

POLI 727, Framing
Prof. Baumgartner
Spring 2015

Questions for week 12, McCall and Scheve

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. Lots of people have tried to explain why Ronald Reagan and others chipped away or eliminated large amounts of progressivity in the US federal income tax. Scheve and Stasavage ask where that steep progressivity came from in the first place. Discuss the relevance of their article to the study of framing. How powerful is the frame of patriotism? Is it up there with race as a powerful one?
2. Review the structure of McCall's book. A good dissertation model? How long would it take to write such a book / dissertation?
3. One consistent question in any democracy is why 51 percent of the voters don't get together and vote to dispossess through taxation, expropriation, or other means, the 49 percent. But in fact this rarely happens, and in fact as McCall shows Americans support a significant income and wealth gap. What are the framing elements of this?
4. Is wealth different from race or gender in its framing characteristics because an individual can move from poor to wealthy, or have offspring that move into another category? Or is that not much help in explaining the differences. Consider the dynamics of framing from the evidence presented in McCall about wealth and economic inequalities and compare those to gender and racial differences.