

POLI 727, Framing
Prof. Baumgartner
Spring 2015

Questions for week 2, articles giving definitions of framing

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. Enumerate the various ways the different authors use ideas that add up to something similar to a “frame.” What do they all have in common, and what distinctions are useful? That is, which are just differences in vocabulary or choice of words, and what differences in these articles are worth maintaining? List the words used to refer to a frame by each author.
2. Several of the authors discuss something similar to the concept of a policy community: a group of specialists, experts, technocrats, or others who surround a policy issue and who may develop a dominant way of thinking about it. Similar to the last question, enumerate who these are referred to and discuss whether these are just differences in language or refer to important conceptual distinctions.
3. Many of the authors in this week’s readings are heroes of constructivism. Is this literature logically connected to only a constructivist approach to political science? Which ideas seem particularly amenable to a quantitative approach?
4. Schneider and Ingram have been criticized for not building in a time element into their analysis. Looking more generally across all this week’s readings, do the authors seem sensitive to the dynamics of how frames can shift over time, or do they treat it in general as a cross-sectional or permanent characteristic of an issue?
5. Is there anything implicit or explicit in these readings to suggest that framing is controlled by particular political elites?