

POLI 718 Agenda Setting, Baumgartner, Spring 2017

Questions for week 11, Dagan and Teles, Prison Break

Consider the following questions for discussion and for potential paper topics.

1. In some ways, this book addresses the question of how a multi-dimensional set of issues can be reduced into the single left-right continuum. It does so by addressing the question of how one side can change its position on such an issue, which raised the broader issue of how parties come to coalesce on one side or another of a given issue debate. Discuss the book in terms of its implication for the multidimensionality of issues and how the parties come to take positions on these complicated substantive matters.
2. What is an identify voucher, and how generalizable is that concept?
3. Reading Kingdon, one has the impression that lots of things just happen to come together. Reading Dagan and Teles, one has the impression that there is a lot of strategy. Discuss the events described in this book that Kingdon might have described as random. Is it random, directed, or what?
4. Could the events in this book have been predicted ahead of time? Why or why not?
5. Discuss the implications of the substance of this book for current efforts to encourage criminal justice reform. What elements may be bi-partisan? Attractive to policymakers? Feasible? What are the barriers to further reform?
6. How unusual are the developments described in this book? That is, discuss what elements are generalizable. Is there a general theory of policy change embedded here? If so, what is it?
7. In *Agendas and Instability*, we discuss the possibility that the multiple venues of federalism may actually make dramatic policy changes more possible, rather than acting as veto points as they have sometimes been portrayed. Discuss the impact of federalism on agenda-setting from this book.