PART VIII

INTEREST GROUPS

DIMENSIONS OF BEHAVIOR

chapter 27

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INTEREST GROUPS AND AGENDAS

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frank r. baumgartner

Schattschneider's Dual Contributions

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E. E. Schattschneider's (1960) slim but lasting volume made two points that remain central to the study of agenda setting and interest groups: the salience of a political issue is often the result of a political process, not a simple result of objective conditions; and the interest group system harbors tremendous bias. Whereas democracies are defined by the concept of "one person one vote," he pointed out that certain segments of society are virtually excluded from participation in the "pressure system" while others speak with voices amplified by their access to many decision makers and their ability to mobilize vast resources. In comparing groups to political parties, which in his view ultimately rest on their ability to appeal to ever larger groups of voters, Schattschneider shows a sense that the group system was clearly unfair.

The Power of Conflict

Schattschneider is often the first citation in reviews on the topic of agenda setting and among the first in those analyzing the structure of the nation's interest group system. He virtually invented the modern field of agenda setting with his simple point that participants in any conflict consist of a winner and a loser and that these

actors have different incentives with regard to the scope of their fight. Losers may want to "expand" the conflict while winners logically should be content with the current scope of the issue, wanting no "outsiders" to become involved. His point was that the number of participants in a conflict, its public salience, or the range of actors (especially government agencies) considered legitimately involved in the issue were not a given based on decisions made by neutral outside observers, but indeed were the fundamental determinants of the outcome of the battle, and were therefore the object of the political struggle itself. Labor unions demanded government involvement in establishing working conditions and labor–management conflict resolution procedures whereas business resisted these efforts, seeing them as unwelcome "outside interference." Of course, what is unwelcome to the powerful may be welcome indeed to the powerless. Scholars have often taken the idea that the scope of a conflict is the result of interest group strategies to mean that scope is determined by the strategies of individual interest groups. It is rare that a single actor can determine the scope or salience of the conflict in which they are engaged; it is a collective process, not an individual choice. Scope is partially but not fully endogenous to the strategies of groups.

Class Bias in the "Pressure System"

The second reason scholars refer to Schattschneider is his emphasis on an aspect of the group system that was been so widely acknowledged at the time he wrote, during the heyday of pluralism: most Americans have no chance of participating. For Schattschneider, the flaw in the pluralist "heaven" that scholars such as Bentley (1908), Truman (1951), and Dahl (1961) described was that the "heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent. Probably about 90 per cent of the people cannot get into the pressure system" (1960, 35). Later empirical studies suggest that he may have exaggerated, as many Americans participate in the group system through such organizations as labor unions. None of these empirical studies refute his general point, however; the interest group system does not reach down to all levels of society, and it has a very strong professional or occupational character. In their recent large-scale study of the Washington interest group universe, Schlozman et al. (2008) found, for example, that *not a single* group in DC was organized with the primary focus of representing the interests of such low-wage workers as janitors, cleaners, or fast-food workers. Whereas bankers, lawyers, firefighters, teachers, and others are well represented through the group system because of its occupational bias, many others are virtually excluded. The normative implications of Schattschneider's dual theses were clear. First, one should view with suspicion arguments tending to limit the role of government, as these are logically the arguments that the powerful will use against the weak. Rather, arguments about the scope of legitimate government activity define the political struggle, reflecting

rather than determining the distribution of power in society. Second, political parties act as the ultimate mechanism for the expansion of social conflict, and they should be stronger. (Schattschneider, of course, had been the chair the American Political Science Association's committee on responsible parties, which issued a report suggesting just this; American Political Science Association 1950.)

INTEREST GROUPS AND AGENDA SETTING

The idea that the scope of conflict was in fact a part of the political process, rather than something imposed by outside forces, stimulated political scientists as few ideas ever have. It took some time, however, before scholars translated the general idea into empirical research projects.

Subsystems. The first book-length study was by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder (1983; originally published in 1972). They noted, as had many scholars of public policy and interest groups before them, that many public policies are surrounded by what they called "systems of limited participation" (1983, ch. 1). This idea was, of course, a staple of interest group studies going back at least to Bentley's (1908) and Griffith's (1939) review of the roles of groups in government or the more contemporary studies such as Milbrath's (1963) review of the power of interest groups, Bauer, Pool, and Dexter's (1963) findings that groups often worked as mere "service bureaus" to those legislators who already agreed with them, or Cater's (1964) analysis of the sugar price protection program. The point was simple but important: most public policies, most of the time, are debated and discussed within relatively small communities of experts. Whether these are called "whirlpools," "subsystems," "iron triangles," or "systems of limited participation," they all have in common that experts dominate (see McFarland 2004). But in many cases, the experts all had certain interests in common, as in the expansion and continuation of favorable government policies toward the industry in question. If political debate stems from conflicts within these professional communities, then we need to be concerned about issues that are *not* on the agenda, and the abilities of tightly knit communities of like-minded professionals to keep their issues out of the public spotlight. The study of interest groups, which had long focused on the functioning of these communities, was to meet the study of agenda setting.

Non-decisions. Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962) came into this debate with a critique of previous studies of pluralism focusing on the problem that some interests in society were simply not represented and therefore not part of the public discussion. Their article was recognized recently as the single most highly cited

study in the history of the *American Political Science Review* (Sigelman 2006). Two book-length studies (Crenson 1971; Gaventa 1980) took seriously the authors' proposal that non-decisions should be studied as well as those issues that are the object of manifest public debate. Few, however, have followed up with empirical studies of how or why issues remain off the agenda (the biggest exception to this is Cobb and Ross 1997). However, the field was set for a consistent concern about what happens when communities of specialists interact with the broader political system.

Agenda setting. John Kingdon (1984) was the next author to devote a book-length study to the process of agenda setting. Kingdon did not stress the role of groups, but he certainly focused on the distinction between those actors in the policy process who are experts on the subject matter and those who are not. He noted that interest groups were often "outside" government but it was inaccurate to describe them as "just looking in." Just as had a long string of interest group scholars dating back to Bentley, he stressed the integration between those outside and inside government who share a concern about a particular policy, industry, or social problem.

Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones (1993) suggested an important role for interest groups in their study of agenda setting, noting how "Schattschneider mobilizations" could occur in which disgruntled policymakers from within a specialized community make alliances with outsiders in order to upend an established policy monopoly. Nuclear scientists concerned about inadequate attention to safety issues in the 1960s are the simplest example: just as Schattschneider discussed, these "losers" in the debate about how to allocate resources appealed to expand the scope of the conflict, and outsiders did indeed become involved on their side of the debate, ultimately leading to the demise of the nuclear power industry.

Framing. This last example raises issues that few authors had addressed up to this point: to what extent do individual interest groups or other policymakers control or manipulate the process? The concept of conflict expansion (or its corollary, the privatization of conflict) suggests that the eventual scope of the conflict is the result of the strategic behaviors of the original protagonists. But to say this is not the same as to suggest that the final outcome is easily controlled by any single actor. Schattschneider gave little indication of how, or by what process, groups would appeal to the audience (and even less about how their rivals would attempt to justify audience deference to "the experts"). We have come to understand that this is through the process of framing, a point discussed below. But who can frame? What of the opponents who have an interest in framing the issue in a different way?

William Riker (1984, 1986) made clear that strategically minded politicians could indeed induce major policy change and affect the political agenda by shifting the

terms of the debate. This could be done by choosing new dimensions of evaluation, to shift a debate from being "about" topic X to describing it in terms of topic Y. For example, when faced with the possible introduction of dangerous nerve gas to be shipped from an overseas military base to his home state, one clever senator convinced his colleagues that the debate was not "really" about where the gas would go, but rather about the Senate's power to ratify treaties. As few senators want to give up power to the executive branch, the motion carried. "Heresthetics," the word he used to describe this process of manipulating decision-making procedures or the dimensions of debate, became an important part of the literature on agenda setting.

The Stability of Frames

But how common is it to reframe a debate? Riker's book gave a number of examples, but then again he covered over 2,000 years of human history in compiling his interesting stories. The literature developed no sense of what the denominator might be: for every hundred times that framing is attempted, how many times does it succeed, and what increases the chances of success? James Druckman (2001, 2004) has provided the best recent analyses of framing, though his focus is not on interest groups or even on agenda setting (he looked at how individuals respond to different arguments or frames when they read them in newspaper articles in an experimental setting). Still, he notes the peculiarities in a literature where scholars have found framing virtually each time they have looked for it. Baumgartner and Jones, for example, stressed the importance of "policy images" and how these can shift quickly from positive to negative as collective attention shifts from one aspect of a complicated issue to another. Riker gave examples of successful strategic politicians actually causing these changes. But few have studied a random sample of issues or discussed the degree to which any single actor could successfully manipulate the collective framing associated with an issue. Cobb and Ross (1997) compiled the only book-length study of efforts to keep issues off the agenda. This is clearly the next step in the literature, to explain the relative capacities of interest groups, government officials, and others to affect how issues are understood. Baumgartner and others (2009) studied ninety-eight cases of lobbying activity representing a random sample of the objects of lobbying in Washington, DC, and followed the issues for four years; they found that only about 5 percent of the issues were significantly reframed during the period of their study. This gives some idea of the power of the status quo. Reframing may be important when it occurs, but interest groups typically are working to protect, not to upset, the status quo, and the collective efforts of groups contribute mightily to the maintenance of existing policies as well as the frames that undergird them.

There is strong evidence from throughout the literature going back decades to make clear that policy definitions are strongly related to policy outcomes (see, for example, the literature reviewed immediately above, or D. Stone 1988, 1989; Schneider and Ingram 1993; Bosso 1987). So lobbyists have a strong incentive to reframe issues and when they succeed the direction of policy often changes. But perhaps the shifts in policy images are due to broader factors such as new evidence and not only to the clever rhetorical tactics of individual lobbyists or policy entrepreneurs. To this point, the literature has failed to pinpoint exactly the causes of shifts in frames, though it has clearly established that such things are fundamental to explaining policy outcomes and the impact of agenda setting.

Venue Shopping

Since Schattschneider's original insights about conflict expansion, two complications have arisen. First, venue shopping by protagonists is strategic: they do not put out a general appeal for help from an undifferentiated audience, but rather seek out particular allies, especially institutional venues or locations in government where they hope that they may have a better chance at success. Second, as in the question of framing, success by the aggrieved party is anything but assured, as the dominant party in the original dispute will naturally fight back, justifying their control over the dispute by denying the legitimacy of any "outside interference."

Baumgartner and Jones (1993) developed the idea of venue shopping, arguing that a peculiarity of US institutional design is that single institutions rarely have monopolistic control over given policy issues. Through separation of powers and federalism, we see "separated institutions sharing power" (Neustadt 1964, 42), or even more than this a series of shared and overlapping jurisdictions where states, localities, and various federal agencies often vie for control or have control over different parts of a given issue. Policy actors seek to push their issues to one or another institutional venue depending on their estimate of their likely success; many policy changes have been related to shifts in institutional control or the emergence of a new institutional player rather than to an established institutional player shifting its position. The Department of Agriculture, after all, did not suddenly shift position on the health effects of smoking and tobacco; rather, policy change came when those with jurisdiction over health issues exerted greater influence. Explaining the policy change requires looking at many policy venues.

Sarah Pralle (2003, 2006) has provided the most in-depth analysis of venue shopping as a strategy, and she notes that lobbyists are often ineffective or only boundedly rational in their search for the most favorable venue. Groups establish comfort levels with certain venues, or develop staff with expertise in dealing with the legal, regulatory, or other types of analyses demanded in a particular venue, and these sunk costs or organizational routines inhibit their abilities to operate in new venues. So the process is far from perfect, far from fully rational. Further, institutional leaders

themselves often seek out issues on which they can exert their influence: the venues seek out the issues, in other words. In any case, scholars have noted the importance of lobbying strategies that focus not only on "expanding" a conflict to a broader audience, but on much more specific strategies of targeting specific institutional audiences. Mazey and Richardson (1993) similarly noted that the relative competencies of Brussels-based regulatory agencies, the European Court of Justice, and the traditional national political systems have recently become the object of considerable jurisdictional ambiguity as the European Union has developed its policy apparatus in more policy areas (see also Guiraudon 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2001; Keating and Hooghe 2001; Beyers 2002; Eising 2004, 2007; Woll 2006; Coen 2007; Mahoney 2004, 2007a, 2007b, 2008; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2008).

Salience

The literature on venue shopping and institutional control is strongly related to the efforts of groups to gain (or to avoid) greater public salience for their dispute. Ken Kollman's (1998) work remains the best systematic treatment of efforts of groups to "go public" and he notes that they do so systematically on those issues where public opinion is in line with their preferences, other things equal (such as the resource capacity to follow this expensive strategy of lobbying). For every lobbyist who seeks to expand a conflict or shift it to a new institutional venue, or onto the front pages of the national newspapers, there is at least another who has the opposite interest: maintain control right where it was in the past. And considering that these actors are typically more powerful than their adversaries, it is not at all clear why they would fail to protect themselves and their institutions from unwanted "outside interference." Some institutions, to be sure, are more successful in this than others. No one contests in modern times the authority of the Federal Reserve Board to fix interest rates or to control monetary policy. No one contests that the US Census Bureau should conduct the decennial census. No other public agency competes with the Postal Service. So all public policies are not subject to jurisdictional ambiguity; for some issues the jurisdictions are quite firmly set. To date, little research has focused on the ability of those in positions of power to limit efforts by rivals to move an issue away from their institutional control or to limit efforts by competing institutions to encroach on those issues that have traditionally fallen within their jurisdiction. Venue shopping is certainly a common occurrence, but so is boundary maintenance. We know little about what causes success in either.

Individual versus Collective Behaviors

The simplest way to think of why we know so much about strategies of agenda setting, venue shopping, and framing from the perspective of the individual

lobbyist but so little about the determinants of their success is that scholars have not designed projects to study the process at two levels. Schattschneider focused on the actions of the two original protagonists in a dispute, but he clearly stated that the outcome in the dispute would be determined by the behavior of the audience. This implies that understanding crowd behavior is more important than understanding individual strategies of lobbying and agenda setting. Few scholars have shifted their attention to this question, however, because of its complexity, though attention to these issues appears to be growing.

The salience, issue definitions, and agenda status of any policy issue are determined by the collective behaviors of all those involved in the policy debate. Any individual actor may attempt to influence the collective outcome, but none determines it singlehandedly (see F. Baumgartner and Mahoney 2008). The idea of many actors competing to control the outcome of a policy process is, of course, central to any kind of democratic decision making, but it creates methodological issues with which political scientists concerned about interest group strategies have not yet grappled sufficiently. The problems are well known in other disciplines, however, including such closely related ones as the study of collective action in sociology. For example, is salience the result of interest group strategies? Yes, since groups clearly seek to manipulate the level of attention to their issues (see Kollman 1998). However, what if there are hundreds of lobbyists working on a given issue? From the perspective of any single actor, none singlehandedly created the observed level of salience, but all must react to it. So in this view salience is imposed from the outside, not the result of lobbying strategy. Similarly, if Riker gives examples of issue definitions being the result of clever speeches by influential senators, this does not mean that frames are on average completely endogenous to the actions of lobbyists or policymakers. In fact, they are exogenous for the vast bulk of lobbyists. In other words, even if individual policymakers might like to affect such collective outcomes as salience, venue, agenda status, or framing, they typically have no control over these things. Rather, for any given lobbyist, these characteristics of the issue are imposed from the outside and the lobbyist must react to them. Collective outcomes are *partially* affected by the actions of individual policymakers, but for the most part it is the individual who responds to the system, not the system which responds to the individual.

Cascades and Power Laws

One reason scholars have been slow to integrate the individual and collective behaviors of groups of lobbyists and other policymakers as they attempt to affect such issues as salience, agenda status, and framing may be that the collective outcomes of these processes are subject to cascades, threshold effects, and other characteristics that make them very difficult to model. Assume simply that policy actors with many potential concerns are likely to spend their time on those issues that are currently the object of attention by others in their environment. When a lobbyist sees that an issue

is "moving" or has some chance of passage, then, like it or not, it may be necessary to get involved. If entire communities of lobbyists behave this way, their collective behavior will be subject to cascade effects where tremendous surges occur occasionally, mobilizing large numbers of lobbyists on a small number of issues. This is exactly what Baumgartner and Leech (2001) found; they looked at a random sample of 137 issues that were mentioned in thousands of lobby disclosure reports filed at the end of 1996 and found that the top two issues accounted for half of all the lobby reports filed while those issues that fell below the median level of lobbying activity generated just 2.27 percent of all the reports (2001, 1202).

Such "power laws" are found in many social and physical processes such as the distribution of income, and certain aspects of what can lead to them are well understood (see Barabasi 2005; Watts and Strogatz 1998; Watts 1999a, 1999b). For example, economic bubbles and crashes can be caused by "herd behavior" where individuals base their behaviors on what they see their colleagues around them doing rather than on their own independent judgment (see Lux 1995). In the field of social movements, such cascade and threshold models have been used to explain such things as why social movements can suddenly "catch on" even if for many years participation is relatively stagnant (see Chong 1991). Thomas Schelling used such a model to explain how neighborhoods can suddenly "tip" in one direction or another in his model of racial segregation (1971), and threshold effects have become common in studies of collective action in general (see, for example, Granovetter 1978; Granovetter and Soong 1983; Macy 1991; Kuran 1991; or Lohmann 1994). These models have in common some form of mimicking, where individuals base their actions on the actions they observe those around them engaging in rather than on their own independent assessment. The simplest examples of such herdlike behaviors may be such things as fashion trends or the sudden popularity of restaurants or movies (see Granovetter and Soong 1988; Becker 1991).

The difficulty with studying power laws is that political scientists have been accustomed to studying the behaviors of individuals much more than the collective actions of crowds. Of course, where the issue of interest groups and agenda setting is concerned, we are interested in both. Can individual lobbyists or groups affect the agenda status of an issue? We know they do sometimes and we can point to examples throughout the literature of where successful lobbying campaigns have indeed changed issue definitions or salience. But from another perspective it is clear that the true determinant of these collective outcomes lies, as Schattschneider suggested, in the behavior of the crowd, not the original disputants. Lohmann's (1994) analysis of who participated in the collective demonstrations leading eventually to the collapse of the East German government in 1991 makes clear that the dynamics of collective action concerns the contagion of the conflict more than the strategies of individual actors.

Subsystems Redux

Baumgartner and others (2009) emphasized the importance of the collective actions of entire communities of experts. We found that specialized communities surrounded virtually every issue we studied, typically including government officials administering relevant programs, corporate or other clients or beneficiaries, local governments, trade associations, unions, and other actors with a professional interest in the issue. Whereas scholars often stress the informational value of specialized knowledge, we find that specialized knowledge was widely available within these communities of experts. While individual advocates certainly attempt to shift attention to one dimension of the issue rather than another, or to build up or avoid public salience for their issue, they do not control these processes singlehandedly. Outcomes were determined by the collective actions of the entire community of experts, and proponents and opponents of policy change engaged in highly structured conflicts where neither side typically mobilized strongly without a counteraction from the other side. The study brings our attention to the need to understand individual lobbying behavior, but also to return to Schattschneider's original suggestion that "when a fight breaks out, watch the crowd" because the outcome of the fight will largely be determined by how many members of the audience get involved. A future challenge in the study of interest groups and agenda setting is clearly to address these issues of the embeddedness of individual lobbying strategies within larger structures, including allies and opponents working on the same issue and often responding to the same contextual factors.

BIASES IN INTEREST GROUP MOBILIZATION

From the beginnings of the modern literature on interest groups (e.g., Bentley 1908; Griffith 1939) scholars have focused on two related items: The close connections among professionals inside and out of government (the so-called "policy whirlpools" or subsystems), and the social class bias associated with representation through the "pressure system" rather than through parties and elections. The system is nothing if not elitist. Then again, it is not limited to social elites, but rather to corporations, occupations, and professions, and there can be great diversity of views associated with those coming from different professional backgrounds. Tobacco farmer trade group representatives and those representing hospitals and public health authorities certainly have different perspectives on appropriate regulation of the tobacco industry, so the fact that the pressure system has a strong occupational, professional, and corporate

bias does not mean it is unified. Pluralists, of course, focused on this diversity but none have argued that the pressure system was representative of average Americans. There is little evidence that the system's elitist character is due to harsh boundaries setting or active efforts to exclude; rather, the bias comes from the fact that some segments of society mobilize powerfully and speak with amplified voices and others mobilize little or not at all. This in turn has great consequences for the types of issues that are brought up.

Social Class Bias in Participation

Scholars of public opinion and mass political behavior have long documented the social class biases in who participates in various political activities (see Angus Campbell et al. 1960; Verba and Nie 1972 for classic treatments). Verba and Nie (1972) showed that these biases were not limited to such activities as voting and contacting government officials, but also were apparent in such things as joining voluntary associations (see also F. Baumgartner and Walker 1988; Putnam 2000). Mancur Olson (1965), of course, explained theoretically why many potentially relevant interest groups would be unlikely to mobilize to their full potential (e.g., groups such as consumers or clients of government programs or others whose goals focus on protecting or maintaining something which will be available to all citizens if granted to any, such as clean air, lower consumer prices, or universalistic government policies). The free-rider problem and the collective action dilemma fundamentally limit the possibilities that David Truman (1951) and Robert Dahl (1961) saw for interest groups to mobilize wherever there might be social need. Some mobilize more easily than others. Jack Walker (1983, 1991) and Robert Salisbury (1984) added fundamental new insights into this process, but the importance of their work for the types of issues that are likely to be addressed in government has not been widely recognized.

The Occupational Nature of the Group System

Walker noted that three-quarters of the groups he identified in his survey of Washington interest groups had an occupational basis; just one-quarter were what he called "citizens' groups." This last category would include such interest group behemoths as the National Rifle Association and the AARP, as well as most groups associated with the environment, gun control, or abortion—much of what people often think of as "single interest groups." In fact, he showed that these are the exception; the rule is that groups active in Washington generally have an occupational basis—they are groups of lawyers, bankers, architects, store owners, nurses, or labor unions, where the membership basis of the group has to

do with a person's job, not their ideology. Salisbury showed that many groups are not only occupational, but they are institutional—their members are not individual citizens or professionals at all, but rather such organizations as cities, hospitals, corporations, or universities. The professional, rather than ideological, motivation to mobilize has many implications.

Bias

The bias in the interest group system has been repeatedly found in study after study (in addition to the studies above, see also Schlozman 1984; Heinz et al. 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; F. Baumgartner and Leech 1998 and 2001; Schlozman et al. 2008). This justifies the concerns brought forward by Bachrach and Baratz (1962) and Crenson (1971) concerning the possibility of certain issues being held permanently "off the agenda" because no one in the "pressure system" has an interest in addressing those concerns. Charles Lindblom's (1977) discussion of the "privileged position of business" in the political system certainly has resonance here. The issue is even more severe than most scholars have recognized, because the interest group system not only ignores many, such as low-wage workers, the unemployed, or those with diffuse social, ideological, or economic interests, but it also provides others the opportunity to speak with huge amplification. Whereas no one can vote more than once, nothing stops a wealthy interest or corporation from lobbying on its own behalf, joining related interest or trade associations, mobilizing allies, hiring PR and consulting firms, and purchasing as much television time or lobbying access as it can afford. Many industries have trade associations with hundreds of staff members permanently monitoring government actions that may affect their members, and individual corporations or professional groups often have government relations departments that dwarf the operations of well-known interest groups.

The Interest Group Policy Agenda

Since Bachrach and Baratz (1962) pointed to the issue of agenda control, scholars have made little progress in investigating the possible implications of bias in the group system for what issues hit the agenda; it is much easier simply to count the number of groups of different types. Since they worked from a random sample of issues in Washington, Baumgartner and colleagues (2009) were able to compare the issues on which the lobbyists were active with data from the Policy Agendas Project[1] which include responses to Gallup Poll questions asking samples of Americans about what they consider to be the most important problem facing the nation today. Thus, one can easily compare the "lobbying agenda" with the concerns of the public. The results

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[1] <http://www.policyagendas.org>.

were very troubling indeed. During the period when their study was done, the most important problem, according to the public, was crime, with 26 percent of the public selecting this issue. Second was unemployment (or the state of the economy more generally, with 19 percent), followed by international affairs (e.g., terrorism, war) at 10 percent, and education (also 10 percent). Lobbyists had different priorities: 21 percent worked on health care, followed by the environment (13 percent), transportation (8 percent), communications (7 percent), and banking (7 percent) (2009, table 1.4). The disjuncture between the concerns of Americans and the priorities of the lobbyists could hardly be clearer. Looking more closely at the issue priorities of the lobbyists, the differences are even starker. Healthcare lobbyists are more likely to be working on such issues as ensuring higher reimbursement rates for their medical specialty than they are to be working toward greater insurance availability or more attention to patient needs. Lobbying in Washington is largely about issues relating to professions.

The Importance of Investing in a Washington Policy Presence

Few scholars have addressed these issues directly, but Jeffrey Berry did so in his book *The New Liberalism* (1999). He noted the greater effectiveness of citizen groups of the political left compared to those of the right in affecting the national agenda, and he attributed this to their efforts to build a Washington research infrastructure rather than relying only on grassroots efforts. Berry also noted the heavily post-material issue concerns of the liberal groups he studied, and this is reflected in the data presented above as well. Environmental groups deviate from the heavy predominance of occupational groups in Washington in general, and they have been quite effective in pushing many environmental issues to the forefront of the national agenda. It is clear therefore that the political agenda is not immune to pressure if the groups can mobilize. We see little movement to push for issues relating to low-wage workers or those in poverty, or even to relieve homeowners struggling with crushing mortgages during the financial and mortgage crisis of 2008, partly because there are so few interest groups in Washington speaking out in favor of those constituencies. Bankers, mortgage insurance companies, and large corporations like General Motors certainly are present, however, and speaking with voices amplified by the number of lobbyists they can recruit.

The Unintended Biases of Federalism

Lisa Miller (2008) raised troubling issues of agenda control in her study of the politics of crime control at three levels of the federal system. An unintended consequence of the increased "federalization" of the issue of crime over the past

several decades is that neighborhood groups, which typically have found ways to participate at the local level (e.g., in public hearings, city council meetings, and directly with police authorities), are virtually excluded from policy debates at the state and national levels. Looking at lists of witnesses involved on crime issues at the national level, she notes a predominance of law enforcement and public authorities. At the local level, participation is much broader, and includes many who live in neighborhoods where crime and poverty is a serious problem. These groups typically are based locally, however, and do not coalesce into national- or state-level organizations with the organizational resources needed to play the lobbying game. Venue shifting, biases in mobilization, and policy agendas all come together in Miller's study.

Journalists and politicians often raise issues about improper access of interest groups. The accumulated literature about the social class and occupational bias in the mobilization of interests that the literature has continually documented over the past several decades suggests that these are real concerns for the strength of democracy. However, the issue is not so much about the access and right of organized interests to develop relations with government officials; of course, they must be able to trade information with them—government often depends on the information provided from within various professional communities. The real issues relate to the inability or unwillingness of members of the general public to mobilize into groups themselves, and that of elected officials to recognize that when they listen to what is being said in Washington there are tremendous distortions in what voices are massively amplified and what voices are not heard at all.

FUTURE AGENDAS OF AGENDA STUDIES

Schattschneider's dual observations about groups and agendas have been at the core of our subfield for almost fifty years now and there is no reason to abandon these important questions. One might suggest abandonment after such a time period if it were apparent that rigorous empirical work could not be done, as some argued about the "agenda denial" idea so prominent in the 1960s. Studies of agenda setting have gained from the creation of large infrastructure projects that have allowed us now to enumerate the items that are on various agendas: congressional, presidential, media, state, and judicial agendas can be studied through established databases or through simple electronic searches.

This review of where we stand has made clear a number of points of interest in the literature but also items obviously needing further detailed work. Who can frame? What determines movements or shifts in collective framing, and what roles do lobbyists play in that? How effective are lobbyists, and under what conditions,

in venue shopping? What is the impact of bias in the mobilization of interests in the composition of the public agenda? To what extent do political parties and elected officials raise issues that are of concern to diffuse publics even if they do not have powerful interest group sponsors? How do groups work with government allies in advocating for positions in the policy process that both share (see Hall and Deardorff 2006)? To what degree do elected officials accurately judge the biases in the group system?

One generation ago the literature on interest groups in comparative politics was largely disconnected from that in the United States, and the US literature focused largely on the federal government only (and even more specifically on Congress). Today there is less of an intellectual divide and there are fewer logistical justifications for such divisions so we can look forward to much more ambitious projects as well as the development of a theoretically coherent comparative literature. No matter what the points of comparison (e.g., across time, across countries, across issue domains, across levels of the federal system, or across different institutional agendas), scholars are much more likely to take seriously the problem of studying both the individual actions of lobbyists and interest groups and the collective patterns that can be studied only by looking at entire policy issues or issue communities.

Assessing the roles of groups in affecting what policymakers in Washington hear about is sobering because it is so apparent that the group system amplifies the voices of many corporate actors and virtually shuts out millions of Americans, as Schattschneider noted so forcefully. The massive mobilization of resources to save "Wall Street" but which ignored "Main Street" in the 2008 financial bail-out is a case in point. However, the political system is not made up only of interest groups, and politicians must reflect broader interests as well. There is certainly nothing in the interest group system to suggest accurate representation of the views and concerns of all Americans. Thus, understanding the processes described here has theoretical and great practical importance as well.