

POLS 541  
Fall 2006  
Prof. Baumgartner

Questions for Week 2, Sep 14.

Readings: Schattschneider, Bachrach and Baratz, Downs, Cobb, Ross, and Ross, and Walker.

1. Critique Schattschneider's views of democracy as described in his last chapter. Is it always better, normatively speaking, for a conflict to be socialized? Any drawbacks? What is his argument?
2. Why is Schattschneider's work so influential? What do you make of the evidence?
3. Bachrach and Baratz make one of those arguments that everyone dutifully cites, then ignores. In fact, their article is the number one most cited article in the entire history of the APSR. Review their point and discuss how it could be used to drive an empirical research project rather than ignored.
4. What are the routes to agenda-access described by Cobb, Ross, and Ross? Is their set of models complete? What are the difficulties in applying this perspective? Can it be used as a guide for research?
5. Downs was wrong: The environment never went away as a political problem. Evaluate the importance of this article in light of this. Why is his point still influential?
6. Discuss the methods developed by Walker in his article. Why were these not picked up more systematically by others? Or have they been?
7. Many of the authors this week discuss issues that would seem to be related to framing or issue-definition. Do any of them discuss this explicitly? How is the work related to this question?
8. Most authors here discuss how issues rise, but for each actor interested in expanding a conflict there are others interested in containing the conflict. Discuss the major arguments in the readings that relate to strategies of issue-containment.