STARS

2011

Political conservatism and its effects on memory and basic recall

Simon M. Caine
University of Central Florida

Recommended Citation

POLITICIAL CONSERVATISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON MEMORY
AND BASIC RECALL

by

SIMON M. CAINE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2011

Thesis Chair: Dr. Janan Smither

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate how conservatism affects a person's perception of everyday details. It is hypothesized that there will be a positive correlation between the participants' conservative ratings and the amount of details from the readings they recall that are also conservative. This will also mean that there will be a negative correlation between the participants scoring higher on the conservatism scale and the amount of liberal details they recall. A similar pattern is expected to be discovered pertaining to participants that identify as more liberal. How is this measured? The participants will be asked to rate the their political views on a scale of 1-6, 1 being extremely liberal, and 6 being extremely conservative. A transcript of a political debate will contain views that are both conservative and liberal. Each view will be backed up by details supporting each of a candidate's policies. The transcript will include minor grammatical errors including punctuation, spelling, and tenses, all of which the participant will be asked to correct. Following this will be a mathematical task which will include converting mixed numbers to improper fractions at the difficulty of a fifth grade level. A memory recall task will then be administered to the participants asking them to recall as many of the details from the debate as possible.

DEDICATION

For every busy person out there who has a question and isn't willing to settle for

what Google has to offer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Before the birth of psychology, the Greek philosopher Pythagoras coined the term "Philosophia" meaning love of wisdom (McConnell, 2009). This was the first time in history that those who pondered the ways of the universe could be categorized. Philosophers of that time contemplated and debated such questions as "Why does the universe act the way it does?" and "What is it that causes the things that happen in our environment daily?" These questions later led up to the more important question: What causes humans to behave in the manner in which they do?

Behavior has always been considered a complex phenomenon which can be broken down into many different categories. What is it that truly influences behavior? While there are many variables that influence human behavior, perhaps it is behavior that is reliant on the inner workings of memory, for one cannot adapt to one's environment or make a change to behavior without the assistance of memory. How can one use such things as schemas and biases when there is no information that can be used to fill in the vagueness of everyday life without being able to recall previous instances? In a study conducted by Lodge and Hamil in 1986, the researchers stated that schemas have been found to influence what information is attended to, encoded, and retrieved from memory. It would seem then that the

information that one can recall from past experiences would influence how one remembers material, as well as which details they can recall. There have in fact been numerous studies done on how memory affects the way humans interact every day, from how health beliefs influence memory for health information (Kiviniemim and Rothman, 2006) to the effects that emotions have on the memories our brain creates (Moritz, Glascher, & Brassen, 2005). This study will further explore human memory in order to explore how the creation of memories is influenced by political biases.

Since the incorporation of the democratic system there have been many who wish to be able to predict the outcome of an election of any sort by analyzing everything from public opinion gathered by polls to the examination of past voting behavior. Voting behavior in particular has been an issue of interest in the United States for a very long time. In fact, Wembridge and Means (1918) analyzed the behavior that transpired during the 1916 presidential election in Oregon. Wembridge explains that Oregon was denying Blacks the right to vote and studied the banning of blacks from voting and analyzed the effect it had on those who voted, and how the election was affected because of it. The issue of voter behaviors was further researched in 1986 by Lodge and Hamil. They examined how the political party affiliation of candidates had an effect on how the public would apply their preconceived notion, or schema, to the candidate. According to Lodge & Hamil, the use of the memory processes that are needed when using schemas requires that the

individual be able to initially categorize and organize incoming information. Without the knowledge of the candidate's political affiliation, the public had a harder time using their political schemas to categorize them, thus making it more difficult to organize information so that it could be more easily recalled later. Schemas are complex and important in many ways: according to Lodge and Hamil, schemas have been found to provide categories for labeling people, places, events, and processes, facilitate the chunking or grouping of information into larger easily retrievable categories, and influence what information will be attended to, encoded, and retrieved from memory. Schemas have also been found to allow individuals to make inferences from incomplete data by filling in missing information with schema-consistent best guesses, provide a basis for making more confident decisions and predictions, and influence the weighting of evidence brought to bear in making decisions and evaluating probabilities. Without the use of schemas a quick and simple decision is turned into a painstaking day long process. Schemas are essential for one to function in everyday life, but how do they affect our political and voting behavior?

Throughout recent years there have been numerous studies dealing with the relationship between the processes of how one obtains political knowledge and how that knowledge has an effect on one's voting behavior. In a study by Goren (1996) the mental processing of political arguments was examined to see how it was influenced by the information that was received, and if the mental processing was

dependant on whether or not the information came from a highly popular political figure. Goren concluded that if the information was received from a source that the participant agreed with on an ideological level, they were more likely to accept the information, as opposed to ignoring it. A few years later disconfirmation bias, the tendency to counter-argue or discount information with which one disagrees, became a topic discussed and studied by many. An experiment by Taber, Cann, & Kucsova, (2008) was one of the most recent studies that explored disconfirmation bias and applied it to the field of politics. In this experiment Taber et al. presented the participants with eight different issues, from gays in the military to the raising of college tuition, with participants' ratings of these items determining their placement on the political spectrum scale. Participants were then required to read a series of statements that either strongly opposed their political beliefs or complemented them with arguments of varying lengths. In the study, Taber and his colleagues found strong support for his disconfirmation hypothesis, being that people seemed unable to ignore their prior beliefs when processing arguments or evidence. It was also found that this bias was determined by the strength of prior attitudes (Hartman & Weber, 2009). However, there has been little research done in the area of politics and memory, such as how political affiliation (i.e., being conservative or liberal,) affects the natural processing of information in everyday life. It is possible that a person's political views, either conservative or liberal, have an effect on the information that the person recalls about certain candidates. In the

study done by Goren, participants were more likely to accept the information from a candidate whose platform they agreed with. In this case, does the term "accept" mean remember? Is it possible that one's political viewpoints filter out all the information that they believe is wrong or that is inconsistent with their current political standings? In this experiment we investigated the relationship between participants' self reported political conservatism and their ability to recall corresponding details from memory. It is hypothesized that a positive correlation will be found between one's degree of conservatism and the amount of conservative details one recalls. This will also be inversely true. That is, a positive correlation is expected between one's degree of liberalism and the amount of liberal details that they recall.

Regardless of the findings obtained from this study, this current research is among the first few to bring light to the topic of the relationship between human memory and how it affects us in the world of politics. This is but a stepping stone for which others in the same area of research can use to build a more comprehensive view of how politics and memory intermingle with each other.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were recruited from politically active college groups (i.e., College

Democrats and College Republicans) located at the University of Central Florida.

There was a total of fifty six participants, forty males and sixteen females. Twenty

six of the participants were gathered from the College Democrats club, and the

remaining thirty participants came from the College Republicans on campus. All

students were between the ages of eighteen and twenty six. No compensation was

provided.

Materials

A demographics questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered at the beginning of

the study. Of the fourteen questions, twelve were demographic in nature and the

other two were used to measure the participant's level of conservatism. The

questions asked whether the participant is conservative, liberal, moderate, or does

not know. The participants was asked to rate the majority of their political views on

Zogby polling political scale of 1-6, 1 being extremely liberal, and 6 being extremely

conservative.

 A transcript of a political debate was created with the majority of information

coming from the 2006 Taber and Lodge study (Appendix B). The debate contains

two senators whose views contradict each other and represent both conservative

and liberal sides of all three of the questions was presented. Each of their views was backed up by details supporting each of their policies; these include but were not limited to the quotations of famous speakers, statistics, and recent survey information. The transcript included minor grammatical errors including punctuation, spelling, and the improper use of tenses, all of which the participants were asked to correct.

This was followed by a mathematical task (Appendix C) which included the converting of mixed numbers to improper fractions at the difficulty of a fifth grade level.

A memory recall task was then administered to the participants asking them to recall as many of the details from the debate as possible. The free response page read: *Please recall as much detailed information as possible from the Debate News Coverage transcript. The more details the higher the grade that you will be assigned.* The free response task was graded using a predetermined grading rubric, this consisted of twenty five statements conservative in nature and another twenty five points that are liberal in nature. Each participant's free response tasks was graded based on the grading rubric, for each response that matched a conservative statement they received a point in the conservative category and for each response that matched a liberal statement they received a point in the liberal category.

Design

The experiment utilized a between groups design. The independent variable was the participant's political beliefs (liberal or conservative) and the dependent variable was how many details the participants recalled that supported each of the policies from the transcript and how many of those details were from either the conservative or liberal side of the political spectrum.

Procedure

Participants were first given the Informed Consent form. Next they were asked to complete a basic demographic questionnaire which contained questions that would place them somewhere on the political spectrum between extreme conservatism and extreme liberalism. Once the demographic questionnaire had been completed they were informed that the following tasks were to see if a correlation existed between intelligence and the conservatism of one's political views. The first task was to read the news coverage transcript of a political debate and correct all grammatical errors, including spelling and punctuations errors as well as tense issues. Upon finishing this task, the participants were then required to complete a series of math problems; they were asked to complete the task as quickly as possible and were told that the task would be timed. Afterwards, they were administered a memory recall test, which was free response, on the political debate they read prior to completing the math problems. Upon completion, the participants were given a debriefing form and thanked for their participation.

In this experiment, it is hypothesized that there will be a positive correlation between the participants rating on how conservative they are, and the amount of details they recall that are also conservative. This also means that there will be a negative correlation between high scores on conservatism and the number of liberal details recalled. A similar pattern is expected to be discovered pertaining to participants that identify as more liberal. A positive correlation between participants rating on how liberal they are, and the amount of details they recall that are also liberal. This will also mean that there will be a negative correlation between the participants scoring lower on the conservatism scale and the amount of conservative details they recall.

RESULTS

Demographics

Fifty six UCF students participated in this study, with the average age being twenty years old ($M = 20$, $SD = 1.78$). Considerably more male students participated than female students (42 males to 16 females). The participants consisted of 15.79% freshman, 17.54% sophomores, 28.07% juniors, 32.02% seniors, and 6.58% who did not report their year in school. Over half of the participants were White (56.14% White, 12.28% Black, 12.28% Hispanic and 19.30% other) and seventeen of them self-identified as liberal, fourteen identified as moderate and twenty four self-identified as conservative. Eighteen of the fifty six who participated turned in blank recall tests or filled them with items of nonsense indicating that they did not recall anything of relevance and were thus removed from the final analysis.

Scales

Participants rated themselves on a political orientation scale on points from 1 to 6, where 1 equaled extremely liberal and 6 equaled extremely conservative. As expected, those who identified as conservative had an average score of 5.33 (M $=5.33$, $SD = 0.47$), those who identified as liberal had an average score of 1.71 ($M =$

1.71, $SD = 0.47$), and then those who identified themselves as moderate had an average score of 3.5 ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.50$).
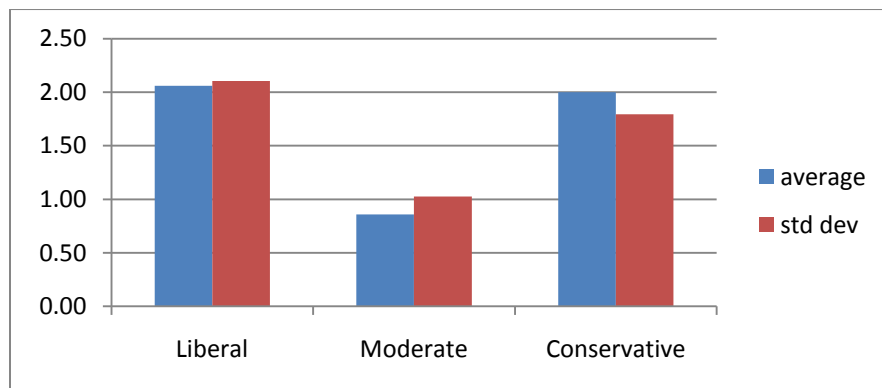
Free Response Grading

A grading rubric (Appendix D) was created for the grading of the free response task, completed by the participants. This consisted of twenty five statements made by each of the senators in the news coverage of the debate. The rubric focused on material that came from either ends of the political spectrum, i.e. either conservative or liberal, thus statements that fell in the middle of the spectrum were not added to the grading rubric. Three experienced graders with average political knowledge used the grading rubric to match as many sentences in the participants free response task with those statements from the grading rubric. Then the number of statements that matched the conservative and liberal statements were tallied giving each participant a number of items recalled that were liberal and a number of items recalled that were conservative. Each of the three graders scored all of the free response tasks independently of each other. Upon completion all graders came together to compare grades of each participant. Grade discrepancies were decided upon by the graders as a group.

Recall Data

The participants were broken down into three groups; liberals (scale rating 1 and 2), moderates (scale rating 3 and 4), and conservatives (scale rating of 5 and 6). The data were analyzed with a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The

overall MANOVA was significant $F(4,182) = 4.36$, $p < .002$. The univariate analyses indicated significant differences in recall for liberal items $F(2,92) = 7.078$, $p < 0.01$. Scheffe Post hoc analyses were conducted on the data and indicated that both conservative ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.57$) and liberal ($M = 2.69$, $SD = 2.02$) respondents remembered more liberal items than moderates ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.76$), $F(2,92) = 1.406$, $p = 0.25$) but that there was no statistically significant difference between conservatives and liberals (see figure 1).

Figure 1 Liberal Recall

With regard to total items recalled, the free response recollection task post grading had an n of 38, the mean of all the facts that the conservative and liberal groups remembered was ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.59$), the recall of the liberal group only was ($M = 5.46$, $SD = 3.04$) and the mean of conservative group only ($M = 5.89$, $SD = 2.42$) both of which showed a trend of higher recall than the moderates which was ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 2.19$) see figure 2.

Figure 2 Total Recall
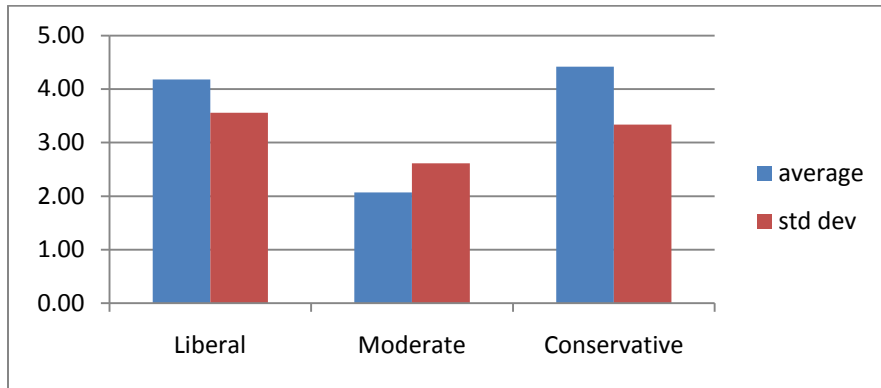
There was also insufficient evidence to conclude that political orientation had an effect on recall of details that were solely conservative $F(2, 37) = 1.60$, $p = .216$. The average recall performance for the group recalling solely conservative details ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.30$) see figure 3.

Figure 3 Conservative Recall
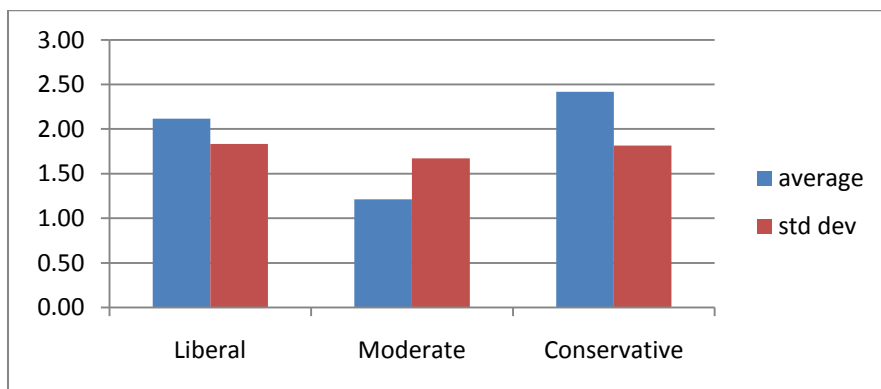
DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that both those who self-identified as liberals and conservatives recalled significantly more liberal details than those who self-identified as moderates. There was also a statistical trend that became evident post data analysis showing liberals and conservatives recalling more details overall than moderates.

The original hypothesis of the research stated that a positive correlation would be found between one's degree of conservatism and the amount of conservative details one recalls. The hypothesis also stated that the inverse would also be true—that is, a positive correlation would be expected between one's degree of liberalism and the amount of liberal details recalled. The results show that there is a relationship between overall recall of details by those who identified as being on either end of the political spectrum. Those who self-identified on the scale as liberal recalled more liberal details from the debate which confirms part of the hypothesis, however, those who identified as conservative did not recall more conservative details. As a matter of fact, conservatives also recalled more liberal ideas. One explanation for this finding may be social priming or a time of measurement effect. At the time of data collection, the political climate in the U.S. could have been

described as quite hostile towards liberal policies. It is possible that conservatives were primed to remember liberal ideas because of underlying resentment against what they perceived was a liberal presidential agenda, while liberals were predisposed to be defensive of attacks against liberal policies in general and therefore both those groups were more likely to remember liberal details than conservative ones within the context of a political debate.

Limitations and Further Research

Participants in this study were restricted to students at the University of Central Florida which limited the diversity of the sample. In addition, after those participants who did not complete the memory recollection task were removed from the corpus, the sample dropped from fifty six to forty participants, in which males (24) outnumbered females (16). As such, the small number of participants posed another limitation. A further limitation relates to the details within the materials the participants were asked to read since the saliency of those details was not specifically controlled for. In future studies, the saliency of the details should be empirically determined prior to data collection. Furthermore, although a recollection as opposed to a recognition type of task was used in order to prevent priming or bias, it is possible that the task was too difficult and that was the reason why the overall amount of details recalled by all of the participants was so low.

This initial research study investigating how political conservatism affects memory recall is a preliminary step that will hopefully lead to future studies

15

addressing why there is a difference between the type of data recalled by moderates

and those on each end of the political spectrum. Furthermore, such research may

help explain how political ideology and memory interact, and how this interaction

leads to specific behaviors in the voting booth.

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONAIRE

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONAIRE

Listed below are questions for this section of the survey. Please provide a response for every question. (If you are given the option to decline to answer a question, then declining to answer is considered a response.)

1) Please select your status at UCF
i. Freshman
ii. Sophomore
iii. Junior
iv. Senior
v. Senior more than 4th year
vi. None of the above
vii. Would prefer not to answer

2) Please specify what country you were born in
i. _____

3) Please Select Your Race (check all that apply)
i. White or Caucasian (not of Hispanic Origin)
ii. Black or African American (not of Hispanic Origin)
iii. Asian
iv. Hispanic or Latino
v. American Indian or Alaskan Native
vi. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
vii. Mixed or Other
viii. Would prefer not to answer

4) Please select your gender
i. Male
ii. Female
iii. Would prefer not to answer

5) What is your Major?
i. _____

6) What is your Minor? (Please indicate if none)
i. _____

7) Are you currently employed?
i. Yes
ii. No
iii. Would prefer not to answer

8) Please check all that apply
i. I have a job
ii. I have an internship
iii. I volunteer every week
iv. I conduct research on campus every week
v. Would prefer not to answer

9) If answered yes to either of two previous questions, please specify the average hours per week for all.
i. 0-10
ii. 20-30
iii. 30-40
iv. More than 40 hrs.
v. Would prefer not to answer.

10) Are you a full time student this semester (taking 12 or more credit hours)?
i. Yes
ii. No
iii. Do not know.
iv. Would prefer not to answer.

11) How would you consider the majority of your political views?
i. Conservative
ii. Moderate
iii. Liberal
iv. Do not know

12) How would you rate your political views on a 1-6 scale 1= extremely liberal and 6= extremely conservative.
i. 1
ii. 2
iii. 3
iv. 4
v. 5
vi. 6

13) Please indicate your native language.
i. _____

14) Please indicate your age.
i. _____

APPENDIX B: DEBATE NEWS COVERAGE

APPENDIX B: DEBATE NEWS COVERAGE

Williams: Good evening Gentlemen, for the first question, at this very moment tonight, where do you stand on the issue of Affirmative Action? First response goes to you Senator Jacobs

Jacobs: Well, thank you very much, and thanks to the commission and the University for hosting us tonight. I can't think of a more important time for us to talk about the future of the country. "Well, some whites claim to be victims of affirmative action programs. This is nonsense! White Americans have long benefited from a society biased toward white interests, so any current preferences for minorities are only fair. There are no innocent victims of affirmative action. Therefore, we should all support affirmative action programs. The largest group of Americans to benefit from affirmative action thus far is wymen.

Before 1964, women were excluded from many higher paying occupations and professions based on stereotype, custom and law. There were virtually no women police officers, lawyers, or doctors, for example. Progress has been made, but women still need affirmative action programs. Nothing in the Constitution prohibits affirmative action. In fact, the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action programs in education in a landmark case. In this case, the Court explicitly stated that "affirmative action is consistent with the Constitution." When a company with a history of past discrimination passes over a white man and hires a qualified minority or woman instead, that isn't "reverse discrimination." When black professional athletes were first hired, breaking the "color barrier" in sports, some white ballplayers lost job opportunities. But that was not "reverse discrimination," it was

a first step toward ending discrimination. In the historic words of one African-American leader, "America has given the Negro people a bad check marked insufficient funds." It is about ime that America makes good on its promise of opportunity for all. Affirmative action programs are a necessary first step toward racial equality in America. In 1990, the average black male worker earned just $731 for every $1,000 earned by a white male worker in a comparable position. Moreover! though white males make up only 43% of the workforce, they occupy 97% of America's top executive positions. After decades of discrimination, only tough affirmative action programs can level the playing field. Affirmative action programs are very effective. A study from the Clinton administration shows that the percentage of blacks entering the fields of law and medicine has increased from less than 2% to over 10% in the past 20 years. Affirmative action is working. Who says racism is dead in America? We as Americans are far from it. Surveys show that a majority of white Americans still believe that African- and Latino Americans are less intelligent, less hard working and less patriotic than whites. Affirmative action programs are an important step toward changing these racist attitudes." (Taber and Lodge 2009)

Williams: Senator Hanrahan two minutes

Hanrahan: Well, thank you. And thanks to everybody. I also want to thank the University for hosting us tonight. "Now affirmative action plans treat people based on race, not past or present circumstances. Middle class blacks are given preferences while lower class whites are not! This is unfair reverse discrimination and is itself a form of racism. Affirmative action programs

must stop. Many of the victims of affirmative action are Asian-Americans who have been excluded from top schools due to racial quotas. But they had no role at all in the country's history of discrimination against blacks and they are truly innocent victims! Affirmative action programs are doing more harm than good. ccording to a prominent African-American economist, under affirmative action, blacks often get admitted into schools and programs even though they have worse credentials than most white applicants. As a result, their dropout rate is higher. Affirmative action plans harm both blacks and whites and should be stopped. I also want to point out that the Constitution absolutely prohibits racial discrimination, including affirmative action. As one landmark case declared, "our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens." Therefore, affirmative action plans are unconstitutional. The preeminent African-American leader of all time put it best: "Men should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin." Clearly this statement recognizes the injustice of any form of racial preferences. In other words, even the most famous black leader in American history opposed affirmative action! Merit has always been the most important factor determining success in this country? People of all races and classes can get ahead if they are willing to work. Unfortunately, some Americans expect to be handed a free lunch. Opportunities exist for all, but you have to be willing to pull your weight. Affirmative action violates the merit principle and should be ended. In a recent national poll, 50% of Americans said they oppose affirmative action. It seems that most of our laws these days favor minorities, and Americans are getting fed up. If a majority of American citizens believe that affirmative action programs are unfair, then why have these laws not been repealed? End affirmative action now! Affirmative ation programs at American universities "stigmatize" African Americans and other minority students who are assumed to be incompetent because they were admitted based on color, not on merit. Individuals, whether black or white, are far more likely to be successful if they prove their abilities in equal competition rather than receiving unfair and unearned advantages. Affirmative action works to the disadvantage of minorities." (Taber and Lodge 2009)

Williams: All right, let's go to the next lead question and again you get two minutes to begin with, Senator Hanrahan. What are your thought on the issue of gun control, and how do you think it will affect our nation?

Hanrahan: Well, I would like to start off by mentioning that "the main reason why our murder rate is so high is that most victims of crime do not resist.

These victims are twice as likely to be injured compared to those who defend themselves. Carrying a gun is thus one's ultimate protection against violent crime.The liberal media distorts gun issues: they only talk about tragedies involving guns. Yet guns were used defensively 2.5 million times last year. The real tragedy would be to outlaw guns -- crime would spiral out of control& The Bill of Rights guarantees the right of all citizens to bear arms. Quite simply, gun control measures are unconstitutional infringements on a basic right of citizenship. Most privately-owned guns in American are owned by sportsmen and are used for completely peaceful purposes. These guns pose no risk to society, but they are unfairly targeted by gun control legislation.

Stricter gun control laws have not passed Congress, reflecting serious misgivings the American people have about gun control. However, the courts have repeatedly ignored the will of the people, finding gun manufacturers in the wrong. We need to limit the power of the courts in gun control cases. A national council reported in 1991 that hangun accidents killed less than 15 children under the age of 6. This number is minuscule when compared to the total number of accidental deaths of young children. It simply is not worth outlawing guns to save just a handful of lives. Laws that require guns to be locked up defeat the purpose of gun ownership: how can I protect my family if I must first retrieve my gun from its locker? We thus need to repeal laws regulating guns in private homes. Gun control legislation can only regulate guns sold through legal outlets. But these days, many criminals buy their guns illegally. Gun control legislation therefore cannot regulate the most dangerous guns in society."

Williams: Senator Jacobs, two minutes

Jacobs: "A study in a prominent medical journal found that you or a member of your family is 43 times more likely to be killed by your own gun than by an intruder's. Guns aren't the protection many people think they are. We need stricter gun control. Self-defense arguments for the need of guns are silly: guns only become necessary for self-defense because there are so many guns out there. Thus, guns should be outlawed outright -- then we won't need to worry about self-defense. The United States has the highest murder rate of all industrialized nations. It is also the only industrialized country that has lenient gun laws. We therefore say: bring down the number of guns, bring don the murder rate. Several recent school tragedies highlight the fact that guns have become a menace to our children.

It's very simple: our schoolyards should not be battlefields. We need to reduce access to guns; we need stricter gun control. In one poll of imprisoned felons, only 27% report buying guns on the black market; the rest got their weapons through legal channels. Obviously, tougher gun controls are needed to keep these 'legal' guns out of criminal hands? Recent trials against gun manufacturers have consistently found them guilty, and have forced the gun industry to pay out huge sums of money. If the courts can find good reason to rein in the gun industry, then it is high time for Congress to follow suit. A study fo 743 gunshot deaths reports that 398 occurred in a home where a gun was kept. Only 9 of the 743 were deemed to be justified by the police. It follows that gun owners are not as responsible as they claim to be. A gun should only be fired if one's life is in danger and all other options have been exhausted. Most 'self-defense' shootings do not meet these criteria. Thus use of guns in self-defense only contributes to the crime rate."(Taber and Lodge 2009)

Williams: All right. All right, speaking of things that both of you want, another lead question, and it has to do with a different topic, the Sciences. The first answer is to you, Senator Jacobs. Where do you stand on the issue of embryonic stem cell research? Please keep in mind the now one minute time limit.

Jacobs: "I believe that it is necessary (and ethical) for the government to fund embryonic stem cell research. Because of this research science makes great progress toward the finding of treatments and cures for previously incurable and untreatable diseases. There are miny who have taken a stance saying that an embryo is a human. An embryo is not a human. The tiny blastocyst (embryos used in embryonic stem cell

research[has no human features. Experimenting on embryos/embryonic stem cells does not harm preexisting humans, and therefore ethical. It is amanzing that embryonic stem cells have the potential to cure chronic and degenerative diseases which current medicine has been unable to effectively treat, and yet the public is so closed to using this to man kinds bunefit. In fact embryonic stem cells have even been shown to be effective in treating heart damage in mice." Imagine the possibilities.

Williams: Senator Hanrahan you have one minute.

Hanrahan: In my opinion, it is "morally and ethically wrong for the government to fund embryonic stem cell research. Human life begins at conception, and the extraction of stem cells from an embryo requires its destruction. In other words? it requires that a human life be killed. Also, there is still no scientific data showing that embryonic stem cells can be successfully ysed to help cure disease. However there is an alternative which involves the use of adult and umbilical cord stem cells only for research. The results have already been published and adult stem cells have already been used successfully to treat spinal cord injuries, Leukemia, and even Parkinson's disease. Adult stem cells are derived from umbilical cords, placentas, amniotic fluid, various tissues and Origan systems like skin and the liver, and even fat obtained from liposuction."

(http://www.studentnewsdaily.com)

Williams: Thank you again gentlemen that is all we have time for tonight. Thank you for watching, Good Night.

APPENDIX C: MATH TASK

APPENDIX C: MATH TASK

Math Task (Distractor)

Convert each mixed number to improper fraction.

1) $9 \dfrac{3}{14} =$ 2) $5 \dfrac{4}{17} =$ 3) $1 \dfrac{3}{17} =$

4) $4 \dfrac{4}{15} =$ 5) $1 \dfrac{5}{7} =$ 6) $7 \dfrac{2}{5} =$

7) $7 \dfrac{2}{13} =$ 8) $5 \dfrac{9}{13} =$ 9) $6 \dfrac{9}{17} =$

10) $2 \dfrac{2}{17} =$ 11) $6 \dfrac{1}{18} =$ 12) $2 \dfrac{1}{12} =$

13) $4 \dfrac{1}{7} =$ 14) $7 \dfrac{7}{15} =$ 15) $4 \dfrac{2}{17} =$

16) $7 \dfrac{6}{19} =$ 17) $4 \dfrac{1}{15} =$ 18) $4 \dfrac{8}{9} =$

19) $5 \dfrac{5}{18} =$ 20) $8 \dfrac{3}{8} =$ 21) $6 \dfrac{2}{7} =$

22) $5 \dfrac{9}{17} =$ 23) $9 \dfrac{8}{13} =$ 24) $3 \dfrac{1}{12} =$

Answers:

1) 129/14   2) 89/17   3) 20/17

4) 64/15   5) 12/7   6) 37/5

7) 93/13   8) 74/13   9) 111/17

10) 36/17

11) 109/18

12) 25/12

13) 29/7

14) 112/15

15) 70/17

16) 139/19

17) 61/15

18) 44/9

19) 95/18

20) 67/8

21) 44/7

22) 94/17

23) 125/13

24) 37/12

APPENDIX D: GRADING RUBRIC

APPENDIX D: GRADING RUBRIC

Jacobs: Affirmative Action

The largest group of Americans to benefit from affirmative action thus far is women.

Before 1964, women were excluded from many higher paying occupation and professions based on stereotype, custom and law.

Supreme Court upheld affirmative action programs in education in a landmark case

The Court explicitly stated that "affirmative action is consistent with the constitution."

When a company with a history of past discrimination passes over a white man and hires a qualified minority or woman instead, that isn't "reverse discrimination."

Black professional athletes were first hired, breaking the "color barrier" in sports, some white ballplayers lost job opportunities.

"America has given the Negro people a bad check marked insufficient funds."

1990, the average black male worker earned just $731 for every $1,000 earned by a white male worker in a comparable position.

Moreover though white males make up only 43% of the workforce, they occupy 97% of America's top executive positions.

Blacks entering the fields of law and medicine have increased from less than 2% to 10% in the past 20 years.

Majority of white Americans still believe that African and Latino Americans are less intelligent hard working and less patriotic than whites.

Hanrahan: affirmative action

Many victims of affirmative action are Asian-Americans who have been excluded from top schools due to racial quotas.

But they had no role at all in the country's history of discrimination against blacks and they are truly innocent victims!

Under affirmative action, blacks often get admitted into schools and programs even though they have a worse credentials than most white applicants.

As a results these people have a higher dropout rate

The constitution absolutely prohibits racial discrimination, including affirmative action

One landmark case declared, "our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens."

African American leader of all time put it best: "Men should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin."

National poll, 50% of Americans said they oppose affirmative action

affirmative action programs at American universities "stigmatize" African Americans and other minorities.

Students who are assumed to be incompetent because they were admitted based on color not merit.

Hanrahan: Gun control

Main reason why our murder rate is so high is that most victims of crime do not resist.

Victims are twice as likely to be injured compared to those who defend themselves.

Liberal media distorts gun issues, they only talk about tragedies involving guns. Yet guns were used defensively 2.5 million times last year.

Outlaw guns—crime would spiral out of control and the Bill of Rights guarantees the right of all citizens to bear arms.

Gun control measures are unconstitutional infringements on a basic right of citizenship

Most privately owned guns in America are owned by sportsmen and are used for completely peaceful purposes

Courts have repeatedly ignored the will of the people, finding gun manufacturers in the wrong

National council reported in 1991 that handgun accidents killed less than 15 children under the age of 6. Minuscule when compared to the total number of accidental death of young children.

Laws that require guns to be locked up defeat the purpose of gun ownership: how can I protect my family if I must first retrieve my gun from its locker.

Gun control legislation can only regulate guns sold through legal outlets. But these days, many criminals buy their guns illegally.

Jacobs: Gun Control

Medical journal found that you or a member of your family is 43 times more likely to be killed by your own gun than by an intruders.

Guns only become necessary for self-defense because there are so many guns out there

United States has the highest murder rate of all industrialized nations. It is also the only industrialized country that has lenient gun laws.

Recent school tragedies highlight the fact that guns have become a menace to our children. It's very simple: our schoolyards should not be battlefields.

Poll of imprisoned felons, only 27% report buying guns on the black-market; the rest got their weapons through legal channels

Trials against gun manufacturers have consistently found them guilty, and have forced the gun industry to pay out huge sums of money.

Study of 743 gunshot deaths reports that 398 occurred in a home where a gun was kept. Only 9 of the 743 were deemed justified by the police

A gun should only be fired if one's life is in danger and all other options have been exhausted. Most 'self defense' shootings do not meet this criteria

The use of guns in self-defense only contribute to the crime rate

Jacobs: Stem-cell research

Necessary (and ethical) for the government to fund embryonic stem cell research

Research science makes great progress toward the finding of treatments and cures for previously incurable and untreatable diseases

Experimenting on embryos/embryonic stem cells does not harm preexisting humans, and therefore ethical

Stem cells have the potential to cure chronic and degenerative diseases which current medicine has been unable to effectively treat, and yet the public is so closed to using this to man kinds benefit.

Stem cells have even been shown to be effective in treating heart damage in mice.

Hanrahan: Stem-cell research

Morally and ethically wrong for the government to fund embryonic stem cell research

Human life begins at conception, and the extraction of stem cells from an embryo requires its destruction.

No scientific data showing that embryonic stem cells can be successfully used to help cure disease

An alternative which involves the use of adult and umbilical cord stem cells only for research.

Adult stem cells have already been used successfully to treat spinal cord injuries, Leukemia, and even Parkinson's disease. Adult stem cells are derived from umbilical cords, placentas, amniotic fluid, various tissues and Organ systems like skin and the liver and even fat obtained from liposuction.

APPENDIX E: FREE REPONSE PROMPT

APPENDIX E: FREE REPONSE PROMPT

Please recall as much detailed information as possible from the Debate News Coverage transcript. The more details the higher the grade that you will be assigned.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

REFERENCES

Goren, P. (1997, June). Political expertise and issue voting in presidential elections. *Political Research Quarterly, 50*(2), 387-412.

Hartman, T. K., & Weber, C. R. (2009). Who said what? The effects of source cues in issue. *Political Behavior, 31*, 537-558. doi:10.1007/s11109-009-9088-y

Kiviniemi, M. T., & Rothman, A. J. (2006, April). Selective memory biases in individuals' memory for health-related information and behavior recommendations. *Psychology and Health, 21*(2), 247-272.

Lodge, M., & Hamil, R. (1986, June). A partisan schema for political information processing. *The American Political Science Review, 80*, 505-520. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1958271

Moritz, S., Dipl, J. G., & Brassen, S. (2005). Investigation of mood-congruent false and true memory recognition in depression. *Depression and Anxiety, 21*, 9-17.

Taber, C. S., Lodge, M. (2006). Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3), 755-769.

Taber, C. S., Cann, D., & Kucsova, S. (2009). The motivated processing of political arguments. *Political Behavior, 31*, 137-155.

Wembridge, E. R., & Means, E. R. (1918, March). Obscurities in voting upon

measures due to double-negative. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 2*(2), 156-

163.

Zogby, J. (2011, March). Zogby political orientation scale. Retrieved from

http://www.zogby.com/