POLI 100M: Political Psychology

Lecture 5: Media
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Announcements

• A brief note on Short Assignment 1
• Short Assignment 2 is due next time—any questions?
  – You can use one of your connections from Short Assignment 1 or you can try something new
  – If you use a connection from SA1, you should consider making revisions based on the feedback you received
• Midterm is a week from today. Study guide posted on TritonEd.
  – 1 hour, 15 minutes to complete midterm (11am-12:15pm)
  – 15 minute break
  – Class will resume at 12:30 (12:30-1:50pm)
• Office Hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:30 in SSB 341, or by appointment
A brief note on thesis statements

• A thesis statement is the sentence that states the main idea of a writing assignment and helps control the ideas within the paper.

• It often reflects an opinion, judgment, or argument that a writer has made about the topic of the paper.
A Strong Thesis Statement

• Gives direction to the paper and limits what you need to write about
• Requires proof—support your statement with detailed supporting evidence to motivate the readers to continue reading the paper
• Mentions your supporting points
Tips for Writing Thesis Statements

• Know the topic (while this is not a research assignment, you may want to thoroughly study your notes on the topic and you are welcome to do additional research)
• Limit your topic (narrow is better for a short paper)
• Brainstorm
• Determine what kind of paper you’re writing:
  – Analytical: breaks down an issue or idea into component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown / evaluation to the reader
  – Explanatory: explains something to the reader
  – Argumentative: makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence.
Example Thesis Statements

• “John Updike’s *Trust Me* is a valuable novel for a college syllabus because it allows the reader to become familiar with his writing and provides themes that are easily connected to other works.”

• Source: https://gustavus.edu/writingcenter/handoutdocs/thesis_statements.php
Example Thesis Statements

• Analytical: “An analysis of the college admission process reveals one challenge facing counselors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds.”

• Source: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/
Example Thesis Statements

• Explanatory: “The life of the typical college student is characterized by time spent studying, attending class, and socializing with peers.”

• Source: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/
Example Thesis Statements

• Argumentative: “High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.”

• Source: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/
Questions?
Last Time

• How do individuals process political information?
  – Attribution theory, consistency theory, lots of biases! Confirmation bias, negativity bias, fundamental attribution error, etc.
  – We use cognitive tricks to filter information, which can lead to errors in judgment

• Belief in misinformation
  – Largely driven by motivated reasoning
  – Backfire effects! Really hard to correct misinformation

• Do we have enough information to vote rationally?
  – Heuristics! (Party ID, Ideology, endorsements, viability, traits, etc.)
  – Help a lot, but might mostly help the people who need it the least
What questions do you have?
Today: Driving Questions

• Why do individuals choose information sources?
• What role does the media play in shaping public opinion?
• How do individuals process information from the media?
Today: Learning Outcomes

• Define the following key terms: framing effects, priming, selective exposure. Explain how these concepts relate to how individuals engage with information from the media.

• Explain the patterns in media source selection

• Evaluate whether the media is able to impact public opinion
Media Use in the U.S.
Online news consumers more likely to get news from professional outlets than from friends, family – but just as likely to think each provides relevant news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Net</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>News organizations</strong></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People they are close with</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People they are not particularly close with</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those who get news online from each, % who say that the news they get from ... is very/somewhat near to their interests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Net</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>News organizations</strong></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People they are close with</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People they are not particularly close with</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Modern News Consumer”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
On social media, the level of engagement declines as the input required from the individual increases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Net</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Click on links to news stories</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Like&quot; news stories</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share or repost news stories</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment on news stories</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post links to news stories themselves</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss issues in the news on the site</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post their own photos or videos of a news event</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The Modern News Consumer”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
The bottom line

• Overall, we’re lazy
• Overall, we’re not that interested in the news
• Overall, we get more information online, but there are *tons* of options out there
• Overall, we trust information from some sources more than others, especially if they’re perceived to share similar views
How does the media influence political attitudes?

• Media bias
• Framing
• Priming
Perceptions of Media Bias
How would you arrange these news outlets from liberal to conservative?

- BBC News
- Breitbart News Network
- Chicago Tribune
- CNN News
- Daily Kos
- Fox News
- Huffington Post
- Los Angeles Times
- NBC News
- New York Times
- Reuters
- USA Today
- Wall Street Journal
- Washington Post
- Yahoo News
Source: Budak, Goel, and Rao (2016)
Hostile Media Effect

• Individuals perceive media counter to their preferences as more biased than media that supports their preferences
Hostile Media Effect

• Cognitive Factors:
  – Selective Recall
  – Selective Perception
  – Motivated Reasoning

• Source Factors

• Individual Factors
  – Stronger opinions
  – Involvement
  – Stronger identity (social identity theory)
(Relative) Hostile Media Effect

- Individuals with different attitudes toward the issue have very different evaluations of the same media content—even if that media content is biased
Media Bias

• Gatekeeping: the media outlet decides which stories will be communicated.
  – New perspectives or particular issues can go unreported → Status Quo Bias

• Examples?
Media Bias

• Coverage Bias: How much time or space is devoted to a particular story, resulting in more/less attention to a story.

• Examples?
For every opinion article published in a liberal outlet about Clinton, we found almost 2.9 about Trump. In our sample* of the conservative media, there were roughly 1.7 articles about Trump for every one about Clinton.

Media Bias

• Statement Bias: A member of the media inserts his or her own views in the reporting of a story.

• Examples?
How Favorably Does Each Media Outlet Treat The 2016 Presidential Candidates?

Shown below are the differences in median sentiment scores assessed to opinion articles about Trump vs. Clinton for each outlet in our sample†. Significant differences are denoted by an asterisk (according to a Mann-Whitney Test).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More Favorable to Clinton</th>
<th>More Favorable to Trump</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fox News</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politico</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Tribune</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Street Journal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slate</td>
<td>-0.015</td>
<td>*** 0.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td>*** 0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>-0.023</td>
<td>*** 0.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*p < 0.05  **p < 0.01  ***p < 0.005
Liberal and Conservative Media Outlets are Aligning Their Views on Trump

We've plotted the median sentiment conveyed in opinion articles written about Trump in our sample*. Toggle the "Media Outlet" filter at the right to exclude any outlets from the graph.

Which biases do you see in the next images?
Steve Bannon out at WH after chaotic tenure
STEVE BANNON IS OUT

Trump's top strategist, lightning rod leaves WH after internal clashes

- Baier: 'Worst week' of Trump’s presidency | Shapiro: Bannon will return to Breitbart, 'smash' Trump when he disagrees
- HuffPost slammed for racy Steve Bannon headline
- VIDEOS: Steve Bannon out at the White House, sources say | Trump has told aides he’s decided to remove Bannon
- Steve Bannon boot lifts stocks | Former Trump administration officials, from Bannon to Comey
- Who is Steve Bannon? | Obama holdovers on Trump's arts council quit over Charlottesville
- VIDEO: Dana Perino says Bannon had become a distraction | Campos-Duffy: Trump needs to reassure his base now

KICK HER OUT?
Lawmaker who wanted Trump dead faces backlash

- Thousands petition for Lehigh University to revoke Trump's honorary degree

FRANTIC SEARCH
Fears for girl, 14, who may have run off with janitor

- Ex-Vanderbilt football player gets 15 years in rape

A FATHER'S GRIEF
Natalee Holloway's dad in shock about new discovery

- FLASHBACK VIDEO: Judge declares Natalee Holloway legally dead

WATCH NOW

How will the right react to Steve Bannon's ouster? | Shapiro warns of rift to come between Breitbart and Trump

Bret Baier on who benefits from Bannon's departure

Dana Perino: Bannon had become a distraction

Manhunt intensifies for driver in Barcelona van attack

Barcelona attack witness: Van stopped 10 feet away from me
Framing

• Framing: The process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue.

• Framing Effect: When (often small) changes in the presentation of an issue or an event produce (sometimes large) changes of opinion.
Examples of Framing Effects
Merolla et al. (2013): Immigration

• “If we can seal our borders and enforce existing immigration laws, [illegal/undocumented/unauthorized] immigrants should be given [the opportunity to eventually become legal citizens/amnesty].”

• “[Illegal/undocumented/unauthorized] immigrants [none/ who came to the US as young children] should be able to earn legal status if they graduated from a US high school, have stayed out of trouble, and have enrolled in college or the military.”

• “According to [current law/the Constitution] any child born in the US is a citizen of the US. The [current law/Constitution] should be changed so that babies born to [illegal/undocumented/unauthorized] immigrants living in the US do not automatically become US citizens.”
Figure 1
Mean support for immigration policies by experimental condition, illegal, undocumented, and unauthorized.
Figure 2
Mean support for immigration policies by experimental condition, varying content of policy description

**LEGALIZATION**
-0.70 Amnesty
-0.04 Opportunity

**DREAM ACT**
0.07 Control
0.41 Came as children

**BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP**
-0.40 Current law
-0.16 Constitution
Iyengar (1987): Poverty

• National poverty: news story about the increase in poverty nationwide and the significant reductions in the scope of federal social welfare programs

• High unemployment: news story that juxtaposed the national unemployment rate with the size of the federal budget deficit

• Victims of economic hardship
  – High cost of heat: two families unable to pay their heating bills
  – Homeless: two black teenagers living on the streets of NYC and a white couple forced to live in their car in San Diego
  – Unemployed worker: financial difficulties facing the family of an unemployed auto worker in Ohio
How does framing work?

- Accessibility Model: Framing depends on the individual and attention to the issue. Preexisting views are made more accessible.
- Importance Change Model: Frames make some considerations more important than others.
How does framing work?

• In order for a framing effect to occur, a given consideration needs to be:
  – Stored in memory
  – Accessible
    • Regular or recent exposure
    • Passive or unconscious process

• Strong frames
  – Availability
  – Accessibility
  – Applicability
How does framing work?

- Moderators: variables that condition the effects [of framing]
- Individual Predispositions:
  - Strong values, strong prior attitudes = less susceptible to framing effects
    - Increased resistance to disconfirming information
- Perceived Applicability: frames delivered by credible sources are more likely to shift opinions
- Exposure to Deliberation or people holding varying opinions can mute framing effects
Priming
Priming

- **Priming**: a nonconscious form of human memory concerned with perceptual identification of words and objects. Refers to activating particular representations or associations in memory just before carrying out an action or task.

- **Priming effects**: Occur when the mention of a specific consideration in one context (the prime) increases the accessibility of that consideration, leading to an increase in the use of that trait in later evaluations of a social target.
How does priming work?

• Individuals *satisfice*: make a decision that is adequate rather than optimally based upon full consideration of all relevant information (Miller & Krosnick 1996)

• Accessibility

• Availability
How does the media prime?
The Priming Hypothesis

• The more attention campaigns and the media pay to a particular aspect of political life, the more citizens will rely on that consideration in their political evaluations (Iyengar & Kinder 1987)

• Examples?
Examples

• Priming individuals to think about collective responsibility for climate change causes more donations to climate efforts than priming individuals to think about individual responsibility or a control prime (daily routine) (Obradovich & Guenther 2016)

• Priming Canadians with images of President Obama instead of President Bush increased positive evaluations of the United States (Dragojlovic 2011)

• Issues the media emphasizes are more likely to be used in evaluating candidates (Druckman 2004)
Applying Framing and Priming