

POLI 727, Framing
Prof. Baumgartner
Spring 2015

Questions for week 6, source credibility

Answer ONE of the following questions. Come to class prepared to discuss ALL of them. Essays should be limited to one page single spaced and should have perhaps one-third of the essay describing the issue and the rest analyzing it. It is preferable to go into detail on a small part of the issue, giving examples or illustrations, than to remain at a general level. The devil is always in the details.

1. Chaiken distinguishes between the source and the message. It is obvious that one's empathy or feelings toward the source of a message might matter. Advertisers do not take average-looking people to endorse their products; they must think that associating the product with an attractive spokesperson matters. (Or, they associate them with a positively-viewed celebrity...) All this seems far afield from the political science literature on framing. Is that a flaw of the political science literature? What are some ways we could do better in studying sources?
2. Druckman compares Jerry Springer and Colin Powell, and then *The National Enquirer* with *The New York Times*. Discuss. Are those experimental treatments just too far-fetched? Or do they show the limits of framing effects?
3. Riker's example of Nerve Gas is commonly cited. What makes it such a good example of a "just-so" story? A just-so story is something that, when looked at in retrospect, involves the random coming together of various elements in a fashion that they come together "just so" to create a certain outcome that never could have been predicted ahead of time. The criticism is that it reconstructs an essentially random or unpredictable process in a way that makes it appear more structured or predictable than it was in fact.
4. A series of articles here discuss the limits of framing: people discuss issues with lots of people; lobbyists present different arguments; elites counter-lobby; and people with different moral foundations are attuned to different arguments. Which if these seems most powerful?
5. Same as last question, but which of the studies has the most innovative or useful research design and evidence? Propose another way of gathering data to answer one of these questions from the readings this week.