The effect of message discrepancy and source beliefs : evidence from a non-weird sample in a real-world political context

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THE EFFECT OF MESSAGE DISCREPANCY AND SOURCE

ON BELIEFS: EVIDENCE FROM A NON-WEIRD SAMPLE

IN A REAL-WORLD POLITICAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

The present research examines the effects of message discrepancy and existing

source beliefs on elaboration and belief certainty. Unlike most studies, which

examined young adults from Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic

(WEIRD) populations, it focuses on non-Western, rural, less-educated, older

adults. Two studies were conducted. Using a survey with mostly open-ended

questions, Study One identified two elaboration strategies: a positive test and a

negative test. When a message was congruent with existing issue beliefs (i.e., low

message discrepancy) or when existing source beliefs were positive, most

participants used a positive test: they decided whether to believe the news based on

whether they had information to support it. When a message was incongruent with

existing issue beliefs (i.e., high message discrepancy) or existing source beliefs

were negative, most participants used a negative test: they decided whether to

believe the news based on whether they had information that contradicted it. Using

a non-laboratory experiment, Study Two tested and provided support for the

hypotheses derived from Study One. Message discrepancy and existing source

beliefs exerted independent effects on the type of test, which in turn predicted

belief certainty. Message discrepancy did not predict the amount of elaboration, but

existing source beliefs did. Positive existing source beliefs led to more elaboration

but this effect did not depend on the level of involvement and message discrepancy

as reported by previous studies (Clark, Wegener, Habashi, & Evans, 2012;

Tormala, Brinol, & Petty, 2007). Interestingly, Study Two shows that when

message discrepancy was low but existing source beliefs were negative,

participants changed their issue beliefs as opposed to changing their beliefs about

the source. The present research offers insights about the mechanism behind belief

revision and belief preservation and provides clues about how to change political

beliefs.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Elaboration is an important concept in a wide range of information processing models. Studies (e.g., Clarkson, Tormala, & Rucker, 2008) have shown that the more individuals engage in elaboration (i.e., issue-relevant thinking), the more certain they are of their beliefs. This finding strongly suggests that elaboration is capable of shaping our perception of reality. Hence, to deepen our understanding about belief revision and belief preservation, the present research focuses on elaboration and its antecedents.

Message discrepancy and existing source beliefs have been found to influence the qualitative and the quantitative aspects of elaboration. In terms of quality of elaboration, many studies (e.g., Clark et al., 2012; Priester & Petty, 1995; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Bichsel, & Hoffman, 2002; Tormala et al., 2007) have examined the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the direction of elaboration (often referred to as thought valence). They found that a message that is congruent with recipients' existing issue beliefs (i.e., low message discrepancy) and a message that is presented by a source about whom recipients hold positive beliefs are likely to induce recipients to generate positive thoughts. The findings from these many studies are fairly consistent. Be it about an issue or a source, they suggest that individuals elaborate incoming information in a way that favors their existing beliefs.

In terms of the quantity or amount of elaboration, past studies have shown that the effects of message discrepancy vary depending on existing source beliefs, and the effects of existing source beliefs vary depending on the level of

involvement. Positive source beliefs were found to increase elaboration when message discrepancy was high (Clark, et al., 2012), and that source effect was more pronounced when involvement was low (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Priester & Petty, 1995; Tormala, et al., 2007). These findings suggest that when people are not personally involved with the issue, they may be willing to revise their beliefs in light of contradictory information given that they hold positive beliefs about the person presenting it.

Although the findings described above are largely consistent, most of the studies examined university students in the United States, who were Western, non-rural, educated, younger adults. This sample from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) nations is arguably different from the majority of the world's population (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Research suggests that Westerners, who are more likely to be individualistic than Asians, may be likely to think of supporting (as opposed to conflicting) information when evaluating a message that contradicts their existing beliefs (Kastenmüller, Greitemeyer, Jonas, Fischer, & Frey, 2010). Westerners may also rely less on source beliefs when evaluating information (Pornitakpan & Francis, 2001). Hence, the findings from the WEIRD population may or may not be generalizable to other populations. Given the accumulating evidence on the differences in cognitive styles across cultures (e.g., Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001; Rosenthal, 2013), there is a possibility that the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration differ across populations. On the other hand, humans presumably share some fundamental

psychological similarities, and desires and mechanisms used to avoid incongruity may be one such fundamental element (Greenwald, 1980).

This research sets out to examine the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration and belief certainty among non-Western, rural, less-educated, older adults. It aims to contribute to existing literature in at least two ways: (a) shed light on the processing mechanism behind belief revision and belief preservation, and (b) offer insights on whether the findings from past studies can be generalized to an understudied population. The sample selected for this particular study is one of the many subgroups of the non-WEIRD populations. Hence, it is by no means a representative sample of the non-WEIRD populations.

Literature Review

This section is organized in such a way that it will first provide an introduction about belief and belief certainty before presenting an overview of the concept of elaboration, which is a predictor of belief certainty. Thereafter, it will discuss literature about the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration.

Belief and Belief Certainty

Belief is defined as "a perceived relationship between two objects or concepts" (Leung et al., 2002, p. 289). Fishbein and Ajzen (2013) defined it as a person's subjective probability that a relationship exists, or to put it simply, it refers to a subjective perception of truth (Galliers & Newell, 2003). Because much of the literature cited in this thesis focused on attitude change rather than belief change, it is necessary to first highlight the relationship between belief and attitude.

Beliefs influence attitude formation. Hence, attitude, which refers to an evaluative judgment that involves some degree of like or dislike (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998), is often a function of beliefs (Fishbein, 1963; Shrigley, Koballa, & Simpson, 1988). For example, a belief that a person is knowledgeable is likely to lead to a positive attitude toward that person. Belief is related to attitude, yet the two concepts are not the same.

Belief is a predictor of attitudes and behaviors (Leung & Bond, 1989; Wells, Reedy, Gastil, & Lee, 2009). Wells et al. (2009) found that issue-specific beliefs affected the level of support for a new policy. Individuals who formed positive factual beliefs about the impact of the workplace safety regulation (e.g., overestimation of the number of injuries to be reduced by the regulation) were more likely to oppose to the repeal of the regulation. The present research, hence, focuses on factual beliefs about political events because they are likely to influence political outcomes.

Much research, especially in political communication, suggests that exposure to contradictory information is not the key to belief change (Ahn, Huckfeldt, & Ryan, 2010; Carretta & Moreland, 1982; McClure & Patterson, 1974; Teel, Bright, Manfredo, & Brooks, 2006). For example, a longitudinal survey on citizens' beliefs about Richard Nixon indicated that the people who held positive beliefs about Nixon prior to the Watergate hearings continued to hold positive beliefs about him even after John Dean had testified that Nixon helped to cover up the break-in (Carretta & Moreland, 1982). According to Greenwald (1980), humans are motivated to preserve their existing knowledge structures and that they

will selectively search for information in memory to confirm what they have already believed. One of the key factors contributing to such resistance is belief certainty (Petrocelli, Tormala, & Rucker, 2007; Pomerantz, Chaiken, & Tordesillas, 1995).

Belief certainty is the extent to which one thinks his or her belief is correct. Beliefs held with less certainty are more prone to change (Clarkson et al., 2008; Tormala & Rucker, 2007). Past research suggests that when people are less certain that their existing beliefs are correct, they become more prone to the influence of contradictory evidence (Petrocelli et al., 2007). Findings from another study also suggest that when belief certainty is low, people will be more influenced by contextual cues, leading to a greater likelihood of message acceptance (Lavine, Huff, Wagner, & Sweeney, 1998). In an attempt to understand the underlying mechanism behind belief revision and belief preservation, the present research focuses on elaboration, a predictor of belief certainty.

Elaboration

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) define elaboration as an information processing strategy that involves a critical examination of a message (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Other terms that have been used to refer to elaboration are the amount of cognitive effort, thoughtfulness, deeper processing, detailed information processing, issue-relevant thinking, and more thinking (Axsom, Yates, & Chaiken, 1987; Barden & Petty, 2008; Chaiken, 1980; Griffin, Neuwirth, Giese, & Dunwoody, 2002; Maheswaran, Mackie, & Chaiken, 1992; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984b; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The ELM uses the term *central route processing* to refer to elaboration (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), whereas the HSM uses the term *systematic processing* (Chaiken, 1987).

The amount of elaboration depends on need for cognition and the level of involvement (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Need for cognition refers to the extent to which individuals enjoy thinking. The level of involvement is the extent to which individuals feel that a message is personally relevant to them. Studies have found that those with high need for cognition and those with a high level of involvement are likely to engage in more elaboration (e.g., Cacioppo, Petty, & Morris, 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

Various methods have been used to measure elaboration. One method is to ask participants how hard they try to evaluate a source's ability to advocate its message and how much effort they put in to evaluate a message (Cacioppo et al., 1983). The more effort they put in, the greater the extent of elaboration. Another method is to ask participants to list as many arguments as they could recall from a message presented to them. The more arguments they can recall, the greater the extent of elaboration (Cacioppo et al., 1983; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). The third method is to ask participants to list all their thoughts that come to mind when evaluating a message (Andrews & Shimp, 1990; Barden & Petty, 2008). The more message-oriented thoughts they generate, the greater the extent of elaboration. In advertising, the more product-attribute-related thoughts individuals generate, the greater the extent of elaboration (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Haugtvedt & Priester, 1997). These three methods are widely used, especially by psychologists.

Communication scholars measure elaboration quite differently. Reynolds (1997), for example, proposed a Likert-scale consisting of 12 items which asked questions such as "While reading the message were you (a) attempting to analyze the issues in the message, (b) not very attentive to the ideas and (c) deep in thought about the message." This scale was rarely used by scholars. More recently, Eveland and colleagues (Eveland & Dunwoody, 2002; Eveland, Shah, & Kwak, 2003) developed an elaboration scale. Their scale items included questions such as "I tried to think of practical applications of what I read," "I found myself making connections between the story and what I've read and heard about elsewhere" and "I often find myself thinking about what I've read in the newspaper." This scale has been used mainly in studies on news learning (Eveland & Dunwoody, 2002; Eveland et al., 2003). At this point, it is worth noting that all these studies focus on the amount of elaboration as opposed to how information is processed.

Despite the difference in the way elaboration is measured, studies consistently show that more elaboration leads to greater belief certainty (Barden & Petty, 2008; Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995; Smith, Fabrigar, MacDougall, & Wiesenthal, 2008; Tormala & Petty, 2002). Barden and Petty (2008) found that both the actual and the perceived amount of elaboration increased attitude certainty. Tormala and Petty (2004a) found that when people evaluated a message that challenged their existing beliefs, those who exerted more (vs. less) cognitive effort to evaluate became more certain of their existing beliefs after they have successfully resisted that message it. These findings strongly suggest that elaboration is capable of shaping our perception of reality. Hence, to understand

the process underlying belief revision and belief preservation, it is important to consider the factors that influence elaboration.

Effects of Message Discrepancy

Message discrepancy refers to the difference between recipients' existing issue beliefs and the position advocated in a message. Research has shown that message discrepancy influences the amount of elaboration. Counterattitudinal messages are more likely to be scrutinized than proattitudinal messages (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979; Clark, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 2008; Jain & Maheswaran, 2000; Taber & Lodge, 2006; Wells et al., 2009). Taber and Lodge (2006) found that participants spent more time evaluating counterattitudinal (vs. proattitudinal) messages and produced more thoughts in response to those messages. The participants were not critical in accepting arguments that were proattitudinal. The finding that message discrepancy leads to more elaboration is consistent across studies (Clark et al., 2008; Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Eagly, Kulesa, Brannon, Shaw, & Hutson-Comeaux, 2000; Edwards & Smith, 1996).

Message discrepancy influences not only the amount of elaboration but also the direction of elaboration (Cacioppo & Petty, 1979; Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Correll, Spencer, & Zanna, 2004; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). Both the ELM and the HSM postulate that initial attitudes influence the direction of elaboration such that favorable thoughts have a higher tendency to dominate when a message is congruent with existing issue beliefs (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The motivated reasoning theory (Kunda, 1990) also predicts that people will elaborate information in a manner that will provide support to their existing issue beliefs. That is, when a message is congruent with their existing beliefs, they will look for information that

supports it. When a message is incongruent with their existing issue beliefs, they will look for information that disproves it.

Consistent with these theories, studies have found that people generated counterarguments when their existing issue beliefs were threatened by incoming messages (Agrawal & Maheswaran, 2005; Clark et al., 2008; Edwards & Smith, 1996; Jain & Maheswaran, 2000). Taber and Lodge (2006) found that despite being instructed to evaluate information in an objective manner, participants attempted to seek information that disconfirmed counterattitudinal messages. As a result, arguments incongruent with their attitudes were viewed as weaker than the congruent ones. It appears that a search for contradictory information, if attempted, is likely to be successful. Individuals seem to have "ample explanatory resources at their disposal to reason their way through apparent disconfirmations" (Boudry & Braeckman, 2011, p. 344). Hence, if they are motivated to reject a message, they will find a reason to do so.

The increase in negative elaboration may not only make people reject a message that contradicts their existing issue beliefs, but also make them more certain of those existing issue beliefs. Tormala and Petty (2004a) found that attitude certainty increased when the amount of elaboration involved in resisting counterattitudinal messages was high. When elaboration was low, there was no change in attitude certainty. These findings suggest that if a message contradicts existing issue beliefs, it can increase negative elaboration, making those existing beliefs more resistant to change.

In sum, research has shown that message discrepancy induces negative elaboration and increases the amount of elaboration, leading to higher belief certainty. However, because many of these studies, which were conducted in the United States, examined university students who were mostly Western, non-rural, educated, younger adults, the extent to which their findings can be generalized to other populations is questionable. Most studies also dichotomized continuous message discrepancy and used analysis of variance (ANOVA), possibly leading to attenuation of the message discrepancy effect. By using a slightly different approach to examine the effect of message discrepancy on elaboration and belief certainty among non-Western, rural, less-educated, older adults, the present research serves as a rigorous test to assess how generalizable existing findings are.

Effects of Existing Source Beliefs on Elaboration

Existing source beliefs refer to beliefs that recipients have of the party presenting a message prior to message exposure (i.e., not induced during experiments). Past research suggests that existing source beliefs can influence the amount of elaboration (Poorisat & Detenber, 2010; Priester & Petty, 1995, 2003). Priester and Petty (2003) found that when a source was believed to be untrustworthy (vs. trustworthy), participants relied more on argument quality and product-focused thoughts (vs. source-focused thoughts) to evaluate a message. This finding suggests that existing negative source beliefs can increase elaboration.

Positive source beliefs can also increase elaboration. Clark et al. (2012) found that when a message was proattitudinal, argument quality had an impact on postmessage attitudes in a   low-source-expertise condition but not in a high-

source-expertise condition. The opposite trend was observed among the participants who read the counterattitudinal message. When the message was counterattitudinal, argument quality had an impact on postmessage attitudes in the high-source-expertise condition but not in the low-source-expertise condition. These findings suggest that when message discrepancy is high, existing positive source beliefs will increase elaboration; but when message discrepancy is low, existing negative source beliefs will increase elaboration.

The extent to which existing source beliefs influence the amount of elaboration appears to depend on how motivated people are to process information. Priester and Petty (1995) found that when given a dishonest (vs. honest) source, participants with low (but not high) need for cognition thought about argument quality more and they judged the message based on the thoughts they generated. Their negative beliefs about a source motivated them to examine a message more closely. They relied more on their thoughts about a message than the source heuristic. For those with high need for cognition, source had no impact on the amount of elaboration. Similarly, Heesacker et al. (1983) found that source influenced the amount of elaboration only among participants who typically would not engage in much elaboration. Their study showed that positive (vs. negative) beliefs about a source motivated people to engage in more elaboration when evaluating counterattitudinal messages. These findings suggest that existing source beliefs have more influence on the amount of elaboration when motivation to process is low.

Existing source beliefs can also influence the direction of elaboration, especially when motivation to process is high. Chaiken and Maheswaran (1994) found that when a message was unclear, a trustworthy source motivated participants in a high-involvement condition to generate thoughts that were positive. There was no difference in the amount of elaboration (measured by the number of product-attribute thoughts generated) between participants in the low- and the high-source-credibility conditions. This finding suggests that in high-involvement conditions where motivation to process is high, existing source beliefs are likely to influence the direction of elaboration but not the amount of elaboration. Findings from Tormala et al. (2007) also indicated the effect of source beliefs on the direction of elaboration, but only when source information was presented before (not after) a message. Taken together, the literature suggests that in low-involvement conditions where motivation to process is low, people will use existing source beliefs to determine whether a message is worth processing; whereas in high-involvement conditions, people will use their existing source beliefs to guide message processing.

In sum, past research suggests that the effects of existing source beliefs on the direction and the amount of elaboration depends on the level of involvement and message discrepancy. However, the extent to which these findings can be generalized to an understudied population, specifically the non-Western, rural, less-educated, older adults, is unclear. Will having negative beliefs about a source motivate them to engage in more elaboration only when involvement is low? Will existing positive source beliefs increase elaboration only when message

discrepancy is high? What are the effects of elaboration induced by existing positive (or negative) source beliefs on belief certainty? Using a slightly different research method, the present research serves as a replication and an extension of the existing literature.

The Present Research

The present research focuses on elaboration, one of the strongest predictors of belief certainty. Findings from past studies have consistently showed both the amount and the direction of elaboration to be influenced by message discrepancy and source beliefs. The research methods employed across these studies and the populations studied have also been rather similar. Hence, the first objective of this research is to assess the generalizability of these findings by examining the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration among non-Western, rural, less-educated, older adults using a slightly different research method. The second objective is to extend past research by examining the effect of elaboration induced by message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on belief certainty. The present research aims to contribute to existing literature by providing insights into the mechanisms behind belief revision and belief preservation among an understudied population.

This research carried out two studies to examine the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration and belief certainty. Study One was designed to (a) inform the questionnaire construction for the upcoming hypothesis-testing study, and (b) identify the association between message discrepancy and elaboration as well as the association between source likability and

elaboration. It employed an open-coding technique to search for ways to characterize elaboration strategies and focused on the associations among message discrepancy, existing source beliefs and how people evaluate news. Findings derived from Study One were used to formulate hypotheses, which were subsequently tested in Study Two.

Study Two was designed to examine the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the quality and the quantity aspects of elaboration, as well as belief certainty. Using a non-laboratory experiment, it tested (a) the hypotheses derived from Study One, and (b) the hypotheses derived from existing literature concerning the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. Based on Study Two's findings, a model from path analysis depicting the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration and belief certainty is presented.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY ONE

The literature has provided much evidence for the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration. This research sets out to examine the generalizablity of its findings. Given the unique characteristics of the study population, there is a need to deviate from customary research procedures and conventional cognitive assessment tools. Study One serves as an exploratory methodological and substantive investigation. Existing source beliefs were observed through the manifestation of source likability. The underlying assumption is that those who like the ruling party are more likely to hold positive beliefs about the government than those who like the opposition, and vice versa.

Objectives

Study One's goals are to (a) inform the questionnaire construction for the upcoming hypothesis-testing study, (b) identify the association between message discrepancy and elaboration as well as the association between source likability and elaboration.

Study Context

Rationale for the Study Context

Political communication was chosen as the study context for two reasons. First, it is a context in which source factors are likely to have a marked impact on how people process information. Research suggests that when ambiguity is present, people are more likely to use mental shortcuts such as source beliefs to inform their message evaluation (Bohner, Chaiken, & Hunyadi, 1994; Ziegler, Schwichow, & Diehl, 2005). Political information supplied by the media is arguably more

ambiguous than other types of information such as health and technology. Thus, there is flexibility in interpreting and evaluating political news.

The second reason for choosing political communication has to do with practical considerations. Like many other countries, Thailand has been facing political turmoil, which paralyzes its development. By providing greater understanding about how people evaluate political news, this research hopes to offer insights that can help bring the divided nation back together.

Political Situation in Thailand

In recent years, Thailand has been facing some of the worst political tension in its history. The tension started to build up a few years after Mr Thaksin Shinawatra became the prime minister. The anti-Thaksin campaign (i.e., the yellow-shirts) accused Mr Thaksin of corruption. The campaign grew bigger when his telecom company sold its stake to a company owned by the Singapore government. The anti-Thaksin protesters gathered in central Bangkok and pressured the government to step down. As a result, Mr Thaksin left the country. When the opposition leader stepped in as the new government, the pro-Thaksin campaign (i.e., the red-shirts) started. They called for a change in the government and the protest turned violent. Mr Thaksin's supporters won the election and Mr Thaksin's sister, Ms Yingluck Shinawatra, became the prime minister. The government's attempt to pass the reconciliation bill, which would give amnesty to Mr Thaksin, intensified the tension between the yellow-shirts and the red-shirts. While this research was being conducted, both anti-Thaksin and pro-Thaksin campaigns were active.

Given that both Study One and Study Two were conducted during the tension between the two political camps, the volatile political climate might affect participants' responses. With emotions running high, people might respond to messages from the party they did not like more negatively. However, some people might be reluctant to share what they really think because they were afraid of what might follow. These possibilities were taken into consideration during planning. The formal study setting and the neutral tone used by interviewers were put in place to minimize the aforementioned issues.

Preliminary Study

A preliminary study was conducted to inform the development of the questionnaire and the design of Study One. Data were collected using interviews with mostly open-ended questions (refer to Appendix B for the interview guide). This method was chosen for two reasons. First, it helped to gain familiarity with the study population, especially to capture nuances needed to understand how to ask questions about politics and how to encourage people to express their thoughts openly. Second, it allowed for an array of elaboration strategies to be observed. This was helpful in planning how to categorize elaboration.

Participants

Participants were recruited from rural districts in the province of Uttaradit in northern Thailand using convenience sampling. The recruitment started on January 18, 2011 and ended on February 4, 2011. Recruiters explicitly informed potential participants during the recruitment that they were looking for partisans

and non-partisans. This approach was chosen because to ensure that there was variation in existing source beliefs in the sample.

To qualify for the study, individuals could not be a college graduate. In Thailand, those with modest educational attainment form a sizable political support base. Approximately 43% of Thais who have the right to vote did not receive education higher than high school (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2010). As part of the recruitment process, individuals were asked to give an example of recent political news they watched on TV. Those who gave irrelevant answers or could not think of any political news were screened out. A cash incentive of 100 Thai baht (approximately 3.20 US dollars) was given to each participant who completed the study.

Eighteen participants were recruited but one decided to withdraw because she felt uneasy talking about her political views. In total, 17 participants—11 non-partisans and 6 partisans—completed the study. For the preliminary study, partisans were those who identified themselves as supporters of Mr Thaksin Shinawatra. Non-partisans were those who identified themselves as being politically neutral. Most of the participants worked in the agricultural sector. Their ages ranged from 32 to 60 years old (male = 9; female = 8). The demographic information of the participants in the preliminary study is presented in Table 1.

Although there is no institutional review board in Thailand, necessary steps were taken to ensure that (a) the risks to participants were minimized, (b) informed content was obtained, and (c) their confidentiality is maintained.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants in the Preliminary Study

ID	Partisanship	Gender	Age	Occupation	Highest education
1	Partisan	Female	55	Farm product seller	Primary 4
2	Partisan	Female	53	Farmer	Primary 4
3	Partisan	Female	58	Farmer	Primary 4
4	Partisan	Female	32	Food seller	Grade 9
5	Partisan	Male	50	Farmer and construction worker	Primary 4
6	Partisan	Male	50	Tobacco seller	Primary 4
7	Non-partisan	Male	49	Ironsmith	Primary 7
8	Non-partisan	Male	60	Farmer	Equivalent to high school diploma
9	Non-partisan	Female	58	Housewife	Primary 4
10	Non-partisan	Female	50	Housewife	Primary 4
11	Non-partisan	Male	44	Farm product seller	Grade 12
12	Non-partisan	Male	32	Farmer	Grade 12
13	Non-partisan	Male	60	Unemployed	Primary 4
13	Non-partisan	Male	35	Vegetable seller	Primary 6
14	Non-partisan	Male	43	Farmer	Primary 4
16	Non-partisan	Female	50	Farmer	Primary 4
17	Non-partisan	Female	45	Farmer	Primary 4

Procedure

Participants were given a consent form before the survey started. They were informed that the study was meant to investigate how Thai people evaluate political news. The survey started with questions about where participants got their political news and their news watching behaviors (e.g., "What kind of programs do you watch?," "What makes you watch political news?," and "What goes through your mind when you watch or hear political news?"). Next, the survey moved on to specific questions about attitudes toward Mr Thaksin and the existing government led by Mr Abhisit. This was done to classify their partisanship and determine source likability. Then, participants viewed six video clips that addressed three different news issues. The news used in the pretest had been broadcast on free-to-air channels including DNN (operated by Zenith Company Network, which is a red-shirt supporter), ASTV (operated by Manager Media Group, which is a yellow-shirt supporter), and TV PBS (operated by the Department of Public Relations), and T-News (operated by T-News, a news agency headquartered in Nonthaburi Province) and Channel 3 (operated by Bangkok Entertainment Company).

After the viewing, the participants described the news they had just watched, and explained why they chose to believe, not believe, or were not sure whether to believe the news. For each news issue, one clip was pro-government and the other was anti-government. The three news issues were selected because of their large coverage on free-to-air channels, their availability online, and their similarity in length. Table 2 presents the list of video clips in the order that they

were presented to participants. Each interview lasted about an hour. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

Table 2

List of Video Clips Played to the Participants in the Preliminary Study

News issue	Clip	Message advocacy	Position	Length in minutes	Channel
A	1	The soldier shot the people in a temple.	Anti-government	2:30	DNN
	2	The soldier did not shoot the people in a temple.	Pro-government	1:35	ASTV
B	3	Mr Sonthi Limthongkul was behind the fire in Bangkok.	Anti-government	3:22	Thai PBS
	4	Mr Thaksin Shinawatra was behind the fire in Bangkok.	Pro-government	1:42	T News
C	5	The government was not willing to release red-shirt leaders from jail.	Anti-government	2:33	DNN
	6	The government was willing to release red-shirt leaders from jail.	Pro-government	3:33	Ch. 3

Note. Refer to Appendix C for the details of each news clip.

Insights from the Preliminary Study

Difficulty in recruitment. Recruiting partisans was difficult. People were skeptical about the study, especially when they were asked whether they were partisans. Many partisans were reluctant to appear in a face-to-face interview.

Hence, to reduce skepticism in the two main studies, partisanship was not mentioned during the recruitment.

Factually-oriented political television news as stimuli. TV appeared to be the primary source for political news. Print media came second. A national survey also showed that the most popular TV program among working adults was news (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2008). Hence, this present research used TV news as stimuli instead of print like the majority of past studies.

Almost all the programs mentioned by participants were fact-based programs (e.g., the evening news summary) as opposed to analysis-based programs. The national survey also indicated that commentary programs were among the least popular programs viewed by working adults (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2008). Thus, a fact-based rather than an analysis-based program was used as stimuli.

Analysis challenges of coding responses from open-ended questions. Responses gathered from the preliminary study revealed that too many open-ended questions made it difficult for analyses. Sometimes, it was unclear whether participants answered the questions. This caused problems for coding. Hence, for the actual study, response options were provided.

Participants generally did not provide detailed responses. When asked to recall the news they had just watched, many participants only mentioned the news issues. It was unclear whether it was because they did not perceive a need to explain in detail to interviewers the content that was presented or whether they did

not understand the news. Hence, to get more accurate and complete responses, a structured and detailed questionnaire was used for Study One.

Unsuitability of detailed analysis. An attempt to characterize information-processing strategies based on too many aspects of a response was not workable. The responses from the preliminary study were characterized based on four dimensions:

- whether the evidence or the logic of the arguments presented in the news clip was used to evaluate the news,
- whether knowledge individuals have acquired prior to watching the news clip was used to evaluate the news,
- whether personal opinions or feelings were used to evaluate the news, and
- whether information individuals used to evaluate the news was positive, negative or neutral towards the position advocated.

The outcome of such categorization could not be integrated and linked to a core category. Hence, when analyzing data from Study One, the coding procedure should be oriented to broader themes.

Method

A survey was conducted by interviewers. Study One was designed based on feedback obtained from the preliminary study.

Participants

Forty-three people from different areas in a northern province of Thailand were recruited using quota, convenience and snowball sampling from July 12 to 23,

2012. There were 21 males and 22 females whose ages ranged from 25 to 60 years old (median = 49). Of the 43 participants, 26 had a secondary level education, 16 had a primary level education and one did not receive any formal education. All participants were able to give at least two examples of recent political news that caught their attention. A cash incentive of 150 Thai baht (approximately 5 US dollars) was given to participants.

Procedure

Participants were asked to read and sign a consent form, which assured them that their personal information would be kept confidential and that their participation would have no political consequences for them. The survey started with general questions about participants' news consumption habits before moving on to questions about partisanship. Participants were asked to report the extent to which they like the Pheu Thai Party (i.e., the government) and the Democrat Party (i.e., the opposition). Response options were read out to them. Some participants did not reveal their true political preference early in the interviews. When they said who they really liked while answering other questions, their answers were taken into consideration to determine their partisanship.

Participants reported their prior knowledge and existing beliefs about the news issue they were about to watch. Then, they viewed six video clips that addressed three different news issues. For each news issue, one clip was presented by the government and the other was presented by the opposition. The three news issues (selected because of their wide coverage on free-to-air channels) were (a) product price increases, (b) the impact of the reconciliation bill, which has been

proposed by the government and was being considered in the chamber, and (c)

amnesty for Mr Thaksin, who was accused of corruption. The clips were chosen

based on their availability online and their similarity in length. The six clips, which

lasted about 1.5 to 3.5 minutes, were shown to every participant in the same order.

All, except Clip 4, were news stories broadcast on Channel 3 (operated by

Bangkok Entertainment Company). Clip 4 was broadcast on Channel 7 (operated

by Bangkok Broadcasting & Television Company Limited). Neither channel

identified itself as a supporter of the government or the opposition. Refer to Table

3 for the list of news clips.

Table 3

List of Video Clips Played to Participants in Study One

News issue	Clip	Message advocacy	Source	Position	Length in minutes	Channel
A	1	Prices of products in markets have not increased significantly.	Government	Pro-government	1:23	3
	2	Prices of products in markets have increased significantly.	Opposition	Pro-opposition	1:10	3
B	3	The reconciliation bill is good for Thailand.	Government	Pro-government	0:44	7
	4	The reconciliation bill is bad for Thailand.	Opposition	Pro-opposition	0:48	3
C	5	The reconciliation bill is not meant to help the former PM.	Government	Pro-government	1:27	3
	6	The reconciliation bill is meant to help the former PM.	Opposition	Pro-opposition	1:20	3

Note. Refer to Appendix D for the details of news content presented in each news clip.

After every pair of clips on the same news issue, participants answered questions about different types of involvement, and after viewing each news issue, they answered questions about comprehension and postmessage issue beliefs. This process was repeated for the next two news issues. Each interview lasted about an hour. The interviews were voice recorded and transcribed.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire addressed source likability, prior knowledge, existing issue beliefs, postmessage issue beliefs, comprehension and three types of involvement (i.e., outcome, value, and impression involvement; refer to Appendix E for the questionnaire). Responses to questions about source likability, existing issue beliefs and postmessage issue beliefs were analysed and used to infer the association between message discrepancy and elaboration, as well as the association between source likability and elaboration. Responses to the rest of the questions were used to inform the construction of Study Two's questionnaire. The questions were tested with eight participants and revised accordingly. The concepts addressed in the questionnaire are presented below in the order they were asked.

Source likability. Participants were asked how much they like the government and the opposition party (e.g., "To what extent do you like the Pheu Thai Party?"). The response options read out to them were: *don't like it at all*, *don't quite like it*, *like it a lot*, and *indifferent—neither like nor hate*. Source likability was examined instead of existing source beliefs because during the pretest, participants struggled to articulate their beliefs about political parties, making it difficult to code and categorize their responses.

Prior knowledge. Before viewing each news issue, participants were asked what they had heard or seen regarding an issue that was about to be presented to them. To gauge the perceived amount of knowledge about an issue, a closed-ended question was included (i.e., "How much knowledge do you have about the prices in the market?"). The response options were: *little*, *moderate*, and *a lot*.

Existing issue beliefs. Participants were asked to report their existing beliefs about an issue that was about to be presented to them. Considering the difficulties faced while trying to interpret the findings from the preliminary study, a closed-ended question was used for Study One (i.e., "Do you believe that things are more expensive?"). The response options for the news about products price increases were: *yes, things are more expensive*; *no, things are not more expensive*; and *don't know/not sure*. The options varied with the news issue. To check whether the question was understood as intended, participants were also asked to explain why they believed so.

Comprehension. After watching each news clip, participants described the news they had just watched. To ensure they reported all the news content they could recall, they were prompted for more information (i.e., "Are there any other points mentioned?" and "Is there anything else about the news that you can remember?). The follow-up questions were found very useful in capturing message recall.

Postmessage issue beliefs. First, participants were asked whether they believed the advocated view (e.g., "After you have watched the news, do you believe that things are not more expensive?"). They were given three response options: *yes*, *no* and *not sure*. An open-ended question was used to capture their justification of postmessage beliefs. Participants were asked to explain what made them find the news believable, not believable or what made them unsure whether to believe the news.

Outcome involvement. Participants were asked whether the news issue that they have just watched concerned them (e.g., "Do you think this issue of whether things are more expensive in the two news clips you have just watched concerns you?"). The response options were: "*It concerns me a lot,*" "*It concerns me but not much,*" and "*It does not concern me at all.*" To ensure that the questions were understood as intended, those who reported that the issue concerned them were asked to explain why they thought it concerned them. Another question was a closed-ended question adapted from the outcome involvement scale by Cho and Boster (2005), i.e., "To what extent do you think this issue of whether things are more expensive will have an impact on your life?" The response options were: "*There will be a great impact,*"   "*There will be an impact but not much,*" "*There will be no impact at all.*"

   Value involvement. Six questions were designed to capture value involvement. The first question directly asked the extent to which participants used their political preference when judging the news. The response options were: *yes, to some extent*; and *not at all*. This question was conceived with an assumption that political preference is associated with values that one cherishes such as conservationism and equality (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004; Goren, 2005). If the news they had just watched evoked any values linked to political preference, it was expected that political preference would influence their news evaluation. For those who reported using their political preference to evaluate the news, they were asked to explain how it was used. A response to this follow-up question was used to infer whether the question was understood as intended.

Participants were also asked whether they used their personal beliefs to assess the news. This question focused on a belief system, which covers more than those associated with political preference, for example, a principle that guides decision making about what is right and wrong. Those who said they used their personal beliefs to evaluate the news were asked to explain what beliefs they used. The last two questions asked the extent to which the news issue was important to them (Park, Levine, Kingsley Westerman, Orfgen, & Foregger, 2007) and why it was important to them. If the news issue evoked values people held dearly, they would perceive it as important. The pretest indicated that when people said the issue was important, they sometimes meant it was important because the issue had an impact on their lives. Thus, to determine whether perceived issue importance was related to value involvement and not outcome involvement, a follow-up question was included. Those who said the issue was important were asked to explain why it was important.

Impression involvement. To assess impression involvement, participants were asked the extent to which they thought their opinion expression about the news issue they just watched influenced the image they formed. The response options were: *a lot of influence*, *some influence* and *no influence at all*. To examine whether the question was interpreted as intended, those who answered *a lot of influence* or *some influence* were asked to explain how their opinion expression might influence their image. Another question about impression involvement asked whether other people would judge them based on their opinions about the issue.

The response options were: *likely* and *unlikely*. Those who answered *likely* were asked to explain how.

Coding Procedure

The following sections describe how responses to questions concerning message discrepancy, source likability and elaboration were coded.

Message discrepancy. Message discrepancy was considered low if message advocacy matched participants' existing issue beliefs. If it did not match, message discrepancy was considered high. If participants said they were not sure what to believe, a message was coded as *neutral*. Table 4 presents the percentages of the three message conditions (i.e., low message discrepancy, high message discrepancy and neutral). Note that in some conditions, the percentage is less than 10, indicating that the distribution of existing issue beliefs about some of the news issues was skewed.

Table 4

Percentages of Participants in Each Message Condition Across Different

Partisanship Categories

	All participants (*N* = 43) %			Partisanship category								
				Pro-government partisans (*n* = 18) %			Pro-opposition partisans (*n* = 8) %			Non-partisans (*n* = 17) %		
Msg Discre-pancy	Low	High	NEU	Low	High	NEU	Low	High	NEU	Low	High	NEU
Clip 1	7	81	12	17	72	11	0	88	13	0	88	12
Clip 2	81	7	12	72	17	11	88	0	13	88	0	12
Clip 3	37	12	51	50	6	44	13	38	50	35	6	59
Clip 4	12	37	51	6	50	44	38	13	50	6	35	59
Clip 5	14	33	54	22	11	67	13	50	38	6	47	47
Clip 6	33	14	54	11	22	67	50	13	38	47	6	47
AVG	31	31	39	30	30	41	34	34	34	30	30	39

Note. NEU stands for neutral (i.e., no existing issue beliefs).

Source likability. Participants were grouped into one of the following categories based on their answers to the questions about whether they liked the government and the opposition: pro-government partisans (n = 18; 41%), pro-opposition partisans (n = 8; 19%) and non-partisans (n = 17; 40%). Four participants explicitly revealed their partisanship only when responding to other questions later during their interviews. Hence, for these participants, their partisanship was determined based on those responses.

Elaboration. Justifications for postmessage beliefs were used to infer elaboration strategies participants used to evaluate the news. The unit of analysis is

each participant's justification for postmessage issue beliefs. An open-coding

technique was used to categorize a justification each participant provided for his or

her issue beliefs reported after watching each news clip. Before the actual coding

procedure, justifications for postmessage beliefs from the first 15 participants were

carefully read to increase an ability to spot meaningful cues that might be the key

to characterizing elaboration strategies. While reading, the researcher noted

possible dimensions of a concept, response variation, possible interpretations,

issues that might surface during coding, and possible themes. The notes were

referred to during coding.

Next, the researcher read each justification for postmessage beliefs again,

but this time focused on different properties of each elaboration strategy. Codes

were constructed to describe how participants processed the news. These codes

were intended for grouping similar strategies. The following are some of the codes

constructed:

- *match/mismatch*: comparing attributes assigned to an object by the news
  source with participants' prior knowledge about the attributes of the
  same or related objects;

- *direct experience*: using first-hand experience to evaluate the news;

- *alternative explanation*: providing an alternative explanation to explain
  why the news may or may not be true;

- *argument generation*: generating a new argument in response to the
  news advocacy;

- *source inference*: citing the source as an indicator of message believability;

- *argument integration*: making connections between news arguments and prior knowledge;

- *rehearsal*: justifying postmessage beliefs by repeating their existing issue beliefs and information that supports them; and

- *trend analysis*: referring to a series of events in the past as a reason for believing or not believing the news.

The codes that could describe responses to questions about one news issue but not the other two were replaced with different codes. For example, many people were using their direct experience to justify their beliefs about product price increases but none used their direct experience to evaluate the news about the reconciliation bill. Thus, the code called *direct experience* was discarded and responses that have previously been assigned as this code was assigned a different code.

A code that could be applied to all three news issues but caused coding confusion was dropped. For example, in some cases, it was clear that people were doing trend analysis because they described information at different points of time and explained what they saw as a trend. Others, however, just said that they believed the news because of what they have been watching on TV. It was unclear whether the latter was trend analysis, so this code was discarded. If a code was observed across three news issues but there were very few cases, that code would

be replaced with another code that has already been used to describe other responses. The list of constructed codes was refined and trimmed.

Next, related codes were integrated to form a concept to describe elaboration strategies. For example, *alternative explanation* and *argument generation* were grouped together to form a new overarching category called *reconciling information*, which refers to a process where people try to come up with an explanation to connect their stored information to new information. *Match/mismatch* was treated as another overarching concept, which refers to a process where people make a straightforward comparison between their own information and incoming information without considering why the two pieces of information are different or similar. To determine whether a typology (e.g., *reconciling information* and *match/mismatch*) was worth further investigation, the associations among message discrepancy, source likability and elaboration strategies were examined. If there was no potential association, that typology was set aside. This procedure was repeated until the typology that allowed us to draw some inferences about possible associations among message discrepancy, source likability on elaboration strategies was identified.

Finally, four categories were used to group justifications for postmessage beliefs: (a) *positive test*, (b) *negative test*, (c) *lack of information* and (d) *unclear response*. A positive test refers to an attempt to determine whether a conjecture is true based on the existence of supporting information, whereas a negative test refers to an attempt to determine whether a conjecture is true based on the existence of contradictory information. Examples of a positive test are "I believe

the news that showed that vegetables were expensive because I also found myself spending more on groceries" and "I am not sure what to believe because although the news claimed that vegetables were expensive, I could not think of any vegetables whose prices were unusually high." Note that the focus of a positive test is on looking for supporting information and that a positive test can be either positive or negative elaboration. Examples of a negative test are "I am not sure whether to believe the news that showed that vegetables were expensive because I could still get the same amount of groceries for the same amount of money" and "I believe the news that showed that vegetables were expensive because there was not a single kind of vegetables that was truly cheap." The focus of a negative test is on looking for contradictory information and a negative test can be either positive or negative elaboration. Examples of a positive and a negative test for each news issue can be found in Appendix F. If participants said they did not have information to evaluate the news (e.g., "I hardly watch the news," "I do not know much about politics" and "I am just an outsider, so I do not know what they are doing"), their responses were categorized as *lack of information*. Responses that were unclear or did not answer the question were coded as *unclear responses*.

Two coders were recruited to code justifications for postmessage beliefs. During training, they were asked to code five responses about each news clip. The instructions were as follows.

- If a justification for postmessage beliefs is based on the existence of supporting evidence or information that suggests the possibility of the news being true, code that response as a *positive test*.

- If a justification for postmessage beliefs is based on the existence of contradictory evidence or information that suggests the possibility of the news being false, code that response as a *negative test*.

- If a response indicates that a participant could understand the question but that participant said or implied that he or she did not have the information to evaluate the news, code that response as *lack of information to evaluate news*.

- If a response does not answer the question or it is not understandable, code that response as *unclear response*.

- All responses must go into one of these four categories.

For the actual coding, the two coders independently coded all the justifications for postmessage beliefs including those used for training. The Krippendorff's alpha was .83, indicating high intercoder reliability. About 6% of all the responses were coded as *unclear responses* and were excluded from the analyses. Table 5 presents the percentages of each elaboration strategy across six news clips.

Table 5

Percentages of Each Elaboration Strategy Across the Six News Clips

	Positive test %	Negative test %	Lack of information %	Unclear response %
Clip 1	23	74	2	0
Clip 2	49	51	0	0
Clip 3	40	44	7	9
Clip 4	23	54	12	12
Clip 5	23	56	12	9
Clip 6	37	49	9	5
AVG	33	55	7	6

A review of existing literature after the completion of open coding found that the concepts of a positive and a negative test are not completely new in psychology: They just have not received much attention in studies on elaboration. Klayman and Ha (1987) used the terms *positive test strategy* to refer to a strategy whereby people look for information that will support the predicted condition when testing a hypothesis. Similarly, a positive test here refers to a type of logic used to evaluate a conjecture by determining whether a proof of a given statement exists. Like Klayman and Ha (1987), this study distinguishes a positive test from confirmation bias. If people try to think whether there is evidence or information that is consistent with message advocacy, they are not necessarily biased. If people have tried but fail to think of a reason to support message advocacy, they probably will not believe that message. A similar explanation applies for distinguishing a negative test from disconfirmation bias. If people receive information and try to

think if there is any contradictory evidence or an alternative explanation, they are not necessarily biased. The terms *positive test* and *negative test* call attention to the type of logic people use to evaluate information.

Although a positive and a negative test are conceptually different from confirmation and disconfirmation bias, there may be an association between the two sets of concepts. A positive test is one of the elaboration strategies that can produce confirmation bias, and the same is true for a negative test and disconfirmation bias. The way thoughts are framed linguistically can sway message judgment to a certain direction. Because a positive test brings attention to words that are supportive of an advocated view, it is likely to lead to positive elaboration. Similarly, a negative test brings attention to words that are opposed to an advocated view, leading to a greater likelihood of negative elaboration.

Findings

This section first addresses an association between message discrepancy and the type of test, then an association between source likability and the type of test, and finally an association between source likability and the type of test in different message conditions.

Association Between Message Discrepancy and the Type of Test

Percentages were used to get a general sense of whether message discrepancy might be related to the type of test participants used to evaluate news. Two sets of analyses were conducted: one was to examine all participants and the other was to examine each partisanship category.

All participants. There may be an association between message discrepancy and the type of test participants used to evaluate news. When message discrepancy was low, a positive test was used more than a negative test (72% vs. 26%). When message discrepancy was high, a negative test was used more than a positive test (11% vs. 86%). In the neutral condition (i.e., no existing issue beliefs), a negative test was used more than a positive test but the difference was smaller than the other two message conditions (22% vs. 56%). Table 6 presents the percentages of each type of test participants used in each message condition. A repeated-measures analysis of variance with news clips as cases indicates that message discrepancy moderated the frequency of test used, $F(4, 20) = 45.13$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .90$.

Table 6

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by Participants in Each Message Condition

(N = 43)

Clip	Low message discrepancy %			High message discrepancy %			Neutral condition (No existing issue beliefs) %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	100	0	0	17	83	0	20	60	20
2	57	43	0	0	100	0	20	80	0
3	75	19	0	20	80	0	18	55	14
4	60	40	0	6	75	6	27	41	18
5	75	19	0	20	80	0	18	55	14
6	64	36	0	0	100	0	30	44	17
AVG	72	26	0	11	86	1	22	56	14

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each message condition may not add up to 100.

By partisanship category. Associations between message discrepancy and the type of test were similar across the three partisanship categories (refer to Tables 7 to 9). When message discrepancy was low, a positive test was used more than a negative test (for the pro-government partisans, 58% vs. 40%; for the pro-opposition partisans, 68% vs. 12%; and for the non-partisans, 81% vs. 19%). When message discrepancy was high, a negative test was used more than a positive test (for the pro-government partisans, 22% vs. 76%; for the pro-opposition partisans, 3% vs. 97%; and for the non-partisans, 3% vs. 88%). A repeated-measures analysis of variance with news clips as cases was conducted for each

partisanship category to examine whether message discrepancy moderated the frequency of test used. The results were statistically significant for the non-partisans and the pro-opposition partisans, but not for the pro-government partisans (for pro-government partisans, $F(1.86, 9.31) = 1.96$, $p = .20$, partial $\eta^2 = .28$; for pro-opposition partisans, $F(4, 12) = 10.37$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .78$; and for non-partisans, $F(4, 12) = 29.91$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .91$).

Table 7

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by the Pro-Government Partisans in Each Message Condition (n = 18)

Clip	Low message discrepancy %			High message discrepancy %			Neutral condition (No existing issue beliefs) %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	100	0	0	23	77	0	50	50	0
2	31	69	0	0	100	0	50	50	0
3	67	22	0	100	0	0	13	63	13
4	0	100	0	11	78	0	13	63	13
5	100	0	0	0	100	0	25	50	17
6	50	50	0	0	100	0	33	50	0
AVG	58	40	0	22	76	0	31	54	7

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each message condition may not add up to 100.

Table 8

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by the Pro-Opposition Partisans in Each

Message Condition (n = 8)

Clip	Low message discrepancy %			High message discrepancy %			Neutral condition (No existing issue beliefs) %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	N/A	N/A	N/A	14	86	0	0	100	0
2	71	29	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	100	0
3	100	0	0	0	100	0	0	100	0
4	67	33	0	0	100	0	25	25	25
5	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	33	33
6	100	0	0	0	100	0	67	33	0
AVG	68	12	0	3	97	0	15	49	10

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. N/A denotes the absence of participants in a message condition. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each message condition may not add up to 100.

Table 9

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by the Non-Partisans in Each Message

Condition (n = 17)

Clip	Low message discrepancy %			High message discrepancy %			Neutral condition (No existing issue beliefs) %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack Info
1	N/A	N/A	N/A	13	87	0	0	50	50
2	73	27	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	100	0
3	83	17	0	0	100	0	30	30	20
4	100	0	0	0	67	17	40	30	20
5	100	0	0	0	88	0	25	50	25
6	50	50	0	0	100	0	13	38	50
AVG	81	19	0	3	88	3	18	41	19

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. N/A denotes the absence of participants in a message condition. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each message condition may not add up to 100.

The following sections describe how the partisans and the non-partisans used a positive and a negative test to evaluate the news.

Use of a positive and a negative test among the partisans. When message discrepancy was low, the partisans who liked the source used a positive test to evaluate the news. Before watching Clip 1, which advocated that there was no price increase, a pro-opposition partisan (ID 2) said he believed things were expensive because the gas price was high. He reported that he did not know much about prices of products in a market. After watching Clip 2, which advocated that there was price increase, he said he believed the news because lentils (one of the

products mentioned in the news) might be expensive in some areas. Although he also said that lentils might be cheap in some areas, the fact that there was possibility that lentils might be expensive made him believe Clip 2. His existing issue beliefs might have induced him to use a positive test. Next is another example of how the partisans used a positive test to evaluate a message that was consistent with their existing issue beliefs. To explain why she believed the news in Clip 3, which advocated that the reconciliation bill was good for Thailand, a pro-opposition partisan (ID 14) said "The word reconciliation means it will have good consequences. Like what they said, it was not just for Police Lieutenant General Thaksin Shinawatra. It will apply to all parties." The first reason she gave was the same reason she used to justify her existing issue beliefs. The low message discrepancy might have made her more open to the arguments presented in the news.

When message discrepancy was high, partisans mostly used a negative test. Before watching the news, a pro-opposition partisan (ID 21) said she believed there were price increases because prices of vegetables went up every day. After watching Clip 1, which advocated that there was no price increase, she said she was not sure whether to believe the news because the price of red onions, one of the products mentioned in the news, sometimes went up. She used a negative test by citing contradictory information to undermine the validity the news that was consistent with her existing issue beliefs. Next is another example of how the partisans used a negative test when message discrepancy was high. Prior to watching the news, a pro-government partisan (ID 13) did not believe the

reconciliation bill was meant to help Mr Thaksin. She said there was nothing in the reconciliation bill that stated it would help Mr Thaksin. As expected, she did not believe the news advocating an opposing view, which was Clip 6. The reason given was that the bill was from the people, not the government. She explained that if the bill had to go through a referendum before it could take effect, it was unlikely that its purpose was to help only Mr Thaksin. "Of course, it had to first be drafted before it could be voted upon" she said. She acknowledged that the government was behind the initiation of this bill. She had the information that could be used to support the view opposite to hers, but she based her judgment on the existence of contradictory information.

Use of a positive and a negative test among the non-partisans. Similar to the partisans, when message discrepancy was low, the non-partisans mostly used a positive test, but when message discrepancy was high, they mostly used a negative test. Before watching the news, one of the non-partisans (ID 3) said he believed there were price increases because everything was more expensive, but when asked how much he knew about prices of products, he said he did not know much. Then, after watching Clip 1, which advocated that there was no price increase, he said he did not believe the news because "prices of products in the market that his housewife shopped was expensive." It is worth noting that he did not talk about the products mentioned in the news. He then watched Clip 2, which advocated a view similar to his. He said he believed this news, which was telling him that the price of lentils has gone up to 75 Thai baht, because "it was impossible that lentils cost only 20 baht like what the other news clip has presented." It was likely that his

elaboration strategy was influenced by his existing issue beliefs. He did not know how much lentils actually cost, and he chose to use a positive test to evaluate the news that was consistent with his existing issue beliefs, and to use a negative test to evaluate the news that was inconsistent with those beliefs.

Association Between Source Likability and the Type of Test

Percentages were used to get a general sense of whether source likability might be related to the type of test. Two sets of analyses were conducted: one was to examine all participants and the other was to examine each partisanship category.

All participants. There may be an association between source likability and the type of test participants used to evaluate news. A positive test was used more than a negative test when the source was from a political party they liked (50% vs. 41%). A negative test was used more than a positive test when the source was from a political party they disliked (15% vs. 74%) and when the source was from a political party that the participants neither liked nor disliked (50% vs. 33%). Table 10 presents the percentages of each type of test used to evaluate (a) a message that was from a political party the participants liked, (b) a message that was from a political party the participants disliked, and (c) a message from a political party that the participants neither liked nor disliked. A repeated-measures analysis of variance with news clip as cases ($N = 6$) indicates that source likability moderated the frequency of test used, $F(1.62, 8.08) = 13.99$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .74$.

Table 10

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by Participants in Each Source Condition

(N = 43)

Clip	Participants liked the source %			Participants disliked the source %			Participants neither liked nor disliked the source %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	39	61	0	13	88	0	12	82	6
2	63	38	0	28	72	0	65	35	0
3	44	39	6	13	88	0	47	29	12
4	38	38	13	11	72	6	29	41	18
5	39	44	11	0	63	13	18	65	12
6	75	25	0	28	61	0	29	47	24
AVG	50	41	5	15	74	3	33	50	12

Note. Lack info= lack of information to evaluate the news. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each source condition may not add up to 100.

By partisanship category. Associations between source likability and the type of test for the pro-government and the pro-opposition partisans were not the same (Table 11 and 12). When the source was from a political party that the participants liked, the pro-government partisans used a negative test slightly more than a positive test (41% vs. 48%), whereas the pro-opposition partisans used a positive test more (58% vs. 33%). When the source was from a political party that the participants did not like, both the pro-government (22% vs. 69%) and the pro-opposition partisans (8% vs. 79%) used a negative test more than a positive test.

Table 11

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by the Pro-Government Partisans in Each

Source Condition (n = 18)

Clip	Participants liked the source %			Participants disliked the source %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	39	61	0	-	-	-
2	-	-	-	28	72	0
3	44	39	6	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	11	72	6
5	39	44	11	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	28	61	0
AVG	41	48	6	22	69	2

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each source condition may not add up to 100.

Table 12

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by the Pro-Opposition Partisans in Each

Source Condition (n = 8)

	Participants liked the source %			Participants disliked the source %		
Clip	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	-	-	-	13	88	0
2	63	38	0	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	13	88	0
4	38	38	13	-	-	-
5	-	-	-	0	63	13
6	75	25	0	-	-	-
AVG	58	33	4	8	79	4

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each source condition may not add up to 100.

Association Between Source Likability and the Type of Test Across Message Conditions

Three sets of analyses were conducted to examine the association between source likability and the type of test is the same across message conditions. First, the percentages of each type of test used when message discrepancy was low were compared among three source conditions: (a) participants liked the source, (b) participants disliked the source, and (c) participants neither liked nor disliked the source. The same comparison was made for the high-message-discrepancy and the neutral conditions.

Low message discrepancy. As shown in Table 13, when message discrepancy was low, a positive test was used more when participants liked (vs. disliked) the source (84% vs. 36%). In addition, a negative test was used more when the participants did not like (vs. liked) the source (44% vs. 14%). Before watching the Clip 1 and 2, one of the pro-government partisans (ID 31) said she believed products in general had become more expensive. After watching the news from the opposition advocating that vegetables such as lentils were expensive (Clip 2), she said she was not sure whether there were price increases because sometimes prices went up and came down within a few days. She did not cite her existing issue beliefs that products in general were expensive; instead, she came up with a reason to question the news' claim, which advocated a view similar to her existing issue beliefs.

Table 13

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by Participants Across Source Conditions

When Message Discrepancy Was Low

Clip	Participants liked the source %			Participants disliked the source %			Participants neither liked nor disliked the source %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	100	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	71	29	0	31	69	0	73	27	0
3	67	22	11	100	0	0	83	17	0
4	67	33	0	0	100	0	100	0	0
5	100	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0
6	100	0	0	50	50	0	50	50	0
AVG	84	14	2	36	44	0	81	19	0

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. N/A denotes the absence of participants in a source condition. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each source condition may not add up to 100.

High message discrepancy. As shown in Table 14, a negative test was used more when participants disliked (vs. liked) the source (94% vs. 75%), but the difference is smaller than the low-message-discrepancy condition (44% vs. 14%). A positive test was used more when participants liked (vs. disliked) the source (25% vs. 4%), but the difference is larger than the low-message-discrepancy condition (84% vs. 36%). Before watching Clip 5 and 6, a pro-government partisan (ID 1) said he believed the reconciliation bill was drafted to help Mr Thaksin. After watching the news from the government advocating that they were not trying to help Mr Thaksin (Clip 5), he said he was not sure whether the bill was meant to

help Mr Thaksin because the government were modifying the proposed bill to make it right. The news was incongruent with his existing issue beliefs but he used a positive test to assess it.

Table 14

Percentages of Each Type of Test Used by Participants Across Source Conditions When Message Discrepancy Was High

Clip	Participants liked the source %			Participants disliked the source %			Participants neither liked nor disliked the source %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	23	77	0	14	86	0	13	87	0
2	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	100	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	100	0	0	0	100	0	0	100	0
4	0	100	0	11	78	0	0	67	17
5	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	88	0
6	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	100	0
AVG	25	75	0	4	94	0	3	88	3

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. N/A denotes the absence of participants in a source condition. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each source condition may not add up to 100.

Neutral condition. As shown in Table 15, in the absence of existing issue beliefs, a positive test was used more when participants liked (vs. disliked) the source (30% vs. 16%), but when the participants did not like (vs. liked) the source, a negative test was used more (66% vs. 54%). Before watching Clip 5 and 6, one of the pro-opposition partisans (ID 15) said he was not sure whether the reconciliation bill was meant to help Mr Thaksin. After watching Clip 5, he said he was not sure

whether to believe the news in Clip 5 because he did not know what was written in the bill. However, after watching Clip 6, he said from listening to what the leader of the opposition party said, it was possible that the government would give amnesty to Mr Thaksin. Note that when the news was from the source that he liked, he used a positive test to evaluate it, but when the news on the same issue was from the source he did not like, he said he did not have information to evaluate it.

Table 15

Percentages of the Type of Test Used by Participants with No Existing Issue Beliefs in Each Source Condition

Clip	Participants liked the source %			Participants disliked the source %			Participants neither liked nor disliked the source %		
	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info	Positive test	Negative test	Lack info
1	50	50	0	0	100	0	0	50	50
2	0	100	0	50	50	0	0	100	0
3	13	63	13	0	100	0	30	30	20
4	25	25	25	13	63	13	40	30	20
5	25	50	17	0	33	33	25	50	25
6	67	33	0	33	50	0	13	38	50
AVG	30	54	9	16	66	8	18	50	28

Note. Lack info = lack of information to evaluate the news. This table excludes responses in the *unclear response* category. Therefore, the average percentages for each source condition may not add up to 100.

Discussion

Before interpreting the findings, the limitations of the study are noted. Findings from a small sample size might not be generalizable. Hence, the

percentages were only taken as rough estimates to describe the data and formulate hypotheses. The study benefited from message replication by having participants watch three different news issues, but other factors such as order and priming effects could influence the findings. Thus, a between-subject design was chosen for Study Two.

The qualitative data were very helpful in informing how the questions were interpreted. There were a few concerns with questions pertaining to involvement. Asking about impression involvement was the most problematic. About half of the participants answered the questions without understanding what the questions meant. Even some of those who understood the questions found them hard to answer. They said they did not know how other people would think of them. This prompted us to drop impression involvement from Study Two. Another noteworthy observation was the similarity between answers to the questions about outcome and value involvement. When asked why an issue was important to them, participants said because its outcome would have an impact on them. This means asking whether an issue is important to them may not be a valid measure of value involvement because it could be measuring both outcome and value involvement. In addition, asking whether individuals have used their personal beliefs is not going to function as a reliable measure of value involvement either. The data revealed that participants interpreted the term personal beliefs very differently from what was intended. The issues regarding these questions about value involvement prompted us to think more carefully about how to measure value involvement.

The data from Study One were analyzed to inform hypothesis formulation. There are three key findings. First, it appears there is an association between message discrepancy and the type of test participants used to evaluate the news. The findings suggest that people are more likely to use a positive test to evaluate a message when message discrepancy is low and to use a negative test when message discrepancy is high. Second, there may be an association between source likability and the type of test people used to evaluate the news. The findings suggest that people are more likely to use a positive test when a message is from a source they like, but they are more likely to use a negative test when a message is from a source they dislike. Third, source likability may influence the association between message discrepancy and the type of test participants used to evaluate the news. The findings suggest that people are less likely to use a negative test when message discrepancy is high if that message comes from a source they like (vs. a source they dislike). Hypotheses were formulated based on Study One's findings and they were tested in Study Two.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY TWO

Study Two uses an experiment to examine the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration and belief certainty. There are two parts to this study. The first part assesses the generalizability of Study One by examining the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the type of test people use to evaluate news. The first part of Study Two also examines the effect of the type of use on belief certainty. The second part of this study assesses the generalizability of findings from past studies concerning the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration.

Objectives

The first goal of Study Two is to test the hypotheses derived from Study One. These hypotheses focus on the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the type of test. They are as follows:

H1: Message discrepancy will influence the type of test people use to evaluate news. A positive test will be used when message discrepancy is low, whereas a negative test will be used when message discrepancy is high.

H2: Existing source beliefs will influence the type of test people use to evaluate news. A positive test will be used when existing source beliefs are positive, whereas a negative test will be used when existing source beliefs are negative.

H3: The effect of existing source beliefs on the type of test will be more pronounced when message discrepancy is high (vs. low).

Study Two also examines the effect of the type of test on belief certainty. It examines whether people become more certain of their existing issue beliefs after using a positive test to evaluate a message that is congruent with those beliefs, and whether certainty decreases following the use of a negative test to evaluate a message that is incongruent with existing issue beliefs.

RQ1:   What is the effect of type of test on belief certainty?

Hypotheses 1 to 3 and research question 1 are presented graphically in Figure 1.
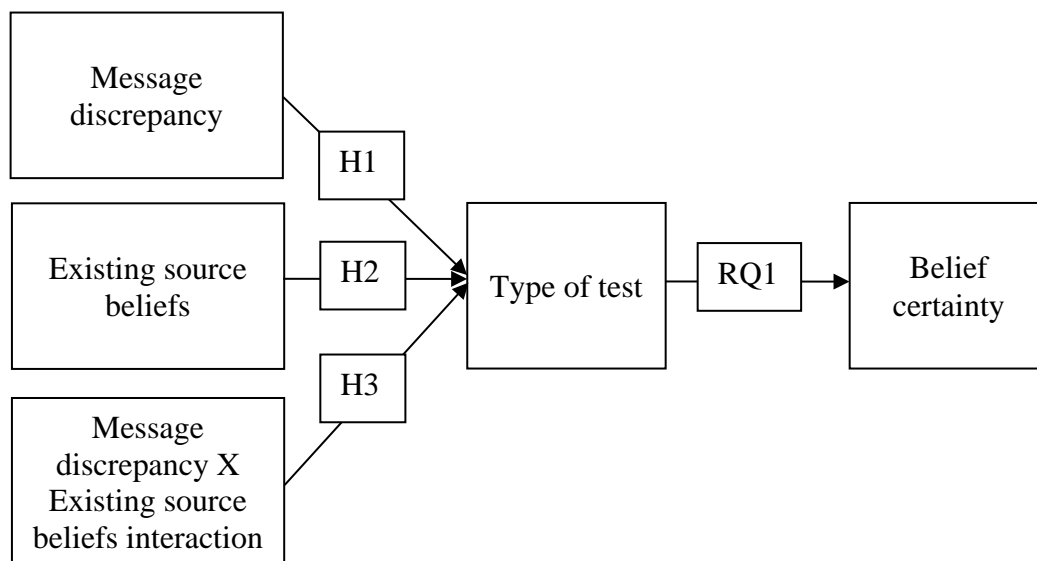
Figure 1. Path diagram for hypotheses 1 to 3 and research question 1.

The second goal of Study Two is to examine the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. Past studies have shown that (a) people engage in more elaboration when evaluating counterattitudinal (vs. proattitudinal) messages (e.g., Eagly et al., 2000; Taber & Lodge, 2006), (b) elaboration of counterattitudinal messages leads to

counterarguments (e.g., Edwards & Smith, 1996; Taber & Lodge, 2006) and

(c) elaboration leads to more certainty (e.g., Barden & Petty, 2008; Petty et al.,

1995). Based on these findings, it is predicted that message discrepancy will lead to

more elaboration and more belief certainty.

H4:   Message discrepancy will positively influence the amount of elaboration.

H5:   The amount of elaboration will be positively associated with belief

        certainty.

The effect of existing source beliefs on elaboration may depend on the level

of involvement. Research has found that in low-involvement conditions, negative

beliefs about a source increased elaboration, whereas in high-involvement

conditions, beliefs about a source influenced thought valence but not the amount of

elaboration (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Priester & Petty, 1995; Tormala et al.,

2007). In line with these findings, it is predicted that the effect of existing source

beliefs on the amount of elaboration will increase as the level of involvement

decreases.

H6:   There will be an interaction between existing source beliefs and the level of

        involvement on the amount of elaboration such that an increase in

        elaboration as a result of existing negative source beliefs will be more likely

        as the level of involvement decreases.

Research has also found that in low-involvement conditions, positive source

attributes increased the amount of elaboration for counterattitudinal messages but

not proattitudinal messages (Clark et al., 2012). Based on this finding, it is

hypothesized that the effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration

will depend on message discrepancy. This study measured, as opposed to

manipulated, source beliefs and the level of involvement.

H7:   Existing positive source beliefs will increase the amount of elaboration

when message discrepancy is high, whereas existing negative source beliefs

will increase the amount of elaboration when message discrepancy is low.

Hypotheses 4 to 7 are summarized in Figure 2.
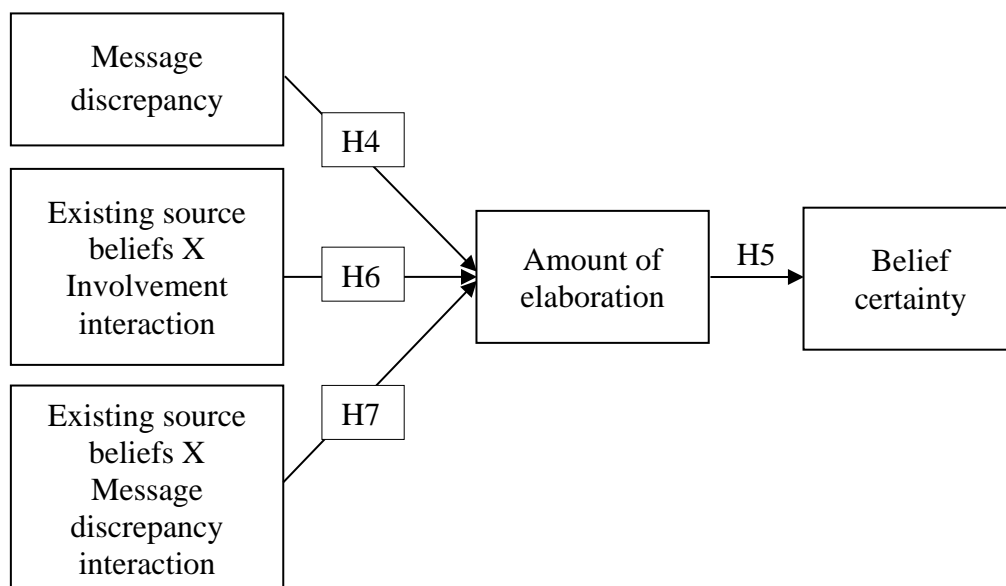

Figure 2. Path diagram for hypotheses 4 to 7.

Method

Study Two used an experiment to examine the effect of message

discrepancy, existing source beliefs on the type of test people use to evaluate news,

the amount of elaboration, and belief certainty. A non-laboratory setting was

chosen because to recruit rural older adults for the study, there was a need to go to

them instead of having them travel to a lab. Also, most of the study variables, such as existing source beliefs and involvement are not easily manipulated in a lab setting.

The study used a between-subject design whereby participants were assigned to watch the news about the amnesty for Mr Thaksin presented by either the government or the opposition. Participants filled out a pen-and-paper questionnaire that evaluated their beliefs about the issue and about the source, the level of involvement, the amount of elaboration and belief certainty. Interviews were used to capture recall and the type of test participants used to evaluate the news.

Participants

Participants were recruited from a province in northern Thailand starting from April 1 to May 8, 2013 through convenience and snowball sampling. Potential participants were approached at public and private places including a bus station, a train station, the Provincial Hospital, the Land Office, a village's pavilion, shops and factories. Village headmen made announcements about the study and a research team member either went from house to house to invite villagers to participate or administered the questionnaires during the village monthly meetings.

Participants were between 25 and 60 years old and had no more than high school education. As part of a screening process, potential participants were asked to recall the name of the government party and the opposition party, and then to give two examples of political news that has caught their attention in the past few

months. Those who could not give at least two examples or did not know the name of the government party or the opposition party were screened out. Each participant was given a cash incentive of 100 Thai baht (approximately 3.20 US dollars).

In total, 333 participants took part in the main study. Data from 10 participants were excluded from analyses. Four of them were those who did not meet the participation criteria. Three of them did not answer any questions on at least one scale, and three did not watch the news clip that corresponded to the condition assigned to them. Data from 323 participants were included in the analyses. There were slightly more females (53%) than males (47%). The median and mode for age were both 43 ($M = 42.48$; $SD = 9.38$). Most participants (43%) had a household income of 5,001 to 10,000 Thai baht or approximately 168 to 336 US dollars per month. Less than half of the participants (42%) received a high school degree or equivalent. About 30% received elementary education. About 25% received low secondary education or equivalent. About half of the participants (51%) worked in the agriculture and the labor sectors.

To determine partisanship, the average scores for existing source beliefs were trichotomized according to the percentiles of distribution into groups of approximately the same size (negative, neutral and positive source beliefs). The cut offs were 2.60 and 3.20. Most participants were supporters of the government led by Ms Yingluck Shinawatra. Of all the 163 participants who watched the news from the government (i.e., the Pheu Thai Party), about 50% reported positive beliefs about the Pheu Thai Party, only 20% reported negative beliefs, and 30% reported neutral beliefs. Of all the 160 participants who watched the news from the

opposition (i.e., the Democrat Party), only 16% reported positive beliefs about the

Democrat Party, about 50% reported negative beliefs, and about 34% reported

neutral beliefs. The numbers seem to reflect the reality in terms of political support

in the study site where the Member of Parliament from the Pheu Thai Party was

elected.

Stimuli

The two clips from Study One about the reconciliation bill, were used in

Study Two. The government news clip argued that the bill was not meant to help

Mr Thaksin, whereas the opposition news clip argued that the bill was meant to

help Mr Thaksin. Both clips lasted 1 minute and 14 seconds. Clip 1 was the same

as Clip 5 in Study One except that a small part of it was cut to make it exactly the

same length as Clip 2. Clip 2 was the same as Clip 6 in Study One.

To ensure that the two clips were not significantly different in terms of

perceived message believability and message clarity, a pretest was conducted with

60 participants: 30 males and 30 females. These participants were also asked the

screening questions to ensure that they met the study participation criteria. Data

from three participants who did not provide an example of political news they

watched in the past few months were excluded. Five 5-point Likert items adapted

from a past study (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007) with end points of *strongly disagree*

and *strongly agree* were used to measure message believability (i.e., "This news is

believable," "This news provides accurate information," "The news presented is

trustworthy," "This news is biased," and "This news provides information that is

complete"). The Cronbach's alpha was .71, indicating good reliability. Two 5-point

Likert items with end points of *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree* were used to measure message clarity (i.e., "I can understand the news" and "The news is not clear"). The Pearson correlation was .01, $p = .97$, so the second item, which had to be recoded, was discarded because this item might have been difficult to answer. The results from paired-sample t-tests show that the government and the opposition news clips did not vary significantly in terms of message believability $[t(55) = 0.21, p = .83 \ (M_{govt} = 3.24, SD_{govt} = 0.61 \text{ vs. } M_{opp} = 3.21, SD_{opp} = 0.48)]$ and message clarity $[t(55) = 0.96, p = .34 \ (M_{govt} = 3.41, SD_{govt} = 0.68 \text{ vs. } M_{opp} = 3.21, SD_{opp} = 0.88)]$.

Questionnaire Pretest

A questionnaire was pretested with 10 participants on April 5, 2013. Participants took much longer than expected to complete the questionnaire, so a number of questions were removed. Questions were revised to be more understandable and to follow a multiple-choice questions format. Participants could not respond to open-ended questions very clearly in written form, so for the actual study, interviewers were used.

The revised questionnaire was pretested with 9 participants. Based on the feedback, response options for most questions were reduced from five to four (i.e., use 4-point Likert items instead of 5-point Likert items). For the remaining 5-point Likert items, smiley faces were included in addition to words to assist comprehension. Responses given during interviews were quite long. Hence, for the actual study, voice recorders were used to ensure that responses were accurately captured.

Both pretests show that participants did not understand the questions about impression involvement—even after several revisions. Because we were unable to obtain a valid measure of impression involvement, this concept was excluded from Study Two. The finalized list of questions used in Study Two can be found in Appendix G.

Procedures

Participants were given a consent form and a pen-and-paper questionnaire. They first answered questions about existing issue beliefs, certainty of existing issue beliefs, existing source beliefs, and certainty of existing source beliefs. Then, they were randomly assigned to watch either the government news clip, which argued that the reconciliation bill was not meant to help Mr Thaksin, or the opposition news clip, which argued that the bill was meant to help Mr Thaksin. After watching the news, they answered questions about outcome involvement and value involvement. Then, they were asked by interviewers to recall the news they had just watched, reported whether they believed the news and why. Most interviews were voice recorded. In cases whereby an interview could not be recorded (e.g., when the background noise was too loud or when a participant did not wish to be voice recorded), an interviewer asked a participant to speak slowly and tried to write down every word he or she said. Each interview lasted about five minutes. After the interviews, participants continued to answer questions in a pen-and-paper questionnaire about their issue beliefs, certainty of issue beliefs, source beliefs, certainty of source beliefs, cognitive effort they have invested to evaluate the news, and demographic information. They took about 25 to 35 minutes to

complete the study. For participants who could not read (either because of literacy or eyesight problems), research assistants read out the questions and the response options to them; these participants took slightly longer than others to complete the study.

Measures

  Issue beliefs. Before and after watching the news clips, participants were asked to report their beliefs about the reconciliation bill on five 5-point Likert items (e.g., "Do you believe that the government drafted the reconciliation bill because they want to bring Thaksin back?") with end points of *strongly believe* and *do not believe at all*, and *not sure* being the midpoint. The response options were presented in both text and picture format. Two items were discarded because a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that they were not valid (Table 16). The rest of the items were scored such that low scores indicated that participants believed that the bill was meant to help Mr Thaksin. The Cronbach's alpha was .82 for existing issue beliefs ($M = 2.77$; $SD = 0.99$) and .88 for postmessage issue beliefs.

Table 16

Items and the Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Existing and

Postmessage Issue Beliefs

	Existing issue beliefs	Postmessage issue beliefs
1. Do you believe that the government drafted the reconciliation bill because they want the government and the opposition to start anew?^	.31	.33
2. Do you believe that the government drafted the reconciliation bill because they want to bring Thaksin back?*	.68	.78
3. Do you believe that the reconciliation bill is intended to help Thaksin be acquitted?*	.75	.79
4. Do you believe that if not for Thaksin's legal case, the reconciliation bill would not have been drafted?*	.71	.72
5. Do you believe that the reconciliation bill is drafted in order to stop everyone from fighting?^	.23	.25

Note:
- * Items 2, 3 and 4 were reversed coded.
- ^ Items 1 and 5 were discarded.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare whether there was a significant difference between existing and postmessage issue beliefs. The result was marginally significant, $t(322) = 1.89$, $p = .06$ ($M_{pre} = 2.77$, $SD_{pre} = 0.99$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.87$, $SD_{post} = 1.07$). Analyses conducted for each news condition (government news and opposition news) indicated that there was no significant change in issue beliefs regardless of whether participants watched the news from the government, $t(162) = -1.16$, $p = .25$ ($M_{pre} = 2.79$, $SD_{pre} = 0.98$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.87$,

$SD_{post} = 1.08$) or the news from the opposition, $t(159) = -1.53$, $p = .13$ ($M_{pre} = 2.76$, $SD_{pre} = 1.00$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.86$, $SD_{post} = 1.07$).

Message discrepancy. The difference between existing issue beliefs and message position was computed [for the government news condition, message discrepancy = 5 - existing issue beliefs score; for the opposition news condition, message discrepancy = (1 - existing issue beliefs score) *(-1)]. Message discrepancy scores ranged from 0 to 5, with high values indicating high discrepancy between existing issue beliefs and message position ($M = 1.99$; $SD = 1.01$).

Source beliefs. Before and after watching the news clips, participants reported their beliefs about the political party in the clip they would see on five 5-point Likert items with end points of *strongly believe* and *do not believe at all,* and *not sure* being the midpoint. Those who viewed the government news clip were asked about the Pheu Thai Party, for example, "Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is good?" Those who viewed the opposition news clip were asked about the Democrat Party. The only item that required reverse coding was discarded because a confirmatory factor analysis indicated that it was not valid (Table 17). The rest of the items were scored such that high scores represent positive beliefs about the source. The response options were presented in both text and picture format. The Cronbach's alpha for existing source beliefs was .87 and for postmessage source beliefs, it was .90.

Table 17

Items and the Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Existing and Postmessage Source Beliefs

	Existing source beliefs	Postmessage source beliefs
1. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is good?	.86	.87
2. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party has done many good things for Thailand?	.88	.86
3. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party does not perform well?*^	.46	.43
4. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is trustworthy?	.85	.91
5. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is not corrupted?	.58	.68

Note:
- *Item 3 was reversed coded and discarded.
- For the opposition news condition, the questions were about the Democrat Party.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare whether there was a significant difference between existing and postmessage source beliefs. The result was not statistically significant, $t(322) = -0.10$, $p = .92$ ($M_{pre} = 2.96$, $SD_{pre} = 1.02$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.96$, $SD_{post} = 1.02$). There was no substantial change in source beliefs in either the government news condition, $t(162) = 1.68$, $p = .10$ ($M_{pre} = 3.42$, $SD_{pre} = 0.95$ vs. $M_{post} = 3.34$, $SD_{post} = 0.99$) or the opposition news condition, $t(159) = -1.83$, $p = .07$ ($M_{pre} = 2.50$, $SD_{pre} = 0.87$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.58$, $SD_{post} = 0.89$).

Certainty of issue beliefs. Two 4-point Likert items, in which one was adapted from past research (Tormala & Petty, 2002), were used to measure certainty of issue beliefs before and after watching the news (i.e., "How confident

are you in your opinion on the reconciliation bill?" and "Are you certain that you

know the real purpose of the reconciliation bill?"). The end points were *not at all*

confident (or *not at all certain),* and *very confident* (or *very certain).* The Pearson

correlation for certainty of existing issue beliefs was $r(321) = .39$, $p < .001$, and for

certainty of postmessage issue beliefs, it was $r(321) = .53$, $p < .001$.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare whether there was a

significant difference between certainty of existing and postmessage issue beliefs.

The result was statistically significant, $t(322) = -2.58$, $p = .01$ ($M_{pre} = 2.22$,

$SD_{pre} = 0.66$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.33$, $SD_{post} = 0.76$). Further analyses show that there was a

substantial change in certainty of issue beliefs in the government news condition,

$t(162) = -2.22$, $p = .03$ ($M_{pre} = 2.27$, $SD_{pre} = 0.67$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.40$, $SD_{post} = 0.77$),

but not in the opposition news condition, $t(159) = -1.42$, $p = .16$ ($M_{pre} = 2.18$,

$SD_{pre} = 0.65$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.25$, $SD_{post} = 0.74$).

Certainty of source beliefs. The two questions used for evaluating

certainty of source beliefs were similar to those used for evaluating certainty of

issue beliefs (i.e., "How confident are you in your opinion on the Pheu Thai

Party?" and "Are you certain that you know the Pheu Thai Party well?"). The

Pearson correlation for certainty of existing source beliefs was $r(321) = .53$,

$p < .001$ and for certainty of postmessage source beliefs, it was $r(321) = .50$,

$p < .001$.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare certainty of source beliefs

before and after the viewing the news clip. The result was not statistically

significant, $t(322) = -1.92$, $p = .06$ ($M_{pre} = 2.36$, $SD_{pre} = 0.81$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.42$,

$SD_{post} = 0.79$). Further analyses show that there was a statistically significant

change in certainty of source beliefs in the opposition news condition,

$t(159) = -2.70$, $p < .01$ ($M_{pre} = 2.05$, $SD_{pre} = 0.66$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.18$, $SD_{post} = 0.69$),

but not the government news condition, $t(162) = 0.00$, $p = 1.00$ ($M_{pre} = 2.66$,

$SD_{pre} = 0.83$ vs. $M_{post} = 2.66$, $SD_{post} = 0.80$).

Outcome involvement. Four 4-point Likert items were adapted from the

outcome involvement scale by Cho and Boster (2005). Participants reported the

extent to which they thought the issue would have an impact on them (e.g., "To

what extent do you think the reconciliation bill has an impact on your life?"). Items

were scored such that high scores represent high outcome involvement. The

Cronbach's alpha was .84, indicating good reliability.

Value involvement. Five 4-point Likert items were adapted from past

studies (Cho & Boster, 2005; Park et al., 2007). Participants reported the extent to

which they felt that the issue was linked to their important values (e.g., "Can your

opinion about the reconciliation bill be used to guess what kind of person you

are?"). Items were scored such that high scores represent high value involvement.

The Cronbach's alpha was .71, indicating acceptable reliability, but a confirmatory

factor analysis shows that a few items were highly correlated with outcome

involvement (Table 18). The rest of the items, which did not correlate highly with

outcome involvement, did not correlate well with each other. These results indicate

that the five items formed a scale that appeared reliable, but that scale was not a

valid measure of value involvement. Hence, value involvement was excluded from

all analyses.

Table 18

Items and the Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Involvement with the Reconciliation Bill

	Outcome involve-ment	Value involve-ment	*M*	*SD*
Outcome involvement (Cronbach's alpha = .84)				
1. To what extent do you think the reconciliation bill has an impact on your life?	.76	.65	2.48	0.96
2. Does whether the reconciliation bill is passed or not have an effect on your life?	.89	.66	2.32	0.97
3. If the reconciliation bill is passed, to what extent do you think your life would change?	.74	.60	2.35	0.96
4. Are you able to think of ways in which the reconciliation bill would affect your life?	.64	.64	2.15	1.01
Value involvement (Cronbach's alpha = .71)				
1. Can your opinion about the reconciliation bill be used to guess what kind of person you are?	.33	.40	2.16	0.94
2. Did you use the principles that you hold to help judge the reconciliation bill?	.43	.54	2.32	0.93
3. Can your opinion about the reconciliation bill tell about your character?	.47	.68	2.16	0.97
4. Do you think the issue of the reconciliation is important to you?	.63	.69	2.44	0.88
5. Would you be enraged if the reconciliation bill did not turn out the way you want	.56	.56	1.95	0.88

Amount of elaboration. Two items adapted from past research (Cacioppo et al., 1983) were used to measure the amount of elaboration. Participants were asked to report the amount of cognitive effort they used to evaluate the news (i.e., "Did you pay attention to analyzing the news you have watched?" and "How hard were you trying to determine whether the news you have just watched was true?"). Response options ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*a lot*). The Pearson correlation was $r(321) = .49, p < .001$.

Message recall. Participants were asked in an interview three questions: (1) "Please tell us in detail what the news you have just watched presented," (2) "Are there any other issues that you can recall from the news you have just watched?" and (3) "Can you remember what else the person in the news said?" Question 2 and 3 were asked to ensure that participants reported all that they could recall. Most participants could not recall the whole argument presented in the news: They could remember parts of it. Most responses were in the form of fragmented statements.

Four coders were trained using the data from Study One. They counted the amount of information that the participants in Study One could recall after watching the clips similar to the ones used in Study Two. They and the researcher created a list of keywords that were later used to code Study Two's data. If a noun or a verb that was determined to be a keyword in the news arguments was mentioned in a sentence or a phrase and that noun or that verb conveyed the arguments contained in the news, 1 point was given; if it did not convey the arguments contained in the news, 0.5 point was given. The points for each

participant were summed up to create a message recall score. Every coder coded

responses from every participant. The Krippendorff's alpha was .73, indicating

acceptable intercoder reliability.

Type of test. Interviewers asked participants whether they believed the

view advocated by the news they have just watched. The response options were

yes, *no*, and *not sure*. Then, depending on their answers, they were asked "What

makes you believe the news you have watched?," "What makes you find the news

you have watched not believable?," or "Can you tell me what makes you unsure?"

Each participant's justification was a unit of analysis. Unlike previous

studies that used the thought-listing method, coders did not break down each

response into independent sentences and treated each as a unit of analysis, because

most responses were fragmented. Their meanings would be captured more

accurately if taken as a whole. Hence, a few fragmented sentences that each

participant used as their justifications for postmessage beliefs were treated as one

unit and were classified by four coders into one of the four categories as in Study

One: (a) *positive test* (n = 98; 30.3%), (b) *negative test* (n = 137; 42.4%), (c) *lack of*

information (n = 27; 8.4%) and (d) *unclear response* (n = 61; 18.9%). As part of

the training, the four coders were asked to code the responses from Study One. The

instructions were as follow.

- If a justification for postmessage beliefs is based on the existence of

  supporting evidence or information that suggests the possibility of the

  news being true, code that response as a *positive test*.

- If a justification for postmessage beliefs is based on the existence of contradictory evidence or information that suggests the possibility of the news being false, code that response as a *negative test*.

- If a response indicates that a participant could understand the question but they said or implied that they did not have the information to evaluate the news, code that response as *lack of information*.

- If a response does not answer the question or it is not understandable, code that response as *unclear response*.

- All responses must go into one of these four categories.

The Krippendorff's alpha was .73, indicating acceptable intercoder reliability. Table 19 presents examples of responses grouped under each coding category. For all the analyses concerning justifications of postmessage beliefs, only those cases with responses categorized as a *positive test*, a *negative test* and *lack of information* were included. Responses were recoded based on a dimension they shared, that is, how consistent the information was with the news. Higher scores indicated higher consistency between the information people used to evaluate the news and the news itself. When people used a negative test, they used information that contradicted the news; hence, a negative test was coded as -1. When people said they did not have the information to evaluate the news, it did not mean they had no information at all, because they could have used the information provided in the news to evaluate its advocacy. Instead, they chose not to focus on either supporting or contradicting information. Hence, their response was coded as 0.

When people used a positive test, they used information that supported the news; hence, a positive test was coded as +1.

Table 19

Examples of Responses Grouped Under Each Coding Category

	Examples	
Coding category	Government news condition (The news advocated that the reconciliation bill was not meant to help Mr Thaksin Shinawatra.)	Opposition news condition (The news advocated that the reconciliation bill was meant to help Mr Thaksin Shinawatra.)
Positive test	Positive elaboration: The reconciliation bill clearly states that the amnesty is for everyone. (ID 339) Negative elaboration: The news source did not clearly state that the reconciliation bill was meant to unite all parties. (ID 155)	Positive elaboration: The government wants Mr Thaksin to come back. (ID 104) Negative elaboration: N/A – There was no response that fit this category.
Negative test	Positive elaboration: I have not seen the reconciliation bill brought back Mr Thaksin yet. (ID 319) Negative evaluation: The PM is Mr Thaksin's sister, so she may try to help her brother. (ID 37)	Positive elaboration: Mr Thaksin would have been back to Thailand long ago if the reconciliation bill was for him. (ID 16) Negative evaluation: The government proposed the reconciliation bill with the aim to bring people together. (ID 64)
Lack of information	I am not there to see what politicians are doing, so I do not know what they are like. (ID 47)	I do not know the details of the bill. (ID 56)
Unclear response	I am not sure if Mr Thaksin is able to come back. (ID 75)	The protesters are not guilty. (ID 226)

Note. Examples of responses are not direct quotations. Actual responses were fragmented, so they have been rephrased to be clearer.

Table 20 presents percentages of each coding category in the government and the opposition news conditions. Justifications coded as *unclear responses* were excluded from all analyses.

Table 20

Percentages of Each Coding Category in Each News Conditions

News condition	Positive test %	Negative test %	Lack of information %	Unclear responses %
Government news	39	35	9	18
Opposition news	22	50	8	20
AVG	31	43	9	19

Other variables. Participants answered questions about their political news consumption, issue familiarity and demographic information. About 80% of the participants watched political news on TV at least 3 to 4 days a week and about 20% of them watched it 1 to 2 days a week. More than 85% of the participants indicated that they have watched political news in the past week and more than 70% of the participants have heard about the reconciliation bill. Table 21 presents descriptive statistics of the study variables.

Table 21

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variables	All Sample (*N* = 323)		Government news condition (n = 163)		Opposition news condition (n = 160)	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Existing issue beliefs	2.77	0.99	2.79	0.98	2.76	1.00
Postmessage issue beliefs	2.87	1.07	2.87	1.08	2.86	1.07
Existing source beliefs	2.96	1.02	3.42	0.95	2.50	0.87
Postmessage source beliefs	2.96	1.02	3.34	0.99	2.58	0.89
Message discrepancy	1.99	1.01	2.21	0.98	1.76	1.00
Certainty of existing issue beliefs	2.22	0.66	2.27	0.67	2.18	0.65
Certainty of postmessage issue beliefs	2.33	0.76	2.40	0.77	2.25	0.74
Certainty of existing source beliefs	2.36	0.81	2.66	0.83	2.05	0.66
Certainty of postmessage source beliefs	2.42	0.79	2.66	0.80	2.18	0.69
Outcome involvement	2.32	0.80	2.44	0.78	2.20	0.81
Amount of elaboration	2.77	0.68	2.79	0.69	2.75	0.68
Message recall score	1.53	1.04	1.58	0.96	1.47	1.11

Note. The means and standard deviations were computed after the deletion of items that were not reliable and/or valid.

Findings

The findings are presented in four parts. First, results regarding the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the type of test and belief certainty are presented. Second, results regarding the effects of message

discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration and belief certainty are presented. Third, a model summarizing all the effects of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs is presented. Lastly, some ancillary findings are presented.

Effects of Message Discrepancy and Existing Source Beliefs on the Type of Test and Belief Certainty

        H1 to H3 predicted the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the type of test participants used to evaluate the news. Regression analyses were conducted with type of test as the dependent variable. The independent variables were: (a) message discrepancy (standardized scores), (b) existing source beliefs (standardized scores), and (c) an interaction term (message discrepancy X existing source beliefs). Results are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Regression Analyses for Message Discrepancy and Existing Source Beliefs

Predicting the Type of Test Participants Used to Evaluate the News

	All participants (N = 262)	Government news condition (n = 134)	Opposition news condition (n = 128)
	ß	*ß*	*ß*
Message discrepancy	-.25***	-.16^	-.36***
Existing source beliefs	.37***	.32***	.27**
Message discrepancy X Existing source beliefs	-.09	-.18*	-.05
Total R²	.23***	.20***	.24***

Note.
- DV: Test type (-1 = negative test, 0 = lack of information, 1 = positive test)
- ^ *p* < .10; * *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; ***p* < .001
- Cases where justifications for postmessage beliefs were coded as "unclear response" were excluded from this analysis.

The main effect of message discrepancy on the type of test was statistically significant. Participants were more likely to use a positive test when message discrepancy was low (vs. high), β = -.25, $t(258)$ = -4.51, p < .001. Similar patterns were observed for both news clips: for the government news condition, β = -.16, $t(130)$ = -1.75, p = .08 and for the opposition news condition, β = -.36, $t(124)$ = -3.82, p < .001. Hence, H1 was supported.

The main effect of existing source beliefs on the type of test was also statistically significant. Providing support for H2, participants were more likely to use a positive test to evaluate the news if they had existing positive (vs. negative) source beliefs, β = .37, $t(258)$ = 6.64, p < .001. Similar patterns were observed for

both news clips: for the government news condition, $\beta = .32$, $t(130) = 3.66$, $p < .001$ and for the opposition news condition, $\beta = .27$, $t(124) = 3.21$, $p < 01$.

H3 predicted an interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the type of test. The result was only statistically significant for the government news condition [$\beta = -.18$, $t(130) = -2.03$, $p < .05$] but not for all participants [$\beta = -.09$, $t(258) = -1.57$, $p = .12$] and the opposition news condition [$\beta = -.05$, $t(124) = -0.59$, $p = .56$]. Hence, H3 was not supported.

RQ1 addressed the effect of type of test on belief certainty. The correlation between type of test and postmessage issue beliefs was small but statistically significant, $r(260) = .16$, $p = .01$, indicating that participants became more certain of their issue beliefs when they used a positive (vs. negative) test to evaluate the news. The relationship was positive for both news conditions, but the correlation was statistically significant only for the government news condition [$r(132) = .21$, $p = .01$], not the opposition news condition [$r(126) = .05$, $p = .11$]. The difference between the two correlations (.21 and .05) was not statistically significant, $z = 1.31$, $p = .20$.

In sum, the findings provided support for H1 and H2. Low message discrepancy and positive source beliefs led to the use of a positive test. H3 was not supported. The effect of existing source beliefs on the type of test did not differ as message discrepancy varied. With regard to RQ1, the type of test was associated with belief certainty. When a positive test was used to evaluate the news, belief certainty increased. When a negative test was used, belief certainty decreased.

Effects of Message Discrepancy and Existing Source Beliefs on the Amount of Elaboration and Belief Certainty

Regression analyses were conducted to test H4, H6 and H7. The independent variables were: (a) message discrepancy (standardized scores), (b) existing source beliefs (standardized scores), (c) outcome involvement (standardized scores), (d) an interaction term between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs interaction, and (e) an interaction term between existing source beliefs X message discrepancy. The dependent variable was the amount of elaboration. Results are presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Regression Analyses for Message Discrepancy, Existing Source Beliefs and

Outcome Involvement Predicting the Amount of Elaboration

	All participants (*N* = 323)	Government news condition (n = 163)	Opposition news condition (n = 160)
	β	*β*	*β*
Message discrepancy	.02	.20*	-.03
Existing source beliefs	.21***	.31***	.23**
Outcome involvement	.27***	.37***	.20*
Existing source beliefs X Outcome involvement	.07	-.00	.06
Existing source beliefs X Message discrepancy	-.04	-.14^	-.05
Total R²	.15***	.26***	.10**

Note.
- * *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01; ***p* < .001

H4 predicted that message discrepancy would lead to more elaboration. As shown in Table 23, there was no association between message discrepancy and the amount of elaboration, $β$ = -.05, $t(124)$ = -0.59, p = .56. The relationship was statistically significant only for the government news condition [$β$ = 0.20, $t(157)$ = 2.50, p < .05], but not the opposition news condition [$β$ = -.03, $t(154)$ = -0.36, p = .72]. H4 was not supported.

H5 predicted a positive relationship between the amount of elaboration and belief certainty. The correlation between the two variables was statistically

significant, $r(321) = .26$, $p < .001$. The relationship was positive for both news conditions, but the correlation was statistically significant only for the government news condition [$r(161) = .38$, $p < .001$], not the opposition news condition [$r(158) = .13$, $p = .11$]. The difference between the two correlations (.38 and .13) was statistically significant, $z = 2.40$, $p = .02$, indicating that the link between the amount of elaboration and belief certainty was stronger for the government news condition.

H6 predicted that the effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration would increase as the level of outcome involvement decreased. As shown in Table 23, the interaction between existing source beliefs and outcome involvement was not statistically significant, $\beta = .07$, $t(317) = 1.39$, $p = .17$ (Table 21). The interaction effect was not statistically significant for either the government [$\beta = -.00$, $t(157) = -0.05$, $p = .96$] or the opposition news condition [$\beta = .06$, $t(154) = 0.73$, $p = .47$]. H6 was not supported.

H7 predicted an interaction effect between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. The result was not statistically significant, $\beta = -.04$, $t(317) = -0.80$, $p = .42$. The interaction effect was not statistically significant for either the government [$\beta = -.14$, $t(157) = -1.84$, $p = .07$] or the opposition news condition [$\beta = -.05$, $t(154) = -.58$, $p = .57$]. H7 was not supported.

In sum, H4, H6 and H7 were not supported, but H5 was. Message discrepancy did not induce more elaboration but existing positive source beliefs did. The effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration did not

depend on either the level of outcome involvement or message discrepancy. More elaboration led to more belief certainty.

Summary Model

A path analysis was computed to provide a more comprehensive view of relationships among the key variables. The model shows good fit (see Figure 3). Message discrepancy influenced the type of test, whereas existing source beliefs influenced both the type of test and the amount of elaboration. Both the type of test and the amount of elaboration influenced belief certainty. Table 24 presents zero-order correlations among all variables.
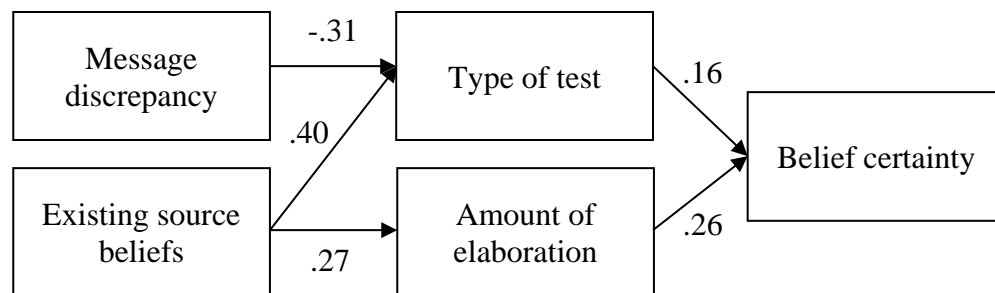
$$\chi^2(4,323) = 1.28, p = .45, \text{RMSE} = .06$$

Figure 3. A path model summarizing relationships among the key variables. Standardized beta coefficients are presented.

Table 24

Zero-Order Correlations Among All Study Variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. Existing issue beliefs	-											
2. Postmessage issue beliefs	.627***											
3. Existing source beliefs^	.035	-.005										
4. Postmessage source beliefs	.038	-.028	.846***									
5. Certainty of existing issue beliefs	-.011	.043	.158**	.213***								
6. Certainty of postmessage issue beliefs	-.065	-.033	.179**	.257***	.521***							
7. Certainty of existing source beliefs	.058	.063	.631***	.594***	.317***	.363***						
8. Certainty of postmessage source beliefs	.022	.011	.493***	.567***	.373***	.439***	.722***					
9. Message discrepancy	.020	.039	.146**	-.154*	-.021	.016	-.035	-.063				
10. Type of test^^	-.031	-.064	.404***	.412***	.063	.157*	.278***	.300***	-.306***			
11. Amount of elaboration	-.058	-.099	.269***	.275***	.302***	.259***	.351***	.367***	-.030	.172**		
12. Recall	-.111*	-.076	-.031	-.049	.155**	.097	.081	-.013	.018	-.038	.144**	
13. Outcome involvement	-.020	-.053	.213***	.277***	.270***	.408***	.246***	.285***	-.082	-.130*	.310***	-.040

Note. ^ For variable 3, which is existing source beliefs, the scores reflected participants' existing beliefs about the political party that provided information in the news clip. If they watched the government news clip, the scores reflected their existing beliefs about the Pheu Thai Party. If they watched the opposition news clip, the scores reflected their existing beliefs about the Democrat Party. The correlation between postmessage issue beliefs (i.e., variable 2) and existing source beliefs (i.e., variable 3) for the government news condition was $r(161) = .59$, $p < .001$ and for the opposition news condition, it was $r(158) = .67$, $p < .001$.
^^$N = 262$; For all other variables, $N = 323$
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Ancillary Analyses

This section is presented in three parts: (a) effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on change in issue beliefs, (b) effect of certainty of existing issue beliefs and on the type of test, and (c) effects of certainty of existing source beliefs on the type of test and the amount of elaboration.

Effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on issue belief change. To examine the effect of message discrepancy on existing source beliefs on issue belief change, postmesage issue beliefs were regressed onto message discrepancy (standardized scores), existing source beliefs (standardized scores) and the non-additive combination of these variables. A change index for issue belief change was computed using a formula by Cohen and Cohen (1983). First, existing issue beliefs were used to predict postmesssage issue beliefs. The unstandardized regression slope was noted (B). Then, the following formula was used to compute the change index: Change index = Postmessage issue beliefs – Existing issue beliefs*B. This change index is the difference between the postscore and the predicted post-score. The formula subtracts variance in the post-score related to the pre-score and the result is the postscore unrelated to the prescore. The change index reflects the variance of postmessage issue belief that is due mainly to exposure to the news and measurement error. This approach for calculating differentials has also been used by Rosenthal (2013).

Two sets of analyses were conducted: one for the government news condition and the other for the opposition news condition. Results are presented in Table 25. The main effect of message discrepancy on issue belief change was

statistically significant for the government news condition [$\beta = .23, t(159) = 2.74, p < .01$)], but not the opposition news condition [$\beta = -.10, t(156) = -1.17, p = .24$)]. The main effect of existing source beliefs on issue belief change was statistically significant for both the government [$\beta = .35, t(159) = 4.41, p < .001$] and the opposition [$\beta = -.43, t(156) = -5.37, p < .001$] news conditions. When participants held positive beliefs about the source, their issue beliefs shifted toward the beliefs advocated. The interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on issue belief change was statistically significant only for the government news condition [$\beta = -.27, t(159) = -3.30, p < .01$], but not the opposition news condition [$\beta = -.06, t(156) = -.73, p = .47$].

Table 25

Regression Analyses for Message Discrepancy and Existing Source Beliefs

Predicting Issue Belief Change

	Government news condition (n = 163)	Opposition news condition (n = 160)
	β	β
Message discrepancy	.23***	-.10
Existing source beliefs	.35***	-.43***
Message discrepancy X Existing source beliefs	-.27**	-.06
Total R²	.13***	.16***

Note.
- ** $p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Further analyses were conducted to examine the interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on issue belief change. Participants were equally divided into two groups based on their message discrepancy scores. Those with scores lower than or equal to 2.00 were grouped in the low-message-discrepancy condition (47.2%), and those with scores higher than 2.00 were group in the high-message-discrepancy condition (52.8%). Separate analyses for each news condition were conducted to examine the effect of existing source beliefs on issue belief change in each message discrepancy condition (i.e., low-message-discrepancy and high-message-discrepancy conditions). As shown in Table 26, the effect of existing source beliefs on issue belief change was more pronounced in the low-message-discrepancy (vs. high-message-discrepancy) condition. When message discrepancy was low, participants who held positive beliefs about the source changed their issue beliefs in the direction of the view advocated. This was the case for both the government and the opposition news conditions. However, when message discrepancy was high, the effect of existing source beliefs on issue belief change was only apparent in the opposition news condition.

Table 26

Regression Analyses for Existing Source Beliefs Predicting Issue Belief Change in

Each Message Condition

	Government news condition (n = 163)	Opposition news condition (n = 160)
	β	*β*
Low-message-discrepancy condition (n = 75)	.45***	-.41***
Existing source beliefs	(n = 77)	(n = 121)
Total R²	.20***	.17***
High-message-discrepancy condition (n = 84)	.08	-.35*
Existing source beliefs	(n = 86)	(n = 39)
Total R²	.01	.12*

Note.
- DV: Change index of issue beliefs. For the government news condition, positive scores mean participants' issue beliefs shifted towards the view advocated and negative scores mean participants' issue beliefs shifted away from the view advocated. For the opposition news condition, it is the opposite.
- * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

In sum, the results suggest that people are more likely to be persuaded if a message is presented by a source about whom they hold positive beliefs, especially when message discrepancy is low. If message discrepancy is low but existing source beliefs are negative, people may steer away from the view advocated. If message discrepancy is high and existing source beliefs run counter to existing issue beliefs, the effect of existing source beliefs on issue belief change may vary.

Effect of certainty of existing issue beliefs on the type of test. Regressing the type of test onto message discrepancy (standardized scores), certainty of

existing issue beliefs (standardized scores) and the non-additive combination of these variables did not produce evidence for either an interaction effect [β = -.03, t(258) = -0.49, p = .63] or a main effect of certainty of existing issue beliefs [β = .05, t(258) = 0.78, p = .44]. Only a main effect of message discrepancy was observed [β = -.30, t(258) = 4.88, p < .001]. This means even when participants were not certain of their existing issue beliefs, they still used a negative test when message discrepancy was high.

Effects of certainty of existing source beliefs on the type of test and the amount of elaboration. Regressing the type of test onto existing source beliefs (standardized scores), certainty of existing source beliefs (standardized scores) and the non-additive combination of these variables did not produce evidence of an interaction effect [β = .02, t(258) = 0.26, p = .80]. A main effect of certainty of existing source beliefs on the type of test was not statistically significant [β = .04, t(258) = 0.49, p = .62] either. Only a main effect of existing source beliefs on the type of test was significant [β = .38, t(258) = 4.89, p < .001]. Participants were still more likely to use a positive test to evaluate the news when their existing source beliefs were positive (vs. negative), regardless of how certain they were of those source beliefs.

Regressing the amount of elaboration onto existing source beliefs (standardized scores), certainty of existing source beliefs (standardized scores) and the non-additive combination of these variables did not produce evidence of an interaction effect [β = -.01, t(319) = -0.15, p = .88]. A main effect of certainty of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration was statistically significant

[β = .30, $t(319)$ = 4.46, $p < .001$], but a main effect of existing source beliefs was not [β = .08, $t(319)$ = 1.18, $p = .24$]. Certainty of existing source beliefs did not moderate the effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration, but it exerted an independent effect on the amount of elaboration such that the more certain participants were in their source beliefs, the greater amount of elaboration.

Discussion

The first goal of this study is to test the hypotheses derived from Study One. The results show that message discrepancy and existing source beliefs independently influenced the type of test participants used to evaluate the news as predicted by the hypotheses. Low message discrepancy and existing positive source beliefs led to the use of a positive test, whereas high message discrepancy and existing negative source beliefs led to the use of a negative test. The fact that Study Two's findings are similar not only to those of Study One's, but also other previous studies suggest that there may be a universal cognitive mechanism that humans share, at least when it comes to message evaluation strategies (in this case, test type).

The second goal of this study is to assess the generalizability of the findings from previous studies regarding the effects of message discrepancy and existing issue beliefs on the amount of elaboration. The majority of Study Two's findings were not in line with those from past research. First, unlike past studies (e.g., Eagly et al., 2000; Taber & Lodge, 2006), there was no evidence of the link between message discrepancy and an increase in elaboration. Only existing positive source beliefs were associated with more elaboration. Second, unlike past studies

(Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Priester & Petty, 1995; Tormala et al., 2007), there is no evidence from Study Two to show that outcome involvement moderated the effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. Participants with high (vs. low) outcome involvement were as likely to invest more cognitive effort in elaboration when they held positive (vs. negative) source beliefs. Third, unlike past work (Clark et al., 2012), Study Two shows no interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. The divergent findings suggest that the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration are not universal and may differ across populations and contexts.

The discussion for Study Two is presented in three parts: (a) effects of message discrepancy, (b) effects of existing source beliefs, and (c) interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs.

Effects of Message Discrepancy

This section focuses on effects of message discrepancy on (a) the type of test, (b) the amount of elaboration, and (c) belief certainty.

Effect of message discrepancy on the type of test. The effect of message discrepancy on the type of test found in Study Two is consistent with confirmation and disconfirmation bias reported in previous studies (Strickland, Taber, & Lodge, 2011; Taber & Lodge, 2006). People tend to focus on confirmatory evidence when evaluating a message that is congruent (vs. incongruent) with their existing issue beliefs. If a message is incongruent with their existing issue beliefs, they tend to focus on disconfirming (vs. confirmatory) evidence. Interestingly, this study also

shows that when message discrepancy was low, people hardly cite the absence of disconfirming evidence—even though that will also allow them to confirm their existing issue beliefs.

It was noted on page 33-34 that a positive test is conceptually different from positive elaboration and confirmation bias, and that a negative test is conceptually different from negative elaboration and disconfirmation bias. However, based on the data, it was found that in practice, a positive test is similar to positive elaboration and a negative test is similar to negative elaboration. There were extremely few cases where a positive test was used but the result was negative elaboration, or where a negative test was used but the result was positive elaboration. The association between the type of test people use to evaluate a message and the direction of elaboration may stem from the influence of linguistic elements. Because a positive test brings attention to words that are supportive of an advocated view, it is likely to lead to positive elaboration. Likewise, because a negative test brings attention to words that are opposed to an advocated view, it is likely to lead to negative elaboration. At least in this study, a positive test was an analog of positive elaboration and a negative test was an analog of negative elaboration.

The finding that existing issue beliefs affect the direction of elaboration is quite similar to effects reported in previous studies—not only in direction but also in magnitude. The effect in the present study, expressed as a correlation between message discrepancy and the type of test, corresponds to $r(260) = -.31$. This is not statistically different from the parallel effects of message discrepancy on thought

favorability reported by Cacioppo and Petty [1979; $r(42) = -.38$; $z = 0.47$, $p = .64$] and by Clark et al. [2012; $r(240) = .36$; $z = 0.63$, $p = .53$ and $r(193) = .39$; $z = 0.96$, $p = .34$]. The similarity is rather striking considering the differences in the methodology and the participants' demographics. Study Two used an unconventional procedure to elicit and analyze thoughts [where Cacioppo and Petty (1979), and Clark et al. (2012) used the thought-listing procedure], and used political news messages during a volatile political climate [where Cacioppo and Petty (1979) used tuition fee increase, drinking age and gasoline sales tax, and Clark et al. (2012) used taxing of junk food and nuclear power plants]. Our participants were rural Asian working adults with no college education, whereas participants in Cacioppo and Petty's (1979) and Clark et al.'s (2012) studies were mostly American college students. Given these differences, the accumulated research strongly suggests that humans are fundamentally driven to avoid incongruity and—regardless of education level—are equipped with similar mechanisms for defending their existing beliefs.

This study examined the effect of message discrepancy on thoughts that eventually determine message believability (as opposed to all their thoughts that came to mind). Participants were asked explain how they arrived at their postmessage beliefs and used a new coding scheme that captured thought types that would not have been captured in a typical thought valence coding procedure (refer to Cacioppo & Petty, 1981 for the thought-listing procedure and the coding of thought valence). For example, a participant cited two alternative explanations: one consistent with the news and the other not consistent with the news. Then, she said

she was not sure what to believe. In the thought valence coding procedure, this cognitive response would be coded as one positive thought and one negative thought. To obtain the final thought valence, a researcher would either subtract the number of negative thought valence from the number of positive thought valence or compute an average. In either case, the result would be neutral thought valence. However, if the same response was coded for the type of test, it would be coded as a negative test because the presence of an alternative explanation means the participant questioned the validity of the news. This research extends previous studies by showing that low message discrepancy leads to not only generation of positive thoughts, but also the use of positive thoughts to decide what to believe.

Why did message discrepancy induce the use of a negative test? Past research suggests that people who have already formed beliefs about an issue are motivated to defend those beliefs and are not genuinely motivated to determine whether a new incoming message is accurate (Boudry & Braeckman, 2011; Chaiken & Giner-Sorolila, 1997). This explanation is sound but it may not apply to this particular study. Participants used a negative test to evaluate a message that was not congruent with those beliefs even when they were not certain of their issue beliefs. It is counter-intuitive that individuals would be motivated to defend something they are not sure is true. Hence, another plausible explanation based on Study One's findings is proposed. Information that has previously been used to form existing issue beliefs may be easier to retrieve from memory. For example, it is probably easier for people who believe there are product price increases to think of a product that has increased in price than to think of a product that has dropped

in price. If they are asked to judge a message that is congruent with their existing issue beliefs, confirmatory information may have a greater chance of being recalled, and therefore is more likely to be used for evaluation. In short, information accessibility as opposed to motivation to defend may better explain the underlying mechanism behind the effect of message discrepancy on the type of test.

Effect of message discrepancy on the amount of elaboration. Study Two's findings do not support the proposition suggested by past research that a message that is incongruent (vs. congruent) with existing issue beliefs is scrutinized more (e.g., Edwards & Smith, 1996; Lord et al., 1979; Taber & Lodge, 2006). The correlation between message discrepancy and the amount of elaboration was not statistically significant, $r(321) = -.03$, $p = .59$. The effect size of message discrepancy on the amount of elaboration from Study Two was compared with those reported by Edwards and Smith [1996; for an issue related to the death penalty, $r(26) = .44$, $z = -2.42$, $p = .02$; corporal punishment of children, $r(25) = .42$, $z = -2.26$, $p = .02$; abortion, $r(33) = .73$, $z = -5.17$, $p < .001$; hiring minorities, $r(26) = .33$, $z = -1.80$, $p = .07$; gay and lesbian adoption, $r(27) = .28$, $z = -1.56$, $p = .12$; the death sentence for minors, $r(26) = .26$, $z = -1.43$, $p = .15$; random blood alcohol level checks, $r(25) = .12$, $z = -0.71$, $p = .48$]. Out of the seven comparisons, three show a statistically significant difference. Hence, the proposition that people who have already formed beliefs about an issue will accept messages that are consistent with prior judgments at face value and scrutinize those that challenge their prior judgment appears to operate only under certain circumstances, and may depend on some as yet unidentified moderator variable.

Effect of message discrepancy on belief certainty. The non-significant relationship between the type of test and belief certainty is not consistent with that of previous research. Specifically, it contradicts Tormala and Petty's (2002) finding that people become more certain of their existing issue beliefs after resisting counterattitudinal messages. In Study Two, after using a negative test to resist to a message that countered their existing issue beliefs, participants became less certain of their issue beliefs. Belief certainty increased only after thinking about confirmatory information when message discrepancy was low. Perhaps this study population was not very confident in their ability to evaluate political messages. Even though they were able to cite information that countered the news that contradicted their existing issue beliefs, they became less certain whether those beliefs they managed to defend were correct.

Effects of Existing Source Beliefs

This section focuses on effects of source on beliefs (a) the type of test, (b) the amount of elaboration, and (c) belief certainty.

Effect of existing source beliefs on the type of test. The finding that existing source beliefs affect the type of test is similar to that reported in previous research—not only in direction but also in magnitude. The effect in the present study, expressed as a correlation between existing source beliefs and the type of test, corresponds to $r(260) = .40$. This is not statistically different from the parallel effects of beliefs about source trustworthiness on thought favorability reported by Tormala et al. [2007; $r(88) = .31$; $z = -0.83$, $p = .41$], and Priester and Petty [2003; $r(63) = .32$; $z = -0.65$, $p = .51$].

The similarity in the findings is noteworthy considering the differences in the methodology and the participants' demographics. Study Two examined naturally pre-existing source beliefs, whereas Tormala et al. (2007) examined source beliefs induced during the experiment. The procedure used to elicit and analyze thoughts (interview vs. thought-listing technique), the message topic (political issue vs. detergent), and participants (rural Asian working adults with no college education vs. American college students) used in Study Two were also different from that of Tormala et al. (2007). The power of positive source beliefs to induce positive thoughts appear to be robust.

Effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. Existing positive source beliefs led to more elaboration. Contrary to some studies (e.g., Andrews & Shimp, 1990; Chaiken, 1980; Petty, Cacioppo, & Goldman, 1981; Priester & Petty, 1995), the effect of source beliefs did not depend on the level of outcome involvement. The contradictory finding may stem from the difference in the way source beliefs were examined. Like most of other past studies, Priester and Petty (1995) manipulated source quality by providing their participants with source information, whereas Study Two examined sources that participants were familiar with. Information about an unfamiliar source leads to newly formed source beliefs, whereas the use of a familiar source evokes naturally existing source beliefs. Newly formed source beliefs may serve as a less reliable cue and provide a lower level of confidence as compared with existing source beliefs. This could be why past studies found the effect of source on attitude change in only low-involvement (not high-involvement) conditions. Although

naturally existing source beliefs are expected to produce higher confidence, using those beliefs to judge a message perhaps does not require a lot of cognitive effort. Hence, existing source beliefs are likely to be used by not only people with high motivation to process but also those with low motivation to process (i.e., low-involvement conditions). This could be why there was no significant difference in the effect of existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration as the level of outcome involvement varied. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised when interpreting null findings.

Another difference that could have contributed to the finding discrepancies discussed above is that this study measured outcome involvement, whereas past studies mostly manipulated it (e.g., Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1984a). Study Two considered all levels of outcome involvement, whereas studies that manipulated outcome involvement typically examined only two levels of outcome involvement: low- and high-outcome involvement). While manipulation of outcome involvement allows for a test of causality, external validity is sacrificed to some extent. In addition, the involvement manipulation is sometimes problematic because there may be a weak correlation between manipulated and perceived involvement, even when manipulation check has been conducted (e.g., Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). Measuring outcome involvement allows us to examine whether all levels of outcome involvement affected the relationship between existing source beliefs and the amount of elaboration in a similar manner. Although this study lacks the ability to make strong claims regarding causal

effects, it nevertheless offers a rigorous test of the interaction between existing source beliefs and outcome involvement on the amount of elaboration.

Effect of existing source beliefs on belief certainty. Existing positive source beliefs affected belief certainty via two routes. One was by inducing the use of a positive test, leading to higher certainty of postmessage beliefs. The other was inducing more elaboration, also leading to greater belief certainty. Therefore, if people hold positive (vs. negative) beliefs about the source, they will not only believe that source, but also be certain that the beliefs they have formed about the message is correct. In short, existing source beliefs are likely to influence not only the direction of issue beliefs, but also the strength of those beliefs.

Study Two's findings provide additional insights about the relationship between a source and resistance to persuasion. Past research showed that people become more certain of their existing issue beliefs after resisting a message from an expert (Tormala & Petty, 2004b), but it is unclear why. This study suggests that people are likely to become more certain of their existing issue beliefs after resisting a message presented by a source with positive qualities because positive beliefs about a source induces more elaboration, which in turn leads to greater certainty.

Interaction Between Message Discrepancy and Existing Source Beliefs

This section focuses on interaction effects between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on (a) the type of test, (b) the amount of elaboration, and (c) belief change.

Interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the type of test. There is not enough evidence to show that the effect of existing source beliefs was more pronounced when message discrepancy was low. However, considering the effect size of message discrepancy ($\beta = -.31$) and existing source beliefs ($\beta = .40$) on the type of test, the latter seems to matter more in the context of political communication. That is, if the goal is to induce audience members to positively evaluate information, make sure that the source is someone about whom people hold positive beliefs. Existing positive source beliefs will not only induce the use of a positive test, but also higher belief certainty.

Interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the amount of elaboration. The non-significant interaction between existing source beliefs and message discrepancy on the amount of elaboration contradicts the findings from Clark et al. (2012). Clark et al. (2012) found that when messages were counterattitudinal, argument quality affected attitudes more in a high-source-expertise condition than in a low-source-expertise condition, but when messages were proattitudinal, argument quality affected attitudes more in a low-source-expertise condition. Clark et al. (2012, p. 90) explained that "when messages are counterattitudinal (disagreeable), experts should motivate greater processing than nonexpert sources because of expectations that they will likely provide robust opposition to one's existing views." However, in Study Two, the effect of source on elaboration did not vary with message discrepancy. Hence, one should be cautious when generalizing the interaction between source and message discrepancy because it seems to vary across contexts and possibly populations.

Interaction between message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on issue belief change. There are two key findings worth noting. One is that belief polarization was observed when a message that was congruent with existing issue beliefs was presented by the source about whom people held positive beliefs–not just any source. In other words, exposing participants to a message that confirmed their existing issue beliefs might not cause those beliefs to become more extreme (as reported in some studies; Strickland et al., 2011; Taber, Cann, & Kucsova, 2009). Perhaps for less-educated adults, their own thinking alone is not enough to create polarized issue beliefs: They may need another person—in this case, a source whom they hold in high regard—to serve as confirmation. If these people are exposed to media voices that echo their existing issue beliefs but those voices are not from sources they favor, the extremity of their issue beliefs may remain the same.

The second finding worth noting is that existing negative source beliefs motivated participants to use a negative test to evaluate a message that was congruent with their existing issue beliefs. Past studies have found that beliefs are difficult to change (Ahn et al., 2010; Carretta & Moreland, 1982; McClure & Patterson, 1974), but this finding contains clues about how to change beliefs about political issues. Participants steered away from their existing issue beliefs if they realized that those beliefs were shared by a source about whom they held negative beliefs. This implies that if the goal is to change existing issue beliefs, one alternative to consider is to select a source that the audience does not like to present information that appears to be congruent with their existing issue beliefs (i.e., the

beliefs that one seeks to change). It should be noted that the source selected must evoke naturally existing source beliefs. To avoid incongruity (which is the contradiction between issue beliefs and source beliefs), based on the findings of this study, people are likely to choose to change their issue beliefs as opposed to changing their pre-existing source beliefs.

Limitations

Past studies suggest that value involvement and outcome involvement differ in their effects on message elaboration (Choi, Park, & Chang, 2011; Maio & Olson, 1995; Nelson & Garst, 2005). Despite our effort to construct a good scale to measure value involvement, the scale did not work as expected. The scale used in Study Two appeared to measure not only value involvement but also outcome involvement. The responses from Study One also suggest that outcome and value involvement are related constructs. Many participants who said they thought the issue was important said it was important because it had an impact on them or their country. To test whether the two constructs are truly distinctive or whether value involvement is a salient construct among this population, a different version of a value involvement scale needs to be developed.

Unlike past studies, Study Two did not infer the amount of elaboration based on the number of message-oriented thoughts or the effect of argument strength. This study measured perceived amount of elaboration, which is closely associated with the actual amount of elaboration (Barden & Petty, 2008). Nevertheless, it is important to note that the amount of elaboration measured in this study was influenced by participants' subjective interpretations of their own

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cognitive effort, whereas the amount of elaboration derived from the number of message-oriented thoughts or the effect of argument strength was influenced more by researchers' subjective interpretations of message elaboration. If participants have thought very hard about the source and they used their source-based evaluations to judge the news content, they might see themselves as engaging in high elaboration. However, if this cognitive response is judged by a researcher, the processing strategy is likely to be classified as low elaboration, because source-related heuristics are considered as low-elaboration thoughts. The difference in how elaboration was measured may limit the comparability of the data from this study and those of past research. Therefore, when assessing the findings of this study in relation to past studies, it is recommended that this difference be taken into consideration.

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

General Discussion

This research examined the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration, and the effect of each elaboration strategy on belief certainty among non-Western, rural, less-educated, older adults. Findings from the two studies contribute to existing literature by (a) providing more insights about the processing mechanism behind belief revision and belief preservation, and (b) offering insights about whether findings from past studies can be generalized to an understudied population.

Using an unconventional research method and a study population that was very different from those of previous studies, the present research produced some findings that parallel those from previous studies (Priester & Petty, 2003; Strickland et al., 2011; Taber & Lodge, 2006; Tormala et al., 2007). It shows that individuals focus more on confirmatory evidence (as opposed to contradictory evidence) when evaluating a message that is congruent with their existing issue beliefs. Findings from both the survey and the experiment reveal that a positive test is more likely to be used when message discrepancy is low or when existing source beliefs are positive. A negative test is more likely to be used when message discrepancy is high or when existing source beliefs are negative. The type of test predicts belief certainty, although not as strongly as the amount of elaboration does. While these findings by themselves are unsurprising, the comparison they allow researchers to make is extremely important. The similarity in findings provides evidence to support Greenwald's proposition (1980) that humans,

regardless of race, age and education, have a tendency to focus on information that supports their existing issue beliefs, leading to belief preservation.

How much individuals are willing to think when message discrepancy is high seems to deviate across contexts and populations. The findings that message discrepancy did not lead to more elaboration contradicts those reported by past studies (Edwards & Smith, 1996; Taber & Lodge, 2006). Although this research was not designed to examine the question of why this occurred, it certainly provides strong evidence to show that high message discrepancy does not always lead to more scrutiny. For this study population and this political communication context, it is the nature of information (i.e., confirmatory or disconfirming information) that goes through their minds as opposed to the amount of thought that leads to belief preservation.

In line with past research on political communication (Kim & Paek, 2009; Lau & Rediawsk, 2001; Mondak, 1993), this research suggests that voters are influenced by cues such as party affiliation and candidates' alliance. A source factor as opposed to a message factor emerged as the strongest predictor of elaboration. Both Study One and Two offers consistent findings about the mechanism involved. That is, positive beliefs about the source bring attention to information that supports the view advocated, whereas negative beliefs about the source bring attention to information that contradicts the view advocated. Of more interest is the effect of source on the amount of elaboration. Existing source beliefs influence not only the type of test people use to evaluate messages but also the amount of elaboration they are willing to invest. In contrast with findings from past

studies (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994; Priester & Petty, 1995; Tormala et al., 2007), findings from this research show that the effect of source on the amount of elaboration is not limited to those with low outcome involvement or when message discrepancy was high. A comparison of findings suggests that the effect of source on the amount of elaboration may vary depending on whether source beliefs were naturally formed or experimentally induced. This is an area that future research can explore. If naturally formed source beliefs (vs. induced source beliefs) are perceived as a more reliable heuristic cue and have more impact on information processing, the next step will then be to focus on factors that shape those beliefs.

Consistent with past studies (Ahn et al., 2010; Carretta & Moreland, 1982; McClure & Patterson, 1974), this research suggests that issue beliefs cannot be changed simply by exposing people to a different viewpoint. Its findings, however, reveal that issue belief change is not difficult to achieve even with one exposure— if the condition is right. The key is to create incongruity, that is, a clash between existing issue beliefs and existing source beliefs. People tend to avoid holding two sets of contradictory beliefs. If they are certain that they are right about the source, they will be more likely to change their issue beliefs. As shown in Study Two, when participants received information that was congruent with their existing issue beliefs from the party about whom they held negative beliefs, they chose to revise their issue beliefs as opposed to their source beliefs. The results could be idiosyncratic to this study population or the method applied, and therefore study replications are encouraged.

There are important implications for the media. An issue often faced in a political turmoil is how to change people's existing beliefs so that two or more divided camps can come to a shared understanding of a situation. Partisans are generally very selective in their evidence collection and evaluation (Slothuus & de Vreese, 2010). As a result, they have a tendency to become more polarized in their beliefs and more resistant to change. The main suggestion to media practitioners derived from this study is to choose sources wisely, especially for issues such as politics where messages can be interpreted in multiple ways. First, examine what perceptions the target audience has of a source because existing source beliefs can determine how a message is going to be processed (a positive or a negative test). If the target audience holds negative beliefs about a source, strong arguments are probably not enough to make them change their issue beliefs. This is because people have a tendency to use a negative test to evaluate information that is not congruent with their existing issue beliefs, and it does not necessarily require much effort to come up with a reason not to believe a piece of news. Next, determine what beliefs the target audience holds about an issue and avoid framing a message in a way that appears to counter their existing issue beliefs. A message that is perceived as being in line with previous judgments will trigger the use of a positive test, a type of logic that gives a message a greater chance to survive a validity assessment. If there is a need to present a message that explicitly clashes with the target audience's existing beliefs, use a source with a good long-standing reputation to present it. If there is a need to use a source with a bad reputation to present a message and the goal is to shift people's existing issue beliefs away from

their original position, one should try to frame a message so that it appears to be congruent with those beliefs. If people are more certain of their source beliefs than their issue beliefs, they will distance themselves from the advocated view.

To the best of my knowledge, the present research is the first to examine the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on elaboration among non-Western, rural, less-educated, older adults. This is a specific but sizable group of people compared with Western, urban, highly-educated, younger adults. Future studies should consider different study populations and examine whether similar phenomena are observed because cognitive processes may vary with social environments. Replications of this research should also be conducted in other communication contexts such as health and advertising. In those contexts, a different typology with different kinds of consequences may be observed.

Conclusion

This research offers insights about the underlying mechanism behind belief revision and belief preservation. Findings from both the survey and the experiment provide strong evidence for the association between message discrepancy and the type of test and the association between existing source beliefs and the type of test. In the research context of the present studies, people have a tendency to use a positive test to evaluate a message that is congruent with their existing issue beliefs and to use a negative test to evaluate a message that is not congruent with those beliefs, leading to belief preservation. Belief revision is possible when message discrepancy is low and existing source beliefs are negative. When existing source

beliefs and existing issue beliefs clash, people prefer to maintain their existing source beliefs as opposed to maintaining their issue beliefs.

Extending the literature about elaboration, findings from this research show that like the amount of elaboration, the type of test also predicts belief certainty. Although the path coefficient linking the type of test and belief certainty was smaller than the path coefficient linking the amount of elaboration and belief certainty, the proposed path model nevertheless illustrates how differentiating types of test can help us to find more ways to influence belief certainty. It is worth noting that the two tests examined here are not exhaustive. There are probably more and perhaps better ways to characterize information processing. The challenge will be to think about processing strategies that are not associated with thought valence. This study is a preliminary step toward uncovering new ways to characterize information processing to predict belief preservation and belief revision.

The current research serves as a much-needed replication of past studies. Given that most studies on elaboration were based on university students in the United States, which is a population that is arguably different from the majority of the world population, a study replication is required for assessing the robustness of their findings (Henrich et al., 2010). Together with past studies, this research project provides strong evidence for the effect of message discrepancy and existing source beliefs on the direction of elaboration, suggesting that regardless of race, age and education, people have a tendency to avoid incongruity. However, unlike what past studies have suggested, this research project shows that people do not put in more effort to elaborate a message that is incongruent (vs. congruent) with their

existing issue beliefs. The discrepancies do not discount the findings from past studies, but they suggest that people use different strategies to avoid incongruity. It will be useful to examine factors governing these differences because such knowledge can help to build a more universal cognitive theory.

The current research offers insights about how message discrepancy and existing source beliefs interact, which serve as clues to achieving belief change. When message discrepancy is low and existing source beliefs are negative, people are likely to change their issue beliefs as opposed to changing their source beliefs. The finding implies that source cues can be quite powerful. From a theoretical perspective, this is very interesting because it means that a simple heuristic cue, which does not require much effort to process, can change people's beliefs about important issues. From a practical perspective, it is quite alarming to see how influential a source can be. If good politicians are discredited, people may not listen to them no matter how strong or reasonable their arguments are. Hence, the next step is to examine why source beliefs have so much impact on how people evaluate political news and whether their impact can be neutralized.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Political Events

2001: Mr Thaksin Shinawatra, the founder of the Thai Rak Thai Party, became the

prime minister of Thailand.

2006: A military coup overthrew Mr Thaksin's government. An interim prime

minister was appointed.

2007: The People Power Party, a reincarnation of the Thai Rak Thai Party, won the

general election.

2008: People, known as the yellow-shirts, organized a mass demonstration to

overthrow the government. Mr Abhisit Vejjajiva, the opposition leader from

the Democrat Party, became the new prime minister. Mr Thaksin went into

self-imposed exile.

2010: Mr Thaksin's supporters, known as the red-shirts, organized a mass

demonstration to overthrow the government, resulting in Thailand's worst

violence in nearly two decades.

2011: The Pheu Thai Party, the third incarnation of the Mr Thaksin's Thai Rak

Thai Party, won the general election. Ms Yingluck Shinawatra, who is Mr

Thaksin's sister, became the first female prime minister. Mr Abhisit became

the leader of the opposition party. A reconciliation bill seeking amnesty for

people involved in political protests since the 2006 coup was drafted and

proposed by the Pheu Thai Party.

2013: When Study Two was being conducted, the reconciliation bill was discussed

and reviewed. Some people perceived it as a sincere attempt to defuse

political conflicts, while others saw it as an attempt to bring Mr Thaksin

Shinawatra back to power.

Appendix B: Questionnaire for the Preliminary Study

Medium
1) Where do you usually get political news?
2) Besides, how else do you get political news?

Program
3) Did you watch any political news yesterday?
4) When do you usually turn on the news?
5) What channels do you watch?
6) What kind of programs do you watch?
7) Do you remember the MC?
8) Can you tell me about this show that you watch?
9) Can you tell me about the kind of political news that you are interested in watching?
10) Can you tell me about the kind of political news that you are not interested in watching?

News viewing
11) When you on the TV, what do you look for?
12) Do you intentionally on the TV for political news?
13) What makes you watch political news?
14) Where you are when you political news is on?
    a. Where is your TV?
    b. What do you do when political news is on?
15) Do you just casually listen or do you think about it?
    a. What goes through your mind when watch or hear political news?
16) Do you find political news easy to understand?
    a. Can you tell me the kind of stories that you think is easy to understand?
    b. Can you tell me the kind of stories that you think is difficult to understand?
        i. What makes it difficult to understand?
17) How would you feel if you don't get to watch political news for a long time, say a month?

News evaluation
18) What is your belief regarding 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6?
19) Participant watches Clip 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.
20) What is your understanding of the clip you have just watched?
21) To what extent to do believe the news presented just now?
22) What is it in this clip that you think is believable? What about it?
23) What is it in this clip that you think is not believable? What about it?
    a. What kind of information would make it more believable?
24) What is it in this clip that you are unsure whether to believe or not? What about it?

      a.   What kind of information would make it more believable?

REPEAT 18-24 for each news clip

Appendix C: Details of News Content Presented in the Preliminary Study

Clip 1: One of the red-shirts leaders presented the evidence to the Department of Special Investigation. The news reporter said that the evidence indicated that the soldiers under the command of the Deputy Prime Minister shot the red-shirt protesters who took shelter in the temple. This red-shirt leader said his intention was to inform the army about what actually happened, so they would punish the criminal. The evidence was not shown in the news clip.

Clip 2: The Deputy Prime Minister said the preliminary findings from the investigation regarding the shooting incident indicated that it was not the soldiers who shot the protesters. He said that it was an outlaw who has been stationing there. He explained that the soldiers were asked to leave that area in the evening.

Clip 3: The narrator said the government used the army to end the protest leading to many deaths. The narrator suggested that the government was behind the violence and the burning of the capital but blamed it on the red-shirts. Mr Sonthi, the government's alliance, knew about what was going to happen. He was able to predict where the fire would be but did not do anything to prevent it. The narrator then suggested that Mr Sonthi was behind all this and it was his intention to make it seems as if it was the red-shirts who did it.

Clip 4: One of the red-shirt leaders said he had to follow what Thaksin said. Many people, including Mr Thaksin Shinawatra, provided the red-shirts movement financial support. The narrator suggested that Mr Thaksin was the one who rejected the reconciliation plan proposed by the government because if passed, it still would not allow Mr Thaksin to return to Thailand. Mr Thaksin said to a journalist that the government's attempt to crackdown on protesters would lead to a guerrilla warfare. The narrator suggested that Mr Thaksin was implying that if nothing is done to help him return to Thailand, the situation would turn violent.

Clip 5: The spokesperson from the Pheu Thai Party said that the government should release the red-shirt leaders from jail to show that they really want to conciliate and that releasing all the red-shirt leaders would help to prevent chaos. He said the government previously said that bails were allowed for the red-shirt leaders but the Department of Special Investigation said they would object to bail. He suggested that the government was just pretending to look good but they had no real intentions to let the red-shirt leaders go. If the government was being true to themselves, they should send signal to the original affiliation of Department of Special Investigation.

Clip 6: A journalist reported that the Ministry of Justice was worried that people might not have trust in the system and believed that the red-shirt leaders arrested would not be treated fairly. Hence, in an attempt to facilitate conciliation, the Ministry of Justice proposed that the red-shirt leaders who have no intention to run

away, alter or manipulate the evidence, or cause harms, should be released temporarily, unless there was strong evidence to hold them captive.

Appendix D: Details of News Content Presented in Study One

Clip 1: A reporter what the government and the opposition were saying about product price increases. The government said products were not expensive but the opposition said they were. The government said they had to do something because of price decline for agricultural products. The spokesperson from the government showed morning glory, kale and lentils he bought and said they were not expensive like what the opposition said. The lentils were not 70 baht per kilogram as suggested by the Democrat Party. He has just bought them yesterday at 25 baht per kilogram.

Clip 2: The spokesperson from the opposition showed lentils and said vegetables and other groceries in the market were expensive. For example, the lentils cost 70 baht per kilogram. The government distorted product prices, he said. He questioned where the government bought the lentils at 30 baht. He said "If people buy products at price higher than what the government says, can they get a refund from the government? If yes, the government can say whatever they want."

Clip 3: General Sonthi who proposed the reconciliation bill said the bill would benefit all parties and not just Mr Thaksin Shinawatra. All the criminal cases could proceed as normal. He said he would not withdraw the bill because it was for all parties to forgive one another and that it depended on the parliament to decide.

Clip 4: Major General Jamlong criticized General Sonthi for seizing the power and proposing the law to clean up his own guilt. He said his party would object this bill and place charges on those who were related to this bill because the bill was unconstitutional. He called this a disunited bill.

Clip 5: An MC asked PM Yingluck Shinawatra whether the reconciliation bill was about bring Mr Thaksin back to the country and returning him his money. The PM said the committee have voted and concluded that the bill had nothing to do with money. She said that today we were talking about the end of a tunnel, which was too soon. She said "Instead of talking about who is going to benefit from it, let's talk about getting a reconciliation process going and do it through the parliament." She added that we should consider the content of bill to see how it could be adjusted and use the parliament voting system. Some people might not know its content thoroughly so let's the parliament debate about it. (Note: The last two sentences were cut in Study Two.)

Clip 6: The opposition leader said that having the reconciliation bill would mean that there would be no limit to a political struggle. It meant that people involved in the killing, stealing and burning places during political unrest from 2006-2007 would not be found guilty. The primary goal of the government was to override all the previous court decisions. It had nothing to do with reconciliation and that it was targeting at Mr Thaksin's legal case. The bill would destroy the legal system. The

focus should be on finding out what really happened during those events and that should be the start of a reconciliation process.

Appendix E: Questionnaire for Study One

SECTION I – General Information

(Note: Answers will be completed by an interviewer before an interview. The information will be taken from answers gathered during the screening.)

1. First name:_____ Last
   name:_____
2. Gender   1) male   2) female
3. Age _____ years
4. Highest education received _____
5. What is your occupation? _____

Start here

Interviewer: We will start now. May I put the recorder here? I am recording your this because I probably will not be able to write down everything you say. Don't worry. We will not make this recording public. There is no right or wrong answer. Just tell us what you really think and feel.

6. Where do you get political news? (circle the answer)
      1) Television
      2) Radio
      3) Newspaper
      4) Talking to other people/Discussion
      5) Others _____
7. When was the last time you watched political news on TV?
   _____
8. How many hours do you spend watching political news in a week?
   _____
9. What channels do you usually turn to for political news?
   _____
10. What programs do you usually turn to for political news?
      1)_____
      2)_____
      3)_____

<u>SECTION II – Political stand (Q1-2)</u>

Question 1: Partisan grouping
1. To what extent do you like the Pheu Thai Party? (Read out the options.)
       1) Don't like it at all. (Ask 2)
       2) Don't quite like it. (Ask 2)
       3) Quite like it. (Ask 2)
       4) Like it a lot. (Ask 2)
       5) Indifferent. Neither like nor hate. (Ask 2)
       (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

2. To what extent do you like the Democrat Party? (Read out the options.)
       1) Don't like it at all. (Ask 3)
       2) Don't quite like it. (Ask 3)
       3) Quite like it. (Ask 3)
       4) Like it a lot. (Ask 3)
       5) Indifferent. Neither like nor hate. (Ask 3)
       (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

Question 3: Prior knowledge – objective vs subjective (Clip 1 & 2)
3. Have you ever heard the news about <u>price increase</u>? (Read out the options.)
       1) Yes (Ask 3.1 on the next page)
       2) No (Ask 3.2 on the next page)
       3) Not sure (Ask 3.2on the next page)
              (If an answer is unclear, ask Back up 3)
              Back up 3) Have you ever heard the news about <u>price increase in the market</u>? (Read out the options)
              1) Yes (Ask 3.1)
              2) No (Ask 4)
              3) Not sure (Ask 4)
       3.1 What have you heard? Could you tell me about it in detail? (Ask 3.2)
       _____
       _____

       3.2 How much knowledge do you have about <u>prices in the market</u>? (Read out the options)(Ask 4)
       1) Little (Ask 4)   2) Moderate (Ask 4)   3) A lot (Ask 4)
       (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

Question 4: Existing belief (Clip 1 & 2)
4. Do you believe that <u>things are more expensive</u>? (Read out the options)
   1) Yes, things are more expensive. (Ask 4.1)
   2) No, things are not more expensive. (Ask 4.2)
   3) Don't know. Not sure. (Ask 4.3 on the next page)
   (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)
   4.1 Why do you think <u>things are more expensive</u>? (Get ready to show Clip 1)

   _____
   _____
   (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

   4.2 Why do you think <u>things are not more expensive</u>? (Get ready to show Clip 1)

   _____
   _____
   (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

   4.3 Can you tell me what makes you <u>feel unsure</u>? (Get ready to show Clip 1)

   _____
   _____
   (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

Interviewer: Next, I will show you the news we have recorded from the television. Start Clip 1 and return to your seat.
Question 5 & 6: Comprehension (Clip 1)

5. Can you tell me in detail what the news has just presented? (Ask 5.1)

   _____
   _____
   (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)
     (If an answer is unclear, ask Back up 5)
     Back up 5) Do you remember, in the news you have just watched, who said what? (Ask 5.1)

     _____
     _____
     (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)
   5.1 Are there any other issues that were mentioned in the news? (Ask 5.2)

   _____
   _____
   (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

5.2 Is there anything else about the news that you can remember? (Ask 6)

_____

_____

(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

6. To what extent, you can understand the news you have just watched? (Read out the options)
    1) Cannot understand at all. (Ask 7)
    2) Not quite understand. (Ask 7)
    3) Can understand some of it. (Ask 7)
    4) Can understand it well. (Ask 7)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

Question 7: Postmessage issue beliefs (Clip 1)
7. After you have watched the news, do you believe that things are not more expensive? (Read out the options)
    1) Yes (Ask 7.1)
    2) No (Ask 7.2)
    3) Don't know. Not sure. (Ask 7.3)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)
    7.1. What makes you believe the news you have watched? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Get ready to show Clip 2)

    _____

    _____

    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

    7.2. What makes you find the news you have watched not believable? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Get ready to show Clip 2)

    _____

    _____

    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)
    7.3. Can you tell me what makes you unsure? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Get ready to show Clip 2)

    _____

    _____

    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

Interviewer: Next, I will show you another piece of news we have recorded from the television.
Start Clip 2 and return to your seat.

Question 8 & 9: Comprehension (Clip 2)

8. Can you tell me in detail what the news has just presented? (Ask 8.1)

    _____
    _____
    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)
            (If an answer is unclear, ask Back up 8)
            Back up 8) Do you remember, in the news you have just watched,
            who said   what? (Ask 8.1)

            _____
            _____
            (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

    8.1 Are there any other issues that were mentioned in the news? (Ask 8.2)

    _____
    _____
    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

    8.2 Is there anything else about the news that you can remember? (Ask 9)

    _____
    _____
    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

9. To what extent, you can understand the news you have just watched? (Read out
    the options)
            1) Cannot understand at all. (Ask 10)
            2) Not quite understand. (Ask 10)
            3) Can understand some of it. (Ask 10)
            4) Can understand it well. (Ask 10)
            (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options,
            ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options
            again.)

Question 10: Postmessage issue beliefs (Clip 2)

10. After you have watched the news, do you believe that things are more
    expensive? (Read out the options)
            1) Yes (Ask 10.1)
            2)No (Ask 10.2)
            3) Don't know. Not sure. (Ask 10.3)
            (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options,
            ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options
            again.)
            10.1 What makes you believe the news you have watched? Can you explain
            to me so I can understand? (Ask 11)

            _____
            _____
            (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

10.2 What makes you find the news you have watched not <u>believable</u>? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 11)

_____

_____

(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

10.3 Can you tell me what makes you <u>unsure</u>? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 11)

_____

_____

(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

Question 11: Outcome involvement (Clip 1& 2)

11. Do you think this issue of <u>whether things are more expensive</u> in the two news clips you have just watched concerns you? Please carefully think about it. Don't rush. (Read out the options)

    1) It concerns me a lot. (Ask 11.1)

    2) It concerns me but not much. (Ask 11.1)

    3) It does not concern me at all. (Ask 12)

    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

    11.1 Why does it concern you? Can you explain to me so I can understand?
(Ask 12)

_____

_____

(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

12. To what extent do you think this issue of <u>whether things are more expensive</u> will have an impact on your life? (Read out the options)

    1) There will be a great impact. (Ask 13)

    2) There will be an impact but not much. (Ask 13)

    3) There will be no impact at all. (Ask 13)

    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

Question 13& 15: Value involvement (Clip 1 & 2)

13. To judge the issue of <u>price increase</u> in the two news clips you have just watched, did you use your preference for a political party at all? Please carefully think about it. Don't rush. (Read out the options.)

    1) Yes, to some extent. (Ask 13.1)

    2) Not at all. (Ask 14on the next page)

    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

13.1 How did you use your preference for a political party to judge the news? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 14)

_____
_____
(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

14. To judge the issue of <u>price increase</u> in the two news clips, did you use your personal belief? Please carefully think about it. Don't rush. (Read out the options)

    1) Not at all. (Ask 15)
    2) A little bit. (Ask 14.1)
    3) A lot. (Ask 14.1)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)
    14.1What personal beliefs did you use? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 15)

_____
_____
(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

15. To what extent do you think the issue of <u>price increase</u> in the two news clips is important? (Read out the options)

    1) Not at all important. (Ask 16)
    2) Important but not much. (Ask 15.1)
    3) Very important. (Ask 15.1)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)
    15.1How is it important? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 16)

_____
_____
(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

Question 16: Impression involvement (Clip 1 & 2)

16. When you express your opinion on the issue of <u>price increase</u> presented in the two news clips in front of others, do you think it will influence your image? Please think about it carefully. Don't rush.(Read out the options)

    1) A lot of influence. (Ask 16.1)
    2) Some influence. (Ask 16.1)
    3) No influence at all. (Ask 17)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

16.1 Why does it influence your image? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 17)

_____

_____

(Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

17. Do you think other people will judge you based on your opinion about the issue of <u>price increase</u>? Please carefully think about it. Don't rush. (Read out the options)
    1) Likely (Ask 17.1)
    2) Unlikely (Ask 18)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

    17.1 Why do you think other people will judge who you are based on your opinion about the issue of <u>price increase</u>? Can you explain to me so I can understand? (Ask 18)

_____

_____

    (Give a participant at least 7 seconds to think.)

Question 18 & 19: Accuracy motivated (Clip 1 & 2)

18. Do you have to know whether the two news clips about <u>whether things are more expensive</u> provide accurate information? (Read out the options)
    1) Yes, I have to know. (Ask 19)
    2) No, I don't have to know. (Ask 19)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

19. When you were watching the two news clips about <u>whether things are more expensive</u>, what were you thinking? (Read out the options)
    1) I want to know whether it is accurate. (Start asking set 2)
    2) I have already known the truth. I don't have to watch this news. (Start asking set 2)
    3) It is not interesting. I don't want to know whether things are more expensive.
    (Start asking set 3)
    4) If it is none of it, could you explain to me what you think?
    _____ (Start asking set 2)
    (If an answer is unclear or a participant did not choose one of the options, ask "Which option would you like to choose?" and read out the options again.)

Note: The same procedure repeated for the other two news issues.

Appendix F: Examples of Positive and Negative Tests for Each News Issue

Examples of a Positive and a Negative Test for Evaluating the News that Suggested that There Were Product Price Increases

Type of test	Positive elaboration	Negative elaboration
Positive test	- I have seen lentils selling at high price.	- I have never seen lentils selling at high price.
	- The politician showed the expensive lentils that he has just bought.	- There was nothing in the news to show that most products were expensive.
	- The price of lentils could go up if there was lack of supply.	- I did not know what could possibly cause the price of lentils to be high.
	- This political party has always been truthful.	- I did not have information that suggested that this political party was truthful.
Negative test	- I have never seen selling lentils at low price.	- I have seen lentils selling at low price.
	- None of the products mentioned in the news were cheap.	- The MC mentioned that certain fruits were cheap.
	- I could not think of any products that did not increase in price.	- Some products did not increase in price.
	- I do not have any information to suggest that this politician is dishonest.	- This politician has always been dishonest.

Examples of a Positive and a Negative Test for Evaluating the News that Suggested
that the Reconciliation Bill Was Good for Thailand

Type of test	Positive elaboration	Negative elaboration
Positive test	- I have heard that the reconciliation bill would give amnesty to all parties.	- I do not know what positive impact the reconciliation bill would have on Thailand.
	- It was stated in the news that forgiving was the first step toward reconciliation.	- The politician in the news did not explain how the reconciliation bill would unite people.
	- The reconciliation bill would give amnesty to all parties and that would stop the political fight.	- I could not see how giving amnesty to all parties could stop the political fight.
	- Information I had about this politician suggested he had good intentions.	- I could not find a reason why this politician would have good intentions.
Negative test	- I do not know how the reconciliation bill could worsen the situation.	- The attempt to pass the reconciliation bill has already provoked uproar among many people.
	- There was nothing in the news to suggest that the reconciliation bill could worsen the situation.	- It was shown in the news that the proposing of the reconciliation bill has already caused chaos in the parliament house.
	- I do not see how reconciliation could be a bad thing.	- Giving amnesty will undermine the justice system.
	- I do not have any information to believe that this politician had ill intentions.	- What this politician did in the past suggested that he was a bad person.

Examples of a Positive and a Negative Test for Evaluating the News that Suggested that the Reconciliation Bill Was Meant to Help the Former PM

Type of test	Positive elaboration	Negative elaboration
Positive test	- If the reconciliation bill is passed, the former PM will be acquitted.	- I have never heard that the reconciliation bill, if passed, would acquit the former PM of all charges.
	- It was stated in the news that the amnesty was not the key to reconciliation; it was the key to help the former PM.	- The politician (the news source) did not explain how the reconciliation bill would help the former PM.
	- The reconciliation bill will give amnesty to the former PM.	- I do not see how the reconciliation bill could acquit the former PM.
	- This politician has always been a good watchdog.	- I do not see why this politician would regret what happened and put the country first.
Negative test	- I do not see how the former PM would benefit from the reconciliation bill.	- The reconciliation bill, if passed, will drop all charges against the former PM.
	- There was nothing in the news to suggest that the reconciliation bill was a sincere attempt to bring people together.	- It was said in the news that the reconciliation bill would give a general amnesty that applies to all parties, not only the former PM.
	- I do not see why the PM will want to help the former PM.	- The former PM does not need this reconciliation bill because he does not need to come back to Thailand.
	- I do not see why this politician would say this (i.e., the bill was meant to help the former PM) just because they want to slander the ruling party.	- This political party has been trying to discredit the former PM for years now.

Appendix G: Measures for Study Two

Existing issue beliefs
Postmessage issue beliefs
1. Do you believe that the government drafted the reconciliation bill because they want the government and the opposition to start anew?^
2. Do you believe that the government drafted the reconciliation bill because they want to bring Thaksin back?*
3. Do you believe that the reconciliation bill is intended to help Thaksin be acquitted?*
4. Do you believe that if not for Thaksin's legal case, the reconciliation bill would not have been drafted?*
5. Do you believe that the reconciliation bill is drafted in order to stop everyone from fighting?^

   Response options are:
   1= Do not believe at all
   2= Do not quite believe
   3 =Not sure
   4 = Somewhat believe
   5 = Strongly believe
   Note:
   - * An item was reversed coded.
   - ^ An item was discarded.

Existing source beliefs
Postmessage source beliefs
1. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is good?
2. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party has done many good things for Thailand?
3. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party does not perform well?*^
4. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is trustworthy?
5. Do you believe that the Pheu Thai Party is not corrupted?

   Response options are:
   1= Do not believe at all
   2= Do not quite believe
   3 =Not sure
   4 = Somewhat believe
   5 = Strongly believe
   Note:
   - * An item was reversed coded.
   - ^ An item was discarded.
   - For the pro-opposition news condition, the "Pheu Thai Party" was replaced with "Democrat Party."

Certainty of existing issue beliefs
Certainty of postmessage issue beliefs
1. How confident are you in your opinion on the reconciliation bill?
   1 = Not at all confident
   2 = Little confidence
   3 = Quite confident
   4 = Very confident
2. Are you certain that you know the real purpose of the reconciliation bill?
   1 = Not at all certain
   2 = Little certainty
   3 = Moderately certain
   4 = Very certain

Certainty of existing source beliefs
Certainty of postmessage source beliefs
1. How confident are you in your opinion on the Pheu Thai Party?
   1 = Not at all confident
   2 = Little confidence
   3 = Quite confident
   4 = Very confident
2. Are you certain that you know the Pheu Thai Party well?
   1 = Not at all certain
   2 = Little certainty
   3 = Moderately certain
   4 = Very certain
   Note:
   - For the pro-opposition news condition, the "Pheu Thai Party" was replaced with "Democrat Party."

Outcome involvement
1. To what extent do you think the reconciliation bill has an impact on your life?
   1 = No effect at all
   2 = Little effect
   3 = Some effect
   4 = A lot of effect
2. Does whether the reconciliation bill is passed or not have an effect on your life?
   1 = No effect at all
   2 = Little effect
   3 = Some effect
   4 = A lot of effect
3. If the reconciliation bill is passed, to what extent do you think your life would change?
   1 = No change at all
   2 = Little change
   3 = Some change
   4 = A lot of change

4. Are you able to think of ways in which the reconciliation bill would affect your life?
   1 = Not at all
   2 = Very few
   3 = Some
   4 = A lot

Valence of perceived outcomes
1. Do you think the reconciliation bill will have a positive impact on your life?
   1 = No positive effect at all
   2 = Little positive effect
   3 = Some positive effect
   4 = A lot of positive effect
2. Do you think the reconciliation bill will have a negative impact on your life?
   1 = No negative effect at all
   2 = Little negative effect
   3 = Some negative effect
   4 = A lot of negative effect

Value involvement
1. Can your opinion about the reconciliation bill be used to guess what kind of person you are?
   1 = Cannot guess at all
   2 = Can guess a little
   3 = Probably can guess
   4 = Can definitely guess
2. Did you use the principles that you hold to help judge the reconciliation bill?
   1 = Did not use at all
   2 = Used a little
   3 = Used quite a lot
   4 = Used a lot
3. Can your opinion about the reconciliation bill tell about your character?
   1 = Cannot tell at all
   2 = Can tell quite a little
   3 = Can tell quite a lot
   4 = Can tell a lot
4. Do you think the issue of the reconciliation is important to you?
   1 = Not at all
   2 = A little
   3 = Somewhat
   4 = Very

5. Would you be enraged if the reconciliation bill did not turn out the way you want?
   1 = Not at all
   2 = A little
   3 = Somewhat
   4 = Very
   Note: This scale was excluded from the analysis.

Cognitive effort
1. Did you pay attention to analyzing the news you have watched?
2. How hard were you trying to determine whether the news you have just watched was true?
   Response options are:
   1 = Not at all
   2 = A little
   3 = Somewhat
   4 = A lot

Message recall
1. Please tell us in detail what the news you have just watched presented.
2. Are there any other issues that you can recall from the news you have just watched?
3. Can you remember what else the person in the news said?
   Note: The above questions were asked by an interviewer.

Justification for postmessage beliefs
1. After watching the news, do you believe that the reconciliation bill is not drafted for Thaksin/ drafted for Thaksin?
   a) Believe   (If a participant choose this option, go to question 2.)
   b) Do not believe   (If a participant choose this option, go to question 3.)
   c) Unsure   (If a participant choose this option, go to question 4.)
2. What makes you believe the news you have watched? Please explain in detail.
3. What makes you find the news you have watched not believable? Please explain in detail.
4. Can you tell me what makes you unsure? Please explain in detail.
   Note:
   - The phrasing of question 1 varied slightly depending on the news condition. If participants watched the pro-government news clip, they were asked if they believed the news that stated that the bill was not drafted for Mr Thaksin. If they watched the pro-opposition news clip, they were asked if they believed the news that stated that the bill was drafted for Mr Thaksin.
   - The above questions were asked by an interviewer.

Political news consumption
1. How many days per week do you watch political news on TV?
   a) 1 - 2 days   b) 3 - 4 days   c) 5 - 6 days   d) Everyday
2. Did you watch political news on TV in the past week?
   a) Yes   b) No   c) Not sure

Issue familiarity
1. Have you ever heard news about the reconciliation bill which is about forgiving convicts?
   a) Yes   b) No   c) Not sure