

The Importance of Saliency Agenda-Setting and Issue Voting in Swiss Politics

Simon Lanz



UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE

FACULTÉ DES SCIENCES
ÉCONOMIQUES ET SOCIALES
Département de science politique

Afin de mieux se présenter, le Département de science politique de l'Université de Genève a lancé en 2009 deux nouvelles publications. Sous le nom de *Geneva Laboratory of Political Science*, ces publications aideront à diffuser les travaux qui se font au sein du Département et à nourrir les échanges avec l'extérieur. Le nom souligne la vocation de « laboratoire » de ces textes, c'est-à-dire de lieu de réflexion, d'expériences et de débat. La publication se distingue par deux couleurs.

La série *Blue Lab* a été créée afin de favoriser la diffusion de travaux en cours de la part des membres du Département. Il peut s'agir de communications présentées à des colloques ou d'autres textes théoriques ou de recherche.

La série *Green Lab* accueille des travaux plus achevés et généralement plus longs. Elle est destinée en particulier à la publication des meilleurs mémoires de Master des étudiantes et étudiants qui achèvent leurs études auprès du Département.

The Importance of Salience

Agenda-Setting and Issue Voting in Swiss Politics

Simon Lanz

Mémoire de Master en Science politique

Directeur de Mémoire: Pascal Sciarini

Copyright © Simon Lanz 2012

Editor

Département de Science Politique et Relations Internationales

Université de Genève

Boulevard du Pont d'Arve 40

1211 – Genève 4

Switzerland

ISSN 1663-649X (Printed Version) ISSN 1663-8751 (On-line Version)

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. Theory | 4 |
| 2.1. Agenda-Setting | 4 |
| 2.2. Issue Ownership | 12 |
| 2.3. Hypotheses | 20 |
| 3. Data & Methodology | 24 |
| 3.1. Data | 24 |
| 3.2. Operationalization | 29 |
| 3.3. Empirical Models | 32 |
| 4. Analysis | 35 |
| 4.1. The Election Campaign | 35 |
| 4.2. The Swiss Voter | 42 |
| 4.3. Agenda Setting & Issue Ownership Voting | 44 |
| 5. Conclusion | 65 |
| A. Appendix: Weights & Variables | 69 |
| B. Appendix: Tables | 72 |
| Bibliography | 78 |

1. Introduction

It is fairly uncontroversial to say that media matters in today's politics (Shehata, 2010a). Nevertheless, researchers still disagree strongly over how, to what extent, and to whom it matters. From agenda-setting theory, we know that the media does not determine *what* people think, but what they think *about* (e.g. Cohen, 1963). In other words, the media changes what people consider salient by selectively emphasizing some issues, while ignoring others. Therefore, the media affects the voting. This effect is based on two assumptions. First, voters have stable perceptions about which party is competent to handle a specific issue. Confronted with two different political problems, they are likely to consider two different parties competent to tackle each of them. This axiom derives from issue ownership theory (e.g. Budge and Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit and Hansen, 2003), according to which parties own certain issues on the long run. Second, voters evaluate parties based on their issue handling competence (e.g. Lau and Redlawsk, 2006; Lachat, 2011). The more important an issue is to a voter, the stronger the impact of competence (Bélanger and Meguid, 2008). Basically, citizens tend to cast their ballot for the party they considers most competent to handle the most important problem (MIP).

Given these assumptions, media effects on electoral decisions can be broken down: The media increases the salience of issues by intensively reporting on them in the news. In turn, this produces winners and losers among parties. The winners being considered the most competent to handle the issue that gained salience and the losers owning the issue that lost salience. In short, the media affects voting via issue salience.

This paper gets to the heart of this mechanism by answering the following two research questions.

1. Introduction

Q. 1 *To what extent does issue salience transfer from the media to the public?*

Q. 2 *How does assigned competence to handle important issues influence individual electoral behavior?*

The first question concerns the validity of agenda-setting, the second question addresses the consequences of agenda-setting for the vote. For this purpose, I examine the 2011 Swiss election campaign. I combine media analysis with rolling-cross section data, which enables me to measure agenda-setting effects more accurately than previous non-experimental studies. I measure change and stability with a pre-election post-election panel dataset.

The results indicate that phases of intensive news coverage moderately increase the odds of considering an issue important. Voters that alter their issue agenda are more likely to change the party they perceive competent to solve the most pressing problem. When it comes to explaining party preferences, I show that assigned issue handling competence is a decisive factor and that changing issue preferences take immediate effect. The results fail to indicate moderating effects of personal characteristics. Most notably, issue ownership voting does not seem to be moderated by party identification.

The paper contributes to the theoretical debate by combining agenda-setting with issue voting. From a theoretical perspective, this link has already been established by the founders of agenda-setting research: “The pledges, promises, and rhetoric encapsulated in news stories, columns, and editorials constitute much of the information upon which a voting decision has to be made” (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p. 176). However, only few scholars of media effects substantiate such statements empirically. The analysis further underscores the importance of short term voting strategies – a field which has merely been touched in the Swiss political context. The finding that issue ownership voting is functioning, is a positive sign for Swiss democracy. According to Bingham Powell (2004), ideological congruence between voters and legislators is an important indicator of the quality of a political system.

2. Theory

In this section, I discuss the theoretical foundations of the mechanism I postulate. At first, I situate the approaches in a broader context. In a second step, I present the basic concepts and the previous findings.

2.1. Agenda-Setting

How does the media influence voting decisions?¹ The first attempts to answer this question go back to the beginning of political behavior research. Influenced by the events of the time, Walter Lippman (1922) and Harold Lasswell (1927) postulated persuasive media effects. Following Lippman, the mass media are the most important connection between events and the images of these events in people's minds. Even if the so-called propoganda model may have been based on "speculative observations" (Dobrzynska, Blais and Nadeau, 2003, p. 28), it helped to establish the massive media effect paradigm.

This thesis of a huge media impact was discarded quickly after the breakthrough of quantitative research methods. In the seminal book *The People's Choice*, political scientists of the Columbia School found media effects to be minimal (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet, 1944). Subsequently, the classical Michigan School studies confirmed this result in the early-1960s (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960). Thus, media influence is weakened by long-term variables such as party preference and other preexisting attitudes. Because individuals primarily expose themselves only to information consistent with their predispositions, media effects are limited to activating existing or latent political orientations (Klapper, 1960).

¹Although beyond the scope of my analysis, two other targets of media influence can be distinguished (Shehata, 2010a, p. 5). First, the media might effect policy measures taken (e.g. Walgrave, Soroka and Nuytemans, 2008; Schwarz, Bächtiger and Lutz, 2011). Second, media effect can refer to the medias' power to shape news content (e.g. Reich, 2009).

2. Theory

In the context of declining party identification and the rise of television, political scientists postulating direct media effects gained new hope. However, the findings they were expecting did not materialize. Analysis after analysis confirmed the minimal effect hypothesis (e.g. Patterson and McClure, 1976; McGuire, 1986). Disappointment abounded. After all, mass media is the most important source of political information. The inability to prove its impact was a burden to political science. Larry Bartels, for example, considered the state of research on media effects to be “one of the most notable embarrassments of modern political science” (1993, p. 267).

Eventually, scholarly attention shifted from persuasive to cognitive effects. In these models, news influences individual perceptions of political issues. Inter-individual differences thus produce varying political behavior (Selb, 2003, p. 1). This line of research produced the priming approach (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987; Krosnick and Kinder, 1990; Krosnick and Brannon, 1993) as well as the framing approach (Iyengar, 1990*b*). The agenda-setting approach however, remains the most popular representative of the cognitive revolution (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McLeod, Becker and Byrnes, 1974). In its core, it refers to the idea that the salience people attribute to a certain issue is determined by the emphasis media places on this very issue (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

Basic Concepts

“What is an *issue*? Without a clear definition, (...) agenda-setting becomes so all-embracing as to be rendered practically meaningless” (Lang and Lang, 1981, p. 450, emphasis added). Over the years agenda-setting literature produced a plurality of definitions for the issue-concept. Most definitions however, include four points (Eichhorn, 2005, p. 9): (i) An issue refers to a single event or a group of events. The event has to be different from the issue. (ii) Processes linked to the event are also part of the issue. Such processes include interpretations, additional information, and action patterns. Following Eichhorn (2005), the media plays an important role in the construction of issues.² (iii) Issues relate to the public sphere.

²In his conceptualization, Peter Selb (2003, pp. 20–23) emphasizes this aspect. To him, issues are bound to individual information processing – they are the activation of cognitive schemata. Thus, no matter how careful researchers describe issues, a theory-based definition (and

2. Theory

If the media refers to individuals, they deal with their role in the public. (iv) Issues can be considered as hierarchical networks. Usually they are part of a paramount category. For example, the VAT is part of the tax policy, which can be considered as part of economic policy. When comparing different issues, the hierarchical level should be consistent.

In an influential article about the 1972 U.S. presidential campaign, McLeod, Becker and Byrnes (1974, pp. 138–140) distinguished three forms of *salience*: *Intrapersonal salience* indicates how important the respondent considers an issue. *Perceived community salience* describes a respondent's perception about what issue is important in his or her community. Finally, *interpersonal salience* shows how often one discusses an issue within one's community. Atwater, Salwen and Anderson (1985) added a fourth form of salience to the typology: *Perceived media salience* stands for the respondent's perception of the importance of an issue in the media. Not surprisingly, this form most distinctively correlates with the media agenda. One could however argue that this finding is rather redundant. In an attempt to clarify the cognitive underpinnings of the agenda-setting process, Iyengar (1990a; 1990b) developed the the so-called accessibility bias model. Accordingly, individuals tend to rely on information that they can retrieve from long-term memory when making judgments. In this perception, salience is no longer considered as a function of importance; rather it is a synonym for accessibility. Following this reasoning Scheufele (2000) criticized traditional agenda-setting literature for using the wrong measures. To him, salience cannot be measured by asking respondents about the most important problem.³ Rather, salience (accessibility) should be measured through response latency (p. 300). Other scholars agreed with the mechanisms described by the accessibility bias model. But other than Scheufele, they still accepted MIP as indicator for salience. According to Eichhorn (2005, p. 11), open-ended MIP questions measure the issues most accessible to the respondents. Importance, on the other hand, relates to the individual's belief system. This

measurement) of the concept will never produce satisfying results. Framing literature provides the key to this problem. This theory transfers the schema-perspective from the recipient (the individual) to the transmitter (the media). Based on previous findings, Selb assumes that measurable media-frames determine immeasurable cognitive schemata. Via measuring the former he is thus able measure the latter.

³MIP is a standard dependent variable in agenda-setting literature, used by most researchers to measure salience (see Takeshita, 2005, p. 277).

2. Theory

concept is best measured using a Likert scale indicating the importance of an issue.⁴ In sum, salience has two meanings. Traditional agenda-setting literature uses it to indicate perceived importance. Cognitive psychologists and advocates of the accessibility bias model equate the concept of salience with the concept of accessibility (Takeshita, 2005, pp. 277–278). For two reasons, I choose the former conceptualization of salience: First, following the accessibility bias model, agenda-setting is a superficial, almost mindless reflex. Asked about the most pressing problem, people simply copy what is prominent in the news. However, this perception stands on shaky empirical ground. Joanne Miller and John Krosnick found that agenda-setting is not just an automatic process. People learn from news judgments what important problems are: “[A]genda-setting may be a more thoughtful, deliberate process than previously thought” (2000, p. 312). Secondly, a comparison of open-ended MIP and close-ended MIP questions does not support Eichhorn’s distinction between importance and salience (Schuman, Ludwig and Krosnick, 1986). Open-ended MIP questions are unlikely to produce mindless answers measuring the issue that is most accessible. The concept of salience is less controversial on the media side (Eichhorn, 2005, p. 12). Usually, it is measured by counting the number of news stories covering a specific issue during a certain period in time. Alternatively, the extent or the length of reporting on a certain issue can be measured. Some also take the position of a article or the size of the medium into account. In these cases, stories printed on the front or in a big newspaper are more important than less prominently positioned articles.

Agenda is clearly one of the pivotal concepts of agenda-setting theory. In an early stage, agenda has been defined as a set of issues ranked in a hierarchy of importance (Dearing and Rogers, 1996, p. 2). By analogy, the media agenda is a list of issues based on their coverage in the news. The public agenda is determined by ranking recipients aggregated answers to the significance of different issues. However, subsequent research clearly showed the downside of this approach.⁵ The most severe empirical problem derives from the cognitive character of the agenda-setting process. Inferences about individuals based on aggregated data are in danger of

⁴Selb (2003) follows this perception. In his analysis he replaces importance with centrality.

⁵For a more comprehensive discussion of negative empirical and theoretical implications, see Eichhorn (2005, p. 12).

2. Theory

ecological fallacy (Becker, 1983). Thus, observing correlations between the media agenda and the public agenda does not manifest effects on the individual level. More recent literature rejected issue rankings and simply defined agenda-setting as the medias influence on the salience of issues (Eichhorn, 2005, p. 12). Agendas thus become complex multi-dimensional constructs, which allow for a more accurate measurement of media-effects.

Previous Findings

It is hard to pin down the origins of agenda-setting research. Some touched the concept long before the term agenda-setting was developed (e.g. Park, 1922). Bernard Cohen (1963) was the first to start, what Dearing and Rogers (1996, p. 9) call, “the metaphor of agenda-setting”. In his book Cohen observes that mass media is not successful in telling people what to think, but in telling people what to think about. However, agenda-setting remained a yet unnamed theoretical idea. This changed with the paradigmatic Chapel Hill study by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972). The authors studied the role of mass media during the 1968 presidential campaign. Because they presumed to be the most vulnerable to campaign influences, 100 undecided citizens were selected and interviewed in a three-week period prior to the election day. The authors detected the public agenda by aggregating answers to the question about the recipient’s biggest concerns. The media agenda was measured by counting the number of news articles and broadcast stories in the mass media available in the town. McCombs and Shaw found an impressively strong correlation (0.98) between the rank of the five issues most frequently covered in the media and the rank of the same five issues on the public agenda. They concluded that the media set the public agenda. Untested, however, remains the assumption that the public agenda determines which candidate to vote for. Following Dearing and Rogers (1996, p. 7), the groundbreaking character of the the Chapel Hill study has to be put into perspective. Both public opinion surveys and media content analysis were by 1972 quite common in media research. Also, the combination of these two instruments was nothing new. To these critics, McCombs and Shaw’s contribution was to put the label agenda-setting on the media agenda–public agenda relationship, to inspire future research and to train

2. Theory

researchers who went on to improve the agenda-setting approach. In my opinion, methodological critique should be added to this valid remarks. I already mentioned the downside of aggregate analysis above. Furthermore, it is questionable if results based on 100 interviews of residents of Chapel Hill, a university town in North Carolina, can be generalized to the entire U.S. electorate. Immediate retests of the hypothesis using another methodological approach failed to confirm the strong correlation between media agenda and public agenda (e.g. McLeod, Becker and Byrnes, 1974). Also, the authors do not address questions of causality. Nevertheless, the study is by far the most frequently cited publication in the agenda-setting literature. It demonstrated that media effects are cognitive, which eventually fueled the of withdrawal from the persuasion hypothesis.

The Chapel Hill study not only led to a proliferation of agenda-setting research, but it also inspired wide variety of methodological and conceptual approaches. However, the fifteen years after the groundbreaking analysis, scholars incrementally built on previous work. A typical representative of this research phase is the book *The Emergence of American Political Issues* by Shaw and McCombs (1977). The authors studied agenda-setting in three U.S. cities. Different from the 1972 article, they measured the public agenda based on representative sample of the population. In order to generalize the agenda-setting hypothesis to all mass media, the authors also included three major television news channels. The results confirm the media agenda–people agenda hypothesis for television and newspaper coverage.

Later, two developments dominated agenda-setting literature (Dearing and Rogers, 1996, p. 13). In the 1980s, a group of scholars, confirmed the agenda-setting hypothesis in laboratory experiments. The first results were published in an article by Iyengar, Peters and Kinder (1982). Later, Iyengar and Kinder deepened the analysis in the book *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion* (1987).

“This volume is a celebrated classic, demonstrating the particular intellectual benefits that can be obtained from creatively using an alternate methodology, experimentation, to probe the psychology of the agenda-setting process, previously investigated only by survey-content analysis methods. The introduction of experimentation marked another methodological move toward disaggregation in agenda-setting research, and a focus on the micro-level

2. Theory

behavior involved in the consequences of issue salience.” (Dearing and Rogers, 1996, pp. 62–63)

In the analysis, the authors recorded newscasts, deleted condition-inappropriate stories, and inserted condition-appropriate material. Using this method, Iyengar and Kinder created newscasts, that only differ in the coverage about one particular issue. The underlying logic was to alter the cues about the salience of issues like civil rights, gun control, or unemployment. In a next step, individuals were recruited to watch the manufactured shows every day of the week. In parallel, a randomly composed control group watched the original newscast. In the end, both groups were asked about the importance different issues. The results showed that members of the treatment group consider the manipulated issue more salient than members of the control group. For their book, Iyengar and Kinder (1987) conducted 14 experiments, delivering ample support for the agenda-setting hypothesis. One possible consequence of altering an individuals’ issue hierarchy is priming. This concept refers to the process in which mass media covers certain issues and not others, thereby shaping “the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged” (Kim, Han, Choi and Kim, 2012, p. 44). Apart from the new methodological approach, Iyengar and his colleagues inspired agenda-setting scholars by introducing preexisting attitudes as moderating effects. For instance, they found individuals less willing to counter argue with the news presentation being more vulnerable to agenda-setting effects (Iyengar, Peters and Kinder, 1982).

At the same time, another trend in agenda-setting literature focused on tracing one single issue over a time period. Issues included the war on drugs (e.g. Shoemaker, 1989), AIDS (e.g. Rogers, Dearing and Bregman, 1993), the environment (e.g. Atwater, Salwen and Anderson, 1985), foreign policy (e.g. Wood and Peake, 1998), and so on. Like the experimental studies, these contributions set an important methodological trend. Evidently, a longitudinal approach allows to trace dynamics of media effects more appropriately.

Since the late-1990s agenda setting research appears to be in a phase of flux. However, over the years, new developments in the literature brought up different problems, which Takeshita (2005) labeled process, identity, and environment. The *process problem* refers to the conflict between traditional agenda-setting literature

2. Theory

and scholars of the accessibility bias model. *Identity problem* concerns the new concept of attribute agenda-setting.⁶ This school assumes that agenda-setting also occurs at the attribute level of issues (e.g. McCombs, Lopez-Escobar and Llamas, 2000; McCombs, 2004). When reporting, the media thus influences how people perceive issues by emphasizing some attributes and ignoring others. Following that, framing researchers argued that agenda-setting is colonizing other theories. The subsequent debate thus led to a more careful distinction between the two theories (Takeshita, 2005, pp. 279–285). The *environment problem* does not concern developments of agenda-setting literature, but trends of communication technology. Since the 1980s, a rapid proliferation of new media, and consequently an increase in opportunities for media choice took place. This calls into question the validity of agenda-setting research:

“The presumption of mass exposure to relatively uniform political content, which has underpinned each of the three leading paradigms of political effect—agenda setting, the spiral of silence, and the cultivation hypothesis—can no longer be taken for granted” (Blumler and Kavanagh, 1999, pp. 221–222)

Thus, the crucial element of this development is the increasing opportunity to select media content based on individual preferences (Shehata, 2010a). This trend has to be taken seriously. However, recent attempts to measure agenda-setting still delivered confirming results (e.g. Shehata, 2010b).

In the Swiss political context, agenda-setting received only scant scholarly attention. So far, most researchers merely addressed the media agenda’s impact on the policy agenda (e.g. Schwarz, Bächtiger and Lutz, 2011).⁷ Attempts to tackle the media’s influence on the public agenda remain rare. In a conference paper, Longchamp (1998) found evidence for agenda-setting effects during the 1995 Swiss election campaign. He distinguished three scenarios: (i) An issue is high on the public agenda without prior news coverage. Typically, this scenario happens when an issue is owned by an outsider party. Following Longchamp, the proximity of the Swiss media to established political actors facilitates this scenario. (ii) The media

⁶Also called second level of agenda-setting.

⁷Funded by the *Swiss National Science Foundation*, doctoral student Nino Landerer (University of Geneva) currently examines the medias growing influence on the political agenda and political actors (NCCR Democracy, Project IP 9: The mediatization of political decision-making).

2. Theory

reports on issues without increasing their salience on the public agenda. (iii) The media influences the public agenda, which confirms the agenda-setting hypothesis. This scenario only occurs when (a) an event triggered the issue and (b) the issue was subsequently subject to discussion among voters. The analysis deserves credit for tackling agenda-setting in the Swiss political context. However, the findings are based on aggregate data and thus suffer from similar shortcomings as the early agenda-setting research.

Peter Selb (2003) was the first to examine agenda-setting effects in the Swiss political context on the individual level. This closed a significant research gap. In his excellent book, he comprehensively analyzed the 1999 national election in the Canton of Zurich, finding ample evidence for salience transfers from the media agenda to the public agenda. Selb considered agenda-setting as a purely cognitive process. All elements of his research model are entirely grounded on findings regarding individual information processing. His reasoning was based on the accessibility bias research tradition. A detailed discussion of the results in detail goes beyond the scope of this paper. In the following I concentrate on the findings most relevant for my own analysis. (i) Selb found significant agenda-setting effects for four out of five examined issues. These results qualify earlier findings by Longchamp (1998). (ii) The examination of effect-dynamics showed an exponential decrease of significant agenda-setting effects within a few days. (iii) Selb's results indicated a moderating effect of sophistication on agenda-setting. Low sophisticated individuals tend to rely more often on heuristic decision making and are thus more vulnerable to media influences. These results conflict Miller and Krosnick (2000), who found highly knowledgeable people more affected by the media. (iv) The power of political parties to influence the media-agenda is very limited. Thus, there is only little bias when measuring agenda-setting effects without taking into account the parties' influence on the media agenda as a casually upstream process.

2.2. Issue Ownership

Following Ole Borre (2001), issue voting follows a distinct pattern. In a first phase, voters form their opinion. Voters' stands on policy issues depend on their interests, their beliefs about what is best for the country, their moral judgments, their

2. Theory

evaluations of government performance, etc. Then, they gather information about the competing parties' positions and arguments on the issues. Finally, citizens vote for the party matching their stands most accurately, especially on issues they consider important. Political systems, where a critical share of the electorate follows this logic, tend to produce governments and parliaments that express the collective policy preferences of the people. Therefore issue voting can be seen as crucial element of accurate political representation (e.g. Adams, Merrill and Grofman, 2005). To Powell (2004), ideological congruence between voters and legislators is an important indicator of the quality of a political system.

Research on issue voting evolved in similar fashion as research on media effect. Early on, observers did not question the role of issues in shaping electoral outcome and partisan change. In a generic analysis, Henry Brailsford (1933, p. 639) stated that an internal controversy over the Boer War in South Africa nearly "wrecked" the British Liberal Party. Electoral outcome was seen as determined by the parties taking positions on issues that subsequent developments proved to be correct or incorrect (Borre, 2001, p. 9).

Much like with early media effect research, the breakthrough of quantitative methods called these perceptions into question. Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) did not find strong effects of issue preferences, apart from reinforcing party loyalties. According to them, the vote was a habit, determined by the individuals social backgrounds. The low amount of issue voting was also confirmed in *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes, 1960). In this study, party identification was seen to be the driving force influencing candidate and issue orientations. Among the latter, candidate evaluations were more powerful in explaining changes of party preferences between two elections. During this time only few attempts were made to explain electoral outcome based on issue preferences. The most notable exception is Anthony Downs's (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, which used rational choice theory to explain voting behavior. The author creates an issue space, in which parties and voters can be positioned. In an election, citizens will simply choose the party or the candidate whose issue positions are closest to their own.

In the 1970s, research on independent effects of issue positions began to mount. The growing interest is evidenced by a collection of articles in the 66th volume

2. Theory

of the *American Political Science Review* (Pomper, 1972; Boyd, 1972; Brody and Page, 1972). The authors proposed an increase of issue voting in the 1960s, a thesis, which still occupies some of the most well-known political scientists (e.g. Dalton, 1996; Franklin, 1985).

Issue voting research has come a long way since its beginning. Today most academics broadly distinguish three lines of issue voting research (e.g. Borre, 2001). (i) Spatial models focus on the role of issue positions attributed to a political party.⁸ (ii) Retrospective voting theory argues that citizens retrospectively look at the performance of governments and reward or punish them accordingly at the polls (Key and Cummings, 1966; Fiorina, 1981). These authors think of the voter as result-oriented, rather than goal-oriented. (iii) Salience theory draws the attention to selective issue emphasis by parties (Budge and Farlie, 1983; Petrocik, 1996). This model focuses on macro level process. Only recently have researchers begun to examine how issue ownership affects individual voting behavior (e.g. Bélanger and Meguid, 2008). With this paper I seek to contribute to the growing body of literature.

Basic Concepts

The *issue* concept has already been discussed in chapter 2.1. Generally, Eichhorn's (2005, p. 9) definition of issues also applies for issue ownership theory. In the literature, the hierarchical level chosen by researchers accounts for most differences. For example when referring to issue ownership, Budge and Farlie (1983) use a wide definition of issues. Petrocik's (1996) conceptualization, on the other hand, is more narrow. More importantly, issue ownership theory differentiates issues based on whether they are suitable for ownership or not. Performance issues such as corruption, or government functioning are always owned by the incumbent party. In these cases, ownership is only possible in the short run.

Evidently, *ownership* is a central concept of issue ownership theory. The following chapter will give a thorough overview of different conceptualizations by discussing

⁸Spatial models can be distinguished into proximity theory (Downs, 1957) and directional theory (Rabinowitz and Macdonald, 1989). While the first posits that citizens will vote for the party or the candidate whose issue positions are closest to their own, the second defends the idea of a voter choosing one side of an issue and holding that position with varying levels of intensity.

2. Theory

previous research. However, one distinct characteristic of the definition used in this paper should be underlined. The majority of articles in the field consider ownership as a macro-level phenomenon. Ownership is given when a significant share of voters assigns high competence in solving a specific issue to a certain party (e.g. Petrocik, 1996; Petrocik, Benoit and Hansen, 2003). However, this conceptualization is not fit to measure individual level effects. Imagine party p_1 owning the immigration issue on the aggregate level. Fictional voter v , however, considers party p_2 the most competent to solve this problem. Why should his behavior at the polls be affected by the aggregate-level ownership of party p_1 ? I think we should rather focus on individual assignments of competence. In this paper, ownership thus describes a phenomenon that is best measured at the individual level.

Previous Findings

Issue ownership suggests that some political issues are more favorable to certain parties than other issues: “[T]he mere fact that a particular issue is being discussed or considered is in itself electorally advantageous to a party (...)” (Martinsson, 2009, p. 110). For example, in a campaign where party p_1 ’s strong issue is mostly absent and p_2 ’s issue is widely discussed, p_2 will ultimately be more successful on the election day than party p_1 . This is the basic postulate of Ian Budge and Dennis Farlie (1983), who established the salience theory.

However, Budge and Farlie’s research must be seen as an extension of previous studies (e.g. RePass, 1971; Robertson, 1976). In his 1971 analysis, David RePass questioned the dominant research opinion postulating issues’ negligible role in decision-making processes. He argues that the close-ended character of survey questions represent the principal flaw of previous analyses. In order to ascertain how issues affect voters, scholars have to know how important they think these issues are. Following RePass, this can only be achieved using open-ended questions.⁹ To him, the superiority of this measurement is evidenced by the pronounced temporal change in issue-related attitudes. Clearly, open-ended issue questions overcome the problem of simply copying long-term party identification. RePass further observed

⁹In the analysis RePass (1971) uses an open-ended MIP question.

2. Theory

remarkable differences between the perceived competence of parties to handle certain issues. The Democratic Party is preferred to solve Medicare, social security and aid for the poor. The Republican Party, on the other hand, are perceived as competent to handle foreign aid, and fiscal policy. But how does the perceived issue handling competence affect individual behavior? RePass's results show, that citizens do not always consider the party they identify with best able to handle the most pressing problem. In these cases the perceived issue handling competence often prevails over log-term party attachment:

“The remarkable thing that emerges from this analysis is that *salient issues had almost as much weight as party identification in predicting voting choice.*”
(RePass, 1971, p. 400, emphasis in original)

Compared to this research, Budge and Farlie's seminal book *Explaining and Predicting Elections* (1983) focuses more strongly on the macro level of issue ownership. For example, socialist parties are assumed to own socioeconomic redistribution. This category covers a wide range of issues like social welfare, housing market, labor market, medical service, etc. Even though social democratic parties are generally considered more apt to solve these problems than other parties, some individuals will think otherwise. Moreover, while socioeconomic matters gaining salience might attract some voters, it can repel others. The decisive figure are the gains and losses for a certain party associated with an issue becoming salient.¹⁰ Some issues lack a fixed direction. Therefore increasing issue salience does not cause clear net effects. Since these issues are not historically attributed to a certain party, ownership is situation-specific. For instance foreign relations is positive (or negative) for the party forming the government, given that the opposition is usually not capable of influencing this issue. Also, issues falling in the category economic stability are usually owned by the incumbent party (Budge and Farlie, 1983, pp. 30–31). However, Budge and Farlie addressed the difference between issues with fixed direction and those without fixed direction only peripherally. Following Martinsson (2009, pp. 112–113), the former are more depending on a party's long-term record, while the latter are dependent on a party's short-term reputation, or even on prospective properties, such as

¹⁰Budge and Farlie (1983, p. 47) refer to this figure as net effect.

2. Theory

promises. Martinsson considered these categories as two extremes on a continuum. Budge and Farlie's (1983) analysis examined a total of 23 countries, one of them being Switzerland. Compared to all other countries, Switzerland has the lowest number of issues discussed during the election campaign (0.6 issues per campaign). Moreover, issue effects are weak. Thus, the dominance of, say, issues owned by the Social Democratic Party only make this party marginally more attractive to voters. However, these results have to be qualified. The analysis is based on a content analysis of *The Economist* and newspaper articles found in the *Keesing's Contemporary Archives in London* (pp. 174–175). Considering the size and global relevance of Switzerland, these sources are hardly suitable to gauge the national discourse. In conclusion, Budge and Farlie are to issue ownership, what McCombs and Shaw (1972) are to agenda-setting. They were not the first to explore the field, but they deepened the understanding of the concept and provoked a proliferation of studies. Also, their aggregate-level approach influenced the research field in the long run.

Clearly, John Petrocik is Budge and Farlie's most influential successor. In his analysis of nine U.S. presidential elections (1996), he reshaped the saliency paradigm and gave the starting signal for a second wave of issue ownership literature.¹¹ Based on which party is seen better able to handle a certain problem, Petrocik classified issues into pro-Democratic and pro-Republican. For example, most social welfare issues were labeled pro-Democratic because the Democrats are perceived to handle these issues better than the Republicans. He then plotted the Democratic share of the presidential vote against the percentage of voters occupied by Democratic issues. The results showed a positive correlation between the two scores. Following Petrocik, Democrats require an issue advantage of more than ten percent before having a chance of defeating the Republicans (1996, p. 836). The author argued that the median voter is uncertain about what is a serious problem because a clear-cut preference for policy and social issues is lacking. While the average voter is inclined to view elections as an opportunity to resolve problems, there is reluctance to deal with the specifics of a solution and to impose ideological consistency on issues.

¹¹Even though Budge and Farlie explicitly talk about parties "owning issues" (1983, p. 41), Petrocik (1996) was the first to use the term issue ownership.

2. Theory

“The key fact for this voter is not what *policies* candidates promise to pursue, but what *problems* (medical care needs, high taxes) will be resolved.” (Petrocik, 1996, p. 830, emphasis in original)

Following this logic, parties use electoral campaigns to increase the salience of the problems they own. As a specific issue becomes most important, the voter will turn to the party perceived to be the most competent to solve it. In an assessment of Petrocik’s theoretical modification, Martinsson (2009, p. 114) underlined two points: First, Petrocik elaborates the issue concept of issues without fixed direction; he renamed them performance issues. Like Budge and Farlie (1983), the impact of those issues depends on the performance of the incumbent party. This form of ownership is typical to political systems with a strong government and a strong opposition. Both camps seek to be regarded as competent to achieve “good times” (Petrocik, 1996, p. 827). It remains that unpredictable events such as war, unemployment and inflation can happen fast, providing one party with a short-term ownership of a performance-based issue. Second, Petrocik rejected Budge and Farlie’s (1983) idea of parties’ self-interest as being the basis of issue ownership. To him, ownership is more than just being apt to handle certain issues. It is a reputation for being concerned about a problem and for proposing solutions. This reputation is a product of attention and history. In sum, the sources of issue ownership are twofold. Performance issues are owned in the short-term and are based on the record of the incumbent party. Other issues are less volatile and are based on the constituencies of the parties.¹²

Petrocik’s input was followed by an increasing number of articles examining issue ownership (e.g. Abbe, Goodliffe, Herrnson and Patterson, 2003; Petrocik, Benoit and Hansen, 2003; Hayes, 2005; Green-Pedersen, 2007; Martinsson, 2009; de Vries, 2010). However, most scholars focused on explaining party and candidate behavior by postulating that parties stressed the issues they own. But why should they do that? Clearly, because voters make their decisions by evaluating the competence that each party has in handling important issues. However, this aspect of issue ownership is rarely tested. Only recently researchers have examined the consequences of issue ownership for individual voting behavior. Analyzing the 1998 Dutch election,

¹²It should be noted, that the long-term character of issue ownership recently was called into question (e.g. Tavits, 2008).

2. Theory

Wouter van der Brug (2004) found indirect effects of issue ownership on party preferences. He stated that the emphasis on certain issues alters parties' ideological position. Since ideological proximity is a key variable to explain party choice, changes in ideological positions ultimately make parties more (or less) attractive to voters. Looking at the electoral behavior in the 1997 and 2000 Canadian election Bélanger and Meguid (2008), found direct effects of party competence on individual voting behavior, however, the strength of the effect depends on the salience of the issue in question. If the issue is not salient to the voter, ownership does not affect party preferences. If the issue on the other hand is perceived important, voters will turn to the party owning it. Taken to the extreme, voters will support the party they think is best able to handle the most salient problem. Lau and Redlawsk (2006) referred to this mechanism as fast and frugal voting, Lachat (2011) called the same mechanism single-issue voting.¹³

In the Swiss political context, Nicolet and Sciarini (2010) found a striking correlation between the MIP, the most competent party and the final vote. In a more detailed analysis Lachat (2011) examines issue ownership voting in the Swiss political context. He hypothesized that issue voting is influenced by the contextual setting of an election¹⁴ as well as by individual characteristics of a voter. Proximity voting asks for a high cognitive involvement and should therefore be strongest in polarized, fragmented, and proportional elections. Single issue voting does not involve a systematic comparison of different political parties and therefore requires less cognitive involvement. It is an intermediate between party identification voting and proximity voting and should be strong when parties emphasize their issue positions. In his analysis of the 2007 Swiss national election Lachat (2011) finds most of his hypotheses confirmed. Single-issue voting and issue proximity voting are strong when the party system is polarized. Fragmentation and proportionality neither affect single-issue voting nor proximity voting. The interplay between political sophistication and issue voting has also been investigated by

¹³This term was originally introduced by Conover, Gray and Coombs (1982). However, their understanding of single-issue voting differed to Lachat's. "[T]he term typically denotes an issue that stimulates people to behave in a single-minded fashion, in the sense that the issue totally dominates other considerations (...)"(1982, p. 310). Strictly speaking, this issue does not have to be the most salient.

¹⁴The electoral districts (Cantons) for the Swiss federal allow to vary the contextual setting within one single election.

2. Theory

Nicolet and Sciarini (2006). Similar to Lachat, they argue that the less politically sophisticated voters are not capable of discriminating parties based on their issue positions. Consequently, issue voting is a strategy more often used by the politically knowledgeable. However, as Lachat rightfully posited, comparing the parties is not a necessary step when voting according to issue ownership theory. How exactly this voting strategy depends on political sophistication has yet to be investigated. In their article Nicolet and Sciarini (2006) also addressed the role of party identification. They postulate a sheltering effect: Party identification lowers the impact of issue positions on the vote. Despite Nicolet and Sciarini's reasoning, no variations in the effect of issue positions across individual characteristics (sophistication and party identification) could be found.

2.3. Hypotheses

Agenda-setting provides the means to explain how the media influences the perceived salience of issues. However, explaining the origins of the public agenda is of limited relevance for electoral behavior research. This is why I think that scholars of indirect media effects should not stop at this stage; the dependent variable has to become the independent variable. Issue ownership theory, on the other hand, has only limited capacity to explain why voters consider some issues important and others not. To get a comprehensive picture of issue dynamics in an electoral campaign, we need to answer both research questions formulated at the outset.

In its core, agenda-setting predicts a transfer of issue salience from the media to the public. Based on this assumption I expect that voters are more likely to consider a specific issue pressing in times when it is highly discussed in the media. If reports about the economy are on the front page of every newspaper, voters are more likely to consider economic issues important, compared to for instance, environmental issues.

H. 1 *In a phase of intensive news reporting on a specific issue, a voter is more likely to consider this issue important.*

Once this basic agenda-setting axiom is established, I concentrate on the factors that account for change and stability of issue preferences. I will examine the influences of time, media consumption, and political sophistication.

2. Theory

Regardless of how agenda-setting scholars define issue salience, it is always seen as vulnerable to short-term changes. Because changes of issue importance are influenced by the media they become more probable as time passes.

H. 2 *The more time passes, the more probable changes in issue salience become.*

Media consumption is the fundamental component of agenda-setting. If an individual does not consume news media, changes in perceived issue salience are less likely to happen. If voters, on the other hand, are frequent media consumers, they are more likely to know what is important and consequently more probable to change the perception of the most important problem.

H. 3 *High media consumption increases the probability to alter the issue agenda.*

A yet unsolved riddle is how political sophistication influences agenda-setting effects. Two conflicting arguments have been made: According to Cacioppo, Petty, Kao and Rodriguez (1986) persuasion can be achieved over a central or a peripheral route. The authors found that politically sophisticated individuals have a stronger need for cognition and therefore often choose the central, more rational route. However, the majority of voters take the peripheral, heuristic route. These people tend to rely on readily available information and are thus more vulnerable to media effects. Selb's (2003) analysis of agenda-setting confirmed this point of view. However, his results conflict with Miller and Krosnick (2000), who found ample evidence for high media effects among knowledgeable voters. Their argument is in line with a more recent school that stated that in order to assess the implications of news stories, a person needs to have some cognitive resources. This argument becomes especially valid when dealing with political sophistication and issue voting (hypothesis 8).

H. 4 *The effect described in hypothesis 3 is moderated by political sophistication. Knowledgeable media consumers are more likely to alter the issue perceived most pressing than low knowledgeable media consumers.*

After evaluating the media's influence on perceived issue salience, I focus on the the impact of salient issues on the vote. My argument builds on two assumptions. First, voters have stable ideas about which party is competent to solve a specific

2. Theory

problem. Hence changing issue preferences often produces changing perceptions of handling competence. Second, people support the party they perceive most competent to solve the problem that is most important to them.

I will consider the two assumptions in turn. First, imagine a fictional voter v who considers issue i_1 the most important and i_2 the second most important problem. According to this voter, the first issue is best solved by party p_1 , while the second issue is better handled by p_2 . If competence is indeed a stable preference, a change of salience (i_2 is the MIP) would be accompanied by a change of the party most competent to handle the most pressing issue (p_2). Based on these considerations, I derive the following hypothesis.

H. 5 *Voters are more likely to change the party they consider competent to handle the most pressing problem if they have altered the MIP.*

I expect that party identification lowers the probability of changing competence since it shields them from short-term preference changes.

H. 6 *Voters are less likely to change the party they consider competent to handle the most pressing problem if they identify with a party.*

Recent literature demonstrated that issue ownership influences electoral behavior as soon as an issue becomes salient (Bélanger and Meguid, 2008). Taken to the extreme, the most salient issue on the voter's agenda plays a decisive role in explaining individual preferences (Lachat, 2011; Nicolet and Sciarini, 2010, p. 451–456).

H. 7 *Considering a specific party most competent to solve the most salient problem increases the probability to vote for this party.*

Again I refine this hypothesis by investigating possible effects of individual characteristics. I will focus on political sophistication and party identification. In a previous article, Nicolet and Sciarini (2006) did not find these variables to substantially moderate issue voting in the Swiss political context. Whether this result also holds for the specific form of issue ownership voting has yet to be tested.

Like in agenda-setting, scholars dispute how political sophistication influences issue voting. Lau and Redlawsk (2006) postulated that issue ownership voting only requires low cognitive involvement. Using the terminology of Cacioppo,

2. Theory

Petty, Kao and Rodriguez (1986), voters choosing the fast and frugal strategy follow the peripheral route to evaluate what party they support on election day. However, this perception conflicts with findings on issue voting more generally. This line of research argues that only the politically sophisticated are able to process information about issues and hence base their vote on issue preferences (e.g. MacDonald, Rabinowitz and Listhaug, 1995).

H. 8 *The effect described in hypothesis 7 is moderated by political sophistication. Sophisticated voters are more likely to use issue ownership voting as a decision-making strategy.*

When analyzing issue voting, party identification is often a central moderator. In the words of Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes (1960, p. 133) “Identification with a party raises a perceptual screen through which the individual tends to see what is favorable to his partisan orientation”. This is what Nicolet and Sciarini (2006, p. 164) named the “sheltering effect” of party identification.

H. 9 *The effect of competence on the vote (hypothesis 7) is moderated by party identification. Issue ownership influences voters with no party identification strongly, but only has a moderate effect on voters with strong party identification.*

Conceptually, three scenarios can be distinguished: (i) Voter v identifies with party p_1 . In this case the effect of competence will be moderate because v 's probability to vote for p_1 is already high. (ii) Voter v identifies with p_2 . In this scenario, identification is expected to trump issue preferences. Thus, considering p_1 competent will only marginally increase the probability to vote for p_1 if the voter feels close to p_2 . (iii) Our fictional voter does not identify with a political party. In this case competence will have a strong effect on the voting decision.

Compared to other theories of electoral behavior, issue ownership voting is better capable of explaining changing party preferences. If v changes his perceptions about the most competent party from p_1 to p_2 , the likelihood to vote for p_2 will increase immediately. If a party however loses assigned competence, the odds to vote for them will drop.

H. 10 *Changes in perceived competence affect the probability to vote for the corresponding party.*

3. Data & Methodology

3.1. Data

The Swiss Election Study 2011 (Selects) is a landmark in the history of Swiss political polling.¹⁵ For the first time it incorporated a rolling cross-sectional (RCS) component, which allows analysts to study campaign dynamics in a way that has never been possible before. Since participants of the pre-election survey were again interviewed after the election day, panel analysis can be conducted. In addition to the telephone interviews, researchers from the University of Zurich carried out a media analysis during the campaign. In the following I will outline some specifics of the RCS, the panel and the media data.

The Rolling Cross-Section Design

The rolling cross-section design enables analysts to track changes in a population. According to Johnston and Brady (2002, p. 283) its “essence is to take a one-shot cross-section and distribute interviewing in a controlled way over time”. From this perspective, the RCS design represents a special case of repeated cross-section design, which means to take a series of cross-sections over a specific period in time (Kenski, 2006a, p. 56). A necessary quality of RCS data is the completely random character of each cross section. Only if this condition is fulfilled one can aggregate the data and create time series.

RCS designs are relatively new to political science. The approach had its very first appearance in the 1984 American National Election Study (ANES). The study took place between January and December, 1984 and called for a total of 75 interviews per week (NES, 1985). First, the new design was used for conference

¹⁵See <http://www.unil.ch/selects>.

3. Data & Methodology

papers (Shanks, Miller, Brady and Palmquist, 1985; Brady, 1985). Later, the data aired in Bartels (1987; 1988), and Brady and Johnston (1987). The second RCS was the 1988 Super Tuesday study. However, these data seem to lie fallow (Johnston and Brady, 2002, p. 284). The breakthrough of the design was the Canadian Election Study (CES) in 1988. For the very first time daily instead of weekly cross sections were taken. The 1988 CES and its succeeding projects¹⁶ have been intensively used get to the heart of the dynamics of electoral campaigns (e.g. Dobrzynska and Blais, 2008; Dobrzynska, Blais and Nadeau, 2003; Mendelsohn and Nadeau, 1999; Mendelsohn, 1996; Johnston, Blais, Brady and Crête, 1992). The CES set an example for countless other RCS designs all over the world.¹⁷ Hence, when the first RCS was conducted in Switzerland the design had overcome most of its teething troubles and has thus become widely accepted as a powerful tool to analyze the dynamics of opinion formation.

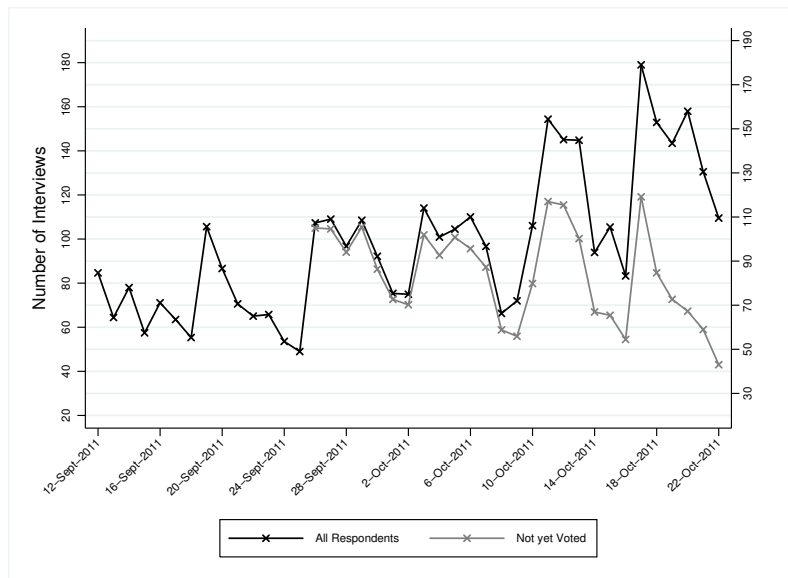


Figure 3.1.: Number of Interviews per Day

¹⁶Until now, the RCS design was used in eight different Canadian Election Studies (1988, 1993, 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011).

¹⁷E.g. in New Zealand (New Zealand Election Study NZES), Great Britain (British Election Study BES), Italy (Italian National Election Study ITANES), USA (National Annenberg Election Study NAES), and Germany (German Longitudinal Election Study GLES). For an overview see Schmitt-Beck, Faas and Wolsing (2010, p. 2).

3. Data & Methodology

Selects 2011 used the day as a unit. This enables researchers to look for changes in opinion to particular events during the electoral campaign. The study called for 100 interviews over a period of 41 days prior to the election. The cross sections took place between September 10 and October 22, 2011. Figure 3.1 shows the number of completed interviews per day. There is a considerable daily fluctuation. However, most of the variation can be explained by the weekday. While Monday proved to be a good days to conduct interviews, people were less available on Sunday. This phenomenon is nothing unusual for RCS surveys (e.g. Schmitt-Beck, Faas and Wolsing, 2010). Over the whole time period the average of completed interviews was 98 (black line). However, I will exclude people who have already voted from the analysis. As a consequence, a substantial number of interviews are lost towards the end of the electoral campaign, which lowers the average of completed interviews to 84 (grey line).

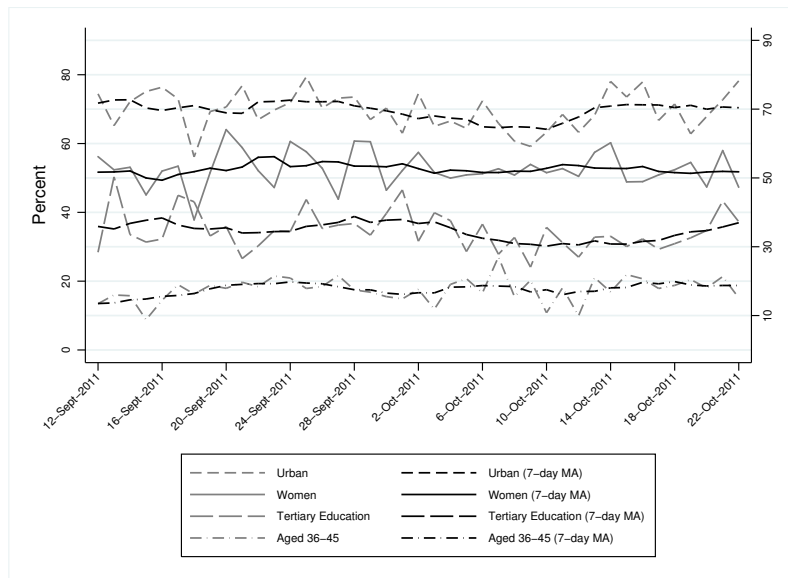


Figure 3.2.: Sociodemographic Variables over Time

Regarding the quality of the dataset, the condition for aggregating individual data on the day of the interview is that the cross sections need to be composed of randomly selected members from the population under study (Kenski, 2006b, p. 67). “Properly done, the date on which a respondent is interviewed is as much a product of random selection as the initial inclusion of that respondent in the

3. Data & Methodology

sample” (Johnston and Brady, 2002, p. 283). If the study fulfills this criteria, sociodemographic variables and other stable features should be evenly distributed over time. In an attempt to test the quality of the 2011 Swiss election study, I visualized four sociodemographic variables in the course of the campaign. Due to the small number of interviews the sampling error is too large when we aggregate on a daily level. I thus use a centered moving average, which averages the value for a particular day, plus the values on the three days before and the values on the three days after (Kenski, 2006c). Figure 3.2 shows that sex, level of education (people with a tertiary education), age (percentage of 36-45 year-olds), and the percentage of respondents living in urban regions is relatively stable over the period investigated. In a next step, I conducted linear regressions where the interview day predicts the sociodemographic variables (daily averages). If the RCS analysis is not entirely random, the election day should significantly affect the sociodemographic indicators. The results presented in table 3.1 show that this is not the case. None of the indicators develop in one or the other direction during the electoral campaign. In sum, neither the visualization nor a more profound regression analysis indicate systematic variation of stable sociodemographic variables. Therefore, the RCS data meet the assumption of randomized selection. Note that these tests are based on all respondents. Moreover, no weights were used.

Table 3.1.: Quality of RCS

| | Female | | Urban | | Age 38–45 | | Educ. Tert. | |
|-----------------------|----------|------|----------|------|-----------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coef. | S.E. | Coef. | S.E. | Coef. | S.E. | Coef. | S.E. |
| Campaign Day | -0.01 | 0.07 | -0.0446 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.05 | -0.105 | 0.07 |
| Intercept | 52.91*** | 1.61 | 70.54*** | 1.72 | 16.33*** | 1.07 | 36.72*** | 1.73 |
| <i>Observations</i> | 41 | | 41 | | 41 | | 41 | |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.00 | | 0.01 | | 0.05 | | 0.05 | |

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The Panel Design

In a prospective panel design the same individuals are asked the same questions at different points in time. Compared to the RCS design a panel design has two main advantages (Brüderl, 2010, p. 964): First, it allows to track the individual

3. Data & Methodology

dynamic of social and psychological processes. Second, a panel survey facilitates investigating the temporal order of developments. The basic idea of panel analyses is to contrast scores from the pre-test to scores in the post-test and see if significant changes happened. If this is the case, it can be assumed that the differences intervened between the panels (Kenski, 2006a, p. 55).

The 2011 Swiss election study includes a pre-election / post-election panel dataset. Participants of the RCS study were contacted again after the election day. Prior to October 23, 4'002 people were successfully interviewed. However, Swiss citizens get their ballot papers sent to their homes and they can participate by sending it back by mail. In the 2011 elections 78 percent of the participants voted this way (Lutz, 2012, p. 47). Taking this phenomenon into account, a considerable amount of people interviewed before the election day already cast their ballot.¹⁸ Clearly, these interviews cannot be categorized pre-election. Thus, only 3'258 interviews were taken into account in the RCS survey. After the election day these people were again contacted for a post-election interview. 2'434 interviews could be successfully completed. In sum, the panel attrition was 25 percent, which is a very good value.

The Media Analysis

To capture the media agenda during the electoral campaign the Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research (IPMZ) at the University of Zurich conducted a content analysis parallel to the RCS.¹⁹ The analysis took place between September 10 and October 22, 2011 and contains 28 different print and online newspapers in French and German. A list of these titles is provided in appendix A.1. Articles were selected under the condition that they are related to the Swiss elections and appear on the front page. In this paper I use a dataset where the reference to a political actor and not the article itself is the unit of analysis. The maximum per article is five different actors. To take the visibility of an article into account, I weighted the data based on the newspapers' circulation numbers (print newspapers)

¹⁸One week before the election 40 percent of the Swiss citizens already sent their ballot paper (Lutz, 2012, p. 47).

¹⁹The faculty *Forschungsbereich Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft* (fög) was the executing organ. See <http://www.foeg.uzh.ch>.

3. Data & Methodology

or page impressions (online newspapers). The exact calculation of the weights is presented in appendix A.1. All-together the dataset contains 1'924 articles and 6'203 issue references.

3.2. Operationalization

Perceived Issue Salience / Perceived Issue Salience Change

Issues themselves are neither used as dependent variables, nor as independent variables. However, I measure their salience which is why the issue concept is crucial for the analysis. Generally, issues need to fulfill Eichhorn's (2005) four conditions (chapter 2.1). As I seek to measure issues on the most paramount level, all issue variables used in this paper are recorded into ten broad categories. The exact process is described in appendix A.3.

Perceived issue salience is measured with an open-ended question asking respondents about the MIP.²⁰ As discussed in the theoretical framework, this is a standard dependent variable in the agenda-setting literature that is used by most researchers to measure issue salience (Takeshita, 2005, p. 277). In hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 the change of attributed issue salience represents the dependent variable. This variable is also based on the MIP question. I compare what the voters perceived as most pressing issue before the election with what they perceived most pressing after the election. If change occurred the new variable takes the value 1, otherwise it takes the value 0.

Phase of intensive News Reporting

Phases of intensive news reporting are a combination of time and issue salience. In accordance with previous research, issue salience is measured by counting the number of news references on a certain issue. The original content analysis distinguishes over 100 different issues. In a first step I reduced the number of categories to ten (see appendix A.3). The units of analysis are the actors referred to in one news article. If a story, for example, mentions three political parties and their positions on nuclear energy, the category environment increases by three

²⁰The exact wording of all variables used in the analysis is presented in appendix A.2.

3. *Data & Methodology*

units. However due to the weights, issue salience cannot be interpreted in a straight forward way. It has to be seen as impact measurement. The second component of the operationalization is the time factor. Only if an issue is high on the media agenda over a certain period in time, can agenda-setting effects be expected. In the following I refer to a phase of intensive news reporting if (i) the references on an issue are above average and (ii) no other issue is more present in the news. This constellation should (iii) last for at least five days. As I will show in chapter 4.1 the election campaign can be distinguished in three phases. The variable I will use takes the value -1 (economic phase), 0 (balanced phase), and 1 (environmental phase).

Time

In hypothesis 2 I expect time to be a decisive factor for MIP changes. Even though issue preferences are likely to change in the short run, people will hardly alter their issue priorities every day. The more time passes, the more likely such changes become. Due to the RCS design we are able to precisely capture time effects. I measure time by counting the days between the pre-election and the election. For the empirical analysis I use a rescaled variable, which spreads between 0 (t_1 interview one day before the election) and 1 (t_1 interview 40 days before the election). Note that the accuracy of this variable is reduced by the t_2 interviews. Absent a more precise indicator the post-election interviews are treated as if they were conducted on the same day, even though this was not the case.

Media Consumption

Hypothesis 3 requires a news exposure variable. I use an interval level measure containing the level of attentiveness to daily newspapers in the 24 hours prior to the interview. The answers range from 1 (not attentive at all) to 5 (very attentive). For the analysis I rescaled the answers from 0 to 1.

Political Sophistication

Although the influence of political sophistication on political behavior has been widely examined, there is no clear definition and no unanimous operationalization

3. Data & Methodology

of the concept (Luskin, 1987). Zaller (1992, p. 43) defined political knowledge as a “general” and “chronic awareness”. In this paper I follow another definition, which equals sophistication with factual knowledge (e.g. Page and Shapiro, 1992; Alvarez and Brehm, 2002). Based on three questions about contemporary Swiss politics, I created a sophistication index. Respondents had to name the current president of the confederation, they were asked how many parties take part in the government coalition, and how many signatures are required to obtain a popular initiative. Respondents got 1 point for each correct answer. Like most measures, I rescaled the variable so it can take values between 0 (low sophistication) to 1 (high sophistication).

Issue Handling Competence / Issue Handling Competence Change

Assigned issue handling competence is measured with the survey item “party most competent to solve the most pressing problem”. By answering this question individuals express what party owns the problem highest on their personal agenda. As hypothesized above, this is a key variable in explaining individual party preferences. The variable distinguishes between the four largest Swiss parties and a residual category. Voters who do not think that any party is competent to solve the problem they consider most pressing or do not name an MIP get a missing value. Hypothesis 10 requires the measurement of perceived handling competence change. This predictor is constructed based on what party a voter considers most competent to solve the most pressing problem on t_1 and on t_2 . If change occurred, the variable takes the score 1, if not 0.

Party Preference / Party Preference Change

The Swiss party System is highly fragmented (Ladner, 2006). In large cantons, voters could choose between over 30 different parties. In order to reduce complexity, I limit the analysis to the Swiss People’s Party (UDC), the Social Democrats (PS), the Liberals (PRL), and the Christian Democrats (PDC). These are the four largest political parties on the national level, representing 73 percent of the Swiss electorate. Voters who supported neither of these parties fall into the residual category. In the pre-election survey, respondents were asked which party they are

3. Data & Methodology

most likely to support at the polls. Party preference change is measured similar to attributed issue handling competence change. If preferences shifted between before (t_1) and after (t_2) the election, respondents get the value 1. If no change occurred, the variable takes the value 0.

Party Identification

In the survey, interviewers proceeded in two steps. First, they queried whether respondents feel close to a certain party. If the answer was affirmative, they asked which party they identify with. I measure party identification with a dummy variable coded 1 if the interviewee feels close to a party, and 0 if otherwise. In hypothesis 9 party identification is introduced as an interaction term. In this case I use a measurement that only distinguishes identifiers and non identifiers. In all other tests, party identification is used as control variable. In these cases, a dummy for the for largest Swiss parties is used.

Control Variables

I further introduce a set of sociodemographic control variables: The *age* of a respondent is recoded into five different groups.²¹ The *education* distinguishes between education below the lower secondary level, vocational training, higher secondary education, and tertiary education. *Rural and urban* indicates where a voter lives. this variable is automatically generated on the basis of the interviewees zip code. Finally, I control for the *gender*, and the *language region*.

3.3. Empirical Models

Due to the nominal character of the dependent variable, I test the basic agenda-setting hypothesis (1) conducting a multinomial logistic regression. The model can be specified as follows:

²¹The groups are: 18 to 25 years, 26 to 35 years, 36 to 45 years, 46 to 55 years, 56 to 65 years, and 65 years and older.

3. Data & Methodology

$$\begin{aligned}
 y_{vi} &= a_i \\
 &+ \beta_1 phase_{vi} \\
 &+ \beta_2 controls_{vi} + \epsilon_i
 \end{aligned} \tag{3.1}$$

Where y_{vi} is the natural logarithm of the ratio of the expected probability that voter v perceives issue i as most pressing and that he considers the base category as most pressing. The dependent variable can take the values 1 (economy), 2 (environment), 3 (no MIP), and the basecategory 4 (other issues). β_1 is the regression coefficient for the independent variable phase. a_i is the intercept and ϵ_i is an error term.

In hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 I seek to explain MIP change. Due to the dichotomous character of this variable a logistic regression will be calculated. The second equation (3.2) summarizes the full model including all independent variables ($time_{vc}$, $know_{vc}$, $media_{vc}$) and the interaction term ($know_media_{vc}$). y_{vc} is the natural logarithm of the odds for voter v to change the issue perceived most pressing.

$$\begin{aligned}
 y_{vc} &= a_c \\
 &+ \beta_1 time_{vc} + \beta_2 know_{vc} + \beta_3 media_{vc} + \beta_4 know_media_{vc} \\
 &+ \beta_5 controls_{vc} + \epsilon_c
 \end{aligned} \tag{3.2}$$

The specifications for the model testing hypothesis 5 are very similar. Here I expect people who changed the MIP (mip_{vo}) having higher probabilities to change the party perceived competent. The exact opposite is expected for party identifiers ($ident_{vo}$).

$$\begin{aligned}
 y_{vo} &= a_o \\
 &+ \beta_1 mip_{vo} + \beta_2 ident_{vo} \\
 &+ \beta_5 controls_{vo} + \epsilon_o
 \end{aligned} \tag{3.3}$$

Where y_{vo} is the probability of voter v to change the perceptions about the most competent party. $ident_{vo}$ is a set of party identification dummies for the four biggest Swiss parties.

All issue ownership voting hypotheses have party preference as the dependent variable (hypotheses 7, 8, and 9). In order to assess a respondent v 's probability to vote for a party p I conduct a multinomial logistic regression. The dependent

3. Data & Methodology

variable takes values between 1 and 5 (1 = PRL, 2 = PDC, 3 = PS, 4 = UDC, 5 = Other party). “Other party” is the basecategory.

$$\begin{aligned} y_{vp} = & a_p \\ & + \beta_1 comp_{vp} + \beta_2 interactions_{vp} \\ & + \beta_3 controls_{vp} + \epsilon_p \end{aligned} \tag{3.4}$$

In the above model $comp_{vp}$ is a set of four dummy variables, one for each party. In one model $interactions_{vp}$ will be political knowledge (hypothesis 8), in the second model party identification will be the moderating variable (hypothesis 9). The last model (hypothesis 10) is insofar a special case as $comp_{vp}$ will also distinguish between voters who had stable perceptions about which party is most competent and voters who changed their preferences in the course of the campaign.

4. Analysis

This section is structured into three parts. First, I give a descriptive overview of the issue dynamics in the 2011 Swiss election campaign (chapter 4.1). In the second part, I present the average Swiss voter (chapter 4.2). This is important because all the predicted probabilities in the the analysis will be calculated for this voter. In the third part, I analyze the validity of the mechanism proposed in the theoretical framework (chapter 4.3).

4.1. The Election Campaign

Issue reporting in the 2011 Swiss election campaign was characterized by three levels of intensity. With almost one fifth of all news references, the economy was at the top of the media agenda. The environment, law and order, international relations, the welfare state, and immigration received intermediate media attention. Only a low number of news references concerned education and culture, discrimination, and public infrastructure.

Table 4.1.: Media and Voter Agenda

| | Media Agenda | | Voter Agenda | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Percent | Observations | Percent | Observations |
| Economy | 19 | 883 | 31 | 525 |
| International Relations | 13 | 586 | 3 | 54 |
| Environment | 11 | 522 | 19 | 314 |
| Law and Order | 10 | 474 | 3 | 54 |
| Welfare State | 9 | 428 | 12 | 211 |
| Immigration | 8 | 352 | 22 | 373 |
| Public Services and Infrastructure | 4 | 208 | 1 | 19 |
| Education and Culture | 4 | 188 | 2 | 40 |
| Gender, Discrimination | 1 | 67 | 1 | 9 |
| Other Issues | 20 | 946 | 6 | 97 |
| Total | 100 | 4'654 | 100 | 1'694 |

4. Analysis

Traditional agenda-setting literature posits a strong relationship between the second and the fourth column in table 4.1 (e.g. McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Accordingly, economy, international relations, and environment should be the electorate's main concerns. The results show, however, that this is only partially true. I argue that the traditional way of measuring the media agenda is simply not accurate enough. Due to the volatility of media reporting, decisions about the beginning, the duration, and the end of the data gathering process may produce a bias in the hierarchy of the issues. Moreover, table 4.1 does not catch short-term media attention. An issue can be salient during just a few days. If we aggregate the media reporting on the campaign level, this issue then reaches the same scores like issues with a low, but constant media reporting. I propose that we can overcome these problems by concentrating on phases of intensive media reporting. In the theoretical framework I hypothesize that such phases alter the probability of considering an issue as most pressing. This means that an issue may take an intermediate or low position in the media agenda over the whole research period, even though it was the dominant issue during a few days. This may however suffice in altering the perceived issue hierarchy.

To clarify my argument, I visualized the reporting during the election campaign in figure 4.1. The y-axis shows the number of news references. For better interpretation seven-day centered moving averages are displayed. The chart illustrates the highly volatile character of issue reporting. During the first two weeks in the research period, the Swiss media strongly reported on economic issues. Later, this issue only received average attention. International relations, law and order, and the welfare state may take an intermediate position in the overall media agenda (table 4.1), but relative to other issues they never made it to the top. However, the opposite is true for the environment. This issue was by far the most present one month prior to the election day. After the first week of October media attention shifted again and none of the issues generated particular media attention until election day.

Figure 4.2 plots the reporting on the two most prominent issues of the campaign. The upper panel depicts the news reporting on economy. The majority of reporting on this matter happened in the first phase of the campaign where three peaks catch the reader's eye (grey line). On September 15, the largest Swiss bank, UBS, announced a loss of over two billion USD as a result of unauthorized trading by

4. Analysis

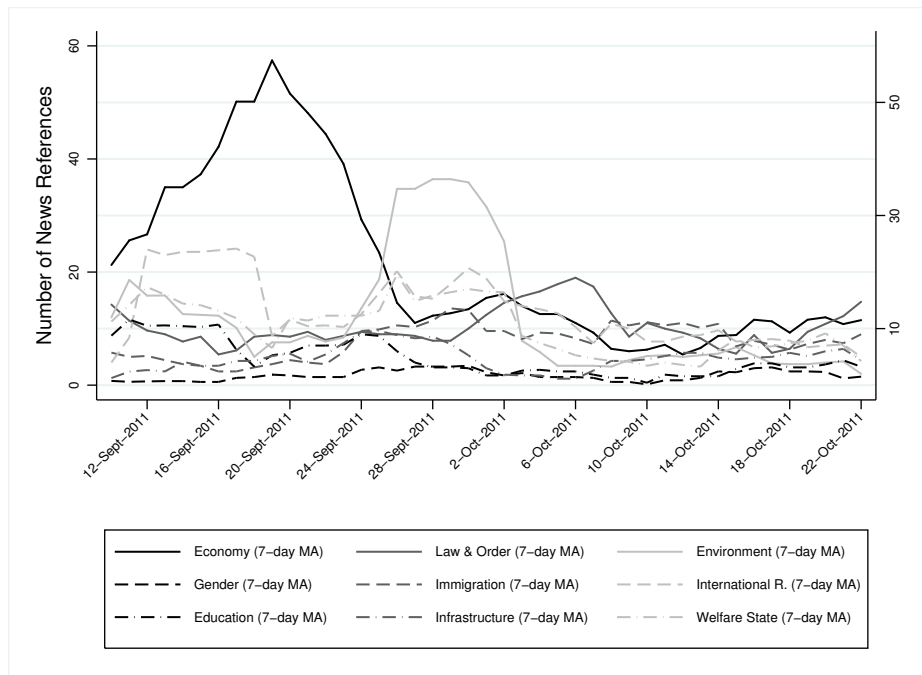


Figure 4.1.: Issues in the News

the investment banker Kweku Adoboli. While reporting already began on the day of the press conference, the bulk of the news references reached the voters on the following day via print newspapers (e.g. Tages-Anzeiger, 9.16.2011). The second peak marks another major event during the campaign. On September 17, there was a silver lining for the ongoing tax dispute between Switzerland and the United States, as Michael Ambühl, head of the State Secretariat for International Financial Matters, reported that the U.S. was ready to strike a deal (e.g. Tages-Anzeiger, 9.17.2011). On September 20 however, everything looked different again: The National Council's Committee for Economic Affairs and Taxation postponed its decision on the deal. The bone of contention was an appendix to the double taxation treaty between Switzerland and the U.S. concerning group inquiries. This regulation would have allowed the U.S. to demand information about suspicious groups instead of just individual suspects in its pursuit of tax fraud (e.g. NZZ Online, 9.20.2011). Two days later, the Council of States decided to suspend any deals with the U.S. until after the elections. The matter was simply too delicate. Five weeks before the election, none of the big parties wanted to openly support

4. Analysis

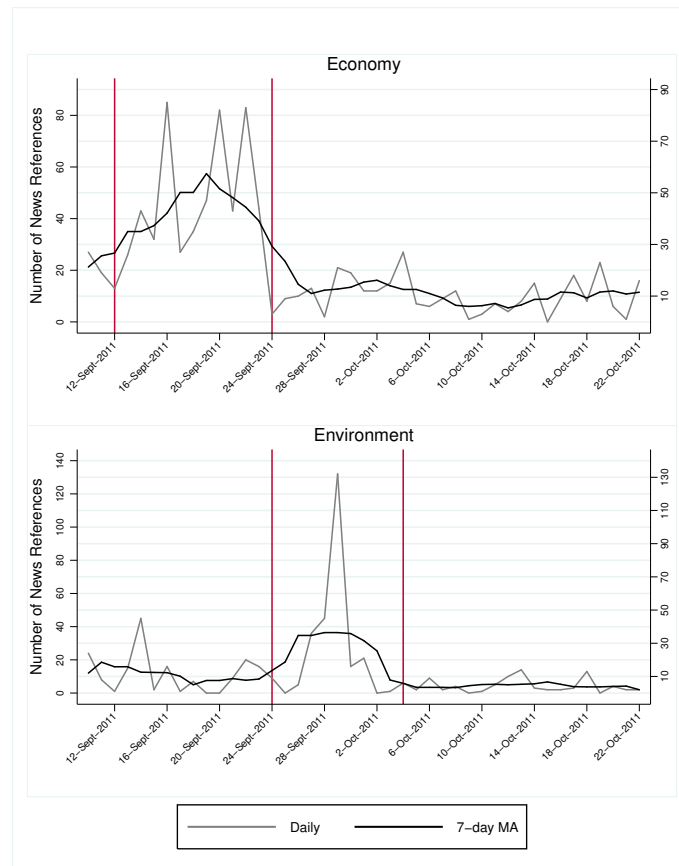


Figure 4.2.: Economy and Environment in the News

an agreement, which could have been construed as helping financial institutions engage in dubious business (NZZ Online, 9.22.2011). This strategy turned out to be successful. After September 22, references to economic issues declined and stabilized on a low level. Not long after the economy dropped on the media agenda, the environment became the center of attention (figure 4.2, lower panel). The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster triggered a turnaround in Swiss nuclear policy. On September 28 the Council of States decided to phase out nuclear power (e.g. Le Temps, 9.29.2011). This decision provoked vast media reporting, which started one day before the actual debate and reached its climax on September 29. The event was similarly covered as the UBS trader scandal. On the day of the event, online media started the reporting. On the day after, print newspapers deepened the coverage and provided analysis.

4. Analysis

In sum, the electoral campaign can be divided into three different phases: A phase of intensive news reporting on economic issues (September 12 to September 24); a phase of intensive reporting on environmental issues (September 25 to October 4); and a phase where issue reporting was balanced (October 5 to October 22).

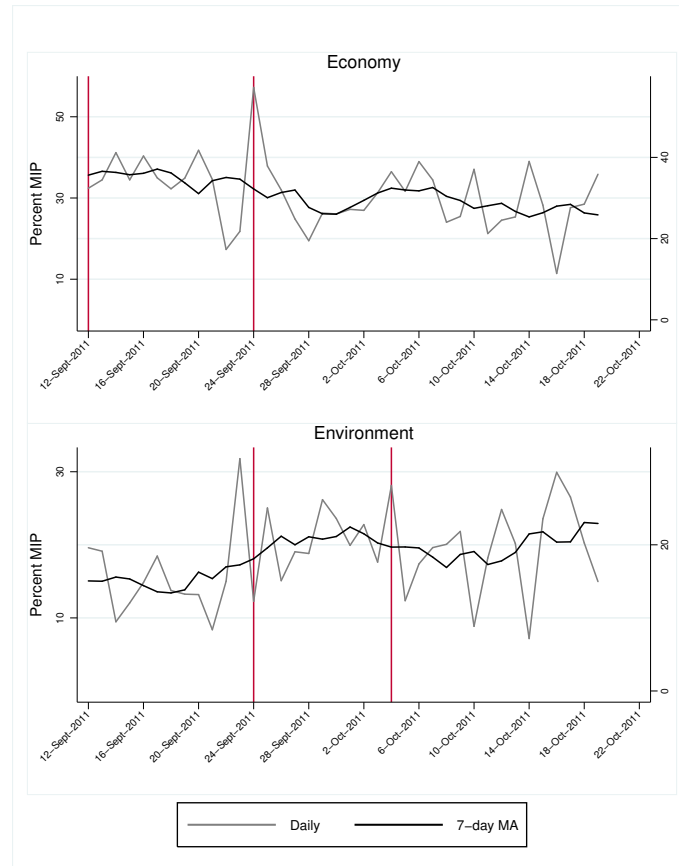


Figure 4.3.: Most Pressing Problem per Day

In contrast to the media, the public was little concerned with international relations and law and order (table 4.1). The welfare state and immigration, on the other hand, were high on the public agenda, but rarely present in the news. A striking characteristic of the voter agenda is its low degree of diversity. More than four fifths of the MIP responses fall into four categories. In comparison, the four most frequently mentioned issues in the media account for merely half of the political news stories. The public agenda is also less volatile than the media agenda. The upper panel in figure 4.3 depicts the percentage of people considering the

4. Analysis

economy the most important problem. Until September 24, over thirty percent of the respondents considered the economy as the top problem to solve. At the end of September, this rate dropped and stagnated between 25 and 30 percent. In the lower panel, I visualized the perceived salience of the environment. While the issue was of little concern to the voters in the beginning of the campaign, it gained almost 10 percentage points until early October. Its aggregated salience decreased two weeks prior to the election. However, it regained some importance the closer the election day came. Note that, even though the RCS data were gathered until election day, the lines in figure 4.3 stop on October 19. This is because I excluded non-voters and people who already voted. As a result, the number of interviews decreases considerably close to the election day, and I therefore dropped the last two days prior to the election before creating the chart.

Figure 4.3 measures the public agenda on the aggregate level. It gives us an idea of the voter's mood in the course of the campaign and whether it reflected media reporting. However, these findings do not allow for conclusions about changes on the individual level. In order to explore such mechanisms, I conduct a further analysis using the panel data. The results are presented in a tree chart (figure 4.4) and they confirm that the perception of attributed issue salience is a rather flux preference. Over two fifth of the voters changed the MIP between the first and the second interview. Considering that half of the respondents were interviewed within twenty days prior to the elections, this number is even more impressive.

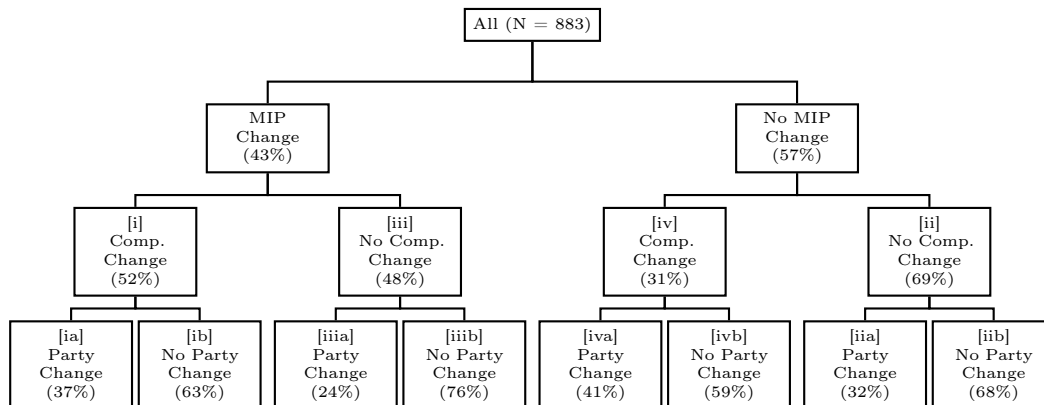
According to issue ownership theory, it can be assumed that changing the MIP affects attributed issue handling competence (hypothesis 5).²² Broadly speaking, four scenarios are possible: (i) Voter alter the MIP and their perception of the party that is most competent to solve the problem. (ii) Voters neither alter the MIP nor the assigned competence. (iii) Voters alter the MIP but not her assignment of issue handling competence. (iv) Finally, Voters can have stable issue preferences, but unstable perceptions about competence. The first three scenarios are consistent with my theory. In the third case the party owns both the new and the old MIP

²²In the following, I refer to changing perceptions about which party is most competent to solve the MIP as "competence changes" or "change of assigned competence". Note that this does not mean that voters changed their opinion about which party is competent to solve a certain issue. It indicates changing perceptions about which party is competent to solve the MIP. According to the mechanism I postulate, such changes are preceded by changes of the MIP.

4. Analysis

– a process I will be unable to grasp conducting regression analysis. The fourth scenario contradicts my argument. The results presented in the tree chart show that between 31 and 52 percent of the voters change their perceptions about competence. These people can be divided into two groups of equal size: Some also alter their opinion about the party most competent to handle the MIP (scenario i), while others do not change their preferences (scenario iii). Voters who do not switch the MIP consist of a large group, which does not change its assignment of handling competence (scenario ii), and a small group of voters which change the party perceived most competent (scenario iv). The last behavior contradicts my definition of issue ownership as long-term preference. In conclusion, the results show that shifts of assigned issue handling competence occur more frequent when the MIP changed as well. However, the consequences of MIP changes are more ambiguous than the consequences of stable MIP preferences. In the latter case, assignment of competence rarely changes. However, since I argue that the first and the third scenario are in line with issue ownership voting this does not come unexpected.

Figure 4.4.: Change of MIP, Perceived Competence, and Preferred Party



Reading example: Between the pre-election and the post-election interview 43 percent of the voters change the problem they perceive as most pressing. Out of this group 52 percent also change the party they consider most competent to handle the MIP. Members of this category split into voters who switch the preferred party (37 percent) and voters who do not change the preferred party (63 percent).

Issue ownership voting theory predicts a strong relationship between assigned issue competence and party preference (hypothesis 7). Facing the volatility of issue

4. Analysis

competence, it is not surprising to find a considerable overall fluctuation of party preferences. Nevertheless, the bottom line in the tree chart demonstrates that the stability of party preferences varies between the four groups. In order to structure the discussion of the results, I assign to each of the four scenarios presented above the letter *a* if the voters change their party preferences and the letter *b* if they do not. In a nutshell, I expect respondents who change their competence preferences to be more likely to change the party preference than voters who do not alter their opinion about which party is competent. The findings indicate that stable competence perceptions often lead to stable party preferences. Seven out of ten voters follow this rule and hence act according to issue ownership voting theory (scenario *iiib* and *iib*). Changing the party preference can be interpreted as a radical step that only a minority of the voters are willing to undertake. Apparently, this is also true for those who did change the assigned issue handling competence. About two out of five voters switch their preferred party. It is not surprising that such behavior is more frequent in scenario *iv* than in scenario *i*. Voter who change their perceptions about handling competence without altering the MIP must be disappointed by the old party, or very convinced of a new actor. Either way, the must have elevated probabilities to change preferences. Even if only a minority of voters who switched the assigned issue handling competence act in line with issue ownership theory, the findings support our theory. Clearly, a comparison of the scenarios shows that whether a person changes her assignment of competence helps us to explain differences in changing party preferences. Switches of party preferences happen 13 percentage points more often in scenario *ia* than in scenario *iiia* and 9 percentage points more often in scenario *iva* than in scenario *iiia*. This rate is even higher when we contrast *iva* to *iiia* (17 percentage points).

4.2. The Swiss Voter

In this section I discuss estimates of central tendency and measures of dispersion for all moderators and control variables used in the analysis. The goal is to give an idea about how the Swiss electorate looks like. Note that I do not delete listwise, which explains the different number of interviews. This technique would leave

4. Analysis

me with only 700 respondents – a reduction of cases not justified by its possible advantages.

Table 4.2.: Means and Dispersion

| Variable | Mean | Median | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. | Observations |
|--------------------------|------|--------|-----------|------|------|--------------|
| Date | 0.53 | 0.52 | 0.27 | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Political Sophistication | 0.53 | 0.66 | 0.3 | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Media Consumption | 0.27 | 0.25 | 0.2 | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity PRL | 0.1 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity PDC | 0.1 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity PS | 0.2 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity UDC | 0.2 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Age | | 3 | | 0 | 5 | 1'801 |
| Sex | 0.51 | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Education | | 3 | | 1 | 4 | 1'800 |
| Urban Rural | 0.68 | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Linguistic Region | 0.19 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 1'801 |
| Religion | | 1* | | 1 | 3 | 1'798 |

* Mode (nominal variable)

As for the standard deviation, displaying the mean value is, strictly speaking, inadmissible for non-scaled variables. For dichotomous variables such as, language region or party identification, it serves another purpose: It indicates the percentage of observations taking the maximum value. For instance, table 4.2 shows that 51 percent of the respondents are female. The average voter is 46 to 55 years old and has achieved a higher secondary education. People falling in this category completed a diploma school, a trading school, high school, or earned a vocational diploma. The average Swiss voter lives in a German speaking urban area and is a protestant.

Let us now turn to the moderators of agenda-setting and issue ownership voting. The political sophistication spreads between 0 (low sophistication) and 1 (high sophistication). The mean voter is able to answer slightly more than every other question correctly. However, the high standard deviation indicates a rather low central tendency. The media consumption shows how attentive a voter has been to daily newspapers in the last 24 hours. According to the mean value our fictional voter is rather inattentive to news. However, based on the standard deviation we conclude that most voters fall between the categories not attentive at all and neither attentive nor inattentive. The variable party identification accurately reflects the strength of the four largest Swiss parties. 10 percent of the electorate identifies

4. Analysis

with the PRL, another 10 percent with the PDC. In contrast with these small parties, the PS and the UDC have twice as many identifiers. On election day, the PRL gained 15, the PDC 12, the PS 19, and the UDC 27 percent of the vote. Thus the Social Democrats were the only party unable to mobilize voters beyond their identifiers. However, our average voter does not identify with any of the big parties. The first line in table 4.2 shows that she was interviewed about 21 days before the election took place.

4.3. Agenda Setting & Issue Ownership Voting

Agenda-Setting

Given the three phases of news reporting before the Swiss elections, we should find people interviewed in the first phase being more probable to consider economic issues the most important. In this phase, environment is unlikely to be considered most pressing. The opposite can be expected in the second phase. People interviewed in the third phase are neither particularly likely nor particularly unlikely to name the economy or the environment as the most important problem.

Table 4.3 depicts the unstandardized multinomial logistic regression coefficients for the two contrast groups economy versus other issue and environment versus other issue.²³ The estimates measure the impact of the variables on considering economy or environment as opposed to any other problem the most pressing issue. In the sixth column I present the estimates for people who did not consider any issue important versus other issue. While I do not expect any specific effects, the results allow us to examine what groups of people are mobilized in the different phases.

The most important finding is presented in the first line. Relative to other issues, phase has a positive effect on economy and a negative effect on environment. But what does this mean? It means that people are more likely to consider economy the MIP during a phase of balanced reporting compared to a phase where the environment dominates the news. Moreover, voters are more likely to perceive economy as important when it is at the top of the media agenda compared to a

²³See equation 3.1, chapter 3.3.

4. Analysis

Table 4.3.: Agenda-Setting – Multinomial Logistic Regression (DV: MIP)

| | Economy | | Environment | | No Issue | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. |
| Agenda Setting | | | | | | |
| <i>Phase</i> | 0.15** | 0.07 | -0.15* | 0.09 | -0.20 | 0.14 |
| Party Identification | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 0.64*** | 0.19 | -0.21 | 0.27 | 0.12 | 0.39 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 0.29 | 0.22 | -0.14 | 0.27 | 0.19 | 0.39 |
| <i>PS</i> | 0.08 | 0.15 | 0.17 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 0.27 |
| <i>UDC</i> | -0.66*** | 0.18 | -1.10*** | 0.22 | -1.50*** | 0.41 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | -0.62*** | 0.12 | -0.04 | 0.14 | 0.05 | 0.22 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | -0.55** | 0.26 | 0.39 | 0.29 | 0.83** | 0.39 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | -0.40* | 0.24 | 0.17 | 0.28 | 0.16 | 0.41 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | -0.24 | 0.19 | 0.10 | 0.23 | -0.41 | 0.36 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | 0.08 | 0.19 | 0.23 | 0.23 | -0.60 | 0.42 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | -0.30 | 0.19 | -0.04 | 0.23 | -0.52 | 0.38 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Sec.)</i> | 0.21 | 0.19 | 0.13 | 0.23 | -0.47 | 0.33 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | -0.18 | 0.19 | 0.17 | 0.22 | 0.12 | 0.31 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Sec.</i> | -0.07 | 0.30 | 0.05 | 0.34 | 0.29 | 0.43 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | -0.01 | 0.13 | -0.14 | 0.15 | 0.03 | 0.23 |
| <i>French Region (German Reg.)</i> | 0.00 | 0.15 | -0.96*** | 0.21 | 0.02 | 0.25 |
| <i>Rel. Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 0.10 | 0.15 | 0.04 | 0.18 | -0.24 | 0.28 |
| <i>Rel. Catholic</i> | -0.08 | 0.16 | -0.12 | 0.19 | -0.41 | 0.28 |
| Intercept | -0.02 | 0.27 | -0.74** | 0.33 | -1.51*** | 0.48 |
| <i>Observations</i> | 1'797 | | | | | |
| <i>NagelkerkeR²</i> | 0.14 | | | | | |

Note: Baseoutcome is *other Issue*; Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

phase of neutral reporting. This effect is significant at the 5 percent level. The opposite is true for environmental issues. Voters are likely to consider environment important when it is present in the news, less likely in times of balanced reporting, and the least likely when the media focuses on another issue (i.e. economy). This effect is significant on the 10 percent level, a score we can partially explain by the low number of people interviewed in the environment phase.

Only three socio-demographics play a role in explaining what people consider important: Women are significantly less probable to name the economy as their MIP. Also, compared to the reference group, the youngest voters are significantly less likely to consider the economy (and not an other issue) most important. Finally, people living in the French-speaking part of Switzerland are more probable to

4. Analysis

consider a problem other than the environment as their MIP. Party identification with the social democrats or the christian democrats does neither raises nor lower the chances to consider any of the issues as important. Voters identifying with the liberal party, however, are more probable to find the economy most important. Identifiers of the UDC are unlikely to perceive the economy important. The same accounts for the environment or no issue. This result can be explained with the base category which includes immigration issues.

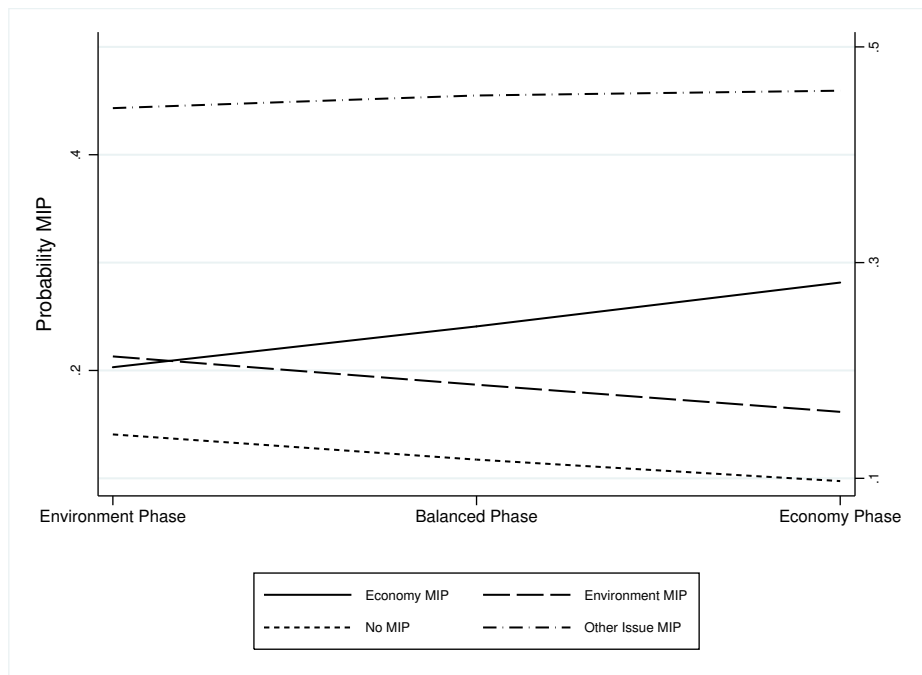


Figure 4.5.: Probabilities during Media Phases

Unstandardized regression coefficients can be interpreted with regard to significance and direction of an effect, but not their magnitude. To remedy this, I predict probabilities for considering either economy, environment, another issue, or no issue most important during the different phases of media reporting. The values in figure 4.5 are calculated for an average voter (chapter 4.2) using the program Clarify (King, Tomz and Wittenberg, 2000). The chances to consider the economy issue most important are 28 percent in the phase of intensive reporting on this issue. When the media reporting is more balanced, this number decreases 4 percentage points. The probability is even lower when the media focuses strongly on the

4. Analysis

environment. The opposite is true for the environment. As the news focus on the parliamentary debate on nuclear power, environment is perceived more salient than economy. In the balanced phase, the probability to consider this issue important drop to 18 percent. When the media reports on economic issues, the odds are only 16 percent. The probability to consider any other issue than economy or environment most pressing is about 45 percent in all three phases. This runs counter to my expectations since I argued that during phases of intensive media reporting, the amount of voters falling into this category decreases. However, the dashed line in figure 4.5 indicates that lower probabilities to consider no issue important account for the increasing likelihood of considering the economy important. This is not the case in the environmental phase. Here, the environment gains at the expense of the economy. Note that agenda-setting is measured on the aggregate level. Strictly speaking, it is not possible to draw any conclusion about changes between the phases.

In conclusion, the results indicate a slight transfer of salience from the media to the voter (hypothesis 1). In phases of intensive media attention voters are more likely to consider the corresponding issues important. The findings lead us to the conclusion that environment and economy are related to each other but not to other issues. When the media focus on the economy, the likelihood of considering environment important are low. When the media report on the environment, the probability to name economy as the most important problem are particularly low. The pool of people who name other issues as important remain about the same, regardless how the media report on them.

After demonstrating how issue reporting influence the public agenda, I will now examine the determinants of MIP change. I run two logistic regressions which are both displayed in table 4.4. I display the exponentiated regression coefficients (odds ratios).²⁴ These values can be interpreted with regard to the strength of the effect. The first model includes the independent variables date, political sophistication,

²⁴In our case a voter's (v) odds (O_v) are the ratio of the probability that she will switch the MIP (P_v) to the probability that she will not switch the problem perceived most pressing ($1-P_v$):

$$O_v = \frac{P_v}{1 - P_v}$$

4. Analysis

and media consumption. I calculate separate models for each independent variable as well. However, the coefficients change only marginally.²⁵ In the second model I introduce an interaction term between political knowledge and media consumption.

In hypothesis 2, I argue that issue salience is a short-term preference. Consequently, the more time passes between two points of measurement, the higher the odds that a respondent changes the MIP. The first model in table 4.4 supports this assumption. The estimator for the variable date is above 1 and significant on the 5 percent level. Compared to a person whose interviews were only a few days apart, a person whose interviews were 40 days apart has a 50 percent higher chance to alter the problem that she considers most important. In other words, as time passes, changing issue preferences become more probable.

Let us now turn to the relationship between media consumption and agenda-setting. The odds ratio in the first model is exactly 1. Thus, regardless of how much a person consumes quality newspapers, the probability that she will change the MIP remains the same. This runs against my hypothesis (hypothesis 3) and the assumptions of most agenda-setting researchers.

How is this possible? Hypothesis 4 attempts to solve this riddle by adding political sophistication to the equation. Accordingly, media consumption is not a sufficient condition for agenda changes. Only if a voter has a certain level of political expertise, she will be able to cope with the information presented in the news. I test this hypothesis by introducing an interaction term between media consumption and political sophistication. The results in the second model show that intensive media consumption reduces the odds to switch the MIP by 35 percent if the political sophistication is minimal. This effect is not significant. Because the estimator of the interaction between sophistication and media consumption is positive we know that the reductive effect of media consumption declines as the level of political knowledge increases. This value just fails to reach the 10 percent significance level ($p=0.102$). However, based on the information in the regression table, there is no way to know what the impact of media consumption is when political sophistication is greater than zero. Facing these limitations, I visualized the marginal effects of media consumption on MIP changes as the political knowledge increases (see Brambor, Clark and Golder, 2006). Thus, figure 4.6 plots the change

²⁵This model is not displayed in the analysis.

4. Analysis

Table 4.4.: Agenda-Setting – Logistic Regression (DV: MIP Change)

| | (1) | | (2) | |
|--|------------|------|------------|------|
| | Odds Ratio | S.E. | Odds Ratio | S.E. |
| Agenda-Setting | | | | |
| <i>Date</i> | 1.50** | 0.31 | 1.50** | 0.31 |
| <i>Political Sop.</i> | 0.95 | 0.18 | 0.63 | 0.20 |
| <i>Media Consumption</i> | 1.00 | 0.15 | 0.65 | 0.20 |
| <i>Political Sop._Media Consumption</i> | | | 2.29 | 1.16 |
| Most Pressing Problem t₁ | | | | |
| <i>Education and Culture (Economy)</i> | 4.89*** | 1.92 | 4.74*** | 1.86 |
| <i>Environment</i> | 1.63*** | 0.26 | 1.62*** | 0.26 |
| <i>Immigration</i> | 1.38** | 0.22 | 1.36* | 0.22 |
| <i>International Relations</i> | 3.30*** | 1.10 | 3.28*** | 1.09 |
| <i>Law and Order</i> | 2.06** | 0.72 | 2.04** | 0.70 |
| <i>Public Services and Infrastructure</i> | 3.90*** | 1.96 | 3.89*** | 1.96 |
| <i>Welfare State</i> | 2.33*** | 0.40 | 2.32*** | 0.40 |
| <i>Other Issues</i> | 4.69*** | 1.20 | 4.67*** | 1.20 |
| Party Identification | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 0.85 | 0.16 | 0.86 | 0.16 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 0.89 | 0.18 | 0.89 | 0.18 |
| <i>PS</i> | 0.93 | 0.14 | 0.94 | 0.14 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 1.15 | 0.18 | 1.16 | 0.19 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | 1.03 | 0.12 | 1.03 | 0.12 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | 0.93 | 0.22 | 0.94 | 0.22 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | 0.78 | 0.18 | 0.79 | 0.18 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 1.23 | 0.21 | 1.25 | 0.22 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | 1.25 | 0.22 | 1.26 | 0.22 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 1.83*** | 0.32 | 1.84*** | 0.32 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Secondary)</i> | 0.94 | 0.16 | 0.93 | 0.16 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | 0.87 | 0.15 | 0.86 | 0.15 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Secondary</i> | 0.98 | 0.26 | 0.96 | 0.25 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.76** | 0.09 | 0.76** | 0.09 |
| <i>French Region (German Region)</i> | 1.52*** | 0.22 | 1.52*** | 0.22 |
| <i>Religion Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 1.26 | 0.18 | 1.25 | 0.18 |
| <i>Religion Catholic</i> | 1.25 | 0.18 | 1.25 | 0.18 |
| <i>Observations</i> | 1612 | | 1612 | |
| <i>PseudoR²</i> | 0.06 | | 0.06 | |

Note: Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

4. Analysis

in probability of MIP change associated with a increase in media consumption (from its minimum to its maximum) across the observed range of the modifying variable political sophistication. In regression models with limited dependent variables we can only look at such effects if all variables are fixed at specific levels. I choose to set all variables so they correspond to the median voter (Chapter 4.2), the MIP at t_1 is economy. The effect of media consumption becomes stronger as political sophistication increases. Thus, media consumption only results in MIP changes if a voter is at least averagely sophisticated. However, while the direction and the strength of the moderating effect supports hypothesis 4, the findings are not significant. Based on the 95 percent confidence interval we cannot rule out the possibility that media consumption has a reductive effect on agenda changes even when sophistication is high. In an extreme scenario, it is even possible that political sophistication diminishes the effect of media consumption.²⁶ Even though the results indicate an interaction between sophistication and knowledge we are not able to verify the hypothesis with certainty.

Only a few sociodemographic indicators contribute significantly to the explanation of the dependent variable. Generally speaking, altering the issue agenda happens more often among older people. Compared to the 36 to 45 year age group, senior voters are significantly more likely to alter their issue preferences. Further, voters living in urban areas change the MIP less often. The same is true for people living in the German speaking part of Switzerland. The most pronounced effects are found for the dummy variables controlling for the issue preference at the time of the first interview. All estimators are greater than 1, hence MIP change is least probable if a voter considers economy the most pressing problem. The difference between this issue and the others is considerable: issue change is between two and nearly five times more probable if not the economy was considered as being the most important problem. Environment and immigration are the only two exceptions. Compared to those saying economy was most important, change was still more probable, but the magnitude of the effects are less strong. One possible way to explain this finding relates to media effects. Altering the issue preference is only one possible reaction to media effects. Another effect might be the reinforcement of

²⁶This is possible if the actual effect equals the upper confidence interval when political sophistication is low, and the lower confidence interval when sophistication is high.

4. Analysis

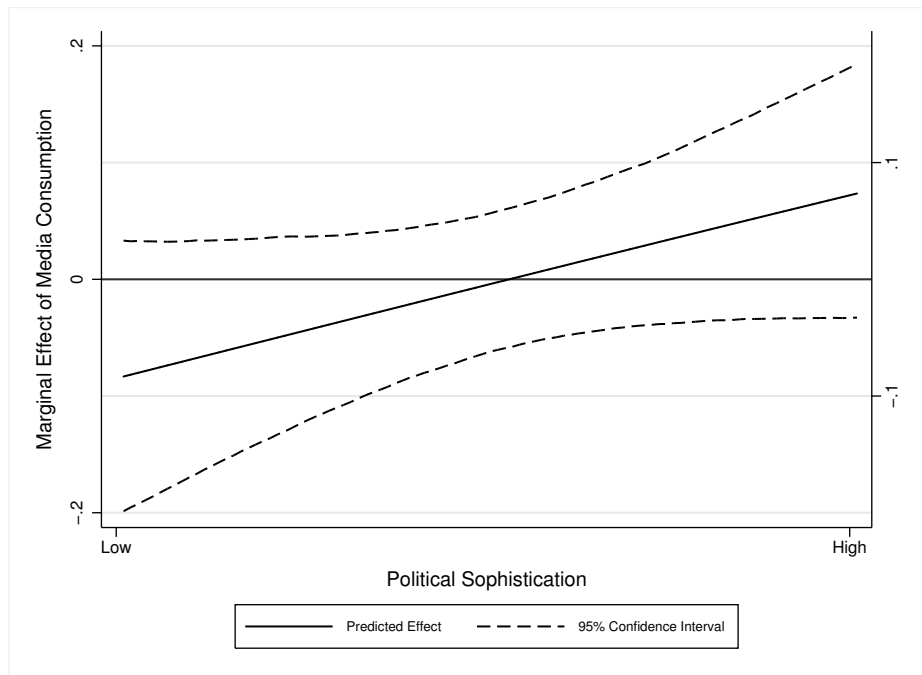


Figure 4.6.: M.E. of Media Consumption on MIP Change as Knowledge Increases

already present issue preferences. People who already consider the economy or the environment most pressing stabilize their preferences during the phase of strong media coverage on the matter. We finally examine the results for immigration – an issue hardly ever reported on during the electoral campaign. Clearly, this issue dominated Swiss politics in the last fifteen years (Lutz, 2012, p. 28). It is strongly associated with the rise of the populist right (Kriesi, Lachat, Bornschieer and Helbling, 2005). Therefore, it is probably an exceptional case.

Competence

In the precedent chapter I found that during intensive media coverage on an issue, the likelihood to consider this issue most pressing increases. On the individual level however, media consumption did not increase the probability to change the issue agenda. In this section, I examine the effects of changing issue preferences. I hypothesize that the probability to alter the competence preferences increases if the MIP changed. Party identification, on the other hand, is expected to lower the odds for competence change.

4. Analysis

Table 4.5.: Competence – Logistic Regression (DV: Comp. Change)

| | Comp. Change | |
|---|--------------|------|
| | Odds Ratio | S.E. |
| MIP Switch | 3.07*** | 0.51 |
| Political Sop. | 0.94 | 0.25 |
| Interview Date | 1.91** | 0.56 |
| Party Identification | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 0.51** | 0.14 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 1.63* | 0.48 |
| <i>PS</i> | 0.67** | 0.13 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 0.30*** | 0.08 |
| Most Pressing Problem t ₁ | | |
| <i>Education and Culture (Economy)</i> | 0.74 | 0.38 |
| <i>Environment</i> | 1.03 | 0.23 |
| <i>Gender Issues</i> | 0.41 | 0.34 |
| <i>Immigration</i> | 0.66* | 0.15 |
| <i>International Relations</i> | 0.18*** | 0.11 |
| <i>Law and Order</i> | 1.12 | 0.60 |
| <i>Public Services and Infrastructure</i> | 0.98 | 0.58 |
| <i>Welfare State</i> | 0.53** | 0.14 |
| <i>Other Issues</i> | 0.29*** | 0.11 |
| Socio-Demographics | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | 1.34* | 0.22 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | 0.77 | 0.24 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | 0.73 | 0.24 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 0.68 | 0.17 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | 0.76 | 0.19 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 0.94 | 0.23 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Secondary)</i> | 1.14 | 0.28 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | 1.24 | 0.30 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Secondary</i> | 1.04 | 0.41 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.70** | 0.12 |
| <i>French Region (German Region)</i> | 0.55*** | 0.12 |
| <i>Religion Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 1.26 | 0.26 |
| <i>Religion Catholic</i> | 1.21 | 0.26 |
| <i>Observations</i> | 881 | |
| <i>PseudoR²</i> | 12.56 | |

Note: Reference categories in parentheses;

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

4. Analysis

I test these hypotheses with a logistic regression (table 4.5). The estimator in the first line shows that changing the perceptions about the most competent party is three times more likely if a voter switched the MIP. This value is highly significant ($p < 0.01$). The dummies indicating whether a respondent identifies with one of the big four parties are below 1 and significant. The sole exception are people identifying with the Christian Democratic Party.

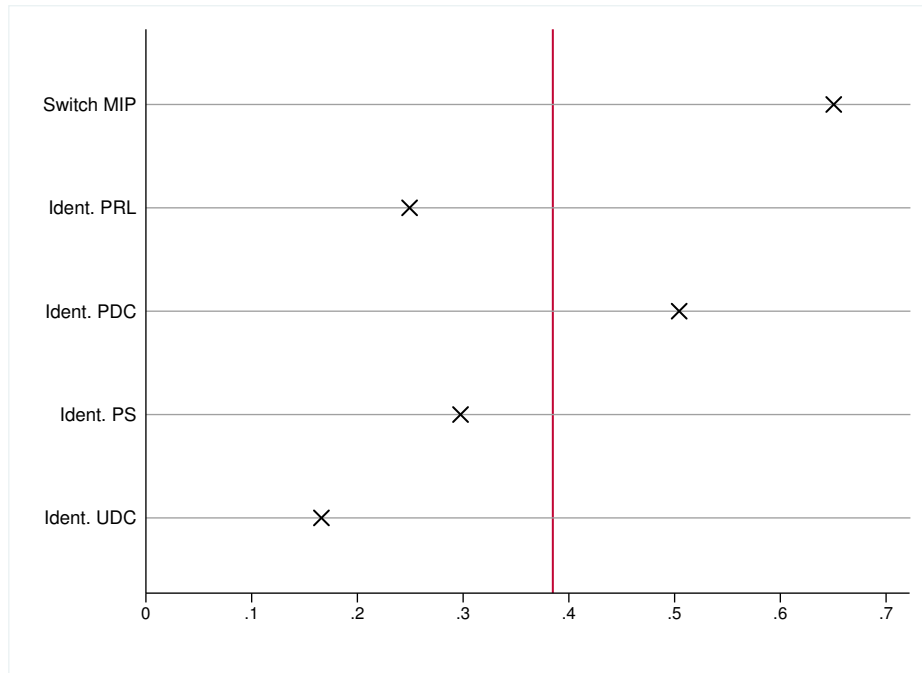


Figure 4.7.: MIP and Competence – Predicted Probabilities

In order to get a better idea about the impact of MIP changes and party identification, I created a dot-chart (Cleveland, 1984). The vertical line in the chart 4.7 depicts an average voter's probability to change the party perceived most competent to solve the most pressing problem (38 percent). On the y-axis I manipulated the value of five different variables. The marker indicate the probabilities for competence change. The top line shows the impact of MIP changes. Voters who changed the MIP are 30 percentage points more likely to switch their perceptions about competence, as the contrast group (red line). This result provides ample evidence for the idea that new top priority issues bring new problem solvers to the forefront. The opposite is true for party identification. Identifying with

4. Analysis

either the PRL, the PS or the UDC lowers the probability to switch the party perceived as competent. The effect is strongest for the voters identifying with the UDC. This party identification almost balances out the positive effect of MIP changes.

In conclusion, we can confirm the hypothesis that people who change the issue they consider most salient are likely to also switch the party perceived most important (hypothesis 5). In contrast, party identification lowers the chances to change the competence (hypothesis 6).

Issue Ownership Voting

Thus far I have established that perceived issue salience is a volatile preference. Phases of intensive media coverage can increase the salience of an issue. The previous section proved that changing salience produces changing perceptions about competence. In this section I show how perceived issue handling competence shapes the voting decision.

Issue ownership voting theory postulates that people vote for the party they perceive best able to handle a certain problem. As stressed by Bélanger and Meguid (2008), this effect is stronger the more important the issue is to the voter. I test this hypothesis by regressing the electoral choice on the party seen as most competent to handle the most pressing problem. Table 4.6 displays the results of the multinomial regression including the PRL, the PDC, the PS, and the UDC. The basecategory is voting for any other party. The first four rows in the regression table measure if a respondent considered the corresponding party best able to handle the MIP. In other words, they indicate which party owns the top problem on the individual level. All four coefficients are positive and highly significant for the corresponding party ($p < 0,01$). Considering a party apt to solve the MIP, enhances the likelihood of voting for them. These effects only lose little strength when controlling for party identification.²⁷ Contrary to identification, the effects of issue ownership are less deterministic. Party identification is practically incompatible with voting for another party. Assigned competence however reveals the proximity of different

²⁷ The regression model without the control variable party identification is not displayed. However, none of the coefficient changes either its direction or the level of significance.

4. Analysis

Table 4.6.: Issue Ownership Voting – Multinomial Logistic Reg. (DV: Party Voted)

| | PRL | | PDC | | PS | | UDC | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. |
| Most Competent | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL (Other Party)</i> | 2.49*** | 0.33 | 0.91** | 0.39 | 0.07 | 0.43 | 1.17*** | 0.40 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 0.88 | 0.59 | 2.19*** | 0.50 | 0.67 | 0.49 | 0.23 | 0.68 |
| <i>PS</i> | -0.13 | 0.61 | 0.58 | 0.42 | 2.17*** | 0.24 | -0.05 | 0.52 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 1.39*** | 0.38 | 0.79 | 0.53 | 0.13 | 0.41 | 2.98*** | 0.31 |
| Party Identification | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 2.60*** | 0.36 | 0.54 | 0.54 | -0.19 | 0.53 | 0.46 | 0.58 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 0.95* | 0.56 | 2.98*** | 0.40 | -0.22 | 0.59 | -0.18 | 0.81 |
| <i>PS</i> | -0.72 | 0.51 | 0.11 | 0.48 | 2.12*** | 0.22 | -0.14 | 0.41 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 0.14 | 0.52 | 0.43 | 0.55 | 0.49 | 0.42 | 2.90*** | 0.32 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | -0.03 | 0.27 | -0.20 | 0.28 | -0.07 | 0.21 | 0.34 | 0.27 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | 0.13 | 0.59 | -0.61 | 0.62 | 0.06 | 0.41 | -0.15 | 0.52 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | 0.37 | 0.51 | -0.98* | 0.55 | -0.21 | 0.43 | -0.16 | 0.49 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 0.21 | 0.40 | -0.25 | 0.44 | 0.38 | 0.33 | 0.03 | 0.38 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | -0.24 | 0.47 | -1.18** | 0.56 | 0.55 | 0.35 | -0.38 | 0.40 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 0.24 | 0.42 | -0.06 | 0.44 | 0.55 | 0.36 | -0.12 | 0.40 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Sec.)</i> | -0.11 | 0.36 | 0.18 | 0.47 | -0.43 | 0.30 | -0.12 | 0.41 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | 0.13 | 0.38 | 0.09 | 0.44 | -0.21 | 0.30 | 0.50 | 0.41 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Sec.</i> | 0.51 | 0.68 | 0.23 | 0.86 | -0.52 | 0.66 | 1.63** | 0.64 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.22 | 0.30 | -0.29 | 0.31 | 0.03 | 0.23 | -0.14 | 0.29 |
| <i>French Reg. (German Reg.)</i> | 0.47 | 0.31 | -0.15 | 0.36 | 0.00 | 0.26 | -0.47 | 0.38 |
| <i>Rel. Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 0.25 | 0.34 | -0.12 | 0.44 | -0.12 | 0.27 | 0.49 | 0.31 |
| <i>Rel. Catholic</i> | 0.049 | 0.36 | 0.91** | 0.37 | -0.12 | 0.28 | 0.33 | 0.35 |
| Intercept | -2.78*** | 0.63 | -2.29*** | 0.65 | -1.79*** | 0.45 | -2.73*** | 0.60 |
| Observations | 1167 | | | | | | | |
| NagelkerkeR ² | 0.81 | | | | | | | |

Note: Baseline is *other party*; Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

4. Analysis

political actors. For instance, considering the UDC capable of solving the MIP also increases the chances to vote for the PRL. The only truly isolated party is the PS.

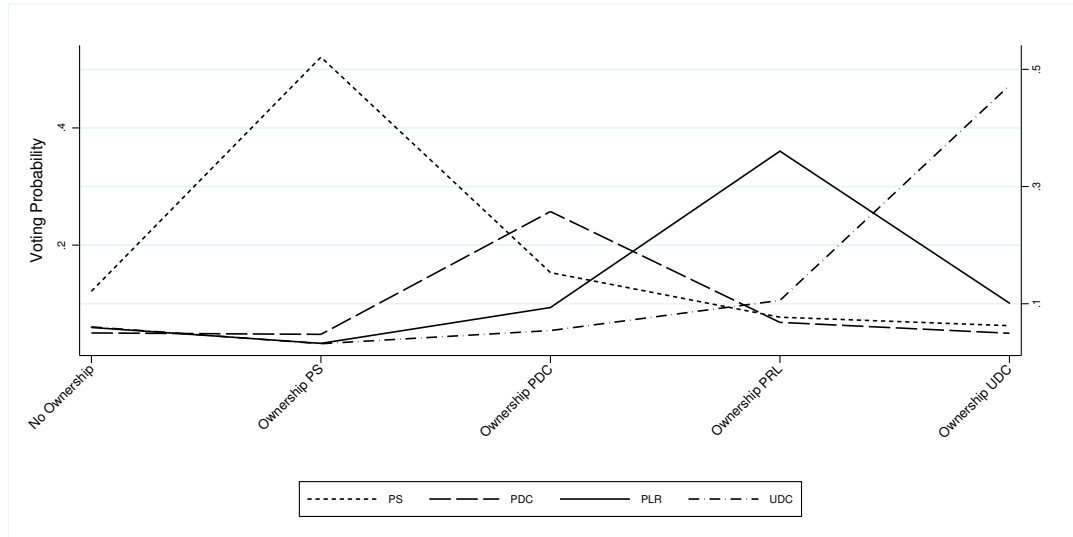


Figure 4.8.: Voting Probability and Issue Ownership

To give an idea about the strength of the effects, I visualized different voting probabilities in chart 4.8. On the x-axis I varied the party that our fictional median voter perceives as most competent to solve the problem she thinks is most important. Imagine a 36 to 45 year-old female protestant voter with a higher secondary education, living in a German-speaking city and having no party affiliations. Under the condition that the voter does not perceive any of the large parties as competent to solve the MIP, the odds are highest that she votes for the PS. Her chances to support a center right party are extremely low. This would only be marginally different if the same person considered the PS the most competent political party. However, in this scenario the voting probability for the PS increase to over 50 percent. The PDC and the PRL take less advantage of issue ownership. The average voter's chances to vote for these parties are below 40 percent, regardless of who she thinks is most capable to solve the MIP. Besides the PS, the UDC is the second biggest beneficiary of assigned issue handling competence. The odds to vote for this party increase by over 40 percentage points as we move on the x-axis from the left to the right. These findings strongly support hypothesis 7. From a party's perspective issue handling competence proves to be an important asset.

4. Analysis

While the effect of considering a party competent is strong and significant for all parties, the two wing parties benefit the most.

For the purpose of examining the role of political sophistication and party identity I run the same regression as above. The only changes concern the introduction of the interaction term between knowledge and assigned issue handling competence in table 4.7, and the interaction term between party identity and assigned issue handling competence in table 4.8.

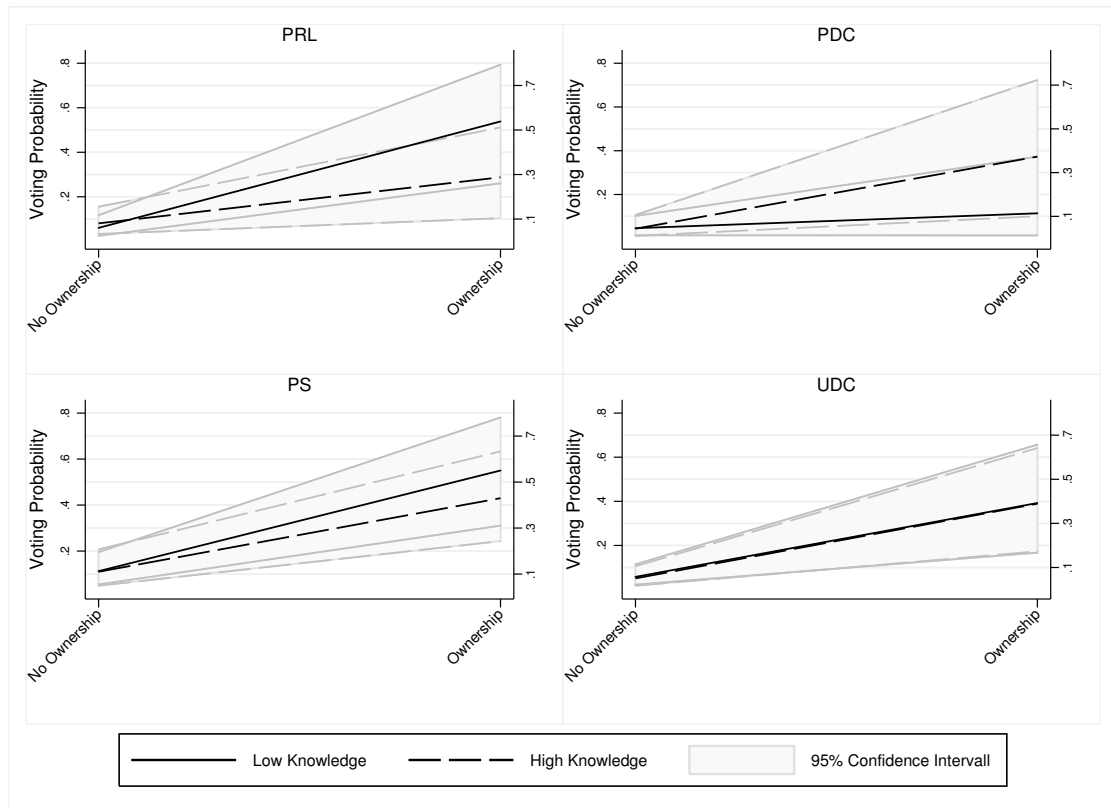


Figure 4.9.: Voting Probability and Issue Ownership - Knowledge

The direction and the significance of the main coefficients in table 4.7 are very similar to the basic model. An exception is the contrast group PDC versus other parties, where the effect of perceived handling competence lost its statistical significance. However, this is of no concern since it only shows that the effect of issue ownership is not significant when political knowledge is minimal – a finding in line with my hypothesis. Figure 4.9 depicts, based on the multinomial regression, voting

Table 4.7.: IOV Sophistication – Multinomial Logistic Reg. (DV: Party Voted)

| | PRL | | PDC | | PS | | UDC | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. |
| Most Competent | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 3.66*** | 0.76 | 1.30 | 0.90 | 1.23 | 0.89 | 1.58* | 0.86 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 1.62 | 1.26 | 1.27 | 0.95 | 1.26 | 0.89 | -0.95 | 1.08 |
| <i>PS</i> | 0.17 | 1.03 | 0.45 | 0.70 | 2.51*** | 0.52 | 0.63 | 0.74 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 2.45*** | 0.72 | 1.10 | 1.30 | 1.18* | 0.65 | 3.23*** | 0.59 |
| <i>Political Sop.</i> | 0.90 | 0.70 | -0.30 | 0.71 | -0.11 | 0.48 | -0.41 | 0.59 |
| <i>PRL X Political Sop.</i> | -2.01* | 1.12 | -0.64 | 1.39 | -2.21 | 1.64 | -0.71 | 1.36 |
| <i>PDC X Political Sop.</i> | -1.32 | 2.37 | 1.78 | 1.53 | -1.55 | 2.06 | 2.41* | 1.40 |
| <i>PS X Political Sop.</i> | -0.45 | 1.35 | 0.23 | 1.26 | -0.59 | 0.82 | -1.59 | 1.29 |
| <i>UDC X Political Sop.</i> | -1.93 | 1.17 | -0.65 | 2.39 | -2.09* | 1.22 | -0.54 | 0.93 |
| Party Identification | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 2.61*** | 0.36 | 0.49 | 0.56 | -0.16 | 0.53 | 0.44 | 0.58 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 0.95* | 0.56 | 3.00*** | 0.40 | -0.20 | 0.59 | -0.17 | 0.81 |
| <i>PS</i> | -0.71 | 0.51 | 0.15 | 0.48 | 2.18*** | 0.23 | -0.10 | 0.41 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 0.15 | 0.52 | 0.54 | 0.56 | 0.50 | 0.42 | 2.96*** | 0.33 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | -0.01 | 0.27 | -0.20 | 0.28 | -0.15 | 0.21 | 0.27 | 0.28 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | 0.17 | 0.60 | -0.61 | 0.64 | 0.00 | 0.42 | -0.16 | 0.52 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | 0.38 | 0.51 | -1.01* | 0.58 | -0.24 | 0.44 | -0.18 | 0.50 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 0.21 | 0.40 | -0.18 | 0.43 | 0.34 | 0.33 | 0.05 | 0.38 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | -0.23 | 0.47 | -1.17** | 0.56 | 0.56 | 0.35 | -0.34 | 0.40 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 0.28 | 0.42 | -0.02 | 0.45 | 0.58 | 0.36 | -0.08 | 0.40 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Sec.)</i> | -0.04 | 0.37 | 0.21 | 0.48 | -0.42 | 0.30 | -0.11 | 0.42 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | 0.18 | 0.40 | 0.09 | 0.45 | -0.26 | 0.30 | 0.47 | 0.41 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Sec.</i> | 0.54 | 0.69 | 0.20 | 0.86 | -0.64 | 0.67 | 1.53** | 0.65 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.18 | 0.30 | -0.34 | 0.31 | 0.04 | 0.24 | -0.16 | 0.28 |
| <i>French Reg. (German Reg.)</i> | 0.45 | 0.32 | -0.10 | 0.37 | -0.04 | 0.27 | -0.44 | 0.37 |
| <i>Rel. Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 0.26 | 0.34 | -0.12 | 0.45 | -0.06 | 0.27 | 0.51 | 0.31 |
| <i>Rel. Catholic</i> | 0.07 | 0.36 | 0.96** | 0.38 | -0.08 | 0.28 | 0.36 | 0.35 |
| Intercept | -3.39*** | 0.86 | -2.17*** | 0.78 | -1.73*** | 0.52 | -2.50*** | 0.73 |
| Observations | 1167 | | | | | | | |
| NagelkerkeR ² | 0.81 | | | | | | | |

Note: Baseoutcome is *other party*; Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

4. Analysis

probabilities for the four parties. Following Best and Wolf (2010) such conditional effects plots are among the most accurate tools to interpret interaction terms in non-linear and non-additive regression models. As we already know from the regression table, the only group in the analysis, for which we cannot be sure whether issue ownership voting applies, are the low knowledgeable voters considering the PDC most competent. In figure 4.9, evidence for this finding is the lower bound of the 95 percent confidence interval running parallel to the x-axis. However, the top right panel indicates a positive moderating effect of political sophistication. High sophisticates who think the PDC is most competent have an almost 30 percentage point higher chance to vote for the Christian Democrats than low sophisticates who think the PDC is best able to handle the MIP. As the strongly overlapping confidence interval shadings demonstrate, this interaction effect is not statistically significant. Other than in the top right panel, the findings presented in the top left and the bottom left panel run counter to my hypothesis. In these cases, political sophistication diminishes the probability to vote according to the issue ownership voting theory. Moreover, the moderating effect of sophistication is significant for the PRL (see table 4.9). Low sophisticates who assign issue handling competence to the PRL are over 20 percentage points more likely to vote for the Liberals than high sophisticates with the same issue preferences. Finally, no clear moderating effect is found when it comes to the UDC. Whether a voter is sophisticated or not, the increase produced by issue handling competence is about 45 percentage points. In sum, the influence of political sophistication is highly ambiguous and varies unsystematically between the parties. In one case, sophistication enhances the effect of issue ownership voting. In another case, no influence of sophistication could be found. Finally, in two cases knowledge leads to a weakening of issue ownership effects. Based on these results we have to reject hypothesis 8.

In hypothesis 9 I expect the presence of identification to diminish the influence of issue ownership no matter what party voters identify with. In the analysis I added the dichotomous variable party identification and let it interact with the four competence indicators. The detailed results of the multinomial regression are displayed in table 4.8. The predicted probabilities in figure 4.10 clarify that hypothesis 9 has to be rejected. While the direction of the moderating effect is

4. Analysis

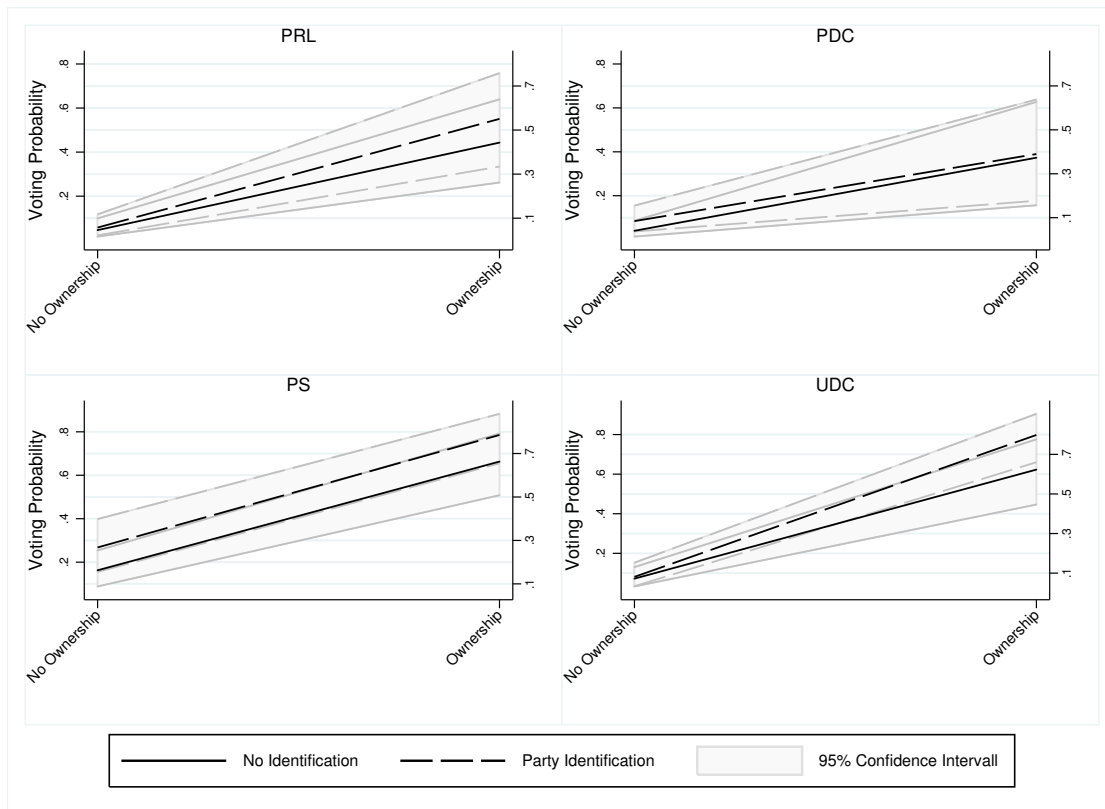


Figure 4.10.: Voting Probability and Issue Ownership - Party Identification

correct for the PDC, it is far from being statistically significant. The chart shows, that the steepness of the dashed and the solid lines are almost identical.

Table 4.8 indicates a positive, but not significant moderating effect of identification for the PRL and the UDC. Thus, having a party identification enhances the effect of issue ownership voting. While the top left and the bottom right panels in figure 4.10 indeed show an effect that runs counter to our expectations, the 95 percent confidence intervals are strongly overlapping. Hence, we cannot exclude with certainty that the effect of issue ownership is actually stronger for the non identification group. No moderating effect could be found in the case of the PS. The overall level of voting probability, however, differs between respondents with and respondents without party identification. It is however noteworthy, that some of the identifiers feel close to the PS, while others feel close to another party. Hence, the effect of party identification on the voting probability of a specific party is difficult

4. Analysis

Table 4.8.: IOV Identification – Multinomial Logistic Reg. (DV: Party Voted)

| | PRL | | PDC | | PS | | UDC | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. |
| Most Competent | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 3.11*** | 0.40 | 0.86 | 0.59 | -0.11 | 0.53 | 0.86* | 0.52 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 2.05*** | 0.67 | 3.39*** | 0.61 | 1.11* | 0.62 | 0.98 | 0.74 |
| <i>PS</i> | 0.59 | 0.64 | 0.83 | 0.60 | 2.57*** | 0.32 | 0.50 | 0.56 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 2.02*** | 0.47 | 0.80 | 0.62 | -0.15 | 0.54 | 3.46*** | 0.35 |
| <i>Party Identification</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL_X_ Identification</i> | 0.54 | 0.40 | 1.09*** | 0.38 | 0.80*** | 0.26 | 0.39 | 0.38 |
| <i>PDC_X_ Identification</i> | 0.52 | 0.63 | 0.02 | 0.80 | 0.02 | 0.83 | 0.99 | 0.81 |
| <i>PS_X_ Identification</i> | -2.25* | 1.27 | -1.35 | 0.84 | -1.31 | 0.96 | -0.48 | 1.09 |
| <i>UDC_X_ Identification</i> | -33.9*** | 0.72 | -0.90 | 0.79 | -0.34 | 0.43 | -1.96 | 1.21 |
| <i>UDC_X_ Identification</i> | -1.62* | 0.83 | -1.45 | 0.97 | 0.15 | 0.77 | 0.53 | 0.57 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | -0.19 | 0.25 | -0.39 | 0.26 | 0.10 | 0.19 | 0.09 | 0.23 |
| <i>Age 18-25 (Age 36-45)</i> | -0.10 | 0.48 | -0.99* | 0.57 | 0.32 | 0.39 | 0.38 | 0.46 |
| <i>Age 26-35</i> | -0.08 | 0.45 | -0.63 | 0.55 | -0.18 | 0.39 | 0.30 | 0.41 |
| <i>Age 46-55</i> | 0.14 | 0.37 | -0.40 | 0.42 | 0.39 | 0.31 | -0.02 | 0.37 |
| <i>Age 56-65</i> | 0.33 | 0.38 | -0.32 | 0.45 | 0.74** | 0.33 | -0.00 | 0.37 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 0.33 | 0.42 | 0.64 | 0.40 | 0.61* | 0.33 | -0.36 | 0.37 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Sec.)</i> | -0.03 | 0.36 | -0.08 | 0.39 | -0.22 | 0.29 | -0.1 | 0.36 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | 0.043 | 0.38 | -0.16 | 0.40 | -0.06 | 0.29 | 0.80** | 0.35 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Sec.</i> | 0.26 | 0.65 | 0.05 | 0.65 | -0.32 | 0.54 | 1.96*** | 0.53 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.08 | 0.26 | -0.42 | 0.28 | 0.14 | 0.21 | -0.25 | 0.25 |
| <i>French Reg. (German Reg.)</i> | 0.79*** | 0.29 | -0.27 | 0.34 | -0.30 | 0.25 | -0.74** | 0.34 |
| <i>Rel. Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 0.46 | 0.33 | -0.42 | 0.43 | -0.17 | 0.23 | 0.43 | 0.28 |
| <i>Rel. Catholic</i> | 0.32 | 0.34 | 1.62*** | 0.37 | -0.18 | 0.25 | 0.10 | 0.30 |
| Intercept | -2.74*** | 0.64 | -2.14*** | 0.62 | -1.69*** | 0.44 | -2.14*** | 0.53 |
| Observations | 1'167 | | | | | | | |
| NagelkerkeR ² | 0.71 | | | | | | | |

Note: Baseline is *other party*; Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

4. Analysis

to ascertain. In conclusion, we have to falsify the idea of party identification as a moderator of issue ownership voting. Assigning issue handling competence to a specific party exerts a strong effect on the voting probability no matter if one feels close to a party.²⁸

Switzerland has long been perceived as a paragon of Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) freezing hypothesis. This is one of the reasons why short-term voting has often been neglected in previous research. Thus far, we have found ample evidence for the idea that voters support the party they think is competent and that this behavior does not depend on party identification or sophistication. Earlier, we also found that between one third and half of the voters changed their perception of the most competent party. In the following, I examine whether changes in the perception about the competence of a party immediately exert an effect on the voting probability. Different from above, I distinguish between voters who had consistent perceptions about which party is most competent to solve the most pressing problem and voters who changed their preferences between the pre-election and the post-election interview. In one model, I investigate what happened, when voters recently come to consider a party competent. In the other, I analyze the voting probabilities of respondent who no longer consider a party competent. My comments will focus on the predicted probabilities in figure 4.11; the regression tables are both displayed in the appendix (table B.6 and B.7)

Figure 4.11 illustrates how the voting probability for the PRL, PDC, PD, and the UDC differs relative to a voter who does not consider any of these parties most competent to solve the MIP (red line). For instance, a voter who perceives the PRL competent at t_1 and t_2 has a 25 percentage point higher chance to vote for the PRL than somebody who does not consider any of the four parties competent. The stable-ownership markers for indicate that assigned issue handling competence increases the voting probabilities between 25 (PRL) and 45 (PS) percentage points. Hence, the Social Democrats benefit the most from stable issue ownership. But how does the voting probability change if a person recently came to consider a party competent? If issue ownership is truly a short-term voting strategy, voting

²⁸I also conducted an analysis including detailed party identification measurements for each of the four parties. I then let these variables interact with the four competence scores. The results do not differ much from those presented in table 4.8. The full regression including all 16 interaction terms is not displayed in the analysis.

4. Analysis

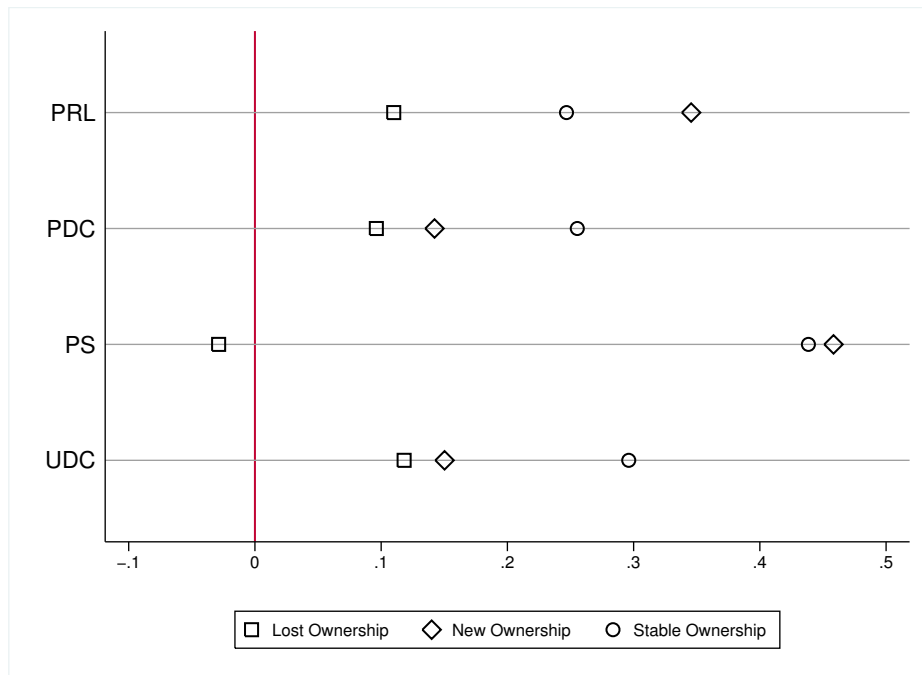


Figure 4.11.: Voting Probability and Issue Ownership - Change and Stability

probabilities should not differ strongly between people with stable ownership and new ownership. Figure 4.11 shows that voters that have recently come to consider the PRL or the PS competent have even higher chances of voting for these parties than people with stable competence perceptions. This, however, is not the case for the other two parties. In these cases, new ownership enhances voting probabilities, but not as much as stable ownership. Lastly, I present the voting probabilities if a party loses ownership (square markers). In these cases a voter considered a specific party competent at t_1 , but not at t_2 . Compared to the other two groups, I expect these voters to have the lowest voting probabilities. The results support this assumption fully. The square markers are all closest to the reference group. In the case of the PS, people punish the party to the extent, that they have a lower voting probability than average voters who do not consider any of the big parties most competent to solve the most pressing problem. In sum, the results show how changing competence assignments affect the chances of voting for a party. Parties that manage to be perceived as the most competent will be rewarded immediately. Parties which lose assigned competence, on the other hand, will be punished.

4. *Analysis*

While the results are similar for most parties investigated, the PS appears to be the party which benefits, but also suffers most distinctively from assigned issue handling competence.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I examined to what extent the media influences what voters consider important and how salient issues influence the electoral decision.

Based on a content analysis of the media during the 2011 Swiss election campaign I distinguished a phase of intensive news coverage on economic issues, a phase of intensive news coverage on environmental issues and a phase of balanced news reporting. During the phases of intensive media coverage, voters were slightly more likely to consider corresponding issues salient. When the Swiss media focused on economic matters, the odds to consider this issue most important increased five percent points in comparison to the phase of balanced reporting and 10 percent points in comparison to the environmental phase. Intensive news coverage does only partially mobilize voters with no preferences; rather it draws perceived salience from other issues. The magnitude of the effect may appear moderate. Considering that the two phases investigated in this paper lasted less than two weeks, the media impact is nevertheless considerable. In conclusion, the results support the thesis of a salience transfer from the media agenda to the public agenda (hypothesis 1). Over the whole period investigated, 43 percent of the voters changed the problem they considered most important. This number upholds the perception of issue importance as a relatively volatile preference (hypothesis 2). A more profound analysis of this thesis showed that within five weeks the chances to switch the MIP increased by fifty percent. I did not find media consumption to increase the probability for changing the issue preferences (hypothesis 3). However, if voters are exposed to news media and have the knowledge to cope with the information they tend to alter their issue agenda more often. While this effect supports hypothesis 4, the results fail to reach statistical significance. Issue handling competence is strongly influenced by MIP changes. Voters who altered their perception about the most important problem are three times more likely to change the party they perceive

5. Conclusion

as competent compared to voters who did not change the MIP (hypothesis 5). Party identification, on the other hand, lowers the probability to change assigned competence as expected in hypothesis 6. The tests of the basic issue ownership voting hypothesis (hypothesis 7) underscore the importance of issue handling competence. Perceiving a party competent to solve the most important problem increases the odds to vote for this party between 25 (PDC) and 40 (PS, UDC) percent points. I expected the effect of competence to be stronger for the high knowledgeable voters and weaker for voters identifying with a party. However, the findings do not support these hypotheses (8, and 9). Competence has a strong effect on the party preference regardless whether a voter identifies with a party or not. The independent effect of competence is also evidenced by the fact that estimators only differ slightly between models where I controlled for party identification and models where I did not control for party identification. The effect of attributed issue handling competence is immediate (hypothesis 10). This supports the idea that competence changes can affect the voting decision in the short run.

What do these findings mean with regard to the two research questions formulated at the outset? First, the media influences the perceived issue salience moderately. In order for agenda-setting to take place, media reporting has to be intensive over a certain time period. In the 2011 election campaign we observed an economic and environmental phase. In the former external events provoked heavy reporting. However, a broad coalition of political actors tried to suppress the dominance of the issue by postponing the debate on the controversial double taxation treaty with the U.S. Insofar as the coverage on the economy dropped sharply after this decision, the strategy was successful. By holding the debate on the nuclear phase out shortly before the election day, a coalition of political parties deliberately fueled the second issue phase. No political actor managed to single-handedly trigger or suppress a phase of intensive news coverage. Hence, the leverage of isolated actors to influence the voters via the media is limited. These results are in line with earlier findings in the Swiss political context (Selb, 2003). However, the exact interplay between political actors and their influence on the media agenda should be further investigated. Also, the period investigated in this analysis was too short to draw solid conclusions about this matter. While I find salience transfers from the media to the public agenda, the individual determinants of agenda setting

5. Conclusion

remain in the dark. I was unable to verify a moderating effect of sophistication on media consumption with absolute certainty. However, the results support the idea that high sophisticates are more vulnerable to media effects than low sophisticates (Miller and Krosnick, 2000). But why do we fail to find a correlation between media consumption and altering the MIP? One reason for this sobering finding could be the measurement of media exposure. According to Prior (2009), self reported news exposure measurements lack validity. He finds that individuals exaggerate their exposure by the factor of 3; some demographics even overreport by the factor of 8. Other than that, the analysis revealed remarkable results concerning the issues perceived as most pressing at t_1 . Voters who considered the economy or the environment most pressing before the elections were unlikely to change the MIP. These two issues were the most present in the news, which may be a sign for a different kind of media effect. Probably, intensive news reporting reinforces already existing agendas. If, for instance, a voter considers economy important, intensive reporting might cement the top position of that issue on the voter's agenda. This assumption, however, needs a more thorough analysis.

In the second research question I asked how assigned competence to handle the MIP affects the vote. In a nutshell, this variable is a decisive factor in explaining party preference. The effect of competence is not moderated by individual characteristics. However, we have to be especially critical when it comes to the role of party identification. Two questions should be raised: First, is the public agenda really determined by the media or does the party identification determine what voters consider important? Second, is the issue handling competence a product of party identification? I am neither able to answer these questions with certainty, nor do I doubt the important role of party identification in the electoral decision making process. The following points should nevertheless be considered: (i) Only half of the electorate feels close to a specific party. Even if party identification influences the perceived issue salience, the assigned competence and the vote itself, we need to find ways to explain voting preferences of non-identifiers. (ii) Party identification is a long-term preference. While such preferences might explain a large share of the vote, they do not help to explain changing preferences. Considering the fact that 40 percent of the voters change their party preferences within only a few weeks, we need models explaining such short-term shifts. The model I propose

5. Conclusion

explains volatility. Changing the perceptions about competence takes immediate effect. (iii) The casual direction between issue preferences and party identification cannot be measured in a satisfactory fashion. Theoretically, it is likely that there is a loop of causality between party identification and issue preferences causing endogeneity.²⁹

In conclusion, we have to be critical about the short-term agenda-setting power of the media. The sources of the public agenda and the determinants of MIP change must be further investigated. One possibility would be to look at greater time periods, another promising path is to analyze the interplay between the most pressing problem and the second most pressing problem. Nevertheless, intensive issue reporting does show moderate effects within only a few days. Moreover, this paper demonstrated the central role of issue handling competence. From a party's perspective, being considered competent to solve the most pressing problem is an important asset. In analogy, changes of issue salience produces winners and losers among parties. The finding that issue ownership voting is functioning, is a positive sign for Swiss democracy. In the words of Ole Borre (2001, p. 9): "The idea of issue voting is that of society taking control of its own destiny".

²⁹This is a problem intensively discussed in the field of economic voting (Tilley, Garry and Bold, 2008).

A. Appendix: Weights & Variables

Table A.1.: Weights Media

| | Circulation | German | | French | |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| | | Percent | Weight | Percent | Weight |
| Print Newspapers | | | | | |
| <i>20 Minuten</i> | 496'205 | 20 | 2.79 | | |
| <i>Basler Zeitung</i> | 77'619 | 3.1 | 0.44 | | |
| <i>Blick</i> | 208'360 | 8.4 | 1.17 | | |
| <i>Berner Zeitung</i> | 174'162 | 7 | 0.98 | | |
| <i>Aargauer Zeitung</i> | 178'764 | 7.2 | 1.01 | | |
| <i>Neue Luzerner Zeitung</i> | 121'371 | 4.9 | 0.68 | | |
| <i>Neue Zürcher Zeitung</i> | 132'670 | 5.3 | 0.75 | | |
| <i>Sonntags Blick</i> | 230'180 | 9.3 | 1.3 | | |
| <i>NZZ am Sonntag</i> | 130'133 | 5.2 | 0.73 | | |
| <i>Sonntag</i> | 158'115 | 6.4 | 0.89 | | |
| <i>Südostschweiz</i> | 122'723 | 4.9 | 0.69 | | |
| <i>SonntagsZeitung</i> | 182'129 | 7.3 | 1.03 | | |
| <i>Tages-Anzeiger</i> | 195'618 | 7.9 | 1.1 | | |
| <i>Weltwoche</i> | 77'800 | 3.1 | 0.44 | | |
| <i>20 Minutes</i> | 203'407 | | | 33.6 | 2.01 |
| <i>24 Heures</i> | 75'796 | | | 12.5 | 0.75 |
| <i>Le Matin Dimanche</i> | 175'951 | | | 29 | 1.74 |
| <i>Le Matin</i> | 57'107 | | | 9.4 | 0.57 |
| <i>Le Temps</i> | 42'433 | | | 7 | 0.42 |
| <i>La Tribune de Genève</i> | 51'487 | | | 8.5 | 0.51 |
| Online News | | | | | |
| <i>20minuten.ch</i> | 194'752'216 | 27.2 | 1.09 | | |
| <i>Blick.ch</i> | 386'124'299 | 53.9 | 2.15 | | |
| <i>NZZ Online</i> | 43'272'975 | 6 | 0.24 | | |
| <i>Tagesanzeiger.ch</i> | 92'496'568 | 12.9 | 0.52 | | |
| <i>20minutes.ch</i> | 53'223'320 | | | 49 | 1.96 |
| <i>24heures.ch</i> | 11'062'100 | | | 10.2 | 0.41 |
| <i>LeMatin.ch</i> | 31'252'398 | | | 28.7 | 1.15 |
| <i>tdg.ch</i> | 13'174'625 | | | 12.1 | 0.48 |

I weighed both, the voter and the media dataset. For specifics about the weights used in the voter analysis, I refer to Lutz (2012, p. 86–87). The weights applied in the media content analysis are based on the circulation numbers of Swiss

A. Appendix: Weights & Variables

newspapers³⁰ and the page impressions of online news³¹. In order to create the weights, I considered the size of the news medium, the language, and whether it is an online or a print newspaper. For instance, *20 Minuten* accounts for 20 percent of the German written print newspapers in the analysis. Accordingly, every issue reference of this paper will be multiplied by the factor 2.79.³²

Table A.2.: Variables

| Variable | Question | Wording |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Perceived Saliency | f12700r | In Switzerland there are many unsolved problems. Which one do you think is currently the most important for our country? |
| Issue Competence | F12700r (t ₂) | Which is the party most competent to solve this problem? |
| | f12720main7 f12720main7 (t ₂) | |
| Media Consumption | F13402 | On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all attentive” and 5 means “very attentive”, how attentive have you been to daily newspapers in the last 24 hours. |
| Political Sop. | F15900 | Can you tell me how many parties are represented in the Federal Council? |
| | F16000 | What is the name of the current President of the Swiss Confederation? |
| Party Preference | F16100 | How many Signatures are needed to obtain a popular initiative? |
| | f10860main7 | If you vote, which party will you support? In other words, to which party belongs the majority of candidates you support? |
| | f11801main7 (t ₂) | Tell me, which party you supported at the election day? In other words, to which party belongs the majority of candidates you supported? |
| Party Identity | f140101main7 | Do you feel close to a party? If yes, witch one? |
| Time | intdate | <i>Date of Interview</i> |
| Sex | SEX | <i>Sex of the Respondent</i> |
| Age | AGE | May I ask you how old you are? |
| Religion | F20760 | What denomination or religious community do you belong to? |
| | f20900r | How often do you attend worship service or other events organized by your church? |
| Education | F21310 | What is the highest education you have achieved? |
| Linguistic Region | spr | <i>Language of the respondent</i> |
| Urban Rural | stla | <i>Urbanization</i> |

Table A.2 depicts the variables used in the analysis. I listed the variable names in the left column and the Selects code in the middle column (version 11.6.2012). In the third column, I present the the exact wordings of the questions. If the text

³⁰Source: REMP “Bulletin des Tirages 2011” (www.wemf.ch).

³¹Source: NET-Metrix “Données d’utilisation en ligne, Sept. 2011” (<http://www.net-metrix.ch>).

³²The equation for the weighting factor W_m of news medium m is 1 over the average circulation number of all newspapers \bar{C} multiplied with the circulation number of m :

$$W_m = \frac{1}{\bar{C}} \times C_m$$

A. Appendix: Weights & Variables

is in italics, the information was gained indirectly (e.g. Urbanization via ZIP code). I use t_2 variables to measure changes. In those cases I only displayed the wording if it differs to the t_1 equivalent.

Table A.3.: Issues

| Selects 2011 | 10 Issues | 3 Issues |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Economy | Economy | Economy |
| Labor Market | | |
| Finances, Taxes | | |
| Environment, Energy | Environment | Environment |
| Immigration, Asylum | Immigration | Other issues |
| Education, Culture | Education, Culture | |
| Gender, Discrimination | Gender, Discrimination | |
| International Relations, Conflicts | International Relations | |
| Foreign Policy, Army | | |
| European Integration | | |
| Law, Order | Law, Order | |
| Regions, National Cohesion | | |
| Public Services, Infrastructure | Public Services, Infrastructure | |
| Social Security, Welfare State | Welfare State | |
| Public Health | | |
| Agriculture | Other Issues | |
| Political System, Parties, Politicians | | |
| Other Issues | | |

Table A.3 describes the operationalization of the issue variables. The voter dataset groups the open-ended MIP question into 18 categories. I aggregated these issues to their paramount categories (middle column). Due to the low number of observations (news references and people considering this the MIP), I regrouped agriculture into other issues. Also, I assigned political system to the residual category. To test hypothesis 1, I assigned all issue categories but environment and economy to the residual category (other issues). Note that the original media dataset distinguishes over 100 issues. Hence, an additional step was necessary in order to get the issue categories depicted in the left column of table A.3.

B. Appendix: Tables

Table B.1.: Descriptives – MIP

| Variable | Percent | Observations |
|---|---------|--------------|
| Most Important Problem (t_1) | | |
| <i>Economy</i> | 31 | 525 |
| <i>Education and Culture</i> | 2 | 40 |
| <i>Environment</i> | 19 | 314 |
| <i>Gender, Discrimination</i> | 1 | 9 |
| <i>Immigration</i> | 22 | 373 |
| <i>International Relations</i> | 3 | 54 |
| <i>Law and Order</i> | 3 | 54 |
| <i>Public Services and Infrastructure</i> | 1 | 19 |
| <i>Welfare State</i> | 12 | 211 |
| <i>Other Issues</i> | 6 | 97 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'694 |
| Most Important Problem (t_2) | | |
| <i>Economy</i> | 36 | 617 |
| <i>Education and Culture</i> | 1 | 22 |
| <i>Environment</i> | 18 | 306 |
| <i>Gender, Discrimination</i> | 0 | 1 |
| <i>Immigration</i> | 19 | 314 |
| <i>International Relations</i> | 3 | 57 |
| <i>Law and Order</i> | 3 | 43 |
| <i>Public Services and Infrastructure</i> | 1 | 21 |
| <i>Welfare State</i> | 14 | 228 |
| <i>Other Issues</i> | 5 | 76 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'685 |
| MIP Change | | |
| <i>Change</i> | 47 | 861 |
| <i>No Change</i> | 53 | 762 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'623 |

B. Appendix: Tables

Table B.2.: Descriptives – Competence

| Variable | Percent | Observations |
|--|---------|--------------|
| Most Competent Party (t_1) | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 13 | 156 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 8 | 94 |
| <i>PS</i> | 20 | 231 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 27 | 318 |
| <i>Other Party</i> | 32 | 361 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'160 |
| Most Competent Party (t_2) | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 15 | 174 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 6 | 75 |
| <i>PS</i> | 20 | 228 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 25 | 292 |
| <i>Other Party</i> | 34 | 400 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'170 |
| Competence Change | | |
| <i>Change</i> | 40 | 357 |
| <i>No Change</i> | 60 | 527 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 884 |

Table B.3.: Descriptives – Party Preference

| Variable | Percent | Observations |
|--|---------|--------------|
| Party Preference (t_1) | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 11 | 198 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 9 | 158 |
| <i>PS</i> | 18 | 319 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 19 | 347 |
| <i>Other Party</i> | 43 | 779 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Preference (t_2) | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 15 | 266 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 12 | 208 |
| <i>PS</i> | 20 | 361 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 26 | 465 |
| <i>Other Party</i> | 27 | 501 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Preference Change | | |
| <i>Change</i> | 41 | 740 |
| <i>No Change</i> | 59 | 1'061 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |

B. Appendix: Tables

Table B.4.: Descriptives – Knowledge, Media Consumption, Party ID, Phase

| Variable | Percent | Observations |
|------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Knowledge | | |
| <i>Low</i> | 13 | 229 |
| <i>Medium Low</i> | 33 | 600 |
| <i>Medium High</i> | 37 | 669 |
| <i>High</i> | 17 | 303 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Media Consumption | | |
| <i>Low</i> | 245 | 437 |
| <i>Medium Low</i> | 16 | 281 |
| <i>Medium</i> | 22 | 402 |
| <i>Medium High</i> | 19 | 350 |
| <i>High</i> | 18 | 331 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity (PRL) | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 11 | 205 |
| <i>No</i> | 89 | 1'596 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity (PDC) | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 90 | 1'628 |
| <i>No</i> | 11 | 173 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity (PS) | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 19 | 350 |
| <i>No</i> | 81 | 1'451 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity (UDC) | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 21 | 379 |
| <i>No</i> | 79 | 1'421 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Party Identity (dichotomous) | | |
| <i>Yes</i> | 46 | 814 |
| <i>No</i> | 54 | 968 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'782 |
| Phase | | |
| <i>Neutral</i> | 38 | 693 |
| <i>Economy</i> | 31 | 558 |
| <i>Environment</i> | 31 | 550 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |

B. Appendix: Tables

Table B.5.: Descriptives – Controls

| Variable | Percent | Observations |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Sex | | |
| <i>Male</i> | 49 | 886 |
| <i>Female</i> | 51 | 915 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Age | | |
| <i>Age 18–25</i> | 10 | 173 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | 9 | 160 |
| <i>Age 36–45</i> | 18 | 319 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 20 | 364 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | 20 | 353 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 23 | 432 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Religion | | |
| <i>Protestant</i> | 39 | 702 |
| <i>Catholic</i> | 37 | 660 |
| <i>No/Other</i> | 24 | 436 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'798 |
| Education | | |
| <i>Below Lower Sec.</i> | 7 | 129 |
| <i>Vocational Training</i> | 41 | 731 |
| <i>Higher Sec.</i> | 13 | 238 |
| <i>Tertiary</i> | 39 | 703 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Region | | |
| <i>French</i> | 20 | 351 |
| <i>German</i> | 80 | 1'450 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |
| Urban Rural | | |
| <i>Rural</i> | 32 | 578 |
| <i>Urban</i> | 68 | 1'223 |
| <i>Total</i> | 100 | 1'801 |

B. Appendix: Tables

Table B.6.: Issue Ownership Voting – Multinomial Logistic Reg. (DV: Party Voted)

| | PRL | | PDC | | PS | | UDC | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. |
| Most Competent | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Stable PRL (Other Party)</i> | 2.12*** | 0.44 | -0.56 | 1.06 | -0.37 | 0.76 | 0.27 | 0.57 |
| <i>Newly PRL</i> | 2.85*** | 0.50 | 1.70*** | 0.50 | -0.65 | 1.06 | 1.69*** | 0.62 |
| <i>Stable PDC</i> | 1.62 | 0.99 | 2.82*** | 0.80 | 0.41 | 0.88 | -35.2*** | 1.13 |
| <i>Newly PDC</i> | 0.00 | 0.81 | 2.09** | 0.81 | 1.15* | 0.66 | 0.36 | 0.96 |
| <i>Stable PS</i> | 0.09 | 0.92 | 0.63 | 0.65 | 2.26*** | 0.33 | -1.11 | 1.17 |
| <i>Newly PS</i> | 0.24 | 1.13 | 1.40** | 0.70 | 2.52*** | 0.43 | 0.19 | 0.63 |
| <i>Stable UDC</i> | 0.61 | 0.71 | -1.10 | 1.45 | 0.40 | 0.53 | 3.05*** | 0.42 |
| <i>Newly UDC</i> | 3.10*** | 0.65 | 2.48*** | 0.87 | 0.10 | 0.96 | 3.00*** | 0.67 |
| Party Identification | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 2.70*** | 0.42 | 1.24** | 0.56 | 0.15 | 0.59 | 0.48 | 0.67 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 1.38* | 0.71 | 3.54*** | 0.57 | -0.49 | 0.75 | -0.50 | 0.89 |
| <i>PS</i> | -1.62* | 0.96 | 0.75 | 0.53 | 2.47*** | 0.28 | 0.09 | 0.53 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 0.43 | 0.67 | 0.28 | 0.78 | 0.56 | 0.46 | 3.19*** | 0.41 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | 0.07 | 0.32 | -0.31 | 0.35 | -0.17 | 0.25 | 0.48 | 0.33 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | 0.15 | 0.67 | -0.23 | 0.71 | 0.12 | 0.47 | -0.22 | 0.63 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | -0.08 | 0.66 | -0.59 | 0.78 | -0.11 | 0.55 | 0.01 | 0.61 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 0.61 | 0.48 | 0.03 | 0.58 | 0.48 | 0.38 | -0.02 | 0.48 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | -0.26 | 0.56 | -1.17 | 0.77 | 0.58 | 0.40 | -0.23 | 0.49 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 0.18 | 0.48 | -0.01 | 0.55 | 0.55 | 0.43 | 0.05 | 0.47 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Sec.)</i> | 0.023 | 0.43 | 0.21 | 0.53 | -0.47 | 0.36 | -0.06 | 0.49 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | -0.09 | 0.49 | 0.05 | 0.52 | -0.26 | 0.36 | 0.54 | 0.50 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Sec.</i> | 1.07 | 0.86 | 0.78 | 1.09 | -1.10 | 0.81 | 1.91** | 0.81 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.44 | 0.37 | -0.57 | 0.38 | 0.18 | 0.28 | -0.02 | 0.36 |
| <i>French Reg. (German Reg.)</i> | 0.71** | 0.33 | -0.15 | 0.44 | -0.15 | 0.33 | -0.19 | 0.45 |
| <i>Rel. Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 0.27 | 0.39 | -0.04 | 0.57 | -0.28 | 0.33 | 0.94** | 0.40 |
| <i>Rel. Catholic</i> | -0.21 | 0.43 | 0.95** | 0.47 | -0.00 | 0.32 | 0.50 | 0.44 |
| Intercept | -3.27*** | 0.79 | -2.71*** | 0.69 | -1.86*** | 0.51 | -3.47*** | 0.81 |
| Observations | 882 | | | | | | | |
| <i>NagelkerkeR²</i> | 0.85 | | | | | | | |

Note: Baseline is *other party*; Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

B. Appendix: Tables

Table B.7.: Issue Ownership Voting – Multinomial Logistic Reg. (DV: Party Voted)

| | PRL | | PDC | | PS | | UDC | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|-------------|------|
| | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. | Coefficient | S.E. |
| Most Competent | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Stable PRL (Other Party)</i> | 1.42*** | 0.46 | -0.75 | 1.05 | -0.93 | 0.76 | 0.12 | 0.54 |
| <i>Not PRL Anymore</i> | 0.77 | 0.55 | 0.066 | 0.68 | -1.60*** | 0.62 | 0.042 | 0.63 |
| <i>Stable PDC</i> | 0.92 | 1.01 | 2.40*** | 0.78 | -0.19 | 0.90 | -31.0*** | 1.04 |
| <i>Not PDC Anymore</i> | 0.34 | 0.53 | 1.12* | 0.58 | -0.61 | 0.70 | -0.76 | 0.76 |
| <i>Stable PS</i> | -0.61 | 0.93 | 0.16 | 0.64 | 1.68*** | 0.33 | -1.19 | 1.11 |
| <i>Not PS Anymore</i> | 0.30 | 0.51 | -0.82 | 0.72 | -0.22 | 0.39 | -0.18 | 0.67 |
| <i>Stable UDC</i> | -0.073 | 0.70 | -1.57 | 1.41 | -0.25 | 0.51 | 2.81*** | 0.39 |
| <i>Not UDC Anymore</i> | 0.39 | 0.68 | 0.88 | 0.64 | -0.54 | 0.66 | 1.49** | 0.58 |
| Party Identification | | | | | | | | |
| <i>PRL</i> | 2.72*** | 0.41 | 0.97* | 0.53 | -0.11 | 0.58 | 0.38 | 0.60 |
| <i>PDC</i> | 1.04 | 0.63 | 3.30*** | 0.54 | -0.44 | 0.74 | -0.67 | 0.91 |
| <i>PS</i> | -1.77* | 1.01 | 0.82 | 0.55 | 2.43*** | 0.27 | 0.20 | 0.52 |
| <i>UDC</i> | 0.37 | 0.62 | 0.37 | 0.85 | 0.71 | 0.45 | 2.88*** | 0.40 |
| Socio-Demographics | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female (Male)</i> | -0.03 | 0.30 | -0.36 | 0.35 | -0.07 | 0.24 | 0.44 | 0.34 |
| <i>Age 18–25 (Age 36–45)</i> | 0.25 | 0.63 | -0.29 | 0.71 | -0.022 | 0.44 | -0.35 | 0.70 |
| <i>Age 26–35</i> | -0.24 | 0.65 | -0.87 | 0.90 | -0.23 | 0.54 | -0.30 | 0.61 |
| <i>Age 46–55</i> | 0.29 | 0.42 | -0.16 | 0.55 | 0.38 | 0.36 | -0.33 | 0.51 |
| <i>Age 56–65</i> | -0.66 | 0.55 | -1.32* | 0.70 | 0.62 | 0.38 | -0.51 | 0.51 |
| <i>Age 66 and older</i> | 0.22 | 0.43 | 0.059 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 0.39 | -0.014 | 0.48 |
| <i>Educ. Tertiary (Higher Sec.)</i> | 0.23 | 0.42 | 0.24 | 0.48 | -0.40 | 0.35 | -0.039 | 0.46 |
| <i>Educ. Vocational Training</i> | 0.079 | 0.45 | 0.23 | 0.49 | -0.29 | 0.35 | 0.71 | 0.45 |
| <i>Educ. Below Lower Sec.</i> | 0.49 | 0.89 | 0.61 | 0.98 | -0.78 | 0.63 | 1.71** | 0.79 |
| <i>Urban (Rural)</i> | 0.39 | 0.35 | -0.51 | 0.37 | -0.046 | 0.26 | 0.16 | 0.35 |
| <i>French Reg. (German Reg.)</i> | 0.41 | 0.32 | -0.21 | 0.46 | -0.20 | 0.33 | -0.25 | 0.44 |
| <i>Rel. Protestant (No/Other)</i> | 0.21 | 0.37 | -0.16 | 0.56 | -0.31 | 0.31 | 0.71* | 0.41 |
| <i>Rel. Catholic</i> | 0.041 | 0.41 | 0.94** | 0.45 | -0.0055 | 0.30 | 0.31 | 0.43 |
| Intercept | -2.51*** | 0.70 | -2.17*** | 0.67 | -1.08** | 0.47 | -2.98*** | 0.75 |
| Observations | 882 | | | | | | | |
| NagelkerkeR ² | 0.83 | | | | | | | |

Note: Baseline is *other party*; Reference categories in parentheses; * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Bibliography

- Abbe, Owen G., Jay Goodliffe, Paul S. Herrnson and Kelly D. Patterson. 2003. "Agenda Setting in Congressional Elections: The Impact of Issues and Campaigns on Voting Behavior." *Political Research Quarterly* 56(4):419–430.
- Adams, James, Samuel Merrill and Bernard Grofman. 2005. *A Unified Theory of Party Competition: A Cross-National Analysis Integrating Spatial and Behavioral Factors*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alvarez, R. Michael and John Brehm. 2002. *Hard Choices, Easy Answers: Values, Information, and American Public Opinion*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Atwater, Tony, Michael B. Salwen and Ronald B. Anderson. 1985. "Media Agenda-Setting with Environmental Issues." *Journalism Quarterly* 62(2):393–397.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1987. "Candidate Choice and the Dynamics of the Presidential Nominating Process." *American Journal of Political Science* 31(1):1–30.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1988. *Presidential Primaries and the Dynamics of Public Choice*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Bartels, Larry M. 1993. "Messages Received: The Political Impact of Media Exposure." *The American Political Science Review* 87(2):267–285.
- Becker, Lee B. 1983. The Mass Media and Citizen Assessment of Issue Importance: A Reflection on Agenda-Setting Research. In *Politik und Kommunikation*, ed. Ulrich Saxer. München: Ölschläger pp. 58–63.
- Bélanger, Éric and Bonnie M. Meguid. 2008. "Issue Salience, Issue Ownership, and Issue-Based Vote Choice." *Electoral Studies* 27(3):477–491.
- Best, Henning and Christoph Wolf. 2010. Logistische Regression. In *Hanbuch der sozialwissenschaftlichen Datenanalyse*, ed. Henning Best and Christoph Wolf. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag pp. 827–854.
- Blumler, Jay G. and Dennis Kavanagh. 1999. "The Third Age of Political Communication: Influences and Features." *Political Communication* 16(3):209–230.
- Borre, Ole. 2001. *Issue Voting: An Introduction*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Bibliography

- Boyd, Richard W. 1972. "Popular Control of Public Policy: A Normal Vote Analysis of the 1968 Election." *The American Political Science Review* 66(2):429–449.
- Brady, Henry E. 1985. Some Tricks for Those Intrepid Souls: Analyzing the 1984 Rolling Cross-Section. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans.
- Brady, Henry E. and Richard Johnston. 1987. What's the Primary Message: Horse Race or Issue Journalism? In *Media and Momentum: The New Hampshire Primary and Nomination Politics*, ed. Gary R. Orren and Nelson W. Polsby. Chatham, N.J: Chatham House pp. 127–186.
- Brailsford, Henry N. 1933. "The Last of the English Liberals." *Foreign Affairs* 11(4):634–644.
- Brambor, Thomas, William Clark and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14(1):63–82.
- Brody, Richard A. and Benjamin I. Page. 1972. "Comment: The Assessment of Policy Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 66(2):450–458.
- Brüderl, Josef. 2010. Kausalanalyse mit Paneldaten. In *Handbuch der sozialwissenschaftlichen Datenanalyse*, ed. Christian Wolf and Henning Best. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag pp. 963–994.
- Budge, Ian and Dennis Farlie. 1983. *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Cacioppo, John T., Richard E. Petty, Chuan F. Kao and Regina Rodriguez. 1986. "Central and Peripheral Routes to Persuasion: An Individual Difference Perspective." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51(5):1032–1034.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.
- Cleveland, William S. 1984. "Graphical Methods for Data Presentation: Full Scale Breaks, Dot Charts, and Multibased Logging." *The American Statistician* 38(4):270–280.
- Cohen, Bernhard C. 1963. *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Conover, Pamela Johnston, Virginia Gray and Steven Coombs. 1982. "Single-Issue Voting: Elite-Mass Linkages." *Political Behavior* 4(4):309–331.

Bibliography

- Dalton, Russel J. 1996. Political Cleavages, Issues and Electoral Change. In *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective*, ed. Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi and Pippa Norris. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- de Vries, Catherine E. 2010. "EU Issue Voting: Asset or Liability?" *European Union Politics* 11(1):89–117.
- Dearing, James W and Everett M Rogers. 1996. *Agenda-Setting*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Dobrzynska, Agnieszka and André Blais. 2008. "Testing Zaller's Reception and Acceptance Model in an Intense Election Campaign." *Political Behavior* 30(2):259–276.
- Dobrzynska, Agnieszka, André Blais and Richard Nadeau. 2003. "Do the Media Have a Direct Impact on the Vote? The Case of the 1997 Canadian Election." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 15(1):27–43.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Eichhorn, Wolfgang. 2005. *Agenda-Setting-Prozesse. Eine theoretische Analyse individueller und gesellschaftlicher Themenstrukturierung*. <http://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/archive/00000734/>.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1981. *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Franklin, Mark N. 1985. *The Decline of Class Voting in Britain: Changes in the Basis of Electoral Choice, 1964–1983*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Green-Pedersen, Christoffer. 2007. "The Growing Importance of Issue Competition: The Changing Nature of Party Competition in Western Europe." *Political Studies* 55(3):607–628.
- Hayes, Danny. 2005. "Candidate Qualities Through a Partisan Lens: A Theory of Trait Ownership." *American Journal of Political Science* 49(4):908–923.
- Iyengar, S., M.D. Peters and D.R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the "Not-So-Minimal" Consequences of Television News Programs." *The American Political Science Review* pp. 848–858.
- Iyengar, Shanto. 1990a. "The Accessibility Bias in Politics: Television News and Public Opinion." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 2(1):1–15.
- Iyengar, Shanto. 1990b. Shortcuts to Political Knowledge: The Role of Selective Attention and Accessibility. In *Information and Democratic Process*, ed. John A. Ferejohn and James H. Kuklinski. Urbana: University of Illinois Press pp. 460–185.

Bibliography

- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Johnston, Richard, André Blais, Henry E. Brady and Jean Crête. 1992. *Letting the People Decide: Dynamics of a Canadian Election*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Johnston, Richard and Henry E. Brady. 2002. "The Rolling Cross-Section Design." *Electoral Studies* 21(2):283–295.
- Kenski, Kate. 2006a. Design Concepts for the Rolling Cross-Section Approach. In *Capturing Campaign Dynamics, 2000 and 2004: the National Annenberg Election Survey*, ed. Daniel Romer, Kate Kenski, Kenneth Winneg, Christopher Adasiewicz and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania pp. 43–67.
- Kenski, Kate. 2006b. The Rolling Cross-Section Design. In *Capturing Campaign Dynamics, 2000 and 2004: the National Annenberg Election Survey*, ed. Daniel Romer, Kate Kenski, Kenneth Winneg, Christopher Adasiewicz and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania pp. 68–78.
- Kenski, Kate. 2006c. Visualizing Data Across the Campaign. In *Capturing Campaign Dynamics, 2000 and 2004: the National Annenberg Election Survey*, ed. Daniel Romer, Kate Kenski, Kenneth Winneg, Christopher Adasiewicz and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania pp. 104–120.
- Key, V. O and Milton C Cummings. 1966. *The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936–1960*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Kim, Sei-Hill, Miejeong Han, Doo-Hun Choi and Jeong-Nam Kim. 2012. "Attribute Agenda Setting, Priming and the Media's Influence on How to Think About a Controversial Issue." *International Communication Gazette* 74(1):43–59.
- King, Gary, Michael Tomz and Jason Wittenberg. 2000. "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2):347–361.
- Klapper, Joseph T. 1960. *The effects of mass communication*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press.
- Kriesi, Hanspeter, Romain Lachat, Simon Bornschier and Mark Helbling. 2005. *Der Aufstieg der SVP*. Zürich: NZZ Verlag.
- Krosnick, Jon A. and Donald R. Kinder. 1990. "Altering the Foundations of Support for the President Through Priming." *The American Political Science Review* 84(2):497–512.

Bibliography

- Krosnick, Jon A. and Laura A. Brannon. 1993. "The Impact of the Gulf War on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Multidimensional Effects of Political Involvement on Presidential Evaluations." *The American Political Science Review* 87(4):963–975.
- Lachat, Romain. 2011. "Electoral Competitiveness and Issue Voting." *Political Behavior* 33(4):645–663.
- Ladner, Andreas. 2006. Politische Parteien. In *Handbuch der Schweizer Politik. Manuel de la politique Suisse*, ed. Ulrich Klöti, Peter Knoepfel, Hanspeter Kriesi, Wolf Linder, Yannis Papadopoulos and Pascal Sciarini. Zürich: NZZ Verlag pp. 317–345.
- Lang, Gladys Engel and Kurt Lang. 1981. Watergate: An Exploration of the Agenda-Building Process. In *Mass Communication Review Yearbook.*, ed. Cleveland Wilhoit and Harold de Bock. Vol. 2 Beverly Hills pp. 447–468.
- Lasswell, Harold Dwight. 1927. *Propaganda Technique In World War*. New York: Knopf.
- Lau, Richard R and David P Redlawsk. 2006. *How Voters Decide: Information Processing During Election Campaigns*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lazarsfeld, Paul Felix, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet. 1944. *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign*. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce.
- Lippman, Walter. 1922. *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan. 1967. *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. New York: Free Press.
- Longchamp, Claude. 1998. Überlegungen zur Bedeutung des "Agenda-Setting"-Ansatzes für die Analyse und Gestaltung von politischen Kampagnen am Beispiel der schweizerischen Nationalratswahlen 1983-1995. Presented at the Congress "Wahlen und Politikvermittlung durch Massenmedien", organized by the Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.
- Luskin, Robert C. 1987. "Measuring Political Sophistication." *American Journal of Political Science* 31(4):856–899.
- Lutz, Georg. 2012. *Eidgenössische Wahlen 2011. Wahlteilnahme und Wahlentscheid*. Lausanne: Selects - Fors.
- MacDonald, Stuart Elaine, George Rabinowitz and Ola Listhaug. 1995. "Political Sophistication and Models of Issue Voting." *British Journal of Political Science* 25(4):453–483.

Bibliography

- Martinsson, Johan. 2009. Economic Voting and Issue Ownership. An Integrative Approach PhD thesis University of Gothenburg.
- McCombs, Maxwell E. 2004. *Setting the Agenda: the Mass Media and Public Opinion*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- McCombs, Maxwell E. and Donald L. Shaw. 1972. "The Agenda Setting Function of the Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36(2).
- McCombs, Maxwell, Esteban Lopez-Escobar and Juan Pablo Llamas. 2000. "Setting the Agenda of Attributes in the 1996 Spanish General Election." *Journal of Communication* 50(2):77–92.
- McGuire, William. 1986. "The Myth of Massive media Impact: Savings and Salvagings." *Public Communication and Behavior* 1:173–257.
- McLeod, Jack M., Lee B. Becker and James E. Byrnes. 1974. "Another Look At the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press." *Communication Research* 1(2):131–166.
- Mendelsohn, Matthew. 1996. "The Media and Interpersonal Communications: The Priming of Issues, Leaders, and Party Identification." *The Journal of Politics* 58(1):112–125.
- Mendelsohn, Matthew and Richard Nadeau. 1999. "The Rise and Fall of Candidates in Canadian Election Campaigns." *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 4(2):63–76.
- Miller, Joanne M. and Jon A. Krosnick. 2000. "News Media Impact on the Ingredients of Presidential Evaluations: Politically Knowledgeable Citizens Are Guided by a Trusted Source." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2):301–315.
- NES. 1985. Progress of the Rolling Cross Sections. Technical Report (Document nes010135).
- Nicolet, Sarah and Pascal Sciarini. 2006. "When Do Issue Opinions Matter, and to Whom? The Determinants of Long-Term Stability and Change in Party Choice in the 2003 Swiss Elections." *Swiss Political Science Review* 12(4):159–190.
- Nicolet, Sarah and Pascal Sciarini. 2010. Conclusion. In *Le destin électoral de la gauche: le vote socialiste et vert en Suisse*, ed. Sarah Nicolet and Pascal Sciarini. Chêne-Bourg: Georg Éditeur pp. 439–467.
- Page, Benjamin I and Robert Y. Shapiro. 1992. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*. American Politics and Political Economy Series Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Park, Robert E. 1922. *The Immigrant Press and its Control*. New York: Harper.

Bibliography

- Patterson, Thomas E and Robert D. McClure. 1976. *The Unseeing Eye: the Myth of Television Power in National Politics*. New York: Putnam.
- Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(3):825–850.
- Petrocik, John R., William L. Benoit and Glenn J. Hansen. 2003. "Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952-2000." *Political Science Quarterly* 118(4):599–626.
- Pomper, Gerald M. 1972. "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968." *The American Political Science Review* 66(2):415–428.
- Powell, G.Bingham. 2004. "Political Representation in Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 7(1):273–296.
- Prior, M. 2009. "The Immensely Inflated News Audience: Assessing Bias in Self-Reported News Exposure." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 73(1):130–143.
- Rabinowitz, George and Stuart Elaine Macdonald. 1989. "A Directional Theory of Issue Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 83(1):93–121.
- Reich, Zivi. 2009. *Sourcing the News. Key Issues in Journalism. An Innovative Study of the Israeli Press*. Cresskill: Hampton Press.
- RePass, David .E. 1971. "Issue Salience and Party Choice." *The American Political Science Review* 65(2):389–400.
- Robertson, David B. 1976. *A Theory of Party Competition*. London: J. Wiley.
- Rogers, E.M., J.W. Dearing and D. Bregman. 1993. "The Anatomy of Agenda-Setting Research." *Journal of Communication* 43(2):68–84.
- Scheufele, D.A. and D. Tewksbury. 2007. "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models." *Journal of communication* 57(1):9–20.
- Scheufele, Dietram A. 2000. "Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication." *Mass Communication and Society* 3(2-3):297–316.
- Schmitt-Beck, Rüdiger, Thorsten Faas and Ansgar Wolsing. 2010. "Kampagnendynamik bei der Bundestagswahl 2009 : Die Rolling Cross-Section-Studie im Rahmen der German Longitudinal Election Study 2009." *Working Paper - Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung* (134).
- Schuman, Howard, Jacob Ludwig and John A. Krosnick. 1986. "The Perceived Threat of Nuclear War, Salience, and Open Questions." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50(4):519–536.

Bibliography

- Schwarz, Daniel, André Bächtiger and Georg Lutz. 2011. Switzerland: Agenda-Setting Power of Government in a Separation-of-Powers Framework. In *The Role of Government in Legislative Agenda-Setting*, ed. Bjørn Erik Rasch and George Tsebelis. London: Routledge pp. 127–144.
- Selb, Peter. 2003. *Agenda-Setting Prozesse im Wahlkampf*. Bern: Haupt.
- Shanks, J. Merrill, Warren E. Miller, Henry E. Brady and Bradley L. Palmquist. 1985. Viability, Electability, and Presidential 'Preference': Initial Results From the 1984 NES Continuous Monitoring Design". Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.
- Shaw, Donald Lewis and Maxwell E. McCombs. 1977. *The Emergence of American Political Issues: the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press*. The West Series in Journalism St. Paul: West Pub. Co.
- Shehata, Adam. 2010a. Media Matter. The Political Influences of the News Media PhD thesis Mid Sweden University.
- Shehata, Adam. 2010b. "Unemployment on the Agenda: A Panel Study of Agenda-Setting Effects During the 2006 Swedish National Election Campaign." *Journal of Communication* 60(1):182–203.
- Shoemaker, Pamela J. 1989. *Communication Campaigns About Drugs: Government, Media, and the Public*. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Takeshita, Toshio. 2005. "Current Critical Problems in Agenda-Setting Research." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 18(3):275–296.
- Tavits, Margit. 2008. "Policy Positions, Issue Importance, and Party Competition in New Democracies." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(1):48–72.
- Tilley, James, John Garry and Tessa Bold. 2008. "Perceptions and Reality: Economic Voting at the 2004 European Parliament Elections." *European Journal of Political Research* 47(5):665–686.
- van der Brug, Wouter. 2004. "Issue Ownership and Party Choice." *Electoral Studies* 23(2):209–233.
- Walgrave, Stefaan, Stuart Soroka and Michiel Nuytemans. 2008. "The Mass Media's Political Agenda-Setting Power : A Longitudinal Analysis of Media, Parliament, and Government in Belgium (1993 to 2000)." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(6):814–836.
- Wood, B. Dan and Jeffrey S. Peake. 1998. "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Agenda Setting." *The American Political Science Review* 92(1):173–184.
- Zaller, John. 1992. *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.