Mapping the Executive Policy Agenda

Norwegian Governments' Issue Priorities 1946-2021

Tuva Marie Kavli

Spring 2022

Master's Thesis in Political Science

45 credits

Department of Political Science

Faculty of Social Science

University of Oslo

Word Count: 33 238

May 23, 2022

Abstract

This thesis investigates the development of the Norwegian policy agenda between 1946 and 2021, building on the theoretical frameworks provided by Punctuated Equilibrium, partisan neutrality, and core issue theory.

As a part of the Comparative Agendas Project, 5855 sentences within 77 executive speeches (Trontaler) have been coded into policy categories to measure policy agenda developments. The relative attention devoted to each policy category is then investigated in a longitudinal, quantitative study of how Norwegian governments' issue attention develop over time. The analysis is structured based on three central agenda-perspectives:

1) Change dynamics and punctuations
2) Partisan compositions and attention shifts
3) Internal issue dynamics and agenda diversity

The findings show that the Norwegian executive agenda has developed through small adjustments, punctuated by major leaps in issue attention. In other words, governments sometimes take U-turns in the amount of attention they devote to a policy domain from one year to another. Parties seems to have a limited effect on agenda setting, as the biggest attention shifts occur more often, and rarely simultaneously, as changes in the partisan composition of government. Rather, the need to respond to external events seems to be more determinant in redirecting executive attention, independently from the government's ideological placement. Furthermore, when the attention devoted to the economy, foreign affairs and defense increase, other issues are crowded out from the agenda, decreasing agenda diversity. Thereby, rather than partisan factors, internal issue dynamics connected to the core functions of the state, seems to give an indication of when Norwegian governments are open to include new issues on their agendas.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor Jens Jungblut for providing great feedbacks and motivating words, always answering my emails in the shortest amount of time. Also, thank you for hiring me as research assistant the spring of 2021, giving me the opportunity to experience political science research firsthand, and learn about policy agenda beyond what I've read in books. I have really enjoyed being a part of the CAP process!

Thank you, Jon Valgermo, for being a great friend, a smart study partner and an intelligent colleague. Without your insights and R-skills, this thesis would not have been the same.

Thank you to my parents, Hanne and Håkon Kavli, for spending so much of your time providing feedback to countless drafts. I am so lucky to have such smart and supportive parents by my side.

Thank you, Nikolay, for being so loving and patient, providing a safe space whenever I needed a break. And lastly, thank you to the people at PC-sal 236 ("7 etasje" especially), for filling long days with laughs, hugs, debriefing and coffee breaks.

I take full responsibility for possible mistakes and shortcomings in this thesis.

Tuva Marie Kavli

May 23, 2022

Table of Contents

Content: Figures

Content: Tables

Introduction

"Our goal is to gain control over the pandemic by winter. I want to be the minister of health. I do not want to be a corona-minister."[1]

Those were the words of the new health minister, Ingvild Kjerkhol, shortly after the Labor Party (Arbeiderpartiet) and the Center Party (Senterpartiet) replaced the Solberg coalition in the 2021 national elections (Fjellanger et al., 2021). People were puzzled by this statement, as strictly speaking, the health ministry's agenda cannot solely be determined by changes in the party composition in government. The pandemic and its consequences needed to be attended to, even if it meant pushing the Labor party's planned health care policies off the agenda for a period. Kjerkhol's quote is a good illustration of the dilemma governments face between going through with pre-planned policies and responding to external shocks and policy inputs after entering office. Although parties promote their "favorite" issues during election campaigns, a range of additional responsibilities follows for the party's holding office. The government-mandate presents the parties with a constant stream of developments and tasks only the executive can attend to, like a global pandemic, a war, or an energy crisis. This challenge opens a question which is fundamental to political science, namely: How do governments allocate their limited attention span between different issues, and what might cause their agenda to change?

How the policy agenda is set, and who gets their issues represented, is ultimately a question that affects the functioning of democracy - a topic that present in the heart of political science. By applying the common methods and coding procedures of the international Comparative Agendas Project (CAP, 2022a), this thesis aims to provide new data and new knowledge about how Norwegian governments sets their policy agenda. Thereby, insight of agenda dynamics can be combined across countries in a way that enables public policy scientists to map policy agendas systematically and comparably, cumulating our knowledge about how different issues are represented in a democratic regime.

[1] "Vårt mål er å få kontroll over pandemien over vinteren. Jeg vil være helseminister. Jeg vil ikke være coronaminister"

1.1. The Policy Agenda: A Prerequisite for Policymaking

Political actors, ideological divisions, public opinion, budgets and reforms are all important to map the process in which policy outputs come about. However, an essential component of the policy process, often neglected in the shadow of political drama and policymaking, is how and when issues reach the political agenda in first place. How do decision makers allocate their attention in response to the waves of policy inputs presented to them? What issues are considered most pressing, and what issues are pushed under the radar? And perhaps most importantly – what makes decision makers change their agendas away from the status quo? These questions are critical, but complicated puzzles within the public policy domain. To occur, policy changes need to be talked about and debated. However, decision makers cannot attend to all issues at once, and the institutional capacity of political systems must filter out some of the waves of information streams to hinder political chaos (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b, p. 605). Therefore, some argue that it is attention, rather than resources, that are scarce for politicians (Combs & Zhu, 1995; Jennings & John, 2009; Jones, 1999; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005).

When attention is a limited resource, the space different issues receive on the policy agenda, i.e., what actors closely related to, or within the government, talk about (Kingdon, 1984, p. 3), can have important implications for policymaking, as increased attention to one issue, might crowd other issues out. In addition, the issues that do reach the agenda tells us something about the probability of policy output and proposals in the future, as a pre-requisite for policy changes to occur, is that it is talked about, debated, and granted some form of attention (Bevan, 2019, p. 20). Elections and other types of political participation is therefore not only a way for the public to communicate ideological divisions, but also a tool to signal what problems politicians needs to solve and pay more attention to (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 9). Thereby, studying policy agenda dynamics – how decisionmakers' attention develops over time along with the issue structure on their agendas – is essential to understand how policy change comes about, and how public interests are represented in a democratic political system.

Agenda-setting literature enlighten the dynamics before the polarizations and debates by discussing how issues capture decisionmakers attention in the first place (Jones &

Baumgartner, 2012, p. 6). The policy agendas of parties (Walgrave & Nuytemans, 2009), the executive (John & Jennings, 2010; Van Assche, 2012), and the legislative power (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b; Jones et al., 2003) have been researched as a part of the quest of understanding policy agenda dynamics. In this thesis, the focus will be on the Norwegian executive policy agenda through mapping the content of "Trontaler" (executive speeches) in the post war period. Investigating developments on what governments choose to address is important to understand the process behind public policymaking and issue representation. Firstly, when governments present intentions of policy fulfilments on their agendas, it is often reflected in policy outputs at a later point in time (Bara, 2005). For example, the policies listed in executive speeches have been found to correlate strongly with laws proposed afterwards (Breunig et al., 2019). In other words, what issues governments talk about gives us a good indication of future policy change, and the potential for an issue to move from the agenda-setting stage to the policymaking stage. Secondly, the attributes of the executive agenda itself may also tell us something about the governments' issue priorities. A diverse agenda is an indication of a wide representation of interests and can tell us something about when the agenda is open for more inputs (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1008), while a concentrated agenda sheds light on what policy domains the government regard as extra important.

Executive speeches are therefore used frequently as a measure of governmental priorities (Breeman et al., 2009; Jennings et al., 2011; John & Jennings, 2010; Mortensen et al., 2011), and are one of the most common measures of the policy agenda (Dowding et al., 2016, p. 11). Although there are cross-country variations in what institutional setting the speech is held, they all serve the purpose of representing the executive priorities the upcoming year (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1009). A few examples are the Queen's Speech in the United Kingdom (Bevan & Jennings, 2019, p. 179), the Discurso de Investidura (investiture speeches) in Spain (Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2019, p. 155), and the "Troonrede" (Speeches from the Throne) in the Netherlands (Timmermans & Breeman, 2019, p. 131)[2]. Like the speeches mentioned above, the Trontaler are presented annually by the monarch on behalf of the government and covers the governments' main plans for policymaking the upcoming year (Kongehuset, 2021).

[2] For more information about CAP and the country-projects, see Baumgartner, Breuning & Grossman (2019).

The aim of this thesis is thereby to take a step back from the debates, ideological divisions and policy outputs to answer the question:

How does the Norwegian government's policy agenda develop over time?

To unravel the most central components of agenda developments, three perspectives will be explored in further detail:

1) Change dynamics and punctuations

2) Partisan compositions and attention shifts

3) Internal issue dynamics and agenda diversity.

The raw data used to investigate these three perspectives contain 5855 sentences allocated on 77 speeches, from the first post-war speech presented on behalf of the Gerhardsen government in 1946, to the last speech of the Solberg government in 2021[3]. Each sentence within the executive speeches is categorized into policy topics, like "Macroeconomics", "Health care" and "Foreign policy" to name a few[4]. Each policy topic is then assigned a percentage value based on the amount of attention they receive each year. The dataset thereby covers 1617 observations: The number of policy topics (21) times the number of executive speeches (77[5]). These relative measures lay the groundwork for the methods used to investigate how and when attention to issues increase and decrease over time. In addition, a more qualitative investigation of the biggest attention shifts (punctuations) and the years they occur will be examined, to see whether different government party compositions address different issues on their agendas. Furthermore, the issue diversity of each speech, measured through Entropy scores, will be used as dependent variables in autoregressive distributed lag models to show how the internal issue dynamics affects agenda diversity.

[3] See online Appendix 8.x, Datasets: "Trontaler 1946-2021 (complete text)"
[4] See Appendix 8.1 for an overview of all policy topics covered in the codebook
[5] Speeches each year 1946-2021, including two speeches in 1959.

In the following section, the three agenda perspectives presented above is elaborated further by connecting them to three specific research questions derived from central agenda-setting theories.

1.2. Research Questions: Changes, Parties and Core Issues

1) Change dynamics and punctuations

The description of how Norwegian governments' issue attention changes over time will be presented in the light of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). According to PET, the agenda of institutions dealing with complex problems are characterized by long periods of stability, punctuated by sudden, disproportional changes in issue priorities. The stability stems from politicians' reluctance to alter previous decisions, as well as their scarce attention spans. In addition, the political systems provide institutional costs, like electoral thresholds, vetoes, negotiations and committee preparations, to filter out noise and promote system stability. Therefore, a bias towards the status quo will cause the policy agenda to remain stable, with only small adjustments, over long periods of time. However, after periods of built-up friction, the external pressure of political inputs will pass a threshold in which governments can no longer push the issue under the radar. In instances like these, the attention towards the issue in question is disproportionally amplified, to compensate for previous ignorance. This punctuated nature of policy agenda development has found broad empirical support across a variety of political systems (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b; Breeman et al., 2009; Hegelich et al., 2015; John & Jennings, 2010; Walgrave & Nuytemans, 2009). To connect the thesis to one of the most well-established parts of agenda research, percentage changes in issue attention will be used to investigate whether the Norwegian executive agenda follows the punctuated pattern of policy change:

To what extent is the Norwegian governmental agenda characterized by big changes in issue attention after long periods of stability?

---

2) Party compositions and attention shifts

Secondly, a more thorough investigation of the biggest attention shifts (punctuations) will be used to see whether punctuations are due to a change in government parties. The theoretical divisions of the expected influence of parties on the policy agenda, can shortly be summarized as party differentiation versus party neutrality. Party differentiation can be connected to the reasoning of issue-ownership theory, stressing that parties prefer to talk about different issues within their area of expertise to increase their popularity (Budge & Dennis J. Farlie, 1983). Therefore, one might expect that changes in issue attention on the executive policy agenda corresponds with the changes in government parties, as parties differ in their preferred issue structure (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009a, p. 79). If one assumes that an election is a way for the public to express a need for an attention-shift in decisionmakers policy priorities (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 9) this connection would also be democratically plausible. Partisan neutrality, on the other hand, stress that although parties differ in their ideological placements, they still need to address a similar set of issues during their time in office (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009a, p. 78). Although different parties disagree on how to solve issues, the government mandate, and the need to respond to external events, is a responsibility that follows the executive independently of its ideological left-right placement. In the Norwegian context, parties and agenda change is an interesting research avenue, as the multiparty system allows for relatively frequent changes in government and complex coalition compositions. With a timeframe covering 76 years of data and 17 different party compositions, the biggest punctuations will be listed alongside partisan changes to investigate:

To what extent can changes in government parties explain changes in issue attention?

---

3) Internal issue dynamics and agenda diversity

The third approach takes a different perspective on the way the executive structure their attention. Jones and Baumgartner (2012, p. 10) argue that to understand how political outputs comes about, one must also investigate the internal dynamics within the system, and not just assume that the relationship between the agenda and external events (such as changes in parties) is linear and direct. Classical state theory emphasize that core functions of the state (macroeconomy, law and order, defense, foreign affairs, and government operations), are issues governments always need to address, as they are associated to policy domains that only can be handled by the national government (Hobbes, 1909; Locke, 1924; Rousseau, 1762). The weight of these responsibilities creates an issue hierarchy within the executive policy agenda, in which the urgency of core issues, takes prevalence over the urgency of non-core issues. Therefore, by connecting agenda-setting to classical state theory, Jennings et al. (2011, p. 1006) argue that increased attention to core issues leads to a lower agenda diversity, leaving less opportunity for other issues to capture executive attention. In other words, the scarce attention-span of governments is biased towards the core functions of the state, so when these require more attention, other issues are not prioritized. The level of core issue urgency can thereby give an indication of when government attention is most responsive to new political inputs (Jennings et al., 2011). Mapping how Norwegian governments' have allocated their attention between core, and non-core issues, internal issue dynamics and agenda diversity will be investigated by answering:

To what extent does increased attention to core issues lead to a lower agenda diversity?

1.3. Contributions

Before elaborating on the main contributions of this thesis, it is useful to establish what the literature have already provided of empirical insights when it comes to executive agenda developments. In connection to the three perspectives touched upon in this thesis (change dynamics, partisan effects and internal issue dynamics) the most central findings can me summarized as followed: First, the gradual changes within executive agendas are sometimes

abrupted by major leaps in issue attention, as the governments redirect their attention towards a different set of policy domains (Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2019; John & Jennings, 2010; Van Assche, 2012). Second, despite evidence of the importance of party issue-competence and voting (Green & Hobolt, 2008; Lachat, 2014; Walgrave et al., 2012) the attempts to trace these leaps of attention back to partisan changes have revealed that the governments' agenda is not necessarily dependent on the parties in office (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009a; Breeman et al., 2009; Mortensen et al., 2011). Third, research on internal agenda dynamics and diversity has revealed that the policy topics government devote their attention to are reliant on the urgency of issues connected to the core functions of the state (Jennings et al., 2011). By investigating Norwegian agenda developments based on these three perspectives, the research questions contribute to enrichen former research from a Norwegian perspective.

However, although the findings summarized above are well-established in former agenda-research, they are rarely analyzed side by side. This thesis, touching upon all three perspectives, will therefore provide a relatively thorough investigation of executive agenda developments. Furthermore, some research gaps are still present, and in the need for more empirical studies. First, the connection between attention shifts and political parties are somewhat diverging, and results are hard to compare, as different countries vary in their party- and election systems. Therefore, parties' role in executive agenda setting needs further investigation within new country-contexts, (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2019, p. 9; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 12) a gap new Norwegian data can contribute to fill. Second, although diversity is not a new concept for the agenda-setting literature (Boydstun et al., 2014; John & Jennings, 2010; Peter & de Vreese, 2003), there has been limited attempts to test Jennings' et al. (2011) findings of the systematic difference between regular, and core issues' effect on the diversity. This thesis therefore expands the scope of empirical studies aiming to map government issue priorities based on core issue theory.

Third, this thesis presents an entirely new country perspective to the agenda-setting literature, as the investigation of agenda developments have not been researched with Norwegian executive speeches before. Thereby, this thesis speaks to a broad array of literature, while at the same time providing a thorough investigation of governmental issue attention, from a new national context. The broader aim of this thesis is thereby to cumulate knowledge around

some central aspects of agenda-setting research with brand new data, filling a country-specific gap in the literature. As the coding has been done parallel with the writing of the thesis, the Norwegian data is also more up to date compared to most executive agenda research, including speeches up until 2021. This fills in the research-gap also from a temporal perspective, providing insights of agenda developments in recent years within a dataset covering over seven decades of Norwegian governments' policy agenda.

Lastly, the data gathering, and coding of the Norwegian executive speeches will contribute to the development of an international research community: The Comparative Agendas Project (CAP). CAP is a comparative research project providing data on policy agendas in 23 countries, two US states and the European union (CAP 2022a). The aim of the project is to develop knowledge on what governments do and prioritize, generating comparable data across countries based on a common coding scheme[6] (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2019, p. 5; CAP, 2022a). A standardized cross-national codebook enables the knowledge about policy agendas to cumulate in a way that allows for comparison across time, issues, and countries.

As the CAP research field is moving towards a comparative perspective (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2019, p. 7), the Norwegian project will broaden the scope of data for scholars asking comparative research questions on public policy and agenda-setting in future research. This crossing between comparative analysis and public policy is not often seen in the political science literature, and CAP has been mentioned as one of the most prominent research projects attempting to fill in this gap (B. G. Peters, 2018, p. 94). Thereby, the provision of the first Norwegian CAP data contributes to a more systematic organization of the study of public policy and agenda-setting. By providing insight on several central agenda-setting perspectives touched upon within different parts of the literature, the Norwegian executive agenda gains a clear position within the research field, the results providing interesting avenues for future research both from a comparative, and a Norwegian perspective.

[6] See Appendix 8.1 for a complete overview of the CAP Codebook

1.4. Structure and Summary

In the following chapter, I elaborate the background of my three research questions by connecting them to Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET), partisan neutrality and differentiation theory, and core issue theory. In each section, I will also summarize the most central findings within the agenda literature in connection to my research questions before presenting one hypothesis connected to each of the three. The Research Design section explains why Norwegian executive speeches lay a good ground for investigation of the policy agenda. In the Methodology chapter, the Comparative Agendas Project and its Codebook is described and discussed in greater detail, followed by operationalizations and statistical models, as well as some reflection around methodological limitations. The proceeding analysis chapter is structured in accordance with the three hypotheses, with an introductory part describing central characteristics of the Norwegian executive agenda in terms of agenda size (speech length) and the types of issues that has been addressed in the post war period. After discussing the findings, I will summarize how the Norwegian governments' agenda has developed over time by connecting it to the three research questions. Finally, I will present some avenues for future research on the Norwegian policy agenda based on some methodological, theoretical, and empirical insights.

2. Theory

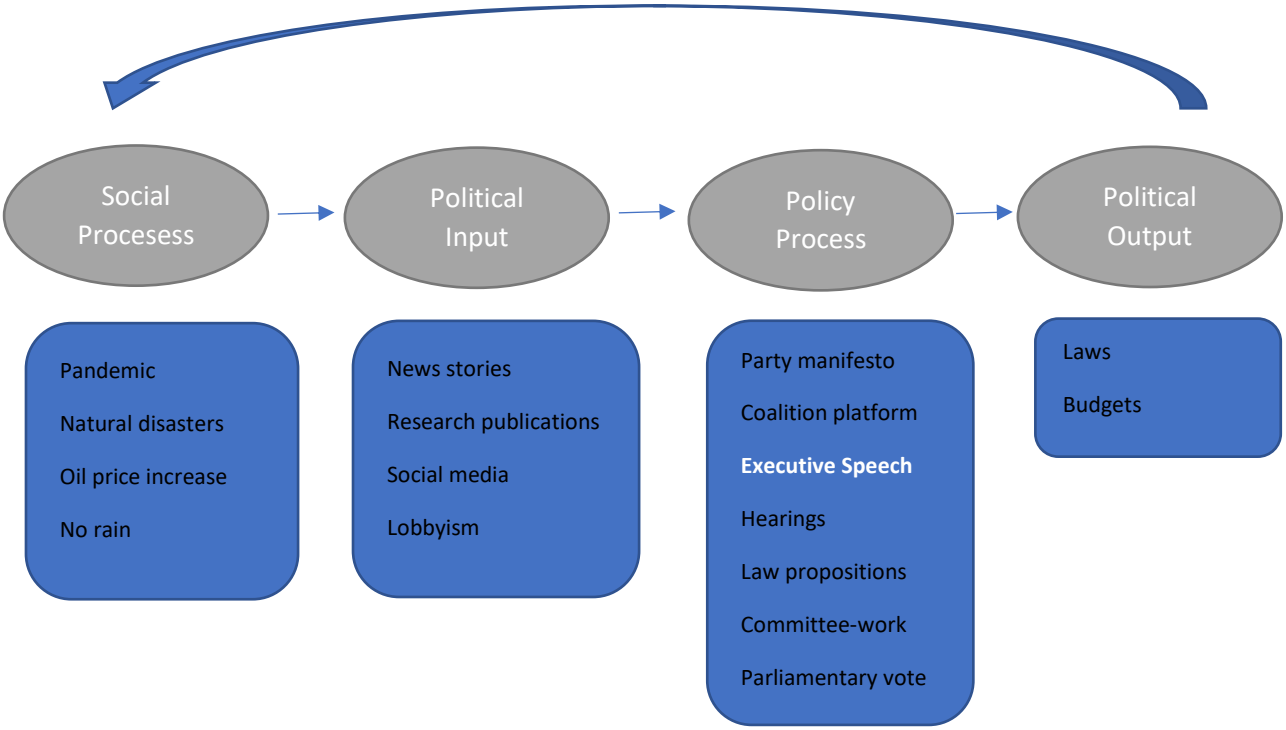
2.1. The Policy Cycle

To understand the dynamics of governmental attention and agenda-setting, it is not sufficient to view the agenda in isolation. Just like other parts of political activities, the governmental agenda exists within a political system, alongside a variety of processes that affects issues' ability to reach decisionmakers' attention. Baumgartner et al. (2009b, p. 605-606) define this as the policy cycle, splitting policymaking into four components: social processes, political inputs, policy processes and political outputs. Social processes are broadly defined as "everything" happening in our external environment, like pandemics, natural disasters, financial crises, and wars. Social processes have political consequences, observed, and processed by politicians: Financial crises affect employment rates, wars affect foreign trade and national security, rising energy prices affect the economic conditions of industries, and a pandemic affect hospital working environments and the study conditions for students. Before politicians can respond to these social processes in the form of concrete policies, the consequences of the social processes need to be presented to them in the form of political inputs. Politicians monitor a range of political inputs daily from a variety of different sources. Media presents news stories about over-worked nurses, farmers' unions push for agricultural subsidies, data collections and reports about rising unemployment rates is presented by economists and the declining psychological health of high school students is shared on social media. In other words, politicians are presented to a wave of information and issues on a regular basis, all of which they can choose to include or exclude on the political agenda.

The political inputs that do reach the agenda then goes through a policy process. The policy process consists of the initial steps before policy output (i.e., budgets and passed laws) comes about, like parliamentary hearings, public debates and introduction of legislative proposals (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b, p. 606). The proximity towards policy outputs varies at different stages of the policy process, which again may affect the threshold for reaching politicians attention and the policy agenda (elaborated by Baumgartner and Jones (2005) below). As the "Trontale" is a presentation of the governments' priorities for the upcoming year, it is reasonable to say that the issues presented in the speech have passed the stages of social processes and political inputs. It has not, however, reached the status of political outputs, as it represents a summary of the governments intentions in the future, reliant on parliamentary support for the policy proposals to come through. Figure 2.1 below illustrates a

simplification of how policies come about, from social process to political output, and where executive speeches can be places within the policy process. The speech is further along the policy process than the pledges presented in party manifestos and coalition platforms (Bara, 2005, p. 592), but earlier than the law propositions presented to the parliament after public hearings.

Figure 2. 1 The Policy Cycle (with examples)



Of course, the executive speech is only one of many agenda platforms where the government can convey their priorities (social media, coalition platforms and TV debates to mention some alternatives). It is therefore not my intention to indicate that executive speeches are the only possible measure of government agenda developments. The speech is, however, an interesting indication of government priorities, as it summarizes the governments' main plans for policymaking the upcoming year. It is therefore a good indication of the types of political input that has caught the government's attention, as the speeches' format is relatively fixed

and short, requiring an issue to gain a certain level of importance to reach its agenda. Furthermore, the formal nature of the Trontale makes it more important in comparison to many other agenda platforms discussing political issues, for example social media. Although accessing the executive speech agenda is not a prerequisite for an issue to become law, the Trontale is a fixed ritual within the political system, so what the government express through this channel should matter., making executive speeches one of the most common measures of the policy agenda (Dowding et al., 2016, p. 11). The application of executive speeches is therefore a good starting point to capture government priorities, as its placement within the policy cycle imposes a certain threshold of accessing its policy agenda.

2.2. The Policy Agenda

Kingdon (1984, p.3) defines the policy agenda as "The list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials, and people outside of government closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given time". An important feature of the policy agenda is that it cannot cover *all* issues at once, which have implications for how we view agenda-setting. In a world with big flows of information and noise, social processes and inputs, political attention is a scarce resource (Jones, 1999; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), while at the same time a necessary condition for policymaking (Boydstun et al., 2014, p. 173). Political institutions and actors have limited amount of time, resources, and attention span, and will therefore need to prioritize some issues at the expense of others on their agendas (Zhu, 1992). In other words, the focus in agenda-setting is what issues political actors devote their attention to, not the results of decision-making or ideological placements. If a government announces that they want to change their immigration policy, the focus is not whether they want to increase or limit the number of immigrants, but the fact that immigration has been granted space on the agenda in the first place, an important prerequisite for achieving policy output in one direction or the other.

Kingdons's definition covers a wide range of actors within the policy cycle, from the public pressure of interest organizations, newspapers, party manifestos, coalition platforms and budgets. More relevant in the context of executive speeches, is Jones and Baumgartner's (2012, p. 4) definition of political institutions' agenda as the "collective organizational attention". Therefore, in the context of this paper, I combine Kingdon's (1984) agenda definition with Jones and Baumgartner's (2012) collective attention and define the executive

policy agenda as: The list of subjects or problems to which the Norwegian government are paying attention to collectively each year in the executive speech. Thereby, the executive policy agenda refers to what issues the government, as a unitary actor, prioritize and devote their attention to. In the following two sections, I will elaborate around these attention dynamics in connection to punctuated equilibrium theory: How can we best describe the developments of decision-makers attention?

2.3. Punctuated Equilibrium and Institutional Costs

Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET), first presented by Jones and Baumgartner (1993), provides an answer to this question by describing the mechanisms behind policy change and stability. PET states that in all decision-making institutions dealing with complex problems, the response of the institution will not be proportional to the inputs. The explanation behind this pattern is that cognitive and institutional costs decrease the response-efficiency of political institutions when presented with political input. Jones and Baumgartner (2005, p. 151) define institutions as "a set of individuals acting according to common rules resulting in collective outcomes". In all decision-making institutions, there are costs that will decrease the response efficiency and actors' ability to respond proportionally to their external environment. Jones and Baumgartner (2005, p. 152) divide the costs into four categories: Information costs, cognitive costs, transaction costs and decision costs. The first two are found in all types of institutions with human interaction. Information costs are associated with the search-process of gathering enough relevant information to make a rational decision. Cognitive costs refer to the limited capacity of decision-making institutions to observe the signals from their environment, and thereby not always being aware of what decisions that needs to be made. This builds on the same reasoning as Simon's (1955) critique of the fully rational "economic man". Individuals' ability to make rational decisions is bounded by informational and computational limits, and it is thereby more accurate to talk about a bounded rationality when it comes to decision-making, rather than the fully rational "homo economicus" (Simon, 1997).

In addition to the limits caused by bounded rationality, the institutions and organizations humans act within impose additional costs to decision-making. Political institutions are not designed to respond to all impulses from their external environment, as some form of stability is necessary to restrain from political chaos. With no system in place to filter out the noise, there would be no time left for actual policymaking and implementation (F. R. Baumgartner

et al., 2009b, p. 605). In other words, the translation from policy input to policymaking is somewhat inefficient. Thereby, although too little responsiveness can be problematic, stating that institutional costs decrease the governments' response efficiency, is not the same as saying that the policy process is flawed. It is solely a description of how political systems are structured to create a certain level of stability and filter a wave of policy inputs (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 173).

Jones and Baumgartner (2005, p. 151) divide these institutional costs into transaction costs and decision costs. Decision costs refer to the costs of bargaining and achieving a common agreement across different preferences. In a coalition agreement for example, the government cannot be responsive to all political inputs from the political parties, as they need to establish a compromise before setting a common agenda for the government as a unitary actor. Thereby, some parties need to sacrifice some attention to their preferred issues to allow other coalition parties some agenda-space. Transaction costs refers to the time-consuming part of the policy process: After agreeing upon a decision, the policy proposal needs to be translated into policy output by informing third parties in public hearings, changing budgetary allocations and presenting propositions to the parliament. Together, due to the bargaining and policy process in democracies, these costs create a certain level of "stickiness" to the political agenda, biasing the governments attention towards the status quo. Moving forward, I will refer to transaction and decision costs in political institutions as "institutional costs", as their effect on the policy agenda stems from the structure of the political institutions they consist within.

2.3.1. Institutional Costs in Executive Speeches

All decision-making institutions have informational and cognitive costs slowing their responsiveness due to human bounded rationality. In addition, institutional costs cause a friction (a resistance to change) when it comes to issues ability to access the agenda. Although friction is present in all political systems, the level of friction is expected to vary at different stages within the policy process as the institutional costs increase the closer you get to policy outputs (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b, p. 609). The process of including new issues during public hearings is smoother than the process of changing laws for example (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, pp. 147–148). It is easier to gain news coverage concerning nurses

working conditions than it is to enact a law, granting nurses a higher salary. Thereby, the "Progressive Friction Hypothesis" expect the intuitional friction to increase the further you move towards actual policy output (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b, p. 609). Baumgartner et al. (2009b) found support for this, seeing a clear pattern of increasing resistance to change the agenda the further you moved away from the initial agenda-setting stage (media headlines) towards parliamentary hearings, and political outputs such as budgets.

There are several steps to be made before the priorities of the government presented in the executive speech turns into political output. In contrast to a law for example, the government does not need the approval of parliament before changing the content of the Trontale. This is the reason why Chaqués-Bonafont and Palau (2011, p. 719) grants the Spanish Prime Minister Speeches with the lowest level of institutional friction compared to oral parliamentary questions, bills and different types of laws. However, as the "Trontale" is the elected governments' presentation of their mutual priorities the upcoming year, a certain threshold of importance needs to be passed to access this type of agenda. The format of the speech is short, making it necessary to filter out less urgent issues (transaction costs). In addition, the government (sometimes consisting of several parties) need to bargain what issues are most important policies to emphasize the following year (decision costs). Therefore, there is reason to believe that institutional friction is at play also in the executive agenda-setting parts of the policy process. How does this help form our expectations of how the executive agenda change and develop over time?

To answer this question, I will further elaborate Punctuated equilibrium theory (PET) and how it explains agenda change over time. After presenting the theory, I will connect it to previous findings in the executive agenda literature, before presenting my first hypothesis: the generalized punctuation hypothesis.

2.4. Punctuated Equilibrium and Attention Change

PET emphasize that although the policy agenda is mostly stable, it can be abrupted by sudden, disproportionally big changes in issue attention and policymaking, i.e., punctuations. This goes against traditional public policy and budget literature, where incrementalism has been a

popular theory of policy change due to its intuitive way of explaining policy developments over time: The budget one year resembles the one the year before (Breunig & Koski, 2012, p. 48). The total change over time is thereby explained by incremental adjustments one year to another. "Democracies change their policies almost entirely through incremental adjustments. Policy does not move in leaps and bounds" (Lindblom, 1959, p. 84). However, proponents of PET argues that in addition to incremental adjustments, the policy changes do, in fact, move in leaps. The incrementalism's starting point isolates the change dynamics from other political institutions and treats major sudden changes as rare exceptions due to external shocks (Breunig & Koski, 2012, p. 50). Punctuated equilibrium theory on the other hand, embraces these big changes in issue attention as an essential component of agenda developments. By explaining the consequences of institutional friction and politicians bounded rationality, PET provides a theoretical framework that explains both the stability, and the larges jumps in attention on the policy agenda.

A good way to describe how decisionmakers redirect their attention towards new policies over time is "disproportionate information processing" (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 5). Information and cognitive costs make politicians' attention-span and ability to process information limited. They also have a build-in resistance to major policy change, as this requires them to alter previous decisions (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 4). These human attributes hinder them to respond to political inputs in a linear matter – all cases cannot be processed at once, and this will also affect the institutions' ability to produce policy outputs. As described by Jones (1999, p. 304): "If individuals have limited attention spans, so must organizations". Big, and sudden changes in policy (punctuations breaking off the incremental adjustments), may therefore stem from politicians' overcompensation for pushing an issue under the radar for too long, or because sudden external shocks create big enough public pressure to redirect their attention and push other less urgent issues off the agenda.

Furthermore, the institutional costs in political systems makes them resistant to change. Even if the politicians do pay attention to the flow of information from their external environment, the information needs to be translated into political output through a policy process. As the political system promotes a certain level of stability in itself, the responsiveness of political institutions is disproportional to the amount of information flow trying to reach the agenda

(Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 7). When public pressure around an issue pushes it towards the policy agenda, institutional, cognitive, and informational costs enable policies to remain stable despite the constant stream of policy inputs. Therefore, the policy agenda will maintain its issue structure for long periods of time, due to the cognitive and institutional forces at play. Only long time build up pressure is enough to cause the attention of decisionmakers to shift dramatically, before returning to the normal equilibrium of stability (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 8).

When these punctuations of attention-shifts occur, it might seem like an exception to the general rule of stability caused by a random shock. However, according to PET, the same forces that caused the stability (cognitive, informational and institutional costs) are also at play when we see major change in issue attention on the policy agenda (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 7). Up to a certain threshold, the political inputs' importance is reduced and filtered out by costs. When passing the threshold however, the issues' importance is amplified severely. In other words, there is a turning point in which institutional costs shifts from downgrading, to exaggerating the importance of a policy issue. Baumgartner and Jones (2005, p. 155) describes this disproportionate responsiveness of a political institutions as an interaction model[7] between the signals from policy inputs and the costs within political institutions. The costs reduce the response-efficiency up to a certain threshold, in which the interaction-effect turns, and amplify the response disproportionally. When an issue finally reaches the attention to policymakers, they will exaggerate their response in the form of major policy change.

2.4.1. Punctuated Equilibrium: Empirical evidence

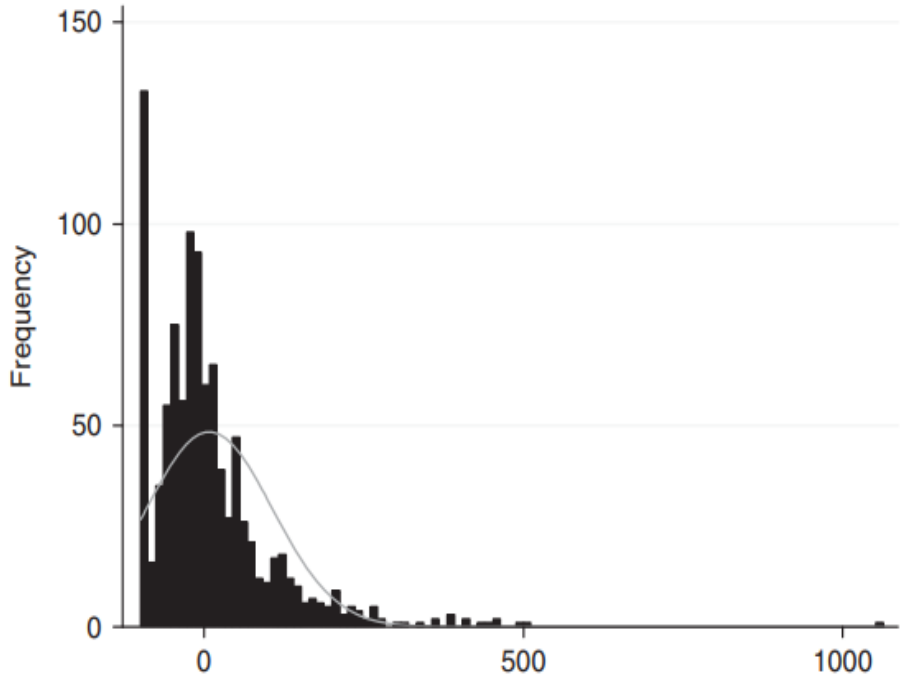
As institutional costs and bounded rationality is present in every political system, it is no surprise that PET has found support beyond the American context (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 11). Baumgartner et al. (2009b) for example, finds punctuated patterns of policy change and increasing institutional friction along the policy process in USA, Belgium and Denmark. Politicians' cognitive limitations are present regardless of their nationality, and all democratic regimes have some degree of institutional friction to handle waves of political inputs and maintain stability. The literature connecting PET to policy change, have used

[7] Interaction model: R = BS*C. Response = Benefits from signals * costs (Jones and Baumgartner, 2005, p. 149).

aggregated frequency distributions to illustrate agenda developments. An example of such a distribution is illustrated in figure 2.2, showing how the UK Queen's Speech have changed its issue attention over time (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 573). The figure is estimated based on the relative attention (percent) devoted to different policy domains one year to another.

By aggregating all changes together like in figure 2.2., the resulting distribution gives an overview of the frequency of gradual, versus punctuated changes. The shape of this distribution is called "leptokurtic". A leptokurtic distribution has a high positive kurtosis, meaning that it has a high central peak, with many observations placed far away from the mean in the tails of the distribution (Christophersen, 2013, p. 18). In the case of agenda-change, the pointiness illustrates the many cases where agendas only develop incrementally, while the tails show the instances of disproportionally big shifts in attention, i.e., punctuations. The big frequency of cases around 0 in figure 2.2 therefore shows that the UK government often address the same issues from one year to another. However, the punctuations that appear in the tails of the distribution, even exceeding 1000 relative change, also shows that the UK government sometimes takes big leaps in their executive speeches by increasing the amount of attention devoted to some issues from one yea to another.

Figure 2. 2 UK Frequency Distribution



Frequency distribution of annual percentage change in issue attention UK, Queen's Speech 1940-2005 (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 573)

Figure 2.2 is one of many examples of similar empirical findings of policy change based on human decision-making at several different stages within the policy cycle. The leptokurtic distributions with a positive kurtosis have even been defined as "The General Empirical Law of Public Budgets", as researchers have yet to discover a budget without a leptokurtic distribution (Jones ¤ Baumgartner 2012; Jones et al. 2009). Intuitively, the pointiness of budget distributions, i.e., its resistance to change, makes sense from an institutional friction perspective as it is easier to debate budget allocations than it is to grant the policy area a bigger proportion of the national budget (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 146). However, the support for PET has also been prevalent on policy agendas earlier on in the policy cycle. Walgrave and Nuytemans (2009) found that changes within party manifestos in 25 countries were either incremental or dramatically big, and similar patterns of change have also been found in within all stages of the American policy process (Jones et al., 2003). Thereby, PET's expectations of policy change are also present places within the policy process with lower levels of institutional friction compared to budgets and other policy outputs.

These findings are also confirmed within governmental policy agendas outside the British and American two-party majoritarian systems. For example, Breeman et al. (2009, p. 11) finds that when looking at relative changes in issue attention over time, the Dutch executive agenda can be characterized by stability, punctuated by relatively extreme changes in issue attention. The presence of policy punctuations is also found within the developments of the Belgium (Van Assche, 2012) and Australian (Dowding et al., 2010) executive speeches. Thereby, the agenda-setting research on executive agenda developments have shown that although governments often address the same issues, disproportional changes in the policy agenda sometimes abrupt the long run equilibrium of stability. This similar pattern of agenda changes across countries, supports Jones and Baumgartner's (2012, p. 11) argument that the costs in all human decision-making institutions makes policy changes punctuated, independent from the political systems they consist within.

The well-grounded empirical support has made punctuated equilibrium a common expectation amongst the agenda literature. As a generalization of the PET, Jones and Baumgartner (2005, p. 178) formulated the expected distribution of change in political institutions to a Generalized punctuation hypothesis: "Output change distributions from human decision-making institutions dealing with complex problems will be characterized by positive kurtosis". Although most changes on the agenda are incremental adjustments centering around the peak of the distribution, there is also a fair amount big jumps in issue attention (punctuations) that deviates from the usual stability, causing the tails of the distribution to be relatively fat. In connection to this, and previous findings in CAP-research on executive speeches, my first hypothesis is:

H1 The Generalized punctuation hypothesis: The change distribution of the Norwegian executive agenda can be characterized by a positive kurtosis, with a high central peak and fat tails

2.5. Parties and Agenda Change

PET is a descriptive theory of how costs effect the distribution of change within complex systems, but it does not provide an explanation of what type of social processes and political

inputs that cause policy punctuations to occur. A common, and democratically plausible, explanation is a change in the party composition in government, but the literature on political parties' effect on policymaking is divided. I will use Baumgartner et al. (2009a) distinction between partisan neutrality and partisan differentiation to summarize this division.

The partisan neutrality perspective emphasizes that although the new government wants to change the policies of the preceding one, this will not alter the structure of issue attention on the agenda, only the ideological direction the policies related to the issues are headed (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009a, p. 78). The plausibility of changes in partisan factors as an explanation of agenda change is therefore restricted, as it assumes different policy issues to align with left-right ideology of the government (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 5). In addition, all governments need to react and adapt to external factors such as the economy, international events and the media agenda, and the policy agenda is thereby not likely to differ based on party compositions. A lot of major policy change have been observed outside the context of party-changes in government. Jones and Baumgartner (2012, p. 6) argue that is therefore unclear whether a change from conservative to a liberal government alter the issue priorities of decisionmakers, as major policy change sometimes (but far from always) happens at the same time as elections.

The partisan differentiation hypothesis on the other hand, highlights the importance of diverging policy preferences within party competition, and the fact that parties weigh the importance of issues differently. Much in line with issue-ownership theory, different parties have different areas of "expertise", giving them a competence ownership and thereby relatively high legitimacy over the issue in question (Budge & Dennis J. Farlie, 1983, p. 287). Although somewhat conceptually debated within the literature (Stubager, 2018, p. 346), voter-leveled research has shown that people do consider issue competence when deciding who to vote for (Green & Hobolt, 2008; Lachat, 2014; Walgrave et al., 2012). Thereby, a central part of issue ownership theory is that parties let certain issues, in which they are considered especially competent by many of the voters, dominate their agendas to attract more votes (Stubager, 2018, p. 345). Issue ownership and partisan differentiation stress that political parties will use the executive agenda to address the issues they identify with and can express

their competence through. Since different parties identify with different issues, the biggest changes in issue attention on executive agendas are due to new parties entering government.

However, moving forward, the focus will mainly evolve around the partisan neutrality hypothesis, which for reasons I will elaborate in the next section, form the expectations for the relationship between the Norwegian executive agenda and changes in government.

2.5.1. Partisan Effects and Party Systems

A natural place to start when forming expectations of how political parties shape the executive agenda is a country's election- and party system. Different party systems also allow for different amount of veto players that can stop the executive from changing policies. In a two-party system, for example, the majoritarian systems give the executive more opportunity to change policies (Schmidt, 1996). The agenda has therefore a bigger potential to change after elections, as a partisan change results in a total ideological turnover, with fewer veto players to abrupt the governments' policy plans. However, with only two parties, each side also needs to cover a broader set of policy domains, as they cannot afford to concentrate their agendas on only one, or a few issues. Based on this reasoning, one might expect that every government address a similar set off issues. In contrast, a multiparty system allows parties to take ownership over more narrow issues, like environmental issues for Green parties, or farmers' rights for agrarian parties. Thereby, although a multiparty system creates more veto players, it also enables niche parties to enter government, which might cause the agenda to fluctuate more between narrow issues from one government to the next.

Norway is a multiparty, parliamentary democracy, with a proportional election system. There are currently 10 parties represented in Parliament after the national elections in 2021. The system allows for a variety of different minority or majority government compositions, consisting of one or multiple parties. It is not allowed to call for a new election in between the four-year parliamentary session, but partisan compositions may vary between each election, as coalition partners can exit and enter. For example, the Norwegian Labor party have a strong tradition of majority single party governments, while in recent years, the Conservative governments have consisted of a minority coalition with parties entering and exiting office between national elections. On one hand, one might expect the multiparty system in Norway to result in a more volatile agenda across different governments. From an issue ownership

perspective, existence of niche parties and their potential agenda-setting powers within coalition governments might provide a broader issue-variation potential than within a two-party system. Relatively small parties can influence relatively big proportions of the executive agenda within government coalitions, making issue ownership more visible in multiparty systems. For example, there is reason to believe that the Christian Democrats' participation in government would influence the executive attention devoted to religious issues, or that the Center Party (traditionally founded as an agrarian party) stress agricultural issues, although they possess a minority of the seats in parliament.

On the other hand, in a two-party majoritarian system, a change in government results in a complete turnover in ideological placement, with no room for the "partial" changes and party overlaps from one government to another. In a two-party system, every time there is a change in government, there is a total change between left and right, along with few veto players to alter the newly elected governments' agenda due to the majoritarian system. In Norway however, the system allows for minority and coalition governments, as well as changes in party composition between elections where some of, but not the entire, government partisan composition is changed. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between changes in partisan factors and elections in the Norwegian system, as an election is not needed for parties to enter and exit the government. For example, when the Christian Democratic Party entered government in 2019, the former government parties (the Conservatives, the Progress Party and the Liberal Party) remained in office, causing a party-overlap from one government to the next. Thereby, the presence of niche parties in governments might not cause a severe attention-shift, as the main structure of government remains stable, and the party turnover is "incomplete". This last reasoning seems to be consistent with the partisan-agenda research elaborated below, as partisan differentiation is mostly associated with turnovers between the Labor and Conservative party in the UK.

2.5.2. Parties and Agendas: Empirical Evidence

A common result when testing for the effect of elections on governmental agendas in the literature on policy agendas, is that policy punctuations appear independently from elections and changes in party compositions (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2019, p. 9). For example, Baumgartner and Jones (2012) finds no significantly big connection between partisan changes

and major policy changes in USA, despite for the US two-party system. Also, within multiparty systems, partisan differentiation seems to have a weak explanatory power. In their research on the Dutch executive agenda, for example, Breeman et al. (2009) find no clear connection between changes in coalition compositions and the agenda of the Dutch Queen's speech. In fact, in contrast to the partisan differentiation hypothesis, they found that attention changes in the executive speech in Netherlands are even more rare in the instances of a coalition turnover, than when the period of the existing government is prolonged. Breeman et al. (2009, p. 21) argue that this might stem from a variety of factors, like the Dutch consensus norm and solely partial party turnovers. In addition, they connect their lack of support to party differentiation to PET: For a new issue to become urgent enough to access the policy agenda, long-term built-up friction is necessary within a time frame exceeding several elections.

In coherency with these findings, Mortensen et al. (2011) comparative analysis of the executive agenda in Denmark, Netherlands and the UK finds no significant effect of changes in party composition of governments, prime minister or elections on the executive agenda. They argue that rather than the color of the party in government, the issues they inherit from the preceding government and how these issues are perceived, is more important in shaping the executive agenda independently of institutional design. Furthermore, Van Assche's (2012, p. 147) concludes that government changes do not systematically cause more punctuations, as only one out of two changes in Belgium leadership within the time frame covered (1993-2008) aligns with major shifts in executive attention. Again, it is important to emphasize that the policy agenda refers to the issues that receives attention and are talked about, and not the ideological position of the government. It is therefore possible for issues to remain stable while the positions of governments change.

Baumgartner et al. (2009a) test the partisan effect on both the parliamentary and executive agenda (New year's speeches, bills and weekly government statements) in France for more than two decades to see whether different governments structure their issue attention differently at different stages within the policy process. In line with the John and Jennings' (2010) emphasis on external events, they conclude that the agenda variation is accounted for by factors other than parties. Although partisan shifts sometimes lead to changes in issue attention, their findings indicate an absence of both party issue-ownership and partisan effect

on government agendas. Differences seems to be connected to different presidents, but it is hard to isolate the presidential effect when the data only covers two French presidential shifts. Although the focus usually revolves around the types of issues, the cross-national[8] party insignificance is also found when investigating expansions and concentrations of the number of issues on the agenda, i.e., issue diversity (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1018; John & Jennings, 2010, p. 584). Partisan neutrality thereby seems to be an accurate description not only for the type of issues addressed, but also for the diversity of executive agendas.

However, some limited effects of party turnovers have been found in the UK and Belgium (Mortensen et al. 2011; Jones & Jennings 2010; Van Assche 2012). John and Jennings (2010) found that party turnovers correspond with major punctuations (big changes in the amount of attention devoted to an issue) on the executive agenda, a correlation also found in nine election years (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 577). Furthermore, the Belgium partisan change in 1999 resulted in a significantly big changes on the executive agenda, including four major attention shifts (Van Assche, 2012, p. 144). However, there has only been 6 instances of party turnovers in British governments between 1940 and 2005, and 27 cases of major policy change. In addition, the Belgium data only covers 1993-2008, with 18 major policy changes and only two partisan changes. Thereby, as stated by the authors, one cannot conclude that changes in partisan factors systematically cause big attention-shifts on the executive agenda due to the limited variation of changes in party composition along with the high frequency of punctuations. Furthermore, there is also a possible underlying effect of external shocks on the executive agenda, as punctuations also appear in between parliamentary sessions when shocks like an oil crisis calls for government attention regardless of party affiliation (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 578) or the 9/11 causes the executive to address defense-issues (Van Assche, 2012, p. 141). Thereby, one cannot establish a direct connection to party change and agenda developments, as some punctuations might as well be caused by external factors appearing simultaneously as partisan changes.

It must be noted that these results differ on aspects that might affect the development of the executive policy agenda and limit our ability to form expectations about the Norwegian one. Baumgartner's et al. (2009a) data from France is based on places within the policy process

[8] USA, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, UK and France (Jennings et al., 2011), UK (John and Jennings, 2010).

not directly comparable to executive speeches. In contrast to the executive speeches in monarchies such as the Netherlands and UK, the French results provides limited comparability to the Norwegian executive speeches presented by the monarch. Furthermore, the length of executive speeches varies across countries (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1012), which might affect the threshold for new issues to reach the agenda, as well as the potential to vary the content of the speech. Also, the coalition system in the Netherlands is characterized by a consensus-norm and a big frequency of party-overlaps from one coalition government to the next (Breeman et al., 2009, p. 21) that differs greatly from two-party majority system in the UK. Different findings in issue attention across governments in these two countries might as well stem from different political systems rather than a clear party-effect. The Norwegian system is somewhere in between. Different from the British governments, Norwegian governments can form minority coalitions. Different from the Dutch governments, there are also instances of complete party turnovers.

However, despite differences in political systems and methodological design, the partisan effect on governments' policy agenda within the literature have, at best, provided limited support to the partisan differentiation hypothesis. Yet, as emphasized by Baumgartner et al. (2019, p. 9) and Jones and Baumgartner (2012, p. 12), the effect of elections on the policy agenda needs further investigation across countries, a task I will attempt to contribute to fulfil with the Norwegian executive speeches. As the Norwegian data set on executive speeches provides over seven decades of data (1946-2021) as well as more changes in party compositions (17) than within the literature presented here, this might give a more comprehensive picture of the partisan effects on agenda change. The partisan changes includes both partial, and complete party turnovers, partisan shifts after long periods of single majority governments, as well as frequent coalition changes within the time frame of one parliamentary session. My hypothesis is based on the combination of theoretical reasoning and the former findings in the agenda-setting literature: The issues governments talk about are not the same as the ideological placements they position themselves in within these issues. Thereby, the left-right placement of government might vary greatly, without this effecting the agenda, just as major changes in issue attention can appear after a government prolongment or in-between elections. In addition, the empirical evidence of multiparty systems and executive agendas points to the direction of limited support of the party differentiation hypothesis. My second hypothesis is therefore:

H2 Partisan neutrality hypothesis: Punctuations does not align with changes in partisan factors, and changes in partisan factors do not generate punctuations

2.6. Internal Issue Dynamics

Changes in partisan factors provide a democracy related explanation of shifts in governments' attention: Different parties prioritize different issues, and elections are a way for the electorate to convey a wish for shifting priorities. However, as elaborated above, the effect of changing party composition on the executive agenda have so far proven to be limited, not only for punctuations, but also for agenda diversity. In fact, John and Jennings (2010, p. 584) found that neither elections, the left-right placement of government, nor the prime minister had any significant effects on the number of issues covered on the UK executive agenda. An additional angle to pursue when investigating developments of the executive agenda is the internal issue dynamics, meaning how the increase and decrease on issues' space on the agenda relate to each other. Is there a link between internal issue dynamics and agenda diversity? Will increased attention to some issues go on expense of the attention to others?

2.6.1. Agenda Diversity and Capacity

Boydstun et al. (2014, p. 174) define agenda diversity as "the degree to which attention on an agenda is distributed across items". The attention can be distributed evenly across a wide range of issues (high agenda diversity) or concentrated on a few issues (low agenda diversity). A lot points in the direction that the political agenda has become more diverse over time. Trends like increased levels of education (Combs & Zhu, 1995, p. 496), globalization, a rising complexity of politics (Andeweg et al., 2020, p. 7), as well as an increasing relevance of issues such as gender equality and the environment (G. P. Peters et al., 2000, p. 10) have broadened the attention span of the public, as well as introduced a variety of new issues relevant for the governments to address on their agendas. Breeman et al. (2009, p. 10) find, for example, that the number of issues on the Dutch executive agenda has increased over time, and Combs and Zhu (1995, p. 510) find a similar trend on the public agenda in the US.

On the one hand, such trends might reflect a more "accessible" agenda, indicating that new issues have the potential to capture executive attention. On the other hand, as more policy-areas arise, the attention span of politicians needs to be distributed across a wider range of issues. It is therefore important to note the difference between the *capacity* and the *diversity* of the agenda (Combs and Zhu, 1995). The diversity refers to whether the agenda revolves around many, or few, issues at the time, whilst the capacity depends on how many issues people, or in this case the government, can focus on at once (Combs and Zhu, 1995, p. 498). Although the number of politically relevant issues increase (diversity), this does not necessarily mean that the size of politicians' attention span, or the institutions' ability to process policy inputs (capacity) increase proportionally. Afterall, as emphasized by Jones (2001), attention is a scarce resource. Similarly, Zhu (1992) describes the agenda as a zero-sum game between issues: Increased attention to certain issues pushes other issues off the agenda.

This has important implications for how we expect the agenda to develop, and when new issues can capture the government's attention. Gains and Annesley (2013) for example, found that when the economy is in decline, it is harder for gender equality issues to access the agenda, as work- and payment related compensations might be costly for the budget. Similarly, Sheingate (2006) concludes that it is easier to promote new issues in Congress committees with broader jurisdictions, i.e., committees with a greater capacity to maintain a more crowded agenda. Thereby, agenda diversity matters for politics because it affects the scope of issues politicians talk about, and the potential for actual policy change. Therefore, considering agenda diversity in public policy making and agenda-setting is essential, as the diversity of the agenda affects how easy, or challenging, it is to access it (Boydstun, et al., 2014, p. 174). For policies to change in a democracy, it needs to reach some form of attention. Since the agenda space is limited, increased attention to one issue, might affect the attention devoted to other issues. When investigating how much attention an issue receives over time, it is also important to consider the agenda diversity and the dynamics between the types of issues that receive attention. Because, when it comes to the executive agenda, the types of issues that get prioritized and the issues that get excluded might not be coincidental.

2.6.2. Core Issues and Selective Issues

To see whether there are systematic differences in the way governments allocate their attention between issues, Jennings et al. (2011) analyze executive agendas in the UK, Netherlands, USA, France and Denmark. Based on theories of the core functions of the state, they investigate how different issue categories effect on agenda diversity: Core issues and selective issues. In distinguishing the core issues from the selective issues, Jennings et al. (2011, p. 1006) draws on traditional state theory in connection to Hobbes (1651), Locke (1689) and Rousseau (1762). These scholars have a common description of core state tasks as defending country boarders, relations to foreign powers, assuring the wellbeing of its people and maintaining the government apparatus. In addition, Jennings et al. (2011, p. 1006) also includes Wilson's (1889) description of legal affairs, state preservation, defense of the realm, promotion of the common good and foreign affairs as the primary functions of government. Together, this literature on traditional theories of the state translates into five core issues: Macroeconomics, legal affairs, defense, foreign policy and government operations (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1008). The core issues are thereby characterized by their permanent need for executive attention, as they are associated with national needs only the state can fulfil.

Selective issues, on the other hand, are characterized by the fact that governments can choose whether they want pay attention to them. Their presence on the agenda is dependent on the core issues' urgency, and their agenda space associated with diversity in the way governments allocate their attention. For example, policies concerning issues like road construction, education and waste disposal have to wave for defense policies if the country is at war. Furthermore, if the agenda is punctuated by an increased focus on selective issues, this does not change the structure of attention devoted to the core issues, only to other selective issues (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1007). This means that selective issues switch places with each other falling on and off the agenda, not effecting the overall diversity. An increased focus on a core issue on the other hand, for example more attention devoted to defense due to a changing security environment, will jeopardize selective issues space on the agenda, leaving relatively more space left for the core issues and a lower agenda diversity.

Although new policy areas have appeared on the agenda in modern times, (immigration and environmental issues for example), the core functions of the state remain high on the list of priorities of governments across several political systems (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1007). Jennings et al. (2011, p. 1021) finds a negative effect on agenda diversity for every core issue

except legal affairs, while selective issues usually have a positive effect. This suggests that when macroeconomics, defense, foreign policy and government operations gain more attention, they crowd other issues out from the executive agenda, while selective issues are included at times the agenda is more diverse. In other words, there is a hierarchy of policy issues, in which core functions of the state are prioritized over selective issues.

The concept of issue hierarchies of the executive is not a new one within executive agenda-setting research. Cohen (1997) found that economic and foreign issues took precedence over other issues in presidential responsiveness to public opinion. Fernández-i-Marín et al. (2019) found a lower probability for big changes in governments' issue attention during economic crises, in line with Gains and Annesley (2013) description of gender equality issues challenge to reach the agenda in periods of economic decline. A descriptive overview of executive speech statements over time also reveal that issues associated with core functions of the state always compose a substantial proportion of the executive agenda (Van Assche, 2012 p. 136; Breeman et al. 2009, p. 9; John & Jennings, 2009, p. 12). This selective responsiveness, and the inability for other issues to access the agenda when economic issues receive a lot of attention, indicates that the information processing of policy inputs by the executive is biased towards core issues.

The scarce attention span of government and the zero-sum game of accessing the agenda thereby seems to be conditional on the type of issue in question. The trade-off governments' face increasing attention towards an issue at the expense of others is a dilemma reserved for the selective issues. When a core issue receives a lot of attention, the question is what selective issues must be crowded out from the agenda to allow the remaining space to be granted to the remaining core issues. In other words, when the urgency of core issues is high, agenda diversity is low. Based on the cross-country support to the biased attention-span of governments, and the support of the core-issue hypothesis formulated by Jennings et al. (2011, p. 1008), the final hypothesis tested to investigate Norwegian agenda developments is:

H3 Core Issue Hypothesis: Increased attention to a core issue has a negative effect on agenda diversity

3. Research Design: A Longitudinal Case Study of the Norwegian Government's Agenda 1946 – 2021

The policy content within Trontaler (executive speeches) between 1946 and 2021 will be used to map Norwegian governments' policy agenda developments. The speech is presented by the monarch once a year during the opening of the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) and is chosen as an agenda-measure for several reasons. Firstly, the speech offer an overview over the government's main plans for policymaking the upcoming year (Kongehuset, 2021), and is therefore a good indication for what issues the executive regard as important to address further in the near future. Similar arguments have been made for comparable executive speeches in the Netherlands, Spain, Australia, the United Kingdom and Belgium (Breeman et al., 2009; Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2019; Dowding et al., 2010; John & Jennings, 2010; Van Assche, 2012). Furthermore, the format is relatively formal, and short, which narrows down the governments' capacity to diversify broaden the scope of issues they prioritize to include on their agendas. Therefore, a change in issue attention in an executive speech has more "weight" compared to other, less length-restricted, platforms conveying information about the policy agenda, such as daily media-headlines or 150 pages long party manifestos. In addition, statements within executive agendas are often associated with policy outputs (Bara, 2005; Breunig et al., 2019). The sentences in the Trontale therefore serves as interesting and relevant units of analysis, as the issues included often takes precedence in policy priorities over issues excluded.

Secondly, the executive speeches enable studying the policy agenda for longer periods of time, which is essential when researching agenda development (Breeman et al., 2009, p. 3) and policy change (Jones and Baumgartner, 2012, p. 13). Covering a wide time frame is thereby a common type of data selection in research concerning political actors' issue attention and priorities (Breeman et al., 2009; Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019; Jennings & John, 2009; John & Jennings, 2010; Walgrave & Nuytemans, 2009). The Norwegian data on the executive agenda contains 77 speeches between 1946 and 2021, capturing 12 different prime ministers, 17 different government compositions and 19 parliamentary sessions, reflecting what issues governments' have addressed on their agendas in a variety of different contexts. The Trontale data thereby aligns well with the time frame requirements established

by former research and serves as a good starting point in answering the Norwegian executive agenda have developed over time.

Thirdly, the executive speeches were also chosen due to its connection to the Comparative Agendas Project (CAP). CAP consists of policy agenda datasets in several countries, US states and the European Union, coded using the same Major CAP Codebook, with some country-specific adjustments (Bevan, 2019). Colleagues and I have used this codebook to map the policy content of party manifestos, coalition agreements and executive speeches, providing the first data on Norwegian policy agendas coded with the CAP codebook[9]. The coding provided insights about the raw data that would not have been possible to achieve without being included in the initial stages of the research process. Thereby, the executive speeches allowed me to code, and gain detailed knowledge about my own material, which created a robust starting point for interpreting the results. Furthermore, throughout the development of the Norwegian agendas project, the investigations of former CAP-work created an awareness of the challenges in transferring an international coding system to a national context. Knowing the details behind the country-specific differences and similarities behind the CAP coding procedures, therefore provided good tools to position the Norwegian findings within agenda-setting research in an accurate manner.

[9] For details about the coding-procedure, see subchapter 4.2 below

4. Research Method

In addition to presenting some descriptive statistics of the executive speech length and issue attention over time, I will use the following methods to answer the three research questions: Firstly, a frequency distribution of the relative changes in issue attention is used to illustrate the nature of relative change on the Norwegian governmental agenda. This is followed by a presentation of the distributions' kurtosis and L-kurtosis score, as well the results of Kolmorgorov-Smirnov (KS) and Shapiro-Wilk (SW) test to statistically capture whether the changes in issue attention over time confirms the expectations of the generalized punctuation hypothesis. Secondly, a more qualitative investigation will be taken, mapping the most severe attention shifts (punctuations) of the distribution, and investigate whether their occurrence correspond with government speeches presented by new government parties. Thirdly, each speech is assigned an Entropy score as a measure of its issue diversity. The Entropy scores are thereby used as independent variables in autoregressive distributed lag models, to see whether the relative increase of core issues has a negative effect on agenda diversity.

In the following section, I present central aspects of the data collection and code book, before elaborating the operationalizations behind the analytical steps used to answer the research questions. Lastly, before presenting the results in the analysis, some reliability and validity issues are addressed and discussed.

4.1. The Comparative Agendas Major Code Book

The CAP Major Codebook consists of over 200 subtopic-codes allocated between 21 general policy-topics. It was created as a part of the Comparative Agendas Project, aiming to map the type of policy focus within different types of agendas. Through several rounds of feedback from the different country agenda projects, a common codebook was created with the purpose of providing general policy codes that can be applied to map policy-attention and developments across different countries and timeframes (Bevan, 2019, p. 24). Today, CAP has been engaged in a total of 23 countries, two US states (Florida and Pennsylvania), the European Union (CAP, 2022a), and the codebook have also been used to map local (municipal) policy agendas (Mortensen et al., 2022). The major topics is presented in Table 4.1. For an overview over all sub-categories, see Appendix 8.1.

An advantage to this coding strategy, is that one does not force policy into ideological positions where this is not natural (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2019, p. 6). This makes it easier to include research on policy-domains not easily placed within a left-right framework, like for example foreign policy. Furthermore, what is considered left-right policies have changed over time and is also affected by a range of time dependent contextual factors (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2019, p. 6) which would be hard to account for while covering over seven decades of Norwegian executive speeches. The codebook therefore serves as a tool to measure the presence of policy-topics, not the substance of political and ideological placements within each topic. In other words, the codebook does not capture politics, but policy. The difference in politics and policy can be illustrated by the focus on environmental policy issues in France, as exemplified by Baumgartner et al. (2009a, p. 93): although the left-wing parties are allied with the Greens, the right-wing incumbents also dedicate attention towards environmental issues once it was set as a part of the French policy agenda. Thereby, although the left-wing and green parties are more "environmental" in their politics, the environment as a policy-area is present on the agenda across all parties. In Norway, both the right-wing party Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet) and the Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti) devote attention to immigration policies although their political stand on immigration are on separate sides of the debate. If an issue becomes more urgent and relevant, like immigration issues on agendas across Western Europe (Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2017), political actors can disagree on how to solve it, but nevertheless devote the issue equal amount of attention.

Table 4. 1: CAP Major topics

1. Macroeconomics
2. Civil rights, minority issues, and civil liberties
3. Health
4. Agriculture and fishing industry
5. Labor
6. Education and culture
7. Environment
8. Energy
9. Immigration and refugee issues
10. Traffic
12. Legal affairs
13. Social policy
14. Housing and urban development
15. Industrial and commercial policy
16. Defense
17. Research, technology and communications
18. Foreign trade
19. Foreign policy and relations to other countries
20. Government operations and government issues
21. Public lands and water management
23. Cultural policy

4.2. Coding Procedure and Reliability Tests

The data-collection process involved gathering the executive speeches (Trontaler) from the NSD-archive (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) and code the units of analysis, whole sentences, into policy areas. Each sentence in the dataset has been assigned a value based on the Comparative Agendas Codebook. The coding procedure is highly standardized for the entire Comparative Agendas network and follows the same coding rules within the same codebook[10]. Based on the CAP coding strategy, the sentences were sorted based on policies,

[10] For full text CAP Codebook, with coding procedures and policy topics, see online Appendix 8.x, Datasets: "CAP Norwegian Codebook"

rather than targets (Bevan, 2019, p. 21). If the government wants to lower taxes to increase the incentive to work, this is coded economic policy, rather than labor policy. In other words, it is the means used to achieve the goal, rather than the goal itself, that is in focus. Sentences without policy content have received a separate code, 2999: "not relevant". In the executive speeches, this is mostly for the ceremonial introductory or ending sentences such as "I pray that God blesses the Parliaments deed and thereby declare the 101st Parliament opened" [11]. Instances in which there is an equal presence of two or more major topics within one sentence, the sentence receives the lowest of the two codes. When a sentence focus on different subcategories within the same major topic, it receives the major topics' general code.

When using a common coding scheme as a technique to map text content, it is important that the coding-technique result in replicable findings: Different coders should place each sentence into the same policy topic, independently from when the coding is done and under what circumstances (Krippendorff, 2019a, p. 24). After gathering the agenda documents (party manifestos, coalition platforms and executive speeches), we did multiple rounds of coder-training to generate reliable data, basing the training on the codebook instructions, coding documents independently from each other (Krippendorff, 2019c, p. 283). After each round of coding, we met to discuss the results before engaging in the next round. Since the agenda length, diversity and purpose varies across documents, parties, and time-period, we varied all these factors during the training. In addition to the reliability-checks for the different types of agenda documents, we varied the left-right placement and size of the political parties and covered a wide timeframe to include different temporal contexts. This process was repeated over several months until a sufficient level of intercoder reliability had been established.

For the reliability tests we used Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004). We continued the training until the reliability score exceeded 0.7, above the acceptable level of 0.67 of Krippendorff's alpha (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 429). As the codebook consists of over 200 subcodes, the threshold of reaching an acceptable level of reliability is lower than for smaller codebooks. Furthermore, in the agenda setting literature, the most common way to apply the data is through the attention given to different major topics (which will also be the case in this thesis). When checking for coder agreement within the major topics (that is, measuring how

[11] In Norwegian: «Jeg ber Gud signe Stortingets gjerning og erklærer det 101. Storting for åpnet"

often we categorized a sentence within the same major topic, not accounting for sub-topic differences) the reliability score exceeded a minimum of 0.8 in all instances[12]. This illustrates that some of the disagreements in the subcodes are not very severe, as they are put within the same major topic.

4.3. Operationalizations

In the following section, a description on how to operationalize measures for agenda developments are presented. The common starting point for estimating relative change, punctuations, partisan neutrality, and core issue effects, is the major topics' relative space on the agenda. I.e., how many percent of executive attention that is devoted to macroeconomics, civil liberties, health, and so on every year. This means that each of the 21 major topics receives a relative value based on their percentage space within each of the 77 speeches, accounting for a total of 1617 observations[13].

4.3.1. Relative Change

To illustrate how government attention on the executive agenda shifts, a relative measure of change in issue attention, I.e., percentage-percentage change will be applied for each of the 21 major topics (excluding statements without policy content). In contrast to a count-percentage change, the relative measure of attention shifts does not capture the possible developments in agenda length (Jones et al., 2003, p. 167). Thereby, the outputs of this measure will not tell us anything about the number of sentences in each executive speech. However, the interest is not the capacity, or the length of the executive speeches, but the developments of how governments allocate their attention and change it over time. Therefore, it is the relative changes of shifts issue attention and priorities, rather than the size of the agenda, that is the focus here, and a percentage-percentage measure of change is the most suitable option (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 179-180).

Each major topic in the Trontale has received a value between 0 and 1 on 21 different variables, based on the relative space devoted to each major topic. This means that if an issue

[12] For Reliability test scores, see Online Appendix 8.x: Inter-coder relibaility
[13] An overview of the dataset of relative space is found in the online Appendix 8.x, Datasets: Policy Topics Percantages 1946-2021

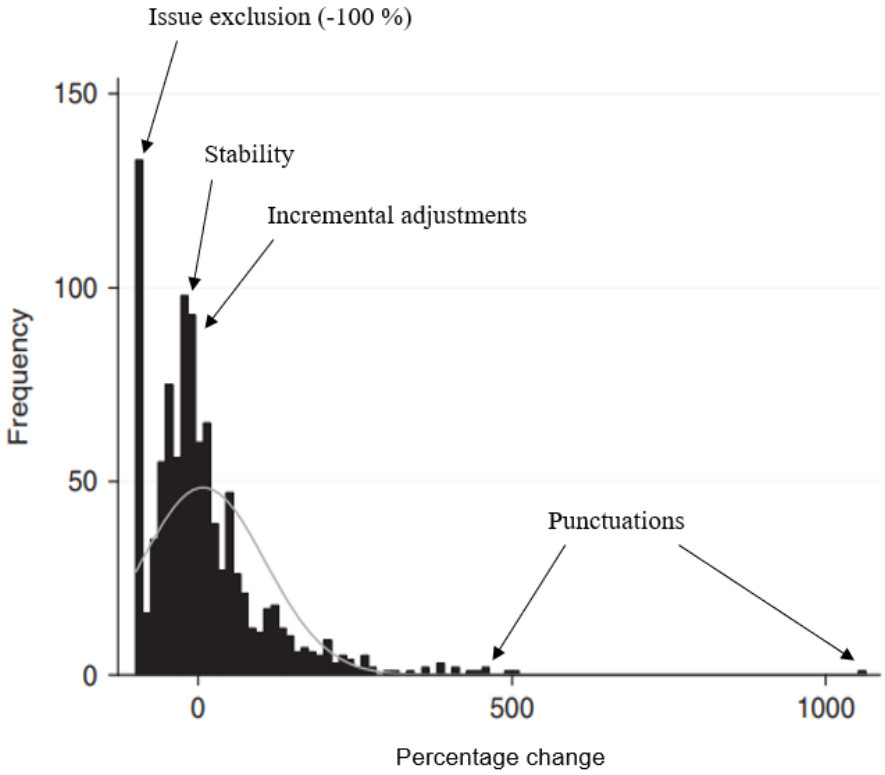
has received a score of 0 there are no sentences within the speech devoted to this topic, while a value of 1 means that all sentences are devoted to one single topic. It is important to distinguish the difference between an increase in absolute percentage *points* and percent increase. To exemplify: If macroeconomics received a score of 0.1 (10 %) in 1959 and 0.2 (20 %) in 1960, the percentage point increase is 10 %, but the relative change in macroeconomic issue attention between 1959 and 1960 is (0.2 - 0.1) / 0.1 = 1: A 100 % increase in relative attention devoted to macroeconomics. As the speeches vary in length, a 100 % increase in relative space devoted to macroeconomics, is not the same as doubling the number of sentences. Rather, it is a measure of how many percent of the total speech (regardless of length) that is devoted to macroeconomics in 1960, compared to how many percentages of the total speech that is devoted to macroeconomics in 1959. The relative changes are then aggregated across all major topics into one frequency distribution, showing us the patterns of change (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, pp. 180-181).

4.3.2. A Leptokurtic Agenda Distribution

When big policy changes occur suddenly after long periods of stability, the resulting distribution of change is leptokurtic, as predicted by the generalized punctuation hypothesis. A leptokurtic distribution has relatively fat tails and a higher central peak compared to a normal distribution. The high central peak represents the many cases of stability on the agenda, followed by small, incremental change. The thick tails represent the relatively many cases of extreme change, also called punctuations, compared to what is expected in a normal distribution, several standard deviations away from the mean (Baumgartner et al. 2009b, p. 607). When policy inputs and public pressure passes a certain threshold, politicians re-direct their attention after long periods of stability towards a new set of policy-issues in a disproportionate manner before returning to the stable equilibrium (Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 8). A leptokurtic distribution, with its central peak and extreme values in the tails, is therefore a good measure to check PET's emphasis on the bias towards the status quo and its sudden punctuations of disproportional change. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of change in the UK Queen's Speech as shown in Figure 2.2 (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 573), adding the components of a leptokurtic distribution that speaks to the expectations of PET. As an issue cannot decrease by more than a 100 percent, the frequency around (-)100 is relatively big, while the central peak around 0 represents stability and incremental adjustments. The biggest

punctuation shows a 1000 percent increase in the attention devoted to an issue from one year to another.

Figure 4. 1: Leptokurtic Distribution of Change



There are several indicators and statistical tests available to establish whether the Norwegian policy agenda fits the attributes of a leptokurtic distribution. Firstly, we can check the kurtosis score on the frequency distribution of change. Kurtosis is a measure of the degree of pointiness or flatness of a distribution, based on deviations from the mean (Christophersen, 2013, p. 18). It gives us an indication of the "wildness" of the distribution – how many cases that are positioned within the extreme values of the distribution, compared to the cases centered around the peak (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 183). Leptokurtic distributions are characterized by a kurtosis score higher than 3, which is to be expected from a normal distribution (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 181). The high peak of the distribution, with many cases centering around 0 % change, speaks to the part of PET that emphasize how institutional friction halters the responsiveness of the political system, making it challenging to change the agenda (Baumgartner & Jones, 2005, p. 182). PET's prediction of

disproportional changes in issue attention can be seen through the many instances of cases with extreme values deviating from the mean, making the tails of the distribution relatively fat compared to a normal distribution. In sum, leptokurtic distribution is characterized by a kurtosis higher than 3, and describes the development of the agenda as mostly stable (seen through the pointiness centering around 0 % change) with relatively many instances of sudden policy punctuations (seen through the fat tails) (John and Bevan, 2012, p. 89).

Secondly, the Kolmorgorov-Smirnov (KS) test is also a common method to check whether the distribution of change in policy agendas are different from a normal distribution (Clauset et al., 2009; John & Jennings, 2010, p. 573; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012, p. 181). The KS-test compares the distribution of changes in the policy agenda to the values of a theoretical probability distribution (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 181). If the null hypothesis of the test is rejected, i.e., the sample cannot be drawn from a normal distribution, it means that the agenda developments are not exclusively characterized by incremental proportional change.

However, both the kurtosis score and the KS-test are sensitive to extreme values and are therefore not very robust measures to describe distributions with big punctuations within the tails. L-kurtosis[14] (Hosking, 1990) is a variant of the kurtosis that is less sensitive to outliers and provides a better indication for the fat tails and narrow shoulders of the distribution (Breuning & Koski, 2012, p. 53). A score above 0.12 (in a range from 0 to 1) indicates that the distribution is characterized by more extreme values (fat tails) and less medium-sized changes (small shoulders) than in a normal distribution (Breuning & Koski, 2012, p. 53). In addition, in contrast to the KS-test, the Shapiro–Wilk (SW) test is not calculated based on the mean and variance of the data and is thereby also and indicator less sensitive for the extreme values of the distribution (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 573). To provide additional certainty of the kurtosis score and KS-results, L-kurtosis and a SW test will therefore also be applied in the analysis.

In the agenda setting literature, direct parameter estimates have been used to compare each tail of the distribution to Paretian and exponential distributions, and examining semi- and log-

[14] See Appendix 8.3.1 for calculation of L-kurtosis based on L-moments.

log-plots to give a more detailed investigation of the policy punctuations and the distribution of agenda-change (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 185). However, this is a more complex technique and is more often applied to give a satisfactory comparison across different stages in the policy process in connection to institutional friction (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b, p. 614; Jones et al., 2003, p. 158; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 185) than for investigations of a single executive agenda (Breeman et al., 2009; Van Assche, 2012). Therefore, as I do not aim to compare the executive speeches' distribution with other agendas at different stages in the Norwegian policy cycle, direct parameter estimates will not be applied here.

4.3.3. Partisan Factors and Punctuations

A variety of methodological approaches have been applied to investigate partisan differentiation and neutrality on agenda-setting. Mortensen et al. (2011) compares the average stability of the agenda in election years with the average stability in non-election years to see whether partisan change influences issue attention in Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Whether the issue structure correlates less between speeches presented by different governments is another method applied both for the Dutch (Breeman et al., 2009) and French (Baumgartner et al., 2009a) executive agenda. In this context however, the Norwegian partisan effect will be tested based on the approach by John and Jennings' (2010) investigation of the UK Queen's speech, and Van Assche's (2012) of the Belgium speech, listing the biggest punctuations to see whether they align with changes in the government party composition. This approach allows for a more detailed examination of the positive tail in the agenda change distribution. By listing the biggest changes in issue attention and when they occur, one can investigate the size and extensiveness of the punctuations beyond the face validity provided by positive tail in the frequency distribution, in addition to the corresponding partisan factors at the time the punctuation occurred.

The agenda-literature has not established an overall agreement on how severe a relative change in issue attention must be to count as a punctuation (Van Assche, 2012, p. 139). John and Jennings (2010, p. 576) operationalize punctuations as over 250 % relative increase[15] in

[15] The punctuations will be directed towards the positive tail of the distribution, i.e., increase in attention, due to the limit of -100 decrease in attention on the negative side of the tail.

the attention devoted to a major topic, which is the threshold that will be applied here[16]. The relative change measures are based on the same technique as when estimating the frequency distribution of relative change. If the governments devote 2 % of the agenda space to Traffic one year, and 8 % the next, there has been a punctuation in Traffic-issues, as its relative space have increased with 300 %[17]. Instead of aggregating the changes into one distribution however, a closer look at these specific punctuations above 250 % will be examined separately, to gain a more qualitative knowledge about the positive tail of the frequency distribution and its connection to partisan change.

The biggest punctuations will be presented along with the corresponding major topic, the years the punctuation occurred along with the government parties, the prime ministers and whether the speech containing the punctuation was presented by a new government. For example, the first speech of the Solberg government was presented in 2014. The punctuations within this speech would thereby align with changes in government parties, as the 2013 speech was presented on behalf of the Stoltenberg II government. If the partisan neutrality hypothesis is correct however, the years including punctuations, should not correspond systematically with years of partisan change. In other words, according to partisan neutrality theory, changes in Norwegian governments' party structure will not in itself be enough to change the issues that are talked about in the executive speech, as political stands might differ, while the issues in focus remain. Note that this analysis is solely descriptive, not controlled for political changes and social processes that might cause governments' agenda to change. The results presented here is limited to whether speeches with the biggest punctuations aligns with changes in party-structures. The results are therefore not an isolation of a partisan effect on variation in issue attention controlled for other intervening variables. Rather, it serves as an overview of whether the years the most severe agenda-changes occur overlaps with the speeches that are presented on behalf of new governments, representing a different party composition compared to the year before.

[16] Van Assche (2012, p. 139) use a threshold of relative increases two standard deviations away from the mean, which equals a relative increase of 213.2 % in the Norwegian case.
[17] (0.08-0.02)/0.2 = 3

4.3.4. Zero-Punctuations

However, the estimation technique of relative changes over time excludes the observations where an issue has zero percent attention, as one cannot divide by zero. This has implications for both the generalized punctuation (H1) and the partisan neutrality (H2) hypothesis. First, this means that the frequency distribution does not include the instances in which issues rise and fall on and off the agenda. Thereby, the frequency distribution gives an inconclusive description of the nature of attention shifts. Second, the list of punctuations along changes in partisan factors do not include instances where issues go from receiving no attention, to being addressed in the executive speech the year after. In other words, it is not possible to capture whether new parties bring completely new issues to the agenda when entering government. Therefore, and additional selection of instances in which issues goes from exclusion to inclusion (from now on referred to as zero-punctuations) will be added to the analysis to provide a richer description of agenda developments. For the frequency distribution, the biggest zero-punctuations will give an indication of the potential thickness of the right tail, i.e., the magnitude of change that can be accounted for by sudden, disproportional changes in the relative attention devoted to an issue. For the partisan neutrality hypothesis, zero-punctuations provides a more robust test by including not only the instances in which an issue increases its relative space, but also instances where an issue gains attention after being ignored in previous speeches.

All issues except foreign policy and macroeconomics are excluded from the agenda from time to time in the Norwegian executive speeches. The occurrence of issues receiving 0 % attention one year, and a relatively low percentage the next is therefore common. To map big attention shifts, and not just incremental adjustments, Van Assche (2012, p. 140) selects the observations with the 10 biggest absolute percentage point changes up from 0 percent, a selection technique that will also be applied here. However, solely listing the zero-punctuations based on their percentage point difference one year to another will make it challenging to compare the zero-punctuations and the punctuations based on relative change. To get an indication of how severe the zero-punctuations are in comparison to the rest of the data, a 1 % value will be added in the years included in the top 10 zero-punctuations. Based on these hypothetical values, one can estimate the relative increases from agenda exclusion to inclusion without changing the absolute percentage point difference between the year before and after the punctuation. For example, if agricultural policies receive 0 % attention in 2000,

and 4 % attention in 2001, there is an absolute percentage point increase in agricultural attention of 4 percent. To estimate the hypothetical size of this zero-punctuation, the agricultural value is assigned 1 % in 2000, and 5 % in 2001, maintaining the percentage point difference of 4 percent. Using the regular estimation technique of relative change, the "hypothetical" agricultural zero-punctuation is (0.05-0.01)/0.01 = 4, i.e., 400 % (or the original percentage in 2001 multiplied with 100). The zero-punctuations will then be added to the analysis when testing the generalized punctuation hypothesis, and the partisan neutrality hypothesis, to fill in some of the gaps caused by the methodological limitations of relative measures.

4.3.5. Core Issues

In line with Jennings et al. (2011), the core issues are categorized into five major topics of the codebook: "Macroeconomics", "Legal Affairs", "Defense", "Foreign Policy" and "Government Operations". To establish whether core issues are high or low on the agenda, relative measures will be applied: If the speech contains 50 statements, and 10 of these are devoted to macroeconomics, macroeconomics receives 20 % of the attention. In a speech of 100 statements however, 10 macroeconomic sentences would only account for 10 % of the attention. Breeman et al. (2009, pp. 8-9) emphasize the importance of relative measures by describing the development of foreign affairs, one of the core issues, on the Dutch executive agenda. Although the total number of foreign affairs statements increased over time, its space on the agenda (measured by the percentage of total number of statements) have decreased. The increased number of foreign affairs statements is due to longer speeches, and not an increased governmental attention towards foreign policies. The relative measure therefore ensures that increased attention to a core issue illustrates actual priority shifts rather than an increase in speech length.

4.3.6. Nominal and Thematic Diversity

There are different ways to categorize and measure agenda diversity. Allen and Izcaray (1988, p. 32) for example, describes *nominal* diversity as "the number of issues a particular social unit considered salient". In the context of this paper, this simply refers to the count of issues that appears within each speech. However, it is also important to include an additional aspect of the diversity-concept called *thematic* diversity. Thematic diversity takes a less quantitative approach and refers to the scope of topics covered (Peter & de Vreese, 2003, p. 45). For

example, an executive speech that covers four economic issues such as the public budget, prices, inflation, and taxes will have an equal nominal agenda diversity, but a smaller thematic agenda diversity, than a speech that covers the four issues inflation, building technology, climate change and crime prevention.

Although the CAP codebook separates sentences into over 200 sub-categories, the focus will be on the 21 major topics. This puts restrictions on the ability to measure nominal agenda diversity, as different issues consisting within the same major topic (like inflation, taxes and budgets) will be counted as one issue (macroeconomics), not three. Thereby, the thematic diversity is of extra relevance applying this topic-categorization, as the leap from one major topic to another is bigger than the leap between subcategories. However, the nominal diversity is also of theoretical relevance, as the number of issues addressed within the speeches gives a good indication of how open the executive agenda is to new inputs. Nevertheless, counting the number of issues present on the agenda can sometimes be misleading if one wants to determine diversity. A government may address a wide set of issues but devote almost their entire attention towards one of them, granting relatively little space left to the rest. To account for such relative weight difference in concentration of the agenda, Entropy scores will be used as a measure of diversity.

4.3.7. Entropy as a Measure of Diversity

Entropy is a measure based on Shannon's H (1948), describing the spread of observations, across several pre-defined discrete nominal categories, which in this case translates to how policy statements are spread across the 21 major CAP topics (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1011). The entropy score is estimated based on the following equation:

$$H = (-1) \sum p(xi) \ln(p(xi))$$

H, the entropy score, is the negative sum of the likelihood that a given policy statement (x) will fall in one of the 21 major categories (i), multiplied with the natural logarithm of that

likelihood (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1011)[18]. An entropy score of 0 means that all attention is concentrated towards one single topic, while the maximum score of ln (21) = 3.04 (the natural logarithm of the number of major topics) illustrates a speech in which each major topic receives the same amount of attention (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1011). If a speech receives the maximum entropy score, it means that each of the 21 major topic receives 4.76 % attention.

To understand what type of measure entropy is, three things are important to note. Firstly, it is not a measure of proportional attention shifts between issues. Agenda-shifting can appear without effecting the diversity of the agenda (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1012). This means that if the attention is divided 40 – 40 – 20 percent between issues A, B and C, a shift between B and C (40 – 20 – 40) result in the same entropy score. Secondly, two agendas with the same number of issues can have different entropy scores. The more evenly attention is spread, the more diverse agenda. This means that it is not only the count of issues present, but the relative attention devoted between the issues that is captured by the entropy score. This is essential in a diversity measure, as the count of topics is misleading when comparing speeches over time. There is a substantial difference between a speech where attention is divided evenly across 10 topics, and a speech with the same number of issues, but where 80 percent of the attention is concentrated towards two of them.

4.3.8. Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model: Entropy

The diversity of executive speeches has been found to move in incremental adjustments, meaning that the diversity one year, resembles the diversity the preceding year (Jennings et al, 2011, p. 1018). In a longitudinal structured data, this creates autocorrelation, a common problem, and expectation, in time series analysis where a units' value one period correlates with the units' value the next period (Christophersen, 2013, p. 158). To control for autocorrelation, one can include the lagged value of the dependent variable as one of the explanatory variables in the model (Worrall, 2010, p. 118). This results in a loss of the speech from 1946 but enables us to interpret the effects of core issues more accurately on diversity, without the statistical issues that time-dependent data creates (Christophersen, 2013, p. 158). Therefore, an auto regression distributed lag model (ADL) is applied to capture core issues

[18] Topics with no statements receives an x-score of 0, as it is not possible to take the natural logarithm of 0.

effect on agenda diversity, controlled for the entropy values of the speech the preceding year (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1018):

$$Yt = a0 + a1Yt\text{-}1 + \beta 1Xt + \beta 2Ct + \beta 3Dt + \varepsilon t$$

The model includes a constant term a0, a lagged independent variable a1Yt-1, an error term illustrating random shocks εt, and three coefficients β1-3 capturing the effect of the level of relative attention devoted to a major topic (X), the number of statements per year (C) and the partisan control over government (D) to control for potential differences is the issue attention across political divisions and longer speeches allowing for more issues to access the agenda (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1018). This means that each of the 21 major topics will have their own model of their effect on the entropy score. If the core issue hypothesis is correct, we expect $\beta 1 < 0$ for the core issues, meaning that they have a negative effect on agenda diversity (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1018). Also, the selective issues are expected to have a $\beta 1 > 0$, as they are connected to more diverse agendas.

4.4. Reliability Issues

As elaborated in chapter 4.2, several rounds of coder training were done to achieve sufficient reliability levels. Some of the most challenging parts in generating reliable data when coding text, are instances where policy statements are especially reliant on human interpretation. For example, the data covers executive speeches between 1946 and 2021, which causes challenges in coding policy statements consistently into the same set of policy categories, while at the same time accounting for time specific contexts. A long time-horizon allows for mapping agenda dynamics over long periods of time but comes at the cost of less context sensitivity. For example, industrial issues right after the World War 2 might be more accurately placed under macroeconomics, as building up the industry was an important tool to improve the economy. Industrial issues in the 21st century, however, are often more associated with commercial policies and innovation, like supporting small business start-ups, rather than macroeconomics. The broad time frame thereby challenges coders' ability to view statements alike, as one coder might interpret a statement based on the modern political

environment, while the other might emphasize the time-specific context in which the statement was first written.

Adding to this, some policy statements can be less specific than others. With different coder backgrounds, this might cause coders to interpret these vague policy statements differently (Krippendorff, 2019b, p. 131). For example, during the first round of coder training for the Norwegian material, it became evident that coders with a Norwegian background (in contrast to the coder with a German background) were more inclined to place broad and vague policy statements about things such as unity ("fellesskap") within welfare state issues. From the perspective of other countries, with smaller welfare states, these types of statements might be associated with other types of issues, such as civil liberties, or determined as a statement without policy content, coded "not relevant". As CAP scientists might apply the Norwegian data to comparative research in the future, maintaining the coding as comparable to different country contexts as possible is important. However, since the scope of this thesis only covers the Norwegian case, and data from other countries are not included directly in the analysis, this will not be discussed further here. In addition, although coder background biases and time specific factors cause reliability challenges, the coder training brought these issues to the surface. Thereby, conscious choices were made both with regards to vague policy statements, and to vary both the time frame and issue structure of the documents to gain an acceptable level of reliability before coding the data.

4.5. Validity Issues

Although the most severe reliability issues have been removed after several rounds of coder training, some validity challenges are not possible to avoid when using an international coding scheme with very general policy topics on a Norwegian context. Therefore, a more detailed description of the coding-procedure, and what implications it has for investigating the Norwegian agenda, is presented. Furthermore, the validity challenges in removing observations due to relative measures are discussed. Lastly, Cook's D measures are used map the most influential speeches to secure that external shocks do not bias the results of the Entropy-models.

4.5.1. Coding

Certain things are worth noting when it comes to the structure of the codebook, as well as the coding strategy. Firstly, creating a cross-national codebook of policy areas is a challenging task, as the importance and perspectives of different policy areas varies across different contexts. Before the creation of the CAP Major Codebook, over 450 subtopics consisted across the CAP projects because of cross-country differences in policymaking, imposing comparability issues (Bevan, 2019, p. 25). Although the aim here is not to compare the Norwegian policy agenda to other countries' policy agenda, the application of the CAP Major Codebook is a contribution to a cross-national research project, building on research applying the same major policy-topics. Perfectly adapting the codes to increase the internal validity of measuring the specific Norwegian context would therefore be problematic in the broader aim of contributing to an international comparative research project. The CAP Major Codebook creates a middle ground for this validity-comparability trade-off, by allowing for country-specific adaptions to ensure national specific validity, while at the same maintaining the structure of the Major Topics to ensure comparability (Bevan, 2019, p. 22). In the Norwegian codebook, for example, the "Government Pension Fund of Norway /Oil Fund" has been added as a "Macroeconomics" subtopic, to better capture the importance of oil investments for the Norwegian economy.

Secondly, the coding strategy might serve some validity challenges when investigating agenda developments. When one sentence is divided equally between several major topics, the sentence receives the lowest code. For example, one of the last sentences in the Trontale from 1950 is coded into the major topic "macroeconomics" ("107 Tax issues"), although it also touches upon culture, pension, education, and housing issues[19]. To illustrate how this effects the inferences we draw concerning the three hypotheses, consider the hypothetical example that the 1950 speech consisted of this one sentence. With whole-sentence coding, a 100 % of the attention would be devoted to macroeconomics, while at sub-sentence level, the attention is spread evenly to the five issues by 20 % each. If all issues in the 1950 sentence were excluded and replaced by new issues in 1951, except for macroeconomics, this type of change would not be measured, as the 1951 "speech" would still be coded based on the lowest code, macroeconomics. Thereby, whole-sentence coding provides a more robust test for the generalized punctuation hypothesis (H1), as it biases the measure of change dynamics towards

[19] See Appendix 8.2.1 for sentence example

stability, rather than punctuations[20]. However, it will also bias the results to support the partisan neutrality hypothesis (H2). An overestimation of stability might also cause an overestimation of partisan neutrality. In other words, issue-variations on the sub-sentence level is not included, which also limits the ability to capture potential partisan differences in agenda-setting.

In addition, the description of agenda diversity becomes somewhat underestimated, as the sub-sentence leveled diversity is not reflected in the coding. Since the core issue hypothesis (H3) concerns capturing the effect-directions of relative increases in issue attention on Entropy scores (negative for core issues, positive for selective issues), and not the Entropy size in general, this does not serve a severe validity problem. However, a part of the core issue analysis is also to describe executive priorities and internal issue dynamics. It is therefore worth mentioning that the lowest code-rule might bias the issue hierarchy description of executive attention towards some issues more than others. For example, amongst the core issues, macroeconomics has the lowest code in the codebook (100), while the other core issues – legal affairs (1200), defense (1600), foreign policy (1900) and government operations (2000) – has relatively high codes in comparison. Thereby, the nature of the codebook rules makes the mapping of policy agendas inclined to overestimate the importance of some issues over others.

However, there are some exceptions to the whole-sentence coding rule that decrease the extensiveness of these validity challenges. In the case of bullet points, each point has received a unique code although they are technically within the same sentence, not separated with a punctum. An example is halfway through the Trontale of 1974, where each line has received a separate code so that the issues included in the list (civil liberty, labor and welfare issues) are coded separately[21]. The different coding strategy is due to the different messages these formats send when it comes to issue priorities. When topics are squeezed together in one sentence, splitting the sentence would overestimate the relative importance of each policy, as each of the subsentences would be weighted equal to whole sentences. When listing bullet-

[20] Note that the size of punctuations is not affected by this, as punctuations are based on relative changes of an issue compared to its past values of itself, not the total percentages. If macroeconomics was excluded in the 1951 speech, the subsentence versus whole-sentence level of coding would not matter for the size of this change: Going from 20 % space to 0 % space, or 100 % space to 0 % space, are both a change of (-)100 %.
[21] See Appendix 8.2.1 for sentence example

points in the Trontale, however, the issues are presented as separate units, in a way that emphasize their importance, and weighing each bullet-point equally to whole sentences is thereby more justifiable. In sum, whole-sentence coding decrease validity by not capturing all issues summarized within the sentence, but it also reflects a priority concerning the position of these issues compared to others, as one would expect them to be added in separate sentences if they were of bigger significance.

4.5.2. Subtopics

Furthermore, a limitation of the application of the major coding strategy is loss of information when it comes to variations within each major policy area. For example, the relative change in issue attention over time might be more severe if one accounts for changes within each subtopic. One government might talk about changing the municipal structure, while another focus on the degree of privatization in the public sector. Due to the major topic categorizations however, both issues are coded within the “government operations” topic, and the data will therefore not reflect these differences.

Also, when investigating core issues effect on agenda diversity, some information is lost by gathering the subcategories into more general categories associated with the core functions of the state. For example, "foreign policy”, a core issue expected to decrease the number of issues on the agenda, consists of a variety of subtopics; the European Union, foreign aid and global terrorism, to mention some. If foreign policy has a negative effect on agenda diversity, one cannot know with certainty whether this is an attribute that can be applied to all foreign policy issues, or whether the effect is driven by a specific subcategory. However, the theoretical expectations concern broad policy-categories (Jennings et al., 2011). After all, the core issue subcategories all share the most important attribute, which is belonging to one of the core functions of the state. Thereby, the different effects of subcategories on agenda diversity are for future research to explore.

4.5.3. Relative Changes and Omitted Cases

A limitation of the Trontale as an agenda-measure is that it is short and formal compared to other types of policy agendas like party manifestos and coalition platforms. In addition, the speeches also devote some of the space to formal ceremonial statements. As these statements do not include any substantial policy content, they are excluded from the data. Therefore, the

speech format creates certain limitations to the amount of issue variation and detail that is possible to include within each speech and limits the total number of units of analysis compared to many other agendas. However, this does not need to limit the validity of measuring the relative issue attention of governments. If we were interested in the capacity of the agenda, I.e., how many issues the speech can handle at once, the total number of statements within each speech over time would be of substantial interest. However, since the objective is to investigate shifts in attention and issue-priorities, a focus on relative changes is the most valid measure (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, pp. 179-180). Thereby, although the speeches' short format limits the number of units of analysis compared to longer agenda documents, it does not limit our ability to measure relative changes in issue attention over time.

However, the application of relative changes requires omitting some cases from the analysis. Firstly, as the value of the distribution is based on the changes of issue attention from the previous year, the issue distribution in the first executive speech from 1946 is not included. In addition, the distribution does not capture instances in which completely new issues appear on the agenda. That is, if the attention devoted to an issue is 4 % one year and 0 % the previous year, the jump from 0 % to 4 % will not be included in the analysis, as you cannot divide by zero, and thereby not estimate relative change. But, since the rise of new issues on the agenda illustrates punctuations in issue attention, loosing these cases is likely to bias the results *against* finding a kurtosis that supports the generalized punctuation hypothesis (H1) (Breeman et al. 2009, p. 26). Therefore, if the distribution is leptokurtic with a positive kurtosis, it is despite of (and not because of) omitted units of analysis.

However, the exclusion of zero-punctuations will, in worst case, result in a false support of the partisan neutrality hypothesis (H2), hiding potential patterns of party differentiation. If new parties bring previously excluded issues on to the agenda when they enter office, this will not be reflected within the punctuations estimated based on relative change. Therefore, mapping the biggest zero-punctuations along with partisan changes will increase the ability to map the presence or absence of partisan effects on agenda setting. In addition, the way issues rise and fall on the agenda is an important component in describing how the agenda develops over time, regardless of the partisan factors, or punctuated equilibriums. Therefore, although often neglected in the agenda-setting literature (Van Assche, 2012, p. 139), zero-punctuations

are also included in the analysis to give a more thorough description of how the Norwegian executive agenda develops.

4.5.4. Influential Observations

To measure core issue effects on agenda diversity, time series regression models for each major topic, with special focus on the five core issues will be applied. A challenge with performing statistical regression analysis with only 76 observations[22], is that each speech is devoted a lot of weight, and outliers will therefore have the potential to be very influential on the results. This creates a dilemma of how influential a speech must be to justify removing it from an already limited data selection. After examining the descriptive statistics of the entropy scores, the most concentrated agenda reveals that 2020 is not comparable to any other years in the data set[23]. After the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020, over 60 percent of government attention within the executive speech presented October 2020 was devoted to only three major topics: Labor, Health and Macroeconomics, deviating greatly for the normal format in terms of issue diversity. Although labor and health issues are often associated to public policies in modern welfare states, these policy areas cannot be related to core functions of the state in the same way as the national economy, laws, defense, foreign policy and government operations. A global pandemic is an extreme case in which a virus serves as a national threat towards people's health and employment, thereby making health and labor issues more reliant on public policies and the government than under normal circumstances. Thereby, it is reason to believe that the 2020 speech has a big effect on the overall results, especially when it comes to the models including labor and health as explanatory variables.

To test whether excluding the 2020 speech from the analysis can be justified, an estimation of Cooks Distance (Cook, 1977) is applied. The purpose of this measure is to map the observations that are especially influential on regression analysis results (Cook, 1977, p. 15). Figures 4.2 and 4.3 below show the Cooks' D scores for each year in the data with the models including labor and health attention as explanatory variables on the agenda diversity[24]. As expected, the presence of health and labor policies in 2020 seems to affect the results greatly.

[22] Speeches 1947-2021, with two speeches from 1959. 1946 excluded due to lagged entropy-effect
[23] See online Appendix 8.x, Datasets: Entropy Scores
[24] To illustrate years on the x-axis, the first of the two 1959 speeches is excluded from the Cooks D plots. See Appendix 8.3.2 and 8.3.3 for Cooks D plots including all speeches

In 2020, both issues score around 2 on Cooks D, over 40 times higher than the rule of thumb threshold of 0.05[25], illustrated by the blue line.

Figure 4. 2: Cooks' D Health

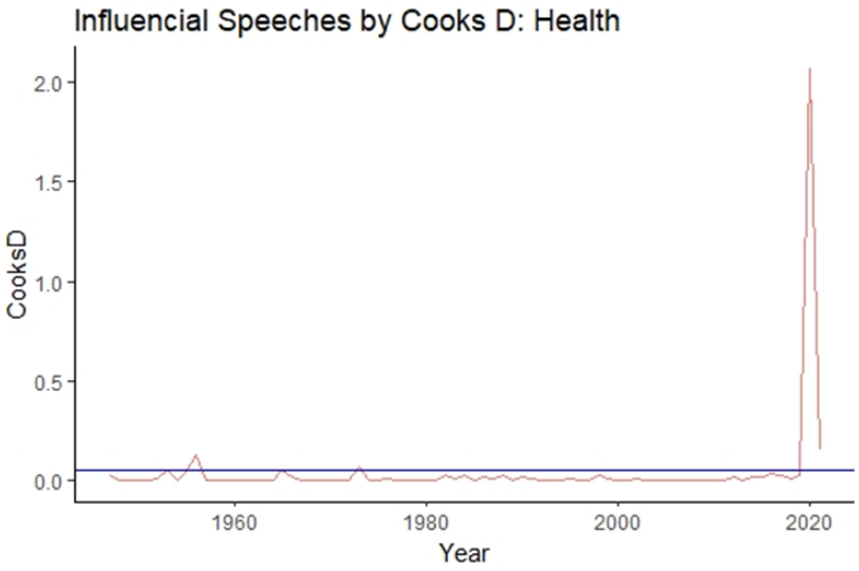
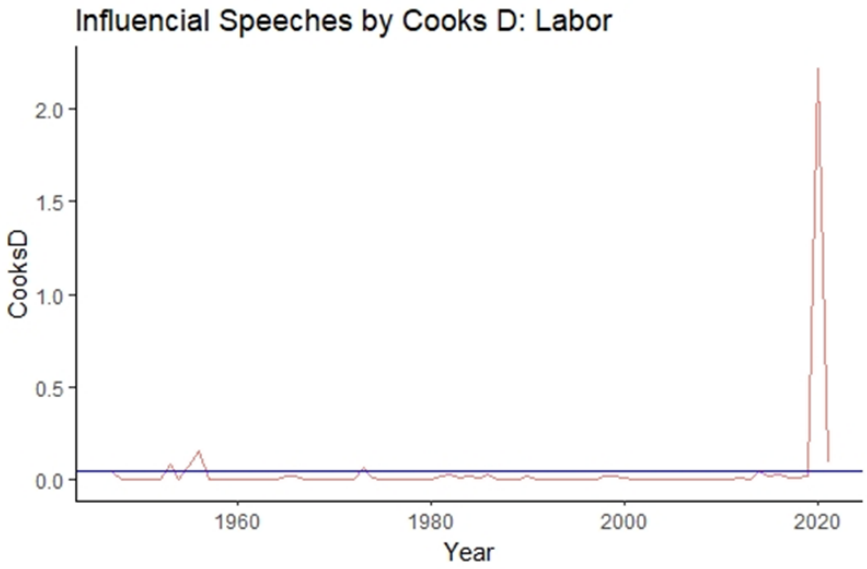


Figure 4. 3: Cooks' D Labor



[25] The rule of thumb when mapping meaningful observations is 4 divided by the number of observations: 4/76 = 0.05 (Glenn, 2016)

Another good illustration of the consequences of including the 2020 speech, is a simple linear regression between labor policies' effect on the entropy score before and after removing 2020 from the analysis. Figures 4.4 and 4.3 show that the effect of labor goes from negative, indicating that increasing attention to labor policies crowd other issues out of the agenda, to slightly positive, placing labor issues in the selective issue category. Similarly, the effect of Health issues' space on the agenda (figure 4.6 and 4.7) changes from a slightly negative, to a clear positive effect before and after omitting 2020. I.e., the 2020 speech leads to contradictive conclusions.

Figure 4. 4: Labor-effect on Entropy including 2020

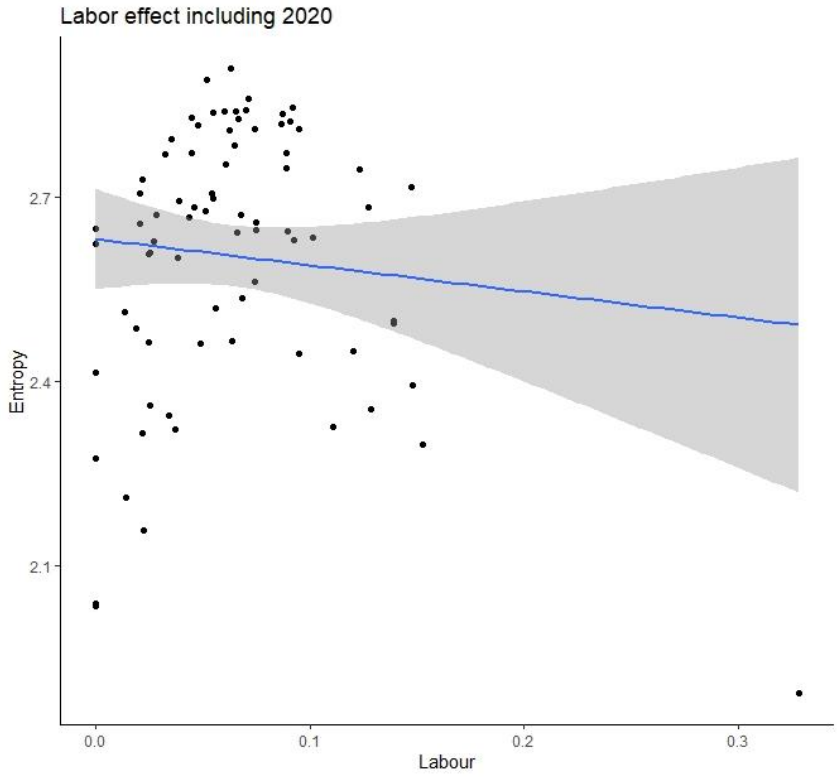


Figure 4. 5: Labor-effect on Entropy without 2020

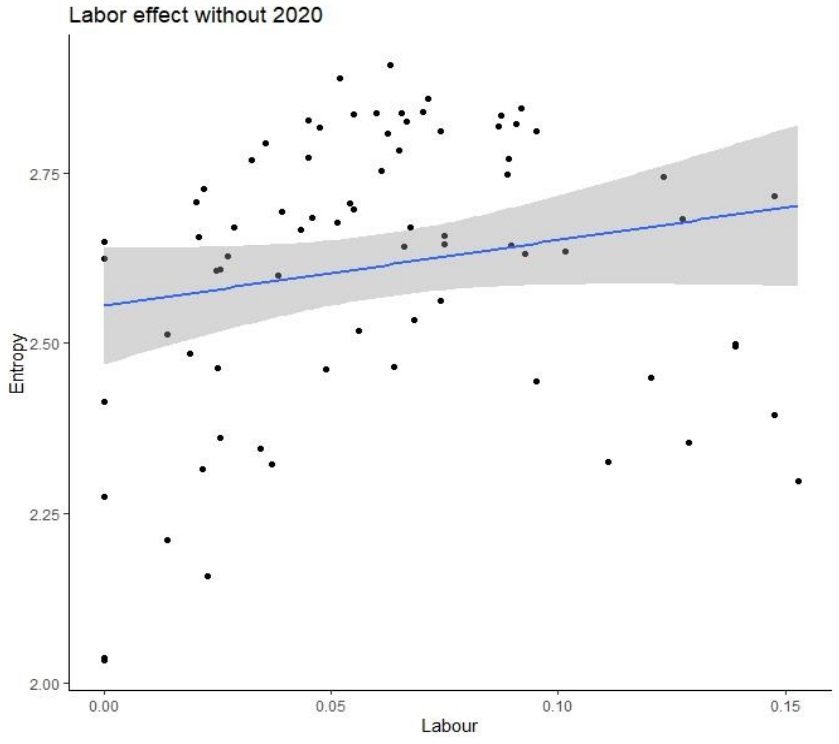


Figure 4. 6: Health-effect on Entropy including 2020

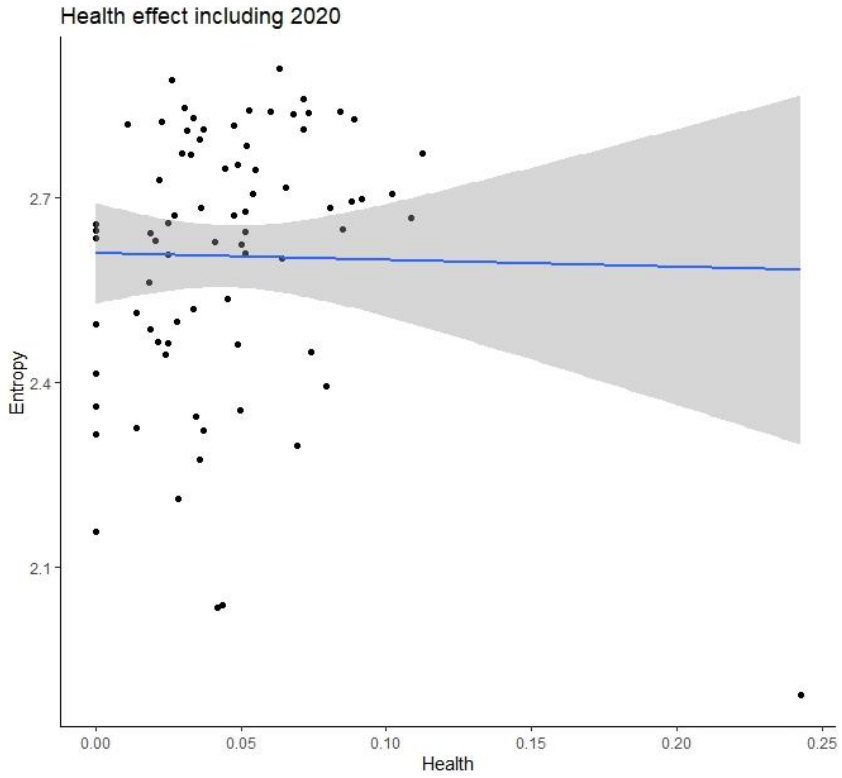
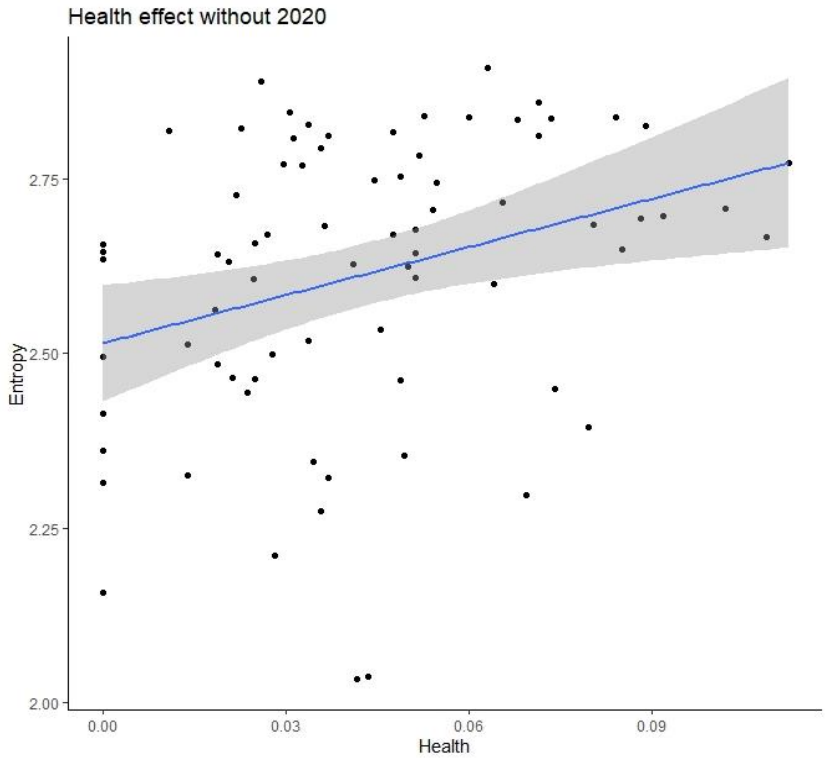


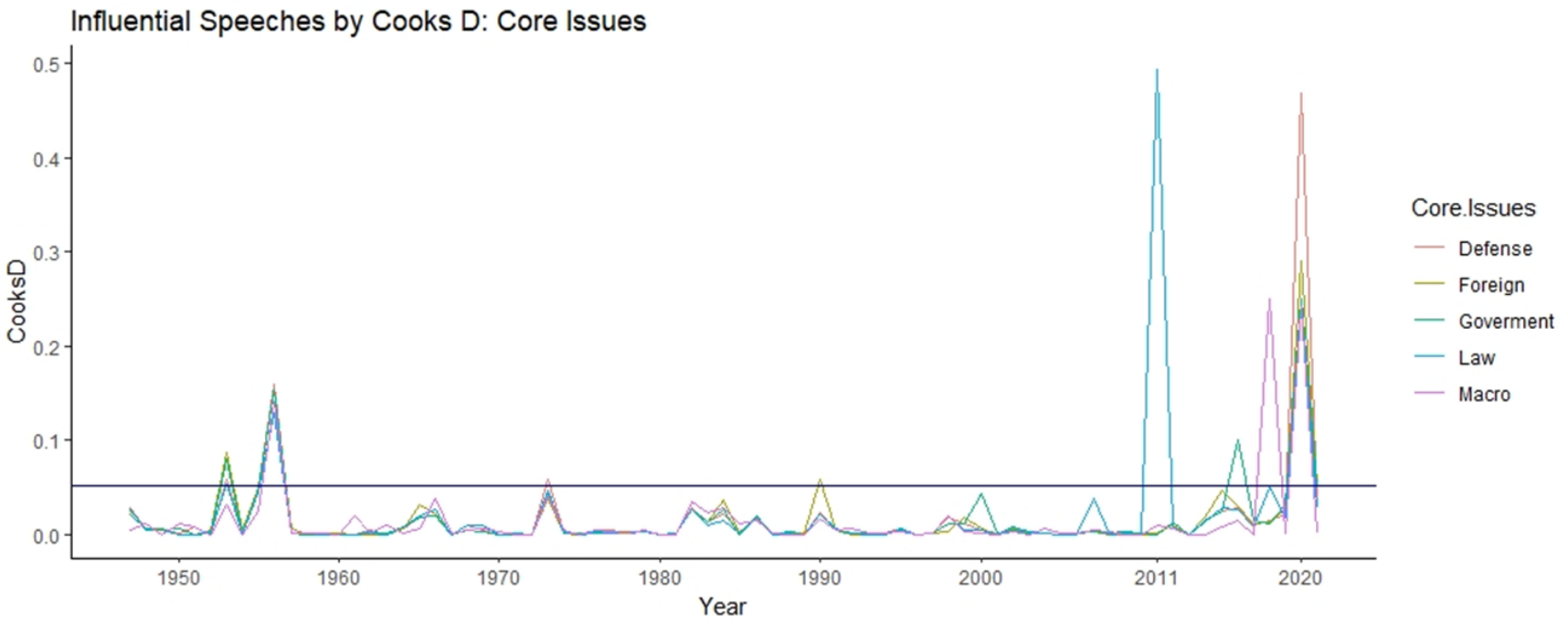
Figure 4. 7: Health-effect on Entropy without 2020



Since the sample size is already small, excluding all speeches with Cooks D exceeding 0.05 on only one or a few of the major topics will limit the sample size too much. However, the 2020 speech is influential not only for health and labor issues, but also for all five core issues, as shown in Figure 4.8[26]. In the aftermath of the 22nd of July terrorist attack in 2011, police reform and domestic fight against terrorism rose greatly to the agenda. Therefore, with an average space of 3.5 %, legal affairs gained over 20 % of the attention in the aftermath of the attack. This is illustrated in figure 4.8, where the Cooks D score of 2011 on the model including law issues is extremely high. Since the 2011 speech is so influential, an additional model excluding both 2011 and 2020 for legal affairs will be included in the analysis to find the effect of law issues on agenda diversity without the external shock of the 22nd of July.

[26] For a more detailed Cook D scores overview, see Appendix 8.3.2 and 8.3.3

Figure 4. 8: Cooks' D Core Issues



5. Analysis

Before analyzing whether the hypotheses are supported, I will present some descriptive characteristics of the Norwegian executive speeches, illustrating their length and issue attention dynamics over time. Thereby, I proceed to structure my analysis in a threefold manner: First, in accordance with the generalized punctuation hypothesis (H1), I will present a frequency distribution illustrating the dynamics of changes in issue attention of Norwegian governments for the last 76 years. Since the relative measure of change excludes changes from zero percent (i.e., instances where new issues rise to the agenda), I will also present 10 cases where new issues appeared on the agenda that were not present the preceding year. The aim is not to explain how, when or why new issues appear, but rather to provide a richer description of the developments in the Norwegian executive agenda and expand our understanding of the magnitude of punctuations. Second, a list of the biggest attention shifts will be presented with government party compositions the same year, and the year before, the punctuation occurred to test for partisan neutrality and differentiation. Thirdly, in accordance with the core issue hypothesis (H3), I will investigate whether core issues have a negative effect on agenda diversity focusing on the Entropy scores of each speech.

5.1. Descriptive Characteristics of the Norwegian Executive Speeches

5.1.1. Agenda Size

Figure and Table 5.1 below illustrate how the size of the executive speeches has developed over time. The blue line is the total count of sentences including formal statements. The red line illustrates the sentences containing solely policy statements, and the dashed line is the policy statement average (71.6 statements). As one can see from the figure, speech length varies over time. The longest speech contains 117 policy statements in total (in 2014), while the shortest speech is down to 23 (in 1955), and the standard deviation is 25.5 statements, over 20 % of the longest speech. This means that the relative weight of one sentence can vary greatly between speeches. A one-sentence increase in issue attention will be reflected through bigger punctuations years where the speeches are short than years when the speeches are relatively long. However, smaller agendas also indicate a higher threshold for reaching it. Therefore, the issues that are able to pass this threshold may be interpreted to be of greater importance, thereby justifying its relative importance.

As the aim is to map the governments' policy agenda, the rest of the analysis will be based on the sentences containing substantial policies, meaning that the formal sentences are excluded from estimations.

Figure 5. 1: Speech length and policy statements over time

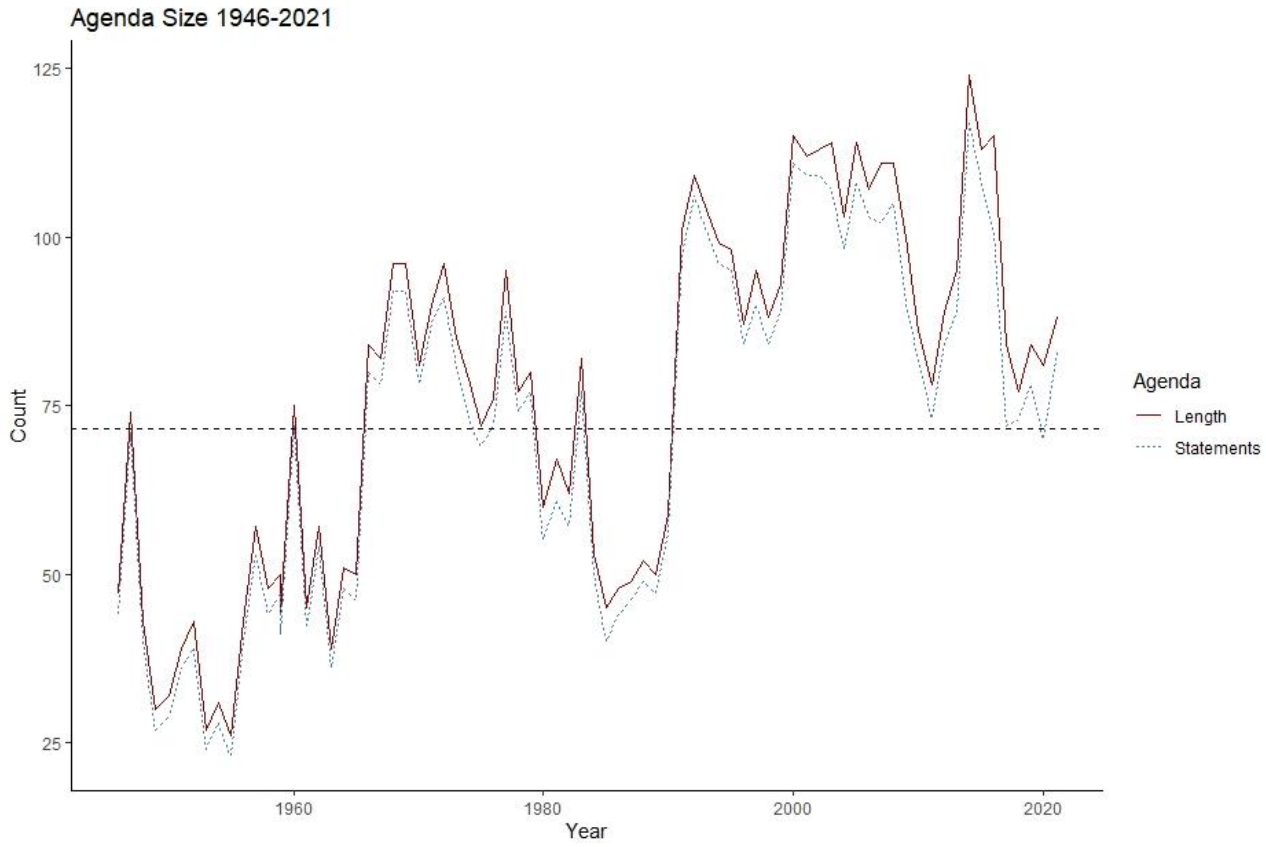


Table 5. 1: Descriptive statistics policy statements

Statements 1946	44
Statements 2021	83
Min	23
Max	117
SD	25.5
Mean	71.6

5.1.2. Issue Attention

Figure 5.2 shows the total count of sentences within each of the major topic categories. all 21 major topics have at some point received executive attention the last 76 years. Foreign policy and macroeconomics are clearly the most common policy areas discussed in executive speeches, followed by labor and social policies. However, the figure cannot tell us anything about the allocation of attention across these issues over time, nor their relative space compared to each other. A more accurate description of what issues Norwegian governments have prioritized after 1946 is therefore illustrated in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5. 2: Issue attention count

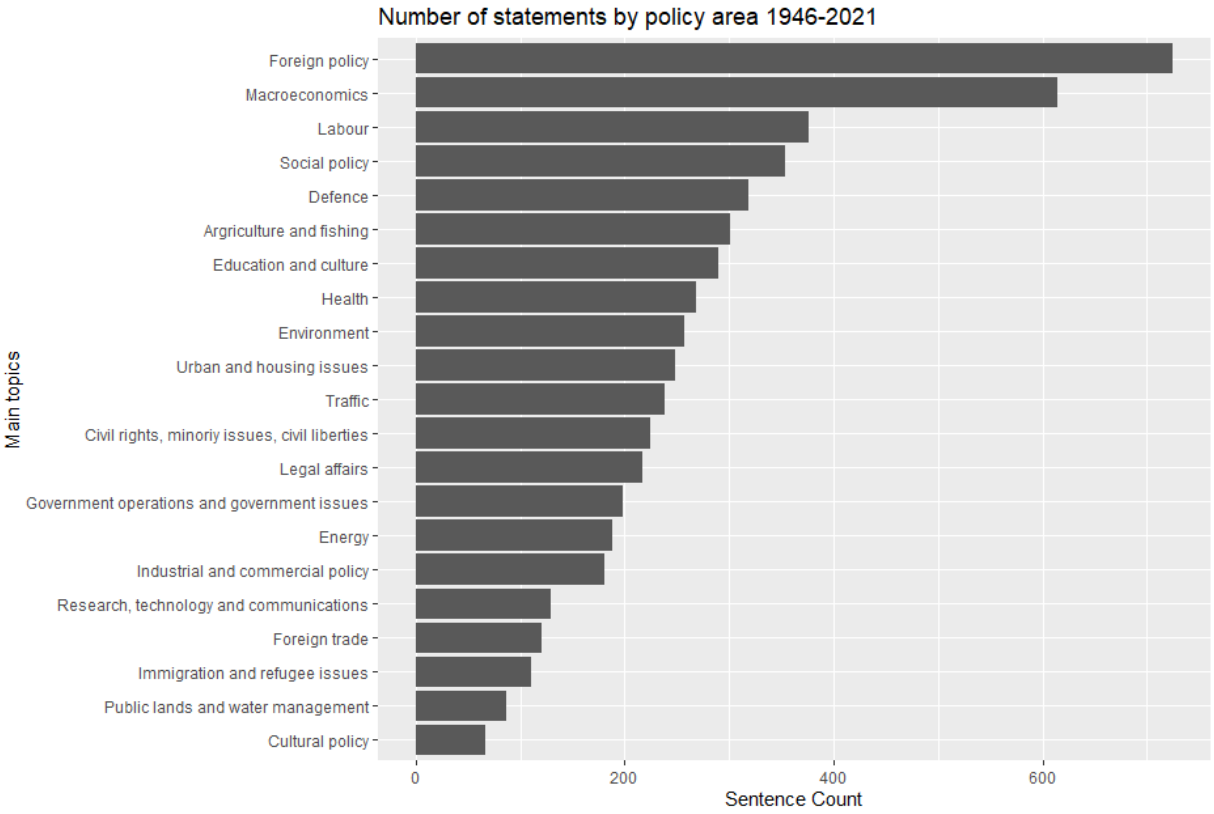
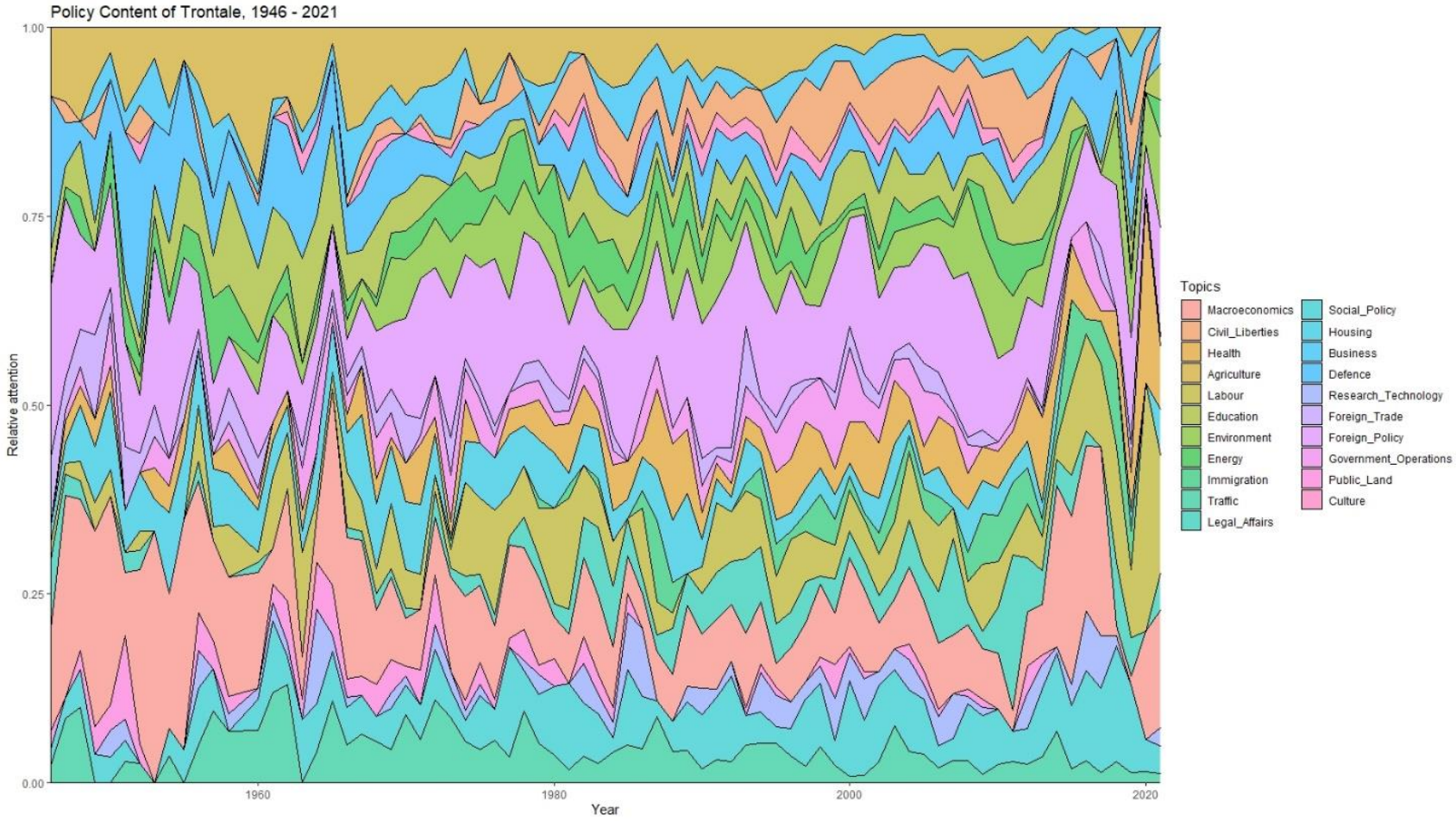


Figure 5.3 shows how the attention of Norwegian governments is allocated across the 21 policy topics between 1946 and 2021. Although the macroeconomic and foreign policy colors are quite prevalent, their issue dominance is far from stable. At first glance, figure 5.3 may be a bit hard to interpret, as the attention is divided across so many issues that it becomes hard to separate the colors. However, this is interesting in itself, as it tells us that the Norwegian executive agenda usually diversifies across a variety of issues, rather than concentrating towards a few. Certain years are clearly more diverse, including more policy areas than others. Speeches from the last decade and the 1960s for example, cover more issues than the executive speeches presented between 1980 and 2000. Also, some issues, like agriculture, seems to receive a decreasing amount of attention, while other issues, like immigration, does not appear as a part of the executive policy agenda until after the 1980s. The effect of external shocks on issue attention is also visible, especially for education and health after the Corona pandemic. In 2019, health policies received 4.7% attention in the executive speech. In 2020, after the outbreak of COVID-19, health policies reached 21 % attention, a relative increase of 346 percentage points (illustrated by the change in the center orange color, figure 5.3). It is important to keep in mind that the interpretations of attention shifts based on figure 5.3 are solely descriptive reflections. However, the sudden jump in issue attention to health and education policies during a pandemic and school lockdown, is a good illustration of how governments constantly need to adapt their focus in response to social processes if they are urgent enough.

Figure 5. 3: Relative attention allocation over time



5.2. Change Dynamics and Punctuations

5.2.1. A Leptokurtic Distribution

Figure 5.4 shows a frequency distribution based on the aggregated changes in the Norwegian Executive Speeches between 1946 and 2021, plotted against the line of a normal distribution. The normal distribution illustrates how changes in government attention would resemble if it developed in a gradual, incremental manner[27].

The leptokurtic nature of the distribution is confirmed by the descriptive statistics presented in table 5.2. The kurtosis score is almost 18, way higher than a score of 3 in a normal distribution. Not surprisingly, the variance in the distribution, telling us something about the spread in the data, is also extremely big. This supports PET's expectations that although politicians' attention shifts are most often non-existent or small, the changes that *do* occur do so in a disproportional manner. The difference between the biggest jump in issue attention of around 1000 % and the standard deviation of 100 % is also a good illustration that there are punctuations that appear many standard deviations away from the mean, of 12.6 %[28]. Also, the L-kurtosis shows evidence of a punctuated distribution, exceeding the normal distribution threshold of 0.12 (Breunig & Koski, 2012, p. 53). In addition, the KS and SW tests in table 4.3 shows a D static of 0.55 and a W static of 0.78, both significant on a 99 percent confidence level. This means that we can safely reject the null hypothesis that the sample is drawn from a normal distribution. In other words, the agenda distribution of change cannot be described as exclusively incremental. The positive kurtosis score referred to in the generalized punctuation hypothesis is thereby confirmed.

[27] The normal distribution is estimated based on the average change in the speeches from one year to another 12.5 % and the standard deviation of change, 100 %, from one year to another.
[28] For additional descriptive statistics of median, min and skewness, see Appendix 8.4.1.

Table 5. 2 Descriptive statistics of change in executive speeches

Mean	12.6
Max	1014.3
Standard deviation	100.3
Variance	10 056
L-kurtosis	0.258
Kurtosis	17.71
N	1617

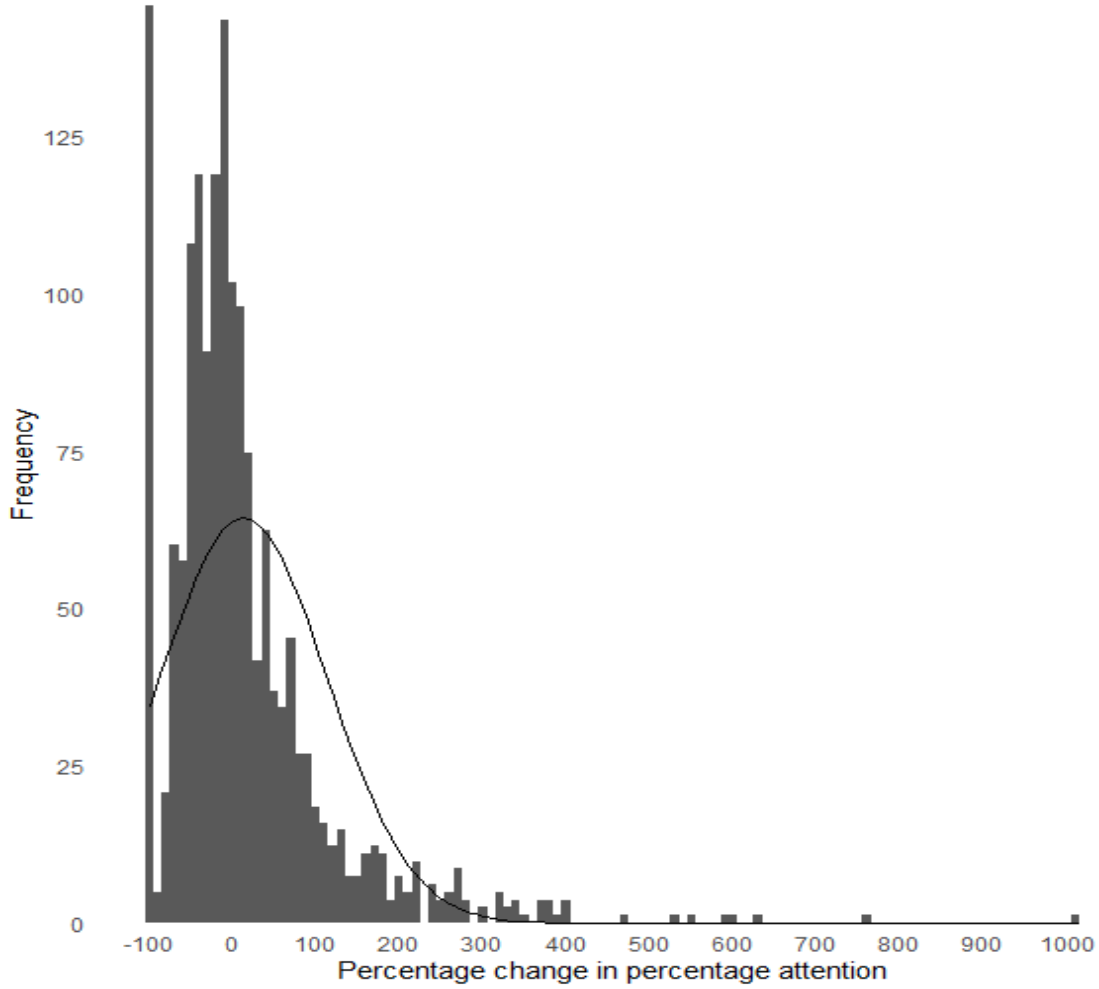
Table 5. 3 Test of Normality against raw data

Kolmorgorov-Smirnov D static	0.55332 ***
Shapiro–Wilk W static	0.77887 ***
N	1617

Furthermore, the generalized punctuation hypothesis gains more support by examining figure 5.4, as the frequency distribution of change confirms the expectations of punctuated equilibrium theory (PET): It has a high central peak, with many cases centering around 0 % change, as well as relatively fat tails. This means that the Norwegian government often circle their attention around the same set of policy areas over time, along with small incremental adjustments in issue attention. Towards the tails of the distribution however, there are relatively many instances of extreme changes (punctuations) in issue attention compared to the normal distribution. This confirms the theoretical expectations further: Some of the changes in governments issue attention deviate from the incrementalistic adjustments centering around the peak of the distribution. First, the positive side of the tale illustrates instances of increased attention devoted to issues. Even without the instances of new issues rising to the agenda included in the distribution (zero-punctuations), several punctuations exceed the normality-tail from 400, up to a 1000 percent increase in the relative attention devoted to an issue from one year to another. Norwegian governments thereby take large jumps in attention devoted to some issues, making disproportionate leaps in attention on their agendas. Sometimes, issues gain a big amount of attention compared to the year before.

Second, as a negative number of sentences is not possible, the attention devoted to an issue cannot drop with more than 100 %, which explains the high negative peak on the left side of the distribution. The big frequency of a 100 % decrease in issue attention illustrates that over the time covered in this distribution, issues dropping off the agenda are just almost as common as the incremental adjustments. Issues dropping on an off the agenda has not gained a lot of attention in the agenda-setting literature however, as it is not mathematically possible to divide by 0, and thereby not possible to estimate a relative percentage increase when an issue previously received 0 percent attention. In the next section however, the 10 biggest zero-punctuations will be presented based on absolute increase in percentage points, to account the fact that the issue exclusions are not reflected in the positive tail of the distribution when they are included back to the agenda.

Figure 5. 4 Changes in Norwegian Executive Speeches



5.2.2. From Exclusion to Inclusion

A limitation to the relative measure of changes in agenda-setting is the exclusion of the cases in which an issue receives 0 % attention. For the Norwegian executive speeches, this is the case for 283 of the 1617 observations (21 major topics times 77 speeches). Just as the observations included in the frequency distribution, changes in governments' issue attention towards former excluded policy domains happens in incremental adjustments, as most topics fall on and off the agenda from time to time. However, table 5.4, showing the 10 biggest zero-punctuations, reveals that there are instances in which the attention devoted to an issue that was excluded one year, gains a disproportional amount of attention the next year.

Table 5. 4 The 10 biggest zero-punctuations

Relative increase (+ 1%)	**Percentages From/to**	**Topic**	**From/to**
1250 %	0/12.5	Research and Technology	1963/1964
970%	0/9.7	Environment	2017/2018
900%	0/9	Labor	1985/1986
830%	0/8.3	Legal Affairs	2017/2018
770%	0/7.7	Civil Rights	2018/2019
750%	0/7.5	Labor	1955/1956
730%	0/7.3	Foreign Trade	1959a/1959b
690%	0/6.9	Energy	1949/1950
690%	0/6.9	Government Operations	1949/1950
570%	0/5.7	Housing	2020/2021

To illustrate, one can compare the biggest punctuation included in the right tail of the frequency distribution, and the biggest zero-punctuation in table 5.4. Macroeconomic issues increased its relative space on the agenda with approximately 1000 %, seen at the outer edge of the right tail in the frequency distribution (figure 5.4). This is due to the attention jump to economic issues from 1.3 % in 2019 to 14.3 % in 2020 with an absolute difference of 13 percentage points. In comparison, the biggest zero-punctuation, for Research and Technology, received 0 % attention in 1963 and 12.5 % attention in 1964. If the attention devoted to research had been 1 % in 1963 and 13.5 % in 1964, and thereby included in the frequency distribution, this would have been the biggest punctuation within the dataset, increasing

Research and Technology's relative space with 1250 %[29]. A quick overview of the remaining 9 zero-punctuations with a minimum of 570 %, reveals that the Norwegian policy agenda is even more punctuated by big shifts in issue attention than the frequency distribution above revealed. Also, in comparison to previous findings, the Norwegian attention shifts from exclusion to inclusion are relatively big. The top 10 zero-punctuations within the Belgium executive speeches have a range of 3.5 to 7 percentage points absolute difference, considerably smaller than in the Norwegian case (Van Assche, 2012, p. 141). Thereby, it is safe to say that issue exclusion one year, does not necessarily indicate that the policy domain in question has entered a time in which the government regards it as unimportant. For an issue to become a part of the executive speech, it does not always have to go through long periods of small, incremental adjustments, as Norwegian governments sometimes devote a lot of attention to an issue after ignoring that same issue the previous year.

5.2.3. Summary and Discussion

In sum, the distribution of change in issue attention within the Norwegian executive speeches is much in line with previous findings (Breeman et al., 2009; Chaqués-Bonafont et al., 2019; John & Jennings, 2010; Van Assche, 2012)[30]. Both the incremental adjustments, as well as the extreme peak on the negative side of the distribution and disproportional increase in attention on the positive tail is found with a great similarity in the Dutch executive speeches (Breeman et al., 2009, p. 11) and the Queen's speeches in the UK (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 573). The Norwegian data on executive speeches thereby provides further support for the "stickiness" of the executive policy agenda predicted by PET: governments attention is biased towards the status quo, but a great proportion of changes in attention happens in a disproportionally big manner. Norwegian governments' agenda are characterized by long periods of stability punctuated by big shifts in attention, illustrating the developments of the policy agenda as discontinuous rather than solely incremental. However, the data also show that Norwegian governments sometimes take big leaps in what policy areas they choose to focus on in their agendas.

The inclusion and exclusion dynamics also mirrors this punctuated pattern. Although most issues are included back into the agenda in a gradual manner, there are also instances where

[29] (0.143-0.013)/0.013 = 10 < (0.135 - 0.01)/0.01 = 12.5

[30] For example, the UK executive speech 1940-2005 descriptive statistics: Kurtosis of 19.21, variance 9727, biggest punctuation 1060 %, and a standard deviation of 98.63 (John and Jennings, 2010, p 574).

the executive attention goes from granting a policy topic no attention, to a substantial amount of attention in only one year. Substantially, one could argue that zero-punctuations are even more severe jumps in governments issue attention compared to the regular punctuations, as they go from ignoring a policy domain entirely, to devoting it a lot of attention the next year. Whether these U-turns of attention shifts are due to partisan changes, external shocks, or governments compensating for excluding an issue by addressing it the next year, is not possible to determine based on this descriptive analysis. But the investigation of the zero-punctuations reveals that the omitted cases from figure 5.4 strengthens a punctuated pattern, in support for the generalized punctuation hypothesis: The Norwegian executive agenda is characterized by long periods of stability, punctuated by a relatively big number of sudden, disproportional changes in issue attention, also when including the 10 biggest zero-punctuations.

Thereby, this first section provides one type of answer to how the Norwegian agenda develops over time: The norm is to talk about a similar set of issues from one year to another, but Norwegian governments also have taken major leaps in the attention within a one-year time frame. The relative attention towards a specific issue one year, is not always dependent on the attention it receives the year before. Thereby, redirecting the attention of the Norwegian governments might be challenging, but not impossible. According to PET, the root to the agenda punctuations is long-term built-up friction that essentially becomes high enough to capture decisionmakers attention (Jones and Baumgartner, 2012, p. 8). A limitation of this explanation is that it does not provide any proposals to what might cause this friction to reach its sufficient level, or when the punctuations occur. The theory only gives a description of the nature of change in a political system, and that cognitive and institutional costs requires policy inputs to pressure for attention for long periods of time to access the agenda (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 173).

As emphasized in Breeman's et al. (2009, p. 12) similar findings of the Dutch executive agenda, the punctuated pattern creates some interesting questions about whether these major changes in issue attention comes in a systematic, or random matter. The following section asks this question from a partisan neutrality and partisan differentiation perspective by investigating whether the punctations on the right tail of the distribution (where issues gain more attention) aligns with changes in partisan factors.

5.3. Partisan Compositions and Attention-shifts

5.3.1. Partisan Composition and Punctuations

Between 1946 and 2021, there has been 17 changes in the party composition of government and 19 national elections, and 13 different Norwegian prime ministers[31]. Within the same time frame, there have been 46 punctuations where the relative space devoted to an issue has increased by 250 % on the agenda. Literature on partisan change and agenda-setting have used different methods like comparing the average issue stability from one year to another, or by checking whether speeches between new and old governments have a relatively low correlation (Baumgartner et al. 2009a; Breeman et al. 2009; Mortensen et al. 2011). Furthermore, Van Assche (2012) applies a different punctuation threshold, and cover a much smaller time frame (1993-2008) than what is applied here. Thereby, the nature of the Norwegian punctuations compared to other executive speeches is restricted to the UK case, with a considerably smaller count of 27 punctuations in British Queen's speech 1940 – 2005, using the same 250 % threshold (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 576)[32]. A possible explanation is that the UK speeches are coded on a subsentence level, meaning that if one sentence includes several policy statements, the sentence receives several codes (CAP, 2022b). This could create a punctuation bias towards the Norwegian speech, as the coding have been done with whole sentences. Thereby, the changes that occur may look more severe, as each topic is devoted the relative weight of a whole sentence. However, the average number of policy statements in the UK speeches is 72 between 1945 and 2008 (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1014), not very different from the Norwegian average of 71. This means that although the UK speech contains subsentence coding, the weight of one policy statement as a proportion to the whole speech is, on average, not considerably smaller than in Norway.

If the great punctuation differences do not stem from different coding procedures, another explanation is that the stability of the Norwegian executive agenda is relatively easy to punctuate. Although the norm is incremental adjustments (represented by the high central peak in the frequency distribution), an investigation of the positive tail of the distribution

[31] Not including John Lyng as prime minister from august to September 1963 and Jonas Gahr Støre from October 2021.

[32] UK covers a smaller time frame (64 years) than Norway (75 years), which could cause the punctation-difference. But estimating the punctuations as a proportion of the speeches, the Norwegian is still more punctuated: 27/64 = 0.42 < 46/76 = 0.6.

reveals a series of instances in which the government has increased their attention in a disproportionally big manner.

Can these punctuations be connected to changes in partisan factors? One theory of why the Norwegian agenda is more punctuated than the UK speeches is the different party systems, as the Norwegian multiparty context provides more parties to fight for their issues' space on the agenda. After all, a two-party system promotes more party-stability than a multiparty system, illustrated by Norway's 17, and UK's 6 partisan changes in government. Thereby, at first glance, the Norwegian multiparty system seems to enhance, rather than limit, the variation of issue attention across governments. However, if that was the case, this only tells us that different institutional settings affect the potential of redirecting government attention, making the agenda more volatile. For the party effect to be present, the timing of this volatility should be possible to link to changes in partisan factors also within the Norwegian context. If this effect is not present, as expected by the partisan hypothesis, most of the punctuations happens independently from changes in partisan factors. Table 5.5 shows the 23 biggest punctuations across all speeches and issues[33] along with the policy topic, years, whether there was an election at the time the punctuation occurred, and what prime minister that headed government this year. The two last columns show the government party compositions the year before and the year after the punctuation occurred. The light color illustrates a partial change in government composition, while the dark a complete party turnover.

[33] For an overview of the lower half, see Appendix 8.4.2

Table 5. 5 Top 23 Punctuations and Partisan Change

Punctuations %	Topic	From/To	Prime Minister	Election	Party change From/To	
1014	Macro	2019/2020	Solberg	No	H, V, KrF, FrP	H, V, KrF
755	Government	2015/2016	Solberg	No	H, FrP	H, FrP
628	Energy	1976/1977	Nordli	Yes	Ap	Ap
600	Energy	2008/2009	Stoltenberg 2	Yes	Ap, SV, Sp	Ap, SV, Sp
586	Labor	1960/1961	Gerhardsen 3	Yes	Ap	Ap
546	Business	2018/2019	Solberg	No	H, FrP, V	H, FrP, V, KrF
532	Agriculture	1965/1966	Borten	No	Ap	Sp, H, V, KrF
466	Education	1998/1999	Bondevik 1	No	KrF, Sp, V	KrF, Sp, V
400	Health	2017/2018	Solberg	No	H, FrP	H, FrP, V
400	Social	1984/1985	Willoch	Yes	H, KrF, Sp	H, KrF, Sp
399	Labor	1973/1974	Bratteli 2	No	Ap	Ap
385	Civil Rights	1976/1977	Nordli	Yes	Ap	Ap
378	Health	1986/1987	Brundtland 2	No	Ap	Ap
378	Immigration	1986/1987	Brundtland 2	No	Ap	Ap
378	Government	1971/1972	Bratteli 1	No	Ap	Ap
374	Health	2019/2020	Solberg	No	H, V, KrF, FrP	H, V, KrF
372	Health	1969/1970	Borten	No	Sp, H, V, KrF	Sp, H, V, KrF
369	Labor	2014/2015	Solberg	No	H, FrP	H, FrP
351	Civil Rights	1989/1981	Brundtland 1	Yes	Ap	Ap
344	Civil Rights	1973/1974	Bratteli 2	No	Ap	Ap
344	Defense	1948/1949	Gerhardsen 2	Yes	Ap	Ap
339	Defense	2009/2010	Stoltenberg 2	No	Ap, SV, Sp	Ap, SV, Sp
333	Immigration	2014/2015	Solberg	No	H, FrP	H, FrP

Overall, only 5 out of the 23 punctuations in table 5.5 (and 8 out of the 23 lower punctuations, see Appendix 8.4.2) make their appearance in the first speech presented on behalf of a new government party composition. Out of the 17 instances of new governments, only four of them (the 2020 speech containing two punctuations) presented speeches including major relative shifts in attention. This supports the partisan neutrality hypothesis, as partisan changes do not seem to generate major punctuations. However, the potential of partisan effects on the executive agenda can be spotted in some instances. For example, from 1965 to 1966 agricultural policies rose by 532 % in relative attention. At the same time-period, a new coalition government entered office, headed by prime minister Ola Borten from the Center Party (Senterpartiet, Sp). In this case, partisan factors might have caused the punctuation to occur, as the Center Party was originally "Bondepartiet" (Farmer's Party) until 1959, and is still associated with granting farmer's rights and agricultural policies a lot of attention. The issue-punctuation could be the parties' way to differentiate themselves from the preceding Labor government and emphasize their core policies. In addition, when the Liberal Party (Venstre, V) entered the Solberg government in 2018, attention devoted to health issues rose due to the increased attention devoted to "mental illness" (333) and "alcohol and controlled illegal drugs" (342)[34]. The Liberal Party's call for more liberal drugs- and addiction laws have been prevalent in their policy priorities (Lien, 2018). Thereby, an investigation of the sub-content behind the health-punctuation reveals a potential partisan differentiation in drug-related health policies before and after the Liberals entered government[35].

However, these instances are not enough to argue for a clear party differentiation pattern in agenda-setting. 13 partisan changes occurred without connection to the biggest shifts in issue attention in the Norwegian executive speeches, and most punctuations do not align with changes in partisan factors[36]. Furthermore, the remaining changes in government compositions visible alongside the punctuations in table 5.5 are hard to connect directly to the corresponding policy topics. For example, in 2019, the Christian Democrats (Kristelig Folkeparti, KrF) entered government, while business-issues rose by 546 % compared to the year before. However, the connection between the Christian Democrats and business policies in 2019 is limited. The party gained responsibility for the child- and family minister post and

[34] See Appendix 8.2.2 for health issue quotes from the 2018 speech.
[35] The subtopic concerning control of illegal drugs (342) was not mentioned amongst the health policy statements in 2017
[36] However, five changes in partisan factors aligns with some of the smaller punctuations. Se Appendix 8.4.2.

the foreign aid minister post, and business-related policies are more associated with the Conservative party, rather than the Christian Democrats. In addition, although the 1014 % increase in the attention devoted to macroeconomics in 2020 aligns with the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) exiting the Solberg government, the most plausible explanation for this attention shift is the outbreak of COVID-19 causing major economic consequences. The same reasoning can be applied for the increase in attention to health policies in 2020. The magnitude of such an event would force any government to increase their attention towards macroeconomics and health, independently from partisan factors.

5.3.2. Partisan Composition and Zero-punctuations

Table 5.6 follows up on the zero punctuations presented in table 5.4, aligning them with the corresponding partisan factors. Also here, most of the punctuations (6 out of 10) happens after government prolongments, rather than partisan change. However, there are certain patterns of attention shifts and changes in partisan factors. For example, labor issues rose from being excluded on the agenda by Willoch's conservative coalition government in 1985, to composing 9 % of the executive speech the first year of the Brundtland labor government 1986. The exclusion to inclusion of labor issues between a government headed by the Conservatives (Høyre, H) and a government headed by the Labor party (Arbeiderpartiet, Ap) aligns well with the expectations of issue ownership and party differentiation in agenda-setting.

Table 5. 6 Zero-punctuations and partisan factors

Relative increase (+1%)	Percentages From/to	Topic	From/to	Prime Minister	Election	Government parties From/To	
1250 %	0/12.5	Research and Technology	1963/1964	Gerhardsen 4	No	Ap	Ap
970%	0/9.7	Environment	2017/2018	Solberg	No	H, Frp	H, FrP, V
900%	0/9	Labor	1985/1986	Brundtland 2	Yes	H, KrF, Sp	Ap
830%	0/8.3	Legal Affairs	2017/2018	Solberg	No	H, FrP	H, FrP, V
770%	0/7.7	Civil Rights	2018/2019	Solberg	No	H, FrP, V	H, FrP, V, KrF
750%	0/7.5	Labor	1955/1956	Gerhardsen 3	No	Ap	Ap
730%	0/7.3	Foreign Trade	1959a/1959b	Gerhardsen 4	No	Ap	Ap
690%	0/6.9	Energy	1949/1950	Gerhardsen 2	No	Ap	Ap
690%	0/6.9	Government Operations	1949/1950	Gerhardsen 2	No	Ap	Ap
570%	0/5.7	Housing	2020/2021	Solberg	Yes	H, V, KrF	H, V, KrF

An interesting attribute to the zero-punctuations is also that the high presence of the Einar Gerhardsen and Erna Solberg governments, representing completely different time periods and pointing in opposite directions when it comes to partisan factors' effect on agenda change. Gerhardsen governments were always Labor one-party governments, while the Solberg coalitions were relatively unstable, expanding and reducing the number of parties quite regularly. However, it is not surprising that within the 16 years as prime minister on and off between 1946 and 1965, some years required the Gerhardsen governments to redirect their attention due to changes within the external environment, independent of partisan factors.

For the Solberg government, however, the second biggest zero-punctuation of environmental issues from 2017 to 2018 aligns with the inclusion of the Liberal Party (V). The relative increase of environmental issues right after the Liberal Party entered government is eye catching, as the party gained the environment- and climate minister post the same year, and they also list climate change on their top 3 most important issue priorities (Venstre, 2021). In addition, amongst the increased attention devoted to civil liberties in 2019[37], were statements about rights and support to families with disabled children, a central part of the equality-reform Krf brought to the agenda when they entered government the same year (Kristelig Folkeparti, 2020). It is not possible to say for certain that punctuations would not appear in the absence of partisan changes, as the Gerhardsen governments have shown that over time, governments are going to push issues on and off the agenda in a punctuated matter despite no variations in party structures. However, the zero-punctuations within the Solberg government also show that new government parties might help bringing issues back on the agenda after being excluded. In sum, although the zero punctuations are not controlled for external events and over half of the selection is connected to government prolongments, some attention-shifts seems to connect to partisan differentiations.

[37] See Appendix 8.2.3 for quotes

5.3.3. Summary and Discussion

The overview of the biggest changes in issue attention of Norwegian governments provides more support for the partisan neutrality, than for the partisan differentiation hypothesis in terms of party-effects on agenda-setting. With a few exceptions, most changes in partisan factors after World War 2 do not coincide with the punctuations, and some of the overlaps that do occur are hard to connect intuitively when accounting for the role of external events such as the pandemic. However, this does not necessarily indicate that parties are insignificant actors in determining the executive agenda.

Firstly, the distinctions between subtopics are not captured by the punctuations. For example, redirecting labor policies from unemployment benefits to trade unions will not be captured by the general topic categories. As the example with drug policies' when the Liberal Party entered government in 2019 shows, subcategories may provide substantial information about the connection between parties and punctuations. Therefore, the evidence provided here supports the partisan neutrality hypothesis, but there might be partisan effects within the content of the broader policy areas. Secondly, as most of the focus is centered around regular punctuations, the zero-punctuations are restricted to only 10 cases, despite the presence of more relatively large shifts from exclusion to inclusion of issues in the data[38]. Therefore, although a change in government parties do not align with the biggest zero-punctuations, the smaller, less extreme changes might still be affected by partisan factors. Third, the Liberal Party' and Christian Democrats's issue-ownership towards environmental issues and civil liberties at the time they entered government raises some interesting questions. For example, maybe there is a stronger connection between partisan change, and pushing entirely new issues towards the executive agenda, rather than increasing the attention to the issues that are already present. To answer this question, one would need to map, and structure all zero-punctuations, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. With the evidence at hand so far, most of the punctuations are not connected to changes in partisan factors. Although parties might be able to punctuate the executive agenda with their most valued issues, the biggest changes in issue attention tend to appear independently from partisan factors.

[38] In addition to the top 10 presented here, 24 zero-punctuations exceeds a 4 absolute percentage increase from 0 one year to the next, exceeding a 400 % "hypothetical" punctuation. These will not be analyzed further but are marked in the online Appendix 8.x, Datasets: "Zero punctuations".

What can the partisan neutrality tell us about the way the Norwegian executive agenda develops? On the one hand, the absence of variation in issue attention between parties might indicate a reluctance to altering the structure of the agenda despite changing voting preferences in the aftermath of an election. If one assumes that new government compositions are the results of the public trying to push new issues on the agenda, the democratic responsiveness of Norwegian governments seems to be slow. On the other hand, the same issues do not need to have the same content. A new government can inherit issues and ongoing policy-developments from the preceding government, proposing new solutions without changing the types of issues that are talked about. A new government can also maintain the structure of the agenda in an oppositional manner, by directly altering the policies of the proceeding government, planning new reforms within the same policy domains.

In addition, the fact that several punctuations appear without any connection to partisan factors is a good illustration of government responsiveness to the social processes directed towards decisionmakers through policy inputs. These inputs can come either due to an external shock, such as the pandemic, or as a response to long-term build up friction as described by Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. As pointed out by Breeman (2009, p. 21) after finding limited variations between the issue structure of old and new Dutch governments: The pressure that is needed to punctuate the agenda may take longer to build up than the time between each election. The relatively big number of punctuations may stem from relations to other states, economic change, interest groups, social media and a range of different factors connected to societal developments that occur independently from elections.

When describing the most central parts of a cabinet's time in office, the social processes surrounding their governance, and what issues that has been regarded as the most urgent independently from what policy domains the government parties identify with, is also important to understand their agendas. When describing the Solberg-government period, parties exiting and joining the coalition is a part of it, but also the political implications of external shocks such as the oil price fluctuations, the refugee crisis, climate change and the pandemic (to mention some). The government is elected to take care of citizens interest no matter the partisan color, and people expects policy responsibility (Mortensen et al., 2011, p.

987) from government towards issues that affect their lives, rather than constantly ignoring external events to stay true to their issue ownership.

In sum, although this analysis is descriptive, it points to the direction that policy inputs from the governments' external environment are just as important in changing government agendas as changes in party compositions. Specifically what types of policy inputs that have been most influential in redirecting Norwegian governments' attention is not possible to say with on the data at hand. However, based on the limited connection to partisan factors, new governments entering office is most likely not one of them. This is in line with former investigations of the role of political parties in agenda-setting, both within case studies in France and the Netherlands (Baumgartner et al., 2009a, Breeman et al., 2009). Furthermore, comparative studies in the Netherlands, UK and Denmark (Mortensen et al., 2011) have shown a similar absence of partisan differentiations. Although governments have preferred issues they would like to address in their executive speeches, their agendas will to a large extent be determined by their response to the time-relevant issues facing society during their time in office (Mortensen et al., 2011, p. 993). This also seems to be the case for the development of the Norwegian government's agenda. Executive responsibilities follow by default, no matter the ideological position of the government. In the next section, I will further build on this reasoning of state responsibilities by looking into whether the role as government can be connected to an executive issue hierarchy in connection to the core functions of the state.

5.4. Core Issues and Agenda Diversity

5.4.1. Descriptive Statistics: Entropy Scores

Figure 5.5 shows how the diversity of the Norwegian executive agenda has developed between 1946 and 2021, along with the overall Entropy average of 2.6 (dashed line). As one can see, the Norwegian executive agenda has been covering a wide range of topics throughout the years. In 1995, the agenda peaked at its most diverse with a score of 2.9, all 21 policy areas receiving some form of attention. At times the executive agenda also becomes more concentrated. In 2020, only 11 out of the 21 topics were present, and over 60 percent of the policy statements were concentrated towards health (24 %), macroeconomics (14 %) and Labor (33 %), resulting in the lowest diversity score of 1.89. This is consistent with the area-plot in Figure 5.3, illustrating the big jump in relative issue attention towards health from

2019 to 2020. However, as elaborated in the methods section, 2020 is a clear outlier, as the minimum diversity score excluding the 2020 speech from the selection, is 2.03 in 1953[39].

Intuitively, shorter speeches would indicate a less diverse agenda, making it more challenging for new issues to access government attention. However, the Norwegian executive policy agenda does not point in this direction. Although the Norwegian speeches are relatively short, they are also more diverse when comparing to previous findings on policy agendas and diversity. On average, Norwegian executive speeches have a higher entropy score than executive speeches in Spain, the United States, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands, and France, despite having a smaller average length than all countries except France (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1014)[40]. Norwegian governments seem to spread their attention across a broad number of issues, rather than elaborating on a handful of policy areas in greater detail. But does the agenda become relatively more concentrated when attention to core issues increases?

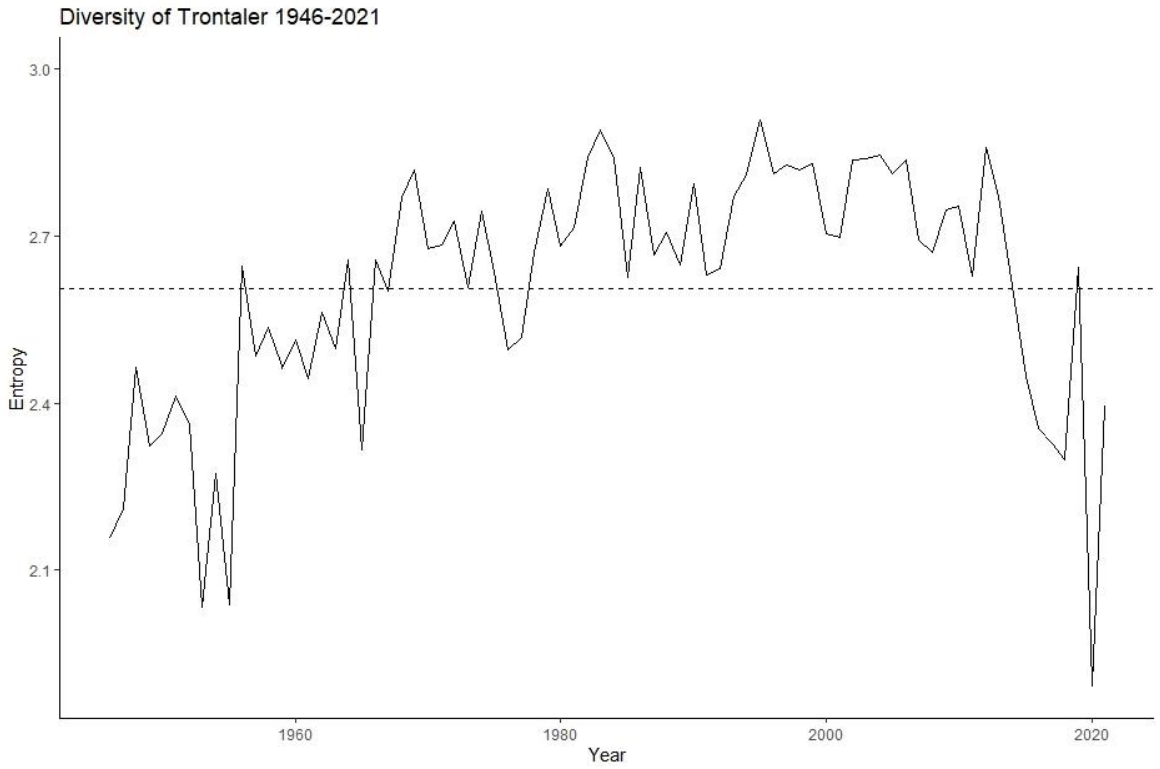
Table 5. 7 Descriptive statistics Entropy-scores 1946-2021

	With 2020	Without 2020
Min	1.89	2.03
Max	2.9	2.9
SD	0.22	0.20
Mean	2.60	2.61
Average nr. policy statements	71.59	71.61
N	77	76

[39] For an overview of all entropy scores, see online Appendix 8.x, Dataset: "Entropy Scores 1946-2021"

[40] Note that entropy scores are not perfectly comparable, as Jennings et al. (2011, p. 1013) includes 19 major topics, which makes the max entropy value 2.944, smaller than the Norwegian max of 3.04. Calculating the average entropy score as a percentage of the maximum score, the Norwegian speeches still have a higher average entropy score (2.61 of 3.04 = 85.5 %) than the highest average entropy score in Jennings' et al. (2011, p. 1014) data, where the Dutch speech has an average score of 2.48, i.e., 82.8 % of the max 2.994. In addition, the maximum UK entropy score between 1940 and 2005, using 21 topics, is 2.704 (John and Jennings, 2010, p. 580), still lower than the Norwegian max score of 2.9.

Figure 5. 5 Entropy scores 1946-2021



5.4.2. Core Issues and Entropy Scores

The results from the analysis are presented in table 5.8. In line with former findings (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1020), the number of policy statements has a small, positive effect on agenda diversity. For each additional policy statement in the speech, there is an average increase in entropy score of 0.002 for most issues. The positive effect makes sense, as longer speeches open more space for new issues to enter the agenda. However, despite being shorter than most executive speeches, the Norwegian agenda remains relatively diverse, which can explain why the size of the statements-coefficient is small. When it comes to government parties, the results do not show any significant difference between left and right, and left and center, on the entropy score. Although this may stem from little variation in the data, the insignificant results further support the argument of partisan neutrality, not just for the timing of punctuations, but also for the diversity of the agenda. In other words, based on these findings, the are no difference between the ideological placement of the government, and the internal issue dynamics. This is also in line with previous, more thorough investigations of partisan

effects on the entropy score in the UK, checking for both changes in parties, prime minister and election years (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 584).

The first model in Table 5.8, AR (Autoregressive), only includes the control variables and the lagged dependent variable by 1 year. The results confirms that entropy scores are partially a function of former values, and that the diversity developments of Norwegian executive speeches are of autoregressive nature. The 0.566 coefficient indicates that over half of the diversity of an executive speech can be explained by the diversity the previous year. In other words, like the relative attention devoted to issues, the diversity of the executive agenda usually moves in incremental adjustments. However, since the coefficient in the AR-model is less than 1, some of the variation of diversity scores can be explained by other factors. The rest of the models investigate whether some of the remaining variance of executive speeches entropy scores can be explained by internal issue dynamics.

In addition to the AR-model, Table 5.8 also shows an overview of each of the core issues effect on the entropy score. In support for the core issue hypothesis (H3), macroeconomics has a negative effect on issue diversity at a 99 % confidence level, and defense and foreign policy have a negative effect on 95 % level. This means that when Norwegian governments devote more attention to these issues, the agenda becomes less diverse. If 20 % of the speech is devoted to macroeconomic issues, this is connected to a 0.22 decrease in entropy score (-1.303 * 0.2), all other factors held constant. In other words, when the government devote more attention to economic issues, other issues tend to be crowded out, leading to a lower agenda diversity. The same is the case for defense and foreign policies, although somewhat smaller effects of -1.107 and -0.849.

When excluding 2011 (with highly influential results for legal affairs), the Law2-model shows a significant and positive effect on the entropy scores on a 90 % level. This contradicts the core issue hypothesis, but confirms previous findings of legal affairs' effect on agenda diversity (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1020). If the executive assigns 10 % attention to legal affairs, this is associated with a 0.1296 increase in entropy score. Rather than concentrating the agenda and decreasing its diversity as predicted by core issue theory, policies concerning

issues like crime, police and court systems seems to be associated with a more diverse agenda. Unlike the case of macroeconomics, foreign policy and defense, when Norwegian governments devote more attention to legal affairs, other issues are not crowded out as a consequence. For example, despite devoting over 20 % attention to legal affairs in 2011, the diversity remained around the average entropy score of 2.6. Thereby, these findings have provided an even stronger empirical support for removing legal affairs from the core to the selective issue category in terms of its effect on agenda diversity (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1021). Lastly, contrary to previous findings and the expectations of the core issue hypothesis (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1020) government operations' effect on agenda diversity is positive and insignificant. This might be a problem of few data points, as the Norwegian data only contains 76 speeches, compared to Jennings et al.'s (2011, p. 1019) cross national analysis containing over 310 speeches. Furthermore, the frequency of government operation statements in the executive speeches is low (see figure 2), which in itself indicates that government operations are not highly prioritized within the Norwegian executive speeches.

Table 5. 8 Core issues and agenda diversity

	Dependent variable:						
	Entropy						
	(1) AR	(2) Macro	(3) Law	(4) Law2	(5) Defense	(6) Foreign	(7) Government
Entropy lag	0.566***	0.330***	0.535***	0.528***	0.499***	0.560***	0.557***
	(0.094)	(0.088)	(0.097)	(0.096)	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.095)
Macroeconomics		-1.303***					
		(0.225)					
Legal affairs			0.664	1.354*			
			(0.537)	(0.686)			
Defense					-1.107**		
					(0.491)		
Foreign Policy						-0.849**	
						(0.379)	
Government operations							0.605
							(0.735)
Statements	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.001	0.001	0.002***	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Center government	0.011	0.030	0.028	0.037	0.010	0.014	-0.011
	(0.084)	(0.070)	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.089)
Right government	0.001	0.015	0.001	-0.004	0.012	-0.026	0.003
	(0.038)	(0.031)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.037)	(0.039)	(0.038)
Constant	1.010***	1.793***	1.082***	1.102***	1.290***	1.125***	1.021***
	(0.223)	(0.229)	(0.230)	(0.227)	(0.250)	(0.223)	(0.224)
Observations	75	75	75	74	75	75	75
R^2	0.536	0.687	0.546	0.571	0.568	0.567	0.541
Adjusted R^2	0.510	0.665	0.513	0.540	0.537	0.536	0.507
Residual Std. Error	0.139 (df = 70)	0.115 (df = 69)	0.139 (df = 69)	0.136 (df = 68)	0.135 (df = 69)	0.135 (df = 69)	0.139 (df = 69)
F Statistic	20.217*** (df = 4; 70)	30.360*** (df = 5; 69)	16.604*** (df = 5; 69)	18.105*** (df = 5; 68)	18.138*** (df = 5; 69)	18.101*** (df = 5; 69)	16.235*** (df = 5; 69)

Note: *p **p ***p<0.01

Table 5.9 and 5.10 gives an overview over the selective issues effect on agenda diversity[41]. Civil, agriculture, energy, research, public land, and culture issues have a positive, significant effect on the entropy score, in line with the theoretical expectations of selective issues. This means that the listed issues are associated with a more diverse agenda, meaning they are devoted attention at times when the agenda is less concentrated. This is especially the case for cultural policies, where a 10 % increase in the attention devoted to culture is connected to a 0.5 increase in the entropy score. This is most likely the result of cultural issues being the topic that have received the fewest number of statements (figure 5.2). Culture issues rarely appear on the Norwegian executive speeches, and when it does, it is in instances where the governments' agenda is diversifies across a variety of other issues. The effects of health, labor, education, environment, traffic, social, housing, business and trade is not significant. One possible explanation for insignificant effects is issue-trading (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1021). A speech can swap out attention devoted to health care one year, with an equal amount of attention devoted to labor issues the other, without effecting the entropy scores. These issues still differ from the core issues however, as they swap between accessing the agenda. Core issues, on the other hand, creates an agenda where a bigger percentage of the attention is concentrated towards a smaller set of issues at the expense of others.

[41] Control-variables, F-statics, Adjusted R^2 and Residual standard errors are removed from 5.9 and 5.10 for space purposes. See Appendix 8.4.3 for complete tables

Table 5. 9 Selective Issues effect on agenda Diversity

	Dependent variable:							
	Entropy							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Lagged Entropy	0.446***	0.574***	0.587***	0.566***	0.562***	0.558***	0.514***	0.566***
	(0.095)	(0.100)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.097)	(0.096)	(0.095)
Civil_Liberties	1.888***							
	(0.565)							
Health		-0.167						
		(0.660)						
Agriculture			0.892**					
			(0.434)					
Labour				0.185				
				(0.440)				
Education					0.215			
					(0.516)			
Environment						0.182		
						(0.556)		
Energy							1.345*	
							(0.690)	
Immigration								-0.195
								(0.635)
Observations	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
R^2	0.601	0.536	0.563	0.537	0.537	0.537	0.560	0.537
Note:								*p**p***p<0.01

Table 5. 10 Selective Issues effect on agenda Diversity (continued)

	Dependent variable:							
	Entropy							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Lagged Entropy	0.564***	0.563***	0.563***	0.560***	0.550***	0.558***	0.565***	0.443***
	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.096)
Traffic	0.312							
	(0.535)							
Social_Policy		-0.137						
		(0.530)						
Housing			0.869					
			(0.660)					
Business				0.825				
				(0.686)				
Research_Technology					1.250*			
					(0.654)			
Foreign_Trade						-0.341		
						(0.772)		
Public_Land							1.517*	
							(0.774)	
Culture								5.000***
								(1.518)
Observations	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
R^2	0.538	0.536	0.547	0.546	0.559	0.537	0.560	0.599
Note:								*p**p***p<0.01

5.4.3. Summary and Discussion

In sum, the support for the core issue hypothesis is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, there is a core issue consistency in the types of issues with negative effects: Increased attention to macroeconomics, defense and foreign policy is connected to a more concentrated agenda, in line with the expectations. No other issues than these three have a negative, significant effect on the entropy score, despite the possibility of issue-swapping generating insignificant effects. Thereby, the "openness" of the Norwegian executive agenda seems to be affected by the urgency of core issues, especially macroeconomics. On the other hand, this pattern is not reflected for legal affairs and government operations. Furthermore, only six out of sixteen selective issues had positive significant effects on agenda diversity. Thereby, the results do not provide sufficient evidence for placing the 21 major topics into two categories (one with a positive, and one with a negative, effect on diversity) based on the five core functions of the state. It does, however, show that only a minority of the topics have the ability to crowd other issues out of the agenda, and these issues are associated with tasks only the state can fulfill: National economic issues, defense of the realm and relations to other countries.

A possible explanation for why the selective and core issues are not as unevenly divided as the theoretical expectation predicts, is the Norwegian, social democratic context, especially after World War 2. In the post-war period the expansion of the modern welfare state, with increasing public expenditure and public insurances (Iversen & Cusack, 2000, p. 316) have broadened what is viewed as state responsibility. Although issues like health, social policies and labor do not have the ability to crowd other issues off the agenda, they are addressed relatively often in the executive speeches in comparison to government operations and legal affairs (see figure 5.2). In accordance with the core issue hypothesis however, government issues such as bureaucratic oversight and public employees, or law and order such as funding of the police and juvenile crime, is placed above health care, pensions, and unemployment benefits in the issue hierarchy. In a modern social democratic welfare state where providing social safety nets is seen as a government task, this is counter intuitive, and might explain why government issues and legal affairs do not have the ability to push issues like health care and employment off the agenda.

Is the urgency of the core issues thereby a good way to explain how the diversity of the Norwegian executive agenda develops over time? The fact that what is predicted to be a permanent issue on the executive agenda (government operations), is also one of the least mentioned topics, provides evidence enough in itself to question the selective – core issue distinctions in describing executive agenda developments. However, although the results cannot support a systematic pattern between selective and core issues (as categorized in the traditional way), the results shows that internal issue-dynamics within the policy agenda do matter for its overall structure. In addition to receiving more space, macroeconomics, defense, and foreign policy issues receive attention at the expense of others. Also, the external validity of government issues' insignificance on the Norwegian executive agendas in general should be taken with caution. Although smaller than the other core issue effects, Jennings et al.'s (2011, p. 1020) analysis with a bigger, cross-national sample of speeches, finds a negative effect of government operations on agenda diversity. Excluding the formal statements, government operations are also the 4th most mentioned topic in the Dutch executive speeches, well above defense on 8th place (Breeman et al., 2011, p. 9). In the Norwegian executive speeches however, it is clear that government operations are not on top of the governments' issue hierarchy.

Lastly, as the investigation of the punctuations and partisan factors, the importance of external events outside of the policy process compared to partisan factors is evident. The terrorist attack 22nd of July 2011, and the 2020 pandemic illustrate how external shocks may be an explanation of why the executive agenda sometimes concentrates towards a smaller number of issues. Although the 2020 speech is a clear exception in terms of agenda diversity, it is important to emphasize that the extreme redirection of government attention towards selective issues (labor and health) illustrates that the core issues importance is not unconditional. Note that this is not the same as saying that health and labor issues have a negative effect on the agenda in general. The statistical models shows that this is not the case. What the 2020 speech does show, however, is that factors other than the urgency of the core issues, such as decreasing hospital capacity and increasing unemployment rates, can also determine the structure of the agenda.

Much in connection to the reasoning of PET (that issues need to pass a certain level of urgency to gain the attention of policy makers), selective issues can be prioritized above core issues too, should they become urgent enough. Neither government operations, defense, nor legal affairs appeared on the 2020 executive agenda. In fact, 2020 is the only instance after World War 2 in which defense has not received any attention by the Norwegian government. This contradicts previous agenda diversity findings, as the diversity of executive speeches have been characterized by the *absence* of extreme deviations from a long run equilibrium (Jennings et al., 2011, p. 1022). One speech is not enough to describe agenda diversity developments as a punctuated equilibrium, but with a more up-to-date timeframe including the pandemic, the recent developments of Norwegian executive speeches shows that abruptions in agenda diversity might not be as impossible as previous findings indicate.

6. Conclusion

How has the Norwegian executive agenda developed in the post war period? To answer this question, three perspectives of agenda developments have been investigated in this thesis: 1) Change dynamics and punctuations, 2) Party compositions and attention shifts, 3) Internal issue dynamics (core issues) and agenda diversity. The main findings are presented below with regard to these three perspectives and their corresponding hypotheses: generalized punctuation, the partisan neutrality and the core-issue hypotheses. Then, the overall conclusions are summarized by answering how the Norwegian executive agenda has changed over time, and how the findings align with former agenda-setting research on executive speeches. In addition, the implications for what we might expect of the Norwegian executive agenda based on these findings are presented in light of recent political events. Lastly, some methodological, theoretical and empirical insights are presented to provide some avenues for future research.

6.1. The Generalized Punctuation Hypothesis

First, the generalized punctuation hypothesis is supported. Institutional costs and bounded rationality seem to decrease politicians' responsiveness, biasing their attention span towards the status quo. However, some of the variation on the executive agenda is also accounted for by disproportionally big jumps in issue attention, amplifying the significance of an issue from one year to another. Describing the Norwegian agenda developments as solely stable is therefore misleading. Rather, the Norwegian executive speeches should be placed alongside former agenda-setting research within the theoretical frame of punctuated equilibrium theory. In contrast to Lindblom's, (1959, p. 84) argument, I will argue that polices *do* move in leaps and bounds. Instead of neglecting punctuations as external shocks and random deviations, the Norwegian case is yet another empirical example of incrementalism being is a necessary, but far from sufficient way of explaining agenda change. Along with the stability, punctuations are just as an important component in the description of the Norwegian executive agenda developments. In other words, Norwegian governments are sometimes inclined to increase the relative magnitude of attention to a specific issue from one year to another.

6.2. The Partisan Neutrality Hypothesis

Do these attention shifts occur due to changes in partisan factors, or does the Norwegian case confirm prior agenda-setting findings supporting the partisan neutrality hypothesis? Most of

the biggest attention shifts have happened after government prolongments, strengthening the argument of parties' insignificance in altering the course of what issues governments address on their agendas. Thereby, the punctuated developments of the Norwegian executive agenda seem to be a product of the external environment, rather than variations within the party composition of government. However, although rare, patterns of party differentiation are also present amongst the biggest punctuations, as changes in issue attention sometimes align with partisan factors. Governments need to juggle their priorities between responding to constantly evolving political inputs, while at the same time providing agenda space for the issues they have promised voters to address during their time in office. The Solberg governments serves as a good example: The macroeconomic punctuation occurred along the external shock of COVID-19. The environmental zero-punctuation of 2018, however, aligned with the Liberals (Venstre) gaining the climate- and environment minister post, and the increased attention to the rights of disabled children in 2019 corresponds well with the Christian Democrats' (KrF) emphasis on disability civil rights. Thereby, the restricted experience of the Solberg coalition turnovers might indicate that new government parties are allowed to influence parts of the executive speeches with their preferred issues to mark their entering.

6.3. The Core Issue Hypothesis

When it comes to the development of agenda diversity however, the ideological placement of governments seems to align with partisan neutrality, as there are no significant effects on the number of issues present on the agenda based on government parties. Rather, the internal issue dynamics are useful to explain whether Norwegian governments choose to concentrate on a small number of issues and when they allocate their attention more evenly. Although not entirely aligned with the core-selective issue distinctions presented by Jennings et al. (2011), three out of the five core issues that I have identified fit the expectations of the core issue hypothesis. Increased attention to macroeconomics, defense and foreign policies leads to a lower agenda diversity, with less space left for selective issues. The selective issues on the other hand, receive executive attention at times where the core issues are less urgent and diversity is high, or take turns by swapping agenda-space with each other. This means that the chance to reach the Norwegian governments' attention varies dependent on whether economic, defense and foreign policies are granted a lot of attention.

What can these three perspectives of the executive speeches tell us about the Norwegian executive agenda developments? In sum, the Norwegian executive agenda has developed through small, gradual adjustments, punctuated by big changes in issue attention. With a few exceptions, changes in partisan factors do not seem to influence the time in which these punctuations occur, while internal issue dynamics and the urgency of core issues are relevant when mapping diversity developments.

6.4. Norwegian Executive Speeches and Agenda Literature

To further elaborate this conclusion, it is useful to describe the findings in light of former agenda-setting research. Although country specific factors - such as the personality of decisionmakers, party system and other institutional features - are at play when shaping policy agendas, the application of a common coding scheme within CAP facilitates a good ground for comparison between Norwegian executive speeches and former CAP research. In the following section, the findings will therefore be compared up against the most common patterns in the CAP agenda-setting literature based on change dynamics, partisan neutrality, and core issues' effect on diversity. In addition, the more unique characteristics of the Norwegian agenda will be highlighted by describing what types of agenda developments that makes the Trontaler differ from other executive speeches.

6.4.1. Former CAP Research: Similarities

The Norwegian agenda's punctuated pattern of change, the rare appearance of partisan differentiation in policymaking and the core-issue effects of macroeconomics, defense and foreign policy aligns well with former literature. Looking at the findings across all CAP-research, this analysis has especially increased support for the generalized punctuation hypothesis. The punctuated pattern of policy change is found across a variety of agenda platforms both within and across countries (F. R. Baumgartner et al., 2009b; Dowding et al., 2010; John & Jennings, 2010; Van Assche, 2012; Walgrave & Nuytemans, 2009), and the Norwegian executive speeches are no exception.

Together with former empirical evidence, it is also safe to say that partisan changes are not the strongest drivers behind how governments allocate their agendas. However, both John and

Jennings (2010) and Van Assche (2012) find connections between punctuations, parties entering government and their corresponding issue ownerships. Mortensen et al. (2011) also find patterns of partisan differentiation, but emphasize that partisan change is, at best, only one of many explanations of attention shifts. Much in line with this reflection, the analysis of Norwegian executive speeches clearly leans towards partisan neutrality, but with a few eye-caching signs of partisan differentiation. Therefore, although partisan change may be the wrong starting point for future research aiming to explain the causes of punctuations, parties should not be ignored completely when reflecting around different government agendas.

However, just as former findings, these results also point to the direction that the determinants of executive attention stem from the roles that follows when entering office, no matter the country or the ideological position of government. The presence of punctuations in between elections, shows that all governments adapt to a constant stream of external input (although in a somewhat disproportional, punctuated manner), no matter their nationality. In addition, although only in line with the macroeconomic, foreign affairs and defense core issue expectations, the Norwegian results supports the reasoning that governments have certain issues that crowd other issues off the agenda. Looking at the partisan neutrality and core-issue effects side by side, it thereby becomes clear that elections are not necessarily the best way to capture government attention. Rather, agenda-setting work is more effective at times where the political climate is not concentrated towards urgent macroeconomic, defense or foreign policy issues.

Lastly, although a great majority of the methods applied to investigate Norwegian agenda developments have been directly derived from former CAP agenda-setting research, this thesis has provided a somewhat broader investigation of attention shifts by including zero-punctuations. Other than Van Assche's (2012) analysis of the Belgium executive agenda, this is a perspective commonly neglected in the literature. Therefore, it is hard to say something general about the way governments include new issues on the agenda or how Norwegian governments do this compared to other countries. However, the presence of zero-punctuations further supports PET's predictions of dispositional changes in attention, and their inconclusive overlaps with partisan changes also mirrors the regular pattern between attention shifts and new parties entering government.

In sum, the results derived from Norwegian executive speeches have increased the general validity of the reasoning behind PET, partisan neutrality and the core functions of government's (excluding legal affairs and government operations), aligning with the general patterns of executive agenda-setting research in the CAP community.

6.4.2. Former Executive Speech Research: Differences

Comparing the development of the Trontaler to other executive speeches also reveals some country-specific Norwegian characteristics worth mentioning. Jennings et al. (2011) analyze the British, Dutch, Spanish, Danish, American and French executive speeches. These countries' executive agendas vary both in their length and the type of political system they exist within. What they do have in common however, is that they have less diverse executive agendas than the Norwegian government (Jennings et al, 2011, p. 1014). In other words, Norwegian governments spread their attention across a bigger number of policy domains than other countries. Furthermore, the high number of punctuations compared to the UK executive speeches (John & Jennings, 2010, p. 576) also illustrates that Trontaler are relatively punctuated, in that both the number of, and the size of the attention shifts are relatively high. Norwegian governments' ability to redirect their attention a lot in a short amount of time is also prevalent when comparing the zero-punctuations to the Belgian executive speeches, as the Norwegian zero-punctuations have a bigger absolute percentage point change (Van Assche, 2012, p. 141).

Together, this indicates that Norwegian government's attention is relatively flexible, and easy to capture. They seem to allow a wider set of issues access the agenda compared to other countries, and they also redirect their attention considerably in a short amount of time, also after government prolongments. Even when an issue is excluded from the agenda one year, the zero-punctuations show that Norwegian governments sometimes take a U-turn and devote a lot more attention to this issue only one year after. Whether this is a reflection of the proportional election system, the party system, politicians compensating for pushing issues under the radar for too long, or that Norwegian governments are more approachable and responsive than in other countries is for future comparative research to explore. It is

nevertheless worth mentioning that although Trontaler aligns well with former findings, Norwegian executive speeches are also relatively diverse and punctuated.

Although this thesis has taken a retrospective look into the developments of the Norwegian executive agenda, the findings have some interesting implications for future issue priorities. For example, both in the Norwegian analysis, and Jennings' et al (2011) cross-country analysis, the agenda becomes less diverse when macroeconomic, foreign policy and defense issues rise on the agenda. The economic consequences of the pandemic, the developing security environment after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the record-high power- and gas prices are all issues that have been present, and is present, on the Norwegian policy agenda. The current political climate thereby provides interesting parallels to the core-issue findings, as the pandemic, the first full scale war in Europe since World War 2, and the energy crisis are issues connected to policies on top of the Norwegian executives' issue hierarchy: macroeconomics, defense and foreign affairs. Assuming that the agenda has a limited capacity, and that attention is a scarce resource, the problems these events cause for Norway's economy, foreign relations, and security environment, leaves limited agenda space left for less pressing matters. In other words, selective issues representation on the executive agenda moving forward will, based on the conclusions drawn here, be limited, as the external shocks of war and economic crisis in Europe is reinforced by the fact that they are related to the core functions of government.

6.5. Future Research

In the following section, I present three avenues for future agenda setting research. The first two concerns some general methodological and theoretical insights that should be accounted for by research using the perspective of punctuated equilibriums. The third provides a short summary of the different future avenues of research within the Norwegian agenda-setting literature as a contribution to the Comparative Agendas Project specifically.

6.5.1. Punctuation versus Concentration

A reoccurring pattern in this thesis, has been the role of external shocks in shaping the executive agenda, both for when the punctuations occur, and when the agenda is more concentrated than usual. However, future research aiming to combine these different

perspectives of agenda developments needs to be aware of the distinctions between concentration, and punctuation. Although the effect of labor, health and legal policies stood out in the Cooks D plots, illustrating the 2020 and 2011 speeches' influence on the agenda diversity, these issues are not amongst the top 10 punctuations. Therefore, whether one investigates punctuations, or agenda diversity has implications for what issues we regard as the most important for agenda developments.

A punctuation means that an issue gains relatively more space on the agenda compared to how much attention that issue received the previous year. Although the issue has gained more attention, this does not provide sufficient support for concluding that it is relatively more important than other issues. A significant change in statistical terms is not necessarily a relevant change in substantial terms. Using relative measures, an increase in the attention devoted to civil rights from 0.5 % space to 2 % space is a relative increase of 300 %. This indicates that civil rights have gained more importance compared to itself, not to the other issues. If the increased attention to an issue decreases agenda diversity on the other hand, it means that it has the potential to crowd other issues out from the agenda, granting it relative more importance compared to other issues. This is also the main distinction between core and selective issues. Selective issues can also be amongst the largest punctuations, but only the core issue punctuations cause the agenda to become more concentrated. In sum, issues' effect on agenda diversity, and issues relative increase from one year to another, are both interesting aspects of agenda developments, but their methodological distinctions need to be considered carefully by future research combining them, to avoid misleading conclusions.

6.5.2. Investigating the Punctuations

Punctuated equilibrium theory indicates that when passing a certain threshold, the attention towards issues is amplified in a disproportional matter. The punctuated nature of the Norwegian executive agenda, just like so many other policy agendas, also points in this direction. However, the mechanisms behind why these punctuations occur is limited to reflections, and restricted to "maybes", much like former agenda-setting research. What we do know is that external factors other than partisan change plays an important role in shaping the policy agenda. A shock like the pandemic has surely shown how governments are able to redirect their attention when issues become urgent enough.

However, the literature seems to move in circles around the presence of these external shocks without investigating their nature and how they connect to the punctuations beyond changes in partisan factors. Future research would benefit from taking a more detailed approach towards the major changes in executive attention. Knowing more about why the punctuations occur can give us a better understanding of what policy inputs that are most effective in capturing the executive's attention, moving the research field closer towards the importance of issue representation in a well-functioning democracy. As the effect of elections seems to be limited, providing further insights of the mechanisms behind the biggest attention shifts is a democratically plausible way to go for future research. A few existing examples is the investigation of how economic crises and specific historical events influence the severity of the punctuations (Fernández-Marín, et al., 2019; Van Assche 2012), or how the attention shifts can be placed within different punctuation categories based on the type of policy change they generate (John & Bevan, 2012).

An additional limitation of punctuated equilibrium theory is its reliance of measuring relative change, thereby neglecting all instances in which new issues rise to the agenda, either for the first time, or after being pushed under the radar for a period of time. The implications of these missing observations within the distribution of change, and along the punctuation investigations, are rarely discussed in the literature. The restricted investigation of the zero-punctuations here therefore serves as an interesting avenue for future research. Assigning excluded policy issues a 1 % value, reveals that there are several instances where an issue has gone from exclusion to inclusion in a punctuated, rather than incremental, manner. Future agenda setting research should investigate when and why new issues are excluded and included, and whether the effect of partisan change differs dependent on the type of punctuations. A more extensive mapping of the zero-punctuations would provide future agenda-research with a more extensive description of the way the agenda develops and reveal information about whether new parties are able to bring new (previously excluded) issues to the agenda.

6.5.3. Norwegian Agenda-Setting Research (CAP)

Lastly, the provision of Norwegian insights in how the executive policy agenda develops through attention shifts, partisan factors, and internal issue dynamics is only the tip of the iceberg. A range of different future research avenues have the potential to further improve our understanding of the Norwegian policy agenda. Based on former research done within the Comparative Agendas Project, I will present a few suggestions here. First, since this thesis is limited to the executive agenda, future Norwegian research might also expand the scope of agenda platform investigations to test the institutional friction hypothesis (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 176). This will provide insight on whether the threshold of reaching decisionmakers' attention increases the further you move along the policy cycle from social processes towards political outputs. Second, the CAP-coded data set on Norwegian policy agendas can also be narrowed down towards specific policy domains, such as focus on the salience of Immigration policies (Green-Pedersen & Otjes, 2019), climate change (Green-Pedersen & Wolfe, 2009), or the consequences of external shocks like the 2020 pandemic and economic crises on political attention (Fernández-Marín, et al., 2019; Knill & Steinebach, 2022). As this thesis only cover a broad issue- and time perspective, more detailed investigations of the thematic agenda developments will further increase our understanding of Norwegian decision-makers issue priorities beyond the broad categories, and how these relate to each other.

Third, the relationship between different agendas also opens for interesting research. The overlap between the executive and the public agenda could tell us something about the democratic responsiveness of governments between elections (Chaqués-Bonafont & Palau, 2011; Jennings & John, 2009). Combining insight of the content of manifestos and executive speeches can provide knowledge about the relative agenda-setting powers within a coalition government (Green-Pedersen et al., 2018). Through the Norwegian CAP project, colleagues and I have also gathered and coded coalition platforms since 1946, which opens a range of opportunities in investigating agenda dynamics within the policies expressed in coalition agreements, and the role different parties play in shaping the coalition agenda. Furthermore, combining the data on executive speeches and coalition agreements enables an investigation of how parties allocate their policy plans throughout the government term based on the coalition agreement. This can give interesting insights on the issue priorities of the Norwegian

government, and the relationship between the ad-hoc responses to a changing political climate and the pre-negotiated plans expressed in the coalition platform.

Returning to the purpose of studying policy agendas in the first place, research in connection to these suggestions might help broaden our understanding of how issues and interests in society is represented in a democratic system. This thesis has shown that before an issue reaches the attention of decision-makers, it has to pass a high threshold of intuitional costs and bounded rationality, especially when core issues are high on the agenda. Thereby, more research based on the systematic methods and common procedures provided by the Comparative Agendas Project will continue to aid agenda scientist to cumulate knowledge about how, and when, issues are represented in a democratic regime.

7. References

Allen, R. L., & Izcaray, F. (1988). Nominal Agenda Diversity in a Media-Rich, Less-Developed Society. *Communication Research*, *15*(1), 29–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/009365088015001002

Andeweg, R. B., Elgie, R., Helms, L., Kaarbo, J., & Müller-Rommel, F. (2020). The Political Executive Returns. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Executives*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198809296.013.39

Bara, J. (2005). A Question of Trust: Implementing Party Manifestos. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *58*(3), 585–599. https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsi053

Baumgartner, F. R., Breunig, C., Green-Pedersen, C., Jones, B. D., Mortensen, P. B., Nuytemans, M., & Walgrave, S. (2009b). Punctuated Equilibrium in Comparative Perspective. *American Journal of Political Science*, *53*(3), 603–620. JSTOR.

Baumgartner, F. R., Breunig, C., & Grossman, E. (Eds.). (2019). *Comparative Policy Agendas: Theory, Tools, Data*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.001.0001

Baumgartner, F. R., Brouard, S., & Grossman, E. (2009a). Agenda-setting dynamics in France: Revisiting the 'partisan hypothesis.' *French Politics*, *7*(2), 75–95. https://doi.org/10.1057/fp.2009.7

Baumgartner, F. R., Green-Pedersen, C., & Jones, B. D. (2006). Comparative studies of policy agendas. *Journal of European Public Policy*, *13*(7), 959–974. https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760600923805

Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1993). *Agendas and Instability in American Politics.* University of Chicago Press.

Bevan, S. (2019). Gone Fishing: The Creation of the Comparative Agendas Project Master Codebook. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0002

Bevan, S., & Jennings, W. (2019). The UK Policy Agendas Project. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0020

Boydstun, A. E., Bevan, S., & Thomas III, H. F. (2014). The Importance of Attention Diversity and How to Measure It. *Policy Studies Journal*, *42*(2), 173–196. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12055

Breeman, G., Lowery, D., Poppelaars, C., Resodihardjo, S. L., Timmermans, A., & de Vries, J. (2009). Political Attention in a Coalition System: Analysing Queen's Speeches in the Netherlands 1945–2007. *Acta Politica*, *44*(1), 1–1. https://doi.org/10.1057/ap.2008.16

Breunig, C., Grossman, E., & Schnatterer, T. (2019). Connecting Government Announcements and Public Policy. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0030

Breunig, C., & Jones, B. D. (2011). Stochastic Process Methods with an Application to Budgetary Data. *Political Analysis*, *19*(1), 103–117. JSTOR.

Breunig, C., & Koski, C. (2012). The Tortoise or the Hare? Incrementalism, Punctuations, and Their Consequences. *Policy Studies Journal*, *40*(1), 45–68. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00433.x

Budge, I., & Dennis J. Farlie. (1983). *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in 23 Democracies*. Allen & Unwin.

CAP. (2022a). *Comparative Agendas*. https://www.comparativeagendas.net/pages/About

CAP. (2022b). *United Kingdom Datasets*. https://www.comparativeagendas.net/uk

Chaqués-Bonafont, L., & Palau, A. M. (2011). Assessing the Responsiveness of Spanish Policymakers to the Priorities of their Citizens. *West European Politics*, *34*(4), 706–730. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2011.572388

Chaqués-Bonafont, L., Palau, A. M., & Màrquez, L. M. (2019). Agenda Dynamics in Spain. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0017

Christophersen, K. A. (2013). *Introduksjon til statistisk analyse* (2nd ed.). Gyldendal Akademisk Forlag.

Clauset, A., Shalizi, C. R., & Newman, M. E. J. (2009). Power-Law Distributions in Empirical Data. *SIAM Review*, *51*(4), 661–703. JSTOR.

Cohen, J. E. (1997). *Presidential Responsiveness and Public Policy-Making*. University of Michigan Press; JSTOR. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.14952

Combs, M. M., & Zhu, J.-H. (1995). Capacity, Diversity, and Volatility of the Public Agenda: Trends From 1954 to 1994. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *59*(4), 495–525.

Cook, R. D. (1977). Detection of Influential Observation in Linear Regression. *Technometrics*, *19*(1), 15–18. JSTOR. https://doi.org/10.2307/1268249

Dowding, K., Hindmoor, A., Iles, R., & John, P. (2010). Policy Agendas in Australian Politics: The Governor-General's Speeches, 1945–2008. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, *45*(4), 533–557. https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2010.517174

Dowding, K., Hindmoor, A., & Martin, A. (2016). The Comparative Policy Agendas Project: Theory, measurement and findings. *Journal of Public Policy*, *36*(1), 3–25.

Fernández-i-Marín, X., Hurka, S., Knill, C., & Steinebach, Y. (2019). Systemic Dynamics of Policy Change: Overcoming Some Blind Spots of Punctuated Equilibrium Theory. *Policy Studies Journal*, *n/a*(n/a). https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12379

Fjellanger, R., Røsvik, E., & Jåma, N. H. (2021, November 3). *Helseminister Kjerkol: – Jeg vil ikke være coronaminister*. https://www.vg.no/i/eE6LqR

Glenn, S. (2016, July 13). *Cook's Distance / Cook's D: Definition, Interpretation*. Statistics How To. https://www.statisticshowto.com/cooks-distance/

Green, J., & Hobolt, S. B. (2008). Owning the issue agenda: Party strategies and vote choices in British elections. *Electoral Studies*, *27*(3), 460–476. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2008.02.003

Green-Pedersen, C., & Mortensen, P. B. (2019). The Danish Agendas Project. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0008

Green-Pedersen, C., Mortensen, P. B., & So, F. (2018). The Agenda-Setting Power of the Prime Minister Party in Coalition Governments. *Political Research Quarterly*, *71*(4), 743–756. JSTOR.

Green-Pedersen, C., & Otjes, S. (2019). A hot topic? Immigration on the agenda in Western Europe. *Party Politics*, *25*(3), 424–434. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354068817728211

Green-Pedersen, C., & Wolfe, M. (2009). The Institutionalization of Environmental Attention in the United States and Denmark: Multiple- versus Single-Venue Systems. *Governance*, *22*(4), 625–646. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2009.01456.x

Hegelich, S., Fraune, C., & Knollmann, D. (2015). Point Predictions and the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory: A Data Mining Approach—U.S. Nuclear Policy as Proof of Concept. *Policy Studies Journal*, *43*(2), 228–256. https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12089

Hobbes, T., , Pogson Smith, W. G.,. (1909). *Hobbes's Leviathan reprinted from the edition of 1651*. Clarendon Press; /z-wcorg/.

Hosking, J. R. M. (1990). L-Moments: Analysis and Estimation of Distributions Using Linear Combinations of Order Statistics. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series B (Methodological)*, *52*(1), 105–124. JSTOR.

Iversen, T., & Cusack, T. R. (2000). The Causes of Welfare State Expansion: Deindustrialization or Globalization? *World Politics*, *52*(3), 313–349. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887100016567

Jennings, W., Bevan, S., Timmermans, A., Breeman, G., Brouard, S., Chaqués-Bonafont, L., Green-Pedersen, C., John, P., Mortensen, P. B., & Palau, A. M. (2011). Effects of the Core Functions of Government on the Diversity of Executive Agendas. *Comparative Political Studies*, *44*(8), 1001–1030. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414011405165

Jennings, W., & John, P. (2009). The Dynamics of Political Attention: Public Opinion and the Queen's Speech in the United Kingdom. *American Journal of Political Science*, *53*(4), 838–854. JSTOR.

John, P., & Bevan, S. (2012). What Are Policy Punctuations? Large Changes in the Legislative Agenda of the UK Government, 1911–2008. *Policy Studies Journal*, *40*(1), 89–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00435.x

John, P., & Jennings, W. (2010). Punctuations and Turning Points in British Politics: The Policy Agenda of the Queen's Speech, 1940-2005. *British Journal of Political Science*, *40*(3), 561–586. JSTOR.

Jones, B. D. (1999). BOUNDED RATIONALITY. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *2*(1), 297–321. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.297

Jones, B. D., & Baumgartner, F.R. (2005). *The politics of attention: How government prioritizes problems*. University of Chicago Press.

Jones, B. D., & Baumgartner, F. R. (2012). From There to Here: Punctuated Equilibrium to the General Punctuation Thesis to a Theory of Government Information Processing. *Policy Studies Journal*, *40*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2011.00431.x

Jones, B. D., Baumgartner, F. R., Breunig, C., Wlezien, C., Soroka, S., Foucault, M., François, A., Green-Pedersen, C., Koski, C., John, P., Mortensen, P. B., Varone, F., & Walgrave, S. (2009). A General Empirical Law of Public Budgets: A Comparative Analysis. *American Journal of Political Science*, *53*(4), 855–873. JSTOR.

Jones, B. D., Sulkin, T., & Larsen, H. A. (2003). Policy Punctuations in American Political Institutions. *American Political Science Review*, *97*(1), 151–169. Cambridge Core. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000583

Kingdon, J. (1984). *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*. HarperCollins.

Knill, C., & Steinebach, Y. (2022). What has happened and what has not happened due to the coronavirus disease pandemic: A systemic perspective on policy change. *Policy and Society*, *41*(1), 25–39. https://doi.org/10.1093/polsoc/puab008

Kongehuset. (2021, November 10). *Åpningen av Stortinget*. http://www.kongehuset.no/artikkel.html?tid=27585&sek=27041

Krippendorff, K. (2004). Reliability in Content Analysis: Some Common Misconceptions and Recommendations. *Human Communication Research*, *30*(3), 411–433. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.2004.tb00738.x

Krippendorff, K. (2019a). Conceptual Foundation. In pages 24-50, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Fourth Edition). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781

Krippendorff, K. (2019b). Recording/Coding. In pages 128-156, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Fourth Edition). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781

Krippendorff, K. (2019c). Reliabaility. In pages 277-360, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Fourth Edition). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071878781

Kristelig Folkeparti. (2020). *Et samfunn med plass til alle*. Kristelig Folkeparti. https://krf.no/politikk/et-samfunn-med-plass-til-alle/

Lachat, R. (2014). Issue Ownership and the Vote: The Effects of Associative and Competence Ownership on Issue Voting. *Swiss Political Science Review*, *20*(4), 727–740. https://doi.org/10.1111/spsr.12121

Lien, T. (2018, February 9). *Blågrønn rusreform—Hjelp foran straff*. Venstre. https://www.venstre.no/artikkel/2018/02/09/blagronn-rusreform-hjelp-foran-straff/

Lindblom, C. E. (1959). *The Science of "Muddling Through." 19*(2), 79–88. https://doi.org/10.2307/973677

Locke, J. (1924). *Two treatises of civil government* (Vol. 751). Dent.

Mortensen, P. B., Green-Pedersen, C., Breeman, G., Chaqués-Bonafont, L., Jennings, W., John, P., Palau, A. M., & Timmermans, A. (2011). Comparing Government Agendas: Executive Speeches in the Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Denmark. *Comparative Political Studies*, *44*(8), 973–1000. https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414011405162

Mortensen, P. B., Loftis, M. W., & Seeberg, H. B. (2022). *Explaining Local Policy Agendas* (1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan Cham. https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-90932-1

Peter, J., & de Vreese, C. H. (2003). Agenda-Rich, Agenda-Poor: A Cross-National Comparative Investigation of Nominal and Thematic Public Agenda Diversity. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *15*(1), 44–64. https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/15.1.44

Peters, B. G. (2018). Comparative Politics and Comparative Policy Studies: Making the Linkage. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, *20*(1), 88–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2017.1414409

Peters, G. P., Rhodes, R. A. W., & Wright, V. (2000). Staffing the summit—The Administration of the Core Executive: Convergent Trends and National Specificities. In *Administering the Summit: Administration of the Core Executive in Developed*

Countries (pp. 3–22). Macmillan. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/oslo/reader.action?docID=6281021&ppg=20

Rousseau, J.-J. (1762). *The social contract & discourses*. J.M. Dent & Sons.

Schmidt, M. G. (1996). When parties matter: A review of the possibilities and limits of partisan influence on public policy. *European Journal of Political Research*, *30*(2), 155–183. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1996.tb00673.x

Shannon, C. E. (1948). A mathematical theory of communication. *Bell System Technical Journal*, *27*(4), 623–656. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1538-7305.1948.tb00917.x

Sheingate, A. D. (2006). Structure and Opportunity: Committee Jurisdiction and Issue Attention in Congress. *American Journal of Political Science*, *50*(4), 844–859.

Simon, H. A. (1955). A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *69*(1), 99–118. https://doi.org/10.2307/1884852

Simon, H. A. (1997). *Administrative behavior: A study of decision-making processes in administrative organization* (4th ed.). Simon & Schuster Free Press.

Stubager, R. (2018). What is Issue Ownership and How Should We Measure It? *Political Behavior*, *40*(2), 345–370. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-017-9403-y

Timmermans, A., & Breeman, G. (2019). The Dutch Policy Agendas Project. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0014

Van Assche, T. (2012). When do new issues appear? Punctuations in the Belgian executive agenda. *Acta Politica*, *47*(2), 128–150. https://doi.org/10.1057/ap.2011.33

Venstre. (2021, September 6). *Venstre på 1-2-3*. Venstre. https://www.venstre.no/lettlest/

Walgrave, S., & Boydstun, A. E. (2019). The Comparative Agendas Project: The Evolving Research Interests and Designs of the CAP Scholarly Community. In *Comparative*

Policy Agendas: Theory, Tools and Data. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0003

Walgrave, S., Joly, J., & Sevenans, J. (2019). The Belgian Agendas Project. In *Comparative Policy Agendas*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198835332.003.0005

Walgrave, S., Lefevere, J., & Trescht, A. (2012). THE ASSOCIATIVE DIMENSION OF ISSUE OWNERSHIP. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *76*(4), 771–782. JSTOR.

Walgrave, S., & Nuytemans, M. (2009). Friction and Party Manifesto Change in 25 Countries, 1945–98. *American Journal of Political Science*, *53*(1), 190–206. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2008.00365.x

Worrall, J. L. (2010). A User-Friendly Introduction to Panel Data Modeling. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, *21*(2), 182–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511251003693702

Zach. (2019, May 11). How to Identify Influential Data Points Using Cook's Distance. *Statology*. https://www.statology.org/how-to-identify-influential-data-points-using-cooks-distance/

Zhu, J.-H. (1992). Issue Competition and Attention Distraction: A Zero-Sum Theory of Agenda-Setting. *Journalism Quarterly*, *69*(4), 825–836. https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909206900403

8. Appendix

8.x Link to Online Appendix

https://github.com/tuvamk/tuvamk

The online Appendix contains two Word documents of the full CAP Norwegian Codebook, and the results of the Intercoder-reliability tests. It also contains the following folders with information of datasets and R-coding:

Data preparation

Creating Relative space dataset (R-file)

Relative space dataset (excel-file with complete values, used in coding)

Datasets (excel files)

Entropy Dataset

Entropy Scores

Policy Topics percentages 1946-2021

Relative change

Trontaler 1946-2021 (complete text)

Zero-punctuations

Rscripts

Appendix_Descriptive

Appendix_H1

Appendix_H2

Appendix_H3

8.1. Overview of the Norwegian Policy Agendas Codebook

1. Macroeconomics

100: General (includes combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 100)

101: Inflation, prices and interest rates (CAP 101)

103: Unemployment (CAP 103)

104: Monetary policy, the Norwegian Central Bank ('Norges Bank'), government bonds and the Ministry of Finance (CAP 104)

105: The national budget and debt (CAP 105)

107: Tax policy and tax reform (CAP 107)

108: Industrial policy (CAP 108)

110: Price control (CAP 110)

111: Petroleum & natural gas industry (CAP 199)

112: The Government Pension Fund of Norway / Oil fund (Oljefondet) (CAP 199)

199: Other (CAP 199)

2. Civil rights, minority issues and civil liberties

200: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 200)

201: Ethnic minority and racial group discrimination (CAP 201)

202: Gender and sexual orientation discrimination and equal rights (CAP 202)

204: Age discrimination (CAP 204)

205: Handicap or disease discrimination (CAP 205)

206: Voting rights and voting issues (CAP 206)

207: Freedom of speech and religion including pornography issues, freedom of assembly and abortion rights (CAP 207)

208: Protection of personal data, the Data Protection Act, inspection of documents protection against monitoring (CAP 208)

209: Anti-government activities (CAP 209)

210: The Church of Norway (CAP 207)

211: Rights and self-governance of the Sami people (CAP 299)

299: Other (CAP 299)

3. Health

300. General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 300)

301: General reforms of the Norwegian health care system (CAP 301)

302: General questions on coverage under the public health insurance system, insurance and right to treatment (CAP 302)

321: Regulation of drug industry and treatment (CAP 321)

322: Health care facilities (CAP 322)

323: Agreements between the public health insurance system and private health suppliers (CAP 323)

324: Medical malpractice/negligence, medical liability and compensation (CAP 324)

325: Health manpower, education and training (CAP 325)

331: Prevention, health promotion and communicable diseases (CAP 331)

332: Children and infants (CAP 332)

333: Mental illness (CAP 333)

334: Long-term care and treatment, rehabilitation services, the terminally ill and ageing issues (CAP 334)

335: Prescription drug coverage, specific drug coverage, expenditure on drug and drug prices (CAP 335)

341: Tobacco (CAP 341)

342: Alcohol and controlled and illegal drugs (CAP 342)

398: Research and development within health care (CAP 398)

399: Other (CAP 399)

4. Agriculture and fishing industry

400: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 400)

401: Agricultural exports and imports (CAP 401)

402: Subsidies and regulation on agriculture (CAP 402)

403: Food policy (CAP 403)

404: Agricultural marketing and promotion (CAP 404)

405: Animal and crop diseases and disease control (CAP 405)

406: Welfare of livestock (CAP 405)

407: Environmental problems related to agriculture (CAP 711)

408: Fisheries policy (CAP 408)

409: Aquaculture industry (CAP 408)

498: Agricultural research and development (CAP 498)

499: Other (CAP 499)

5. Labour

500: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 500)

501: Working environment, work-related injuries/occupational injuries and compensation (CAP 501)

502: Active labour market policy, training and workforce development (CAP 502)

503: Personal employee benefits (CAP 503)

504: General labour market questions on trade unions (CAP 504)

505: Specific private labour market collective bargaining questions / fair labour standards (CAP 505)

506: Child labour and youth unemployment (CAP 506)

507: Unemployment benefits and other labour market related transfer payments (CAP 507)

508: Questions on the employment situation within specific industries (CAP 599)

529: Migrant and Seasonal workers (CAP 529)

599: Other (CAP 599)

6. Education and culture

600: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 600)

601: Higher education (CAP 601)

602: Norwegian primary and lower secondary school and general and vocational upper secondary education (CAP 602)

603: Education of underprivileged students (CAP 603)

604: Vocational post-secondary education and training (CAP 604)

606: Special education for youth with learning disabilities and the handicapped (CAP 606)

607: Libraries and improvement of the level of education (CAP 607)

698: Educational research (CAP 698)

699: Other (CAP 699)

7. Environment

700: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 700)

701: Drinking water, drinking water quality, water supply and ground water (CAP 701)

703: Waste disposal and disposal problems (CAP 703)

704: Hazardous substance, fluid and waste and toxics such as pesticides (CAP 704)

705: Air and noise pollution, climate change and climate policies (CAP 705)

707: Recycling (CAP 707)

708: Indoor environmental hazards (CAP 708)

709: Animal and plant life protection (CAP 709)

710: Marine environment, oil pollution, coastal areas and coastal area protection (CAP 711)

711: Freshwater environment and soil pollution (CAP 711)

712: Spatial planning (CAP 1400)

798: Environmental research and development (CAP 798)

799: Other (CAP 799)

8. Energy

800: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 800)

801: Nuclear energy (CAP 801)

802: Electricity and hydroelectricity (CAP 802)

803: Oil and natural gas (CAP 803)

804: Heat supply (CAP 800)

805: Coal (CAP 805)

806: Alternative and renewable energy (CAP 806)

807: Energy conservation (CAP 807)

898: Research and development (CAP 898)

899: Other (CAP 899)

9. Immigration and refugee issues

900: All questions related to immigration and refugees including integration issues (CAP 900)

10. Traffic

1000: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1000)

1001: Mass transport and safety (CAP 1001)

1002: Road construction, maintenance and safety. Motor vehicles and safety (CAP 1002)

1003: Airports, air traffic and safety (CAP 1003)

1005: Railroad transport and safety (CAP 1005)

1007: Maritime issues (CAP 1007)

1008: Shipbuilding industry (CAP 108)

1010: Public works and transport facilities (CAP 1010)

1098: Research and development (CAP 1098)

1099: Other (CAP 1099)

12. Legal affairs

1200: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1200)

1201: Authorities dealing with crime including gun control and private security forces (CAP 1201)

1202: Financial crime and organised crime (CAP 1202)

1203: Drug-related crime (CAP 1203)

1204: Court system (CAP 1204)

1205: Prison system (CAP 1205)

1206: Juvenile crime (CAP 1206)

1207: Child abuse and child pornography (CAP 1207)

1208: Family issues (CAP 1208)

1210: Criminal Code issues and civil actions (CAP 1210)

1211: Crime prevention (1211)

1227: Police and Other General Domestic Security Responses to Terrorism (CAP 1227)

1299: Other (CAP 1299)

13. Social policy

1300: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1300)

1301: Food assistance (CAP 1301)

1302: Cash benefit/social security benefit and anti-poverty programmes (CAP 1302)

1303: Elderly issues (CAP 1303)

1304: Assistance to the disabled and handicapped (CAP 1304)

1305: Volunteer associations (CAP 1305)

1308: Parental leave and child care (CAP 1308)

1399: Other (CAP 1399)

14. Urban and housing issues

1400: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1400)

1401: Urban housing issues (CAP 1401)

1403: Urban economic development and general urban issues (CAP 1403)

1404: Rural housing issues including small islands (CAP 1404)

1405: Rural economic development including small islands (CAP 1405)

1406: Low-income housing issues (CAP 1406)

1408: Elderly and handicapped housing (CAP 1408)

1409: Homeless issues (CAP 1409)

1411: Housing market for homeowners (CAP 1401)

1499: Other (CAP 1499)

15. Industrial and commercial policy

1500: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1500)

1501: Banking (CAP 1501)

1502: Securities and investments (CAP 1502)

1504: Mortgages, credit cards and other consumer cards (CAP 1504)

1505: Insurance issues (CAP 1505)

1507: Bankruptcy and insolvency (CAP 1507)

1520: Antitrust legislation and regulation of limited companies (CAP 1520)

1521: Small and medium-sized business issues (CAP 1521)

1522: Copyrights and patents (CAP 1522)

1523: Domestic disaster relief (CAP 1523)

1524: Tourism (CAP 1524)

1525: Consumer policy and consumer safety (CAP 1525)

1526: Sports and gambling regulation (CAP 1526)

1599: Other (CAP 1599)

16. Defence

1600: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1600)

1602: Security policy and defence alliances such as NATO (CAP 1602)

1603: Military intelligence and espionage (CAP 1603)

1604: Military readiness and military reaction force (CAP 1604)

1605: Arms control and arms proliferation (CAP 1605)

1606: Military aid and weapons sales to other countries (CAP 1606)

1608: Military personnel and families (CAP 1608)

1610: Military procurement and weapons system acquisitions (CAP 1610)

1611: Military installations, property and buildings (CAP 1611)

1612: The Norwegian Home Guard (CAP 1612)

1614: Environmental problems caused by military activity (CAP 1614)

1615: Civil defence (war related) (1523 includes readiness issues not related to war) (CAP 1615)

1616: Civilian personnel in the Norwegian Armed Forces and consequences of military issues for civilians (CAP 1616)

1617: Oversight of defence contracts and contractors (CAP 1617)

1619: Issues directly related to war (CAP 1619)

1620: Claims against the Norwegian Armed Forces (CAP 1620)

1698: Research and development (CAP 1698)

1699: Other (CAP 1699)

17. Research, technology and communications

1700: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1700)

1701: Space travelling issues and collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA) (CAP 1701)

1704: Commercial use of space and satellites (CAP 1704)

1705: Science technology transfer and international scientific cooperation (CAP 1705)

1706: Telecommunication and telephone services (CAP 1706)

1707: Media (CAP 1707)

1708: Weather forecasting and geological issues (CAP 1708)

1709: Computer industry and computer security (CAP 1709)

1798: Research and Research Policy (CAP 1798)

1799: Other (CAP 1799)

18. Foreign trade

1800: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1800)

1802: Free trade agreements, disputes and agreements (CAP 1802)

1803: Export promotion and regulation (CAP 1803)

1804: Foreign investment in Norway and Norwegian company investment abroad (CAP 1804)

1806: Competitiveness and the balance of payment (CAP 1806)

1807: Tariff, imports and import regulation (CAP 1807)

1808: Exchange rates and related issues (CAP 1808)

1899: Other (CAP 1899)

19. Foreign policy and relations to other countries

1900: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 1900)

1901: Norwegian foreign aid (CAP 1901)

1902: International resources exploitation and resources agreements and global environmental problems (CAP 19029

1905: Developing countries issues (CAP 1905)

1906: International finance and economic development and economic organisations (CAP 1906)

1907: China (CAP 1921)

1908: USSR, Russia and former Soviet republics (CAP 1921)

1909: Eastern Europe (excluding former Soviet republics) (CAP 1921)

1910: EU / EEA (CAP 1910)

1911: Africa (CAP 1911)

1912: South Africa (CAP 1912)

1913: Western Europe and Scandinavia (CAP 1910)

1914: Latin and Central America (CAP 1921)

1915: International canal issues such as Panama and Suez issues (CAP 1915)

1916: North America (CAP 1921)

1919: Asia, Australia, and Japan (CAP 1921)

1920: Middle East (CAP 1921)

1925: Human rights (CAP 1925)

1926: International organisations (CAP 1926)

1927: International Terrorism and hijacking (CAP 1927)

1929: Norwegian diplomats, Norwegian citizens abroad, foreign diplomats in Norway, border control (CAP 1929)

1999: Other (CAP 1999)

20. Government operations and government issues

2000: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 2000)

2001: Relations between state, municipalities and counties (CAP 2001)

2002: Government efficiency and bureaucratic oversight (CAP 2002)

2003: Postal services (CAP 2003)

2004: Public employees and public servants (CAP 2004)

2005: Nominations and appointments (CAP 2005)

2006: Medals, orders and currency (CAP 2006)

2007: Government procurement, contracts and outsourcing (CAP 2007)

2008: Public buildings and property, general questions on privatisation (CAP 2008)

2009: The Norwegian Tax Administration (CAP 2009)

2010: Prime Minister impeachment (CAP 2010)

2011: Relations between the Parliament and other ministers (CAP 2011)

2012: Regulation of political activities, elections and election campaigns (CAP 2012)

2015: Claims against the Government (CAP 2015)

2016: Regulation and control of municipalities and counties (CAP 2001)

2030: National holidays (CAP 2030)

2099: Other (CAP 2099)

21. Public lands and water management

2100: General (including combinations of multiple subtopics) (CAP 2100)

2101: National parks, memorials, recreational and historic sites and protected areas (CAP 2101)

2102: Indigenous Affairs (CAP 2102)

2103: Use of public natural resources such as lands and forests, private hunting and fishing (CAP 2103)

2104: Water and sea resources including harbours (CAP 2104)

2105: Questions on Svalbard and other oversea territories (CAP 2105)

2199: Other

23. Cultural policy (CAP 2300)

2300: Any general question on cultural policy (CAP 2300)

2999: Not relevant

8.2. Quotes and Examples

8.2.1. Sentence summary and sentence points

Example sentence summary

"Av andre saker som vil bli lagt fram for Stortinget nevnes forslag om opprettelse av et institutt for kulturelt samkvem med utlandet, skatt av årets inntekt, pensjonsordning for statsarbeidere, lærlingelov og lov om boligformidling til avløsning av den midlertidige rekvisisjonslov" (Trontale, 1950)

> *"Among other cases that will be presented for Parliament, is the creation of a cultural institute in relations to foreign countries, taxes of this years' income, pension schemes for public employees, trainee law and law about housing in replacement of the temporary requisition law".* (Trontale, 1950)

Example sentence points

"Det vil bli lagt fram:
forslag om lov om likestilling mellom kjønnene,
tempoplan for gjennomføring av likestilling mellom ulike lønnstakergrupper,
forslag om å sikre unge arbeidstakere mot usaklig oppsigelse,
forslag om 38 timers arbeidsuke i helkontinuerlig skiftarbeid og arbeid under dagen,
forslag om ny arbeidsmiljølov,
forslag om lov om barnehager og om andre tiltak for barn." (Trontale, 1974)

"It will be presented:

proposal of a gender equality law,

time-plan for implementing equality between different salary-groupings,

proposal to secure young employees from illegitimate resignation,

proposal of 38 hours working week within continual shifting-work and work during daytime,

proposal of new working environment act,

proposal of new kindergarten law and of other child measures" (Trontale, 1974)

8.2.2. Health Polices 2018

Tilbudet til utsatte mennesker i vårt samfunn, som rusavhengige og mennesker med psykiske lidelser, skal styrkes

Et offentlig utvalg skal utrede en rusreform

Målet er at brukerne får riktig og rask hjelp uten å risikere straffeforfølgning

Regjeringen tar sikte på å legge frem en opptrappingsplan for barn og unges psykiske helse i løpet av høsten 2018 og en ny nasjonal helse-og sykehusplan i 2019

Regjeringen vil legge frem en folkehelsemelding hvor ensomhet blir et viktig tema (Trontale, 2018)

The support to vulnerable people in our society, like drug addicts and people with mental illnesses, will be strengthened

A public committee will evaluate a drug-reform

The goal is that the addicts will receive instant and correct help without risking legal punishments

The government aims to present a plan for children's and youth's mental health during the fall of 2018, as well as a new national health-and hospital plan in 2019

The government will present a public health promotion proposal in which loneliness will be an important issue. (Trontale, 2018)

8.2.3. Civil Liberties 2019

Regjeringen vil iverksette en likeverdsreform

Målet er å gjøre hverdagen enklere for familier som venter eller har barn med behov for sammensatte tjenester

Blant tiltakene er å forenkle krav til dokumentasjon for ulike hjelpemidler for å unngå unødig dokumentasjon ved kroniske eller medfødte tilstander (Trontale, 2019)

> *The government wants to implement an equality-reform*
>
> *The goal is to make the everyday lives easier for families expecting, or including, children with needs for special services*
>
> *Amongst the measures is a simplification of the documentation-requirements to gain the right for different aids to avoid unnecessary documentation in the instance of chronical or innate disabilities.* (Trontale, 2019)

8.3. Methodology

8.3.1. L-Kurtosis

Formula of the rth L-moment (Breuning and Jones 2011, p. 107):

$$L_r(F) = \frac{1}{r}\sum_{j=0}^{r-1} -1^j \binom{r-1}{j} E(X_{r-j:r})$$

The L-kurtosis score is the ratio between the fourth and the second L-moment:

$$\text{L – kurtosis} = \frac{L_4(F)}{L_2(F)}$$

8.3.2. Core Issues Cooks D

The following section presents an overview over the most influential observations (speeches) for each model (sorted into major policy topics) based on Cooks' Distance. The red numbers illustrate the speech numbers (2-77, i.e., 1947 to 2021 including two speeches in 1959) that have a Cook's D higher than 0.05, I.e., 4 divided by the number of observations (Zach, 2019).

Figure 8. 1 Cooks D Macroeconomics

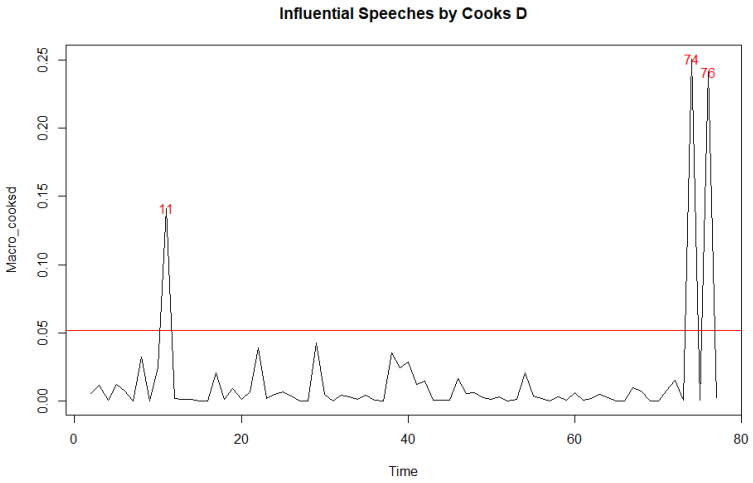


Figure 8. 2 Cooks D Legal affairs

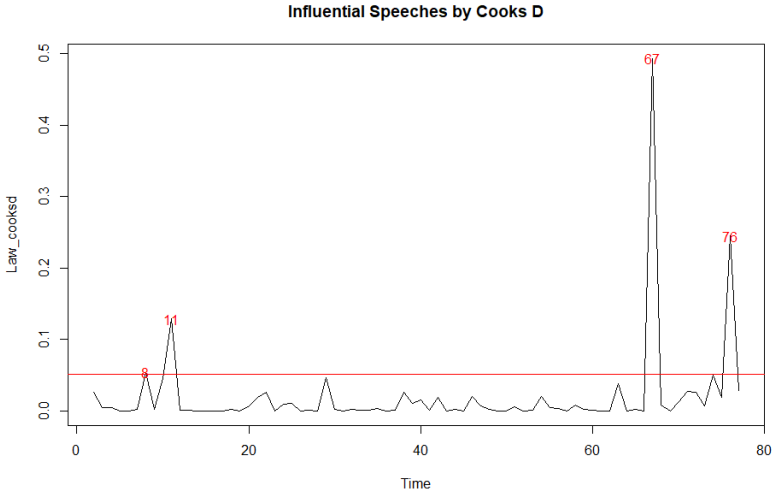


Figure 8. 3 Cooks D Defense

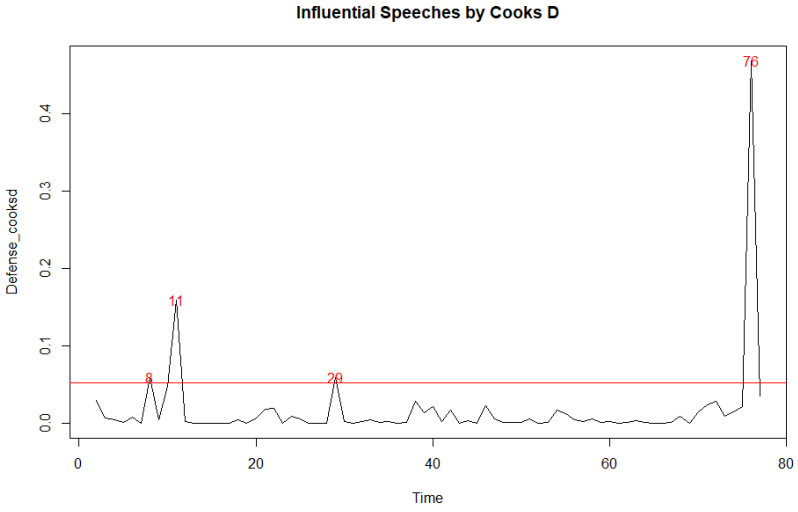


Figure 8. 4 Cooks D Foreign policy

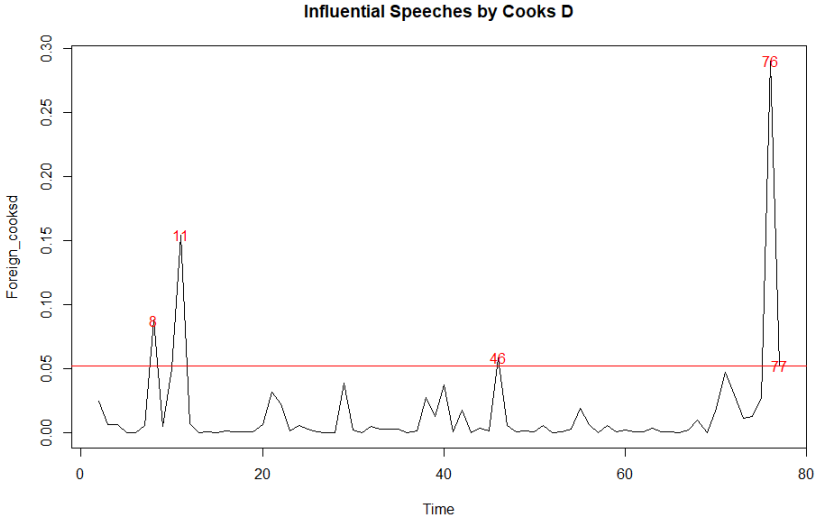
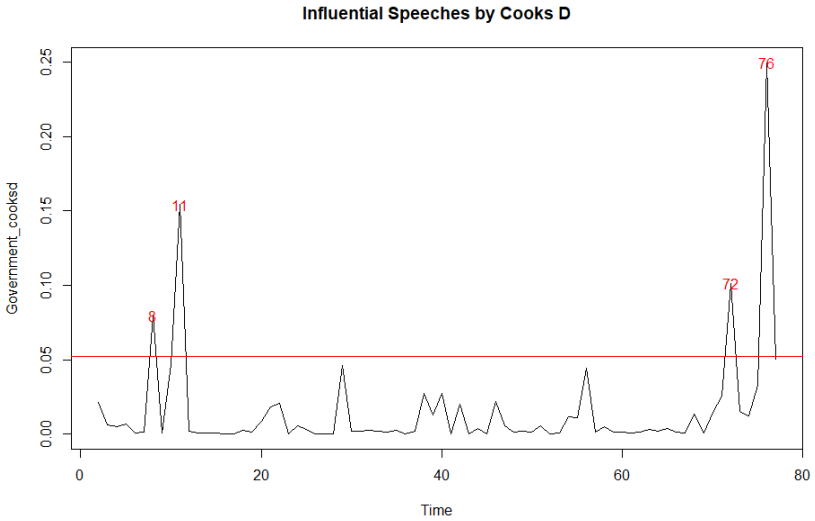


Figure 8. 5 Cooks D Government operations



8.3.3. Selective issues Cooks D

Figure 8. 6 Cooks D Civil rights

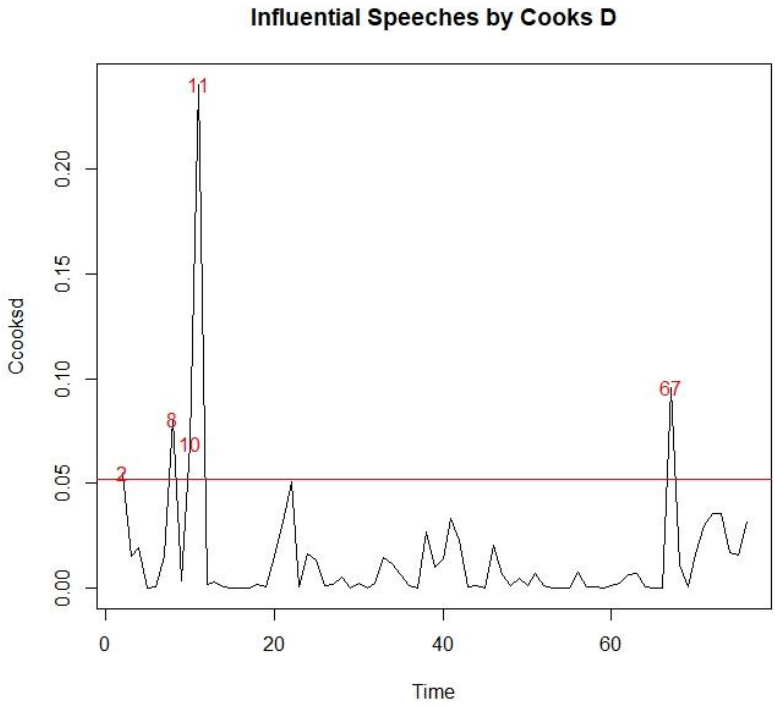


Figure 8. 7 Cooks D Agriculture

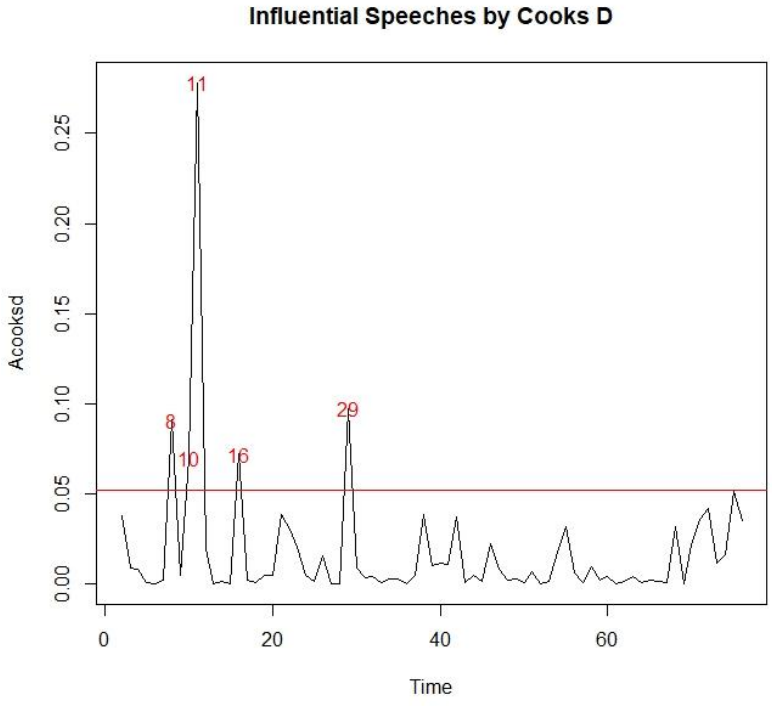


Figure 8. 8 Cooks D Education

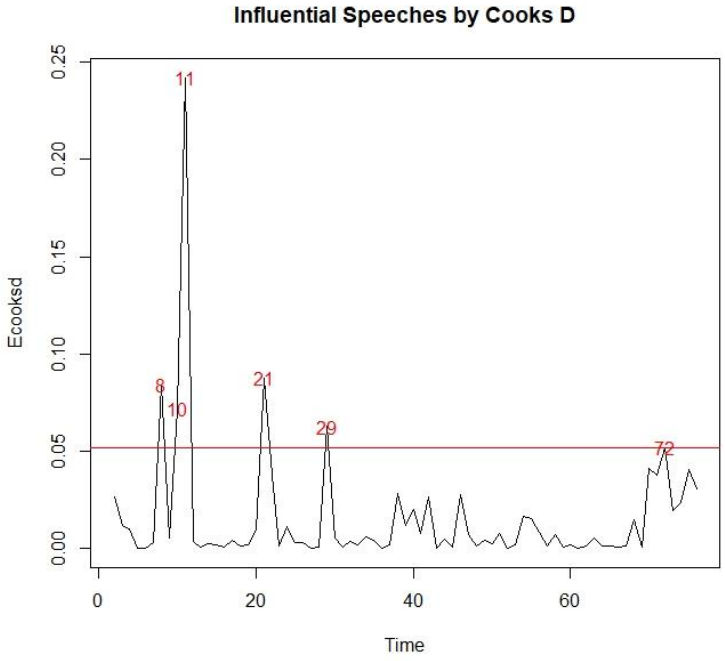


Figure 8. 9 Cooks D Environment

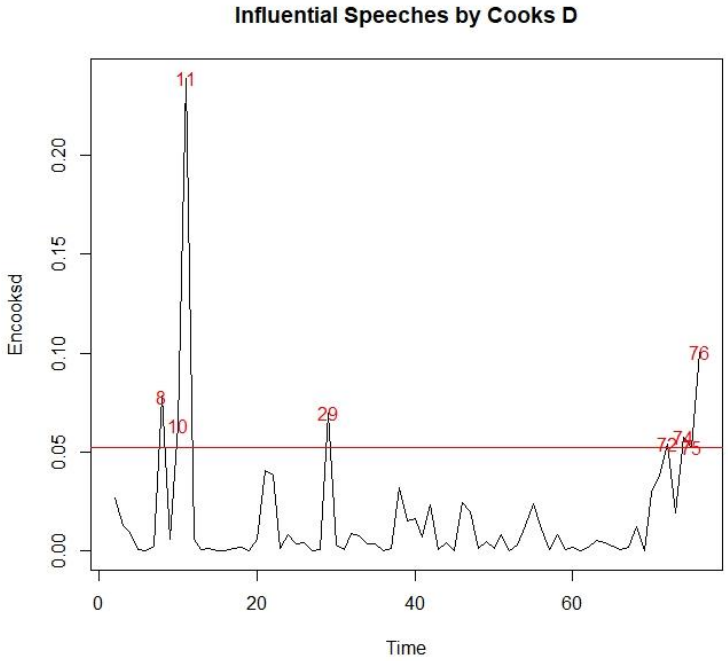


Figure 8. 10 Cooks D Energy

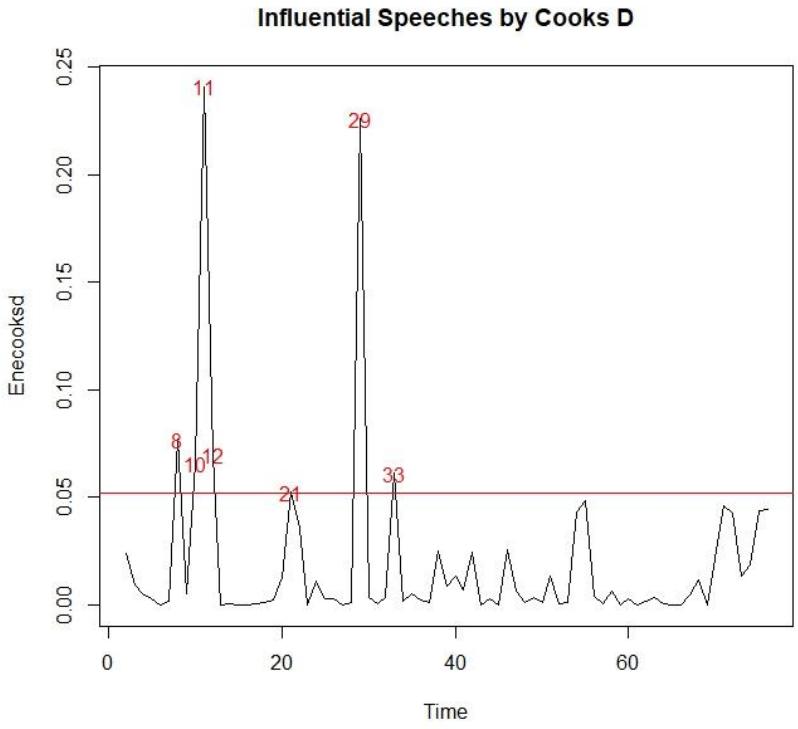


Figure 8. 11 Cooks D Immigration

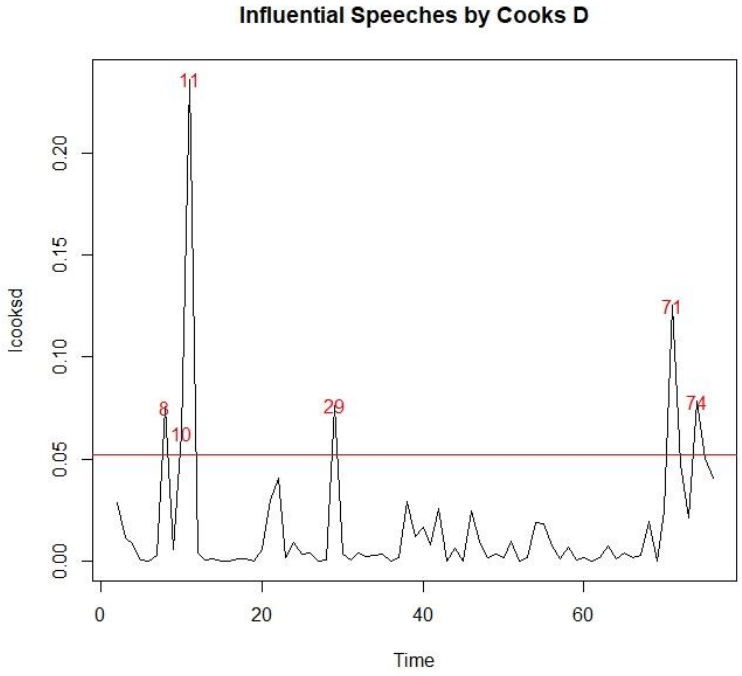


Figure 8. 12 Cooks D Traffic

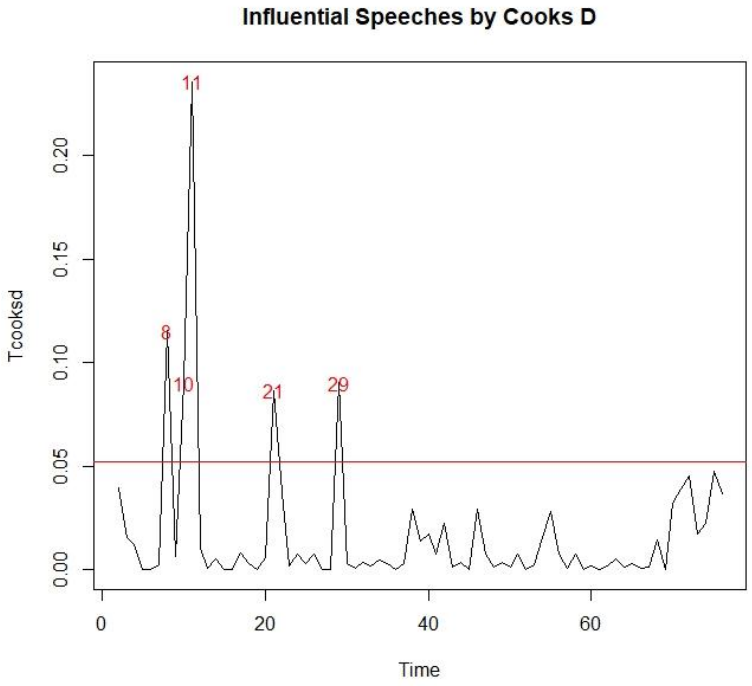


Figure 8. 13 Cooks D Social Policy

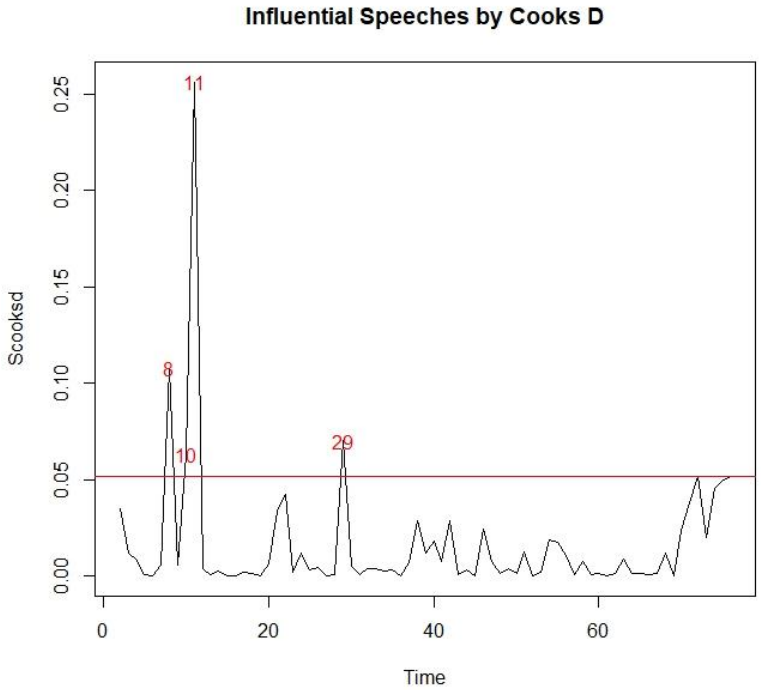


Figure 8. 14 Cooks D Housing

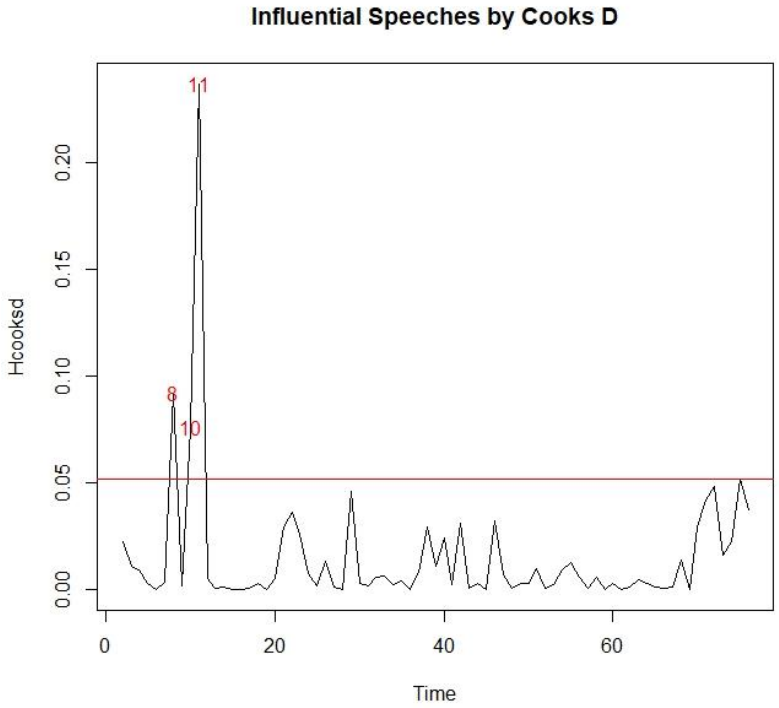


Figure 8. 15 Cooks D Business

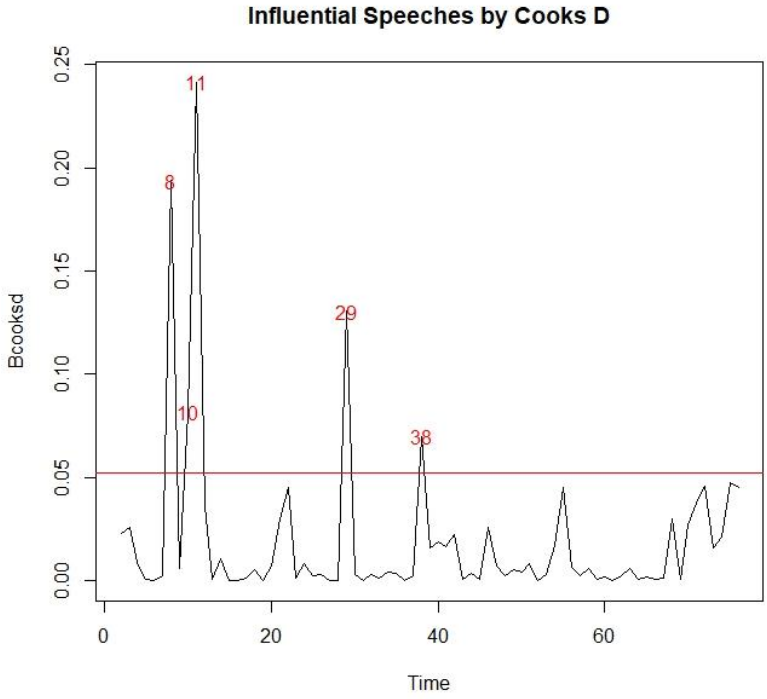


Figure 8. 16 Cooks D Foreign Trade

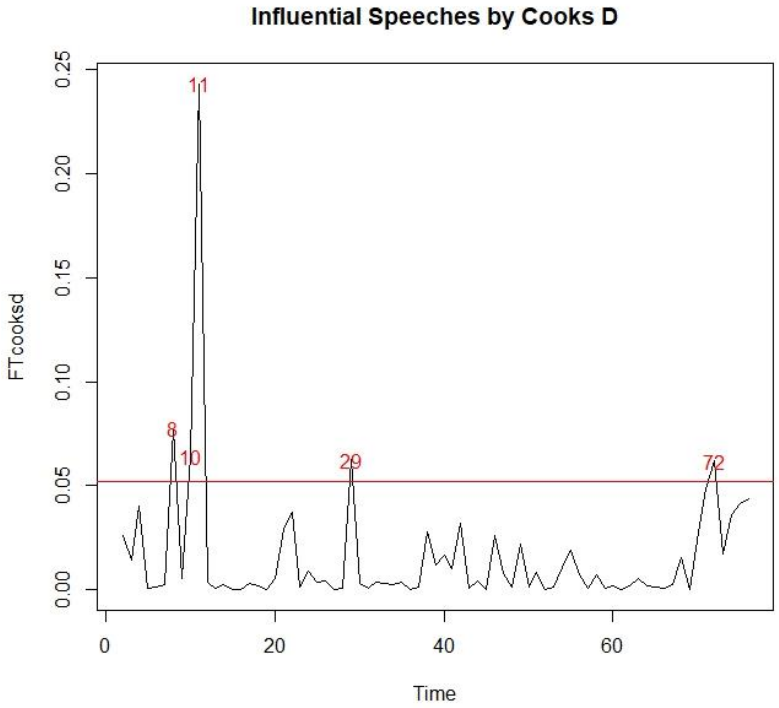


Figure 8. 17 Cooks D Public Land

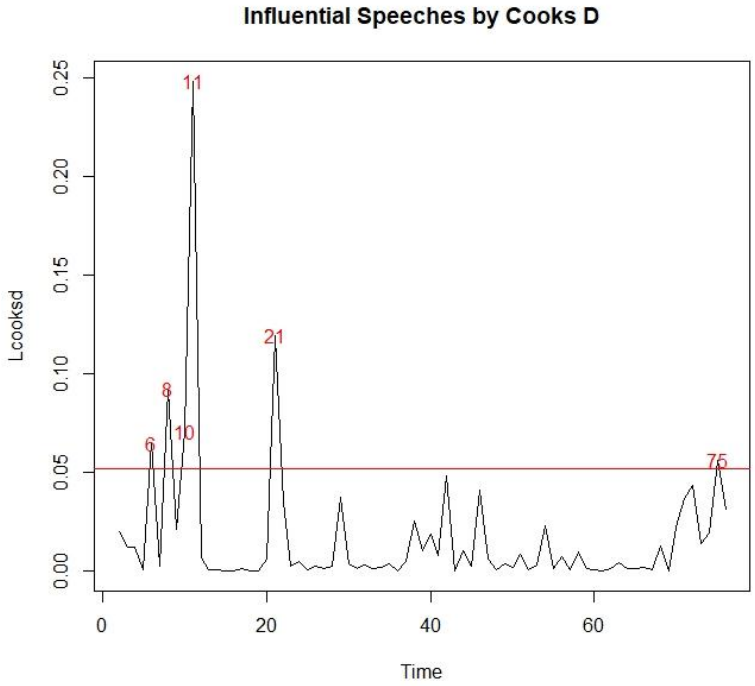
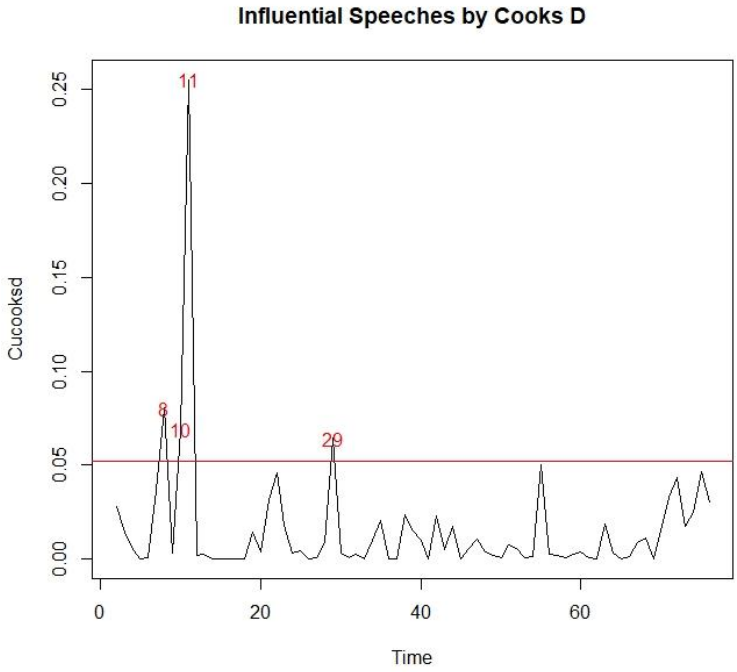


Figure 8. 18 Cooks D Culture



8.4. Analysis

8.4.1. H1 Frequency Distribution

Table 8. 1 Descriptive statistics frequency distribution

Median	-8.49
Min	-100
Skewness	2.83

8.4.2. H2 Parties and Punctuations

Table 8. 2 Lower half of 46 punctuations

Dark colors are total party turnovers, light is partial party turnover

Punctuations %	Topic	From/To	Prime Minister	Election	Party change From/To	
329	Business	1997/1998	Bondevik 1	No	Ap	KrF, Sp, V
321	Immigration	1993/1994	Brundtland 3	No	Ap	Ap
320	Trade	1992/1993	Brundtland 3	Yes	Ap	Ap
319	Agriculture	2005/2006	Stoltenberg 2	No	KrF, H, V	Ap
317	Macro	1963/1965	Gerhardsen 4	Yes	Ap	Ap
302	Business	1965/1966	Borten	No	Ap	Sp, H, V, KrF
300	Environment	2001/2002	Bondevik 2	No	Ap	KrF, H, V
284	Business	1978/1979	Nordli	No	Ap	Ap
278	Legal	1998/1999	Bondevik 1	No	KrF, Sp, V	KrF, Sp, V
278	Land	1998/1999	Bondevik 1	No	KrF, Sp, V	KrF, Sp, V
275	Environment	1997/1998	Bondevik 1	No	Ap	KrF, Sp, V
275	Research	1984/1985	Willoch	Yes	H, KrF, Sp	H, KrF, Sp
274	Social	1999/2000	Stoltenberg 1	No	KrF, Sp, V	Ap
274	Business	1958/1959	Gerhardsen 3	No	Ap	Ap
272	Traffic	1946/1947	Gerhardsen 2	No	Ap	Ap
270	Agriculture	1974/1975	Bratteli 2	No	Ap	Ap
266	Labor	2019/2020	Solberg	No	H, V, KrF, FrP	H, V, KrF
261	Labor	1957/1958	Gerhardsen 3	No	Ap	Ap
261	Legal	1977/1978	Nordli	No	Ap	Ap
261	Land	1977/1978	Nordli	No	Ap	Ap
259	Land	1970/1971	Bratteli 1	No	Sp, H, V, KrF	Ap
255	Energy	1947/1948	Gerhardsen 2	No	Ap	Ap
251	Social	1976/1977	Nordli	Yes	Ap	Ap

8.4.3. H3 Complete tables

Table 8. 3 Selective Issues Complete

	Dependent variable:							
	Entropy							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Entropy lag	0.446***	0.574***	0.587***	0.566***	0.562***	0.558***	0.514***	0.566***
	(0.095)	(0.100)	(0.093)	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.097)	(0.096)	(0.095)
Civil_Liberties	1.888***							
	(0.565)							
Health		-0.167						
		(0.660)						
Agriculture			0.892**					
			(0.434)					
Labour				0.185				
				(0.440)				
Education					0.215			
					(0.516)			
Environment						0.182		
						(0.556)		
Energy							1.345*	
							(0.690)	
Immigration								-0.195
								(0.635)
Statements	0.001**	0.002**	0.002***	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002***	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Partisan.controlCenter	-0.028	0.008	0.024	0.015	0.017	0.008	0.023	0.014
	(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.083)	(0.086)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.083)	(0.086)
Partisan.controlRight	-0.003	0.001	0.012	-0.001	0.002	0.001	0.012	0.002
	(0.035)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.038)
Constant	1.280***	0.995***	0.868***	1.003***	1.002***	1.026***	1.056***	1.008***
	(0.224)	(0.233)	(0.229)	(0.225)	(0.225)	(0.230)	(0.220)	(0.225)
Observations	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
R^2	0.601	0.536	0.563	0.537	0.537	0.537	0.560	0.537
Adjusted R^2	0.572	0.503	0.531	0.504	0.504	0.503	0.528	0.503
Residual Std. Error (df = 69)	0.130	0.140	0.136	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.136	0.140
F Statistic (df = 5; 69)	20.759***	15.971***	17.768***	16.019***	16.018***	15.989***	17.583***	15.984***

Table 8. 4 Selective Issues Complete (continued)

	Dependent variable:							
	Entropy							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Entropy lag	0.564***	0.563***	0.563***	0.560***	0.550***	0.558***	0.565***	0.443***
	(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.094)	(0.094)	(0.093)	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.096)
Traffic	0.312							
	(0.535)							
Social_Policy		-0.137						
		(0.530)						
Housing			0.869					
			(0.660)					
Business				0.825				
				(0.686)				
Research_Technology					1.250*			
					(0.654)			
Foreign_Trade						-0.341		
						(0.772)		
Public_Land							1.517*	
							(0.774)	
Culture								5.000***
								(1.518)
Statements	0.002**	0.002**	0.002***	0.002**	0.002**	0.002**	0.002***	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Partisan.controlCenter	0.009	0.010	0.032	-0.008	-0.004	0.013	0.006	0.018
	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.085)	(0.086)	(0.083)	(0.085)	(0.083)	(0.079)
Partisan.controlRight	0.003	0.003	0.005	-0.006	-0.007	0.002	0.004	0.022
	(0.038)	(0.039)	(0.038)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.038)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Constant	0.997***	1.020***	0.944***	0.989***	1.026***	1.039***	0.959***	1.284***
	(0.225)	(0.228)	(0.228)	(0.223)	(0.219)	(0.234)	(0.220)	(0.225)
Observations	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
R^2	0.538	0.536	0.547	0.546	0.559	0.537	0.560	0.599
Adjusted R^2	0.505	0.503	0.515	0.513	0.527	0.504	0.529	0.570
Residual Std. Error (df = 69)	0.140	0.140	0.138	0.139	0.137	0.140	0.136	0.130
F Statistic (df = 5; 69)	16.090***	15.972***	16.690***	16.566***	17.516***	16.027***	17.598***	20.621***