

POLI 727, Framing
Prof. Baumgartner
Spring 2015

Questions for week 10, various stuff by your instructor

Answer ONE of the following questions. Come to class prepared to discuss ALL of them. Essays should be limited to one page single spaced and should have perhaps one-third of the essay describing the issue and the rest analyzing it. It is preferable to go into detail on a small part of the issue, giving examples or illustrations, than to remain at a general level. The devil is always in the details.

1. In 1991 Jones and I distinguished between positive and negative tones, calling that a “policy image.” The literature has since moved to more specific enumeration of individual arguments. Discuss.
2. In the 1991 article, we do not have a firm measure of the policy outcome, though the outcome is pretty clear: the nuclear industry declined drastically and policy changed. In the 2008 book we develop a very clear measure of the state of public policy: the number of death sentenced per year. In the 2013 article we similarly develop a very clear measure of the state of public policy: the generosity index. Discuss the importance of measuring the state of public policy over time.
3. In the 2008 book we rely on very short abstracts from the printed version of the New York Time Index. In the 2013 article we use keyword searches. What are the best ways to measure a frame? How much does it matter?
4. Evolutionary Factor Analysis is a very complicated technique. Is it worth it? What do we learn from that chapter?
5. In the article on poverty, we do not assess race. How could one do that?
6. One of the interesting things about the death penalty is that it is a debate that takes place outside of the world of corporate lobbying. What is special, unusual, ungeneralizable about that case because of that? Are there elements of how capital punishment is framed and who is involved in the debate that make it a particularly poor choice for theory building?
7. Would it be fair to say that shifts in the framing associated with the death penalty were created by any particular group or network of actors? How much agency can we assert in these collective framing processes? Consider the evidence in the case of nuclear power and poverty as well. Who controls this? How could you study that?