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# The Republican Who Did Not Want to Become President: Colin Powell's Impact on Evaluations of the Republican Party and Bob Dole

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*In this study, respondents' attention was either drawn to Colin Powell's decision to join the Republican Party or to his decision not to run as a presidential candidate of this party before they began to evaluate the Republican Party or Bob Dole. When the Republican Party was first evaluated, thinking about Powell's party membership resulted in more favorable evaluations and thinking about his refusal to run as its candidate resulted in less favorable evaluations relative to a control condition. When Bob Dole was first evaluated, thinking of Powell always resulted in more negative evaluations. Moreover, carryover effects between both judgments were observed (i.e., initial judgments of the party affected subsequent judgments about Dole, and vice versa, in an additive manner). The results are consistent with predictions derived from Schwarz and Bless's inclusion/exclusion model of social judgment.*

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**O**n November 8, 1995, retired General Colin L. Powell, the hero of the Gulf War, declined to compete in the 1996 presidential race, admitting that his candidacy would require "a passion and commitment that, despite my every effort, I do not have for political life" ("Excerpts From General Powell's News Conference," 1995, p. A11). By deciding not to enter the race for the Republican nomination, Powell resisted the pressure resulting from enormous popularity in voter polls and media coverage. At the time, the 58-year-old retired general was touted as "a dominant thoroughbred for the Presidential sweepstakes, the Man o' War candidate, a heroic figure who could only compound his victories of public service in battling for the White House" ("Decision by Powell Included Six Weeks," 1995, p. A12).

Whatever the disappointment among the public, the General's decision not to run brought about a collective

sigh of relief from the nation's established presidential candidates. Days before his momentous announcement, public opinion polls had revealed that Bob Dole, the Republican front-runner, would have been seriously threatened by a Powell candidacy. Senator Dole had an extra reason to happily welcome Powell's decision: At the same time that Powell declared not to seek political office, he also announced that he had just enrolled as a Republican: "I will act and work as a Republican in the months ahead, trying to broaden the appeal of the party" ("Excerpts From General Powell's News Conference," 1995, p. A11).

How might Colin Powell's dual decision have reflected on the Republican Party and its contenders in the 1996 presidential race? On one hand, Powell's decision not to compete in the 1996 elections as a Republican candidate disassociated him from the Republican Party. On the other hand, his announcement that he had just enrolled as a Republican associated him with that party. What may have been the impact of these (dis)associations (see Stapel & Spears, in press)? Should we expect that the Republican Party's popularity suffers, at least temporarily, when a popular candidate such as Powell declines to run as its candidate? Or should we expect that

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**Authors' Note:** The reported research was conducted while the first author was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Michigan. Further support was provided by Grant No. 575-70-074 from the Dutch Science Foundation (*Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek*). Thanks to Markus Kemmelmeier, Willem Koomen, and Piotr Winkielman for their help with the present research. Address correspondence to Diederik A. Stapel, Department of Social Psychology, University of Amsterdam, Roetersstraat 15, 1018 WB Amsterdam, the Netherlands; e-mail: sp\_stapel@macmail.psy.uva.nl.

*PSPB*, Vol. 24 No. 7, July 1998 690-698

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the Republican Party benefits from Powell's decision to become a member? And how about the contenders in the race for the Republican nomination? Would they benefit from Powell's association with their party? Or would Powell serve as a standard against which all other contenders pale? We propose that the answer to these questions is: It depends. More promising, we suggest that recent theorizing about context effects in social judgment may help to specify the impact of Powell's dual decision on evaluations of the Republican Party and its contenders in the 1996 presidential race. Specifically, we draw on the inclusion/exclusion model of assimilation and contrast effects in social judgment (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a) to specify the conditions under which (a) Powell's decision not to run and (b) his decision to become a Republican either (c) helps or (d) hurts (e) the Republican Party in general or (f) Bob Dole in particular. Moreover, we propose that variations in question wording and question order, each one defensible in its own right, are sufficient to produce any of the previously mentioned outcomes in a predictable manner.

Next, we review key assumptions of the inclusion/exclusion model, note parallel predictions from related models, and specify a complex set of hypotheses.

#### THE MENTAL CONSTRUAL OF TARGETS AND STANDARDS: THE INCLUSION/EXCLUSION MODEL

In more general terms, we can think of the scenario previously described as pertaining to the conditions under which an exemplar (Powell) influences evaluations of a superordinate category (the Republican Party) as well as evaluations of other members of the same category (the Republican contenders). The inclusion/exclusion model (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a) assumes that evaluative judgments require two mental representations; namely, a representation of the target and a representation of a standard against which the target is evaluated. Both representations are constructed on the spot and are based on information that is chronically accessible as well as information that is temporarily accessible (e.g., because it was addressed in preceding sections of a questionnaire). Similar to other recent models of assimilation and contrast effects, such as Martin's (1986) set/reset model, Strack's (1992) representativeness model, or Tourangeau's (1992) belief sampling model, the inclusion/exclusion model assumes that information that is included in the representation formed of the target results in assimilation effects. This simply reflects that the judgment is based on the representation formed; that is, adding information with positive (or negative) implications results in a more positive (or negative) representation and, hence, in a more positive (or negative) judgment. Information that is excluded from the representation formed of the target,

however, results in contrast effects. The inclusion/exclusion model distinguishes two types of contrast effects. First, excluding a positive (or negative) piece of information from the representation of the target results in a less positive (or less negative) representation and, hence, less positive (or less negative) judgments. Such subtraction-based contrast effects (e.g., Martin, 1986; Schwarz, Strack, & Mai, 1991; Strack, Martin, & Schwarz, 1988; Wegener & Petty, 1995) are limited to the target from which the information is excluded and do not generalize to evaluations of other targets. Second, the excluded information may be used in forming a standard of comparison against which the target is evaluated. Comparison-based contrast effects (e.g., Brown, 1953; Herr, 1986) generalize to all targets to which the standard is applicable. Accordingly, the inclusion/exclusion model predicts the emergence, direction, and generalization of context effects and specifies a number of different variables that may elicit the inclusion or exclusion of information (see Schwarz & Bless, 1992a, for a discussion).

Next, we apply the basic logic of the inclusion/exclusion model to Colin Powell's impact on evaluations of the Republican Party and Bob Dole. Subsequently, we extend the model by addressing how having made one judgment might have affected the other.

#### *Evaluations of the Republican Party*

First, Colin Powell's decision to join the Republican Party allows his inclusion in the representation formed of this party. Given Powell's popularity, this should result in more positive evaluations of the Republican Party, reflecting an assimilation effect. In this study, we rendered this aspect of Powell's dual decision highly accessible by asking some respondents the following question: "General Colin L. Powell, the hero of the Gulf War, recently decided to become a member of a political party. Do you happen to know which party that is?"

On the other hand, Powell's decision not to run as a candidate of the Republican Party may elicit his exclusion from the representation formed of this party, thus providing the prerequisites for a contrast effect. To render this aspect of Powell's dual decision highly accessible, we asked other respondents the following question: "General Colin L. Powell, the hero of the Gulf War, has recently been wooed by a political party to run as its candidate in the 1996 presidential elections. He decided not to run. Do you happen to know which party it was that made Powell an offer he rejected?"

We predict that the Republican Party will be evaluated more positively when a preceding question brings to mind that Powell became a member of the Republican Party (inclusion) but more negatively when a preceding question brings to mind that he declined to run for the Republican nomination (exclusion).

Of importance, these predictions only hold when the evaluation of the Republican Party is the first judgment to be made (after the Powell inclusion/exclusion question has been asked), an issue to which we return later in this article.

#### *Evaluations of Bob Dole*

Next, consider Powell's likely impact on evaluations of Bob Dole under conditions in which the respective question about Powell immediately precedes evaluations of Dole. Whereas a superordinate category, such as the Republican Party, allows for the inclusion of all members of this category, this is not the case for lateral categories, such as other members. In fact, the target category of Bob Dole has only one member (*viz.*, Bob Dole). Hence, Powell cannot be included in the representation formed of this target, independent of whether the preceding question brings to mind his party membership or his decision not to run. Accordingly, either of these questions should result in a contrast effect on evaluations of Bob Dole, reflecting that Dole pales in comparison to the highly popular Powell.

Consistent with these predictions, Schwarz and Bless (1992b) observed that thinking about a politician who was involved in a scandal increased judgments about the trustworthiness of other individual politicians, even though it decreased the trustworthiness of politicians as a group. These differential effects at the superordinate and lateral level reflect the differential inclusion and exclusion processes involved in forming mental representations of superordinate and lateral targets (*e.g.*, politicians in general *vs.* other exemplars) (see also Winkielman & Schwarz, 1996).

Again, however, the predicted contrast effect of Powell on judgments of Dole should only be obtained when evaluations of Dole are the first judgment that participants form (after Powell has been brought to mind).

#### *Carryover Effects*

So far, we have addressed the impact of Colin Powell's dual decision on evaluations of the Republican Party and of Bob Dole when the respective judgment is the first one to be made. Next, we turn to the issue of how an initial judgment of the Republican Party (or of Bob Dole) would affect subsequent judgments of Bob Dole (or the Republican Party).

*Evaluations of Dole following evaluations of his party.* Recall that we predicted that the Republican Party will be evaluated more favorably when the preceding question elicits Powell's inclusion in, rather than exclusion from, the representation formed of the party. How would that affect subsequent judgments of Bob Dole? We assume that the evaluation of the party carries over to subsequent evaluations of the party's presidential candi-

date, reflecting that some relevant features of the exemplar can be derived from his category membership. We further assume that this carryover effect combines in an additive manner with Powell's direct impact on judgments of Dole, as previously discussed. Accordingly, the negative impact of a comparison with Powell should be attenuated by Powell's positive impact on the Republican Party under inclusion conditions. ("He's not Colin Powell but at least he's a Republican, and that's good.") Conversely, the negative impact of a comparison with Powell should be enhanced by Powell's negative impact on the party under exclusion conditions. ("Not only is he not Colin Powell but he's also in the wrong party.")

*Evaluations of the party following evaluations of Bob Dole.* Similarly, we assume that evaluations of Bob Dole carry over to evaluations of his party. Recall that we predicted that thinking about Powell will always decrease evaluations of Dole when Dole is assessed first. This renders a relatively poorly evaluated exemplar, Dole, who is accessible for inclusion in the representation formed of the party. Hence, the party should be evaluated least positively when the question about Powell's candidacy excludes him from the party and the subsequent assessment of Dole renders Dole accessible as a negatively evaluated exemplar. The impact on the party should be less detrimental, however, when the question about Powell's party membership elicits the inclusion of Powell. In this case, the opposite effects of including Powell as a positively evaluated exemplar and including Dole as a negatively evaluated exemplar should attenuate one another.

With these two sets of carryover predictions, the present study addresses how inclusion/exclusion processes at the level of the superordinate category (Republican Party) affect subsequent carryover effects to judgments of other exemplars (*cf.* Bless & Schwarz, 1998; Bodenhausen & Wyer, 1987).

#### *Summary*

Table 1 summarizes our predictions. Although we predict a complex pattern, several of the individual components of this pattern are consistent with results obtained in previous studies (see Bless & Schwarz, 1998; Bodenhausen & Wyer, 1987; Martin, 1986; Schwarz & Bless, 1992a, 1992b). However, they have not previously been tested in combination. Note also that these predictions imply that Colin Powell may influence judgments of the Republican Party and of Bob Dole in any way a public opinion pollster may want—provided the pollster understands the underlying judgmental dynamics and selects the right context question and question order. We return to these applied implications in the Discussion section.

**TABLE 1: Summary of Hypotheses—Expected Evaluations of the Republican Party and Bob Dole as a Function of the Categorization of Colin Powell and Question Order**

	<i>Representation of Republican Party</i>		<i>Control</i>
	<i>Inclusion In</i>	<i>Exclusion From</i>	
First judgment			
Republican Party	Assimilation (+)	Contrast (-)	Baseline (0)
Bob Dole	Contrast (-)	Contrast (-)	Baseline (0)
Second judgment			
Republican Party	Cancellation (0)	Strong contrast (-)	Baseline (0)
Bob Dole	Cancellation (0)	Strong contrast (-)	Baseline (0)

NOTE: The table shows the expected evaluations relative to control conditions without a categorization question about Powell.

We tested this set of predictions by asking participants either a question about Powell's party membership or a question about Powell's decision not to run for the Republican nomination. Subsequently, we assessed the main dependent measures, participants' evaluations of the Republican Party and of Bob Dole, in counterbalanced order.

## METHOD

### *Procedure*

Participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions according to a 3 (categorization of Powell: inclusion, exclusion, control)  $\times$  2 (order of target judgments: Republican Party first, Bob Dole first) factorial between subjects' design.

Participants in the inclusion condition were first asked, "General Colin L. Powell, the hero of the Gulf War, recently decided to become a member of a political party. Do you happen to know which party that is?" whereas participants in the exclusion condition were asked, "General Colin L. Powell, the hero of the Gulf War, has recently been wooed by a political party to run as its candidate in the 1996 presidential elections. He decided not to run. Do you happen to know which party it was that made Powell an offer he rejected?"

Subsequently, participants evaluated the Republican Party and Senator Bob Dole on 9-point scales ranging from 1 (*not at all favorable*) to 9 (*very favorable*). Participants assigned to the control condition answered the evaluation questions without receiving a preceding knowledge question about Powell. Moreover, the order in which the two evaluation questions were presented was counterbalanced.

At the end of the questionnaire, participants also indicated, among other items, how they felt about General Colin L. Powell (using the scale ranging from 1 [*not at all favorable*] to 9 [*very favorable*]); reported whether they usually thought of themselves as a Democrat, a Republican, or an independent; and indicated their sex, age, and race/ethnicity.

### *Participants*

The sample consisted of 127 undergraduate students from the University of Michigan (mean age = 19 years) who participated in this study in exchange for partial course credit. Obviously, it was essential for the present experiment that participants knew about Colin Powell's dual decision to become a member of the Republican Party but not to run for the Republican nomination. Without this information, the knowledge questions about Powell would not activate the appropriate knowledge structures, rendering the experiment mute as a test of the inclusion/exclusion model. For this reason, the data of 37 participants (about equally divided across conditions) were dropped from analyses. Not surprisingly, inclusion of these participants attenuated the obtained effects. This left 90 participants for the analyses. Of the participants, 76% were female and 24% were male, distributed randomly across conditions; 29% of the participants thought of themselves as Democrats, 31% thought of themselves as Republican, 38% thought of themselves as independent, and 2% reported no political affiliation.

## RESULTS

### *Preliminary Analyses*

First, our data confirm that participants evaluated Colin Powell very favorably ( $M = 7.3$  on a 9-point scale). Thus, a key prerequisite for our predictions is satisfied.

Second, we tested whether participants' sex, age, party preference, or ethnicity influenced their evaluations of the Republican Party, Bob Dole, and Colin Powell. These demographic variables were entered into ANOVAS, along with the two experimental factors. No main or interaction effects of the demographic variables were observed in this homogeneous college population, all  $F$ s  $< 1$ . Although it is somewhat surprising that party preference did not affect ratings of the Republican Party and Bob Dole, this presumably reflects the low intensity of party identification in this population and the power

of the experimental manipulations, which was apparently sufficient to override preexisting preferences.

#### Analytic Strategy

Before we turn to the key findings, a note on our analytic strategy is appropriate. Given our specific predictions, omnibus  $F$  tests are not informative (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991). Moreover, each individual prediction has received support in previous conceptually related studies (as reviewed earlier) that justified the use of a priori contrasts. To render the results digestible, we first report individual cell comparisons. Subsequently, we report two contrast analyses, one testing all predictions pertaining to judgments of the Republican Party and one testing all predictions pertaining to judgments of Bob Dole.

#### Initial Evaluations of the Republicans

The first line of Table 2 shows participants' evaluations of the Republican Party when this judgment was assessed first. The obtained findings support the predictions summarized in Table 1.

As expected, these respondents evaluated the Republican Party more favorably when the preceding question elicited Colin Powell's inclusion ( $M = 6.1$ ), rather than exclusion from ( $M = 4.4$ ), the representation formed of the party,  $F(1, 84) = 4.92, p < .05$ . Moreover, the evaluations provided by control group participants, who were not exposed to a knowledge question about Powell, fell between these extremes ( $M = 5.2$ ).

Thus, as predicted, Powell's impact on the Republican Party (a superordinate category) depended on the specific categorization evoked by the respective knowledge question (pertaining to his party membership or his decision not to run for the Republicans).

#### Initial Judgments of Bob Dole

The second row of Table 2 shows participants' evaluation of Bob Dole when this judgment was assessed first. Again, the findings support the predictions.

As expected, these respondents evaluated Dole less favorably when either of the preceding knowledge questions brought Colin Powell to mind ( $M_s = 3.3$  for the party membership and 3.7 for the candidacy question, respectively) than when no knowledge question was asked ( $M = 4.8$ ),  $F(1, 84) = 4.48, p < .05$ . These contrast effects reflect that Powell cannot be included in the representation formed of Bob Dole (a lateral category) and is used as a standard of comparison.

#### Evaluations of the Republican Party Following Evaluations of Dole

Next, we turn to the carryover effects of initial judgments of Bob Dole on subsequent evaluations of the

**TABLE 2: Effects of the Categorization of General Colin Powell on Judgments of the Republican Party and Senator Bob Dole as a Function of Question Order**

	Representation of Republican Party		Control
	Inclusion In	Exclusion From	
First judgment			
Republican Party	6.1	4.4	5.2
Bob Dole	3.3	3.7	4.8
Second judgment			
Republican Party	5.2	3.7	5.3
Bob Dole	4.4	2.9	4.7

NOTE: Ratings ranged on a scale from 1 to 9, where 1 = unfavorable and 9 = favorable. All participants evaluated the Republican Party and Bob Dole. When their first judgment pertained to the Republican Party, their second judgment pertained to Bob Dole (and vice versa).  $N = 13$  to 16 per cell.

Republican Party. As summarized in Table 1, we predicted that the previously observed effects would combine in an additive fashion. As we have shown, Powell elicited a contrast effect on judgments of Dole, independent of the knowledge question asked. This negative impact on Dole should transfer to subsequent evaluations of the Republican Party, given that Dole can be included in the representation formed of this party. However, this negative impact should be attenuated when the knowledge question elicits the inclusion of Powell into this representation and should be enhanced when the knowledge question elicits the exclusion of Powell from this representation. The third row of Table 2 shows the relevant data, which again support our predictions.

First, consider the condition in which the question about Powell's decision not to run for the Republican nomination elicited his exclusion. In this case, participants evaluated the party less favorably ( $M = 3.7$ ) than in any other condition. Most important, this evaluation is significantly less positive than in the respective control condition ( $M = 5.3$ ),  $F(1, 84) = 4.49, p < .05$ . Moreover, it is nonsignificantly less positive than in the condition in which Powell is excluded from the representation of the party but no prior judgment of Dole is assessed ( $M = 4.4$ ),  $F < 1$ .

Next, consider the condition in which the question about Powell's party membership elicited his inclusion. In this case, Powell's inclusion cancels the negative impact of the preceding judgment of Dole, resulting in an evaluation that does not differ from the relevant control condition ( $M_s = 5.2$  and 5.3, respectively),  $F < 1$ . However, this evaluation is nonsignificantly less positive than the evaluation obtained when Powell is included and no prior judgment of Dole is assessed ( $M = 6.1$ ),  $F(1, 84) = 1.54, p = .20$ .

In summary, this pattern of results is fully consistent with predictions, although not all individual comparisons reached significance.

*Evaluations of Dole Following Evaluations of the Republican Party*

Finally, we turn to carryover effects of initial judgments of the Republican Party on subsequent evaluations of Bob Dole. As summarized in Table 1, we again predicted that the separate effects of Powell on Dole and on the Republican Party would combine in an additive fashion. As shown, Powell has a negative impact on evaluations of Dole, independent of the knowledge question asked. However, Powell’s impact on the Republican Party depends on whether the knowledge questions elicit his inclusion in, or exclusion from, the representation of the party. In combination, these effects should result in the least favorable evaluation of Bob Dole when Dole is contrasted to Powell and Powell’s exclusion from the party results in an unfavorable evaluation of his party in general. On the other hand, the negative impact of Powell on Dole should be attenuated when Powell’s inclusion in the party results in a more favorable evaluation of the party in general. Again, the results shown in the last row of Table 2 confirm these predictions.

When Powell was excluded from the representation of the party, Dole was evaluated less favorably ( $M = 2.9$ ) than in any of the other conditions. Most important, this condition differs from the respective control condition ( $M = 4.7$ ),  $F(1, 84) = 6.33, p < .05$ , and is nonsignificantly lower than in the respective condition when Dole was assessed first ( $M = 3.7$ ),  $F(1, 84) = 1.27, p = .26$ .

Finally, Powell’s negative impact on Dole and his positive impact on the Republican Party under inclusion conditions canceled one another, resulting in an evaluation of Dole that did not differ from the respective control condition ( $M_s = 4.4$  and  $4.7$ , respectively),  $F < 1$ . Moreover, this evaluation is nonsignificantly higher than in the respective condition when Dole was assessed first ( $M = 3.3$ ),  $F(1, 84) = 2.13, p = .14$ .

In summary, this pattern of results is again fully consistent with predictions, although not all comparisons reached significance.

*Combined Analysis*

To provide overall tests of the respective patterns predicted for judgments of the Republican Party and judgments of Bob Dole, we performed two separate contrast analyses (see Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991). The contrast weights that were used are shown in Table 3.

*Judgments of Republican Party.* Based on predictions, we assigned weights of 1 to the cells that we expected not to differ, weights of 2 and -2 to cells in which we expected

**TABLE 3: Contrast Weights for the Effects of the Categorization of General Colin Powell on Judgments of the Republican Party and Senator Bob Dole as a Function of Question Order**

	Representation of Republican Party		Control
	Inclusion In	Exclusion From	
Republican Party			
First judgment	2	-2	1
Second judgment	1	-3	1
Bob Dole			
First judgment	-3	-3	4
Second judgment	4	-6	4

NOTE: The table shows contrast weights based on our hypotheses.

assimilation versus contrast, and a weight of -3 to the cell in which we expected the most pronounced contrast effect. As can be expected in light of the reviewed individual comparisons, this a priori contrast reached significance,  $F(1, 84) = 10.96, p = .001$ .

*Judgments of Bob Dole.* Again, reflecting the predictions shown in Table 1, we assigned a weight of 4 to cells that we expected not to differ, a weight of -3 to cells in which we expected contrast, and a weight of -6 to the cell in which we expected the strongest contrast. Again, this a priori contrast reached significance,  $F(1, 84) = 11.22, p = .001$ .

In combination, these a priori contrasts provide strong support for our two sets of predictions, as did the ordering of all means shown in Table 2, although some of the individual comparisons pertaining to carryover effects failed to reach conventional levels of significance.

DISCUSSION

So, what is the impact of Colin Powell’s dual decision to join the Republican Party but not to run in its presidential nomination? The answer is a resounding: It depends. But what it depends on can be well predicted on the basis of recent models of context effects in social judgment, which conceptualize under what conditions contextually activated information is likely to result in assimilation or contrast effects (e.g., Martin, 1986; Strack, 1992; Wegener & Petty, 1995). In the present analysis, we drew on the only model that provides a priori predictions for all of the conditions that were investigated in the current experiment, namely Schwarz and Bless’s (1992a) inclusion/exclusion model. In the following, we first address the theoretical implications of the present analysis and then turn to applied implications for public opinion research before we venture to offer some advice for Senator Dole (realizing it comes too late).

*Mental Construal and the Emergence of Context Effects: Inclusion/Exclusion Processes*

In general, the inclusion/exclusion model (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a) predicts that the inclusion of information in the representation formed of a target results in assimilation effects, whereas the exclusion of information from this representation, and its use as a standard of comparison, results in contrast effects. A host of different variables can govern inclusion/exclusion decisions, and the model provides a unifying conceptualization of many variables that are known to elicit assimilation or contrast (see Schwarz & Bless, 1992a, for a review). We addressed one of these variables in the present study (viz., the categorical relationship between the context information and the target category). We manipulated participants' perception of this relationship by asking different knowledge questions and by choosing different target categories. We address both aspects in turn.

First, the inclusion/exclusion model predicts that the impact of an exemplar (Colin Powell) on a superordinate category (Republican Party) depends on whether the exemplar is included in, or excluded from, the temporary representation formed of that category. We evoked the respective categorizations by asking two different knowledge questions, pertaining either to Powell's party membership (inviting his inclusion in the representation formed of the party) or to his decision not to run as a Republican candidate (inviting his exclusion from this representation). The inclusion question resulted in a more positive evaluation of the party compared to a control condition, whereas the exclusion question resulted in a less positive evaluation (see also Bless & Schwarz, 1998).

Second, whether a given piece of information can be included in the representation formed of a target depends on their categorical relationship. Information pertaining to a subordinate category, such as a specific exemplar (e.g., Powell), can be included in the representation of its superordinate category (e.g., Republican Party). However, it cannot be included in the representation of lateral categories, such as other exemplars (e.g., Bob Dole). After all, the category of Bob Dole has only one member. Hence, exemplars can result in assimilation or contrast effects on judgments of superordinate categories, depending on the specific operation evoked (as discussed previously). However, given that they are sufficiently extreme (see Herr, 1986), exemplars will typically result in contrast effects on judgments of other exemplars, reflecting that they serve as standards of comparison. Accordingly, we observed that the inclusion knowledge question as well as the exclusion knowledge question about Colin Powell resulted in contrast effects on judgments of Bob Dole when this judgment

was assessed first, consistent with previous findings (Schwarz & Bless, 1992b).

Third, the present study extended previous research by allowing us to test whether inclusion/exclusion processes at the level of the superordinate category and the level of another exemplar combine in an additive manner when both judgments are assessed. The obtained results confirmed this hypothesis. When participants included Colin Powell in their representation of the Republican Party and evaluated Bob Dole after they had provided a judgment of the party, Powell's positive impact on judgments of the party and his negative impact on judgments of Dole canceled one another. Conversely, when participants excluded Powell from the representation formed of the party and evaluated Dole after they had provided a judgment of the party, Powell's negative impact on the party and on Dole amplified one another.

Conceptually equivalent effects were obtained when judgments of the Republican Party were assessed after judgments of Bob Dole. In this case, Powell's negative impact on initial judgments of Dole attenuated the positive impact of including Powell in the representation of the party but amplified the negative impact of excluding Powell from this representation.

In summary, the present findings are fully consistent with the predictions derived from the inclusion/exclusion model (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a). Furthermore, they provide a test of how inclusion and exclusion processes combine when several related judgments are assessed. In doing so, the present analysis integrated insights from previous conceptualizations of subtraction-based contrast (i.e., accessible information is subtracted from or partialled out of the target representation) (e.g., Martin, 1986), comparison contrast (i.e., accessible information is used as a comparison standard) (e.g., Brown, 1953; Herr, 1986), and carryover effects (i.e., evaluations of one target may carry over to evaluations of another target in a way that is commensurate with the perceived relation between these targets) (e.g., Bodenhausen & Wyer, 1987; Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988). The inclusion/exclusion analysis provides an integration of these separate hypotheses into a coherent framework, resulting in a complex set of predictions. That these predictions were consistently supported when tested in the context of a vivid real-life political event provides encouraging testimony to the explanatory power of social cognition theorizing.

*Applied Implications: Context Effects in Political Cognition and Public Opinion Research*

From an applied point of view, the present findings illustrate that the impact of a given public event (Colin Powell's dual decision) is not solely determined by the

characteristics of the event per se. Instead, it depends crucially on the way in which people think about the event. Although this is generally appreciated by researchers interested in political cognition, research in this domain has mostly focused on how accessible concepts guide the encoding and interpretation of political material (see Iyengar & Ottati, 1994, for a review). As a result, this research has primarily paid attention to assimilation effects, and the currently most influential model (Zaller, 1992) does not provide a mechanism for contrast effects. In fact, as Iyengar and Ottati (1994) put it, "political cognition researchers have yet to empirically document contrast effects" (p. 168). The present findings fill this gap. As these and related findings (Bless & Schwarz, 1998; Schwarz & Bless, 1992b; Stapel & Spears, in press) demonstrate, it is not enough to know which information is accessible. Instead, we need to understand how accessible information is used in constructing mental representations of targets and standards if we want to predict the impact of accessible information on political judgments.

Finally, our findings bear on the intricacies of public opinion polls. In general, public opinion researchers want to capture how the public spontaneously thinks about an event. Unfortunately, this task is rendered difficult by the sheer fact that our thought processes are context dependent, as the present findings illustrate. Hence, the research instrument used may profoundly affect the obtained results (see Schuman & Presser, 1981; Schwarz, Groves, & Schuman, in press; Schwarz & Sudman, 1992; Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwarz, 1996; Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988, for extensive reviews). Most important, the content of preceding questions (e.g., our knowledge questions), the nature of the target question (e.g., pertaining to an evaluation of Dole or of the Republican Party), and the order in which the questions are presented affects the results in complex—yet systematic—ways, often suggesting opposite substantive conclusions. In fact, depending on which condition of the present experiment we draw on, we may conclude any of the following: (a) The Colin Powell episode has helped the Republican Party and has not hurt Bob Dole (Powell inclusion/party first); (b) it has hurt the Republican Party somewhat and Bob Dole a lot (Powell exclusion/party first); (c) it has hurt both the Republican Party and Bob Dole somewhat (Powell exclusion/Dole first); (d) it did not affect the Republican Party but has hurt Bob Dole (Powell inclusion/Dole first).

Does this state of affairs imply that public opinion surveys produce nothing but artifacts? We do not think so (see Sudman et al., 1996, chapters 5 and 11, for more detailed discussions). Human judgment is always context dependent, in research situations as in real life, and attitude judgments are no exception to this rule. We

construct these judgments on the spot, when needed (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a; Strack, 1992; Wilson & Hodges, 1992), by drawing on the information that is most accessible at that point in time (Higgins, 1996). Some of this information is chronically accessible, whereas other information may only come to mind because it has been addressed in an earlier question or the recent news (e.g., Iyengar & Kinder, 1986). Although the chronically accessible information provides for some stability in judgments, the temporarily accessible information is the basis of context effects. As many recent models of assimilation and contrast effects noted, the nature of these context effects depends on how the accessible information is used; the same information may result in assimilation as well as contrast effects, reflecting the inclusion/exclusion operations previously discussed (e.g., Herr, 1986; Martin, 1986; Schwarz & Bless, 1992a; Stapel & Spears, in press; Strack, 1992). Although the underlying processes are systematic, and the results are predictable and replicable, any given result may lead us astray when we do not take its contextual nature into account.

#### *Any Advice for Senator Dole?*

After Colin Powell announced his decision not to run for the Republican nomination, a relieved Senator Dole declared, "I will actively seek his advice and counsel as we work to bring our people together, broaden the appeal of our party, and move our nation forward" ("Powell Rules Out a 1996 Race," 1995, p. A10). Would Bob Dole have been well advised by associating himself with Colin Powell? Perhaps Senator Dole hoped that such an explicit association would rub off, allowing him to bask in Colin Powell's reflected glory (Cialdini et al., 1976). If so, our findings, and the results of the election, suggest that his hopes were not warranted. When it comes to individual evaluations, allusions to national political icons such as Colin Powell are better avoided, due to the dangers of contrastive comparison. Yet, if it was Senator Dole's intention to improve the standing of his party by emphasizing General Powell's commitment, his strategy was probably successful and his party did, indeed, fare well—although we will never know for sure to what extent Colin Powell contributed to these outcomes.

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Received December 12, 1996

Revision accepted June 26, 1997