

POLI 891, Framing  
Prof. Baumgartner  
Fall 2012

Questions for week 13, Armstrong, Conceiving Risk

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. A policy change definitely occurred. Can we say who caused it? People often ask this question. Was there an entrepreneur? Was he/she responsible for the shift? If that entrepreneur was successful, does that mean that they could do it again?
2. Can we list the conditions that came together to create the policy change Armstrong observes? Were these sufficient causes, as well as necessary ones? That is, would they always work that way if they came together in another case?
3. Armstrong describes a policy shift that mostly occurs within a policy community of experts, rather than on the front pages of the nation's newspapers, and certainly not in the institutions of government. The President, leaders of the House and Senate, and other usual suspects in policy change were completely absent. What does this model of policy change suggest for our understanding and theories of policy change and policy framing? Where is the mass public in this model? Where are the traditional political leaders such as political parties and office-holders? How often does this type of thing happen?
4. Analyze the research design and methodology used in this book. (It is based on a dissertation.) What were the logistics of writing it?
5. Trace the framing change in this book and discuss whether it was a collective effort, a battle between alternative frames, or what. How does the frame-change that is observed by Armstrong in this case compare with the literature you have read on how frames change in general.