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van der Pas, D.J.

Publication date

2014

Document Version

Final published version

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

van der Pas, D. J. (2014). *From the press to politics and back: When do media set the political agenda and when do parties set the media agenda?* [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

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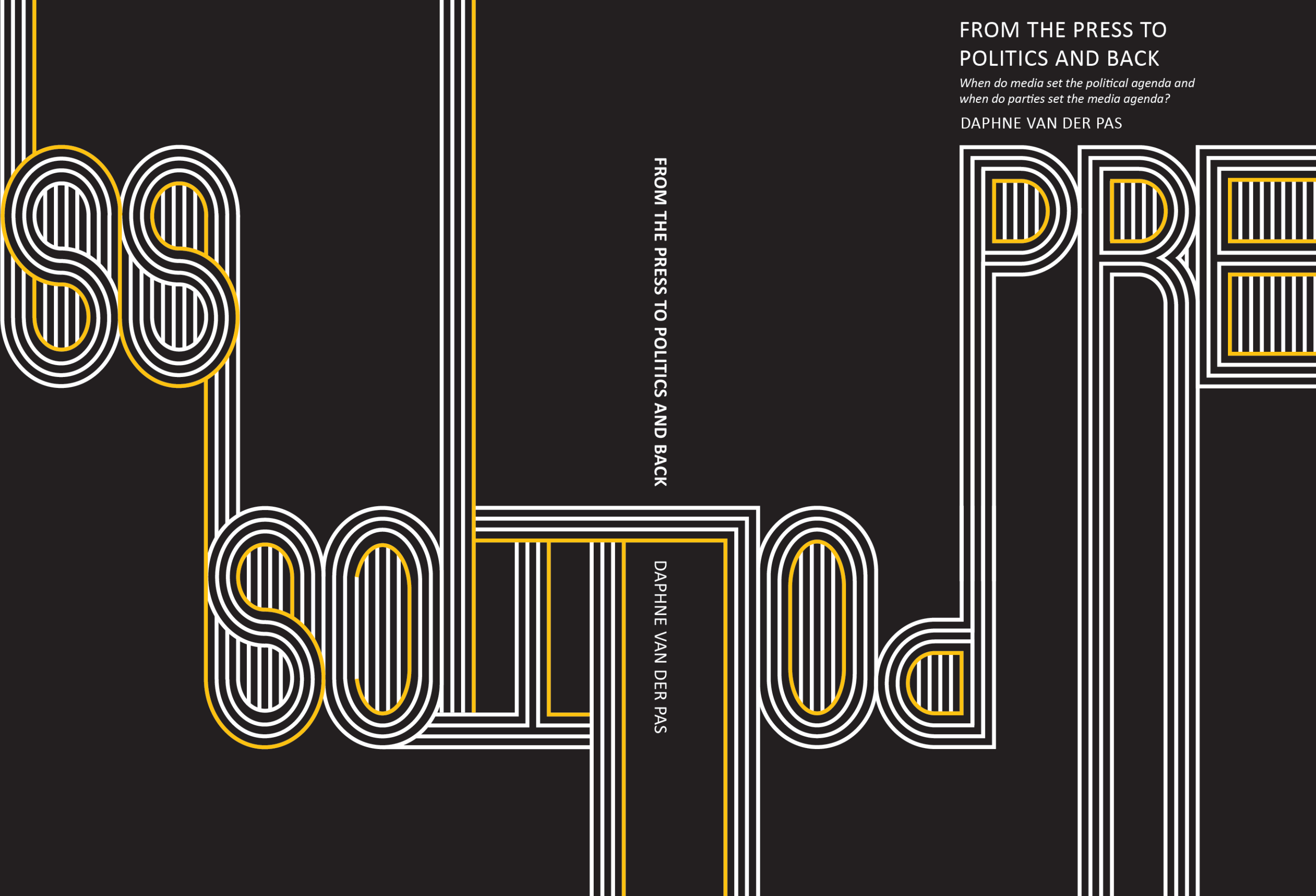
FROM THE PRESS TO POLITICS AND BACK

*When do media set the political agenda and
when do parties set the media agenda?*

DAPHNE VAN DER PAS

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When Do Media Set the Political Agenda and
When Do Parties Set the Media Agenda?

ISBN 978-94-6203-695-6

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Printed by CPI Wöhrmann

From the Press to Politics and Back
When Do Media Set the Political Agenda and
When Do Parties Set the Media Agenda?

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT
ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde
commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel
op donderdag 4 december 2014, te 10:00 uur

door Daphne Joanna van der Pas
geboren te Amsterdam

Promotor: Prof. dr. W. van der Brug

Copromotores: Prof. dr. R. Vliegenthart

Prof. dr. C.E. de Vries

Overige leden: Prof. dr. B.M. Burgoon

Dr. S.L. de Lange

Prof. dr. C.H. de Vreese

Prof. dr. J. Kleinnijenhuis

Dr. G. Thesen

Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen

Table of Contents

List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
CHAPTER I	1
Introduction	
CHAPTER II	19
Do Media Respond To Party Conflict?	
CHAPTER III	45
Making Hay While the Sun Shines	
CHAPTER IV	67
Watchdogs or Lapdogs?	
CHAPTER V	91
Political Parallelism in the Media's Political Agenda-Setting Power	
CHAPTER VI	113
Conclusion	
Appendices	133
References	167
Nederlandstalige Samenvatting	185

List of Tables

TABLE II.1. EU issue subcategories.

TABLE II.2. Examples of statements on the sub-issue 'agriculture' in different frames.

TABLE II.3. Descriptive statistics.

TABLE II.4. Effects on Δ media attention for EU sub-issues.

TABLE III.1. Summary of Expectations for the Four Cases.

TABLE III.2. Determinants of Issue Attention in Parliamentary Questions, 1995–2010.

TABLE IV.1. Effects of parliamentary questions on newspaper agenda, 1995-2010.

TABLE IV.2. Expected increase in media coverage following parliamentary questions.

TABLE IV.3. Expected increase in media coverage following parliamentary questions.

TABLE IV.4. Summary of findings.

TABLE V.1. Explaining issue mentions in PQs in the Netherlands, 1999-2010.

TABLE A.1. Issue search strings.

TABLE A.2. Swedish party search strings.

TABLE A.3. Dutch party search strings.

TABLE D.1. Parties included in the analysis and their coding.

TABLE D.2. Descriptive statistics.

TABLE E.1. Models with control for issue visibility in last week's newspaper, 1995-2010.

TABLE E.2. Effects of parliamentary questions –not mentioning the newspaper- on newspaper agenda, 1995-2010.

TABLE F.1. Effects of parliamentary questions on newspaper agenda, both interactions simultaneous.

TABLE G.1. Explaining EU and immigration attention in Question Hour on Tuesday.

TABLE H.1. Results using alternative estimation techniques.

TABLE I.1. Comparison of ownership measures.

TABLE I.2. Results with alternative ownership measures.

List of Figures

FIGURE I.1. Summary of dissertation.

FIGURE II.1. Framing polarization (left) and positional polarization (right) scores.

FIGURE II.2. Marginal effects based on model 4.

FIGURE III.1. Marginal effects for the EU issue in Sweden.

FIGURE IV.1. Mean tie between parties and each of the two newspapers, 1995-2010.

FIGURE IV.2. Marginal effects of parliamentary questions on newspaper agenda.

FIGURE V.1. Mean issue ownership of the EU and immigration issues, 1995-2010.

FIGURE V.2. References to newspapers in all PQs and tie between party and newspaper, 1995-2010.

FIGURE V.3. Predicted probability of issue mention in PQ, depending on visibility and paper-party tie.

FIGURE V.4. Predicted probability of issue mention in PQ, depending on visibility and issue ownership.

FIGURE VI.1. Summary of dissertation.

FIGURE VI.2. Model of political agenda-setting by the media outlined by Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006).

FIGURE B.1. Positions on the EU on different sub-issues in Germany.

FIGURE B.2. Positions on the EU on different sub-issues in the Netherlands.

FIGURE B.3. Positions on the EU on different sub-issues in the United Kingdom.

FIGURE B.4. Positions on the EU (all sub-issues) in Germany.

FIGURE B.5. Positions on the EU (all sub-issues) in the Netherlands.

FIGURE B.6. Positions on the EU (all sub-issues) in the United Kingdom.

FIGURE B.7. Framing per party over all elections and EU sub-issues in Germany.

FIGURE B.8. Framing per party all elections and EU sub-issues in the Netherlands.

FIGURE B.9. Framing per party over all elections and EU sub-issues in the United Kingdom.

FIGURE B.10. Framing of EU sub-issues in Germany, averaged over all parties.

FIGURE B.11. Framing of EU sub-issues in the Netherlands, averaged over all parties.

FIGURE B.12. Framing of EU sub-issues in the United Kingdom, averaged over all parties.

FIGURE C.1. Visibility of immigration and EU in Dutch and Swedish newspapers.

FIGURE C.2. Attention for the EU in parliamentary questions, Sweden.

FIGURE C.3. Attention for immigration in parliamentary questions, the Netherlands.

FIGURE C.4. Framing of the EU by different parties in Sweden.

FIGURE C.5. Framing of the EU in Swedish newspapers.

FIGURE C.6. Framing of immigration by different parties in the Netherlands.

FIGURE C.7. Framing of immigration in Dutch newspapers.

FIGURE I.1. Mean issue ownership of parties, 1995-2010.

Acknowledgements

Voordat ik aan dit promotietraject begon hoorde ik van sommige mensen dat vier jaar waarschijnlijk heel lang zou duren. Er zijn zeker wel een paar momenten geweest van gefrustreerd naar cijfers op een computerscherm turen, maar over het algemeen heb ik een fantastische tijd gehad. Ik ben blij dat ik nu de mensen mag bedanken die daar aan bijgedragen hebben.

Ten eerste mijn begeleiders, Wouter van der Brug, Rens Vliegthart en Catherine de Vries. Wouter, al tijdens de master vond ik het erg prettig om door jou begeleid te worden, en dat is alleen maar bevestigd. Of het nu om eerste ideeën, analyses of bijna voltooide papers ging, het was altijd enorm verhelderend en motiverend om dingen met jou te bespreken. Rens, je gaf altijd erg duidelijk aan dat ik voor alle vragen aan kon kloppen, en dit heb ik erg fijn gevonden. Door jou leerde ik tijdreeksanalyse en ging ik door op automatische inhoudsanalyse. Daarnaast ben je onmisbaar geweest bij het vinden van het uiteindelijke onderwerp van dit proefschrift. Catherine, je hebt me veel geleerd in de eerste periode van mijn promotie, en later vanuit Geneve en Oxford bleef je een inspirerend voorbeeld.

Ten tweede wil ik graag de overige collega's van het NWO conflict project bedanken voor de samenwerking: Marijn van Klingereren, Marc van de Wardt, Sarah de Lange, Hajo Boomgaarden en Claes de Vreese. Ook aan de codeurs mijn hartelijke dank voor het harde werk.

Dan wil ik graag iedereen bedanken uit de CPPC club voor de ontzettend leuke bijeenkomsten en het nuttige commentaar. Bedankt Lutz, Annemarie, Joost, Floris, Sarah, Gijs, Benno, Elmar, Armèn, Erika, Eelco, Eefje, Joep, Mariken, Wouter, Emily, Catherine, Bouchra, Tom, Meindert, Loes, Matthijs, Marc, Jona, Patrick en Sjoerdje. Ook wil ik graag Philip van Praag en Ruud Koopmans bedanken voor hun feedback op versies van hoofdstukken.

Floris Vermeulen en Jean Tillie, dankzij jullie werk ik aansluitend aan een nieuw project waar ik veel zin in heb. Floris, ook bedankt voor de jaargesprekken tijdens mijn PhD project. Sjoerdje, bedankt voor de vertegenwoordiging en alle hulp.

Ik weet nog steeds niet helemaal waarom kamer 1.34 als 'feestkamer' bekend stond (want statistiek is een feestje?), maar dankzij de kamergenoten zit

die naam er wat mij betreft niet ver naast. Maar naast dat we heel veel lol met elkaar hebben, heb ik ook heel veel inhoudelijke hulp, steun, tips en ideeën van jullie gehad. Marc, Joep, Eelco, Eefje, Annemarie, Elmar, Sjoerdje, Loes, Erika en Lars, bedankt!

Nog voordat veel duidelijk was over de inhoud van de dissertatie, wist ik dat ik Femke en Elmar zou vragen als paranimfen. Ik ben heel blij dat nu het af is, jullie me bijstaan tijdens de verdediging. Daarnaast ben ik jullie beiden enorm dankbaar voor alle hulp tussendoor, die meer was dan ik had moeten vragen, maar die jullie altijd zonder klagen gaven.

Josine, je hebt het me nog heel moeilijk gemaakt door niet één, maar meerdere fantastische covers te ontwerpen voor dit proefschrift. Dank je wel! Jurjen, dank dat je me –soms meerdere keren per week- heen en weer hebt gechauffeerd toen dat nodig was.

Als laatste wil ik mijn ouders en broer bedanken. Selma en Sjef, jullie nemen niks zomaar van me aan, en ik vrees dat zelfs een doctorstitel dat niet gaat veranderen. Ik ben blij dat jullie me scherp houden, maar het meeste ben ik dankbaar dat jullie me aanmoedigen en helpen in wat ik ook doe. Dit proefschrift draag ik op aan jullie.

Amsterdam, oktober 2014.

Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction

Why are some issues the subject of heated political and public debate, while others receive almost no political or media attention? Many scholars have noted that there is virtually no limit to the number of potential issues that could be the subject of public policy (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1989; Dearing and Rogers 1996; Hillgartner and Bosk 1988; Schattschneider 1960). As Jones and Baumgartner (2005, 11) note, ‘a pretty good beginning assumption is that the desires of citizens to have their problems addressed [...] are infinite.’ However, a prerequisite for political action and policy change is political attention, and the number of issues that can receive attention in a political system is inevitably limited. Agenda-setting, or the process by which ‘attention is allocated to some problems rather than others’ (Jones and Baumgartner 2005, viii-ix), is therefore a crucial aspect of politics.

One of the most important ways in which new issues present themselves to political actors is through the media. Coverage in the media can provide policymakers with information on developments in society, and moreover, politicians often regard media attention as an indicator of what citizens find important. However, we know that media attention on an issue is only sometimes translated into political attention (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). In other words, political actors selectively adopt issues from the media agenda onto the political agenda, and they often ignore the issues presented in the media. Similarly, politicians and parties attempt to affect the broader debate and push their issues on the media agenda, but they are only sometimes successful in influencing the issues to which the media devote their attention. This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the mutual influence between media and political agendas by studying when agenda-setting occurs in one direction or the other and when it does not. Specifically, it asks: *Under what circumstances do the media influence what is on the political agenda, and under what circumstances do parties influence the media agenda?*

Political agenda-setting

Prioritizing policy issues on the political agenda is a crucial part of party politics. First, to reach their ideological goals, the policy issues parties wish to address

need to be introduced on the political table to begin with. In the national politics of representative democracies, this means that if a party wishes to have its policies on an issue realized, it must ensure that the issue is on the legislative agenda (Vliegthart, Walgrave and Zicha 2013). Any agenda, however, has a 'limited carrying capacity' in the sense that only a finite number of topics can be included. As there are potentially infinite issues, issues can themselves be considered to compete for a spot on the agenda (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988). To achieve their *policy objectives* (Müller and Strøm 1999), parties need to ensure that their issues are on the political agenda, as this is the beginning of the political decision making process.

Second, parties also fight over which issues should top the political agenda to maximize their electoral support. Certain issues are more electorally advantageous than others for specific parties, as these parties are considered the most competent at handling that particular problem (Petrocik 1996) or because they hold a position that is favored by a large part of the electorate (Riker 1996). As a result, parties not only compete for votes by taking different issue positions but also by selectively emphasizing issues that are electorally attractive (Schattschneider 1960, Budge and Farlie 1983; Riker 1996; Carmines and Stimson 1986; see also Vavreck 2009). By the same token, parties attempt to draw attention away from issues that favor their opponents. Recently, scholars have argued that this form of competition, called 'issue competition', has grown increasingly important in Western European politics (Green-Pedersen 2006; 2007). Socio-structural voting has declined (Dalton 2002), leaving parties with a more volatile electorate which partially bases its electoral decisions on the issues that are on the agenda.

While parties thus seek to determine the political agenda, they do not operate in a vacuum. Instead, it is generally believed that the media substantially impact the political process and outcomes. Indeed, a recent study found that many politicians in Belgium and the Netherlands think that the media have too much power over politics and often set the political agenda (Van Aelst et al. 2008). Also in scholarly accounts the media are often accorded considerable influence on politics, and by implication on the political agenda. For example, over the last half century, politics in Western European democracies have reputedly become increasingly *mediatized* (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999; Schulz

2004; Strömbäck 2008), and governed by a *media logic* (Altheide and Snow 1979; Meyer 2002). According to these theories, political actors adopt the logic of the media, conforming to the rules set by the media's 'rhythm, grammar and format' (Altheide 2004, 294). This stands in contrast to an earlier age of 'party logic' in which 'reporters obediently and respectfully followed the agenda set by politics' (Brants and Van Praag 2006, 28; see also Mazzoleni 1987).

One of the essential questions regarding the power of the mass media over politics is whether the media are able to set the political agenda. Over the past two decades, the body of research on this question has grown noticeably; however the central conclusion thus far is that there is no simple answer. Occasionally the media have a sizeable impact on the selection of issues that are discussed in politics (e.g., Soroka 2002), while on other occasions the media seem to play little or no role in determining the political agenda (e.g., Kleinnijenhuis and Rietberg 1995; Walker 1977). Reviewing these apparent contradictions, Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) conclude that whether the media set the political agenda is dependent on the circumstances, i.e., is *contingent*. In other words, whether an issue in the media spotlight receives political attention depends on a number of factors, such as the type of issue, the type of media outlet covering it, whether it is a routine or campaign period, which party is in government and which in opposition (Bartels 1996; Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Soroka 2002; Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011; Wood and Peake 1998). In short, the question is not whether the media influence the political agenda, but rather when and under what circumstances they do.

Media agenda-setting

Just as they have a stake in setting the political agenda, it is equally important for parties to ensure that advantageous issues are one the *media agenda*, while damaging issues are discussed as little as possible in the media. Studies into the influence of the media on public opinion have famously revealed that although opinions are not easily changed by media reporting, the mass media are 'stunningly successful in telling [the public] what to think *about*' (Cohen 1963, 13, emphasis mine; Dearing and Rogers 1996; McCombs and Shaw 1972). In other words, by prioritizing certain issues, the media can influence what issues the public finds important and eventually has in mind when choosing between

parties at elections (priming). Thus, to ensure that voters are thinking about the issues that give them a competitive advantage, it is crucial for parties to place these issues high on the media agenda.

Surprisingly, however, the effect of political agendas on media agendas has received less extensive study than the opposite effect. This is startling because, as argued above, control over the media agenda is a coveted asset in party competition. Furthermore, most studies conducted to date focus on the effect of campaign messages such as press releases (e.g., Brandenburg 2002; Hopmann et al. 2012; Lancendorfer and Lee 2010), meaning that we know little about whether issue attention spills over from the political agenda to the media agenda during routine periods. Yet, political preferences are formed gradually throughout the electoral cycle (Jennings and Wlezien 2013), and hence to maximize votes, it is sensible for parties to attempt to set the media agenda and eventually the public's agenda at any time. In addition, most studies that consider the effect of political agendas on the media agenda during routine periods are conducted in the specific context of the United States (Bartels 1996; Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004; Wood and Peake 1998). In these studies, the presidential agenda sometimes sets the media agenda, but not for all issues or at all times, while the congressional agenda is almost entirely ignored by the media. In a study on the Netherlands, Vliegthart (2007) found a very weak effect of attention devoted to the issue of immigration in parliamentary speeches on the visibility of this issue in the media.

Thus, overall, the parliamentary agenda seems to have little or no effect on the media agenda; however, as in the case of the agenda-setting effect operating in the opposite direction, the effect might be *conditional*. During routine times, political activity is often not of interest to the news media, and therefore the policy issue will not reach the media agenda, while in certain instances the issues discussed in politics are of great interest to the media and receive ample coverage. The puzzle, therefore, is when the issues political parties advance are covered by the media and when they remain unnoticed.

To summarize the discussion thus far, parties have a clear interest in influencing what issues are on the political as well as on the media agenda, in view of policy goals and electoral gains, while journalists allegedly have substantial influence over politics in general, including political agendas.

Empirical studies on the relationship between issue agendas in politics and in the media have demonstrated that there is a *reciprocal* relationship, and moreover, that the influence in either direction is *conditional*. This dissertation contributes to our knowledge of the conditional nature of the relationship between the media and political agendas. The influence is mutual, but the actors on both sides, journalists and political actors, each have their own goals and incentives that govern how they respond to the political or media agenda, respectively. The transfer of an issue from one agenda to the other is therefore never automatic but is in either direction contingent on the goals and incentives of both media and political actors. On the one hand, the strategic interests of political parties in conjunction with media content condition whether issues from the media discussion are brought into the political arena. On the other hand, parties attempt to influence the public debate in the media, but their efforts to do so are filtered by news makers' interests, such as journalistic norms and news values.

Core of the dissertation

Figure I.1 displays the conditional factors explaining when an issue moves from one agenda to the other that are tested in this dissertation. The larger arrows from the political agenda to the media agenda and vice versa represent the transfer of an issue from one agenda to the other, while the smaller arrows pointing at these larger arrows represent the conditions that explain when the transfer occurs and when it does not. That is, these are the conditioning factors. The numbers next to the arrows denote the corresponding chapters in this thesis. As these numbers indicate, two of the four empirical chapters focus on the conditional effects of policy agendas on media agendas (Chapter II and IV, upper big arrow in Figure I.1) and two study the conditional effects of the media agenda on politics (chapters III and V, lower big arrow in Figure I.1). Before discussing the overarching conclusions that result from this model, let me shortly explain the conditioning factors in the figure.

As the figure displays, political parallelism is a factor that I hypothesize influences the transfer of issues in both directions. Political parallelism refers to the links between specific newspapers and parties, and these are expected to structure both if issues from newspapers are brought into parliament, and if issues parties stress in parliament are covered in newspapers. Historically, in

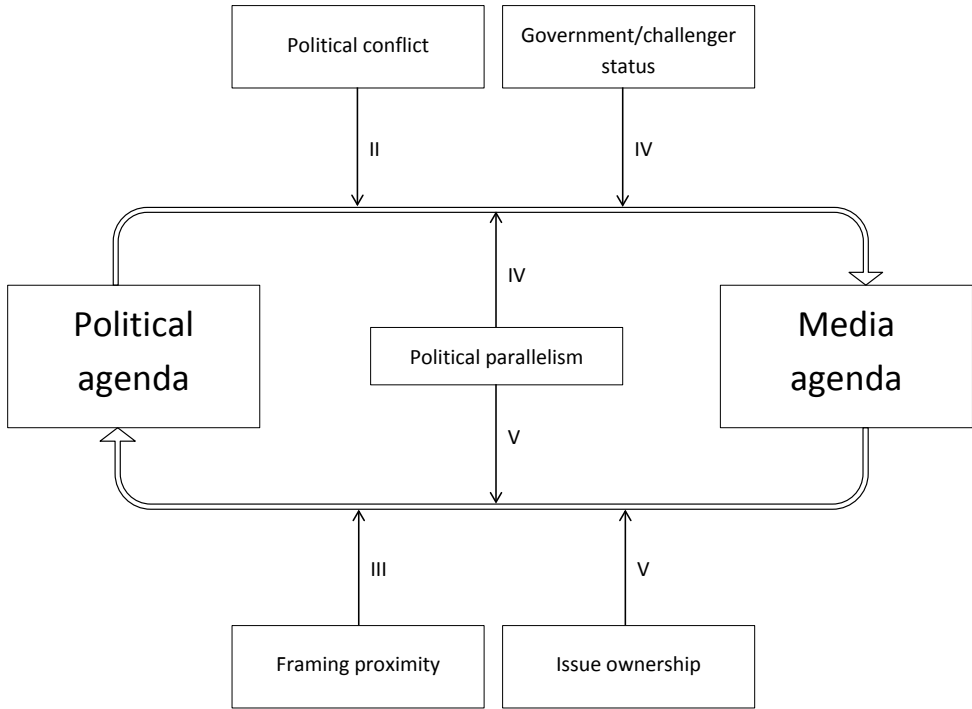


FIGURE I.1. Summary of dissertation.

most Western European countries, newspapers had strong ties to political parties, in terms of ownership, readership and ideological orientation of the newsroom staff. The formal part of these ties has eroded, but in most countries there are still (informal) links between outlets and parties in the political orientation of the journalists, editors and the readers. I hypothesize that these links matter for agenda-setting in both directions. In other words, *who* in the media or in politics discusses an issue, matters for whether actors from the other arena copy it.

Turning more specifically at the upper half of Figure I.1, this dissertation considers two factors –besides political parallelism– to explain whether an issue from the political agenda moves to the media agenda: political conflict and government/challenger status. What is essential for grasping this part of the puzzle is the incentives of journalists and editors, as they are the gatekeepers of the media agenda. To make a selection out of the infinite amount of potential news stories, they make use of *news values*, while the way they exercise their profession is guided by their own normative idea of news making, i.e. *news norms*.

Due to the journalistic news value of conflict, more media attention goes to issues over which parties are in conflict. In addition, the news norm of *watchdog journalism* makes newspapers pay more attention to issues if they are brought up by challenger parties. The effect of the news norm of conflict is corroborated empirically in Chapter II, and that of the watchdog norm in Chapter IV.

In the lower half of Figure I.1, we see that framing proximity and issue ownership are deployed to explain when the media agenda sets the political agenda. Whereas in some popular accounts the media are pictured as an almost deterministic force on politics, Chapter III and V argue that though media have some power over the political agenda, political actors also strategically choose when to respond to media attention. I expect that whether they choose to do so depends on *what* the media talk about, and *how* they talk about it. What the media talk about matters because parties that ‘own’ an issue benefit if it rises on any agenda, so if the media discuss it they should be the first to use the opportunity put it on the political agenda as well. This argument has been made previously and substantiated with research in Belgium and Denmark (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011) and I test it for the Netherlands in Chapter V. Contrary to expectations, I find no supporting evidence.

How issues are talked about in the media matters because parties prefer to pay attention to the media’s issues when the media are discussing them in a way that suits the party, i.e. when the media are using the party’s *frames*. Put differently, whether a party adopts an issue from the media agenda depends on the similarity between the framing in the media and the framing of the party, or the ‘framing proximity’. In contrast to the issue ownership explanation, I do find supporting evidence for this ‘framing proximity’ hypothesis, in Chapter III.

Finally, I hypothesize that political parallelism affects both the issue transfer from the political arena to the media realm, as well as the other way around. Strangely, links between parties and news outlets have never been considered in agenda-setting research, with the result that in the extant research all newspapers are assumed to exert an equal influence on all parties and all parties are assumed to have an equivalent chance of coverage in all newspapers (but see Vliegthart and Mena Montes 2014). This assumption connects with the idea of the media as an homogenous force on politics, and with the idea of the media simply mirroring what happens in politics. In Chapter V we show that

parties take inspiration from specific newspapers for their parliamentary questions, while in Chapter IV I show that newspapers only tend to cover the parliamentary questions of parties they are linked to.

Overarching conclusions

There are three overarching conclusions that arise from the findings in this dissertation that I would briefly like to highlight. First, this dissertation adds the concept of framing to the discussion of political-media agenda-setting. To frame is 'to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation' (Entman 1993, 52). Thus, framing is part and parcel of the competition between parties, as the issue itself is defined through framing. Because framing involves a definition, a causal interpretation and a treatment recommendation, what policies are appropriate follows from how an issue is framed. As Schattschneider (1960, 66, emphasis in original) argued: 'Political conflict is not like an intercollegiate debate in which the opponents agree in advance on a definition of the issues. As a matter of fact, *the definition of the alternatives is the supreme instrument of power.*'

In this dissertation, I argue that framing matters in two ways: for political agenda-setting by the media and for media agenda-setting by political actors. The latter is the subject of Chapter II, in which the role of political conflict in media agenda-setting is studied. As discussed, parties contest the interpretation of issues by promoting different frames, and journalists are responsive to this struggle over meaning because of the news value that conflict carries. Consequently, issues over which parties engage in a framing conflict are more likely to reach the media agenda, while –*ceteris paribus*– consensually framed issues are more easily ignored by the media.

The second way in which framing matters for agenda-setting is in the reverse direction, with issues moving from the media agenda to the political agenda. In Chapter III, I demonstrate that parties not only actively promote their own framing but also respond tactically to the framing environment offered by the media. Specifically, they prioritize issues in parliament when the framing in the media is in concord with their own framing, and avoid the issue when the media framing is very different from their own. In these two ways, via framing

proximity (Chapter III) and conflict in frames (Chapter II), framing is an important factor influencing whether an issue from the media debate receives political attention and whether an issue from the parliamentary debate garners media attention.

The second overarching conclusion arising from the research in this dissertation is that although the media clearly influence the political agenda, the media are not the unitary, irresistible force they are sometimes suggested to be (by politicians, for example, see Strömbäck 2011; Walgrave 2008). As discussed above, parties adopt issues from the media agenda, but they strategically choose when to do so and when not to, depending on whether the media framing suits them (Chapter III). In addition, Chapter V demonstrates that political parallelism between newspapers and parties affects the political agenda-setting power of the media. Political parallelism refers to the connections between specific parties and newspapers, in terms of ideology, readers, or staff. In this chapter, I show that parties do not simply copy the agenda presented by any newspaper but take issues from those papers that their voters read. In this way, there are links between parties and the news media that govern whether an issue presented in newspapers is addressed in parliament, and therefore not all outlets exert an equal influence on all parties.

Third, the evidence presented in this dissertation demonstrates that the media do not purely act as a mirror reflecting existing power structures (cf. Bennett 1990). Political parallelism works in both ways: not only are parties more likely to follow an associated newspaper, but their parliamentary questions are also only reported on in newspapers that are read by the party's voters (Chapter IV). Accordingly, the links between parties and papers (political parallelism) structure the issue transfer in both directions. For media agenda-setting by politicians, this means that the media do not uniformly reflect whatever is happening in politics, but instead newspapers mirror the issue priorities of the parties they are linked to in terms of readership.

Another way in which the media do not merely reflect the present power configuration is that they offer certain advantages to challenger parties, i.e., opposition parties that have never been in government. In general, government parties are presented more prominently in the news (an *incumbency bonus*, Hopmann, De Vreese and Albæk 2011); however, in Chapter IV, I show that the

issues that challengers advance in parliamentary questions receive more attention in the media than those presented by government parties. Thus, while challengers are themselves less visible in the news, they are granted greater agenda-setting power, and as such the media also function as a 'weapon of the weak' rather than a tool for those already in power. In addition, Chapter II demonstrates that the media devote more attention to issues over which parties are in conflict, and we know from previous research that challenger parties have the greatest incentive to expand the political conflict to new issues (Hobolt and De Vries 2012, Van de Wardt 2014). By responding to political conflict, the media thus devote attention to the issues that challengers seek to politicize.

Case selection and data

How the goals and incentives of media and political actors influence whether issues from one agenda are adopted by the other is studied by examining two policy issues, immigration and European integration, in a selection of Western European countries from 1995 to 2010. I will now expand on the case selection and data that were collected to study the relationship between media and political agendas.

In an influential study, Kriesi and his colleagues (2006, 2008) argue that globalization gave rise to a new structural conflict between those profiting from it and those who are disadvantaged by the increased economic and cultural competition. Immigration and European integration are issues through which the conflict spurred by globalization can find expression, and as such both issues had the potential to become salient in the public and political debate in Western European countries in the past few decades.¹ However, this potential was not realized in all countries. For example, in Sweden, the issue of European integration was discussed abundantly in the past few decades (Lindahl and Naurin 2005; Netjes and Binnema 2007), while immigration received little attention until very recently (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2013; Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). By contrast, the EU issue was never particularly prominent in the Dutch political debate in the 1990s or the early twenty-first century, while immigration was one of the most prominent issues (Vliegthart 2007; Muis

¹ In this dissertation, "immigration" denotes the immigration to and integration into society by persons with immigrant backgrounds. Also, "the EU issue" refers to the issue of European integration.

2012). These disparities are all the more striking, as social conditions concerning immigration and European integration are relatively similar in Sweden and the Netherlands: both are EU members and have received substantial numbers of immigrant workers and asylum seekers. In sum, the two issues represent fruitful research cases with considerable variation in the levels of politicization across countries and over time and essentially invariant politicization potential.

This dissertation studies the mutual influence between the media and the political agenda; so what is an agenda, and how is it measured? Dearing and Rogers (1996, 2) define an agenda as ‘a set of issues that are communicated in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time’. As this definition indicates, agendas concern a *hierarchy* of issues, and these issues need to be *communicated*. The focus of this dissertation is not on the entire agenda, but on two specific issues, and hence to trace these issues in terms of communicated importance, I examine the *amount of attention* that is devoted to each of these issues. For both the media and political agendas, attention is measured using automated content analysis. For each of the two issues, search strings are employed to count the number of words in a text or a speech that relate to either European integration or immigration (see Appendix A). This method allows for reliable measurements across large amounts of material, making it possible to trace the development of the issues over a long period of time.

To measure attention devoted to immigration and European integration in the media, the content analysis is applied to national newspapers, retrieved from the LexisNexis and Infomedia databases.² Ideally, attention to the issues in a variety of media – TV, radio, social media and the internet- would be taken into account, but this would obviously be very costly, and newspapers serve as a good representation of the national news media agenda. Vliegthart and Walgrave (2008), for example, found that in Belgium, newspaper agendas have a stronger influence on television agendas than vice versa. Bartels (1996) reports that in the United States, the newspaper The New York Times has more influence on the political agenda than television news does, while the latter follows the agenda of that newspaper (see also Roberts and McCombs 1994). Therefore, newspapers

² The media data for chapters III, IV and V were collected under the NWO Conflict and Security program (Grant Number 432-08-130) and the media data for Chapter II under a research project funded by the Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR).

represent the best option for using a single source to tap the media agenda. Chapter II, covering the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands, only studies quality papers, while the other chapters all consider one quality paper and one tabloid-style paper for each country.

The political issue agenda refers to the issue hierarchy communicated by a certain political institution, and hence there is not one but many political agendas. In this dissertation, I concentrate on national politics in a selection of Western European countries. Moreover, the focus is on the strategies and incentives of individual parties, and hence it is necessary to distinguish among the different issue agendas of separate parties. To do so, I consider two political issue agendas: the issue priorities parties convey in their election manifestos and the issues they draw attention to in parliament by posing parliamentary questions. The parliamentary arena is the start of the legislative process and is the place where government officials and elected representatives interact in policy decision making. The parliamentary question hour is the institutionalized moment at which parties can present new issues for discussion and thus the occasion for both government and opposition members of parliament to influence the issues on which policy action will be set into motion.

The agenda of the political system as a whole is only considered in Chapter II, as this chapter examines the conditioning effect of political conflict, which is a feature of the party system and not of individual parties (for the party-system agenda, see Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010). This chapter also considers effects over the longest time span: it examines how the conflicts generated by parties in their election manifestos increase media attention on an issue during the next electoral cycle. This long period is why manifestos are selected as the source to measure the political agenda in this chapter: these are the official documents in which parties establish their positions on issues for the coming electoral term (Laver and Garry, 2000).³

As argued above, parties compete over the definition of issues by promoting diverse framings, and in order to study the effects of this struggle over frames on political and media agenda-setting, I measure framing by parties and

³ The parliamentary data were also collected under the NWO Conflict and Security Grant, and the manifesto data for Chapter II were collected by Catherine de Vries under the NWO Veni project number 451-08-001.

the media. This is achieved via the manual coding of party manifestos (Chapter II), parliamentary questions and newspaper articles (Chapter III) by trained coders.

Causality between media and politics

All four empirical chapters of this dissertation focus on conditional *effects* or *influence* between the media and political agendas, but causal effects are notoriously difficult to isolate in the relationship between the media and politics. Politicians and journalists have been described by a number of metaphors that indicate the level of entanglement between the two: as two partners in a tango (Gans, 1980) or a rumba (Ross, 2010), as chicken and egg (Vliegthart 2007, 108), dueling partners (Schroder and Phillips 2007; see Ross 2010), and in symbiosis (Brants et al. 2010). At least four factors make it difficult to discern which of the two actors is affecting the other.

First, the effects between media and political actors are reciprocal: newsmakers affect the behavior of politicians, but politicians are also important sources for journalists, purposefully create media events and directly contribute to coverage by writing opinion articles and so forth. Wolfsfeld (2011, 30-31) aptly summarized this when he described processes involving politics and media as a Politics-Media-Politics cycle (PMP), or better yet as a PMPMPMP cycle. Further, this cycle of mutual influence does not consistently begin on one of the two sides, politics or media. In essence, if there is convergence or correlation between the two, this would say little about who is the cause and who is the effect.

Second, the effects between politics and the media are not only reciprocal; they are also often anticipatory (Kepplinger 2007). Though there is some debate concerning the extent to which politics is mediatized (see Strömbäck 2008), there is no doubt that the mass media have fundamentally grown in importance over the past century and politicians have increasingly become dependent on media coverage. Many of the actions of politicians are not directly in reaction to media reporting, but are performed with the intention of provoking a reaction –most likely favorable coverage- by the media. In this way, the presence of the mass media influences the behavior of politicians even without the media acting initially.

The third reason that causality is difficult to ascertain in politics-media processes is quite obvious but worth mentioning nonetheless: many of the processes of interest, such as agenda-setting between political and media agendas, are macro processes and are therefore nearly impossible to study experimentally on individuals in laboratory settings. Fourth and finally, not all of the behavior that influences one of the actors occurs publicly, rendering parts of the process invisible to the researcher. Politicians and journalists frequently maintain informal contact (Van Aelst, Sehata and Van Dalen 2010); hence, for example before a parliamentarian asks questions on an issue, she might inform a journalist about it 'off the record'. In that case, the MP has initiated a possible media report, but this would not necessarily be directly visible in the coverage or parliamentary behavior.

These, and other problems associated with studying causality in media-politics relationship may never be entirely solved, but in this dissertation I nonetheless attempt to move toward a causal analysis and cautiously make causal claims. There are three methodological tools that aid in this effort. First, all analyses employ a clear temporal order, in which the presumed cause is measured at an earlier point in time than the presumed effect. Second and relatedly, where necessary, the analyses control for the dependent variable's recent past. Thus, for example, in Chapter III the issue priorities of parties in parliaments serve as the dependent variable, while the visibility of the issues –one of the independent variables- is measured one quarter of a year earlier. In addition, a lagged dependent variable is included in the model. The combination of the two ensures that effects captured by the model are not –at least temporally- operating in the reverse direction, in this case parliament causing media visibility.

Third, wherever possible I empirically model alternative explanations that contradict the causal order I hypothesize. For example –again- in Chapter III, I study the responses of parties in parliament to media coverage, and I hypothesize that parties respond to media attention by raising the issue in parliament only if the framing of the issue in the media is akin to their own framing. Thus, media attention and framing are regarded as causes and parliamentary issue prioritization as the effect. However, an alternative explanation is that media attention does nothing to parties' issue priorities in parliament, but instead parties first discuss an issue in the media, before bringing

it into parliament. I control for this explanation by also measuring whether parties are mentioned in the media coverage. Overall, by excluding such alternative explanations and specifying the temporal order, the analyses do not provide undeniable evidence on the causality in a given relationship, but they do bring us one step closer to finding the most plausible causal interpretation.

Outline of the empirical chapters

The chapters are ordered such that the earlier ones involve effects spanning the longest period, while the latter ones are the most fine-grained in time scale. Accordingly, Chapter II examines political conflict and issue salience among parties during elections and the consequences for the media agenda throughout the subsequent electoral term. Chapter III, which inspects framing proximity between newspapers and parties and its impact on parties' issue priorities in parliament, employs a 3-month time span. It is no coincidence that the two chapters on framing involve effects over longer periods, as the framing of an issue is unlikely to change overnight, and the effects of framing should be expected to materialize slowly. Chapters IV and V examine parliamentary questions and the effects *on* and *of* media reporting, respectively, both of which are characterized by very short attention cycles. Consequently, in these two chapters, weekly data are employed.

Chapter II begins with the notion that politics essentially concerns conflict and goes on to distinguish two types of political conflict: *discursive* and *positional*. Discursive conflict, which I discussed above on page 4, refers to the contest between parties over how an issue should be understood and is measured through polarization in framing. Positional conflict, by contrast, refers to the confrontation between the various policy solutions parties propose and is measured through polarization in positions. This chapter does not consider the immigration issue but uses the multidimensional nature of the EU issue to inspect 'sub-issues' of European integration in three countries with varying levels of contestation over the EU: the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands. The findings support our expectation that the media only copy the sub-issues that parties prioritized in their manifestos if the parties are engaged in discursive or positional conflict over the sub-issues.

Chapter III argues that it is rational for parties to draw attention to an issue in parliament when the media framing is similar to the preferred framing of the party, while they should remain relatively silent on an issue when the framing in the media is in discord with the party's framing. I test this hypothesis using the EU and immigration issues in Sweden and the Netherlands in the period from 1995 to 2010. Because media attention on immigration in Sweden was generally low during this period, while the media visibility of the EU was low in the Netherlands, I expect that the effect of proximity in framing will not be visible for these issues, but by contrast it is very clear for the immigration issue in the Netherlands and the EU issue in Sweden. In general, these expectations are born out in the empirical analysis, with certain differences in how framing proximity operates in the Netherlands and Sweden.

Chapter IV studies which parliamentary questions are successful in producing media attention on an issue and which questions fail to set the media agenda in the subsequent week, based on questions on immigration and European integration in the Dutch parliament from 1995 to 2010. I hypothesize that journalists are both driven by the norm of *watchdog* journalism and by their partisan ties, i.e., their '*lapdog*' side. Following the watchdog norm, I argue, journalists should devote greater attention to the parliamentary questions of challenger parties. Challenger parties are opposition parties that have never been in government (Hobolt and De Vries 2012), and because they have no prior office responsibilities and low coalition potential, they attack the government most fiercely in their parliamentary questions. Watchdog journalists respond to this because they consider it part of their job to hold the government accountable. At the same time, newspapers have ties with particular parties, and therefore also act as the '*lapdogs*' of these parties, devoting greater attention to their questions.

Chapter V inspects whether the ties between newspapers and political parties also influence whether politicians replicate the issue attention in a newspaper in their parliamentary questions concerning immigration and European integration in the Netherlands. Up to 80 percent of parliamentary questions in the Netherlands are explicitly inspired by media coverage (Ruigrok et al. 2013); however, in this chapter we demonstrate that newspapers have significantly more agenda-setting influence over parties they have ties with, thus showing that political parallelism operates in both directions of the agenda-

setting process. Although we can only draw this conclusion for the Netherlands, there is reason to suspect that it should also hold for countries with similar media systems, such as the Scandinavian countries (Hallin and Mancini 2004). In addition, we test an extant hypothesis in the literature that issue owners respond more strongly to media attention on their issue but find no support for it. If anything, issue owners tend to devote such attention to their issue that media attention seems to matter *less*, at least with respect to these two issues in the Netherlands.

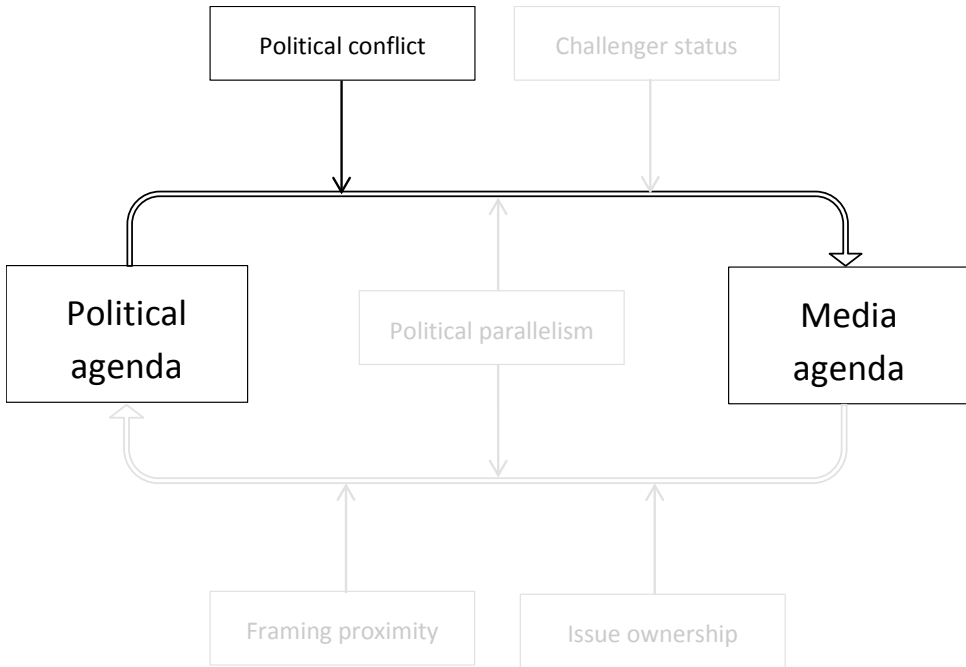
Chapter VI concludes this dissertation by summarizing the results and providing directions for further research.

Chapter II

Do Media Respond To Party Conflict?

Debates on European Integration in British, Dutch & German Party Manifestos and Newspapers, 1987-2006⁴

⁴ This chapter is based on an article co-authored by Rens Vliegthart that is forthcoming in *Political Studies*.



Abstract

How do policy issues reach the political agenda? This question has received ample scholarly attention over the last decades, yet scholars have only recently explicitly examined the ways in which political party and media agendas interact. This study extends this on-going work to examine how the conflict among parties in terms of policy stances they propose, *positional conflict*, and the meaning, i.e., frames, they attach to a policy issues, *discursive conflict*, affect media attention. By focusing on party debates on European integration in British, Dutch and German election campaigns between 1987 and 2006 and employing a pooled time series analysis, we show that discursive conflict and to a lesser extent positional conflict among parties boost media reporting on issues. These findings have important implications for our understanding of the dynamics in media attention to particular policy issues, as well as the way in which parties and media interact within election campaigns.

Introduction

The number of policy issues that have the potential to reach the political agenda in modern democracies is nearly infinite, yet only some issues gain the attention of politicians, journalists and voters. The process of “mobilization of bias” (Schattschneider 1960, 62), that is to say the struggle over which policy issues top the political agenda, has attracted widespread scholarly interest from students of both European and American politics (see for example Adams 1997; Carmines and Stimson 1989; De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Green-Pedersen 2007; Lindaman and Haider-Markel 2002; Kriesi et al. 2006; 2008; Riker 1982). Most of this work focuses on political parties, as they serve as the gatekeepers of parliamentary debate. Moreover, political parties have clear incentives to mobilize particular issues to advance their electoral standing. Yet, parties are largely constrained by media actors in their actions. Media attention is an important prerequisite for parties to reach the electorate. These complex interactions between party and media actors have received only scant scholarly attention. Only recently have political and communication scientists increased their efforts to study how the attention to and conflict over policy issues amongst parties and within the media interact (Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011; Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006).

This chapter contributes to the existing body of work by examining how parties generate conflict over policy issues to influence media attention. We argue that there are at least two forms of conflict that parties can engage in: *positional* and *discursive* conflict. Both are ultimately aimed at winning votes with the goal of securing political office and implementing policy ideals (Strøm 1990). Positional and discursive conflict, however, differ in character. In the case of positional conflict, parties distinguish themselves from competitors by carving out distinct issue stances. In the case of discursive conflict, parties contest the meaning attached to a policy issue, that is to say, the framing of the issue. In this study, we explore the extent to which both discursive and positional conflict foster media attention. The chapter contributes to the literature on the interaction between the political and media agendas, which generally examines *salience*, by adding *conflict* among parties in both framing and policy stances as important moderators of salience effects. In this way, our study contributes to the literature emphasizing that political agenda-setting effects are conditional (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). It is one of the first studies to explore whether the way in which

parties present their issues in formal communication affects the agenda-setting power of those parties. As such, this study furthers our understanding of why journalists follow the content of the political agenda more closely in certain instances than in others.

We examine party-media dynamics by focusing on a policy issue that recently generated substantial contestation, European integration, within three countries, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK). The European integration issue constitutes an excellent object of study for our endeavor. EU membership is not a novel phenomenon in Western Europe, but the contestation over European integration is (e.g., De Vries 2007; 2010; Hobolt 2009; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Kriesi et al. 2006; 2008). Exploring the EU issue within the three countries outlined provides us with variation in the extent of conflict over time and space: while conflict over the EU has long been extensive in the UK, it remains limited in Germany and the Netherlands (De Vries 2007). In addition, following recent work demonstrating the multidimensional character of the process of European integration (Diez Medrano 2003; Helbling, Hoeglinger and Wüest 2010), we disaggregate the EU issue into a variety of sub-issues adhering to the different aspects of the integration process. This allows for a more fine-grained analysis of the consequences of party conflict for media attention.

Our study demonstrates that discursive conflict among parties indeed enhances the impact of party attention on media attention regarding EU issues. Specifically, journalists respond more strongly to issues advanced by political parties if these parties differ in how they present the issue, i.e., if they are in conflict regarding the framing. This finding lends credence to the conclusion put forward by Chong and Druckman (2007, 100) that “virtually all public debates involve competition between contending parties to establish meaning and interpretation of issues.” However, the other form of conflict we consider, positional conflict, does not significantly increase the transfer of salience from parties to the media. Thus, our findings suggest that parties play a pivotal role in garnering media attention on policy issues, especially when the parties advance opposing frames.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, we outline our hypotheses concerning the ways in which conflicts among parties affect media attention on policy issues. Next, we introduce our case, issues relating to European integration

in the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands. Third, we clarify our data collection and coding strategies. In a fourth step, we outline our measures and estimation method. Fifth, we present our empirical results and assess the robustness of our findings, and finally, we conclude by highlighting our main findings and their implications.

Theory and hypotheses

The relationships between the party and media agendas have recently gained increasing scholarly attention. Most of the work to date focuses on agenda-building linkages in which formal and documented aspects of the party agenda, e.g., transcripts of parliamentary debates, oral and written parliamentary questions and party electoral manifestos, are compared with actual media coverage (see Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). The focal point of this existing work is the transfer of the salience of issues from one agenda to the other: to what extent and under which conditions does an increase in attention to issues on the media agenda result in an increase in attention to the same issue on the political agenda – and vice versa? Unlike previous studies (e.g., Thesen 2013), however, the focus here is not on media content but the content of party communication. We consider conflict among parties as the key variable in explaining media attention to policy issues. Party conflict is important, as it signals to journalists which issues are politically contested and thus worthy of reporting. We argue that at least two forms of conflict among parties exist: *discursive* and *positional* conflict. While positional conflict relates to a competition of ideas on an issue, discursive conflict signifies the divergent meanings parties attach to an issue. Party conflict over an issue, either positional or discursive in nature, is likely to increase the effect of political attention on media attention on that issue, as conflict constitutes one of the most important news values that journalists adhere to – signaling that the political attention devoted to this issue is important (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Harcup and O’Neill 2001). Conflict is an important aspect of political news coverage (Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007). Issues on which political parties agree are not newsworthy and are considered uninteresting to report on or read about (Vliegenthart 2012). If parties express disagreement on an issue – either in the position they take or the framing they use – this is a clear signal to journalists that this issue might be worth reporting upon. Let us clarify

the concepts of positional and discursive conflict among parties and their relationships with media attention in greater depth.

Positional Conflict

Positional conflict is at the core of spatial theories of party competition (see Downs 1957; Druckman, Petersen and Slothuus 2013) and relates to the way in which parties attempt to distinguish themselves from their competitors. In the Downsian spatial model of politics, the policy preferences of voters and parties are represented as positions in a shared policy space. In this model, parties compete with one another by taking different positions in that space. Greater distances signify greater disagreement over policy. Introducing positional conflict is beneficial for parties, as their issue positions are an important factor explaining voters' ballot choices, a process referred to as issue voting. The most widely used conceptualization of issue voting is the proximity model, as developed by Enelow and Hinich (1984) in their seminal work *The Spatial Theory of Voting*. This model assumes that voters act rationally and vote for policy proposals that form the basis of future government. The rationale here is that each voter's utility of a party on a particular policy issue is a negative function of the issue distance between a voter and a party. In the case of redistributive attitudes, for example, one would expect voters to cast their ballots for a party or candidate whose issue position on redistribution is most proximate to their own. Consequently, by introducing positional conflict, parties offer voters a choice on a policy issue.

Our focus here is on this link between politics and the media. As argued, an important aspect of politics is the competition between contending parties over the policy positions they take. This disagreement, or conflict, signals to journalists that an issue deserves public attention. Conflict is a key news value that journalists abide by and thus determines to a considerable extent how much attention journalists devote to politicians (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Harcup and O'Neill 2001). Politicians can devote substantial attention to a policy issue, but if they essentially agree on it, this attention is hardly considered newsworthy. Only if conflict exists will journalists consider the issue worth reporting on. This expectation is formalized in the following hypothesis:

H1 Positional Conflict Hypothesis: *Political attention on an issue is more likely to lead to media attention if parties are in positional conflict over the issue.*

Discursive Conflict

Discursive conflict refers to the different meanings, or frames, parties attach to policy issues. Parties not only must differentiate themselves from their opponents in terms of policy positions, but they also need to ensure that policy issues are defined within the terms of what they consider to be the problem at hand and what solutions should be proposed. In other words, it is important for parties to frame an issue in accordance with a party platform or doctrine (see Hinich and Munger 1993; Petersen, Slothuus and Togeby 2010; Slothuus and De Vreese 2010). The framing of an issue carries the definition of the problem or issue but also more or less explicitly demands certain types of solutions (Entman 1993). Particular ways of framing an issue may be more beneficial to parties, allowing them to force rivals to speak on an issue in their terms. As a result, discursive conflict constitutes an important dimension of party competition.

Though a wide array of framing studies have convincingly demonstrated the effects of single frames through experiments, only recently have scholars recognized the importance of studying framing outside of a laboratory setting and consider a more realistic situation of multiple frames that may compete (Chong and Druckman 2007; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). Furthermore, it is remarkable that no study to date has explicitly explored how *framing* in the political realm impacts *media attention*. Framing, or more specifically the divergence in framing, serves as an important indicator of the disagreement that exists among political elites. Ultimately, the use of different frames indicates that political actors emphasize different aspects of the issue and provide divergent definitions of the problem and different solutions (Vliegenthart and Van Zoonen 2011). By introducing different frames, parties fight over the terms of the debate. When parties compete in this way, they attempt to make their frame the dominant one by emphasizing it while aiming to avoid the frames employed by competitors (Hänggli and Kriesi 2010). As the media must make choices regarding their coverage on the basis of newsworthiness, of which conflict is an important criterion, we again expect a stronger effect of political attention on

media attention when competing frames are present. The discursive conflict hypothesis summarizes this expectation:

***H2 Discursive Conflict Hypothesis:** Political attention on an issue is more likely to lead to media attention if parties are in discursive conflict over the issue.*

It is worth noting that both hypotheses state that the transfer of salience from politics to the media is more likely to occur in the presence of political conflict. In other words, both posit a *conditional* effect: positional and discursive conflict are hypothesized to moderate the effect of political attention on media attention. As with any interaction effect, however, there are two complementary readings of it. The fact that political conflict moderates the effect of political salience on media attention necessarily implies that political salience moderates the effect of political conflict on media attention. By consequence, H1 and H2 also imply that political conflict is more likely to generate media attention if an issue is politically salient.

Alternative Explanations of Media Attention

There are several alternative expectations of increased media attention on a policy issue to consider. In addition to conflict, negativity is an important news value (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Harcup and O'Neill 2001). Journalists are known to over-report on negative news (Soroka 2006). In keeping with this literature, we also expect the media to pay more attention to those issues on which parties express more negative views regarding the EU. In other words, *predominantly negative stances towards European integration within party communication lead to heightened media attention.*

Moreover, the salience of issues for political parties might also induce additional media attention in itself, not only in interaction with conflict. In the literature, however, there are surprisingly few studies examining agenda-setting effects in this direction, and the few that exist find very limited to no effects of salience among parties on salience in the media (e.g., Bartels 1996; Vliegenthart 2007; Wood and Peake 1998). Moreover, if a direct spillover of political attention to the media is expected, it is likely to be short-lived and only prevalent during campaign periods (see Brandenburg 2002; Hopmann et al. 2012). In conclusion,

we take political attention into account, but our expectation is that *higher salience of parties regarding issues does not (independent of conflict) lead to heightened media attention on the same issues.*

The Case of EU Issues

We examine the degree to which discursive and positional conflict among parties affects media attention by focusing on the politicization of European integration in the period from 1987 to 2006. Overall, European integration constitutes an excellent case, as we have witnessed considerable party and public contestation over European integration in past decades (e.g., De Vries 2007; 2010; Hobolt 2009; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Kriesi et al. 2006; 2008). Up to the late 1980s, European integration was generally perceived as a foreign policy issue restricted to the realm of international relations. In this view, European integration occurred *among*, not *within*, the countries of (Western) Europe. Two decades later, this view clearly no longer holds. The transition of the European Community (EC) into the EU as outlined in the Treaty of Maastricht characterizes the transformation from a mere intergovernmental regime with primarily economic and market-related competencies into a supranational regime with increased political competencies (Hix and Høyland 2011; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Steenbergen and Marks 2004). As EU policy making has extended its scope from market integration to non-economic issues and has thus become more-and-more multidimensional, the integration process itself is increasingly contested.

Consequently, when studying the nature and impact of European integration either in Brussels or at home, scholars must consider the institutional complexity, multidimensional character and increased politicization of the process. The integration process is characterized by geopolitical, economic, institutional and, increasingly, social and cultural components (see Helbling, Hoeglinger and Wüest 2010). In order to do justice to these numerous aspects, we distinguish 13 different topics within European integration, which we call sub-issues, and trace the conflict over these sub-issues separately over time.

The recent qualitative changes in the European integration process entail that European integration is no longer a policy issue restricted to the realm of international relations and policy-making but part-and-parcel of domestic

politics. Therefore, we explicitly look at the dynamics among *domestic actors* underlying the increased conflict over EU matters. For this purpose, the political parties in the UK, the Netherlands and (West) Germany offer a representative picture, first because the three countries differ in the degree of conflict over European integration among parties. While the UK has long experienced large-scale conflict, conflict over the EU is only a recent phenomenon in Dutch politics and remains fairly limited in the German case (De Vries 2007; 2009). Second, all three countries experienced what is often considered the defining moment in the conflict over Europe, namely the Treaty of Maastricht, and therefore besides variation in space also offer considerable variation over election campaigns in the extent of conflict. Third, as these are all existing EU members, we are not faced with the potentially confounding effect of accession to the EU, as in Eastern European countries for example, which should lead to exceptionally high attention being devoted to EU-related issues (Tillman 2004).

Methods

Our positional and discursive conflict hypotheses are tested using time series data on 13 EU sub-issues from 1987 to 2006 in the UK, the Netherlands and Germany. The 13 sub-issues are listed in Table II.1. As discussed above, we anticipate positional or discursive conflict on a certain sub-issue to boost media attention on that sub-issue. We use party manifestos to gauge party framing and positions on these sub-issues, while we employ one quality newspaper per country as the basis of our media data.⁵

Independent variables: Discursive and positional conflict

We conducted a content analysis of party manifestos using trained coders to arrive at measures of positional conflict, framing conflict, negativity and the salience of each sub-issue. Every election, parties issue manifestos to clarify their positions on current and recurring issues, and these therefore provide an excellent source to measure party behavior (Budge et al. 2001). In each manifesto,

⁵Note that we do not expect the manifestos to have a direct effect on media reporting in forthcoming electoral terms, as they only receive limited readership. However, they are very carefully drafted and are therefore an accurate reflection of the parties' issue prioritizations, positions and framing.

TABLE II.1. EU issue subcategories.

1	EU general: European integration, European Commission, European Council, Court of Justice, Parliament, Committee of regions, treaties, referenda, Euroskepticism, EU's democratic deficit
2	Accession of countries to the EU
3	Economy, trade, fiscal stability and policy, European monetary union
4	Foreign Policy, diplomacy, defense, geopolitics, human rights
5	Social Policy, unemployment, social welfare, urban/rural planning
6	Crime
7	Environment
8	Agriculture
9	Immigration
10	Democracy, local government
11	Education, (information) technology, science
12	Arts, culture and media
13	Moral Issues

the coders isolated the statements that concern the EU and coded the EU sub-issue to which the statement was related. In addition, the coders indicated the position the statement expressed towards the European integration process, ranging from favorable (+1) to unfavorable (-1), including a neutral option (0), and the frame used by the party.

For each statement, the coders could select five non-mutually exclusive frames (each coded 0 if not present, 1 if present): the peace frame, the prosperity frame, the pride frame, the profit frame and the politics frame. The peace frame signifies that EU issues are described in terms of (international) security, diplomacy and/or war and peace; prosperity framing relates to the extent to which EU issues are presented from a social welfare or environmental perspective; the pride frame denotes that EU issues are presented from an national identity, ethnic, or cultural point of view; within the profit frame, the economic or financial aspects of EU issues are mentioned; and a politics frame discusses EU issues from an institutional or political-strategic viewpoint. Via these frames, parties can provide a meaning for each statement concerning a sub-

TABLE II.2. Examples of statements on the sub-issue ‘agriculture’ in different frames.

Party	Frame	Statement
Labour Party	profit	‘Because of our success in achieving extensive reforms in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), 2005 will be the first year for decades when farmers will be free to produce for the market and not simply for subsidy.’
Liberal Democrats	prosperity	‘We will insist on the enforcement of maximum time limits and for transporting live animals in the EU, a stricter timetable for banning veal crates and improved rearing conditions for pigs and chickens across the EU.’
Conservative Party	politics	‘We will continue to play a leading part in European Community negotiations to reform the CAP.’

issue in five different ways. Table II.2 presents examples of different framings of a given sub-issue, while Appendix B gives a graphical overview of the coded data.⁶

We are interested in two types of conflict among parties: positional conflict, in which parties differ in the substantive positions they adopt, and discursive conflict, in which parties compete over the actual terms of the debate. To obtain measures of both types of conflict, we use the coded manifesto data to calculate the *conflict* among parties. For positional conflict, we calculate the extent of ‘positional polarization’, indicating whether parties diverge in their positions regarding the EU. Similarly, for discursive conflict, we examine ‘polarized framing’, which captures whether parties are opposed in their framing instead of being similar.

The measure of positional polarization is developed in three steps. First, using the manifesto statements, the average position on the EU was calculated per sub-issue for each party. These positions vary continuously between -1 (completely negative) and +1 (completely positive). If a sub-issue was not

⁶Note that the intercoder reliabilities calculated on 10 % of the coded data both for coders across the different countries and within countries ranged between a Krippendorff Alpha of .69 and .87 for the specific frames used by parties as well as the positions adopted on the 13 sub-issues. These scores can be considered more than sufficient.

discussed by any party in a year, there is no conflict and the positional polarization was set to zero.⁷ Then, as a second step, the distances in position between party pairs were calculated by simply taking the absolute difference in position between two parties. Third, based on these distances, the Esteban and Ray (ER) polarization measure is computed (Esteban and Ray 1994). The ER polarization measure accounts for the size of the parties, their distance, and the ‘polarization sensitivity’, which was set at the standard level of 1.3.⁸ The index is calculated for each of the 13 EU issues in every party system for each election year issue as follows:

$$P_{issue}(\pi, d) = \sum_{a=1}^h \sum_{b=1}^h \pi_a^{1+1.3} \pi_b d(a, b)$$

where

$P_{issue}(\pi, d)$ is the positional polarization of the EU sub-issue.

h is the number of parties in the party system.

π_a is the size of party a , measured by the size of the parliamentary fraction.⁹

π_b is the size of party b , measured by the size of the parliamentary fraction.

1.3 is the value of the ‘polarization sensitivity’ parameter, or α .

$d(a,b)$ is the distance between the EU positions of parties a and b .

Our second measure of political conflict taps into discursive conflict with respect to the European integration project. An ER polarization index was also calculated for this type of conflict in three steps. First, for each EU sub-issue, the number of times each of the five frames is used by a party in a manifesto is counted and then divided by the length of the manifesto, to make these framing counts comparable across parties. Second, from these numbers of frame usage per

⁷We also calculated polarization scores without setting the elections with no positions on a sub-issue at zero, but treating them as missing, and this yielded similar results. This was also done for the discursive polarization measure, also with similar results.

⁸Esteban and Ray (1994) recommend an alpha value between 1 and 1.6. We also calculated polarization measures for the two most extreme values in this range. Results with these measures were very similar, and are available on request.

⁹The size of the parliamentary fraction in the most recent election preceding the manifesto was used, but if the party was not yet in parliament during this election, the next one was used.

party manifesto, Euclidean framing distances between parties are calculated.¹⁰ So, for each pair of parties, the distance in the framing of each EU issue is calculated in the following manner¹¹:

$$d(a, b) = \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^5 (a_i - b_i)^2}$$

where

$d(a,b)$ is the framing distance between parties a and b on one sub-issue.

a_i is the proportion of party a 's manifesto framing the EU sub-issue in terms of frame i .

b_i is the proportion of party b 's manifesto framing the EU sub-issue in terms of frame i .

i is the index of the five frames described above.

Third, an Esteban and Ray index was calculated for these distances using the same formula as for positional polarization. As for positional polarization, if a sub-issue was not discussed (meaning that no frames were coded), the measure was set to zero for no conflict. The procedure yields a measure of framing conflict for each of the 13 EU sub-issues in all three countries per election year. This framing polarization score is higher when parties differ to a greater extent in how they frame issues, all else being equal. For example, if Labour frames the issue of accession to the EU in exclusively social terms, and never in economic terms, while the Conservative Party only uses the economic frame, their framing distance will be large and the discursive conflict measured as polarization high. Moreover, the polarization is particularly high when parties form two separate camps of framing with approximately equal weight in party size. Thus, in the previous example, the polarization is higher if Labour and the Conservatives are of approximately equal size, and more important, it is lower if the Liberal Democrats adopt a bridging framing position by combining economic and social frames when discussing accession.

¹⁰We also calculated city-block distances, but as the two distances correlated highly and led to the same results, we only present the analyses using Euclidean distances.

¹¹Note that the more salient an issue is, i.e., the more it is mentioned in a party manifesto, the greater the framing distances are likely to be. This is, in addition to substantive reasons, why issue salience is included as a control variable in the models we present later in the chapter.

Dependent variable: Media Attention

This study examines the national news media's response to party conflict on EU issues, so the dependent variable is the amount of attention the news media pay to the specific EU sub-issues mentioned above. As political conflict is measured in election manifestos, we look at the response in the media throughout the subsequent electoral term (from the moment of publication of one election's manifestos to the next). We rely on an elaborate dataset collected previously, containing electronic copies of all articles mentioning the European Union, the European Community or any of its institutions for one quality newspaper per country from the early nineteen-nineties to the end of 2006 (Boomgaarden et al. 2010; Vliegthart et al. 2008). For the Netherlands, we have the articles from *NRC Handelsblad* from 1991 onwards, for Germany the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* from 1992 onwards and for the UK *the Guardian* from 1990 onwards.

Based on the manual coding of the party manifestoes as outlined above, we developed search strings for any of the 13 sub-issues. Using Will Lowe's *JFreq*,¹² we constructed a frequency list of all words that were mentioned in any of the statements coded as concerning a specific sub-issue. From the resulting 13 frequency lists, words were selected that can be considered indicative of the presence of an issue, based on frequency (words that only occur seldom were excluded) and uniqueness (words that occur frequently in the lists of several issues cannot be used to reliably distinguish one issue from another and are excluded as well).¹³ This procedure resulted in a list of a maximum of ten words per issue (word lists and more detailed information on the procedures are available from the authors upon request). For one sub-issue in each country (moral issues in the Netherlands; arts, culture and media in Germany and the UK) no word met the criteria outlined above, and this issue was consequently excluded from further analysis.

Using the search strings, we searched the newspaper database and determined the total number of articles mentioning each issue starting two months before an election (the moment most party manifestoes were published)

¹²See <http://www.williamlowe.net/software/jfreq/> for additional information.

¹³Specifically, a word was included in a search string for an issue if it met the following criteria: (a) it has a uniqueness score of at least 60% - i.e., of the occurrences of the word in all statements, 60% or more were in statements that were coded as concerning this specific issue; (b) it belonged to the ten most frequently used words with an authenticity score of 60%.

until two months before the next election (when new party manifestoes were published). This way, the independent variables, taken from the election periods, always precede the dependent variable in time. For the first and last election in each country, we do not have complete media data. Consequently, for the first election, we consider the coverage from the moment the newspaper is included in the database until two months before the second election. For the last election, we consider the period ranging from two months before that election until the end of 2006. The score that is used in the analysis is the *share* (i.e., percentage) of the attention on the EU as a whole that is devoted to a certain EU sub-issue in a given period. Taking the relative amount of attention per sub-issue ensures that trivial changes in the media format (e.g., from broadsheet to tabloid) do not determine the attention score. More important, the relative scores better reflect the substantive interest at the sub-issue level, as otherwise the general trend in attention devoted to the EU as a whole might drive the trends in all sub-issues.

We conducted an additional robustness check to test whether the inclusion of a single newspaper is problematic and does not offer an adequate reflection of the public debate that takes place within a certain country. For both the Netherlands and the UK we used additional quality newspapers (*Volkscrant* from 1995-2005, the *Times* and *Independent*, for the entire period) that were analyzed using the same search strings. The correlation between sub-issue attention in the *NRC* and *Volkscrant* series was .90, that between the *Guardian* and *Independent* was .91 and that between *Guardian* and the *Times* was .96. This indicates that – at least for quality newspapers – cross-issue and temporal variation in attention follow very similar patterns, also when the political leanings of those newspapers differ significantly.

Control Variables: Issue Negativity and Salience

We expect that the media not only react to conflict but also to negativism among parties. For each EU statement in the manifestos, we recorded whether it expressed a negative position towards the object, i.e., the EU in general. We assume that when discussing specific EU-related issues, parties are expressing an evaluation of the EU project as a whole. From the EU positions per statement (-1, 0 or 1 for negative, neutral and positive), we calculated the position for each party

TABLE II.3. Descriptive statistics.

	Germany		Netherlands		United Kingdom	
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.
Media attention (%)	8.33	6.20	8.34	5.45	8.34	3.70
Negativity/positivity	0.486	0.408	0.126	0.407	0.264	0.595
Salience among parties	0.168	0.214	0.169	0.179	0.116	0.194
Election years	'90, '94, '98, '02, '05		'89, '94, '98, '02, '06		'87, '92, '97, '01, '05	

Note: Salience among parties (the number of EU statements divided by manifesto length in words, averaged over all parties) is multiplied by 1000 for readability.

per sub-issue and then took the average score of negativity/positivity towards the EU for a party system at a given time.

News media attention may also simply follow party attention, so we include the salience of sub-issues within the political system as a second control. Though based on previous studies this effect is unlikely, it is important to account for because framing polarization could be expected to be high for politically salient sub-issues. The salience of an EU sub-issue in a party system at a given time is calculated by counting the number of statements addressing a sub-issue in each party manifesto, dividing it by the length of the manifesto, and taking the mean score of all manifestos.

Table II.3 summarizes the main descriptive statistics for the salience among parties, attention in the media, and negativity, for each country. As the polarization numbers are not on readily interpretable scales, their means are not listed, but their development over time is displayed in Figure II.1. On average, both the positional and framing polarization between parties is lowest in the Netherlands, while German parties stand out for being most positive on the EU in their manifestos.

Estimation Method

Our dataset covers 13 sub-issues in three countries over five elections (1987-2006). This gives the data a time-series, cross-sectional structure, with N=36 (3x13 – 3 for the missing sub-issues) sub-issues and T=5 elections. We dealt with this structure by estimating OLS coefficients with panel-corrected standard errors, as prescribed

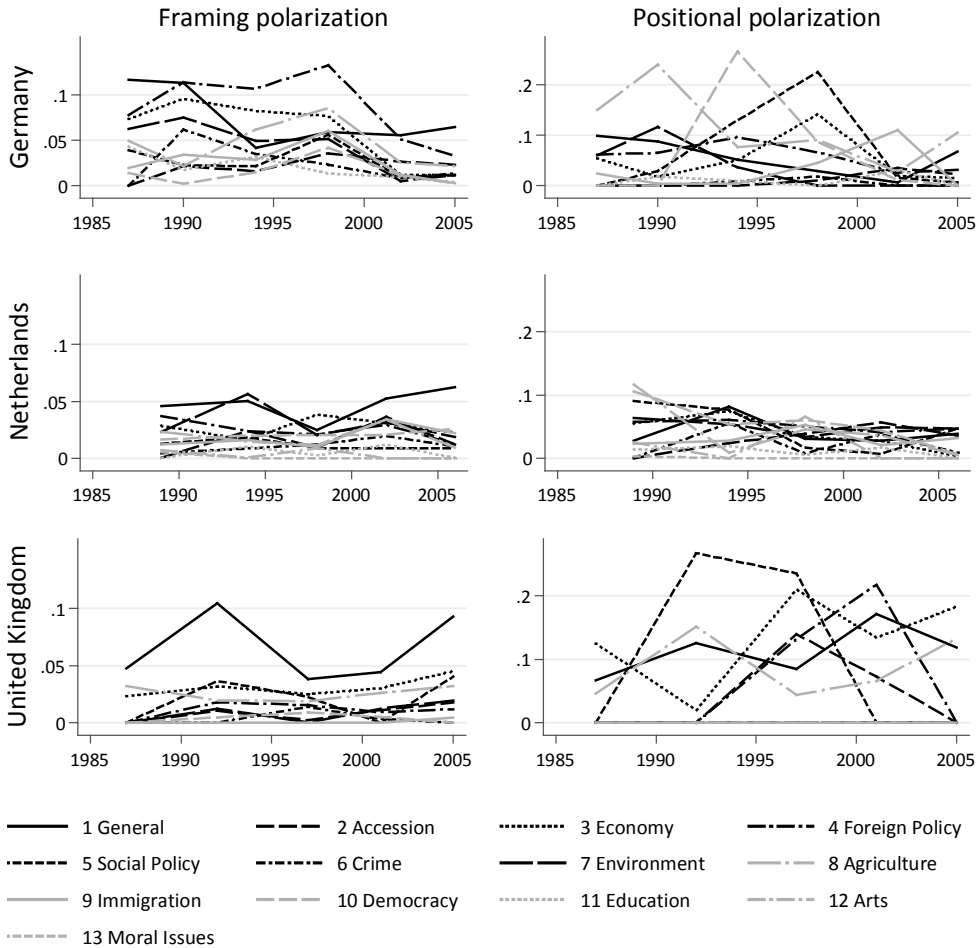


FIGURE II.1. Framing polarization (left) and positional polarization (right) scores.

by Beck and Katz (1995). This ensures that the estimation method accounts for both panel heteroskedasticity (different error variances for the different sub-issues) and contemporaneous correlation (certain sub-issues are similar, and attention to such issues may therefore follow a similar pattern over time, leading to correlated errors). The time variable was numbered such that elections being held in proximate years in different countries were assigned the same number. For example, the German elections of 2006, the Dutch elections of 2006 and the British elections of 2005 all were assigned the number 5, so that if something were

to cause increased attention on the same sub-issue in all three countries circa 2005/2006, the dependence in these observations was taken into account.

A prerequisite for valid estimation of the models is that temporal dependency is removed, which was done in two steps. First, the time series of the dependent variable were made stationary by first differencing the series. This was necessary because non-stationarity may produce spurious results, and as a panel unit root test (Maddala and Wu 1999) indicated that media attention to EU sub-issues is non-stationary, we used *changes* in media attention as a dependent variable¹⁴. We also differenced the independent variables to maintain the same substantive interpretation of the effects as in an un-differenced model. Second, we tested whether the dependent variable, the differenced series of media attention on the EU sub-issues, displayed serial correlation, and because this was not the case, we estimated the models without any autocorrelation terms.

Finally, to ease the interpretation of the interaction terms in the models, we standardized all variables, such that the main effects can be interpreted as the effect of the variable when the other variable included in the interaction is at its mean. Following the recommendations of Brambor, Clark and Golder (2005), we also present marginal effects graphs for the interaction effects. Marginal effect plots are a convenient way of summarizing at precisely which value of political salience the effects of the polarization measures become significant and vice versa— which helps to provide a substantial interpretation for our findings.

Results

Table II.4 displays the estimation results, presented in four models. First, two models are presented for each of the two types of political conflict: positional and discursive, which we operationalize as positional polarization (model 1) and framing polarization (model 2), respectively. Second, we present a model exploring the effect of both types of conflict simultaneously (model 3), and the final model presents the results for both types of conflict including the control for positivity/negativity in positions towards the EU among parties (model 4).

¹⁴The differenced series are stationary according to the same unit root test.

TABLE II.4. Effects on Δ media attention for EU sub-issues.

	Model 1: Positional conflict	Model 2: Discursive conflict	Model 3: Both types of conflict	Model 4: Both types + control
Δ Salience among parties	0.040 (0.116)	-0.015 (0.141)	-0.011 (0.143)	0.019 (0.156)
Δ Positional polarization	0.087 (0.066)		0.111 (0.058)	0.112 (0.080)
Δ Positional polarization x Δ salience	0.160*** (0.046)		0.053 (0.041)	0.098 (0.060)
Δ Framing polarization		0.101 (0.127)	0.083 (0.128)	0.071 (0.130)
Δ Framing polarization x Δ salience		0.160*** (0.039)	0.143*** (0.036)	0.123*** (0.033)
Δ Positivity about EU among parties				0.119 (0.120)
Constant	-0.045 (0.024)	-0.096* (0.046)	-0.100* (0.046)	-0.081 (0.064)
N (observations)	144	144	144	112
N (panels)	36	36	36	32
Adjusted R²	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.08
Chi² (df)	12.86 (3)	31.65 (3)	45.54 (5)	47.63 (6)

Note: Panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses. All variables are differenced and standardized. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Regarding the first type of conflict, H1 stated that positional polarization increases the effect of political attention on media attention for European integration issues. In model 1, we observe a significant interaction between positional polarization and political salience, but in models 3 and 4, which also include discursive conflict, the interaction is smaller and no longer significant. Therefore, it appears that framing polarization, rather than divergent positions on the EU, affects whether media adopt issues from the political agenda. However, that is not to say that conflict over policy stances does not matter at all. Figure II.2 provides a more complete picture of the combined effects of positional

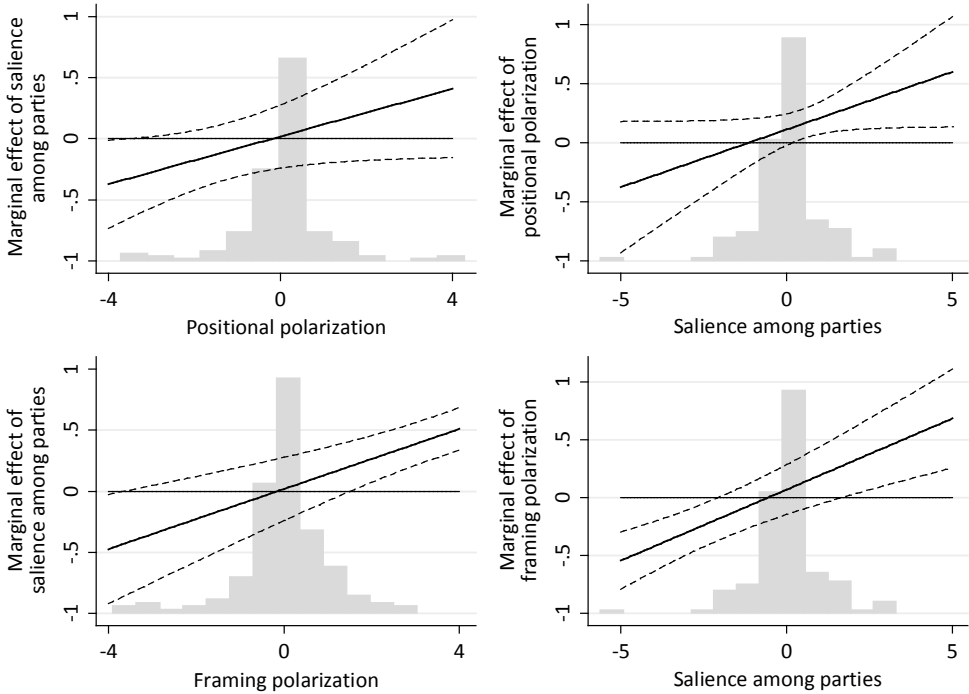


FIGURE II.2. Marginal effects based on model 4.

Note: The histograms indicate which values of the variable along the x-axis are in the dataset; the dashed lines indicate the 90% confidence interval.

polarization and political salience, based on model 4. The upper left panel displays the effect that attention among parties has on attention in the media, at different values of positional conflict (including the 90% confidence interval). The histogram displays which values of positional polarization are in the dataset. At all observed values of positional conflict, the confidence interval includes zero, confirming that political attention per se does not lead to media attention and also that the effect of political salience does not depend on the level of positional conflict. In the upper right panel, however, we see that positional conflict per se has a significant (and positive) effect on media attention when the moderator, salience among parties, is above the mean (zero). So, although the interaction is not significant, leading to a rejection of H1, in line with our expectations, positional polarization leads to media attention under the correct conditions. To be specific, when parties increase the salience of EU sub-issues in their

manifestoes, then heightened positional conflicts over an EU sub-issue lead to increasing newspaper coverage concerning these issues. This holds true, despite that we control for the overall negativity towards and salience of the EU sub-issue in the party system.

As models 2, 3 and 4 show, framing polarization has no significant main effect on media attention, but the interaction between political salience and framing polarization is positive and significant. This is in line with H2, which specified that discursive polarization enhances the effects of political attention on media attention. The lower panels of Figure II.3 depict the marginal effects. On the left, we observe that although framing polarization functions as a moderator, on average political attention has no effect on media attention. This is consistent with previous studies reporting that the media do not or hardly follow parties' issue priorities in general. However, we also note that when framing polarization is very high, the salience of an EU issue among parties has a significant, positive effect on media attention. Similarly, in the right panel, we observe that when media attention is sufficiently high (approximately over 1), framing polarization leads to increased media attention. Therefore, in line with our discursive conflict hypothesis, the more political parties engage in a salient struggle over the meaning of an EU sub-issue and use contesting frames, the more attention newspapers devote to the sub-issue.

Besides our two conflict measures, we control for parties' negativity towards the EU, which we also expect to increase media attention. Contrary to our expectation, the results indicate that media attention does not increase in response to more Euroskeptical party positioning. Apparently, the act of parties casting the EU in a negative light is not regarded as particularly newsworthy. This might be explained by our use of quality newspapers, which themselves tend not to be Euroskeptical. Most important, however, controlling for negativity does not alter the findings on political conflict. In conclusion, we accept H2 concerning discursive conflict as a moderator of media agenda-setting by political parties, and we reject H1 but note that positional conflict does directly increase the media coverage of an issue if it is coupled with sufficient attention from parties. Thus, the results confirm our expectation that the media respond to

conflict among parties over issues by paying more attention to these issues, but they appear to do so most strongly for discursive conflict.¹⁵

Conclusion

Most existing work on issue competition within the US and Western European contexts studies the strategies of political parties in competing over which policy issues top the political agenda (see for example Adams 1997; Carmines and Stimson 1989; De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Green-Pedersen 2007; Kriesi et al. 2006; 2008; Lindaman and Haider-Markel 2002; Riker 1982). This study builds on these studies to examine the interactions between parties and the media. Specifically, we explore the ways in which two types of conflict over policy issues among parties, positional and discursive, garner media attention. Examining the effect of party conflict on the media agenda is important, as parties are strategic actors that utilize conflict over issues to highlight programmatic differences to rally electoral support to strengthen their voice in parliament or increase the likelihood that they will be able to enact their policies while in office (Strøm 1990). Indeed, voters in contemporary democracies often turn to the media to obtain information on parties' policy ideas and activities. Excluding the role of the media in analyses of issue competition is potentially problematic, as one runs the risk of ignoring the important gate-keeping role media that actors play in setting the political agenda (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). By studying the dynamics of issue competition

¹⁵In addition to the models reported, we checked the robustness of the results in five ways. One, we estimated a model including country dummies and one including country dummies and interaction terms with these country dummies and the other explanatory variables, to examine whether the effects differed significantly between the countries, and they did not. Two, as for framing and positional polarization, it could be the case that a negative evaluation of the EU by all parties only affects the media if the parties devote sufficient attention to an issue. Thus, to assess this, we also included an interaction between positivity regarding the EU and salience among parties. The interaction was not significant, nor was the main effect of positivity at any value of the moderator significant. Three, we included period dummies, one at a time and simultaneously, to determine whether different scores in different elections drove the results, and they did not. Four, to inspect the sensitivity to different specifications in terms of serial correlation, we also specified models with a lagged dependent variable, a common ar1 term for serial correlation in the residuals and a panel-specific ar1 term; these results led to the same conclusions. Five, though the PCSEs can deal with contemporaneous correlation between the errors of different sub-issues to a considerable extent, the same sub-issues in the different countries could be extremely correlated, causing problems in the estimation of the errors. We inspected the errors, but the highest correlation in errors between the countries for the same issues was 0.25 for Germany and the Netherlands, which is well within the boundaries of what the technique can handle.

among parties over European integration and their effects on media attention, this study thus advances our understanding of the complex interrelationships between the party and media agendas.

We employ novel data on party debates on European integration in British, Dutch and German election campaigns between 1987 and 2006 and combine them with existing data on media attention on EU issues (Boomgaarden et al. 2010; Vliegenthart et al. 2008). In addition, rather than treating European integration as a single dimension on which parties compete and the media report, as in existing work, we open the black box of party competition over European integration by disaggregating the issue into 13 subcategories. This allows for a more fine-grained understanding of the different positions and frames parties employ regarding European integration issues, which is particularly important given the changes in the integration process in recent decades. We examine the extent to which positional conflict, in the stances parties take, and discursive conflict, in the frames parties use, affect whether attention devoted to different aspects of European integration among parties spills over to media reporting. By employing a pooled time series analysis, we show that discursive conflict over European integration indeed enhances the agenda-setting power of politics over the media, while controlling for the degree of negativity regarding the EU among parties.

If parties discuss a political issue in different terms and focus on different aspects, this signals to journalists that this issue is one that parties disagree on and might be worthy of reporting. The findings might help to explain why previous studies rarely found a direct effect of political attention on media attention, as the media only appear to adopt the political agenda when parties compete over the meaning of an issue. Discursive conflict is apparently more pronounced for journalists than positional conflict: positional conflict was not found to incur this significant moderating effect. However, positional conflict was important in a small way: in instances in which there is both a higher level of positional conflict and a higher level of salience in party platforms, journalists respond with increased attention. An explanation for this difference between the two types of conflict might be that framing is a particularly strong means of explicating differences with others (Vliegenthart 2012). Positions are often less pronounced and, especially in the context of party manifestoes, less saliently

indicated. For journalists, it is easier to report on discursive conflict that translates into media coverage in which opposing views are presented.

The finding regarding discursive conflict has particularly important consequences for how we conceptualize party competition and its effects on media reporting. The framing of policy issues is a central feature in media studies (see Entman 1993) but is largely neglected in the literature on party competition (for an exception, see Helbing, Hoeglinger and Wüest 2010). Most studies conceptualizing conflict among parties focus on differences in the positions parties take and the salience they assign to policy issues (see, for example, Stokes 1963; Budge et al. 2001; or Laver 2001). Our findings suggest that the different meanings, that is to say frames, parties ascribe to issues may be equally important. By framing issues in accordance with the overall programmatic slant of a party's platform, parties can ensure that policy issues are discussed on their terms and are most relevant to the solutions they propose. As a consequence, framing allows parties to suggest that certain solutions are more appropriate or credible. This in turn could have important implications for issue ownership and the degree to which voters associate parties with certain policy issues (Petrocik 1996). Our findings suggest that the linkages between the framing of policy issues and issue ownership may be a fruitful avenue for further research.

Regarding media coverage, we relied on a single quality newspaper for each of the countries. While we conducted additional robustness checks that also considered coverage from other quality newspapers, the media analysis remained limited in nature. Future research should consider a wider variety of news outlets, not only tabloid-style newspapers but also television and online media. We are convinced, however, that the results will be similar, as quality newspapers still act as strong agenda-setters for other media (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2008) and this study shows that coverage in different quality newspapers is strikingly similar. A second issue concerns the period under consideration: after 2006, the European Union experienced turbulent years and the issue of European integration became further politicized due to the economic crisis and the (further) rise of far-right parties, which speak against European integration, such as UKIP in the UK and the PVV in the Netherlands. It is likely that this increased polarization might further increase media attention on the EU. Indeed, research suggests that at least in the run-up to European parliamentary elections, media

attention has increased substantially (Boomgaarden et al. 2013). Whether the mechanism we revealed in this chapter has also been at work in recent years is a question for future research.

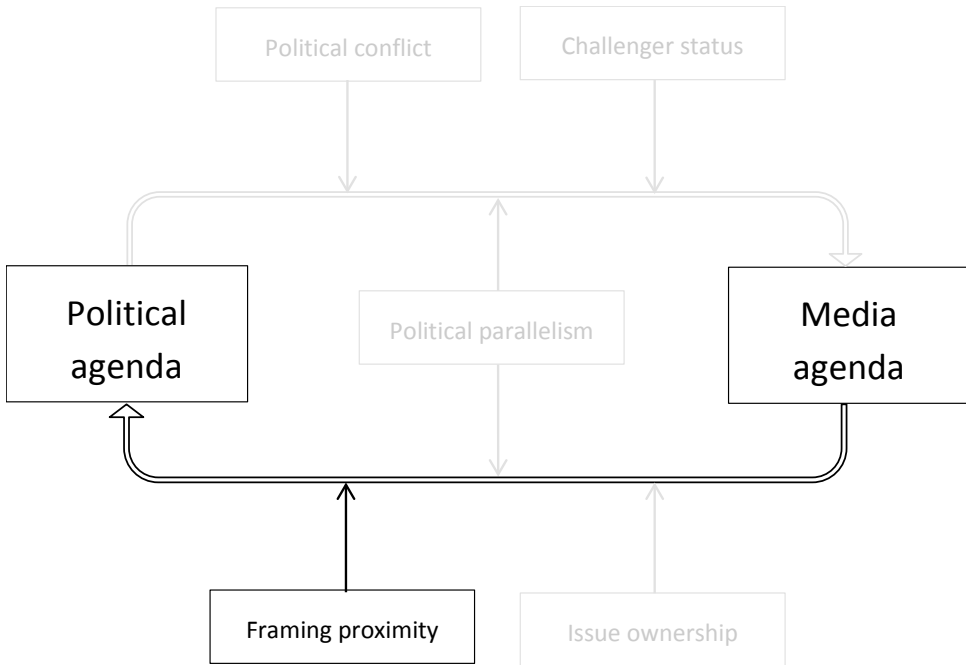
A final topic that constitutes an interesting avenue for further research is the possible endogeneity characterizing the linkages between party and media agendas. Here, we have focused on the degree to which party conflict –whether positional or discursive in nature– boosts the effect of parties on media reporting. Specifying the relationship in this direction seems particularly plausible, as conflict is a key news value employed by journalists. Moreover, we ensured that our measure of media attention only includes media reporting in the period after the electoral manifestos were issued or new ones were drawn up. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to expect that as party conflict garners media attention, this increased reporting may in itself result in higher levels or qualitatively different types of positional and discursive conflict among parties. It may prove worthwhile to explore these mechanisms in greater depth in future work.

Chapter III

Making Hay While the Sun Shines

*Do Parties Only Respond to Media Attention When the Framing Is Right?*¹⁶

¹⁶ This chapter is based on an article that appeared in *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 19(1), 42-65.



Abstract

When do parties take over the media’s issue attention in parliament? Scholarly work has shown that the mass media’s influence over the political agenda is conditional, yet only recently scholars started to consider the active role of parties and their strategic incentives in responding to the media. This chapter argues that parties only respond to media attention if the issue is framed in the party’s terms, as the right framing helps the party attain its policy goals. This argument is supported by pooled time-series analyses of the issue of European integration and the issue of immigration in Sweden and the Netherlands over the period 1995 to 2010. Altogether, the study contributes to our understanding of the strategic incentives and options parties have in responding to the media, as well as to our knowledge of the role of framing in political competition.

Introduction

Do the mass media dictate the political agenda? The scholarly work on *mediatization*, *mediamalaise*, and *media-logic* seems to suggest that media have a large and growing influence on the workings and the content of competition between parties (Altheide and Snow 1979; Mazzoleni et al. 2003). Yet on the other hand, studies on the effect of the media agenda on political agendas have produced conflicting findings and scholars have now come to the conclusion that the magnitude of mass-media's agenda-setting power varies (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). The differences in media influence on political agendas can partly be explained by the nature of the issues on the table (e.g., sensational or nonobtrusive), the type of media outlet (e.g., TV or newspaper, quality or tabloid), and the time (campaign or routine times), but also an important part of the explanation lies in the strategic behavior of political actors. The strategic interests of political parties form "a crucial gate-keeping mechanism in terms of mass media influence on macro-politics," as Green-Pedersen and Stubager (2010, 664) note.

This chapter expands the research on how political parties strategically filter or amplify media attention. Specifically, it examines whether parties selectively discuss issues when the media framing is to their advantage, and remain silent about the issues when it is not. I argue that in this way they take advantage of the opportunities the media environment offers. Parties prefer issues to be framed in a particular way because a frame entails a problem definition and suggests appropriate solutions. As a consequence, parties themselves use the frame that most closely suits their policy program, but it is also rational for parties to talk about an issue when the framing in the media is how the party likes to frame the issue. In other words, the frame preferences of political parties should moderate the agenda-setting power of the media. This hypothesis is tested using the issues of European integration and immigration in newspapers and the parliaments of the Netherlands and Sweden in the period from 1995 to 2010.

The study contributes to existing research in three ways. First, it underlines the importance of framing in party competition and connects it to agenda-setting. Agenda-setting studies are mainly concerned with the salience of issues, while political competition is for a substantial part fought over the

definition of an issue, with parties striving to make their interpretation dominant (e.g., Callaghan and Schnell 2001; Daviter 2007). The present findings confirm that not only the sheer quantity of political or journalistic attention devoted to an issue needs to be considered, but that also qualitative aspects in terms of frames are important. In other words, not only *what* is on the agenda, but also the *way* issues are discussed matters. Only recently scholars have started to expand the scope of political agenda-setting studies to the qualitative characteristics of news reporting and political discourse (most notably Thesen 2013), and this study adds framing to this broader picture. This way, it bridges the two distinct literatures on framing and on political agenda-setting by the media.

Second, the study contributes to the recent strand of agenda-setting literature that stresses that parties strategically use media attention to advance their own goals (see Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Thesen 2013). Parties, by responding selectively when framing in the media is advantageous, and remaining silent when it is not, actively take advantage of situations arising the media, rather than passively undergoing the influence of the media. Thus, this study underlines that the media indeed exert an unmistakable influence on politics, but that this influence is filtered by the strategic considerations of political actors.

Third, it also contributes to the literature on framing. Much of this research is on the effects of framing on *individuals*, typically studied in lab settings (Chong and Druckman 2007). This study shows that frames indeed also have important effects in real-world settings on the actions of collective actors such as political parties.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I shortly discuss previous findings on the media's political agenda-setting power and more broadly on framing, from which this study's expectations are formulated. After this, the issues of immigration and of European Union (EU) integration in Sweden and in the Netherlands are presented, which are used as cases to test the theory. Then, I explain how from newspaper databases and parliamentary records the media and party agendas are measured, and what the manual coding procedure was used to measure framing. This is followed by a description of the statistical model, after which the results are presented. Finally, the implications and limitations of the

finding that parties' response to media attention is moderated by favorable framing are discussed.

Theory and hypotheses

The question whether the mass media steer the political agenda has been picked up in many studies. However, what stands out from this body of research is disagreement: While some find a very strong impact of the media, others hardly find any influence at all. For example, Vliegenthart and Roggeband (2007) find a very small and negative effect of media attention for immigration on the parliamentary agenda in the Netherlands, while in a study of the neighboring country Belgium, Vliegenthart and Walgrave (2011) find that increasingly and in general considerably the media determine what is discussed in parliament. In a review of the literature, Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) point out that these contradictions imply that the political agenda-setting power of the media is *contingent*. There is no simple answer to the question to what extent the media determine the political agenda, but the media's influence depends on a number of factors (see also Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008).

Which factors, then, moderate if the media influence the political agenda? The authors have suggested that the type of issue (Bartels 1996; Soroka 2002), the type of media outlet (TV or newspaper, public or private) and the way topics are covered matters. Eilders (2000; 2002), for example, argues that the media are more likely to exert an influence when they collectively focus on the same issues (focus) and when they do so with overwhelmingly similar opinions (consonance). Moreover, besides characteristics pertaining to the media agenda input that political actors are confronted with, parties and other political actors themselves play an active role in choosing when to copy issues from the media agenda. The transfer of salience is by no means automatic or mechanic, as political actors have a *choice* whether to react or not to what the media are covering, and often consider this carefully.

The question then becomes, as Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006, 99) put it: "Why do political actors embrace issues put forward by the media?" Green-Pedersen and Stubager (2010) have recently examined the strategic incentives parties face when deciding to adopt issues from the media agenda, and found that parties tend to respond to media attention on issues they "own" (see also

Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011). This chapter extends the argument that the media's influence on the political agenda depends on parties' strategic interests in political competition, but it also takes the *way* topics are discussed into account. In a recent study on Denmark, Thesen (2013) found news content characteristics in interaction with the political context condition parties' incentives to adopt owned issues from the media agenda. For example, opposition parties have more reason to respond to bad news than government parties, because government could be held responsible for the situation. In this chapter, the idea that the content of the coverage—not just the topic—matters in parties' decisions to bring news into politics is further explored, by considering more broadly how an issue is framed. However, before moving further, I turn to the concept of *framing*, to develop how this is a crucial concept in understanding the strategic incentives parties have to adopt issues from the media agenda.

Framing and Party Competition

Framing, in Entman's (1993, 52) much cited definition, is "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation." So, by framing the meaning of an issue or problem is construed, and as a consequence certain solutions become more salient, while others are pushed to the background. Parties, in pursuit of the implementation of their specific policies, want issues to be defined in terms facilitating their solutions. In other words, parties have a great interest in promoting the framing that most closely fits their program (e.g., Helbling, Hoeglinger and Wüest 2010). This makes it more likely they will attain their policy objectives, as well as their vote-seeking objectives if they successfully get their frames across to the electorate (Müller and Strøm 1999).

Much like they "own" particular issues (Petrocik 1996), then, parties may be linked to certain frames. This notion has recently been recognized in the literature on policy framing. Slothuus and De Vreese (2010), for example, use the term *party frames* to denote issue frames that are explicitly sponsored by a political party. Similarly, Petersen, Slothuus and Togeby (2010) argue that parties use frames to signal their value reputations or ideology to citizens. Accordingly, voters associate political parties with particular frames in the political debate, that

is, they recognize the party frames. To sum up, parties promote the issue frame that leads naturally to their preferred policy solutions. In parallel fashion, their competitors strive for their framing of an issue to become the dominant interpretation. An important part of party competition is, therefore, a struggle over the meaning of an issue, that is, a fight over frames (see Chapter II). In this way, frames are an integral part of party competition (see also Chong and Druckman 2007; Hänggli and Kriesi 2010; Sniderman and Theriault 2004).

As argued above, political parties work hard to get the frames that are supportive to their argument into the dominant discourse. Conversely, their competitors also promote their framing, while other actors in the public sphere (journalists, opinion makers, interest groups, etc.) also add to the total framing of an issue. Parties therefore rarely have a monopoly over the way issues are defined. This straightforwardly leads to the reason why parties should pay attention to the same issues as the media do when the media are using their frame. When media reporting provides a context in which their frame prevails, their policy solutions appear more plausible, so it makes sense to strike iron when it's hot and discuss the issue in parliament at that moment. In contrast, if parties broach a topic while the framing of it in the media is in discord with their platform and framing, they will have a hard time finding support for their policies. Previous studies have shown that framing is more persuasive if it resonates with prior beliefs or opinions an individual holds (e.g., Entman 2004; Gamson and Modigliani 1989; Schemer, Wirth and Matthes 2012). As Hänggli and Kriesi (2010, 143) summarize "frames that employ more culturally resonant terms have a greater potential for influence." When a party discusses an issue in a frame that was just used for the same issue in the news, the audience is already familiar with the frame. As a consequence, it not only saves a party the effort of framing the issue in the preferred frame, it also makes the framing of the party more powerful because it resonates.

Hypotheses

The expectation of this study is that parties stress issues when the media framing is congruent with their own framing. So parties keep an eye on the framing of an issue in the media, and respond in parliament when the media framing resembles their own. This directly leads to the first hypothesis:

H1 Framing Proximity Main Effect Hypothesis: *The closer the framing of an issue in the media is to the framing of the party, the more likely the party is to address the issue in parliament.*

Accordingly, when the media framing is not to their advantage, parties will call less attention to an issue than usual. This does not mean that they will be completely silent on the topic, but simply that—everything else being equal—they emphasize it less than they would have had the media framing been closer to their own. In short then, Hypothesis 1 postulates an effect of framing closeness between a party and the media on a party's issue salience. However, the way an issue is framed in the media should matter only when there is sufficient coverage. If the media hardly report on an issue, the mix of frames used in those few articles will not be very important, whereas when newspaper pages overflow with articles on a certain topic, the framing of this huge amount of coverage matters a lot for parties. In other words, it could be that media attention needs to pass a certain threshold before framing starts to have an effect, that is, there is an interaction between the closeness in framing and media salience:

H2 Framing Proximity Interaction Hypothesis: *The closeness in framing between a party and the media has a stronger effect on a political party's agenda when media attention for the issue is high.*

While this interaction means that more media attention bolsters the effect of framing closeness, it conversely would also indicate that media attention has a stronger effect on parliamentarians when the framing is congruent. These two readings of the interaction effect are merely two sides of the same coin; however, it is worth noting the substantive implication. Interpreted that way, closeness in framing is one of the factors that moderate the impact the media agenda has on the political agenda (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). The interaction hypothesis therefore speaks directly to the literature on the conditionality of the media's political agenda-setting power.

As noted before, parties also actively try to influence the way issues are framed in the public debate, and journalist often use politicians as direct sources in their coverage. It could be, therefore, that parties do not actually respond to the right framing in media, but simply first spread their framing of a topic in the

media, and then address the issue in parliament. If this were the case, a closeness in framing between media and a party preceding a parliamentary question would merely be an epiphenomenon of the fact that the party is the “framer” in both domains. To test this alternative explanation, whether a party is a big contributor to the coverage of an issue in the media is included as a control variable.

The hypotheses are tested on the issues of European integration and immigration in Sweden and the Netherlands. In Sweden, the EU is a politically contested issue, but immigration is remarkably little politicized, whereas in the Netherlands immigration has been fiercely disputed in politics, and the EU until very recently retained its “sleeping giant” status (Van der Eijk and Franklin 2004). Thus, these four cases present a nice spread in predicted outcomes, because—following the interaction hypothesis—framing closeness should only have an effect in the cases when media salience is sufficiently high. According to the hypotheses, an effect should be visible for immigration in the Netherlands and the EU in Sweden, but not for immigration in Sweden and the EU in the Netherlands. In the next section, the context of the two countries and issues is discussed a little further.

The Issues of Immigration and the EU in Sweden and the Netherlands

Like many of its Nordic neighbors, Sweden is somewhat reluctant toward the European Union. Entry to the Union was decided by a very narrow majority in a referendum in 1993, shortly after which support declined to a minority again. The Miljöpartiet and Vänsterpartiet (Green party and Left party) even called for a withdrawal from the Union, and since continued to oppose European integration. The Eurosceptic parties led a successful campaign against adoption of the Euro currency at the 2003 referendum, and also consistently perform well at European parliamentary elections, with most notably the single issue Eurosceptic party Junilisten receiving 15 percent of the votes in 2004 (Raunio 2007). In addition, the issue has laid bare deep tensions within the Social Democratic party, and is on average very salient among Swedish parties (Netjes and Binnema 2007). Immigration, on the contrary, is exceptionally little politicized in Sweden (Dahlström and Esaiasson 2013). There was an anti-immigration party in the early nineties, Ny Demokrati, but it disappeared from parliament quite quickly. The mainstream right had strategic incentives to keep the issue nonsalient, to be able

to govern together with proimmigrant parties as well as to keep internal divisions below the surface (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). As a consequence, even though there existed anti-immigrant sentiment among the public, the issue was not prevalent in Swedish politics up till 2010.

In the Netherlands, immigration received some political and media attention in the 90s, but the main anti-immigrant party, the Centrum Partij, and later Centrum Democraten (CD), was effectively boycotted in parliament as well as in the media (Van Spanje and Van der Brug 2007). Full politicization of the issue did not take place until the early 2000s, after the debate was sparked by international events such as the 9/11 attacks and Madrid bombings as well as the adoption of the issue locally by more mainstream actors (e.g., Paul Scheffer). Most crucial though was the spectacular rise of anti-immigrant party Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF) in 2001 to 2002 (Koopmans and Muis 2009). Mainstream parties were left in an awkward position, as the Labor party PvdA was blamed for past failures of immigration policies and the liberal party VVD was confronted with pressure from competitors to the right (Van Reekum and Duyvendak 2012). From 2006 the anti-immigrant niche was filled by Wilders' Party for Freedom (Van der Brug et al. 2009). By contrast, the issue of European integration remained on the background of Dutch national politics for a longer period, and while it was shortly contested around the 2005 referendum (De Vries 2009), the issue only as recently as the 2012 elections really broke into the domestic political debate.

Table III.1 below summarizes the expectations for the four cases. Two of the cases, immigration in Sweden and the European integration issue in the Netherlands, only provide weak tests of the theory, as merely the absence of an effect is predicted. The expectation here is that the closeness in framing has no significant main effect, due to the relatively low media salience of the issues. Though it is less evident whether to anticipate an interaction, my expectation is that media attention in these cases is never enough for the main effect and interaction to combine into a significant effect of the closeness in framing. The two other cases, the EU in Sweden and immigration in the Netherlands, offer the more thorough tests because here significant effects are expected. In both these cases, parties are expected to emphasize the issue more in parliament when the media use their frames, and put less emphasis on it if the media framing is very much unlike their own (H1). In addition, they are expected to respond more

TABLE III.1. Summary of Expectations for the Four Cases.

Country	Issue	Level of Politicization	Expectation Regarding Main Effect Framing Proximity (H1)	Expectation Regarding Interaction Between Framing Proximity and Media Salience (H2)
Sweden	EU	High	Positive	Positive
Sweden	Immigration	Low	Zero	Zero
Netherlands	EU	Low	Zero	Zero
Netherlands	Immigration	High	Positive	Positive

Note. H1 = main effect hypothesis; H2 = interaction hypothesis.

strongly to media framing when attention for the issue in the media is high (H2). In combination, the four cases—with their crossed expectations—give the opportunity to exclude country as well as issue specific explanations, and thus really put the spotlight on the framing and attention as causes.

Methods

Salience

This chapter inspects if parties pay more attention to an issue if the media framing coincides with their own, so the response variable is the salience of an issue for a specific party. Parliamentary questions are used to measure this, as they are the prime avenue for parties to put new issues on the legislative agenda and thus further their policy goals (as opposed to manifestos for example, which are further removed from implementation). Furthermore, parliament is also the political arena that is most likely to respond to the media agenda (Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008). The measure for salience was obtained via automated content analysis on the oral questions in the parliamentary proceedings from 1995 to 2010. First, the text of the oral questions was selected from the proceedings based on the titles.¹⁷ Second, the number of words related to the issue, either immigration or European integration, was counted for every

¹⁷ The data were provided by Maarten Marx, who selected it from the data set created in the PoliticalMashup project. The parliamentary questions were found by selecting from the Dutch data the speeches with “vragenuur” in the title, and from the Swedish data the speeches with “frågestund,” “frågor till,” or “Svar på interpellation” in the title. Speeches that were not by members of parliament were filtered out (such as ministers responding to questions).

question using previously developed search strings (see Vliegenthart 2007; Vliegenthart et al. 2008; search strings may be found in Appendix A). This count was summed over all questions of a party in the same quarter of a year. Because oral and written questions are primarily an instrument of the opposition, government parties ask fewer questions and consequently score lower on the issue words. As a third step therefore, the search string count was divided by the total number of words in the questions posed by members of the party in that quarter.¹⁸ Thus, the resulting salience score taps the amount of time and resources a party is willing to invest in an issue, given the limited number of issues they can address in parliamentary questions (see Appendix C for a descriptive overview of the collected data).

Salience of the issues EU and immigration in the media, one of the independent variables, was measured in a very similar way with an automated content analysis of two daily newspapers. Previous work has shown that political parties respond more strongly to newspapers than to television or radio news, so newspapers were chosen over other media for their most likely effect (Bartels 1996; Roberts and McCombs 1994). To get a representative overview of newspaper reporting, for the Netherlands the most widely read quality paper, *Volkskrant*, and the most widely read tabloid paper, *De Telegraaf*, were selected, while for Sweden the most read morning paper *Dagens Nyheter* and most read evening paper *Aftonbladet* were included. First, like for the parliamentary questions, the number of EU and immigration related words were counted with the help of search strings in LexisNexis' newspaper database for the Dutch papers and the newspaper archive Retriever for the Swedish papers. Second, a visibility score was calculated using this formula:

$$v(\text{issue at } t) = \sum_{a \in \text{articles at } t} {}^2\log(8hf_{\text{head}} + 2hf_{\text{body}})$$

where $v(\text{issue})$ is the visibility of an issue in a given quarter (t) of a year, a denotes an article from all articles in this period, hf_{body} is the number of mentions in the body of the article, while hf_{head} is the number of mentions in the headline. The log

¹⁸ Members of the European Parliament were counted as speakers of their respective party's parliamentary fraction; speakers from the Dutch Antilles and Aruba were excluded, as well as all Dutch parties that spoke less than 600 paragraphs (out of 469,733 paragraphs of parliamentary speech, so less than 0.13 percent) over the whole research period in the Dutch parliament. No such procedure was necessary for the Swedish data.

transformation and the multiplication by 8 and 2, respectively, gives mentions in the headline three times the weight of mentions in the rest of the article (see Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007: 80).¹⁹ Third, the visibility scores of the two papers in each country were combined with equal weights, except for the period prior to 1998 when De Telegraaf was not digitally available, and for which a weighted version of the Volkskrant score was used.²⁰ Finally, because an interaction term is used in the models, the visibility score was standardized within each issue and country combination, so that the main effects can be interpreted more easily.

As discussed, an alternative explanation for a congruence in framing could be that parties first plug an issue (using their framing) in the media, and subsequently discuss it in parliament. This explanation is tested by including as a control the percentage of coverage of an issue in which the party name occurs. The idea here is that if a party is directly responsible for the framing in an article, for example, a party member is explicitly quoted or paraphrased, the name of the party will be mentioned. This control was constructed by selecting the articles from the two newspapers that contain at least one immigration or EU search string word in the header, and by counting within these articles the percentage containing the party name or acronym (see Appendix A).

Framing

To gauge the framing of the issues among political parties and in the media, trained coders manually coded newspaper articles and parliamentary questions and speeches. For the newspapers, three (EU) or four (immigration) articles per month were randomly selected from all articles in the database containing at least one mention of EU or immigration related words in the header. We selected from

¹⁹ Newspapers change their formats and the newspaper databases may contain gaps, so to check whether this influenced the results, the total number of words in the entire paper of every second week of the month was counted for the Dutch newspapers. This measure for the size of the paper was also summed over quarters, and used to divide the EU and immigration word counts by, yielding a measure of the relative salience of an issue at a given time. This measure correlated very strongly with the visibility score used in the main analyses, and led to similar results.

²⁰ This was done by calculating how much higher the mean visibility in the two papers was than then the visibility in only the Volkskrant, and multiplying the Volkskrant score by this factor in the period when only this paper was available.

articles mentioning these terms in the header to ensure the coders received material that was on-topic, and articles that were nonetheless not on-topic were manually filtered out afterward. Similarly, for political framing, four parliamentary questions were randomly sampled from the question hours in which the EU and immigration search strings yielded at least three hits, and off-topic questions were discarded manually. In addition, for the Dutch parliament in each year the two debates containing most EU or immigration related words were selected, and from these debates the first entry of each party was coded. This is the speech MPs prepare completely beforehand, so it reflects the carefully chosen framing of the party best.

For each issue, the coders could choose six non-mutually-exclusive frames: the economic frame, the social frame, the cultural frame, the judicial/legal frame, the international security frame and the political frame.²¹ The economic frame signals that the issue of immigration or European integration are described in economic or financial terms and/or referring to economic or financial consequences for individuals, groups, organizations, or countries. The social frame means the issue is presented in light of concerns dealing with the welfare state, social housing, health care, elderly care, education, or other social concerns. The cultural frame is used for example for mentions of uni/multiculturalism, cultural integration or assimilation, creating, maintaining or defending of own or others identity or nationality, the use of religious symbols, signs, or holidays. The judicial or legal frame denotes framing in terms of laws and regulations, for example mentions of jurisdiction, (criminal) law, justice, discrimination, or human rights. The international security frame means the issue is presented in

21 The intercoder reliability for the frames in Dutch material was 0.65, 0.46, 0.61, 0.46, 0.63, and 0.41 (Krippendorff's α on a random sample of 254 units with five coders), respectively, for the economic, social, cultural, judicial, international, and political frame, and in the Swedish papers 0.52, 0.38, 0.61, 0.52, 0.48, and 0.24 (Krippendorff's α on a random sample of 72 articles with two coders). Overall, these reliability scores range from acceptable to rather low. However, there are two reasons why these data can still bring valuable insights. Firstly, the codes for individual frames are not used directly in the analyses, but grouped per time period into a frame usage fraction and then combined over frames into the framing proximity score. Each observation of the framing proximity measure is built up of on average 210 codes (6 frames \times on average 15 articles = about 90 newspaper codes, plus about 6 frames \times on average 20 parliamentary speeches or questions = 120 codes of parliamentary material, giving a total of 210 codes), and can therefore be expected to be much more reliable than its constituent parts. Second, the lower reliability scores bias the estimates such that effects are less likely to reach significance. In other words, the lower reliability scores make the tests of the hypotheses more conservative in the cases where positive effects are expected.

light of the international balance of power between states, peace and war, security, defense, or geopolitics. The political frame, finally, is when the issue is discussed from an institutional or political-strategic viewpoint, for example dealing with the notion of democracy, constitutional affairs, the institutional framework, the bureaucracy, political institutions, elites, or parties.

Via these frames, parties or journalists can provide a meaning in six different ways to the issues of immigration and European integration. The hypothesis of this chapter is that a closeness in framing between a party and media matters, so how is this measured? To tap the closeness in framing, a simple measure of Euclidean proximity was calculated in four steps. First, for each party the preference for a frame was assessed by calculating the fraction of questions and speeches in which the frame was used over all coded parliamentary questions and speeches. Second, the scores for each party were standardized within a frame, so only the differences among parties, and not so much among frames remained.²² Third, for every quarter of a year in the research period, the fraction a frame was used by the media was calculated from the coded newspaper articles, and these fractions were also standardized within each frame. Because three to four articles were sampled per month for each of the two newspapers, the quarterly framing scores for the media are based on 18 to 24 coded articles, minus the articles that coders deemed off-topic. Fourth, an overall framing proximity measure was computed for each issue separately via a Euclidean distance formula multiplied by -1:

$$proximity(part, media\ at\ t) = -1 * \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^6 (part_i - media\ at\ t_i)^2}$$

where i is the index of frames, $part_i$ is the standardized fraction of questions in which the party uses frame i , and $media\ at\ t_i$ is the standardized fraction of coded articles at time t using frame i . Thus, the proximity in framing between a party and the media at a given time point is the reverse of a framing distance score.

²² In addition, some frames are used far more often in the political arena than in the media, yet it is undesirable that these differences due to the arena start driving the results. This is also avoided by this standardization. In particular, for the Dutch immigration issue the political frame was used much more frequently in parliament than in newspapers (about 70 percent versus about 30 percent of coded units), so as an extra check the analysis was repeated for this issue but excluding the frame altogether, yielding identical results.

Last, like the media salience measure, the framing proximity score was standardized within a country-issue combination for ease of interpretation.

Statistical Model

For each of the four cases (the issues of immigration and European integration in Sweden and the Netherlands) a separate model was built with the issue attention of parliamentary parties in the question hour as the dependent variable. This gives the data a time-series cross-sectional structure, with panels being parties which are followed over time, measured in quarters from 1995 till 2010. First, the temporal structure was dealt with by checking that the series were stationary, and including in the right-hand side of the equation the dependent variable with lag 1 (the previous quarter) and lag 4 (a year earlier). The residuals were afterward inspected and found to be white noise, so serial correlation was sufficiently modeled. Second, OLS estimates with panel-corrected standard errors were used with a correction for contemporaneous correlation and heteroskedasticity (Beck and Katz 1995). Furthermore, to make sure the causal factors took place before the response, a lag of 1 quarter was used on every independent variable. Finally, in avoid giving small parties a disproportionate importance in the analysis, observations were weighted by party size (as the share of parliamentary seats).

Results

We now turn to the empirical tests of the theory. According to the first hypothesis of this chapter, framing proximity between newspapers and a party has a positive effect on the party's issue salience: The more the framing in the media is supportive to a party's argument, the likelier the party is to bring the issue up in parliament. Furthermore, following the second hypothesis, this effect is stronger the more media attention there is, implying that there is a positive interaction between framing proximity and media attention. In Table III.2, the separate models for each four cases are displayed. To start with the *weakest* tests of the theory, that is, the cases in which only the absence of an effect was predicted, we can see that as expected neither for immigration in Sweden nor for the EU in the Netherlands any of the explanatory variable has a significant effect. The main effect of framing proximity is in both cases almost zero, and the interaction

TABLE III.2. Determinants of Issue Attention in Parliamentary Questions, 1995–2010.

	Netherlands		Sweden	
	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU
Framing proximity t-1	0.023*	0.001	-0.001	0.005
	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Media salience t-1	0.001	-0.006	0.002	0.003
	(0.011)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.005)
Framing proximity t-1 x media salience t-1	-0.002	-0.004	-0.009	0.020**
	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.009)	(0.006)
Party-issue co-occurrence in media t-1	-0.002	-0.000	0.001	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	0.001
Parliamentary questions t-1	0.109	-0.006	0.156	0.123
	(0.086)	(0.068)	(0.080)	(0.067)
Parliamentary questions t-4	0.214*	0.009	0.192**	0.193**
	(0.087)	(0.049)	(0.066)	(0.069)
Constant	0.104***	0.036***	0.048***	0.076***
	(0.020)	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.011)
N (parties x time points)	413	402	301	287
N (parties)	11	10	7	7
Adjusted R ²	0.05	0.00	0.10	0.08
chi2	14.82	3.32	21.12	21.72

Note. OLS estimates weighted by party size with correlated panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses; framing proximity and media salience are standardized per country and issue combination. Significance levels: *p <.05; **p <.01; ***p <.001.

between the framing proximity and media salience is also not nearly significant. For the EU issue in the Netherlands, the model explains none of the variance, while for immigration in Sweden there is some variance explained, but this can be attributed to the lagged dependent variables.

So the two cases where no effect was expected indeed display none, but what about the cases where the framing closeness between parties and the media *should* matter? Looking at the first model, for the issue of immigration in the Netherlands, we see a significant positive main effect of framing proximity, but no significant interaction between framing proximity and the attention for the issue in newspapers. So Dutch parties tend to pay attention to the framing of

immigration and discuss the topic more when the framing the media matches their own, but do not do this more intensely when media report a lot about immigration. In other words, the framing matters, regardless of the amount of media attention. This is effect is found while controlling for the party's own occurrence in the coverage of the issue, which indicates that parties do not merely respond to the media attention they generated themselves. In addition, it is striking that media salience does not have a significant impact on the questions parties ask on immigration topics in parliament. Possibly sheer attention in the media only has a short term effect that is not captured in the quarterly time span used here, while apparently the influence of the framing context provided by the media is more persistent.

Finally, in the last column the model for the EU issue in Sweden has no significant main effects, but does have a significant positive interaction between framing proximity and media salience. To get a clearer picture of the net effects in realistic situations for the issue of the EU in Sweden, Figure III.1 shows the marginal effect of framing proximity on party issue attention in parliament depending on the salience in the media, and conversely (in the lower panel) the effect of media salience depending on the proximity in framing (see Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005). The histograms display which values of the variable along the x -axis are in the data set. In the upper panel we see that when media salience is relatively low (below 0.46), the effect of framing proximity is not different from zero, or even negative (for media salience values below -1). Yet as the salience of EU matters in the Swedish papers goes up (above 0.46), the effect of framing proximity becomes positive and increasingly strong. In other words, when newspapers write very little about the issue, it does not matter for parties whether the media framing coincides with their own, but when the issue is all over the papers, the framing becomes more and more important. This amounts to more than a threshold: The effect of framing proximity actually keeps growing as media salience rises. Again, this holds while controlling for coverage in which the framing might directed by the party. The lower panel is based on the same interaction, but here the emphasis is on the transfer of salience, with framing proximity on the x -axis moderating the effect of the media agenda on the party agenda in parliament. The effect of media attention on party agendas indeed ranges from significantly negative to significantly positive depending on framing

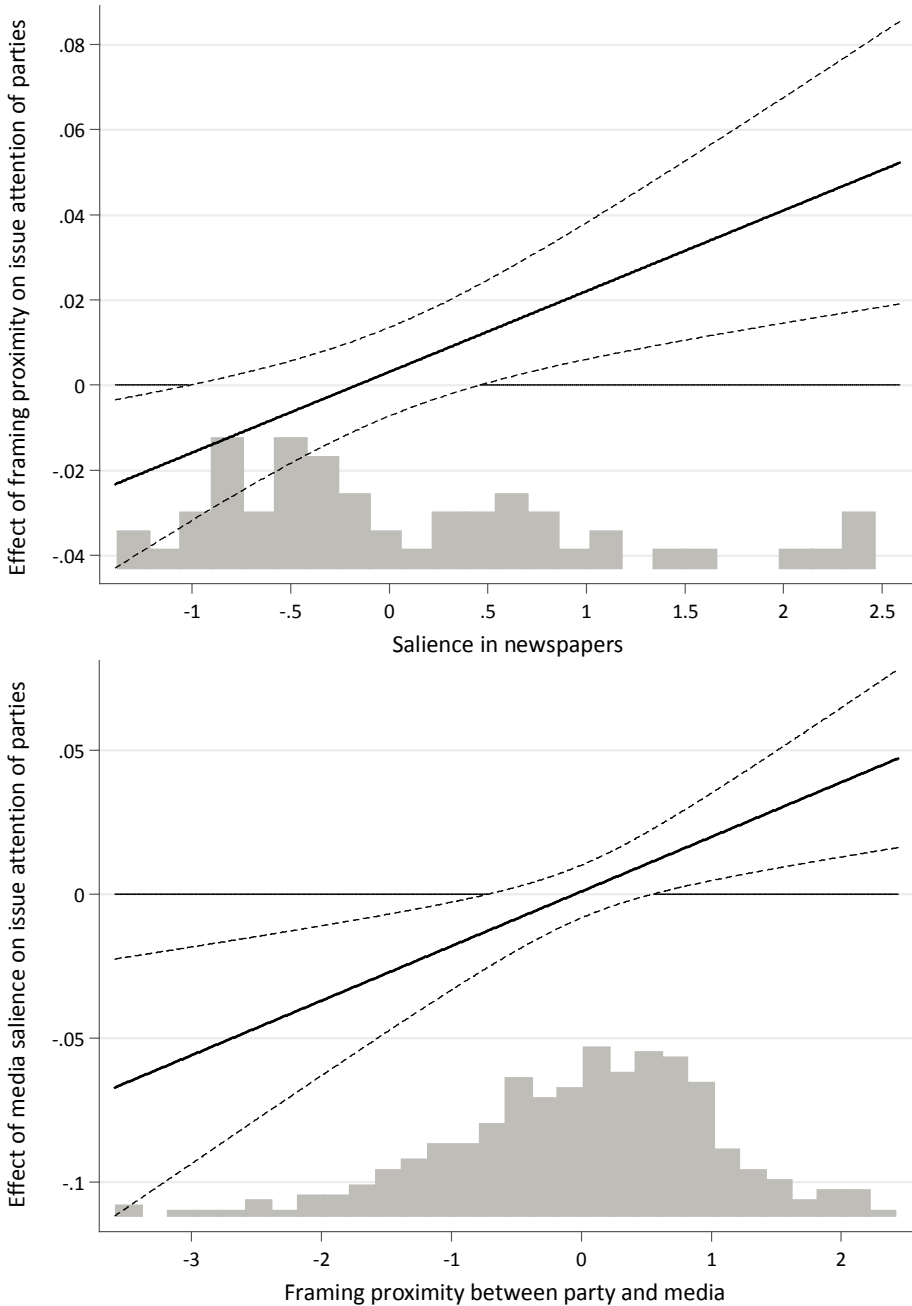


FIGURE III.1. Marginal effects for the EU issue in Sweden.

Note: The histograms indicate which values of the variable along the x-axis are in the dataset; the dashed lines indicate the 95% confidence interval.

proximity: When the media framing is similar to that of the party, parliamentarians adopt the issue the media put on their agenda, however when the media framing is not at all like their preferred framing of the issue, they actually discuss the issue *less* if the media bring it up.

In summary, as expected in the two cases of politicized issues a closeness in framing with the media leads parties to emphasize an issue more. Nevertheless, there is a subtle difference in the way in which frame closeness works: in one case through a main effect (H1), and in the other via an interaction (H2). On the one hand, for the issue of the EU in Sweden a significant interaction between media salience and framing proximity was found, which means that parties react to the frames in the media more when the issue is more visible in the media. On the other hand, for immigration in the Netherlands only a main effect of framing proximity was found, so for this issue the amount of media attention was of no importance. It therefore appears that, at least in the period from 1995 till 2010, Dutch parties were *always* sensitive to the framing in the media, whereas for Swedish parties media framing only mattered if the visibility was high enough. A possible explanation for this difference is that the attention for immigration in Dutch newspapers was always high while it varied for the EU in Sweden, or alternatively, that the immigration issue was such a game changer for Dutch politics that parties were constantly watching the framing, even if it was not on the front pages. As said though, this is a small difference, as for both cases in most instances a closer resemblance to the media framing led to a greater issue emphasis in parliament.

Conclusion

An important part of politics is the struggle over the way problems are defined. Parties not only compete by taking different positions or selectively emphasizing different issues, but also by promoting their way of understanding the issues, that is, *frames* (see Chong and Druckman 2007; Hänggeli and Kriesi 2010; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). This study adds to our understanding of this struggle over meaning by showing that parties strategically bring issues into parliament when their framing is prevalent in the media, and avoid an issue when it is not. It is rational for parties to put issues on the political agenda when the framing in the media is similar to the party's own framing, as the party frame will resonate and

the party's proposed policy solutions will seem more appropriate. Contrariwise, when the media use a framing that is very different from the party's own, it will be very hard for the party to find support for its policies in parliament, and it would be wiser to keep the issue of the legislative agenda. Four cases with each a pooled time-series model bring support to the theory. As expected, in the cases of the unpoliticized issues of immigration in Sweden and European integration in the Netherlands, parties were unresponsive to the framing used in the media, while for the politicized issues of European integration in Sweden and immigration in the Netherlands parties put the issues on the agenda when the framing in the media was right.

At least two conclusions follow from these findings. First, the results underline the importance of framing in political competition. Much of the work on party competition focuses on either positions or on salience (Budge and Farlie 1983; Downs 1957), while the struggle over frames is an essential part of politics. Yet framing studies have only recently begun to consider situations outside the experimental setting and with competing frames (Chong and Druckman 2007; Schaffner and Sellers 2009). This study provides evidence of the significance of frames in the real-world setting of media-politics interactions in parliamentary democracies. Moreover, the impact of framing was even more pronounced than that of media salience, which had a significant effect in only in one of the cases. The limited effect of media salience is probably due to the focus on long term dynamics, and it is likely that a stronger effect would have been visible with a monthly or weekly time span. Yet in this light the consistent effect of framing closeness is even more interesting, as apparently the consequences of media frames *do* persist over a longer period.

Second, the findings emphasize that parties opportunistically choose when to respond to the media and when not to. Thus, they contribute to the recent set of studies that stress that the transfer of salience to politics is not automatic, but that parties strategically filter media attention according to their interests (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Thesen 2013). This way, the study also adds to our wider understanding of the conditionality of the media's political agenda-setting power (Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006).

In this chapter, only two policy issues in two countries are studied, and this of course begs the question whether the results of this chapter hold equally

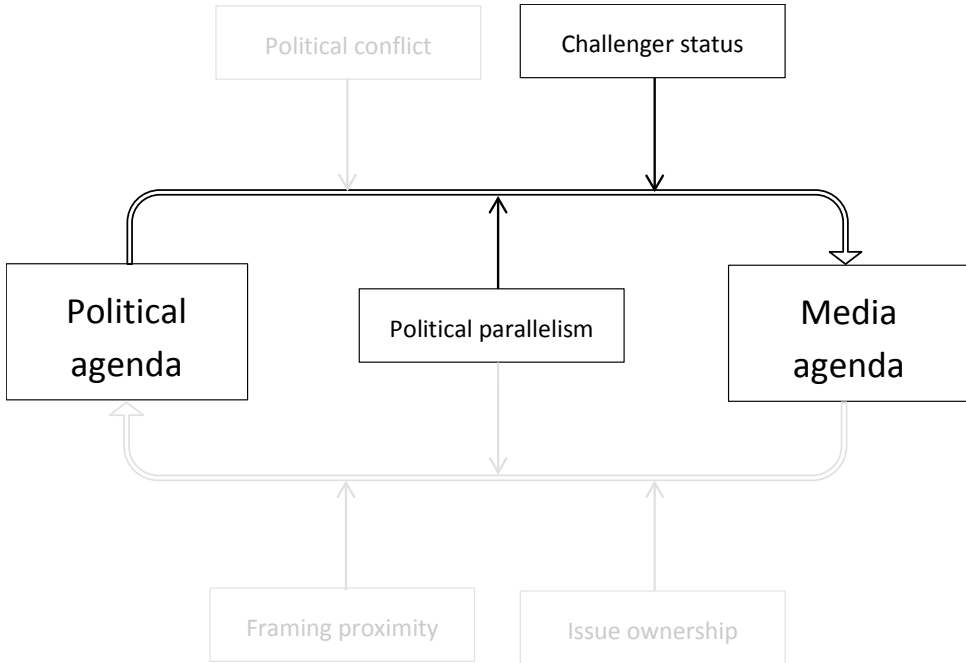
for other issues. A full answer requires research on more issues, but immigration and European integration do seem to be typical of the wider set of politically contested issues. However, not all issues are contested: Just like there are valance issues for which parties do not hold different positions, there might be issues for which parties agree over the framing, or have not developed their frame preferences yet. Further research could establish which issues are characterized by a framing consensus and, relatedly, when and how parties form preferences for specific frames.

In brief, this chapter found evidence for a very general pattern of political responses to media communication. It argued that this strategy would help a party attain its goals, and as a follow-up it would be very interesting to see if this behavior indeed brings the intended benefits. Do parties that keep more firmly to this media strategy get more policies implemented? Do they get a more favorable evaluation from voters as a result of frame resonance? Does this strategy help parties become associated with an issue and possibly attain ownership in the eyes of the electorate? Furthermore, the proposed media strategy should serve the policy-seeking goals of the party, but not all parties are equally policy-seeking. It is therefore to be expected that, even though the pattern found here holds in general, some parties use a very different strategy when it comes to dealing with media frames and attention (see also Hänggli and Kriesi 2012). Are there for instance parties that do not avoid a topic when the framing is contrary to their own, but rather try to engage in the conversation and turn the framing around by stressing the issue more? Surprisingly little research is done on different strategies for media frames, let alone what the consequences of different strategies might be. These are interesting questions for further research, as answers bring us closer to understanding what is on the political agenda, and moreover, who determines what is.

Chapter IV

Watchdogs or Lapdogs?

*Partisan and Structural Bias in the Media Coverage of
Parliamentary Questions in the Netherlands, 1995-2010*



Abstract

In many parliaments, MPs have a weekly opportunity to ask government ministers questions, however, most of these parliamentary questions (PQs) are ignored in the media, while only some receive coverage. This chapter examines when journalists pay attention to the issues brought up in PQs and when they do not, and hypothesizes the presence of a *structural bias* and of a *partisan bias* in the coverage of questions. A structural bias results from the norm of watchdog journalism, which makes journalists focus on questions that put pressure on the government, that is, questions of challenger parties. A partisan bias results from the partisan ties that newspapers and parties have, which make journalist only pay attention to the questions of linked parties, but not the rest. The hypotheses are tested with pooled time series analyses on PQs on the issue of immigration and of European integration in the Netherlands from 1995 to 2010 and the coverage of these two issues in two daily newspapers, De Telegraaf and the Volkskrant.

Introduction

Much of the political competition in Western democracies is fought over which issues should dominate the political agenda (Carmines and Stimson 1989; Green-Pedersen 2007; Schattschneider 1960). Also in parliament, parties strive to ensure that their preferred topics are salient while diverting attention away from topics that might harm them (Riker 1996). Parliamentary questions in particular are a means for parties to place issues on the political agenda and generate more widespread attention for them in the public debate. Surprisingly, however, we know very little about whether the issues parties introduce in their parliamentary questions are actually picked up by the media. In other words, we do not know whether parties' efforts to call attention to issues by asking questions in parliament are in vain. Moreover, even less is known regarding which parliamentary questions successfully attract media attention to an issue and which are ignored. News media must be highly selective in selecting what to cover, but we do not know which issues from parliament are deemed newsworthy and which are not.

This chapter fills part of this lacuna by examining which parliamentary questions are more likely to inspire newspaper coverage and which fail to produce media attention. It argues that not all parliamentary questions are equally interesting for journalists to respond to and hypothesizes the presence of a *structural bias*, whereby journalists respond more to questions posed by challenger parties, and a *partisan bias*, whereby newspapers devote greater attention to parties that are overrepresented among their readers. Two issues, European integration and immigration, in the Netherlands over the period from 1995 to 2010 are used to study this subject.

The findings have important implications for our understanding of the media as perpetuators of existing power structures. Many studies show that journalists consider powerful actors more newsworthy and consequently devote the most attention to actors holding the highest government offices (De Swert and Walgrave 2002; Hopmann, De Vreese and Albæk 2011; Green-Pedersen, Mortensen and Thesen 2013; Van Dalen 2012; Wolfsfeld 1997). As Tresch notes (2009, 71), 'formal power in the policy-making process easily translates into discursive power', thus leading to a virtuous cycle for already powerful politicians. I argue, and empirically substantiate, that the very mechanism that

leads journalists to focus on government parties in political news in general, namely the watchdog norm, leads them to concentrate on challenger parties in the coverage of parliamentary questions. In so doing, the chapter demonstrates that the media do not always amplify political power but may also function as ‘weapons of the weak’.

Furthermore, by combining the literatures on party competition and political communication, this study demonstrates that the distinction between mainstream opposition and challenger parties (De Vries and Hobolt 2012) is also relevant for our understanding of the interaction between politics and the media. Research in political communication thus far distinguishes government and opposition parties (e.g., Thesen 2013; Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011), but the divergent roles and incentives within the opposition lead to very different journalistic responses to challengers and mainstream opposition parties. Finally, the chapter also contributes to our knowledge of the partisan nature of the Dutch media landscape after ‘depillarization’. Since 1960, the formerly strong ties between newspapers and political parties have steadily (and famously) eroded. This chapter documents that even in recent ‘depillarized’ decades, newspaper journalists, at least in their selection of parliamentary activity for coverage, remain partisan.

The chapter proceeds by first discussing extant research on the media coverage of parliamentary questions and then argues that we should expect a contingent relationship. Then, the hypotheses of structural bias and partisan bias are introduced, followed by a brief discussion of the cases used in this study, which are the issues of immigration and European integration in the Netherlands from 1995 to 2010. Next, the data, content analysis and statistical methods are presented, followed by the results on the two hypotheses. Finally, the conclusion discusses the implications for our understanding of the interactions between political and media agendas.

Theory and hypotheses

Although agenda-setting research has made considerable progress in explaining the mass media’s power over the political agenda, few studies examine whether and how political actors can influence what is on the media agenda. Those studies that do examine this topic primarily focus on campaign periods, explaining how,

through public speeches, TV ads and press releases, parties can influence election news coverage (Brandenburg 2002; Lancendorfer and Lee 2010; Hopmann et al. 2012). As a result, we know very little about the influence of politics over the media agenda in routine periods. Recent research, moreover, reveals that long before campaigns begin, voters gradually form electoral preferences, suggesting that setting the media agenda during routine periods is of crucial importance for parties (Jennings and Wlezien 2013). In addition, because campaign studies often look at press releases, we know even less about the media agenda-setting power of *parliament* during routine periods. This is surprising, because much parliamentary activity –i.e., speeches and questions– is largely symbolic in nature and intended to influence the broader public debate. In particular, by asking parliamentary questions, parties attempt to attract public attention to their specific issues, either to set the electorate’s issue priorities through the media or to use the media to force government parties to address an issue.

Furthermore, of the studies that consider media agenda-setting by parliament during routine periods, most examine the US context. Bartels (1996) shows that the US congressional agenda has both positive and negative effects on the media agenda, depending on which political issue is involved. Edwards and Wood (1999) study both congress and the presidential agenda for five issues and find that congress did not affect weekly media attention on any of them. A study by Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake (2004) on three policy issues also concludes that the president, but not congress, exerts influence over the media agenda. Outside the US, in a study of the issue of immigration in the Netherlands, Vliegenthart (2007, 64) finds ‘limited evidence for the claim that media tend to follow politics.’ A long-term agenda-setting effect was detected, but this effect was minimal and barely significant, while there was no effect in the short run.

In summary, very few studies have addressed the question of whether the legislative agenda affects media attention, and the conclusion thus far is that the influence is either limited or nonexistent. A negligible overall agenda-setting effect is not very strange, however, because not all issues discussed in parliament are likely to have equal news value for journalists and the audience. As a wealth of communication research has demonstrated, the media have a limited ‘carrying capacity’ (Hilgartner and Bosk 1988) and newspapers must be very selective in prioritizing potential news stories. To do so, journalists employ ground rules for

deciding what is news (see Harcup and O'Neill 2001), such as the news value of *power*, leading newspapers to allocate disproportionate space to elite actors, particularly those holding the highest government offices (Hopmann, De Vreese and Albæk 2011). Whether an issue from the parliamentary agenda appears in the news is likely to depend on whether journalists assign it such a news value.

The news value of power and the incumbency bonus

Bennett's (1990) influential work on the indexing hypothesis and subsequent studies (e.g., Althaus et al. 1996; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston 2006) have shown that the range of views presented by the media tends to mirror the range of views that exist in the elite debate. Put differently, matters discussed by political elites are considered relevant news, and views that are not voiced in the elite debate tend to be ignored in the news as well. However, the journalistic focus on power extends further, by prioritizing the more powerful among the political elites, as is documented in the numerous studies demonstrating the existence of a so-called 'incumbency bonus' (Brants and Van Praag 2006; Hopmann, De Vreese and Albæk 2011; Van Aelst et al. 2008). Politicians that participate in government are mentioned more frequently and prominently in the news than their colleagues in opposition. The result is that the media reproduce (and possibly reinforce) existing formal power structures in their coverage, by granting already powerful actors more exposure (Tresch 2009).

As Green-Pedersen, Mortensen and Thesen (2013) argue, it is important to understand what mechanism causes the media to focus disproportionately on powerful politicians. According to these authors, the news *value* of power should be understood in light of the news *norm* of the media as a "watchdog". This norm implies that journalists are responsible for monitoring the performance of actors with a particular responsibility, i.e., those in political power holding office. Thus, the watchdog norm explains why government actors are generally more prominently featured in the news. However, when journalists cover parliamentary activity, this norm might have a different effect than it does in the case of general political coverage. Parliamentary questions are primarily an instrument by which the opposition holds the government accountable. As a case in point, opposition parties are responsible for the vast majority of questions in the parliaments of Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands (Van Aelst and Vliegthart 2013; Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011). By asking the government

questions, opposition MPs can both confront the government with issues that the latter wishes to avoid and directly hold ministers responsible for societal problems. A watchdog journalist, therefore, also seeking to hold government officials responsible, should have a particular interest in covering the questions of opposition parties seeking to fulfill precisely the same role.

Thus, there is reason to expect journalists to be more responsive to questions posed by the opposition, as they pressure those formally in power. However, the opposition is a heterogeneous group, and not all parties have an equal incentive to put pressure on the government. This is especially the case in multiparty systems. In these systems, De Vries and Hobolt (2012) differentiate between two types of parties within the opposition: mainstream opposition parties and challenger parties. Challenger parties are defined as parties that have never participated in government, and the distinction from the mainstream opposition is relevant here for two reasons. First, challenger parties are more likely to be issue entrepreneurs, i.e., to attempt to restructure political conflict by mobilizing previously non-salient issues (De Vries and Hobolt 2012). This makes them more likely to introduce issues in parliament that are ignored by the government. Mainstream opposition parties, by contrast, are reluctant to do so in fear of jeopardizing potential future governing coalitions. As the coalition potential of challenger parties is low anyway, they have little to lose, but much to gain from agitating matters by introducing new issues.

Second, mainstream opposition parties have been in government and are likely to be responsible for part of the policies that are in force, or at least still have some effect. Problematizing issues fiercely can therefore potentially backfire, as mainstream opposition parties themselves might be held responsible for not having addressed the problem when they were in office. Challenger parties, with no past government responsibility, are free to press the government hard on issues. In brief, the professional norm of watchdog journalism and the different incentives of government, mainstream opposition and challenger parties lead to the following expectation²³:

²³ This hypothesis relies on the assumption that challenger parties more fiercely pressure the government through their parliamentary questions, i.e., the content of their questions is more conflictual than those of other parties. We know from previous research that challenger parties employ more extreme discourse in their manifestos (Van de Wardt 2014), but there is (to my knowledge) no research demonstrating that the parliamentary questions of challengers are more

H1 Challenger Bonus Hypothesis: Parliamentary questions of challenger parties, i.e., parties that have never assumed governmental responsibility, are more likely to receive media coverage than those posed by mainstream opposition or government parties.

Partisan bias

The mechanism proposed above would produce a structural bias in the news. Structural bias is a reflection of news production routines that in principle applies to all journalists and is not the result of ideological decisions (van Dalen 2012, 34). Partisan bias or slant, by contrast, occurs when political color or party affiliation, which differs for every newspaper or even journalist, shines through in the selection of sources, opinions, or entire news stories. Many, primarily American, studies on the coverage of election campaigns center on the question of whether such partisan bias exists in the reporting of various outlets (e.g., D'Alessio and Allen 2000; Entman 2010). Partisan bias is studied much less in the West-European context, but a survey of journalists in four European countries (Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Sweden) confirmed that journalists are 'partisan actors whose beliefs affect their news decisions' (Patterson and Donsbagh 1996). Yet, in an empirical study on the content of five German newspapers, Eilders (1999) found very similar issue repertoires in the different outlets, suggesting little or no politically biased issue selection.

Traditionally, the media in North and Central Europe were marked by strong political parallelism. Hallin and Mancini (2004) describe this group as 'Democratic Corporatist' countries, where organized social groups played a central role in structuring social, political and cultural life, as well as important components of the media system. Newspapers were directly linked to organized

confrontational toward the government. In this study, the content of the questions was not coded; however, I could draw on another dataset of coded written parliamentary questions in the Netherlands to test this assumption to some extent. This dataset covers the same period (1995-2010) and contains approximately 500 randomly selected written parliamentary questions per year, coded for their frames. The presence of 'conflict framing' provides an indication of whether the interrogator seeks to introduce conflict (see De Vreese 2005). Challenger parties indeed use this frame the most often in their questions: they do so in 54% of cases, while the mainstream opposition does so in 50% and the government in 45% ($X^2(df=2)=39.10, p=0.000$). I am thankful to Rens Vliegthart for providing these data.

social groups and were consequently highly partisan. Since the 1960s and 1970s, this system has largely eroded and newspapers have lost their immediate connection to political parties. This is not to say, however, that papers may not be associated with specific parties or ideologies (Patterson and Donsbagh 1996). In the Netherlands, for example, most national dailies gradually redeveloped substantively distinct profiles with recognizable ideological positions (Van der Eijk 2000).

For two related reasons, one could expect journalists to be more prone to adopt an issue raised in the parliamentary questions of an ideologically affiliated party. The first is that news editors and journalists have their own policy positions and will consider the parliamentary questions of parties that hold similar positions to be more newsworthy or interesting because they view them through a partisan lens. Possibly, as a response to such reporting, newspapers would attract readers who also hold similar views. The second is that newspapers have a historical legacy of ties with certain parties, and even though the current editors might no longer be partisan, the particular audience still is (or partly is). It would then still be sensible from a market perspective to cater to the partisan preferences of the newspaper's audience and devote particular attention to the questions of certain parties while ignoring those of others. Both reasons lead to the same expectation, which is laid down in the following hypothesis:

***H2 Partisan Bias Hypothesis:** Parliamentary questions of parties that are ideologically linked to the newspaper are more likely to receive media coverage than those of parties that are ideologically distant.*

Methods

These hypotheses are tested by tracing two issues over a period of fifteen years (1995-2010) in newspapers and in parliament in the Netherlands. The Netherlands, with its democratic corporatist media system and multiparty political system with relatively easy entry for political newcomers, provides a suitable testing ground for the hypotheses. The issues under scrutiny are immigration and European integration. Both are part of the 'new politics' dimension (Hooghe, Marks and Wilson 2002, Kriesi et al. 2008), which in this

research period provided parties with fresh potential issues to politicize. As such, European integration and immigration both meet the minimal requirement that they *could* have been politicized; yet they vary greatly in the extent to which they actually were in the Netherlands. Immigration was politicized spectacularly from the early 2000s onwards, while European Union (EU) integration only received limited attention in response to the 2005 referendum on the Constitutional Treaty but generally remained off the political and out of the media limelight until 2010 (De Vries 2009). Therefore, the two issues represent *diverse cases* (Gerring 2006) in terms of political attention and media attention, which strengthens the generalizability of the findings to a wider range of issues. The EU issue shows whether the challenger bonus and partisan bias pertain to issues for which attention (both politically and in the media) is generally low, and conversely, the immigration issue will reveal whether the hypotheses hold for issues that receive ample attention.

The amount of media coverage a parliamentary question inspires is measured in two newspapers: one quality paper, the *Volkskrant*, and one tabloid-styled paper, *De Telegraaf*. It is important to include –and separately analyze– each type of newspaper, because news norms such as the watchdog function may weigh very differently for quality and tabloid editors. The number of articles that follow a question is measured via automated content analysis on the newspaper database LexisNexis. Previously developed search strings for each of the issues were used (Vliegthart 2007; Vliegthart et al. 2008) as were search strings for each party’s name or abbreviation (Appendix A). The resulting variable measures the number of articles in the seven days following the question hour in parliament that mention the party name at least once *and* mention at least one issue search string word. Question hour in the Dutch lower house is held on Tuesday afternoons, and both papers are morning papers, so using the papers from Wednesday to the following Tuesday ensures that the articles always appeared *after* the question was asked.²⁴ For the *Volkskrant*, weekly data from January 1995 to 2010 week 36 were used. Unfortunately, the availability of *De Telegraaf* in the database only begins in 1999, so for this newspaper data from January 1999 to 2010 week 36 are used.

²⁴ *De Telegraaf* introduced a Sunday paper in March 2004 and discontinued it in January 2010; these Sunday papers were discarded to keep the weekly article count consistent over time.

The main independent variable taps whether a party asked questions on the issue in the oral parliamentary question hour. This is measured by applying the previously described issue search strings to the text of parliamentary proceedings with the title 'Vragenuur' (question hour).²⁵ As this search count was done per week per party, and because most parties use zero issue search string words in most weeks, the resulting variable is highly skewed. For this reason, a dichotomized version is used in the analyses, with 0 indicating that no issue words mentioned by the party in that week's question hour and 1 indicating that one or more issue words were used.

The first hypothesis posits that the parliamentary questions of challenger parties have a stronger impact on media coverage, and this is tested by introducing party type as a moderator on the effect of parliamentary questions. Challenger parties are operationalized as parties that have never participated in government; mainstream opposition parties are parties that have been in government but are currently in opposition; government parties form the reference category for these two dummy variables. A list of the parties included in the analyses and their types can be found in Appendix D.

The second hypothesis states that media are more likely to cover the parliamentary questions of parties to which they are ideologically linked. As described above, newspapers with a particular party affiliation apparent in their reporting probably attract readers with similar partisan views. Alternatively, newspapers that have a partisan audience might adapt their news selection to their readers. The editorial office's party affiliation is thus either reflected in the paper's readership or is itself a reflection thereof. Therefore, to measure the ideological tie between a paper and a party, the voting behavior of the newspaper's readers is employed. Specifically, the extent to which voters of a particular party are overrepresented among the readers of the paper is used, based on the Dutch National Election Study from the most recent election. The measure is calculated as follows:

$$Tie(part, paper) = \ln\left(\frac{O}{E} + 1\right)$$

²⁵ The text of the proceedings is made digitally available by Maarten Marx and can be accessed at <http://search.politicalmashup.nl/?q=vragenuur&order=rchrono>. The proceedings from 2002 week 27 to 2003 week 35 are missing from the database and are therefore not included in the analyses.

where O is the observed frequency of voters for the party in the election study and E is the expected frequency if the voters were distributed independently across newspapers. A natural log is taken such that, for example, twice as many voters in the readership and half as many have the same effect size. Finally, one is added before taking the log because the log of 0 has no outcome, so by adding 1, the parties with zero voters among the readers of a newspaper also receive a score. The measure is computed using the election studies of 1994, 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2006, and each observation was coded with the most recent election study score. Figure IV.1 plots the resulting newspaper-party tie scores averaged over all years, with the De Telegraaf ties on the x-axis and Volkskrant ties on the y-axis. As the figure shows, parties that are tied to the Volkskrant tend to not be tied to De Telegraaf, which is also reflected in a correlation of -0.62 ($p=0.04$) between the two.

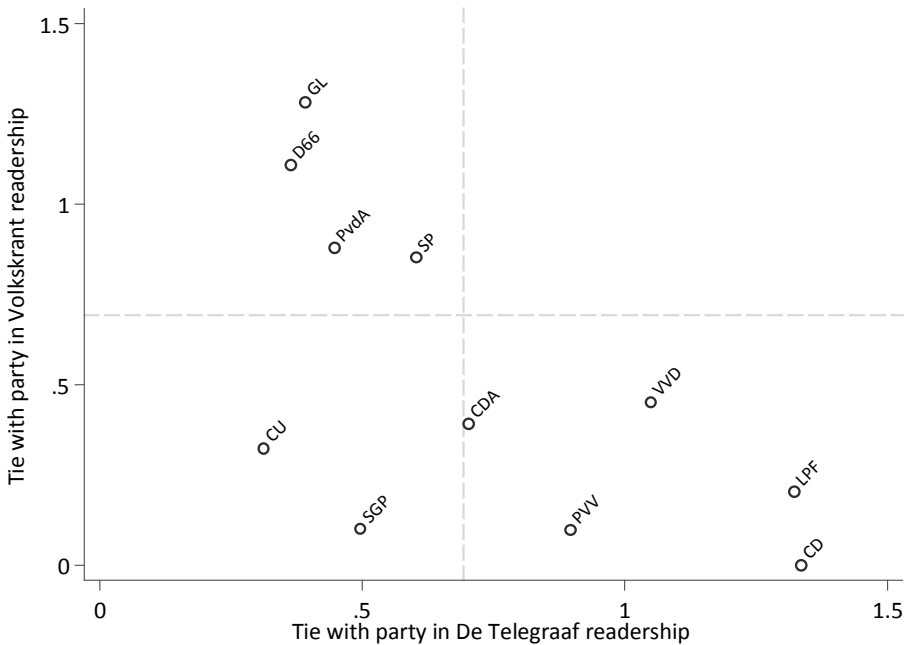


FIGURE IV.1. Mean tie between parties and the two newspapers, 1995-2010.

Note: The dashed line indicates the turning point from underrepresentation of the party voters to overrepresentation.

As discussed above, previous research has indicated that incumbents receive a bonus in terms of media coverage: they are mentioned more often in the news. It is likely, however, that larger parties, with more parliamentarians and staff at their disposal, are also featured in the news more frequently than small parties. To account for this, party size in parliament is included as a control. Appendix D provides a descriptive overview of the dependent and independent variables.

Finally, the second hypothesis suggests that journalists have a partisan bias in their news selection, and as explained above, this would lead them to only cover parliamentary questions of parties to which they are ideologically close. Yet, there is an alternative explanation that could account for newspapers covering questions posed by particular parties to a greater extent, and that is not a partisan bias on the part of newspapers, but a newspaper bias on the part of parties. Research has demonstrated that –at least in the Netherlands– many parliamentary questions are based on very recent news items (see Chapter V). Furthermore, journalists are likely to report on parliamentary questions that are based on an article in their paper. So it could be the case that newspapers do not prefer the questions of certain parties but merely prefer questions in which they are mentioned, and thus the link between a party and newspaper is completely the result of the parliamentarian’s source selection. This alternative explanation is explored in two different ways in Appendix E.

Estimation technique

The issues of immigration and European integration are studied in two newspapers, leading to a total of four cases that are separately modeled. The dependent variable in every model is the number of newspaper articles that mention both the party and the issue, measured weekly for 11 parties over a period of 15 years. As a consequence, there are two types of dependence within the data that must be dealt with: observations following one another in time might be correlated, and observations of the same party (panel) could be correlated. In addition, the number of articles is a count variable exhibiting overdispersion, making linear regression inappropriate. To address these issues, pooled time series models were estimated using generalized estimating equations (GEE), specifying a negative binomial distribution with a log link for the

dependent variable (Hilbe 2011; Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2005). This type of model includes a parameterized within-panel correlation structure, through which the autocorrelation in the observations of the same party can be modeled. For the analyses in this chapter an AR10 correlation structure was selected, thus accommodating any possible correlation in newspaper coverage up to ten weeks in the past. This rather large number of lags was selected because media attention on issues tends to be quite persistent through time and an explorative inspection of the data revealed dependence over this time span. Further, a Huber-White sandwich estimator of variance was used to account for the clustering within party (the panel variable).²⁶

Both hypothesis 1, regarding the media agenda-setting power of challenger parties, and hypothesis 2, regarding partisan bias in newspaper reporting of parliamentary activity, imply an interaction effect. To test the first hypothesis, an interaction between the questions posed on an issue in parliament and the party type is included, and to test the second hypothesis, an interaction between the questions and party overrepresentation among the newspaper readers is included. Because interaction effects are often small in magnitude and therefore difficult to detect in observational studies (Aiken and West 1991), the interactions for hypothesis 1 and 2 are included in separate models. For completeness, analyses including both interactions simultaneously can be found in Appendix F.

Results

The evidence pertaining to hypothesis 1 (H1) is presented in the first four models in Table IV.1 for each of the cases. Before addressing the hypothesis, we note that in all four models, the main effect of the challenger party dummy is negative, while the main effect of the mainstream opposition dummy is negative for the immigration issue and positive for the EU. This provides some preliminary evidence that the distinction between mainstream opposition and challenger

²⁶ The analyses were performed in Stata 12 using the `xtgee` command and specifying the options `family(nbinomial α)` `correlation(ar10)`, `vce(robust)` and `force`. The last option is necessary because the dataset is unbalanced, as certain parties were not in parliament throughout the whole period. As described by Hilbe (2011), `xtgee` cannot estimate the dispersion parameter α simultaneously with the model, so following the recommendations of Hilbe, this parameter was first estimated in a negative binomial regression (using the `nbreg` command) and then inserted in the command.

TABLE IV.1. Effects of parliamentary questions on newspaper agenda, 1995-2010.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf		Volkskrant		De Telegraaf		Volkskrant		De Telegraaf		Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration
Issue in parliamentary questions	0.139*** (0.027)	-0.019 (0.019)	0.417* (0.179)	0.045 (0.064)	0.015 (0.160)	0.049 (0.044)	-0.414 (0.495)	-0.047 (0.052)								
Mainstream opposition	0.013 (0.208)	-0.105 (0.113)	0.068 (0.196)	-0.156 (0.207)												
Challenger party	-0.458 (0.338)	-0.262 (0.372)	-0.548 (0.454)	-0.452 (0.402)												
Issue in questions x mainstream opposition	-0.211*** (0.058)	0.150*** (0.039)	-0.145 (0.438)	0.039 (0.154)												
Issue in questions x challenger party	0.404* (0.167)	0.145*** (0.025)	-0.675 (0.475)	0.053 (0.080)												
Tie between party and newspaper									0.396 (0.336)	0.351 (0.280)	0.887* (0.413)	0.766+ (0.394)				
Issue in questions x tie									0.265 (0.225)	0.03 (0.048)	0.952 (0.637)	0.171* (0.084)				
Party size	0.027** (0.008)	0.031** (0.011)	0.029** (0.009)	0.034** (0.010)	0.037*** (0.008)	0.036*** (0.007)	0.036*** (0.007)	0.037*** (0.008)								
Constant	-1.380*** (0.283)	0.630+ (0.380)	-2.359*** (0.360)	-0.051 (0.349)	-2.019*** (0.466)	0.181 (0.384)	-3.253*** (0.404)	-0.812* (0.353)								
N (parties)	11	11	10	10	11	11	10	10								
N (parties x weeks)	6721	6730	4882	4882	6721	6730	4882	4882								
Adjusted deviance	0.703	0.787	0.468	0.862	0.708	0.782	0.463	0.844								

Note: Unexponentiated coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The reference category for the mainstream opposition and challenger dummies is government party. †p<.10 *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001 (two-tailed).

parties is meaningful, as challenger parties seem to be most noticeably at a disadvantage in terms of visibility in the news when they are not actively putting an issue on the agenda in parliament. In addition, the control for the size of a parliamentary fraction has a positive and significant effect, meaning that larger parties are indeed more prominently featured in discussions of the EU and immigration in the media.²⁷

Regarding H1, we see that the interaction between raising an issue in parliamentary questions and the challenger party dummy is positive and significant for both immigration and European integration in the Volkskrant but not significant for either issue in De Telegraaf. The notion that watchdog journalists devote greater attention to parliamentary activities that pressure those in power, i.e., the questions of challenger parties, therefore seems to hold for the journalists and editors of the Volkskrant but not for the Telegraaf. A tentative explanation is that a quality paper, such as the Volkskrant, places greater weight on the watchdog news norm than a tabloid, such as De Telegraaf. However, pending further evidence to check this, we can only conclude that there is partial support for H1.²⁸

The interaction terms and their significance provide a good understanding of the differences between the two types of opposition parties with respect to the reference category, government parties, but indicate less directly what the net agenda-setting effect of the various parties is. Table IV.2

²⁷ Models excluding the control for party size were also estimated, and in these the main effect of the challenger party variable was negative *and* significant in all four cases, while the main effect of the mainstream opposition party variable was negative and not significant. Thus, when excluding party size, we see a clear 'incumbency bonus', as government parties are mentioned more often in the coverage of the EU and immigration, but when the control for party size is included the effect is smaller and no longer significant. These analyses are available upon request.

²⁸ One might wonder, in particular regarding the immigration issue, whether the results on challenger parties are driven by issue ownership. It could be that media find the mostly right-wing, anti-immigrant parties that own the issue more newsworthy, and only seemingly respond to challenger status because this coincides with issue ownership. To assess this, CD, LPF and PVV were marked as immigration issue owners and the CD, PVV and SP as EU owners. For both De Telegraaf and the Volkskrant, a model was estimated with an interaction between issue ownership and the questions on the issue, along with the interaction between questions on issue and party type. The interaction term between challenger status and parliamentary questions barely changed however: for the EU in the Volkskrant, it increased from .404 to .539 (stronger support for H1), for immigration in the Volkskrant from .145 to .154, for the EU in De Telegraaf from -.675 to -.648 and for immigration in De Telegraaf from 0.053 to 0.013. In conclusion, the results remain unchanged even when controlling for issue ownership, meaning that this cannot be the actual driving factor.

TABLE IV.2. Expected increase in media coverage following parliamentary questions.

	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration
Government	15% (9%–21%)	-2% (-5%–2%)	52%(7%–116%)	5%(-8%–19%)
Mainstream opposition	-7% (-14%–1%)	14% (5%–24%)	31%(-32%–154%)	9%(-11%–33%)
Challenger	72% (23%–140%)	13% (10%–16%)	-23%(-67%–83%)	10%(1%–21%)

Note: Bold indicates that the effect of parliamentary questions is significant at $p < 0.05$; numbers in parentheses are the 95% confidence interval. The entries are calculated from the marginal effects via $(e\beta - 1) * 100\%$, yielding the expected percentage increase in newspaper articles mentioning both the party and the issue if the parliamentary questions variable goes from 0 (issue not mentioned in questions) to 1 (issue mentioned in parliamentary questions) for the specific party type.

newspaper articles on the party and issue when the party includes the issue in parliamentary questions, relative to when it does not. For example, when a government party asks parliamentary questions on the EU, the number of articles mentioning both the EU and the party goes up by 15% (with a 95% confidence interval ranging from of 9 to 21%) compared to when the party does not bring up the EU during the parliamentary question hour. Also regarding the EU issue in De Telegraaf, the parliamentary question agenda of government parties affects the media agenda, but for the immigration issue no significant increase (or decrease) can be observed in either paper in response to questions of government parties. Challenger parties, in contrast, bring about significantly heightened media attention with their questions in three out of the four cases, with the predicted increase ranging from 10 to 72%. Only regarding the EU issue in De Telegraaf do they fail to bring about a significant effect. Finally, the questions of opposition parties lead to more newspaper articles on the topic of immigration in the Volkskrant, so in one out of the four cases.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposes that newspapers are more likely to report on the parliamentary questions of ideologically proximate parties, and models 5 to 8 in Table IV.1 provide the tests of this proposition. Again, we first look at the main effect, in this case tie between party and newspaper. For both issues in both newspapers, the effect is positive, while for the EU and immigration in De Telegraaf it is also significant. This indicates that at least De Telegraaf reports

more extensively on the parties their readers vote for in their coverage of the EU and immigration when the parties are not asking parliamentary questions about these issues.

Regarding the interaction between party overrepresentation and parliamentary questions, we see that -as expected- the effect is positive in all four cases, but significant only in the case of the issue of immigration in *De Telegraaf*. This means that only for this issue and newspaper does the effect of asking parliamentary questions differ significantly depending on the extent to which the party is supported among the newspaper's readers. However, as Brambor, Clark and Golder (2005) point out, even if the interaction term itself is insignificant, the combination of the main effect of X and the interaction between X and Z might nevertheless depend on Z, implying an important conditionality in the relationship. Concretely, regarding the results discussed here, this means that whether parties can successfully put issues on the media agenda by bringing them up in the question hour might still depend on whether their voters are sufficiently represented in the newspaper's audience. This is displayed graphically in Figure IV.2, where the net effect of asking parliamentary questions on an issue is plotted for different values of the overrepresentation variable, along with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure IV.2 shows that, as expected, both newspapers ignore the parliamentary questions of parties that are severely underrepresented among their readers, as for low values of the newspaper-party tie variable, the marginal effect of parliamentary questions is insignificant in all four cases. However, at approximately the 0.69 mark, the point at which a party is neither under- nor overrepresented in the paper's readership, the marginal effect of parliamentary questions reaches significance for both issues and newspapers. In other words, a parliamentary question only causes an issue to rise on the newspaper's agenda if there is sufficient support for the party among the newspaper's audience. Thus, in line with H2, there seems to be a partisan bias in the selection of these daily newspapers. It is worth noting, however, that though this clearly holds for three out of four of the cases presented here, the evidence on the EU issue in the *Volkskrant* is slightly less compelling, as at higher values of the tie variable, the

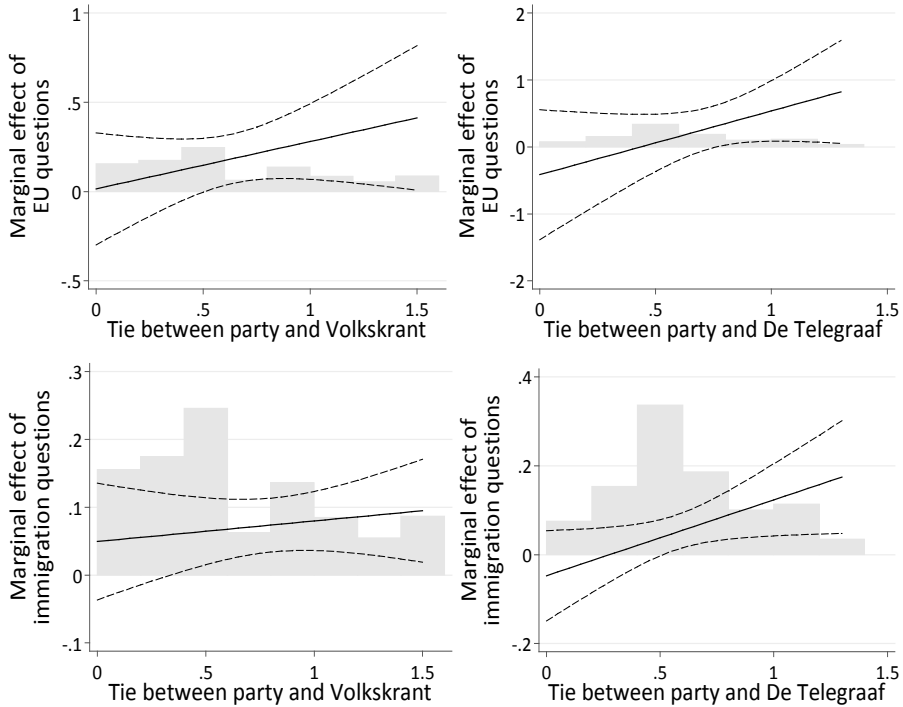


FIGURE IV.2. Marginal effects of parliamentary questions on newspaper agenda.

Note: The scale of the y-axis differs across graphs. The solid line indicates the value of the coefficient of the variable ‘issue in parliamentary questions’ at different values of the variable ‘party overrepresentation among the readers of the newspaper’; the dashed lines display the 95% confidence interval; the histograms represent the values of the newspaper-party tie variable that are in the dataset (in fractions, meaning that a bar of .3 represents 30% of the data).

uncertainty in the model increases to such an extent that the marginal effect again becomes insignificant.

Finally, both Table IV.1 and Figure IV.1 present the results in terms of unexponentiated coefficients, and these are not readily interpretable in terms of the effect size due to the log transformation in the model. To remedy this, Table IV.3 presents the expected increase in the number of articles covering an issue and party if a party asks parliamentary questions on the issue compared to when it does not. In the first row, which presents the expected increase in the outcome in the case of extreme underrepresentation of the party among the newspaper’s readers, none of the increases/decreases are distinguishable from zero. As noted

TABLE IV.3. Expected increase in media coverage following parliamentary questions.

Tie between party and paper	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration
0	2% (-26%–39%)	5% (-2%–12%)	-34% (-75%– 74%)	-5% (-14%–6%)
midpoint (≈ 0.69)	22% (6%–40%)	7% (3%–12%)	28% (-7%– 75%)	7% (3%–12%)
maximum	52% (0%–131%)	10% (2%–19%)	138% (5%–441%)	20% (5%–37%)

Note: Bold indicates that the effect of parliamentary questions is significant at $p < 0.05$; numbers in parentheses are the 95% confidence interval. The maximum value of the parallel tie variable is 1.53 for the Volkskrant and 1.35 for De Telegraaf. The entries are calculated from the marginal effects via $(e^{\beta}-1)*100\%$, yielding the expected percentage increase after parliamentary questions goes from 0 (issue not mentioned in questions) to 1 (issue mentioned in parliamentary questions) while the tie between the party and paper is held at the given level.

above, if a party has no ideological link with a newspaper's readers, the paper will not respond to its activity in parliament. At higher levels of the overrepresentation variable, an increase in articles covering the issue and party becomes visible, with expected increases in the number of articles ranging from a modest 10% to 138% (although the latter is accompanied by substantial uncertainty, as reflected in the confidence interval).

Overall, some support was found for both hypotheses. The structural bias hypothesis, which posits a 'challenger bonus' for parliamentary questions, appeared to be most relevant for the quality paper the Volkskrant and less so for De Telegraaf. Specifically, challengers have significantly more agenda-setting power on both issues in the Volkskrant (see Table IV.1) and can significantly set the Telegraaf agenda on immigration, while government parties cannot (see Table IV.2). Contrary to expectations, challengers are unable to influence De Telegraaf's reporting of the EU issue. More uniform results were found for the partisan bias hypothesis, as in all four cases, journalists ignore the questions of parties that their readers do not vote for, while they are positively responsive to questions from parties with substantial support among their audience. All findings are summarized in Table IV.4.

TABLE IV.4. Summary of findings.

	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration
Structural bias (H1)	Significant interaction	Significant interaction	-	Marginal effect is conditional
Partisan bias (H2)	(Marginal effect is conditional)	Marginal effect is conditional	Marginal effect is conditional	Significant interaction

Conclusion

This chapter examined whether and how parliamentarians can place issues on the media agenda through their parliamentary questions. It hypothesized that the media agenda-setting effect of parliamentary questions is conditioned by both a *structural* and a *partisan* bias. A structural bias should arise because journalists, governed by the norm of the media acting as the watchdog of democracy, critically follow actors with much political responsibility in order to hold them accountable. Challenger parties, with no past government responsibilities and low coalition potential, tend to put pressure on the government with their parliamentary questions, and their questions are therefore more likely to garner attention in the media. The analyses reveal that this is the case for both issues in quality paper the Volkskrant and to a lesser extent for one issue (immigration) in the tabloid paper De Telegraaf. The partisan bias, which simply posits that journalists are more likely to cover the parliamentary questions of ideologically associated parties, was observed in the form of a precondition in all four cases: only if a party is supported by the readers of the newspaper will the paper devote column space to questions posed by the party.

Overall, this study underlines that the media are not merely passive reflectors of existing power structures in three ways (see Green-Pedersen, Mortensen and Thesen 2013). First, supporting evidence was obtained that newspapers' responses to the political context are guided by media norms such as watchdog journalism. As such, the incentives and norms of the media interact with, rather than merely follow, the political context (see also Van Aelst et al. 2008). This also is also reflected by the fact that quality and tabloid newspapers apparently differ in the weight they put on the watchdog norm, suggesting that editors have a choice in whether and how to respond to political power.

Second, while government parties are featured more in the news, challenger parties can influence which topics are on the agenda of the public debate in the media, and this is a valuable asset in light of the growing importance of issue competition (Budge and Farlie 1983, Green-Pedersen 2007) and early voting decisions in the election cycle (Jennings and Wlezien 2013). Specifically, although the norm of watchdog journalism leads to an incumbency bonus in political news in general, in the coverage of parliamentary questions, it actually results in a ‘challenger bonus’ or ‘incumbency penalty’. This means that formally less powerful challenger parties have more power to set the media agenda through their parliamentary questions.

Third, the results indicate that newspapers report on the questions of parties they are close to, while they ignore the questions of ideologically unconnected parties, thus leading to a different selection of issues from parliament in each newspaper. If the news media were merely reflecting political power in their selection, by contrast, issue prioritization would not vary across newspapers. In this way, the partisan preferences of the newspapers and their audiences divide up the newspaper landscape in ways that are incompatible with the pure ‘reflection of power’ thesis.

These contributions notwithstanding, further research is needed to test the generalizability of these findings. Both issues studied here are part of the cultural dimension of political competition, and during this period it might have been particularly profitable for challenger parties to expand political conflict on this dimension. It is possible, therefore, that economic issues are employed as frequently as immigration or European integration to pressure the government and that there is no ‘challenger bonus’ in economic issues. Yet, this remains a question that can only be answered by further research, as one could equally argue that any policy issue can be used to hold the government accountable. Similarly, further research is necessary to determine whether the challenger bonus, which in theory applies to any multiparty system, also holds in other countries. It can be expected that in countries with similar journalistic cultures (see Van Dalen, De Vreese and Albaek 2012), similar patterns could be observed, but again this is an empirical question. Finally, only print media were considered, while parties have an interest in influencing the agenda of the media and public discussion in general, including television, radio and new media. By expanding to

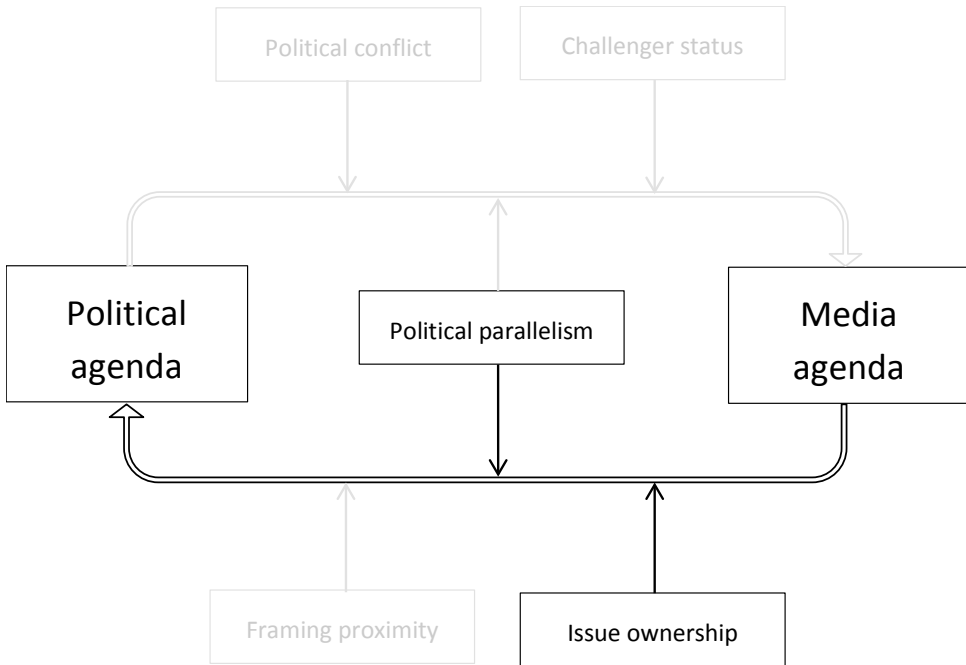
additional countries and media types, future research can further our understanding of parliamentarians' failures and successes in setting the agenda of the public debate.

Chapter V

Political Parallelism in the Media's Political Agenda-Setting Power

*The Case of Parliamentary Questions in the Netherlands,
1999-2010*²⁹

²⁹ This chapter is based on an article co-authored by Wouter van der Brug and Rens Vliegenthart and is currently under review.



Abstract

Due to the professionalization of the media and depillarization of society, the ties between media outlets and political parties have weakened in the Netherlands. In this chapter, we examine whether ties between parties and newspapers still determine when parties adopt issues from newspapers in their parliamentary questions by studying the attention devoted to the issues of immigration and European integration in De Telegraaf, the Volkskrant and parliament from 1999 to 2010. We find that parties only copy the issues from the newspapers their voters read, i.e., political parallelism structures the effect of the newspaper agendas on the agenda in parliamentary questions. In addition, we also inspect whether issue owners are more prone react to media attention for their issues by asking questions, but find no support for this hypothesis.

Introduction

Up to 80 percent of parliamentary questions (PQs) in the Netherlands are explicitly inspired by media coverage (Ruigrok et al. 2013). This seems to imply that the media have a considerable influence on parliamentary activities, and in particular on the content of the Question Hour. This dominant role of the media in parliamentary affairs can be considered an outcome of a broader process that scholars have labeled *mediatisation* to describe the 'situation in which the media have become the most important source of information and vehicle of communication between the governors and the governed' (Strömbäck 2008, 230). Yet, does this imply that the media should be regarded as a single, unitary force that pushes issues onto the agendas of all parties equally? Or are there, despite the rise of a common 'media-logic' (Altheide and Snow 1979), still ties between parties and media outlets that determine whether a party adopts an issue from the media? In other words, is the media's agenda-setting power moderated by political parallelism?

This chapter seeks to answer these questions by examining whether parties are more inclined to follow the issue attention of the newspapers their voters read or whether they indiscriminately follow any paper. To this end, oral questions on the issues of immigration and of European integration in the Dutch parliament in the period from 1999 to 2010 are studied, as well as the attention devoted to these issues in two national daily newspapers. The findings confirm that political parallelism indeed shapes the agenda-setting power of newspapers over parliamentary factions in the Netherlands. So, parties are more likely to bring up an issue that was raised in a newspaper that their voters read. This is substantiated by a logistic pooled time series analysis.

In addition to political parallelism, this study considers another explanation for parties' willingness to copy issues from the media agenda, namely issue ownership. Since Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) argued that the agenda-setting power of the media is *conditional*, scholars have focused on the factors that explain when an issue is transferred from the media agenda to political agendas and when it is not (e.g., Thesen 2013; Van der Pas 2014; Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008). One recurring explanation is the ownership of an issue: if the public clearly associates a party with a specific issue, it is seen as the 'issue owner'. Parties are most likely to respond to media

coverage of an issue that they ‘own’ (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011). In this chapter, we also consider issue ownership but find no confirmatory evidence for the effect of ownership on the likelihood of adopting media issues. On the contrary, it seems that the owners have already prioritized their issues, leaving little for the media to add, at least for the two issues studied here.

By studying these two moderators, newspaper-party ties and issue ownership, this chapter contributes to the existing literature on the media’s influence on parliament in four respects. First, while recent studies in the European context have elaborately considered factors that shape political agenda-setting patterns, characteristics of the media system and specifically political parallelism have received scant attention. Only one very recent study considered political parallelism as a moderator of political agenda-setting effects, but took a different, cross-national approach (Vliegthart and Mena Montes 2014). In the studies situated outside the US, the effects of different *types* of outlet –for example TV or print- are considered, but to our knowledge no study takes differences between outlets of the same kind into account (see Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008). In this study, we contribute to the field by considering the agenda-setting effects of different newspapers separately and by explaining the varying strength of their agenda-setting power by the partisan ties of the newspapers. As such, this chapter combines the literatures on media-party parallelism and on agenda-setting.

Second, the role of partisan ties in newspapers’ agenda-setting ability reveals how important parallelism remains in interactions between the media and politics. On the one hand, the theory of media logic implies that the interaction between the two is increasingly governed by the ground rules of the media, which follow from format requirements and news values that are shared between all newspapers or TV stations (Altheide and Snow 1979; Strömbäck 2008). Empirical studies have shown that, to some extent, signs of media logic are visible in the Netherlands (Brants and Van Kempen 2002; Brants and Van Praag 2006). Further, formal ties between a party and the media system, for example in terms of ownership, have long disappeared with *depillarization* of society (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Mancini 2012). On the other hand, in most northern European

countries, some form of political parallelism persists (Hallin and Mancini 2004; Van der Eijk 2000), and this study contributes further evidence on this subject.

Third, this chapter tests the hypothesis that issue owners react more strongly to the media agenda when their issue is at stake. Previous studies found support for this hypothesis in Belgium and Denmark using a general classification of all political issues (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011), while the present study of two specific policy issues (immigration and EU integration) in the Netherlands does not find that the media more strongly set the agendas of issue owners. Possible explanations for this discrepancy are offered in the discussion.

Fourth and finally, the results of this chapter provide additional insights into the role and use of PQs in the Dutch *Tweede Kamer*. We know from previous research that many questions refer to media sources (Van Aelst and Vliegenthart 2013), and the weekly Question Hour in the Netherlands is explicitly intended to allow MPs to confer on current events.³⁰ This chapter shows that the influence of the media on the topics of PQ is present in the very short term: the newspapers from the same day and the day before the Question Hour are clearly the most important with respect to the issue attention in PQs.

In the next section, the hypotheses are substantiated by first discussing media effects on the parliamentary agenda and then political parallelism and issue ownership. This is followed by a section on data and operationalizations, in which –among other things– the measures of parallelism and issue ownership are explained. Then, the statistical model is introduced, followed by the results and a discussion.

Theory and hypotheses

PQs fulfill a number of functions in representative democracies, such as requesting information from ministers, pressing them for action, gaining personal publicity for the interrogator or building a reputation on specific matters (Russo and Wiberg 2010, 217-218). Martin (2011) distinguishes two broad motivations for asking parliamentary questions: holding the government accountable and developing a reputation among one's constituency. In line with the latter point,

³⁰ See, for example, http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/dossiers/rechten_van_kamerleden.jsp

questions are often considered an apt tool for parties to introduce issues onto the parliamentary agenda (Van Aelst and Vliegenthart 2013). While the agenda for plenary debates is difficult for a single party to influence directly, MPs are free to table questions on any topic in most parliaments and thus determine what issues are discussed.

Because of their symbolic nature, PQs represent the political agenda that is most responsive to the issue agenda in the media (Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008). However, as is the case with other political agendas, the media's influence on the parliamentary agenda is conditional: occasionally the effect of issue attention in the media is substantial, and on other occasions there is no effect at all on what is discussed in PQs (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011; Walgrave and Van Aelst 2006). The literature offers a number of factors to explain whether an issue is copied from the media, such as the frames used in the news coverage (Chapter III), whether the news is good or bad for the government (Thesen 2013), and what type of issue is being discussed (Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008). Thus far, however, only one study has considered the question of whether the structural partisan ties of media outlets matter: Vliegenthart and Mena Montes (2014) found evidence that such partisan ties are important in Spain, where the opposition is only influenced by newspapers that are ideologically close, but not in the Netherlands. Their analysis, however, focused on the government and opposition as a whole and did not consider individual parties. To understand how structural ties between the media and politics might affect the impact of the media on the individual political parties' agendas, we next turn to the concept of political parallelism.

Political parallelism

The concept of 'parallelism' was first introduced by Seymour-Ure in 1979 to describe the relationship between a medium and a party.³¹ A newspaper parallels a party if it is 'closely linked to that party by organization, loyalty to party goals and the partisanship of its readers' (Seymour-Ure 1974, 173). However, as Hallin

³¹ The concept is used, by Seymour-Ure and by Hallin and Mancini (2005), to denote parallelism between a single newspaper and party and that of the party/media system as a whole (Mancini 2012: 263). In the current chapter, we are interested in the first type of parallelism, between one party and a newspaper.

and Mancini (2005) and Mancini (2011) note, in most countries this type of press/party parallelism has almost entirely disappeared, and this is also the case in the Netherlands. The Netherlands were formerly the classic example of a 'pillarized society', in which different social subgroups each had their own institutions for nearly any aspect of social life, from political parties to football clubs, churches, newspapers and unions. This system eroded during the second half of the 20th century, in tandem with the secularization of society, declining membership in political parties and the weakening of structured social cleavages (Brants and Van Kempen 2002; Brants and Van Praag 2006; Dalton 2004).

Although this type of press/party parallelism has faded, a different type of parallelism currently links parties and the media. Hallin and Mancini (2004) describe that in most European countries, the organizational connections between parties and newspapers have faded, but parallels between the two remain in terms of content, the affiliations of media personnel, and the partisanship of the audience. Specifically for the Netherlands, Van Kempen (2007) finds that there are still moderate levels of parallelism between the media and the party system.

There are at least two reasons to suspect that this form of alignment between parties and newspapers leads parties to adopt issues from their affiliated papers. First, the media are often regarded as a mouthpiece for sentiments of the public. The attention devoted to an issue in a newspaper would then imply that the readers consider it important, meaning that for a party with many of its voters among the readership, issue visibility in the newspaper can serve as an indication of their constituency's concerns. From this perspective, bringing the issue into parliament is a form of responsiveness to the voters of the party associated with the newspaper that suggested the issue. Second, media-party parallelism is reflected in the ideological leaning of the journalists and editors and in the content of the coverage. So, it is more likely that the content of the coverage suits the policy interests of parties that are linked to the newspaper, and therefore it is more beneficial for these parties to repeat the issue in parliament. The first hypothesis states the expectation following from these two considerations:

***H1 Parallel Newspaper Hypothesis:** Parties are more likely to ask PQs on an issue that was covered in a newspaper the party has a tie with than one that was covered in a paper they have no tie with, all else being equal.*

Issue ownership

In his influential article, Petrocik described issue ownership as a party's reputation for being better able to 'handle' a problem facing the country (Petrocik 1996, 826). The issue owner benefits electorally from additional attention being devoted to the issue, as this biases voters towards the party with the best reputation. Therefore, parties attempt to increase the salience of owned issues in campaigns such that these problems become prominent concerns among the electorate when casting their votes (Petrocik 1996; Budge and Farlie 1983). As it supports their efforts, issue owners are directly advantaged by media attention on their issues.

More recently, the concept has been argued to consist of two aspects: an associative dimension and a competence dimension (Van der Brug 2004; Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans 2012). The competence dimension is largely determined by party preference (Stubager and Slothuus 2013; see also Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch 2012), and as a result different sections of the electorate perceive –depending on their ideological position and party identification– different parties to be the owner of an issue. In the present chapter we are interested in ownership as a party characteristic, and not a voter-party property, so we focus on the associative dimension of issue ownership.

As issue owners expect to benefit from media attention on their issue, they are more likely to respond to such media attention by raising the issue even more themselves (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegthart and Walgrave 2011). Green Pedersen and Stubager (2010) support this argument through an analysis of the Danish parliament and find that mass media attention on issues owned by the opposition leads the opposition parties to devote attention to those issues (except in the case of foreign affairs). Similarly, Vliegthart and Walgrave (2011) find that in both the Belgian and Danish parliaments, opposition parties that have prioritized an issue in their previous election manifestos are more likely to respond to media attention on the issue than non-owners. Government parties are not more likely to adopt issues from the media agenda in Belgium, and in Denmark they are even *less* likely to respond to media attention. On average for both opposition and government parties, however, issue owners in both countries have a stronger response in parliament to media attention on an issue.

The two studies discussed above were conducted in countries that are similar in many respects to the Netherlands. Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands are all relatively small EU countries with multiparty systems characterized by parties historically rooted in social cleavages, while all three have a democratic corporatist media system according to Hallin and Mancini's classification (2004). It is therefore reasonable to expect that issue ownership also facilitates the transfer of an issue from the media agenda to the owner's agenda in the Dutch parliament, which is under study here. This expectation is recorded in the second hypothesis:

***H2 Issue Ownership Hypothesis:** Issue owners are more likely to respond to media attention on an issue by asking parliamentary questions than other parties are, all else being equal.*

Methods

The hypotheses are tested by following the attention on two issues over time in the Dutch parliament and in two Dutch newspapers. The issues are European integration and immigration. They are both non-economic issues with a potential for politicization; however, they vary in the amount of attention that they received, both in parliament and in the media. Immigration was on average quite high on the political and media agendas during the research period, while debate was relatively quiet around European integration, and over time both issues display considerable fluctuation in both media and political attention (see Chapter I).

This chapter seeks to explain when an issue travels from newspaper pages to the question hour in parliament; the dependent variable is therefore whether a party mentioned an issue in a parliamentary question during the weekly oral question hour. The weekly question hour is held every Tuesday and broadcast live on Dutch public television. Questions can be submitted to the chair of Parliament until two hours before the question hour begins. The chair makes a selection of the questions that will be asked, accounting for both relevance and urgency, while also ensuring that a wide variety of issues are addressed. Whether an issue was mentioned (coded with 0 and 1), is captured using previously developed search strings for immigration and the EU issues (Vliegthart 2007;

Vliegenthart et al. 2008; see Appendix A). These search strings were applied to the speeches during the parliamentary proceedings of the period from mid-1999 to December 2010 with the title ‘question hour’.³² The results were disaggregated by party. As the question hour is held every Tuesday, this results in weekly scores for each of the parties represented in parliament over a period of twelve years.

Media attention is measured through two daily morning papers, the quality paper the *Volkscrant* and the more popular newspaper *De Telegraaf*. We chose newspapers over other media formats such as television or the internet because previous studies have shown that newspapers have the strongest agenda-setting effect (Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008) and exhibit considerable variation in their (perceived) political leanings. In addition, as discussed in chapter I, a clear temporal separation between the dependent and independent variables can be made using newspapers, as they are published at a single, specific moment of the day. Attention devoted to the EU and immigration issues in these two papers is measured using the same search strings as were applied to the parliamentary data, using the newspaper database LexisNexis. *De Telegraaf* is only available in the LexisNexis database from 1999 onwards, so this is when we begin our analysis.³³ The approximate hit counts that result from the computerized content analysis using the search strings are converted into a visibility score using the same formula as in Chapter III:

$$v(\text{issue in week}) = \sum_{a \in \text{articles at } t} 2\log(8hf_{\text{head}} + 2hf_{\text{body}})$$

where $v(\text{issue})$ is the visibility of an issue in a given week, a denotes an article from all articles in that week, Hf_{body} is the number of mentions in the body of the article, while hf_{head} is the number of mentions in the headline (see Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007, 80). Thus, mentions of the issue in the headline receive three times ($2\log 8$) the weight of mentions in an article’s main text, and additional mentions in articles with numerous hits contribute less than the first few mentions do. We add the issue visibility in the Monday and Tuesday newspapers

³² The data were provided by Maarten Marx and the PoliticalMashup project. Speeches by non-parliamentarians such as ministers were excluded.

³³ For a while, *De Telegraaf* had a Sunday paper, but it did not throughout the entire research period; for consistency, all Sunday papers were discarded from the analysis.

preceding the Question Hour to explain whether the issue was mentioned in a PQ (see Appendix G for the selection of this time span).

According to the first hypothesis, parties do not indiscriminately follow any newspaper, but rather copy issues from newspapers to which they are ideologically close. Parallelism can manifest itself in four ways: in the media content, the ownership of the media, the affiliations of the journalists and in the partisanship of the readers (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 28; Van Kempen 2007, 307). We measure the tie between a newspaper and party by examining the paper's readership and consider a party closer to a newspaper if the party enjoys more support among the readership than among the general electorate. Specifically, we use the Dutch National Election Studies to gauge the extent to which the voters of a particular party are overrepresented among the readers of the paper (Todosijevic, Aarts and Van der Kaap 2010). As in Chapter IV, to calculate the measure, the following formula is used:

$$Tie(part, paper) = \ln\left(\frac{O}{E} + 1\right)$$

where O is the observed frequency of voters for the party in the election study and E is the expected frequency if the voters were distributed independently across newspapers. The measure is computed using the election studies of 1994, 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2006, and each observation was coded with the most recent election study score (see Chapter IV).

The second hypothesis of this chapter concerns the issue ownership by parties. Specifically, we focus on the associative dimension of issue ownership rather than on the competence dimension (e.g., Van der Brug 2004; Walgrave, Lefevere and Tresch 2012). As Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans (2009) argue, the association between an issue and a party derives from repetitive linking of the two in the media. To capture this, we measure associative ownership in newspapers by counting how many of the newspaper's articles on the issue also mention the name of the party. To do so, the same two daily newspapers, *De Telegraaf* and the *Volkskrant*, are employed. First, we selected the articles on the two issues, using the immigration and European integration search strings. For *De Telegraaf*, we were restricted by the availability of data in LexisNexis, which only starts in 1999, but for the *Volkskrant* we went back to 1995. This way, the issue ownership of the anti-immigration party CD can also be inspected. Second, we counted the number of the issue-related articles mentioning each party. To do

this, the party name search strings as used in Chapter III were employed (see Appendix A). Third, of both the total number of issue-articles and the number of articles mentioning the issue and a party, rolling averages of the past 52 weeks were derived, with decreasing weights for the 40th to 52nd week in the past. The reasoning was that ownership is a relatively stable attribute of a party but also must be allowed to change over time (see Petrocik 1996, 826 n2; Walgrave, Lefevere and Nuytemans 2009). In the fourth and final step, the ownership score for each week was calculated. Because large parties are mentioned much more frequently in the news than small parties, we must correct for party size (in terms of the number of parliamentarians), which was included as follows:

$$\text{Ownership} = \frac{\text{number of issue \& party articles} / \text{size of party}}{\text{total number of issue articles}} * 100\%$$

The averages of the resulting issue ownership scores for each party are displayed in Figure V.1. As the figure shows, the scores correspond to general understanding of Dutch politics, with, for example, the anti-immigration party PVV scoring high on the ownership of both immigration and European integration.

As a final point on operationalization, we control for the number of seats the party holds in parliament in the models, as larger parties are often granted more speech time in parliament and have more staff to help prepare questions.

Statistical model

The dependent variable reflects whether a party mentioned an issue during the weekly question hour, which we analyze separately for each of the two issues. As it is a dichotomous variable, we employ logistic regression. In addition, there are three methodological concerns that must be addressed. First, the behavior of parties is followed sequentially over weeks, so that there could be temporal dependence in the data. Beck, Katz and Tucker (1998) recommend using time dummies or splines for such dependence in dichotomous variables; however, Carter and Signorino (2010) recently demonstrated that including the duration (t) since the last event and t² and t³ in the regression performs equally well as splines but is easier to interpret and is superior to time dummies. Consequently, in

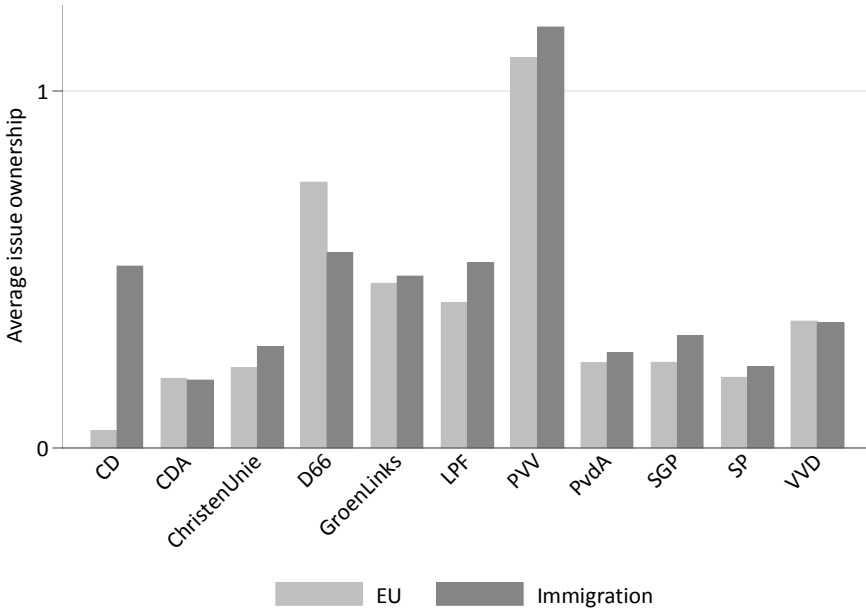


FIGURE V.1. Mean issue ownership of the EU and immigration issues, 1995-2010.

preparation for the main analyses, logistic regressions including only these duration variables were conducted, and the significant effects were retained in the main analyses. None were needed for the EU, while for immigration, t and t^2 were necessary.

Second, the observations are clustered by week: there are multiple observations in each week, one for each party. To deal with this, cluster-corrected (sandwich) standard errors are estimated. Third, the observations are also clustered by party. One option to address this is to include party fixed effects (party dummies), and another is to estimate a multilevel model with a random intercept for parties. The latter is an attractive option; however the higher levels should have at least approximately 20 observations (Hox 2010, 233-4), and the number of parties is much lower than that. Therefore, we only estimate this type of model as a robustness check in Appendix H. The option of party fixed effects has the drawback that part of what we wish to explain, i.e., differences between parties in their issue attention in parliamentary questions, is effectively eliminated from the data through the use of the party dummies. Therefore, we opt for an analysis without party dummies (so only correcting for the clustering in weeks) but include the same analyses *with* party fixed effects in Appendix H.

This chapter is about the contingency of the parliamentary agenda-setting power of newspapers, and the hypotheses as such demand interaction effects. To determine whether parties only respond to reporting in newspapers that they are close to, we included an interaction term between the party-paper tie and issue visibility in the newspaper. To capture whether issue adoption from the media is stronger or weaker for owned issues, we included an interaction between issue ownership and issue visibility in the newspaper. Ultimately, the following model is estimated for each of the two issues (with the component in parentheses only pertaining to the immigration issue):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{logit}(\hat{y}_{it}) = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{visibility Telegraaf}_t + \beta_2 \text{visibility Volkskrant}_t \\ & + \beta_3 \text{issue owners}/ip_{it} + \beta_4 \text{tie to Telegraaf}_{it} \\ & + \beta_5 \text{tie to Volkskrant}_{it} + \beta_6 \text{issue owners}/ip_{it} \\ & * \text{tie to Telegraaf}_{it} + \beta_7 \text{issue owners}/ip_{it} * \text{tie to Volkskrant}_{it} \\ & + \beta_8 \text{partysize}_{it} \quad (+ \beta_9 \text{duration}_{it} + \beta_{10} \text{duration}_{it}^2) \end{aligned}$$

where i is the index of parties and t are weeks. We standardize all the variables that are included in the interactions to ensure that the main effects are easier to interpret. To grasp the effects of the interactions and main effects, we include predicted probability graphs (see Brambor, Clark and Golder 2005).

Results

The first hypothesis of this chapter contends that parties are more likely to copy the issue agenda of a newspaper that they have ties with in terms of readership. It is known that parliamentarians often directly take inspiration from media coverage in their parliamentary questions and frequently refer explicitly to media items. So before we model when parties copy the issues of immigration and European integration, we examine whether parties are more likely to cite a newspaper that their voters read in their parliamentary questions. To do so, we use all parliamentary questions from 1995 to 2010 (i.e., not just immigration and EU questions) and for each party take the percentage in which an explicit reference to De Telegraaf or the Volkskrant was made. The relationship with newspaper ties is depicted in Figure V.2.

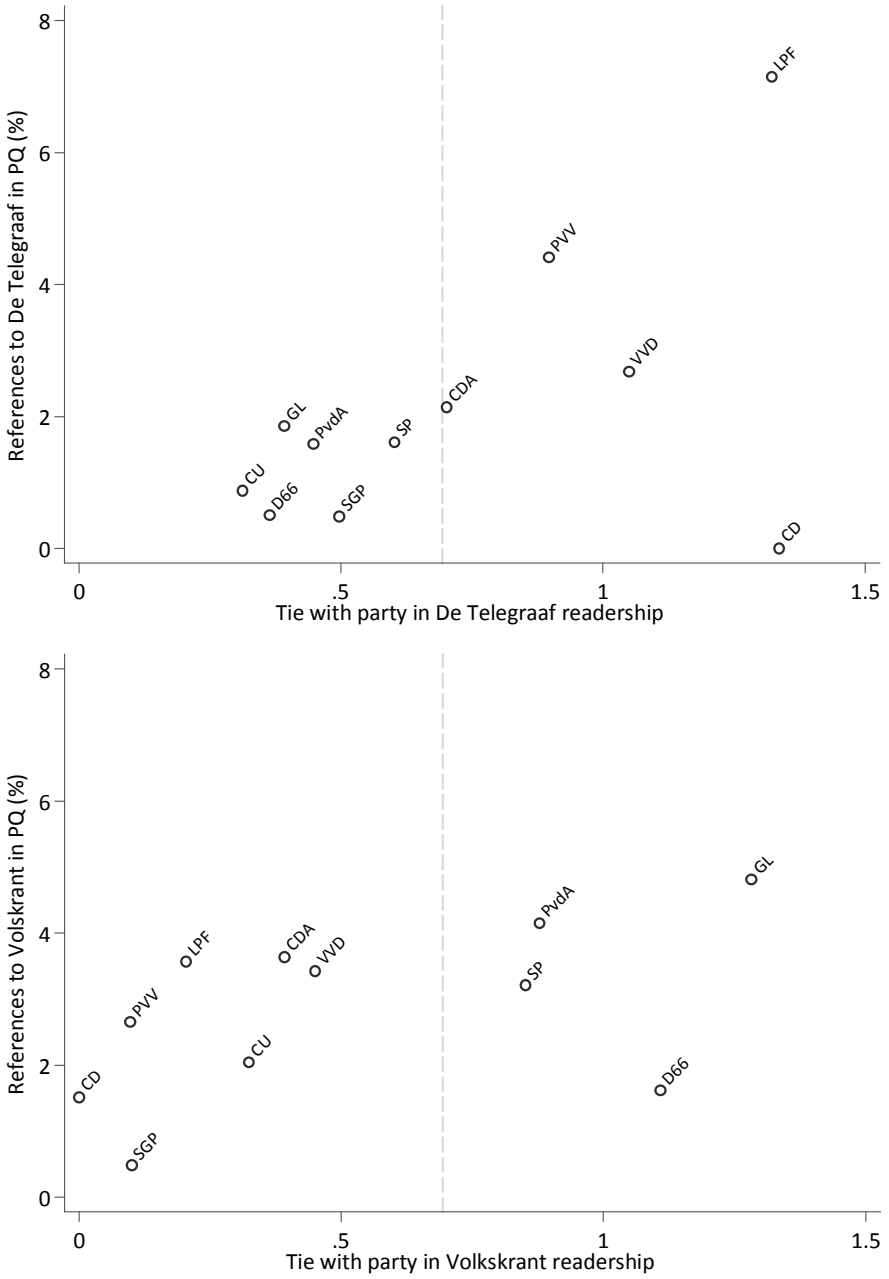


FIGURE V.2. References to newspapers in all PQs and tie between party and newspaper, 1995-2010.

Note: The dashed line indicates the turning point from underrepresentation of the party's voters to overrepresentation.

The figure displays a positive relationship between references to a newspaper and the number of party voters among its readership. For both De Telegraaf ($r=.52$, $p=.10$) and the Volkskrant ($r=.51$, $p=.11$), there is a strong -though insignificant- correlation. A notable outlier is the CD, the voters of which tend to read De Telegraaf, but which almost never responds to the newspaper's issue agenda. Then again, this is not very surprising, given the CD's ostracized position and strained relationship with the media (Van Spanje and Van der Brug 2007). In general, there is a clear pattern of parties mentioning the newspapers they have ties with more often. However, it nevertheless might be the case that parties mention the name of a linked newspaper, while they allow their agendas to be set by any newspaper. To study when attention is copied, with or without explicitly mentioning the newspaper, we turn to the results on the issue attention on the EU and immigration issues, presented in Table V.1.³⁴

The first part of the table presents the main effects, which, as the variables in the interactions are all standardized, reflect the effect of a variable if the other variable in the interaction is at the mean (zero). Thus, the fact that the visibility in De Telegraaf of both the EU and immigration is positive and significant means that for parties with an average tie to De Telegraaf and average issue ownership, issue attention in De Telegraaf is an incentive to ask a parliamentary question on the issue. The main effect of issue attention in the Volkskrant, by contrast, is not significant, meaning that for parties with an average tie to this paper and average issue ownership, attention to the EU or immigration in the Volkskrant does not tempt them to ask PQs on these issues. The main effect of the tie between parties and both newspapers is significant, which means that if these newspapers devote an average amount of attention to the issues, tied parties respond with a greater increase in attention than parties without these ties. The main effect of EU ownership is not significant, but ownership of the immigration issue is, meaning that parties that are associated with immigration in the media also mention it more often in parliament. This difference corresponds to the notion that the immigration issue is more politicized and has multiple parties that clearly attempt to distinguish themselves on that issue.

³⁴ The number of observations differs for each model for a two reasons. First, for De Telegraaf, data are only available beginning in 1999, while for the Volkskrant they are available from 1995. Second, fewer observations are available for the immigration models, as the inclusion of duration dummies leads to missing observations in the beginning of the research period.

TABLE V.1. Explaining issue mentions in PQs in the Netherlands, 1999-2010.

	PQs on the EU		PQs on immigration	
Main effects				
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf	0.221*	(0.094)	0.176*	(0.079)
Issue visibility in Volkskrant	-0.054	(0.129)	0.042	(0.077)
Tie with De Telegraaf	0.194†	(0.108)	0.370***	(0.071)
Tie with Volkskrant	0.485***	(0.090)	0.199***	(0.059)
Issue ownership	-0.118	(0.080)	0.133**	(0.043)
Interactions				
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf x Tie with De Telegraaf (H1)	0.249**	(0.089)	-0.054	(0.058)
Issue visibility in Volkskrant x Tie with Volkskrant (H1)	0.181*	(0.080)	0.101*	(0.042)
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf x Issue ownership (H2)	0.175**	(0.060)	-0.029	(0.041)
Issue visibility in Volkskrant x Issue ownership (H2)	-0.092	(0.086)	0.012	(0.049)
Controls				
Party size	0.004	(0.005)	0.005	(0.003)
Time since last PQ			-0.023**	(0.007)
Time since last PQ 2			0.000*	(0.000)
Constant	-3.238***	(0.155)	-1.979***	(0.127)
N	4494		4621	
McFadden's pseudo R2	0.03		0.05	
Log likelihood	-826.053		-1522.835	

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. Issue visibility in both papers, issue ownership, and the newspaper-party tie variables are all standardized. †p<.10 *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001 (two-tailed).

The first hypothesis, that parties are more likely to follow the media attention of the newspapers their voters read, is tested in the first two interactions. The interaction is positive and significant in three out of the four cases: for the EU issue in De Telegraaf and for both immigration and European integration in the Volkskrant. Therefore, attention devoted to the EU in De Telegraaf and to the EU and immigration in the Volkskrant has a stronger impact on parliamentarians of parties that are linked to the newspaper that stresses the issue. Regarding the attention devoted to the immigration issue in De Telegraaf,

the results are not as expected, as the interaction is not significant. In summary, we find support for the hypothesis in three out of four cases.

So what is the overall effect of these interactions on the questioning behavior of parties? Figure V.3 plots the predicted probabilities of a party asking questions on the EU and immigration, based on the models presented above. The upper left panel depicts the probability that the EU is mentioned in a party's PQ, depending on how much attention De Telegraaf devoted to the EU and whether the voters of the party are over- or underrepresented in the readership of De Telegraaf. If De Telegraaf pays little attention to the issue –represented on the left side of the graph- both parties with and without a tie to De Telegraaf in terms of readers have a low probability of asking a question regarding European integration, approximately a 0.04 chance. However, if attention to the issue in De Telegraaf increases, the probability of mentioning the issue goes up for parties with a link to De Telegraaf, up to approximately 0.4 if there is much attention

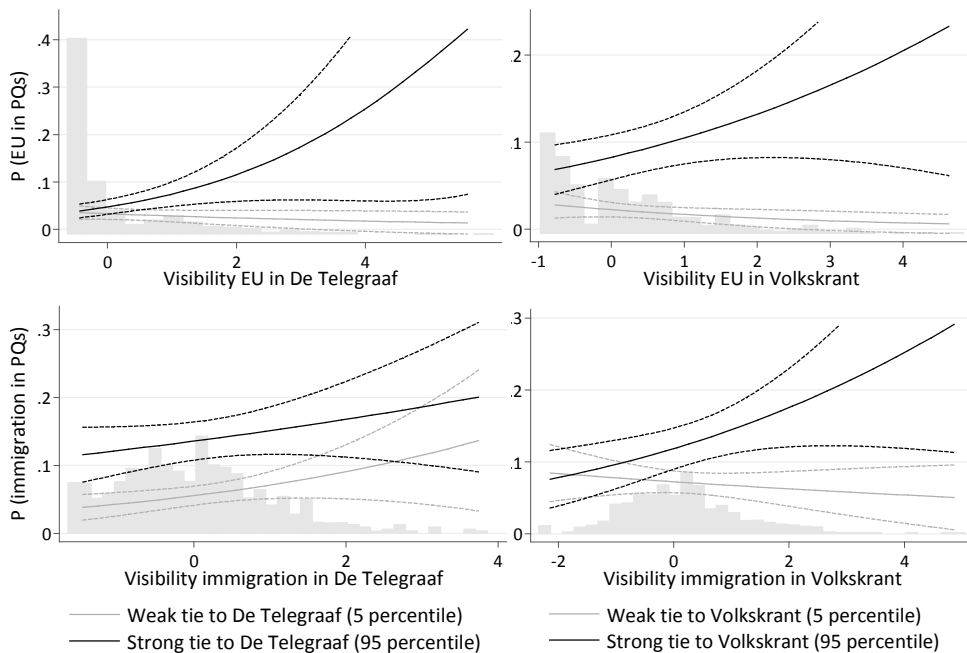


FIGURE V.2. Predicted probability of issue mention in PQs, depending on visibility and paper-party tie.

Note: Predicted probabilities based on models in Table V.1. The histograms display how often these (standardized) values of issue visibility occur in the dataset; the dashed lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals.

devoted to the EU, while for unaffiliated parties, the probability remains low. The issue of the EU in the Volkskrant (upper right panel) and of immigration in the Volkskrant (lower right) present similar pictures: issue attention in the newspaper leads to a greater likelihood of the party asking questions on the topic, but only for affiliated parties. Finally, the lower left panel depicts the discordant case, in which the hypothesis does not hold. It indicates that as the visibility of immigration in De Telegraaf increases, allied parties stress the issue more (though not significantly), but so do parties that have no tie with De Telegraaf.

We now turn to the evidence on hypothesis two, also presented in Table V.1. Here, three out of the four interactions are *not* significant. Issue owners do not seem to react more strongly to EU visibility in the Volkskrant or to immigration in either newspaper. In two instances, the interaction is even negative, though not significant. Only the EU issue in De Telegraaf conforms to the expectation: EU issue owners are more likely to respond to coverage on the

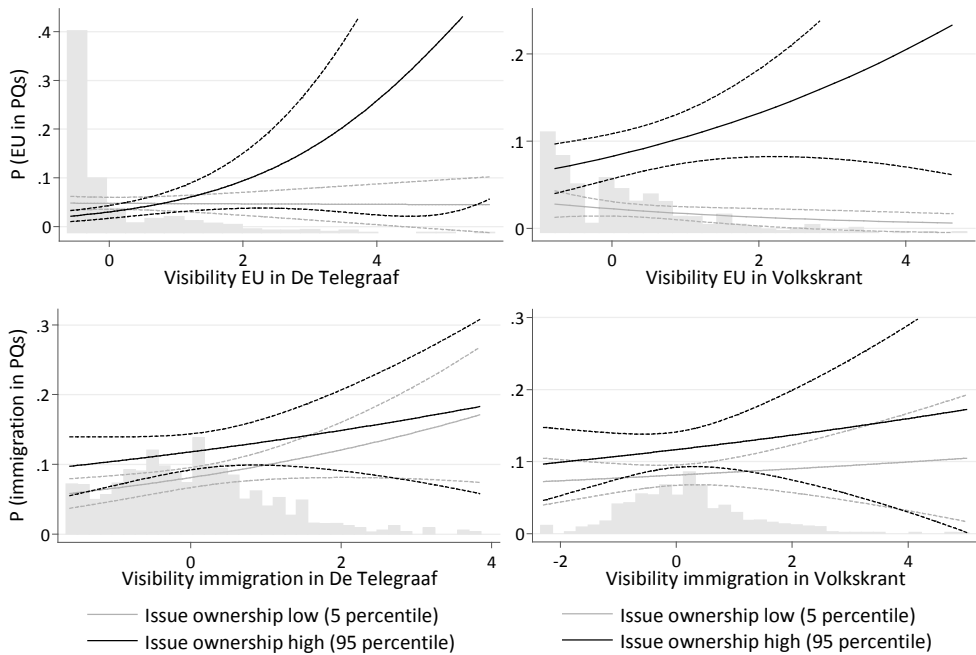


FIGURE V.3. Predicted probability of issue mention in PQ, depending on visibility and issue ownership.

Note: Predicted probabilities based on models in Table V.1. The histograms display how often these (standardized) values of issue visibility occur in the dataset; the dashed lines indicate the 95% confidence intervals.

issue in De Telegraaf. Again, the resulting predicted probabilities are plotted, in Figure V.3. Here, we observe that even regarding EU ownership and EU reporting in De Telegraaf, the results are not convincing. For an issue owner, the predicted probability does rise as attention to the issue in De Telegraaf goes up, but the likelihood of mentioning the issue is not significantly higher than that of non-owners. Overall, we must conclude that there is no supporting evidence for the issue ownership hypothesis. In Appendix I additional analyses with alternative operationalizations of ownership can be found that lead to the same conclusion.

Conclusion

In the age of *mediatization*, political actors and the media increasingly depend on, anticipate, and follow one another (Strömback 2008; Van Aelst and Vliegenthart 2013). Moreover, the notion of *media logic* in politics implies that ‘the power to define who and what is politically relevant lies firmly with the media’ (Brants and Van Praag 2006, 30). Accordingly, parties need to conform to the rules and format requirements of the media, which are moving towards more consumer-centered journalism. This chapter does not directly contradict this understanding of media logic but argues that the power of the media over politics is also still structured along ideological lines between parties and media outlets. The empirical analyses of Dutch parliamentarians’ oral questions on the issues of immigration and European integration revealed that parties are clearly more inclined to follow the agendas of newspapers that their voters read. Thus, political parallelism structures the political agenda-setting power of the newspapers. This might be a consequence of strategic considerations on the part of political parties: following the newspapers that their potential voters read shows responsiveness and helps them to obtain a favorable image among their constituency.

There are of course limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn from the present study. First, we studied political parallelism in a single country, and it is therefore uncertain whether the hypothesis also holds for other European countries. It is reasonable to suspect that similar patterns hold in other democratic corporatist countries, but this remains to be confirmed by future research. Additionally, in this study two issues were followed separately over time, and consequently an important question is whether the results can be generalized to

other issues, or whether they are particular to these two. Both issues themselves display comparable effect sizes despite being at very different stages of politicization, which suggests that these effects may be quite robust. However, it is conceivable that for certain issues, specific papers have a very strong reputation –for example a financial daily on financial issues- meaning that no party can ignore the coverage of that paper on that issue (see e.g., Vliegthart and Mena Montes 2014 on the economic issue). As for the choice to study political parallelism in agenda-setting, this can arguably be seen as the ‘least-likely’ area to exhibit ties between parties and the media, as for example the editorial section would be a more likely venue to detect the partisan slant of a newspaper (Van Kempen 2007, 305). Thus it is telling that even in the transfer of issue attention from one agenda to the other, ties between parties and papers matter.

An important question that follows from these findings is whether such parallelism between newspapers and parliamentary groups is beneficial or detrimental for a representative democracy. On the one hand, it could be regarded as a sign that parliamentarians are responsive to their constituencies, as MPs choose to listen specifically to the newspapers for which their electorate is overrepresented in the readership. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as signifying that parties may excessively rely on the issues that happen to be discussed in certain newspapers. While the answer to this question can in part only follow from a normative discussion, further research into the causal mechanism underlying parallelism in agenda-setting should also provide part of the answer. Do parties follow particular papers because the content of the coverage more closely suits their platform? In that case, it is possible that both the stronger agenda-setting effect of a newspaper on a party and the overrepresentation of the party's voters among the readers are both consequences of the newspaper's content. Alternatively, is it the case that parties know what newspapers their voters read and wish to provide their constituents a service by devoting attention to their issues? In that case, the media content is not the underlying cause, but merely a mediating factor. Further alternative causal scenarios are conceivable, but it is clear that an interesting point for further study is what precise aspects of newspaper motivate parties to adopt the attention devoted to an issue.

Finally, this study also investigated the role of issue ownership as a contingent factor in the relationship between attention in the media and attention in parliament and –surprisingly– found that issue owners are *not* more likely to ask parliamentary questions if their topic has been covered in the media. Appendix I demonstrates that this holds for dynamic and time-invariant measures of issue ownership, as well as media-based and parliament-based ownership. This is inconsistent with prior studies that found such an effect for opposition parties in Denmark and in Belgium (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011). An obvious difference with these studies is the countries under scrutiny. However, this is not truly an *explanation* for why the results diverge. As discussed above, this chapter only looks at two issues, while the other research on ownership takes the entire political agenda into account. The immigration issue in particular had very clear owners in the Netherlands during the period under study, so it is possible that there is a ceiling effect: because the immigration issue owners already frequently stress the issue in parliament, they are not concerned by whether the media also devote attention to it. However, this still does not explain why no effect was also found for the EU issue. Thesen (2013) offers a more sophisticated explanation for how issue ownership operates in agenda-setting: he expects that opposition parties that are owners respond to *negative* news in order to pressure the government. Unfortunately, in the present study, we did not consider negativity in the news, so we cannot check this empirically, but it also appears that this is not the explanation for the unexpected findings. The issue owners of immigration are generally opposition parties, so they should respond to negative news, and we know from other research that immigration was discussed quite negatively in Dutch news during this period (e.g., Van Klingeren 2014). Why issue owners are not more susceptible to media attention in their PQs on immigration and the EU in the Netherlands, therefore, remains to be explained. A tentative explanation is that oral questions are highly constrained in number, and institutional gatekeeping processes limit parties’ opportunities to respond to media coverage on owned issues: questions that address such matters might be considered too predictable and thus not make it into parliament. Whether this is the case is a subject for future research.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Introduction

Politicians and journalists in modern democracies are entwined in a relationship of mutual dependence and reciprocal effects. How and to what extent they influence each other is a topic that has interested many commentators and motivated a vast body of scholarly work, both on the power of the media over politics as well as on the influence of politicians and parties on the debate in the media. Issues and agendas lie at the heart of politics, so a pertinent question in the broader debate on the power relations between media and politics is to what extent both types of actor can influence the agenda of the other. Influence over either agenda is important, as a political system can only address a subset of all potential policy issues, and similarly there is room for only a limited number of issues in the public debate in the media. From the existing work on the European and American contexts, we know that the influence on either agenda is neither automatic nor categorical, but rather is *conditional*. As a consequence, the question is not so much *whether* the political agenda sets the media agenda and vice versa

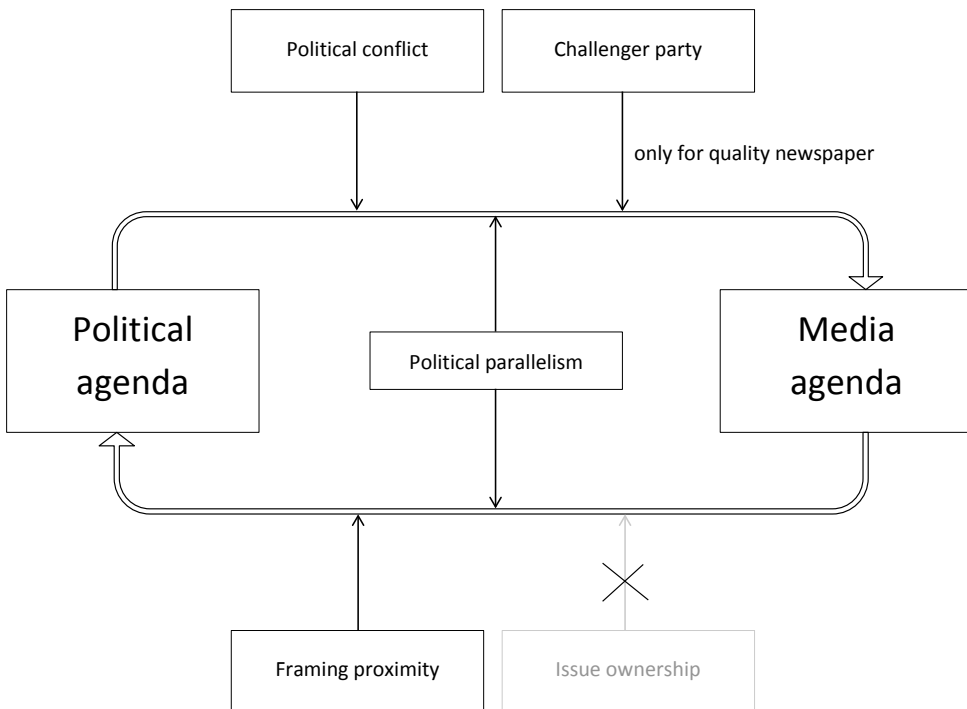


FIGURE VI.1. Summary of findings.

but *under what conditions* agenda-setting effects occur and when they do not. This dissertation contributes to the literature by addressing this question.

Main findings

Effects on the whole cycle

What are the main findings on these conditional agenda-setting effects between politics and the media? The main hypotheses and results are summarized graphically in Figure VI.1. Let me first discuss political parallelism, which is placed at the core of the model. Political parallelism refers to the linkages between specific newspapers and parties in terms of ideology, personal contacts and staff, or readership. Over the past half century, the relationship between the political realm and the mass media has changed drastically in Western Europe. While in the first half of the 20th century, political actors had the primacy in the relationship with the media, and newspapers were often directly owned by political parties, in the second half of that century, the mass media became more independent, professionalized, and came to be regarded as a force influencing politics, rather than vice versa. In this process, the links between media elites and political elites weakened, but political parallelism did not disappear entirely. Against this historical backdrop, chapters IV and V inspected whether parallel ties between parties and newspapers still influence the extent to which issues are adopted from one realm to the other and found that indeed parties adopt issues from parallel newspapers (i.e. political parallelism is a significant moderator), while these papers only tend to discuss issues contained in the parliamentary questions of parallel parties (i.e. the main effect of salience is only significant for parallel parties). It is particularly interesting that political parallelism affects agenda-setting in both directions, as this illustrates how entwined and mutually dependent politicians and journalists are. Both types of actor benefit from the mutual linkage: politicians because they are granted space for the dissemination of their issues in the media and journalists because their reports are legitimized by the adoption of parliamentarians. As the linkages are beneficial to both, they are likely to remain intact, and political parallelism will most likely continue to matter in the future.

Media agenda-setting by political actors

The upper half of Figure VI.1 depicts the factors, other than political parallelism, that were hypothesized to facilitate an issue becoming the subject of media attention. Political actors purposefully and unintentionally convey issue priorities and issue framings, and depending on their journalistic interests, the media may or may not respond with coverage of the issues. In other words, whether the political agenda sets the media agenda depends on both the messages political actors provide and the interests of the journalists covering them. From this starting point, I hypothesized that political conflict and the challenger status of political parties would ease the issue transfer from the political to the media agenda.

Conflict is a quintessential part of politics. Parties compete with one another over which issues should be addressed, which policy solutions are optimal for these issues and how the issues should be understood. In other words, they fight through selectively emphasizing issues, taking different positions and by framing issues in different ways. Chapter II combined these modes of party competition by distinguishing two types of conflict: positional and discursive, under the expectation that both types would enhance the effect of issue salience on media attention on an issue, due to the news value of conflict. In other words, the media are more likely to adopt an issue parties are discussing if the latter do so confrontationally. The results in this chapter were conclusive regarding discursive conflict: the more parties stress different frames, or different understandings of an issue, the more likely the media are to echo the attention devoted to the issue. Positional conflict was not a significant moderator. However, the results demonstrated that this type of conflict does matter, but in a small way: if parties are paying a *lot* of attention to an issue, then positional conflict gives rise to additional media coverage.

The reason that journalists respond to discursive conflict is the *news value* the conflict carries. However, journalists are not exclusively driven by news values; they are also guided by their normative understandings of how the profession should be carried out, and specifically by the *news norm* of watchdog journalism. Watchdog journalism implies that the media monitor the actions of the government and attempt to hold those in power accountable. Because challenger parties, i.e., parties that have never been in government, are equally

keen on putting pressure on the government, it is more interesting from the perspective of watchdog journalism to report on the parliamentary questions of challenger parties. In Chapter IV, I tested whether this is the case and found that it holds, but only for one of the two newspapers I studied. The *Volkskrant* reports on the parliamentary questions of challenger parties to a greater extent, but *De Telegraaf* does not. As the *Volkskrant* is generally considered a quality paper and *De Telegraaf* more tabloid-like, an explanation could be that the watchdog norm is more important in quality paper newsrooms.

In summary, the analyses in this dissertation provide examples of three selection criteria employed by journalists: news values, news norms and partisan ties. Both the news value of conflict and the news norm of watchdog journalism result in greater media agenda-setting power for challenger parties. The watchdog news norm does so directly, as (at least quality newspaper) journalists devote greater attention to the issues advanced by challenger parties, and the news norm of conflict does so more indirectly, as challenger parties are typically the parties that benefit most from an expansion of conflict. This overall agenda-setting advantage for challengers is striking, as they are generally at a disadvantage and receive less media attention than mainstream parties, particularly those in office. Thus, through the issue choice in their agendas, it seems that the media are *not* simply amplifying existing power inequalities.

Political agenda-setting by the media

The lower half of Figure VI.1 displays the conditioning factors of the media's power over the political agenda that are examined in this dissertation. As discussed, I hypothesized and found that parties' agendas in parliament are more influenced by coverage in parallel newspapers, specifically newspapers that are read by their voters. In addition, I expected that issue owners are more likely to copy an issue from the media agenda and that parties are more likely to adopt issues from the media when the framing is in their advantage. Overall, the hypotheses were that parties are guided by *what* is being discussed (i.e., whether they own the issue) and the *way* it is discussed (i.e., whether it is framed in their terms).

Regarding issue ownership, the results differed substantially from expectations. Two previous studies (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010;

Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011) found that in Denmark and in Belgium, opposition MPs were more responsive to the media agenda when it concerned an issue that they owned. Thesen (2013) found a similar but weak effect of issue ownership for opposition parties in Denmark and found that if the news is sufficiently positive in tone, government parties also respond more to owned issues. By contrast, I detected no such issue ownership effect in the case of the Netherlands in chapter V, and if anything, issue owners seem to be less affected by media reporting on their issues, at least for the two issues under study here, immigration and European integration. A likely explanation is that the owners of these two issues already devote such frequent attention to these issues that they are equally likely to discuss them after the media do so, while for non-owners, media coverage provides an additional incentive to place the issue on the agenda.

Finally, I hypothesized that parties choose to respond to issues on the media agenda if the way the issue is discussed in the media is to their liking. Specifically, I argued that, as an important part of the political struggle is fought over the way issues are framed, parties ignore coverage that is framed in their competitors' terms and respond by including an issue in parliamentary questions if the framing in the media is similar to their own. Thus, a similarity in the dominant framing in the media to that of the party moderates the effect of issue visibility in the media. I found that this is indeed the case for the issue of European integration in Sweden, while for the immigration issue in the Netherlands, a slightly different, but largely similar, pattern was found: framing proximity did not moderate the effect of issue attention in the media, but in itself already lead to heightened prioritization of the issues in parliament, possibly because media attention to this issue was high in the Netherlands throughout the period under study. As expected, for the issues to which the media hardly paid any attention, that is European integration in the Netherlands and immigration in Sweden, framing proximity had no effect. In summary, an issue on the media agenda is transferred to the parliamentary agenda if a party benefits from the way the issue is discussed (framing proximity) and if it is discussed by an allied news source (political parallelism), while issue owners were not more prone to react to the media discussing their issue.

Three main conclusions

What do these results tell us more broadly about the interaction between media and parties? In the introduction I outlined three overarching conclusions that arise from this dissertation, and I briefly return to these before addressing the contributions to specific literatures. First, this dissertation introduces framing into the literature on agenda-setting between the media and politics in both directions. Framing is a crucial part of party and issue competition, as different ways of defining and understanding an issue put different parties at an advantage, and therefore part of the struggle fought between parties is over the framing of issues. Because the fight over frames is so important for parties, it has implications for the signals parties send to the media and for what messages from the media parties are willing to pick up in parliament, and as such framing affects agenda-setting between media and politics.

Second, the research in this dissertation emphasizes that although the media can influence politics, they are not a unitary, unstoppable force as is sometimes suggested (see Brants et al. 2010; Stromback 2011; Walgrave 2008; cf. Mazzoleni and Schultz 247-249). As recent agenda-setting studies note (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Thesen 2013), political actors are often the ones who decide whether to use input provided by the media, and this active role of parties and politicians in filtering media attention is therefore not to be dismissed. Chapter III underlines the impact of strategic considerations of parties by showing that parties are more likely to respond to media attention if their framing is used. While this illustrates the active part of parties, chapter V demonstrates that the media are not one homogenous influence on politics (cf. Manin 1997, 228-229). Instead, parties have parallel bonds with certain newspapers and their agenda is affected by parallel papers, and not significantly by other newspapers. Thus, rather than *the* media having power over politics, the results in that chapter show that *some* media influence *some* parties.

Third, this dissertation shows that the media do not always work as a mirror reflecting existing power structures, but sometimes favor those with formally less power, such as challengers or allied parties. Bennett's (1990) famous 'indexing hypothesis' states that the range of views expressed in the media is indexed on the debate among political elites, and particularly government. This implies that the voices with more formal political power get heard more in the

public debate in the media. Indeed, many studies have documented an ‘incumbency bonus’ in the news, showing that government officials are featured more prominently in the news than their opposition or parliamentary colleagues. Though the findings in this dissertation do not contradict these studies, they counterbalance them somewhat by uncovering a previously neglected advantage that formally less powerful political actors enjoy, namely more media agenda-setting power. Although government politicians appear more in the media themselves, the parliamentary questions of challenger parties have more influence on which *issues* are being discussed in newspapers (at least in the quality press, see Chapter IV), which gives them a powerful weapon in issue competition. In addition, the fact that journalists are not merely echoing the formal power distribution is also evident in the fact that not all newspapers follow the same parties, but that each prefers to follow their parallel parties first and foremost.

Contributions to the literature

Political agenda-setting by the media

The results in this dissertation speak to the literatures political agenda-setting, media agenda-setting, party competition and issue competition, framing and media systems. Regarding the literature on political agenda-setting by the media, the first and the second conclusions I just mentioned are directly of relevance. Both the importance of framing and that of parties’ tactical considerations are in line with arguments put forth in recent scholarly work. Green-Pedersen and Stubager (2011), Thesen (2013) and Vliegthart and Walgrave (2011) call attention to the active role of parties, and the work in this dissertation adds further empirical evidence to this line. In addition, Thesen (2013) emphasizes that the content of news should be taken into account, so not just *whether* an issue is discussed but also the *way* in which, and the findings in this dissertation on framing provide a clear example hereof.

Besides extending this recent line of inquiry, this dissertation is also one of the first to point to the media system content in which agenda-setting takes place. To my knowledge, only one recent study, that of Vliegthart and Mena Montes (2014), also considers political parallelism in agenda-setting. These

authors compare political agenda-setting in the different media systems of Spain and the Netherlands by taking into account to which newspaper the opposition or the government is linked. Chapter V further elaborates our understanding of political parallelism in agenda-setting by considering the ties to newspapers for each individual party, rather than a whole opposition or government bloc, and by using a continuous and empirical measure of parallelism. This way, the results show that not all media have an equal bearing on all parties, or in other words also *who* discusses an issue matters.

Lastly, this research adds further empirical evidence on the role of issue ownership in political agenda-setting, and demonstrates that this explanation has its limitations. Previous studies on the parliamentary agenda of opposition parties in Belgium and Denmark found that issue owners are more prone to react to media attention for owned issues, however, chapter V shows that this explanation does not hold for immigration and EU issue owners in the Netherlands.

Media agenda-setting literature

Regarding media agenda-setting by political actors, Chapter I noted that our knowledge is much more limited than that on agenda-setting effects in the other direction. There is work on the prominence and visibility of politicians in the media (e.g. Tresch 2009; Hopmann, De Vreese and Albæk 2011), or the visibility of some of their activity such as parliamentary questions (Van Alest and Vliegthart 2013), and there is a substantial body of literature on political influence over the media agenda during campaigns (Brandenburg 2002; Lancendorfer and Lee 2010; Hopmann et al. 2012), but the research on the influence of policy agendas on the media agenda in non-election times is still very limited, especially outside the United States (see Vliegthart 2007 on the Netherlands; and Bartels 1996; Wood and Peake 1998; Edwards and Wood 1999; Eshbaugh-Soha and Peake 2004 on the US). By consequence, we know little about when parties are successful in setting the media agenda and when they fail in their attempts during routine times. As I mentioned earlier, this gap in our knowledge is striking because electoral preferences are formed early and gradually during the election cycle (Jennings and Wlezien 2013), and it is very important for political parties to garner attention for their topics in the wider

public debate in the media. A main addition this dissertation delivers to this field, therefore, is that it provides insight into media agenda-setting by political actors during routine times. This gives us information about how media and parties interact most of the time, outside the specific context of electoral campaigns, but it also broadens the scope to include the effects of routine time political activities such as parliamentary questions, rather than press releases which are typically studied in campaign time agenda-setting studies. Furthermore, by studying political influence over the media agenda outside the US in the multiparty system of the Netherlands, effects of this more complex political context come into focus. Chapter IV distinguishes between two types of opposition parties, mainstream opposition and challenger parties, and showed the journalists attribute unequal news value to the activity of government, mainstream opposition and challenger parties. Besides to these elements of the political context, this study also draws attention to the media system context, by showing how a feature of democratic corporatist media systems, that is political parallelism, moderates political parties' influence over the agenda in the media.

Party and issue competition, framing and media systems literatures

There are also two specific contributions to the literature on party and issue competition that are worth mentioning. The first is that in Chapter II, two forms of political conflict were conceptualized, namely discursive conflict and positional conflict. The former is seen as a conflict over the way issues are to be understood, and the latter as conflict over which policy solutions are most suited to address an issue. Furthermore, both were hypothesized to interact with issue salience, and as such the three ways in which parties are often thought to compete with each other, that is through salience, positions and framing, were combined into one conceptual model. The present research looks at the effects of these types of conflict on media reporting, but the conceptual model can be usefully applied more generally to study the competition between parties.

Second, the findings add to our understanding of the extent to which parties 'talk past each other'. Given that political parties attempt to make the most out of their relative strengths, many scholars have noted that they tend to discuss different issues rather than engage in dialogue with each other over policy solutions for the same issues (e.g., Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996; Riker

1996). Yet, scholars have also noted that both types of competition between parties, that is issue competition through selectively emphasizing advantageous issues, and positional competition through the confrontation of policy positions, are not entirely mutually exclusive and in fact co-exist (Green Pedersen 2007). This dissertation draws attention to an additional way in which parties talk past each other. Besides that parties –at least to some extent- stress different issues from each other in one campaign, they also choose different moments to discuss the same issues during routine times. This is a consequence of the finding that parties emphasize issues in parliament when the media framing is right, because as parties have different frame preferences they will choose different moments to bring up an issue.

The results are also of interest to scholars in the field of framing research. In this field, most of the work has been conducted in lab-settings where subjects of experiments are exposed to a single frame at a time. While such an experimental se-up offers a great advantage in terms of internal validity, a call has been made to boost the external validity by looking beyond the lab-setting, as well as to consider more realistic situations of multiple, competing frames (Chong and Druckman 2007; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). This research answers to that call by demonstrating the importance of framing in a real world setting, and by looking at multiple frames at the same time through framing polarization (Chapter II) and framing proximity (Chapter III). Furthermore, most of the research on framing focusses on public opinion, while this dissertation shows that framing also has consequences for the behavior of political and media actors.

In addition, this research contributes to the literature on media systems, by showing for the case of the Netherlands how political parallelism pervades agenda-setting between media and parliament. Further, a measure of political parallelism between individual newspapers and political parties is developed in the chapters IV and V, and this measure can be extended to other media, such as TV as well. Moreover, it can readily be applied to data of other countries, and thus facilitate a systematic comparison between interactions between politics and media in different media systems, which is one of the prime interests of media system scholars.

Finally, this dissertation makes a number of methodological contributions that I would briefly like to highlight, as they can be of use in future studies. As

just mentioned, a measure for political parallelism was developed. Furthermore, a measure for framing distance was introduced, and the Esteban and Ray (1994) polarization measure was applied to frames and policy positions to operationalize discursive and positional conflict. Finally, dynamic operationalizations for issue ownership in media and in parliament were presented.

Further research

Generalizability

Given these findings, what are the interesting directions for future research on the mutual and conditional relationships between the media and political agendas? The first and obvious point that must be made here is that expanding the empirical range to include additional countries, issues and media outlets would contribute to the generalizability of the findings. Studying additional countries would be especially relevant regarding how political parallelism conditions agenda-setting. Chapters IV and V demonstrate that in the Netherlands in recent decades, parties and newspapers are connected such that each tends to adopt issues from a linked newspaper or party, thus providing information on the present state of the media system. As argued by Hallin and Mancini (2004), the Netherlands can be regarded as an instance of a democratic corporatist media system, yet to know whether political parallelism is equally important in other countries exhibiting this system, such as the Scandinavian countries and Germany, they would need to be studied in their own right. Further, it would be interesting to determine whether the results also apply to other media systems, such as the Mediterranean polarized pluralist and the North Atlantic liberal media systems. Arguably, in the polarized pluralist media systems, higher levels of political parallelism are to be expected, but comparatively assessing whether partisan links matter more or less in these countries could provide insights into a possible convergence of media systems (see Vliegthart and Mena Montes 2014).

As discussed in the introduction (Chapter I), the immigration and European integration issues are each part of a new cultural dimension of party competition that scholars contend has arisen in West Europe (Kriesi et al. 2006; 2008). This dimension provided the potential for contestation over and

politicization of the EU and immigration issues, which was only realized in a number of countries and periods, making the issues interesting research cases with substantial variation in the outcome. In contrast to earlier studies, the focus of this dissertation was not on inherent differences between issues but on the interests and strategic considerations of the actors involved. Therefore, the differences between issue types were taken out of the equation by centering on two issues instead of the entire agenda. The intuition is, however, that the explanations offered in this dissertation are not particular to these two issues, and this remains to be verified in further research. Moreover, considering the role of framing in agenda-setting revealed in this dissertation, in a next step, it would be of particular interest to assess the interaction between framing and issue types: can issues be reframed in such a way that they fall into a different issue type? Can this way agenda-setting dynamics be manipulated purposefully by political parties?

Finally, this dissertation only considered print media, examining two daily newspapers –one quality and one tabloid-style- in most chapters. The reason that daily newspapers were selected as the source of the media agenda is that previous studies have shown these to be the stronger political agenda setters, with other media such as television possibly playing a mediating role (Bartels 1996; Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans 2008). In further research, it would be interesting to take the full media agenda into account and, if possible, also consider inter-media agenda-setting effects to map the media's influence on the political agenda even more comprehensively. Moreover, due to their recent development, scholars have scarcely begun to explore the role that new media and social media play in setting either other media or political agendas, so this is a particularly interesting direction for future research. Social media also create additional possibilities to study how public opinion *in combination* with (social) media coverage impacts policy agendas.

Political agenda-setting by the media

The suggestions above primarily concern enhancing the generalizability of the findings presented in this dissertation; however, this is of course only one of the tasks for future research. To consider further topics for research, let us briefly reassess the extant literature on agenda-setting effects in the direction from the

media to politics. In 2006, Walgrave and Van Aelst provided a comprehensive overview of the field at the time and based on this outlined a preliminary model of political agenda-setting by the mass media. From the existing research, they distilled four factors conditioning whether and to what extent the media agenda has an impact on a political agenda: the type of issue, the type of media agenda, the type of political agenda, and the time period (electoral or nonelection periods). The model the authors subsequently proposed is displayed in Figure VI.2.

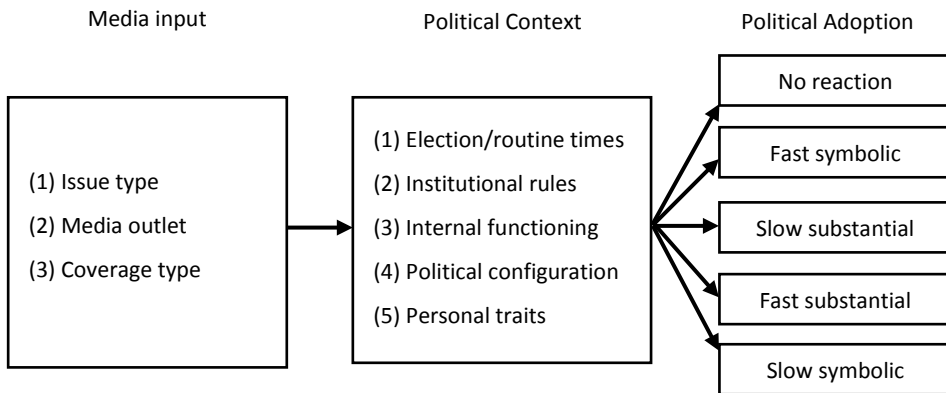


FIGURE VI.2. Model of political agenda-setting by the media outlined by Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006).

In the years since the publication of their article, progress has been made in identifying further factors that determine whether the mass media impact a political agenda. The most headway has been made regarding what Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) categorized as ‘the political context’. This is unsurprising, considering that, as several researchers (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Thesen 2013; see Chapter III) have emphasized, parties have an active choice in whether and how they respond to media attention. The government or opposition status of a party and issue ownership are motives for parties that condition whether they copy an issue from the media agenda (Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011). The work of Thesen (2013) goes a step further to *combine* elements of the content of the media coverage with the structure of the political configuration. His attack and defend model –in brief- posits that opposition parties respond to bad news, while government parties

respond to good news. Similarly, Chapter III of this thesis proposes that depending on the way issues are framed in the media and on what the preferred frames of the parties are, parties will adopt an issue from the media coverage onto the parliamentary agenda or they will not.

Further progress can be made by looking at more aspects of the content of media coverage. For instance, how do parties respond to explicit positions on issues taken in the media? Do they respond when positions similar to their own are prevalent in the media, as with framing (Chapter III), or are they also confrontational, responding to opposing positions? Does it matter who is the source of the media item, for example do political ‘heavyweights’ writing in the media also carry greater agenda-setting weight? The media are –among other things- used by parties to communicate amongst one another (cf. the PMP cycle in Wolfsfeld 2011); how does this affect the transfer of issues from the media to the political realm?

Although many steps have been taken made to understand parties’ role in taking over issue attention from the mass media, existing empirical work all posits only one strategy for parties in the same structural position. This leaves no room for parties to adopt different strategies to deal with the media in similar situations. For example, as Thesen (2013) argues, opposition parties should respond to news that is negative in tone; however, not all opposition parties might adopt this strategy. Similarly, I argue in Chapter III that parties should discuss issues when the media framing is to their liking and remain silent otherwise. However, there might be alternative strategies, such as actively confronting opposing frames. These different strategies might be the results of party idiosyncrasies, differences in the parties’ member bases, the degree of professionalization and financial resources, or the relative weight of vote-, policy- or office-seeking goals (Müller and Strom 1999). Differentiating multiple alternative strategies opens up an interesting and understudied topic for further research, namely the *consequences* of agenda-setting strategies. Do the strategies outlined in existing research pay off, for example electorally, and how? What are the benefits of different strategies in the long and short run and in terms of office, voting or policy objectives?

In summary, referring to the preliminary model as described by Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006), my suggestions for further research are to (1)

continue uncovering how aspects of news content matter in combination with the political configuration, (2) use interactive and social media to explore the role of various forms of public opinion in political agenda-setting by the media, (3) specify and study alternative strategies parties can adopt in the same structural position, and (4) add a block on the right-hand side of the figure exploring the *consequences* of political agenda-setting by the media, and in particular of the diverse strategies parties employ herein.

Media agenda-setting by political actors

As discussed earlier, the impact of political agendas on issue attention in the media has been studied less extensively than agenda-setting in the other direction. Although this dissertation adds to our knowledge –we now know that (at least in the countries under study) the media are more likely to copy an issue from the political agenda if parties are in discursive conflict and when the issue is brought up by challenger parties or by parties that are linked to the particular media outlet– there is still much to be done.

In this dissertation, I contend that journalists select issues from the political agenda based on news values, news norms and their partisan ties. The news value scrutinized here (in Chapter II) is that of conflict, which is arguably the most relevant criterion regarding politics, however, there are other news values that might play a part. The news value of personalization, for example, may also be a factor facilitating the transfer of an issue from the political to the media agenda. If this is the case, then the next question is whether politicians can frame an issue in a more personalized way and thus incites greater media attention. This way, framing can once more be relevant in setting the media agenda. In this dissertation, I only looked at framing in terms of polarization, which is at the aggregate level of the party system, and therefore the frames of individual parties only mattered in reference to other parties' frames. An interesting route for further research is to study to what extent individual parties can frame issues such that they can increase or decrease the media attention devoted to the issues.

In addition to considering further news values (in addition to conflict) and framing at the party level, differences between media outlets have yet to be explored. In Chapter IV, on the news norm of watchdog journalism, a divergence

between De Telegraaf and the Volkskrant came to light, which was possibly due to one being more tabloid-like and the other falling into the category of quality papers. This begs the question, to be answered by further studies, of how big the differences in journalistic norms are between the staffs of different newsrooms. Moreover, what are the consequences of the different news norms for the outlet's coverage, particularly regarding who is granted the opportunity to discuss his or her issues?

As in the research on political agenda-setting by the media, progress can be made in understanding media agenda-setting by political actors by differentiating the different strategies parties may adopt in order to influence which issues are on the media agenda. I examined the influence of challenger parties, political conflict and newspaper-party ties on agenda-setting but did not allow for diverse strategies, for example within the group of challenger parties. So, like I argued above that parties in similar situations might respond differently to inputs from the media, they might also actively try to influence the media in different ways. To begin with, it would be interesting to know how party leaders and strategists reflect on this themselves and to know whether they consciously employ specific strategies to introduce issues into the broader public debate. Thereafter, it would be interesting to examine the effectiveness of different strategies. For example, is it sensible to save the party's strength and only make a concerted effort to influence the debate at well-timed moments (if so, which moments?), or is it important to continually steep the media debate with issues? How are different media channels to be employed in combination? Finally, and most important, do the parties that follow such strategies reap the benefits and, if so, in what form?

The PMPMPMP cycle

As discussed in the introduction (Chapter I), the influence between media and political agendas is reciprocal, and as such there is a continuous cycle of politics influencing the media, influencing politics, influencing the media, influencing politics, etc. (Kepplinger 2007; Wolfsfeld 2011, 30-31). One of the most important tasks for future research is to zoom out and consider this cycle as a whole. In this work, I focused on one constituent link at a time; however, to further our understanding, we should also trace issues throughout the chain. In relation to

the results presented in this dissertation, there are two concrete questions open, that require such an appreciation of the entire cycle.

One of the open questions regards the mechanism underlying political parallelism, and hence the answer should provide a remedy to one of the shortcomings of the research in this dissertation. As explained in this conclusion and chapters IV and V, the parallel ties between parties and news outlets operate in both directions, affecting both whether journalists adopt issues from the political agenda as well as whether parties copy issues from the media agenda. Parallelism was measured by looking at the readers of newspapers and which parties they voted for, with parties that were overrepresented among the readers being the linked parties. However, just because it was gauged this way does not mean that partisanship in the newspaper readership constitutes the mechanism by which political parallelism affects agenda-setting. Put differently: *how* do the ties between journalists and political actors structure issue transfer? Is it due to ideological congruence between the journalistic staff and politicians, in other words, are the journalists themselves partisan? Relatedly, do parties respond to parallel newspapers per se, or only if the coverage follows their political preferences? Alternatively, is the motivation for political parties akin to representation, in the sense that they believe that the issues raised by the newspaper their constituency reads are the issues that are on the minds of their constituency? Are newspapers motivated to follow the parties for which their readers vote for economic reasons, as they believe that catering to their readers is in their commercial interest? As yet another alternative, are the links purely based on informal contacts between politicians and journalists and personal relationships? Determining this mechanism is important, as the way ties between parties and the media will develop in the future depends on it, and moreover, it helps our understanding of the mediatization of politics.

Finally, the combination of the findings on framing proximity and on political conflict raises an interesting question spanning the entire agenda-setting cycle. Chapter III, on framing proximity, demonstrated that parties choose the right moment to discuss an issue, emphasizing it only if the framing in the media is correct. As parties each have different frame preferences, the result is that they will advance issues at different times and accordingly 'talk past each other' instead of engaging in dialogue. This is interesting in its own right, in light of the

literature on the lack of issue convergence between parties (e.g., Budge and Farlie 1983, Riker 1993, Sigelman and Buell 2004). However, this finding is also relevant to Chapter II, which shows that confrontation in the form of political conflict fosters the adoption of political issues by the media. So, if a party wishes to place an issue on both the media and parliamentary agenda, it is faced with the dilemma that direct confrontation with other parties helps to put the issue on the media agenda, while when adopting issues from the media agenda an evasive strategy seems to be best. This is only one example of an instance in which it would be fruitful for future research to combine the two halves of the cycle. Considering issue trajectories spanning the entire PMPMP cycle can thus provide us with more elaborate insights into what is on the center stage of politics, and what is left out.

Appendices

Appendix A

Search strings

This appendix documents the search strings that were used to measure salience of the issues in parliamentary questions and in newspaper articles in chapters III, IV and V, as well as to gauge the occurrence of party names (also chapters II, IV and V). For the parliamentary and the newspaper data, the number of hits on the search strings below was counted. Composites were counted as one hit, so that for example “Europeiska unionen” and “EU” both count as one. For the parliamentary data, the search string was applied without the “w/” operator, while in the media data the operator “w/10” means that the word should occur within ten words of the previous word. An asterisk (used for parliamentary and media data) functions as a wildcard, so at the end of a word this indicates that any ending is allowed.

TABLE A.1. Swedish party search strings.

Party	Search String
Centerpartiet (C)	Centerparti* OR Centerpolitik* OR Centerriksdag* OR Centern OR Centerns
Folkpartiet Liberalerna (FP)	Folkparti*
Kristdemokraterna (KD)	Kristdemokrat* OR Kristendemokrat* or (“Kristen Demokratisk”)
Miljöpartiet de Gröna (MP)	Miljöparti*
Moderata samlingspartiet (M)	Moderaterna or Moderaternas OR Moderaten OR Moderater OR Moderatleda* OR Moderatledning* OR Moderatlist* OR Moderatparti* OR Moderatpolitik* OR Moderatriksdag* OR Moderatdelegation* OR Moderatdomin* OR (“Moderata samlingsparti*” OR “Moderata Riksdag*” OR “moderata ministr*” OR “moderata politiker” OR “moderata parti*” OR “moderata fotfolket” OR “Moderata företrädd*”)
Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti (S)	Socialdemo*
Vänsterpartiet (V)	Vänsterparti*

TABLE A.2. Dutch party search strings.

Party	Search String
CD	CD or ("Centrum democraten" and not Rasmussen)
CDA	CDA or "Christen Democratisch Appèl"
ChristenUnie	ChristenUnie or GPV or RPF or "Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond" or "Reformatoische Politieke Federatie"
D66	D66 or "Democraten 66" or "D'66"
GroenLinks	GroenLinks
LPF	LPF or "Lijst Pim Fortuyn"
PvdA	PvdA or "Partij van de Arbeid"
PVV	(PVV and not (Productschap and Vee and Vlees)) or "Groep Wilders" or "Partij voor de Vrijheid"
SGP	SGP or (Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij)
SP	SP or (("Socialistische Partij") and not ("Belgische socialistische partij" or "Waalse socialistische partij" or Jospin or Milosevic or Chirac or ("Francois Hollande") or ("Ilir Meta") or ("Fatos Nano") or ("Fidel Espinoza") or (SLD and Polen) or ("Ulla Hoffmann") or Medgyessy or ("Jose Socrates") or ("Martin Schulz") or ("Martin Schultz") or Guterres or ("Deense Socialistische Partij") or Gyurcsany or ("Ségolène Royal") or ("Strauss-Kahn") or ("Wynns hotel in Dublin") or Zapatero or PSOE or Fidesz or ("Bulgaarse Socialistische Partij") or oranjerevolutie or Janoekovitsj or allende or Insulza or Vandenbroucke or ("Van Miert") or ("Pacifisch Socialistische Partij") or ("Franstalige socialistische partij") or Jemen or ("Van Outrive") or ("Hongaarse Socialistische Partij") or ("Portugese Socialistische Partij") or ("Pernille Frahm") or ("Revolutionair Socialistische Partij") or ("Noorse regering") or Mussertor or ("Jose Blanco") or Morales or Escalona or Pasok or Sarkozy or ("Front National") or (" Franse socialistische partij") or ("Pacifistisch Socialistische Partij") or ("Democratisch Socialistische partij") or (Labour and Conservatieven and Brown and Blair) or ("de Marokkaanse socialistische partij") or ("Vlaamse socialistische partij") or ("Robert Voorhamme") or (Janssens and (Antwerpen or Vlaams))))
VVD	VVD or "Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie"

Note: For the Socialist party a very extensive string had to be developed in order to exclude all foreign socialist parties, while the for Centrum Democrats articles containing the acronym 'CD' were sorted manually to exclude articles on musical CDs etc.

TABLE A.3. Issue search strings.

Country	Issue	Search String
Sweden	European integration	(Europeiska unionen) or (EU) or (Europeiska gemenskap*) or (EG) or (Europaparlamentet) or (Europeiska kommissionen)
Sweden	Immigration	diskrim* or (skola* or kurs* or lektion* or utbildning*) w/10 (utlän* or flykting* or gästarbetar* or asylsök*) or (svenska för invandrare) or språkkurs* or språkundervisn* or anhöriginvandring* or skenäktenskap* or utlän* or flykting* or gästarbetare* or asylsök* or invandr* or (illegala flyktingar) or utvis* or Upphållstillstånd* or Mångkult* or tvångsgiftermål* or tvångsäktenskap* or (brud* w/5 utland) or (försörjningskrav w/20 äktenskap*) or asyl* or Flyktingamnesti* or Huvudduk* or slöja* or burka*
Netherlands	European integration	(Europese Unie) or ALLCAPS(EU) or (Europese Gemeenschap) or ALLCAPS(EG) or (Europees Parlement) or (Europese Commissie) or ((Europees Hof) w/5 Justitie)
Netherlands	Immigration	discrim* or (haat w/5 aanzet) or (scholing* or cursus* or les* or onderwijs or oprot*) w/10 (migrant* or immi* or alloch* or asiel* or buitenl*) or (cursus w/1 Nederlands) or taalcur* or taalles* or taalonderw* or gezinsherenig* or schijnhuw* or nephuw* or uithuw* or immig* or alloch* or vreemdeling* or migran* or moslim* or islam* or asiel* or illegalen or uitgezet* or verblijfs* or multicult* or (massa w/1 regularis*) or regularis* or importbruid or (bruid* w/5 buitenland) or (inkomenseis w/20 trouw*) or pluriform* or asielzoeker* or vluchteling* or (generaal pardon) or hoofddoek* or kopvod*

Appendix B

Coded material for Chapter II

This appendix provides an overview of the coded data on the framing and positions on the EU sub-issues in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Figures B.1, B.2 and B.3 provide, for each country, the party positions on the different EU sub-issues, averaged over time. For example, in Figure B.1 one can see that the Labour Party in the United Kingdom holds positive attitudes on the European integration project when discussing most sub-issues but is more negative when agricultural policies (sub-issue 8) are discussed. The focus in figures B.4, B.5 and B.6 is on the development of party positions on the EU over time, disregarding for simplicity the different sub-issues. For example, in Figure B.5 we note that CP'86, SP and PVV are the most Euroskeptical parties and that SP has moderated its stance somewhat over time. Figures B.7, B.8 and B.9 depicts which frames may be associated with which parties. In the UK, for example, the peace frame is most strongly linked to Labour and the prosperity frame to the Liberal Democrats, while the Conservatives' framing is marked by comparatively little use of the politics and peace frames and substantial profit framing (though Labour also makes frequent use of this frame). Finally, in the figures B.10, B.11 and B.12 the use of the six frames over time is displayed for every sub-issue, averaged across parties. Here, we note for example that in Germany, the issue of crime in the EU (sub-issue 6) was first nearly exclusively framed in terms of prosperity but over time became discussed using prosperity and politics framing.

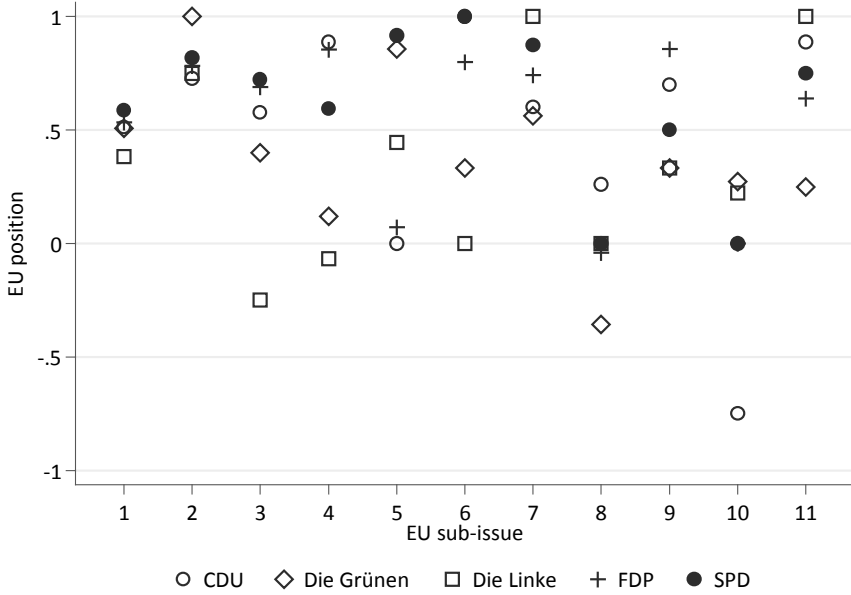


FIGURE B.1. Positions on the EU on different sub-issues in Germany.

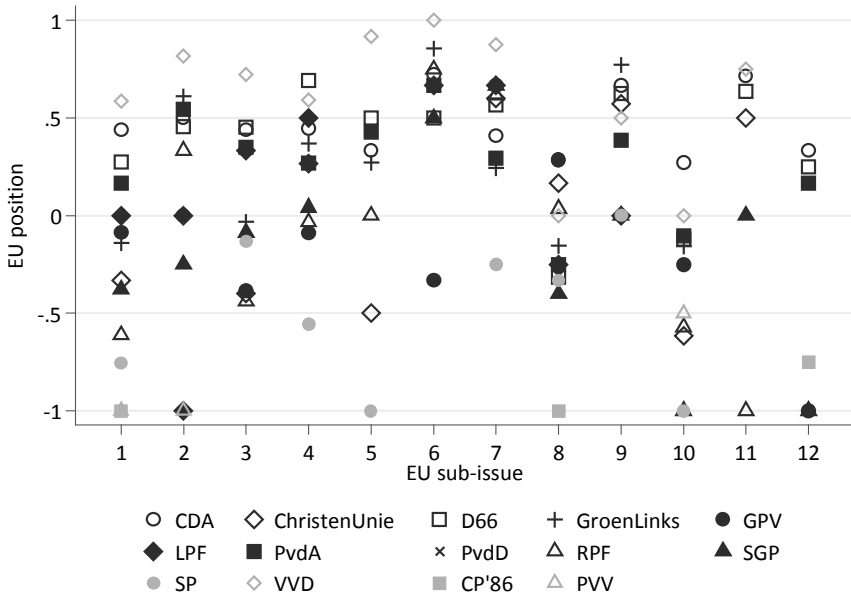


FIGURE B.2. Positions on the EU on different sub-issues in the Netherlands.

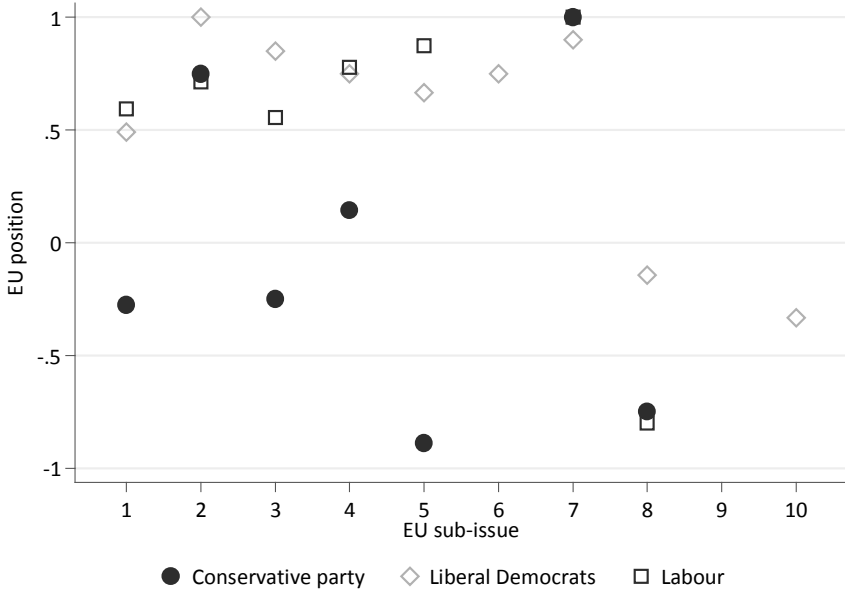


FIGURE B.3. Positions on the EU on different sub-issues in the UK.

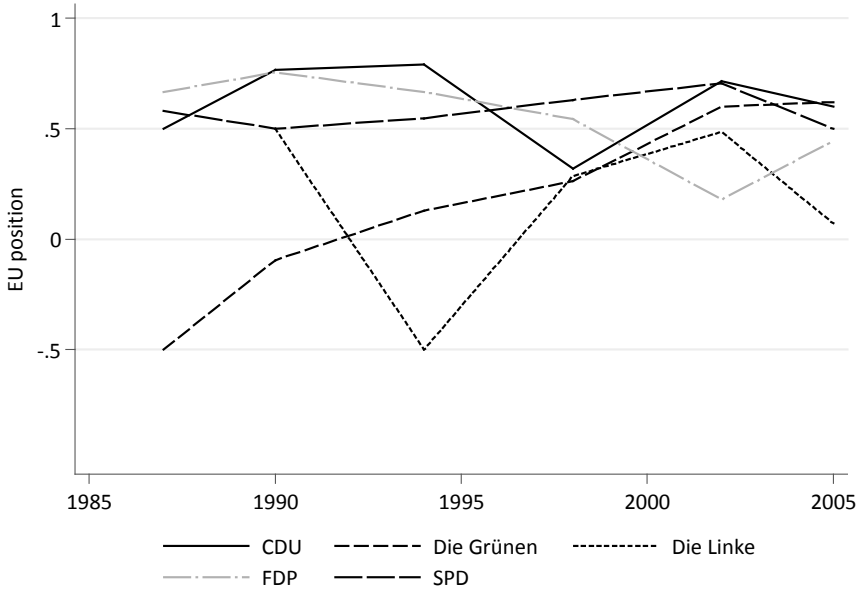


FIGURE B.4. Positions on the EU (all sub-issues) in Germany.

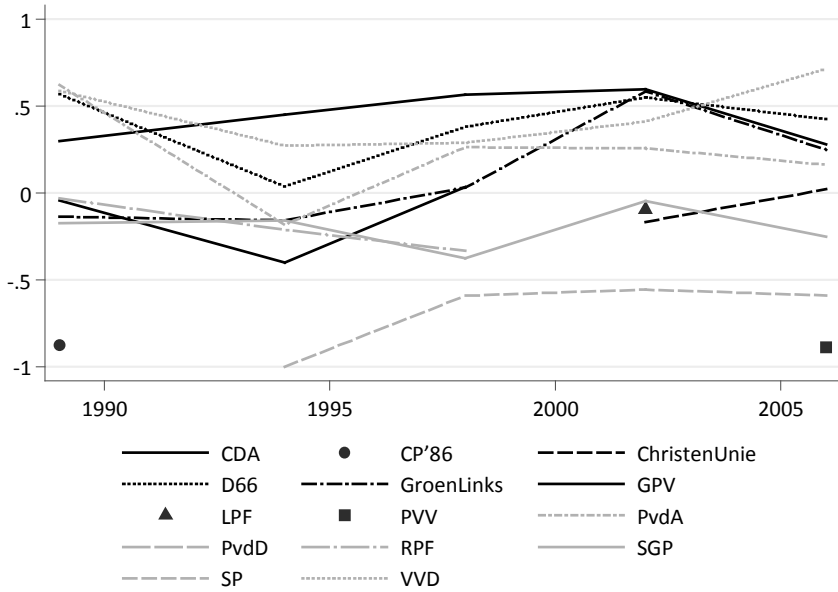


FIGURE B.5. Positions on the EU (all sub-issues) in the Netherlands.

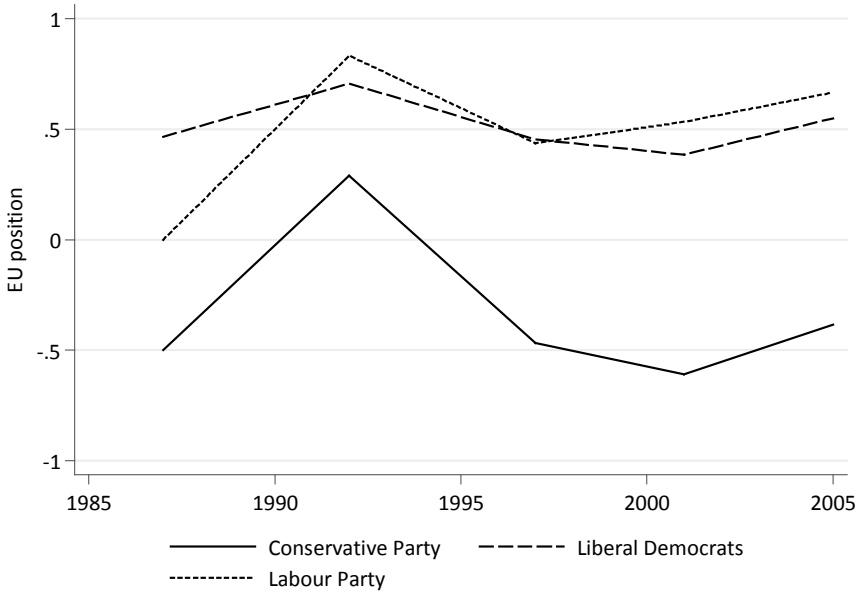


FIGURE B.6. Positions on the EU (all sub-issues) in the UK.

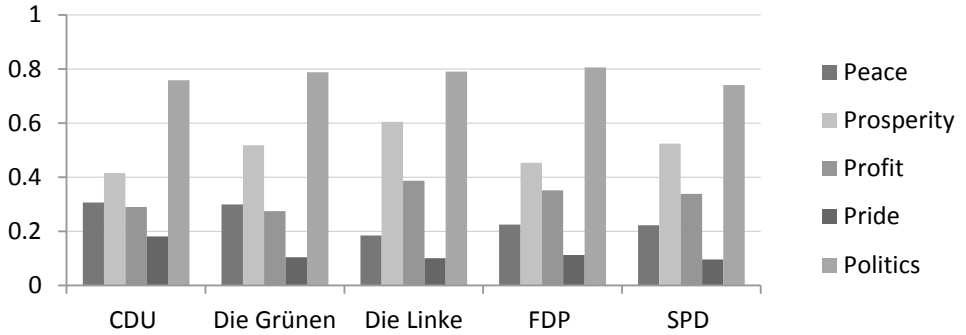


FIGURE B.7. Framing per party over all elections and EU sub-issues in Germany.

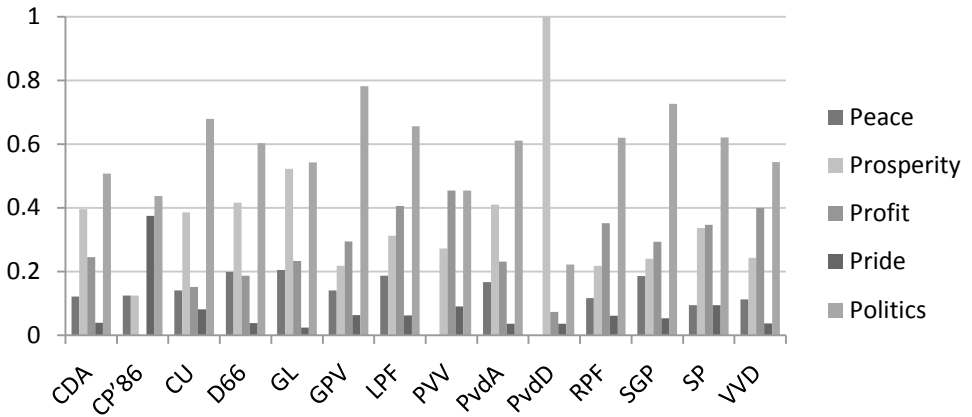


FIGURE B.8. Framing per party over all elections and EU sub-issues in the Netherlands.

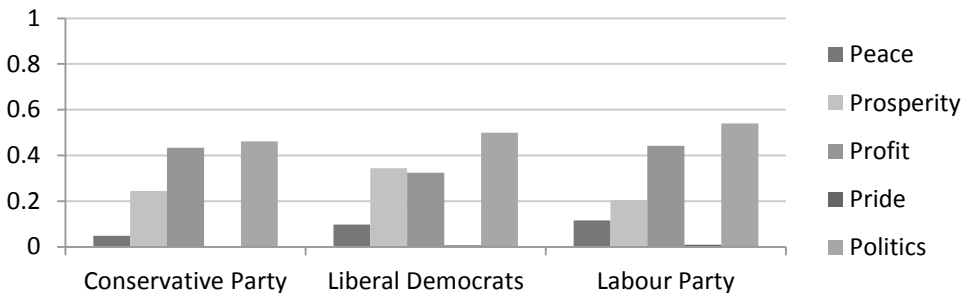


FIGURE B.9. Framing per party over all elections and EU sub-issues in the UK.

APPENDICES

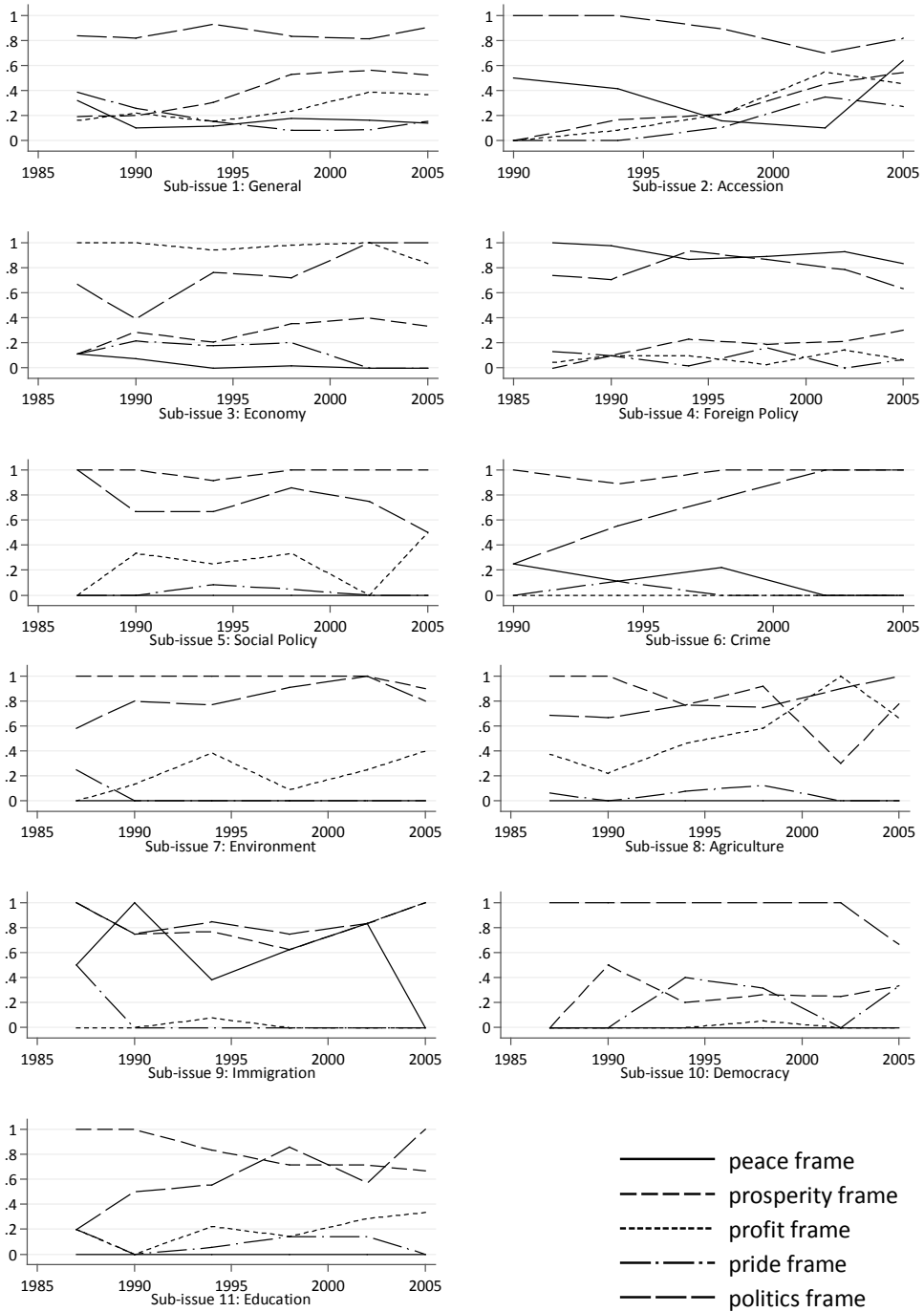


FIGURE B.10. Framing of EU sub-issues in Germany, averaged over all parties.

Appendix B

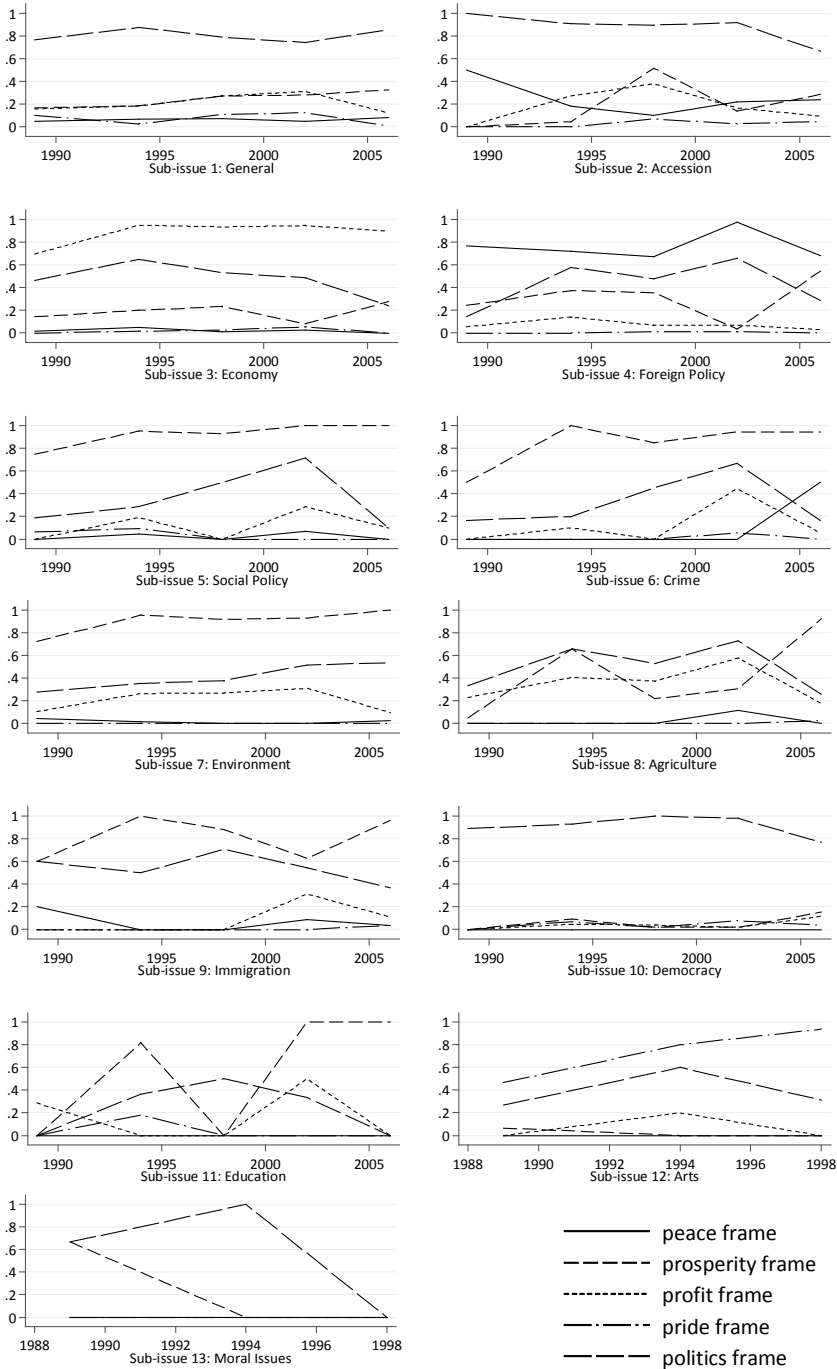


FIGURE B.11. Framing of EU sub-issues in the Netherlands, averaged over all parties.

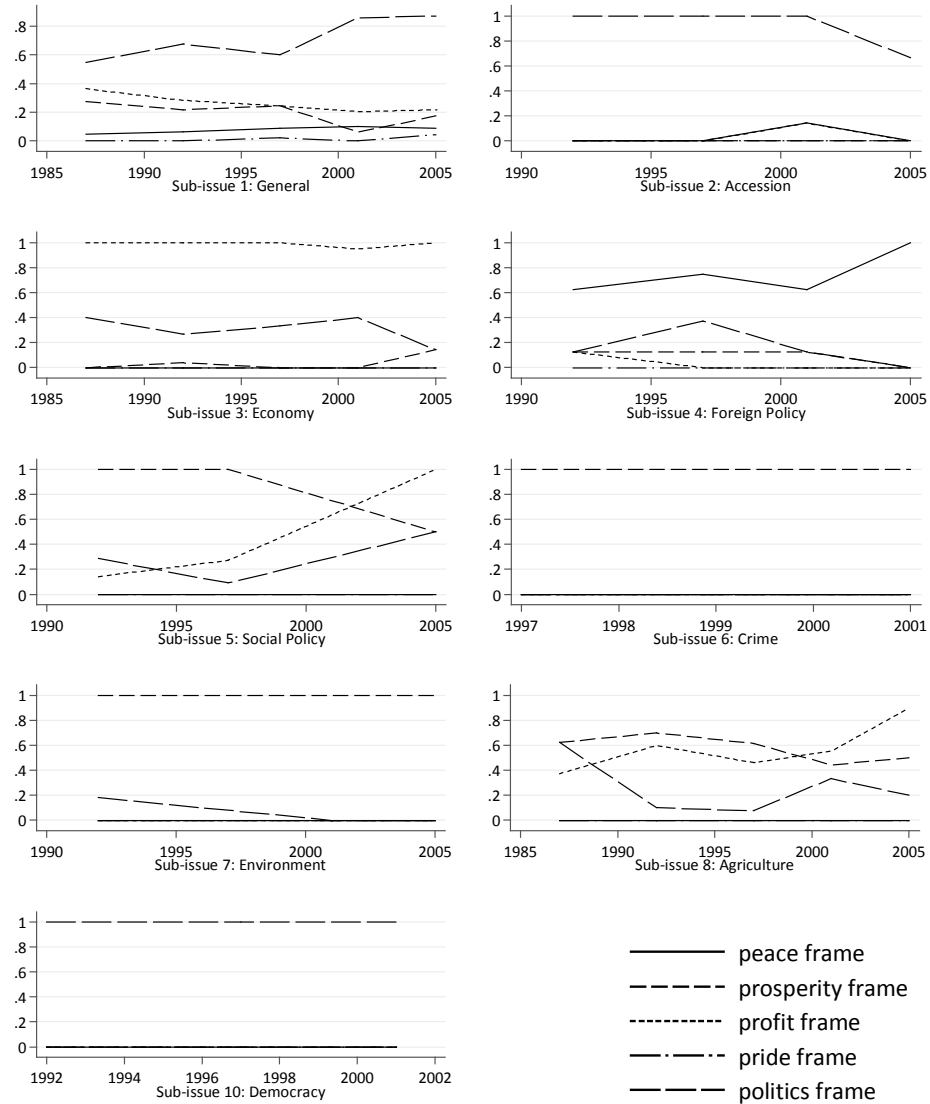


FIGURE B.12. Framing of EU sub-issues in the United Kingdom, averaged over all parties.

Appendix C

Description of data for Chapter III

This appendix gives a descriptive overview of the data that were used in Chapter III, to give some insight into the face-validity of this novel data set. For brevity only the two politicized issues are shown here (European integration in Sweden and immigration in the Netherlands), as these well-known issues are easier to inspect.

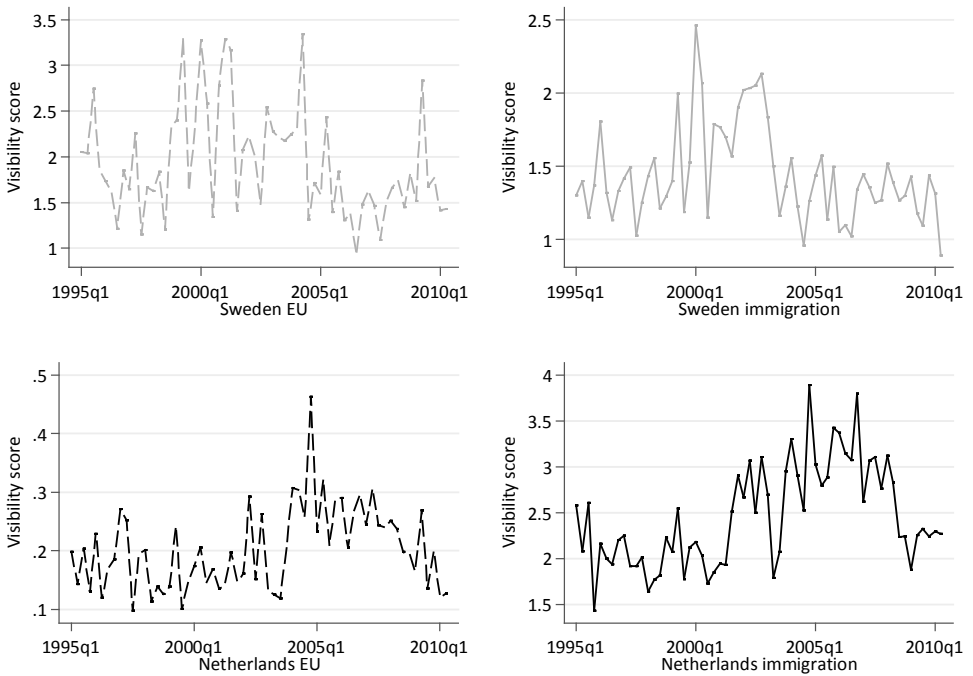


FIGURE C.1. Visibility of immigration and EU in Dutch and Swedish newspapers.

Note. The y-axis differs per graph. The visibility can be compared over time within one issue and country, but not strictly between issues, as the different search strings might not work equally well and the size of newspapers differs over countries.

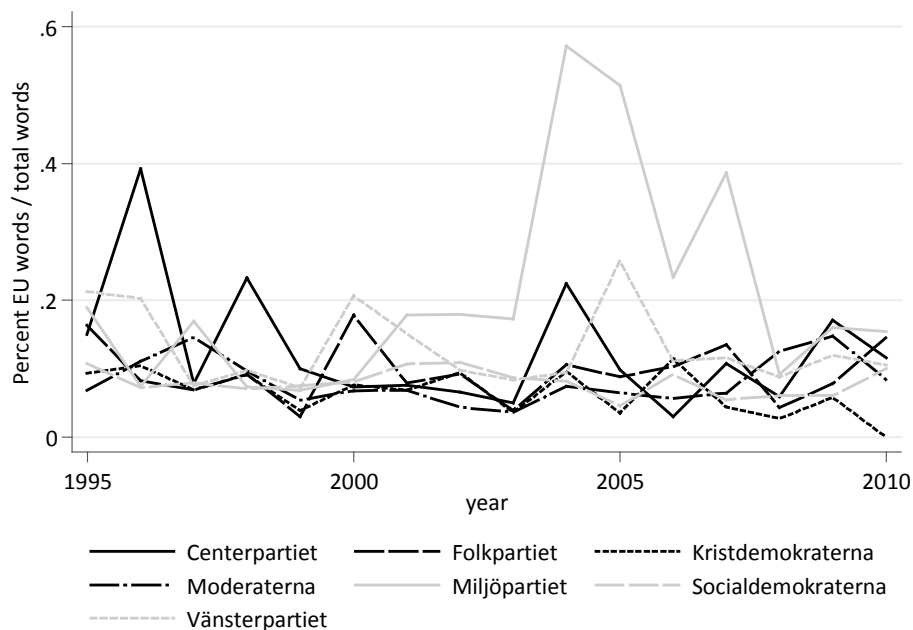


FIGURE C.2. Attention for the EU in parliamentary questions, Sweden.

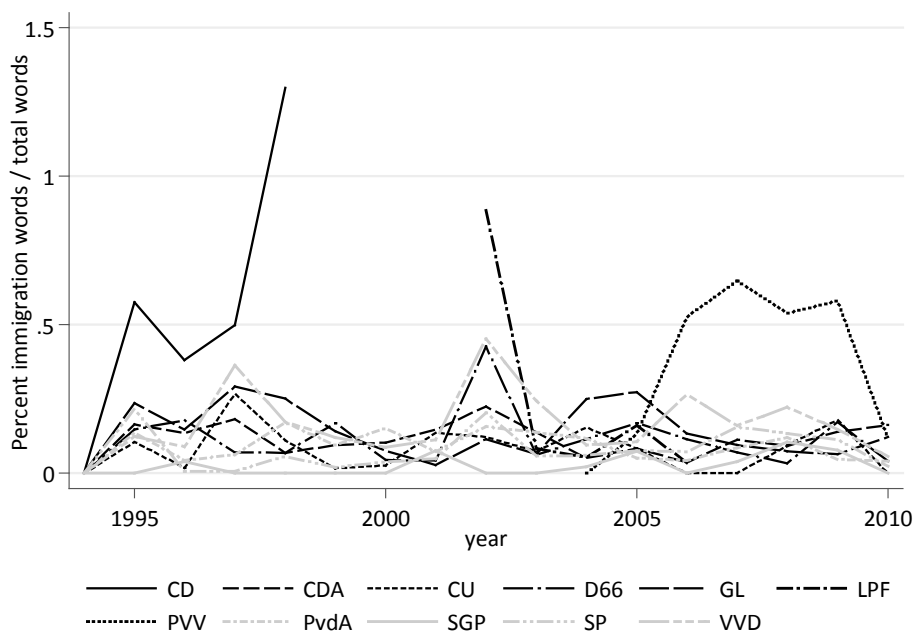


FIGURE C.3. Attention for the immigration in parliamentary questions, the Netherlands.

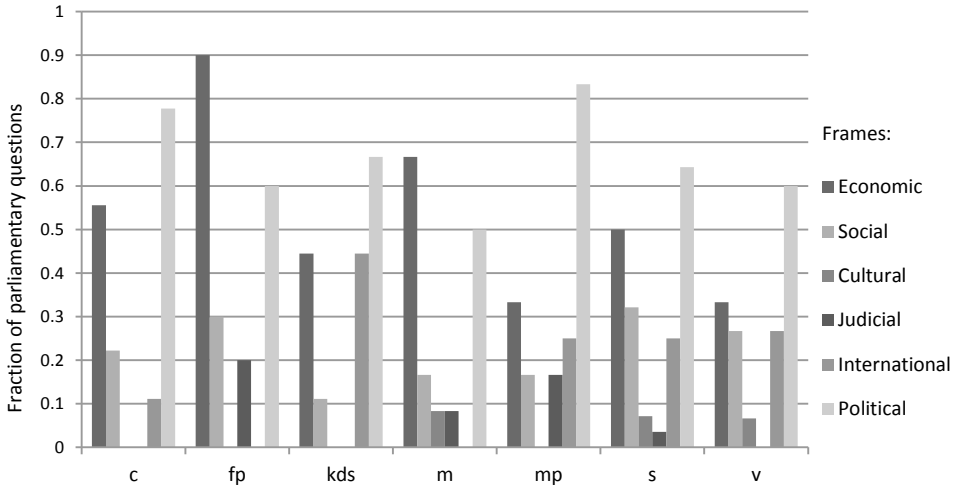


FIGURE C.4. Framing of the EU by different parties in Sweden.

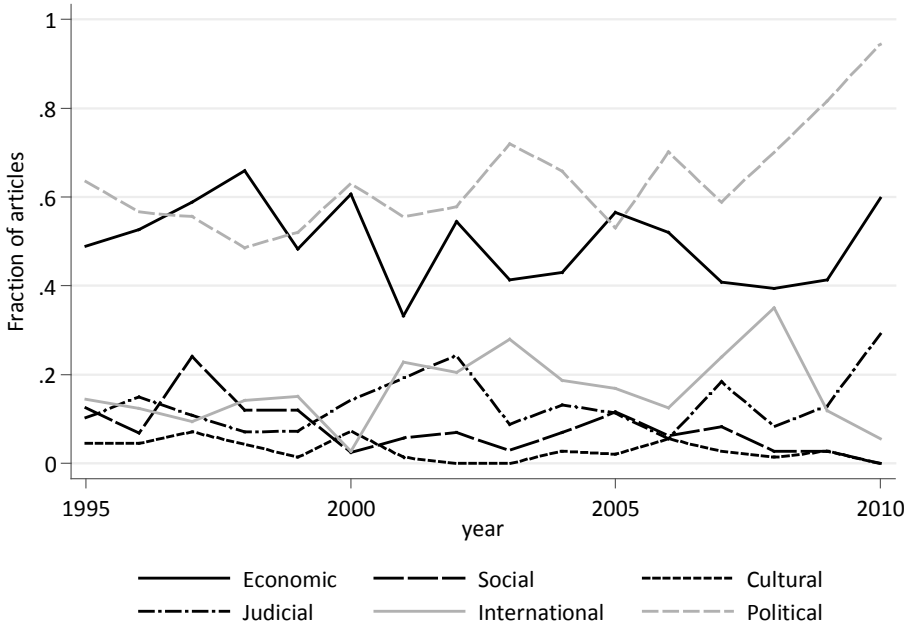


FIGURE C.5. Framing of the EU in Swedish newspapers.

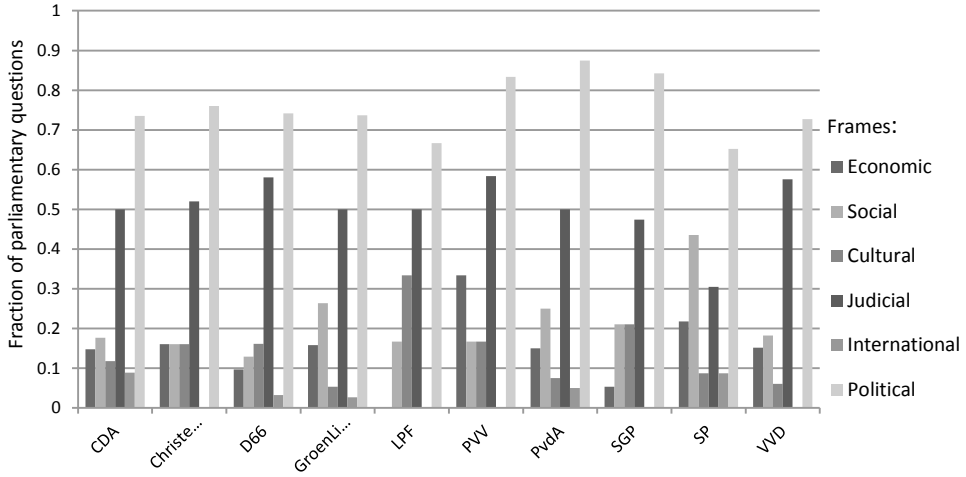


FIGURE C.6. Framing of immigration by different parties in the Netherlands.

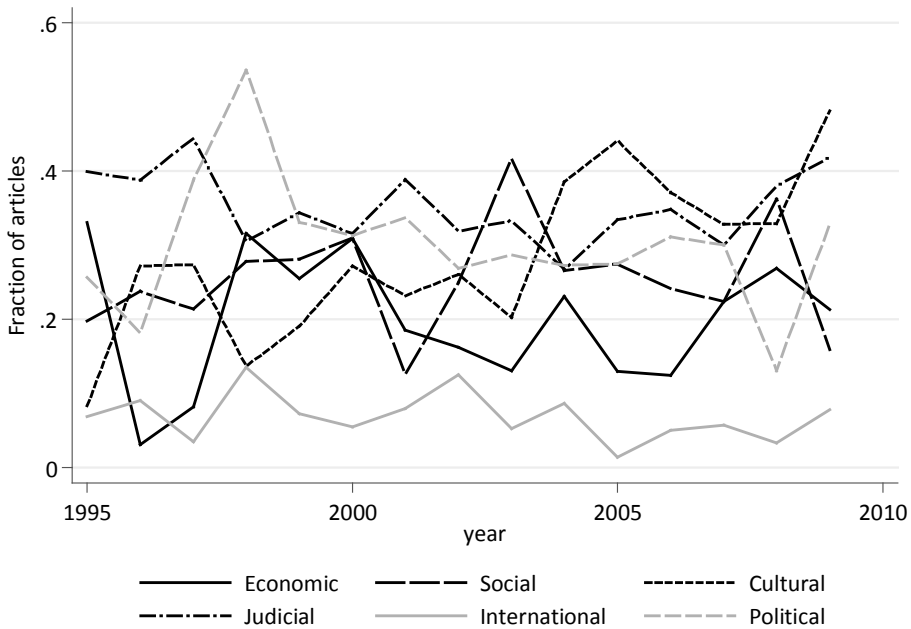


FIGURE C.7. Framing of immigration in Dutch newspapers.

Appendix D

Description of data for Chapter IV

TABLE D.1. Parties included in the analysis and their coding.

	N	Government	Mainstream opposition	Challenger
CD	175	-	-	1995w1 - 1998w18
CDA	757	2002w30 - 2010w35	1995w1 - 2002w29	-
Christen- Unie	757	2007w9 - 2010w35	-	1995w1 - 2007w8
D66	757	1995w1 - 2002w29 2003w22 - 2006w27	2002w30 - 2003w21 2006w28 - 2010w35	-
Groen- Links	757	-	-	1995w1 - 2010w35
LPF	176	2002w30 - 2003w22	2003w23 - 2006w47	2002w20 - 2002w29
PVV	314	-	-	2004w47 - 2010w35
PvdA	757	1995w1 - 2002w29 2007w8 - 2010w35	2002w30 - 2007w7	-
SGP	757	-	-	1995w1 - 2010w35
SP	757	-	-	1995w1 - 2010w35
VVD	757	1995w1 - 2007w7	2007w8 - 2010w35	-

Note: The period from 2002w27 to 2003w35 is missing for all parties due to a gap in the parliamentary proceedings database.

TABLE D.2. Descriptive statistics.

	Mean	Standard deviation	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum
Dependent variables				
Articles on EU issue & party in the Volkskrant	0.375	0.810	0	17
Articles on immigration & party in the Volkskrant	3.239	4.076	0	46
Articles on EU issue & party in De Telegraaf	0.148	0.441	0	7
Articles on immigration & party in De Telegraaf	1.592	2.246	0	18
Independent variables				
Parliamentary questions on EU (count)	0.063	0.495	0	11
Parliamentary questions on immigration (count)	0.215	1.148	0	26
Parliamentary questions on EU (dummy)	0.042	0.201	0	1
Parliamentary questions on immigration (dummy)	0.109	0.311	0	1
Tie between party and Volkskrant	0.562	0.453	0	1.531
Tie between party and De Telegraaf	0.651	0.367	0	1.346
Party size in parliamentary seats	15.858	14.303	1	45

Note: In the analyses, the dummy version of the parliamentary questions variables was used.

National Election Study data

The variables ‘tie between party and Volkskrant’ and ‘tie between party and De Telegraaf’ are calculated on data from the Dutch National election Study. The variable ‘Party voted for [in current] parliamentary election’ (V15_2) and ‘Daily newspaper’ (V2_4, V2_6 and V1_1) were used. The number of respondents with valid answers for both questions is 1512 (in the 1994 study), 1801 (1998), 1566 (2002), 1268 (2003) and 2390 (2006).

Appendix E

Analysis of alternative explanation for results in Chapter IV

This appendix inspects an alternative explanation for why newspapers tend to write on issues presented in the parliamentary questions of certain parties and not others. The reasoning behind the second hypothesis is that this is the result of a partisan bias in the news selection of journalists and editors, i.e., newspapers selectively prioritize certain parties over others. However, as Wolfsfeld (2011) articulately argues, interactions between media and politics often form a cycle, with the media influencing politics, influencing the media, influencing politics and so forth. This is also the case for parliamentary questions: parliamentary questions may inspire media coverage, but they are themselves often directly motivated by reports in the media. Therefore, it could be the case that a journalist first writes a piece, which a parliamentarian reads (or receives a tip about from the journalist) and asks a question on it. It is then beneficial for the newspaper to report on the topic, as the parliamentary question validates their earlier coverage. Such a scenario has two implications for the explanation offered in this Chapter IV. First, it would imply that the issue is first suggested in the media and not in parliament: the agenda-setter would thus not be the party but the journalist. Second, it could imply that the newspaper is not necessarily partisan: it is possible that MPs select from particular newspapers and newspapers simply respond more to certain parties because these are ones that mention their coverage in parliament.

This appendix explores this alternative scenario in two ways. First, a control for issue attention in the newspaper in the preceding week is added. In the original models, autoregressive terms were included in the error structure, but because the dependent variable is the number of articles that mention both the issue and the party, this is not equivalent to controlling for past issue attention (in which the party need not be mentioned). By adding this control, we can see whether it is the newspaper that first places the issue on the agenda, and not the political party. Table E.1 reports the results including this control. As expected, the control is positive and significant in all models, indicating that if an issue is highly visible one week, it is also likely to be high on the newspaper's agenda in the next week. More important, however, adding this control does not change the results obtained earlier. The interaction between parliamentary

Table E.1. Models with control for issue visibility in last week's newspaper, 1995-2010.

	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf		Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigr.	EU	Immigr.	EU	Immigr.	EU	Immigr.
Issue in parliamentary questions	0.133*** (0.026)	-0.021 (0.018)	0.391* (0.157)	0.035 (0.063)	0.001 (0.152)	0.064 (0.055)	-0.397 (0.501)	-0.056 (0.055)
Mainstream opposition	0.007 (0.201)	-0.108 (0.108)	0.055 (0.230)	-0.162 (0.209)				
Challenger party	-0.444 (0.338)	-0.258 (0.374)	-0.529 (0.436)	-0.435 (0.398)				
Issue in questions x mainstream opposition	-0.182*** (0.042)	0.154*** (0.041)	-0.141 (0.398)	0.058 (0.161)				
Issue in questions x challenger party	0.418* (0.167)	0.161*** (0.025)	-0.702 (0.469)	0.065 (0.081)				
Tie between party and newspaper					0.388 (0.336)	0.37 (0.276)	0.819† (0.422)	0.753* (0.383)
Issue in questions x tie					0.293 (0.214)	0.016 (0.059)	0.883 (0.643)	0.183* (0.088)
Issue visibility in last week's newspaper	0.027** (0.008)	0.031** (0.011)	0.029** (0.009)	0.034** (0.010)	0.037*** (0.008)	0.036*** (0.007)	0.035*** (0.007)	0.037*** (0.008)
N (parties)	11	11	10	10	11	11	10	10
N (parties x weeks)	6721	6730	4882	4882	6721	6730	4882	4882
Adjusted deviance	0.674	0.683	0.435	0.809	0.679	0.679	0.431	0.788

Note: Coefficients (not exponentiated) with standard errors in parentheses. Constant and the control for party size are included but not shown. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

TABLE E.2. Effects of parliamentary questions –not mentioning the newspaper- on newspaper agenda, 1995-2010.

	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf		Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigr.	EU	Immigr.	EU	Immigr.	EU	Immigr.
Issue in parliamentary questions, without mention of the newspaper	0.132*	-0.017	0.417*	0.052	-0.006	0.066	-0.532	-0.039
	(0.056)	(0.019)	(0.179)	(0.063)	(0.181)	(0.042)	(0.476)	(0.073)
Mainstream opposition	0.012	-0.107	0.072	-0.158				
	(0.211)	(0.112)	(0.191)	(0.208)				
Challenger party	-0.457	-0.258	-0.545	-0.45				
	(0.337)	(0.374)	(0.452)	(0.403)				
Issue in questions x mainstream opposition	-0.204*	0.172***	-0.174	0.036				
	(0.086)	(0.033)	(0.415)	(0.157)				
Issue in questions x challenger party	0.396*	0.146***	-0.801†	0.048				
	(0.173)	(0.025)	(0.428)	(0.080)				
Tie between party and newspaper					0.396	0.353	0.884*	0.766†
					(0.336)	(0.280)	(0.411)	(0.396)
Issue in questions x tie					0.282	0.018	1.077†	0.165
					(0.245)	(0.047)	(0.628)	(0.108)
N (parties)	11	11	10	10	11	11	10	10
N (parties x weeks)	6721	6730	4882	4882	6721	6730	4882	4882
Adjusted deviance	0.703	0.788	0.468	0.863	0.709	0.781	0.463	0.844

Note: Coefficients (not exponentiated) with standard errors in parentheses. Constant and the control for party size are included but not shown. †p<.10 *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001 (two-tailed).

questions and challenger party status remains positive and significant for both issues in the *Volkskrant*, meaning that the *Volkskrant* reports more on issues included in the questions of challenger parties, even when controlling for the attention devoted to the issues in the editions of the *Volkskrant* from the week before. Similarly, the results on the overrepresentation of party voters among the readership remain substantively the same.³⁵

Second, the parliamentary questions that refer to the *Volkskrant* or *De Telegraaf* are excluded from the analysis. This allows us to determine how newspapers respond to parliamentary questions that are not explicitly inspired by their own coverage. Table E.2 lists these results. Again, the challenger interaction term is positive and significant for both issues in the *Volkskrant*. Additionally, little changes regarding the overrepresentation of party voters.

Finally, it is important to note that these additional analyses do not imply that there is no media-politics-media cycle –there almost certainly is- or that political parallelism is entirely the result of journalistic bias –it most likely arises from both sides. They do indicate, however, that the results provide information on the ‘politics to media’ link in the chain, as they are not purely driven by the media’s influence on politics one step earlier in the cycle.

³⁵ Marginal effect graphs are available from the author upon request.

Appendix F

Additional analysis for Chapter IV

TABLE F.1. Effects of parliamentary questions on newspaper agenda, both interactions simultaneous.

	Volkskrant		De Telegraaf	
	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration
Issue in parliamentary questions	0.074 (0.169)	-0.041 (0.025)	-0.084 (0.479)	-0.076 (0.070)
Mainstream opposition	0.021 (0.185)	-0.101 (0.107)	0.025 (0.191)	-0.167 (0.175)
Challenger party	-0.419 (0.303)	-0.198 (0.365)	-0.511 (0.430)	-0.483 (0.375)
Mainstream opposition x issue in questions	-0.205** (0.063)	0.155*** (0.040)	-0.200 (0.496)	0.000 (0.165)
Challenger party x issue in questions	0.334† (0.188)	0.147*** (0.026)	-0.591 (0.530)	0.046 (0.086)
Tie between party and newspaper	0.378 (0.325)	0.332 (0.275)	0.764 (0.365)	0.741* (0.351)
Tie x issue in questions	0.096 (0.241)	0.027 (0.038)	0.749 (0.710)	0.198* (0.092)
Party size	0.029*** (0.008)	0.033** (0.010)	0.026** (0.009)	0.030** (0.010)
Constant	-1.686*** (0.425)	0.348 (0.448)	-2.808*** (0.445)	-0.439 (0.433)
N (parties)	11	11	10	10
N (parties x weeks)	6721	6730	4882	4882
Adjusted deviance	0.695	0.758	0.454	0.807

Note: Coefficients (not exponentiated) with standard errors in parentheses. The reference category for the mainstream opposition and challenger dummies is government parties. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Appendix G

Day selection for newspaper visibility

This appendix documents the procedure by which the Monday and Tuesday newspaper editions were selected to measure the visibility of the two issues in the media in chapter V. Table G.1 displays, separately for each issue and newspaper, the effect of issue visibility in the morning paper of the day of the Question Hour (Tuesday), the effect of visibility the day before (Monday), and the day before that, and so on, until the newspaper of one week earlier. In the first row, we observe that if the EU or immigration is highly visible in the Tuesday issue of Telegraaf, parties are more likely to ask PQs on the issue. The Tuesday paper of the Volkskrant does not have a significant effect, but the Volkskrant of Monday does. For convenience, the final column reports the average coefficient of issue visibility in the newspapers of that day. This reveals that, on average, issue visibility in the newspapers of Tuesday, Monday, and Friday has a positive effect on the likelihood of a party including an issue in the weekly Question Hour on Tuesday. As the largest effect is observed on the first two days, we choose the issue visibility of the Monday and Tuesday newspapers for the analyses.

TABLE G.1. Explaining EU and immigration attention in Question Hour on Tuesday.

	EU		Immigration		Mean coefficient
	De Telegraaf	Volkscrant	De Telegraaf	Volkscrant	
Tuesday paper	0.083* (2.00)	-0.005 (-0.15)	0.016† (1.65)	0.003 (0.61)	0.024
Monday paper	0.154* (2.44)	0.065† (1.67)	0.011 (0.86)	0.014† (1.71)	0.061
Saturday paper	-0.059 (-1.17)	0.021 (0.84)	0.002 (0.26)	0.004 (0.82)	-0.008
Friday paper	0.100† (1.96)	0.026 (0.84)	0.016 (1.44)	0.007 (1.28)	0.037
Thursday paper	-0.117† (-1.66)	-0.006 (-0.21)	0.005 (0.49)	-0.002 (-0.41)	-0.030
Wednesday paper	-0.025 (-0.37)	-0.055* (-1.98)	-0.002 (-0.20)	-0.013* (-2.03)	-0.024
Time since last PQ			-0.031*** (-4.64)	-0.033*** (-5.58)	
Time since last PQ²			0.000** (3.18)	0.000*** (3.68)	
Constant	-3.176*** (-21.14)	-3.269*** (-19.03)	-2.335*** (-9.30)	-2.088*** (-9.32)	
N	5205	7006	4961	6601	
McFadden's pseudo R²	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.03	
Log likelihood	-902.041	-1182.9	-1661.846	-2222.705	

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with t-values, based on clustered standard errors, in parentheses. Analyses using the Volkscrant begin in 1995 and end in 2010, while those using De Telegraaf are from mid-1999 to the end of 2010. †p<.10 *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001 (two-tailed).

Appendix H

Robustness checks for Chapter V

This appendix lists the results of analyses using two alternative estimation techniques to the one employed in Chapter V. As discussed in Chapter V, the observations are grouped on two non-nested levels: by week and by party. In the main analyses, only the clustering on week, but not on party, was modeled, and in this appendix both are addressed in two ways. First, we estimate logistic regressions comparable to those in the chapter, but including dummies for the party effects. The standard errors are still clustered at the week level. The results of these analyses are reported in the first two columns of Table H1. Regarding the interactions for hypothesis one, we see that the results found in the chapter still hold. Again, in three out of the four cases, the interaction between party-paper tie and issue attention in the newspaper is significant, meaning that parties are significantly more likely to copy issue attention from an ideologically close paper. Again, coverage of the immigration issue in De Telegraaf is the exception, which fails to elicit a stronger response from linked parties. Similarly, the results on ownership echo those in the chapter, with only one out of four cases displaying a significant interaction.

Second, we estimate cross-classified logistic regression models, with random intercepts for parties and weeks. Further, the visibility of an issue in newspapers is measured at the week level and not at the lowest level of week-party combinations, meaning that the interactions with media visibility are cross-level interactions. For this reason, a random component (varying by week) in the slopes of newspaper-party tie and issue ownership should be included. Unfortunately, the estimation of a random slope for issue ownership was not feasible, and hence a random component was only estimated for tie with De Telegraaf and tie with Volkskrant. The model regarding the EU issue was estimated with the specification of unstructured covariance in the random components, meaning separate variances are estimated for all of the random components and the components are allowed to co-vary (for example, a covariance for the random slopes for the ties to the two newspapers is estimated, instead of being set to zero). Coincidentally, the three estimated covariances did not differ significantly from zero. Regarding the immigration issue, estimating all of these parameters was not feasible, and hence, a model with separately

TABLE H.1. Results using alternative estimation techniques.

	Logistic regressions with party dummies and clustered standard errors		Cross-classified logistics regression	
	EU	Immigration	EU	Immigration
Main effects				
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf	0.232* (0.095)	0.190* (0.079)	0.226 (0.192)	0.132 (0.214)
Issue visibility in Volkskrant	-0.044 (0.128)	0.027 (0.079)	-0.107 (0.202)	-0.106 (0.225)
Tie with De Telegraaf	0.264 (0.267)	-0.107 (0.215)	0.101 (0.478)	0.471† (0.272)
Tie with Volkskrant	0.057 (0.284)	-0.446* (0.215)	-0.177 (0.351)	0.284 (0.229)
Issue ownership	-0.131 (0.116)	-0.132† (0.072)	-0.364* (0.167)	-0.260† (0.146)
Interactions				
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf x Tie with De Telegraaf (H1)	0.280** (0.100)	-0.059 (0.066)	0.358* (0.172)	0.331† (0.200)
Issue visibility in Volkskrant x Tie with Volkskrant (H1)	0.166* (0.073)	0.103* (0.042)	0.256 (0.162)	0.349* (0.162)
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf x Issue ownership (H2)	0.181** (0.063)	-0.014 (0.040)	0.153 (0.127)	-0.057 (0.143)
Issue visibility in Volkskrant x Issue ownership (H2)	-0.091 (0.086)	-0.012 (0.047)	-0.127 (0.125)	-0.076 (0.123)
Variance components				
Party: constant σ^2			0.073	0.043
Week: Tie with Telegraaf σ^2			1.829	1.395
Week: Tie with Volkskrant σ^2			4.465	3.931
Week: constant σ^2			15.700	16.399
N	4494	4620	4494	4621
McFadden's pseudo R²	0.049	0.069		
Log likelihood	-812.876	-1485.835	-683.008	-686.893

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with (clustered) standard errors in parentheses. Party dummies (first two models), the duration variable (immigration models), the control for party size and the constant are not shown. †p<.10 *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001 (two-tailed).

estimated variances for the random components, but zero co-variances, was estimated instead.

The last two columns in Table H.1 present the results of the cross-classified models. These are, again, largely in line with results found earlier. As before, H1 is supported in three out of four cases, although here the interaction between EU visibility and tie with the Volkskrant is the exception, instead of De Telegraaf. Moreover, all interactions are positive in sign. Regarding H2, there is again no supporting evidence for the hypothesis, as in these analyses none of the interactions is significant, and three out of the four are negative. Overall, these additional analyses confirm prior conclusions.

Appendix I

Analyses with alternative issue ownership measures for Chapter V

Chapter V found no supporting evidence for the hypothesis that issue owners are more responsive to media attention on their issues than non-owners. This is rather surprising, as earlier studies did find support for this hypothesis (though in different countries). Therefore, we retest the hypothesis in this appendix using a different measurement of issue ownership. In the main analysis, we examined ownership based on the association between the issue and the party in the newspaper coverage of the past year, as scholars have argued that parties claim ownership through media appearances. However, it has also been argued that the association between an issue and a party in the minds of voters is the product of a history of attention to the issue (Petrocik 1996; see also Van der Brug 2004). Therefore, we construct an alternative measure based on the past issue prioritization of the party in parliament.

To capture the issue prioritization of the parliamentary group, we consider the relative attention parties devoted the issue in the parliamentary questions of the preceding year. First, for each week, we take the number of words the party devotes to the EU or immigration in their parliamentary questions and divide this by the total number of words in oral questions posed by the party in that week. Such a relative score is a good indicator of a party's issue priorities: how much of the limited resources (in preparation and speech time) is the party prepared to devote to the issue? Second, as in the measurement of issue ownership in the media, a rolling average is taken of the 52 weeks prior to the week previous to each observation, with decreasing weights for the 40th to 52nd week in the past.

TABLE I.1. Comparison of ownership measures.

	EU ownership		Immigration ownership	
	Media	Parliament	Media	Parliament
Part of variance between parties	32%	13%	49%	67%
Overall correlation media and parliament	0.06 (0.000)		0.39 (0.000)	
Correlation within parties	-0.01 (0.303)		-0.01 (0.580)	
Correlation between parties	0.32 (0.000)		0.68 (0.000)	

Note: P-values for correlations in parentheses.

Table I.1 presents a description of the two types of issue ownership –in the media and in parliament. The share of the variance between parties is informative of how stable each type of ownership is over time. For immigration, there is considerable stability: 49 to 67 percent of the variance in the ownership of

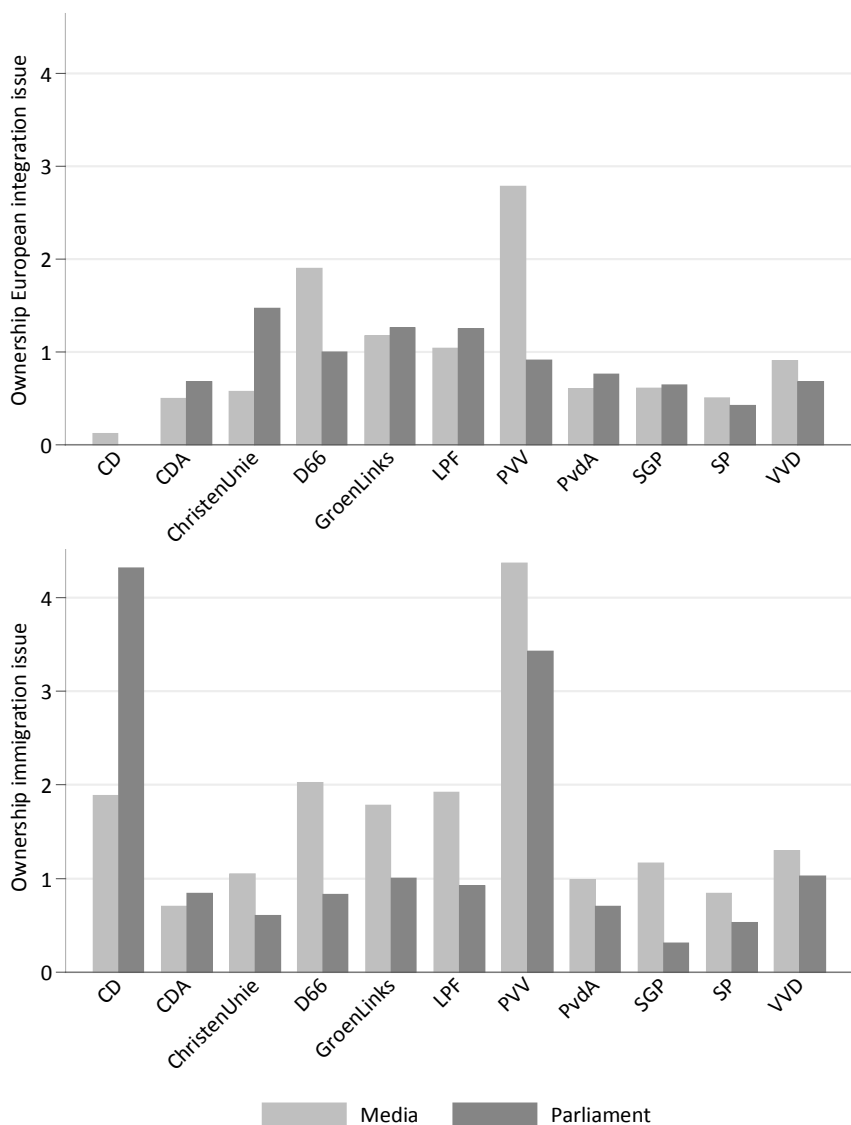


FIGURE I.1. Mean issue ownership of parties, 1995-2010.

Note: Both ownership scores are divided by their standard deviation to facilitate comparison

this issue can be attributed to differences between parties, whereas for the EU issue, parties vary substantially in their ownership over time. This could be a sign that, as the issue of European integration was not politicized as much as the immigration issue, the ownership has yet to be clearly established. In addition, regarding the EU issue, the correlation between ownership in the media and ownership in parliament is low ($r=.06$), whereas there is substantially greater correlation between the two on the issue of immigration ($r=.39$). For both issues, the correlation between the two measures lies between parties, and not within parties over time. Figure I.1 displays the mean score for each type of ownership per issue and party. Here, we observe that ownership in the media and ownership in parliament generally concur, but with some exceptions. The Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) is linked to the EU issue in the media much more than the prioritization by the parliamentarian faction would suggest, as is the case for D66. On the immigration issue, the owners Centrum Democraten (CD) and PVV clearly stand out, while owner Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF) only has a moderate score. Finally, we also note that despite its history of attention in parliament, the CD is not linked to immigration to the same extent in the media, which confirms the party's ostracized status (Van Spanje 2010).

Table I.2 reports the alternative results. Models 1 and 2 include ownership in the media, as in the main analyses, but exclude the party-paper tie variables and their interactions. These models reveal that issue ownership in the media does not fail to enhance the effect of issue visibility in newspapers because of the inclusion of the tie variables. Models 3 and 4 display the regressions with issue ownership in parliament as the predictor. In model 3, one interaction is negative and the other near zero, while neither is significant. In model 4, the interaction between ownership and visibility in the *Volkskrant* is even significantly negative, meaning that the immigration issue owners are significantly less likely to press the issue in parliament due to newspaper attention. In this model, the main effect of issue ownership is more substantial, indicating that past questioning behavior is a strong predictor of present PQs. Finally, in models 5 and 6, the owners of the immigration issue -CD, LPF and PVV- are marked with a dummy variable, based on the existing literature (Van Heerden et al. 2014). This is only done for immigration, as the owners of this issue are unambiguously known. Model 5 indicates that the immigration owners

TABLE I.2. Results with alternative ownership measures.

	EU M1	Immigr. M2	EU M3	Immigr. M4	Immigr. M5	Immigr. M6
Issue visibility in De Telegraaf	0.04 (0.12)	0.28** (0.10)	0.06 (0.11)	0.23* (0.11)	0.28** (0.10)	
Issue visibility in Volkskrant	0.03 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.08)	0.04 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.09)	-0.01 (0.08)	0.14* (0.06)
Ownership in the media	-0.01 (0.06)	0.16*** (0.05)				
Ownership in parliament			0.00 (0.06)	0.28*** (0.05)		
Ownership dummy					0.74*** (0.13)	0.64*** (0.11)
Visibility in De Telegraaf x Ownership media	0.12 (0.06)	-0.06 (0.06)				
Visibility in Volkskrant x Ownership media	-0.11 (0.07)	0.06 (0.05)				
Visibility in De Telegraaf x Ownership parliament			-0.04 (-0.06)	-0.06 (-0.04)		
Visibility in Volkskrant x Ownership parliament			0.01 (0.08)	-0.09* (0.05)		
Visibility in De Telegraaf x Ownership dummy					-0.23 (0.16)	
Visibility in Volkskrant x Ownership dummy					-0.14 (0.14)	-0.19+ (0.10)
N	4668	4793	4838	4666	4832	6472
McFadden's pseudo R2	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.05	0.04	0.04
Log likelihood	-881.2	-1586	-886	-1521	-1588	-2159

Note: Logistics regression coefficients with clustered standard errors in parentheses. All variables in the interactions are standardized. Controls for party size and duration since last question (squared) are included, but not shown. † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

voice the issue significantly more in parliament but respond less to media attention (though the negative interactions are not significant). The last model only considers attention in the Volkskrant, as data for this newspaper are available from 1995 on (instead of 1999), which allows us to include the CD in the model. Again, issue ownership has a significantly positive main effect, meaning that at the average media attention on the issue, owners ask more questions about it, but the interaction with visibility in the Volkskrant is again negative, indicating that media attention has less of an effect on immigration issue owners. In this

final model, the negative interaction is even significant. In summary, none of the measures of issue ownership provide any supporting evidence for hypothesis two.

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Nederlandstalige Samenvatting

Waarom staan sommige onderwerpen hoog op de agenda van de politiek, terwijl andere vrijwel genegeerd worden? Waarom staan de kranten vol van berichtgeving over bepaalde onderwerpen, terwijl journalisten andere onderwerpen onbesproken laten? Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe onderwerpen onder de aandacht komen te staan, door specifiek te kijken hoe politieke en media-agenda's elkaar onderling beïnvloeden. Het kijkt dus enerzijds naar de invloed van de onderwerpkeuze in de politiek op wat er in de media besproken wordt, en anderzijds naar de invloed van media-aandacht voor onderwerpen op politieke aandacht. Uit het bestaande onderzoek naar dit laatste, de invloed van de media op de politieke agenda, weten we dat beïnvloeding lang niet altijd plaatsvindt, maar dat het afhangt van de *omstandigheden*. Op eenzelfde manier ligt het voor de hand dat politici en partijen niet zomaar kunnen bepalen welke onderwerpen in de media besproken worden, maar dat ze slechts onder bepaalde omstandigheden invloed hebben op de onderwerpskeuze van de media. De centrale vraag van dit proefschrift is dus: **wanneer bepalen de media de politieke agenda, en wanneer bepalen partijen de media-agenda?**

Relevantie

Het is belangrijk om te weten hoe de politieke agenda en de media-agenda tot stand komen om ten minste vier redenen. Ten eerste is politieke aandacht een voorwaarde voor beleidsvorming, Met andere woorden, waar de politiek zich over buigt, bepaalt voor welke problemen er beleidsoplossingen worden geboden.

Ten tweede is de politieke agenda een belangrijk strijdpunt voor politieke partijen onderling, om zowel ideologische als strategische redenen. Vanuit hun uiteenlopende ideologieën hebben partijen verschillende beleidsdoelen, en ze strijden met elkaar om de onderwerpen op de agenda te krijgen die zij het belangrijkste vinden om aan te pakken. Vanuit strategisch oogpunt is het van belang voor partijen om goed over te komen op de kiezers, door te zorgen dat onderwerpen die de partij in een goed daglicht plaatsen te benadrukken en de onderwerpen die de partij kunnen schaden in de ogen van de kiezer van de

agenda te houden. De totstandkoming van de politieke agenda geeft dus inzicht in het politieke spel tussen partijen.

Ten derde is, naast de politieke agenda, de media-agenda een grote inzet in de competitie tussen partijen. Om kiezers voor zich te winnen zijn partijen grotendeels afhankelijk van communicatie via de media. Studies naar de invloed van de media op burgers laten zien dat de media niet zozeer bepalen *wat* mensen ergens over denken, maar dat ze wel een grote invloed hebben *waarover* mensen denken (*agenda-setting*). Het is dus eigenlijk moeilijk voor politici om in mediaoptredens kiezers over te halen voor hun standpunten, maar ze kunnen wel proberen –via de media- te zorgen dat kiezers die onderwerpen in gedachten hebben die hun goed over doen komen. Vreemd genoeg is er weinig bestaand onderzoek naar de mate waarin de politiek de onderwerpen in de media kan bepalen.

Ten slotte is het van belang om te weten hoe bepalend de media zijn voor de politieke agenda om zo meer te weten over de macht van de media over de politiek in het algemeen. Vaak wordt er gesproken over de aanzienlijke en groeiende macht van de massa media in onze samenleving en politiek; de termen *media logica*, *mediatisering* en *mediacratie* zijn voorbeelden van dit idee. Beïnvloeding van de politieke agenda door de media is een concreet geval van media-invloed op de politiek, en door dit te onderzoeken komen we dus meer te weten over hoe groot de macht van de media in werkelijkheid is.

Onderzoeksaanpak

De wisselwerking tussen de agenda in de media en in de politiek wordt in dit proefschrift onderzocht aan de hand van twee specifieke onderwerpen op deze agenda's, namelijk het immigratie issue en het issue van Europese integratie. Beide issues worden gevolgd door de tijd, van 1995 tot 2010, in Nederland, en in een hoofdstuk ook in Zweden en in een ander hoofdstuk in Nederland, Verenigd Koninkrijk en Duitsland.³⁶ Deze onderwerpen zijn gekozen omdat ze in deze periode in West-Europa in potentie tot veel conflict en aandacht konden leiden, maar dit in verschillende landen in wisselende mate daadwerkelijk gebeurd is. Zo is bijvoorbeeld tot 2010 in Zweden Europese integratie veel besproken in de

36 Hoofdstuk II kijkt iets verder terug in de tijd, vanaf 1987, en stopt in 2006.

media en in de politiek, en immigratie relatief weinig, terwijl dit in Nederland net andersom was. Daarnaast worden, door te kijken naar twee onderwerpen en niet naar de hele agenda, de inherente verschillen tussen issues buiten beschouwing gelaten, waar de bestaande literatuur zich tot nu toe vooral op gericht heeft. Hierdoor kunnen andere verklaringen in beeld komen, zoals de strategische overwegingen horend bij partijcompetitie en de *framing* van onderwerpen.

Bevindingen per hoofdstuk

Na de inleiding in hoofdstuk I, kijkt **hoofdstuk II** of kranten eerder politieke aandacht overnemen als partijen onderling in conflict zijn. Conflict is een essentieel onderdeel van politiek. Vaak hebben partijen er baat bij het conflict uit te breiden naar nieuwe onderwerpen, maar het is de vraag of dit ook een effectieve strategie is om een onderwerp in het bredere debat in te media te krijgen. We meten in Duitse, Britse en Nederlandse partijprogramma's hoeveel en op welke manier deelonderwerpen van Europese integratie besproken worden, en kijken hoeveel media-aandacht er vervolgens naar de deelonderwerpen gaat. Het blijkt dat als partijen aandacht besteden aan een EU deelonderwerp met erg uiteenlopende *framing*, wat wij opvatten als conflict over de definitie van het issue, kranten de politieke aandacht voor een issue overnemen in de daaropvolgende periode. Ook als partijen in hun programma's erg verschillende standpunten innemen, vóór of tegen Europese integratie, zijn kranten geneigd te schrijven over de onderwerpen die partijen agenderen. Daarentegen als partijen een deelonderwerp veel bespreken, maar zonder conflict in framing of standpunten, besteden de kranten geen aandacht aan het onderwerp. Deze bevindingen laten zien dat conflict een belangrijke rol speelt, en daarnaast dat niet alleen de hoeveelheid aandacht voor een onderwerp telt, maar ook de manier waarop het besproken wordt (framing).

Hoofdstuk III onderzoekt of partijen eerder geneigd zijn onderwerpen over te nemen uit de media op het moment dat de manier waarop ze besproken worden, dat wil zeggen de overheersende framing, hen schikt. Hiervoor kijk ik hoe vaak partijen immigratie en Europese integratie noemen in parlementaire vragen in Nederland en Zweden, en hoe vaak en met welke frames deze onderwerpen werden genoemd in de kranten in het voorafgaande kwartaal. De resultaten geven aan dat in Nederland partijen inderdaad eerder Kamervragen

stellen over immigratie als de framing van het issue in kranten lijkt op de framing die de partij hanteert. In Zweden stellen partijen eerder parlementaire vragen over Europese integratie als dit onderwerp veel en met de voorkeurs framing in de Zweedse kranten heeft gestaan. Net als uit hoofdstuk II blijkt dus uit dit hoofdstuk dat het er toe doet *hoe* een onderwerp wordt besproken, en niet alleen *of* het besproken wordt. Daarnaast laat het zien dat partijen strategisch kiezen wanneer ze issues overnemen uit de media, en in dat opzicht dus niet slaafs volgen wat de media agenderen.

Hoofdstuk IV analyseert wanneer kranten onderwerpen uit parlementaire vragen overnemen. Partijen stellen die vragen vaak om een onderwerp bij een breder publiek onder de aandacht te krijgen, maar verreweg de meeste vragen worden genegeerd door de media. Dit hoofdstuk stelt twee hypothesen om te verklaren wanneer het wél lukt via parlementaire vragen een onderwerp in de media te krijgen: de *waakhond* en de *schoothond* hypothesen. De waakhond hypothese houdt in dat journalisten, omdat ze het als taak zien de regering te controleren, vooral rapporteren over vragen van nooit regerende partijen (challenger parties), die de regering onder druk zetten. De schoothond hypothese stelt dat journalisten alleen rapporteren over vragen van gelieerde partijen, dat wil zeggen de partijen waar hun lezers op stemmen. Voor de schoothond hypothese wordt lichte steun gevonden in de analyses, terwijl de waakhond hypothese alleen lijkt te gelden voor de *Volkskrant*, en niet voor *De Telegraaf*.

Net als hoofdstuk IV bestudeert **hoofdstuk V** de banden tussen partijen en kranten, maar dit hoofdstuk kijkt juist naar het effect op de politieke agenda: laten partijen zich in hun parlementaire vragen eerder inspireren door kranten van hun politieke kleur? Ongeveer 80% van de Kamervragen in Nederland is gebaseerd op mediaberichtgeving, wat een teken lijkt te zijn van de grote, eenduidige invloed van de media. De analyses van dit hoofdstuk laten echter zien dat partijen selectief zijn in hun bronkeuze; ze laten zich sterker beïnvloeden door kranten die veel gelezen worden door hun kiezers. Daarnaast toetst dit hoofdstuk een bestaande hypothese uit de literatuur, namelijk dat *issue owners* (denk bijvoorbeeld aan de PVV bij immigratie) eerder geneigd zijn te reageren op media-aandacht voor 'hun' onderwerp. In tegenstelling tot eerdere studies vindt deze hypothese geen steun in de analyses. Het lijkt eerder dat de eigenaars het

EU issue en immigratie issue al zo vaak zo noemen in Kamervragen, dat extra media-aandacht voor de onderwerpen juist voor deze partijen niets toevoegt.

Conclusies

De bevindingen in dit proefschrift leiden tot drie overkoepelende conclusies over de relatie tussen de onderwerpen in de media en in de politiek. De eerste is dat het bij de wisselwerking tussen de politieke agenda en de media-agenda niet alleen gaat om de *hoeveelheid* aandacht die naar een onderwerp gaat, maar ook om de *manier* waarop het besproken wordt, de framing. Dit lijkt vanzelfsprekend, maar de meeste bestaande studies kijken alleen naar hoe vaak een onderwerp genoemd wordt. Uit hoofdstuk II blijkt dat journalisten gevoelig zijn voor framing door partijen, en alleen politieke aandacht overnemen als er een strijd over de betekenis van het issue gaande is. In hoofdstuk III bleek dat partijen op de framing in de media letten, en vooral onderwerpen opwerpen in de Kamer als de framing in het publieke debat mee zit. Zo zijn frames dus van belang voor beide agenda's.

Ten tweede sluit dit proefschrift aan bij recente onderzoeken die onderstrepen dat partijen geen passieve speelballen zijn van de media, maar strategisch kiezen wanneer zij op media-aandacht reageren en wanneer niet. Uit hoofdstuk III blijkt dat partijen op het juiste moment wachten om een onderwerp te bespreken in het parlement, door het te introduceren op het moment dat de framing in de media naar hun zin is. Hoofdstuk V laat zien dat niet alle media op alle partijen invloed hebben, maar dat partijen vooral luisteren naar de kranten van hun eigen kiezers.

Ten derde kan geconcludeerd worden dat de media niet altijd de bestaande machtsstructuren uitvergrooten (hoewel ze dit vaak wel doen), maar ook in het voordeel van minder machtige partijen kunnen werken. Het is bekend dat politici en partijen met formeel veel macht, bijvoorbeeld in ministersposten, meer media-aandacht krijgen dan minder machtige partijen en politici, en zo 'bevoordeeld' worden. Hoofdstuk IV laat met de waakhond hypothese zien dat de Volkskrant meer bericht over issues die juist door minder machtige partijen worden geagendeerd, namelijk *challenger* partijen. Dit soort partijen zijn dus misschien wel minder zichtbaar in de media, maar kunnen wel –ten minste bij de Volkskrant- beter onderwerpen agenderen in de media. Ook uit hoofdstuk II

komt een voordeel voor dit soort partijen naar voren. In dat hoofdstuk blijkt dat media eerder conflictueuze onderwerpen overnemen van de politieke agenda, en challenger partijen zijn vaak degenen die baat hebben bij conflict over nieuwe issues, terwijl regeringspartijen dit juist proberen te vermijden.

Vervolgonderzoek

Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan de wetenschappelijk literatuur over de politieke macht over de media-agenda, de media-invloed over de politieke agenda, partijcompetitie, *issue competition*, framing en mediasystemen, en voegt een aantal methodologische vernieuwingen toe. Niettegenstaande deze bijdragen is er nog veel verder te onderzoeken over hoe onderwerpen in de media en de politiek elkaar beïnvloeden. Een eerste stap is om het onderzoek uit dit proefschrift uit te breiden naar meer landen, onderwerpen en mediakanalen, om zo de algemene geldigheid van de bevindingen te toetsen. Zo neemt dit proefschrift alleen kranten in beschouwing, en dit roept natuurlijk de vraag op of een vergelijkbare dynamiek geldt tussen de politiek en TV, radio, internet en sociale media. Daarnaast richt dit proefschrift zich op twee specifieke issues, immigratie en Europese integratie; onderzoek naar meer issues zou uit moeten wijzen of de gevonden patronen inderdaad voor andere issues ook opgaan.

Het onderzoek in dit proefschrift geeft ook aanleiding tot interessante nieuwe richtingen voor vervolgonderzoek. Twee daarvan zal ik hier kort noemen. De eerste gaat verder in op de strategische overwegingen van partijen. Hoofdstuk III liet zien dat partijen slim omgaan met media-aandacht door te zwijgen over het onderwerp in het parlement wanneer de framing in de media nadelig is, en een onderwerp juist te bespreken als de framing voordelig is. Dit is echter slechts één strategie van met de media omgaan, en partijen hebben mogelijk verschillende aanpakken die kunnen werken. Zo zou het kunnen dat sommige partijen in plaats van deze ontwijkende strategie juist de confrontatie opzoeken op het moment dat de framing in het debat in de media hen niet zint. Zijn er partijen met een dergelijke alternatieve mediastrategie, en welke strategie werkt er dan het beste? En gerelateerd: hebben partijen verschillende ideeën over hoe ze het debat in de media naar hun hand kunnen zetten, en zo ja welke aanpak werkt dan het beste?

Ten tweede kan er voortgang geboekt worden door effecten tussen de politiek en de media beiden kanten uit te onderzoeken, en niet als eenrichtingsverkeer te zien. Dit proefschrift doet een stap in die richting door effecten in beiden richtingen te bekijken, maar vervolgonderzoek kan nog meer de cyclus centraal stellen. Als een partij bijvoorbeeld een onderwerp zowel in de politiek als in de media onder de aandacht wil brengen, moet ze dan conflict opzoeken, wat voor de media goed werkt, of juist wachten tot het debat al in hun termen gevoerd wordt, wat in het parlement weer een betere strategie is? En hoe komen de banden tussen media en partijen tot stand, worden die bijvoorbeeld versterkt als journalisten en Kamerleden onderling van elkaar onderwerpen overnemen? Vervolgonderzoek dat verder de wederzijdse beïnvloeding centraal stelt kan ons zo verder doen begrijpen wanneer onderwerpen onder de aandacht komen te staan, en wanneer niet.