

POLI 891, Framing
Prof. Baumgartner
Fall 2012

Questions for week 12, various Baumgartner framing articles

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 the 1991 article we distinguish between “positive” and “negative” “tone” in discussing nuclear power. Later articles get a LOT more complicated. For what purposes is it sufficient to ask the question we did in that JOP paper: is this good news or bad news from the perspective of the person or industry involved?
2. In Framing the Poor, we use a complicated set of keywords, but overall a very simple technique to identify how discussion of the poor has evolved over time. Evaluate that method. Is it believable?
3. In the death penalty book and in the poverty article, we use media framing measures to predict statistically an actual public policy indicator. Evaluate that. What do you think of the development of the indicators and of the theoretical justification behind the statistical model?
4. The working paper on absolute v. relative opinion change has been vigorously and strongly rejected now from two major journals. Help us develop a new “hook” for it: that is, what would be a way to draw the reader into the project in the first two pages? Imagine that you are proposing a revised version where the data would stay in the paper, but we would revise all the writing and set-up to it. How would you propose to begin the paper? What question would you say we can answer? [This is not a plea for help! Rather, that’s often the difficult part in publishing in the top journals: getting the “hook” right. So, give it a try!]
5. In the death penalty book, we do a number of things relating to the quantitative study of framing, we first document the rise of the innocence frame, using the codes we developed directly; then we use the new technique, evolutionary factor analysis to trace the shifting themes associated with the death penalty over time. Discuss which technique is more useful, and what we learn from the much more complicated EFA methodology. [btw, all the data for that book as well as an EFA tutorial are available on the book web site.]