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Inoculation in political campaign communication

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The University of Arizona, 1987

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INOCULATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION

by

Michael Walton Pfau

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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the dissertation prepared by Michael Walton Pfau
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June, 1987

Michael Walton Pfau

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ABSTRACT

This study examined attack and inoculation message strategies in political campaign communication. A total of 341 initial and followup treatment interviews and 392 control interviews were completed among potential voters in a U. S. Senate campaign during October 1986.

The study hypothesized that character attack messages directed to supporters of opposing candidates exert more influence than issue attack messages. This prediction was not supported. Contrary to prediction, the results indicated that, during the latter stages of a political campaign featuring known candidates, issue attack messages exert more persuasive impact than character attack messages.

However, the primary purpose of this investigation was to apply McGuire's inoculation theory to political campaign communication. The study hypothesized that political campaign messages can be designed to inoculate supporters of candidates against the subsequent attack messages of opposing candidates. This prediction was supported.

In addition, the results supported the hypothesis that inoculation confers more resistance to subsequent attack

messages among strong political party identifiers as opposed to weak identifiers, nonidentifiers and crossovers. Contrary to prediction, however, the study found that inoculation confers more resistance among Democrat party loyalists as opposed to Republican party loyalists.

The results of this investigation extend the scope of inoculation theory to new domain, and at the same time, suggest a new strategic approach for candidates in political campaigns.

CHAPTER 1

JUSTIFICATION AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Persuasion, the conscious attempt to alter the attitudes or behaviors of another, plays a central role in politics. From the ancient Greeks to the present, persuasion has been viewed as an essential characteristic of a participatory political process. This is particularly true in the political campaign context. Communication, particularly persuasion, is the fundamental consideration in political campaigns. As McBath and Fisher (1969, p. 17) observe, "Campaigning is essentially a process of communication, a persuasive process."

While the extant literature has treated persuasion as central to political campaigns, it has also viewed conversion as synonymous with persuasion. The practice of, and research in, political persuasion have focused almost exclusively on efforts to alter existing political attitudes of receivers. Kraus and Davis' (1976, p. 3) classic synthesis of research involving mass communication and political behavior examined 3,000 studies, observing that, "A central concern in many of these studies and reviews is the impact of various institutions on voting behavior."

Given such emphasis, it is appropriate to ask, Does political persuasion alter existing attitudes? Despite a voluminous data base, the answer is that, "it depends." Berelson's depiction (1975, p. 531) of the impact of mass media communication on receiver attitudes remains an accurate reflection of the status of present research findings concerning the influence of political communication. "Some kinds of communication on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people under some kinds of conditions, have some kinds of effects."

Nearly 40 years of extensive study of political persuasion have elapsed since Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1968) studied the effects of political persuasion in the 1940 presidential campaign in Erie County, Ohio. Several theories have been advanced during this period which attempt to explain the impact of political persuasion on receiver attitudes. Yet, available theory and research is hardly illuminating.

There are no integrated theoretical perspectives. As McBath and Fisher argue, "although there are various theories of persuasion, no single theory is concerned with political persuasion per se. Instead, theoretical development has proceeded in compartmentalized fashion. There are rival perspectives about the nature of the electorate, the voter decision process, mass communication, and persuasion.

Further, most research findings are context specific, focusing on the influence of set speeches, news, advertising, and debates on receiver attitudes toward candidates. However, most of these studies are atheoretical. Either no explanatory rubric is used, or the theoretical perspective is implied, but not specified.

Despite these failings, the emphasis on conversion continues. As Nimmo and Sanders (1981, p. 21) comment on the focus of contemporary political research, "attitude change and effect studies continue to occupy a central role in inquiries into political advertising, political debates, political socialization, elections and voting, and public opinion." Further, the preoccupation with conversion dictates contemporary political campaign practices. For example, candidates trailing their opponents in the polls are urged to employ communication message strategies to influence the attitudes of those voters who are undecided or weakly disposed to the opposing candidate, while candidates leading in the polls are often advised to shy away from substantive communication in order to avoid alienating voters who support the candidate.

This study adopts the view of Miller and Burgoon (1973) regarding the objectives of persuasion. They distinguish the attempt to change attitudes and behaviors from the effort to foster resistance to change in existing

attitudes and behaviors. Miller and Burgoon (1973, p. 16) note that, "The former objective has been extensively studied by students of persuasion; the latter has been relatively unexplored."

This investigation assumes that, just as political messages can be designed to convert receivers, they can be structured so as to foster resistance. Hence, this study will employ McGuire's inoculation theory as the vehicle to test the efficacy and desirability of the strategy of promoting resistance against attitude change in political campaigns.

Message Strategies

Contemporary political campaign practices place almost exclusive reliance upon three message strategies. Bolstering messages are designed to promote the positive attributes of a candidate's character or issue positions. The bolstering message strategy answers the question, Why should the voter support the candidate? By contrast, attack messages attempt to call attention to failings in the opponent's character or issue positions. The attack message strategy answers the question, Why should the voter not support the opposing candidate? Finally, refutation messages are designed to answer an opponent's attacks. The refutation message strategy answers the question, Why are the opposing candidate's attacks false or irrelevant?

A political candidate can employ any one or more of these three message strategies in the course of a campaign. Generally, however, incumbents and challengers will employ a different mix of bolstering and attack approaches, while reserving the refutation option for answering an opponent's attacks. Incumbents can usually win reelection by stressing their own positive attributes. However, in most instances challengers must employ a combination strategy, emphasizing their own positive attributes and the opponent's negative attributes, in order to unseat an incumbent. As a result, in most campaigns, incumbents place primary reliance on the bolstering message strategy whereas challengers utilize a combination of bolstering and attack message strategies (Kaid & Davidson, 1986; Trent & Friedenberg, 1983).

The attack message, because it stresses the negative attributes of an opponent, has received increasing criticism in recent years. Indeed, the use of attack messages in political advertising is termed, "negative advertising." Although some evidence suggests that strong attack messages can result in voter backlash (Garramone, 1985; Merritt, 1984; Stewart, 1975), political professionals seem convinced of their efficacy. As Sabato (1981, pp. 165-166) observes, "Going on the offense, 'attack politics,' is becoming more popular because, while vicious, it has gained a reputation for effectiveness among professionals...negative advertising

is believed to be more attention grabbing and exciting, and to be particularly effective against incumbents." Sabato estimates that nearly one-third of all political commercials are negative, and that the proportion is rising (1981, p. 166). This trend, if anything, has accelerated in recent years. Indeed, Associated Press reporter, Rita Beamish, termed the more frequent use of attack commercials in the 1986 congressional campaigns as "a tidal wave."

Research Hypotheses

The only strategic response presently available against the rising tide of attack messages is the refutation message. However, the efficacy of the refutation approach has not been established. Further, since refutation messages are post-hoc responses, they are of no use against an opponent's attack message which occurs late in the campaign. This study introduces a fourth political message strategy: inoculation. The inoculation message strategy is designed to promote resistance against attitude change, deflecting persuasiveness of subsequent attack messages which might be launched by an opponent during a campaign.

Attack Strategy

The attack message strategy is paradigm persuasion. Attack messages seek conversion. They attempt to alter the attitudes, and ultimately the voting behavior, of receivers

who are conflicted, or leaning to the opposing candidate. This investigation starts with attack messages because inoculation can only be examined juxtaposed to attack messages. The persuasiveness of attack messages is what inoculation militates against.

Two dominant genres of attack messages dominate contemporary political campaigns. All attack messages call attention to failings of the opponent. Character attacks, however, place primary emphasis on personal attributes whereas issue attacks concentrate on substantive content. The foci of character and issue attacks are distinct.

Further, evidence suggests that character attacks are more efficacious than issue attacks. Although no study has directly compared the relative persuasiveness of character and issue attacks, a wealth of data over the past two decades concerning voter decision criteria points to the primacy of character over issue content in contemporary elections (DeVries & Tarrance, 1972; Graber, 1980; O'Keefe, 1975; Pomper, 1975; Shapiro, 1969). Asher (1980, p. 139) captures this position well: "It is the personal characteristics of the nominee that have the greatest potentiality for affecting election outcomes." Or, as Graber (1980, p. 184) concludes, "Overall, three out of four answers people give when asked... why they would vote or refrain from voting for a certain

candidate concern personality traits. People are interested in the human qualities of their elected leaders."

This is not to suggest that issues are unimportant. Indeed, a plethora of recent empirical findings document an increasing issue orientation among American voters. Weisberg and Rusk (1970), Repass (1971), Axelrod (1972), Boyd (1972), Page and Brody (1972), Pomper (1975), Miller and Levitan (1976), Nie, Verba and Petrocik (1976), and others report substantial changes in the electorate in the direction of greater issue consciousness. Pomper and Lederman (1980) synthesized electoral studies over the past two decades, finding that the issue coherence of the average voter has risen dramatically.

However, despite the growing role of issues in electoral decisions, it is premature to infer that issue appeals still carry more weight than character appeals in political campaigns. This is particularly true in light of the evidence that issue messages serve an image function. Bennett (1977, p. 223), for example, maintains that candidate issue positions facilitate judgments of candidate character. "It is the act of paying obeisance to the issues, not their detailed definition, that matters." In the same spirit, Kenski (1985) observes that, "Election campaigns are issue involved, but image oriented." Past studies often failed to clearly separate issue and character effects. Rusk (1987, p.

135) refers to the difficulty of "disentangling issue effects from party and candidate effects." As a result, the impact of issues on electoral decisions may be overstated.

Further, research indicates that issues exert even less influence in congressional as opposed to national elections (Conway & Wyckoff, 1980; Mann & Wolfinger, 1980; Uslaner, 1981). Rusk (1987, p. 131) concludes that, "the generally weaker role of issues and issue voting [on the congressional vote] seems agreed to by almost all." As a result, this study predicts that:

H1: Character attack messages produce more attitude change than issue attack messages.

Inoculation Strategy

The inoculation message strategy seeks to strengthen existing attitudes against change. Inoculation messages attempt to strengthen existing attitudes, and voting predispositions, of receivers. Inoculation is a resistance strategy which, until now, has been ignored by political communication scholars.

Inoculation theory employs a biological analogy to explain how messages confer resistance. As McGuire (1970, p. 37) describes, "...we can develop belief resistance in people as we develop disease resistance in a biologically overprotected man or animal; by exposing the person to a weak

dose of the attacking material strong enough to stimulate his defenses but not strong enough to overwhelm him." The theory posits that refutational pretreatments, in the presence of a supportive structure, threaten the individual, triggering the motivation to bolster arguments supporting attitudes, thereby conferring resistance to subsequent counterpersuasion (Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961).

Most subsequent studies confirmed that refutational are superior to supportive pretreatments (Anderson & McGuire, 1965; McGuire, 1961, 1962; McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961, 1962; Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961; Tannenbaum, McCauley & Norris, 1966), although other studies reported that the use of both were superior to either alone (McGuire, 1961; Tannenbaum & Norris, 1965).

Although much of the early research on inoculation theory focused on what McGuire termed, "cultural truisms," germ-free beliefs uncontaminated by counterarguments, a number of more recent studies have applied the basic tenets of the theory to more controversial topics (Burgoon, et al., 1976; Burgoon & Chase, 1973; Burgoon, Cohen, Miller & Montgomery, 1978; Burgoon & King, 1974; Freedman & Steinbruner, 1964; Infante, 1975; McCroskey, 1970; McCroskey, Young & Scott, 1972; Ullman & Bodaken, 1975). Miller and Burgoon (1979, p. 312) offer a rationale to support broader application. "While earlier research spent effort attempting

to specify optimal pretreatment strategies, [these investigations provide] evidence to suggest that...any message may affect the persuasive efficacy of a subsequent persuasive attack."

This rationale supports the appropriateness of inoculation theory to explain the process of conferring resistance to political persuasion. This investigation posits that, in comparison with people who receive no inoculation, for those people who receive an inoculation pretreatment:

H2: Inoculation messages confer resistance to attitude change following exposure to a persuasive attack.

Perhaps the most interesting finding of the inoculation research is that refutational pretreatments uniquely promote resistance to both same and novel counterarguments (McGuire, 1961, 1962, 1970; Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961). This confirms the role of refutational pretreatments in motivating receivers as opposed to simply providing answers to specific arguments. As McGuire explains (1962, p. 248), "The resistance conferred by the refutational defense...derives not only from the assimilation and retention of the bolstering material...but also from the motivational effect of the preexposure to threatening material." It is the capacity to provide resistance to both

same and novel attacks which makes inoculation such a useful message strategy. This study predicts that, for those people who receive an inoculation pretreatment, compared to those who do not:

H3: Both refutational same and novel inoculation approaches confer resistance to attitude change following exposure to a persuasive attack.

Finally, it makes intuitive sense that inoculation decays with the passage of time. Indeed, many of the classic studies on inoculation employed relatively short intervals between the administration of the inoculation treatment and the persuasive attack. The delay between inoculation and attack ranged from a few minutes (McGuire, 1970; Tannenbaum & Norris, 1965) to a maximum of two weeks (McGuire, 1970; Ullman & Bodaken, 1975). Most of the inoculation studies did not examine the effectiveness of inoculation at multiple time periods. But, the few that did support that inoculation diminishes over time (McGuire, 1962; 1970; Pryor & Steinfatt, 1978).

H4: As the number of days between inoculation and attack increases, the effectiveness of inoculation against subsequent exposure to an attack message decreases.

Further, the resistance literature suggests that the effectiveness of inoculation over time depends, to some degree, on the type of inoculation message. McGuire (1962) and Pryor and Steinfatt (1978) report that the decay of inoculation is less with refutational novel as opposed to refutational same pretreatments. Thus, it is predicted:

H5: As the number of days between inoculation and attack increases, the effectiveness of inoculation against subsequent exposure to an attack message decreases less with novel than with same inoculation approaches.

Persuasibility Factors

Any additional considerations which influence the effectiveness of persuasive attack messages may also affect the ability of inoculation messages to confer resistance to attitude change. The extant literature suggests that two factors impinge persuasibility of political campaign messages: political party orientation and gender.

Political Party Orientation. The political communication literature indicates that party identification exerts substantial pressure on political cognitions. Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1954) and Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960) posited the psychological theory of voting in two election studies during the 1950's. They

argued that, absent psychological cross-pressures in the form of short-term forces, party identification is the most significant influence on voter attitudes about candidates.

It is true that recent studies document a general weakening of party identification during the last two decades (Axelrod, 1972, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986; Boyd, 1972; Brody & Page, 1972; Goldberg, 1966; Miller & Levitan, 1976; Nie, Verba & Petrocik, 1976; Petrocik, 1980; Pomper, 1972a, 1972b, 1975; Pomper & Lederman, 1980; Repass, 1971; Shapiro, 1969; Stanley, Bianco & Niemi, 1986; Weisberg & Rusk, 1970). This weakening of party identification has swelled the nonaffiliated ranks (a combination of politically apathetic and independent) to more than one-third of the electorate (Public Opinion, 1984, p. 21) and increased the extent of crossover voting (Republican identifiers who vote for Democratic candidates and vice-versa) to more than one-seventh of the electorate (Mann & Wolfinger, 1984, p. 273). Nonetheless, all studies acknowledge that party identification continues to exert substantial influence on the political attitudes and voting disposition of many Americans. Shively (1980, p. 236) characterizes the role of party identification on political attitudes and behaviors in contemporary campaigns as, "still dominant in many people's decisions on how to vote, and...still one of the few factors transcending immediate elections."

How does party orientation affect persuasibility? For one thing, the literature indicates that those affiliated receivers are less susceptible to political persuasion. Chaffee and Choe (1980) report that higher involvement, a characteristic of affiliation, militates against persuasibility. Blumler and McQuail (1969), Weisberg and Rusk (1970), Atkin (1971), Sherrod (1971), King (1977), and others indicate that affiliated receivers are inclined toward the selective perception of their candidate's message. Thus, following inoculation, candidate attack messages should exert less impact on party identifiers.

H6: Inoculation pretreatments confer more resistance to subsequent exposure to an attack message among receivers who more strongly identify with a political party.

The weakening of party identification has been most pronounced among Democrats. As a result, "The registration gap between Democrats and Republicans has closed from almost two-to-one during the 1970's to a modest margin of 38 percent to 32 percent. Among voters under twenty-four years old, the Republicans actually hold a lead" (Henry, 1985, p. 261).

Although Axelrod (1972, 1982, 1986) and Norpoth and Rusk (1982) pinpoint a loosening of Democratic Party ties among all demographic segments since 1964, sizable shifts among white southerners, blue-collar workers, and Catholics

are particularly noteworthy because they demonstrate the erosion of the New Deal coalition. As a result, McWilliams (1985, p. 168) concludes that, "The New Deal strategy has played out...It [the New Deal coalition] is exhausted." In fact, the weakening of voter loyalty to the Democratic Party is the primary support for the claims of Caddell (1985), Ginsberg and Shefter (1985), Hargrove and Nelson (1985), Lowi (1985), and others that a political dealignment is in progress. However, Stanley, Bianco and Niemi (1986, p. 975) caution that, "obituaries for the New Deal coalition appear harsher than reality warrants."

One manifestation of this development is that Democrats are more likely than Republicans to abandon their party's candidates during a political campaign. This is apparent in the higher proportion of Republican party identifiers who vote consistently with party identification. Shively (1980, p. 233) reports that 86 percent of strong Democrats and 96 percent of strong Republicans, and 66 percent of weak Democrats and 84 percent of weak Republicans, vote consistently for their party's candidate in presidential elections. This suggests that, following inoculation, attack messages should produce less impact on faithful Republican than on faithful Democrat identifiers.

H7: Inoculation pretreatments confer more resistance to subsequent exposure to an attack message among receivers who are Republican identifiers than among receivers who are Democrat identifiers.

Gender. Much previous research has examined the relationship between persuasibility and a myriad of individual difference variables. These variables are important because, as McGuire (1969, p. 247) observes, "[They] interact with other aspects of the communication situation (source, message, etc.) in affecting attitude change." One individual difference in particular, gender, is singled out in this study. There are three reasons for this decision. First, gender (along with age and self-esteem) is viewed as "strategic" by McGuire (1969, p. 247) due to "the relatively high quantity and quality of research devoted to [it]." Second, gender is one of the few individual difference variables which has been examined in inoculation research. And, third, given the present emphasis on "gender gap" in the political communication literature, there is reason to believe that political messages may exert unique influence upon female and male receivers.

Gender has been examined extensively in the persuasion literature. Generally, most studies indicate that

women are more persuasible, although the explanations for this finding vary. Cronkhite's (1969, p. 136) synthesis typifies this view: "The evidence seems to indicate overwhelmingly that women are generally more persuasible than men." More recent evidence suggests that, while women are still more persuasible than men, the difference is narrowing as gender roles undergo change in American society (Reardon, 1981; Rosenfeld & Christie, 1974).

The few inoculation studies which incorporated gender into their designs suggest modest differences between women and men. For example, although Stone (1969) reports no gender differences overall, he did find that females showed more change than males in the "source-oriented" condition. In addition, Dean, Austin and Watts (1971) report an interaction between forewarning and sex. For male receivers, forewarning inhibited attitude change; for females, it facilitated change. The limited inoculation findings add further support for the claim that women are more vulnerable than men to persuasive attacks.

This difference is particularly important in political persuasion since the identification of "a gender gap" (Mandel, 1982). The growing gap is based on women's negative response to President Reagan's personality and positions. Simply put, both in 1980 and in 1984, "there was

a noticeable difference in how men and women voted" (Axelrod, 1986, p. 284).

The gender gap, a recent phenomenon in American politics (Frankovic, 1982), provides further support for the view that women and men may respond uniquely to contemporary political appeals. However, while persuasibility studies suggest women are more vulnerable to persuasive attacks, and thus more susceptible to inoculation, the gender gap literature simply indicates that women are influenced differently than men by particular candidates and appeals. Thus, this study predicts that:

H8: The effectiveness of inoculation against subsequent exposure to an attack message is different for women than for men.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

The hypotheses were examined in the 1986 political campaign between Republican incumbent James Abdnor and Democratic challenger Tom Daschle for the U. S. Senate seat from South Dakota. The campaign featured two capable, and well-known, opposing candidates. Abdnor had won the Senate seat in 1980 over George McGovern. Prior to declaring his candidacy for the Senate, Daschle had served four terms in the U. S. House of Representatives. "Before the election, polls showed that both Mr. Abdnor and Mr. Daschle were regarded as the most honest, likable politicians in recent South Dakota history" (Fialka, 1986).

Both candidates made extensive use of political persuasion during the campaign. Altogether, Abdnor and Daschle spent \$6.6 million, most of which was targeted for media advertising. The \$6.6 million amounted to \$9.40 for each South Dakota resident or more than \$22 for each vote cast in the election (Brokaw, 1986). It was estimated in October that the average South Dakota resident had been exposed to more than 300 political advertisements on behalf

of the two candidates (Fialka, 1986). The study was conducted during October 1986.

Subjects

A total of 733 adult residents in the Sioux Falls metropolitan area served as subjects for the study. The Sioux Falls metropolitan area is divided into 43 wards for voting purposes. Two adjacent, two-square block, predominantly residential areas were selected at random from each of the wards. One of the areas in each ward was randomly assigned to the treatment condition (n=341) and one to the control condition (n=392). Experimenters administered messages and instruments to an average of eight adults in each treatment area and nine adults in each control area.

Design

The study employed a 4 X 3 X 2 factorial analysis of variance design. The design is depicted in Figure 1. The study manipulated three independent variables, including: political party orientation, inoculation condition, and attack message approach. The four political party orientation types comprised strong (Democrat and Republican), weak (Democrat and Republican), no identification (independent and uninterested), and crossover (Democrat identifiers who support the Republican candidate and

<u>Party Affiliation</u>	<u>Inoculation Pretreatment</u>	<u>Attack Message</u>
Strong	None	Issue
Weak	None	Issue
None	None	Issue
Crossover	None	Issue
<hr/>		
Strong	Same	Issue
Weak	Same	Issue
None	Same	Issue
Crossover	Same	Issue
<hr/>		
Strong	Novel	Issue
Weak	Novel	Issue
None	Novel	Issue
Crossover	Novel	Issue
<hr/>		
Strong	None	Character
Weak	None	Character
None	None	Character
Crossover	None	Character
<hr/>		
Strong	Same	Character
Weak	Same	Character
None	Same	Character
Crossover	Same	Character
<hr/>		
Strong	Novel	Character
Weak	Novel	Character
None	Novel	Character
Crossover	Novel	Character

Figure 1. Design.

Republican identifiers who support the Democrat candidate). The three inoculation conditions included control (no inoculation), refutational same, and refutational novel. Finally, the two attack message approaches consisted of issue attacks and character attacks. The study's dependent variable was the attitude change following the attack messages, as operationalized in terms of attitude toward the candidate supported in the message, attitude toward the position advocated in the message, likelihood of voting for the candidate supported in the message, and the credibility of the candidate supported in the message.

Procedure

The study sought to assess whether the use of refutational same and novel pretreatment messages on behalf of a candidate in a political race inoculate against the subsequent attack messages of an opposing candidate. To determine this, it was necessary to construct both inoculation and attack messages for administration during the study.

Individual messages can vary in their capacity to inoculate against subsequent attacks. Jackson and Jacobs (1983) warn that most attempts to generalize from specific messages to a category of messages are questionable. To overcome this limitation, Jackson and Jacobs (1983, p. 177) recommend the use of natural messages which are

representative of prototypical categories. The possibility that some messages may prove more effective than others in inoculating against persuasive attacks informs design. This study employed multiple message types. Altogether, two of each of the following message types (one Abdnor and one Daschle) were written for use in the study: issue attack, character attack, issue inoculation, character inoculation, and novel inoculation.

Message Construction

The Abdnor and Daschle campaigns were asked in August to furnish attack messages for use in this investigation. Specific guidelines for the construction of attack messages were provided each of the campaign managers. Inoculation messages were to have been prepared based on the attack messages provided by the campaigns. However, both of the campaigns declined to furnish attack messages on the grounds that their involvement would lock them into attack positions which might prove disadvantageous when finally administered during October.

Thus, the attack messages were prepared by an experimenter, after identifying the most salient issue and character concerns on the basis of independent polling data, using the existing pool of Abdnor and Daschle campaign messages. The pool of campaign messages consisted of the sum

total of position papers, print and electronic commercial messages, and complete and partial accounts of speeches. Inoculation pretreatment messages were prepared in response to each attack message. A refutational same message was written for each candidate as an implicit rebuttal to each issue and character attack message. Similarly, a refutational novel message was constructed for each candidate on the same topic as, but without an implicit rebuttal of, the corresponding attack messages.

Inoculation theory posits that threat triggers the motivation to bolster existing attitudes, making them resistant to subsequent attacks (Anderson & McGuire, 1965; McGuire, 1964; Pagageorgis & McGuire, 1961). Anderson and McGuire (1965, p. 44) describe the role that threat plays in the inoculation process, as follows: "To stimulate the person to develop his defenses and acquire resistance to persuasion, it is necessary to threaten him rather than reassure him about the validity of his belief." Thus, the first paragraph of each of the inoculation pretreatment messages was designed to threaten receivers. Threat was operationalized as a warning of impending, and potentially persuasive, attacks against the candidate supported by the receiver. The warning was specific to the content of the subsequent attacks in the refutational same condition and general in the refutational novel condition.

Message Equivalence

Each inoculation message attempted to replicate the written style and design of its corresponding attack message. Burgoon, Cohen, Miller and Montgomery (1978, p. 33) have previously stressed the need for persuasion studies to employ messages which are relatively similar. Each pair of inoculation messages was constructed so as to match as closely as possible the writing style and overall comprehensibility of the corresponding attack message. Special attention was paid to the total length, average sentence length, verb tenses, and modifiers of the inoculation messages and their corresponding attack message (Burgoon, Cohen, Miller & Montgomery, 1978).

Total word counts and the Index of Contingency, developed by Becker, Bavelas and Braden (1961) to assess the comprehensibility of messages, were used to evaluate message equivalence. As Figure 2 indicates, the total word counts and the Index of Contingency ratings of the inoculation pretreatments and their corresponding attack message are similar. A statistical assessment of the relative word counts and Index of Contingency ratings is inappropriate (Burgoon, Cohen, Miller & Montgomery, 1978). However, their overall similarity suggests that the messages employed in the investigation were relatively compatible.

<u>Possible Message Combinations</u>	<u>Total Words</u>	<u>Contingency Index</u>
Abdnor Issue Inoculation	242	8.8
Daschle Issue Attack	240	10.8
<hr/>		
Abdnor Character Inoculation	248	7.6
Daschle Character Attack	254	10.2
<hr/>		
Abdnor Generic Inoculation	249	13.5
Daschle Issue Attack	240	10.8
Daschle Character Attack	254	10.2
<hr/>		
Daschle Issue Inoculation	228	7.9
Abdnor Issue Attack	238	10.1
<hr/>		
Daschle Character Inoculation	256	9.1
Abdnor Character Attack	231	8.4
<hr/>		
Daschle Generic Inoculation	236	7.5
Abdnor Issue Attack	238	10.1
Abdnor Character Attack	231	8.4

Figure 2. Readability.

The Index of Contingency evaluates the readability of sentences. A low Index of Contingency indicates significant diversity of word use. A high Index of Contingency signifies significant repetition of word use.

Independent Variables

Three independent variables were manipulated in the first phase of the study. The operationalizations of attack message approach and inoculation condition were described previously. Political party orientation was operationalized as strong, weak, and none, based on the subjects' responses, and as crossover, in those instances in which the subject claimed a strong or weak identification with one political party but supported the candidate endorsed by the opposite party.

Time interval, political party faithful, and gender were manipulated in subsequent analyses. The time interval separating inoculation pretreatment and attack was divided into short, moderate, or long, based on intervals of one, two, and three weeks, respectively. Political party faithful was operationalized as Republican and Democrat identifiers who supported the candidate endorsed by their respective party. Finally, gender was dichotomized as female and male.

Administration

Fourteen undergraduate, senior students from an upper division communication class served as interviewers for the study. Prior to the study, interviewers received eight hours of training, consisting of formal instruction followed by supervised practice interviews, to insure uniformity in the

administration of pretreatment and posttreatment instruments. Interviewers were assigned randomly to treatment and control conditions.

The first phase of the study was conducted from October 1 to October 8. During this phase, interviewers informed subjects that they were conducting research for the Center for the Study of Political Argument at Augustana College. Interviewers ask subjects to read a political message and then to respond to questions about the message. Interviewers administered pretreatment instruments and inoculation messages to 530 Sioux Falls area adults (59.0 percent response rate). The pretreatment instrument consisted of a demographic questionnaire and manipulation check. All inoculation messages were printed on paper bearing the logo, Center for the Study of Political Argument.

The second phase of the study was implemented from October 11 through October 28. In this phase, interviewers informed subjects that they represented the interest group, Citizens for an Informed Electorate. Interviewers asked subjects to read a political message on behalf of one of the candidates. After subjects completed the message, the interviewers administered the posttreatment instruments.

This phase consisted of two simultaneous components. Interviewers administered the posttreatment instruments and attack messages to those adults who had received inoculation

pretreatments (no subject was contacted twice by the same interviewer). Subjects in the first phase were identified in the second phase by name or description plus address. Altogether, 341 of first-phase participants completed the second phase (64.3 percent), 85 refused (16.0 percent), and 104 could not be reached (19.6 percent). At the same time, interviewers administered posttreatment instruments and attack messages to a separate group of 392 Sioux Falls area adults (56.7 percent response rate) who functioned as a control group in the study.

Posttreatment instruments included attitude toward candidate, attitude toward position, likelihood of voting for candidate, and credibility measures. All attack messages were printed on paper bearing the logo, Citizens for an Informed Electorate, color keyed in red for Daschle messages and blue for Abdnor messages.

Instruments

The dependent variable in this investigation was the attitude change produced by the attack messages. Three primary dependent measures were employed to assess attitude change. These measures examined attitude toward the candidate supported in the attack message, attitude toward the position advocated in the attack message, and the likelihood of voting for the candidate supported in the

attack message. In addition, a measure of the source credibility of the candidate supported in the attack message was used to supplement the previous measures.

Attitude toward Candidate and Attitude toward Position

Attitude toward the candidate supported in the attack message and attitude toward the position advocated in the attack message were evaluated using six-item scales, adapted for the political communication context from a four-item measure employed previously by Burgoon, Cohen, Miller and Montgomery (1978) and Miller and Burgoon (1979). Both scales featured six semantic differential items, including: wise/foolish, good/bad, positive/negative, right/wrong, favorable/unfavorable, and acceptable/unacceptable.

Likelihood of Voting for Candidate

Likelihood of voting for the candidate supported in the attack message was employed to assess voting disposition. A 0-100 scale measured the probability of the receiver voting for the candidate supported in the attack message.

Source Credibility

The factors and scales used in the study to assess the credibility of the candidates were based on previous factor analytic research on the dimensions of source credibility by McCroskey, Holdridge and Toomb (1974). The

study employed 15 seven-interval semantic differential scales designed to evaluate five dimensions of credibility. The dimensions and their respective indicators included: character, comprising selfish/unselfish, good/bad, and honest/dishonest; competence, consisting of competent/incompetent, qualified/unqualified, and intelligent/unintelligent; composure, consisting of poised/nervous, tense/relaxed, and anxious/calm; extroversion, including energetic/tired, outgoing/withdrawn, and aggressive/mEEK; and sociability, comprising cheerful/gloomy, pleasant/unpleasant, in addition to good-natured/irritable.

Manipulation Check

A three-item semantic differential scale was used as a manipulation check to insure that the inoculation pretreatment messages triggered threat in receivers. The scale was modified from one developed by Burgoon, Cohen, Miller and Montgomery (1978), and used subsequently by Miller and Burgoon (1979) and Burgoon, Pfau, Birk and Clark (1984). The items included: dangerous/safe, anxious/calm, and threatening/nonthreatening.

Reliability

All of the instruments employed in the study, with the exception of the measure assessing the likelihood of

voting for the candidate supported in the attack message (a one-item measure), were evaluated for their reliability using Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha. The reliabilities for the two attitude scales were high: attitude toward the candidate supported in the attack message (.87); attitude toward the position advocated in the attack message (.91). Alpha reliabilities for the five dimensions of source credibility were satisfactory: character (.77); competence, (.83); composure (.77); extroversion (.79), and sociability (.79). Finally, the reliability of the manipulation check instrument was low: threat (.50).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

A 4 (political party orientation) X 3 (inoculation condition) X 2 (attack message approach) factorial analysis of variance was used to assess Hypothesis 1 through 3. This procedure facilitated a direct comparison of the relative persuasiveness of the attack messages for those subjects who received inoculation pretreatments and for those who did not.

However, to examine the relative effectiveness of inoculation pretreatments, the appropriate focus for Hypotheses 4 through 8, variations of the original procedure were employed. In these instances, other variables, including the interval separating inoculation pretreatment and attack (small, moderate, large), party faithful (Democrat and Republican), and gender (female and male), alternated with political party orientation (none, weak, strong, and crossover) in the design. Also, in these circumstances, the control cell was removed from the inoculation condition, leaving the two pretreatment cells (same and novel). The attack message approach condition remained constant in all

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
MANIPULATION	INOCULATION PRETREATMENT	ATTACK MESSAGE APPROACH	ATTITUDE DISPOSITION
		Issue (<u>n</u> =358)	AC= 3.86 AP= 3.84 LV=18.18
		Character (<u>n</u> =375)	AC= 3.48 AP= 3.29 LV=14.23
Inoculation (<u>n</u> =341)			AC= 3.38 AP= 3.30 LV=12.95
	Refutational Same (<u>n</u> =232)		AC= 3.41 AP= 3.38 LV=13.91
	Refutational Novel (<u>n</u> =109)		AC= 3.33 AP= 3.14 LV=10.89
No Inoculation (Control) (<u>n</u> =392)			AC= 3.91 AP= 3.78 LV=18.96

Figure 3. Flow Chart.

The flow chart sequentially depicts the steps which are involved in assessing inoculation in this investigation. Attitude disposition means are displayed for each step on the primary attitude measures of attitude toward the candidate supported in the attack message (AC), attitude toward the position advocated in the attack message (AP), and likelihood of voting for the candidate supported in the attack message.

assessments. All of the analysis of variance results were evaluated using nondirectional tests (Keppel, 1982).

When the results of the factorial analysis of variance warranted further assessment, two strategies were employed. If theory predicted a particular relationship among more than two means of a significant main effect, planned comparisons were conducted using Dunn's multiple comparison procedure (Kirk, 1982), also known as the modified Bonferroni test (Keppel, 1982). If the omnibus ANOVA revealed an unpredicted interaction, or if it suggested a main effect which was not hypothesized, then appropriate tests of simple effects were conducted and, if results warranted, the Bonferroni post-hoc procedure was employed to analyze differences in means.

Attack Message Approach

Hypothesis 1, which predicted that character attack messages produce more attitude change than issue attack messages, was not supported. The factorial analysis of variance indicated a significant main effect for attack message approach on the major attitude measures of attitude toward candidate supported in the message ($F=15.29$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$) attitude toward the position advocated in the message ($F=27.53$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), and

likelihood of voting for the candidate supported in the message ($F=5.63$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). These results are displayed in Table 1.

However, further analysis of the direction of the differences revealed that, contrary to prediction, issue attacks were more persuasive than character attacks in each instance. The overall attack message means are depicted in Figure 3.

Table 1. A 4 (Political Party Orientation) X 3 (Inoculation Condition) X 2 (Attack Message) Analysis of Variance Summary on Major Attitude Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP) and Likelihood of Voting for (LV)

Measure	Scale	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	
AC	Attack Message	26.11	1	26.11	15.29	*
	Inoculation Condition	48.11	2	24.05	14.09	*
	Party Orientation	40.09	3	13.36	7.83	*
	Residual	1210.35	709	1.71		
AP	Attack Message	55.08	1	55.08	27.53	*
	Inoculation Condition	44.10	2	22.05	11.02	*
	Party Orientation	106.56	3	35.52	17.76	*
	Residual	1418.27	709	2.00		
LV	Attack Message	2825.24	1	2825.24	5.63	*
	Inoculation Condition	6457.77	2	3228.89	6.44	*
	Party Orientation	16632.99	3	5544.33	11.05	*
	Residual	355587.25	709	501.53		

* Significant at the .05 level.

Only statistically significant interactions are displayed.

In addition, the analysis of variance revealed significant main effects involving the dimensions of source credibility on character ($F=15.63$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), competence ($F=9.02$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$), composure ($F=5.10$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$), and sociability ($F=15.25$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$). However, as Table 2 indicates, the direction of the differences in the attack message means ran opposite that predicted. These ANOVA results are shown in Table 3.

An interaction involving attack message approach and political party orientation ($F=3.61$; $df=3/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$) overrode the main effect for the dependent measure

Table 2. Summary of the Attack Message Means on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Dependent Measure	Attack Message Approach	
	Issue ($n=358$)	Character ($n=375$)
Ch	3.85	3.46
Ce	4.31	3.99
Co	3.69	3.44
Ex	4.94	4.76
So	4.08	3.68

of composure, while attack message approach was not significant on the dependent measure of extroversion. A test of simple effects revealed significant differences involving issue attack messages, but not character attack messages, across party orientation conditions on composure ($F=6.46$; $df=3/354$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.04$). A Bonferroni post-hoc test was computed on the difference in the issue attack message means. The results indicated that the issue attack messages were responsible for significantly less influence on strong party identifiers as compared to either weak party identifiers ($t=-3.48$; $df=1/708$; $k=6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed) or crossovers ($t=-3.39$; $df=1/708$; $k=6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed).

Inoculation Condition

Hypothesis 2 predicted that inoculation messages confer resistance to attitude change following exposure to a persuasive attack. In addition, Hypothesis 3 predicted that both refutational same and novel inoculation approaches confer resistance to attitude change. As Table 1 indicates, the analysis of variance offered initial support for these predictions. It revealed a significant main effect for inoculation condition on the major dependent variables of attitude toward the candidate ($F=14.09$; $df=2/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), attitude toward position ($F=11.02$; $df=2/709$;

Table 3. A 4 (Political Party Orientation) X 3 (Inoculation Condition) X 2 (Attack Message) Analysis of Variance Summary on the Source Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Measure	Scale	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Ch	Attack Message	28.27	1	28.27	15.63 *
	Inoculation Condition	3.54	2	1.77	0.98
	Party Orientation	36.99	3	12.33	6.82 *
	Residual	1282.58	709	1.81	
Ce	Attack Message	18.80	1	18.80	9.02 *
	Inoculation Condition	9.20	2	4.60	2.21
	Party Orientation	49.40	3	16.47	7.90 *
	Residual	1476.90	709	2.08	
Co	Attack Message	11.24	1	11.24	5.10 *
	Inoculation Condition	10.54	2	5.27	2.39
	Party Orientation	28.99	3	9.66	4.38 *
	Attack X Party	23.90	3	7.97	3.61 *
	Residual	1560.60	709	2.20	
Ex	Attack Message	5.20	1	5.20	2.70
	Inoculation Condition	38.45	2	19.23	9.98 *
	Party Orientation	6.79	3	2.26	1.18
	Residual	1365.28	709	1.93	
So	Attack Message	30.26	1	30.26	15.25 *
	Inoculation Condition	2.11	2	1.06	0.53
	Party Orientation	22.14	3	7.38	3.72 *
	Residual	1406.48	709	1.98	

* Significant at the .05 level.

Only statistically significant interactions are displayed.

$p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .02$), and likelihood of voting for ($F = 6.44$; $df = 2/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .01$).

Two additional approaches were employed to provide direct tests of hypotheses 2 and 3. Both provided further support for the prediction that inoculation pretreatments, whether same or novel, confer resistance to attitude change following exposure to a persuasive attack.

First, modified Bonferroni comparisons were computed to compare the combined same and novel inoculation pretreatment means against the no inoculation means. They revealed statistically significant differences between the combined treatment and control means on the main dependent measures of attitude toward candidate ($F = 21.32$; $df = 1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .03$), attitude toward position ($F = 16.90$; $df = 1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .02$), and likelihood of voting for ($F = 10.73$; $df = 1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .01$). While the combined inoculation pretreatment means were significantly lower than the no inoculation condition means on all three dependent measures, the comparisons indicated that the refutational same and refutational novel inoculation means did not significantly differ from one another. The inoculation condition means are displayed in Table 4.

Inoculation same and novel pretreatment means were treated separately to provide a direct test of hypotheses 3. A simple analysis of variance was computed on the difference

Table 4. Summary of the Inoculation Condition Means on the Primary Dependent Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP), and Likelihood of Voting for Candidate (LV) and on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Dependent Measure	Inoculation Condition		
	None (<u>n</u> =392)	Same (<u>n</u> =232)	Novel (<u>n</u> =109)
AC	3.91	3.41	3.33
AP	3.78	3.38	3.14
LV	18.96	13.91	10.89
Ch	3.69	3.67	3.45
Ce	4.25	4.04	3.98
Co	3.67	3.49	3.33
Ex	5.04	4.70	4.44
So	3.93	3.81	3.81

between the treatment and control conditions on all dependent variables. The results verified that each inoculation pretreatment approach fosters resistance to subsequent attack messages. The refutational same pretreatment conferred resistance on the dependent measures of attitude toward candidate ($F=20.50$; $df=1/622$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), attitude toward position ($F=10.98$; $df=1/622$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), and

likelihood of voting for ($F=6.72$; $df=1/622$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). The refutational novel pretreatment conferred resistance on the dependent measures of attitude toward candidate ($F=14.81$; $df=1/499$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), attitude toward position ($F=15.38$; $df=1/499$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), and likelihood of voting for ($F=9.70$; $df=1/499$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$).

The results on credibility were mixed. As Table 3 reveals, there was a significant main effect for inoculation condition on extroversion ($F=9.98$; $df=2/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$). A planned comparison of the combined same and novel pretreatment means and the no inoculation means confirmed that inoculation pretreatments confer resistance to subsequent attack messages ($F=228.91$; $df=1/709$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.14$).

Also, the results indicated that inoculation condition approached statistical significance on the credibility dimension of composure ($F=2.39$; $df=2/709$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.00$). However, comparisons involving the combined same and novel pretreatment means and the no inoculation means indicated that the differences were not significant.

When refutational same and novel pretreatments were examined separately, it was found that refutational same pretreatments produced a statistically significant effect on the source credibility dimensions of competence ($F=3.23$;

$df=1/622$; $p < .05$, one-tailed; $\hat{\omega}^2=.00$) and extroversion ($F=8.84$; $df=1/622$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$), whereas refutational novel pretreatments resulted in statistically significant impacts on the dimensions of competence ($F=2.88$; $df=1/499$; $p < .05$, one-tailed; $\hat{\omega}^2=.00$), composure ($F=4.27$, $df=1/499$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.00$), as well as extroversion ($F=15.63$; $df=1/499$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$).

Hypotheses 4 and 5 concerned the decay of inoculation over time. Hypothesis 4 predicted that, as the time interval between inoculation and attack increases, the effectiveness of inoculation against subsequent exposure to an attack message decreases, while Hypothesis 5 posited that the decrease in effectiveness over time is less with novel than with same inoculation approaches. A 3 (small, moderate, and large interval) X 2 (same and novel inoculation pretreatment) X 2 (issue and character attack message approach) factorial analysis of variance was computed to test these hypotheses. The results with respect to the major dependent variables are displayed in Table 5.

The factorial analysis of variance indicated a significant main effect for time interval on the major dependent measures of attitude toward candidate ($F= 3.75$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$) and attitude toward position ($F=6.13$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$). Subsequent planned comparisons, using the modified Bonferroni procedure,

Table 5. A 3 (Time Interval) X 2 (Inoculation Pretreatment) X 2 (Attack Message) Analysis of Variance Summary on Major Attitude Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP) and Likelihood of Voting for (LV)

Measure	Scale	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
AC	Attack Message	15.61	1	15.61	10.29 *
	Inoculation Condition	0.25	1	0.25	0.16
	Time Interval	11.38	2	5.69	3.75 *
	Residual	499.03	329	1.52	
AP	Attack Message	22.82	1	22.82	11.85 *
	Inoculation Condition	3.99	1	3.99	2.07
	Time Interval	23.63	2	11.81	6.13 *
	Residual	633.55	329	1.93	
LV	Attack Message	738.54	1	738.54	1.88
	Inoculation Condition	617.08	1	617.08	1.57
	Time Interval	1291.88	2	645.94	1.65
	Residual	129124.10	329	392.47	

* Significant at the .05 level.

Only statistically significant interactions are displayed.

supported that inoculation decays over time. The results indicated that inoculation pretreatments are more effective in deflecting attack messages at small intervals as opposed to moderate or large intervals on the measures of attitude toward candidate ($F=6.86$; $df=1/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$) and attitude toward position ($F=6.93$; $df=1/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), and that inoculation is more effective at moderate than long intervals on attitude toward position ($F=6.91$; $df=1/329$;

Table 6. Summary of the Time Interval Means on the Primary Dependent Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP), and Likelihood of Voting for Candidate (LV) and on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Dependent Measure	Time Interval		
	Short (<u>n</u> =99)	Moderate (<u>n</u> =130)	Long (<u>n</u> =112)
AC	3.12	3.39	3.60
AP	3.01	3.19	3.68
LV	9.95	13.62	14.81
Ch	3.30	3.60	3.86
Ce	3.64	4.06	4.31
Co	3.17	3.46	3.65
Ex	4.36	4.72	4.74
So	3.35	3.88	4.14

$p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .02$). The time interval means are displayed in Table 6.

The significant main effects, in conjunction with the planned comparison results, involving the attitude toward candidate and attitude toward position measures, provides partial support for Hypothesis 4, that inoculation effectiveness wears off over time. However, the absence of

any interactions involving inoculation pretreatment and time interval suggests no support for Hypothesis 5, that the decrease in effectiveness is less with novel than same inoculation approaches.

The results involving the credibility measures failed to support Hypothesis 4 or 5. Although the factorial analysis of variance identified main effects for time interval on the credibility dimensions of character ($F=5.02$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), competence ($F=5.78$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), and sociability ($F=7.92$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.04$), a triple interaction involving time interval, inoculation condition, and attack message approach was significant on the dimension of extroversion ($F=3.26$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$) and overrode the main effects on the dimensions of character ($F=3.08$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$) and competence ($F=3.67$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). These results are displayed in Table 7.

In all three instances, there were consistent patterns of differences involving the means which suggested that inoculation same pretreatments varied in their effectiveness in deflecting character attacks as opposed to issue attacks at large intervals, whereas novel inoculations varied in their effectiveness in deflecting character as opposed to issue attacks at moderate intervals. A 2 X 2 factorial analysis of variance involving attack message

Table 7. A 3 (Time Interval) X 2 (Inoculation Condition) X 2 (Attack Message) Analysis of Variance Summary on the Source Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Measure	Scale	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	
Ch	Attack Message	17.55	1	17.55	11.39	*
	Inoculation Condition	3.18	1	3.18	2.06	
	Time Interval	15.47	2	7.74	5.02	*
	Attack X Inoculation X Time	9.51	2	4.75	3.08	*
	Residual	507.13	329	1.54		
Ce	Attack Message	12.98	1	12.98	6.69	*
	Inoculation Condition	0.15	1	0.15	0.75	
	Time Interval	22.43	2	11.21	5.78	*
	Attack X Inoculation X Time	14.24	2	7.12	3.67	*
	Residual	637.80	329	1.94		
Co	Attack Message	4.70	1	4.70	2.14	
	Inoculation Condition	1.65	1	1.65	0.76	
	Time Interval	11.81	2	5.90	2.69	
	Attack X Time	14.78	2	7.39	3.37	*
	Residual	721.75	329	2.19		
Ex	Attack Message	13.54	1	13.54	7.18	*
	Inoculation Condition	4.28	1	4.28	2.27	
	Time Interval	9.50	2	4.75	2.52	
	Attack X Inoculation X Time	12.67	2	6.33	3.36	*
	Residual	620.43	329	1.89		
So	Attack Message	24.94	1	24.94	12.22	*
	Inoculation Condition	0.02	1	0.02	0.01	
	Time Interval	32.32	2	16.16	7.92	*
	Residual	671.60	329	2.04		

* Significant at the .05 level.

Only statistically significant interactions are displayed.

approach (issue, character) and inoculation pretreatment (same, novel) was computed at each time interval (small, moderate, large) as a prerequisite to further post-hoc explorations.

Although all attack message approach and inoculation pretreatment at moderate and large time intervals on the dimensions of character, competence, and extroversion approached statistical significance, the two-way analysis of variance identified only one significant interaction, at large intervals, on the credibility dimension of competence ($F=4.49$; $df=1/108$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$). Further analysis of the means indicated that at large intervals same inoculation pretreatments were significantly more effective in deflecting character attacks as opposed to issue attacks ($t=-3.04$; $df=1/329$; $k=6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed).

A planned comparison was computed to follow up on the finding of a main effect for time interval on the credibility dimension of sociability. The results indicated that inoculation pretreatments were more effective in promoting resistance to attack messages at small intervals as opposed to moderate or large intervals ($F=15.52$; $df=1/329$; $p < .05$, two-tailed; $\hat{\omega}^2=.04$).

Finally, as Table 7 reveals, the factorial analysis of variance revealed a significant two-way interaction involving time interval and attack message condition on the

credibility dimension of composure ($F=3.37$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). A test of simple effects on both issue and character attacks across the three time intervals indicated that the means of issue attack messages, but not character attack messages, varied significantly over time ($F=6.25$; $df=2/161$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.06$). Further examination of the means revealed that issue attacks were much more effective at small time intervals in contrast to moderate ($t=-2.52$; $df=1/329$; $k=3$; $p < .05$, two-tailed) and large ($t=-3.46$; $df=1/329$; $k=3$; $p < .05$, two-tailed) intervals.

Thus, whereas Hypothesis 5 had predicted that novel are superior to same inoculation pretreatments as the time interval between inoculation and attack increases, the pattern of results on the credibility dimensions suggest a more complex pattern.

Persuasibility Factors

Political Party Orientation

Hypothesis 6 predicted that, inoculation pretreatments confer more resistance to subsequent exposure to an attack message among receivers who more strongly identify with a political party. This prediction was supported, at least for strong party identifiers. The results indicated that inoculation pretreatments fostered more resistance to persuasive attacks among strong

identifiers than among weak identifiers, nonidentifiers, or crossovers.

Initially, as Table 1 and Table 3 illustrate, the 4 (political party orientation) X 3 (inoculation condition) X 2 (attack message approach) factorial analysis of variance identified main effects for political party orientation on the major attitude change variables of attitude toward candidate, attitude toward position, and likelihood of voting for, and on the source credibility dimensions of character, competence, composure, and sociability, although an attack message and party orientation interaction overrode the main effect for composure. These results were discussed previously.

However, to assess the relative effectiveness of inoculation among political party orientation conditions it was necessary to confine the analysis to the treatment population. A 4 (political party orientation) X 2 (inoculation pretreatment) X 2 (attack message condition) factorial analysis of variance was computed.

The factorial analysis of variance indicated significant main effects for political party orientation (none, weak, strong, crossover) on the major dependent measures of attitude toward candidate ($F=5.37$; $df=3/325$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.04$), attitude toward position ($F=12.20$; $df=3/325$;

Table 8. A 4 (Political Party Orientation) X 2 (Inoculation Pretreatment) X 2 (Attack Message) Analysis of Variance Summary on Major Attitude Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP) and Likelihood of Voting for (LV)

Measure	Scale	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
AC	Attack Message	19.12	1	19.12	12.78 *
	Inoculation Condition	0.15	1	0.15	0.10
	Party Orientation	24.10	3	8.03	5.37 *
	Residual	486.17	325	1.50	
AP	Attack Message	31.82	1	31.82	17.78 *
	Inoculation Condition	3.19	1	3.19	1.78
	Party Orientation	65.49	3	21.83	12.20 *
	Inoculation X Party	16.51	3	5.50	3.07 *
	Residual	581.64	325	1.79	
LV	Attack Message	977.61	1	977.61	2.59
	Inoculation Condition	458.94	1	458.94	1.22
	Party Orientation	5272.11	3	1757.37	4.66 *
	Residual	122631.08	325	377.33	

* Significant at the .05 level.

Only statistically significant interactions are displayed.

$p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .08$), and likelihood of voting for ($F = 4.66$; $df = 3/325$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .03$). These ANOVA results are displayed in Table 8. The political party means are shown in Table 9.

However, an interaction involving inoculation pretreatment and political party orientation overrode the main effect on attitude toward position. Two tests of simple

Table 9. Summary of the Political Party Orientation Means on the Primary Dependent Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP), and Likelihood of Voting for (LV), and on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

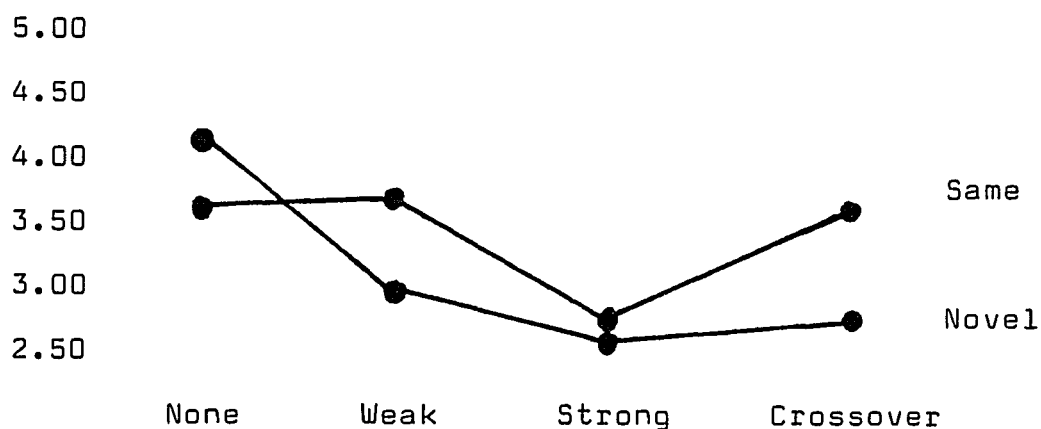
Dependent Measure	Political Party Orientation			
	None (n=82)	Weak (n=94)	Strong (n=121)	Crossover (n=44)
AC	3.65	3.51	3.05	3.53
AP	3.80	3.49	2.76	3.45
LV	15.21	15.03	7.84	18.32
Ch	3.61	3.77	3.41	3.73
Ce	4.06	4.21	3.80	4.13
Co	3.35	3.67	3.31	3.45
Ex	4.61	4.68	4.52	4.78
So	3.99	4.05	3.55	3.71

effects were computed, on same and novel inoculation pretreatments, across political party orientation. The tests of simple effects revealed that same inoculation pretreatments ($F=7.47$; $df=3/228$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.08$) and novel inoculation pretreatments ($F=6.80$; $df=3/105$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.14$) varied significantly across political party orientation on attitude toward position. Further examination of the means

indicated that same inoculation pretreatments were significantly more effective in deflecting attack messages among strong identifiers than among nonidentifiers ($t=-3.15$; $df=1/325$; $k=6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed), weak identifiers ($t=-3.54$; $df=1/325$; $k=6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed), or crossovers

Table 10. Mean Scores of Same and Novel Inoculation Pretreatment Conditions on Political Party Orientation on the Dependent Measure of Attitude toward Position

Inoculation Pretreatment	Political Party Orientation			
	None	Weak	Strong	Crossover
Same	3.62 ($n=52$)	3.72 ($n=68$)	2.80 ($n=79$)	3.69 ($n=33$)
Novel	4.11 ($n=30$)	2.91 ($n=26$)	2.69 ($n=42$)	2.71 ($n=11$)



($t = -3.42$; $df = 1/325$; $k = 6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed). By contrast, novel inoculation pretreatments were more effective with weak identifiers ($t = -2.93$; $df = 1/325$; $k = 6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed), strong identifiers ($t = -3.46$; $df = 1/325$; $k = 6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed), and crossovers ($t = -3.41$; $df = 1/325$; $k = 6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed) than with nonidentifiers. These means are depicted in Table 10.

Political party orientation exerted minimal impact on the dimensions of source credibility. The only significant effect involving political party orientation was a main effect on the dimension of sociability ($F = 3.05$; $df = 3/325$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .02$).

Planned comparisons were then computed for the political party orientation means on the three remaining dependent variables for which significant main effects were reported: attitude toward candidate, likelihood of voting for, and sociability. Two modified Bonferroni comparisons were computed.

The results of the first comparison supported Hypothesis 6. They revealed that persuasive attacks, following inoculation, exert less influence on strong party identifiers than on nonidentifiers, weak identifiers, and crossovers. This was true on the dependent measures of attitude toward candidate ($F = 9.76$; $df = 1/325$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .03$), likelihood of voting for ($F = 10.26$; $df = 1/325$;

$p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .03$), and the credibility dimension of sociability ($F = 3.61$; $df = 1/325$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .01$).

The second comparison examined weak party identifiers against nonidentifiers and crossovers. The modified Bonferroni comparisons indicated no significant differences involving the dependent variables of attitude toward candidate, likelihood of voting for, or sociability.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that inoculation pretreatments confer more resistance to subsequent exposure to an attack message among receivers who are loyal Republican identifiers than among receivers who are loyal Democrat identifiers. A 2 (party faithful) X 2 (inoculation pretreatment) X 2 (attack message approach) factorial analysis of variance was computed to examine this hypothesis. It revealed significant differences between Democrat and Republican faithful on the credibility dimensions of competence ($F = 8.20$; $df = 1/207$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .03$), composure ($F = 15.18$; $df = 1/207$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .06$), and extroversion ($F = 34.99$; $df = 1/207$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .13$). Further, the differences between Democrat and Republican faithful approached statistical significance on the dependent variables of attitude toward candidate ($F = 3.10$; $df = 1/207$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .01$) and likelihood of voting for ($F = 3.39$; $df = 1/207$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2 = .01$). However, further analysis of the direction of the differences revealed that,

Table 11. Summary of the Party Faithful Means on the Dependent Measures of Attitude toward Candidate (AC), Attitude toward Position (AP), and Likelihood of Voting for (LV), and on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Dependent Measure	Party Faithful	
	Democrat (<u>n</u> =109)	Republican (<u>n</u> =106)
AC	3.10	3.41
AP	2.93	3.24
LV	8.57	13.47
Ch	3.54	3.59
Ce	3.69	4.27
Co	3.08	3.86
Ex	4.09	5.11
So	3.75	3.79

contrary to prediction, inoculation pretreatments confer more resistance to attack messages among loyal Democrats than among loyal Republicans. These means are displayed in Table 11.

Gender

Hypothesis 8 predicted that the effectiveness of inoculation following subsequent exposure to an attack

Table 12. A 2 (Gender) X 2 (Inoculation Condition) X 2 (Attack Message) Analysis of Variance Summary on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Measure	Scale	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Ch	Attack Message	17.91	1	17.91	11.37 *
	Inoculation Condition	3.24	1	3.24	2.08
	Gender	1.10	1	1.10	0.71
	Attack X Inoculation X Gender	14.34	1	14.34	9.20 *
	Residual	518.79	333	1.56	
Ce	Attack Message	13.87	1	13.87	6.74 *
	Inoculation Condition	0.15	1	0.15	0.07
	Gender	0.00	1	0.00	0.00
	Attack X Inoculation X Gender	10.91	1	10.91	5.30 *
	Residual	685.19	333	2.06	
Co	Attack Message	3.58	1	3.58	1.66
	Inoculation Condition	1.91	1	1.91	0.87
	Gender	13.05	1	13.05	5.92 *
	Residual	733.99	333	2.20	
Ex	Attack Message	11.13	1	11.13	5.87 *
	Inoculation Condition	4.89	1	4.89	2.58
	Gender	9.10	1	9.10	4.80 *
	Residual	631.50	333	1.90	
So	Attack Message	24.09	1	24.09	11.28 *
	Inoculation Condition	0.01	1	0.01	0.00
	Gender	3.35	1	3.35	1.57
	Attack X Inoculation X Gender	8.97	1	8.97	4.20 *
	Residual	710.91	333	2.13	

* Significant at the .05 level.

Only statistically significant interactions are displayed.

message is different for women than for men. A 2 (gender) X 2 (inoculation pretreatment) X 2 (attack message approach) factorial analysis of variance was computed to evaluate this prediction.

The analysis of variance revealed no effects involving gender on the major attitude measures of attitude toward candidate, attitude toward position, or likelihood of voting for. However, as Table 12 reveals, gender exerts both direct and indirect influence on source credibility. The factorial analysis of variance indicated main effects for gender on the credibility dimensions of composure ($F=5.92$; $df=1/333$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$) and extroversion ($F=4.80$; $df=1/333$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). The pattern of results suggested that inoculation rendered males more resistant following exposure to attack messages. The gender means are depicted in Table 13.

In addition, gender interacted with inoculation pretreatment and attack message approach on the credibility dimensions of character ($F=9.20$; $df=1/333$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), competence ($F=5.30$; $df=1/333$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$), and sociability ($F=4.20$; $df=1/333$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). To further explicate these interactions, two-way factorial analysis of variance was computed involving inoculation pretreatment and attack message approach for both females and males on the three credibility dimensions.

Table 13. Summary of the Gender Means on the Credibility Dimensions of Character (Ch), Competence (Ce), Composure (Co), Extroversion (Ex), and Sociability (So)

Dependent Measure	Gender	
	Females ($n=226$)	Males ($n=115$)
Ch	3.66	3.49
Ce	4.03	3.99
Co	3.58	3.15
Ex	4.75	4.37
So	3.90	3.63

The two-way analysis of variance indicated significant interactions involving inoculation pretreatment and attack message approach for females on the credibility dimension of character ($F=5.91$; $df=1/222$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), and for males on the dimension of character ($F=4.29$; $df=1/111$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$). In addition, interactions approached significance for females on the credibility dimension of competence ($F=3.05$; $df=1/222$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$) and for males on the dimension of sociability ($F=2.74$; $df=1/111$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$).

Further analysis of these differences revealed a consistent pattern involving gender, inoculation

Table 14. Summary of the Inoculation Pretreatment Means on Issue and Character Attack Messages for Females and Males on the Three Credibility Dimensions Involved in the Triple Interaction: Character, Competence, and Sociability.

		FEMALES	
Dependent Measure	Inoculation Pretreatment	Attack Message Approach	
		Issue	Character
	Same	(n=80)	(n=72)
Character		4.03	3.37
Competence		4.37	3.71
Sociability		4.27	3.48
	Novel	(n=37)	(n=37)
Character		3.42	3.65
Competence		3.95	4.01
Sociability		4.03	3.82
		MALES	
Dependent Measure	Inoculation Pretreatment	Attack Message Approach	
		Issue	Character
	Same	(n=34)	(n=46)
Character		3.78	3.44
Competence		4.06	3.96
Sociability		3.74	3.61
	Novel	(n=13)	(n=22)
Character		4.13	2.76
Competence		4.64	3.59
Sociability		4.23	3.18

pretreatment, and attack message approach, as Table 14 illustrates. For females, there was a difference involving the effectiveness of same inoculation pretreatments in deflecting issue versus character attacks, but no difference regarding the effectiveness of novel inoculation pretreatments. This pattern appeared on the dependent measure of character ($t=2.64$; $df=1/333$; $k=6$; $p < .10$, two-tailed).

By contrast, for males, there was a difference involving the effectiveness of novel inoculation pretreatments in deflecting issue versus character attacks, but no difference regarding the effectiveness of same inoculation pretreatments. This pattern appeared on the dependent measures of character ($t=3.73$; $df=1/333$; $k=6$; $p < .05$, two-tailed) and sociability ($t=2.22$; $df=1/333$; $k=6$; $p < .10$, two-tailed).

Manipulation Check

To insure that the inoculation pretreatment messages triggered threat in receivers, a 3 (threat levels) X 2 (inoculation pretreatment) X 2 (attack message approach) factorial analysis of variance was computed for each of the dependent variables. The results revealed a main effect for threat on the dependent measures of likelihood of voting for ($F=3.49$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\omega^2=.01$) and composure ($F=3.33$;

$df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). Further, threat approached significance on the credibility dimension of character ($F=2.66$; $df=2/329$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$). The results of a planned comparison of the attack message means at low, moderate and high threat on the credibility dimension of composure indicated that the high threat condition promoted more resistance than the low or moderate threat conditions ($F=8.08$; $df=1/330$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$).

However, results of the analysis of variance identified an interaction involving threat and attack message approach which achieved statistical significance on the dependent measure of attitude toward candidate ($F=3.82$; $df=2/329$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$), and approached statistical significance on the measures of attitude toward position ($F=3.01$; $df=2/329$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$), likelihood of voting for ($F=2.37$; $df=2/329$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$), and character ($F=2.42$; $df=2/329$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.01$).

The possible interaction of threat and attack message approach warranted further post-hoc explorations. Tests of simple effects were computed on issue and character attack message approaches across the three levels of threat. They revealed that, issue attacks did not, but character attacks did, produce a statistically significant difference across threat levels on the dependent measure of attitude toward candidate ($F=3.23$, $df=2/174$, $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.03$), attitude

toward position ($F=4.14$; $df=2/174$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.04$), and character ($F=6.28$; $df=2/174$; $p < .05$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.06$) and nearly significant differences across threat levels on the dependent measure of likelihood of voting for ($F=2.72$; $df=2/174$; $p < .10$; $\hat{\omega}^2=.02$).

Examination of the character attack means suggested a common pattern: attitude change increased from low to moderate threat levels, and then dropped from moderate to high threat levels. However, further tests of the character attack means offered little support for this claim. They did indicate that the effectiveness of the attack messages fell as threat increased from moderate to high on the credibility dimension of character ($t=-2.83$; $df=1/329$; $k=3$; $p < .05$, two-tailed), but they fell short of statistical significance on attitude toward candidate, attitude toward position, and likelihood of voting for.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The results of this investigation of inoculation in political campaign communication extend the applicability of inoculation theory to a new domain: political campaign influence. In the process, the results suggest important insights for the practice of political campaign communication.

Attack Message Effect

Contrary to prediction, the results indicate that issue attacks were more persuasive than character attacks among receivers who are committed to the opposing candidate. This was true for each of the major dependent variables and for most of the credibility dimensions. The relative effectiveness of issue and character messages had never been examined in the context of political communication. However, the literature on voter decision criteria indicates that character is the most important variable in candidate preference (Asher, 1980; Bennett, 1977; DeVries & Tarrance, 1972; Graber, 1980; G'Keefe, 1975; Pomper, 1975; Shapiro,

1969), particularly in congressional elections (Conway & Wyckoff, 1980; Mann & Wolfinger, 1980; Uslander, 1981)

Nonetheless, it is possible to reconcile the finding of this study that issue messages are more persuasive among receivers who are committed to the opposing candidate with the judgment of the extant literature that character criteria are most important in candidate preference. The critical factor in determining the relative influence of issue versus image appeals may be timing. Character seems to be the first judgment that voters make regarding candidates. As a result, there is ample support for the position that voter perceptions of candidate character are particularly volatile during the early stages of a political campaign (Becker & McCombs, 1978; Gopoian, 1982; Kennamer & Chaffee, 1982; Mendelsohn & O'Keefe, 1976; Trent & Friedenber, 1983; Williams, Weber, Haaland, Mueller & Craig, 1976). Such volatility in perceptions of candidate character, coupled with the finding that voters learn about candidate character more readily than about candidate issue positions (Weaver, Graber, McCombs & Eyal, 1981), suggests that character messages may be more influential than issue messages prior to attitude formation about candidate character.

However, once voter judgments of candidate character take, the potential of character messages to influence voters diminishes sharply (Hofstetter, Zukin & Bus, 1978; Kinder,

1978; Patterson, 1980; Patterson & McClure, 1976; Strouse, 1975). Thus, during later stages of a campaign, issue messages may exert more impact than character messages. This investigation was conducted late in a campaign, featuring known candidates, maximum commercial message penetration, and relatively few undecideds. Hence, it is not surprising that issue attack messages exerted more influence than character attack messages in this study.

This study's finding that issue attacks are more persuasive than character attacks among receivers who are committed to the opposing candidate is an important finding. As noted above, this may be a function of timing. In any case, the time has past to depend upon inferences drawn from political decision criteria as a rationale to assert the superiority of character as opposed to issue appeals in political communication. The results of this study suggest the primacy of issue attack messages, and warrant further investigation to determine the relative influence of issue and character messages at different stages of a political campaign

Inoculation Effect

The most important finding of this study is that inoculation pretreatments, whether same or novel, confer resistance to attitude change following exposure to a

persuasive attack. This effect was found for all main dependent measures, accounting for three percent of variance in attitude toward candidate, two percent of variance in attitude toward position, and one percent of variance in likelihood of voting for. This suggests that inoculation deflects the persuasiveness of subsequent political attacks in a number of ways: undermining the potential influence of the source of political attacks, deflecting the specific content of political attacks, and reducing the likelihood that political attacks will influence receiver voting intention. The effect of inoculation was also found for the source credibility dimensions of competence, composure and extroversion.

The results provide further support for McGuire's theoretical model (McGuire, 1961a, 1961b, 1962, 1970; McGuire & Papageorgis, 1961, 1962; Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961) and for the extension of the model to more controversial topics (Burgoon, 1976; Burgoon & Chase, 1973; Burgoon, Cohen, Miller & Montgomery, 1978; Burgoon & King, 1974; Freedman & Steinbruner, 1964; Infante, 1975; McCroskey, 1970; McCroskey, Young & Scott, 1972; Miller & Burgoon, 1979; Ullman & Bodaken, 1975).

The application of inoculation theory to political campaign communication is useful and important. Contemporary political campaigns place exclusive reliance on three message

strategies: bolstering, attack, and refutation. Of these three, the attack message option has grown in popularity in recent years, in large part because political campaign professionals are convinced that attack messages are effective (Moyers, 1984; Sabato, 1981). The refutation message is the only strategic response presently available against the attack message. However, the efficacy of the refutation message is unproven.

This investigation suggests a fourth political message strategy: inoculation. The results of this study indicate that inoculation messages deflect the persuasiveness of subsequent political attacks which might be launched by a candidate during a campaign. Further, because inoculation precedes attack, it even provides defense against attack messages which are launched late in a campaign in order to preempt a refutation message response.

The potential for inoculation may even be greater than these results indicate. If anything, the findings of this study are conservative. Inoculation should prove most effective when employed prior to the formation of, or the solidification of, voter perceptions about candidates and issues. Research suggests more volatility in voter perceptions, and thus more potential for influence, during the initial phase of political campaigns (Becker & McCombs, 1978; Gopoiian, 1982; Kennamer & Chaffee, 1982; Trent &

Friedenberg, 1983; Williams, Weber, Haaland, Mueller & Craig, 1976). Thus, inoculation should prove most effective early in a political campaign, prior to the saturation of political campaign messages, and against a less known opponent. By contrast, this investigation was conducted during the last month of an intense campaign, in which the average voter had been exposed to more than 300 political advertisements on behalf of the two candidates, and which featured two known and respected opponents (Fialka, 1986). In short, this investigation tested inoculation under the most unfavorable circumstances.

The results offer some support for the prediction that inoculation effectiveness decays over time. The study affirmed decay on both the attitude toward candidate and attitude toward position measures. However, contrary to the previous findings of McGuire (1962) and Pryor and Steinfatt (1978), the results of this study failed to support a difference in the rate of decay between same and novel inoculation pretreatments.

At first glance, the triple interaction, involving time interval, inoculation condition and attack message approach on the credibility dimensions of character and competence appears interesting because the interactions seemed to suggest a consistent pattern of differences in which inoculation same pretreatments varied in their

effectiveness in deflecting character attacks as opposed to issue attacks at large intervals, whereas novel inoculations varied in their effectiveness in deflecting character as opposed to issue attacks at moderate intervals.

However, subsequent post hoc analysis indicated that this pattern only approached statistical significance at moderate and large time intervals on the dimensions of character, competence and extroversion, while it achieved statistical significance at large intervals on the dimension of competence. While there is no theoretical rationale to account for this finding, this pattern of results suggests that the relationship between inoculation pretreatment, time interval and attack message may be more intricate than previously thought. The findings, that same inoculation pretreatments are more effective in deflecting character as opposed to issue attacks at large intervals, or that issue attacks are more effective at small intervals, if they extend to the other source credibility dimensions, carry important nuances for practitioners.

Persuasibility

The study affirms that inoculation confers more resistance to attack messages among strong party identifiers on attitude toward candidate and likelihood of voting for. This offers further confirmation for the position that strong

party affiliates are less susceptible to political persuasion in all circumstances (Atkin, 1971; Blumler & McQuail, 1969; Chaffee & Choe, 1980; King, 1977; Sherrod, 1971; Shively, 1980; Weisberg & Rusk, 1970). The results of this study simply indicate that inoculation pretreatments strengthen resistance levels among all receivers, regardless of political orientation, but leaving strong party identifiers as the most resistant overall.

An interaction involving inoculation pretreatment and political party orientation overrode the main effect on attitude toward position. The post hoc finding, that same inoculation pretreatments were significantly more effective in deflecting attack messages among strong identifiers as opposed to weak identifiers, nonidentifiers or crossovers, adds further support for the view that inoculation is effective among strong identifiers. However, the post hoc finding that novel inoculation pretreatments were more effective among weak identifiers, strong identifiers, and crossovers as opposed to nonidentifiers, cannot be explained by extant theory. Both findings suggest that same and novel inoculation pretreatments should be adapted to political party orientation for maximum results.

The study found that, contrary to prediction, inoculation pretreatments confer more resistance to subsequent attack messages among faithful Democrat

identifiers than faithful Republican identifiers on attitude toward candidate, likelihood of voting for, competence, composure and extroversion. The rationale for the prediction was that, since Republican identifiers are less susceptible to political persuasion, following inoculation, attack messages should exert less impact on them.

The results of this study rule out the most parsimonious explanation for this finding: that the messages directed toward faithful Republican identifiers were somehow more effective than the messages directed toward faithful Democrat identifiers. However, the results indicated no significant inoculation or attack message and party affiliation interaction. This suggests that the explanation for the finding that inoculation confers more resistance among Democrat identifiers must lie elsewhere.

One explanation that cannot be completely ruled out is that the greater impact of inoculation among Democrat as opposed to Republican faithful is an idiosyncrasy, either of the 1986 Abdnor and Daschle campaign, or of South Dakota politics. However, it is doubtful if this finding is an idiosyncrasy of the Abdnor and Daschle campaign. Despite considerable volatility in candidate preference, this study detected no overall shift to the Democrat candidate during the month of October. The study identified a 53-47 percent margin for the Democrat nominee in both phase one (October 1

to October 8) and phase two (October 11 to October 28), the same margin which prevailed in the election.

Nonetheless, the finding could be an idiosyncrasy of South Dakota politics. Since South Dakota is a rural plains state, the composition of the Democrat and Republican parties is unique. For example, among South Dakota Democrats there are far less blue-collar workers and Catholics, two of the groups frequently identified with the overall weakening of the New Deal coalition in recent years (Axelrod, 1972, 1982, 1986; Norpoth & Rusk, 1982). The impact of inoculation among party identifiers should be explored further in order to eliminate idiosyncrasy as a possible explanation.

The persuasion literature suggests one plausible additional explanation which is also consistent with the position, so firmly established in theory and research, that Democrat identifiers are more persuasible than Republican identifiers (Caddell, 1985; Ginsberg & Shefter, 1985; Hargrove & Nelson, 1985; Lowi, 1985; McWilliams, 1985; Norpoth & Rusk, 1982; Shively, 1980). Greater persuasibility, of course, renders Democrat identifiers more vulnerable to political attacks.

However, greater persuasibility should also make them more susceptible to inoculation. In addition, since inoculation precedes attack, it may carry more persuasive force among receivers higher in persuasibility, either

because of an assimilation effect (Sherif & Sherif, 1967), or because of a primacy effect based on superior recall and influence of the first message in a conflicting message sequence (Burgoon, 1975). A primacy effect is even more pronounced when the content area is both interesting and familiar to receivers (Rosnow & Robinson, 1967), as should have been true for the inoculation messages geared toward party identifiers. The possibility of enhanced inoculation impact among more persuasible receivers, either due to an assimilation or primacy effect, should be examined further.

The study fails to support a gender effect on the dependent variables of attitude toward candidate, attitude toward position, or likelihood of voting for. However, gender did impact all source credibility dimensions. The results indicated a main effect for gender on the dimensions of composure and extroversion in the direction of greater resistance among males following exposure to attack messages.

However, the triple interactions, involving inoculation pretreatment, attack message approach and gender, on the dimensions of character, competence, and sociability are particularly interesting. The results suggested a consistent pattern, although post-hoc analysis indicated that statistical significance was achieved only on the dimension of character. For females, same inoculation pretreatments were more effective in deflecting character as opposed to

issue attacks, while novel inoculation pretreatments were equally effective with both. For males, novel inoculation pretreatments were more effective in deflecting character as opposed to issue attacks, while same inoculation pretreatments were equally effective with both. There is no theoretical explanation which can account for these findings. The impact of inoculation pretreatment, attack message approach and gender on source credibility should be examined further, since additional support for the pattern of results indicated in this study would suggest important nuances for the design and targeting of inoculation messages.

Concerns

Two concerns affect the interpretation of the results of this investigation. This section will assess concerns regarding: the threat manipulation and the amount of variance accounted for.

Threat Manipulation

Inoculation theory posits that refutational pretreatments, in the presence of a supportive structure, confer resistance to counterpersuasion because they threaten the individual, thus triggering the motivation to bolster arguments supporting attitudes (Anderson & McGuire, 1965; McGuire, 1964; Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961). The first paragraph of each inoculation message was designed to

threaten receivers, and a three-item scale was employed to assess whether the inoculation messages achieved this purpose. However, the results were disappointing.

First, the alpha reliability of the threat dimension was low: threat (.50). This calls into question the internal consistency of the three-item threat measure. Subsequent studies should employ a five-item threat measure, consisting of the following items: threatening/nonthreatening, harmful/not harmful, intimidating/unintimidating, risky/not risky, and safe/dangerous. This measure was employed by Burgoon, Cohen, Miller and Montgomery (1978) and Miller and Burgoon (1979) with quite satisfactory alpha reliability outcomes.

Second, while the inoculation pretreatment messages did generate threat, the overall level was insufficient. The results revealed a main effect for threat on likelihood of voting for and the credibility dimension of composure. In addition, the results indicated an interaction involving threat and attack message, such that, as threat increased from moderate to high, the effectiveness of the character attack messages, but not the issue attack messages, declined. This finding achieved statistical significance on attitude toward candidate, attitude toward position, and on the credibility dimension of character, and approached

statistical significance on the dependent measure of likelihood of voting for.

Nonetheless, if the results of the three-item measure are accurate, then the inoculation messages employed in this study failed to generate sufficient threat levels. One plausible explanation for insufficient threat involves the operationalization of threat in this study. The initial studies on inoculation operationalized threat in terms of the placement of two counterarguments in the first paragraph of an inoculation message (McGuire, 1961a, 1961b). Later, McGuire (1964) operationalized "high threat" as the use of four counterarguments in an inoculation message. Of course, McGuire's inoculation messages, administered in laboratory settings, were lengthy, running 500-600 words.

This investigation, conducted in field conditions, employed much shorter inoculation messages (ranging from 230 to 260 words). As a result, a single counterargument was raised in the opening paragraph of each inoculation message. It is possible that a single counterargument is not enough to generate sufficient threat levels. The alternative, however, is to employ a more lengthy inoculation message, an option which may significantly impair subject participation in field conditions.

A second explanation for insufficient threat concerns the political campaign context. Actual threat in a political

campaign, where it is normative for receivers to be exposed to messages which run opposite their own attitudes, may be inherently low. Much past resistance research was confined to laboratory conditions, using messages which focussed on salient issues designed to threaten attitudinal freedom. The results of this investigation suggest that it is necessary to rethink the notion of threat in field contexts.

Finally, it should be noted that the primary purpose of a manipulation check is to protect against Type II error. The results of this study supported inoculation theory, thus reducing concerns about the question of sufficient threat levels.

Variance Accounted for

The results of this study, though statistically significant, failed to account for sizable variance in dependent variables; despite the fact that many of the findings exceeded the most stringent statistical standards ($p < .01$). The results on attack message and inoculation condition manipulations illustrates this outcome. With regard to the attack message manipulation, the results indicated that issue attacks were more persuasive than character attacks. Yet, the difference was responsible for two percent of the variance in attitude toward candidate, three percent of the variance in attitude toward position,

and one percent of the variance in the likelihood of voting for the candidate supported in the attack message. Similarly, the results revealed a main effect for inoculation. Yet, the differences in inoculation and control conditions accounted for three percent of the variance in attitude toward candidate, two percent of the variance in attitude toward position, and one percent of the variance in likelihood of voting for.

However, the level of variance accounted for by the results in no way diminishes the importance of the findings of this investigation. Any reasonable assessment of the levels of variance accounted for must be viewed within the context of the investigation. Using this perspective, the levels of variance accounted for in this study are meaningful.

In order to detect an inoculation effect, the attack messages, administered to receivers already committed to the opposing candidate, had to exert a persuasive influence. In other words, to test for inoculation it was necessary to target for influence only the most unlikely prospects, those receivers with formed attitudes about the candidates and their positions sufficient to warrant a preference for one candidate. It should be clear that even the most successful attempts to influence the attitudes of receivers who already support a particular candidate in a political campaign will

account for only a small proportion of the total variance in the attitudes of those receivers about the candidates or their positions.

Furthermore, this investigation employed a single message stimulus (the treatment condition consisted of an inoculation message, subsequently followed by an attack message; the control condition consisted of a single attack message), administered during the last month of an intense political campaign, that featured highly visible candidates and maximum penetration of commercial messages. Under these circumstances, what is surprising is how much, not how little, variance in receiver attitudes toward the candidates was accounted for by the administration of single messages. If anything, the results underestimate the potential of inoculation, since in actual use during a political campaign, inoculation would be accomplished via multiple messages over a period of time.

Finally, the significance of variance cannot be assessed via mathematical means alone. Other considerations are also relevant. For example, this investigation employed an axiomatic theory to explain the efficacy of a fourth political message strategy in campaigns. The findings of this study are girded by the explanatory calculus of inoculation theory, requiring less variance accounted for. Furthermore,

in close political campaigns, the variance accounted for in this investigation could prove sufficient to put one candidate over the top. Or, as Jeffries (1986, p. 259) writes, "...even slight changes may be significant in close elections."

Conclusion

The practice of, and research in, political persuasion to date has emphasized attempts to change voter attitudes and behaviors to the exclusion of efforts to foster resistance against subsequent persuasive attacks. This preoccupation with conversion has produced more confusion than insight, prompting some political communication scholars to abandon behavioral approaches to political communication (Sanders, Kaid & Nimmo, 1985, p. 308), and others to minimize the role of persuasion in politics (Mauser, 1983, p. 34). But, the focus on conversion has made a clear imprint on the strategies and tactics employed in political campaigns. Currently political advisors counsel many candidates to shy away from substantive approaches which might alienate supporters or potential converts.

This investigation posited that political messages can be designed to inoculate supporters of candidates against the subsequent attack messages of an opposing candidate. The

results of the study support this position, thus extending the scope of inoculation theory to new domain and providing a new strategic approach for candidates in political campaigns.

APPENDIX A

STUDY QUESTIONNAIRES

Two questionnaires were employed in this study. The phase one, or inoculation pretreatment, questionnaire was designed to gather information about subjects, facilitate administration of the appropriate inoculation pretreatment message, and assess threat and readability. It is contained on pages 85-87.

The phase two, or attack message, questionnaire was administered to treatment and control populations. The interviewers were trained to adapt the questionnaire to the appropriate group. It was designed either to identify specific subjects in the case of the treatment population, or to gather information about subjects in the case of the control population. In addition, the phase two questionnaire was designed to facilitate administration of the appropriate attack message, and then to assess subject attitudes about the candidate supported in the attack message as well as the positions advocated in the attack message. The phase two questionnaire is contained on pages 88-91.

PHASE ONE SUBJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Ward: _____

Interviewer: _____

Good afternoon (ADAPT GREETING). My name is (INSERT NAME) with the Center for the Study of Political Argument. We are interested in examining how people evaluate arguments which are used in political campaign literature.

Are you eligible to vote in South Dakota?

IF NO, ASK IF YOU CAN SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD THAT IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN SOUTH DAKOTA. IF NOONE IS, THEN TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW. IF ONE IS, BUT IS NOT HOME, ASK WHEN WOULD BE THE BEST TIME TO RETURN IN ORDER TO SPEAK WITH THEM. Thank you.

Would you be willing to spend a few minutes to participate in this research project?

IF NO, TERMINATE INTERVIEW.
I'm sorry for the inconvenience. Thank you.

IF YES, CONTINUE INTERVIEW.

I need to ask a few questions which are designed to provide some background information and then I will ask you to read and evaluate a political message. Please remember that the quality of the results of this research project depends upon the accuracy of the information that you provide. All information which you provide will remain confidential.

1. What is your preference in the race for the United States Senate in South Dakota:

- (1) James Abdnor
- (2) Tom Daschle
- (3) Undecided or no preference

IF THE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION IS 3, TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW. EXPLAIN: This phase of the study requires me to interview only Abdnor supporters. But, I would like to thank you anyway for your cooperation.

IF THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION IS 1 OR 2, PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

2. Would you describe your political party affiliation as:

- (1) Strong Republican (2) Weak Republican
- (3) Strong Democrat (4) Weak Democrat
- (5) No affiliation

IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 2 WAS 1, 2, 3 OR 4, PROCEED TO QUESTION 3.

IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 2 WAS 5 OR 6, MOVE DIRECTLY TO QUESTION 4.

3. We need to precisely pinpoint your political party affiliation for this research project. So, on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 represents a very weak affiliation and 7 represents a very strong affiliation, would you characterize your party affiliation as:

very weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very strong

Your name? _____

Your address? _____

IF SUBJECT HESITATES TO PROVIDE PERSONAL INFORMATION, EXPLAIN THAT: This information is needed for the research project (we have to be able to identify participants in order to validate each questionnaire). However, let me assure you that all responses will remain confidential.

4. Your sex (ASCERTAIN WITHOUT ASKING)?

- (1) Female
- (2) Male

5. What was the last year of school completed?

- (1) some high school
- (2) high school graduate
- (3) some college or vocational school
- (4) college graduate
- (5) some graduate or professional school
- (6) advanced degree

6. Would you categorize your age as:

- (1) 18-25 years
- (2) 26-34 years
- (3) 35-44 years
- (4) 45-54 years
- (5) 55-64 years
- (6) 65 or more years

I now ask that you read this political message carefully and thoroughly. When you complete the message, I will ask you to evaluate it by responding to a few brief questions. ADMINISTER INOCULATION MESSAGE.

FOR ABDNOR SUPPORTERS, RANDOMLY SELECT ONE OF THE ABDNOR INOCULATION MESSAGES (I-1, I-2, I-3).

FOR DASCHLE SUPPORTERS, RANDOMLY SELECT ONE OF THE THREE DASCHLE INOCULATION MESSAGES (I-4, I-5, I-6).

7. MARK MESSAGE USED HERE. VERIFY THE ACCURACY.

- (1) I-1 (ABDNOR-ISSUE-SAME)
- (2) I-2 (ABDNOR-CHARACTER-SAME)
- (3) I-3 (ABDNOR-GENERIC-NOVEL)
- (4) I-4 (DASCHLE-ISSUE-SAME)
- (5) I-5 (DASCHLE-CHARACTER-SAME)
- (6) I-6 (DASCHLE-GENERIC-NOVEL)

AFTER THE SUBJECT READS THE MESSAGE, CONTINUE. I now have a few brief questions about the message. I would like you to evaluate the message, responding to the following pairs of adjective opposites. There are seven spaces, with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 separating each of the adjective pairs. Please respond carefully. Remember, however, that there are no right or wrong answers. I felt that the message was:

- 8. Clear 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unclear
(where 1 is the most clear and 7 the most unclear)
- 9. Difficult 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Easy
- 10. Light 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Heavy
- 11. Complex 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Simple

Just a few more items. I felt that the message was:

- 12. Dangerous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Safe
(where 1 is the most dangerous and 7 the most safe)
- 13. Nonthreatening 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Threatening
- 14. Anxious 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Calm

Thank you very much for participating in this project.

PHASE TWO SUBJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Ward: _____ Interviewer: _____

Good afternoon (ADAPT GREETING).

FOR NONINOCULATED SUBJECTS, MOVE DIRECTLY FROM THE GREETING TO IDENTIFICATION OF YOURSELF AND YOUR AFFILIATION.

FOR INOCULATED SUBJECTS, CONTINUE: Could I please speak with Mr./Ms. _____ (INSERT SUBJECT NAME)? VERIFY THE ADDRESS (ASCERTAIN WITHOUT ASKING)

IF THE SUBJECT IS NOT HOME, ASK WHEN WOULD BE THE BEST TIME TO RETURN SO THAT YOU CAN SPEAK WITH THEM. Thank you. IF YOU ARE SPEAKING WITH THE RIGHT SUBJECT, CONTINUE.

My name is (INSERT NAME) with Citizens for an Informed Electorate. Citizens for an Informed Electorate is interested in providing information about political candidates and their positions. Would you mind reading a campaign message from the Abdnor and Daschle Senate race and then answering a few brief questions about it? IF YES, GO TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MESSAGE.

IF NO, REASSURE THEM THAT IT WILL TAKE LESS THAN 5 MINUTES AND THAT THEIR RESPONSES WILL REMAIN ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENTIAL. IF STILL NO, TERMINATE INTERVIEW. I apologize for the inconvenience. Thank you.

IF YES, SAY: The messages were written for the study by Citizens for an Informed Electorate. They are based on appeals which the candidates have--or might--use in this campaign..

FOR ALL NONINOCULATED SUBJECT ONLY ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

44. What is your preference in the race for the United States Senate in South Dakota?

- (1) James Abdnor (2) Tom Daschle
- (3) Undecided or no preference

IF THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION ABOVE WAS 3, THEN TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW. This phase of the study requires me to interview only people who prefer one of the candidates. But, I'd like to thank you anyway for your help.

IF THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION ABOVE WAS 1 OR 2, THEN PROCEED TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

45. Would you describe your political party affiliation as:

- (1) Strong Republican (2) Weak Republican
- (3) Strong Democrat (4) Weak Democrat
- (5) No affiliation

IF THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION ABOVE WAS 5, SKIP TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ATTACK MESSAGE.

IF THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION WAS 1, 2, 3 OR 4, THEN ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

46. On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates a very weak and 7 a very strong affiliation, how would you characterize your party affiliation?

very weak 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very strong

47. FOR NONINOCULATED SUBJECTS, SELECT THE ATTACK MESSAGE AT RANDOM. MARK MESSAGE USED HERE. VERIFY ACCURACY.

- (1) A-1 (DASCHLE-ISSUE-ATTACK)
- (2) A-2 (DASCHLE-CHARACTER-ATTACK)
- (3) A-3 (ABDNOR-ISSUE-ATTACK)
- (4) A-4 (ABDNOR-CHARACTER-ATTACK)

15. FOR INOCULATED SUBJECTS, THE APPROPRIATE MESSAGE IS PREDETERMINED. THIS SUBJECT SHOULD RECEIVE MESSAGE _____. VERIFY THE ACCURACY.

ADMINISTER THE APPROPRIATE ATTACK MESSAGE.

Here is the message. Please read it carefully and thoroughly. When you complete it, I will ask you to respond to a few brief questions.

AFTER SUBJECT READS THE MESSAGE, CONTINUE. I now have a few brief questions. I will ask you to respond to pairs of adjective opposites. There are seven spaces, with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 separating each of the adjective pairs. Please respond as accurately as possible. Remember, however, that there are no right or wrong answers.

I think that the candidate supported in the message is:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 16. Positive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Negative |
| (where 1 is the most positive and 7 the most negative) | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good |
| 18. Favorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Unfavorable |
| 19. Acceptable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Unacceptable |
| 20. Foolish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Wise |
| 21. Right | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Wrong |

I think that the position taken in the message is:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 22. Positive | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Negative |
| (where 1 is the most positive and 7 the most negative) | | | | | | | | |
| 23. Bad | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Good |
| 24. Favorable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Unfavorable |
| 25. Acceptable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Unacceptable |
| 26. Foolish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Wise |
| 27. Right | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Wrong |

28. On a scale from 0-100, indicate your likelihood of voting for the candidate who is supported in the message. PLACE ANSWER HERE: _____

The last group of items are designed to measure your attitude toward the candidate who is supported in the message with greater precision. Again, I will read a list of adjective opposites. Please indicate your feeling about the source by responding along a seven-point scale. I feel that the source of the message is:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| 29. Selfish | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Unselfish |
| (where 1 is the most selfish and 7 the most unselfish) | | | | | | | | |

30.	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
31.	Honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dishonest
32.	Incompetent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Competent
33.	Intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unintelligent
34.	Unqualified	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Qualified

There are just a few more items.

35.	Poised	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Nervous
36.	Tense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relaxed
37.	Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Calm
38.	Energetic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Tired
39.	Outgoing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Withdrawn
40.	Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Meek
41.	Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant
42.	Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cheerful
43.	Good-natured	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irritable

Thank you very much for participating in this project.

APPENDIX B

INOCULATION AND ATTACK MESSAGES

The six inoculation and four attack messages which were employed in this investigation are contained on pages 94-103.

The messages were designated as follows:

- I-1: Abdnor Issue Inoculation
- I-2: Abdnor Character Inoculation
- I-3: Abdnor Generic Inoculation
- I-4: Daschle Issue Inoculation
- I-5: Daschle Character Inoculation
- I-6: Daschle Generic Inoculation
- A-1: Daschle Issue Attack
- A-2: Daschle Character Attack
- A-3: Abdnor Issue Attack
- A-4: Abdnor Character Attack

Subjects received specific combinations of inoculation and attack messages. In the refutational same condition, those subjects who were treated with an issue inoculation message subsequently received an issue attack message on behalf of the opposing candidate, whereas those subjects

who were treated with a character inoculation message subsequently received a character attack message on behalf of the opposing candidate. In the refutational novel condition, those subjects who were treated with a generic inoculation message subsequently received either an issue or character attack message on behalf of the opposing candidate.

ABDNOR SUPPORTS FAMILY FARMER

No one has worked harder in support of the family farmer in the U. S. Senate than Jim Abdnor. Yet, despite Senator Abdnor's efforts, as the election draws nearer you can expect Tom Daschle and his supporters both to step up their attacks on current farm support programs as wasteful and misdirected and to depict Senator Abdnor as a supporter of those programs.

We would like to set the record straight. It is true that Senator Abdnor voted for the 1985 Farm Bill, and that the legislation was far from perfect. Yet, the Senator worked hard to make it better by pushing through four amendments. The Abdnor amendments called for shipments of CCC surplus grain to depressed farm areas, higher grain quality controls for increased exports, a study of the proposed ban of leaded gas, and a study by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation of offsetting winter and spring wheat production. Following these improvements, Senator Abdnor voted for the 1985 Farm Bill because overall it offers many long-term solutions to the farm crisis. Further, Senator Abdnor's record as a champion of the family farmer is beyond question. For instance, Abdnor recently won his two-year fight to remove non-farmer investors from farming when he included a provision in the Senate's tax reform bill to deny non-farmers the opportunity to shelter non-farm income with farm losses.

So, when Senator Abdnor's opponents attack, remember that the Senator's record in support of family farmers speaks for itself.

I-1

ABDNOR PROVIDES EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Jim Abdnor is an experienced and effective voice for South Dakota in the U. S. Senate. Yet, as the election draws nearer you can expect Tom Daschle and his supporters to step up their attacks on Jim Abdnor's speaking skills, charging that flashy oratory is a prerequisite for effectiveness in the U. S. Senate.

The image of flowery speeches and spirited debates on the Senate floor fails to capture the manner in which leadership is exercised in the U. S. Senate. The real work of a Senator is done in committee rooms where committee and subcommittee members control what proposals are funded, which compromises are negotiated, and which battles are won and lost. It is in committee where Jim Abdnor's experience pays off for South Dakota. Jim Abdnor sits on important Senate committees. He is the first South Dakota Senator since Karl Mundt to serve on the powerful Appropriations Committee. This committee oversees every federal dollar spent in every state for housing, highways, education -- for virtually everything that touches our lives. Does this benefit South Dakota? It is no coincidence that during the past five years total federal grants for state and local governments in South Dakota have increased more than four times more than the national average. In addition, Jim Abdnor's accumulated seniority in the Senate works for South Dakota. Thus, his second term should prove even more productive than his first.

So when Senator Abdnor's opponents attack his speaking skills, remember that the bottom line is performance, not flashiness.

ABDNOR'S WORKED HARD TO KEEP YOUR TRUST

Jim Abdnor has worked hard for South Dakota and rural America in battle after battle in the U. S. Senate. He has worked hard to keep your trust. Now, however, as election day draws nearer, you can bet that Tom Daschle will step up his well-financed campaign against Senator Abdnor, attacking on all fronts in a desperate bid to unseat him. Some of Tom Daschle's messages may cause you to question who is the better candidate.

If doubts arise during the final days of this campaign, remember two simple things about Jim Abdnor. First, Jim Abdnor knows South Dakota, its people, and our needs. He knows what we need in agriculture because he is from a small town and remains a farmer. His rural ties fostered a deep, personal commitment to a better life on our family farms. Jim Abdnor knows us because he has spent his life in public service, listening, working and winning for South Dakotans. The second thing to remember is that you always can count on Jim Abdnor to put South Dakota first. Senator Abdnor isn't interested in grabbing national media attention. The two fundamental criteria which guide his actions are: Is it good for South Dakota? Is it good for America?

Jim Abdnor knows South Dakota and he puts South Dakota first. As his opponent steps up his attacks during the closing days of this campaign, just remember that Jim Abdnor has worked hard to keep your trust, earning your support in this election.

DASCHLE'S RECORD IS STRONG

Tom Daschle has established a strong record as a political moderate during the years that he served South Dakota in the House of Representatives. However, as the election draws nearer the opposition may step up attacks on Tom Daschle's voting record, charging that it is too liberal for South Dakotans. While this charge may influence some voters who are not familiar with Tom Daschle and his record, most voters will recognize the weakness of this attack. First, attempts to brand candidates as "conservative" or "liberal" are often misleading. For example, organizations which rate voting records generally view: support for all military spending as conservative, but support for legislation to help American veterans as liberal; support for the environment as liberal; and reductions in federal spending on social services and farm programs as conservative.

Second, attempts to label candidates draw attention away from specific positions and votes, which are the proper focus of a political campaign. Tom Daschle's positions include: a fair price, decent income, and affordable credit for farmers; across-the-board cuts in federal spending to achieve a balanced budget; a strong, but lean, military capability; an arms control agreement with tough safeguards against cheating; and a strong commitment to American veterans.

It's time to focus this campaign on the relative merit of the two candidates and their positions. Political labels are a poor substitute for substantive comparisons.

DASCHLE STANDS UP FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Tom Daschle is a Democrat who stands up for what's best for South Dakota. Yet, as this campaign draws to a close, you can expect Jim Abdnor to use national party politics in an attempt to sway voters. Abdnor's message, reinforced by visits to the state by the President, Vice President and others, is that support for Tom Daschle constitutes an attack on President Reagan's policies.

We think that South Dakota voters are too smart to fall for this tactic. They know that Tom Daschle stands up for what's best for us, regardless of the pressures of national party politics. He has supported what's good, and opposed what's bad, in the President's program. For example, Tom Daschle has spoken out for a balanced economic policy based on across-the-board federal spending cuts which exempt neither domestic programs nor defense spending. This caused him to favor some Reagan initiatives and to oppose others. The important thing to remember is that some of President Reagan's proposals are not good for South Dakotans and should be opposed. For example, the President's farm policy is a disaster for South Dakota farmers. His 1985 Farm Bill should have been opposed. That's what standing up for South Dakota is all about! Tom Daschle led the fight against the President's farm bill in the House; Jim Abdnor voted for it in the Senate.

It's good to know that you can always count on Tom Daschle to stand up for what's best for South Dakota.

DASCHLE WILL DELIVER FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Tom Daschle is the candidate who can deliver for South Dakota in the U. S. Senate. However, as election day draws nearer, you can bet that Jim Abdnor will step up his campaign, attacking on all fronts in a desperate bid to retain his Senate seat. As you attempt to sort out the claims and counterclaims in this campaign, don't lose sight of what is really important.

This is a crucial period for South Dakota and for all rural America. Falling farm prices, soaring debt, and ruinous federal policies have devastated rural America, forcing thousands off of their land and threatening the economies of main street merchants in hundreds of small towns.

Jim Abdnor, the incumbent Republican, has had his chance to produce. Given the record of Republican policies since 1981, it is not surprising that Abdnor prefers to shift the campaign agenda from the Republican record to a litany of charges against Tom Daschle. In these difficult times South Dakota desperately needs Tom Daschle in the U. S. Senate fighting for our survival. Tom Daschle has become a recognized, national leader for rural America. Now he asks your support in his campaign for the Senate where, because each state is equal, his strong voice will prove even more effective.

In these troubled times for rural America, the only relevant concern is candidate performance. So, when Jim Abdnor attacks, don't lose sight of what is really important. Tom Daschle will deliver for South Dakota and for rural America!

SUPPORT PAYMENTS MISDIRECTED

Current farm support programs, because they are based on production and not on producers' needs, spend your hard-earned tax dollars to support the biggest and richest agribusiness operators, providing only token payments to the family farmer. The National Legislative Education Foundation reports that: "...farm support programs...help the rich get richer and encourage the big to grow bigger." Almost a third of support payments go to 5 percent of farms with sales over \$250,000 a year. The average family income of those farmers is \$97,000 a year; average equity is \$900,000. By contrast, about half of U. S. farmers, suffering the most distress during hard times, get less than \$1,000 a year in Federal payments, only one-third of which goes to the four out of five with lowest incomes. As a result, support payments are too small to make much of a difference.

The Republican farm policies, which James Abdnor has supported and Tom Daschle opposed, are not only wasteful, they are an outrage. They are contributing to the monopolization of American agriculture while at the same time forcing hundreds of thousands of family farmers off the land. Tom Daschle advocates targeting support payments to family farmers who need the most help. Targeting will alter the current misdirection in farm support payments, providing increased assistance to beleaguered family farmers at a savings to the American taxpayer.

Support Tom Daschle for the U. S. Senate and help reverse the misdirection in farm support payments.

A-1

SOUTH DAKOTA NEEDS A STRONG VOICE

The U. S. Senate is a special forum in two respects. First, it is special because it erases differences in population among the states. Since South Dakota has as many members of the Senate as larger states like California and New York, it is the one place where citizens of smaller states stand shoulder to shoulder with everyone else in the country. Second, the U. S. Senate is special because it is a deliberative body, where a member's influence is measured in terms of visibility, particularly in floor debates.

The Senate is the place to make a difference for South Dakota. Jim Abdnor, despite other fine qualities, is not the strong spokesperson that South Dakota needs. Abdnor shuns public speeches -- even during political campaigns. Even his supporters admit that Abdnor is uneasy in front of people. As a result, Abdnor has adopted a very low profile in this campaign. Further, Abdnor has repeatedly shown his disdain for political debates. Frankly, we are worried. Since Jim Abdnor won't even speak to South Dakota voters, we think there is good reason to be concerned about his effectiveness in the Senate. These are not the actions of a strong spokesperson.

Because the U. S. Senate is the one forum where South Dakota has an equal voice, and because these are tough times for rural America, that voice must be stable, strong and effective. Support Tom Daschle for the U. S. Senate and make South Dakota's voice all that it can be.

A-2

CANDIDATES' VOTING RECORDS SHOW A CLEAR DIFFERENCE

This year's Senate election involves more than a simple choice between two candidates who happen to differ in approach and style. It also concerns a fundamental choice between two distinct political ideologies. When you go to the polls on election day, remember that you are selecting someone to represent your views in the U. S. Senate during the next six years.

The candidates' positions are reflected in their voting performance. Various organizations rate the voting records of members of the Congress. Summaries of the candidates' voting records highlight a clear difference in political philosophy between Jim Abdnor and Tom Daschle. Liberal organizations, including the Americans for Democratic Action and the AFL-CIO, rate Daschle high and Abdnor low. Conservative organizations, including the U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the American Conservative Union, rate Abdnor high and Daschle low. These ratings of the two candidates' voting records, though compiled by groups with very different political orientations, point to a single, indisputable conclusion. They indicate that Jim Abdnor is a conservative and Tom Daschle is a liberal.

In 1980 South Dakota voters made it very clear where they stand on important economic, defense and family issues, supporting Jim Abdnor over liberal George McGovern. We think that Jim Abdnor's voting record still represents the views of most South Dakota citizens. If you agree, return Jim Abdnor to the U. S. Senate. This election provides a clear choice between two distinct ideologies.

A-3

SENATE ELECTION INVOLVES MORE THAN A SIMPLE CHOICE

This year's Senate election involves much more than a struggle involving two candidates who differ in approach and style. If this was all that was at stake in this election, your decision would be easy since you would simply vote your preference between Jim Abdnor and Tom Daschle.

But, there is more to it than that. This election is also a vote of confidence or no confidence in President Reagan and his policies. Simply put, the outcome of the Abdnor and Daschle election may prove to be one of the most important events of the President's second term in office.

Tom Daschle has repeatedly opposed the President's key initiatives regarding important economic, defense and family issues. In addition, as a Democrat, he poses a direct threat to President Reagan and his policies which depend on maintaining the Republican majority in the Senate. With Republican control hanging by a thread, many analysts argue that the outcome in South Dakota may well tip the balance. Hence, during his visit, Vice President Bush characterized a Republican victory in South Dakota as "vitally important" to the state as well as the nation. President Reagan stressed the same theme during his recent trip to the state.

Support the President and his policies by casting your vote for Republican Jim Abdnor in the South Dakota Senate election. There is a great deal at stake in this election!

A-4

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