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Theories of Tobacco-Control Policy Across Space and Time

“Health promotion policies involving individual life-styles inspire greater personal passions and produce more political conflict than other areas of public policy because they impinge more directly on personal freedom, choice, intimacy, and morality.” (Leichter 1991: 261-62)

“What the smoker does to himself may be his business, but what the smoker does to the nonsmoker is quite a different matter. This [the nonsmokers’ rights movement] we see as the most dangerous development to the viability of the tobacco industry that has yet occurred.” (Roper Organization, 1978, in a report to the Tobacco Institute, as quoted in US Department of Health and Human Services 2000b: 46)

“Let me say that it should not be surprising if these policies in many instances either reflect or take into account the proximity of the United States. Living next to you is like sleeping with an elephant. No matter how friendly and even-tempered the beast, one is affected by every twitch and grunt.” (Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., 1969)

Introduction

Despite the growing importance of tobacco control and a burgeoning literature on many dimensions of the tobacco problem, especially public-health ones, there have been surprisingly few analyses of the *politics* of tobacco control, especially from social scientists. The previously published work is predominantly journalistic in nature, focussing on a single country, usually the US. Earlier work tended to be more historical (Neuberger 1963; Wagner 1971; Whelan 1984; White 1988; Kluger 1996), while recently