The political agenda-setting power of the media: The Europeanisation nexus

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ABSTRACT

Previous studies have demonstrated that the extent to which media coverage influences the issue priorities of policy-makers is contingent on the type of issues, media, and political agendas. This article contributes to this literature by elaborating on a factor that has been surprisingly neglected so far: the domestic or Europeanised character of the political issue covered in the news. Empirically, we apply time-series cross-section analyses to a dataset on media and parliamentary agendas during the years 1995-2003 in Switzerland. We find that the media's political agenda-setting power mainly stems from news coverage of domestic issues. News on Europeanised issues have a weak impact on so-called symbolic parliamentary agendas, and no impact at all on the more substantial parliamentary agendas that may initiate decision-making processes.

KEYWORDS Agenda-setting; Europeanisation; media; parliament, Switzerland

Introduction

In most Western countries, the media is known to influence political agendas by devoting attention to some issues and downplaying others. A number of studies have demonstrated that media coverage influences the issue priorities of a variety of political agendas, but that the media's agenda-setting power is contingent on a series of factors. We contribute to that literature by focusing on a factor that has been hardly addressed so far: Europeanisation. Most agenda-setting studies do not take into account whether media coverage relates to purely domestic issues or deals with European Union (EU)-related issues. However, with respect to the influence of the media agenda on the political agenda, this distinction is likely to matter.

Europeanisation has led to "differential empowerment" (Börzel and Risse 2003). EU-related issues fall mainly under the main responsibility of national governments and remain partly "out of reach" for national MPs. Thus, for policy-seeking considerations, national MPs are more likely to react to news coverage of domestic issues, than to news coverage of Europeanised issues. Going one step further, we argue that not only the strength, but also the nature of the media's political agenda-setting power differs between domestic and Europeanised issues. On domestic issues, MPs have extensive decision-making competences and can pick up media-cued messages to introduce real change on so-called substantial policy agendas (e.g., Walgrave and van Aelst 2006). On EU-related issues, by contrast, national MPs mainly have control and information functions, which they can exert with instruments of rather symbolic nature such as parliamentary questions and interpellations. Hence, we assume that the media's political agenda-setting power is of both substantive and symbolic nature for news on domestic issues and of mostly symbolic nature for news on Europeanised issues.

By looking at the conditional role of the domestic versus Europeanised character of issues covered in national news stories, we not only expand research on the media's political agenda-setting power, but link it with the literature on the Europeanisation of parliamentary attention. While scholars in that field have highlighted the degree and scope of MPs' activities

on Europeanised issues (e.g., Gava et al. 2017: Navarro and Brouard 2014; Senninger 2017), our study provides insights into the extent to which parliamentary attention is inspired by media coverage.

Empirically, we use data on issue attention in the media and in the parliamentary arena in Switzerland, a country that is not a member of the European Union (EU) but strongly influenced by it. Through a mix of bilateral agreements with the EU and unilateral adaptation to EU rules, Switzerland has reached a "customized quasi-membership" (Kriesi and Trechsel 2008: 186), and thus shares a number of similarities with EU member states (Haverland 2014). Moreover, the Swiss parliament is institutionally strong but structurally weak and is, therefore, a sort of in-between case between a strong parliament of the German or Scandinavian type and a weak parliament typical of a parliamentary, majoritarian democracy (e.g. U.K, France or Ireland) (Vatter 2014).[1] As a result of both Switzerland's quasi-membership in the EU and the intermediary status of the Swiss parliament, our results are likely to travel well to other countries.

Our analysis of the media agenda is based on a systematic coding of the leading Swiss daily newspaper (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) between 1995 and 2003. Our data on the parliamentary agenda comprises all parliamentary interventions of substantive nature (parliamentary initiatives, motions and postulates) and of symbolic nature (parliamentary questions and interpellations) introduced in the Swiss parliament during the same period. To evaluate whether and to what extent the media agenda influences the parliamentary agenda, we rely on time-series cross-section estimations of monthly data.

The conditionality of the media's agenda-setting power: the role of Europeanisation

The agenda-setting approach deals with how and why different organizations (e.g., political parties, media) and political institutions (e.g., Congress, the President, Courts) allocate attention to certain issues and not to others. Studies interested in the agenda-setting power of the media have shown that this power is contingent on a series of factors, such as the type of media outlets (Walgrave et al. 2008), the type of issues (Soroka 2002), or the type of political agenda (for a review, see Walgrave and van Aelst 2006). A crucial distinction is between symbolic and substantial political agendas. The media's agenda-setting power is stronger for symbolic political agendas, with no real policy consequences, such as presidential speeches or parliamentary hearings, than for substantial agendas with tangible consequences, such as law-making or budgetary allocations (e.g. Walgrave et al. 2008).

We add to that list the domestic or Europeanised character of the issue covered in the news. Europeanisation refers to the domestic consequences of the European integration process on domestic polity, politics and policies in EU member states and beyond (Börzel and Risse 2003; Featherstone and Radaelli 2003). The literature on the Europeanisation of national parliaments initially focused on the institutional and organizational responses to the challenges raised by European integration but then took a closer look at what national MPs actually do in EU affairs (e.g. Auel et al. 2015; Finke and Herbel 2015; Raunio 2009). Some studies have adopted a policy agenda perspective to analyze the Europeanisation of parliamentary attention across policy issues (Brouard et al. 2012; Gava et al. 2017; Senninger 2017).

To the best of our knowledge, however, there is only one study so far that looks at the role of Europeanisation for the media's power to set the parliamentary agenda. According to van Noije et al.'s (2008) analysis of agenda-setting in the UK and in the Netherlands, European integration decreases the power of national news sources and increases that of the media. As a result of the transfer of decision-making authority to the supranational level, national states are challenged by other actors and are thus not as influential as in domestic politics. This prompts

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the media to search for alternative news sources and, by the same token, increases media influence on national politicians. Their comparison of four issues that are Europeanised to various degrees (agriculture, environment, immigration, drugs) does not provide clear-cut results, but points towards stronger media effects on Europeanised than on domestic issues.

This article puts forward a competing theoretical argument that is less focused on a media perspective (how the media select their sources), but more interested in an actor perspective (why and when MPs react to the media). Linking up with research on the conditional nature of the media's agenda setting power, we make two points: first, we posit that news on Europeanised issues have a weaker influence on the parliamentary agenda than news on domestic issues. Second, we claim that news on Europeanised issues merely affect the symbolic parliamentary agenda, whereas news on domestic issues also have an impact on the substantial parliamentary agenda.

Regarding the first point, earlier agenda-setting work has shown that issue features matter for the media's impact on political agendas. Among other issue characteristics, the "institutional ownership" of an issue can be relevant (Manheim 1986): the clearer an actor's responsibility regarding an issue, the greater the chance that media coverage on this issue affects political agendas, whereas media coverage has less impact in case of diffuse or shared responsibilities (Pritchard 1992). The European integration process has led to a "differential empowerment" (Börzel and Risse, 2003), strengthening the government (Moravcsik 1994) and weakening national parliaments (for a review, see Goetz and Meyer-Sahlin 2008). While institutional reforms aimed for a better balance between the executive and legislative branches (e.g. Auel and Christiansen 2015; Winzen 2010), national parliaments are still lagging behind. Studies focusing on the Swiss case reached a similar conclusion (Fischer and Sciarini 2014; Sciarini 2014). National executives not only have an almost exclusive authority to control the political agenda (that is, to introduce and/or block policy issues), but they also benefit from an

information asymmetry. Given their limited policy-making competences on Europeanised issues, policy-seeking MPs have less incentives to react to news coverage on such issues. According to our first hypothesis, news on domestic issues have a stronger power to set the parliamentary agenda than news on Europeanised issues.

Policy-seeking considerations also inform our second hypothesis. The distinction between symbolic and substantial political agendas highlighted by earlier work also matters in relation to Europeanisation. In EU countries, institutional reforms have provided national parliaments with new information rights and extended oversight powers, in particular through their European Affairs Committees (EAC). The same holds in Switzerland, where the parliament received new consultation rights in foreign policy (Lüthi, 2007). Thus, while MPs have a hard time influencing policy-making on Europeanised issues, their control and scrutinizing functions have been expanded.

To exert those functions, MPs can also rely on more classic instruments such as parliamentary questions and interpellations. In fact, Vliegenthart and Walgrave (2011a: 1033) see asking questions to specific ministers or the cabinet as a whole as "the main instance of parliamentary control". When drafting questions on Europeanised issues, MPs can use the media as inspirer. Therefore, to the extent that they do react to news stories covering Europeanised issues, MPs will presumably do so by asking questions and interpellations to the government; that is, they will react to media coverage on so-called symbolic agendas with no real policy consequences.

On domestic issues, by contrast, MPs have more extensive agenda-setting and decision-making competences. Swiss MPs can use parliamentary initiatives and motions to initiate decision-making processes, and they may resort to media cues to select the issues they want to address. As a result, media coverage of domestic issues is likely to trigger a parliamentary response also on substantial agendas, and not only on symbolic agendas as it is the case for

Europeanised issues. Hence our second hypothesis states that news coverage of domestic issues has an influence on both the substantial and symbolic parliamentary agendas, whereas news on Europeanised issues merely influence the symbolic parliamentary agenda.

Data and methods

To study issue attention in media and parliamentary agendas, we have applied the classification system developed in the "Policy Agendas Project" (e.g. Baumgartner and Jones 1993, John 2006). This coding scheme was slightly adapted to the Swiss context and comprises 20 major topic categories. Due to the small number of observations, we group agriculture with macroeconomics,[2] foreign trade with foreign policy, and public lands with environment. We are thus left with 17 topics.

We use this topic system to measure issue attention in parliamentary interventions, the dependent variable in our analysis, between 1995 and 2003 (N=9'949). Previous studies showing that the media has a stronger influence on symbolic agendas than on substantial agendas have compared political agendas of very different nature, i.e. parliamentary questions (as symbolic instruments) and laws or budgets (as substantial agendas). We offer a more nuanced view by focusing on the parliamentary agenda and by comparing media effects on interventions of symbolic and substantive nature.

Parliamentary proposals (initiatives, motions, postulates) can be qualified as substantial parliamentary agendas, as they enable MPs to fulfill agenda-setting functions and initiate legislative processes, which may eventually result in policy changes. However, parliamentary initiatives, motions and postulates are not all equally powerful, and they are not equally easy to activate either. A postulate is easier to use than a parliamentary motion or initiative,[3] but it is less constraining for the executive. The *postulate* requires the Federal Council (the Swiss government) to write a report on a given issue. It is up to the government to decide whether that

should lead to a legislative change. *Motions* are a more powerful initiation tool: Once adopted by both Chambers a motion forces the Federal Council to prepare a bill. The *parliamentary initiative* is even more powerful since it allows the parliament to conduct the decision-making process from start to finish, thus by-passing the executive. Empirically, Swiss MPs give the impetus to about a fourth of decision-making processes, whereas government initiates about half of processes (Sciarini et al 2002).

Parliamentary *questions* and *interpellations* are of more symbolic nature. They first serve as information gathering and communication channels towards the media and the public, and draw attention to certain topics (Bailer 2011; Kepplinger 2002). Second, in a context where parliamentary control over the executive has become a crucial aspect of MPs' activities, questions and interpellations are used to scrutinize government actions. Our data-set includes 5'889 parliamentary interventions of symbolic nature and 4'040 interventions of substantial nature.

For the media agenda we use the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (NZZ), the leading Swiss quality paper among political and economic elites.[4] In line with earlier studies (e.g. Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010: 668, Tresch et al. 2013), we focus on national news and exclude foreign news.[5] National news deal with political issues regarding e.g. the welfare state, nuclear energy or foreign policy that are decided by national policymakers in the country under study. By contrast, foreign news cover political issues and events taking place in another country (e.g., a civil war or an election) or involving other countries or international organizations (e.g., trade negotiations). Such issues are mostly "out of reach" for national MPs and are, therefore, not likely to "hit home" and to affect their agenda-setting activities.[6]

For the 1995-2003 period, we coded on every other day the main issue topic of all news articles on the front page of the national news section of the NZZ (N=5'044).[7] We additionally

coded a variable informing whether the news story related to a domestic or Europeanised issue (see the coding examples in Table A1 in the online appendix).

From the perspective of Switzerland's European policy, the period under investigation is exemplary of the last 25 years. After the rejection of the European Economic Area in 1992, Switzerland concluded two sets of bilateral agreements with the EU on issues such as the free movement of persons, road and air transportation, agriculture, public procurement, the taxation of savings, fight against frauds, or participation in the Schengen/Dublin agreement (Afonso and Maggetti 2007; Dupont and Sciarini 2001 and 2007). In addition, Switzerland has adapted unilaterally to EU rules in a number of policy fields such as telecommunication, electricity markets, or regulatory policies in the economic sector (Fontana et al. 2008; Mach et al. 2003; Sciarini 2014; Sciarini et al. 2002 and 2015).

We first identified national news dealing with Europeanised issues "by hand", i.e. based on our reading of newspaper articles. We further complemented the coding by applying the keywords search used in the "Delors myth" project (Brouard et al. 2012) to identify references to EU debates or norms (Gava and Varone 2012). In total, 805 national news articles (or 16 percent) cover Europeanised issues (589 identified by hand and 216 with the keywords search) and 4'239 relate to domestic issues. The evolution of the share of news stories on Europeanised issues shows some fluctuations over time but without any clear trend (figure 1).

Figure 1: Share of news on Europeanised issues (1995-2003, in %)
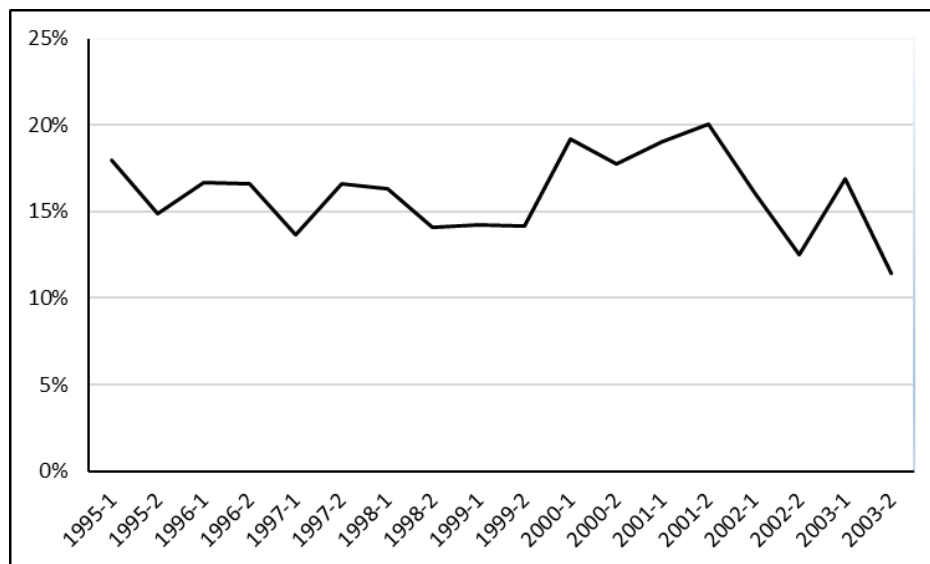
Our coding of Europeanised issues provides a finer-grained and arguably more valid measure than the previously cited study by Van Noije et al. (2008: 463). In that study, the authors *a priori* defined issues as either EU-related or domestic, depending on whether those issues belonged to a policy domain in which the decision-making power had been transferred to the European level. Accordingly, they classified agriculture and environment as Europeanised, drugs policy as "purely national" and immigration as an "in-between" case. However, with such a crude categorization one runs the risk of treating as Europeanised an issue that is in fact domestic in nature, and vice-versa.

In line with earlier studies in the field (e.g. Vliegenthart et al. 2016), we use months as time units.[8] The measures of issue attention in both the media and parliamentary agendas are thus constructed as the share of the total agenda that is devoted to each of the seventeen issues each month over the nine years under study. The estimations take the form of time-series cross-section OLS regressions (random effects models) with panel-corrected standard errors, where each of the seventeen issue topics constitutes a panel. To deal with autocorrelation our models include lagged dependent variables. In addition, we must cope with the organizational characteristics of Swiss parliament. As a result of the "militia" system, the Swiss parliament

meets only four times a year for a three weeks session (plus possible extraordinary sessions). According to the law on Parliament, MPs can introduce parliamentary interventions during sessions only. Thus, in 46 of the 108 months covered by our data there were no parliamentary sessions and, therefore, no parliamentary interventions. We drop these 46 months without parliamentary session from the analysis, and run the estimations on the remaining 62 months.[9] This means that the lagged dependent variable refers to the preceding parliamentary session, irrespective of whether that session took place one month, two months or three months ago.

Analyses

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the distribution of issue attention in the parliamentary and media agendas. Starting with the parliamentary agenda, we see several similarities between the substantial and symbolic parliamentary agenda, but also some differences. On the one hand, for both types of agendas MPs devote strong attention to government operations, transportations and macroeconomics, and little attention to civil rights, energy, social welfare and housing/urban development. On the other hand, international affairs/foreign trade and, to a lesser extent, defense and immigration are (far) more often addressed through symbolic interventions than through substantial interventions. The opposite holds for labor/employment.

The three issue topics that feature prominently in the parliamentary agenda (government operations, transportation and macroeconomics) also dominate the media agenda. In particular, government operations account for almost one fifth of newspaper articles. Similarly, some issues such as social welfare, energy and housing are as rarely addressed in the media agenda as in the parliamentary agenda. However, if we differentiate the media agenda and separately look at news on domestic issues and Europeanised issues, we also see some important differences: Government operation and education are far more prominent in articles on

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domestic issues than in articles on Europeanised issues. Conversely, transportation, international affairs/foreign trade and – to a lesser extent – immigration are far more frequent in news on Europeanised issues that in news on domestic issues.

The same three issue topics (international affairs/foreign trade, transportation and immigration) also stand out if we take the opposite perspective and look at the degree of Europeanisation (results now shown): for all three issue topics the share of news on Europeanised issues exceeds 30 percent, which is clearly above the average degree of Europeanisation (16 percent). By contrast, for some topics (housing, social welfare, education) the share of news dealing with Europeanised issues is very low (below 5 percent). A closer look at the data shows that articles on international affairs/foreign trade often related to Swiss-EU bilateral negotiations. Likewise, transportation was one of the seven issues covered by those bilateral negotiations and was often covered as such in the news. Moreover, several newspaper articles reported on the New Railway Link through the Alps (NRLA) and on the dispute between Switzerland and Germany around Zurich airport, which indirectly related to the bilateral talks with the EU as well. The same holds for the immigration issue, another topic of the bilateral talks that was in parallel discussed domestically, in relation to the so-called "18 percent popular initiative" aiming for a stricter regulation of the resident foreign population in Switzerland. In sum, media coverage is most Europeanised in policy fields that were included in bilateral talks *and* that additionally gave rise to public debates, legislative activities or international talks that somehow related to Switzerland's European integration policy.

Table 1: *Distribution of issue attention by agenda, in %)*

	Parliamentary agenda	Symbolic parliamentary agenda	Substantial parliamentary agenda	Media agenda	News on domestic issues	News on Europeanised issues
Macroeconomics, agriculture	9.6	9.4	9.9	10.8	11.0	9.6

Civil rights, minority issues	2.7	2.4	3.2	3.8	4.1	2.1
Health	7.7	7.3	8.3	5.0	5.5	2.1
Labor, employment	5.9	4.1	8.5	4.5	5.0	2.1
Education	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.3	6.1	1.2
Environment, public lands	4.1	4.3	3.8	2.1	2.2	1.5
Energy	2.1	1.9	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.1
Immigration	5.6	6.6	4.2	4.5	3.5	9.6
Transportation	11.6	12.2	10.9	11.1	9.1	21.4
Law and crime, family issues	4.7	4.1	5.5	4.2	4.6	1.9
Social Welfare	2.8	2.3	3.7	2.0	2.3	0.5
Housing, urban development	2.3	1.5	3.4	1.6	1.9	0.2
Banking, finance, domestic commerce	6.2	5.4	7.3	5.9	6.1	4.8
Defense	4.9	5.9	3.4	5.2	5.4	3.9
Science, technology, communication	4.1	4.6	3.4	3.2	3.4	2.4
International affairs, foreign trade	9.0	11.4	5.6	9.6	6.9	23.6
Government operations	11.1	11.1	11.1	18.9	20.4	11.1
N	9'949	5'889	4'060	5'044	4'239	805

Empirical tests

To examine how the domestic or Europeanised character of issues covered in the news moderates the media's political agenda-setting power, we proceed in two steps. We first investigate the varying strength of the media's political agenda-setting power depending on the Europeanisation of issues covered in the news (hypothesis 1), and then assess whether this effect varies according to the type of parliamentary agenda – symbolic or substantial (hypothesis 2).

Table 2 presents the results. Model 1 assesses the effect of the overall media agenda on parliamentary attention. This effect is positive and statistically significant. The effect of the lagged dependent variable is, however, almost twice as strong as that of the media agenda. This

suggests that the parliamentary agenda of a given month is fairly similar to that of the previous month(s), which confirms the findings of earlier studies emphasizing the inertia and incrementalism of parliamentary attention (Walgrave et al., 2008).[10]

In Model 2, we disaggregate media attention by distinguishing news on domestic issues and Europeanised issues. The results confirm our first hypothesis. News on domestic issues have a positive impact on parliamentary attention, whereas the effect of news covering Europeanised issues is much weaker (about five times weaker).

Table 2: *The influence of the media agenda on the parliamentary agenda (OLS coefficients, SE in parentheses)*

	Model 1	Model 2
Parliamentary agenda$_{t-1}$	0.376***	0.379***
	(0.040)	(0.040)
Overall media agenda$_{t-1}$	0.200***	-
	(0.027)	
News on domestic issues $_{t-1}$		0.163***
		(0.025)
News on Europeanised issues $_{t-1}$		0.034**
		(0.013)
Constant	0.025***	0.025***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
R^2	0.330	0.328
N	1'037	1'037

Note: *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

The higher political agenda-setting power of news on domestic issues than of news on Europeanised issues can be understood based on the idea of "institutional ownership". Given that MPs have limited competences on Europeanised issues, they are unlikely to react to media coverage on such issues. In addition, MPs mainly have information and control functions on

Europeanised issues, but only limited agenda-setting power and co-decision rights. Hence, our second hypothesis posits that media coverage on Europeanised issues merely trigger parliamentary interventions of symbolic nature. By contrast, we hypothesize that media coverage of domestic issues sparks off both substantial and symbolic parliamentary interventions. Table 3 contains the evidence on this second hypothesis. Model 1 shows the effects of the (lagged) media agenda and of the (lagged) symbolic agenda on the symbolic parliamentary agenda (parliamentary questions and interpellations). Model 2 does the same for the substantial parliamentary agenda (parliamentary initiatives, motions, postulates).

Table 3: *The influence of the media agenda on the parliamentary agenda – symbolic and substantial (OLS coefficients, SE in parentheses)*

	Model 1 Symbolic agenda (questions and interpellations)	Model 2 Substantial agenda (initiatives, motions and postulates)
Symbolic parliamentary agenda $_{t-1}$	0.343*** (0.041)	
Substantial parliamentary agenda $_{t-1}$		0.238*** (0.043)
News on domestic issues $_{t-1}$	0.155*** (0.029)	0.213*** (0.039)
News on Europeanised issues $_{t-1}$	0.057*** (0.017)	0.012 (0.017)
Constant	0.026*** (0.002)	0.031*** (0.003)
R^2	0.273	0.169
N	1'003	1'037

Note: *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

The findings support our second hypothesis. As expected, news on Europeanised issues have a significant – albeit not too strong – effect on the symbolic parliamentary agenda, but no significant effect on the substantial parliamentary agenda. Thus, on Europeanised issues MPs do not use media-cued messages as inspirers to set the agenda and initiate decision-making processes. The only thing they do is to – slightly – react to media coverage when asking questions and introducing interpellations. By contrast, news on domestic issues also affect the symbolic parliamentary agenda, but have an even stronger effect on the substantial parliamentary agenda. This finding confirms our expectations, and it is particularly noteworthy given that earlier studies have mainly detected media effects on symbolic political agendas (e.g., Walgrave et al. 2008). This gives credit to the argument that MPs use media-cued messages as inspirers when elaborating their parliamentary proposals on domestic issues.

Robustness tests

As a first robustness test, we include foreign news in addition to national news on Europeanized and on domestic issues (see table A2 in the online appendix). This test confirms that foreign news have no effect at all on the parliamentary agenda. Our second test copes with missing data due to the lack of parliamentary session in a given month. As mentioned above, for 46 months there was no session, which means that lag 1 in fact refers to the sessions two (or three) months ago. To make sure that this does not affect the results, we developed an alternative coding of the series' own past by using either of three lagged dependent variables (t-1, t-2 or t-3). That is, if there was a parliamentary session in a given month, lag 1 takes the value of that month and lags 2 and 3 take the value of 0. This applies to 62 out of the 108 months in our data. If there was no session in a given month but there was a session the month before, then the lags 1 and 3 are put to 0 and we use the value of lag 2 (29 occurrences). And if the two preceding months were missing we use the value of lag 3, whereas lag 1 and lag 2 are put to zero (17 occurrences).

Substantively, the argument is that if there was no session during the previous month, then the (autoregressive) influence stems from what happened two months before (or possibly three months before).

Tables A3 and A4 in the online appendix show that the coefficients for the media agenda are very similar to those appearing in tables 2 and 3, respectively. Further, in both tables A3 and A4 the coefficients for the three lags are about the same size. An additional test reveals that these coefficients do not differ significantly from each other, which means that if there was no session the month (or two months) before, then the allocation of attention in the two (or three) previous months influences the allocation of attention in the current month. Moreover, for all models appearing in tables A3 and A4 we estimated an alternative specification also including lags 2 and 3 for the media agenda. This does not change the results (see table A5), and the coefficients for those additional lags are very small and hardly (model 1) or not (model 2) significant.

Finally, taking hypothesis 1 as an example, we also show in the online appendix the results of an alternative estimation strategy based on OLS with random effects and OLS with fixed effects, and the related Hausman test (table A6). The model with random effects yields the same results as the model with PCSE. Coefficients for the model with fixed effects go in the same direction as those with random effects, but are smaller. This indicates that the influence of the media agenda on the parliamentary agenda operates more on the between-issue level, rather than on the within issue level (over time).

Conclusion

This article contributes to the literature on the conditionality of the medias' political agenda-setting power by highlighting the role of the Europeanised versus domestic character of issues covered in the news. First, our results show that the media's agenda-setting influence mainly

operates through news stories on domestic issues. By contrast, news on Europeanised issues have only a weak effect on the parliamentary agenda. Second, the comparison between the symbolic and the substantial parliamentary agenda leads to novel findings: media coverage of Europeanised issues merely affects the symbolic parliamentary agenda, relating to MPs' control and information functions, whereas news on domestic issues also affect the substantial parliamentary agenda, i.e. the agenda relating to MPs agenda-setting and co-decision functions. Thus, on Europeanised issues that mainly fall in the hands of the national government, MPs are sensitive to media-cued messages only when exerting their control and information functions.

What are the broader implications of our findings? First, while the agenda-setting literature has largely overlooked the role of Europeanisation, our results invite scholars to pay more attention to the distinction between news on domestic and on Europeanised issues. Second, the result that news on domestic issues have a significant influence on the substantial parliamentary agenda contrasts with previous agenda-setting studies that found mainly media effects on symbolic agendas. This finding may be due to our measure of substantial agendas: While parliamentary initiatives, motions and postulates can initiate a decision-making process and lead to real policy consequences, they are less substantial than laws, budgets or government decisions, on which previous studies were based (e.g., Walgrave et al. 2008). Our study suggests that the distinction between symbolic and substantial agendas is not binary, but should rather be considered as a continuum.

Third, our study also contributes to the literature on the Europeanisation of parliamentary attention, as it helps to uncover the mechanisms through which national parliaments and MPs attempt to "fight back" (Raunio and Hix 2000). As it turns out, MPs tend to rely on media-cued messages when drafting their questions and interpellations to the government on Europeanised issues, but only to a limited extent. Moreover, news covering Europeanised issues do not influence parliamentary proposals. While this finding was not

unexpected it may be regrettable from a normative point of view. By delivering information on Europeanised issues the media may help MPs to form their opinions and exert their agenda-setting, legislative and control functions. According to our data, this does – at least partly – hold for control activities, but not for parliamentary activities of a more substantial nature. MPs remain minor players in Europeanised policymaking and media coverage does not seem to contribute alleviating the often-deplored democratic deficit of Europeanised policymaking.

New theoretical developments on the conditional nature of the media's political agenda-setting power were often initiated by single-country studies, and subsequently received more systematic support from comparative studies (Vliegenthart et al., 2016). Therefore, our results from the Swiss case are likely to have implications for the agenda-setting literature. Regarding the broader validity of our results, there is no reason why the distinction between news coverage of domestic issues and of Europeanised issues could not apply to other countries as well, and more especially to EU member states. Given the similarities existing between Switzerland and EU member states with respect to economic integration (Haverland 2014), the conditional role of Europeanization is likely to also be at work in EU member states.

This said, we can wonder whether the moderating effects of Europeanisation on the medias' agenda-setting power would be larger or smaller in EU member states than in Switzerland. Answering this question is obviously speculative and leads to contradictory expectations. On the one hand, Switzerland's adaption to the EU is partly autonomous and thus more open to debate than in EU countries. National parliaments in the EU have perhaps less to say about Europeanised affairs than the Swiss parliament and, therefore, less reason to react to media-cued messages. If this holds, then the difference in effects between news on domestic and on Europeanised issues should be even stronger in EU member states. On the other hand, the EU legal order is broader in scope for EU member states than for outsider Switzerland (König and Mäder 2012). Moreover, the importance of European integration on the national

political agenda of EU member states has increased during the last two decades as a result of triggering events (European Constitution, Eurozone crisis, migration crisis). This, together with the implementation of institutional and organizational reforms aiming at reinforcing national parliaments in EU affairs, implies that Europeanised issues are both more familiar and more meaningful for MPs in the EU than in Switzerland. In that sense, the differences in effects between news on domestic and on Europeanised issues should be smaller in EU countries, than in Switzerland. In any case, applying our analytical framework to EU countries and testing how the media's agenda-setting influence on the parliamentary agenda is affected by Europeanisation appears as a promising research avenue.

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[1] On the one hand, the Swiss government system tends towards separation of powers system, and grants MPs with powerful agenda-setting and control instruments over the executive. On the other hand, in the Swiss "militia" parliament MPs' involvement is part-time and incidental to a professional activity, and MPs lack resources.

[2] On the subtopic level, macroeconomics includes redistributive issues such as fiscal and monetary policy, as well as industrial policy. Agricultural policy is also very much oriented towards redistribution (subsidies for farmers), regulation and protection, which justifies collapsing agriculture with macroeconomics.

[3] The Chamber to which its author belongs must approve a postulate, whereas both Chambers must approve a motion or an initiative.

[4] While analysing only one quality paper may be seen as a limitation, it has been demonstrated that different media largely influence each other in terms of which issues to cover. This effect is known as intermedia agenda setting (e.g., McCombs, 2005). As a result, the issue agendas of different media are often highly homogeneous (for the U.S., e.g. Vargo and Guo 2017; for Spain, e.g. Baumgartner and Chaqués Bonafont 2015; for Belgium, e.g. Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2008).

[5] Several agenda-setting studies assess the media's issue priorities with respect to all news items regardless of the foreign or national scope of the news and without any closer reflection about the likely consequences of this choice (e.g. Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011b).

[6] In the robustness test section we present the results of an additional model including the 4'769 foreign news appearing on the front page of the NZZ (according to the editorial line the front page has until recently reported on international politics only).

[7] In order to ensure reliability, student coders were trained by a master coder and participated in several pre-tests. Inter-coder reliability tests were conducted all along the coding process, and always exceeded 0.7 (Krippendorf's alpha), which is acceptable given the complexity of the codebook.

[8] Some studies have chosen weeks as time units, but eventually included four to five week lags in their estimations (e.g. Green-Pedersen and Stubager 2010; Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011b). Moreover, breaking down the analysis to weekly observations results in many zeros (Van Noije et al. 2008).

[9] For symbolic interventions the number of months is 61, since during a given month with a parliamentary session no question or interpellation was introduced.

[10] We carried out panel unit root tests and found no problem of non-stationarity: For all models and regardless of the test we apply, the null hypothesis that panels contain unit roots is rejected.

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