Politics and Science in Confronting Environmental Change

Steve Seitz
Computational Modeling Lab, LAS
& Department of Political Science
Policy Agenda

Breakout

Capture Operatives

Languishing or Policy Decision

Framing

Policy Status Quo
Public Discourse

1. Source of Knowledge
   a) Competing Rules of Evidence & Proof
      1) Revelation
      2) Observation
      3) Social Construction
   b) Competing Explanations

2. Substitution
St. Ambrose (AD 389) "To discuss the nature and position of the earth does not help us in our hope of the life to come. . . It is enough to know what Scripture states."

Galileo (1615) “The Bible shows the way to go to heaven, not the way the heavens go”
Observation

Italian Inquisition
Galileo (1615) “Nothing physical which sense-experience sets before our eyes, or which necessary demonstrations prove to us, ought to be called into question (much less condemned) upon the testimony of biblical passages.”
Galileo (1615) “But I do not feel obliged to believe that that same God who has endowed us with senses, reason, and intellect has intended to forgo their use and by some other means to give us knowledge which we can attain by them.”

Galileo abjures Copernician theories, 1633
Revelation vs. Observation

Puritan witchcraft trials 1692 (Salem, Mass.)
    Use of extra-sensory information to indict, convict, and execute fellow citizens
Scopes Trial 1925
Public Discourse

1. Source of Knowledge
2. Substitution of pre-packaged Explanation for Information
   a) Malevolent Agent: “Someone is always trying to take from me what is rightly mine.”
   b) Benevolent Agent: “People look after the interests of one another.”
Policy Agenda

- Policy Status Quo
- Capture Operatives
- Breakout
- Framing
- Languishing or Policy Decision
- Change Operatives
## Political Sophistication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Conceptualization</th>
<th>% of total sample</th>
<th>% of voters</th>
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<tr>
<td>I. Ideologues</td>
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<td>II. Near-Ideologues</td>
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<td>III. Group Interest</td>
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<td>IV. Nature of the Times</td>
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Operative Framing

Climate Change
Tobacco Industry Model
Create Doubt about Observational evidence
Hearst/Murdoch Model
Substitute Explanation for Information
“Yellow Journalism”
Yellow Journalism

W.I. Thomas (1908) A murder trial, a street or ring fight, a slanderous bit of gossip, a game in which you have a competitor to beat, and theatrical representations, are fascinating because they revive the elemental emotions. In the light of these facts it becomes plain that the yellow journal owes its existence to the persistence in men of primitive emotions of an essentially anti-social character, to the fact that emotions are pleasurable, no matter what their origin, and that people will pay to experience shock.
Policy Languishing or Decision

- Opinion Leaders
- Operative Framing
- Civil Groupings

Elections
Ineffective Responses

1. The experts agree ...
   a. Anti-intellectual tradition in America
   b. Paranoid style in American politics
   c. Competing rules of evidence
2. Relying on mainstream media
Alternate Responses

1. We live in an Engineered world
   a. Makes assumptions about the future
   b. Best available knowledge has been changing, and hence professional guidelines for 100 year or 50 year construction must also
   c. Compare assumptions of previous engineering projects to their current performance
   d. Costs of compensating for past engineering

2. National security
The best policy decision is one where we agree on the policy, not on what the policy is supposed to accomplish.