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ABSTRACT

To determine the public's responses to the 1988 presidential debates, the System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups (SYMLOG) was used to analyze how values positions connected to interpersonal styles. Subjects, 157 students from either a mid-sized Southern university or a large Midwestern university and 21 non-students drawn from people who had gathered to watch the first debate at the Democratic headquarters in a mid-size southern city, responded to a set of questions. Findings confirmed that: (1) the winner of the debate was predicted by post-debate preference after the first debate; (2) the winner of the debate was predicted by perceptions of the candidate that projected the strongest personal image, the greatest credibility, the most logical arguments, and the strongest emotional appeals; (3) vote intention was predicted by the SYMLOG value positions; (4) perceptions of strongest personal image, candidate credibility, and candidate ability to use logical argument and present emotional appeals were predicted by SYMLOG value positions; and (5) actual voting choice was predicted by the post-debate preference after the first debate. Findings also showed that if subjects did not watch the debates, they were not able to report their perceptions of which candidates won the debates and that the self-report SYMLOG dimension did not predict one of the candidates. (Sixteen tables of data and three figures are included, and 22 references are appended.) (MS)

POLITICAL VALUES AND POLITICAL JUDGMENTS:

ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO THE 1988 PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

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New players and new issues make each presidential debate a rich source of conversation, speculation, and analysis. The 1988 presidential debates between Vice President George Bush and Massachusetts' Governor Michael Dukakis are no exception. The debates stimulated interest as the media held that the campaign "revealed a lot about what sort of men the candidates are. . . . because the way the candidates have conducted it has reinforced pre-existing doubts about them" (Newsweek, November 7, 1988).

With respect to the debates, both the media and the public complained that the spontaneity had been eliminated from the debates because the candidates could not confront each other's position. These were not "true" debates as they were dominated by rehearsed patterned responses and strategic one liners. These debates were staged as invitations to speak with rigid time limits and no opportunity to interrupt each other as a panel of three journalists questioned the candidates. Newsweek (September 26, 1988) had forewarned us that the journalists selected to question the candidates would ask "seemingly important questions that do nothing but generate pre-packaged answers".

Even preparation for the debates was newsworthy. If the public were willing and interested, they did not have to go far to learn about the candidates' preparation for the debates which included expensive media consultants, numerous briefing books, hours of cram courses, and multiple rehearsals with look-alike, talk-alike stand-ins for the other candidate. An Associated Press story, like so many other news and feature stories, lowered

our expectations of the debates by telling us that the past debates "produced neither great oratory nor breakthroughs on major issues. Instead, they have offered televised summations of the standard speeches and positions the candidates serve up in their daily campaign travels, and some have turned on mistakes in style or substance" (The Kansas City Star, September 18, 1988). Thus, most media writers and debate critics had agreed before the debate: these debates would be no different than the others; the real issue of the debates is candidate image which revolves largely around what mistakes are and are not made.

All this preoccupation with what the debates would not be--that is, debate--did not keep the media, the public, or academics from drawing conclusions about the candidates or analyzing candidate positions. Similar evaluations have been made in the past. Berquist and Golden's (1981) claims about the 1980 televised presidential debates support the idea that image and value assessment are made on second order media information. First, they show that prior to the debate the media act as a promoter of the event and establish expectations regarding performance and outcome. Second, Berquist and Golden provide evidence that once the debates are over news commentators become instant critics of the candidates' performance as well as reporters of listener/viewer response. Third, Berquist and Golden indicate that a sustained "second-wave" of criticism continues to provide listeners/viewers with information as the media continue to assess and analyze the debate interaction in the days following the debate. Fourth, they show that the

electronic media filter a speaker's delivery, appearance, and overall manner to emphasize those presidential skill factors over substance of comment. And, finally, they argue that the televised debate format is not a debate at all. Rather, the format provides an arena for evasive answers as well as restated campaign speeches.

Even though past debates are criticized and recommendations are made for future debates by these and other critics, the debate format remains a function of the political parties and their special interests rather than a real opportunity for the electorate to increase their understanding of the issues. These same criticisms can be levied at the Bush-Dukakis debates.

Whatever the public or our personal reaction to the debates, the precedent for debate has been firmly established. "As a society we have had time to reflect on the usefulness of such debates. We can draw on the evidence of several hundred debate studies and several major books to aid our evaluation of them" (Kraus & Davis, 1981, p. 274). Each debate has produced volumes of analysis and criticism. Because mass media continue to play such a large role in the political process either by providing party or candidate information, or analyzing events and process, academics continue to provide another type of analysis--that of media's role in the presidential debates. "Television debates appear to be an important form of political communication for modern campaigns. Evidence suggests that debates serve some groups of voters quite well. Debates may provide a means of making our society more democratic" (Kraus & Davis, 1981, p. 275). The assessments of past debates in general and the

evaluations of media's role in the debate process in particular has resulted in several hypotheses about the effects of debate viewing and consequent effects on voter behavior.

Research of Past Debates

In Kraus and Davis' (1981) review of research studies on the presidential debates between 1960 and 1980, they found that two types of voters are most likely to utilize the debates as sources of information. The first group are the elite pluralists. This group of voters lets their strongly developed attitudes dominate their use of the debates. Elite pluralists use the debates to "serve as another source of partisan communication which helps them become more convinced of the desirability of their party's candidate and the weaknesses of his opponent" (Kraus & Davis, 1981, p. 286). The second group identified by Kraus and Davis (1981) are new voters--those who lack a firm tie or commitment to a political party and whose political attitudes are not polarized. These voters tend to make up their minds about candidates late in the campaigns; thus, the debates serve to activate political interests as these voters do not engage in other political activities.

Sigelman and Sigelman (1984) report that most impact studies of the 1968 and 1976 presidential debates indicate that televised debates reinforce existing perceptions and predispositions rather than change previously held images of candidates, issue orientations, or voting intentions. Their own study of the Carter-Reagan debate indicates that voting intention permitted accurate predictions to be made of who won the debate. They

conclude that "the public does not approach presidential debates cognitively unencumbered and determined to weigh the evidence evenhandedly" (Sigelman & Sigelman, 1984, p. 627). There is a generally held assumption that "people who normally tune in political stimuli--such as debates--generally already are more interested and informed about politics than those who do not tune in such stimuli" (Lemert, Elliott, Nestvold, & Rarick, 1983, pp. 155-156). These conclusions and assumptions together suggest that we should be able to see distinguishable differences in those who profess party alignment and in those who do and do not watch the debates.

Why Do We Continue to Ask Who Won?

Vancil and Pendell (1984) report that there appears to be an obsession with winning and that it permeates both scholarly and popular analyses of the presidential debates. From the confusion that results from mixed operationalizations of asking the question "who won?", Vancil and Pendell propose six criteria which provide alternative meanings for the phrase "debate winner". Five of those six are of interest here.

Their first criterion is that "winner" simply refers to the viewers' pre-debate candidate preference. Vancil and Pendell advocate that the idea of the viewer is not to weigh the information presented in the debate, but to participate actively by supporting the preferred candidate and to affirm their victory. They suggest that this phenomenon occurs because "the debate is viewed as a pre-election match, it is not taken as the real contest" (Vancil & Pendell, 1984, p. 63).

A second criterion suggests that the "winner" of the debate

refers to the candidate whose position statements on the issues are most consistent with those of the viewer. "Political ideologies, party preferences, and issue predispositions markedly determine which candidate will be perceived as sensible, wise, knowledgeable, and truthful as the debate progresses" (Vancil & Pendell, 1984, p. 64).

The third criterion advanced by Vancil and Pendell (1984) is that the "winner" may be the candidate who viewers perceive to have superior debate skills. This criterion causes much confusion as being a "better debater" may not be the same as "winning the debate", particularly as the Bush-Dukakis debate format legitimized non-contact rhetorical styles. There was no actual debate confrontation.

The fourth criterion is that the "winner" may be the candidate who viewers perceive to have a superior presidential personality. Issues may be unimportant, but the goal of the viewer becomes to "identify the best and the brightest, the candidate with the moral and intellectual capacity to lead the nation and to make the right decisions" (Vancil & Pendell, 1984, p. 67).

The fifth criterion advanced by Vancil and Pendell (1984) is that the "winner" is the candidate labeled such by the news media. Even if a person does not watch the debates, if you are somehow connected to our mass media laden world media, you "know" who won the debates because you have been told by the media or been able to make some post-debate decision about who won by listening to or reading the media's analyses and critiques.

Concurring with Vancil and Pendell's (1984) analysis, we believe that asking "who won" in several direct and indirect forms may be a more appropriate method for getting to a realistic understanding of the electorate's perceptions of the debate. But as Vancil and Pendell identify, asking the "who won?" questions in several formats invokes the capacity of the responses to complement as well as to conflict with each other.

Similar conclusions from an analysis from a different perspective are drawn by Rouner and Perloff (1988). They look at debate effects from the maximum effects and minimum effects tradition. Maximum effects argue that debates exert a wide range of cognitive and attitudinal effects while the minimum effects tradition maintains that individuals' pre-existing beliefs and biases shield them from debate influence. Their empirical study using controls for pre-debate preference provides stronger evidence than do Sigelman and Sigelman's (1984) findings that selectivity biases are operative for voters with pre-debate preferences. However, viewers who were undecided prior to the debate did not predict perception of the debate outcome. These results lend themselves to an examination of more cognitive variables such as information about the personal characteristics and issue positions of the candidates rather than the perception of who won the debate (Rouner & Perloff, 1988).

Values

Campaign issues and presidential images have been standard variables for study (in the studies already cited; also see Katz & Feldman, 1962; Kraus & Smith, 1962; Sears & Chaffee, 1979; Simmons & Leibowitz, 1979; and Tannebaum, Greenberg, & Silverman,

1962). Davies (1980) points us in a new direction in the study of political campaigns--values. Using the underlying theory and categorization of interpersonal styles, world views (value positions) and personality types from Bales' (1970) Personality and Interpersonal Behavior, Davies investigates the use of world views or value positions as viable opportunities for assessing political positions. Acknowledging Bales' premise that one's values affect a person's self picture, Davies took each of Bales' value positions and completed case histories to test the clarity of the categorization scheme as well as the comprehensive spread and ability of the types to differentiate.

The value positions are connected to the interpersonal styles developed by Bales (1970). Both are expanded in Bales and Cohen's (1979) SYMLOG: System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups. This later development includes methods for empirically gathering data about world views by either examining the frequency of categorical interaction or through a self-report that captures the perceived frequency/intensity of value display. The value types are generally synonymous with the interpersonal axes of the SYMLOG space. The three theoretical orthogonal dimensions (conceived as continua) are: 1) Dominance (U=Upward) to Submissive (D=Downward); 2) Friendly (P=Positive) to Unfriendly (N=Negative); and 3) Task Oriented (F=Forward) to Emotionally Expressive (B=Backward).

In the SYMLOG value space, the three basic dimensions are translated into politically significant terms by Polley (1983, 1986) who continues to develop the original SYMLOG space. In

Polley's political transformation of the space, U-D becomes material success and power (U) to ascetic self-denial (D). P-N becomes equalitarian (P) to self-interest (N). The F-B dimension is translated into conventionality (F) to anti-conformity (B). Thus, the space is made up of 26 vectors which are the permutations of the three dimensions (e.g., U, UD, UDF, and so on).

Davies' (1980) attraction to the SYMLOG value space is that it liberates political ideology from the "constricting linearity of the conventional Left-Right political spectrum. . . . And it is satisfying, finally to see that over studied type, the authoritarian personality, filling just one neat slot out of 26" (p. 127). His case study investigation of the 26 value types caused Davies to conclude that "one is tempted, indeed, to see F rather than P as the political centre--or, rather to see the F-B axis as the one with the highest charge of intrinsically political current, with the flanking NF-PB and PF-NB axes carrying most of what is left" (p. 265).

Polley (1983) has completed one study which verifies Bales' initial assumptions by converging the SYMLOG value space with the Eysenck Social Attitude Space and self-reports on scales of Conservative-Liberal and Democrat-Republican.

> The obvious implication is that this organization of social attitudes parallels the predominant political polarization in this country. A single dimension is identified which runs from "a powerful law and order" (UNF) to "quiet contentment, taking it easy" (DPB). As a simple stereotype, this seems to fit the Republican-

Democrat polarization quite well. (p. 74)

Polley continues: the distinct advantage of SYMLOG in measuring values over other measures is that

> rather than dealing with temporal issues, it deals with abstract values such as material success and power, trust in the goodness of others, and rugged individualism. If the means shift on the SYMLOG value scales, we may assume that it represents an actual shift in the values. (pp. 75-76)

Another verification study completed by Holmes (1986) led that researcher to conclude that the social evaluation derived from self-images on the SYMLOG Value Rating Form has both social and political meaning. It appears that SYMLOG may well be a viable tool for measuring value expression in the political context. What we know about political candidates is based on their interaction style. And, in political campaigns, that interaction is largely focused on values about issues. Even if most of the electorate has no first hand experience with the candidate, mass media display candidate communication by covering campaign speeches and debates (first order), or through news reporting of what the candidate said that day in the campaign (second order). Thus, it seems that we make value perceptions and assumptions based on some, even though limited, access to candidates' interaction.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Although the studies cited above, along with related ones we have not mentioned, have influenced our thinking, we are

especially indebted to Bales and his work on SYMLOG value images. To gain a more thorough insight into this method, one of the authors spent time with Bales at Harvard University. The conversations held on that occasion, along with observations of the SYMLOG method in use, contributed to the belief that this approach would be especially suitable to an analysis of presidential debates. It is against this background that we sought to answer two research questions:

1. To what extent did subjects modify their opinion after the debates?

2. What is the relationship of SYMLOG value images to debate outcomes?

These questions, in turn, led to the development of 10 hypothesis and one research question.

Based primarily upon the work of Vancil and Pendell (1984) and their alternative representations of "winner" of the debate, we developed the following set of hypotheses for those subjects who viewed some or all of both debates.

H1: The winner of the debate will be the candidate predicted by post-debate preference after the first debate.

H2: The self-report SYMLOG dimensions will best predict one of the candidates. This candidate will be the "winner" of the debate.

H3: The winner of debate will be predicted by perceptions of the candidate that projected the strongest personal image, the greatest credibility, the most logical arguments, and the strongest emotional appeals.

H4: The winner of the debate will be that candidate which most closely resembles the Most Effective Leadership Position (Koenigs & Cowen, 1988) according to the SYMLOG value positions.

Still following the focus of Vancil and Pendell (1984), one question about those subjects who did not watch the debates will be asked.

Q1: If subjects did not watch the debates, were they able to report their perceptions of which candidate won the debates?

Using the theoretical foundation of SYMLOG (Bales, 1970, 1979; Davies, 1980; & Polley, 1983, 1986), the following set of hypotheses are generated for all subjects:

H5: Vote intention will be predicted by the SYMLOG value positions.

H6: Perceptions of strongest personal image will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions.

H7: Perceptions of candidate credibility will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions.

H8: Perceptions of candidate ability to use logical argument will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions.

H9: Perceptions of candidate ability to present emotional appeal will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions.

And, finally,

H10: Actual voting choice will be predicted by the pre-election preference after the first debate.

Subjects

Subjects for this study were drawn from student and non-student populations. The student subjects (n=157) were enrolled in communication courses either at a mid-size Southern university or a large Midwestern university. Students at the southern university were asked to respond to questionnaires after the first debate, and prior to and after the second debate. Students at the midwestern university were asked to respond to questionnaires after the first and second debates. After

election day, students at both universities were asked to indicate if and how they voted in the national election.

Generally, the subjects were about evenly split between the two schools; females represented about 57% of the sample; and 90% of them were the traditional college age (18-25). Nearly 44% of these subjects identified themselves as Republicans while 39% were swing voters. Only 15% identified themselves as Democrats; 2% indicated that they did not identify with any of the three other categories. More than half of the student subjects watched all or some of the first debate.

The non-student sample (n=21) was drawn from people who had gathered to watch the first debate at the Democratic headquarters in a mid-size southern city. The headquarters staff agreed to allow the researcher to collect data on a volunteer basis at the end of the debate. Unfortunately, a similar event for the second debate was not planned. This data was collected to add a minimal baseline comparison to the student subjects' responses.

Even though attendance at this viewing was by invitation, not all indicated that they identified themselves as Democrats. This sample was evenly split according to sex and represented several age groups. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of both the student and non-student samples.

Table 1

Sample Demographics

	Students South (n=74)	Students Midwest (n=83)	Non-Students (n=21)
Party Identification			
Democrat	17	7	17
Republican	26	43	0
Swing Voter	29	32	4
Other	2	0	0
Sex			
Female	47	42	10
Male	27	41	11
Age			
18-25	63	78	3
16-35	5	5	6
36-45	5	0	8
46-55	1	0	0
over 55	0	0	4
Viewed Debate 1			
All	33	22	21
Some	30	39	0
None	11	22	0
Viewed Debate 2	16	2[illegible]	--
All	30	33	--
Some	28	23	--
None			

Procedure

Both the student and non-student subject groups were asked to respond to a set of questions. The student subjects were given their questionnaires and asked to return them to their instructors. The non-student subject group responded to their questionnaires immediately after the debate.

The questions used in the study are modeled after questions asked in a study of the 1984 Reagan and Mondale debates (partially reported in Wall, Golden, & James, 1988). These questions also resemble the types of questions asked in other presidential debate research: party identification, interest

in the debates, indication of watching the debates, pre and post debate preference, indication of the image and credibility of the candidates, indication of the ability of the candidates to present logical arguments and emotional appeals, and general demographic questions. Other than the demographic questions, responses were generally on a five-point Likert-type scale.

The second part of the questionnaire asked for responses to the SYMLOG Value Form. The form originally developed by Bales and Cohen (1979) stems from Bales' (1970) earlier work and has been further developed and validated by Polley (1983, 1986). The value form consists of 26 value phrases each of which represents the single SYMLOG dimensions (e.g., U) and each double and triple permutation of the SYMLOG dimensions (e.g., UF, UPF). Responses to each value phrase are made on a three point scale (0=rarely, never; 1=sometimes; and 2=often, always). Instructions for calculating the final SYMLOG value positions are detailed in Bales and Cohen (1979). Subjects were asked to respond to value phrases about themselves, and both presidential candidates.

Table 2 presents the reliabilities of the SYMLOG value form. The Value Form is displayed in Figure 1.

TABLE 2

SYMLOG Reliabilities

SYMLOG Value Form	Post Debate 1	Post Debate 2
	Student Subjects	
Self U-D	.620	.733
Self P-N	.648	.735
Self F-B	.632	.757
Bush U-D	.820	.855
Bush P-N	.783	.841
Bush F-B	.814	.865
Dukakis U-D	.723	.789
Dukakis P-N	.660	.786
Dukakis F-B	.739	.814
	(n=157)	
	Non-Student Subjects	
Self U-D	.504	
Self P-N	.463	
Self F-B	.404	
Bush U-D	.458	
Bush P-N	.480	
Bush F-B	.649	
Dukakis U-D	.518	
Dukakis P-N	.148	
Dukakis F-B	.354	
	(n=21)	

The reliabilities for the student subjects are within acceptable ranges. The reliabilities are best for their perceptions of Bush. The reliabilities of the non-student subjects are low, and should be interpreted with caution due to the small sample size.

Results

Without separating viewers from non-viewers, the two samples reported the following interest and perceptions after the first debate (Table 3). Table 4 presents the perceptions of the

student subjects prior to the second debate, and after the second debate.

TABLE 3

Perceptions After Debate 1

Variable	Students (n=157)	Non-students (n-21)
Interest in the debate (scale 0=no interest; 4=great interest)	2.968	4.000
Leaning toward candidate (indicates students are somewhat leaning toward Bush; non-students are strongly leaning toward Dukakis)	2.318	4.571
Strongest personal image	2.641	3.571
Presents greatest credibility	2.494	4.000
Strongest logical arguments	2.684	4.286
Strongest emotional appeals	2.942	3.619
(the above questions were based on a 5 point scale; the anchor of 1 indicates Bush was perceived more favorably; the anchor of 5 indicates Dukakis was perceived more favorably)		

TABLE 4

Student Perceptions Prior to and After Debate 2

Variable	Prior to Debate 2 (n=70)	After Debate 2 (n=157)
Interest in the debate	3.143	
Leaning toward candidate	2.371	2.174
Strongest personal image	2.529	2.489
Presents greatest credibility	2.557	2.423
Strongest logical arguments	2.743	2.545
Strongest emotional appeals	2.971	2.699

Table 5 presents the SYMLOG value perceptions calculated from the data received after the first debate for the student and non-

student subjects and after the second debate for the student subjects.

TABLE 5

SYMLOG Value Perceptions

SYMLOG Dimension	After Debate 1 Students (n=157)	After Debate 1 Non-students (n=21)	After Debate 2 Students (n=153)
Self U-D	0.013	0.200	-0.087
Bush U-D	1.175	0.200	1.127
Dukakis U-D	1.346	3.300	0.953
Self P-N	3.968	4.667	3.817
Bush P-N	2.780	1.524	2.790
Dukakis P-N	2.039	2.905	1.627
Self F-B	1.481	-0.286	1.078
Bush F-B	4.219	6.571	4.118
Dukakis F-B	0.740	0.714	-0.085

(potential range -18 to +18)

Table 6 displays the correlations of the SYMLOG dimensions for the student subjects. Table 7 displays the correlations of the SYMLOG dimensions for the non-student subjects. These correlations indicate that the three dimensions do not violate the assumption of orthogonality. Questions about the relationship of the three SYMLOG dimensions have been raised in the past.

TABLE 6

Correlations of SYMLOG Dimensions for Student Subjects

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
				Time 1				
1 Self U-D	-.170*	-.176*	-.015	-.042	-.094	.016	.045	.079
2 Self P-N		.096	-.005	.190*	-.063	.007	-.014	-.132
3 Self F-B			.006	.278*	.270*	-.042	.003	-.038
4 Bush U-D				-.197*	-.109	.426*	.109	.078
5 Bush P-N					.151	.008	.159*	.022
6 Bush F-B						.001	.107	.118
7 Dukakis U-D							-.165*	.000
8 Dukakis P-N								.120
9 Dukakis F-B								
				(n=157)				
				------Time 2------				
1 Self U-D	-.046	-.225*	.167*	-.204*	-.098	.049	-.095	.049
2 Self P-N		.231*	.061	.401*	.054	.135	.069	-.049
3 Self F-B			.013	.244*	.171*	.046	-.072	-.042
4 Bush U-D				-.046	.066	.409*	.078	-.002
5 Bush P-N					.176*	.053	.026	-.050
6 Bush F-B						.105	.117	.111
7 Dukakis U-D							-.161*	-.093
8 Dukakis P-N								.295*
9 Dukakis F-B								
				(n=150)				

*=p<.05

TABLE 7

Correlations of SYMLOG Dimensions for Non-Student Subjects

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
				Time 1				
1 Self U-D	-.255	.012	-.079	.066	-.064	.593*	-.023	-.020
2 Self P-N		.149	.094	-.043	.033	-.521*	.676*	.088
3 Self F-B			.160	.160	-.228	.171	-.068	.632*
4 Bush U-D				-.149	-.130	.061	.320	.213
5 Bush P-N					.117	.151	-.375	.343
6 Bush F-B						-.279	.344	.041
7 Dukakis U-D							-.342	-.124
8 Dukakis P-N								-.143
9 Dukakis F-B								

(n=21)

*=p<.05

The value profiles for self-reports of the student groups and their value profiles of the candidates at time 1 are shown in Figure 1. Self-report value profiles and their value profiles of the candidates at time 2 are shown in Figure 2. The self-report and candidate value profiles of the non-student group are shown in Figure 3. Each of these figures displays the rating intensity on each of the 26 vectors that make up the SYMLOG space.

FIGURE 1

Value Profiles of Student Subjects: Time 1

U Individual financial success, personal prominence and power

UP Popularity and social success, being liked and admired

UPF Active teamwork toward common goals, organizational unity

UF Efficiency, strong impartial management

UNF Dogmatic enforcement of authority, rules and regulations

UN Tough-minded, self-oriented assertiveness

UNB Rugged, self-oriented individualism, resistance to authority

UB Active pursuit of change, new and unorthodox ideas

UPB Leading group-centered efforts to change and seek new solutions

P Friendship, mutual pleasure, recreation

PF Responsible idealism, collaborative work

F Conservative, established, correct ways of doing things

NF Rigid adherence to organizational expectations and rules

N Self-protection, self-interest first, self-sufficiency

NB Rejection of established procedures, rejection of conformity

B Change to new procedures, different ideas

PB Group-centered approaches to new ideas and procedures

DP Trust in the goodness of others

DPF Dedication, faithfulness, loyalty to the organization

DF Obedience to the chain of command, compliance with authority

DNF Grudging self-sacrifice in the interests of the organization

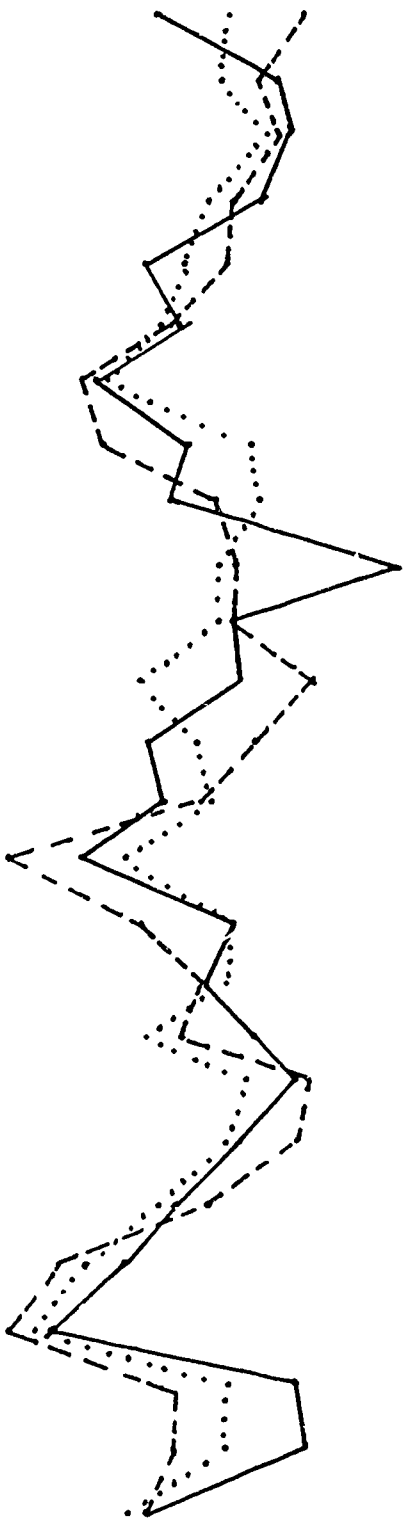
DN Passive rejection of popularity, going it alone

DNB Admission of failure, withdrawal of effort from the task

DB Tolerance for new ideas and different procedures

DPB Comfort with co-worker's new ideas and suggestions for change

D Giving up personal needs and desires, passivity



—— = Self - - - = Bush .... = Dukakis

FIGURE 2

Value Profiles of Student Subjects: Time 2

U Individual financial success, personal prominence and power

UP Popularity and social success, being liked and admired

UPF Active teamwork toward common goals, organizational unity

UF Efficiency, strong impartial management

UNF Dogmatic enforcement of authority, rules and regulations

UN Tough-minded, self-oriented assertiveness

UNB Rugged, self-oriented individualism, resistance to authority

UB Active pursuit of change, new and unorthodox ideas

UPB Leading group-centered efforts to change and seek new solutions

P Friendship, mutual pleasure, recreation

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F Conservative, established, correct ways of doing things

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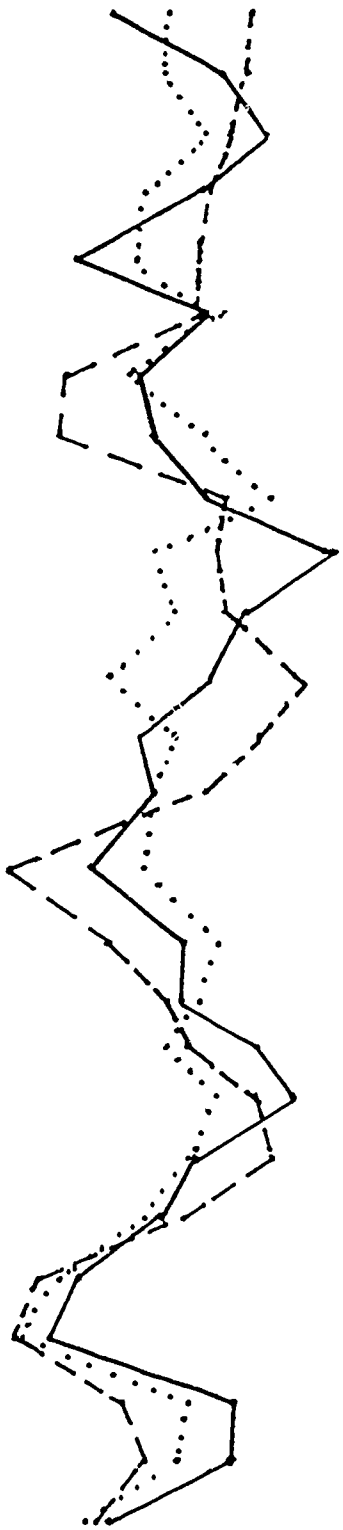
DNB Admission of failure, withdrawal of effort from the task

DB Tolerance for new ideas and different procedures

DPB Comfort with co-worker's new ideas and suggestions for change

D Giving up personal needs and desires, passivity



—— = Self - - - = Bush ···· = Dukakis

FIGURE 3

Value Profiles of Non-Student Subjects: Time 1

U Individual financial success, personal prominence and power

UP Popularity and social success, being liked and admired

UPF Active teamwork toward common goals, organizational unity

UF Efficiency, strong impartial management

UNF Dogmatic enforcement of authority, rules and regulations

UN Tough-minded, self-oriented assertiveness

UNB Rugged, self-oriented individualism, resistance to authority

UB Active pursuit of change, new and unorthodox ideas

UPB Leading group-centered efforts to change and seek new solutions

P Friendship, mutual pleasure, recreation

PF Responsible idealism, collaborative work

F Conservative, established, correct ways of doing things

NF Rigid adherence to organizational expectations and rules

N Self-protection, self-interest first, self-sufficiency

NB Rejection of established procedures, rejection of conformity

B Change to new procedures, different ideas

PB Group-centered approaches to new ideas and procedures

DP Trust in the goodness of others

DPF Dedication, faithfulness, loyalty to the organization

DF Obedience to the chain of command, compliance with authority

DNF Grudging self-sacrifice in the interests of the organization

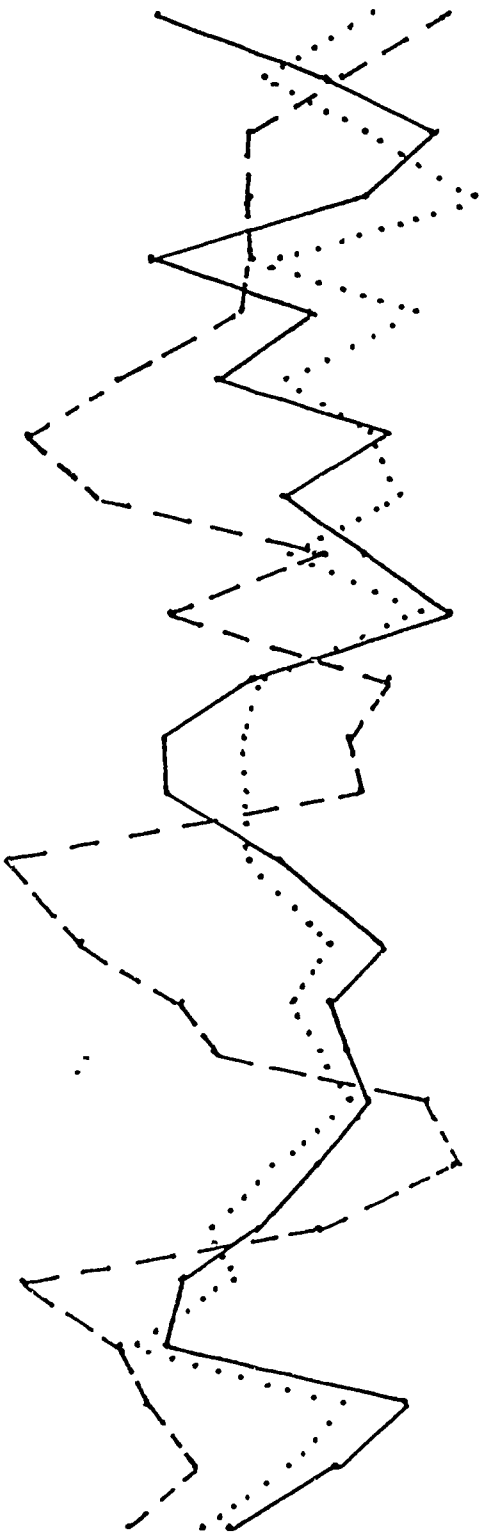
DN Passive rejection of popularity, going it alone

DNB Admission of failure, withdrawal of effort from the task

DB Tolerance for new ideas and different procedures

DPB Comfort with co-worker's new ideas and suggestions for change

D Giving up personal needs and desires, passivity



— = Self -- = Bush ···· = Dukakis

The first group of hypotheses investigates the notion of "winner" of the debate for those student subjects who watched some or all of the debate. Hypothesis 1 suggests that the winner of the debate could be predicted by post-debate preference after the first debate. Testing the question "Who do you believe won the first debate?" as the criterion and responses to the question "Toward whom are you leaning?" as the dependent variable, the overall F was 52.28 (df=1,99; p=.0001) and accounted for 35% of the variance. Using the question "In your opinion, what was the outcome of the first debate?" to same dependent variable, the overall F was just slightly better (F=59.04; df=1,99; p=.001) accounting for 37% of the variance. There seems to be little difference in asking the question in terms of "who won" and "what was the outcome". This is interesting in that the response sets to the two questions were different. The "who won" question had a non-scaled response set while the "outcome" questions had a 5-item Likert-type response set.

These same questions were tested for the second debate. The results are similar. Testing the "won" question as predicted by the "leaning" question, the overall F was 73.75 (df=1,110; p=.0001) and accounted for 40% of the variance. Testing the "outcome" question, the overall F was just slightly better (F=85.20; df=1,110; p=.0001) accounting for 43% of the variance. Thus, the first hypothesis is supported. The winner of the debate can be predicted by the initial post-debate preference of the subjects. Similar results are achieved by asking either a "who won" question or an "outcome" type question.

The second hypothesis suggests that one of the candidates can

be identified as the winner by predicting candidate SYMLOG value perceptions from self-report SYMLOG value perceptions. Table 8 presents the regression results.

TABLE 8

SYMLOG Value Predictions of Debate Winner

SYMLOG Self-Report Dimension	predicts	SYMLOG Candidate Dimension	F	df	p	R^2
		First Debate				
Self U-D		Bush U-D	0.99	1,98	.321	.010
		Duk U-D	0.32	1,98	.574	.003
Self P-N		Bush P-N	4.54	1,99	.036	.044
		Duk P-N	0.42	1,99	.520	.004
Self F-B		Bush F-B	9.73	1,99	.002	.089
		Duk P-N	0.30	1,99	.583	.003
		Second Debate				
Self U-D		Bush U-D	3.50	1,107	.064	.032
		Duk U-D	0.03	1,107	.871	.000
Self P-N		Bush P-N	24.41	1,110	.000	.182
		Duk P-N	0.12	1,110	.733	.001
Self F-B		Bush F-B	1.91	1,110	.170	.017
		Duk P-N	0.19	1,110	.661	.001

Few of the regressions had significant results for predicting winner through self-identification. Although self-reports of SYMLOG values predicted SYMLOG perceptions of Bush's P-N and F-B for the first debate and P-N at the second, so little variance was accounted for that the significance is not useful. Thus, the second hypotheses is rejected. Self-perceptions on the SYMLOG value scale do not predict the winner as a measure of identification with candidates.

The third hypothesis suggests that the "winner" of the debate

can be predicted by subject perceptions of the candidates' personal image and credibility, and the candidates' ability to deliver logical arguments and emotional appeals. The hypothesis was tested with backward entry stepwise regressions. The results are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Predictions by Image, Credibility, Argument, and Appeals

Entry Step	Model Predicting Who Won	F	df	p	R^2
	First Debate				
1	Logical Argument	67.66	1,98	.0001	.408
2	Emotional Appeal	35.90	2,97	.0001	.425
3	Credibility	24.82	3,96	.0001	.437
4	Personal Image	18.581	4,95	.0001	.439
	Second Debate				
1	Logical Argument	100.85	1,109	.0001	.481
2	Emotional Appeal	56.49	2,108	.0001	.511
3	Credibility	40.19	3,107	.0001	.530
4	Personal Image	30.85	4,106	.0001	.538

As seen above, all of the variables fit into a significant model to predict "who won" the debate and hypotheses three is supported. Perception of the candidates' logical argument accounted for most of the variance. In both debates, emotional appeal accounted for two percent or so more of the variance with little more added by the subjects' perceptions of the candidates' credibility or personal image.

Hypothesis four presumed that subjects' party affiliation will identify the winner of the debate by comparing the SYMLOG value positions of the candidates to the SYMLOG value position which Koenigs and Cowen (1988) have established as the ideal position of the "most effective leader". In this hypothesis, we

are trying to tap into Vancil and Pendell's (1984) operationalization that the winner is the candidate who displays the most presidential or leadership skills.

Using the same SYMLOG value form, Koenigs and Cowen collected data from adult raters in business settings. Generally, these raters were engaged in personal or organizational development activities and represented a wide variety of public and private sector organizations. Asked "What kinds of values does the most effective leader (MEL) of task-oriented teams you have known show in behavior?", the position for that idealized position was 3 U on the U-D dimension, 8 P on the P-N dimension, and 8 F on the F-B dimension. This position could be characterized as expressing values slightly interested in material success and power (U), and expressing values that are equal and moderate of equality and emotion (P) and conforming to authority or convention (F). These results were broken down by party identification and are presented in Table 10.

TABLE 10

Comparison of Candidate SYMLOG Position to Most Effective Leader (MEL) SYMLOG Position

Party Identification SYMLOG Variable	Dimension Position	Difference from MEL	Total Difference
	First Debate		
Democrat			
Bush UD	0.750	2.250	
Bush P-N	0.313	7.687	
Bush F-B	3.436	4.564	14.501
Duk U-D	0.563	2.437	
Duk P-N	2.938	5.062	
Duk F-B	1.813	6.187	13.686
	(n=16)		
Republican			
Bush U-D	1.000	2.000	
Bush P-N	3.844	4.156	
Bush F-B	5.200	2.800	8.956
Duk U-D	1.178	1.822	
Duk P-N	1.822	6.178	
Duk F-B	0.000	8.000	16.000
	(n=45)		
	Second Debate		
Democrat			
Bush U-D	-0.250	3.250	
Bush P-N	0.571	7.429	
Bush F-B	4.000	4.000	14.679
Duk U-D	0.250	2.750	
Duk P-N	2.667	5.333	
Duk F-B	0.762	7.238	15.321
	(n=21)		
Republican			
Bush U-D	1.064	1.936	
Bush P-N	3.917	4.083	
Bush F-B	4.063	3.937	9.956
Duk U-D	1.256	1.744	
Duk P-N	1.354	6.646	
Duk F-B	-1.458	9.458	17.851
	(n=47)		
	SYMLOG potential range -18 to +18		

The fourth hypothesis is partially supported. For the first debate, those subjects who profess Republican party identification rated Bush much closer than Dukakis to the "most

effective leader" (MEL) position. Those subjects professing Democratic party alignment rated Bush and Dukakis differently; yet, perceptions of both candidates are about equally distant from the MEL. In the second debate, a similar pattern exists for Republicans. It appears that they align their perceptions of Bush more closely to the values of the MEL while the Democrats have difficulty in perceiving either candidate aligning with the MEL as well as difficulty in differentiating between candidates.

Now turning attention to non-viewers, Question 1 was an attempt to see if student subjects reported a winner for the debate even if they did not watch the debate. Subjects were given the "win" and "outcome" questions and had the opportunity to respond that they "did not watch the debate". Surprisingly, only 1 of 53 students who did not watch the first debate indicated that Bush won; 2 reported that "Bush had an advantage over Dukakis"; and 1 reported that his/her candidate preference did not change as a result of the debate. We suspected that more subjects would respond to these questions even if they did not watch the debate. A similar pattern existed for the second debate. One of the 42 student subjects who did not watch the debate reported that there was no debate winner, but rather "it was a tie"; 1 reported that "Bush had an advantage over Dukakis" while 1 reported no change in candidate preference and 1 reported some change in candidate preference.

The next group of hypotheses deals with the ability of the SYMLOG value scales to predict voter choice and subject perceptions. These hypotheses were tested for all student

subjects regardless of their debate viewing report. Hypothesis 5 suggests that voter choice can be predicted by the SYMLOG value positions (U-D, P-N, and F-B for each candidate). Table 11 reports results of the backward entry stepwise regression models.

TABLE 11

Regressions on SYMLOG Value Positions

Entry Step	Model Predicting Who Subjects Would Vote For After Debate	F	df	p	R^2
	First Debate				
1	Bush P-N	30.94	1,151	.0001	.170
2	Duk P-N	18.45	2,150	.0001	.197
3	Duk F-B	13.92	3,149	.0001	.219
4	Bush F-B	11.78	4,148	.0001	.241
5	Bush U-D	9.88	5,147	.0001	.252
6	Duk U-D	8.35	6,146	.0001	.256
	Second Debate				
1	Bush P-N	33.84	1,148	.0001	.186
2	Duk P-N	21.84	2,147	.0001	.230
3	Bush U-D	15.16	3,146	.0001	.238
4	Duk U-D	11.84	4,145	.0001	.246
5	Bush F-B	9.48	5,144	.0001	.248
6	Duk F-B	7.92	6,143	.0001	.250

After both the first and second debate, the Bush P-N variable contributed most to the regression model. Adding the Dukakis P-N variable to the Bush P-N model was the second best model for predicting how subjects would vote after each of the debates. It is interesting to note that for the first debate, the F-B dimension accounted for more of the variance in the criterion variable (who subjects would vote for) than the U-D dimension. However, for the second debate, just the reverse occurred. In both instances, the addition of the third SYMLOG dimension (U-D after the first debate, and F-B after the second) did not significantly add to the variance already accounted for in the first three or four steps. Insofar as 25% of the variance was accounted for by using all three SYMLOG dimensions in a complete

model, Hypothesis 5 received support.

Hypothesis 6 suggests that the SYMLOG value positions will predict the candidate with the strongest personal image. Table 12 shows the results of the backward entry stepwise regressions.

TABLE 12

SYMLOG Predictions of Candidates' Personal Image

Entry Step	Model Predicting Who Subjects Believe Have Strongest Personal Image	F	df	p	R^2
	First Debate				
1	Bush P-N	8.11	1,151	.005	.051
2	Duk P-N	7.98	2,150	.000	.010
3	Duk F-B	6.30	3,149	.0006	.112
4	Bush F-B	5.50	4,148	.0008	.129
5	Bush U-D	4.55	5,147	.0008	.134
6	Duk U-D	4.12	6,146	.0007	.145
	Second Debate				
1	Bush P-N	23.17	1,147	.0001	.136
2	Duk P-N	20.49	2,146	.0001	.219
3	Bush U-D	14.19	3,145	.0001	.227
4	Duk U-D	10.96	4,144	.0001	.233
5	Bush F-B	8.82	5,143	.0001	.236
6	Duk F-B	7.30	6,142	.0001	.236

Although hypothesis 6 is supported in terms of significance, so little of the variance is accounted for after the first debate (14.5%), as compared to the second debate (23.6%), that the results must be interpreted cautiously. Again, the P-N dimension for both debates accounts for the largest portion of the variance, F-B and U-D dimensions are reversed, and steps 5 and 6 failed to add much to the final equation.

Hypothesis 7 suggests that the candidates' credibility can be predicted with the SYMLOG value positions. Table 13 shows the results of the backward entry stepwise regressions.

TABLE 13

SYMLOG Predictions of Candidates' Credibility

Entry Step	Model Predicting Who Subjects Believe Has Greatest Credibility	F	df	p	R^2
		First Debate			
1	Bush P-N	31.85	1,151	.0001	.174
2	Duk P-N	19.42	2,150	.0001	.206
3	Duk F-B	15.68	3,149	.0001	.240
4	Bush F-B	13.63	4,148	.0001	.269
5	Bush U-D	11.40	5,147	.0001	.279
6	Duk U-D	9.77	6,146	.0001	.287
		Second Debate			
1	Bush P-N	30.13	1,148	.0001	.169
2	Duk P-N	21.77	2,147	.0001	.229
3	Bush U-D	14.65	3,146	.0001	.231
4	Duk U-D	10.95	4,145	.0001	.232
5	Bush F-B	8.71	5,144	.0001	.232
6	Duk F-B	7.21	6,143	.0001	.232

Hypothesis 7 is supported in terms of significance at each of the entry steps, but again the addition of the second and third dimensions adds little more to the model. As seen above, the P-N dimension accounts for the most variance.

Hypothesis 8 suggests that the SYMLOG value positions will predict the candidates' ability to use logical argument. Table 14 shows the results of the backward entry stepwise regressions.

TABLE 14

SYMLOG Predictions of Candidates' Use of Logical Argument

Entry Step	Model Predicting Candidates' Ability To Use Logical Argument	F	df	p	R^2
	First Debate				
1	Bush P-N	21.16	1,150	.0001	.124
2	Duk P-N	14.88	2,149	.0001	.166
3	Duk F-B	10.79	3,148	.0001	.179
4	Bush F-B	9.41	4,147	.0001	.204
5	Bush U-D	8.98	5,146	.0001	.235
6	Duk U-D	8.18	6,145	.0001	.253
	Second Debate				
1	Bush P-N	23.97	1,148	.0001	.139
2	Duk P-N	17.38	2,147	.0001	.191
3	Bush U-D	12.04	3,146	.0001	.198
4	Duk U-D	9.28	4,145	.0001	.204
5	Bush F-B	7.59	5,144	.0001	.209
6	Duk F-B	6.29	6,143	.0001	.209

Hypothesis 8 is supported for all models. A similar patterns exists here as in the previous regression models in terms of the position of the three SYMLOG dimensions and how the dimensions contribute explained variance to the regression model.

Hypothesis 9 suggests that perceptions of the candidates' use of emotional appeals can be predicted by the SYMLOG value positions. Table 15 shows the results of those backward entry stepwise regressions.

TABLE 15

SYMLOG Predictions of Candidates' Use of Emotional Appeals

Entry Step	Model Predicting Candidates' Ability To Use Emotional Appeal	F	df	p	R^2
1	Bush P-N	10.59	1,151	0014	.066
2	Duk P-N	9.55	2,150	.0001	.113
3	Duk F-B	7.82	3,149	.0001	.136
4	Bush F-B	5.87	4,148	.0002	.137
5	Bush U-D	4.67	5,147	.0006	.137
6	Duk U-D	3.87	6,146	.0013	.137
	Second Debate				
1	Bush P-N	20.71	1,148	.0001	.122
2	Duk P-N	14.20	2,147	.0001	.162
3	Bush U-D	9.77	3,146	.0001	.167
4	Duk U-D	7.38	4,145	.0001	.169
5	Bush F-B	5.94	5,144	.0001	.171
6	Duk F-B	4.93	6,143	.0001	.171

Hypothesis 9 is supported in that the regressions were significant. However, the variance accounted for initially and as the model builds is below expectations.

The last hypothesis tests the minimum effects assumption that actual voting choice can be predicted by initial subject preference. Table 16 presents the chi-square matrix.

TABLE 16

Actual Voting Choice Predicted by Initial Post-Debate Preference

Report of Actual Vote	Voting Preference After First Debate		
	Bush	Dukakis	Undecided
Bush	55	0	1
Dukakis	1	17	4

Hypothesis 10 is supported by a significant F of 69.199 (df=2). One thing Table 16 makes very clear is that voting preference changed very little as a result of the televised debates or media reports of the debates or campaign in general. The largest

change came about in the Dukakis camp. Of the five subjects who were undecided, four went with Dukakis and one with Bush.

Summary of Hypotheses

Before beginning a general discussion of the results, the hypotheses and questions are restated with an indication of their confirmation.

H1: The winner of the debate will be predicted by post-debate preference after the first debate. Confirmed.

H2: The self-report SYMLOG dimensions will best predict one of the candidates. This candidate will be the "winner" of the debate. Not Confirmed.

H3: The winner of debate will be predicted by perceptions of the candidate that projected the strongest personal image, the greatest credibility, the most logical arguments, and the strongest emotional appeals. Confirmed.

H4: Party affiliation will determine which candidate most closely resembles the Most Effective Leadership Position (Koenigs & Cowen, 1988) according to the SYMLOG value positions. Partially Confirmed: Republicans Yes, Democrats No.

Q1: If subjects did not watch the debates, are they able to report their perceptions of which candidate won the debates? No.

H5: Vote intention will be predicted by the SYMLOG value positions. Confirmed.

H6: Perceptions of strongest personal image will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions. Confirmed.

H7: Perceptions of candidate credibility will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions. Confirmed.

H8: Perceptions of candidate ability to use logical argument will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions. Confirmed.

H9: Perceptions of candidate ability to present emotional appeals will be predicted by SYMLOG value positions. Confirmed.

H10: Actual voting choice will be predicted by the post-debate preference after the first debate. Confirmed.

Discussion

The findings in this study, we feel, have important implications for rhetorical and communication theory in general and for political communication in particular. With respect to our first prediction, the data provided support for the notion that initial candidate preference is one of the most significant predictors of who won the debate. This finding is consistent with the minimum effects theory. That is, the debates may fail to substantively change the views of those who have clear preferences already formed.

The second hypothesis failed to receive any support. In this hypothesis, we were trying to validate Vancil and Pendell's (1984) self and candidate perception consistency criterion. They argue that the candidate that comes closest to the viewer's issue predispositions will be the candidate that they declare as the winner. Apparently for this group of subjects, issue alignment was not a significant issue in determining who won the debate or in indicating their candidate preference.

The third hypothesis uses Vancil and Pendell's (1984) "best debater" criterion to identify the winner of the debate. We used the candidates' use of logical argument, ability to present emotional appeals, credibility, and personal image as variables that would identify the "best debater". The logical argument variable is the most effective in terms of predicting the subject's choice of winner, followed by emotional appeals and credibility with personal image last. These results reconfirm

those reported earlier by Wall et. al (1988). It appears then that the style and substance of the communication that takes place in the debates does make a difference in how candidates are perceived and how people use those perceptions to make candidate choices.

Using another of Vancil and Pendell's (1984) winner criterion as a basis for our hypothesis testing, we wanted to test the ability of SYMLOG to identify the candidate with the superior presidential personality. The media had generally conceded that these debates were about the overall impressions of the candidates and that the public was in fact being given an opportunity to assess the candidates' presidential appeal. The closest SYMLOG identification of a superior presidential personality was Koenigs and Cowen's (1988) identification of the "most effective leader". While there certainly must be some differences in the idealized most effective leader in task oriented groups or teams, we feel that there was enough similarity to test the SYMLOG images of the candidates against this position. These results were quite interesting. Using the most effective leader SYMLOG position as the criterion, those subjects who identified themselves as Republicans could easily distinguish between the two candidates. They clearly saw Bush as being closer to the criterion position. Subjects professing Democratic party alignment, on the other hand, could not. For these subjects, the SYMLOG positions given to Dukakis and Bush were different, but almost equally distant from the criterion position. Thus, Democrat subjects did not perceive either

candidate as a potentially strong leader.

More work clearly needs to be done using MEL (Most Effective Leader) as an indicator of voter choice. The MEL scores performed very well for subjects who reported being Republicans but it did not differentiate the two candidates for those subjects who reported being Democrats. However, the excellent results derived from the Republican subjects provides strong impetus to continue this line of thought. The poor performance in terms of Democrats could well be part of the poor showing of Dukakis.

Results to question one sought nonviewers reaction to the debate and to see if they would identify a winner. We were hoping to identify the second order media effects that Vancil and Pendell (1984) indicate exist for nonviewers. It appears, though, that student subjects read the questionnaire closely and truthfully responded that they did not watch the debates. This result lends validity to our other hypotheses.

We concur with Vancil and Pendell that the "winner" criterion used in debate polling will affect the results. Cross comparisons are difficult as pollsters and researchers use any of the various definitions of "winner" available when asking "who won the debate." The results of our four hypotheses illuminate the confusion and suggest care when making the selection of the winner criterion.

Our second major group of hypotheses covers new ground as we found that a candidate's image, credibility, and ability to use effective logical argument and emotional appeals can be predicted by utilizing SYMLOG value positions. In each of the five

hypotheses, the P-N dimension was the first variable entered and accounted for the largest amount of variance. In the other hypotheses of this group, P-N again was significantly related to the subject's perception of the candidates' personal image, credibility, emotional and logical arguments after both debates. For the most part, the dimensions were stable in their predictions from time 1 (after the first debate) to time 2 (after the second debate). Considering the amount of variance explained, SYMLOG accounted for 26% and 25% of the variance in response to the candidate preference question after both debates. In the other hypotheses, the amount of variance accounted for by SYMLOG ranged from a low of 14% to a high of 28%, with most of the percentages at the 25% point. Thus, it is our contention that the SYMLOG value questionnaire holds much promise in predicting candidate preferences indicating that candidate perception is tied to perceived value positions.

While these results suggest that the P-N dimension is the viable in identifying candidate preference, Davies (1980) suggests that the F-B dimension should be seen as the primary axis of political involvement. The P-N dimension is anchored by the P vector value statement "friendship, mutual pleasure, recreation, and by the N vector value statement "self-protection, self-interest first, self-sufficiency". With these label identifiers we are surprised that the student subjects used this dimension to account for their candidate preferences.

In the SYMLOG value space, scores of +18 and -18 are the maximum and minimum positions in the space. For these subjects,

their highest value perception on the U-D dimension was for Dukakis after the second debate (1.3); on the F-B dimension, the highest value perception was for Bush after the first debate (4.2). With the exception of Bush's F-B rating, their other U-D and F-B ratings were consistently in the 0 to 2 range. The range of subject P-N ratings of both candidates were even more consistent (1.6 to 2.7). Even so, all of these are in the low range of possible SYMLOG scores indicating that they perceived the candidates as minimally expressing these values. We expect that students would rate themselves in this range, but that they would rate the candidates much higher (closer to the "most effective leader" ratings). We must note that the non-student subjects did not rate the candidates much differently.

With respect to Bush's F ratings (the highest of all SYMLOG ratings in this data), Holmes (1986) suggests that the F-B dimension is where voters lacking strong party commitment make their political judgments. "These weak party identifiers . . . make their judgment about a party's bid for political authority on the merits of its past performance, exercising their vote-control power accordingly" (p. 164). Polley (1983) reports that the predominant political Democrat-Republican attitudes should fit the UNF-DPB polarization emphasizing the F-B dimension. This polarization does not appear in this data. The use of SYMLOG in collecting data on voter perceptions has been sparse, but results are similar in concluding that the F-B dimension is the most representative of political ideology. This dimension is anchored by the F vector value statement of "conservative, established, correct ways of doing things" while the B vector is anchored by

"change to new procedures, different ideas". We believed that this polarization was evident in the candidates' debate communication. While students differentiated between the candidates on this dimension, it did not singly predict or significantly add to the regression models.

Even though, the SYMLOG value dimensions did not perform as expected they appear to be highly related to questions concerning who won the debate and the subjects' indication of how they will vote thus lending further credence to the tool's usefulness in communication research. The use of the SYMLOG value form is one that provides useful insights into the electorate's perceptions of the candidates. Particularly with respect to perceptions of candidates' use of logical argument and their ability to use emotional appeals, and the candidates' credibility and personal image, it would appear that the SYMLOG method has the potential to enlarge our understanding of the three forms of artistic proof outlined by Aristotle in his Rhetoric.

Our last hypothesis was intended to confirm our first hypothesis about the minimum effects of the debates, and it did. Voter preference after the first debate was a highly significant predictor of how subjects indicated they voted in the national election. Of the 56 individuals initially leaning toward Bush, 55 reported actually voting for him. Of the 22 individuals initially leaning toward Dukakis, 17 actually voted for him.

Presidential debates provide a very good opportunity to continue to assess the persuasive effects the debates have on those who watch them. The data reported here indicate that pre-

debate candidate preference is the most effective predictor of voting behavior. This is, in our opinion, probably due to the nature of the presidential debate process being more like a series of very short, highly rehearsed speeches than a true confrontation.

Presidential debate research should continue. For each debate, there will always be a new crop of emerging voters. Second, continuing to analyze debate effects is important as long as "an increasing number of voters are less certain about their political attitudes and less committed to political parties. Many of these voters seek to base their vote decisions on information derived from campaign communication" (Kraus & Davis, 1981, p. 289). Although Kraus and Davis (1981) conclude that "debates accomplish little which is not already done by other forms of political communication" (p. 289), there has not been any report of detrimental debate effects.

This research project, like many before it, indicates that we need to restructure presidential debate research. We keep trying to collect and analyze data as if one of the candidates could win the debate. But since the debate format does not allow for a winner, we should strive for different approaches. The research focus needs to shift to collecting data on pre-debate preferences using the SYMLOG value statements to evaluate those preferences. What is largely unknown at this time is what factors those pre-debate preferences are based upon. Knowing the political values of the electorate expressed in SYMLOG values may aid in developing campaign communication that reinforces and strengthens voters' existing candidate choices.

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