A Tall Tale: How Stories Can Change U.S. Public Opinion

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A Tall Tale: How Stories Can Change U.S. Public Opinion

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Story Frames Move Public Opinion More Than Fact Frames

Why Foreign Aid?
• US Foreign Aid represents ~1% of the US budget
• Majority of Americans believe US Foreign Aid to be 28% of the US budget

Why Stories?
• Recent studies reveal that narratives following the “Universal Story Structure” change brain chemistry resulting in participants being 33% more likely to donate to a cause (Zak 2012)

Hypothesis
• Story frames will prove more persuasive than fact frames

Methods
• Ordered Logit Test with Odds Ratio: Used to predict how effective each story was at moving public opinion
• Compare and contrast regression analysis of story and fact frames

Stories vs. Facts

Average Increase in Support for Foreign Aid

Results 1
• Story frames are more effective at garnering support for foreign aid than are fact based frames

Results 2
• The 3 most persuasive story frames are more persuasive than the 3 most persuasive fact frames

Implications
• Policy Makers should use stories frames to increase support for misconstrued issues
• Those treated with a story frame are up to 6 times more likely to support an increase in foreign aid than those in the control group that supported a decrease in foreign aid