

Abstracts

Introduction: Politicians and Media

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It's a widespread and persistent assumption that the media has great influence on politics. But is it true? In this introductory article we present how the idea of great media influence on politics historically has been a widespread public perception, but at the same time it is only in recent decades that research in political communication has been able to document that the media is an important, autonomous political institution. At the same time we warn again exaggerating the influence of the media. The media today do play a greater role in politics than earlier, but they interact with other political actors, organizations and institutions. The chance for the media to influence these is contingent upon a number of different factors.

Indexing theory

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Indexing refers to the norms used by news organizations to select news sources and frames. When indexing norms become widely shared across organizations, media systems may display familiar national characteristics and act as an institution. The most common indexing norm found in many democratic press systems is to index sources and their views according to the power balances among actors in political institutions that journalists deem likely to affect the outcomes of political conflicts or policy processes. New areas of research include how changes in media systems, such as fragmenting audiences and proliferating media channels, may change information production routines.

**Political agenda setting:
Studying the impact of media on politics
with a focus on issue attention**

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This article introduces the political agenda setting approach to study the effects of media coverage on politics. The basic idea is that an increase in media attention for an issue results in a subsequent increase in political attention for the same issue. Previous research has shown that this presence and size of this effect depends on a range of contingent characteristics, including the issue investigated, the media outlet, other content characteristics, the political agenda (symbolic or substantial) and characteristics of the political actor involved. The empirical example in this paper looks at the effect of newspaper coverage on a wide range of issues on parliamentary questions in France, the Netherlands and Spain. Results confirm the presence of an influence from media on politics. This influence is larger for opposition parties and somewhat for radical parties. Among opposition parties, the impact is again larger for radical parties and also depends on size, with larger parties being affected more.

**The influence of news media on
political elites: Investigating strategic
responsiveness in Congress**

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News media play a central role in democratic politics, yet we know little about how media affect the behavior of policy makers. To understand the conditions under which news media influence political elites, we advance a theory of strategic responsiveness, which contends that elected representatives are more likely to heed their constituents' preferences when voters are attentive. Accordingly, news media's influence on legislative behavior should be most apparent near elections and dependent on the partisan composition of the constituency. We capitalize on the incremental rollout of the conservative Fox News Channel in the late 1990s to evaluate our theoretical predictions. Fox News caused both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to increase support for the Republican Party position on divisive votes, but only in the waning months of the election cycle and among those members who represent districts with a sizable portion of Republican voters.

**Mediatization as self-fulfilling prophecy:
An analysis of Danish MP's presumed
influence of the media**

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According to the mediatization theory, the presumed effect of the media on the public is an important reason why politicians adjust their own behavior to the logic of the media. Nevertheless, we have limited knowledge about the antecedents and consequences of politicians' presumed influence of the media on the public. A survey shows that, across the board, Danish Members of Parliament perceive the media as having a strong influence on the public. When MPs presume a strong influence of the media, they are more cynical towards the media and see their colleagues as show horses who do anything for media attention. When politicians believe the media to be influential on the audience, they are more likely to base political initiatives on media coverage. No impact was found of presumed media influence on attempts to get coverage in the media. It is concluded that presumed media influence indeed plays a role in the mediatization of politics. Presumed media influence is however mainly related to negative attitudes towards the media and other MPs, while the impact on the MPs own behavior seems limited by the institutional position of the MP and structural characteristics of the political system.

Realistic synthesis – an alternative approach for meta-analysis

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Realistic synthesis is a relatively new approach and method for meta-analysis of public interventions. The approach was developed by Ray Pawson and has not, so far, been applied and tested on public policies and interventions in Denmark. In this article, we construct and test a realist synthesis for a widely used measure in Danish active labour market policies, namely »enterprise training« (virksomhedspraktik) for people on social assistance benefits. In general, there is evidence to support that enterprise training works in returning participants into paid employment. However we lack knowledge about how, why and for whom, which is crucial to further improve and target the measure. We find that realist synthesis is a useful alternative to quantitative meta-analysis and that realist synthesis is particularly applicable to complex interventions and problems within social and welfare policies.

**Unexplainable Differences?
Budget Institutions and Public Finances
in Denmark and Sweden after the
Financial Crisis**

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Why did the financial crisis of 2008 have very different effects on public finances in Sweden in comparison with Denmark. Based on a comparison of fiscal institutions in Denmark and Sweden this article investigates whether differences in fiscal performance can be explained by differences in budgetary institutions, where Sweden had a more centralized budget procedure than Denmark before the enactment of the Danish Budget Law in 2012. Due to differences in business cycles as well as changes in Danish pension taxation it is hard to unambiguously assess whether the difference between fiscal performance in Denmark and Sweden is due to budget procedures. However the more centralized Swedish budget procedure might have been at least partly responsible for the better fiscal performance in Sweden. At the municipal level the differences in budget institutions seem to explain a great deal of the trend in the share of municipalities with budget overruns.

Review Article: Research freedom in Denmark in international perspective

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Research freedom is a core value in modern societies. Research freedom is an ideal, a regulative principle to be realized as well as possible. This should be done through the legal and institutional framework, policies and strategies, economic conditions, standards and working conditions, etc., As well as the practices and traditions which embeds research.

How is the state of research freedom in Denmark today? Based on the investigation of the very concept of research freedom and its justification in an international perspective the paper examines what exists in authoritative documents from Danish authorities on freedom of research. The conclusion is that research freedom has a peripheral and low-ranking position in research and university policy in spite of the great changes that have taken place. The article is based on an ongoing investigation of research freedom in Denmark.