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POST-DEBATE PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATE SCHEMATA: THE SPIN DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION FOR IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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ABSTRACT

POST-DEBATE PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATE SCHEMATA: THE SPIN DOCTOR'S PRESCRIPTION FOR IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

by

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Partisan political operatives often speak immediately after televised candidates' debates in an attempt to create a favorable impression of their candidate. This is known as "spin," and it is done because it is believed effective. This study hypothesized that spin can affect impressions of candidates because even though it is presented by biased sources, it presents overloaded "cognitive miser" voters with schemata that facilitate their processing task. Using a videotaped production that included an actual candidates' debate and confederate spin speakers who appeared after the debate, the study manipulated the schematic content of the

spins and conditions believed to affect heuristic processing. Results showed: 1. Partisan schematic spin amplifies impressions of the candidate of whom it speaks. 2. schematic spin intensifies impressions of candidate traits when the candidate in fact possessed the traits, as indicated by control subjects. 3. When the spin for one candidate highlights a positive trait the candidate possesses, and the opponent's spin highlights the opponent's opposite trait, trait ratings for each candidate become polarized. The results suggested that spin affects impressions of candidates in a specific way. Spin is most effective when its claims about the candidates are plausible and consistent with what the viewer has observed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deep and profound gratitude to the members of my committee. All were patient and supportive beyond the call of duty, but each in their own unique way nurtured me throughout the process and showed special generosity with ideas and encouragement. No student could have been more fortunate than me.

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> Dukakis press secretary: I think Michael Dukakis won tonight's contest. He was presidential, he was assured, he was in command.
>
> Bush campaign manager: The vice-president, I thought, was forceful throughout the entire debate and Dukakis, frankly, got boring.
>
> ABC television commentator Jeff Greenfield: [these comments]could determine who will be the next president of the United States. (Nightline, September 26, 1988.)

The persuasion tactics employed by campaign teams during the last three presidential elections have been the subject of heated debate. Critics charged that slick, carefully constructed campaign messages—sound bites, negative advertisements, and racist appeals, such as the 1988 Bush campaign's Willie Horton advertisement—influence voters while providing little substance on which they can base an informed electoral choice. Nowhere has this been more evident than in televised debates between presidential candidates, in which omnipresent spin doctors—the candidates' partisan spokespersons—offer immediately after the debate biased interpretations and conclusions about the candidates' performance.

Considering prior research on the credibility of the individual delivering a persuasive message (e.g., Kelman, 1958; Hass, 1981), it is counterintuitive to expect that biased message sources such as partisan campaign workers

could significantly influence evaluations and impressions of candidates, especially regarding an event that the subject has eyewitnessed. Yet, when we consider the tremendous viewer audience for debates, that many people report that they base their votes solely on the debates, and we observe the pervasiveness of spin doctoring, we can assume that campaigns engage in spin because it works and we have good reason to believe that professional persuasion practitioners have found an effective influence strategy that to date remains unexamined empirically by social scientists. Hence, understanding how spin doctors affect people's impressions of candidates has potentially important implications for theoretical views of social influence and for practical efforts to influence and change attitudes.

BACKGROUND

Although spin might be considered the world's second oldest profession, the terms "spin" and "spin doctor" are relatively new, but are used so pervasively that they can be found easily in the popular culture. In fact, in the fall of 1996, the ABC television network introduced a comedy series called "Spin City," whose main character was a spin doctor. The following will define spin and spin doctoring in its political context.

Who Are Spin Doctors?

Spin doctors are partisan political spokespersons who, in the case of political debates, appear on television immediately after debates and provide biased appraisals of their candidates' performances. The latest edition of the American Heritage Dictionary defines a spin doctor as "A representative for a person, especially a politician, who publicizes favorable interpretations of the person's words or actions."

Modern politics first recorded the term "spin doctor" in 1984, in an October twenty-first Sunday New York Times editorial:

> Tonight at 9:30, seconds after the Reagan-Mondale debate ends, a bazaar will suddenly materialize in the press room....A dozen men in good suits and women in silk dresses will circulate smoothly among reporters, spouting confident opinions. They won't be just press agents trying to impart a favorable spin to a routine release. They'll be the Spin Doctors, senior advisors to the candidates... (Safire, 1986)

The 1988 presidential election saw spin doctors become a campaign institution. Speaking of the ubiquitousness of spin doctors in 1988, Carlson (1989), in a Washington Post article entitled "The Spin Doctor Awards: In praise of the fine art of distortion," stated, "There were so many of them clamoring for press attention after the second presidential debate that a truly new phenomenon was seen in the land: Spin Doc Gridlock" (page 24). This quotation and the passage

quoted above it capture the essence of spin as practiced by many of its practitioners immediately after a debate.

The press has perceived spin doctors as clearly biased and has characterized them as tricksters, charlatans, or manipulators. For example, Carlson (1989) described the spin doctor as:

> ...a cousin of the con man, a brother of a PR man and a direct descendant of that frontier fellow who bought cheap whisky and changed it, by the mere alchemy of words, into expensive patent medicine....He was the kid who could stand there with a straight face and tell Mom and Dad that getting a 57 on his math midterm really wasn't that bad. In fact, it was pretty impressive: It proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had mastered the majority of the required curriculum. Almost two-thirds, in fact.....Spin doctors are found in all walks of life, but they do tend to migrate towards politics, where a good spin can make a king (page 23).

Similarly, Maltese (1992) profiled the former Republican National Committee spokesperson and lobbyist Charles Black, and recalled some of Black's activities:

> Black is a master media manipulator or 'spin doctor' as it is called in the political trade. He seems able to put a 'spin' on almost any event, no matter how unfavorable, to cast his client in a favorable light (page 183).

And Safire (1986) noted the pejorative connotation of the term "spin doctor," when he wrote, "...nobody ever says... 'I am the puppeteer and spin doctor'" (page 14).

Although spin doctors received a spate of attention in the popular media, scholarly writings have paid them scant attention, mentioning them peripherally as members of a group of surrogates who are conjectured to play at least some role in the audience's perception of a candidates' debate and its outcome (e.g., Friedenberg, 1990; Blyskal & Blyskal, 1986; Martel, 1983). None have explained the influence process or have discussed specific spin-doctor effects. For example, Friedenberg (1990) stated: "...post-debate strategy today focuses on providing a massive and well-coordinated surrogate effort. Prominent spokespersons for the candidate are made readily accessible to the media" (page 206). In the context of what Nimmo (1974) and others have called the "mediated" nature of politics, where the layperson sees political reality through the filter of various media, spin doctors are often mentioned briefly as simply another piece of the mediation mosaic.

Spin doctors, Charles Black and the previous characterizations aside, include among their ranks such otherwise respected political figures as former Speaker of the House Thomas Foley and former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley. Objectively speaking, spin doctors are partisan spokespersons who attempt to influence an audience to form positive impressions and feelings towards the candidates they represent and negative impressions of opponents.

What is Spin?

Spin can be discussed from many different perspectives. The following sections describe spin in its political context, examine it as a form of propaganda, and discuss it from a psychological perspective. Before describing spin content, it is important to point out that whatever the spin is comprised of, it is not arbitrarily conceived or ad-libbed; spin is a highly intentional influence tactic. Anecdotal evidence suggests that spin is conceived systematically and is sometimes focus-group tested for efficacy.

Martel (1983), in his analysis of presidential debates, reported:

> [Spin] explanations are not always spontaneous. Rather, before the debate even occurs, a candidate's staff will compile an analysis of the debate's outcome consistent with the candidate's overall strategy, and share it with the surrogates, those expected to be approached for comment (page 196).

Kramer (cf. Blyskal & Blyskal, 1985) recommended to 1984 presidential candidate Walter Mondale: "You can and should try to influence press coverage of the debate. Have your surrogates ready to praise your performance..." (page 202.)

Simon's (1990) account of presidential candidate George Bush's 1988 campaign activities provided a glimpse of how persuasive themes related to debates, advertising, and spin were pre-tested for efficacy using focus groups. Data were

gathered through both traditional survey methodologies and quasi-scientific devices. Simon described one such focus-group session:

> And no longer did the focus groups just talk. Instead, they were wired to a computer. Each [focus-group member] had a device called a "perception analyzer" that was about the size of a transistor radio and had a dial on it. You sat in a chair and watched, say, the first debate between Bush and Dukakis. If something you saw on the screen made you likely to vote for Dukakis, you turned the dial to the left. If it made you more likely to vote for Bush, you turned it to the right....A computer instantly transformed the information into a graph....Orwell's 1984 had come to 1988 (pages 216-217).

Definitions of Spin

To define spin, Facts on File (1988, page 752) stated that it is "...the way the campaigns tried to manufacture lasting interpretations of the event...."

Spin statements in the context under discussion are, first and foremost, answers to television interview questions posed by journalists. They are seldom direct answers, and sometimes they bear no relationship to the questions that elicited them. In the most general terms, spin is interpretations, conclusions, and repetitive praise of the candidate and criticism of the opposition candidate.

From another perspective, spin might also be thought of as a special instance of propaganda:

> The deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct

> behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist (Jowett and O'Donnell , 1992, page 4).

It is so-called "white" propaganda, in which the identity, and thus the intention of the propagandist, is known.

The flavor of spin is captured by Lumley's (1929) definition of propaganda as "the dissemination of conclusions" (page 10). For taxonomic purposes, spin can be discussed as a particular instance of propaganda that occurs at a specific time in a specific context.

Support for the idea that spin is propaganda is gained by seeing the degree to which spin statements can be summarized by a few basic propaganda techniques that date back to those derived from analyses of the infamous Father Coughlin (1972) speeches, and they can be found in Army Field Manual FM-33: Psychological Operations (Department of the Army, 1979).

Spin uses the *bandwagon* technique, in which the majority viewpoint towards the candidate is presented to exert conformity pressure by asking the audience to join the inevitable majority conclusion. Blyskal and Blyskal (1982) have argued that the perception of the candidate as the potential winner, as the candidate most will end up voting for, is a powerful inducement for the undecided voter. The *bandwagon* technique is exemplified by a statement such as, "The American people were looking for more than the knowledge

that Dan Quayle would know the first names of his cabinet members" (PAVA Archives, 1988).

The bandwagon technique reflects the essence of several persuasion models that consider the impact of the opinions of others on the subject. It may be, in terms of Kelley's (1967) ANOVA model of persuasion, a way of providing, as Eagly and Chaiken (1984) pointed out, consensus information within a single observation. For example, instead of giving the subject the opportunity to make repeated observations of others, the communicator may within a single communication claim that their position is endorsed by many others, as when the salesperson tells the indecisive customer, "I already sold two pairs of those today."

Cialdini, in his (1987) participant observation study of real-life persuaders, developed a principle that bears conceptual similarity to the bandwagon technique. Known as the "social validation principle," it states that one should be more willing to comply with a request for behavior to the degree that similar others are or have been performing it, or in the case of the spin doctor's pronouncements, to the degree that others *will be* performing it. He gave as examples of this principle charities claiming that others have given donations, churches "salting" the collection plate, and advertisers claiming their product is the "largest selling."

Finally, the "appropriateness" component of Reardon's (1991) ACE model of persuasion also considers a social influence dimension that would lead in practice to a bandwagon technique. Reardon explained this dimension as "...the extent to which the idea or action is approved of by important others or whether it is the right thing to do in the situation at hand" (page 71). Reardon offered the statement "Everyone in the group is going tonight, so you should join us" (page 71) as example of an appropriateness appeal.

All the above examples have in common the attempt to influence behavior by making salient the opinions, feelings, or behaviors of a majority.

Another commonly used propaganda technique is the *assertion* or *conclusion* statement, whereby the spin doctor offers as fact an opinion or untestable statement, while offering no supporting evidence. One example of the assertion/conclusion technique was provided in Frank Farenkopf's statement above. Lee Atwater's statement that Dukakis "...showed he is not in the mainstream" (PAVA Archives, 1988, page 11) is another example of this technique. One is left looking for evidence to support or refute this statement, and since the referent of the assertion is not itself is in the debate, perhaps the spin

doctor is inducing the viewer to conduct their own *constrained* informational search.

Another technique favored by spin doctors is *insinuation*, which is designed to stir up latent hostility and suspicion. For example, speaking of Dukakis, Atwater said, "He's in several of these groups, ah, ACLU, this other group, that reflect his values" (PAVA, 1988, page 11). In this case, we might be led to wonder what *these* groups refers to. Hate groups? Fringe groups? Un-American groups? And the implication one might take away from the "reflect his values" phrase is that the ACLU is a fringe organization, and Dukakis has values that are unlike one's own. Informed by focus-group research on voters' attitudes and feelings towards specific topics, insinuation can be made very effective.

Spin is also laden with *virtue words* and *glittering generalities*, two propaganda techniques that are often combined in single spin sentences. For example, a spin doctor disclosed that Bush is for "peace through strength." Of course, everyone is pro-peace, and -strength, military or otherwise, is generally held to be good, especially when communicated ambiguously as strength, and not as tanks, planes, and bombs. Presumably, pairing this phrase (and the good feelings it is believed to arouse) with the candidate will transfer the positive association to the candidate, and

this is the *virtue words* component. The *glittering generalities* component rests in the phrase's lack of specificity. "Peace through strength" sounds good, but its exact meaning is unclear. Does it mean domestic peace or international peace? Peace through military strength? Economic strength? The strength of American children's education? The answer is unclear. But the phase sounds good, and the goal of the technique is to make one associate these good sounds, regardless of what they mean specifically, with the sound of the candidate's name.

Another technique spin doctors and other persuaders use repeatedly is *repetition*. Simply stated, repetition involves repeating specific themes. In the case of spin doctors, repetition may occur within one spin doctor's answers to separate questions, or across several spin doctors coordinating their individual answers. Again, as with other spin techniques, whatever is being repeated may have been tested for meaningfulness, including the meanings of particular words and phrases comprising each particular theme. Below is an example of a particular spin doctor answering several different questions by repeating the same theme.

> Reporter: If people saw him tonight and they watched it all the way though, how, what would they think of Dukakis today? Who is he?

> Spin Doctor: (Susan Estrich, Dukakis campaign): I think they think Dukakis is a leader ready to face the future, and they'd have to look at George Bush and ask themselves, "what were the most memorable moments of George Bush tonight? Ducking a debate? Attacking the press? Defending Dan Quayle? and telling us that we're going to have a court full of Bork's if he's elected (PAVA Archives, 1988, page 20).

You may note that the question posed an opportunity for the spin doctor to extol the virtues of her candidate, which would have been reasonable, since Dukakis was seen as "cold" and undefined to many voters, i.e., needing to be explained. Instead, most of the spin doctor's answer refers to the opponent, and this reference was repeated:

> Reporter: Did the governor accomplish what he needed to accomplish tonight?
>
> Spin Doctor:...You saw [Bush] in his most emphatic moment of the debate: ducking another debate; saying no. You saw him defending Dan Quayle. You saw him telling us that if he's elected president, we're going to have a court full of Bork's...(PAVA Archives, 1988, page 22.)

The theme was repeated once more:

> Reporter: Do you think [Bush] was weaker [tonight than in the last debate?]
>
> Spin Doctor: Well, I didn't, I don't think he said any more, I mean, when I think of his most memorable moments from tonight, I think of him attacking the press, defending Dan Quayle, ducking a debate, and telling us we were going to have a court full of Bork's..." (PAVA Archives, 1988, page 24).

Perhaps when this spin doctor mentions "his most memorable moments," she is, as Facts on File's definition of

spin states, trying to create for us *our* most memorable moments: the "lasting interpretation" of the candidates and the debate.

Regardless of whether insinuation, repetition, or bandwagon techniques are used in spin, most spin statements are candidate-related, having to do with the character and style of the candidate, and the nature of their performance. This is consistent with Miller, et al.'s (1986) analysis of National Election Survey data, in which they found most people were most interested in information related to the candidate's image, i.e., peripheral or heuristic cues. A comment by Bush spin doctor Frank Farenkopf after the October 1988 presidential candidates debate illustrates this:

> I thought the vice-president[Bush] was much looser up there tonight, he was relaxed; I thought he performed much better than he did, for example, at Wake Forest. I thought he was super. He didn't have, I think, as much of a burden on him as the governor[Dukakis] did. The governor is behind, he was trying desperately for a knockout to find something to turn it around (PAVA Archives, 1988, page 31).

Although spin can be analyzed from the above perspective of propaganda techniques, which seem to be employed by spin doctors, from a psychological perspective, spin may be most persuasive when it is highly schematic.

Fiske & Taylor (1991, page 98) defined a schema as: "a cognitive structure that represents knowledge about a concept or type of stimulus, including its attributes and the relations among those attributes." The power of schematic spin lies in its ability to reduce voters' cognitive work and allow them to economically go beyond the schema label and infer in the candidate the characteristics that the schema suggests. The flavor of the schema in politics can be found in Conover and Feldman's (1986, page 128) example of the schema in a speechmaking context:

> an anti-abortion heckler might jeer 'baby killer,' thereby priming bystanders to use a schema that they almost certainly would not have employed otherwise. Yet, although the increase in accessibility may be quite transitory, the schema could nonetheless have a lasting impact on the voter's impression of a candidate.

The Psychology Of Spin

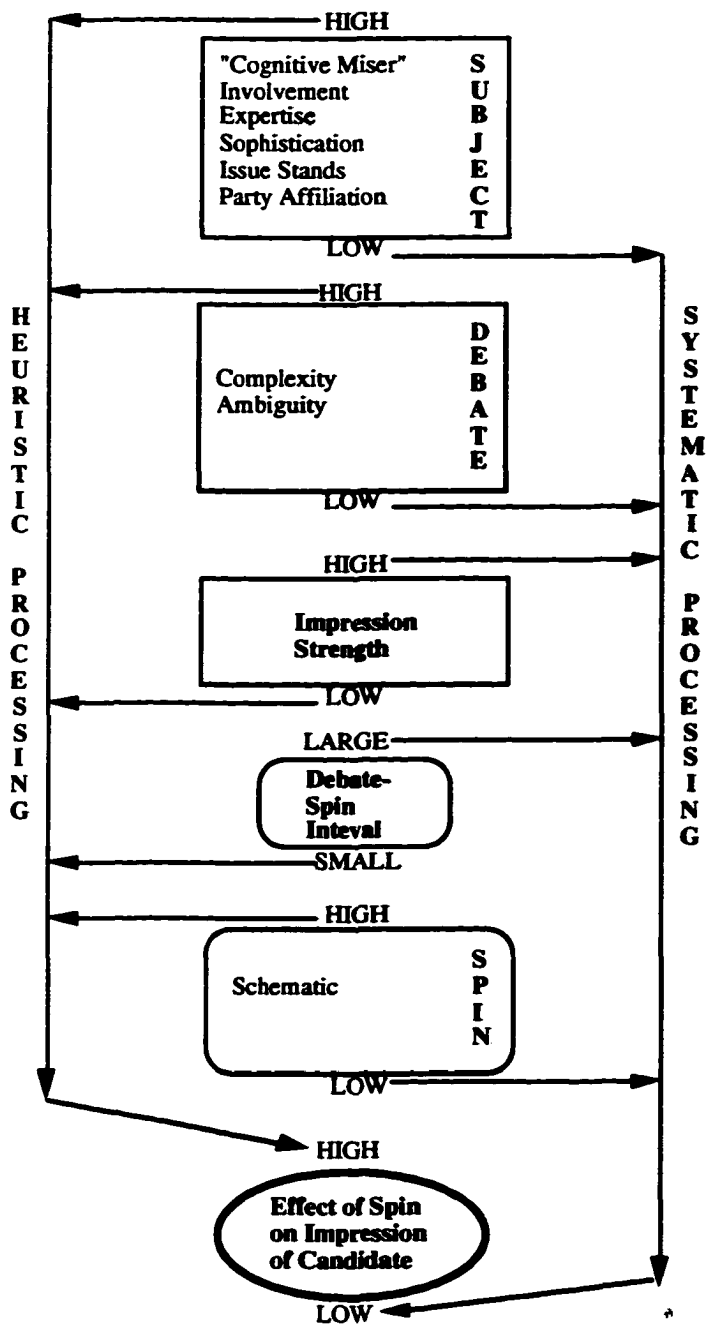
One way to understand the psychology of spin is to assume that people are cognitive misers, who, to a greater or lesser degree, depending on circumstances, process information heuristically (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). This means they use a range of mental shortcuts when confronted with large amounts and complex types of information, or information that is deemed unworthy of effortful thinking. When confronted with a complex stimulus such as a debate, the tendency to process heuristically is amplified. As the

tendency to process heuristically increases, so will the tendency to use the schematic information (heuristic cues) contained in spin when forming an impression of candidates. Spin can be analyzed in terms of the voter (the subject in this experiment), the debate, and the spin factors that contribute to the tendency to process heuristically.

Figure 1 shows a model that depicts the effect of spin on impressions of candidates in terms of the spin stimulus itself (more schematic or less schematic), the mediating subject variables (degree of involvement and/or political interest; party affiliation) and debate factors (complexity or ambiguity), and the degree to which these factors increase the likelihood of heuristic processing. Key components of the model will be discussed below from both political and psychological perspectives, following a brief discussion of the social-cognition foundations to which these factors apply. This discussion will also suggest the ways in which these factors can be tested experimentally.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Spin



Psychological Theories That Apply To Spin

Contemporary social- and political-cognition theorizing shares two related features: Both conceive the individual as a cognitive miser (Fiske and Taylor, 1984, 1991), and both offer models of persuasion and person perception that dichotomize processing into effortful, rational, normative thinking on one hand, and quick, easy, efficient thinking, on the other. However, each model within each school uses different terms to make the distinction. For example, "peripheral" vs. "central" (Petty and Cacioppo, 1981); "systematic" vs. "heuristic" (Chaiken, 1980); "piecemeal" vs. "schematic" (Fiske, 1986); "normative" vs. "heuristic" (Ottati, 1990); and, in a slightly different sense, "memory-based" vs. "impression-driven" (Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh, 1990).

The cognitive miser conception holds that people lack the ability, resources, and interest to attend to, understand, remember, and process the information they are exposed to. As a result, people uses cognitive shortcuts or heuristics (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) to evaluate, to decide, and to form an impression. In short, people use heuristics to make cognitive life manageable.

The schema is the cognitive shortcut most often discussed in social cognition literature. To repeat the definition presented earlier, Fiske & Taylor (1991) defined the schema as:

> a cognitive structure that represents knowledge about a concept or type of stimulus, including its attributes and the relations among those attributes.

Schemata guide encoding, processing, storage, and retrieval of information. Perhaps most important, schemata guide inferences, allowing the subject to go beyond information available. Schemata can affect what information is available in consciousness and what will be remembered.

Some examples of schemata relevant to politics are person, political party, issues, and ideology. For example, if an individual learns that someone is a "conservative," their schema for this ideology may make it likely for them to think of a Christian white male who earns middle-class income or higher, who is anti-abortion, who is against gun control legislation, who is in favor of school prayer, who is against government-sponsored social programs, and who is generally in favor of a diminished role for the federal government. Or, if an individual learns that someone is liberal, they may be more likely to have a schema that features women or minorities from less affluent segments of society, who support abortion rights, who favor gun control legislation, who believe in government-sponsored social programs, and believe that government ought to play a significant role in remedying social and economic ills. Though one has not met the person, you have a cognitive organization of attributes that includes characteristics of the person, as well as issue stands. President Bush used a schema to great effect in 1988

when he called Democratic candidate Michael Dukakis "...a card carrying member of the ACLU; a liberal." This was intended to influence a subgroup of the electorate to form an extremely negative view of candidate Dukakis by associating him with an easy villain, in the form of the "card-carrying Communist." (The truthfulness of this characterization was questionable, since the organization in question, the American Civil Liberties Union, is philosophically antithetical to Communism and often takes stands in agreement with Republican positions.)

Schemata allow the subject to make rapid inferences with little effort and to reach conclusions without assiduously examining a body of specific information. Prior research (Sherman & Corty, 1984; Tversky and Kahneman, 1982; Nisbett & Ross, 1981) on how stereotypes facilitate judgment tasks supports this formulation.

Political Schemata

Wyer and Ottati (in press) propose that schemata operate in domains such as politics. For example, when someone learns that a candidate is a member of a party or group, they make inferences and form an impression based on that information, and later ignore more specific information, such as the candidate's stands on particular issues. They base their evaluation solely on the initial schema information. Considering prior research on the effects of schemata and

stereotypes, I propose this is exactly what spin doctors attempt to activate, when after the debate they make clear, for example, that the opposition candidate is a member of the National Rifle Association, is "extremist," or "right wing," or, the candidate they represent is a "family man," or a "man who came up the hard way." The intention is to provide a vivid summary concept that people can use effortlessly to flesh out an impression of the candidate and reach the conclusion that the spin doctor intends.

Lau (1986) offered a model of political cognition in which he proposed that voters evaluate political candidates using four "political schemata": issues, group relations, party identification, and candidate-personality. Further, he stated that individual subjects use only a small number of specific schemata in their political information processing, which guide what political information the individual seeks, as well as how they process the information.

Lau's (1986) schema conception, along with that of the cognitive miser, further clarifies understanding of the spin process. If one assumes that the subject is a cognitive miser confronting a difficult debate stimulus (Figure 1), and one recalls that most people attend to peripheral candidate features ("image," personality, and superficial characteristics) to reduce their cognitive workload, then presenting the subject with candidate, person, or personality schemata following the debate will powerfully affect their

impressions of candidates as well as their overall decision process.

Subject Factors

Involvement

A discussion of the characteristics of those who watch candidate debates dovetails nicely with the notion of the cognitive miser. Generally, subjects who are uninvolved and uninterested will, according to several models, resort to heuristic processing and will thereby be inclined to use the peripheral cues that the spin doctor provides. Subjects who chronically activate particular party, issue, or ideological schemata will be less affected by spin than those who engage in less thoughtful processing.

Political consultant Charles Black (cf. Taylor, 1990), might as well have been offering a definition of the uninvolved cognitive miser when he offered this description of the American voter:

> They have a short attention span. They don't follow government and politics every day....They will not sit down around the kitchen table and read through both parties' platforms and make an informed family decision. They want it put simply. They like contrast. The less work they have to do to figure out the differences, the better they like it.

Some, such as Drucker and Platt-Hunold (1987), have contended that Americans view their presidential debates as

little more than game shows. Most Americans are uninterested or are simply unable to systematically consider all the information that they would need to make an "informed" electoral decision. Such an "informed" choice might include the issues, the candidates' positions on the issues, the candidates' record, the candidates' character, along with a variety of speeches, events, and behaviors. Whether it is the enormity of the processing task or simple apathy, most voters seek to conserve resources and employ heuristic processing and peripheral cues to reach their conclusions. For some, simply knowing a candidate's party will determine their vote. For others, heartfelt issues matter most. For most debate viewers, the candidate's superficial characteristics may determine their evaluation.

By a variety of scientific measures, as well as more mundane indicators, such as the low television ratings both 1996 party conventions received, Americans are often shown to be inattentive to politics. Lest one attribute this to a stupid rather than a cognitive-miserly electorate, one need only consider Miller, et al.'s (1986) previously mentioned analysis, in which heuristic processing of political information was positively correlated with education level. The tendency to process heuristically is ecumenical.

For example, in a poll taken one year before the 1988 presidential election, 68% of viewers reported that they paid

close attention to coverage of a Texas toddler trapped in a well, while 15% reported paying close attention to the Democratic presidential campaign, and 13% reported paying close attention to the Republican presidential campaign (cf. Jamieson, 1988). Similarly, two months prior to the 1988 election, a survey reported 50% of the voting-age public could not identify the Democratic vice-presidential candidate (Oreskes, 1990).

Americans show low involvement with politics, which is a critical factor in determining how much and when they will use heuristic versus effortful processing. The importance of the processing task affects the type of processing that will be undertaken. For example, in a study that featured communicators presenting arguments, Chaiken (1980) found that uninvolved subjects, i.e., subjects for whom the outcome was unimportant, were persuaded by the communicator's personal characteristics (heuristic cues), while involved subjects attended to and were persuaded by the quality of the communicator's arguments. Involved subjects or subjects for which the outcome matters are found to engage in effortful, time-consuming processing, while uninvolved subjects are found to process tasks using quick shortcuts and attending to superficial criteria.

Expertise and Sophistication

Spin effects will be mediated by the subject's political expertise or sophistication. Fiske, Kinder, and Lartner (1983) as well as McGraw, Lodge, and Stroh (1990) found that political experts process information differently than novices. Expertise is not orthogonal to interest and involvement, though. Both studies found that experts, who differentiated and organized information related to a subject, were superior to novices in correctly recalling details associated with a stimulus when such an association would be inconsistent with the nature of the stimulus. Stated another way, novices are more likely to ignore inconsistent information and are thus probably more susceptible to spin effects. Moreover, Lodge McGraw, and Stroh (1990) found experts more efficient than novices in forming candidate impressions. Experts gave more weight to candidate's stands on important issues and less weight to stands on unimportant issues. These findings suggest a sophisticated use of information that would possibly lead the expert to more carefully evaluate the veracity of spin, and more appropriately distribute attention to the range of information available. As well, they support the idea that novices will be more likely to attend to peripheral, non-issue-related cues and thus may be more susceptible to spin influence.

Generally, spin's effect should be most pronounced with uninvolved subjects who have weak party, ideological, and

candidate identifications, and low levels of political expertise.

The Debate as a Complex Stimulus

Politics, with its campaign process, issues, live events, and candidates, is a stimulus-rich, message-dense cognitive domain that virtually demands that the subject use cognitive shortcuts to contend with it. As Graber (1980) pointed out about televised debates, "Most people are unable to absorb the flood of information quickly enough, particularly when the pictures lack explicit cues to point out which are more important" (page 80). And as Campbell (1983) pointed out in his presentation of "strategic ambiguity," politicians may make things more difficult, because they deliberately make ambiguous statements, which they have learned from experience benefits them.

If processing political information is difficult and confusing, processing political debates can be even more so. Debates have many components: the issues, along with the candidate's appearance, style, demeanor, and presentation. Statements made by candidates within debates may be ambiguous and difficult to comprehend, as may be the debate outcome.

Focusing on the ambiguity and complexity of debates and the challenges this presents the subject, Jacoby, et al., (1986) conducted a study in which subjects viewed a videotape

of the 1980 presidential candidates debate after first receiving instructions that told them they would be tested afterward on the debate content. The study found a miscomprehension rate of candidate statements in 21% among this test-savvy group who, as was mentioned, expected to be tested on the debate content. From this it is easy to conclude that miscomprehension in the general viewing audience is higher than 21%. As Rosenstiel (1987) stated: "...spinning can work, because events such as debates are not like football games..." (page 24).

Debates are confusing, ambiguous, and difficult to process, and as such they are likely to increase the possibility that cognitive misers will avail themselves of the cognitive shortcuts that the spin doctor provides. It follows from this that spin effects will increase as the complexity of the impression stimulus increases. When the stimulus is simple and clear, the subject will be capable of processing without resorting to supplementary processing help, and spin effects will decrease.

The Impression of the Debate

The discussion up to this point has dealt with why spin might affect impressions of candidates by describing how spin makes heuristic cues available to a perceiver motivated to process heuristically. From the perspectives of social-

cognitive and political psychology, the following discusses how these cues, once salient, affect the impression.

Spin's real-life defining characteristic is its presentation immediately following debates. This suggests a critical period in which influence attempts will be effective, presumably before the subject has solidified their impression. Updating an old impression-formation model can help explain the processes occurring within the critical period.

Asch's (1952) impression formation studies were conducted this way: two groups of subjects were presented with trait adjectives and asked to form an impression of a target person. Group one received a list with traits a, b, X, c, d. Group two received a list with traits a, b, Y, c, d. The two lists differed by one trait, yet each group formed substantially different impressions of the target person. Asch reasoned that the x and y traits were "central" to people's conceptions of personality, important enough to cause the other trait items to organize into a different gestalt.

Applied to spin, the formulation would be as follows: Subjects observe the debate, which offers a extensive list of traits related to the both the debate in general and the candidate in particular. Following the debate, the subject recalls features of the debate and attempts to combine them

into a summary judgment. As with Asch's formulation, some traits more than others will influence the overall evaluation. The difficulty lies in the overwhelming number of debate or candidate aspects to consider.

The spin doctor, appearing immediately after the debate, affects the impression by highlighting items for inclusion in the subjects "trait list." The spin doctor accomplishes this by repeatedly stressing a few vivid schemata ("he's a tested leader"; "the opponent is liberal!" and by distracting the subject from considering other impression elements. In terms of Higgins & Bargh's (1987) conception of priming, the spin doctor activates a schema, makes it accessible, and primes the subject to activate other trait categories that in turn affect the subject's summary judgment. The cognitively overloaded subject may in fact be grateful to the spin doctor for offering a more manageable chunk of information to consider or for highlighting the debate's important points. The key idea is that the spin doctor activates schemata and affects the subject's trait calculus before the subject uses their own cognitive criteria. As such, the effect of spin on impressions could be expected to increase when the subject's impression is unformed and spin can reduce cognitive work and provide impression elements, and the effect of spin will decrease as the subject solidifies their impression and has less need for processing help.

In this study it is hypothesized that the complexity of a debate, along with the low involvement level of most of the electorate, make for a situation in which the content-organizing and inference-guiding functions of the schemata that the spin doctor provides are uniquely suited to people's processing needs and can be *uniquely* effective in influencing a subject's impression of the debate.

From the perspectives of heuristic information processing and impression formation, this applied study will explain how spin can influence voter impression of candidates with the following conception: A "cognitive miser" (Fiske and Taylor, 1984, 1991) describes the average person who is overloaded with information and who to make their cognitive tasks quick and efficient, employs mental shortcuts to quickly reach decisions and evaluations without having to systematically process all available, relevant information. A debate viewer who is a cognitive miser observes a complex debate stimulus and so taxed is motivated to make use of the rich heuristic person-schemata that the spin doctor provides and which serve to make easier the task of forming impressions of the candidates. In this context, person-schemata can be thought of as stereotypical representations that contain the most descriptive and key features of a category or group of people. Examples would include college professors, blue-collar workers, homebodies, and extraverts.

Using videotaped debate vignettes that feature an actual candidate debate between a "professional" Republican and a "common man" or "amateur" Democrat, along with experimentally manipulated post-debate spins delivered by professional actors, this field study will attempt to demonstrate the following: 1. On measures of impressions and attitudes related to the candidates and their specific traits such as Honesty, Leadership, and Likeability, the quality of being a "regular guy"; and on measures of who won the debate and for whom subjects would be most likely to vote, more schematic spins--determined as such in the pilot research--will be more effective in influencing subjects' impressions of candidates possessing the traits in question than less schematic spins. This is because schemata lead to inferences and assimilation of additional information that support the subject's observations. 2. The effect of Processing Mode. Under conditions that enhance the tendency to process information heuristically, subjects deprived of time to engage in effortful processing will be more influenced by spin than subjects afforded the opportunity to process the debate stimulus systematically. This is because spin that is presented immediately after the debate will provide schematic content that will feed into the "cognitive miser"'s need to process heuristically and will thus supplant more rationalistic, systematic processing. It is expected that

when subjects are deprived of time to process systematically, their tendency to make use of convenient schematic spin information will be increased and the effect of spin will be stronger.

Using a videotaped production of a candidates debate and spin presentations, this study will manipulate the schematic content of the spin and the processing mode conditions under which subjects will form impressions of candidates and will examine these effects on measures of impression. The spin manipulation will consist of four conditions: 1. Schematic spin for each of the two candidates (Amateur-Professional Schematic). 2. Bland praise for each candidate (Less-Schematic). 3. Schematic spin for the Democratic candidate and Less-Schematic spin for the Republican candidate (Amateur Schematic). 4. Schematic spin for the Republican candidate and Less-Schematic spin for the Democratic candidate (Professional Schematic). Processing Mode will be operationalized as follows: 1. In the Systematic condition, subjects will be given one minute between the debate and spin in which they will be instructed to form an impression of the candidates. 2. In the Heuristic condition, subjects will view the spin immediately after the debate without interruption. In the Control condition, subjects will view only the debate and will not undergo the spin or processing mode manipulations. It is expected that in the three schematic

conditions, subjects will have more extreme impressions of candidate traits than will subjects in the Less-Schematic and Control conditions. Further, this effect will be amplified in the Heuristic Processing Mode condition. The study will test the following specific hypotheses using a variety of dependent measures:

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis One: Impressions of Leadership

A. There will be a main effect for Spin Condition, with the following group differences: 1. The Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean Leadership score than will the Professional-Amateur Schematic(two-sided), Less-Schematic, and Amateur-Schematic treatments. 2. The Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean Leadership score than will the Amateur Schematic and Less-Schematic treatments. 3. As an aggregate, the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Professional Schematic treatments will result in higher mean Leadership scores than will the aggregate Amateur-Schematic and Less-Schematic treatments and the Control condition.

B. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with a higher mean Leadership score in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

Hypothesis Two: Impressions of Likeability

A. There will be a main effect for Spin condition, with the following group differences, and where a score less than zero indicates a preference for the Democratic candidate: 1. The Amateur Schematic treatment will result in lower mean Likeability than will result from the Amateur-Professional Schematic, Less-Schematic, and Professional Schematic treatments. 2. The Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment will result in lower Likeability values than will result from the Amateur Schematic and Less-Schematic treatments. 3. An aggregate of the Amateur-Professional and Amateur Schematic treatments will result in lower Leadership ratings than will result from an aggregate of the Professional Schematic, and Less-Schematic treatments and the Control condition.

B. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with mean Likeability lower in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

Hypothesis Three: Impressions of "Regular Guy"

A. There will be a main effect for Candidate, with mean "Regular Guy" for Bob Jordan (Democrat, Amateur), the challenger, higher than mean "Regular Guy" for Jim Martin (Republican, Professional), the incumbent.

B. There will be a main effect for Spin condition, with the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic Spin treatments resulting in higher mean ratings "Regular Guy" for

both candidates than will result from the Less-Schematic treatment and the Control condition.

C. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with mean "Regular Guy" higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. There will be a Spin x Candidate interaction, wherein the Amateur Schematic treatment will result in higher mean "Regular Guy" for Jordan and lower mean "Regular Guy" for Martin, and the Professional Schematic treatment will result in higher mean "Regular Guy" for Martin and lower mean "Regular Guy" for Jordan.

Hypothesis Four: Impressions of Honesty

Since the schematic scripts attempted to portray candidate Bob Jordan an amateur with whom most people can identify and Jim Martin as a professional politician, if people are inclined to see politicians as less honest, it might be expected that subjects would infer Bob Jordan to be more honest than Jim Martin, with the following results:

A. There will be a main effect for Candidate, with mean Honesty for Bob Jordan higher than mean Honesty for Jim Martin.

B. There will be a main effect for Spin treatment, with the Amateur-Professional treatment resulting in higher mean Honesty for both candidates than will result from the Less-Schematic treatment and the Control condition.

C. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with mean Honesty higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. There will be a Spin x Candidate interaction. Because of its emphasis of the Jordan traits that relate to honesty, the Amateur Schematic treatment will result in higher mean Honesty for Jordan and lower mean Honesty for Martin. Similarly, because it lacks the trait-relevant information that would benefit Jordan, the Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean Honesty score for Martin and a lower mean Honesty score for Jordan.

Hypothesis Five: Impressions of Who Won the Debate

It is expected that since the schematic spins attempted to portray Jim Martin as the professional politician and Bob Jordan as the "regular guy," subjects would infer, along with their observation of the debate, that the professional politician is probably a better debater and the following results would obtain:

A. There will be a main effect for Candidate, with the mean "Won The Debate" score for Jim Martin higher than the mean score for Bob Jordan.

B. There will be a main effect for Spin condition, with the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment resulting in a higher mean "Won the Debate" score for both candidates than in the Less-Schematic treatment and in the Control condition.

C. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with the mean "Won The Debate" score higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. There will be a Spin x Candidate interaction, wherein, because of its emphasis on the Martin traits that relate to politics, the Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean "Won The Debate" score for Martin and a lower mean score for Jordan. Similarly, because it lacked the trait-relevant information that would benefit Martin, the Amateur Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean "Won The Debate" score for Jordan and a lower mean score for Martin.

Hypothesis Six: Impressions of Whom To Vote For

Considering that only 11% of subjects in this college sample identified themselves as Republican, and that based on the nature of the schematic scripts, Democrat Bob Jordan was a candidate with whom subjects would be likely to identify, the following results are expected:

A. There will be a main effect for Candidate, with mean "Vote For" Bob Jordan significantly higher than mean "Vote For" Jim Martin.

B. There will be a main effect for Spin condition, with the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment resulting in higher mean "Vote For" for both candidates than will result

from the Less-Schematic treatment, or will be found in the Control condition.

C. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with mean "Vote For" significantly higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. There will be a Spin x Candidate interaction, wherein the Democrat Schematic treatment will yield significantly higher mean "Vote For" for Bob Jordan and lower mean "Vote For" for Jim Martin, and similarly, the Professional Schematic treatment will yield higher mean "Vote For" for Jim Martin and lower mean "Vote For" for Bob Jordan.

METHOD

Subjects

In fulfillment of an Introductory Psychology course requirement, 338 subjects from the subject pools of Hunter and Baruch Colleges of The City University of New York signed up to participate in the experiment. The Hunter subjects totaled 139, of whom 27 were male, 90 were female, and 20 were either absent for the experiment or were excluded for providing unusable data. The Baruch subjects totaled 199, of whom 84 were male, 99 were female, and 18 were either absent for the experiment or were excluded for providing unusable data. The mean age for Hunter college subjects was 22.00

(N=118, SD=5.11) and for Baruch college subjects was 20.59 (N=184, SD=3.90).

Apropos variables of theoretical importance to the study, the Hunter and Baruch samples were roughly equivalent in terms of self-identified affiliation to Democratic, Republican, Independent, Libertarian, and "Other" parties. However, the Baruch sample had three times as many self-identified Republicans as the Hunter sample ($\chi 2=15.69$, DF=4, $p < .0035$).

The Hunter and Baruch samples were also equivalent in subjects' rating of their political interest level, as measured by the political interest items of the questionnaire. (See Results section below.)

Within each college sample, groups of subjects who signed up for a given period were randomly assigned to one of 17 conditions: 8 Spin treatment conditions x 2 Processing Mode conditions (Systematic/Heuristic) and a Control condition. They were run in separate groups.

Materials

Videotapes

Eight, 18-minute videotapes containing a 12-minute debate excerpt followed by a 6-minute spin segment were created for the eight spin treatment conditions. A 12-minute control videotape was created using only the debate segment.

The tapes were recorded by a professional video crew in a television studio at The City University of New York Graduate School. Recordings were made using 3/4" videotape, and editing was completed by an experienced video editor.

The debate segment, which constituted the entirety of the control tape and the first portion of the treatment tapes, was created by editing segments from a professional, broadcast-quality tape of a 1988 North Carolina gubernatorial debate between then governor Jim Martin (Republican) and then Lieutenant Governor Bob Jordan (Democrat), moderated by television journalist Lloyd Dobbins.

To enhance mundane realism and to support the cover story that the videotape was produced by a college cable television station, several common broadcast-production techniques were employed.

Each videotape began with a numeric countdown graphic. Next, a classical musical soundtrack (J.S. Bach: Concerto in D Minor for Two Violins and Orchestra, BWV 1043) played, while a graphic displayed "Political Science Network" (the fictitious college cable station) and a voiceover read one of two statements. For the treatment conditions, the voiceover read "Coming up next are excerpts from today's North Carolina gubernatorial candidates debate followed by reactions from the candidates' media advisors." For the control condition,

the voiceover read only "Coming up next are excerpts from today's North Carolina gubernatorial candidates debate."

Following this lead-in, journalist Lloyd Dobbins introduced the candidates, after which Bob Jordan and Jim Martin made two-minute introductory statements. Following the introductory statements, six "issue" segments were edited in, in which each candidate alternately gave one-minute answers to questions about taxes, education, and "scandals" unique to each. Whenever the candidates spoke, the lower third of the screen displayed their names and party affiliations. These graphics also obscured any information from the original tape that would invalidate the cover story, such as the original date and time. To further enhance believability and to ensure that the debate remained appropriate to the year of the study, all date references were edited out of candidates' statements.

In the treatment tapes, immediately following the last candidate's last answer came a fictitious segue that included a display of a crowded room with people milling about, a soundtrack of room-crowd noise, a graphic that displayed "Colbert Auditorium, Media Filing Center," and a voiceover that read, "We now move to the media filing center for reactions from the candidates' media advisors."

After the segue, one of 8 types of spin vignettes was appended. All spin vignettes were variations of a fictitious

question and answer session designed to mimic the typical question and answer sessions that network television provides following a political candidates debate. Spin-doctor confederates representing each candidate alternately provided three-minutes of scripted spin answers (see Appendix A) to a group of three confederate reporters' scripted questions. Whenever the spin doctor-confederates spoke, the lower third of the screen displayed a graphic with their name, along with "Media Advisor," followed by the name of the candidate they represented. To enhance mundane realism, the confederate reporters were equipped with microphones and tape recorders and presented their questions in a disorderly and competitive way. Additionally, signs in the background displayed "Press Releases" and "Position Papers," and a soundtrack played crowd-room noise. All confederates in this segment were professional actors who were paid for their services.

Each spin vignette was created by editing together two, three-minute segments of identical format. In each segment, one of the two confederate spin doctors provided either a Schematic or Less-Schematic spin in response to confederate reporters' questions. Each confederate spin doctor always represented only the candidate (political party) for whom he was supposed to be employed and provided his spin answers to the same set of questions specific to the candidate he represented. As such, four segments, (Schematic/Amateur,

Less-Schematic/Amateur, Schematic/Professional, Less-Schematic/Professional) were combined to create four vignettes that featured either Schematic spins (each actor presents a Schematic spin), Less-Schematic spins (each actor presents Less-Schematic spin), and partisan spins (one actor provides Schematic spin, the other provides Less-Schematic spin). These four vignettes were counterbalanced for order of presentation, resulting in the eight spin vignette conditions displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

Composition of Spin Vignette Tapes

Tape	First Speaker Spin/Party	Second Speaker Spin/Party	Condition Label
1	Amateur Schematic/Democrat	Professional Schematic/Republican	as/ps
2	Professional Schematic/Republican	Amateur Schematic/Democrat	ps/as
3	Less- Schematic/Democrat	Professional Schematic/Republican	lsd/ps
4	Professional Schematic/Republican	Less- Schematic/Democrat	ps/lsd
5	Amateur Schematic/Democrat	Less- Schematic/Republican	as/lsr
6	Less- Schematic/Republican	Amateur Schematic/Democrat	lsr/as
7	Less- Schematic/Republican	Less- Schematic/Democrat	lsr/lsd
8	Less- Schematic/Democrat	Less- Schematic/Republican	lsd/lsr

Since each of the confederate spin doctors differed in appearance and manner, a pilot study was conducted in which 53 subjects viewed the videotaped vignettes in which only one spin doctor confederate presented either a Schematic or an

Less-Schematic spin following the debate segment. On survey items related to the confederate spin doctor's persuasiveness, effectiveness, likeability, and honesty, subjects rated both speakers negatively and there were no significant differences found between the actors on these items.

Spin Scripts

The questions and answers that constituted the spin vignettes (see Appendix A) were developed by analyzing videotapes of past televised candidate-debate spin interviews. The scripted answers to the questions were, in terms of general speaking style, modeled after typical spin interviews, but their content was varied according to the spin condition. In the Schematic (Amateur/Professional) spin condition, each spin doctor confederate used 12 schemata or personal adjectives to describe the candidate he represented, for example, "...a plain-speaking man...," or "...a solid professional." Similarly, each spin doctor confederate used negative characterizations to describe the opposition candidate, for example, "...a country-club Republican...," or "the amateur..."

The two schematic scripts had common features. Each attempted to amplify the proponent's inherent positive characteristics and the opponents inherent political liabilities, but never did the spins attempt to portray a

candidate as having characteristics that would be unreasonable to infer from viewing them. In the political sense, no attempt was made to reposition the candidates to be substantially different from what one might reasonably infer from seeing them and hearing their views. In the Less-Schematic condition, the spin doctor confederates used no stereotypes and did not characterize the opposition candidate. Generally, these spins consisted of the previously mentioned propaganda techniques, such as "glittering generalities," and "virtue words"; for example, "We feel great about how we did tonight," or "We did real well."

Validity of the Spin Vignette Tapes

In the same pilot study that evaluated the characteristics of the spin doctor confederates, the Schematic and Less-Schematic spins were compared in trials in which only one spin doctor confederate presented either a Schematic or an Less-Schematic spin following the debate portion. However, the effect of whom the spin doctor represented was not counterbalanced; in all cases, each spin doctor always represented the same candidate.

Table 2

Summary Statistics for Subject Ratings of Spin Content by Spin Condition

Item	Spin Condition	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	t	p
Speaker used stereotypes to characterize opposition	Less-Schematic	21	2.02	1.67	-1.99	-3.91	.00
	Schematic	33	4.02	1.92			
Speaker gave good picture of opposition	Less-Schematic	21	.976	1.29	-.930	-2.16	.04
	Schematic	32	1.91	1.67			
Speaker used a lot of political slogans	Less-Schematic	20	1.68	1.59	-1.58	-3.18	.00
	Schematic	33	3.24	1.82			

Subjects rated the spin content on a scale from zero to six. Table 2 above summarizes the results for the Schematic and Less-Schematic conditions. On items related to the spin content, and collapsing across candidates, subjects in the Schematic spin conditions rated the spin as containing more stereotypes and slogans than subjects in the Less-Schematic condition, and indicated that the spin gave a "better picture of the opposition candidate."

Questionnaire

The five-page, five-part questionnaire called "Opinion Survey" constituted the dependent measure (see Appendix B). The first part consisted of open-ended items that asked generally for the subjects' opinions about the debate and the candidates. Parts two and three consisted of two-part, Likert-type items, in which the subject rated each candidate on a scale from zero to six. The second part concerned impressions of the candidates. The third part attempted to measure recall of schema-consistent/inconsistent statements by asking subjects to indicate separately for each candidate the likelihood that they made a given statement. The fourth section contained items designed to measure the subject's level of political interest, and the last section asked for demographic information.

To control for response set bias, two versions of the questionnaire were used. The first version had all items in parts two and three with scales related to the Republican candidate Jim Martin appearing on the left of the page, while the other version began the same items with scales related to the Democratic Candidate Bob Jordan on the right of the page. The procedure used to select items from the questionnaire which were used for hypothesis tests will be described in sections to follow.

PROCEDURE

For each condition, groups ranging from five to 25 subjects received introductory instructions (see Appendix C) and were shown a videotape on a 25" color monitor with stereo sound. Subjects in the Heuristic Processing Mode conditions viewed the entire tape without interruption. Subjects in the Systematic condition were forewarned about an interruption. Subjects in the Systematic Processing Mode conditions viewed the debate portion of the tape until it concluded, at which time the tape was stopped and the experimenter gave the instruction: "Please take a minute to form an impression about the candidates you have just seen. I will re-start the tape in exactly one minute." After the one-minute interval, the subjects viewed remainder of the tape. For all conditions, when the entire tape was viewed, subjects were immediately given the questionnaire and one hour to complete it, after which they received a group debriefing in which the deception and the true nature of the experiment were revealed. Following the group debriefing, one volunteer subject from each group, when available, was selected for a more comprehensive, individual debriefing.

Questionnaire Preparation

Political Interest Scale

An aggregate political interest measure was created from items in the fourth part of the questionnaire, which asked

the subjects to indicate the number of times they engaged in an activity related to politics, such as joining a political organization or watching political programming on television, or voting in state, local, or national elections (see Table 3).

Table 3: Political Interest Scale Items

Item number	Item	
1	About how many times a week do you:	read newspaper articles devoted to politics?
2		Watch political segments on the news?
3		Talk to friends or relatives about politics?
4	How often do you watch TV shows devoted to politics, like Meet the Press, Face the Nation, The MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour, This Week with David Brinkely, etc.?	
5	How many times have you:	sent a letter to an editor of a newspaper?
6		sent a letter to a politician?
7		joined an organization working on a local or national problem?
8		signed a petition about a national or local issue?

The distributions of the eight remaining items related to political interest were examined. Outliers, those values greater than ten, were set to ten. This scale was intended to be used to compare the two college samples and as a covariate.

The Hunter and Baruch samples were compared regarding mean Political Interest. No significant difference was found ($t = -.383$, $DF = 305$, $p = .7017$) between Baruch College ($M = 10.87$, $SD = 7.86$) and Hunter College ($M = 11.16$, $SD = 8.01$).

Questionnaire Item Reduction

To reduce the number of items to be used in the final analyses and to determine whether or not the two college

samples could be collapsed into one, Principal Components (varimax and orthotran transformations) factor analyses were carried out on the second part of the questionnaire, which contained items related to impressions of the candidates.

Factor Analysis of Measures of Impressions

The questionnaire's second section consisted of 16 two-part items (32 variables) that probed for impressions of the candidates. One part of each item contained a rating scale for candidate Jim Martin/Professional and the other part had a scale for candidate Bob Jordan/Amateur.

The first analyses examined separately items related to each candidate, i.e., parts one and two of each item, for each of the college samples.

The analysis of the Bob Jordan/Democrat items for the Hunter college sample yielded seven factors ($\chi 2=631.87$, DF=135, $p < .0001$), four of which had eigenvalues greater than one. (See Table 4.) The Baruch college sample yielded eight factors ($\chi 2=672.20$, DF=135, $p < .0001$), with four having eigenvalues greater than one. (See Table 5.)

Table 4

Unrotated Factor Loadings for Bob Jordan (Amateur) Items, Hunter College Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
reqguv_j	.631	-.372	-.284	-.311	-.071	.132	-.060
manager_j	.693	.180	-.342	-.030	.158	.094	.013
honest_j	.686	-.213	-.060	-.205	-.064	-.287	-.370
strong_j	.621	.528	-.033	-.071	-.099	-.021	-.090
confident_j	.439	.580	-.250	-.158	-.072	.032	-.011
peacecorp_j	.644	-.288	.057	.114	-.299	-.134	-.045
cclub_j	-.168	.611	.163	-.357	.315	.044	.047
gochurch_j	.473	-.006	.373	-.350	-.496	.021	-7.936E-5
milofficer_j	.126	.418	.380	.646	-.056	-.060	-.355
familytime_j	.571	-.030	.471	.240	-.128	.117	.224
value$$_j	.007	.657	.312	-.297	-.064	-.226	.124
schoolunch_j	.610	-.082	-.015	.187	.012	-.096	.667
taxcut_j	.209	-.275	.567	-.240	.224	.578	-.091
womenmil_j	.491	-.228	.319	-.071	.502	-.473	.013
wondebate_j	.609	.377	-.264	.269	.059	.326	.004
votefor_j	.807	-.107	-.027	.116	.368	.055	-.124

Table 5

Unrotated Factor Loadings for Bob Jordan (Amateur) Items, Baruch College Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
regguy_j	.537	-.061	-.063	.002	.427	.152	-.392	-.378
manager_j	.679	.120	-.112	-.308	.149	-.081	.088	.214
honest_j	.582	-.135	-.262	-.143	.265	.159	-.375	.133
strong_j	.662	.416	.054	.064	-.203	.141	-.094	-.058
confident_j	.527	.500	.208	-.188	-.282	.196	.220	-.165
peacecorp_j	.346	-.435	-.238	.505	-.091	-.145	.183	-.250
cclub_j	-.076	.394	.638	.047	.363	-.202	.070	.017
gochurch_j	.311	-.559	.508	-.073	-.061	-.105	-.174	-.042
milofficer_j	.404	-.193	.083	.455	-.381	.391	-.136	.224
familytime_j	.493	-.225	.427	-.187	-.304	-.345	-.099	-.325
value$$_j	-.037	.385	.472	.480	.088	.105	-.274	.153
schoolunch_j	.491	-.334	.216	-.426	-.079	.107	.075	.391
taxcut_j	.263	-.348	.297	.112	.380	.441	.536	-.117
womenmil_j	.504	-.145	.004	.376	.167	-.460	.095	.340
wondebate_j	.653	.414	-.175	.118	-.002	-.157	.157	-.009
votefor_j	.713	.150	-.293	.054	.055	-.092	.107	-.063

The analysis of the Jim Martin items showed similar results for each college sample (see Tables 5 and 6). The Baruch sample yielded eight factors ($\chi 2=681.65$, DF=135, $p < .0001$), five of which had eigenvalues greater than one. The Hunter sample similarly yielded eight factors ($\chi 2=502.16$, DF=135, $p < .0001$), five of which had eigenvalues greater than one.

Table 6

Unrotated Factor Loadings for Jim Martin (Professional) Items, Hunter College Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
regguy_m	.610	-.241	.016	.178	-.287	.430	-.261	.172
manager_m	.473	.457	-.312	.083	.059	.294	-.192	-.323
honest_m	.738	-.136	.007	-.017	-.299	-.075	-.236	-.206
strong_m	.100	.751	-.159	.009	-.195	-.326	-.155	-.172
confident_m	.117	.666	-.295	.143	-.317	-.079	-.089	.399
peacecorp_m	.708	-.122	-.152	-.046	.333	-.066	-.147	.201
• cclub_m	-.278	.468	.330	.433	-.137	.293	.207	-.103
gochurch_m	.402	.154	.679	-.079	-.179	-.135	-.047	-.254
milofficer_m	.110	.526	.196	-.093	.631	.051	-.362	.081
familytime_m	.584	-.056	.509	-.015	.004	-.282	-.024	.257
value$$_m	-.286	.524	.344	.037	.077	-.027	.177	.121
schoolunch_m	.684	-.006	.349	-.126	.026	.297	.142	.021
taxcut_m	.253	-.260	.016	.804	.051	-.264	-.036	.114
• womenmil_m	.588	.112	-.173	.315	.369	.087	.386	-.111
wondebate_m	.575	.291	-.156	-.323	-.163	.087	.373	.293
votefor_m	.711	-.008	-.227	-.079	.025	-.293	.288	-.238

Table 7

Unrotated Factor Loadings for Jim Martin (Professional) Items, Baruch College Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
regguy_m	.482	-.320	-.143	.182	.462	-.349	.079	-.072
manager_m	.676	.273	-.195	-.010	-.187	.169	.189	-.028
honest_m	.662	-.217	-.189	-.031	-.172	-.084	.404	-.217
strong_m	.548	.512	-.054	-.164	.108	.052	-.185	-.178
confident_m	.291	.773	-.056	.103	-.162	-.015	.032	.179
peacecorp_m	.493	-.321	-.027	-.341	.098	.419	-.269	.225
• cclub_m	-.151	.500	.353	.415	.069	.264	-.250	-.142
gochurch_m	.319	-.106	.646	-.087	-.373	-.162	-.024	-.354
milofficer_m	.256	.061	.492	-.506	.176	-.422	-.169	.267
familytime_m	.317	-.258	.332	.363	-.455	.014	.176	.517
value$$_m	-.181	.473	.382	-.007	.453	-.016	.492	.035
schoolunch_m	.566	-.368	.268	.261	.026	.077	-.144	-.295
taxcut_m	.425	-.048	-.028	.615	.319	-.182	-.197	.163
• womenmil_m	.451	-.220	.234	-.093	.371	.514	.215	.054
wondebate_m	.657	.469	-.066	-.064	-.104	-.062	-.041	.005
votefor_m	.734	.063	-.211	-.074	.026	-.117	-.091	.091

The unrotated factor loading patterns for all analyses are very similar. The first factor loads high positive (> +.3/-.3) on almost all items except "is a member of a country club" and "values wealth," both of which load low negative, (< +.3/-3). This might be considered a general positive evaluation or halo effect, or alternatively, a measure of the candidate's likeability. The second factor loads high positive on "is a strong person," "confident," "member of a country club," "values wealth," and "won the debate," while loading negatively on "is a regular guy," "was a member of the Peace Corps," "favors free school lunches for needy children." This factor is difficult to interpret, as are the remaining factors, which retain some pattern consistency across candidates and groups, but are difficult to interpret and in some cases load highly on only one of the 16 items.

Difference Score Analysis

Another set of analyses was conducted, in which a difference score was calculated for each item by subtracting the Bob Jordan/Amateur response from the Jim Martin/Professional response. The rationale for this approach is that the two separate variables within each item represent a comparative judgment of the candidates.

A factor analysis of the resulting 16 items showed a similar unrotated factor structure for Baruch and Hunter college samples. In the Hunter college sample, the factor

analysis initially yielded seven factors ($\chi 2$=829.17, DF=135, $p < .0001$) three of which had eigenvalues greater than one. The analysis of the Baruch college sample yielded eight factors ($\chi 2$=865.07, DF=135, $p < .0001$), of which four had eigenvalues greater than one. (See Tables 8 and 9.)

The loading patterns of the first two factors, as was the case in the first set of analyses, suggest what might be termed likeability, while the second factor, with high loadings on variables such as being a good manager, being a "strong" and confident person, and likely to have been a high-ranking military officer, suggests what might be termed leadership characteristics. Factors three through eight have some high loadings, but within each factor, no loadings cohere into anything interpretable. In many cases, factors load on only one item.

Table 8

Unrotated Factor Loadings for Difference Score Variables, Hunter College Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
-regguy	.718	-.348	-.097	.010	.020	.145	.183
-manager	.532	.498	-.264	.142	-.346	-.035	-.059
-honesty	.772	-.140	-.215	-.216	.112	.067	.206
-strong	.306	.742	-.200	.025	.245	-.160	.138
-confident	.298	.752	-.110	.238	.220	.051	.105
-peacecorp	.780	-.179	.194	.088	.069	.196	.142
-cclub	-.431	.465	-.238	-.238	-.267	-.297	.400
-gochurch	.540	-.226	-.384	-.432	.384	-.032	.022
-miloff	.013	.543	.434	-.064	.396	-.338	-.226
-familytime	.701	-.204	.152	.005	.249	-.107	-.122
-value$$	-.376	.380	.377	.015	.169	.519	.427
-schoolunch	.738	-.009	.323	-.124	-.334	-.083	.028
-taxcut	.065	-.480	-.084	.695	.145	-.335	.281
-womenmil	.610	.002	.462	-.179	-.188	-.322	.252
-wondebate	.602	.505	-.046	.146	-.143	.235	-.265
-votefor	.828	.140	-.041	.168	-.136	.056	-.081

Table 9

Unrotated Factor Loadings for Difference Score Variables, Baruch College Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7	Factor 8
-regguy	.612	-.138	.363	-.079	.334	-.265	-.109	-.079
-manager	.643	.366	-.039	-.056	-.177	-.200	-.359	.067
-honesty	.674	-.186	-.061	-.228	.073	-.370	-.016	-.271
-strong	.419	.711	.010	-.016	-.051	.244	.103	.080
-confident	.267	.752	-.133	-.131	-.039	.334	.064	.078
-peacecorp	.506	-.256	.122	.401	-.103	.424	-.148	-.129
-cdub	-.330	.333	.331	-.537	-.190	-.068	.365	.069
-godchurch	.501	-.421	-.229	-.268	-.008	.073	.394	-.163
-miloff	.152	.348	-.378	.380	.513	-.233	.311	.282
-familytime	.493	-.382	-.260	-.172	.258	.377	.181	-.204
-value$$	-.461	.528	.110	.018	.388	-.019	.046	-.260
-schoolunch	.499	-.465	-.027	-.029	-.189	-.074	.160	.541
-taxcut	.286	-.120	.646	-.180	.444	.255	-.110	.268
-womenmil	.247	.059	.547	.502	-.242	-.115	.461	-.182
-wondebate	.586	.611	-.029	-.075	-.103	-.060	-.049	-.121
-votefor	.748	.266	-.019	.072	-.072	-.076	-.004	.014

Next, since the two college samples had roughly similar loading patterns, they were combined into one and analyzed using a three-factor solution. Results, using an oblique rotation, show two roughly interpretable factors ($\chi 2$=1530.65, DF=135, $p < .0001$), which are similar to the factors obtained in earlier analyses but are easier to interpret (see Table 10.)

The first factor has high positive (>=.3) loadings on the variables related to honesty, Peace Corps membership, church attendance, spending time with family, and supporting free lunches to needy schoolchildren. It also has negative loadings for confidence, membership in a country club, valuing wealth, and supporting tax cuts for small businesses.

This is a slightly cleaner and more interpretable loading pattern than the pattern from the first sets of analyses, because this factor excludes "regular guy," "manager," "strong," "won the debate," and "vote for". These latter attributes load well on the second factor. Factor one may be termed "Likeability," since it reflects favorable ratings on disparate variables that could be considered virtuous or socially desirable for politicians.

Table 10

Three Factor Oblique Solution For Difference Score Variables, Combined Sample

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
-regguy	.270	.099	.523
-manager	.043	.698	.076
-honesty	.631	.160	.052
-strong	-.264	.881	-.040
-confident	-.346	.881	-.076
-peacecorp	.491	.086	.218
-cclub	-.734	.211	.198
-gochurch	.868	-.123	-.273
-miloff	.130	.431	-.526
-familytime	.801	-.048	-.145
-value$$	-.727	.262	.048
-schoolunch	.677	-3.452E-4	-.002
-taxcut	-.421	-.116	.993
-womenmil	-5.970E-5	.226	.412
-wondebate	.001	.825	-.010
-votefor	.298	.579	.138

The second factor loads high positive on how good a manager the candidate is, how strong a person he is, how confident he is, how likely he was a military officer, and, as might be expected from these variables, the subjects'

assessment of whether the candidate won the debate, and the subjects' willingness to vote for the candidate. This factor will be termed "Leadership."

The third factor has high positive loadings on the extent to which the candidate is a "regular guy," favors a taxcut, and supports women in the military performing combat duties. It has a negative loading on the likelihood that the candidate was a high-ranking military officer. However, only the loading on "regular guy" is unique to this factor.

To summarize the interpretation of the first two factors, although the factors are not orthogonal, and no clean loading pattern exists for each, factor one seems to indicate a general positive evaluation on some personal characteristics and issue stands (with high negative loadings on some "liability" characteristics, such as "values wealth" and "is a member of a country club"). Factor two connotes leadership. While these factors are not necessarily "clean," they nonetheless provide some rationale for selecting the items to be used in hypothesis tests.

Item Selection

In addition to using the factor analyses to create a manageable subset of items, some items were selected rationally for their apparent relevance to the measurement of impressions of candidates.

In national polls, voters have indicated consistently that they consider honesty the single most important characteristic that weighs on their choice of candidate. As a result, the item "How honest do you believe the candidate is?" (honesty) will be tested separately.

Another possibly important variable related to voter choice is the degree to which the voter can identify with the candidate. Since the Schematic spins contain material that describes the candidates as different on this dimension, and since this item loads uniquely on factor three, apart from the Likeability and Leadership items, the variable "How much is each candidate a 'regular guy'" will be tested separately.

The items related to confidence, the Peace Corp, country club membership, church attendance, spending time with family, valuing wealth, providing free lunches to needy schoolchildren, and cutting taxes on small business all load high on factor one (and load oppositely on factor two). They constitute what might be termed character virtues. As a result, these items will be combined and tested using an aggregate scale called "Likeability," which would also be assumed to weigh in heavily on voter choice.

The items related to management skill, personal strength, confidence, and likelihood of being a high-ranking military officer all load high on factor two. These items

will be combined and tested using an aggregate scale called "Leadership."

The items related to subjects' ratings of which candidate won the debate and which candidate they would vote for are ones that speak directly to the practical effects of spin and therefore will be tested separately. Table 11 indicates by category the final pool of items to be used to test the experimental hypotheses.

Table 11

Items Selected for Final Hypotheses Tests by Category

Item Type	Item
Individual	How honest do you think each candidate is?
	How much is each candidate a "regular guy"?
	To what extent would you say each candidate won the debate?
	To what extent would you be willing to vote for each candidate?
Likeability Scale	Served in the Peace Corps
	Member of a country club (negative)
	Attends weekly religious services
	Values spending time with his family
	Values Wealth (negative)
	Supports free lunches for needy schoolchildren
	favors tax cut for small businesses
Leadership Scale	How good a manager is each candidate?
	How "strong" a person is each candidate?
	How confident a person is each candidate?
	How likely was it that the candidate was a high-ranking military officer

To discuss the dependent measure's internal consistency, it must first be noted that it was not constructed to be

unidimensional in a strict psychometric sense. It was intended to measure broadly impressions of the candidates, in terms of inferences about their traits ("regular guy, "honesty," "leadership) and performance ("won the debate"), as well as a behavioral intention (willingness to vote for each candidate). Moreover, because the proposed were intended to obtain general impression results as well as results for each candidate separately, the items used in different analyses had different structures. Nonetheless, reliability analyses of the four two-part items conducted separately for each candidate showed Cronbach's alphas of approximately .7.

RESULTS

Preparatory Analyses

Tests For Order Effects

To control for order effects related to when each type of spin appeared in each tape, eight two-part spin vignette tapes were created to account for all possible combinations of spin doctors and spin types. Comparisons for all parings were made using the Likeability scale. This scale was selected because it was comprised of the largest number of variables and would thus be expected to be more stable than either the Leadership scale or the other individual items. As Table 12 below indicates, results show no significant mean Likeability differences between the order control pairs.

Table 12

t-tests for Order Control of Spin Conditions

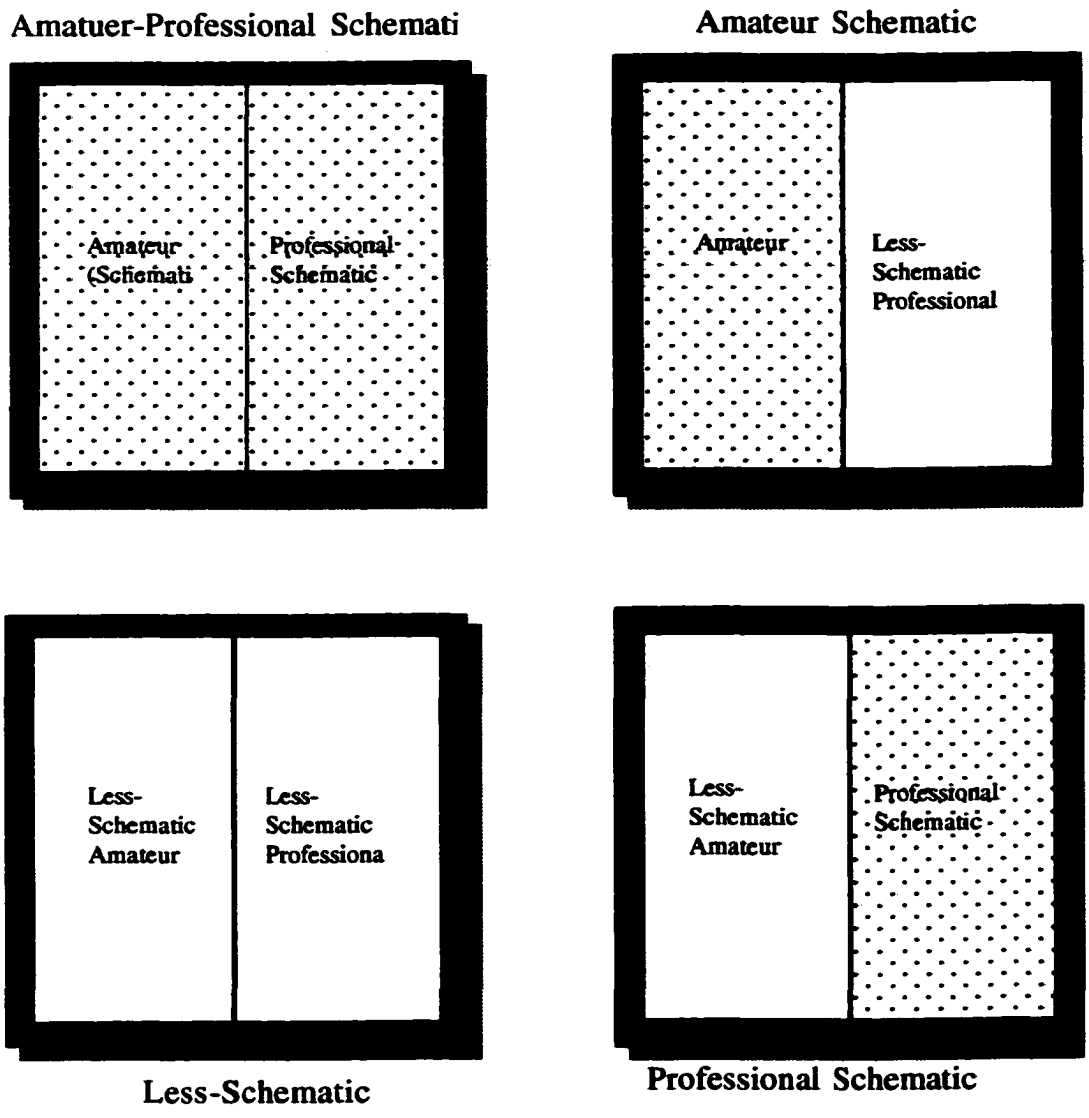
Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	df	t	p
as/ps	38	-5.76	7.68	-1.62	91	-3.91	.34
ps/as	55	-4.14	8.32				
lsp/lsa	24	-2.08	4.10	-.930	72	-.399	.69
lsa/lsp	50	1.61	5.07				
as/lsp	27	-4.78	5.92	-.178	60	-.104	.92
lsp/as	35	-4.6	1.82				
lsa/ps	11	-2.00	9.77	-1.44	18	-.367	.72
lsa/lsp	50	1.61	5.07				

Note. as= Amateur Schematic, ps= Professional Schematic, lsa= Less-Schematic Amateur , lsp=Less-Schematic Professional

Since there were no order effects found, the eight conditions were collapsed into four. As mentioned previously, The Amateur-Professional Schematic condition paired schematic spins for each candidate, and was also comparative. The Less-Schematic condition paired spins for each candidate that offered only general praise. The Amateur Schematic condition paired the Amateur schematic spin for the Amateur (Democrat) candidate and the Less-Schematic spin for the Professional (Republican). The Professional Schematic condition paired the schematic spin for the Professional (Republican) candidate and the Less-Schematic spin for the Amateur (Democrat) candidate. A pictorial representation of the four conditions is shown below in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Pictorial Representation of Spin Conditions



Hypothesis Tests

The experimental hypotheses will be tested using a four Spin by two Processing Mode (Heuristic/Systematic) factorial with single control condition design (Keppel, 1982). According to conceptions of heuristic processing and schemata, effects on subjects' impressions will be highest in the Amateur-Professional Schematic (two-sided) and Amateur Schematic and Professional Schematic (one-sided) Spin conditions, in which subjects receive a post-debate message that contains candidate-related schemata. Further, this effect will be intensified in the Heuristic Processing Mode condition, in which subjects are deprived of time to process systematically and will therefore make use of the convenient schematic information that facilitates their processing task.

Hypothesis One

Impressions of Leadership

Since the Amateur-Professional Schematic (two-sided) treatment is comprised mainly of candidate-schema information that referred to Jim Martin's leadership ability and Bob Jordan's conventionality, and since Martin is the incumbent, the following results were predicted, where a mean score greater than zero indicates a preference for Martin:

A. There will be a main effect for Spin Condition, with the following group differences: 1. The Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean Leadership

score than will the Amateur-Professional Schematic (two-sided), Less-Schematic, and Amateur Schematic treatments. 2. The Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean Leadership score than will the Amateur Schematic and Less-Schematic treatments. 3. As an aggregate, the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Professional Schematic treatments will result in higher mean Leadership scores than will the aggregate Amateur Schematic and Less-Schematic treatments and the Control condition.

B. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with a higher mean Leadership score in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

An analysis of variance (see Table 13) showed a significant main effect for Spin Condition, no significant main effect for Processing Mode, and no significant Spin x Processing Mode interaction. Table 14 shows mean Leadership scores by Spin condition, and Figure 3 shows the same.

An analysis of variance (see Table 13) showed a significant main effect for Spin Condition, no significant main effect for Processing Mode, and no significant Spin x Processing Mode interaction. Table 14 shows mean Leadership score by Spin condition, and Figure 3 shows same.

Table 13

Summary of ANOVA Effects for Leadership Scores by Condition

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Spin Condition	3	69.17	292	25.57	2.71	.05
Processing Mode	1	20.28			.79	.37
Spin x Proc. Mode	3	3.49			.14	.94

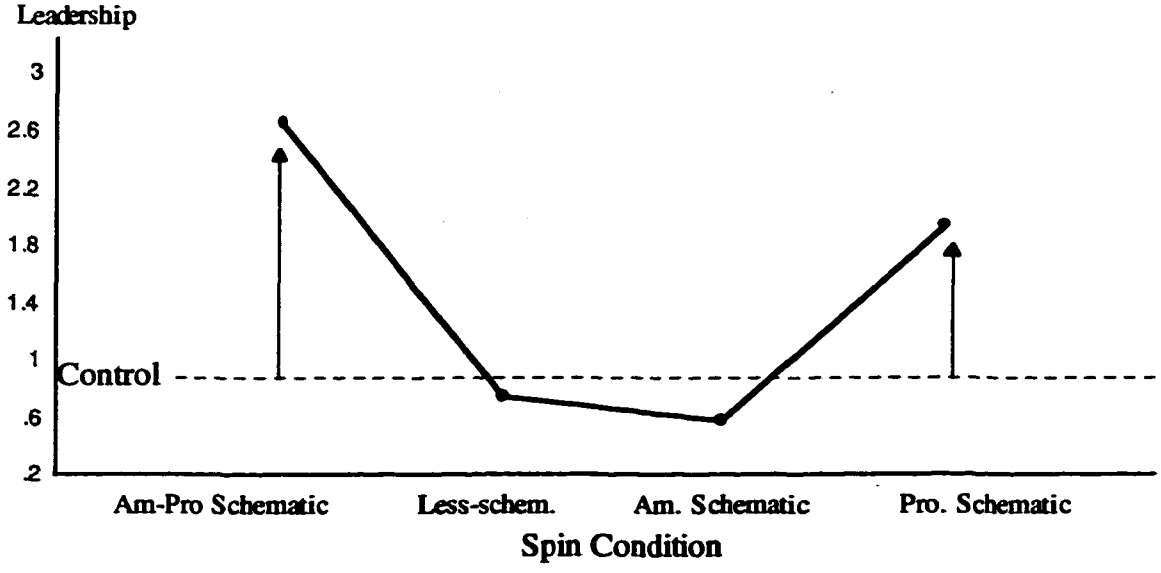
Table 14

Mean Leadership Score as a Function of Spin Condition

Spin Condition	Leadership
Am-Pro. Schematic	2.62
Less-Schematic	.71
Am. Schematic	.54
Pro. Schematic	1.91
Control	.83

Figure 3

Mean Leadership as a Function of Spin Condition



Note: Values greater than zero indicate a preference for candidate Martin.

A summary of post-hoc contrasts appears in Table 15 below. Using a Scheffé critical value, none of the contrasts were significant, although the Amateur-Professional Schematic vs. Amateur Schematic and the Amateur-Professional Schematic

vs. Less-Schematic contrasts suggested a trend at the .10 level.

The Amateur-Professional Schematic (two-sided) and Professional Schematic treatments resulted in high values that indicated a preference for the Republican candidate, Martin. The Less-Schematic and Amateur Schematic treatments had roughly equivalent means (and similar to the Control mean) that indicated only a slight preference for the Republican candidate. The Professional Schematic spin featured a leadership schema for Jim Martin and this, along with Martin's incumbency, may thus explain his high (M=1.91) Leadership rating in this condition.

Table 15

Post-Hoc Comparisons for Mean Leadership by Spin Condition

Comparison	SS	df	MS	F
Pro. Schematic vs. Am.-Pro. Schematic	8.92	1	25.56	.35
Pro. Schematic vs. Am. Schematic	30.65	1		1.20
Pro. Schematic vs. Less-Schematic	23.53	1		.92
Am.-Pro. Schematic vs. Am. Schematic	157.38	1		6.16
Am.-Pro. Schematic vs. Less-Schematic	131.48	1		5.14
Dem.-Pro. Schematic vs. Control	97.03	1		3.79
Pro. Schematic vs. Control	17.46	1		.68
Error	7466.17	292		

However, the Professional Schematic condition featured no opposing schema for Bob Jordan. The highest Leadership rating (2.62) was found in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition, which featured a leadership schema for Jim Martin

and a "regular guy" schema for Bob Jordan. This additional Bob Jordan information may have provided a means by which the subjects could compare and contrast these two possibly related traits. As such, this additional, contrasting information may have served to make Jim Martin's leadership more salient for subjects in this condition.

In comparison to the Control group, the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment elevated Martin's Leadership rating over 300%, and the Professional Schematic treatment elevated it over 200%, in comparison with the Control group. Similarly, the Amateur Schematic treatment elevated Jordan's Leadership rating by over 50% in comparison to the Control condition. This seems to indicate that when one candidate is inherently preferable on the trait in question, the spin that raises awareness of that trait can intensify the preference for the candidate. Further, the opposing view, as it occurred in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition, only served to intensify this preference. And when the candidate is rated inherently lower on the trait in question, as shown by Control condition values, Less-Schematic spin and the schematic spin with a different set of traits related to the less-preferred candidate can reverse this perception, in comparison to Control values. The suggestion is that if a candidate has a trait on which he/she would be viewed favorably, failure to provide spin that directly or

indirectly raises awareness of the trait can not only reduce the opportunity to enhance a favorable perception of the trait but can allow the opponent to use a trait-irrelevant spin to their advantage.

Hypothesis Two

Impressions of Likeability

Since the schematic treatments attempt to portray candidate Bob Jordan as someone with whom most people can identify and Jim Martin as a professional politician, the following results are predicted, where a mean score less than zero indicates a preference for Candidate Jordan:

A. A main effect for Spin condition, with the following group differences: 1. The Amateur Schematic treatment will result in lower mean Likeability than will result from the Amateur-Professional Schematic, Less-Schematic, and Professional Schematic treatments. 2. The Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment will result in lower Likeability values than will result from the Amateur Schematic and Less-Schematic treatments. 3. An aggregate of the Amateur-Professional and Amateur Schematic treatments will result in lower Leadership ratings than will result from an aggregate of the Professional Schematic, and Less-Schematic treatments and the Control condition.

B. A main effect for Processing Mode, with mean Likeability lower in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

An analysis of variance (see Table 16) showed a significant main effect for Spin condition. There was no significant main effect for Processing Mode, and no

significant Spin x Processing Mode interaction. Table 17 shows mean Likeability by Spin condition, and Figure 4 displays a graph of the same.

Table 16

Summary of ANOVA Effects for Likeability by Spin Condition

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Spin	3	190.12	287	47.72	3.98	.00*
Processing Mode	1	5.64	287		.11	.73
Spin X Proc. Mode	3	18.09	287		.38	.77

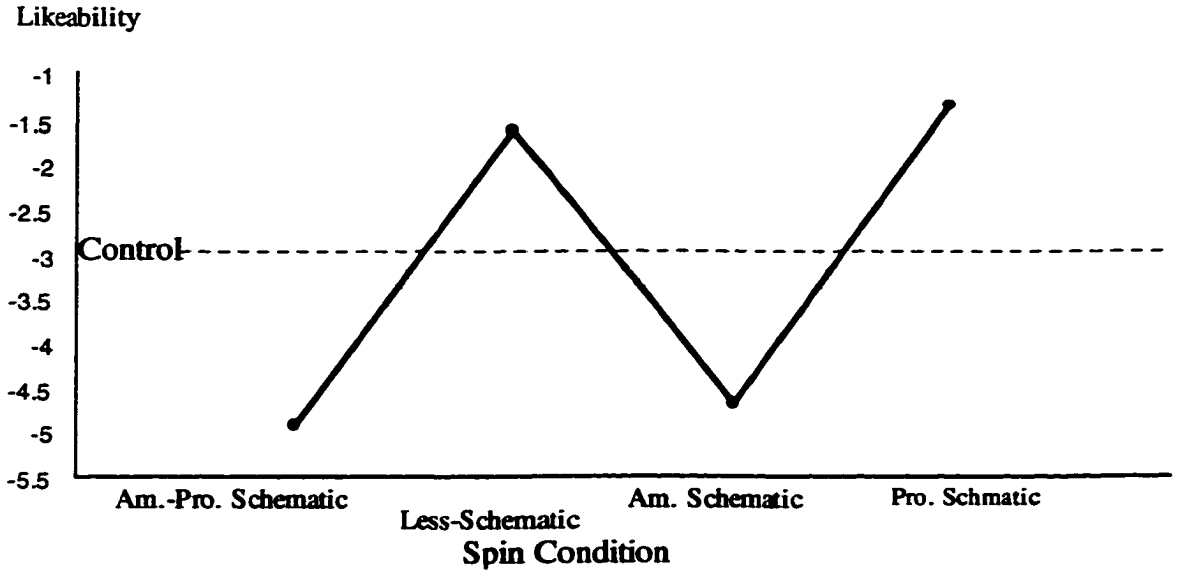
Table 17

Mean Likeability as a Function of Spin Condition

Spin Condition	Likeability
Am.-Pro. Schematic	-4.92
Less-Schematic	-1.65
Am. Schematic	-4.70
Pro. Schematic	-1.35
Control	-3.04

Figure 4

Mean Likeability as a Function of Spin Condition



Note: Negative values indicate a preference for the Democratic candidate, Jordan.

As the Table 18 below indicates, there is a significant difference between the Amateur-Professional Schematic and the Less-Schematic treatments. Bob Jordan's Likeability rating is highest in the Amateur-Professional condition. There is also a significant difference between the aggregate conditions. In addition to these results, it is interesting to consider the overall pattern of the data, as shown in Figure 4.

Table 18

Post-Hoc Comparisons for Mean Leadership by Spin Condition

Comparison	SS	df	MS	F	p
Am. Schematic vs. Am.-Pro. Schematic	1.75	1		.04	>.05
Am. Schematic vs. Pro. Schematic	169.65	1		3.55	>.05
Am. Schematic vs. Less-Schematic	295.21	1		6.19	>.05
Am.-Pro. Schematic vs. Pro. Schematic	206.16	1		4.32	>.05
Am.-Pro. Schematic vs. Less-Schematic	392.82	1		8.23	<.05*
(Am. Schematic + Am.-Pro. Schematic) vs. (Pro. Schematic + Less-Schematic + Control)	2388.17	1		50.04	<.05*
Pro. Schematic vs. Less-Schematic	1.34	1		.03	>.05
Am.-Pro. Schematic vs. Control	106.51	1		2.23	>.05
Pro. Schematic vs. Control	40.19	1		.84	>.05
Am. Schematic vs. Control	73.41	1		1.54	>.05
Less-Schematic vs. Control	53.13	1		1.11	>.05
Error	13696.9	287	47.72		

The Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic treatments resulted in similar high negative values (below Control value) that indicated a strong preference for Bob Jordan (Democrat). The Less-Schematic and Professional Schematic treatments resulted in similar low negative values (above the Control value) that indicated a much weaker preference for Jordan, i.e., a more favorable result for Martin, in comparison to the Control value. These results are similar to those found in the analysis of Leadership, although in this case, Jordan is the preferred candidate. Relative to the Control group, the Professional Schematic

treatment amplified Martin's Likeability "deficit" approximately 50%, while the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic treatments enhanced Jordan's Likeability rating by approximately 60%.

The interpretation of this pattern of results is the same as for the pattern of the results for Leadership. Considering the way that the treatment means varied about the Control mean, these results indicated that when one candidate is inherently preferable on the trait in question, the partisan Schematic spin related to him can substantially improve his rating on the trait. This was the case of the Amateur Schematic treatment. Further, when Jim Martin's spin was provided along with the Amateur Schematic spin, which occurred in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition, Bob Jordan's Likeability rating was even more intensified. As was the case with the pattern of results for the Leadership variable, the Less-Schematic spin, almost as much as partisan spin, helped the candidate less preferred on the dimension in question.

Hypothesis Three

Impressions of "Regular Guy"

This measure of impression was a within-subjects repeated measure of the separate ratings for each candidate on the item: "How much is each candidate a 'regular guy'?" Since the schematic scripts attempt to portray candidate Bob

Jordan as someone with whom most people can identify and portray Jim Martin as a professional politician, the following results were predicted:

A. A main effect for Candidate, with mean "Regular Guy" for Bob Jordan, the challenger, higher than mean "Regular Guy" for Jim Martin, the incumbent.

B. A main effect for Spin condition, with the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic Spin treatments resulting in higher mean ratings on "Regular Guy" for both candidates than will result from the Less-Schematic treatment and the Control condition.

C. A main effect for Processing Mode, with mean "Regular Guy" higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. A Spin x Candidate interaction, wherein the Amateur Schematic treatment will result in higher mean "Regular Guy" for Jordan and lower mean "Regular Guy" for Martin, and the Professional Schematic treatment will result in higher mean "Regular Guy" for Martin and lower mean "Regular Guy" for Jordan.

A repeated-measures analysis of variance(see Table 19), with the within factor "Regular Guy" rating for each candidate, showed a significant main effect for Candidate, with Jordan rated as more of a "Regular Guy" (3.45) than Martin, (2.86). There was also significant Spin x Candidate

and Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate interactions. The main effect for Processing Mode was not significant. Group means are shown in table 20, and Figures 5 and 6 display the significant interactions.

Table 19

Summary of ANOVA Effects for "Regular Guy" by Condition

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Spin	3	2.26	294	1.88	1.22	.30
Processing Mode	1	.03			.02	.90
Candidate	1	37.36			22.76	.00*
Spin x Processing Mode	3	.69			.37	.78
Spin x Candidate	3	12.74			7.76	.00*
Proc. Mode x Candidate	1	4.34			2.65	.10
Spin x Proc. Mode x Candidate	3	5.98			3.64	.01*

Table 20

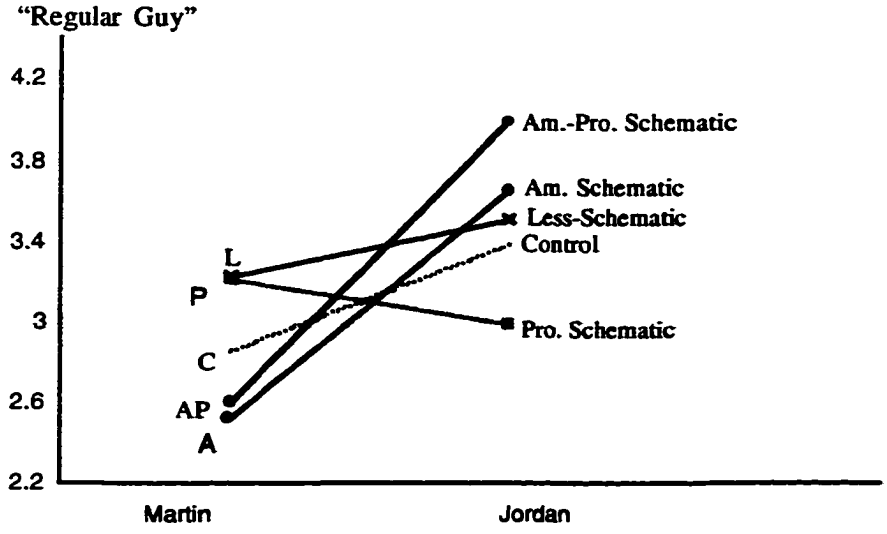
Mean "Regular Guy" as a Function of Spin Condition and Candidate

	How much is a "Regular Guy"	
Spin Condition	Martin (R)	Jordan (D)
Am.-Pro. Schematic	2.57	3.95
Less-Schematic	3.13	3.47
Am. Schematic	2.48	3.61
Pro. Schematic	3.18	2.95
Control	2.82	3.38
All Groups	2.79	3.59

Figure 5 below shows the Spin x Candidate interaction.

Figure 5

"Regular Guy" as a Function of Spin Condition and Candidate



Note: L=Less-Schematic, P=Professional Schematic, C=Control, AP=Amateur-Professional Schematic, and A=Amateur Schematic.

There were significant post-hoc differences between Martin's and Jordan's mean "regular guy" ratings in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition ($p<.00$); between Martin's rating in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition and Jordan's rating in the Less-Schematic condition ($p<.01$); between Martin's rating in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition and Jordan's rating in the Amateur Schematic condition ($p<.00$); between Martin's "regular guy" rating in the Amateur Schematic condition and Jordan's ratings in the Amateur-Professional Schematic ($p<.00$), Less-Schematic, ($p<.00$), and Amateur Schematic ($p<.00$) conditions;

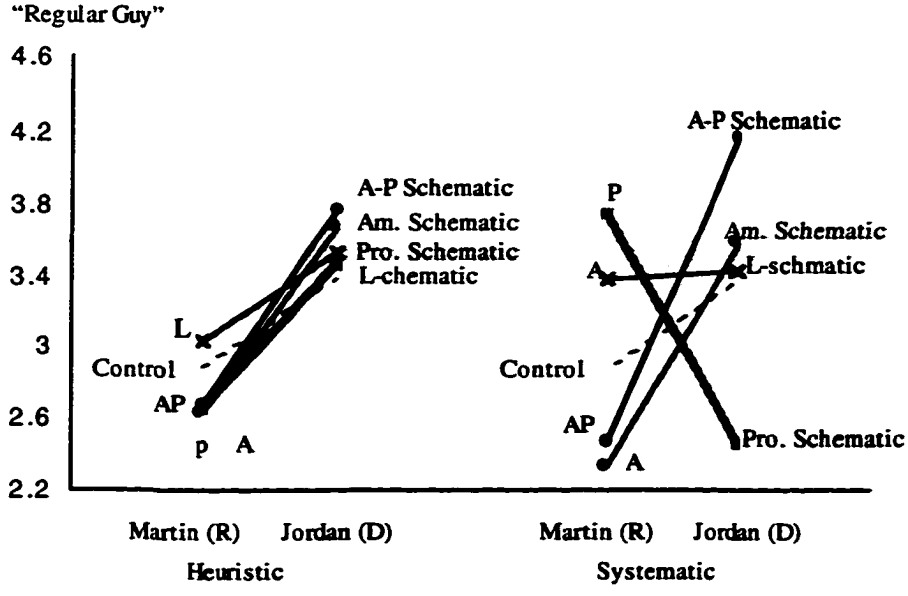
and between the Martin's rating in Control condition and Jordan's rating in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition ($p<.01$).

Examining the overall pattern of the data, the Less-Schematic treatment elevates ratings of each candidate relative to the Control condition, and the Amateur-Professional and Amateur Schematic treatments intensify and polarize Jordan-Martin difference. The Professional Schematic treatment is the only condition in which Martin is rated higher than Jordan, as well as the condition that reflects Jordan's lowest "regular guy" rating. This finding departs from the overall trend of the data. That the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment polarizes the Jordan-Martin difference more than the Amateur Schematic treatment can be explained by noting the following: In this two-sided treatment, the Amateur side presents regular guy schema information for Jordan and a professional politician schema for Martin. The Professional side provides a leadership schema that not only presents leadership information for Martin, but also emphasizes the Jordan's inexperience in this same area. Since both scripts in some way highlight separately for each candidate qualities related to leadership, conventionality, and experience, having the additional discriminating information provided by the Professional side in this condition may offer a different

metric through which the subject can evaluate leadership and thus intensify the contrast between the two candidates.

Figure 6

"Regular Guy" as a Function of Spin Condition, Processing Mode, and Candidate



Note: A=Amateur, P=Professional, L=Less-Schematic, AP=Amateur-Professional.

Figure 6 shows the Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate interaction. There were significant post-hoc differences, as indicated in Table 21 below:

Table 21

Summary of Significant Post Hoc Comparisons by Condition

Comparison			p
A-P Schematic/Heuristic/Martin	vs.	A-P Schematic/Systematic/Jordan	<.03
A-P Schematic/Systematic/Martin	vs.	A-P Schematic/Systematic/Jordan	<.03
Am. Schematic/Heuristic/Martin	vs.	A-P Schematic/Systematic/Jordan	<.02

Examining the overall pattern of the data, treatment effects were more consistent across Spin conditions in the Heuristic condition than they were in the Systematic condition. Looking across Processing Mode conditions, The Less-Schematic treatment seems to have elevated each candidate above the Control ratings in approximately the same way. In the Heuristic condition, Jordan's rating was elevated by all spin treatments, in the order of Amateur-Professional Schematic, Amateur Schematic, Professional Schematic, and Less-Schematic.

The pattern of results in the Systematic condition was more interesting. The Jordan-Martin difference was polarized in the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic conditions, relative to the Control condition, with Jordan rated more highly on "Regular Guy." However, this polarity was reversed in the Professional Schematic treatment with Jordan rated less of a regular guy than Martin. In fact, Jordan's "regular guy" in this condition was his lowest score across all conditions, and Martin's is the highest across all conditions. This result, along with the higher variability of Spin x Candidate effects in the Systematic condition, was counter-hypothetical and contradicted the formulation initially proposed.

Hypothesis Four

Impressions of Honesty

As was the case with the analysis of "Regular Guy" variable, this measure of impression was analyzed as a within-subjects repeated measure of the separate ratings for each candidate. Since the schematic scripts attempted to portray candidate Bob Jordan as someone with whom most people can identify and Jim Martin as a professional politician, if people are inclined to see politicians as less honest, it might be expected that subjects would infer Bob Jordan to be more honest than Jim Martin, with the following results:

A. There will be a main effect for Candidate, with mean Honesty for Bob Jordan higher than mean Honesty for Jim Martin.

B. There will be a main effect for Spin treatment, with the Amateur-Professional treatment resulting in higher mean Honesty for both candidates than will result from an Less-Schematic treatment and will be found in the Control condition.

C. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with mean Honesty higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. There will be a Spin x Candidate interaction. Because of its emphasis of the Jordan traits that relate to honesty, the Amateur Schematic treatment will result in higher mean Honesty for Jordan and lower mean Honesty for Martin. Similarly, because it lacks the trait-relevant information

that would benefit Jordan, the Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean Honesty score for Martin and a lower mean Honesty score for Jordan.

A repeated-measures analysis of variance (see Table 22) with the within factor being the Honesty rating for each candidate, showed a significant main effect for Candidate, with Jordan (3.09) rated as more honest than Martin (2.55), The Spin x Candidate interaction was also significant. The main effect for Spin was not significant, while the main effect for Processing Mode approached significance. Group means are shown in Tables 23 and 24, and Figure 7 displays the Spin x Candidate interaction.

Table 22

Summary of ANOVA Effects for Honesty by Condition

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p-level
Spin	3	1.14	297	2.35	.48	.69
Processing Mode	1	7.42		2.35	3.15	.07
Candidate	1	26.28		1.36	19.34	.00*
Spin x Processing Mode	3	1.12		2.35	.48	.70
Spin x Candidate	3	4.57		1.36	3.37	.02*
Processing Mode x Candidate	1	2.92		1.36	2.15	.14
Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate	3	1.45		1.36	1.07	.36

Table 23

Mean "Honesty" by Processing Mode and Candidate

	How honest is each candidate?	
Processing Mode	Martin	Jordan
Heuristic	2.61	3.32
Systematic	2.50	2.86
Control	2.39	2.67

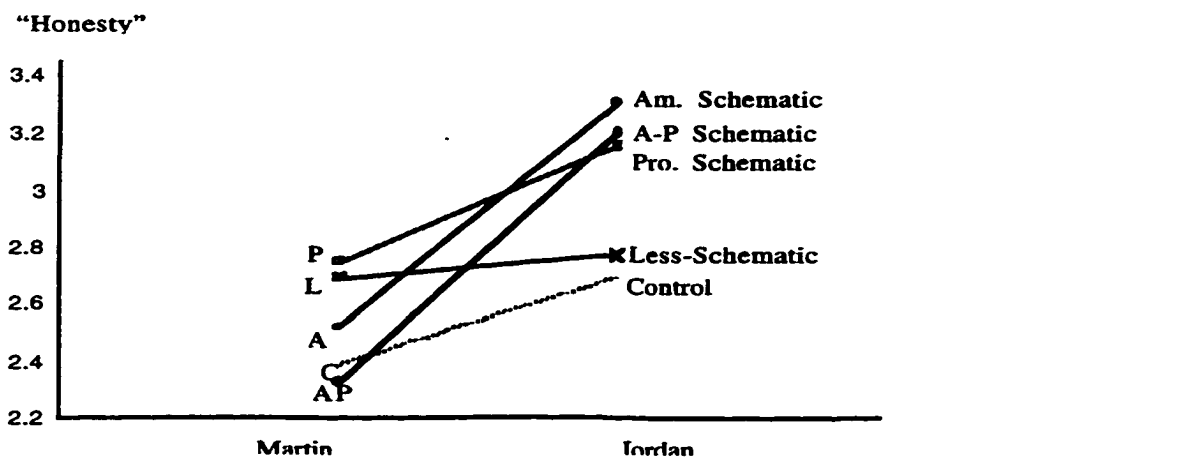
Table 24

Mean "Honesty" by Spin Condition and Candidate

Spin Condition	How honest	
	Martin	Jordan
Am.-Pro. Schematic	2.31	3.18
Less-Schematic	2.68	2.76
Am. Schematic	2.50	3.29
Pro. Schematic	2.73	3.14
Control	2.39	2.67
All Groups	2.53	3.06

Figure 7

Mean "Honesty" as a Function of Spin Condition and Candidate



Note: P=Professional Schematic, L=Less-Schematic, A=Amateur Schematic, C=Control, AP=Amateur-Professional Schematic.

There were significant post-hoc Scheffé differences between the Honesty ratings for Martin and Jordan in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition($p < .00$) and the Amateur Schematic condition ($p < .00$). There were also significant differences between the rating of Martin in the

Amateur-Professional Schematic condition and the rating of Jordan in the Amateur Schematic condition ($p<.01$); between the rating of Martin in the Less-Schematic condition and the rating of Jordan in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition ($p<.05$); between the rating of Martin in the Amateur Schematic condition and the rating of Jordan in Amateur-Professional Schematic condition ($p<.00$). The difference between the ratings of Martin in the Control condition and the ratings of Jordan in the Amateur Schematic condition ($p<.06$).

Examining the overall pattern of the data, Figure 7 shows that the Amateur Schematic treatment resulted in Jordan's highest Honesty rating, while the Professional Schematic treatment resulted in Martin's highest Honesty rating. The Amateur-Professional Schematic spin elevated Jordan's Honesty rating, but depressed Martin's rating lower than the Control group. This is an interesting result, because this treatment contained two partisan spins, each of which accuses the opposition of dishonest behavior. That the equal amounts of accusation for each candidate affected each candidate's Honesty rating differently suggests that subjects were using other information to form their impressions. As was the case with the results for the Leadership, Likeability, and "Regular Guy" variables, this result may be explained by schema theory: The competing Amateur and

Professional Schematic spins contained schemata that did not refer directly to honesty, but might be the means through which an inference about honesty can be made. For example, the Schematic spin that referred to Martin emphasized leadership ability, experience, and toughness ("a seasoned, solid professional"; "strong"), and criticized Jordan as being ("a well-meaning guy, a nice guy, but..."; "an amateur). The Jordan script emphasized in a positive way Jordan's conventionality ("a regular guy"; "a guy who worked his way up"; "a man of the people"). Considering this information together, one might conclude that Martin was more of a politician and Jordan was more like a non-politician and then infer that the politician-type person is less honest. The two schemata operating together sharpened the contrast between the candidates.

It is also worth noting that all Spin treatments elevated honesty ratings for each candidate above the Control means, with the exception of the Amateur-Professional Schematic Spin discussed above.

Hypothesis Five

Impressions of Who Won the Debate

Like, the previous analyses, this measure of impression is a within-subjects repeated measure of separate ratings for each candidate. It is expected that since the schematic spins attempted to portray Jim Martin as the professional

politician and Bob Jordan as the "regular guy," subjects would infer, along with their observation of the debate, that the professional politician is probably a better debater and the following results would obtain:

A. There will be a main effect for Candidate, with the mean "Won The Debate" score for Jim Martin higher than the mean score for Bob Jordan.

B. There will be a main effect for Spin condition, with the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment resulting in a higher mean "Won the Debate" score for both candidates than in the Less-Schematic treatment and in the Control condition.

C. There will be a main effect for Processing Mode, with the mean "Won The Debate" score higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. There will be a Spin x Candidate interaction, wherein, because of its emphasis on the Martin traits that relate to politics, the Professional Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean "Won The Debate" score for Martin and a lower mean score for Jordan. Similarly, because it lacked the trait-relevant information that would benefit Martin, the Amateur Schematic treatment will result in a higher mean "Won The Debate" score for Jordan and a lower mean score for Martin.

A repeated-measures analysis of variance (see Table 25), with the within factor the "Won the Debate" rating for each

candidate, showed no significant main effects or interactions. Group means are shown in Table 26, and Figure 8 displays a plot of the means by treatment condition.

Table 25

Summary of ANOVA Effects for "Won the Debate" by Condition

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Spin	3	1.19	293	1.32	.90	.44
Processing Mode	1	.34		1.32	.26	.61
Candidate	1	6.30		2.41	2.61	.11
Spin x Processing Mode	3	1.63		1.32	1.23	.30
Spin x Candidate	3	2.15		2.41	.89	.45
Processing Mode x Candidate	1	4.32		2.41	1.79	.18
Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate	3	.51		2.41	.21	.89

Table 26

Mean "Won the Debate" as a Function of Condition and Candidate

Treatment Condition	Processing Mode	Martin	Jordan
Am.-Rep Schematic	Heuristic	3.63	3.54
	Systematic	4.00	3.13
Less-Schematic	Heuristic	3.67	3.67
	Systematic	3.84	3.56
Am. Schematic	Heuristic	3.79	4.06
	Systematic	3.73	3.60
Pro. Schematic	Heuristic	3.64	3.27
	Systematic	4.27	3.64
Control		3.86	3.56
All groups		3.78	3.58

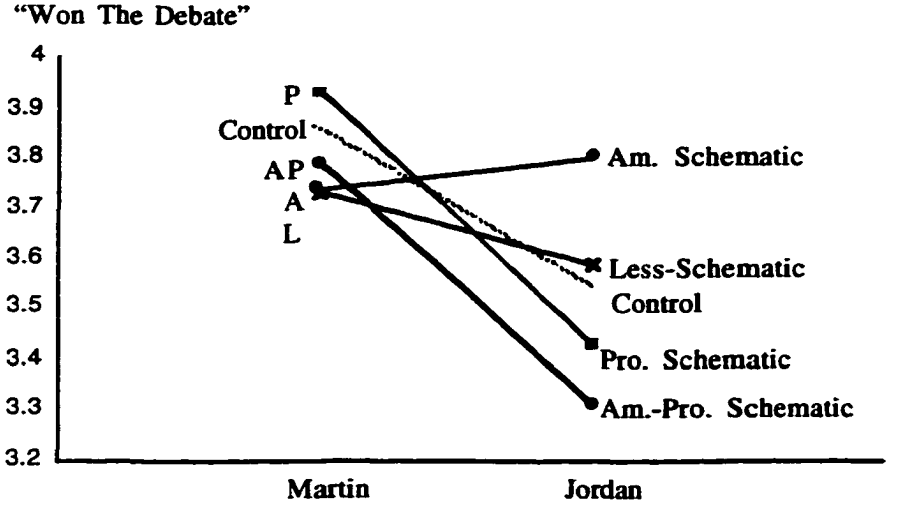
Table 27

Mean "Won The Debate" as a Function of Spin Condition and Candidate

Spin Condition	Won the Debate	
	Martin	Jordan
Am.-Pro. Schematic	3.82	3.34
Less-Schematic	3.75	3.61
Am. Schematic	3.76	3.83
Pro. Schematic	3.95	3.45
Control	3.86	3.56
All Groups	3.78	3.58

Figure 8

Mean "Won the Debate" as a Function of Spin Condition and Candidate



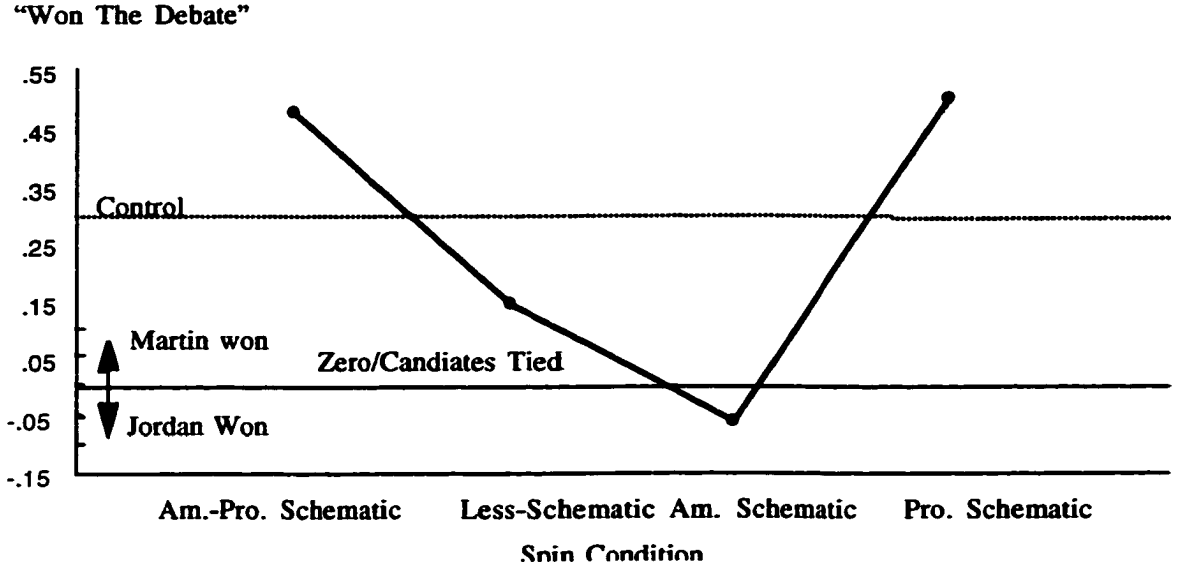
Although none of the results were significant with this variable, it is nonetheless interesting to note the pattern of results. The Professional and Amateur Schematic spins each resulted in the their respective candidate's highest "Won the

Debate" rating. In Martin's case, the Professional Schematic treatment was the only one that raised his rating above that of the Control condition.

To get a different perspective on the data, another analysis of variance was carried out using a difference score comprised of the Martin rating minus the Jordan rating. As in the first analysis, the results were not significant. However, the graph of the means of this difference score by Spin condition (see Figure 9) makes clearer the potential practical impact of the treatments.

Figure 9

Mean "Won the Debate" as a Function of Spin Condition



The Amateur-Professional and Professional Schematic treatments elevated Martin's "Won The Debate" rating over the Control condition rating by an approximate average of 60%,

while the Less-Schematic and Amateur Schematic treatments worked in Jordan's favor, elevating the evaluation of his performance by an approximate average of over 300% above the Control value. This suggests that when Martin was perceived as the winner in the Control condition, the treatments that contained favorable information about him, which was the case in Professional Schematic and Amateur-Professional Schematic treatments, intensified the perception of Martin as winner equally well, with the pro-Jordan portion of the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment having no diminishing effect.

It is perhaps more interesting to note that the Amateur Schematic treatment resulted in a rating of Jordan as the debate winner. It was not unexpected to find that the Amateur Schematic treatment would substantially help the Democrat, Jordan. However, considering that Martin was preferred over Jordan in the Control condition this result suggested that even when a candidate is perceived as inherently inferior on the variable in question, providing a superior spin may dramatically alter perceptions, even reversing them, as was the case here.

Hypothesis Six: Impressions of Whom To Vote For

The measure of "To What extent would you be willing to vote for each candidate" was a within-subjects repeated measure of the separate ratings for each candidate. Unlike

the previous variables, which focused on impressions of particular traits or the evaluation of performance, the subjects' ratings of their likelihood to vote for each candidate was the only variable that attempted to measure a behavioral intention, albeit in an imaginary situation. Moreover, unlike other variables, the decision to vote for a candidate is often a serious decision that has multiple determinants. Considering that only 11% of subjects in this college sample identified themselves as Republican, and that based on the nature of the schematic scripts, Democrat Bob Jordan was a candidate with whom subjects would be likely to identify, the following results are expected:

A. A main effect for Candidate, with mean "Vote For" Bob Jordan significantly higher than mean "Vote For" Jim Martin.

B. A main effect for Spin condition, with the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment resulting in higher mean "Vote For" for both candidates than will result from the Less-Schematic treatment, or will be found in the Control condition.

C. A main effect for Processing Mode, with mean "Vote For" significantly higher for both candidates in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition.

D. A Spin x Candidate interaction, wherein the Amateur Schematic treatment will yield significantly higher mean "Vote For" for Bob Jordan and lower mean "Vote For" for Jim

Martin, and conversely, the Professional Schematic treatment will yield higher mean "Vote For" for Jim Martin and lower mean "Vote For" for Bob Jordan.

A repeated-measures analysis of variance (see Table 28), with the within factor the "Vote For" rating for each candidate, showed a significant main effect for Candidate, with Jordan (M=3.43) preferred over Martin (M=2.83). No other main effects or interactions were significant. Group means for the Processing Mode x Candidate interaction, which was the only effect that in any way approached significance, are shown in Table 29, and Figure 10 displays a plot of same.

Table 28

Summary of ANOVA Effects for "Vote For" by Condition and Candidate

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Spin	3	1.15274	293	2.72	.42	.74
Processing Mode	1	1.73107		2.72	.64	.43
Candidate	1	33.36158		3.51	9.50	.00*
Spin x Processing Mode	3	4.31005		2.72	1.58	.19
Spin x Candidate	3	.15103		3.51	.04	.99
Processing Mode x Candidate	1	8.57790		3.51	2.44	.12
Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate	3	3.64975		3.51	1.04	.38

Table 29

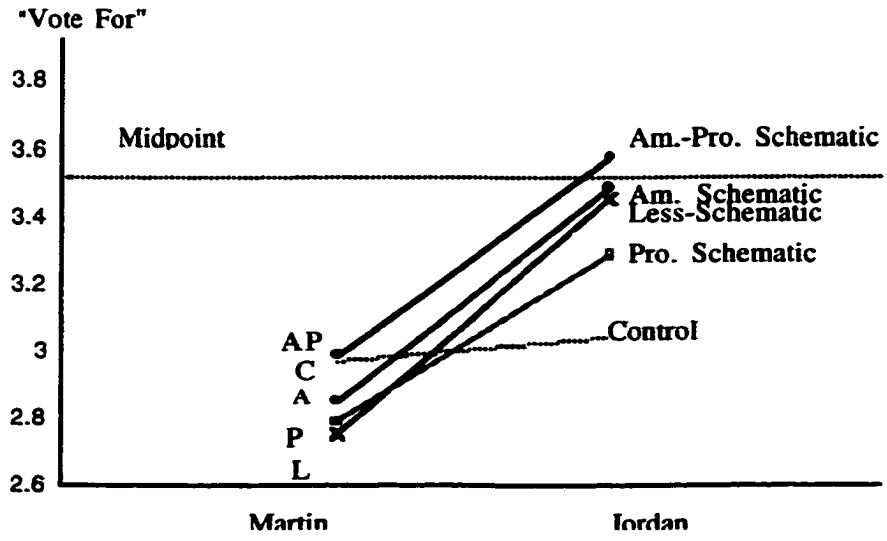
Mean "Vote For" as a Function of Processing Mode and Candidate

	To what extent would you be willing to vote for each candidate?	
Processing Mode	Martin	Jordan
Heuristic	2.74	3.65
Systematic	2.91	3.20
Control	2.95	3.14
All groups	2.88	3.45

Figure 10 below shows each candidate's mean "Vote For" rating by Spin condition. In the Control condition, subjects rated themselves as almost equally likely to vote for Martin as for Jordan. All treatments raised Jordan's "Vote For" value above the Control value, but as was the case with ratings of the "preferred" candidate in previous analyses, the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment, which contains two sides and thus more differentiating information, resulted in Jordan's highest rating. All treatments but the Amateur-Professional Schematic reduced Martin's "Vote For" rating below the Control value.

Figure 10

Mean "Vote For" as a Function of Spin Condition and Candidate



Note: AP=Amateur-Professional Schematic, C=Control, A=Amateur Schematic, P=Professional Schematic, L=Less-Schematic.

To better understand the practical consequence that this result would suggest had it been significant, consider the magnitude of the ratings in all the conditions. On this zero-to-six "Vote For" variable, all ratings of the candidates fell below a midpoint of 3.5, with the exception of Jordan's ratings in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition. In close elections, in which campaigns seek any edge in the war of public opinion, spin can play its appropriate part in moving opinions regarding the candidates debate. In the context of all the other inputs posed to the voter, spin about a debate may play a small but important role in nudging the voter above some threshold of apathy,

which is how Jordan's rating in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition can be viewed.

Figure 11

Mean "Vote For" as a Function of Processing Mode and Candidate

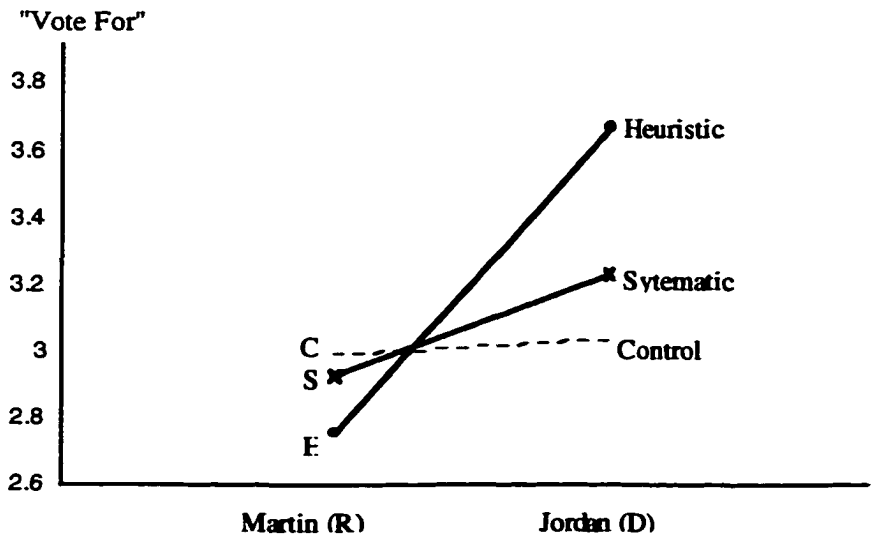


Figure 11 shows mean "Vote For" by candidate and processing mode. Note that in the Control group, subjects were almost equally likely to vote for each candidate. In the Heuristic condition,, the Jordan-Martin difference was polarized, while in the Systematic condition, the subjects rated themselves as only slightly more willing to vote for Jordan. As well, Martin's rating dropped much more below Control in the Heuristic condition than in the Systematic condition, while Jordan's rating improved substantially in the Heuristic condition, relative to Control. This result was the only one that provides support for the formulation that heuristic

processing conditions will increase the use of heuristic cues, such as schemata, which will in turn impact on impressions of the candidates. This result was counter-hypothetical, as was the finding for the Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate interaction for the "regular guy" variable, discussed earlier, where only subjects in the *Systematic* changed their opinions in a counter-hypothetical way.

Summary of Results for Hypothesis Tests

Table 30 shows a summary of the results of the experiment. There were significant effects as a function of spin condition for the Leadership and Likeability scales, significant Spin X Candidate interactions on the repeated measures variables, and a significant differences between the candidates on three of the variables.

Table 30

Summary of Experimental Results for Hypothesis Tests

Measure	Effect Factor	Sig.	Post Hoc Results
Leadership	Spin	.05	NS
Likeability	Spin	.01	AP > Less-Schematic A+A-P Schematic > P+Less-Schematic+ Control
"Regular Guy"	Candidate	.00	Jordan > Martin
	Spin x Candidate	.00	AP/Jordan > AP/Martin L/Jordan > A-P/Martin A/Jordan > A-P/Martin A-P/Jordan, L/Jordan, A/Jordan > P/Martin A/Jordan > Control/Martin
	Spin x Processing Mode x Candidate	.01	A-P/Sys./Jordan > A-P/Heu./Martin AP/Sys/Jordan > AP/Sys/Martin
Honesty	Candidate	.00	AP/Jordan > AP Martin
	Spin x Candidate	.02	AP/Jordan > AP Martin
Won Debate	ALL	NS	
Vote For	Candidate	.00	Jordan > Martin
Political Interest	Spin	.02	AP > Less-Schematic

Note: AP=Amateur-Professional Schematic, L=Less-Schematic, A=Amateur Schematic, P=Professional Schematic.

Additional Analyses

Ad Hoc Analysis

Following the initial analyses, it occurred that if political schemata were indeed present in the Spin treatments, subjects frequency judgments about their engaging in politically-related activities would be affected.

According to the Tversky and Kahneman (1973), judgments about how often things occur are affected by the availability of associated or related information. Using this reasoning, I expected that after being presented with candidate schemata, which are a special instance of political schemata, politics would become more cognitively available to subjects and this in turn would affect their judgments about their frequency of engaging in the activities that comprised the Political Interest Scale. Specifically, Political Interest Scale scores would be highest in the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic and Professional Schematic conditions and lower in the Less-Schematic and Control conditions. As mentioned in the Methods section, the pilot test confirmed that the schematic scripts were significantly different regarding the degree to which they "gave a good

picture of the candidate and the opponent" and "contained lots of stereotypes and slogans."

An analysis of variance was carried out on the Political Interest Scale. The main effect for Spin condition was significant, while the main effect for Processing Mode and the Spin x Processing Mode interaction were not significant. Table 31 shows the summary of effects for this analysis, and Table 32 and Figure 12 show mean Political Interest by Spin condition.

Table 31

Summary of ANOVA Effects for Political Interest Scale by Condition

Effect	df Effect	MS Effect	df Error	MS Error	F	p
Spin	3	191.48	298	61.90	3.09	.03*
Processing Mode	1	16.75			.27	.60
Spin x Processing Mode	3	5.06			.08	.97

Table 32

Mean Political Interest by Spin Condition

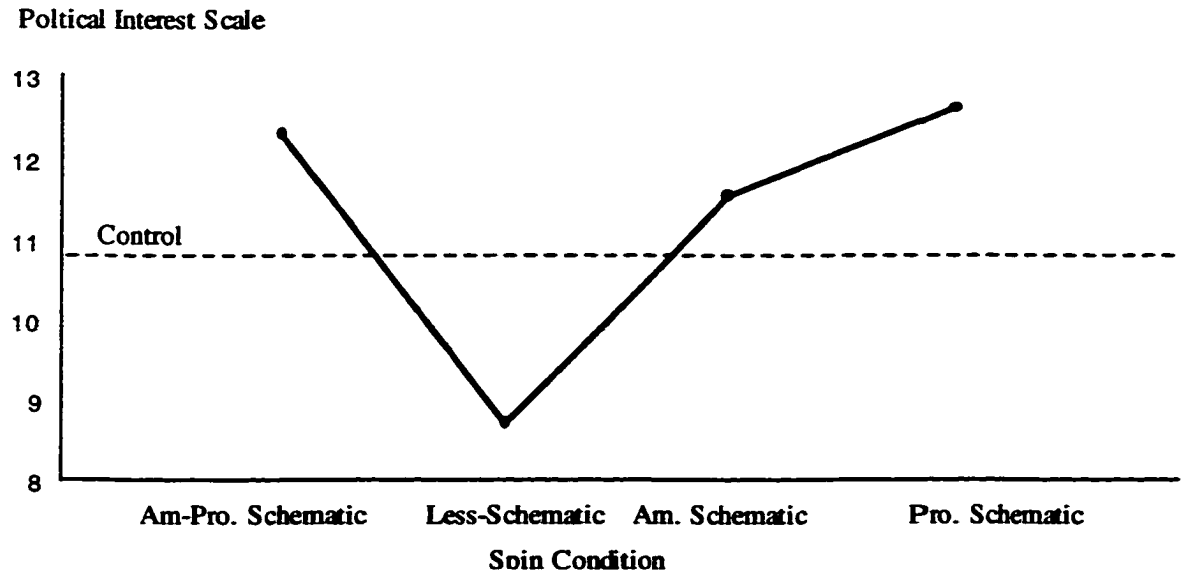
Spin Condition	Political Interest
Am.-Pro. Schematic	12.30
Less-Schematic	8.70
Am. Schematic	11.52
Pro. Schematic	12.59
Control	10.87

The other guys were just acting like politicians." And finally, in perhaps what might be the ultimate statement in support of the idea that spin's utility raises the likelihood of heuristic processing, one subject answered the question unashamedly, stating that he paid the most attention to the spin "So I would know what to think." When I pressed for elaboration, the subject said "So I would know what opinions to have about the debate." Of course, since instructions in the dependent measure called "Opinion Survey," along with the experimenter's verbal instructions, specified that there were no right or wrong answers and that opinions were sought, it is possible that the subject was simply uninvolved and was using the spin, as his comment indicated, to comply with experimental demand. Nonetheless, this comment was supportive of the heuristic processing notion. This subject's behavior may have been like some of the electorate, in which the cognitive-miser voter employs the easiest-to-process information at hand to make a voting decision.

With the exception of one anomalous result, which was a Spin x Candidate x Processing Mode interaction on the "regular guy" variable, there were no significant results that supported the heuristic processing hypothesis. There was however, a non-significant post-hoc trend that was counter-hypothetical and departed noticeably from the overall pattern

Figure 12

Mean Political Interest by Spin Condition



Post-hoc Scheffe analysis showed a significant difference between mean Political Interest in the pooled Schematic (M=12.31) and the Less-Schematic (8.62) conditions, $p<.05$.

Examining the overall pattern of the data, the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic and Professional Schematic conditions resulted in higher Political Interest scores than found in the Control condition. The mean Political Interest value was lower in the Less-Schematic condition, and this could be due to the Less-Schematic spins being boring or distracting from politically related thinking.

Open-Ended Items

Results of the questionnaire's open-ended items were not systematically analyzed. However, since even a superficial

examination of the responses showed some consistency, illustrative examples will be discussed briefly.

The open-ended items appear in Table 33 below. A simple eyeballing of the responses revealed a consistency for items four, five, and six. Responses for subjects in the experimental groups overall reflected either verbatim quotations from the treatment scripts that go beyond what was observed in the debate, while responses of subjects in the Control group overall reflected observations of each candidate's behavior and what might be reasonably inferred from it.

Table 33

Open-Ended Items From Dependent Measure

Item	Stem
1	What did you think of the debate?
2	What were the most significant qualities each candidate had?
3	What do you think others will think of the debate?
4	For each candidate, list 5 words or phrases that describe him.
5	For each candidate, list 3 things that you liked about him.
6	For each candidate, list 3 things that you disliked about him.
7	What type of person is each candidate?

For example, In response to the item that asked for five words or phases that describe each candidate, common responses for Bob Jordan included "people's man" ("man of the people in the spin script) and "average man." Common responses for Jim Martin included "rich" and "helps his

friends," which reflected the spin script characterization of Martin as "rich" and "someone who puts his friends on the gravy train." Control responses for the same item often described Martin as "intelligent," "confident," and "old," while describing Jordan as "shifty eyed," "good speaker," and "warm."

A Similar tendency to paraphrase or directly quote the spin doctors was found for the items about honesty. For example, one subject indicated that they liked Bob Jordan because he "Doesn't lie about taxes." This captures the sentiment of the spin script, which said:

> Bob Jordan doesn't want to make any election-year promises that he won't be able to keep. So he did the honest thing and told voters he wasn't sure. First he's going to see if we're spending the people's money wisely before we go and ask them to cough up even more.

Note that the spin statement could be construed as simply evasive, but the subject seemed to extract the intended message. Responses like these suggested that more support for the hypotheses might be found in content analyses of these data.

Responses to items one and two, which asked "What did you think of the debate?" and "What were the most significant qualities that each candidate had?" showed substantial variability and thus did not support the hypotheses. Some

responses to these items characterized the quality of debate, some characterized the candidates, and others simply described the debate's format. Some subjects indicated responses similar to those of the spin doctors, while others showed considerable independence. For example, in response to item two, a subject indicated "the ability to contradict each other," which was perhaps an accurate observation but does not reflect the spin script. This same subject nonetheless liked Jim Martin as a "negotiator" and "leader," which reprised the spin script that referred to Martin several times as a leader and someone who negotiated budget agreements.

Other observations regarding responses to the open-ended items concerned their precision and lack of utility. For example, for items 4 and 5, which asked the subject to list three things that they liked or disliked about the candidates, most subjects listed fewer than three attributes. Moreover, some subjects indicated that they liked or disliked a candidate without specifying what they liked or disliked about him.

Item three, which asked subjects to project what they believe others will think of the debate, was virtually useless. In almost all cases, subjects' answers to this item were identical to their answer to item one, which asked for their opinion about the debate.

To summarize the pattern of responses to the open-ended items: Three items (four, five, and six) showed patterns in their responses that suggested a formal content analysis would provide support for the hypotheses. Items one and two appeared to have responses that showed little pattern and thus little support for the hypotheses. Item three supplied no useful information.

DISCUSSION

Hypotheses Related to Schema Effects

One of the experiment's key aims was to explain the effect of spin in terms of schemata. The general conception was that schema allow the subject who is forming an impression socially to take an initial organization of data and go beyond to infer more and different characteristics in others. It was expected that a schema in spin that presented one candidate as amateur politician would lead subjects to infer that this amateur is more like them (a "regular guy"), more honest, and more likable than his more experienced, professional opponent.

Schemata are non-observable and therefore evidence for them and their effects can be obtained only by traces that offer the best explanation for outcomes in the absence of alternative explanations. To raise confidence that the spin scripts contained schemata, the Schematic and Less-Schematic portions that in various combinations comprised the final

independent measures were pilot tested, and significant differences were found in terms of the degree to which each contained stereotypes and "gave a good picture of the candidate and the opponent."

Simple eyeballing of the open-ended responses, as mentioned earlier, indicated that on some items, treatment subjects most often offered verbatim quotations from the spin doctors, paraphrases, or information that on face seems strongly associated with the spin material. For example, in response to the broad question of "What did you think of the debate," a Control subject indicated "The debate was not what I expected...," while a subject in the Amateur-Professional Schematic condition wrote "Bob Jordan was weak." But overall, evidence from the open-ended items would most likely provide weak or no evidence for schematic processing (though they may have provided other useful information) because all but two of the items confound the search for candidate-related information by asking specifically for it. So the remaining evidence is to be found in the scale items.

The scale items were designed to probe for the strength of inferences about the candidates, i.e., to probe for the strength of conclusions about the candidates' qualities that may or may not have been apparent in the debate. The overall pattern of the results for the Schematic conditions does, in fact, provide support for the idea that schemata were

operative. In some cases, the results were statistically significant. Jim Martin, the incumbent Republican, was rated most highly on Leadership in Amateur-Professional Schematic(two-sided partisan) and Professional Schematic (one-sided) conditions, while Bob Jordan, the Democratic challenger, was rated most highly on Honesty in the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic conditions. The effect was refined, in that the schematic information did not blur the differences between the candidates and result in each receiving equal ratings on Leadership and Honesty. Rather, the spins elevated each candidate's ratings *on the characteristics that subjects believed they truly possessed,* as might be concluded reasonably from the facts related to the candidates' identities and as evidenced by ratings in the Control condition. At least in the confines of this experiment, in which the spins were created to *veridically* highlight each candidates' strengths and weaknesses, spin amplified impressions of the candidates' traits.

The results associated with the Less-Schematic condition undermined the uniformity of the effect. This condition's spin script was comprised of spins for each candidate that offered bland praise, such as "He did really well tonight. It was expected that Less-Schematic spin would result in ratings that are roughly equivalent to Control ratings, but a different pattern emerged.

When one candidate was preferred on the variable in question, the Less-Schematic spin elicited for the less-preferred candidate his second-highest ratings—ratings roughly equivalent to the partisan, schematic spin that touted him. In some cases, the Less-Schematic rating was higher than Control. This effect was asymmetrical: The preferred candidate received lowest or next-to-lowest ratings from subjects in the Less-Schematic condition. That the Less-Schematic treatment resulted in ratings lower than Control ratings probably cannot be attributed to it being a boring script. If boredom was the culprit, then the less-preferred candidate would not have received roughly equivalent ratings in both the Less-Schematic and partisan schematic conditions.

It was also proposed earlier that because the different Spin treatments affected the Political Interest Scale (originally constructed to function as a covariate) much in the same way as it affected the other dependent measures, this would serve as additional evidence that schemata were operative. It is possible that a subject-treatment interaction occurred. Since blocks of students who signed up for given time periods throughout weeks of a semester were randomly assigned to groups, the experiment was not truly randomized. It is possible that discrete types of subjects signed up for specific day and time slots. However, as presented earlier, there were no significant differences

between subjects from the two separate college samples on several demographic measures.

Alternative explanations to the formulation that the availability of candidate schemata affected ratings of candidates included the spin scripts' sheer informativeness, vividness, and memorability. Although pilot-test subjects rated the schematic spin scripts as containing significantly more stereotypes than Less-Schematic scripts, and stereotypes may be thought of a subset of schemata, the three schematic scripts and the Less-Schematic scripts can be reasonably thought of as differing in other respects.

Because they directly addressed the candidates' characteristics and used multiple similar adjectives and clichés, the schematic scripts were probably more memorable, vivid, and ultimately, they simply contained more information than the Less-Schematic scripts, which simply offered general praise for each candidates' performance. In this sense, the three schematic scripts and the Less-Schematic script could be thought of as differing not on their schematic content but on their overall informativeness and interest value. An improved manipulation would balance the information value, interest value, and memorableness of the three schematic scripts and the Less-Schematic script by perhaps offering in the Less-Schematic script facts about each candidate's relevant history, instead of simply praise of his

performance. But controlling non-schematic variables the schematic scripts would be difficult, since vivid and memorable information is very often schematic.

Hypotheses Related to Heuristic Processing

The second main set of hypotheses in this study maintained that subjects are cognitive misers who in service of reducing their cognitive workload would employ the spins provided by the spin doctors to form impressions of candidates easily and efficiently. They would process information heuristically. As such, it was believed that depriving subjects of time to think about what they had seen would make heuristic processing more likely and lead to a greater use of spin--a stronger spin effect--than if they were given time to process the debate information more thoughtfully and systematically.

In one sense, evidence for heuristic processing was obtained by the overall results; they suggested that subjects used the schematic information in the treatments and did not process systematically. But support was mixed for the idea that this effect was amplified under conditions that were expected either to increase (the heuristic condition) or to decrease (the Systematic condition) this tendency. The comments of the fifteen debriefed subjects provided anecdotal support for the conception that spin was easier to process and had more utility than the debate information, which would

be expected to facilitate heuristic processing. But as I will discuss later, the experimental results did not support the heuristic processing hypothesis.

For example, the following question was posed to debriefing subjects:

> Even though I have just reminded you that the people speaking after the debate were paid by the candidates to speak for them—and so what they said is certainly biased—why do you say that you gave more weight to what *they* said?

One subject replied: "Because it's [the spin] like cotton candy. I didn't understand what the candidates said." This was typical of comments that supported the idea that the spin was easier to process than the debate.

More support for this idea came from a subject who answered, "These guys [the spin doctors] speak my language. The other guys were just acting like politicians." And finally, in perhaps what might be the ultimate statement in support of the idea that spin's utility raises the likelihood of heuristic processing, one subject answered the question unashamedly, stating that he paid the most attention to the spin "So I would know what to think." When I pressed for elaboration, the subject said "So I would know what opinions to have about the debate." Of course, since instructions in the dependent measure called "Opinion Survey," along with the experimenter's verbal instructions, specified that there were

no right or wrong answers and that opinions were sought, it is possible that the subject was simply uninvolved and was using the spin, as his comment indicated, to comply with experimental demand. Nonetheless, this comment was supportive of the heuristic processing notion. This subject's behavior may have been like some of the electorate, in which the cognitive-miser voter employs the easiest-to-process information at hand to make a voting decision.

With the exception of one anomalous result, which was a Spin x Candidate x Processing Mode interaction on the "regular guy" variable, there were no significant results that supported the heuristic processing hypothesis. There was however, a non-significant post-hoc trend that was counter-hypothetical and departed noticeably from the overall pattern of the Processing Mode results. This concerned the item "How much is each candidate a 'regular guy.'"

In the Heuristic Processing condition, in which subjects received treatments immediately after the debate, subjects rated Bob Jordan as significantly more a "regular guy" than Jim Martin, the Republican. As shown in Figure 6, the difference between the candidates was large, while the differences among the spin treatments was small. However, in the Systematic Processing condition, in which subjects had a one-minute interval between the debate and the spin treatment, and in which they were instructed to form an

impression of what they saw, subjects in the Professional Schematic condition rated Jim Martin as more of a "regular guy" than Bob Jordan. The hypothesis predicted that time-deprived subjects would be more motivated to use schemata and thus more likely to be "persuaded" than would subjects who had time to systematically weigh all available evidence. But in this case, subjects who had time to consider all information and who were instructed to form an impression, formed an impression *opposite* to those of subjects in the seven treatment and Control conditions. When the data departed from pattern, as was the case here, it did so opposite to what the experimental hypothesis predicted and in a way that suggested that spin may be more effective when subjects have time to consider its content. In the context of earlier results, in which spin was effective when its content called attention to a trait that the candidate was perceived to have (according to Control), this result suggested that when the candidate lacks the trait being measured, and the subject has time to consider different information that can nonetheless suggest a basis for a favorable impression, that favorable impression can function as a halo and cause the subject to rate the candidate favorably on a trait that the candidate lacks. Unfortunately, it is difficult to attribute this to the manipulation, because the result may be at least

partially interpretable as an artifact of the instructions that subjects in this condition received.

Another problem related to the interpretation of these counter-hypothetical results was the overall validity of the operationalizations. The subjects in the Systematic conditions received one minute to form an impression of the candidates, after receiving instructions to do so. It was believed that forming an impression before receiving the treatment would inoculate subjects against the effects of spin, or stated alternatively, would force the subjects to engage in systematic, rational processing. But it is difficult to conclude that the instructions and the one-minute interval were sufficient to elicit systematic processing. An improved manipulation would perhaps provide subjects more time to form an impression and better instructions to guide them in this task. For example, subjects could be given five minutes to form and impression and be instructed to write a comprehensive description of the candidate for a prospective voter, but this manipulation would make the simulation farther from reality.

The Pattern of The Results

As preliminary field research, this study's primary purpose was to determine whether the widely practiced activity of "spin" works, i.e., whether or not spin can influence people's impressions of candidates they have seen

in a campaign debate. Second, the study was designed to examine how spin works, in particular, the degree to which effects can be explained by the concept of candidate schemata and whether conditions that would be expected to affect the tendency to use schemata would accentuate the overall effect.

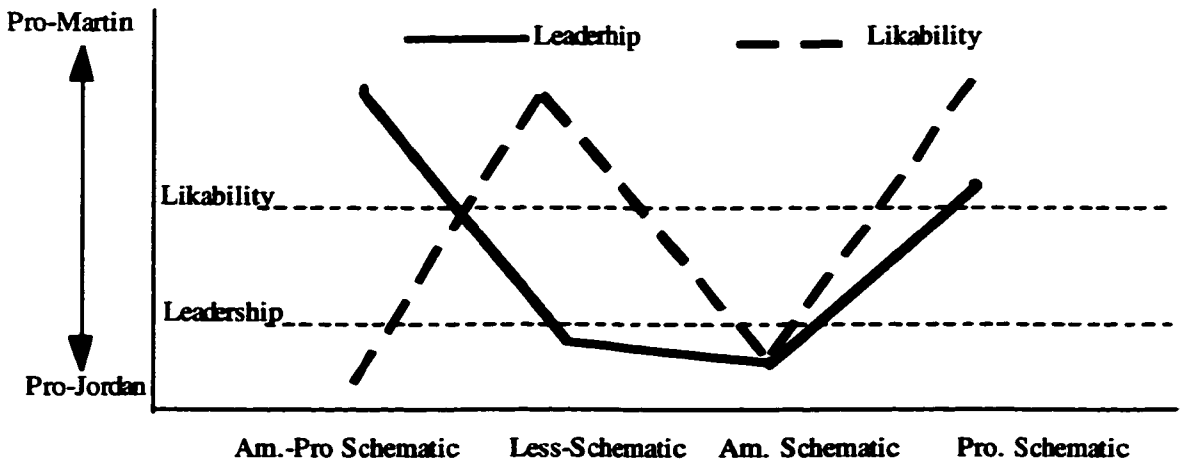
Regarding the first question, results suggested that "spin" works but in a particular way. As to spin working because conditions that enhance heuristic processing force subjects to employ available schemata, the results were mixed. But most interesting is the pattern of the results, which show consistency.

Figure 13 shows a conceptual overlay plot of the results for the Leadership and Likeability measures. The results suggested that the effect of partisan spin has a specific pattern. On the measure of Leadership, on which Control subjects rated the Professional, Jim Martin, higher, the Amateur-Professional Schematic treatment (two-sided, partisan schematic) resulted in the highest ratings relative to Control and the Republican one-sided condition the next highest. The Less-Schematic and Amateur Schematic treatments resulted in ratings that favor Martin almost equally less than in the Control condition. The results for Likeability were similar. Control subjects indicated that Jordan, the Democrat, was more likable. The Amateur-Professional Schematic (two-sided, partisan) and Amateur Schematic

treatments resulted in substantially higher pro-Jordan ratings relative to Control, while the Less-Schematic and Professional treatments resulted in ratings that are more pro-Martin.

Figure 13

Conceptual Overlay Plot of Ratings of Leadership and Likeability by Spin Condition



The pattern of results seemed to say two things: 1. If a candidate, as demonstrated in the Control condition, is perceived as possessing a particular trait, providing spin that indirectly highlights that trait can lead to inferences that substantially help the candidate—as demonstrated in the Amateur-Professional Schematic and Amateur Schematic conditions, which contained the trait-relevant schematic spin. 2) Failing to highlight the trait(s) loses the advantage (see Less-Schematic above) and can enable an opponent to counteract it to their favor by using trait-

irrelevant spin (see Amateur and Professional Schematic conditions above). It should be noted that the improvement in ratings obtained through the partisan Amateur Schematic and Professional Schematic treatments was practically meaningless when the candidate appeared to lack the trait being measured. Ratings in these conditions for the "weaker" candidate were virtually identical to ratings in the Less-Schematic condition.

But more interesting was the polarizing contrast effect that resulted from the Amateur-Professional(partisan, two-sided) treatment. In this treatment, one spin highlighted what turns out to be a candidate's strengths related to the trait being measured, and the other spin highlighted the other candidate's strengths on a different set of traits. If that different trait, as is shown above, can be conceived of as "opposite" (e.g., strong leader versus "regular guy"), then this opposing spin in fact only served to sharpen the contrast between the candidates. It served to elevate the rating of the candidate who inherently possessed the trait being measured while lowering the opponent's standing on this same trait. It is as if this two-sided treatment provided two poles on a unidimensional scale. The additional information made the differences between the candidates seem more extreme.

On the repeated measures items, this same symmetrical result generally held true as well, as shown in Table 34, which indicates the rank order of item means for each candidate, by spin condition.

Table 34

Rank Order of Item Means as a Function of Candidate and Spin Condition

			Rank of Rating (1=Highest) by Condition			
Measure	Candidate	Control Preference	A-P	Amat.	Prof.	Less Schem.
Regular Guy	Martin (R)	Jordan (D)	3	4	2	1
	Jordan (D)		1	2	4	3
Honesty	Martin (R)	Jordan (D)	4	3	1	2
	Jordan (D)		2	1	3	4
Vote For	Martin (R)	Jordan (D)	1	2	3	4
	Jordan (D)		1	2	4	3
Won Debate	Martin (R)	Martin (R)	2	3	1	4
	Jordan (D)		4	1	3	2

When one candidate was preferred in the Control condition, the Amateur-Professional Schematic (partisan, two-sided) spin most often elevated that candidate's ratings to the highest among the conditions and also resulted in the opponent's lowest ratings. This symmetrical effect followed next for the partisan treatment related to the preferred candidate. So in terms relevant to the spin practitioner, partisan spin can help a candidate when it goes unopposed, which is to be expected. But when an opponent's spin has the ring of truth (as confirmed by Control subjects) one's own spin that touts one's own candidate's virtues may actually

hurt the candidate's ratings and intensify the favorable impression of the opponent. Stated in perhaps pithier terms, spin cannot make a sow's ear into a silk purse, but it can make a silk purse silkier.

General Validity Considerations

Factors affecting the internal and external validity of the experiment included the effectiveness of the deception, the reliability of the dependent measure, a possible confounding of impression with the experimental instructions as well as with the dependent measure; recency, and the degree to which the experiment was a realistic sample of actual debate processing.

The Effectiveness of the Deception

The primary factor affecting the experiment's validity concerns the degree to which the deception was effective and subjects believed that they had watched a genuine television show with two candidates debating, followed by comments by their spokespersons. According to the debriefed subjects, the stimulus videotapes had sufficiently good production values—although inferior to those of commercial television—to convince them that they indeed were viewing a college cable-access program. Fifteen subjects unanimously agreed about this. All subjects also agreed that the candidates were genuine. However, it was difficult to

conclude what subjects believed about the spin doctors and how this impacted on their responses.

When subjects were asked: "What did you think about the candidates' spokespersons?", with one exception, all subjects commented, mostly positively, on the spin doctors' presentations and traits. One 37-year-old subject (mean age=21.13, SD=4.45), who described herself as very interested in politics, said the spin doctors "were phony and that the experiment was rigged." When the deception was revealed and subjects were asked whether or not they had detected it, besides the woman mentioned above, four subjects said "no," and nine made comments to the effect of "Now that you mention it...," or "I thought something was off." When these nine subjects were probed further, two subjects said that the spin setting looked staged, one subject said that the spin doctors looked like they were acting, one said that the reporters looked like they were reading their questions (which they were), and one subject said that the spin doctor was reading his answer (he was not). With all this said, it remains to be answered whether or not revealing the spin doctors' identities altered subjects' beliefs about the spin doctors by making them aware of their suspicions. Or, alternatively, whether or not after the deception was revealed, subjects revealed their suspicions as a way of saving face. The author's general impression about the experiment, after

running most of the subjects, was that at least half of the subjects appeared to be doing nothing more than fulfilling their research requirement; they were attempting to responsibly comply with the demands of the task and were perhaps not involved or interested enough to consider the authenticity of the spin doctors. With this in mind, the significant, patterned results, could be interpreted at least two ways. Either subjects were deceived and it is therefore reasonable to extrapolate the results to real life, or subjects were not deceived but nonetheless "utilized" the spin information simply as an efficient means of complying with the demands of the experiment. This second possibility does not necessarily undermine the experiment's generality. Rather, it may in fact strengthen it: Perhaps voters are well aware that spin doctors are biased, but just as the uninvolved subjects did, they may use the convenient, easy-to-process information from the spin doctors in the service of their goal to form an impression of the candidates in the debate.

This type of processing is explained by models such as Anderson's (1981) weighted average model, which Fiske (1986) has called "piecemeal" processing. In Anderson's formulation, subjects consider all information at hand, differentially weight each information element, and then mathematically combine the elements to arrive at a summary conclusion. For

example, if one is shopping for a new car, one might consider information from the car salesperson and Consumer Reports magazine. Most people will place the highest value on the Consumer Reports information, but will not completely discard all information from the salesperson. This can be extended very easily to the experiment.

Because subjects had chosen to participate in the experiment and watch the stimulus tape until receiving the questionnaire dependent measure, they would in all likelihood have chosen to attend to the spin, whether or not it would be biased, delivered by a biased source, or perceived to be fraudulent. (Remarks of debriefed subjects suggests that the likelihood was that they paid the *most* attention to the spin and found it to be more vivid, comprehensible, and memorable than the information conveyed by the debate.) If spin is considered simply as an additional information element, the subject may be aware that spin is biased and thus of dubious value, but may nonetheless use it *with the least effort* to comply with the experimental demand and complete the questionnaire. To the extent that the spin offered clearly articulated conclusions and opinions, this information of otherwise questionable value would obtain high value in the service of the subject's effort to respond to questionnaire. Assuming that apathetic, uninvolved, cognitive-miser voters behave similarly to cognitive-miser subjects, then the

effectiveness of the deception becomes almost inconsequential. Of course, much more is at stake for most voters than was the case in the experiment. But this fact does not invalidate any conclusion to be drawn about the similarity between cognitive processes employed by subjects and voters in their respective contexts.

The Dependent Measure

When considering the dependent measure, internal-consistency and construct-validity issues arise. Did the dependent measure's two factor-analytically derived scales and four two-part items measure impressions of candidates and do so reliably?

First, the four two-part items of the dependent measure ("regular guy," "honesty," "won the debate," and "vote for the candidate") seem to have a prima facie relationship to impressions. Regarding the factor-analytically derived Leadership and Likeability scale items, results for the Leadership and Likeability scales agreed with statements of debriefed subjects, who indicated that they found for a variety of reasons Bob Jordan, the Democratic challenger more likable than the incumbent Republican, Jim Martin, whom they found, for a variety of reasons, to have more leadership qualities. Moreover, as noted earlier, reliability analyses of the four two-part items conducted separately for each candidate showed Cronbach's alphas of approximately .7.

Confounding of Impression Measure

One possible confounding variable when discussing the hypothesis that schematic information influenced impressions is that subjects were instructed to form an impression. Some findings indicated that the tendency to process heuristically when forming impressions of candidates could have been a function of what subjects were asked to do.

The "impression-driven" model of Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh (1989) posits that voters form their impressions "online." In order to deal economically (heuristically) with the large quantity of candidate information, voters take in instances of candidate information and form an impression immediately. When encountering new information, they retrieve their summary evaluation (but not its elements) and then form a new evaluation that considers the old impression, updated to include the new data. This process is distinct from "memory-based" processing, which holds that people form impressions by retrieving all prior information elements about candidates (but not a summary evaluation), and then consider new information by combining all elements to form a new impression.

Lodge, McGraw, and Stroh contended that when the subject's goal is to form an overall impression about or make an overall evaluation of candidates, as was the case in this experiment, impression-driven processing occurs. If the

subject's goal is to remember as much information as possible, then memory-based processing occurs. Similarly, Ottati (1990) found that in making comparative judgments of two candidates, as opposed to evaluating a single candidate, subjects did not engage in an arduous retrieval of all information relevant to the judgment, but rather attended to peripheral information and employed a couple of useful dimensions with which they compared the candidates and reached a conclusion. Considering these findings, any conclusions drawn regarding schemata in this experiment affecting impressions must be qualified by consideration of the methods employed. Subjects' impressions of candidates may have been affected by schemata only because they were instructed to form an impression and their goal was to evaluate the candidates. This idea may explain the anomalous (but not statistically significant), counter-hypothetical result found in the Systematic condition, in which subjects who received instructions to form an impression and were given a minute to do so rated as honest the candidate who was rated less honest in all other conditions. It appears as though these subjects were the most affected by spin.

The instructions and goal alone may have compelled subjects to process heuristically. That the goal of evaluating was clear to subjects in the Heuristic conditions is possible, since they understood that they would be

receiving an opinion survey after viewing the videotape. Subjects in the Systematic condition, who were instructed to form an impression and were given a minute to do so, were certainly geared to form an impression. This joint methodological problem of the instructions and goal is considerable and ought to be controlled for in future research. It could be argued, however, that the nature of the subjects' inherently low motivation and involvement, as well as the perhaps uninvolving nature of the experiment, were sufficient to facilitate heuristic or impression-driven processing, and would thus have led to a spin effect, regardless of the instructions that were provided or the subjects' understanding of their goal. Moreover, since voters who evaluate candidates have to contend with massive amounts of superficial and substantive information that motivate heuristic processing, the perhaps artifactual heuristic processing obtained in the experiment may nonetheless illustrate a voter's processing.

The second confounding variable affecting the dependent measure was the fact that some of its items make evaluative dimensions salient and thus may have influenced the evaluations of candidates on subsequent items. For example, it is difficult to interpret fully how spin affected subjects' global evaluation of the candidates, since making salient honesty, leadership, and "regular guy," along with

the other traits made salient by the other items not used in the final analyses, probably impacted on subjects' rating of who won the debate and for whom they would be willing to vote. A less reactive view of subjects' processing and memory might possibly have come from analysis of the open-ended items. Pending the analyses of these data about what subjects thought about after exposure to spin, one cannot confidently generalize to the real-life political domain.

Recency

Since the spin information followed the debate and immediately preceded the administration of the questionnaire, a recency effect must be considered. It is possible that in responding to the questionnaire, subjects simply used the last information that they were exposed to. This could explain differences between the spin conditions and Control. But it explains neither differences in magnitude nor kind among the Amateur-Professional Schematic, Less-Schematic, Amateur Schematic and Professional Schematic treatments, nor the particular pattern of the effect. Nonetheless, since voters not only receive several messages after receiving spin but also do not necessarily form their impressions about the candidates similarly to the way experimental subjects were constrained to, any extrapolation to voter behavior must be limited. The degree to which this experimental impression-formation process differed from the real life process again

raises the issue of overall generality of the spin effect investigated here.

Generalizability

Some issues of generalizability have already been presented in context. Even if the experiment's internal validity was adequate, it remains to be demonstrated whether or not the effects found were temporary—a critical issue when considering the real-life effect of spin. The effects found here, however significant and patterned, could have been transient, and thus any one instance of spin may have little ultimate impact on a voter's evaluation of candidates.

Whether or not the effects found in this experiment were enduring, and are thus, ultimately, meaningful, could have been dealt with, conceivably, by either re-administering the dependent measure after some interval, or re-administering the debate without the spin (like the experiment's Control condition), along with the dependent measure.

If one assumes for purpose of discussion that the effects found in this experiment are enduring, the next step in a comprehensive understanding of spin involves determining specifically the role these effects play in a voter's ultimate evaluation of candidates.

Recalling the model proposed earlier (see Figure 1), the real-life effect of spin can be discussed in terms of two levels of involvement. 1. In low-involvement elections in

which debate viewing is a key determinant of voters' evaluations of candidates, spin can be important. The experimental results suggested that spin can intensify evaluations, pro and con, as mediated by subject factors, such as involvement, issue stands, and party affiliation. 2. If an election compels a voter to consider a variety of inputs, such as the candidates' record, issue positions, and statements, along with news reports and advertisements, then whatever effect spin has on a voter's evaluation of candidates in a debate will be, in the context of the impression-driven model, updated and incorporated into the ongoing evaluation. As such, the effect of spin is probably inconsequential and it could not be expected to decide elections. However, professional campaign operatives are realistic and often aim modestly to seek any edge, which in some cases can be the margin of victory. Campaigns seek not to get a liberal to vote for a conservative, or vice versa. They seek, for example, to get the unmotivated conservative to get out and vote, or to get the disaffected liberal to stay home on election day. So in the context of a comprehensive campaign, spin can play a small but important role in affecting a voter's global evaluation of the candidates which can in turn affect voter turnout and participation. And, of course, I began this study with the

premise that spin is undertaken so widely and diligently because it works—or at least it is believed to have value.

Some Conclusions

To summarize the effect of spin on impressions of candidates:

1. Unopposed partisan schematic spin (One-sided conditions) can intensify impressions of candidate traits. When the spin indirectly highlights a trait that the candidate possesses it leads to inferences that significantly and substantially improve ratings on that trait.

2. Two-sided schematic can lead to inferences that result in polarized ratings for the candidates. When the two sides presenting the spin highlight and direct attention to traits that one candidate has and the other candidate lacks, ratings for the candidate possessing these traits move to the highest scores, while ratings for the other candidate move to the lowest scores.

3. Failing to highlight the trait(s) works to the advantage of the candidate who lacks the trait being measured.

Spin is most effective when it is schematic, comparative, and truthful. When the spin about the candidates' traits agrees with what can be observed about them, it intensifies conclusions about the traits.

Although spin did substantially affect impressions in this study, conclusions about the scope of the effect are

limited by the fact that the spins herein were constructed to be plausible and thus somewhat "honest." To truly gauge the power of spin on impressions, an improved manipulation would reverse the spins presented here: The spin for Bob Jordan, the "regular guy" Democrat, would consist of the content used for Jim Martin, the "strong leader" Republican, and vice versa. Along with the current results, results from such a manipulation of "dishonest" spin would help to determine the absolute scope of the effect. If such results were significant and replicated the earlier finding, they would, as a practical matter, help to justify further study of spin effect as an instance of deceptive political communication that requires examination and exposure to the public.

Appendix A

Spin Vignette Question and Answer Scripts

Professional Schematic spin script for Republican candidate Jim Martin

Graphic: Tom Lindsey, Martin Campaign Advisor

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Well, tonight the voters had the chance to do a little comparison shopping, and I think they're going to reach the same conclusion that everyone else has: that this is a choice between and amateur and a professional, and at this point in North Carolina's history, we just can't afford to have an amateur steering the ship of state.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Tom, do you think the governor won the debate tonight, I mean, did his performance tonight give your campaign any kind of bounce?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: I think any time you see the two candidates together, like tonight, for example, we come out looking better. The Governor is a solid professional with a record he can be proud of. The Lieutenant Governor, well, he's a nice guy and all that, but ....

Reporter Sam Riordan: So you don't think that Bob Jordan's experience both as a legislator and a successful businessman, you don't think that counts for anything? I mean, ...

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Successful businessman? At what? Monkey business? I mean all these secret midnight meetings and all that. What are they doing at those meetings? Trying to balance the state's budget by passing around a Ouija board? Maybe they were holding a seance or something.

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Lemee take one from Susan.

Reporter Susan Hepplewhite: Will some people come away tonight thinking that the Governor didn't adequately explain why Jimmy Green was apparently being paid for a no-show job?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: First off, Bob Jordan is simply trying to get people to look at something other than his own record, or should I say, lack of one, so he's making a bunch of unsubstantiated charges. The Governor's got an army of pros at his disposal, so he called on Jimmy Green to help the him and the state—with jobs, educating our kids, cleaning the environment, keeping our taxes low—as everyone knows. Bob Jordan has a lot to learn about getting your facts straight before you go public. I think he's got a lot to

learn--period. On the other hand, the Governor knows the ropes cold.

Reporter Anthony Rosatti: What about taxes? Some might say the Governor wasn't entirely clear about what North Carolinians might expect this coming year ...

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: I know, Tony, that you're just trying to do your job, but seriously, I mean, look at what the Governor said. He battle-tested—he already brought two highway programs in without raising taxes and under-budget to boot—and he'll find the money for programs in whatever way will best serve all North Carolinians. The people already know the Governor can get the job done; all he needs to do is to point to his record. I thought he said it was still an open question.

Reporter Angela Thomas: Did the Governor perform tonight as well as was expected? Was he up to speed?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Angela, Jim Martin is a seasoned, solid professional with a strong, strong record to point to. He consistently performs well; the people have seen this time and time again. Tonight he came out swinging. The Lt. Governor, he's a well-meaning guy, but he just isn't—when

you see the two of them together—he just isn't in the Governor's league. Maybe that's why Mr. Jordan has agreed only to debate us once. Most challengers beg for debates, he only agreed to one. It sort of calls his ... I don't know ...his leadership into question. Yeah, he ran a dry cleaning business. But can he run a state? Can he even debate?

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Tom, can I ...can I just

Reporter Richard Simms: So did you deliver your knockout punch tonight? Did tonight seal it for you?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: The Governor is a confident, solid political pro who has led the state to record employment levels and educational gains, while cleaning up the environment at the same time. He has the facts, and he has the toughness to lead. Tonight Mr. Jordan didn't exactly look like greased lightning. So when tonight people again were able to see the Governor, the pro, side by side with the amateur—if that doesn't give us a knockout punch, it certainly leaves Mr. Jordan looking a little bloody.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Tom? Tom?
Sam Riordan: What would you say were the Governor's best moments tonight?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: I can't think of any good sound bites for you tonight, sorry. But I think you have to look at the overall performance: You saw a solid, confident, professional leader up against an inexperienced guy—a nice guy, don't get me wrong—who, frankly, looked a little shaky up there. So I think the voters have to make the overall comparison as to who looks strong enough to lead this state at this time. So it wasn't any one moment, it was the whole picture. Again, maybe that's why Jordan only wanted to debate us once.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Did Governor Martin do any damage tonight to the Lieutenant Governor?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: In a word, "yes." He was confident, solid, and if you permit me to be poetic, he radiated leadership. He had the answers and he was in control: what you'd expect from a pro. And he has a record. On the other hand, when you see an inexperienced and kind of shaky-looking Bob Jordan, I would have to say the Governor didn't do anything to strengthen Mr. Jordan's appeal.

Reporter: Thank you.

Tom Lindsey: My pleasure.

know that Bob Jordan is the one to lead this state for the next 4 years.

Sam Riordan: Bob, before...inaudible...

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: You want tomorrow's headline? It's like this: "Lt. Governor Jordan wins debate by setting forth clear proposals for addressing state's problems." That's gonna be tomorrow's headline.

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I think Susan is next.

Reporter Susan Hepplewhite: It seems, Bob, that Lt. Governor Jordan spoke mostly about education while saying little about the problems facing people in the rural counties. Don't you think people in the counties will come away feeling that Bob Jordan has written them off?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Susan, First off, I don't think that's fair. We don't ask the questions, Susan. Secondly, I get the feeling that you and I just watched two different debates! Bob Jordan grew up in the counties and he understands the problems facing our rural citizens better than anyone. Tonight Bob Jordan spoke about extending highways to help to get jobless county folk back into the job base. And he also

Less-Schematic script for candidate Jim Martin

Reporter Sam Riordan: Tom, How do you think this will play tomorrow?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: I think the Governor did real, real well, tonight. It was a real solid performance. It's a shame we can't have any more debates, because they only work to our advantage. The Governor looked real good, and we're proud and happy about the outcome. I think the voters will also be pleased with the way the Governor did tonight.

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Susan? or was that Angela?

Reporter Donna L. Tom, do you think the Governor won the debate tonight, I mean, did his performance tonight give your campaign any kind of bounce? Did you wrap it up?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: We're not going count our ... we're real happy with the way things went tonight. The Governor looked confident, spoke well, reminded voters about his record, and looked like a winner. As for getting a bounce, wrapping it up, we're not going to count any chickens before they hatch. But we feel real good about where we stand right now. No complaints, here. None at all. We think there was

one serious candidate out there tonight: The Governor.

Reporters all shout their questions at once.

Reporter Sam Riordan: You sound very confident. So you don't think that Bob Jordan's experience both as a legislator and a successful businessman, you don't think that counts for anything? I mean, ...

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: We think the Governor has a solid record to point to and that the Lt. Governor doesn't. Running a business is one thing, running a state--a state like ours--is another. And maybe you ought to look into how successful Bob Jordan's business career was. You say it's successful, but I'm not so sure. The Governor's record is clear, though.

Reporter Susan Hepplewhite: Will some people come away tonight thinking that the Governor didn't adequately explain why Jimmy Green was apparently being paid for a no-show job?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: I think the Governor handled the issue very well. Bob Jordan was trying to make a big deal out of nothing. Jimmy Green has helped this state get jobs, and he's saved the state millions. The Governor just told it

like it is. We're real happy with the way the Governor handled that issue. In fact, the Jimmy Green question gave the Governor the chance to finally set the record straight.

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Tony, let me give you a shot.

Reporter Anthony Rossati: What about taxes? Some might say the Governor wasn't entirely clear about what North Carolinians might expect this coming year ...

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Is that a loaded question? (smile). The tax question, the whole tax issue is real tough one. And I was proud of the way the Governor handled it. And you know, I think the people watching tonight will, if anything, come away feeling that the Governor was forthright and candid. He didn't rule anything in or anything out. He did, though, point to his track record, which, if anything, should let people breathe easy about taxes this year.

Reporter Angela Thomas: Did the Governor perform tonight as well as was expected? Was he up to speed?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: The Governor is always up to speed; he loves to debate. The Governor's strategy was simple: Debate, point to his strong record—taxes, job growth,

education— and just let him be the Governor. As usual, I think you saw that he did very well, and I think the voters, when they think about it, will reach the same conclusion. We always expect the Governor to perform well, and tonight he didn't disappoint us.

Reporter Sam Riordan: Tom?

Reporter Richard Simms: So did you deliver your knockout punch tonight? I mean, did tonight seal it for you?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: Well, you'all remember what happened with Truman and Dewey, right? We're not taking a thing for granted. We're satisfied that the Governor did well tonight, we're gonna keep campaigning hard, and we feel come election day the voters will make the right choice. However well we feel we're doing, we're not going to let up until election day.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Tom? Tom?

Reporter Sam Riordan: What would you say were the Governor's best moments tonight?

Spin Doctor Tom Lindsey: I can't think of any particular

moments or "knockout punches," as you folks are fond of saying, but overall, I think it was just a good, solid performance. The Governor has the facts and answers straight and came off flawlessly. It was a bunch of good moments throughout. We're real pleased with the outcome.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Did Governor Martin do any damage tonight to the Lieutenant Governor?

Tom Lindsey: I think whenever the two candidates appear together, we do some damage! People get to see the Governor has the experience, has the answers, and in general, has his act together. We did real well tonight, and I hope, if things keep going as they have been, come election day, we'll all be smiling.

Amateur Schematic script for Democratic candidate Bob Jordan

Graphic: Bob Davis, Jordan Campaign Advisor

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Yes, definitely. We're real happy with the way things went tonight. I think tonight you saw the Lt. Governor as he is: A man of the people. A plain-speaking guy, a workingman. Compare him to Governor Martin, the country-club Republican. Where was he during the budget crisis? I'll tell you where: At the Kentucky Derby playing "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous."

Reporters all shout their questions at once. Finally, Donna Loughlin repeats her question while others relent.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Bob? Bob, before tonight the polls...the polls showed you trailing by about 4 points. Do you think the Lt. Governor's performance tonight was good enough to narrow the gap? I mean, did he really win tonight?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Donna, polls, schmolls. We saw some polls that showed us ahead by 5 points. I think the way Governor responded—or should I say, didn't respond—to the questions about why he's paying Jimmy Green $300 bucks a day for a no-show job, that helped us a lot. You saw one guy, Bob Jordan, a regular guy, side-by-side with Governor Martin, just another rich Republican who puts his friends on the

gravy train while people like us are trying to put food on the table. So I think tomorrow's polls are gonna show we scored a knockout.

Reporter Sam Riordan: Bob, before...inaudible...

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: You want tomorrow's headline? It's like this: "Common Man David fells Aristocrat Goliath." That's gonna be tomorrow's headline.

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I think Susan is next.

Reporter Susan Hepplewhite: It seems, Bob, that Lt. Governor Jordan spoke mostly about education while saying little about the problems facing people in the rural counties. Don't you think people in the counties will come away feeling that Bob Jordan has written them off?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Susan, hey, we don't ask the questions, you know. Bob Jordan grew up in the counties and I believe Governor Martin grew up on the golf course. So who better understands the problems facing our rural citizens? Tonight You saw Bob Jordan's compassion when he talked about getting the highways out into the counties. What does Martin want to do? He wants to give big businesses in the

big city tax-breaks. So who has written the counties off? You tell me.

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Tony, I hear you. Let's give Tony Rosatti in the back, there, a chance.

Reporter Anthony Rosatti: Do you think the Lt. Governor handled the "secret meeting" issue well here tonight?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I'm proud of the way he handled it. He told it like it was—a group of legislators who met publicly and tried to save the state from fiscal disaster. I guess just about when Lt. Governor was meeting and trying to keep the state from going bankrupt, the Governor was probably up in the mansion sipping his evening brandy. So I don't know what all the ruckus is about

Reporter Anthony Rosatti: Bob, Bob. Just a quick follow-up: does that mean the "secret meeting" was a problem for the campaign before tonight?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I think Jim Martin and his hired henchmen tried to make it a problem. But I give the people credit; they're gonna see it as just another example of the rich guy trying to beat up on the poor guy.

Reporter Angela Thomas: Was Lt. Governor Jordan better tonight than in his other public appearances? Any surprises?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: He's been consistently strong in all his public performances. Look, Angela, we're talking about an experienced, vigorous legislative leader, and a guy who ran a business for over twenty years. As far as surprises? If there was any surprise, it was, to me at least, how the differences between the two candidates became even clearer tonight. Governor Martin—with his handlers and spin doctors and manicurists, you name it—against a guy who worked his way up and feels how people are hurting right now. So we're really happy about the way things went tonight.

Reporter Sam Riordan: Bob...you...inaudible....

Reporter Richard Simms: So if your polls show you ahead, do you think you've wrapped it up at this point?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Tonight the voters again had the opportunity to see who they want to lead them over the next four years. I think every time they see Bob Jordan and Jim Martin side by side, we come out the winner. But we're just going to keep working hard; we're going to keep asking people

if they want A man like Martin—a big spender for the rich, or a guy like Bob Jordan, who understands what they're facing and has the plan to make sure everyone has a chance to get a piece of the pie. We'll take it to the people--people like us.

Reporter Sam Riordan: Bob, the Lt. Governor fuzzed up his answer when he was asked if he would have to raise taxes. Why isn't he willing to state his position more clearly?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Sam, you said the answer was fuzzy. Bob Jordan is a straight guy who tells the truth. He doesn't want to make any election-year promises that he won't be able to keep. Bob Jordan knows what it's like to try to feed a family of six—that's what he's been through. I know the last thing he would want to do is take more money away from people by raising their taxes. But he may have to, so he gave it to the people straight.

Reporter: Thank you, Bob.

Bob Jordan: You bet.

Less-Schematic script for Democratic candidate Bob Jordan

Graphic: Robert "Bob" Davis, Jordan campaign advisor.

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Yes, definitely. We're real happy with the way things went tonight. Lt. Governor Jordan stated his positions clearly, he was the one with the fresh ideas, and, I think, when people think about the debate tomorrow, they'll remember that Bob Jordan was the one with the answers. Bob Jordan looked real good tonight, and if you're asking "who won," I think it was clear that Bob Jordan looks like our next Governor.

Reporters all shout their questions at once.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: Bob? Bob, before tonight the polls...the polls showed you trailing by about 4 points. Do you think the Lt. Governor's performance tonight was good enough to narrow the gap? I mean, did he really win tonight?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Donna, polls, schmolls. We saw some polls that showed us ahead by 5 points. I don't know if tonight was a home run, but it was a least a triple. But what's important is that people hear the way Bob Jordan stated his positions on education, on jobs, on getting highways out to the dirt roads--you name it--I think people

know that Bob Jordan is the one to lead this state for the next 4 years.

Sam Riordan: Bob, before...inaudible...

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: You want tomorrow's headline? It's like this: "Lt. Governor Jordan wins debate by setting forth clear proposals for addressing state's problems." That's gonna be tomorrow's headline.

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I think Susan is next.

Reporter Susan Hepplewhite: It seems, Bob, that Lt. Governor Jordan spoke mostly about education while saying little about the problems facing people in the rural counties. Don't you think people in the counties will come away feeling that Bob Jordan has written them off?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Susan, First off, I don't think that's fair. We don't ask the questions, Susan. Secondly, I get the feeling that you and I just watched two different debates! Bob Jordan grew up in the counties and he understands the problems facing our rural citizens better than anyone. Tonight Bob Jordan spoke about extending highways to help to get jobless county folk back into the job base. And he also

spoke about creative investment incentives for the counties, so businesses can bring the jobs right to where the people are.

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Tony, I hear you. Let's give Tony Rosatti in the back, there, a chance.

Reporter Anthony Rosatti: Do you think the Lt. Governor handled the "secret meeting" issue well here tonight?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I'm proud of the way he handled it. He told it like it was—a group of legislators who met publicly and tried to save the state from fiscal disaster. And you know, I think the people watching tonight will, if anything, come away feeling proud not only for what he said tonight but for what he did in that midnight meeting that everyone's made such a ruckus about.

Anthony Rosatti: Bob, Bob. Just a quick follow-up: does that mean the "secret meeting" was a problem for the campaign before tonight?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: I think Jim Martin tried to make it a problem. But most people are probably grateful that legislators like Lt. Governor Jordan are willing to go to the

extra mile--midnight meetings, all-night sessions, anything--to try to get the state government to make their lives easier.

Reporter Angela Thomas: Was Lt. Governor Jordan better tonight than he was in his other public appearances?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: He's been consistently strong in all his public performances. Look, Angela, we're talking about a vigorous legislative leader and businessman. Tonight you saw another good performance.

Reporter Sam Riordan: Bob...you...inaudible....

Reporter Richard Simms: So if your own polls show you ahead, do you think you've wrapped it up at this point?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Tonight the voters again had the opportunity to see who they want to lead them over the next four years. I think every time they see Bob Jordan and Jim Martin side by side, we come out the winner. But we're just going to keep working hard--we won't take anything for granted--we're going to keep working hard and listening to the people right up until election day.

Reporter Sam Riordan: Bob, the Lt. Governor fuzzed up his answer when he was asked if he would have to raise taxes. Why isn't he willing to state his position more clearly?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: Sam, you said the answer was fuzzy. I think the people out there heard something different. Bob Jordan doesn't want to make any election-year promises that he won't be able to keep. So he did the honest thing and told voters he wasn't sure. First he's going to see if we're spending the people's money wisely before we go and ask them to cough up even more.

Reporter Donna Loughlin: How much of boost did you think Lt. Governor Jordan's performance tonight gave the campaign?

Spin Doctor Bob Davis: The more people see and hear Bob Jordan the better we'll do. People get to see his experience, his understanding of their problems, and his knowledge of the facts. We did real well tonight, and I think on election day, we'll come out the winner.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Opinion Survey

People vary widely in their views of politics and politicians. You have just seen a videotape of a debate between Governor Jim Martin and Lieutenant Governor Bob Jordan and we interested in hearing your opinions about it. Please respond to the items below, keeping in mind that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. This is NOT a test. Please also keep in mind that your responses are completely confidential. Thank you very much.

What did you think of the debate?

What were the most significant qualities that each candidate had?

What do you think others will think of the debate?

For each candidate, list 5 words or phrases that describe him:

Jim Martin	*Bob Jordan*

For each candidate, list 3 things that you liked about him:

Jim Martin *Bob Jordan*

For each candidate, list 3 things that you disliked about him:

Jim Martin *Bob Jordan*

What type of person is each candidate?

Jim Martin *Bob Jordan*

In the items below, please circle the number on the ruler, which best describes how you feel or what you believe.
Note: the candidates' names may appear in different places in the items below:

How much is each candidate a "regular guy"?

Jim Martin

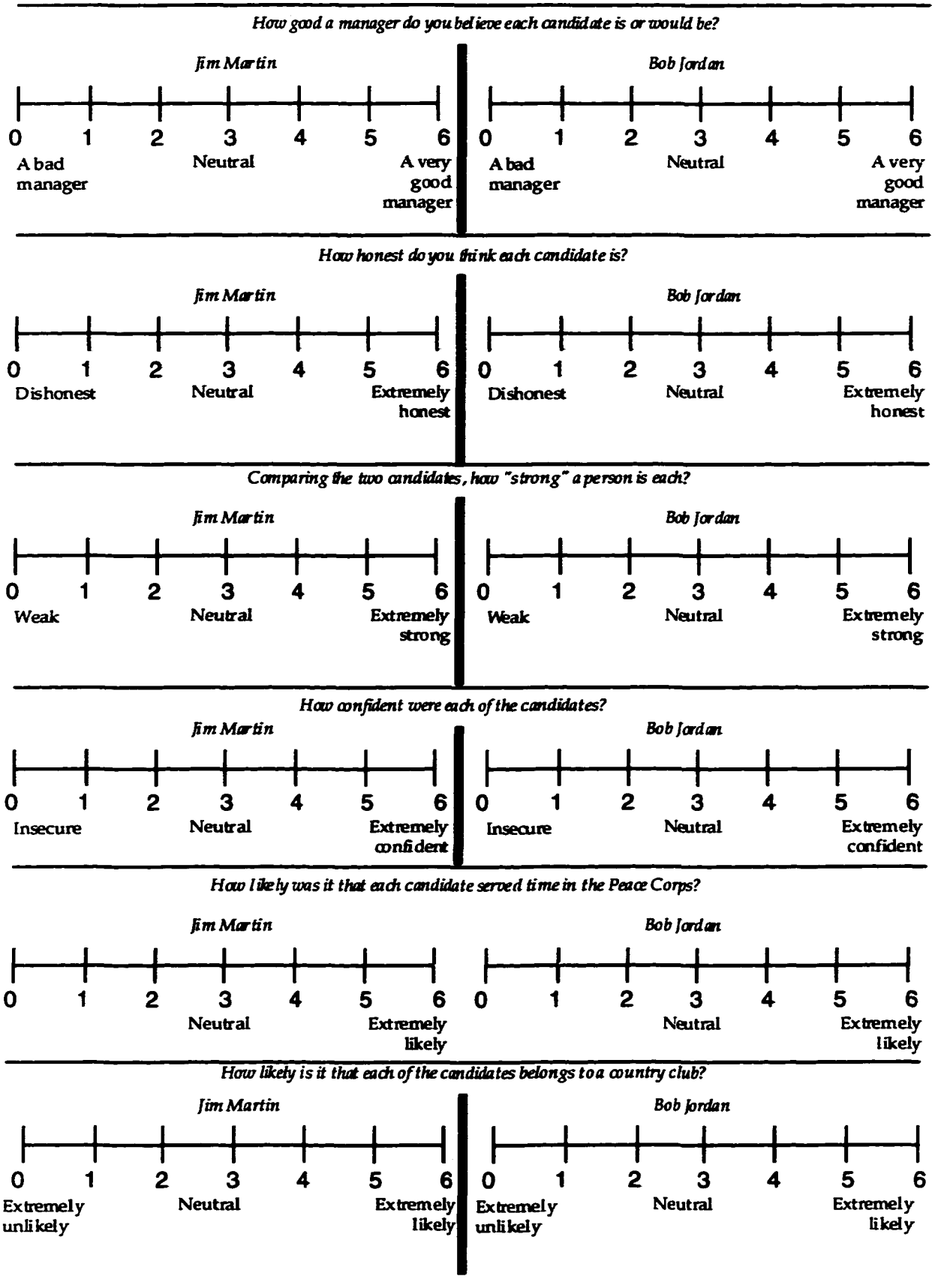
0 1 2 3 4 5 6

Not at all a regular guy — Neutral — Very much a regular guy

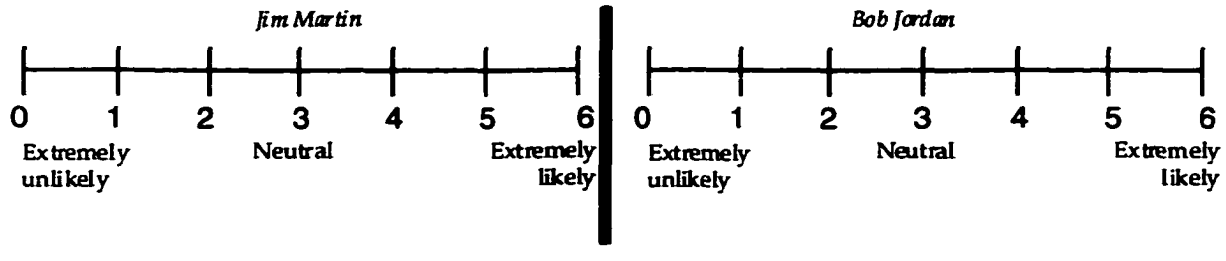
Bob Jordan

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

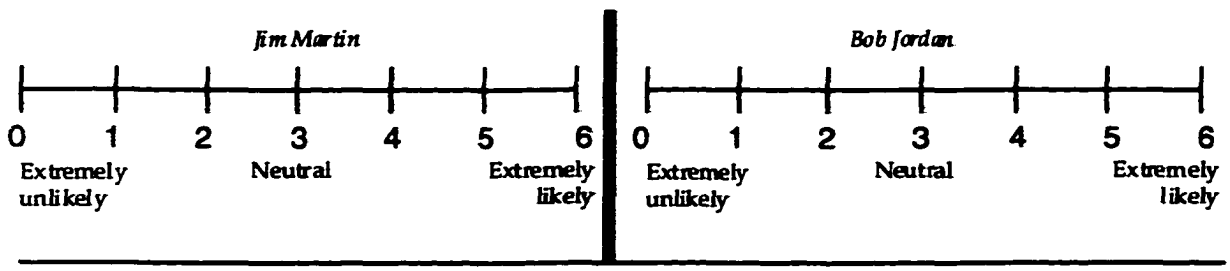
Not at all a regular guy — Neutral — Very much a regular guy



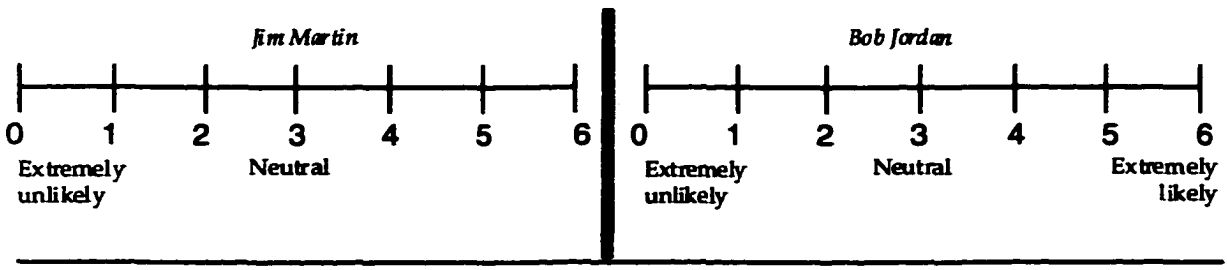
How likely is it that each of the candidates attends religious services each week?



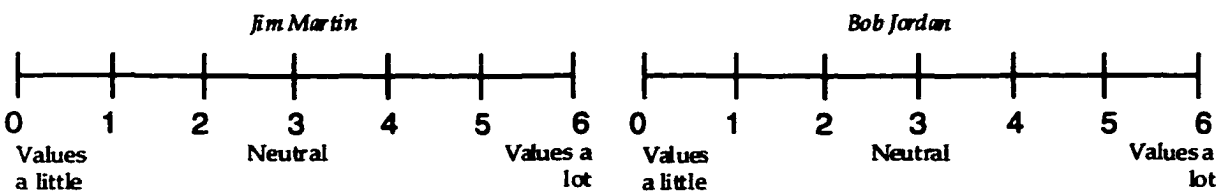
How likely do you think it would be that each candidate would become a high-ranking military officer?



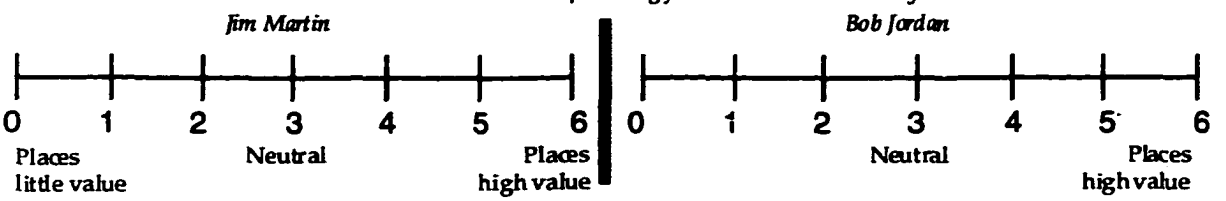
How likely do you think it is that each of the candidates values spending time with his family?



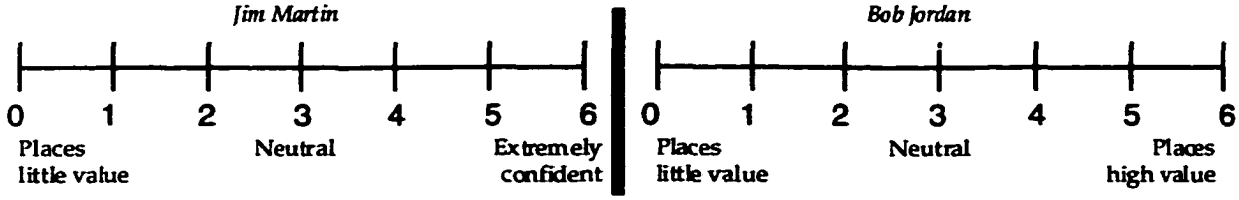
To what extent does each candidate value personal wealth?



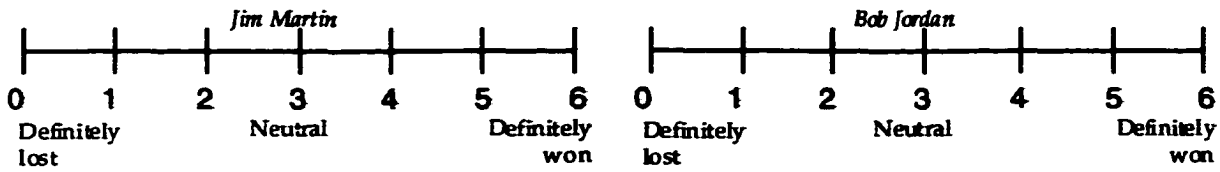
To what extent does each candidate value providing free school lunches to needy school children?



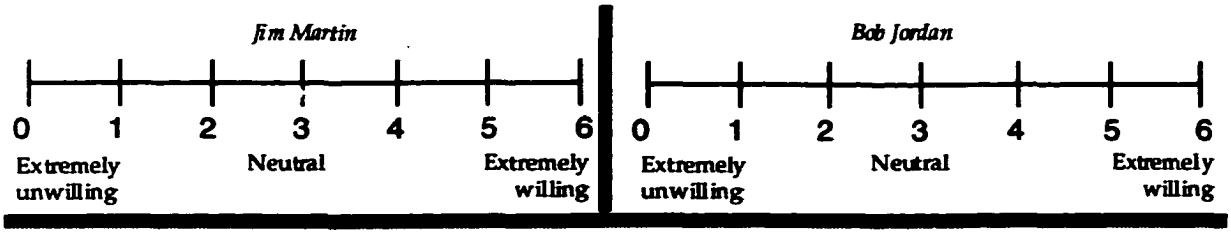
To what extent does each candidate value providing tax cuts for Americans starting small businesses?



To what extent would you say each candidate "won" the debate?

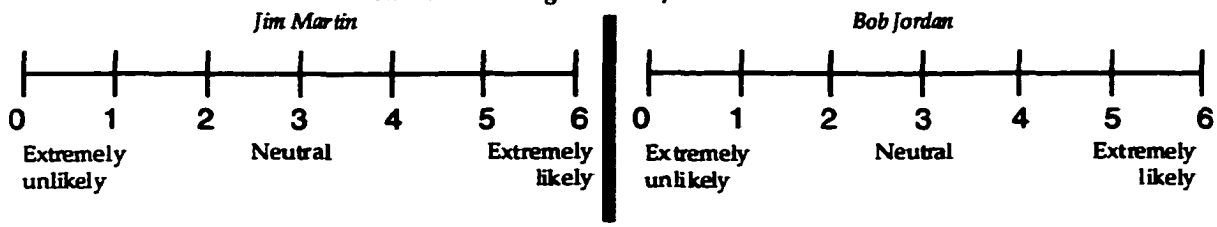


To what extent would you be willing to vote for each candidate?

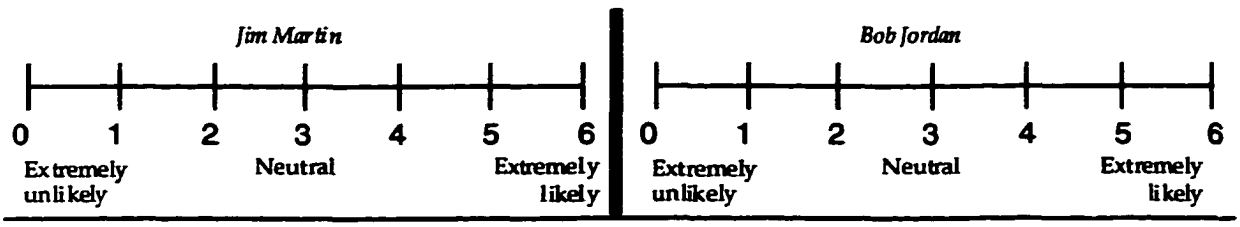


In the section below, circle the number on the ruler, which best corresponds to how likely you believe that each of the candidates, *speaking in the debate*, made the statements below:

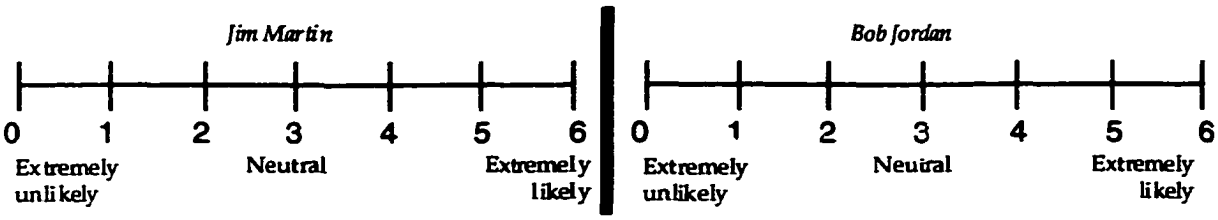
"I believe that nothing is more important than education."

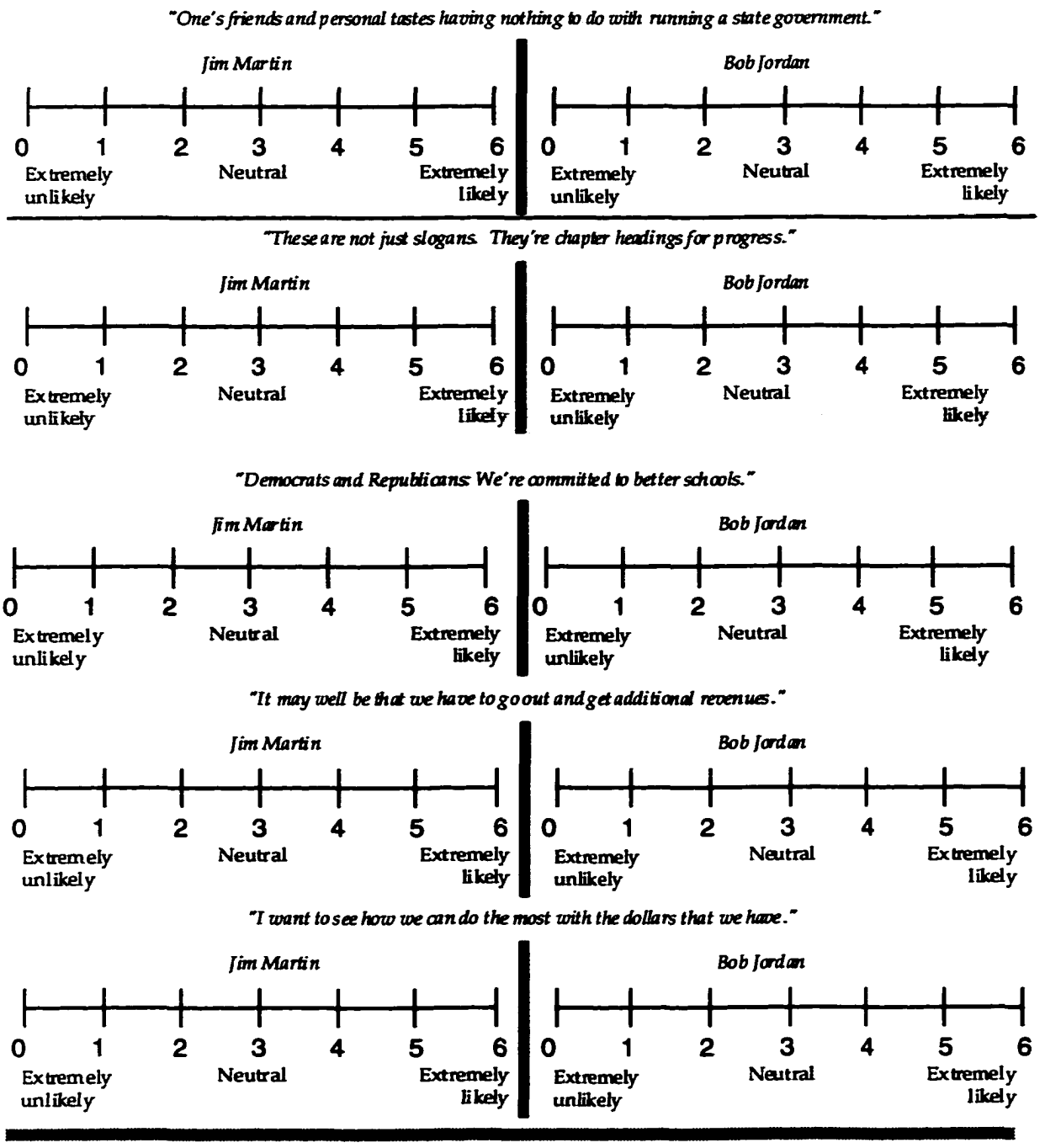


"We will work to build better schools with better pay for teachers."



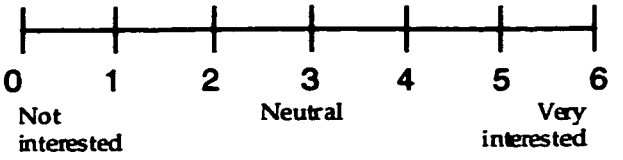
"Nothing—nothing—is more important than the children. The children represent the hope and future of this great state."





Please provide us with some information about your interest in politics:

In general, how interested are you in politics? (Please circle the number that best corresponds to your level of interest:



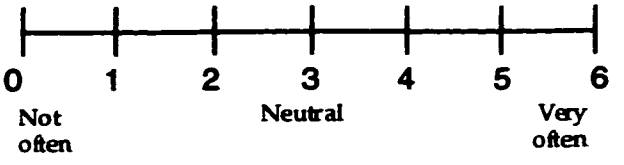
Do you identify yourself as a (circle one):

Democrat Independent Libertarian Republican Other_____

About how many times a week do you: Read newspaper articles devoted to politics ____

Watch political segments on the news ____ Talk to friends or family about politics ____

How often do watch TV shows devoted to politics, like *Meet the Press, Face the Nation, The MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour, This week with David Brinkley, etc. (circle the number that corresponds to how often you watch):*



How many times have you: sent a letter to an editor of a newspaper ____
sent a letter to a politician ____
joined an organization working on a local or national problem ____
signed a petition about a national or local issue ____

Did you vote in the last: Mayoral election YES NO
Gubernatorial election YES NO
Presidential election YES NO

Please provide us with the following demographic information:

Your gender Male Female

Your age ____

Your college level (circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

The name of your college _____

Your major _____

Appendix C

Instructions to Subjects

Thank you for coming.

Today I'm going to show you a short video about a debate between two politicians and then I'm going to ask you to fill out a survey and give me your opinions. The survey is just that—a survey—it's not a test. I'm not trying to find out how smart you are; I just want your opinions.

The tape I'm going to play was made by college students for a campus cable station. In it, you will see two candidates for the governorship of North Carolina in a debate. One is Jim Martin, a Republican, and the other is Bob Jordan, a Democrat. They'll speak for a few minutes and then people who work on their campaign staff will speak. The tape takes about 15 minutes.

After the tape, I'm going to ask you to fill out the opinion survey. Again, it's not a test; I'm just interested in your opinions on what you saw. And, your surveys are completely confidential and anonymous. Don't put your names on them.

After I collect all the surveys I'll tell you more about the experiment.

Anybody have any questions?

Appendix D

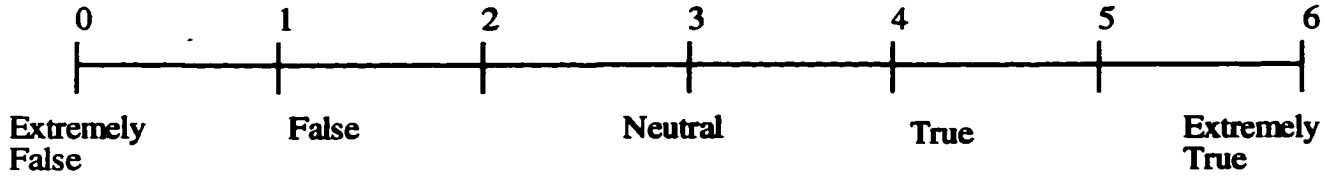
Pilot Study Questionnaire

Opinion Survey

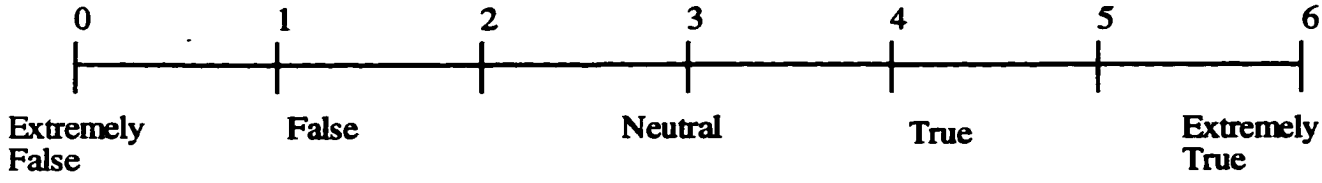
People vary widely in their views about politics and politicians. You have just seen a videotape of a political event, and we are interested in hearing your opinions about it. Please answer the questions below, keeping in mind that there are no correct or incorrect answers. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential.

Your opinions about the speaker. In the items below, please circle the number that expresses how true or false you believe the statement is.

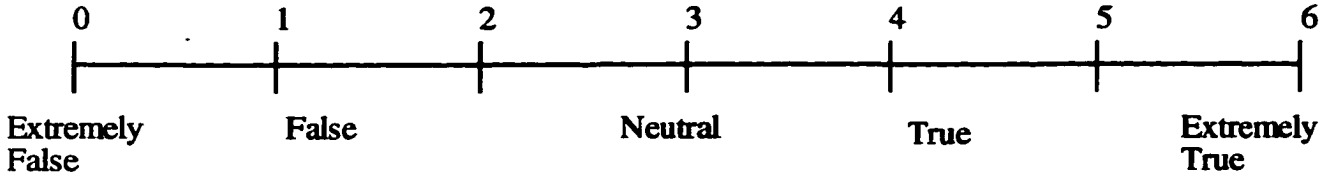
1. **The speaker was likable**



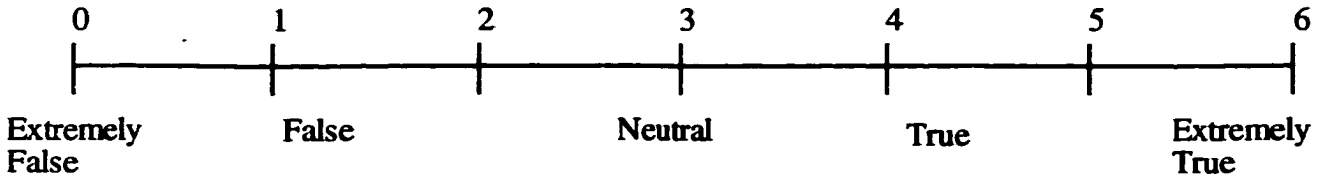
2. **The speaker was not very believable**



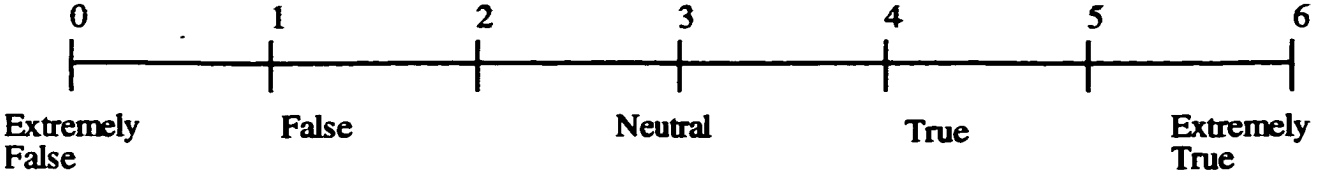
3. **I would probably buy a used car from the speaker**



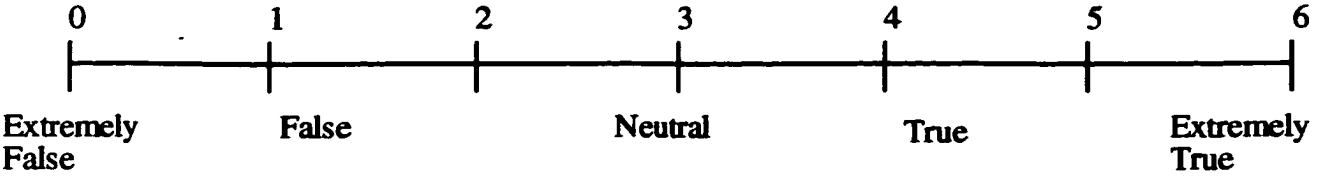
4. **The speaker was not a trustworthy person**



5. The speaker was persuasive

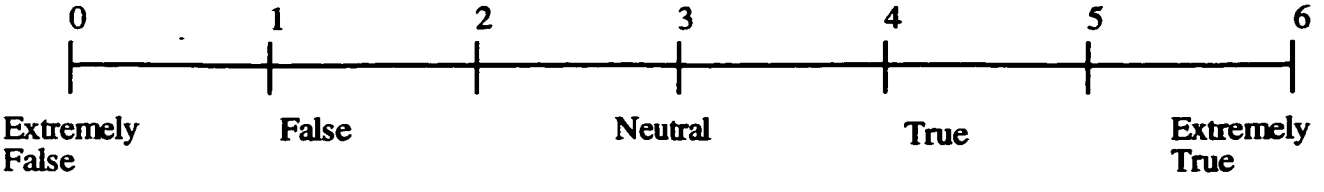


6. The speaker was probably not effective at what he was doing

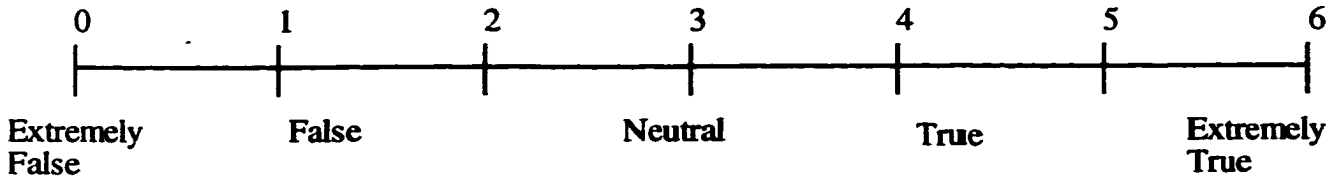


Your opinions about what the speaker said. In the items below, please circle the number that corresponds to how true or false you believe the statement is.

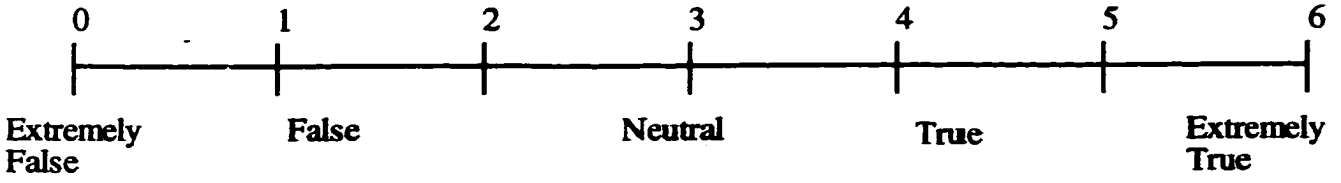
1. My hunch is that the speaker probably clarified what his boss said when the boss spoke earlier.



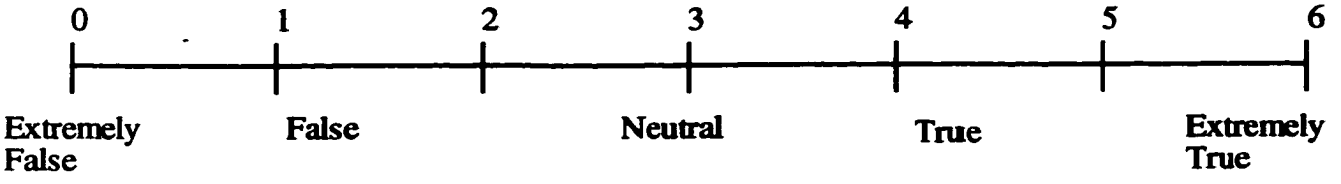
2. The speaker didn't have anything informative to say



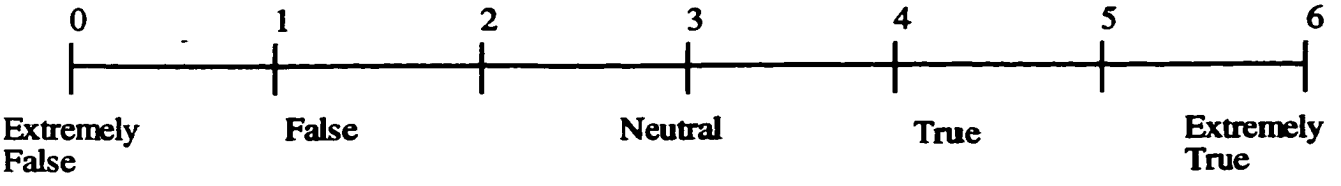
3. The speaker's statements were, overall, accurate



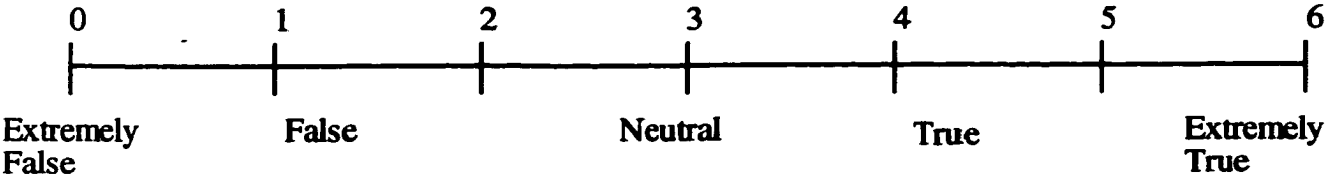
4. The speaker was, overall, positive in what he had to say.



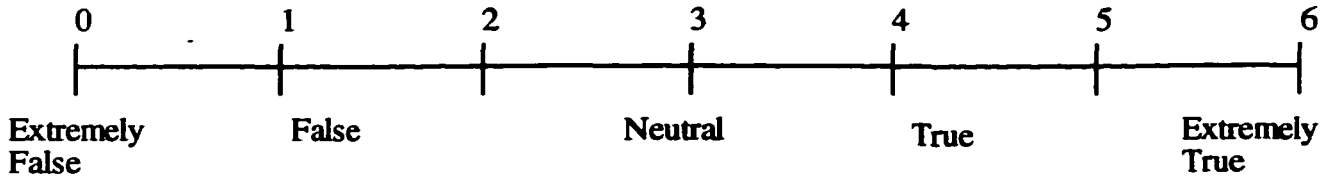
5. The speaker used stereotypes to characterize his boss's opponent



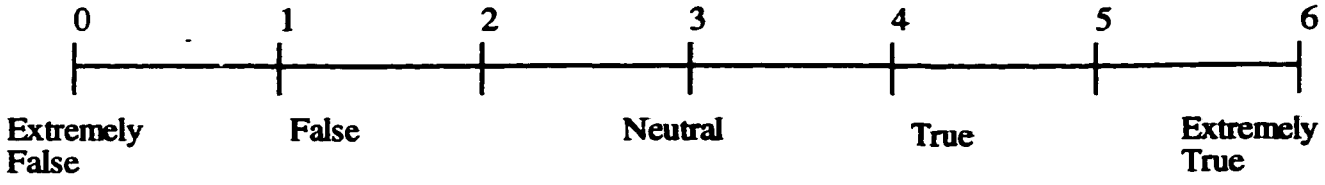
6. From what the speaker had to say, I got a good picture of what the opposition candidate was like



7. The speaker used a lot of political questions in what he had to say



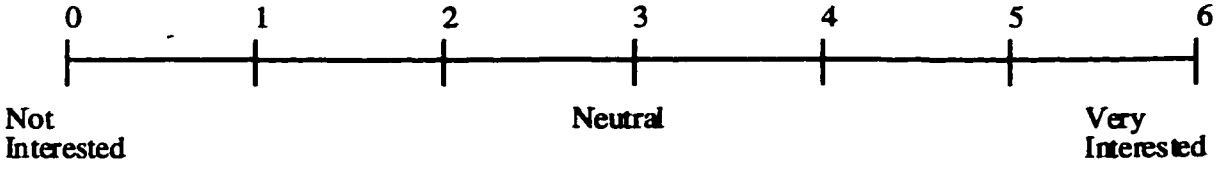
8. Overall, I didn't learn anything about the two candidates from what the speaker had to say



Please provide us with some information about your interest in politics.

People also vary greatly in how interested they are in politics. Please indicate how interested <u>you</u> are in politics by answering the questions below.

1. In general, how interested are you in politics? (Please circle the number that corresponds to your level of political interest.)



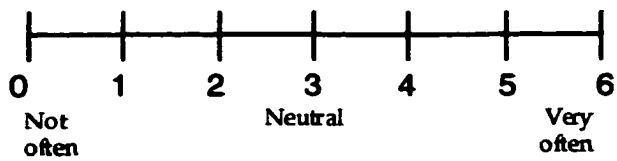
Do you identify yourself as a (circle one):

Democrat Independent Libertarian Republican Other_____

About how many times a week do you: Read newspaper articles devoted to politics ____

Watch political segments on the news ____ Talk to friends or family about politics ____

How often do watch TV shows devoted to politics, like *Meet the Press, Face the Nation, The MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour, This week with David Brinkley, etc. (circle the number that corresponds to how often you watch):*



How many times have you: sent a letter to an editor of a newspaper _____
sent a letter to a politician ____
joined an organization working on a local or national problem ____
signed a petition about a national or local issue ____

Did you vote in the last: Mayoral election YES NO
Gubernatorial election YES NO
Presidential election YES NO

Please provide us with the following demographic information:

Your gender Male Female

Your age ____

Your college level (circle one) Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

The name of your college _____

Your major _____

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