

Review for Policy Studies Journal

Manuscript ID: PSJ-719

Title: Framing the Poor (*Revised Version*)

I liked the earlier version of this paper, and I like the revised version even more. The authors have done a commendable job of addressing the critiques provided, and the result is a clean and highly compelling story with implications not only for our academic understanding of framing effects but also, just as importantly, for our understanding of poverty policy and poverty itself in the US. I look forward to seeing the article in print so that I may assign it to my students.

Of course, I have a few lingering comments.

The paper's revised focus on the main story—how framing influences policy—makes it much stronger. That said, I think the significant contributions constituted by the measures of poverty and governmental response (spanning pp. 16-23) and GGI (pp. 25-26) that the authors develop warrant a stronger shout-out in the intro.

I also think the central story would be made stronger still by additional discussion about the causal mechanisms that underpin the influence of framing on policy. Some causal discussion is offered beginning on p. 14, but personally I'd like to see the argument, even if just in concise form, earlier on. It's intuitive to think that policymakers would have incentives to respond to media framing via (or in anticipation of) shifts in public mood. Or perhaps the story is simply that framing is persuasive, and policymakers are persuadable. But no matter the intuition, I think it wouldn't be too pedantic to spell the argument out more concretely (and sooner).

Relatedly, I'd like to see a bit more discussion about why the poverty mood index (so great that you have that data!) should not be expected to reflect shifts in public response to framing. Does the cyclical nature of the mood data, as described in Footnote 3, suggest that the mood index is relatively blunt in nature, meaning that there just aren't enough repeated survey questions to constitute a measure fine-grained enough to pick up on shifts in framing? I fully appreciate the authors' data-constraint-driven decision not to pull public opinion into the model, and the paper is certainly strong enough without that extension. Still, I'd like to see a bit more discussion on what (causal) role that opinion may be playing, if any.

Finally, I would still like to see even a reasonable conjecture about how/why it takes a decade for media effects to filter through the policymaking process to yield the lag results shown in Fig. 7.

Other small notes:

- P. 1: Two typos in the quote. I think it should be “12 social security cards and is collecting veterans benefits”
- P. 6: Looks like you're missing a space between “the” and “1960s”
- P. 8 footnote: should be “how much government is doing to help the poor”
- P. 26: you shift from “net tone” to “net generosity”
- P. 29: the sentence that starts “To decrease government generosity, it might be that the media simply pays less attention” reads strangely, as though the media might intend the decrease in government generosity