

POLI 727, Framing
Prof. Baumgartner
Spring 2015

Questions for week 14, Schrad, *The Political Power of Bad Ideas*.

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. Schrad compares the power of ideas and the impact of institutional structures. Explain and discuss.
2. He places special emphasis on the role of “ideational brokers.” Explain and discuss.
3. We have often discussed a framer’s potential ability to link their policy to such powerful symbols as patriotism. Discuss this in relation to the temperance movement. Why were their frames so powerful (for a time)? Compare to Scheve and Stasavage.
4. Was the power of the temperance frame more about the ethnic and religious politics, or more about framing and ideas? Were the frames powerful because they were well chosen, and so could be chosen by other types of actors, or were they powerful because they mobilized particular ethnic, religious, or social groups?
5. If you had been opposed to prohibition back in the 1910’s, what would have been the most effective framing strategy? Why was this ineffective? Can we measure this and use it to predict, or is this kind of thing only accurate in retrospect when we know what eventually happened?
6. Let’s say you want to attack “big cola” or “big sugar” in an effort to fight obesity. What can you learn from the temperance movement?
7. A key element in his research design is his use of small-N international comparison. Discuss what we gain from this that we would not have gained from an Armstrong-like analysis only of the US case.