Loss of Parliamentary Control Due to Mediatization and Europeanization

A Longitudinal and Cross-sectional Analysis of Agenda Building in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

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Abstract
The central question in this study is whether the power of the media agenda over the political agenda has recently increased. The agenda-building dynamics are established using cross-country time-series data on four issues, covering fifteen and eight years respectively of British and Dutch parliamentary debates and newspaper articles. Structural equation models show that the parliamentary agenda is more influenced by the media agenda than the other way around, and that the power balance has shifted even more in favour of the media. We additionally find that media power is especially associated with issues within the European domain. Our study contributes empirically to the ‘mediatization’ debate in a EU context, which is largely limited to the realm of theoretical speculation.
Introduction

The reciprocity between the agenda of politicians and public opinion is a major theme in political science. Research results indicate that political parties often adjust their policies to public opinion. Conversely, public opinion is sensitive to political events and popular leaders, at least when the issue at hand is considered to be sufficiently important. It has long been recognized that mass media play a vital role in forging the links between politicians and citizens in modern democracies. Politicians, often ignorant of public preferences, monitor the media for a proxy measure of the public mood. Citizens would

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hardly be aware of political policies and performance, were it not for the media. The media offer a forum for political profiling on behalf of politics, as well as for the exchange of ideas and political pressurizing on behalf of society. But the media do not just act as neutral transmitters. They exert an autonomous influence. Agenda-setting scholars have provided us with a body of evidence for media’s capacity to raise issue prominence in the audience’s minds. Evidence of media influence on the political agenda is not quite as elaborate. This study sets out to expand agenda-building research through time and across borders.

We will first address the question as to who is leading whom in the dance of MPs and journalists. The next question concerns the change in this power play, referred to as the ‘mediatization’ question. Research suggests that politicians have increasingly lost their grip on the media, not only in terms of the negative and cynical tone of the news, but also in terms of attention. Finally, it will be assessed whether domestic and European policy domains trigger different agenda-building dynamics. Evidence regarding the first question, on agenda building, is still inconclusive. To our knowledge, the second question concerning a shifting balance of power has not been addressed earlier with time-series data, and third, agenda-building studies have mostly been confined to national settings, especially to the USA.

Agenda setting and agenda building

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Agenda setting and agenda building are about influencing the topics of discussion, the agenda, of others. The majority of agenda-setting studies have aimed at clarifying when, how, and to what degree the agenda of the mass media influences the agenda of citizens. In addition to early studies showing that the media agenda ‘primes’ issues that are used by citizens to evaluate politics and political candidates, much work has been done recently on the question of how the media agenda moderates the effects of social and economic cues on public preferences and retrospective voting.

The sub-area of studies directly linking the political agenda and the media agenda is commonly referred to as agenda building. Quoting Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester: ‘...a crucial dimension of power is the ability to create public events. And since access to media is an essential ingredient in creating and sustaining the realities of publics, a study of such access is simultaneously a study of power relationships’. We will continue by presenting an inventory of agenda-building literature to understand how this political battle for access is settled. Arguments and studies will be compared, which either favour politically controlled agenda-building relations or leave room for a powerful media agenda.


10 See, for example, Jon Krosnick and Don Kinder, ‘Altering the Foundations of Support for the President through Priming’; *American Political Science Review*, 84 (1990), 497-512; Susan Banducci and Jeffrey Karp, ‘How elections change the way in which citizens view the political system: Campaigns, media effects, and electoral outcomes in comparative perspective’; *British Journal of Political Science*, 33 (2003), 443-67.


THE CASE FOR TOP-DOWN AGENDA BUILDING

The foremost of several sound reasons for expecting political dominance over the media agenda is that political leaders of national or international allure are newsworthy. Galtung and Ruge explain: ‘The more threatening or beneficial the consequences that their actions may have for citizens, and the greater number of citizens likely to be affected, the more ‘relevant’ they are’. Additionally, journalists consider it part of their democratic task to favour the viewpoints of the political elite, who are, after all, the people’s representatives. Commitment to the routines of objective reporting will result in top-down agenda building as the natural state of affairs. Second, democratic political institutions provide an efficient and constant source of information, since officials have learned to anticipate media’s demands and to be available. Third, political elites often prefer secrecy when little popular credit can be gained. This aspect is tackled in Bachrach’s and Baratz’s analysis of the non-decision. Power is exercised just as much by succeeding in deliberately failing to act upon an issue forwarded by others, as it is by introducing an active policy on other issues.

Research results to back up this top-down relationship are easily found. John Kingdon speaks of a politically dominated cycle, due to media’s short attention span. Paul Light argues that Congress, rather than the news, is the primary source of domestic policy

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17 Shoemaker and Reese, *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*.
ideas for the US president. A study by Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg shows an unchallenged political agenda on economic issues in the Netherlands from the early 1980s. Flemming, Wood and Bohte found dominance of the US institutional agenda, especially of Congress. Time-series analyses during British and Dutch elections reveal that, in the final count, political parties set the media agenda. Weak or absent media effects are also found by Walker, by Pritchard and Berkowitz, and by Wanta and Foote.

THE CASE FOR MEDIACRATIC AGENDA BUILDING

Good reasons can be found for expecting the media agenda to affect the political agenda as well, which may be labelled as ‘mediacratic’ agenda building. First, politicians are urged to pay court to the media for their superior access to mass audiences. Politicians are forced to react to issues that arise in the media, because they risk being accused of inaction if they fail

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20 Paul C. Light, *The President’s Agenda: Domestic Policy Choice from Kennedy to Carter* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).


to deliver solutions quickly. They aim at taking the lead in public discussion, which means defining the terms through which the issue is understood. Politicians are eager to withhold this instrument of power from their opponents, as well as from ‘investigative’ journalists. Paradoxically, the wish to take the lead results in adjusting issue priorities to the taste of the media for conflict, drama and horse race. Second, the political arena does not form an airtight unity; rather, media scoops can often be traced to lack of loyalty or competition from within the political system, rather than to masterly journalism. If issues enter the public domain prematurely, politicians must look for ad hoc solutions, in order to satisfy both media and voters. Third, media’s reliance on their values of news production makes for choices and interpretations that are not always in the politician’s best interest. Since political actors often disagree about issue priorities, the media are enabled to focus on controversial issues that are expected to deliver a continuing stream of political conflicts and political drama.

Empirical support for media dominance can already be found in the Langs’ Watergate study, where they address the role of obtrusive and continuous issues. Studies


by Wood and Peake, Edwards and Wood, and Soroka reveal a dominant media agenda for unobtrusive, dramatic issues, often regarding foreign policy. For other examples, we refer to Gilberg et al., Protess et al., Trumbo, Baumgartner and Jones, and Baumgartner, Jones and Leech.

The Balance of Power

The bottom line of the close link between journalists and officials is the mutual affirmation of their ‘raison-d’être’. The news privileges of officials are a repetitive symbolic reinforcement of their legitimacy. In turn, officials’ authority rubs off on the credibility of a story. In the words of Gadi Wolfsfeld: ‘Power is a question of relative dependence: who needs whom more at


32 Hallin, *We keep America on Top of the World: Television Journalism and the Public Sphere*. 
the time of transaction?33 When drawing up the balance on the basis of agenda-building literature, with evidence either in favour of parliamentary or media control, the debate about the distribution of power turns out to be inconclusive. It suggests that agenda building leaves room for media influence, beside parliamentary control, thus giving rise to hypothesis one.

H1 Not only does the parliamentary agenda influence the media agenda, but the parliamentary agenda is also influenced by the media agenda.

Mediatization

Mediatization of the political debate implies either politicians’ increased responsiveness to media caprices or politicians’ loss of monopoly over news coverage. It can easily be expressed in terms of agenda building:

H2 The influence of the media agenda on the parliamentary agenda has increased relative to the influence in the reverse direction.

Speculations on the mediatization of politics are widespread,34 but empirical evidence lags behind. Four groups of arguments pertaining to modern societies will be discussed here.

First, the ICT revolution has led to almost hourly news scoops and deadlines. The news becomes old hat sooner, tempting politicians to give up their own agenda and link up with the news of the day to remain newsworthy. Second, with the emergence of liberalized and competitive news markets, a party logic gave way to a media logic. No longer can news organizations spend the lion’s share of their resources on tiresome and complex politics. Profits, in terms of sales and personal status, are to be gained in the scoop, favouring the


proactive or audacious journalist. Third, ideology has retreated from citizens’ everyday lives. The traditional links of loyalty between parties and news organizations have shrunk, as have the opportunities for politicians to reach voters in terms of time, space and sound bites. Since voters increasingly rely on the media to make political choices, so do politicians.

The three trends highlighted above are intertwined causes of the emergence of a new journalistic practice, labelled ‘interpretative’ or ‘pragmatic’ reporting. Prudence, respect and integral reporting typified journalists’ ‘sacerdotal’ approach to politicians, which still prevailed in the 1980s. The political agenda was the central point of reference for the daily news agenda. According to the interpretative style, only the criteria of news selection determine whether an issue will turn into a story. This means less attention enjoyed by politicians and more journalistic commentary. To ensure the attention of an audience, while posing as critical watchdogs, journalists dwell on scandals and conflicts.

Fourth, institutional changes that weaken the formal power of national politicians will decrease their efficacy to build the media agenda. We refer to the theoretical perspective of ‘multilevel governance’, which describes European integration as a process of central states transferring parts of both their formal decision-making authority and actual policy-making


influence to diverse realms of society, to public and private sectors, on a local, regional, and international level, particularly to the EU. Central states are still influential actors, but they are now merely influential actors among many others. We argue that national politicians face increased policy uncertainty as soon as they enter the European arena. This acts as an incentive for the media to actively search for stories and alternative news sources, especially when they sense lingering policy disagreement among negotiating partners. History teaches us that such diplomatic clashes are right around the corner in the EU.

The hypothesis that media are more influential in the more unpredictable foreign arena, is supported by agenda-building studies. Wood and Peake conclude: ‘...the foreign policy agenda operates in the context of a continually unfolding international drama. The drama depends on the media for production and interpretation. The president [...] has no script and often must respond in impromptu fashion to media interpretations’. National media may be drawn to alternative incentives through the workings of news values and

consider the regular MP less often as being an authoritative news source. As Bennett argues with his ‘trail of power’, ‘...when decisive actors emerge outside of domestic political institutions, journalists can be expected to bring their voices and views into the stories’.  

A substantial and influential body of literature contests media’s role in shaping foreign policy. One should be aware that these studies evaluate the political impact of (1) the tone, and not the agenda, of the news, and (2) usually in one specific type of foreign event: US military interventions. In such international confrontations, the president’s executive position is exceptional, the governmental communication apparatus highly hierarchical and controlled, and the media entirely dependent on official statements. In line with Livingston, Virgil Hawkins stresses exactly this point: ‘It is important to note that intervention decisions, however, are extreme examples of conflict-related foreign policy decisions. Academic discussion that is limited to intervention decisions will neglect to examine the much broader effect of the media (or rather lack thereof) on foreign policy decisions’. Besides, such monopoly over foreign affairs typically associated with the US president, is out of reach for European heads of state as soon as EU issues are concerned;


there are always fifteen of them (during the research period), and all claim authority. At the same time, European media, serving smaller and internationally dependent countries, traditionally offer more extensive coverage of foreign affairs than US media do. Hence, they have learned to use other (international) channels of information than just their executive.

This fourth argument regarding media empowerment through the decreased authority of national news sources certainly applies to national parliaments. The national parliament is irrefutably the institution that saw its sphere of influence most seriously compromised, if only for its limited options of receiving updated information about EU affairs. To test this theory, an issue-specific hypothesis is called for. But the obvious question to address first is whether European integration matters at all to agenda building. If so, we expect politicians to be dealing with increasingly identical problems, as well as greater convergence among the European media.

H3 Both national parliamentary agendas and national media agendas in EU member states will converge over time.

This idea that especially politicians who are fully in charge feel entitled to put pressure on the media agenda, while journalists readily follow, will become manifest in different distributions of power across different issues.

H4 Especially for issues with a strong European dimension, media agenda-building power increases vis-à-vis parliamentary agenda-building power.

Note that we do not expect a total elimination of the national parliamentary agenda. The EU still suffers from an information deficit. EU decision-making is complex and technocratic, generating copy that hardly appeals to the home editors. It takes a long period

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50 Jürgen Gerhards, ‘Westeuropäische Integration und die Schwierigkeiten der Entstehung einer europäische Öffentlichkeit’; *Zeitschrift für Soziologie, 22* (1993), 96-110; Christoph Meyer, ‘Political
of socialization for EU correspondents to grasp the proceedings themselves and to become insiders. Thus, less power of national elites will not primarily result in less news attention, as one might expect, but in increased responsiveness to the national media agenda.

**Method**

**SELECTION OF NATIONS, ISSUES, AGENDAS AND TIME FRAME**

The United Kingdom and the Netherlands were studied, being EU states at opposing ends of the scale regarding the transfer of decision-making power to the EU. The UK, still one of Europe’s most influential nations, entered the EU only in 1973. Reluctance towards further integration is still manifest throughout society. The Netherlands has supported the European cause all along the line. The question of whether or not to go along with new initiatives never provoked real political discussion. Until the 2005 referendum on the EU Constitution, Dutch citizens had hardly questioned their government’s EU policy. The choice for the four issue domains is based on the extent to which the decision-making power has been transferred to the European level. Two issues are typically EU-based: agriculture and environment (pillar 1 of the EU). Drugs policy is still dealt with on the

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54 See, for example, Hooghe and Marks, *Multi-Level Governance and European integration*. 
national level. Immigration is positioned somewhat in between national and European
decision-making. It is classed in pillar 3 of the EU. Steps towards a common policy have
been taken with the Schengen agreements (1990). We consider this an issue ‘in transition’.

We use parliamentary debates to measure the political agenda. However, there is no
such thing as the political agenda. The relationship between parliament, rather than
government, and the media is of special interest to us, because the mission of both is to act
as guardians of democracy. Since MPs are elected, while journalists are not, a focus on the
power play between them provides an interesting insight into contemporary democracy. In
their thorough review of agenda-building literature, Walgrave and Van Aelst call for a
combination of symbolic and substantive agendas.\textsuperscript{55} They are critical of the symbolic
agenda, which in their opinion represents little more than an agenda of political rhetoric that
succumbs too easily to media pressure. Although they have an important point, the authors
refer only to presidential speeches and party press releases\textsuperscript{56}, which are indeed specifically
targeted at the media. These forms of political communication are thereby wrongly equated
with parliamentary debates or congressional hearings. The latter are not primarily designed
for reaching the media, but are the central instrument of parliamentary performance.

There is less academic disagreement about the choice of the media agenda.
Newspapers are used here. Still, the argument that television is a more important medium, is
an often-heard one. This argument is especially relevant for studies about media effects and
public opinion. A study aiming at media effects and politics depends less on the reach of a
medium than on its reputation. Moreover, the correlation between issues in TV news and
issues in the press, as well as the correlation among newspapers, is extremely high.\textsuperscript{57}

British parliamentary documents have been digitally available for longer than the
Dutch archives. This is unfortunate but unproblematic, since the period of research still

\textsuperscript{55} Symbolic agendas include all political forums intended for the communication or deliberation of
political viewpoints, whereas substantive agendas include actual policy measures.

\textsuperscript{56} The argument of Walgrave and Van Aelst expresses our reason for not working with party press
releases, a common indicator for the political agenda. Moreover, in many countries party press
releases are too irregular to allow for a time-series analysis.

\textsuperscript{57} Kleinnijenhuis, ‘Het Publiek Volgt Media die de Politiek Volgen’.
coincides, as it should, with the aforementioned societal trends, enabling the trends towards mediatization and agenda convergence to be revealed. The interpretative style forced its way into British journalism as early as the 1980s, whereas it took another decade for its first signs to show in Dutch journalism, due to the heritage of pillarisation and the late arrival of media competition.\textsuperscript{58} The timing of European key events\textsuperscript{59} prescribes a research period encompassing the 1990s and the turn of the millennium, which is covered by both data sets.

British debates and newspaper articles were collected from 22-11-1988 to 31-12-2003.\textsuperscript{60} Three national quality newspapers with a high circulation and a different political outlook were chosen: the Times (liberal conservative), the Guardian (social democrat) and the Independent (liberal democrat).\textsuperscript{61} Dutch debates\textsuperscript{62} and newspaper articles could be gathered from 1995 to 2003, from three high-circulation quality dailies: NRC Handelsblad (liberal conservative), Algemeen Dagblad (popular), and De Volkskrant (social democrat).

Document selection is based on the occurrence of broad issue-specific search terms in the text,\textsuperscript{63} followed by checks for relevance, which are discussed in the next section. In total, 251,942 British newspaper articles and 166,419 Dutch ones were analyzed. Since debates


\textsuperscript{59} Among which most importantly, the Maastricht Treaty signed in 1992, the Amsterdam Treaty signed in 1997, the Treaty of Nice signed in 2001 and the introduction of the Euro in 2002.

\textsuperscript{60} Downloaded from the \textit{Hansard} internet site, the official report of both British Houses.

\textsuperscript{61} All British and Dutch newspapers are downloaded from Lexis Nexis. The Independent and Independent on Sunday start in 1989 and 1990 respectively. To deal with the non-simultaneous start of the newspapers a weight of 1,5 was appointed to media hits in years with two newspapers. Hits for the Times and the Independent were multiplied with 6/7, once their Sunday-editions were introduced.

\textsuperscript{62} Dutch debates were obtained from the publishing house for government documentation, SDU.

\textsuperscript{63} British debates were integrally downloaded. Dutch debates were selected according to the SDU classification system based on policy domains. Relevance was established afterwards by checking for the presence of the same search terms as used for article selection.
do not consist of such sections, the number of days on which the issues were discussed is a more meaningful unit: 2,349 days of British debates and 333 days of Dutch debates.\textsuperscript{64}

\textbf{INFORMATION EXTRACTION BY MEANS OF AUTOMATED CONTENT ANALYSIS}

Computers lack the ability to interpret and judge for themselves. A design for automated content analysis requires the theoretical concepts to be translated into precise categories of semantically related words that correspond as accurately as possible to actual occurrences. Our theoretical model includes one central concept: the agenda. It is defined as the amount of attention paid to an issue within one time unit. In turn, attention is made operative as the number of textual occurrences of any issue-specific keyword.

To define the issues, a hierarchical list of keywords was drawn up, covering each issue as exhaustively as possible.\textsuperscript{65} Since a computer does not know how to distinguish between keyword occurrences in different semantic contexts, the keywords were linked to disambiguation criteria to avoid incorrect occurrences in the scores of attention. These disambiguation criteria prescribe that a keyword should only be counted when it occurs simultaneously with semantically related keywords in a context unit (either the document as a whole, or a ‘ramped window’ of, for example, 30 or 5 words).\textsuperscript{66}

Whereas these criteria aim at excluding incorrect keyword occurrences within relevant documents, there should also be checks for relevance aimed at the documents that are included erroneously. First, a random selection of the documents was manually examined to see whether the subjects indeed pertained to one of the four issues. As a \textsuperscript{64}The difference in numbers is due to the fact that the Dutch SDU selected debates in which an issue was the primary subject, whereas the British debates were selected if one search term was mentioned. The British debates include more peripheral hits. Such lack of correspondence matters little to the results, since the score for attention is not dichotomous, but increases with the number of keyword hits per article. Hence, debates with only peripheral issue relevance hardly contribute to the final scores.\textsuperscript{65} The wordlist of each issue is made up of synonyms, for example both ‘drugs’, ‘narcotics’ and ‘controlled substances’ or ‘herbicide’ and ‘weed killer’, as well as hyponyms, for example ‘windmills’ and ‘biomass’ as subcategories of ‘sustainable energy’ or ‘Pakistani’ as a subcategory of ‘immigrant’.\textsuperscript{66} The list of keywords and disambiguation criteria is available from the authors.
result, the original search terms were refined by adding restrictions to the terms that appeared too ambiguous (filter 1). Second, a filter was applied to media data to delete articles that were positioned in, for example, the sports and entertainment sections of the newspaper (filter 2). Such forms of fiction seldom reflect current political discussion.

Custom-made software was used to transform the raw documents to a uniform input format (xml), to search all documents for the presence of the keywords, and count the relevant hits. In the case of newspapers, the sum of the number of hits in the article’s body and twice the number of hits in the headline or leader was calculated. This decision is based on the assumption that a keyword in a headline or leader indicates special commitment to the issue. Due to the lack of comparable structure in the debates, every such hit was treated equally. The square roots of the scores were used to decrease the influence of outliers on statistical tests and to render variables with a more ‘normal’ distribution.

MODELING STRATEGY

Since the aim of this research is to test explicit hypotheses about the reciprocal influence relationships between the media and parliamentary agendas, we favoured deductive structural equation modelling (SEM) rather than an inductive modelling approach, such as vector autoregression models (VAR). SEM models allow for a parsimonious, direct test of our hypotheses, since they allow endogenous variables to influence each other reciprocally.

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67 See, for example, Wouter van Atteveldt, Nel Ruigrok and Jan Kleinnijenhuis, ‘Associative Framing: a unified method for measuring media frames and the media agenda’; submitted to W. Evans (ed.) special issue of Social Science Computer Review on Computers and Content Analysis.

68 Both the media and political data are skewed. Box-Cox-tests, based on the transformation \( x' = \frac{\log(x^{\lambda} - 1)}{\lambda} \), showed that the optimal \( \lambda \) is \( \lambda = 0.40 \) and \( \lambda = 0.37 \) for the British and Dutch political agendas respectively, and \( \lambda = 0.02 \) and \( \lambda = 0.12 \) for their media agendas. The common solution of a log-transformation, \( x' = \frac{\log(x+1)}{\log(2)} \), which equals \( \lambda = 0 \) in the Box-Cox transformation, would reduce the skewness too much. We opted for a uniform square root transformation (\( \lambda = 0.5 \)) for all agendas.

even within a single time period. Because comparisons between models for different nations, issues and periods are required to test our hypotheses, the models should be parsimonious. Inductive models such as VAR models use large numbers of parameters to fit the peculiarities of the data, which are simply irrelevant to test hypotheses of a comparative nature, while still not offering tests of reciprocal influence.

Let us immediately acknowledge, however, that the hypotheses to be tested do not specify the precise time dynamics involved in the agenda-building process. Therefore, inductive modelling techniques were used in an exploratory fashion to uncover the time lags of reciprocal influence that our SEM models should take into account. VAR models gave us a priori knowledge about a plausible lag length, potential seasonality in the time series, and the number of lags to incorporate in the SEM models.

A thorny question is whether the parliament-media interactions should be modelled with daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly data. Although MPs and journalists interact on a daily basis, they are not always able to respond instantaneously, due to a variety of constraints such as other hot news and the inertia of political institutions. MPs cannot interrogate the government on every issue every day, because of the pre-determined parliamentary agenda, for instance. These common-sense considerations to limit the range of possible time units to weekly and monthly units match the empirical results from the few longitudinal agenda-building analyses available. Here we took advantage of the exploratory power of VAR models to arrive at an informed choice between weekly and monthly data.

The weekly and monthly VAR models included the media and the political agenda as dependent variables, and their prior values as independent variables. The weekly models

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71 Craig Trumbo (1995) finds media effects that last between two weeks and three months. Wood and Peake (1998) observe media effects to diminish within three weeks. Edwards III and Wood (1999) find media effects lasting up to six weeks on average. Stuart Soroka finds media effects using a lag of one month (2002; 2003). Kleinnijenhuis (2003) concludes that the political agenda needs more than two weeks to react to media coverage.

72 The results of the Vector Autoregression Models are available from the authors.
largely corresponded to the monthly results, since most significant effects in the chaotic weekly patterns occurred within the last eight weeks and a year earlier. This indicates a consistent yearly seasonality especially in the parliamentary agenda, due to holidays and the vested rhythm of the parliamentary year (e.g., speeches from the throne). Hence, for reasons of parsimony and statistical performance of the regression residuals\(^73\), a monthly time unit was chosen.

However, choosing months as the unit of analysis implies that short-term effects (up to four weeks) will appear as instantaneous influence. Although instantaneous, or 'synchronous', causal influence may seem an odd concept at first glance, it is founded on the same causal idea as lagged causality, i.e. that a cause \(A(t-1)\) is accompanied above chance by an effect \(B(t)\). Instantaneous causation means that the effect of \(A(t-1)\) on \(B(t)\) is mediated by \(A(t)\). To put it differently, whereas lagged causality entails that the correlation between \(A(t-2)\) and \(B(t)\) vanishes when \(A(t-1)\) is held constant, instantaneous causality should be assumed when the correlation between \(A(t-1)\) and \(B(t)\) vanishes when \(A(t)\) is held constant.\(^74\)

Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests were performed to test whether the parliamentary and media agendas for each issue in each country are stationary (see Table 1).

Table 1 about here please

With monthly data (one time lag), the null hypothesis of a unit root in the agendas was consistently rejected at the 1% level of significance (once at the 5% level). It was thus unnecessary to difference the data to render them stationary: there is no deterministic trend or seasonality in the data that interferes with parameter estimation.

\(^73\) The residuals of VAR-models based on weekly and monthly data were compared on remaining serial correlation (Breusch-Godfrey) and autoregressive conditional heteroscedasticity (Engle’s ARCH). We compared weekly and monthly data with one lag and a yearly seasonal lag (of 52 weeks, or 12 months). Moving from weekly to monthly data reduced the number of series with negative serial autocorrelation in the residuals. ARCH disappeared in all but two of the series with monthly data.

Informed by the short-term causality and yearly seasonality in the monthly VAR models, an initial parsimonious SEM model is easily given, with assumed dominance of instantaneous causality as the point of departure:

\[
\text{parl}(t) = a \text{med}(t) + b \text{parl}(t-1) + c \text{parl}(t-12) \\
\text{med}(t) = d \text{parl}(t) + e \text{med}(t-1) + f \text{med}(t-12)
\]

The parliamentary agenda is indicated by ‘parl’, ‘med’ is the media agenda, ‘(t)’ at present time, ‘(t-1)’ with a lag of one month, ‘(t-12)’ with a lag of 12 months. Including the yearly lag (t-12) in the SEM models controls for seasonality in the data as was detected by the VAR models, but not included in the Dickey-Fuller unit-root tests of monthly data. We used the program LISREL 8 to provide maximum likelihood estimates of the parameters \(a\) to \(f\). It should be noted that this pair of equations entails that the cross-lagged influences of the agendas on each other are completely mediated by the present values of the agendas. If it would appear that these equations do not fit the data, a cross-lagged influence of one time unit would be added to the model according to the modification indices, resulting in the equations:

\[
\text{parl}(t) = a \text{med}(t) + b \text{med}(t-1) + c \text{parl}(t-1) + d \text{parl}(t-12) \\
\text{med}(t) = e \text{parl}(t) + f \text{parl}(t-1) + g \text{med}(t-1) + h \text{med}(t-12)
\]

Next, influences that appeared insignificant on the basis of their \(t\)-values were deleted from the models. One modelling consideration remains to be addressed. One should not neglect variables that may cause a spurious correlation between the endogenous variables. Every agenda-building researcher must consider the potential impact of real-world cues (RWC) on

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75 To test whether the actual variance-covariance matrices could have been expected from the estimated parameters of the model, Absolute Fit Indices Chi-square and RMSEA will be presented, as well as Comparative Fit Indices (CFI), (see, for example, Anne Boomsma, ‘Reporting Analyses of Covariance Structures’; Structural Equation Modelling, 7 (2000), 461-83).

76 It turned out that this modelling strategy always converged in a single model regarding the crossover influences, i.e. instantaneous causation rather than cross-lagged causation.
the concerns of both politicians and journalists. In the current design that covers four issues, one is faced with a wide range of possible real-world cues. For instance, a RWC for agriculture may concern export figures, the number of BSE cases, national or EU subsidy expenditures or the size of the butter mountain. Ideally, but hardly feasible, one would control for every single one of them. Although different indicators might be thought of in the area of immigration as well, more than in other policy domains there is one specific type of real-world data available that touches at the heart of what immigration is about, i.e. the number of potential immigrants actually knocking on the door. Supposing that both media and parliament readily respond to real-world indicators, even if these RWCs would relate only vaguely or partially to a policy area, they would certainly respond to the number of asylum applications received by the UK and the Netherlands. Therefore, admittedly merely as a preliminary indication of the probability that our estimated parliament-media interactions are nothing but methodological artefacts, we checked for immigration whether monthly figures of asylum applications adjust the agenda-building parameters as originally estimated. Since British figures before January 1991 are not available, a baseline model was created by rerunning the original model for this shorter period. The series of Dutch applications match the original research period.

The UK data cover 182 months per issue (728 in total). Dutch data cover 99 months per issue (396 in total). To compare the flows of influence through time, the Dutch data were split into two equal parts. The British data were split into three parts, of which the two most recent periods are equal to the Dutch periods.

**Results**

**CHRONOLOGY**

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78 The British asylum figures were kindly delivered by the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate. We are obliged to Rens Vliegenthart and Hajo Boomgaarden for the Dutch figures, which they retrieved from the Dutch Central Statistics Office (CBS).
Prior to presenting the results of the quantitative analysis, we will give a brief qualitative description of the events that caused the most noticeable peaks on the agendas. This should give a global impression of the extent to which parliament and the media face similar concerns. Moreover, it will tell us whether the key events of the issues are predominantly European or domestic, irrespective of their EU-pillar classification. Figures 1 and 2 show media (top lines) and parliamentary attention (bottom lines) for each of the issues, with the Dutch issues below the British equivalents. The letters above the lines indicate the events described below. Visual inspection reveals the interconnectedness of parliament and the media, with the peaks on both agendas roughly coinciding on many occasions. Also, a strong seasonality of the parliamentary agenda is apparent, amongst other reasons, due to the structural absence of debates during parliamentary holidays.

Figure 1 about here please

**British Agriculture** - In February 1990 (a) the press and parliament discuss ways to compensate farmers affected by Mad Cow Disease, one of which being the devaluation of the EU green pound. March 1996 (b) marks the start of public hysteria and the British beef ban by the EC, when the link between BSE and Variant Creutzfeld Jacob Disease is established. In March 2001(c) Foot-and-Mouth Disease has spread across the country.

**Dutch Agriculture** - February 1997 (d) sees the outbreak of swine fever. In November 2000 (e) there is a revival of public fear of beef, with new BSE cases in France and one in the Netherlands. The fear that British Foot-and-Mouth Disease will reach the continent rages across Europe and this fear is justified when an outbreak is confirmed in late March 2001 (f).

**British Environment** – Both the media and parliament discuss plans to privatize electricity and water in July 1989 (a), as well Thatcher’s input at the G7 summit in Paris. In May 1992 (b) the press anticipates the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro held on June 1, discussed in parliament in June. News in December 1997 (c) is devoted to the UN

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79 For a more extensive overview, see Lonneke van Noije (Forthcoming 2007).
Conference on Climate Change in Kyoto. In October and November 2000 (d) the southeast of the UK faces outbreaks of severe flooding.

_Dutch Environment_ – In December 1997 (e) the Kyoto conference is the only thing on the media’s agenda. A parliamentary committee is formed in October 1998 (f) to investigate mysteries surrounding an airplane crash - ‘de Bijlerramp’ - in 1992. Both parliament and the press show interest in the The Hague Climate Summit in November 2000 (g). In November 2002 parliament deals with the liberalization of the electricity market and with the safety of nuclear power plant Petten.

_Figure 2 about here please_

_British Drugs_ – The summer of 1989 (a) marks the US ‘War on Drugs’ in Colombia, in which the UK is personally involved, with British servicemen accused of training Colombian hitmen. British politicians fear a ‘crack explosion’ in Britain. The Panama crisis explains the parliamentary peak in December 1989 (b). In June 1996 (c) parliament debates strategies for fighting drug abuse. A discussion on the reclassification of cannabis hits the news in July 2001 (d), while only appearing in the House of Commons with the official announcement by Minister Blunkett in November 2001 (e).

_Dutch Drugs_ – In April 1996 (f) the conclusions of a parliamentary investigation of dubious police methods to fight drugs networks was on both agendas. November 1996 (g) marks an escalation of the French-Dutch soft drugs dispute. In February 2002 (h) politics fights ‘cocaine swallowers’, often deprived young drug smugglers from the Antilles.

_British Immigration_ – In November 1991 (a) there is media and parliament focus on Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong. In April and May 1999 (b) both agendas turn to the war in former Yugoslavia with its many refugees. News and debate in September 2001 (c) is first devoted to the rising political tension between the UK and France about illegal immigration via the Eurotunnel, and soon it is all about the terrorist attacks in New York.

_Dutch Immigration_ – In September 1997 (d) ‘white illegals’ figure high on both agendas, when the Turkish tax-paying tailor Gümüs is forced to leave the country. The war in Yugoslavia and the urgent need to offer refuge to the ethnic Albanians demands the
attention of parliament and the media April 1999 (e). In April 2002 (f) the national elections in May are being organized, in which right-wing populist Pim Fortuyn has pushed the immigration issue to prominence on the campaign agenda and is notoriously successful. The parallel is drawn between his success and Le Pen’s near-presidential victory in France. On May 6 (g) Pim Fortuyn is murdered, causing unprecedented national outrage.

This rough outline of key events suggests that a causal relationship between the agendas of the media and parliament exists, considering the level of shared interests observed especially in the current affairs of agriculture, immigration and Dutch drugs. The strongest European dimension can be observed in the events of agriculture (e.g., European-wide epidemics; EU ban on British beef) and immigration (e.g., Yugoslavia, British-French dispute over protection of the Eurotunnel, European right-wing populism).

RESULTS OF THE STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELS
A first general remark to be made is that the model estimates exhibit a clear yearly pattern in the parliamentary agenda, while the media agenda shows a stronger short-term autoregression. To put it differently, politicians behave like old watchdogs that return to their homes, whereas the media resemble a pack of hounds that briefly follow their interests of the day. In this section we will concentrate on the question ‘who influences whom’, rather than on the time-variant structure of the influence process. Overall, the model fit is very satisfactory in all cases with CFI near to 1, RMSEA smaller than 0.05 and a p-value higher than 0.05 (see Table 2).

Overall agenda building (H1) - On account of the first hypothesis that agenda building involves both parliamentary and media influence, figure 3 visualizes the overall British and Dutch agenda-building processes respectively, tested over the whole research period, taking the four issues together.

Figure 3 about here please

There is room for significant flows of crossover influence in both countries, despite the considerable degree of independence displayed by both actors. Clearly, though, parliament
and the press do not treat each other as the ultimate source for their agendas, signified by
the modest crossover coefficients. The flows of influence are indeed bi-directional in the
United Kingdom, with a dominant media agenda. In the Netherlands there is no question of a
balance of power in which both parties are represented. The Dutch media agenda is the only
agenda that seems to matter. The models already indicate the independence and power (or
rather the lack thereof) of the British and Dutch national democratic institutions, which at the
same time touches on an inherent agenda-building question; which agenda is the dominant
one? In both countries the answer tends towards the media agenda.

Agenda building in time (H2) - Has mediatization left its footprints in agenda
building? We move on to assess whether the balance of power is stable over time or
whether British and Dutch media have tightened their grip on the parliamentary agenda.

Table 2 about here please

In Table 2 the results for the British agenda-building process in periods one, two and three
can be found. In the early days, we already see a considerable media influence on
parliament ($b_{media} = 0.15$, $p = 0.53$, $RMSEA = 0.00$), with no parliamentary influence at all. In the
second period, media dominance has increased ($b_{media} = 0.19$, $p = 0.67$, $RMSEA = 0.00$), which
is reinforced in period three. Significant parliamentary influence is absent in all models.
British MPs seem highly and increasingly sensitive to the daily whims of the media, while
journalists take no notice of the interests of these politicians.

Turning to the Dutch situation, the trend points in the same direction, but the shift is
more pronounced. During the period 1995 up to 1999, parliament and the media manifest no
mutual interest whatsoever (Table 2). From 2000 onwards, the media have seized power
over parliament, while the reverse influence remains absent. Parliament has become highly
responsive to events that appear in the news.

The increase in media’s agenda-building power is statistically significant in both
countries. The $\chi^2$ test to compare subpopulations (in LISREL) rejects the null-hypothesis
that the models are essentially equal (UK period 1 vs. period 3: $\chi^2 = 59.83$, $p < 0.001$,
RMSEA=0.16; NL period 1 vs. period 2: \( \chi^2 = 18.17, p<0.05, \text{RMSEA}=0.07 \). This trend both in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands makes one think that in these democracies the collective interests of the people have come to be promoted by their political representatives only to the extent that they happen to coincide with news values.

**Agenda convergence (H3)** - In order to test whether politics and the news in different EU countries have come to display more similar concerns, the correlations between the British and Dutch parliamentary agendas and media agendas in period two and period three were compared. The parliamentary agendas have become more alike: the correlation coefficient has risen from \( r=0.28 \) (N=196, \( p<0.001 \)) to \( r=0.47 \) (N=200, \( p<0.001 \)). A cautious indication of an emerging European public sphere is the increased convergence of British and Dutch media agendas, from \( r=0.46 \) (N=196, \( p<0.001 \)) to \( r=0.65 \) (N=200, \( p<0.001 \)) in period 3. Both agenda convergences are significant (\( \Delta r_{\text{parl}}: t=2.20^*, \Delta r_{\text{media}}: t=2.74^{**} \)). Media appear at least as sensitive to the European setting of politics as parliaments do.

**Agenda building across issues (H4)** - On account of H4, we test the agenda-building model for each issue separately (Table 2). The differences between the models are again significant (UK all issues: \( \chi^2=172.52, p<0.001, \text{RMSEA}=0.19 \); NL all issues: \( \chi^2=90.85, p<0.001, \text{RMSEA}=0.17 \)). In both countries, the results for the issues of agriculture and drugs confirm our expectations that the media do not have as much grip on the parliamentary agenda of domestic issues as on the parliamentary agenda of European issues. In the UK, both EU issues (agriculture and environment) display media dominance, whereas every trace of influence vanishes for the issue of drugs. Still, the British parliament fails to set the media agenda on this domestic issue. The Dutch media largely instigate public discussion on agriculture, whereas it is parliament that convincingly initiates drugs discussions.

The results of the Dutch environment are not in line with hypothesis 4. Since it is a EU issue, we expected a strong media. However, parliamentary influence is exceptionally strong. The earlier described chronology tells us that key events largely concerned domestic

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80 Note that this \( \chi^2 \) test for significant differences between models requires \( p<0.05 \), whereas a satisfactory fit of a single model is indicated by \( p>0.05 \).

81 To assess the statistical significance of the differences between correlations, Fisher’s \( z \)-transformation and the formula: \( t = z_1 - z_2 / [(1/n_1-3) + (1/n_2-3)]^{1/2} \) were applied. \* \( p<0.05 \); \** \( p<0.01 \).
matters, such as the parliamentary enquiry (1998/1999) into the Bijlmer air crash. Even during the UN Climate Conference of 2001, an authoritative news source was safeguarded at the national level: the Dutch Environmental Secretary Pronk was president of the UN forum on climate change at the time. So, while in formal terms environment should be classified as a EU issue, it may well have been the domestic reality of the events and the lack of interference of EU institutions that empowered the agenda of parliament.

We defined immigration as an issue situated between the boundaries of domestic and EU politics. We expect the media agenda to be less dominant than in the cases of agriculture or environment, but more influential than in the case of drugs. For both countries, it is true that media’s position is stronger for immigration than for drugs. In fact, media’s position is surprisingly strong. Solely focussing on the formal level of decision-making of this issue appears to underestimate the news dynamics at play. Maybe the issue triggers media dominance due to its exceptional public sensitivity. The media go out of their way to give the public what it desires. Politicians may find it hard not to adjust to persistent journalists.

However, it is also possible that EU measures to incorporate this policy area were enough to breach media’s reliance on familiar news sources back home. Worries about immigration policies or sentiments in neighbouring countries have often become the centre of European debate. Recent examples include the international reactions evoked by Haider in Austria, Le Pen in France, and Fortuyn in the Netherlands. Again the actual contribution of European actors to the political discussions may have made the difference.

Table 3 about here please

Spurious correlations due to Real-World Cues? – Should our findings of a powerful media agenda regarding immigration be reconsidered, once the influence of RWCs is taken into account? First, retesting the original British immigration model for the shorter period 1991-2003 again results in a model with a unidirectional media influence ($b_{\text{media}} = 0.25$) and a good fit ($p=0.75$, $RMSEA=0.00$) (See Table 3). Adding the asylum applications shows that the RWC strongly impacts the British media agenda with a delay of one month ($b_{\text{rwc}}=0.25$). Still, this affects neither the strength of media influence, nor the absence of parliamentary
influence ($b_{\text{media}}=0.25; b_{\text{parl}}=\text{n.s.}; \rho=0.95$, $RMSEA=0.00$). Remember that media influence in the original Dutch model was $b=0.22$. This even rises to $b=0.27$ ($\rho=0.54$, $RMSEA=0$) once the asylum data are included. In the Netherlands it is parliament that responds to the RWC with a delay of one month ($b_{\text{parl}}=0.25$). In summary, both MPs and journalists may react to RWCs, but this does not prevent parliament from reacting to the news. As far as immigration goes, it is now safe to argue that our findings of media dominance do not concern a spurious relationship that should really be seen as an artefact of the influence of real-world events on both agendas. Since the impact of RWCs on the other three issues was not tested, our conclusions about those balances of power might be undermined after all. However, since even a RWC as asylum applications, which is so central to the policy area of immigration, does not account for any of the media’s autonomous effect on the parliamentary agenda, we deem it highly unlikely that controlling for any other RWC will wipe out the equally significant flows of influence (in whatever direction) in the other three cases.

**Discussion**

Much literature is devoted to the omnipresence of the media in modern society and the possible trivialization of politics. In this study we bring a uniquely extensive dataset to the fore to empirically test whether media control over parliament has expanded in recent times. These data comprise parliamentary debates and newspaper articles on the issues of agriculture, environment, drugs and immigration, covering a period of fifteen years for the United Kingdom and eight years for the Netherlands. While many agenda-building studies are theoretical assessments, and empirical studies use longitudinal data to reconstruct agenda building as a ‘once and for all’ model, we applied longitudinal and cross-sectional data to also assess shifts through time, as well as differences across countries and issues. In line with the first hypothesis we find that media influence on the parliamentary agenda is undeniable. While the agendas exert a mutual influence in the UK, the Dutch media agenda is not controlled by the parliamentary agenda. The second hypothesis, which predicts that the power balance has shifted in favour of the media agenda, was also convincingly confirmed. Both British and Dutch media gained considerable control over the parliamentary agenda, while parliament remained powerless.
Hypothesis three predicts convergence among European parliamentary agendas and media agendas as an outcome of mediatization and integration. This was consistently backed up: a first indication that Europe’s institutional changes make a difference to agenda building and that a European public sphere may be emerging after all. Finally, we expected a stronger media agenda when Brussels makes the decisions. This proved correct for all issues except for the Dutch environment, where parliament was clearly dominant. Also, media’s immigration agenda was stronger than anticipated. The nature of the key events of these issues prompts us to consider the actual involvement of European actors in political discussions, rather than formal EU authority, as an explanation of why the press turns to or turns away from the national parliament. Introducing real-world cues in the immigration models did not change the mediocratic balance of power.

At this point we ask ourselves why certain recent studies found a strong influence from the British and Dutch parliaments on the media agenda?\textsuperscript{82} First of all, the analyses were based on much shorter time periods. Media are less restrained in responding quickly to events than MPs are. Longer time series allow us to also capture the delayed reaction from parliament, while shorter designs are only sensitive to instant media reaction, thereby overestimating parliamentary dominance. Second, the focus of these studies was on elections. It is likely that elections trigger different dynamics. Politicians are inherently more newsworthy during elections than during the slack season. Distinguishing between elections and routine politics may be a useful exercise for a full understanding of agenda building.

Although our findings significantly add to knowledge on the media-parliament power play in a European context, agenda-building studies are not designed to reveal underlying mechanisms. Literature on media’s political influence has indicated possible explanatory factors. In 1974 Molotch and Lester suggested that accidents and scandals open the road for third parties to initiate unwanted publicity.\textsuperscript{83} In critical responses to Bennett’s ‘Indexing

\textsuperscript{82} Heinz Brandenburg, ‘Who follows Whom? The Impact of Parties on Media Agenda Formation in the 1997 British General Election Campaign’; Jan Kleinnijenhuis, ‘Het Publiek Volgt Media die de Politiek Volgen’.

\textsuperscript{83} Molotch and Lester, ‘News as Purposive Behavior: on the strategic use of routine events, accidents, and scandals’. See also, Baumgartner and Jones, \textit{Agendas and Instability in American Politics}. 

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Hypothesis’ and Hallin’s ‘Sphere of legitimate controversy’, scholars like Althaus, Wolfsfeld, Robinson, Niven, and even Bennett himself, argue that media gain political influence when political elites lose their grip on the situation and opinion becomes polarized. Our suggestion for follow-up research is to test the role of conflict in the empowerment of the media agenda in European policy areas. Conflict has already proven a substantial factor in explaining media’s agenda-setting power with respect to the issue of European integration.

Another suggestion would be to extend the analysis to more EU countries. Our study suggests that institutional settings matter to agenda building. If our results were to hold for other countries, with their own peculiarities and EU attitudes, this would be an important check on the robustness of the conclusions, although the limited availability of digital data, especially before 1995, poses a serious problem.

Besides the fact that parliamentary activity other than debates might have been used, or that within parliamentary debates several distinctions between politicians and parties could have been made, we should especially be aware that we used parliamentary debates rather than governmental statements as a measure of the political agenda. Therefore, we cannot be sure that media have not become increasingly responsive to the government agenda. Since national executives are more involved in European politics, the convergence between the agendas of European media may be less a result of media’s independent choice for a more global outlook, than of stronger governmental influence on the media agenda. However, in that case, our conclusion should be that MPs, appointed to

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scrutinize our governments, are not only under the spell of the media, but are also failing to control the national executives.

This study has demonstrated that national parliaments exert remarkably little control over the public debate. The media are now pulling the strings even more than a decade earlier. They seem to gain power over parliament’s priorities when the issues discussed move away from the domestic level and embrace an amount of European interference. Apparently, the media are prepared to follow national politicians when their competence and status are unchallenged, but inclined to take the lead when politics is merely symbolic.
Table 1: Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests on stationarity of the time series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Parliamentary agenda</th>
<th>Media agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>NL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>-9.94***</td>
<td>-6.95***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>-10.56***</td>
<td>-6.82***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>-9.70***</td>
<td>-6.33***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>-9.16***</td>
<td>-6.86***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The cells contain results from Augmented Dickey-Fuller tests (adf), with a constant and no trend. Significant negative adf-values indicate stationarity. ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Critical values (5%/1%): -2.885/-3.483 (UK) and –2.892/-3.514 (NL). STATA 8.0 was used for the unit root tests.
Figure 1: Monthly time series of parliamentary and media attention for agriculture and environment

**Note.** To improve the legibility of the graphs, they were based on a log transformation of the original time series.
Figure 2: Monthly time series of parliamentary and media attention for drugs and immigration

UK drugs

NL drugs

UK immigration

NL immigration

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Parliamentary agenda

Media agenda
Figure 3: British (top) and Dutch (bottom) agenda building, whole period, all issues

Note. The vertical flows of influences between the two right-hand variables represent the instantaneous (t) crossover influence between the parliamentary agenda and the media agenda. The conclusion about the balance of agenda-building power is based on these (standardised) coefficients. The flows of influences between the left-hand and right-hand variables represent the autoregressive influence of the agenda with a lag of one month (t-1) or twelve months (t-12) on the agenda at present (t).
Table 1: Structural equation models with lags of 0, 1, and 12 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Crossover influence</th>
<th>Autoregressive influence</th>
<th>Model Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt; → M&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;t-1&lt;/sub&gt; → P&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>M&lt;sub&gt;t-12&lt;/sub&gt; → M&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK overall</td>
<td>0.07*</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
<td>0.71** (t-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-1995</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.15**</td>
<td>0.75** (t-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.72** (t-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2003</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.66** (t-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.66** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.69** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
<td>0.71** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.60** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>0.49** (t-1)</td>
<td>0.49** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>0.46** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.48** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL overall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.13**</td>
<td>0.50** (t-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.64**</td>
<td>0.84** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2003</td>
<td>0.20**</td>
<td>0.38** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.89** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>0.49** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.69** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.66** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.55** (t-1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.22** (t-12)</td>
<td>0.48** (t-12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 'P' and 'M' are the parliamentary and media agenda respectively. The brackets behind the coefficients indicate the lag that is associated with the coefficients (t-1 or t-12). * indicates statistical significance at p<.05 (two-sided, t>1.96); **: p<0.01 (two-sided, t>2.58); – indicates the lack of a significant flow of influence. R<sup>2</sup><sub>p</sub> and R<sup>2</sup><sub>m</sub> refer to the explained variance in the political agenda and the media agenda respectively.
Table 3: The impact of real-world cues on the agenda-building process of immigration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Crossover influence</th>
<th>Autoregressive influence</th>
<th>Model Fit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P_t → M_t</td>
<td>M_{t+1} → P_t</td>
<td>rwc→ P_t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-2003</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.25** x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-2003</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.25** x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'91-'03 + rwc</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.25** 0.25**(t-1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-2003</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.22* x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'95-'03 + rwc</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.27** -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. x indicates that the relationship was not tested; – indicates the lack of a significant flow of influence.