MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

„Media Bias on Issue Ownership Perceptions"

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2021 / Vienna 2021

Danksagung

Ich danke meiner Mutter Ulrike für ihre Fürsorglichkeit und den unglaublichen Rückhalt, den sie mir gibt. Ich kenne niemanden der so viel Zeit und Energie dafür verwendet andere Menschen glücklich zu machen und niemanden der so erfolgreich dabei ist.

Ich danke meinem Stiefvater Simon für das beständige Verständnis, welches er mir entgegenbringt, sowie für seine Hilfsbereitschaft und Zeit, die er aufgewendet hat, um diese und andere Arbeiten Korrektur zu lesen.

Ich danke meinem Vater Walter für seine bedingungslose Unterstützung, das große Vertrauen in mich und meine Fähigkeiten und die vielen schönen Momente die ich mit ihm erlebe.

Ich danke meinen beiden Schwestern Lea und Josephine. Euch zu begegnen ist immer eine Quelle der Freunde und des Glückes. Miterleben zu können, wie großartig ihr euch entwickelt, erfüllt mich mit Stolz.

Ich danke meiner Tante Simone, die wie eine große Schwester für mich ist und die immer ein offenes Ohr und zwei offene Arme für mich bereithält.

Ich danke meinen Großeltern Anna Maria, Anton, Dianne, Elfriede, Johann und Winfried für die zahlreichen schönen Kindheitserinnerungen, die ich mit ihnen verbinde und die Unterstützung, welche sie mir zuteil werden lassen.

Ich danke Igor, Jakob, Oliver und Pancho für über 20 Jahre treue Freundschaft, unzählige schöne Erlebnisse und hoffe, dass noch viele weitere folgen werden.

Ich danke meinem Betreuer Univ.-Prof. Markus Wagner, PhD für seine hilfreichen Ratschläge und Anregungen, die wesentlich zur Fertigstellung der vorliegenden Masterarbeit beigetragen haben. Ebenso danke ich Assoz. Prof. Thomas Meyer, PhD und Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Sylvia Kritzinger für ihre hervorragende Lehre, ohne welche diese Arbeit nicht möglich gewesen wäre.

Schließlich möchte ich mich noch bei meinen Kolleginnen und Kollegen am Institut für Staatswissenschaft für die freundliche und professionelle Zusammenarbeit, sowie die zahlreichen interessanten und anregenden Gespräche bedanken.

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1. Introduction

Political competition, at least to some extent, means competition between political actors regarding different political issues. Parties and politicians offer different solutions for issues that voters care about, in order to gain their electoral support. In this sense the term 'issue' refers to "a broader set of policies or political statements" (Dolezal et al. 2014: p.60). It is an abstraction from concrete interests and concerns to a more general topic and thus "simplifies the political discussion and helps voters in structuring the party and issue landscape." (Dolezal et al. 2014: p.60-61). For example, it is easier to memorize that a party supports environment protection in general than to remember that a party advocates tax cuts on solar energy.

The connection between parties and issues follows specific patterns. Some parties are more likely to be associated with an issue or perceived as more competent in dealing with it than their competitors. These patterns are described by the concept of 'issue ownership' (see Petrocik 1996). Being perceived as 'owner' of an issue is very important for parties because it improves their prospects for electoral success, especially when an issue is highly salient on the public agenda (see Petrocik et al. 2003; Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Green & Hobolt 2008; Walgrave et al. 2012; Müller & Meyer 2013; Lachat 2014; Lanz & Sciarini 2016; Thesen et al. 2017).

However, which parties are perceived as 'owner' of an issue is not a given fact. It depends on the information people receive about the connection between parties and issues, and the way they process this information. Such information is mainly provided by mass media: "most citizens' experience of the political world is mediated, news outlets play an important role in translating the electoral supply of party alternatives to citizens" (Banducci et al. 2015: p.572).

Nevertheless, specific media outlets may differ in how they report about parties in their coverage of specific issues, with some parties being covered more favorable than others. Thus, people might receive different information about the connection of parties and issues, depending on the media outlets they consume. When people form or adapt their perceptions of issue ownership in reaction to such (unbalanced) coverage, this might be considered as a form of 'media bias': "The political effect of the idealised normative role of mass media is to enable an informed, meaningful, unprejudiced choice by the electorate. The notion of bias implies a deviation from the informative media function, which may result in a distorting effect on political attitudes and outcomes." (Brandenburg 2005: p.299)

However, even when the issue-specific coverage of media outlets is relatively 'unbalanced' regarding the representation and evaluation of different political actors, people might differ in how susceptible they are to this kind of information. If they have attitudes that limit their willingness or ability to accept this information, exposure to such coverage will not result in a 'bias' of issue ownership perceptions.

In this master thesis, I will investigate the role of media coverage in shaping issue ownership perceptions. To do so, I attempt to answer the following research questions: *Does news media consumption 'bias' a person's issue ownership perceptions? And which circumstances make it more likely that issue ownership perceptions are 'biased' by news media reporting?*

In order to do so, I will first present the concept of issue ownership, leading to a theoretical model of how people form and adapt issue ownership perceptions, when they receive information about the connection between parties and issues (chapter 2). Then, I will discuss the notion of 'media bias' (chapter 3.1.), in which ways it might affect issue ownership perceptions (chapter 3.2.) and under which circumstances people might be more susceptible to 'media bias' (chapter 3.3.), resulting in a set of hypotheses.

These hypotheses will be tested in the empirical part of this master thesis using a so called 'linkage study' (see De Vreese et al. 2017). To do so, I combine content analyses of newspaper coverage (Litvyak et al. forthcoming) and party communication activities (Müller et al. forthcoming a-c) with survey data (Wagner et al. 2020), in context of the 2017 Austrian election campaign[1]. In chapter 4, I will describe this case in detail, and provide information about the data, variables and methods used to test my hypotheses. In chapter 5, the results are presented for a series of conditional logistic regression models. Depending on a party's visibility and evaluation within the issue-specific newspaper coverage a respondent was exposed to during the election campaign, these models estimate the likelihood of a party (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, The Greens, NEOS, Liste Pilz) to be perceived as associative or competence issue owner of seven different issues ('Job Market and Employment', 'Immigration', 'European Integration', 'Economy', 'Environment', 'Corruption', 'Pensions').

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[1] I would like to thank the members of the 'Vienna Center for Electoral Research'(VieCER) for providing these data.

Answering my research questions might bring new insights about the function of media for the political process. If issue ownership perceptions are 'biased' by media coverage, media outlets cannot simply be considered as 'neutral' provider of political information, but as influential political actors themselves, that are able to shape the public perception of politics. Furthermore, from a scientific perspective, investigating whether and how media coverage can affect issue ownership perceptions can improve our understanding of what issue ownership perceptions actually are and under what circumstances they might be more likely to be changed. Finally, if some people are found to be more susceptible to 'media bias' than others, this would have important implications for the study of media effects. When researches only look at overall populations when examining media effects, they might overlook the possible differences between subgroups and thus underestimate media's ability to shape the public's perception of politics.

2. Issue ownership perceptions

In political science, the concept of 'issue ownership' was developed to describe the superiority of one party over its competitors on an issue (see Petrocik 1996). However, like most concepts used in social science, 'issue ownership' is not a natural entity, but a tool to explain empirical phenomena. Therefore, I address the questions of what 'issue ownership' actually is and where it comes from in this chapter. The discussion of these aspects will lead to a theoretical model of how issue ownership perceptions are formed and adapted, which will be the basis for answering my research questions about whether and how such perceptions can be 'biased' by a person's news media consumption.

2.1. The level of issue ownership perceptions

Issue ownership in its original conception is a feature of political parties. A party owning an issue has "a reputation for policy and program interests, produced by a history of attention, initiative, and innovation toward these problems" (Petrocik 1996: p.826). Empirically, such reputation is usually measured by asking survey respondents which party is being most competent in handling an issue, with those parties being considered as issue owners that obtain the highest percentage (e.g., Petrocik 1996: p.831-832; Walgrave & De Swert 2007: p.43-46; Meyer & Müller 2013: p.492-493; Seeberg 2020a: p.1245). However, there is no consistent definition of how large this percentage has to be, so that such an attribution would be justified. In two party systems with a dualistic structure of political competition, identifying an issue owner might be relatively easy, with one party being named by more than 50 percent of respondents. In contrast, when multiple parties compete over an issue, issue ownership might be more contested, with no party possessing a clear advantage over all its competitors (see Walgrave & De Swert 2007: p.43; Bélanger & Meguid 2008: p.482-483).

Despite this lack of a clear definition, issue ownership is used to explain why parties emphasize specific issues in their election campaigns (e.g., Petrocik 1996; Petrocik et al. 2003; Dolezal et al. 2014) or why parties gain or lose electoral support (e.g., Petrocik 1996; Petrocik et al. 2003; Meyer & Müller 2013; Thesen et al. 2017). When looking at such party-level phenomena, issue ownership in the form of aggregated survey responses is the main point of interest: "issue ownership is most relevant to our understanding of […] politics and policy making as an aggregate-level phenomenon. After all, we conceive of parties owning specific issues among electorates rather than among individual voters. It is a party's aggregated net advantage on

'handling' particular issues that is associated with election results and presumably the basis of a candidate's decision to emphasize particular issues in a campaign for office." (Egan 2013: p.80).

However, these aggregated numbers are the sum of individual issue ownership perceptions. When one is interested in where issue ownership comes from, it is necessary to look at these individual perceptions as well as at the factors that might influence them (e.g., Stubager & Slothuss 2013; Walgrave & Soontjens 2019; Craig & Cossette 2020). Furthermore, because of the semantic meaning of the word 'ownership' there can be only one (clear) *owner* for one issue at the aggregate level. On the individual level, in contrast, a broad variety of parties can be perceived by different individuals to *own* a specific issue. Therefore, when issue ownership is used to explain attitudes or political behavior of individuals, it is more reasonable to focus on perceptions rather than on issue ownership at the aggregated level. Individual voters might not know which party is judged by a majority of people to be most competent to handle an issue. Their voting decision is much more likely to be influenced by which party they perceive to be competent (see Green & Hobolt 2008; Lachat 2014; Lanz & Sciarini 2016; Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Walgrave et al. 2012).

To sum up, while *issue ownership* per se is a feature of parties that is recorded at the aggregated level, *issue ownership perceptions* are opinions of people that are measured at the level of individual survey responses. Although both concepts are linked, because one is produced by aggregating the other, they are used to explain different phenomena, or in other words, the same phenomenon from different perspectives (e.g., voting behavior of the electorate versus voting behavior of individuals).

In this master thesis, I'm interested in whether and under what conditions *issue ownership perceptions* are 'biased' by media coverage. Therefore, my analysis will be conducted on the individual level, leaving implications of media bias for *issue ownership* on the aggregate level open to future research.[2]

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[2] An aggregate-level approach on this topic could be to investigate whether the parties ascribed as issue owners differ between the audiences of different media outlets and analyze if such differences correspond with a media outlets coverage of parties and issues. Yet, using such approach would not allow to draw conclusions on whether the issue ownership perceptions of individuals are actually influenced by media coverage, because transferring findings, that are generated on the basis of aggregated data to the individual level risks to produce false conclusions due to ecological fallacy (see Egen 2013: p.83).

2.2. The content of issue ownership perceptions

Apart the question from which perspective the concept of issue ownership is examined, parties or individuals, also its actual meaning is not uniformly defined in the scientific literature: "Scholars seem to agree that issue ownership refers to the connection between issues and parties in voters' minds. Some parties are connected by more voters to an issue than others. But what this 'connection' precisely entails is not entirely clear and has been defined in several ways." (Walgrave et al. 2015: p.780). The original definition of issue ownership by Petrocik in 1996 mentions aspects like 'handling an issue', addressing a party's (perceived) ability of dealing with it, a party's issue priorities shown in form of 'attention' and 'commitment', as well as 'policy and program interests', which refer to a party's positions on these issues (Petrocik 1996: p.826).

Because of the different elements contained in the conception of issue ownership, Walgrave and colleagues have suggested that issue ownership should be treated as a two-dimensional concept (see Walgrave et al. 2012; Walgrave et al. 2015; Lefevere et al. 2016). The first dimension, named *competence issue ownership*, is defined as a person's "belief that a party is best placed to tackle the issue." (Walgrave et al. 2012: p.779). This dimension is similar to the measurements of issue ownership most commonly used in research, asking respondents which party is best in 'dealing with' or 'handling' a specific issue (see Walgrave et al. 2015: p.786). The second dimension, called *associative issue ownership,* addresses "the spontaneous identification of parties with issues in the minds of voters, regardless of whether voters consider the party to be the most competent to deal with these issues" (Walgrave et al. 2012: p.772). While the competence dimension entails a positive valuation of a party, this second dimension does not (see Stubager 2018: p.351). This means that a person can *associate* a party with a specific issue without perceiving this party as most *competent* to deal with it at the same time, and the other way around (see Walgrave et al. 2012: p.776; Lachat 2014: p.729-730). Although both dimensions are moderately correlated, they address different aspects of how individuals perceive the connection between parties and issues (Walgrave et al. 2015: p.790).

But what exactly do these dimensions capture or ask differently: when is a party perceived to be *competent* and what does it mean when a person *associates* a party with an issue? Starting with competence issue ownership, Stubager describes 'competence' as a party's "*capacity to deliver* desired outputs" (Stubager 2018: p.350). From the perspective of an individual, a party is able to do so if it fulfills two criteria: first, the policy position of a party on an issue is to some

degree congruent to the policy position of this individual, so that they approve the policy goals a party tries to achieve. Several studies have shown that policy agreement between voters and parties indeed is a crucial factor for competence issue ownership perceptions (see Stubager & Slothuus 2013; Lefevere et al. 2016; Craig & Cossette 2020; Seeberg 2020a). However, promising to produce the policy outputs a person desires is one thing, but actually doing so is another: "a voter may well agree with the policy position of a given party, but if the party is incompetent (over the long run) at delivering on its policies, it will not be seen as the issue owner" (Stubager 2015: p.350). Therefore, a second criterion for *competence issue ownership* is whether a person believes that a party has the abilities necessary to produce the desired policy output. Such a belief might depend on several factors, like confidence in a party's leading politicians, the (perceived) chances of a party for entering the government and obtaining the relevant portfolios, or a party's performance on the issue in the past (see Stubager & Slothuus 2013; Stubager & Seeberg 2016; Craig & Cossette 2020). If such abilities are judged particularly high, they might even compensate to some extent for a lack of policy agreement. For example, voters who perceive a party as very competent to deal with an issue that is particular important to them are likely to vote for this party, even if they do not fully agree with that party's position on the issue (see Lachat 2014).

The weight both criteria have on *competence issue ownership perceptions* might vary from person to person, but also between different issues (see Green & Hobolt 2008: p.462). Stokes (1963) differentiates between two kinds of issues: 'valence' and 'position' issues. 'Valence' issues are those issues on which parties and voters prefer the same outcome (see Stokes 1963; p.372-373; Egan 2013: p.19-20), like for example reducing unemployment or preventing crime[3]. Because of the lack of positional disagreement between parties and individuals on these issues, judging a party's competence might mainly depend on the perceived ability of this party to deliver. Moreover, since producing such desired outcomes is primarily expected from parties in government, their perceived performance might be weighted especially high when forming or adapting competence issue ownership perceptions (see Petrocik 1996: p.827; Wagner & Zeglovits 2014: p.288). On 'position' issues, on the other hand, parties have different preferences about how to deal with an issue, for example whether and how immigration to a country should be restricted, so that individuals have to decide which party to agree with (see Stokes 1963; p.373). In this case, policy agreement is likely to have a higher weight for a

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[3] Egan (2013) refers to these issues as 'consensus issues'.

person's competence ascription towards a particular party (see Wagner & Zeglovits 2014: p.282-283; Craig & Cossette 2020).

Some scholars even argue that for 'position' issues, issue ownership is merely a reflection of policy agreement (see Egan 2013: p.47), raising concerns about a potential endogeneity of both concepts (e.g., see Walgrave et al. 2015: p.786; Stubager 2018: p.346). Diminishing this concern, Stubager (2018) showed in a question wording experiment that the standard measurement of competence issue ownership[4] is more closely linked to qualification considerations[5] than to policy considerations[6], and that this applies for 'valence' issues as well as for 'position' issues (see Stubager 2018: p.360-362). Furthermore, the strict distinction between both types of issues can be considered as a theoretical simplification: "So-called valence issues may pose some positional differences, and valence or competence judgments will still be relevant to the evaluations of parties on so-called position issues. […] Whether an issue is more valence than positional is an empirical question" (Green & Hobolt 2008: p.462). For example, even if parties agree on the output that should be produced in a specific policy field (e.g., lowering unemployment), they might strongly disagree on the approaches to reach such a goal (e.g., 'cutting aid for the unemployed' versus 'extend training for the unemployed'), and an individual's perception of competence therefore is likely to depend on which of these approaches they prefer (see Stubager & Seeberg 2016: p.164).

The empirical finding that competence issue ownership perceptions are an expression of policy agreement to a large extent is in line with the conceptualization of this dimension. In contrast, this would not be true in case of the associative dimension. This latter is assumed to lack the positive valuation component that is entailed in competence perceptions, so that associating a party with an issue should not depend on whether a person agrees with a party's position on the issue or not. However, empirically such perceptions are indeed more independent from policy agreement than competence perceptions (see Lefevere et al. 2016; Stubager 2018: p.363). Furthermore, compared to competence issue ownership, associative issue ownership is more concentrated within the electorate. This means that the highest percentage of people associating an issue with a specific party is considerably higher than the highest percentage of people perceiving a party as competent to handle the same issue (see Walgrave et al. 2012: p.776; Lachat 2014: p.734; Stubager 2018: p.360). Based on these findings one could argue that

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[4] "Which party is in your opinion best at handling [issue X]?" (Stubager 2018: p.354)
[5] "Which party do you think is best qualified to handle [issue X]?" (Stubager 2018: p.354)
[6] "In your opinion, which party has the best policy on [issue X]?" (Stubager 2018: p.354)

associative issue ownership perceptions are the 'pure' form of party-issue connections in a person's mind, whereas competence issue ownership perceptions are party-issue connections that are 'contaminated' with policy agreement and performance evaluations. By associating a party with an issue, a person acknowledges a party's commitment towards the issue, without judging that party's political stance on it. As a consequence, both dimensions of issue ownership will be more likely to overlap when the positional disagreement between parties on an issue is rather low ('valence issues'), but when there is a high variance of positions on an issue ('positional issues'), both dimensions might be more independent from each other (see Walgrave et al. 2015: p.788-789).

But what meaning do these 'pure' associations have for attitudes and the political behavior of individuals, and therefore why are they an interesting asset for political science research? First and foremost, they might regulate the way people observe and interpret the political process: "Associative issue ownership draws attention to a party when thinking about an issue. Thus, when issues are salient for voters, the party-issue associations draw attention to some parties and not to others, directly linking those parties to the task at hand (voting)." (Walgrave et al. 2012: p.773). In line with this argument, associative issue ownership is found to have a positive effect on the attention a party receives during the election campaign. First, journalists are more likely to include a party in their coverage about a certain topic, if they perceive this party to be the associative issue owner (see Van Camp 2018). Furthermore, voters put more attention towards associative issue owners than to other parties during the election campaign, if the issue a party is associated with is perceived to be important (see Lefevere et al. 2015).

Highlighting the need for a separation of both dimensions of issue ownership, *competence perceptions* and *party-issue associations* are found to affect a person's vote choice in different ways. Competence issue ownership perceptions influence the probability to vote for a party directly (see Green & Hobolt 2008; Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Walgrave et al. 2012; Lachat 2014; Lanz & Sciarini 2016), whereas associative issue ownership perceptions do so only when combined with high issue importance (see Walgrave et al. 2012) or policy agreement (see Lachat 2014). However, similar to the link between policy agreement and competence issue ownership, there are concerns about a potential endogeneity (e.g., Walgrave et al. 2015: p.786; Lanz & Sciarini 2016: p.217; Stubager 2018: p.346). General party preference and party identifications are found to be strong predictors for the parties that are considered to be

competent[7] (Stubager & Slothuus 2013; Walgrave et al. 2014; Lefevere et al. 2016; Vliegenhart & Lefevere 2017; Craig & Cossette 2020) and to a lesser extent also which parties are associated with an issue (see Lefevere et al. 2016; Walgrave & Soontjens 2019). Therefore, people tend to perceive and report issue ownership perceptions in a way that aligns with their general feeling towards a party.

Despite this strong link, both concepts are by no means identical and there are many cases where the perceived issue owner is not the party that is preferred in general (see Bélanger & Meguid 2008: p.482-483; Meyer & Müller 2013: p.487). In case of associative issue ownership perceptions, Walgrave and Soontjens (2019) found that the correlation with party preference is stronger, when people lack the information necessary to form such perceptions in the first place: "As a party is less mentioned in the news with regard to an issue, the impact of the partisan heuristic is stronger. So, the less information voters have about parties' actual attention to issues, the more they fill in the blanks by using their party preference as a shortcut." (Walgrave/Soontjens 2019: p.142). A similar mechanism might be at work in context of competence issue ownership perceptions. When people do not know enough about a party's position or a party's abilities to handle a specific issue, they might just infer the judgment about a party's competence from their general feelings towards this party. Or the other way around, when a person lacks a clear preference about an issue, they might just adopt the issue position of their preferred party and with that also a positive evaluation of this party's competence on the issue.

A potential endogeneity of issue ownership perceptions with party preferences and policy agreement might face a serious challenge when examining the influence of these perceptions on vote choice. However, such concerns are less problematic when issue ownership perceptions themselves are the matter of interest, as is the case in this master thesis. On the contrary, investigating how media coverage of parties and issues influences issue ownership perceptions might even contribute to dismantle such endogeneity concerns, by showing that these perceptions are not entirely dominated by party preference or policy agreement. However, in doing so, the strong relationship between party preferences, policy agreement and issue

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[7] Vliegenhart and Lefevere (2017) even found that the effect of party preference on competence issue ownership perceptions is stronger than the other way around. However, when controlling for previous party preference (t-1), competence ownership perceptions still exert an independent and significant effect, which indicates that they are more than a pure reflection of party preferences.

ownership perceptions has to be accounted for when searching for other sources of such perceptions.

Based on the literature review in this section, issue ownership will be treated hereinafter as a two-dimensional concept. Competence issue ownership is about whether a person agrees with a party's policies on an issue and beliefs that the party possesses the abilities to realize these policies. Associative issue ownership, on the other hand, is about whether a person perceives that a party is strongly committed and truly concerned to deal with an issue, so that it automatically comes to mind when thinking about it. In this sense, it addresses a party's credibility in dealing with an issue (see Lefevere et al. 2015: p.891). Both perceptions are important for a person's attitudes towards a party and in the end also for that person's political behavior (i.e., vote decision), albeit in different ways and to a different extent. And both perceptions might also be influenced by different sources or the same sources in different ways and to a different extent.

2.3. The stability of issue ownership perceptions

An important aspect of the conceptualization of issue ownership is its degree of stability. As issue ownership was originally developed within the context of the American two-party-system, issues where perceived as belonging to one of the two main parties and therefore could be either labeled as 'Democratic' or 'Republican' (see Petrocik 1996: p.831-832; Petrocik et al. 2003: p.606; Egan 2013: p.69-72). Although a change in the ownership of an issue from one party to the other was not ruled out, especially when it comes to issues like the economy, that are linked to an incumbent's performance (see Petrocik 1996: p.827), such changes were perceived as exceptions rather than as rule. Overall, issue ownership was considered to be rather stable in the long-run (Petrocik al. 2003: p.603-604). Such pattern of party-level stability of issue ownership can be also observed for European multiparty systems (see Seeberg 2017; Thesen et al. 2017: p.287; Stubager 2018: p.357-560) [8]. However, while the parties that own an issue might rarely change, there is a considerable extent of fluctuation in the percentages issue ownership is derived from (see Meyer & Müller 2013: p.492-494). This indicates that a party's issue ownership is contested and that the advantage over its competitors on the owned issue is far off from being fixed. Furthermore, the degree of stability that is found at the party-level

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[8] Seeberg (2017), as well as Thesen et al. (2017) investigate the stability of aggregated issue ownership preconceptions by looking at issue ownership switches between party-blocs (left versus right). Thus, stability might be lower when also accounting for within bloc changes of issue ownership (see Seeberg 2017: p.488).

depends on how strictly issue ownership is defined, for example the timespan a party must be in lead on an issue, before it is considered to own it (see Christensen et al. 2014: p.145-146).

Even if issue ownership is a highly stable phenomenon at the party-level, this tells us little about the stability of individual issue ownership perceptions. Changes of these perceptions might cancel each other out. For example, when one person is changing its competence perception from party A to party B, while another person changes from party B to party A, the dynamic of individual issue ownership perceptions is observed as stability when looking at the issue ownership of parties (see Walgrave & Lefevere 2017: p.494). This notion is supported by empirical evidence, with studies finding a considerably lower stability of issue ownership at the individual level compared to the aggregated level (see Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014: p.234; Lanz & Sciarini 2016: p.220-221; Walgrave & Lefevere 2017: p.494). Moreover, individual changes of issue ownership perceptions are actually quite common, over the long run[9] (see Walgrave & Lefevere 2017: p.494), as well within a single election campaign[10] (see Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014: p.234; Lanz & Sciarini 2016: p.220-221).

The lower degree of stability compared to the aggregate level is found for *associative* (see Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014; Walgrave & Lefevere 2017) and *competence* issue ownership perceptions alike (see Lanz & Sciarini 2016). Nevertheless, both dimensions differ themselves in their degree of stability, with associative perceptions being more stable than competence perceptions (see Tresch & Feddersen 2019: p.403). This finding is not surprising, due to the different content of both dimensions. While associative perceptions only change when the party-issue connection in a person's mind change, competence perceptions might change either because of a growing policy disagreement between a person and a party, or because of a decreasing belief in a party's ability to deliver the desired policy output. Especially this last point is likely to be influenced by short-term dynamics, like the evaluation of a party's recent performance or a change of party leadership. Furthermore, the stability of both dimensions might also vary between different issues (see Walgrave & Lefevere 2017: p.495; Stubager 2018: p.362-363).

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[9] Walgrave and Lefevere (2017) found for Belgium that more than 50% of respondents changed their associative issue ownership perceptions between 2009 and 2014 (see Walgrave & Lefevere 2017: p.494).

[10] Lanz and Sciarini (2016) found that about 25% of respondents have changed their competence issue ownership perceptions between the two waves of a Pre- and Post-Panel-Election-Study in Switzerland 2011 (see Lanz & Sciarini 2016: p.220-221).

Despite the empirical finding that issue ownership perceptions are relatively dynamic, some authors perceive stability as a necessary component in the conceptualization of issue ownership (see Egan 2013: p.156; Stubager 2018: p.349). For example, Stubager (2018) suggests that the standard question used to capture competence issue ownership perceptions should be replaced by a version that puts special emphasis on a person's long-term considerations[11] (Stubager 2018: p.367). However, such measurement would reduce the applicability of issue ownership to traditional parties, as well as to established issues. It rules out the possibility of younger parties to be perceived as issue owner and it is not suited to capture ownership over new emerging issues, because parties would not have had enough time to build up long-standing reputations. Moreover, for younger persons that lack knowledge about parties' past priorities and performances, it would be impossible to derive their issue ownership perceptions from long-term considerations, making the validity of such measurement dependent on a person's age or level of political knowledge. Finally, such measurement would be less useful in explaining political behavior. While issue ownership in form of long-standing perceptions would be less prone to endogeneity with policy agreement or party identification (see Stubager 2018: p.363-364), a person's vote choice is more likely to be influenced by the perception of a party's more recent competence or commitment towards an issue, which would be not captured by such measurement.

Overall, the stability of issue ownership perceptions is likely to vary from person to person, depending for example on attitudinal predispositions, but also between different issues or between different political contexts (e.g., depending on the number of relevant political parties in a country) (see Walgrave et al. 2009: p.155). Defining issue ownership perceptions *a priori* as a stable political attitude may obscure such important differences. Furthermore, the stability of issue ownership perceptions is probably related to the stability of its sources: when the information coming from these sources changes frequently, then so will the perceptions that are influenced by this information. In contrast, when the information coming from these sources stays fairly stable, there is no reason for persons to alter their preexisting issue ownership perceptions, leading to stability. Which sources form and influence issue ownership perceptions is an empirical, not at theoretical question (see Stubager 2015: p.349). Therefore, the question of whether issue ownership perceptions are stable or not, should be answered empirically (see Seeberg 2017: p.478).

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[11] "If you disregard the current situation and look, instead, at the last 30-40 years which party is then in your opinion best at handling [issue X]?" (Stubager 2018: p.354)

2.4. The sources of issue ownership perceptions

As stated at the end of the last section, identifying the sources that issue ownership perceptions stem from is an empirical rather than a theoretical task (see Stubager 2015: p.349). In this section I will give a comprehensive overview of potential sources and their characteristics, leading to a model of how issue ownership perceptions can be formed and adapted. This model includes three main components: (1) information, (2) transmitters and (3) recipients.

2.4.1. Information about party-issue connections

As elaborated in previous sections of this master thesis, issue ownership perceptions are party-issue connections in a person's mind, either about a party's *competence* or its *commitment* on an issue. To be able to make such connections people need information.

The first sort of information that might be useful in this regard is which issues parties prioritize and which positions they take on these issues (see Petrocik 1996: p.826; Walgrave & De Swert 2007: p.47; Walgrave et al. 2009: p.160; Tresch et al. 2015: p.202; Dahlberg & Martinsson 2015: p.824). Furthermore, people might base their issue ownership perceptions on information about whether a party is responsible for dealing with an issue, for example when it heads a ministry that is in charge of the issue at hand (see Walgrave & De Swert 2007: p.54-55; Walgrave & Lefevere 2017: p.488-489; Van Camp 2018: p.31-32) and whether the party has performed good or bad in dealing with the issue (see Petrocik 1996: p.827; Stubager & Slothuss 2013: p.579; Stubager & Seeberg 2016: p.168; Seeberg 2020b: p.775). Finally, people might infer a party-issue connection from a party's reputation to represent specific groups within society (constituencies) and the political interests and preferences that are linked to these groups (e.g., workers need for jobs and good payment) (see Petrocik 1996: p.827; Stubager & Slothuss 2013: p.582-583; Stubager & Seeberg 2016: p.168). All of these kinds of information can play a different role in forming either associative or competence issue ownership perceptions. While 'pure' associations between parties and issues might derive mainly from parties' issue priorities and its constituency links, information about parties' issue positions and performances might be used more often when deciding whether to ascribe competence to a party or not. Information about a party's responsibility for an issue (e.g., in form of a ministerial portfolio) is likely to be relevant for both perceptions, because at the one hand it is a marker of a party's priority for an issue, and on the other, it enables people to judge a party's performance.

In addition to the diversity regarding the different kinds of information that can link parties with issues, there is a temporal diversity of such information. Since issue ownership is characterized as a form of 'reputation' (see Petrocik 1996: p.826), not only a party's recent issue priorities or its recent performance on an issue might be considered by a person when forming or adapting issue ownership perceptions, but also the knowledge and information they acquire about parties' past priorities (see Walgrave & De Swert 2007: p.54) and performances. However, for competence issue ownership perceptions information about recent aspects are likely to outweigh information about historical aspects (see Stubager 2018: p.361). Whether a party is believed to deliver a desired policy output will primarily depend on whether the party's recent position on an issue is approved by a person and whether the party is perceived to currently possess the abilities to implement this position. The goals a party wanted to achieve in the past and whether it was actually able to do so, should only play a minor role for current competence perceptions, even more when the party is judged differently regarding these aspects in the present. For associative issue ownership on the other hand, historical information might be more relevant. For example, the longer the timespan a party has prioritized an issue, the more likely it is that this connection has been established in a person's mind, especially for persons that have received information about this connection continuously (see Tresch et al. 2015: p.201). Nevertheless, if a party would totally abandon an issue that was important for it in the past, so that no recent information to affirm this connection is provided any longer, even such long-standing connections would be likely to fade away after a while.

2.4.2. Transmitters of information about party-issue connections

Above I have presented the potential kinds of information that can link a party to an issue. However, such information does not suddenly pop up in a person's mind and for most people it is hard or even impossible to observe such information directly. The information has to come from somewhere else, from so called 'transmitters': "citizens in large societies are dependent on unseen and usually unknown others for most of their information about the larger world in which they live" (Zaller 1992: p.6).

The first potential transmitters are parties themselves. By communicating about issues, for example in their election manifestos or in public speeches, parties can convey all kinds of information about their connection to an issue, like which issues they care about, what positions they take on these issues, promoting their own performance on an issue or blaming an opponent for a bad performance, and underlining their bond to specific social groups (see Stubager &

Seeberg 2016: p.163-164; Seeberg 2020b: p.775-776). In this way, parties can affect issue ownership perceptions of people who are exposed to this kind of communication[12] (see Walgrave & De Swert 2007; Walgrave et al. 2009; Walgrave et al. 2014; Tresch et al. 2015; Dahlberg & Martinsson 2015; Stubager & Seeberg 2016; Seeberg 2020b).

However, parties are not the only source that can provide such information and most of the time people are not directly exposed to or actively seek to consume party communication. Although it is possible to attend to party events and listen to speeches of politicians, visit a party website or follow politicians on social media, most people do neither of these things, or at least not frequently. Instead, they rely on news media to get this kind of political information: "media have become the main intermediary between parties and voters. […] In postindustrial democracies, issue ownership, just like any other piece of political information, is conveyed to the voter via the mass media. […] it is (only) via the mass media that speeches and advertisements are relayed to the public. Even party programs are not directly communicated to the public at large but only via media coverage, as the average voter does not read party programs." (Walgrave & De Swert 2007: p.39).

When reporting about parties in context of specific issues, media professionals can rely on official party communication activities, for example in form of press releases or press conferences. However, most of the time they do not simply pass through such information to their audience. They critically evaluate this information and reach out to experts and other sources to get additional insights on a topic. Furthermore, because of their recourses and expertise, journalists are more capable compared to ordinary citizens to assess more directly the information that is relevant for party-issue connections. For example, they can evaluate a government party's performance on an issue based on the legislation and the outputs produced: "While voters may directly feel the impact of high inflation rates, they may never personally experience the rise of unemployment or crime rates. When considering such issues, voters may not know about the incumbent government's poor performance—unless they hear about it from their discussion networks or from the media." (Tresch & Feddersen 2019: p.397). As a consequence, the information generated by political actors with the aim to reach out to the public is not fully congruent with the information transmitted to people via media coverage.

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[12] While party communication is found to be less effective in case of associative issue ownership perceptions compared to competence perceptions, parties are still able to reinforce their perceived connection with an 'owned' issue by communicating about it, at least when their advantage over other parities on the issue was only moderately (see Walgrave et al. 2014: p.204-206).

However, this coverage is likely to affect the issue ownership perceptions of the people exposed to it (see Walgrave & De Swert 2007; De Bruycker & Walgrave 2014; Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014; Walgrave & Lefevere 2017; Tresch & Feddersen 2019; Walgrave & Soontjens 2019), making media as transmitter of information to an important factor within this communication process.

Finally, people might get information about party-issue connections from their personal surroundings, for example when engaging in political discussions with family, friends or colleagues (see Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014). These sources are particularly close to a person and therefore the information provided by them, as well as their views on this information, should be valued very high when a person is forming or adapting their issue ownership perceptions. Nevertheless, also these persons normally do not obtain political information directly but rely on party communication activities or, more often, media coverage themselves (see Zaller 1992: p.6). Therefore, information received through political discussion is largely affected by the (potentially different) media outlets that another person consumed and how they formed their opinion based on the information they received: "Even when we learn from friends or family members about some aspects of public affairs, often we may still be secondhand consumers of ideas that originated more distantly among some type of elite." (Zaller 1992: p.6).

2.4.3. Reception of information about party-issue connections

Information being transmitted to individuals is just the first step for the formation or adaptation of issue ownership perceptions. In a second step, people need to process the received information, and the consequence of this processing depends on a person's individual predispositions: "Every opinion is a marriage of information and predisposition: information to form a mental picture of the given issue, and predisposition to motivate some conclusion about it." (Zaller 1992: p.6). In context of issue ownership, such predispositions are for example whether a person has already formed such perceptions or not, which issues they perceive to be important, what policies they prefer on an issue, their general feelings about the different parties, their political interest and knowledge, as well as their trust towards the transmitters of information (parties, media and discussion partners)[13].

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[13] These predispositions will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, when forming specific hypotheses about how they moderate the effect of media coverage on issue ownership perceptions.

2.4.4. The flow of information about party-issue connections

Figure 1 illustrates the flow of information about party-issue connections. It consists of the three components that have been discussed in detail in this section: (1) information about party-issue connections, (2) the transmitters of this information (party communication, media coverage and interpersonal discussion) and (3) individuals (with their potential predispositions) as the final recipients of this information. The solid arrows indicate how accessible information about party-issue connections is for each of the three different transmitters, with shorter and thicker arrows indicating higher accessibility. The dashed arrows visualize the (biased) information provided by each transmitter and that is either received by individuals or another transmitter. Again, the length and thickness of the arrows indicate the accessibility of the provided information for a particular recipient. For example, while information coming from personal discussion partners is highly accessible for an individual, the accessibility of the actual information about party-issue connections for this transmitter is rather low. As a consequence, it is more likely that discussion partners received their information through media coverage. On the other side, parties can provide information about their connection to issues first-hand through their own communication activities. However, most of this communication is not accessed by people directly, but only when it is transmitted via media coverage and interpersonal discussion. In this sense, media can be considered as an intermediate transmitter, because the information it provides is more accessible for individuals than direct party communication, while its accessibility of the original information about party-issue connections is higher than those of interpersonal discussion partners. Thus, media can both help individuals to bridge the distance to the original information or help parties to bridge the distance to the individual recipients[14].

However, none of the three transmitters does simply pass through all the information available to them. Instead, they select specific aspects from a great pool of information about party-issue connections, so that the "information that reaches the public is never a full record […]. It is, rather, a highly selective and stereotyped view of what has taken place" (Zaller 1992: p.7). This selection process is guided by considerations and interests that are specific to each type of transmitter. For example, parties are likely to select only information that is advantageous to them or information that is disadvantageous to their opponents. Media outlets may choose

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[14] Social media might be another way for parties to bridge the distance to the recipients (see e.g., Graham et al. 2013; Skovsgaard & Van Dalen 2013). However, I do not consider social media as a separate 'transmitter' of information, but as a specific tool of party communication to bypass traditional media and spread-out information about their connection to specific issues more directly. Therefore, party communication via social media will be included in the empirical analysis of this master thesis as a control variable.

information based on their 'news value', but also information that fit with a media outlets general editorial stance[15]. And discussion partners are more likely to transmit information to others that affirm their own opinions and attitudes. As a consequence, the overall picture people obtain about party-issue connections is 'biased' to some degree, regardless where exactly the information is coming from. Since the focus of this master thesis is on the information people receive through media coverage and whether this affects their issue ownership perceptions, the notion of media bias will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

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[15] In Austria, this is called 'Blattline', describing a newspapers general ideological orientation, which is officially issued in a newspaper's imprint.

Figure 1: The flow of information about party-issue connections

Transmitter of information

Information about party-issue connections:

Party's priority on an issue (recent/historical)

Party's position on an issue (recent/historical)

Party's performance on an issue (recent/historical)

Party's responsibility for an issue (recent/historical)

Constituency link to an issue (recent/historical)

Party Communication

Media Coverage

Interpersonal Discussion

Recipients of information with individual predispositions:

(Preexisting issue ownership perceptions)

Issue priorities

Issue positions

Party preferences

Political sophistication

Trust in parties/ media/ discussion partners

…

Legend:
Observation of original information by a transmitter
Reception of (biased) information by a recipient

3. Media bias on issue ownership perceptions

In the previous chapter, I have presented a model of how information about party-issue connections is transmitted to individuals via party communication, media coverage or interpersonal discussion (see Figure 1). Media coverage was identified as a particular important transmitter, because it has better access to the relevant information than individual discussion partners and can more easily reach out to a broad public than direct party communication. Therefore, media is best suited to bridge the distance between individual recipients and the information used to form and adapt issue ownership perceptions. However, like the other transmitters, media only provide a selected sample of available information, so that recipients get a 'biased' picture about the connection between parties and issues.

In this chapter, I will discuss the notion of 'media bias' in more detail: how can it be defined, what does it stem from and how might it affect issue ownership perceptions, leading to a first set of hypotheses. Thereafter, I will turn to the reception side and discuss how a person's individual predispositions might limit or enhance the susceptibility towards media bias.

3.1. What is 'media bias' and what does it result from?

In order to define what 'media bias' actually is, it is necessary to reflect on the function of media within a society and its relationship to the political sphere in particular. In democracies, people are supposed to choose those parties or politicians that are best suited to represent their interests and preferences. To be able to do so properly, people need to know what the different political actors stand for, what they plan to do when in office or what they have done in the past, so that voters can hold them accountable for their decisions. Providing such information is a main function of media: "The political effect of the idealised normative role of mass media is to enable an informed, meaningful, unprejudiced choice by the electorate. The notion of bias implies a deviation from the informative media function, which may result in a distorting effect on political attitudes and outcomes." (Brandenburg 2005: p.299).

Fulfilling this normative role as a provider of 'unbiased' political information is not that simple. Given the bulk of potential information about politics, media outlets have to screen all information available to them and only select some pieces that will be presented to their audience. By doing so, they make judgments about what is relevant and interesting for people

to know and what is not. In this sense they act as a 'gatekeeper' of the public's political agenda (see D'Alessio & Allen 2000: p.135; Haselmayer et al. 2017: p.371-372).

Moreover, media outlets shape the news content beyond this selection of particular political information, by engaging with the selected information and its sources. For example, political actors try to influence media coverage to their own advance (see Hopmann et al. 2012: p.175; Eberl et al. 2018: p.782), so that journalists and editors have to reflect carefully and critically on the statements of politicians and putting them into a broader political context when including them in their news reports. By doing so, journalists might question the credibility or validity of such statements. Furthermore, journalists are supposed to look behind the scene of politics to uncover patterns of political misconduct and other mechanisms that might undermine the democratic process. This is likely to result in negative coverage of the political actors involved (see Patterson & Donsbach 1996: p.460). However, such forms of criticism are in line with the normative role expected from media in a democracy. If media outlets would just pass on the information received from political actors or allow politicians to conceal political scandals, they would be nothing else than tools for political propaganda.

At the same time, the normative expectation towards media outlets in a democratic system is to be politically 'neutral' and 'objective', in the sense that they do not advocate for particular political actors or intentionally promote the electoral prospects of these actors through a favorable news coverage (see Patterson & Donsbach 1996: p.460; Bennett 1996: p.375). In practice, such 'neutrality' is for example achieved by strictly separating segments within newspapers where factual information is presented to the readership, and segments where editors or journalist comment on political developments from their own perspective, the so called 'Wall of Separation' (see Kahn & Kenney 2002: p.381). However, even when simply presenting 'factual' news, journalist might highlight a specific perspective on a political matter or mainly focus on some aspects of it, while neglecting others: "No serious media analyst would argue that journalism anywhere in the worlds is literally neutral. […] even where journalists may be sincerely committed to a professional ideology of 'objectivity,' news incorporates political values, which arise from a range of influences, from routines of information gathering to recruitment patterns of journalists and shared ideological assumptions of the wider society." (Hallin & Mancini 2004: p.26)

Because it is unrealistic to demand that each news story with political content should be entirely isolated from a journalist's own political values and personal judgments, the keyword in the discission about media bias is *balance*. In this context, balance means that political coverage "is not strongly slanted in favor of or against any political side. All sides should be equally represented according to some kind of benchmark for balance or neutrality. Conversely, in this view, bias is the extent to which media reporting deviates from this benchmark." (Eberl et al. 2017b: p.1127). However, such 'balance' can be achieved in two different ways, or in other words, on two different levels (see Hallin & Mancini 2004: p.29-30)[16]. On the one hand, one can look at individual media outlets and examine whether their coverage fit the criteria for 'balance' or not. On the other hand, the media system can be perceived as a whole. On this level, political balance is also achieved when different media outlets favor different parties, so that potential political tendencies of individual media outlets compensate each other. From a democratic perspective, finding such form of 'balance' might be sufficient to overcome concerns or accusations about a general political partiality of the media system[17] (see D'Alessio & Allen 2000; Adkins Covert & Wasburn 2007), because overall there is a full representation of the different political views that exist within a society. Nevertheless, in such a situation most people would still be exposed to an 'unbalanced' and therefore 'biased' media coverage of political actors on an individual level, because they are likely to receive their information from only one or a few media outlets and these outlets might be biased in one particular direction (see Dalton et al. 1998: p.117-118).

Regardless on which level 'balance' is examined, the benchmark used to judge political coverage in this respect is not that straightforward either. From a theoretical, democratic perspective, an equal coverage of all political actors seems to be appropriate, so that all competitors for political power have the same chances to reach out to the public and present their priorities and political positions. While in two-party-systems such a normative benchmark for 'balance' might be applicable, with expecting both of the main parties and their candidates to be covered by the media to an almost equal extent (see D'Alessio & Allen 2000: p.137-138; Hopmann et al. 2011a: p.250), an equal treatment of political parties by the media is rather unlikely in multiparty systems. There are structural factors why some political actors (should) receive more coverage than others: "Requiring equal amounts of media coverage for each

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[16] Hallin and Mancini (2004) refer to these different levels of balance with the terms 'external' and 'internal' pluralism.
[17] Such concerns are particularly strong in the USA, with liberals and conservatives each perceiving 'the media' to be slanted towards the other political side (see D'Alessio & Allen 2000: p.134; Dalton et al. 1998: p.120-121).

political party would ignore the differences between parties that have different electoral sizes and play different roles within a political system. Allocating equal amounts of media coverage to all parties ignores these differences. Hence, the question is how political balance in news coverage can be defined in countries with complex party systems." (Hopmann et al. 2011a: p.243).

The reasons why structural differences between political actors translate into differences in political coverage lie in the criteria media professionals use to decide what to report about ('news values'). For example, prominent and powerful political actors are assessed to be more newsworthy, so that parties in government (see Brandenburg 2005: p.304; Hopmann et al. 2011b: p.272-273) or high-ranked politicians like ministers (see Van Aelst et al. 2008) receive more coverage than others. Furthermore, characteristics of party and media system might manifest themselves in specific forms of coverage and journalistic styles, in some countries for example by a stronger tendency of media to report about politics as a strategic game rather than as a competition along policy issues (see Strömbäck & Shehata 2007: p.799-801). This form of coverage might be more advantageous for some political actors than for others. Finally, as has been discussed earlier, media outlets rely also on parties' own communication activities when reporting about politics. Parties that communicate more about certain topics are more likely to be present in media's coverage of these topics (see Hopmann et al. 2012) and party communication activities that match certain 'news values' (e.g., 'conflict' or 'surprise') are more successful in being incorporated in the news (see Haselmayer et al. 2017). Therefore, media coverage of politics will to a certain extent reflect the patterns of party communication.

The mechanisms outlined above can be labeled as 'structural bias'. Thereby, the deviation from the normative ideal of equal coverage is caused by "journalistic norms with regards to their interaction with the processes and circumstances of news production" (see Strömbäck & Shehata 2007: p.799). However, political coverage is not entirely dominated by such forms of bias. If that were the case, media outlets would hardly differ in the political content they provide, because the structures of party and media system they face, as well as the communication activities of parties they can rely on, are identical for all. Instead, editors and journalist are also able to make content decisions that are not predetermined by general norms or guidelines of news production: "the rules that structure patterns of news content are not so binding that they remove room for personal judgment. Some personal coloring of the news may come through the introduction of ideological judgments at the margins of the dominant rule

system. [...] It makes sense to think that in any news system, underlying norms and practical rules establish broad constrains on patterns of content, while ideological shading reflects journalists' personal contact with their stories." (Bennett 1996: p.380-381).

When a media outlet's political coverage deviates from a 'balanced' treatment of political actors not because of structural factors, such deviation can be considered as 'partisan bias' (see Strömbäck & Shehata 2007: p.799). There are three different sources that contribute to this form of bias: First, journalists' and editors' individual news decisions are to some extent affected by their own political and ideological attitudes (see Patterson & Donsbach 1996)[18]. Second, political endorsements of newspapers, for example published in editorial comments or opinion pages, might cross over the 'Wall of Separation' and influence the treatment of political actors in daily news coverage (see Kahn & Kenney 2002)[19]. And third, journalists and editors take the political preferences of their audience into account, for example when deciding which political statements to select from party communication (see Haselmayer et al. 2017). All of these mechanisms might result in a coverage that is more favorable to some political parties than to others, independent from these parties' electoral size or their role as a government party. And even if such 'imbalance' is only minor, it is likely to affect the political orientations of news consumers, especially when exposed to it over a longer period of time.

Based on the discussion in this section, 'media bias' will be considered hereinafter as the *deviation from the normative-democratic benchmark* (equal coverage of all political actors) *that cannot be traced back to structural reasons of deviation or to deviations due to differences in party communication*. In other words, 'media bias' is interpreted as only that (extent of) bias that results from journalists' or editors' individual news decisions ('partisan bias') and not from general patterns of political news coverage that are identical across all media outlets ('structural bias'). Furthermore, because I am interested in the media's role in shaping a person's issue ownership perceptions, I will approach the concept of 'media bias' form an individual's perspective. This means, that I am neither interested in whether the political coverage in specific media outlets is 'biased', nor whether there is an overall 'bias' in favor of particular parties at

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[18] Based on a quasi-experimental test within a journalist-survey in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Sweden and the United States, Patterson and Donsbach (1996) found that the judgment about a story's newsworthiness, as well as decisions about headlines and news content are influenced by a journalist ideological self-assessment and opinions about policy issues.

[19] Official endorsements of political actors are more common in the USA than they are for example in Austria (see Eberl et al. 2017b: p.1131). However, also Austrian newspapers have a general ideological orientation ('Blattlinie') and even if such form of political endorsement might be more subtle, it still can be expected to influence a newspaper's political coverage.

the media system level. Instead, I focus on the overall (biased) picture people receive through their news consumption (e.g., from multiple media outlets) about the connection of parties to specific issues and how this picture affects that person's issue ownership perceptions.

3.2. How 'media bias' might affect issue ownership perceptions

As has been established in section 2.4., people need information about the connection between parties and issues in order to form or adapt issue ownership perceptions. But just as the transmitters (party communication, media coverage, interpersonal discussion) only provide a selected sample of such information, people themselves are only able to observe and memorize a small sample of the information they receive: "people do not pay attention to everything. To do so would breed paralysis. Attention is highly selective" (Iyengar & Kinder 1987: p.64). When thinking about what parties they associate with a particular issue or which party they perceive to be most competent in dealing with an issue, people do not "undertake[] exhaustive analysis, [but] ordinarily prefer heuristics—intuitive shortcuts and simple rules of thumb. One such heuristic is reliance upon information that is most *accessible*." (ibid.). Thus, when people are asked to report their issue ownership perceptions, they will answer based on "considerations that happen to be at the 'top of the head' at the moment of response." (Zaller 1992: p.36)

Media Coverage, as visualized in Figure 1, plays a central role for what information people receive about politics, and thus for which information will be 'most accessible' for people, or in other words, what information will be 'at the top of their heads'. Through this 'priming' effect, media influences the way people think about politics and in the end the political decisions they come to: "*By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, [...] news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, policies, and candidates for public office are judged.*" (Iyengar & Kinder 1987: p.63). Yet, people receive different and unbalanced information about parties and issues because of (partisan) 'media bias' (as defined in the previous section) entailed in the media outlets they consume.

In the scientific literature, 'media bias' is usually considered in three different forms: First, '*visibility bias*' refers to "the extent to which some media outlets devote disproportionally more coverage to some actors than other outlets do." (Eberl et al. 2017b: p.1128). Second, 'tonality bias' is about "whether evaluations present in media coverage are systematically more

favorable to one political party compared to other parties." (ibid.) [20]. And third, 'agenda bias' addresses "the extent to which political actors appear in the public domain in conjunction with the topics they wish to emphasize." (ibid.). These different forms of media bias are for instance found to affect the perception and approval of political candidates (see Dalton et al. 1998; Kahn & Kenney 2002; Druckman & Parkin 2005; Eberl et al. 2017a), as well as party preferences and vote decisions (see Druckman & Parkin 2005; Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007; Hopmann et al. 2010; Eberl et al. 2017b; Johann et al. 2018)

However, the visibility of and the tonality towards a party does not only vary between the coverage of different media outlets, it can also vary between the coverage of different issues within an individual media outlet. For example, while party A might be more often and more positively covered than party B when a media outlet is reporting about topic Y, party B might be more visible and more favorable covered when the same media outlet is reporting about topic Z. So even if the overall news coverage of parties would be balanced, looking at specific issues could reveal a different picture, with a more uneven distribution of party presence and evaluation in connection to specific issues. Such differences are very likely, because journalists rely themselves on issue ownership perceptions when deciding which parties or politicians to include in a story about a certain topic (see Van Camp 2018) and parties are more likely to receive positive coverage in news reports about issues they own (see Hayes 2008). Therefore, when looking at the effect of media bias on issue ownership perceptions, only a party's visibility and the tonality towards the party in a media outlet's issue-specific coverage is of interest, not that party's visibility or tonality in the overall coverage.

When looking at issue-specific media coverage, 'visibility bias' and 'agenda bias' are two sides of the same coin. If a party's issue-specific visibility is higher or lower than it should be according to that party's own emphasis on the issue, or according to structural differences between parties, such deviation from an equal treatment can be considered as an issue-specific 'visibility bias'. At the same time, the deviation can be interpreted as an 'agenda bias', since that party would not be linked with the issue to the extent it would prefer. This difference between a party's own issue agenda and its issue-specific coverage is likely to have consequences for the issue ownership perceptions of a media outlet's audience: "Agenda distortions in media coverage may lead to misperceptions in the electorate about what the party

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[20] D'Alessio and Allen (2000) and Brandenburg (2005) use the terms 'coverage bias' (visbility) and 'statement bias' (tonality) to describe these different forms of media bias.

in question stands for and proposes, which may affect evaluations" (Brandenburg 2005: p.300). In contrast to that, if the visibility of the different parties in a media outlet's issue-specific coverage perfectly match the differences between parties in how much emphasis they put on this topic themselves, then a bias would not exist at all. In such a case, the media outlet would just 'neutrally' reflect the parties' own issue agendas.

The mechanism of how 'visibility bias' and 'agenda bias' in issue-specific news coverage affect issue ownership perceptions is similar to the priming mechanism outlined at the beginning of this section: "When the media choose to select a specific party when reporting about an issue, they establish a connection in the mind of the media consumer between that issue and the mentioned party. […] When an issue comes to mind, voters then automatically think about a certain political party and vice versa." (De Bruycker & Walgrave 2014: p.87). However, while this mechanism is rather straightforward when it comes to the 'pure' connection between parties and issues (*associative issue ownership*), it is less clear in case of *competence issue ownership*. Competence issue ownership is the perception that a party is in the best position to deliver a desired policy output (see Stubager 2018: p.350 and chapter 2.2). Therefore, just being mentioned in connection with specific issues in the media is not enough for a party to be considered as most competent. However, in order to decide whether a party is able to deliver a desired policy output, people need information about a party's policy positions, to see whether they agree with it or not, and information that help to judge a party's abilities (e.g., a party's past performance on the issue). So even if a party's issue-specific visibility alone is insufficient as a source for a person's perception of competence issue ownership, it should be a necessary precondition. Without any information about a party's connection to an issue, a person might not even consider that party when thinking about who is most competent in dealing with this issue. Therefore, a party's issue-specific visibility is expected to influence associative and competence issue ownership perceptions alike:

Hypothesis 1 (visibility/agenda bias): *The more visible a party is in the issue-specific news coverage a person is exposed to, the more likely this person will associate the party with the issue* (H1a*) and consider the party to be most competent to deal with it* (H1b).

Some empirical evidence supporting this claim has already been provided, with several studies finding that a higher visibility of parties in issue-specific media coverage increases the probability that a party is perceived as associative (see Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014; De

Bruycker & Walgrave 2014; Tresch & Feddersen 2019; Walgrave & Soontjens 2019) or competence owner of the issue (see Walgrave & De Swert 2007; Tresch & Feddersen 2019). Contrary to that, there are hardly any empirical studies that address whether the tonality of issue-specific news coverage affects issue ownership perceptions. Only Seeberg (2020b) showed in a survey experiment that when parties blame another party for a bad performance on an issue in the news, this reduces the probability that the attacked party is perceived as competence owner of the issue. However, this study only explored the effect of party communication (transmitted by the news), not the effect of tonality in overall news coverage.

The mechanism of how 'tonality bias' should affect issue ownership perceptions is similar to those of 'visibility bias'. For example, when a party receives negative coverage in connection to an issue (e.g., criticism about its issue position; criticism about its bad performance; criticism about its lack of attention regarding the issue), negative considerations about that party's ability to handle the issue should be primed in the mind of news consumers[21]. However, since associative issue ownership perceptions lack the evaluative component (see chapter 2.2.), the tonality towards a party in issue-specific news coverage should only affect competence issue ownership perceptions. In other words, whether a party is simply associated with an issue is not expected to depend on whether it is criticized or praised in the news. All forms of news coverage that link a party with an issue should strengthen associative issue ownership perceptions, making 'tonality bias' ineffective for this dimension of issue ownership:

Hypothesis 2 (tonality bias): *The more positive a party is portrayed in the issue-specific news coverage a person is exposed to, the more likely this person will consider the party to be most competent to deal with it* (H2b*), but not more likely to associate the party with the issue* (H2a).

Table 1 summarizes the hypotheses formulated in this section about how the different types of 'media bias' in issue-specific news coverage should affect a person's associative and competence issue ownership perceptions[22].

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[21] The effect of tonality in media coverage might depend on the source of criticism. Kleinnijenhuis and colleagues (2007) found that criticism covered in the news only affects a person's party preferences when it comes from within the party or from societal actors, but not in case of criticism coming from political opponents or journalists (p.377-379). However, in this master thesis I will not differentiate between different sources when looking at the tonality of issue-specific news coverage.

[22] Despite the theoretical separation of 'visibility' and 'tonality', empirically both aspects of a party's coverage in the media are likely to be interrelated. For example, Eberl and colleagues (2017a) found that, when the visibility of a politician in news coverage is low, the effect of 'tonality bias' on the perception of their (general) competence becomes insignificant and that the direction of the visibility effect changes from positive to negative when the coverage is more critical (see Eberl et al. 2017a: p.122-123).

Table 1: Media bias on issue ownership perceptions (hypotheses)

Type of bias	AIO perceptions (a)	CIO perceptions (b)
(higher) visibility (H1)	positive effect	positive effect
(positive) tonality (H2)	no effect	positive effect

3.3. Susceptibility to 'media bias' on issue ownership perceptions

As has been established so far, a person's issue ownership perceptions are expected to be affected by the information they receive from media about the connection between parties and issues, and this information is likely to be 'unbalanced' in consequence of (partisan) 'media bias'. However, such information is usually not consumed by individuals who had no prior knowledge about political affairs. Therefore, new pieces of information will be compared to what a person already knows or believes, and only in some cases the new information will lead to the formation or adaptation of issue ownership perceptions. This idea is expressed in the RAS-model (Receive-Accept-Sample model) of opinion formation: "Opinion statements, […] are the outcome of a process in which people *receive* new information, decide whether to *accept* it, and then *sample* at the moment of answering questions." (Zaller 1992: p.51).

Whether new information will be accepted or not depends on a person's predispositions, defined as "stable, individual-level traits that […] are the critical intervening variable between the communications people encounter in the mass media, on one side, and their statements of political preferences, on the other." (Zaller 1992: p.22). Predispositions are attitudes formed and adapted based on previous information, obtained and accumulated over a long period of time, and are thus "in part a distillation of a person's lifetime experiences, including childhood socialization" (ibid.). In this section, I will present a bunch of predispositions that can be expected to mediate the effects of media bias on issue ownership perceptions.

The first and most obvious predisposition in this context is whether people hold preexisting issue ownership perceptions or not. If a person has already thought about which party is linked most closely to an issue or which party is most competent in dealing with it, any further information about a party's priority or position is expected to be less influential. Only when a person is confronted with information that is in conflict with their existing issue ownership perceptions, there might be a need for adaption: "New events may happen or new information

may become known to a person, creating at least a momentary dissonance with existing knowledge, opinion, or cognition concerning behavior." (Festinger 1959: p.4). In order to resolve such 'cognitive dissonance', a person has to gouge between the contradictory information. If the new information is more convincing to a person than the previous knowledge on the matter, it will lead to an adaption of issue ownership perceptions.

In contrast, for people with no preexisting issue ownership perceptions towards an issue (e.g., when the issue is new to the political agenda[23]), all information about the connection of a party to this issue will be new information, or at least information that can not conflict with previously established issue ownership perceptions. Furthermore, because attention to political matters is not always high, it could be that people have forgotten about previously formed issue ownership perceptions. Yet, when a political topic rises in importance in media coverage (again), people might be reminded of them: "It is precisely through priming that issue ownership is activated and becomes accessible. In other words, priming as a media effect combines agenda setting and issue ownership" (Walgrave et al. 2009: p.156). To sum up, I expect the effect of media bias (visibility and tonality) to be stronger if issue ownership perceptions are absent:

Hypothesis 3: *Media bias on associative (H3a) and competence (H3b) issue ownership perceptions will be stronger for people with no preexisting issue ownership perceptions.*

Previous research using panel surveys showed that associative (see Kleinnijenhuis & Walter 2014: p.237) and competence issue ownership perceptions (see Walgrave et al. 2014: p.10; Vliegenhart & Lefevere 2018: p.669) are indeed strongly affected by the preexistence of such perceptions. However, these studies do not investigate whether and how preexisting issue ownership perceptions mediate the influence of other potential sources, like for example information obtained through media coverage.

The next predispositions that have to be considered are a person's issue priorities. As has been shown by previous research, issue ownership perceptions are more likely to affect a person's vote decision for issues that are perceived to be important (see Bélanger & Meguid 2008; Green & Hobolt 2008; Walgrave et al. 2012). However, a person's issue priorities might also be relevant for how issue ownership perceptions are formed or adapted in the first place, for

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[23] De Bruycker and Walgrave (2014) found that a party's presence in the Belgium's media coverage about the new topic of 'financial crisis' had a significant impact on which party is perceived as owner of that issue. In contrast, visibility in media coverage of other, established issues had no significant effect (see p.91-92).

example by mediating the effect of media bias. People do not pay attention to every political issue to an equal extent. For example, they are more likely to read newspaper articles about topics they perceive to be important, as well as topics they are interested in, while skipping articles about topics they do not care about. As a consequence, the issues for which a person will be exposed to media bias in news coverage will depend on a person's own issue priories. Supporting this argument, Tresch and Feddersen (2019) found that a party's visibility in issue-specific media coverage only affects competence and associative issue ownership perceptions for issues that are salient to a respondent (see p.404-405). However, if the mechanism outlined above is correct, the same should apply for 'tonality bias' on competence issue ownership perceptions:

Hypothesis 4: *Media bias on associative (H4a) and competence (H4b) issue ownership perceptions will be stronger for issues that people perceive to be important.*

Additional to the priority a person puts on an issue, also their policy preference regarding the issue should be an important predisposition. However, this should apply only for competence issue ownership perceptions. Competence issue ownership has been characterized by two aspects (see chapter 2.2.): a person's policy agreement with a party and a person's believe in that party's abilities to deliver. The latter of two should be more prone to short-term fluctuations caused by media coverage, for example when a party is criticized for a bad performance on an issue. However, when the policy agreement between a person and a party is low, it should not matter for a person's competence issue ownership perception whether the party is portrayed positively or is highly visible in the issue-specific news coverage (see Wagner & Zeglovits 2014: p.282). That person will never approve this party's policy output on the issue anyways. In contrast, when the policy agreement between a party and a person is high, the issue-specific coverage of a party in terms of visibility and tonality should be a main source for a person to judge that party's ability to deliver. For associative issue ownership perceptions, on the other hand, policy agreement is no necessary precondition, so that a person's issue positions should not mediate the influence of media coverage on these perceptions:

Hypothesis 5: *Media bias on competence (H5b), but not on associative issue ownership perceptions (H5a) will be stronger when there is a high policy agreement between an individual and a party on an issue ('valence issues')*[24].

Besides issue-specific predispositions (issue priorities and policy preferences), a person's party-specific predisposition is expected to influence the acceptance of new information as well. Like with preexisting issue ownership perceptions, new information about a party's connection to an issue might create a situation of 'cognitive dissonance' (see Festinger 1959: p.4). For example, when a party that is strongly disliked is highly visible and portrayed positively in the issue-specific news coverage or when a party that is strongly liked is portrayed negatively or is not mentioned at all, the supposed consequences of this information for a person's issue ownership perceptions would run contrary to that person's general party preferences. Therefore, in order to avoid 'cognitive dissonance', a person will be less likely to adapt their issue ownership perceptions in response. In other words, instead of changing issue ownership perceptions in a way that would contradict established party preferences, a person might reject the validity of media coverage in these situations.

However, when a person does not have clear-cut party preferences, but has similar (positive) feelings towards multiple parties, there would be no reason to reject information provided by media about a party's connection to an issue, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable for this party. Instead, such information might even enable these persons to decide between different parties when thinking about who is most competent in dealing with an issue, since they cannot simply derive such judgment from their general party preferences. Therefore, the competence issue ownership perceptions of people with a high party ambivalence should be more susceptible to media 'bias'. For associative issue ownership, on the other hand, a person's party preferences are not expected to influence the acceptance of information. Simply associating a party with an issue does neither imply a positive nor a negative evaluation, and thus a deviation of these perceptions from general party preferences will not cause 'cognitive dissonance'[25]:

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[24] Because it is not possible with the data used in this master thesis to measure a person's policy agreement with a party directly, the differentiation between 'position' and 'valence issues' will be used as a proxy. Therefore, media bias on competence issue ownership perceptions is expected to be stronger for 'valence issues', where the policy agreement between a person and all parties should be high due to shared preferences about the policy output (see Stokes 1963: 372-373; Wagner & Zeglovits 2014: p.282-283).

[25] Walgrave and Soontjens (2019) found that a party's visibility in issue-specific news coverage mediate the effect of party preferences on associative issue ownership perceptions, indicating that people infer associative issue

Hypothesis 6: *Media bias on competence (H6b), but not on associative issue ownership perceptions (H6a) will be stronger for people with a high level of party ambivalence.*

Empirical evidence for the restricting role of party preferences is for example provided by Fournier and colleagues (2004), who showed that people with strong partisan preferences resisted the influences coming from media coverage during the election campaign. Johann and colleagues (2018) found that the tonality towards a party in media coverage only affected the vote choices of people with a high ambivalence in party preferences, while a high visibility of a party in news coverage only affected people with a low party ambivalence. Regarding competence issue ownership perceptions, Walgrave and colleagues (2014) showed that party messages transmitted via television news were only persuasive when they come from a party that is not disliked. Yet, as discussed earlier, news coverage includes more than simple presentations of parties' own communication attempts. In coverage in which parties are not quoted directly, people might be less likely to reject information that runs counter their party preferences.

Furthermore, the acceptance of new information might depend on the level of trust a person has towards the transmitter of information: "acceptance and persuasiveness of a message depends on the credibility of the source." (Walgrave et al. 2014: p.5). Therefore, political information contained in media coverage will be only considered as valid by a person when media in general or a specific media outlet in particular is judged to be trustworthy: "research in psychology suggests that both priming and agenda setting may be most likely to occur among people who trust the competence and motives of media personnel the most. [...] readers and viewers who trust the judgment of news personnel may be most inclined to accept their beliefs [...], whether conveyed implicitly or explicitly by their stories, and may therefore be more likely to manifest agenda setting and priming." (Miller & Krosnick 2000: p.303). This should also be true for the formation and adaptation of issue ownership perceptions. When a person trusts a media outlet's coverage, they should be more likely to accept information about the connection between parties and issues (priorities, positions, performances and so on). Contrary, if a person is suspicious regarding a media outlet's political coverage (or the political coverage of media in general), for example when they believe the coverage to be biased in favor of one political party

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ownership perceptions from their general party preference when only few information is provided by the media on this matter (see p.142). However, I am interested in the inverse interaction effect, with party preferences mediating the effect of a party's visibility and tonality in issue-specific news coverage, thus addressing the role of party preferences in situations where information on the connection between parties and issues is provided by media.

or one political side, the information will be rejected and thus not used when forming or adapting issue ownership perceptions[26]:

Hypothesis 7: *Media bias on associative (H7a) and competence (H7b) issue ownership perceptions will be stronger for people with a high level of media trust.[27]*

Besides the acceptance of political information provided in the media, the effect of media coverage on political attitudes also depends on whether a person is able to perceive, understand and memorize this information (see Zaller 1992: p.42; Dalton et al. 1998: p.119). Such ability can be labelled as 'political sophistication': "a person is politically sophisticated to the extent to which his or her political cognitions are numerous, cut a wide substantive swath, and are highly organized, or 'constrained'." (Luskin 1990: p.332). It is the result of a person's interest in political matters, the extent of exposure to political information and the intellectual capacities necessary to deal with this information (see Luskin 1990: p.335). Regarding issue ownership perceptions, people with a high level of political sophistication should be more likely to recognize and memorize information about the connection between parties and issues, and furthermore being better capable to evaluate the meaning of this information in terms of issue ownership.

However, the observed information will only result in an adaption of issue ownership perceptions, when it provides a person with some new insights, and whether it does, will also depend on a person's level of political sophistication: "New information must be both important and intelligible to constitute a decisive element […]. But the extent to which voters deem new information to be important and intelligible may vary. For low aware voters, new pieces of information obviously form important additions to their existing stock of political information, but their inability, or disinclination, to interpret this information may limit its impact. The potential impact of information gains among highly aware voters may also be limited but for different reasons. For them, information gains are meaningful, but the additional information

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[26] Miller & Krosnick (2000) found that media coverage affects the perceptions of a country's most important political problems primarily among people with a high level of media trust, however, only when it is combined with a high level of political sophistication.

[27] The trust a person has in the validity of news coverage is likely to vary between different media outlets. Since with the data used in this master thesis it is not possible to measure media-specific trust, I can only rely on general media trust to test this hypothesis. However, it is reasonable to assume that people who distrust a specific media outlet's coverage will simply be less likely to consume it. Therefore, they would not be exposed to bias in the coverage of these media outlets anyway, making such measurement less suitable to examine the mediating role of media trust.

may be neither sufficiently new, nor sufficiently important, […]. It is the moderately aware voters, those who are sufficiently experienced to understand the information that is diffused but not sufficiently informed […] to avoid being 'surprised,' who may be more susceptible to influence by new information." (Nadeau et al. 2008: p.233). So, while people with high political sophistication should be those who most frequently observe information in media coverage necessary to form or adopt issue ownership perceptions, simultaneously they are those least likely to be affected by this information because of the knowledge they already had. On the other hand, people with a low level of political sophistication possess little prior knowledge on the connection between parties and issues, so that most information provided by media on this matter is expected to be important for their issue ownership perceptions. However, they lack the abilities or motivation necessary to recognize and internalize this information, so that in the end their issue ownership perceptions will be less likely affected by media coverage as well. This leaves people with a medium level of political sophistication most susceptible to information contained in issue-specific media coverage. They are interested and knowledgeable enough to pay attention to the information, but not so knowledgeable that the information is irrelevant to their issue ownership perceptions:

Hypothesis 8: *Media bias on associative (H8a) and competence (H8b) issue ownership perceptions will be stronger for people with a medium level of political sophistication than for people with high and low political sophistication.*

Empirical findings regarding the mediating role of political sophistication are inconclusive. Some studies provide evidence for the claim that persons with a medium level of political sophistication are those most susceptible to media and campaign effects (see Nadeau et al. 2008: p.240-242; Dalton et al. 1998: p.123). Others found media effects to occur only among the least (see Eberl et al. 2017b: p.1138-1139) or the most political sophisticated (see Miller & Krosnick 2000: p.308). However, the mediating role of political sophistication might depend on the complexity of the information a person is confronted with (see Zaller 1992: p.125-127). When the information is very simple, most people should be able to perceive and understand it, so that the least political sophisticated are expected to be most affected. When the information is very complex, then only the most sophisticated should be able to recognize and memorize it and thus also the only ones influenced[28].

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[28] Zaller (1992) refers to these scenarios as 'easy learning' and 'hard learning' situations.

Nevertheless, the different forms of information that can link a party to an issue (see chapter 2.4.1.) should range somewhere in between in terms of complexity, making the moderately sophisticated the most susceptible group. For example, regarding a party's position on an issue, Nadeau and colleagues (2008) note: "Given that parties' position on issues represents a type of information that is neither exceedingly simple (such as recognizing leaders) nor particular complex (arguments justifying a policy), the main threshold in terms of information gains should be between voters with high and medium high levels of awareness and those with medium low and low levels of awareness." (Nadeau et al. 2008: p.244).

Table 2 summarizes the hypotheses about the different predispositions that might limit or enhance the susceptibility of a person's associative and competence issue ownership perceptions to the influence of media bias (visibility and tonality) in issue-specific news coverage.

Table 2: Susceptibility to media bias on issue ownership perceptions (hypotheses)

Individual predispositions	AIO perceptions (a)	CIO perceptions (b)
	The effects of media bias will be stronger if, …	
Preexisting issue ownership perceptions (H3)	absent	absent
Priority on the issue (H4)	high	high
Policy agreement (H5)	-	high
Party ambivalence (H6)	-	high
Media trust (H7)	high	high
Political sophistication (H8)	medium	medium

4. Data and Methods

In order to investigate the potential effect of 'media bias' on issue ownership perceptions, an extensive amount of empirical data is needed to perform a so called "linkage study" (see De Vreese et al. 2017). First, a content analysis of media coverage is necessary to identify the information about the connection between parties and issues that is provided in different media outlets. Second, survey data are used to measure the issue ownership perceptions of individuals and to link these individuals to the media data, based on questions about their news consumption behavior. And third, additional data about direct party communication activities has to be included in the analysis to ensure that the information entailed in media coverage is not simply a reflection of information spread out by political actors themselves (which would not be considered as 'media bias' according to the definition presented in the previous chapter).

In this master thesis, I will examine whether and how the newspaper coverage during the 2017 Austrian election campaign had 'biased' the issue ownership perceptions of people, based on a diverse and high-quality set of data that is provided by the 'Austrian National Election Study 2017'. Media data are drawn from a manual content analysis of political coverage in eight major daily newspapers in the last six weeks before this election (Litvyak et al. forthcoming). Survey data come from the third and fourth wave of an online panel study, marking the beginning and end of the election campaign (Wagner et al. 2020). Finally, I rely on content analyses of press releases (Müller et al. forthcoming a), Facebook postings (Müller et al. forthcoming b) and newspaper ads (Müller et al. forthcoming c) to control for the effects of direct party communication.

4.1. The case: The Austrian parliamentary election campaign in 2017

Austria shares many characteristics with other European democracies: elections are organized by a proportional system, political competition is structured by political parties and the government is typically formed by a party coalition. Until the 1980s the party system was very stable, with two major parties, the social-democratic SPÖ and the Christian-conservative ÖVP, competing for chancellorship, most of the time resulting in a grand coalition between both of them. However, with the entry of the Green party in parliament in 1986, following the emergence of the environmental issue, as well as with the transformation of the FPÖ into a populist radical right party and its subsequent increasing electoral success, the party system has become more dynamic (see Wineroither & Kitschelt 2017: p.268-270). New parties gained and

lost parliamentary representation, like the FPÖ-split off parties LIF (1994-1999) and BZÖ (2005-2013) or the populist Team Stronach (2013-2017). Therefore, since the 1990s, multiple parties (on all sides of the ideological spectrum) have competed for ownership over a range of policy issues.

The 2017 election campaign, again, brought a lot of dynamic to political competition in Austria (see Bodlos & Plescia 2018). The election was the consequence of an early resignation of the former government coalition between SPÖ and ÖVP, marking the end of a legislative term that was characterized by intra-coalition conflicts and a growing dissatisfaction of the population with the government. During the campaign the issue of immigration dominated the public agenda due to the aftermath of the 'European refugee crisis' in 2015. Especially the ÖVP, under new leader and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Sebastian Kurz, tried to challenge the issue-owner FPÖ, by prioritizing and adopting its positions regarding immigration. While emphasizing its credibility on the immigration issue as well, the FPÖ tried to sharpen its policy profile on other topics, e.g., the economy, in order to strengthen its attractiveness as a coalition partner for the ÖVP. The SPÖ focused their campaign on its traditional topics, like pensions and social security. However, a scandal about SPÖ campaign adviser Tal Silberstein concerning 'dirty campaigning' gained huge public attention in the last weeks before the election, making it difficult for the party to present its own issue priorities and policy positions. Also, the Green party struggled to focus its campaign on policy issues, due to intra-party conflicts, resulting in a separation of former MP Peter Pilz, who competed at the election with his own, new formed list. The liberal party NEOS tried to establish themselves within the Austrian party system, after they gained parliamentary representation for the first time in 2013. Compared to previous elections, all parties switched their campaign activities more towards online communication channels like Facebook or YouTube.

Besides the party system, also the Austrian media system is quite similar to other north and central European countries, characterized by a strong role of public broadcasting, a high circulation rate of daily newspapers and a moderately high degree of political parallelism[29] (see Hallin & Mancini 2004: p.67 and p.74; Plasser & Lengauer 2012: p.36-37). The high importance of public broadcasting and newspapers in Austria is also reflected in the sources people receive their political information from (see Table 3). While 62% of respondents

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[29] Political parallelism refers to "the extent to which the different media reflect distinct political orientations in their news and current affairs reporting" (Hallin & Mancini 2004: p.28) and therefore is a major factor for the existence of media bias.

indicate that they watch television news at least several times per week to inform themselves about politics, 59% read newspapers to do so. Also, radio (53%) and the internet (51%), including online versions of daily newspapers, are often used for this propose on a weekly basis, while social media (33%) is still only named by a minority of people as a regular source of political information. Thus, despite a declining circulation rate of print media in recent years, newspapers are still an important transmitter of political information in Austria[30]. Furthermore, the Austrian print media landscape is characterized by a dominant position of tabloid newspapers (see Plasser & Lengauer 2012: p.30-31), as well as a very critical style in political reporting compared to other European countries (ibid.: p.50-51).

Table 3: Sources of political information in Austria (2017)

Type	Frequency of consumption					
	Several times per day	Nearly daily	Several times per week	Several times per month	Less often	never
Television	10%	29%	23%	11%	16%	10%
Newspapers	9%	29%	21%	13%	18%	12%
Radio	12%	23%	18%	10%	21%	16%
Internet	13%	19%	19%	11%	21%	18%
Social Media	8%	12%	13%	8%	20%	38%

Data: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020), wave 4 (N=3,173)

To sum up, the structure of the Austrian party system and its dynamics in context of the Austrian parliament election in 2017 presumably have led to a situation where the public is confronted with some new information about the connection between parties and issues (e.g., their positions and priorities). These circumstances in combination with a media system that has a relatively high degree of political parallelism compared to other European countries (see Lelkes 2016: p.529), makes the 2017 Austrian election campaign a very suitable case to investigate the potential bias of newspaper coverage on the formation and adaption of issue ownership perceptions: "Austria is a likely case to find partisan bias in newspaper reporting as there is a

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[30] However, regarding these numbers it has to be noted, that people tend to overreport their news consumption behavior in survey questions, and that its measurement is more reliable in case of television and internet use compared to the reported amount of newspaper consumption (see Sharkow 2019: p.203).

relatively high level of polarization in party and media systems." (Haselmayer et al. 2017: p.368)

4.2. The dependent variables: associative and competence issue ownership perceptions

The basis for the empirical investigation in this master thesis is the "AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017" (Wagner et al. 2020) conducted in context of the Austrian National Parliamentary Election on October 15, 2017. Respondents were selected according to demographic quotas in order to represent the Austrian voting population (Austrian citizens above the age of 16).

Issue ownership perceptions are measured for seven different issues (Job Market and Employment; Immigration; European Integration; Economy; Environment; Corruption; Pensions) using two different questions for the associative (AIO)[31] and the competence dimension (CIO)[32]. For each issue and each question, respondents could choose between one of the six parties with prospects of parliamentary representation (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, The Greens, NEOS and Liste Pilz), or indicate that they perceive an "other party"[33] or "no party" as the issue owner. Furthermore, issue ownership perceptions are measured at two different times (the beginning and the end of the 2017 Austrian election campaign)[34], making it possible to observe individual changes of these perceptions.

Figure 2 displays the percentage of respondents who named a party to be the associative and competence issue owner of the seven issues. The left and right bars show the percentage each party yielded before (wave 3), and at the end (wave 4) of the election campaign, respectively. For five of the seven issues a clear associative and competence issue owner can be identified at both times: the SPÖ is associated (46%/50%) and judged to be most competent (36%/41%) regarding the issue 'Job Market and Employment'. The same is true for the issue 'Pensions' (AIO: 53%/53%; CIO: 40%/43%). The FPÖ owns the issue 'Immigration' (AIO: 51%/59%; CIO: 37%/40%), and the ÖVP the issue 'Economy' (AIO: 55%/53%; CIO: 43%/44%). On 'Environment' issue ownership is even more distinctive, with 74% of respondents (wave 4: 78%) associating the Greens with the issue and 50% (wave 4: 57%) also attributing them the highest competence to deal with it. These issue ownerships are no surprise, however, since they were more or less established back in the 1990s (see Meyer & Müller 2013: p.493-494).

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[31] "Spontaneously, which party do you think of when you think about the following issues?"
[32] "And which party is in your view most competent on the following issues?"
[33] Due to the small number of respondents choosing this option, it is not considered in further analyses.
[34] Wave 3 (30.08.-14.09.2017) and wave 4 (02.10.-13.10.2017) of the six-wave panel

Figure 2: Issue ownership perceptions (Austrian election campaign 2017)
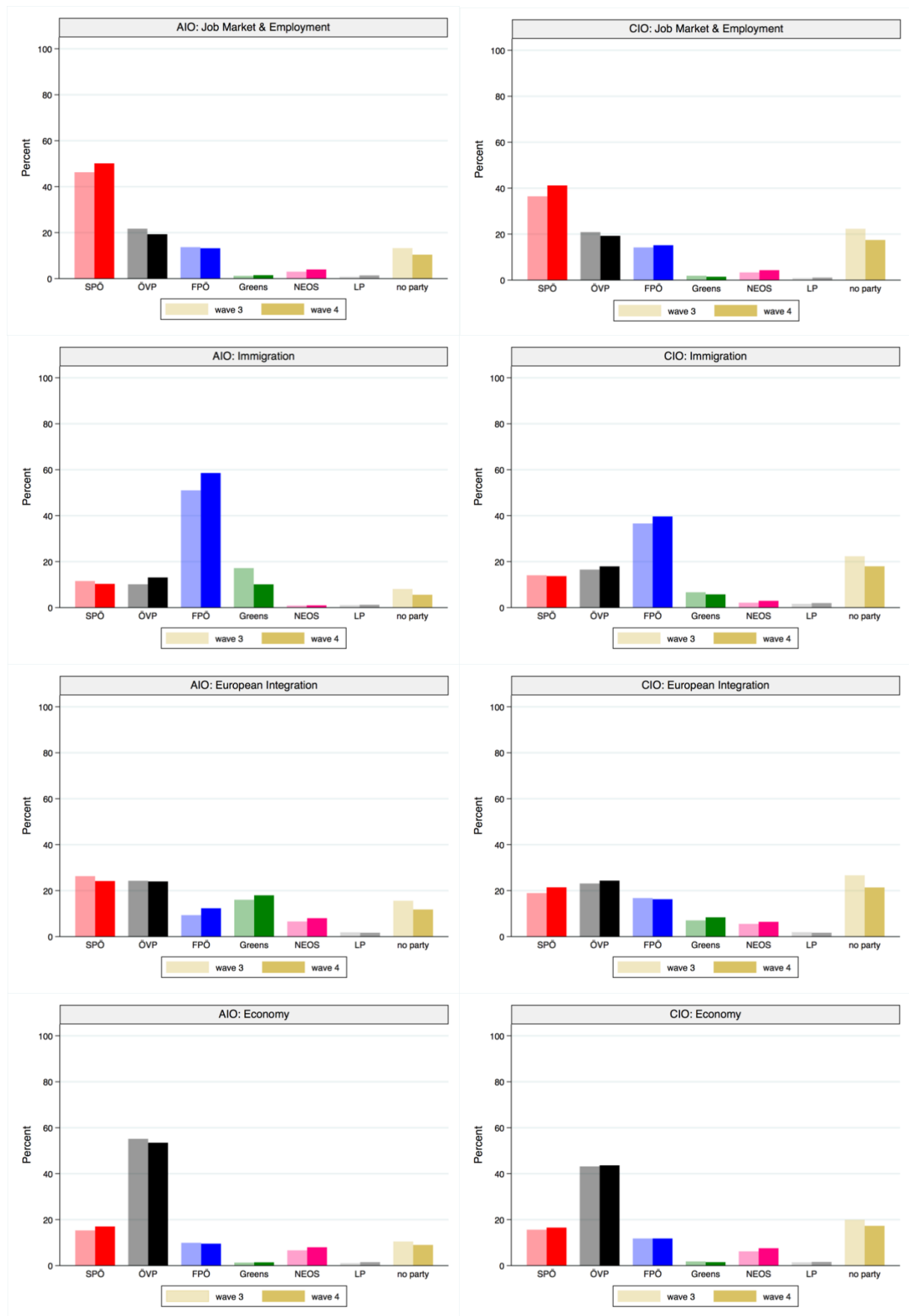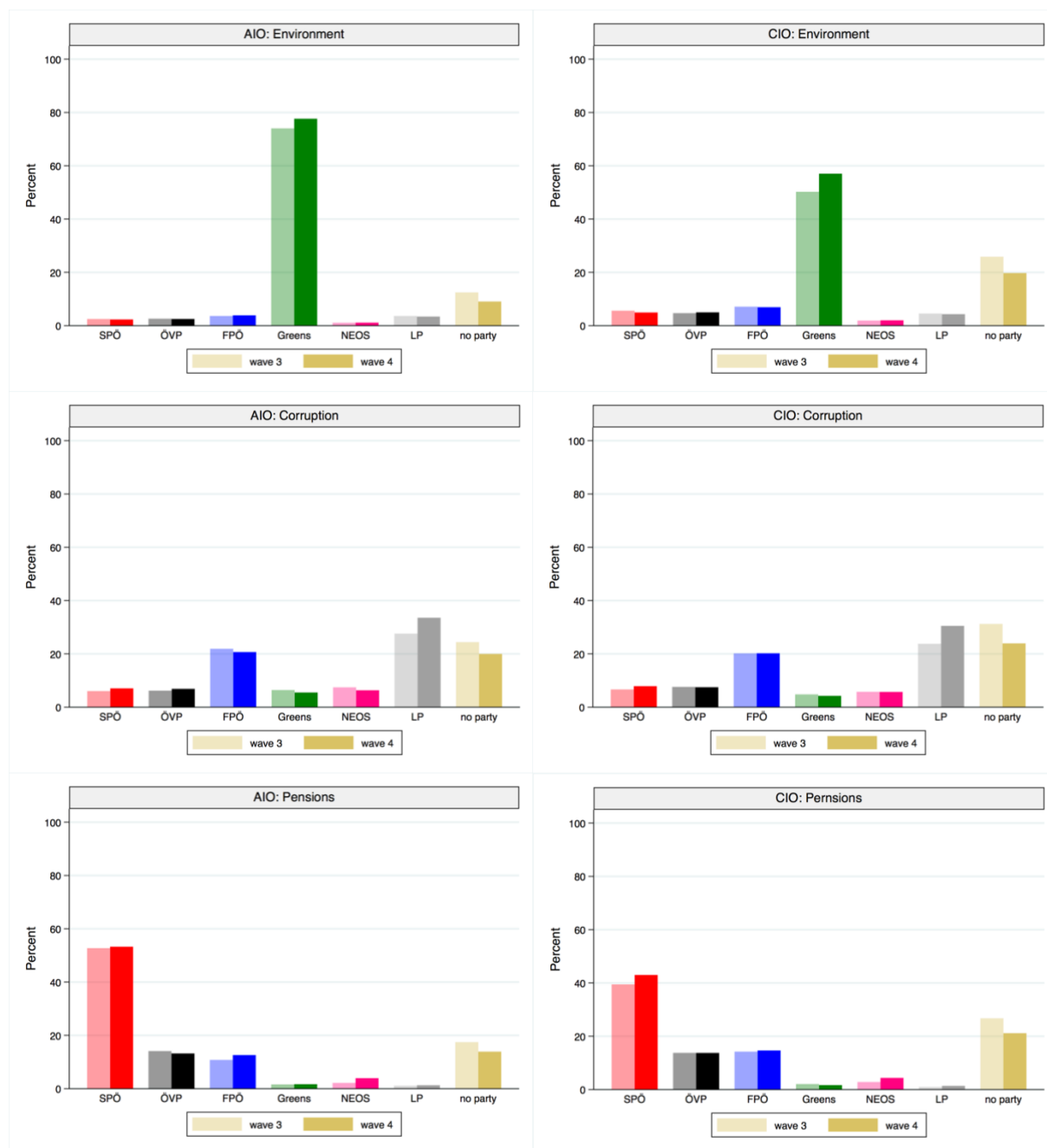
For the two remaining issues, ownership is more contested. The issue 'European Integration', formerly owned by the ÖVP (see Meyer & Müller 2013: p.493-494), is equally associated with SPÖ (26%/24%) and ÖVP (24%/24%), while in terms of competence, the ÖVP (23%/24%) is slightly ahead of the SPÖ (19%/21%), with the FPÖ (17%/16%) being not far off. Ownership of the issue 'Corruption' is especially interesting. In previous election campaigns, the issue was perceived as a central concern and competence of the Green party. This changed with the departure of former MP Peter Pilz, who has been well-known for his investigations about corruption (see Bodlos & Plescia 2018). In the end of the 2017 election campaign, Pilz's newly formed list is associated with the issue of 'Corruption' by 34% (wave 3: 28%) and judged as most competent by 31% (wave 3: 24%), while only a small minority of respondents considered the Greens as owner of the issue (AIO: 6%/6%; CIO: 5%/4%). This indicates that issue reputations are not necessarily bound to parties, but that they can also be hold by individual politicians. However, also a large proportion of people indicated that they do not associate any party with 'Corruption' (24%/20%) or that no party is competent in dealing with it (31%/24%). Another big part of respondents considered the FPÖ to be the associative (22%/21%) and competence issue owner (20%/20%) of 'Corruption'. Therefore, the advantage of the Liste Pilz might be too small to consider it as clear owner in this case (at least not at the beginning of the election campaign).

Interestingly, it can be observed across all issues that the percentage of people answering with 'no party' to the issue ownership questions decreased between the two times. This points to a potential 'learning effect' that occurred in course of the election campaign. People might have received information that helped to decide about issue ownership. For most issues (except for the issue 'Economy') such learning effects strengthened the leading position of the issue owner (and even secured Liste Pilz's ownership of corruption).

Despite these small shifts, the numbers displayed in Figure 2 draw a rather stable picture of issue ownership perceptions. Nevertheless, as discussed in chapter 2.3., stability on the aggregated level might be accompanied by dynamic patterns on the individual level. This claim is clearly supported when looking at Table 4, showing for each issue the percentage of people who answered differently to the issue ownership questions in wave 3 and wave 4. For all issues, at least one third of respondents changed their issue ownership perceptions in course of the election campaign (with the exception that only 21 % of respondents changed their associative ownership percentage for the environmental issue). Surprisingly, the 'pure' association of parties with issues seems to be more variable than competence perceptions.

Table 4: Short-term change of issue ownership perceptions

Issues	% of respondents who changed IO-perceptions between waves			
	AIO	CIO	AIO (only parties)[35]	CIO (only parties)
Job Market & Employment	38%	34%	32%	27%
Immigration	45%	36%	41%	28%
European Integration	53%	43%	49%	37%
Economy	35%	34%	30%	27%
Environment	21%	33%	14%	24%
Corruption	45%	41%	37%	32%
Pensions	38%	34%	28%	25%

Data: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020), wave 3 and wave 4 (N=1,249 – 2,337)

Table 5: Congruence of associative and competence issue ownership perceptions

Issues	% of respondents who choose the same AIO and CIO			
	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 3 (only parties)	Wave 4 (only parties)
Job Market & Employment	74%	66%	67%	69%
Immigration	53%	53%	47%	54%
European Integration	61%	57%	55%	58%
Economy	75%	66%	67%	69%
Environment	79%	68%	68%	72%
Corruption	74%	69%	69%	73%
Pensions	77%	67%	68%	71%

Data: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020), wave 3 and wave 4 (N=1,590 – 2,833)

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[35] The columns labeled with '(only parties)' show the percentages when the option 'no party' is excluded.

Another important question is whether association and competence can actually be considered as two different dimensions of issue ownership (see chapter 2.2.). Table 5 displays the percentages of people who named the same party (or the option 'no party') for both. At the beginning of the election campaign (wave 3), roughly three out of four respondents choose the same answer regarding association and competence for the issues 'Job Market and Employment', 'Economy', 'Environment', 'Corruption' and 'Pensions'. For the remaining two issues, 'Immigration' and 'European Integration', the congruence between association and competence attribution is considerably smaller (53% and 61 %, respectively). These differences are not surprising because both issues can be considered as positional issues in the Austrian context, while the other five issues have a more valence character (see Plescia 2020: p.651-652). For 'Immigration' and 'European Integration', people seem to be more likely to associate a party with the issue, without simultaneously agreeing on that party's policy position (an important precondition to judge the party as competent), while for valence issues it appears like both aspects more often go hand in hand.

When looking at wave 4, it can furthermore be noticed that the congruence between association and competence decreased during the election campaign. However, this is only true when people who choose the 'no party' option are considered. Therefore, such decrease might be produced by the earlier mentioned 'learning effect', with people being more likely to either associate or ascribe competence to a party at the end of the election campaign. If just looking at the party options, a slight increase in congruence can be observed instead. Nevertheless, the numbers displayed in table 5 underline the usefulness of a separation of both issue ownership dimensions, because even in case of valence issues there is a considerable share of respondents (about 25%) who do not ascribe competence to the party they associate the issue with.

Overall, the descriptive results presented above indicate that there is a considerable amount of variability in issue ownership perceptions, even during the short time period of an election campaign. In order to investigate whether this variation can be explained to a certain extent by 'media bias' (hypothesis 1 and 2), I will conduct a row of conditional logistic regressions (one for each issue and each dimension of issue ownership) following McFaddens's choice model (see McFadden 1974). Therefore, my dependent variables take the value '1' if a specific party

(SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, The Greens, NEOS or Liste Pilz) is chosen by a respondent as owner of the issue (in the interview of wave 4) and the value '0' if another party is chosen[36].

Because conditional regression includes fixed effects for the selection alternatives, in this case the six different parties, the models account for structural differences between parties (e.g., regarding their electoral size or their ministerial responsibility for an issue) that might explain differences in issue ownership perceptions, as well as differences in news coverage: "fixed effects control for the fact that some parties are generally more visible or always evaluated better or worse than others" (Eberl et al. 2018: p.792). This ensures that a potential media effect on issue ownership perceptions can be attributed to differences in the issue-specific coverage of different media outlets ('partisan bias'), and not to general patterns of coverage that are constant across all media outlets ('structural bias') (see Eberl et al. 2017b: p.1134-1135).

Furthermore, the panel structure of the data allows to control for preexisting issue ownership perceptions. Therefore, the measurement of associative and competence issue ownership in wave 3 is included in the models as a lagged dependent variable (with the value '1' if the same party is named as issue owner and the value '0' if not). By doing so, the results of the analysis can be interpreted more convincingly regarding the causality of a potential media effect (see De Vreese et al. 2017: p.223), ruling out the possibility of 'selective exposure'[37] (see Eberl et al. 2017b: p.1135). Additionally, the lagged measurement accounts for long-term sources of issue ownership perceptions that are not controlled for in the models[38] (see Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007: p.374).

Overall, this methodical approach, in combination with the control variables that will be presented in the upcoming sections, constitutes a robust setting to test the hypotheses about media bias on issue ownership perceptions developed in chapter 3: "Including lagged measures, a large set of control variables as well as […] fixed effects in a single model guarantees a very conservative measurement of media bias effects, eliminating many potentially confounding factors." (Eberl et al. 2017a: p.119)

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[36] Due to the structure of the regression models (respondents x parties), respondents who answered with 'no party' in wave 4 were excluded from the analysis. While it would also be interesting to investigate why people do not chose any party as issue owner, I focus on the decision between parties.

[37] 'Selective exposure' refers to the possibility that people select information sources that align with their political attitudes and opinions (see e.g. Garrett 2009: p.677-680). If that is the case, the causality of a media effect could run from attitudes to media exposure and not the other way around.

[38] With regard to the analysis, it should be noted that "the lagged dependent variable will also absorb a part of the news effects, which will result in an underestimation of news effects." (see Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007: p.374).

4.3. The independent variables: Party visibility and tonality in issue-specific news coverage

In order to identify 'media bias' in issue-specific news coverage, the "AUTNES Manuel Content Analysis of the Media Coverage 2017" (Litvyak et al. forthcoming) is used. The study provides comprehensive data about the political coverage of eight major daily newspapers in Austria, during the last six weeks before the election (August 30 to October 14, 2017)[39]. Variables were coded on the level of individual newspaper articles, and only articles that mentioned at least one political actor were included.

The two independent variables (party visibility and tonality in issue-specific news coverage) are generated in several steps, following the process outlined by De Vresse and colleagues (2017) to perform a 'linkage study'. First, for each survey respondent, the period of observation was defined as the last 21 days before that respondent's interview in wave 4[40]. For example, if a person was interviewed on October 7, the period of observation run from September 16 to October 6. In this way, it is ensured, that only those newspaper articles were used for the construction of the independent variables, that a person could have been exposed to between both interviews.

Second, a party's visibility and tonality in the issue-specific coverage during the period of observation is estimated for each of the eight newspapers separately. Visibility is measured by counting the number of articles were a party, or its front-runner[41], is mentioned in conjunction to an issue[42] and this number is then divided by the overall number of articles about that issue in this newspaper. Therefore, a party's issue-specific visibility can range from '0' (party and/or its front-runner is not mentioned in any article about this issue) to '1' (party and/or its front-runner is mentioned in every article about this issue). To measure tonality, mentions of a party

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[39] The newspapers were selected based on circulation rates and include different types of newspapers, like quality newspapers (*Der Standard, Die Presse, Salzburger Nachrichten*), as well as midrange newspapers (*Kurier, Kleine Zeitung*) and tabloid newspapers (*Krone, Österreich, Heute*).

[40] Interviews of wave 4 were held on 12 different days (02.10.-13.10.2017). Therefore, there are 12 different observation periods. Furthermore, 12 respondents for whom the time period between the interviews in wave 3 and wave 4 was shorter than 21 days, were excluded from the analysis.

[41] Despite the fact, that in Austria people vote for party lists, front-runners play a central role during the election campaign and gain a lot of media attention. They are usually the highest representatives of their parties (party leaders), so that they can claim to speak for their party when it comes to issue priorities and positions. Thus, in order to capture a comprehensive picture of the information people obtain about the connection between parties and issues, it is crucial to include coverage of front-runners into the analysis.

[42] The issue categories used, match the seven issues from the issue ownership questions in the survey data, although they are defined broader in some cases: 'Job market and Employment', 'Migration and Asylum', 'European Integration', 'Economy, Budget and Taxes', 'Animal welfare and Environment', 'Corruption and Fight against Corruption', 'Pensions'.

or a front-runner are either coded as clearly positive or negative (+2/-2), with a positive or negative tendency (+1/-1) or as balanced, ambivalent or neutral (0)[43]. If a party and its front-runner were both mentioned in an article, the mean of both evaluations was used to get an overall evaluation value. Afterwards, for each newspaper and each period of observation, a party's average evaluation was calculated for all issue-specific articles a party (and/or its front-runner) was mentioned in. Therefore, a party's issue-specific tonality can range from '-2' (party and/or its front-runner are clearly negatively evaluated in all articles about this issue) to '+2' (party and/or its front-runner are clearly positively evaluated in all articles about this issue), with '0' indicating a neutral tonality in average. The inter-coder reliability (Krippendorff's alpha) is satisfactory for all variables used to measure a party's issue-specific visibility and tonality[44] (see Litvyak et al. forthcoming).

Finally, the media data is linked with the survey data. To this end, the visibility and tonality measures for the different periods of observation are assigned to each respondent based on the date of their interview in wave 4. Then, to generate the final independent variables, newspaper specific visibility and tonality measures are combined and weighted by a respondent's behavior of newspaper consumption[45], using the following formulas:

Exposure to a party's issue-specific visibility $= \sum_1^n (days_{in} \times visibility_{jn}) / \sum_1^n days_{in}$

Exposure to a party's issue-specific tonality $= \sum_1^n (days_{in} \times tonality_{jn}) / \sum_1^n days_{in}$

For each respondent (i), the number of days (0-7) they read a specific newspaper (n) is multiplied by the visibility or tonality of a party (j) in that newspaper's issue-specific coverage during the last 21 days before a respondent's interview in wave 4. Then, the results for all eight newspapers are added up and then divided by a person's total amount of newspaper consumption (0-56)[46].

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[43] The original codes for 'balanced/ambivalent' (0) and 'neutral/no tendency' (77) were combined in order to include all articles were a party and/or its front-runner is mentioned.

[44] For the variables that indicate whether an issue was present in an article or not, Krippendorff's alpha ranged from 0.61 ('Corruption') to 0.82 ('Pensions'). Reliability for the coding of whether a party or its front-runner were mentioned in an article or not ranged from 0.87 (Liste Pilz) to 0.97 (Greens; Sebastian Kurz; Christian Kern), and for the evaluation of parties and candidates it ranged from 0.74 (SPÖ) to 0.85 (Ulrike Lunacek).

[45] Table A1 in the Appendix displays the newspaper consumption of respondents. The newspaper that has by far the biggest readership is the 'Krone', with 48% of respondents reading the 'Krone' at least once a week.

[46] For respondents who do not read any of the eight newspapers, the dependent variables were set to '0' for all parties and all issues.

Figure 3: Exposure to party visibility and tonality in issue-specific news coverage

Visibility: Environment

Tonality: Environment

Visibility: Corruption

Tonality: Corruption

Visibility: Pensions

Tonality: Pensions
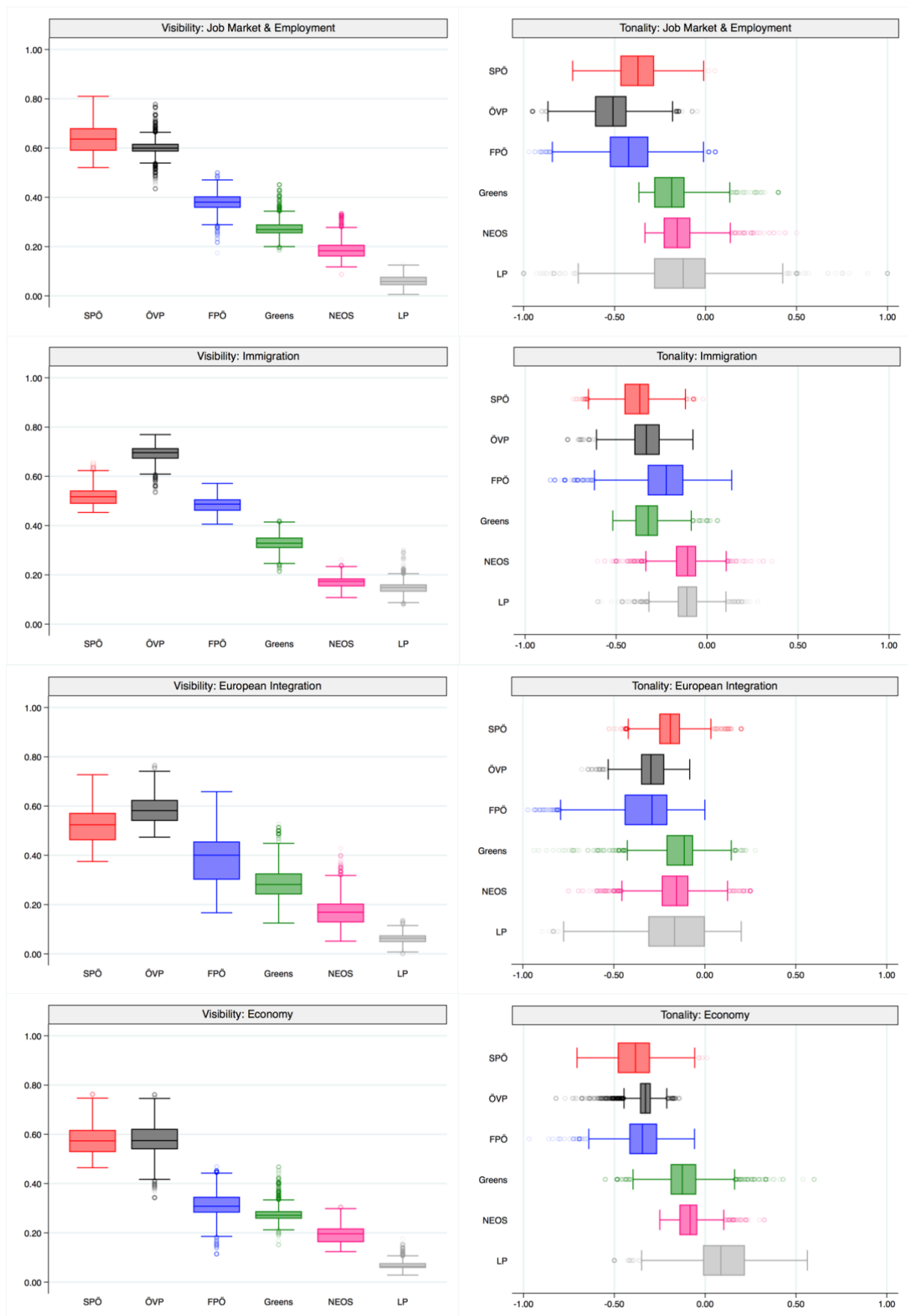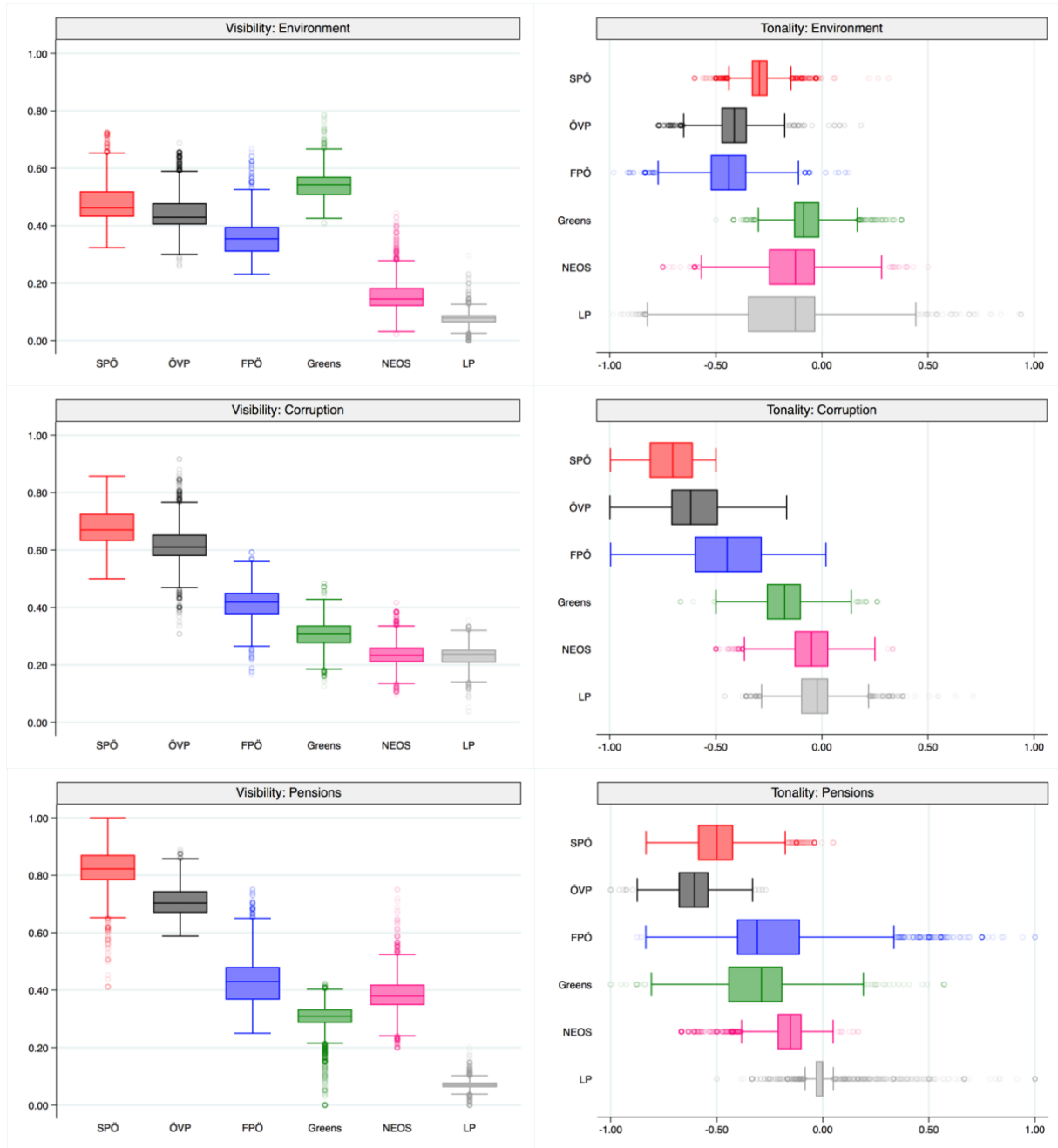
The box plots displayed in Figure 3 show the distribution of the dependent variables for each issue and each party[47]. As can be seen in the box plots on the left side, structural differences between parties are clearly reflected in the issue-specific visibility respondents are exposed to[48]. SPÖ and ÖVP, the two largest parties, that formed the government coalition before the election, were most visible for all issues except 'Environment', followed by the FPÖ, the biggest opposition party. The SPÖ was more visible than the ÖVP when it comes to 'Job Market and Employment' and 'Pensions', two issues that were handled by an SPÖ minister (Alois Stöger). The opposite is true for 'Immigration' and 'European Integration', issues that fell in the responsibility of ÖVP front runner and 'Minister of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs', Sebastian Kurz. Regarding 'Economy', an issue also handled by an ÖVP minister (Harald Mahrer), both parties were equally visible. The least visible party on all issues is the new formed Liste Pilz. Nevertheless, there are some deviations from these pure structural patterns. Most clearly, this is the case for 'Environment', for which the Greens are the most visible party, despite their smaller electoral size and lack of government participation. Furthermore, also other opposition parties received more newspaper coverage on some issues. For example, while the FPÖ (median= 0.49) was almost as visible as the government party SPÖ (0.52) with regard to 'Immigration', it was clearly behind both government parties when it comes to 'Economy' (median FPÖ= 0.31; median SPÖ and ÖVP= 0.57). NEOS had a higher visibility regarding the issue 'Pensions' (median= 0.38), the only issue where the party was more visible than the Greens (median= 0.31). Finally, despite its overall low visibility, the Liste Pilz was almost equally visible as the NEOS concerning the issues 'Immigration' (median= 0.15) and 'Corruption' (median= 0.24), while for all other issues the list was far behind the other parties, appearing in less than 10% of newspaper articles.

The data on tonality (box plots on the right side in Figure 3) confirm that Austrian newspapers have a critical style of political reporting (see Plasser & Lengauer 2012: p.50-51). For all issues, the median tonality of all parties is negative (except the tonality of the Liste Pilz in regard to 'Economy'). Furthermore, parties that are more visible on an issue, tend to be covered more

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[47] Respondents who do not read newspapers are not included in the box plots, since they have a visibility and tonality value of '0' for all parties and all issues. Furthermore, although the scale of tonality actually ranges from '-2' to '+2', empirically values are concentrated within a range from '-1' to '+1'. Therefore, a few outliers that are outside this range are not displayed in Figure 3 (4 in case of 'European Integration'; 18 in case of 'Environment'; 178 in case of 'Corruption').
[48] For the descriptive analysis, the median displayed in the box plots is used as a yardstick to compare visibility and tonality between parties.

negatively[49]. However, the parties show differences in tonality for different issues. For example, the SPÖ was the most negatively evaluated party on the issues 'Corruption' (median= -0.71), 'Immigration' (median= -0.37) and 'Economy' (median= -0.38) but received a more positive coverage than ÖVP and FPÖ for the issues 'Job Market and Employment' (median= -0.37), 'European Integration' (median= -0.19) and 'Environment' (median= -0.3). The Greens were the most positively covered party on 'European Integration' (median= -0.11) and 'Environment' (-0.09), while on 'Immigration' (median= -0.32) the tonality of its coverage was similar to that of the ÖVP (median= -0.33) and more negative than that of the FPÖ (mean= -0.23). Compared to the other parties, the tonality of NEOS and Liste Pilz was more positive on almost every issue. However, for both parties this (average) tonalities are based on a small number of articles, due to their general low visibility.

Besides these differences between parties, the box plots in Figure 3 show a considerable amount of variation within parties, indicated by the length of the whiskers. For example, the issue-specific visibility of the FPÖ on 'Pensions' ranges from 0.25 to 0.75, while its issue-specific tonality ranges from -0.88 to +1. Such inner-party variation can be observed across all parties and for all issues, even though in most cases to a smaller degree. Thus, how visible a party is in the issue-specific newspaper coverage and what tonality this coverage has, differs widely between respondents, depending on which newspapers they have read and how frequently they have done so.

This is furthermore illustrated by Figure A1 in the Appendix, showing the (average) visibility and tonality of parties in the issue-specific coverage of the eight different newspapers[50]. Clearly, newspapers differ in how they report about parties in connection to different issues. For example, while NEOS is included in 55% and the Greens only in 5.5% of all articles in *Heute* about 'Pensions', both parties are equally covered in the reporting of the *Kurier* about this issue (Greens= 41%; NEOS= 43%). Also, the percentage of articles that included the FPÖ differed considerably between both newspapers (*Heute*= 43%; *Kurier*= 71%). However, the structural patterns of visibility described earlier are clearly reflected in the coverage of all newspapers. Therefore, the differences between newspapers are more pronounced regarding the tonality of coverage. For example, although the coverage of 'Immigration' in *Krone* and *Der Standard* is

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[49] Visibility and tonality are negatively correlated for all issues except 'Environment', with correlation coefficients ranging from -0.30 ('European Integration') to -0.82 ('Corruption').
[50] For each newspaper there are 12 different values for a party's issue-specific visibility and tonality, due to the 12 different periods of observation. Therefore, the dots in Figure A1 mark the average value of a party's visibility and tonality in a newspapers issue-specific coverage.

quite similar in terms of visibility, both newspapers clearly differ in how they evaluate the different parties. In the *Krone*, the FPÖ (+0.03) is the party most positively evaluated, followed by NEOS (-0.09), ÖVP (-0.13) and Liste Pilz (-0.14). SPÖ (-0.47) and the Greens (-0.49) received a more negative coverage. The opposite pattern can be observed for the evaluation of parties in *Der Standard*. FPÖ (-0.76) and ÖVP (-0.59) received the most negative coverage, while SPÖ (-0.38) and Greens (-0.28) were evaluated less negative. A similar contrast in tonality can be found for the coverage of 'European Integration' in *Die Presse* and *Heute*. Liste Pilz (-0.81), FPÖ (-0.67) and SPÖ (-0.42) were evaluated negatively in *Die Presse*, while they received an overall neutral or positive coverage in *Heute* (FPÖ= -0.03; Liste Pilz= 0; SPÖ= +0.08). In contrast to that, the Greens were the most negative covered party in *Heute* (-0.43) and the most positive portrayed party in *Die Presse* (+0.14). Only in case of the ÖVP (*Heute*= -0.24; *Die Presse*= -0.2) both newspapers 'agreed' in their evaluation.

4.4. Control variables: direct party communication and individual predispositions

The descriptive results presented in the previous section showed that during the Austrian 2017 election campaign, potential voters were exposed to different information about the connection between parties and issues, depending on the visibility and tonality with which parties were covered on different issues in different newspapers. According to the hypotheses developed in chapter 3.2., these differences might 'bias' issue ownership perceptions, with more visible and more positively evaluated parties being more likely associated with an issue and judged to be most competent. However, this can be considered only as a form of partisan 'media bias', if media coverage is more than a simple reflection of structural differences between parties or parties' own communication activities (see chapter 3.1). While the structural differences will be accounted for in the analysis by the specification of the conditional logistic regression model (party fixed effects), the patterns of party communication will be controlled for using content analyses of press releases, Facebook postings and newspaper ads.

Press releases are a central tool for political actors to shape the media agenda and thus to influence which information news consumers will be exposed to: "Press releases […] are a particularly useful means of capturing what parties want the media to talk about. […] [They] are quick to write and cheap to distribute, but can potentially have a large audience if covered by even one large media outlet" (Meyer et al. 2020: pp.284-285). For media professionals, on the other hand, press releases carry important political information that might be interesting for their audience, so that they will incorporate them in their political coverage in many cases.

However, media outlets differ in which press releases they select, due to the orientation on specific news values or the political preferences of their audience (see Haselmayer et al. 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to include party press releases themselves in the analysis when investigating the effects of a potential 'bias' in a media outlets political coverage.

To do so, I rely on the "AUTNES Coding of Party Press Releases 2017" (Müller et al. forthcoming a). The study covers all press releases issued by the six analyzed parties (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, The Greens, NEOS, Liste Pilz)[51] in the last six weeks before the election (September 4 to October 14, 2017. The title and subtitle of each press release were coded according to over 700 predefined specific topics. For the purpose of this master thesis, press releases were recoded, in order to match the seven issues analyzed[52]. Based on this data, I have generated control variables (one for each issue) that count the number of party press releases addressing a particular issue either in title or subtitle within the period of observation[53].

Table 6 displays the issue emphasis of different parties during the election campaign, measured as the percentage of all policy related press releases that were dedicated towards an issue[54]. The differences between parties resemble many of the patterns found for issue ownership perceptions and media coverage. FPÖ and Greens put most of their attention on the issue they own, which is simultaneously the issue they were most visible at in media coverage ('Immigration' and 'Environment', respectively). The same is true for the ÖVP, which emphasized their owned issue ('Economy'), as well as the other two issues for which the party received more newspaper coverage than any other party ('Immigration' and 'European Integration'). For the SPÖ, this pattern applies only in case of 'Job Market and Employment', while the second issue that is owned by the party ('Pensions') was not especially emphasized during the campaign. Instead, the party addressed the issues 'Environment' and 'Economy', and at least for the latter one the party received an equal amount of newspaper coverage as the issue owner ÖVP. The issue 'Corruption' was most emphasized by FPÖ, Liste Pilz and NEOS, with the former two also competing for ownership over the issue at the begin of the campaign.

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[51] Press releases are included if they were issued by the party organization or its sub-organizations (e.g., 'SPÖ-Pensionistenverband (PVÖ)'), as well when they were issued by relevant individual party politicians, like members of parliament or candidates for the election.

[52] The allocation of specific codes to the seven issues is displayed in Table A2 in the appendix. A few press releases were allocated to several issues. For example, the specific code 'EU: quotas for refugees / immigrants / asylum seekers' was considered for the issues 'Immigration' and 'European Integration' as well.

[53] In order to synchronize the analysis of media coverage and press releases, both aspects were observed for the same period (the last 21 days before a respondent's interview in wave 4).

[54] Since there are twelve different periods of observation, Table 6 displays average percentages. Non-policy related press releases, like announcements of press conferences, were excluded.

Table 6: Party issue emphasis during the election campaign (press releases)

Issues	Parties					
	SPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ	Greens	NEOS	LP
Job Market & Employment	9%	5%	3%	3%	4%	0%
Immigration	3%	12%	18%	11%	8%	9%
European Integration	6%	12%	6%	9%	14%	0%
Economy	8%	12%	7%	4%	4%	7%
Environment	8%	7%	5%	17%	3%	4%
Corruption	6%	7%	12%	7%	10%	10%
Pensions	1%	3%	2%	0%	2%	0%

Data: AUTNES Coding of Party Press Releases 2017 (Müller et al. forthcoming a)

However, parties do not only have the possibility to reach out to the public via media coverage. They can also try to spread out information more directly, for example through their social media channels. This allows them to bypass the gatekeeping mechanism of traditional media and to provide 'unfiltered' information to their followers (see Skovsgaard & Van Dalen 2013: p.740-741). To control for this alternative source of political information I use the "AUTNES Coding of Facebook Pages 2017" (Müller et al. forthcoming b), which covers all postings that where published on the official accounts of the six analyzed parties or their front-runners during the last six weeks before the election. The topic of the posting was coded using the same coding scheme as for press releases. Again, specific codes where allocated to the seven analyzed issues (see Table A3 in the Appendix) and for each party (incl. front-runners) the number of postings addressing a specific issue was counted for the period of observation. This data is linked to survey respondents based on a question whether they have visited the Facebook page of a specific party or candidate during the election campaign (wave 4). For respondents who have not visited any of these Facebook pages, the control variables (one for each issue) have the value '0' for all parties[55].

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[55] The Facebook pages of the FPÖ and Heinz-Christian Strache were visited by most respondents (9.6%), followed by the ÖVP and Sebastian Kurz (8.2%), the SPÖ and Christian Kern (7.9%), the Greens and Ulrike Lunacek (3.6%), NEOS and Matthias Strolz (3.2%) and the Liste Pilz with front-runner Peter Pilz (2.6%). 82.9% of respondents have not visited any of these Facebook pages.

Another way of direct party communication are newspaper ads. They allow parties to target specific social groups, according to the characteristics in the readership of different newspapers, and people who cannot be reached by a party's online communication activities. Thus, when people read newspapers to inform themselves about politics, they are not only exposed to media coverage, but maybe also to direct party information. Furthermore, parties might use newspaper ads with the aim to influence a newspapers political coverage in their favor (see Eberl et. al 2018). Therefore, I control for ad placement in the eight analyzed newspapers during the last six weeks of the election campaign, based on data from the "AUTNES Content Analysis of Party Newspaper Ads 2017" (Müller et al. forthcoming c). The specific codes used to determine whether an ad addresses one of the analyzed issues are displayed in table A4 in the appendix. For each issue, the number of ads a party published in a newspaper was estimated for the period of observation (see table A5 in the appendix). These numbers were linked with the survey data, weighting them by the number of days a person reads a specific newspaper (0-7, see table A1)[56].

Finally, during election campaigns potential voters can also receive direct information form parties via interpersonal and impersonal canvassing (see Johann et al. 2018: pp.264-265). Therefore, control variables are included in the regression models that indicate whether a respondent has received information from parties by mail, e-mail, telephone, SMS or TV-commercials (*impersonal canvassing*, 0/1) and whether a respondent was directly approached by a party member at home, at work or during a campaign event (*interpersonal canvassing*, 0/1)[57].

However, whether a person's issue ownership perceptions are 'biased' by news consumption does not only depend on which information they receive and where this information comes from, but also on a person's individual predispositions. While variables controlling for these predispositions are included in all conditional logistic regression models, the hypotheses regarding a person's susceptibility to 'media bias' (see chapter 3.3.), will be tested by a subgroup analysis. Therefore, respondents are divided in various subsamples so that regression models can be conducted for each subgroup separately (one per issue and issue ownership dimension).

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[56] The formula used is similar to those for the independent variables (i=respondent; n=newspaper; j=party):

Exposure to a party's issue-specific newspaper ads = $\sum_1^n(days_{in} \times number\ of\ ads_{jn}\ ) / \sum_1^n days_{in}$

[57] Since there is no information available about the specific content of information a respondent received via canvassing, the control variables have the same value for all seven issues.

The first predispositions are a person's preexisting issue ownership perceptions. As mentioned in chapter 4.1., this is controlled for using a lagged dependent variable measured at wave 3 of the survey. For the subgroup analysis, people who chose the option 'no party' for an issue ownership question in wave 3 are compared to people who chose one of the six party alternatives (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, Greens, Neos, Liste Pilz). According to hypothesis 3, the effect of the independent variables (exposure to a party's issue-specific visibility and tonality in newspaper coverage) should be stronger for the first group.

The second predispositions are a person's issue priorities. This is measured at wave 3 of the survey, by asking respondents to name up to three political issues that are currently most important to them. For each of the seven analyzed issues a dummy variable is generated, taking the value '1' if an issue was named and '0' if not. For the subgroup analysis, respondents are divided based on these variables, with the first group ('1') expected to be more affected by 'media bias' (hypothesis 4).

Third, media bias on competence issue ownership is expected to depend on a person's policy preferences, with a stronger effect when the policy agreement between a person and a party is high (hypothesis 5). However, it is not possible to test this hypothesis directly, since no measurement of policy agreement is available. Instead, media effects are compared between positional and valence issues. Following Plescia and colleges (2020), 'Immigration' and 'European Integration' are considered as positional issues, while 'Job Market and Employment', 'Economy', 'Environment', 'Corruption' and 'Pensions' are considered as valence issues. Since for valence issues parties and voters generally agree upon the policy goals that should be pursued, 'media bias' is expected to be stronger for these five issues.

The fourth predispositions are a person's general party preferences. These are measured using *'probability to vote'*-questions (PTV) in wave 3. For each of the six analyzed parties, respondents were asked how likely it is that they would ever vote for this party on a scale form '0' ('highly unlikely') to 10 ('very likely'). Based on a respondent's general feelings towards the different parties, also their degree of party ambivalence is estimated[58]. Low values indicate that a respondent has rather clear party preferences (e.g., when the probability to vote for FPÖ

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[58] Following Johann and colleges (2018), the following formula is used to measure party ambivalence (see p.277):

party ambivalence = mean(PTV1, …, PTV6) – 2 x SD(PTV1, …, PTV6)

or ÖVP is '10', while it is '0' for all other parties), while respondents with high values have a similar (positive) feeling about multiple parties (e.g., when the probability to vote for each party is '6'). For the subgroup analysis, respondents are divided in three groups: 'low party ambivalence' (< -3), 'medium party ambivalence' (≥ -3 < 0) and 'high party ambivalence' (≥ 0). According to hypothesis 6, media affects are expected to be strongest for the third group.

A person's level of media trust, the fifth predisposition, is measured at wave 3 using a scale form '0' ('do not trust at all') to '10' ('completely trust'). Respondents are allocated to the following three subgroups: 'low media trust' (0-3), 'medium media trust' (4-6) and 'high media trust' (7-10), with the last group expected to be most susceptible to 'media bias' (hypothesis 7).

The final predisposition is a person's level of political sophistication. Political sophistication can be measured in several ways, for example using a person's self-reported political interest or their attention to the election campaign. However, the most straightforward way to do so is to estimate a person's factual knowledge about politics (Zaller 1992: p.43), since that can be considered as the final outcome of the different factors that contribute to a person's level of political sophistication. Therefore, political sophistication will be measured as the number of correct answers a respondent has given to six knowledge questions about Austrian politics (0-6)[59]. For the subgroup analysis respondents are divided in three groups: 'low political sophistication' (0-1), 'medium political sophistication' (2-4) and 'high political sophistication' (5-6). According to hypothesis 8, people with a medium level of political sophistication are expected to be those most likely influenced by 'media bias'.

Furthermore, to ensure that media effects are not produced by the frequency of media consumption, the total number of days a respondent reads the eight different newspapers is controlled for (0-56), as well their use of TV, radio, internet and social media as source for political information (see table 3)[60]. Finally, a respondents age in years (16-79), their gender (1/2)[61] and their level of formal education (0/1)[62] are added as basic socio-demographic control variables.

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[59] The questions ask about the age citizens are allowed to vote in Austria, the percentage a party needs to enter the parliament and the party affiliation of 4 Austrian politicians (Hans-Peter Doskozil, Sophie Karmasin, Sonja Hammerschmid, Herbert Kickl). While all other variables were measured in wave 3 or 4 of the panel study, these questions were measured in wave 1.
[60] For all of these variables, original values were recoded to range from 1 ('never') to 6 ('several times per day'). All of these variables are measured in wave 4.
[61] Male respondents are coded as '1', female respondents as '2'.
[62] Respondents who successfully passed their secondary education exams ('Matura') were coded as '1'.

5. Results

In order to investigate whether and how issue ownership perceptions are influenced by a person's news media consumption during the 2017 Austrian election campaign, I conduct a row of conditional logistic regressions following McFadden's choice model (see McFadden 1974). These models estimate the likelihood that one of the six analyzed parties (SPÖ; ÖVP; FPÖ; Greens; NEOS; Liste Pilz) is chosen as an associative or competence issue owner, and whether this likelihood is affected by the visibility and tonality of a party in the issue-specific newspaper coverage a respondent is exposed to. Regressions are conducted for the seven different issues, as well as for both dimensions of issue ownership separately.

Figure 4 displays the coefficients of media visibility and tonality (with a 95% confidence interval) when only these two independent variables are included in the conditional logistic regression models (see table A20 and A21 in the appendix). For the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Immigration', 'European Integration' and 'Corruption', the results are in line with hypotheses 1 and 2. The more visible a party was and the more positively it was portrayed in newspaper coverage about these topics during the election campaign, the more likely it is that a respondent exposed to this coverage named this party as competence issue owner. Regarding the tonality of coverage, the same applies for the issues 'Job Market and Employment', 'Economy' and 'Pensions', while the coefficients for media visibility are not significant for those three issues. The results for the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment' deviate from the other issues. It is the only issue where the coefficient of media tonality is not significant. Furthermore, the coefficient of media visibility is negative, meaning that the more visible a party is in the newspaper coverage about 'Environment' a respondent was exposed to, the less likely they are to name the party as competence issue owner.

The results for associative issue ownership perceptions are quite similar. Unlike the expectation that for this dimension of issue ownership only a party's issue-specific visibility in news coverage should be important (due to the fact that this dimension does not necessarily include a positive valuation of a party), the coefficients for media tonality are again positive and significant for all issues except 'Environment'. For media visibility, on the other hand, a positive and significant result can be observed only for 'Immigration', 'European Integration' and 'Corruption'. The coefficients for 'Environment' and for 'Pensions' are both negative and significant.

Figure 4: Correlation of media coverage and issue ownership perceptions (table A20 & A21)
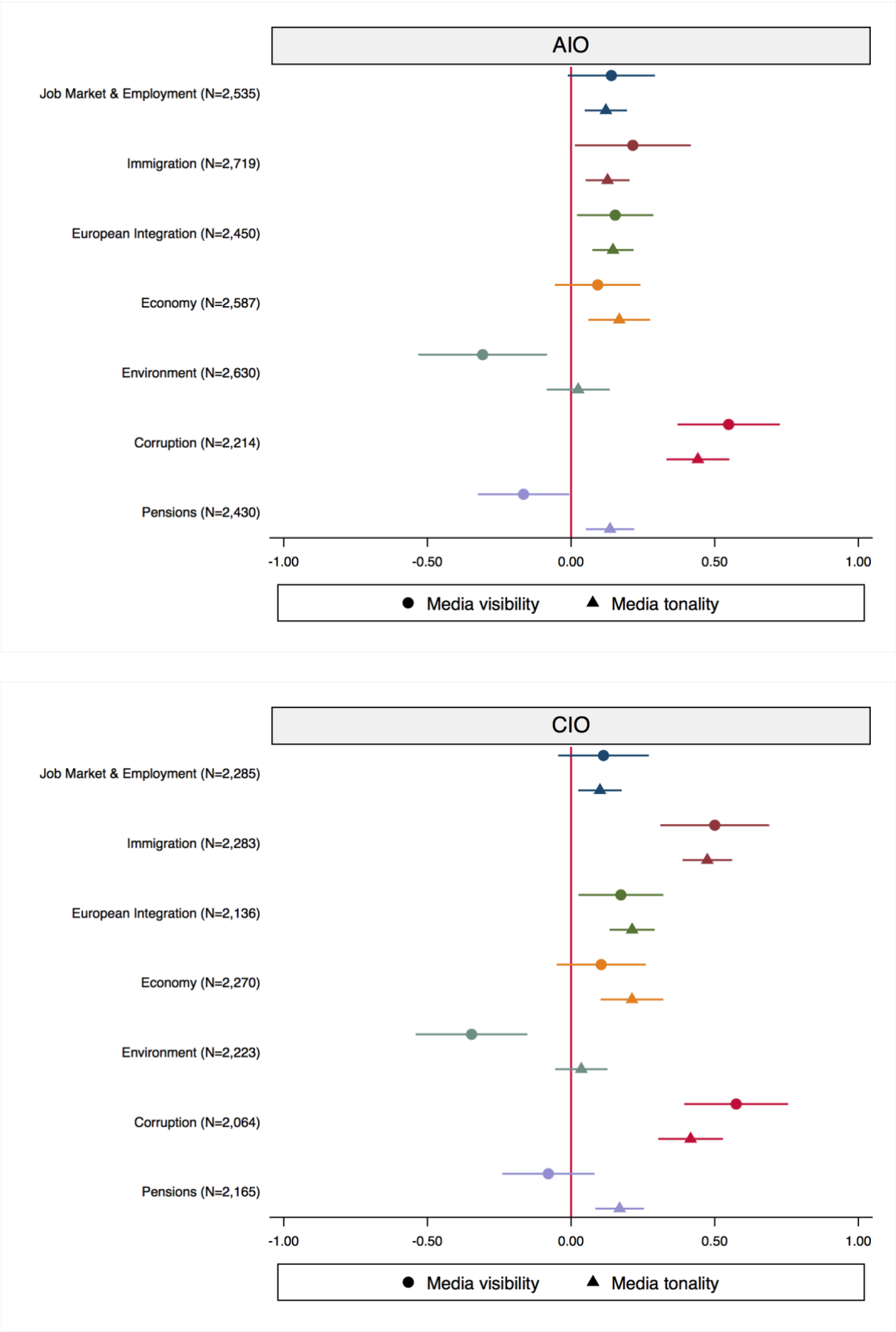
However, although the results displayed in Figure 4 show that for most issues there is a positive correlation between a party's issue-specific visibility or tonality and the issue ownership perceptions of news consumers, this cannot be directly interpreted as a form of 'media bias'. There are other reasons that might explain these correlations. For example, news decisions of journalist and editors might be influenced by their own issue ownership perceptions (see Hayes 2008; Van Camp 2018), and if these perceptions match with those of the wider society, causality would run from issue ownership perceptions to media content and not the other way around. The same is true in case of 'selective exposure', with news consumers selecting information sources that more or less align with their preexisting issue ownership perceptions (see e.g., Garrett 2009: p.677-680). Finally, such correlations could result just from patterns of party communication that are transmitted via media coverage and thus would not be the product of a 'biased' political coverage of different media outlets.

To rule out these alternative explanations, a lagged measurement of issue ownership perceptions (wave 3) and the control variables described in chapter 4.4. (i.e., party communication via press releases, Facebook postings and newspaper ads) are added to the conditional logistic regression models. Furthermore, regressions are repeated for several subsamples to test the hypotheses about the susceptibility to 'media bias' (see table A6 – A19 in the appendix)[63]. The results for the two independent variables (exposure to a party's issue specific visibility and tonality in newspaper coverage) are shown in Figure 5 to Figure 9 (coefficients with 95% confidence intervals)[64]. The blue dots in each figure show the coefficients from models where all respondents are included, the other symbols (red squares, yellow diamonds, green triangles) show coefficients from the subsample models[65]. For a few issue-subsample combinations, no results can be provided because the conditional logistic regressions do not converge for these models. This might be caused by the small sample size and a lack of variation on the dependent variable.

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[63] Tables A6 to A19 display only the coefficients for all alternative-specific variables (variables that vary between respondents *and* parties). The case-specific variables (variables that vary *only* between respondents) not shown in the tables are 'issue importance', 'party ambivalence', 'media trust', 'political sophistication', 'total amount of newspaper consumption (days per week)', 'frequency of news consumption via TV', 'frequency of news consumption via radio', 'frequency of news consumption via internet', 'frequency of news consumption via social media', 'age', 'gender' and 'education'.

[64] Both variables are standardized using the following formula: $X(standardized) = (X - mean(X)) / SD(X)$

[65] The size of coefficients from different logistic regression models might not be comparable on a one-to-one basis (see e.g., Allision 1999; Karlson et al. 2012; Kuha & Mills 2020). Therefore, the analysis of the subsample models will primarily focus on differences regarding significance and direction of coefficients, not on differences regarding their size.

Figure 5: Media bias on issue ownership perceptions – preexisting IO (table A6 - A19)

AIO: Environment

Media visibility

Media tonality

-2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00

● overall (N=1,727)   ■ no preexisting AIO (N=119)
▲ preexisting AIO (N=1,608)

CIO: Environment

Media visibility

Media tonality

-2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00

● overall (N=1,461)   ■ no preexisting CIO (N=205)
▲ preexisting CIO (N=1,256)

AIO: Corruption

Media visibility

Media tonality

-2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00

● overall (N=1,479)   ■ no preexisting AIO (N=207)
▲ preexisting AIO (N=1,272)

CIO: Corruption

Media visibility

Media tonality

-2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00

● overall (N=1,392)   ■ no preexisting CIO (N=253)
▲ preexisting CIO (N=1,139)

AIO: Pensions

Media visibility

Media tonality

-2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00

● overall (N=1,618)   ■ no preexisting AIO (N=175)
▲ preexisting AIO (N=1,443)

CIO: Pensions

Media visibility

Media tonality

-2.00   -1.00   0.00   1.00   2.00

● overall (N=1,427)   ■ no preexisting CIO (N=195)
▲ preexisting CIO (N=1,232)

The results of the overall sample displayed in Figure 5 (blue dots) indicate that 'media bias' on issue ownership perceptions is rather an exception, not the rule. Out of all 28 visibility and tonality coefficients, only the effect of media tonality on the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions' is positive and statistically significant[66]: how the different parties were evaluated in the newspapers' coverage on pensions has indeed affected which party is perceived as most competent, even when controlling for preexisting issue ownership perceptions, party communication or a person's general party preferences. Furthermore, there is a significant effect for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment', however, this effect surprisingly was negative. When a party was evaluated well in newspapers' coverage of the environmental issue, news consumers where actually less likely to ascribe competence to this party[67]. For all other issues, neither associative nor competence issue ownership perceptions are 'biased' by newspaper coverage, at least not when looking at the overall sample.

Besides the coefficients of the overall sample (blue dots), Figure 5 displays also the coefficients for the first two subsamples: people with no preexisting issue ownership perceptions for an issue (red squares) and people with preexisting issue ownership perceptions (green triangles)[68]. In line with hypothesis 3, positive and significant effects of media visibility and tonality are only found in cases where respondents did not name a party as issue owner in wave 3. For this group of respondents, issue ownership perceptions were 'biased' by the visibility of a party in newspapers' coverage of 'Corruption' (competence) and by the tonality of parties in the coverage about 'Job Market and Employment' (association) and 'Pensions' (competence). Although the sample sizes of respondents with preexisting issue ownership perceptions are considerable larger, none of the 28 coefficients turned out to be positive and statistically significant. Only in case of competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment' the coefficient for media tonality is significant, with a negative sign (like in case of the overall sample). Therefore, people that lack issue ownership perceptions tend to be the more susceptible to media bias than people with preexisting perceptions of issue ownership.

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[66] If not specified otherwise, the level of significance is always $p < 0.05$.

[67] This reversed form of 'media bias' is rather puzzling. It might be caused by an 'act of defiance', with news consumers not only rejecting information that contradicts with their established attitudes, but even adapting their issue ownership perceptions in an opposite direction in response. Some cues for the plausibility of this assumption are provided when looking at differences between subgroups. A negative and significant coefficient of media tonality was only found for respondents with already established competence issue ownership perceptions for 'Environment' (see Figure 5), respondents for whom the issue was not very important (see Figure 6), respondents with a medium level of media trust (see Figure 8) and with a low level of political sophistication (see Figure 9).

[68] Respondents are divided based on whether they have chosen the option 'no party' for the issue ownership questions in wave 3.

Figure 6: Media bias on issue ownership perceptions – issue importance (table A6 - A19)
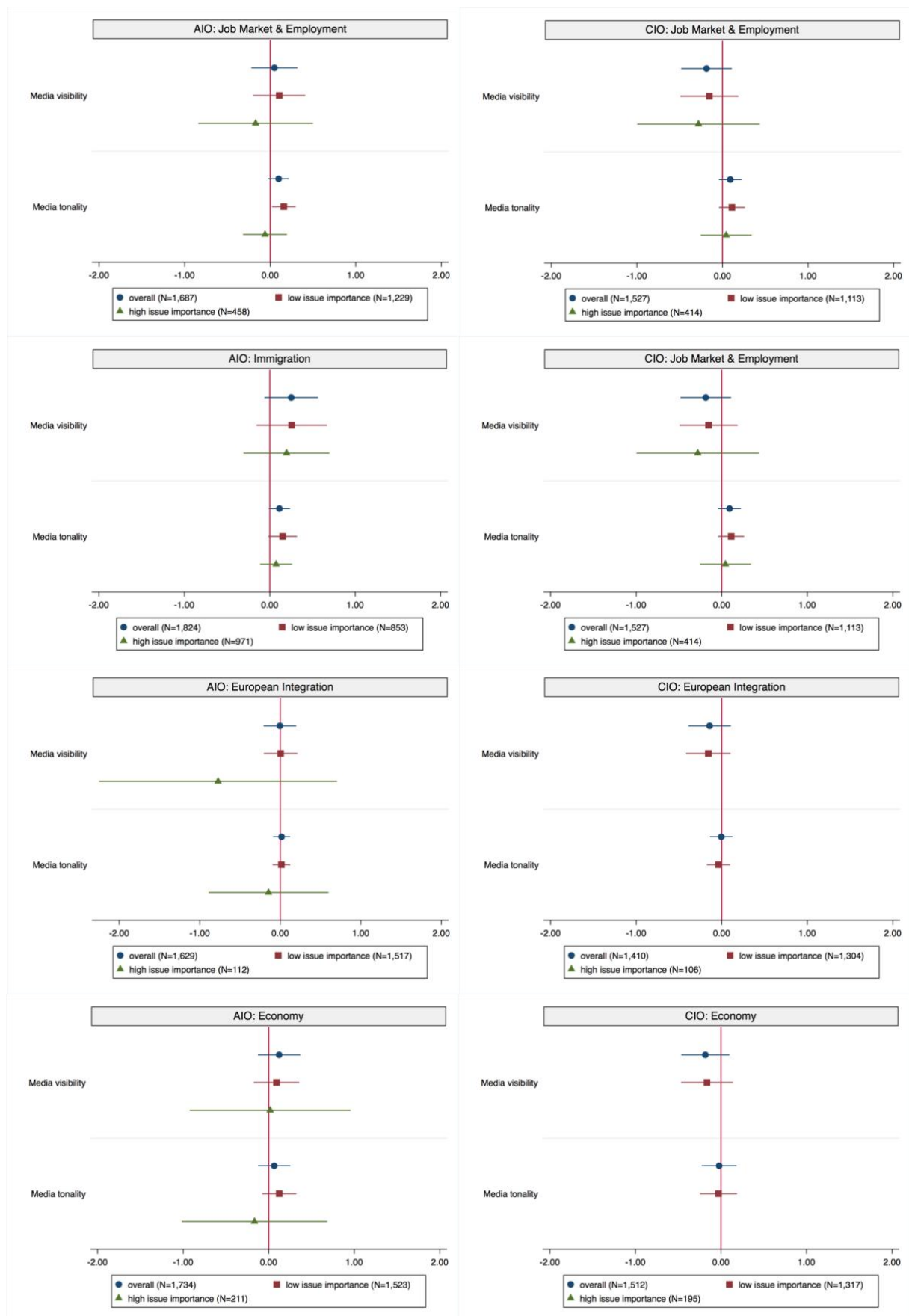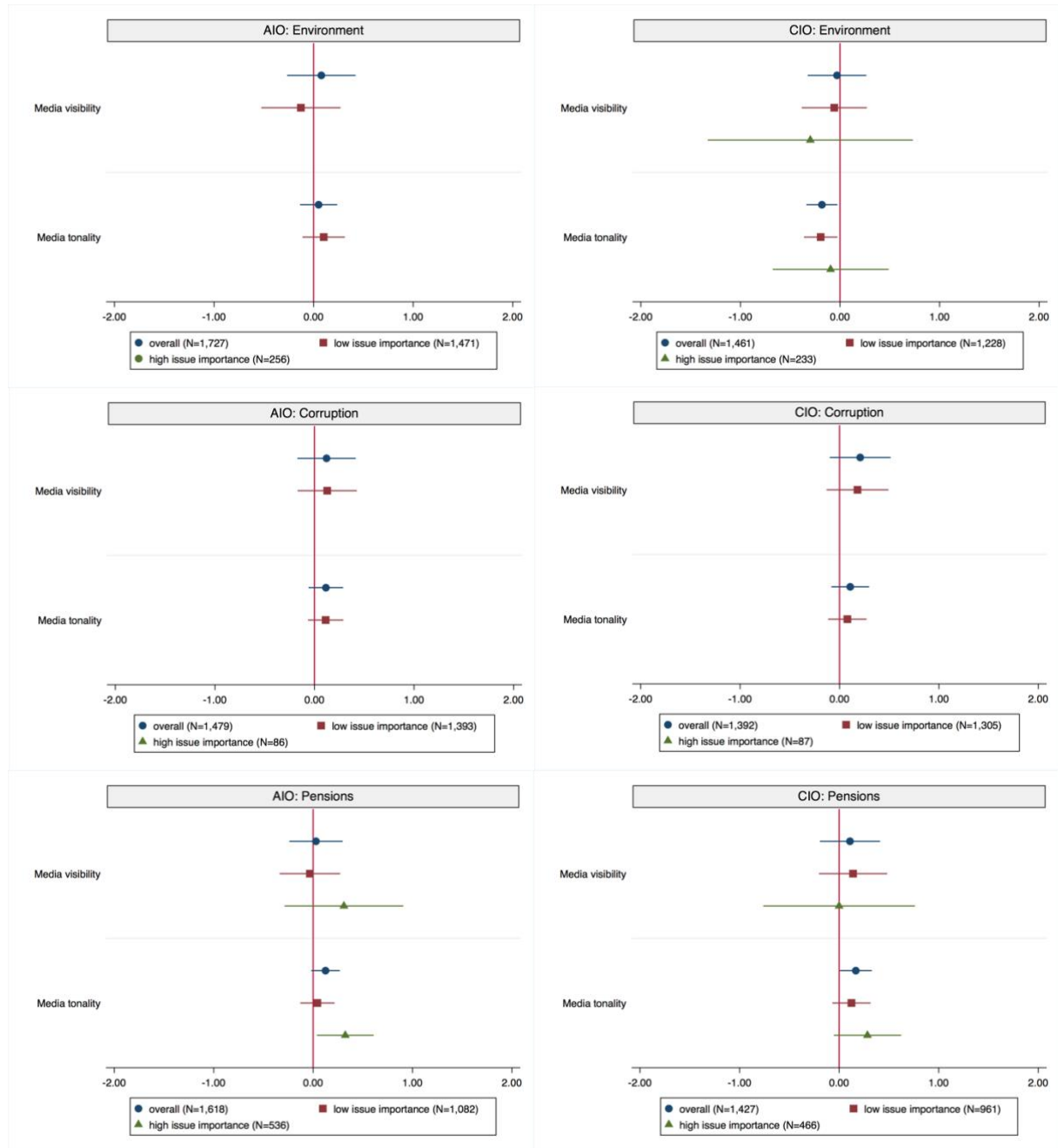
The next groups that are compared regarding their susceptibility for media bias (see Figure 6) are respondents with low (red squares) and respondents with high issue importance (green triangles)[69]. According to hypotheses 4, people who perceive an issue to be important are expected to be more susceptible for 'media bias', due to their higher attention for information about these issues. However, for most of the issues the coefficients of the independent variables are not statistically significant, and they hardly differ between both subgroups. One positive and significant effect is found for each subgroup. While the associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment' are 'biased' by the tonality of newspaper coverage only for respondents who did not perceive the issue to be important, the opposite pattern can be observed for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions', with only the 'high importance' subgroup being affected by the tonality of coverage[70]. Furthermore, a negative significant effect is found again for the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment', but only for respondents with low issue importance. Thus, none of the two subgroups seems to be particularly more susceptible to 'media bias'.

A potential explanation for this lack of difference might be that people with high issue importance are not only those who are more interested in information about this issue, but also those who have already more established issue ownership perceptions[71]. So even if they might be more often exposed to media coverage about these issues than people who do not care about them, this coverage will less often result in an adaption of their issue ownership perceptions. Therefore, whether either subgroup is more likely to be biased, could depend on what kind of information is provided in media coverage about an issue. For example, people with high issue importance might only be 'biased' when media coverage contains some new insights about a party's connection to an issue (e.g., when a party has changed its policy position on an issue). People with low issue importance on the other hand might be more likely 'biased' by media coverage, when an issue is particularly high on the public agenda, so that they cannot avoid being exposed to it.

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[69] For 5 of the 14 dependent variables, the conditional logistic regression models of the 'high issue importance' subsamples do not converge. This might be caused by the especially low sample size and a lack of variation on the dependent variable for these subgroups.

[70] These results conflict with hypothesis 2a, according to which associative issue ownership perceptions should not be affected by the tonality of media coverage, due to the lacking valuation component of this dimension. A potential explanation might be that positive coverage is more memorable then neutral or negative coverage.

[71] This assumption is supported by the results displayed in table A22 and A23 in the appendix. For both dimensions of issue ownership and across all issues the percentage of respondents who changed their issue ownership perception between wave 3 and wave 4 of the survey was always higher among people with a 'low issue importance'. This is also true when only switches between parties are considered. The differences in the stability of issue ownership perceptions between both groups ranged from 2% (AIO of Economy (only parties)) to 14% (AIO of European Integration).

Figure 7: Media bias on issue ownership perceptions – party ambivalence (table A6 - A19)
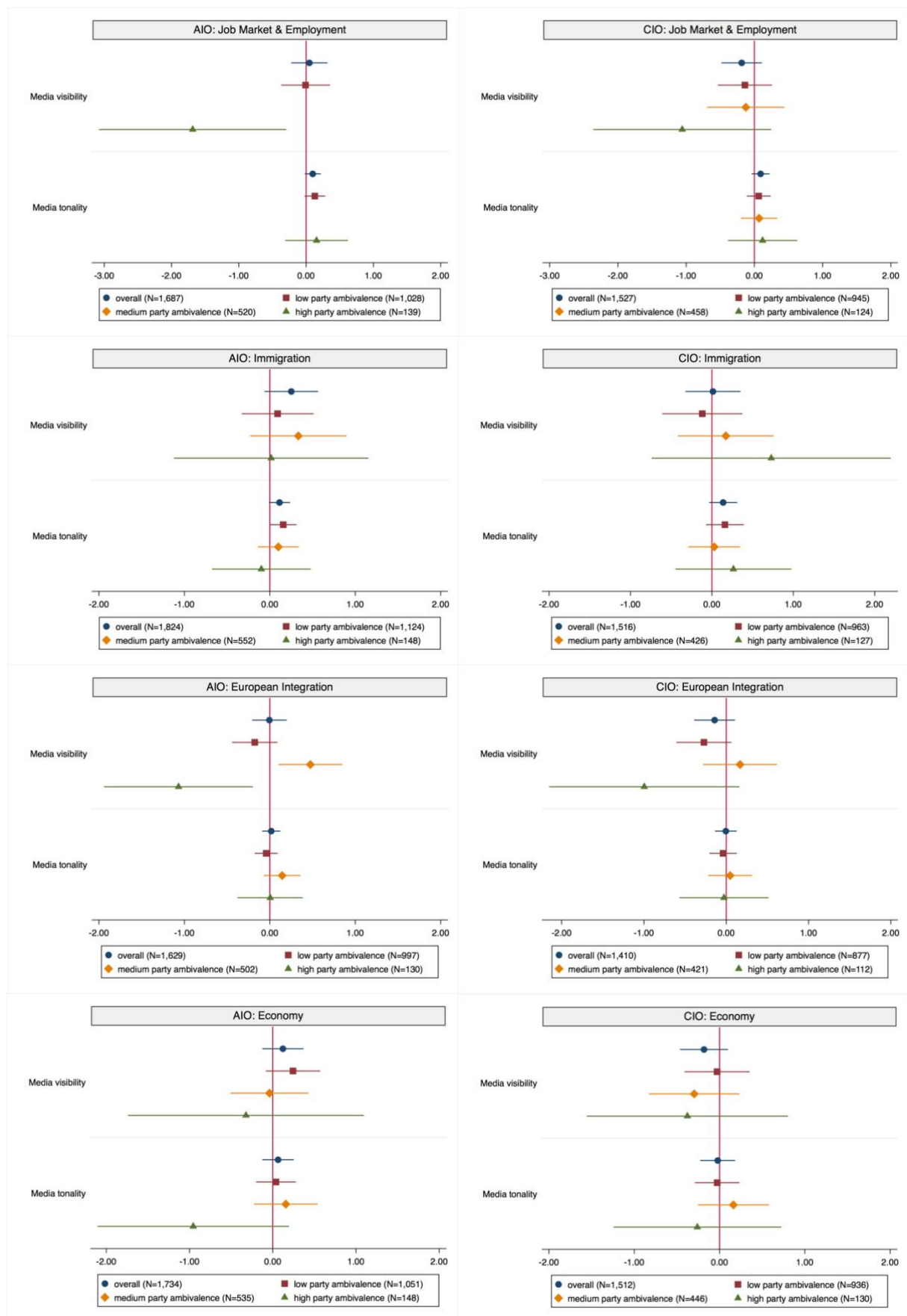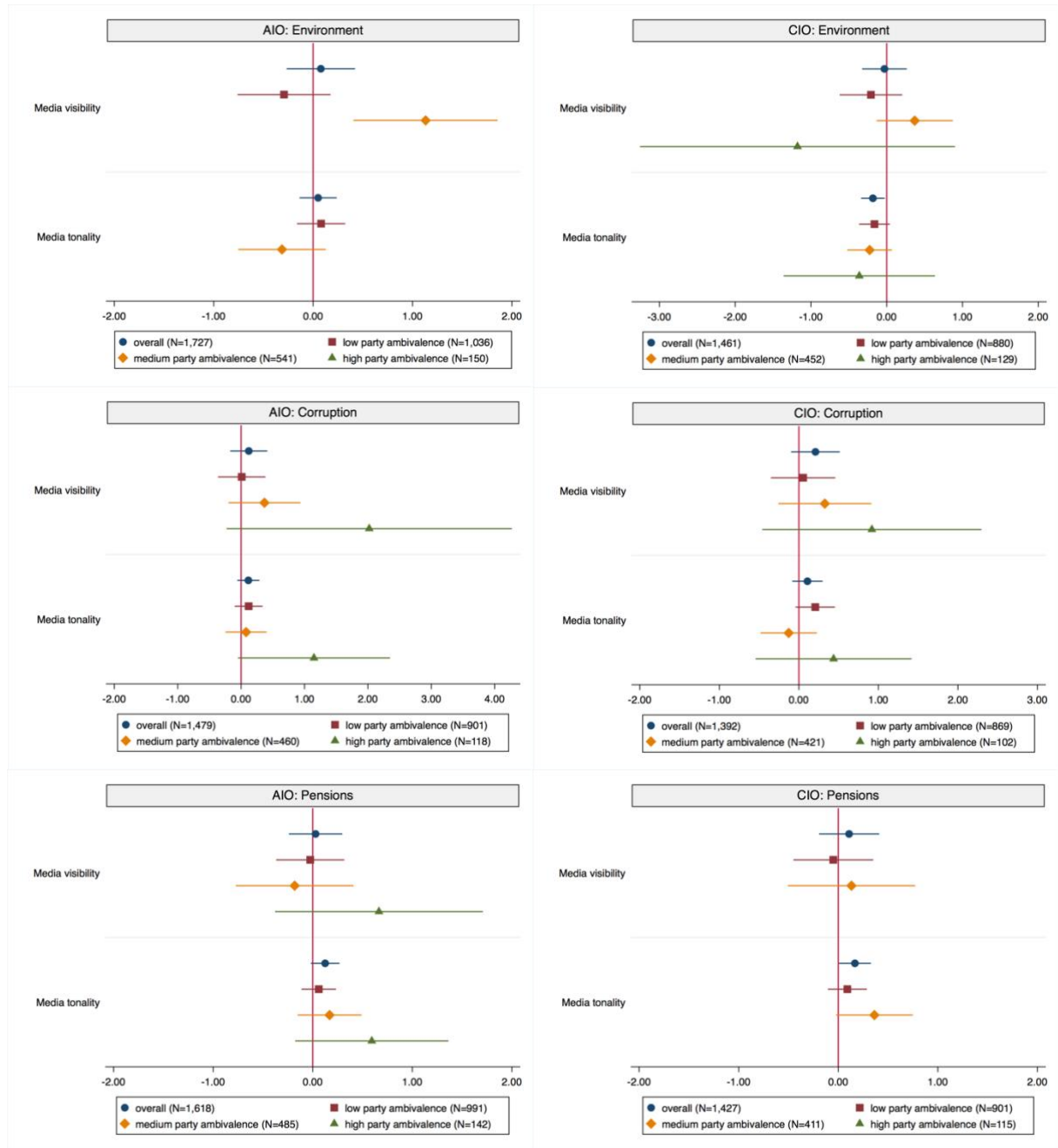
Turning to the next predisposition that might influence a person's susceptibility to 'media bias', Figure 7 display the results for respondents with low (red squares), medium (yellow diamonds) and high party ambivalence (green triangles). First, unlike expected in hypothesis 6, the effect of media visibility and tonality on competence issue ownership perception does not depend on a respondent's level of party ambivalence. For some issues the coefficients of the 'high party ambivalence'-group were positive and somewhat larger than those of the other subgroups (effect of media visibility and tonality on 'Immigration' and 'Corruption'), on other issues they were negative and somewhat smaller (effect of media visibility on 'Job Market and Employment', 'European Integration' and 'Environment'). Nevertheless, not a single coefficient of the different subgroups reached statistical significance. For associative issue ownership perceptions on the other hand, some differences between the subgroups can be observed. However, the results are not consistent across different issues and types of media bias. For the associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Immigration', respondents with a low party ambivalence are the only group that is 'biased' by the tonality of newspaper coverage. For the issues 'European Integration' and 'Environment', the effect of media visibility turned out to be positive and significant for respondents with a medium level of party ambivalence. Finally, for the issues 'Corruption' and 'Pensions' the effect of media visibility and tonality were stronger among respondents with a high party ambivalence, however, without reaching statistical significance. Furthermore, for this subgroup, the visibility coefficients for the issues 'Job Market and Employment' and 'European Integration' are negative and significant, meaning that these respondents were actually less likely to associate a party with these issues when it was more visible in the newspapers' coverage[72].

Furthermore, a person's susceptibility to 'media bias' is expected to depend on whether they trust the source of information (hypothesis 7). Figure 8 displays the coefficients for the subsample analysis of respondents with low (red squares), medium (yellow diamonds) and high media trust (green triangles). In three cases, results are in line with the expectations. The issue ownership perceptions of respondents with a high media trust are biased by parties' visibility for the newspaper coverage of 'Job Market and Employment' (AIO) and by the tonality of parties in the coverage of 'Immigration' (CIO) and 'Corruption' (AIO). In several other cases, there is a tendency of this subgroup to be more affected, however, without being significant.

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[72] The inconsistent results and broad confidence intervals of the 'high party ambivalence' group might partly be explained by its heterogenous composition. For example, it includes respondents whose probability to vote for any of the six parties is '0', as well as respondents whose probability to vote for any of the six parties is '5' or higher. While for the first group of respondents the 'high' level of party ambivalence is probably the result of a general disenchantment with politics, the latter respondents are actually torn between multiple parties.

Figure 8: Media bias on issue ownership perceptions – media trust (table A6 - A19)
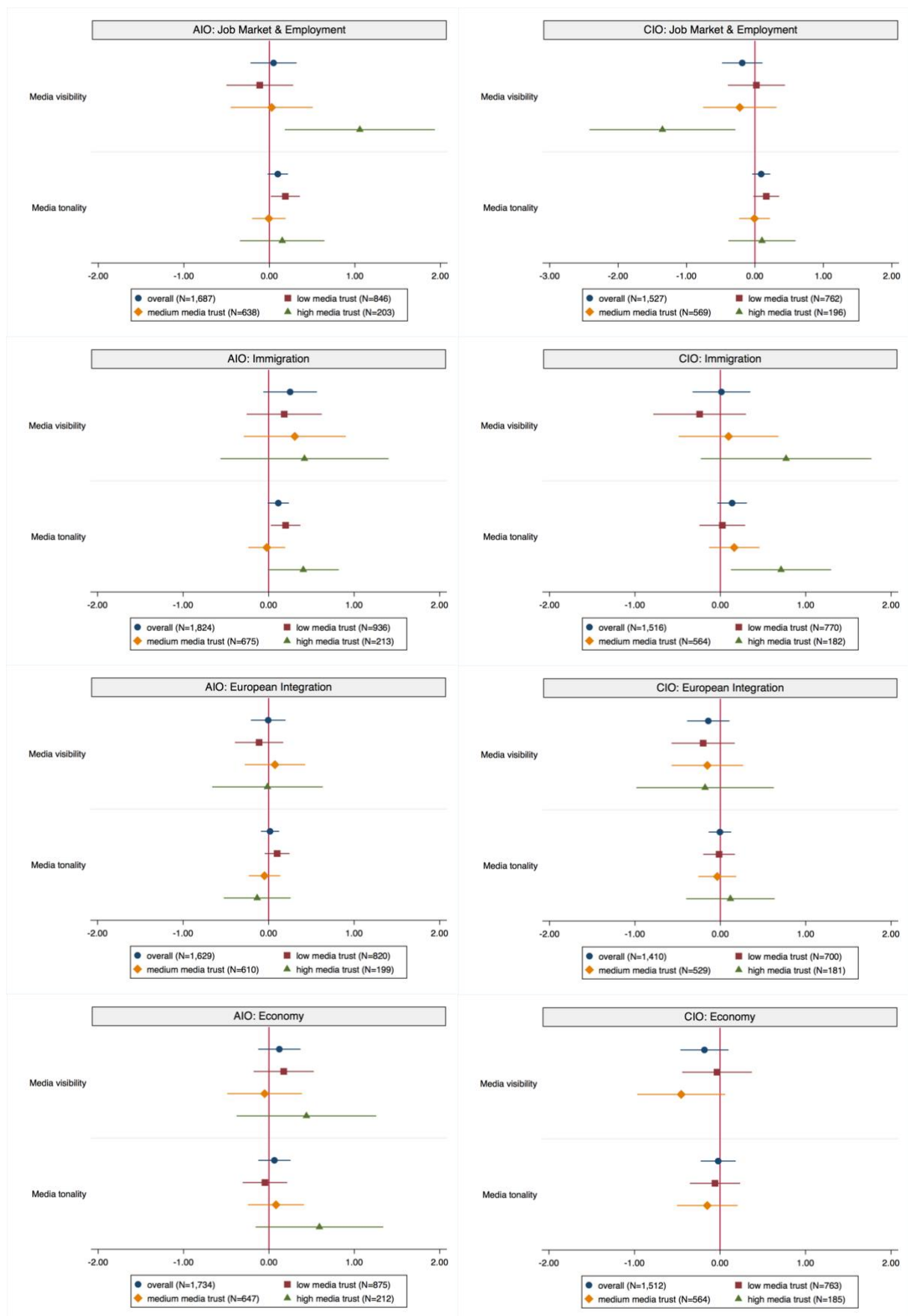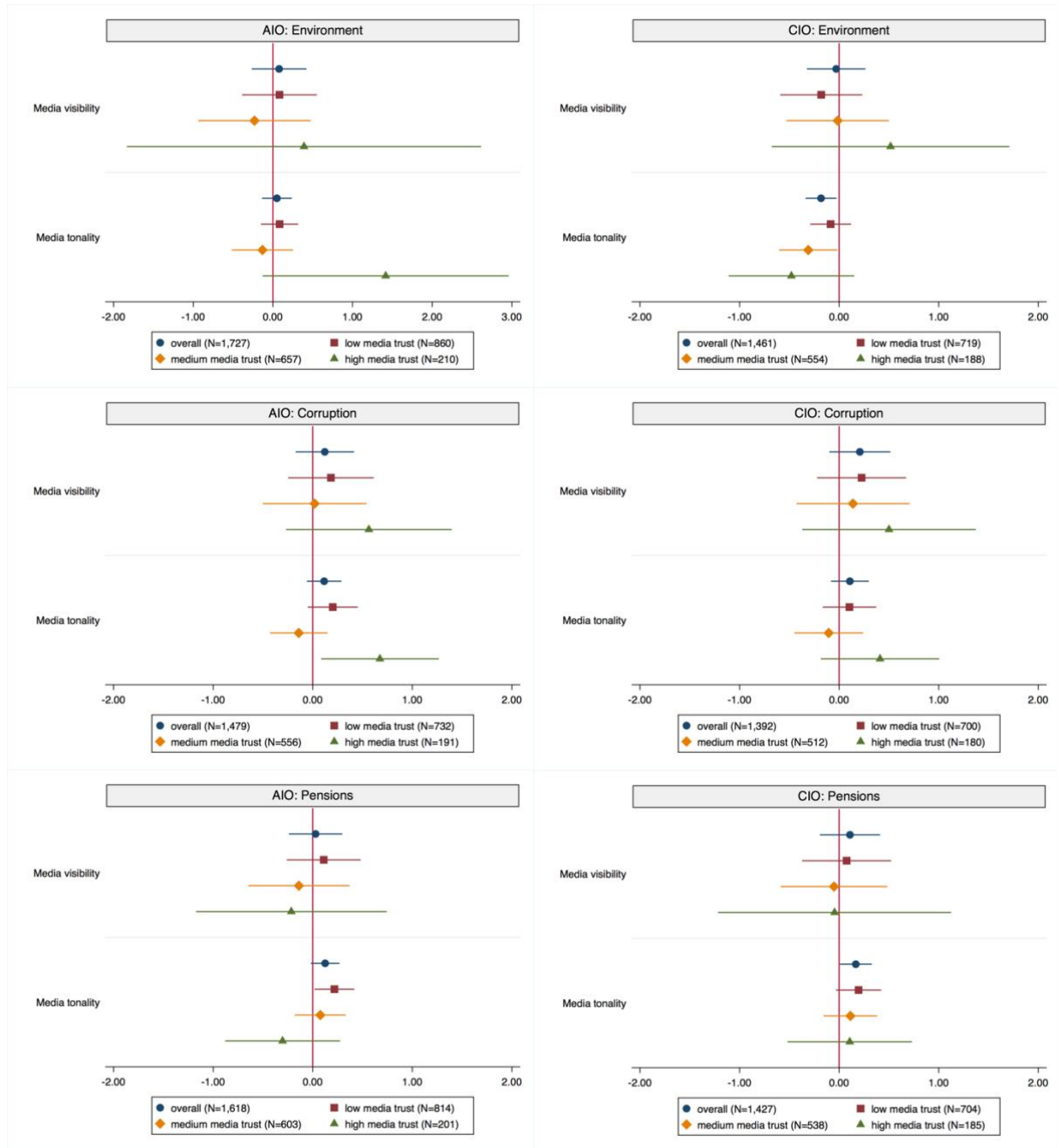
Nevertheless, in two cases it is the group of respondents with low media trust that is 'biased' by newspaper coverage. For the associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions' and 'Immigration' the coefficients for media tonality reached significance only for this subgroup, even though in the latter case the coefficient is actually smaller than the one of respondents with high media trust. Furthermore, two negative but significant results are found. For respondents with high media trust, there is a 'negative visibility bias' for the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment' and for respondents with a medium level of media trust a 'negative tonality bias' for the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment'. So, while in most cases respondents with high media trust tend to be more susceptible to 'media bias', exceptions from this pattern exist. Even when people distrust media as transmitter of information, there are some situations where they are biased by media coverage, probably without noticing it.[73]

Finally, Figure 9 shows the results for respondents with different levels of political sophistication. According to hypothesis 8, people with a medium level of political sophistication are expected to be more susceptible to 'media bias'. However, the only significant results are found for the group of respondents with a low level of political sophistication. The issue ownership perceptions of this group are 'biased' by the tonality of newspaper coverage for 'Job Market and Employment', 'Immigration' (both AIO) and 'Corruption' (CIO). Regarding the competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment', a 'negative tonality bias' for respondents with low political sophistication can be observed. For most of the other issue ownership perceptions, the effects of media visibility and tonality do hardly differ between the three subgroups.

To sum up, the results displayed in Figure 4 to 9 indicate that issue ownership perceptions are normally not 'biased' by media coverage across all news consumers, but that only specific groups within society are affected in this way. Unlike in case of the overall samples, positive and significant effects of media visibility and tonality are found for several subgroups across all issues[74] (except 'Economy') and for both dimensions of issue ownership. However, which groups are affected vary from issue to issue, probably depending on the specific content of the issue-specific media coverage. Only in case of preexisting issue ownership perceptions do the results clearly conform with the hypotheses about susceptibility to 'media bias'.

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[73] Result might be different when media outlet specific trust measures were used. However, such measurements were not available.
[74] Thus, hypothesis 5 is not supported, since 'media bias' occurs for 'positional' and 'valence issues' alike.

Figure 9: Media bias on issue ownership perceptions – pol. sophistication (table A6 - A19)
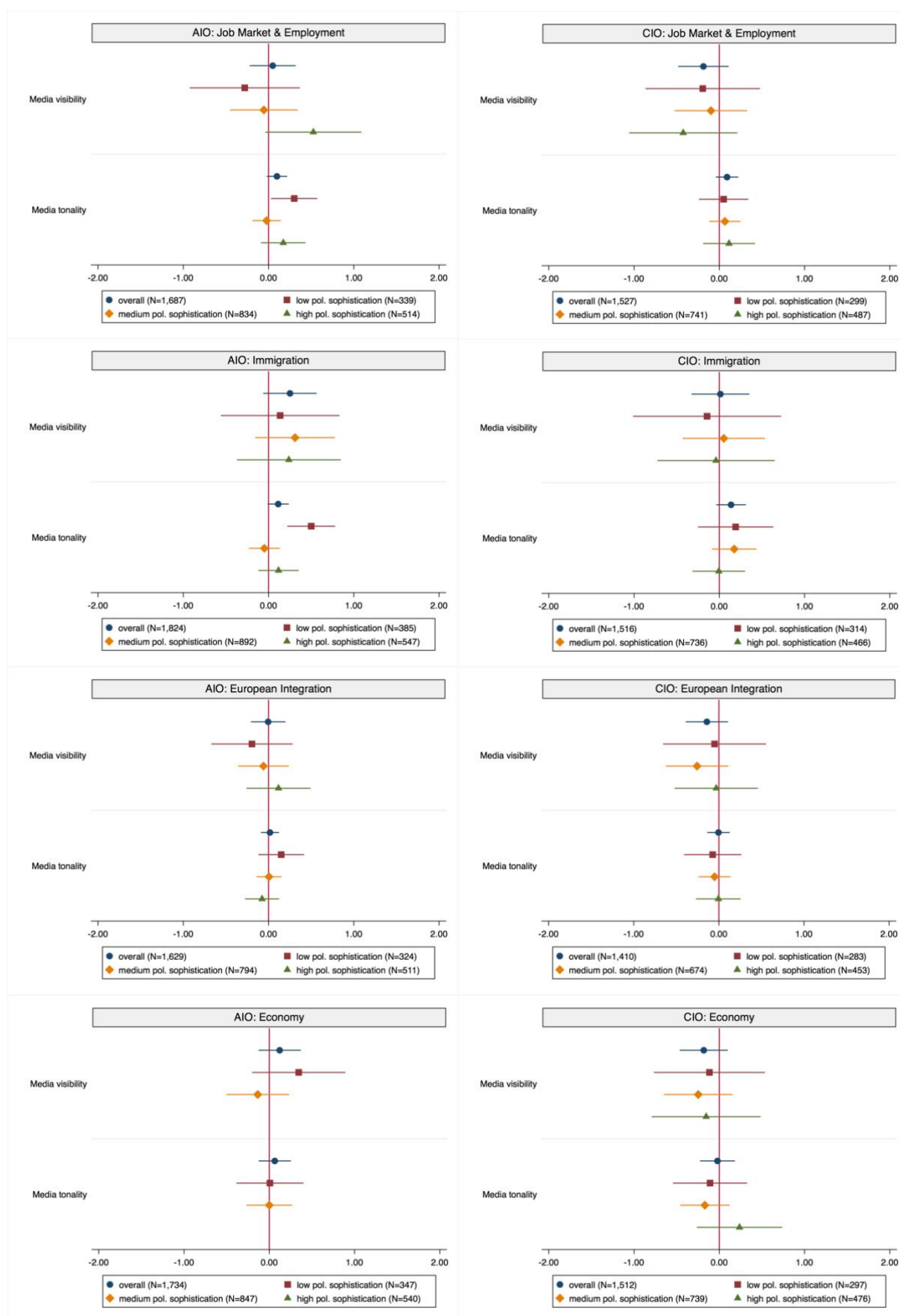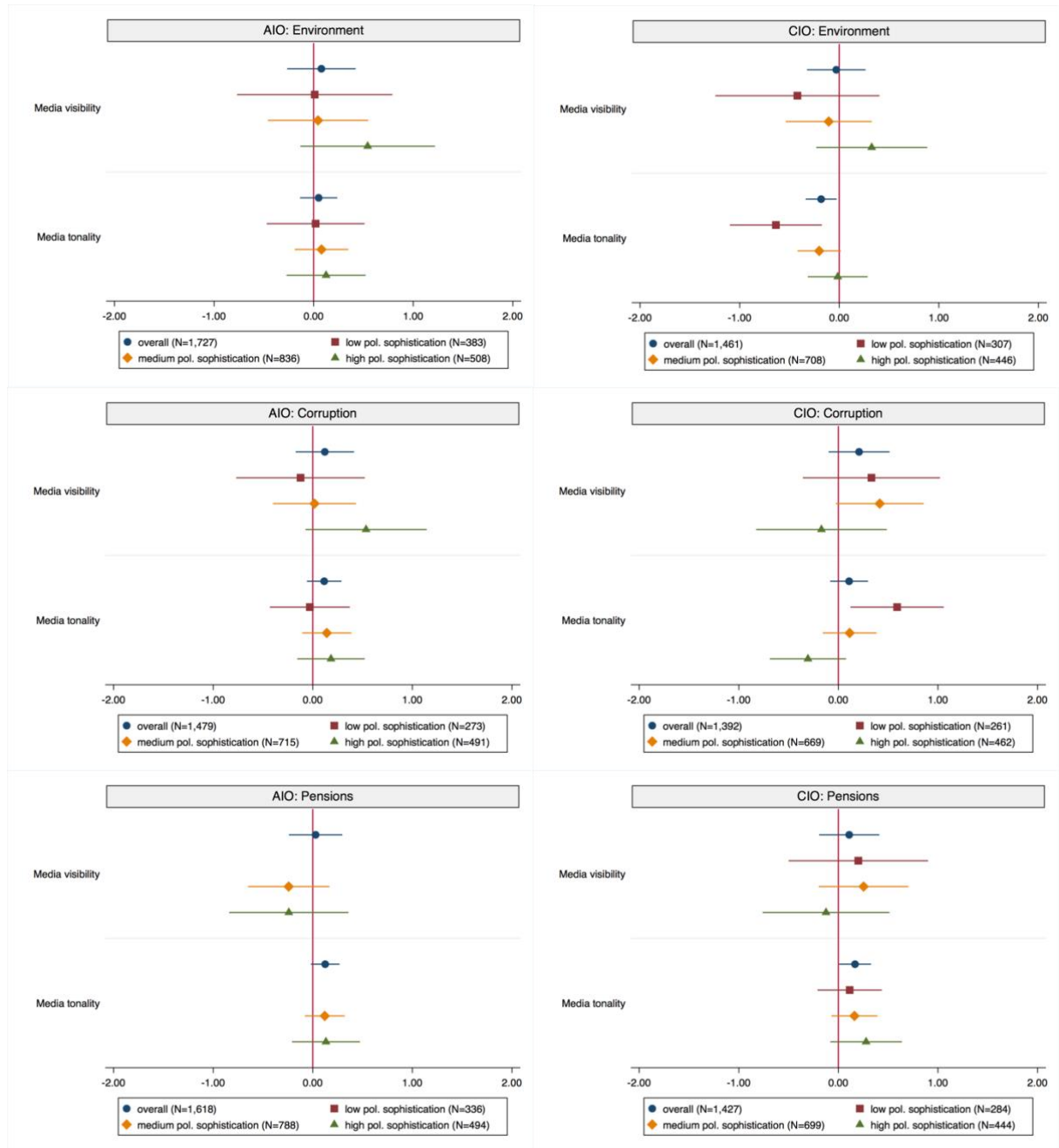
Besides the media effects described above, several other variables are found to influence issue ownership perceptions (see table A6 - A19). First and not surprising, the lagged measurements of associative and competence issue ownership perceptions have a positive and highly significant (p <0.001) effect in every single regression model. Thus, there is a high degree of continuity in the issue ownership perceptions of respondents throughout the election campaign. Second, also a respondent's general party preferences are a strong determinant for which party they associate with an issue and which party they judge to be competent to deal with it. There are only three cases where the coefficient does not reach statistical significance (AIO and CIO of 'Immigration' and AIO of 'European Integration'), all for the subsample of respondents with a high party ambivalence[75].

From the variables controlling for party communication, Facebook postings turned out to be most effective. All coefficients of the overall samples are positive and significant, except for the associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment'. Thus, the more postings about an issue were published on the Facebook pages of parties and front-runners a respondent has visited during the election campaign, the more likely it is that a respondent considers a party as associative or competence issue owner[76]. This higher effectiveness of Facebook postings in influencing issue ownership perceptions compared to media coverage can be related to two reasons. First, unlike media coverage, Facebook postings by parties or politicians are aimed explicitly to be persuasive, and thus they are less likely to contain ambivalent or complex information. Second, they might have a more susceptible audience, because most of the time they are seen by individuals who actively seek political information. Therefore, Facebook (and other social media channels as well) seem to be a suitable tool for parties to reach out to voters directly to enhance their issue reputations, even though only a small part of the electorate can be addressed this way (about 17% of respondents).

Contrary to that, party press releases and newspaper ads about an issue had no effect on issue ownership perceptions, at least when looking at the overall effects. Interpersonal canvassing significantly increased a party's likelihood to be perceived as competence issue owner of 'Economy' and associative issue owner of 'Corruption', while impersonal canvassing increased a party's likelihood to be associated with 'Environment' or judged competent on 'Pensions'.

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[75] This is not surprising, since with higher party ambivalence there is a lower variability of party preferences (probability to vote).
[76] Like with the effects of media coverage, there are several differences between subgroups. For example, except for the issue 'Immigration' the effect of Facebook postings was only significant for respondents with a medium or high level of political sophistication (see table A6 – A19).

6. Conclusion

In this master thesis I have investigated whether a person's issue ownership perceptions (*association* and *competence*) are 'biased' by issue-specific media coverage and the circumstances that make such 'bias' more likely. This was expected to be the case when convenient information (e.g., information about a party's issue priorities or its performance on an issue) meets susceptible recipients (e.g., people with no preexisting issue ownership perceptions or a high level of media trust) (see Figure 1 in chapter 2.4.).

The empirical analysis was conducted for the 2017 Austrian election campaign, by linking content analyses of newspaper coverage and party communication activities (press releases, Facebook postings, newspaper ads) with survey data from the beginning and the end of the election campaign. Newspapers differed in how they have reported about parties in their coverage of specific issues (see Figure A1 in the appendix). News consumers therefore were exposed to different 'pictures' about the connection between parties and issues (see Figure 3 in chapter 4.3.), depending on the newspapers they have read. These differences were reflected in the issue ownership perceptions of respondents, with more visible and better evaluated parties being more likely associated with an issue and more likely to be judged as most competent (see Figure 4 in chapter 5).

However, issue ownership perceptions can only be considered as 'biased' by media coverage, (1) when this coverage is not simply a reflection of structural differences between parties or a reflection of parties' own communication activities, and (2) when causality runs from media coverage to issue ownership perceptions and not the other way around (e.g., in case of 'selective exposure'). The regression models conducted in this master thesis have accounted for these alternative explanations by including party-fixed effects, a lagged measurement of issue ownership perceptions and control variables for party communication, making them to a conservative and robust test for the identification of 'media bias'.

The results showed that 'media bias' does not occur across the board, but only among specific groups (see Figure 5 to 9 in chapter 5). Attitudinal predispositions like party ambivalence, media trust or political sophistication enhance or limit a person's susceptibility to 'media bias'. Which kind of predispositions are important in this matter and how was not consistent across issues and for different types of 'media bias' (visibility and tonality). Therefore, future research should further investigate under which circumstances people are more likely to be 'biased'.

The fact that significant media effects were only found for a small number of subgroups is consistent with the scholarly consideration that these perceptions are usually rather stable political attitudes. However, the empirical investigation of this master thesis was limited to a period of only three weeks before the election. This indicates that even in the short-run issue ownership perceptions are not as unalterable as often assumed. Moreover, media effects are likely to be underestimated when including a lagged dependent variable in the regression models (see Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007: p.374) and considering the accumulation of measurement errors contained in the content analysis of newspaper coverage and in the self-reported frequency of newspaper consumption (see Scharkow & Bachl 2017). This makes the detected results even more convincing.

Additionally, measuring 'media bias' is not that straightforward, since researchers usually do not know what specific content respondents have been actually exposed to. While in this master thesis the simple number of newspaper articles addressing a specific issue and the evaluation of parties in these articles were linked to respondents based on questions about how often they read different newspapers, a more sophisticated 'exposure measure' could have been applied. For example, the prominence of news content (e.g., whether an article was published on the front page of a newspaper) is likely to guide news consumers attention and thus influence which information they will be more likely to receive (see De Vreese 2017: p.229). Likewise, more recent newspaper articles could be more accessible in the minds of news consumers, so that researches might weight them higher when constructing media exposure measures (ibid: p.231). Finally, political coverage often contains information that originates from different sources (e.g., political actors, activists, experts, journalists) and whether and how media content affects news consumers might differ between these sources (see Kleinnijenhuis et al. 2007: p.369).

Furthermore, the existence and magnitude of 'media bias' might depend on several contextual factors that are worth to be examined by future research. First, in order for issue ownership perceptions to be 'biased', media coverage has to include some information that brings new insights about the connection between parties and issues. This is more likely to be the case when an issue is new to the public agenda, but also when parties have changed their issue priorities or policy positions and different media outlets cover these changes in different ways. In contrast, when the available information about the connection of different parties to an issue is rather consistent over a long period of time, changes of issue ownership perceptions in general and 'media bias' on these perceptions in particular will be unlikely.

Second, how dynamic issue ownership perceptions are and thus how easily they can be 'biased' by media coverage, probably depends on the characteristics of the party system. In context of the Austrian parliamentary election 2017, six parties have competed for voters and public attention. However, one of them (Liste Pilz) was founded shortly before the election and another party (NEOS) has been in parliament only since 2013, so that both parties had not much time to build up issue reputations among the electorate. Therefore, 'media bias' on issue ownership perceptions might be even more common in countries that have had a high effective number of parties (see Laakso and Taagepera 1979) over a long period of time (e.g., the Netherlands).

Third, characteristics of the media system are likely to enhance or limit 'media bias' as well. Austria's media landscape is characterized by a high circulation rate of newspapers (Plasser & Lengauer 2012: p.36-37) and a relatively high degree of political parallelism in newspaper coverage (see Lelkes 2016: p.529). This constitutes a suitable setting for 'media bias' to be observed. However, there are countries where the degree of political parallelism and the existence of partisan media is more distinctive than in Austria (e.g., countries that belong to the 'Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model' of media systems, see Hallin & Mancini 2004: p.67), probably making 'media bias' even more likely. In addition, media systems of different countries differ regarding journalistic routines and general styles of coverage (see Strömbäck & Shehata 2007: p.799-801) and these characteristics might also shape media content and its impact on news consumers.

Besides a variation between countries, there is also a within country diversity of journalistic styles and forms of coverage. For example, quality and tabloid newspapers are likely to differ in how they report about politics. Furthermore, their readerships might have specific characteristics, making them more or less susceptible to 'media bias'. Thus, whether and how issue ownership perceptions are 'biased' by media converge might depend on the type of coverage (see e.g., Johann et al. 2018: p.272-274). Due to the dominant position of tabloid newspapers in Austria (see Plasser & Lengauer 2012: p.30-31), especially because of the high circulation rate of the 'Krone', the results in this master thesis might be partly driven by respondents who were exposed to this type of coverage. Therefore, future research should furthermore disentangle whether media effects are caused by the coverage of specific media outlets or specific types of coverage.

Finally, while in this master thesis only political coverage in printed newspapers was investigated, issue ownership perceptions might be 'biased' by television news or online news sites alike. There is no reason to believe that the 'priming' mechanism outlined in chapter 3.2. (which makes some information more accessible in the minds of news consumers), is limited to a specific medium. Even more, because there is a declining trend in the circulation rates of printed newspapers, other media forms might become more important as a source of political information and thus are worth investigating in the future.

Nevertheless, the results in this master thesis have shown that media outlets are not entirely 'neutral' transmitters of political information, but actors who can 'bias' the political attitudes of news consumers themselves. It is not in my intention to judge whether this is something to be concerned about with respect to the democratic process. An 'unbiased' transmission of political information might even not exist because information received from other transmitters, like political actors or individual discussion partners, is likely to be shaped by specific interests as well. However, if people are more aware of the fact, that the specific 'picture' they receive about politics is just one of many possible 'pictures', they might be more deliberative when dealing with political information and also more willing to receive such information form a broader and diverse set of available sources.

Appendix

Table A1: Newspaper consumption in Austria (2017)

Newspaper	Frequency of Consumption (# of days per week[77])								
	0	0.5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Krone	35%	18%	11%	6%	6%	4%	4%	2%	15%
Der Standard	60%	21%	5%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Die Presse	65%	21%	4%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
Österreich	60%	18%	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%	1%	3%
Kurier	60%	20%	6%	4%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Heute	58%	19%	4%	3%	4%	3%	6%	1%	2%
Salzbugrer Nachrichten	76%	15%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Kleine Zeitung	65%	16%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	7%

Data: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020), wave 4 (N=3,173)

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[77] The category '0' includes respondents how do not read newspapers at all. The category '0.5' display respondents who indicate that they read the newspaper less often than once a week.

Figure A1: Party visibility and tonality in issue-specific news coverage per newspaper
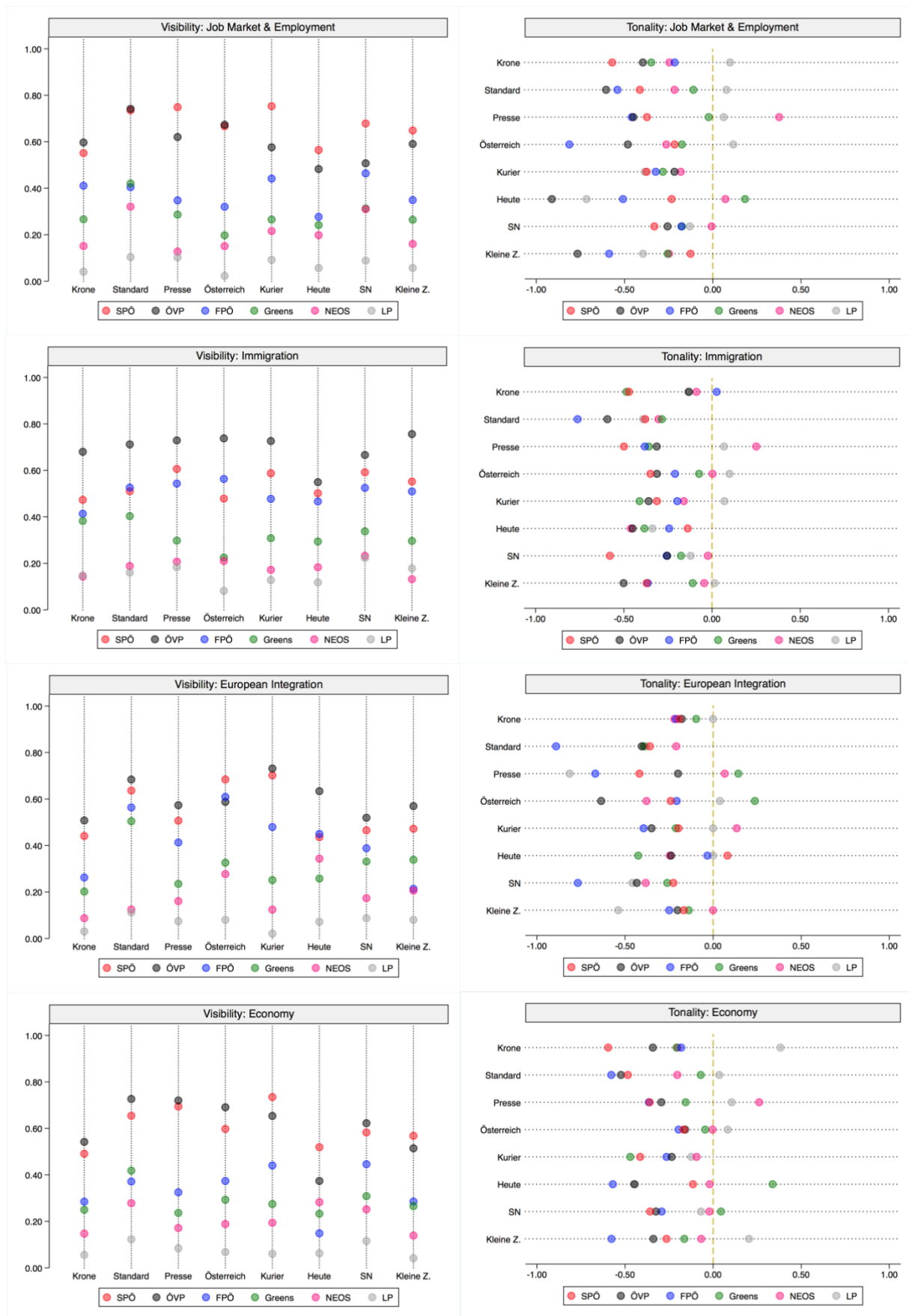
Table A2: Coding of press releases

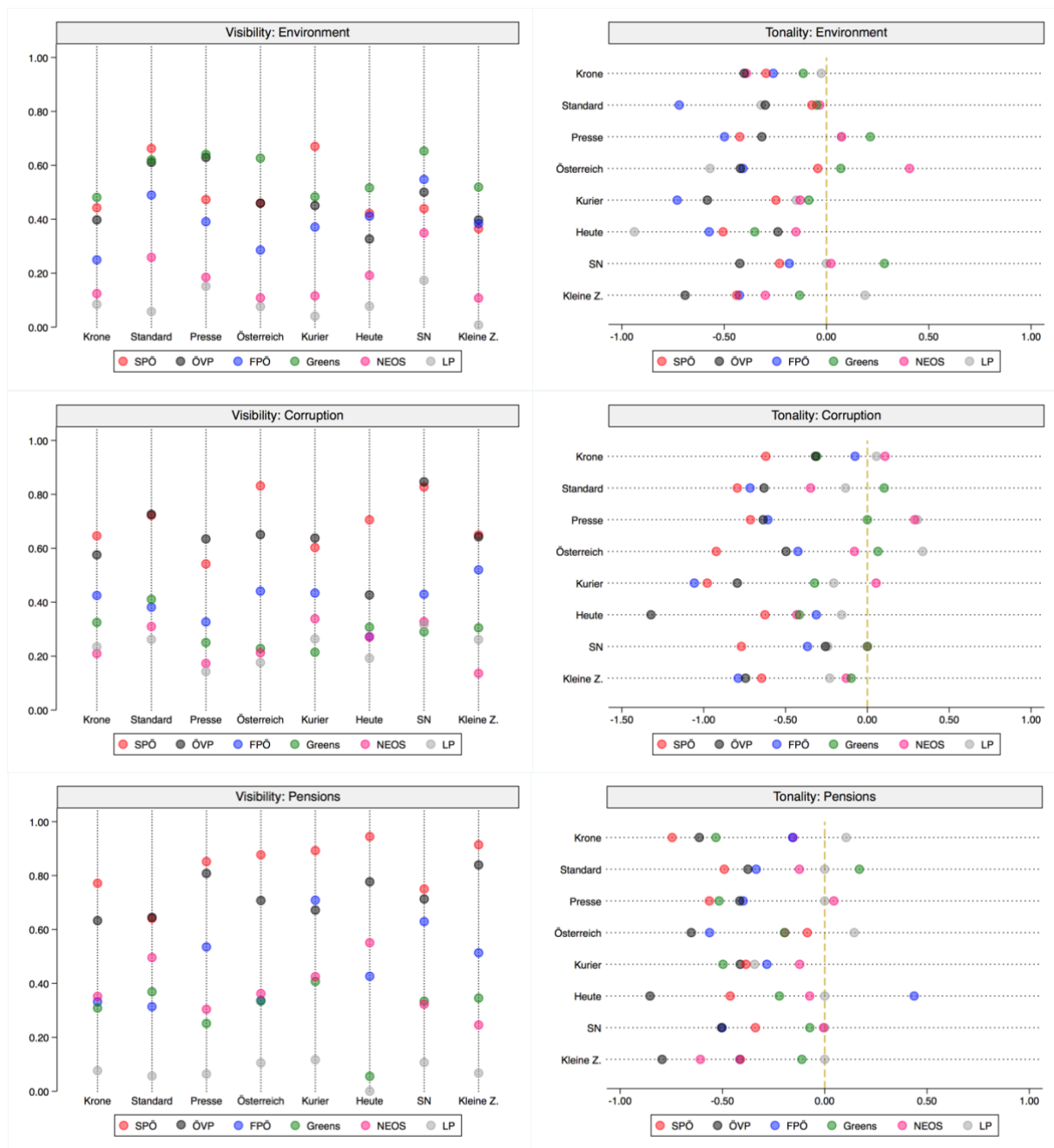| Issues	Specific codes
Job Market & Employment (N=55)	employment protection (general) (9); government financing of vocational training / support of apprentices (8); active labor market policies (8); leveling of legal status of workers and employees (7); apprentices (social group) (3); further education / qualification / on-the-job training / sabbatical (3); unemployment (general) (2); collective labor contract (2); minimum wage (2); working hours (2); priority for Austrian employees (1); unemployment: elderly employees (1); unemployment: disabled / chronically ill (1); commuters (1); sick pay (1); apprenticeship / vocational training / dual education (general) (1); adult education / adult education centers / adult evening classes (1); (illegal) immigrants working as carers (1)
Immigration (N=93)	Islamic terrorism / Islamism / fundamentalism / hatemongering (13); EU: quotas for refugees / immigrants / asylum seekers (8); asylum / admission of refugees (7); welfare benefits only for Austrian citizens (7); Islam in schools / in the Austrian Armed Forces (6); integration of immigrants (general) (5); racism / xenophobia (4); compulsory German language skills before school enrolment (4); immigration / immigrants / foreigners (general) (3); crime committed by foreigners (general) (3); Schengen / Frontex (3); mosques / minarets / Islamic institutions (general) (3); deportation of illegal immigrants / asylum seekers from third countries (3); acceleration / improvement asylum procedure (2); multiculturalism / dialogue / acceptance of differences / pluralism (2); deportation of foreign offenders (individuals) (2); priority for Austrian employees (2); integration of immigrants: support (2); integration of immigrants: compulsion / constraints / forced adaption (2); Islam / Muslims (general) (2); EU: common standards for refugees / asylum-seekers (1); restriction of number of foreigners (1); admission of economic refugees (1); supervision of asylum seekers / pre-deportation detention (1); right to vote for immigrants (general) (1); forced marriage / genital mutilation / honor killing / cultural crimes (1); fostering of German language acquisition (support) (1); instruction in native language (1); (illegal) immigrants working as carers (1); benefit fraud by foreigners (1)
European Integration[78] (N=88)	European integration (general) (12); EU: quotas for refugees / immigrants / asylum seekers (8); federal / strong EU / extension of powers (5); EU centralism (4); quality of food / nutrition / diet* (3); EU: subsidies / regional policy (except agriculture) (3); social Europe (3); Schengen / Frontex (3); pesticides / colony collapse disorder (bees)* (3); tax evasion / trusts / foundations* (3); social / fair / just world trading system* (2); business taxes* (2); democracy / participation in the EU (2); nuclear energy* (2); telecommunication infrastructure* (2); gender equality* (2); illegal party funding / corruption* (2); judicial reform (general)* (2); asylum / admission of refugees* (2); deportation of illegal immigrants / asylum seekers from third countries* (2); consumer protection (general)* (2); stricter environmental regulations* (2); tax reform (general)* (1); victim protection* (1); domestic violence* (1); sanctions against individual countries* (1); Austrian EU membership (1); Austrian influence in the EU (1); EU budget (general) (1); EU: cooperation justice / domestic policy / home affairs (1); EU: common standards for refugees / asylum-seekers (1); Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (general) (1); internal European market (policies, not EEA) (1); public disclosure of side jobs / income of politicians* (1); investigation of specific scandals and affairs (incl. parliamentary committees)* (1); parliamentary minority rights: control / oversight / investigation committees* (1); abolition / reduction of political institutions* (1); death penalty* (1); road charge / road pricing* (1)
Economy (N=67)	national competitiveness (11); promotion / measures for companies (general) (8); privatization / liberalization / deregulation: rail transport (8); globalization / reduction of tariffs / open world market (6); economic growth (4); social / fair / just world trading system (4); promotion / measures for small and medium sized companies (specific) (4); economic policy (general) (3); promotion of self-employment / self-employment / business creation (general) (2); competition policy / combatting cartels, monopolies, price agreements (2); high salaries / severance pay for managers (private sectors) (2); government control of prices (general) (1); economic stimulus program / public investment (1); privatization / liberalization / deregulation (general) (1); privatization / liberalization / deregulation: energy supply (1); liberalization of trade regulation act (1); high salaries / executive bonuses (1); supervision of financial markets (1); support for tourism (1); supervision of companies (social dumping etc.) (1); internal European market (policies, not EEA) (1); capitalism / market economy / entrepreneurs / property (general) (1); national government bailout fund / bad bank (1); speculation / financial transactions / stock exchange (1)
Environment (N=82)	pesticides / colony collapse disorder (bees) (17); environmental protection / sustainability / conservation (general) (10); public transport (10); climate protection (general) / Kyoto Protocol (9); animal protection (general) (8); nuclear energy (7); stricter environmental regulations (6); extension of railroad network (specific projects) (4); road charge / road pricing (4); cyclists / pedestrians (3); renewable energy (general) (2); environment impact assessment (1); air pollution / particulate matter / fine dust (1)
Corruption (N=84)	abuse of power by parties (general) (21); investigations of specific scandals and affairs (incl. parliamentary committees) (17); illegal party funding / corruption (15); legal party funding (e.g. public and donations) (14); patronage / nepotism / favoritism (11); public disclosure / restriction of campaign expenditures (4); public disclosure of side jobs / income of politicians (1); funding of political advertising by parliamentary party groups / ministries / state-owned enterprises (1)
Pensions (N=22)	Pensioners / elderly people (general) (10); pension reform (general) (4); early retirement (3); pension increase (general) (2); pension increase: small pensions / widows (2); taxation of pensions (1)

Data: AUTNES Coding of Party Press Releases 2017 (Müller et al. forthcoming a)

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[78] Codes that are marked with * belong to other issue categories (e.g., 'taxes'). However, they were assigned to the issue of 'European Integration' because a 'reference to the EU' was coded either for title and/or subtitle of the press release (e.g., when a party call for a harmonization of 'business taxes' on the European level).

Table A3: Coding of Facebook postings

Issues	Specific codes
Job Market & Employment (N=74)	leveling of legal status of workers and employees (16); unemployment (general) (11); minimum wage (11); apprentices (social group) (6); further education / qualification / on-the-job training / sabbatical (5); working hours (4); unemployment: elderly employees (3); employment protection (general) (3); salaries / wages / earnings (3); strict labor regulation / against flexible working environment (2); flexible working hours (general) (2); adult education / adult education centers / adult evening classes (2); right to work (1); active labor market policies (1); marginal / part-time employment (people) (1); trade unions (1); health and safety in the workplace (noise / chemicals etc.) (1); government financing of vocational training / support for apprentices (1)
Immigration (N=186)	immigration / immigrants / foreigners (general) (20); integration of immigrants (general) (20); Islamic terrorism / Islamism / fundamentalism / hatemongering (18); Islam / Muslims (general) (16); welfare benefits only for Austrian citizens (16); Schengen / Frontex (12); asylum / admission of refugees (12); integration of immigrants: support (8); restriction of number of foreigners (6); admission of economic refugees (6); deportation of illegal immigrants / asylum seekers from third countries (5); Islam in schools / in the Austrian Armed Forces (5); headscarf / burqa / niqab (5); multiculturalism / dialogue / acceptance of differences / pluralism (4); mosques / minarets / Islamic institutions (general) (4); EU: common standards for refugees / asylum-seekers (3); forced marriage / genital mutilation / honor killing / cultural crimes (3); crime committed by foreigners (3); supervision of asylum seekers / pre-deportation detention (2); integration of immigrants: compulsion / constraints / forced adaption (2); deportation of foreign offenders (individuals) (2); benefit fraud by foreigners (2); segregation in schools (foreigners and Austrians) (2); EU: quotas for refugees / immigrants / asylum seekers (1); criteria for immigration (Green Card; credit system, skilled labor, …) (1); right to stay for asylum seekers (1); asylum fraud (1); acceleration / improvement of asylum procedure (1); right to vote for immigrants (general) (1); parallel society (1); special welfare system for foreigners (1); compulsory language skills before school enrolment (1); racism / xenophobia (1)
European Integration[79] (N=96)	European integration (general) (34); Schengen / Frontex (12); pesticides / colony collapse disorder (bees)* (9); EU-association Turkey (7); subsidiarity principle in the EU (6); social Europe (6); Europe of nations (3); EU: common standards for refugees / asylum-seekers (3); federal / strong EU / extension of powers (2); Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (general) (2); climate protection (general) / Kyoto Protocol* (2); consumer protection (general)* (1); quality of food / nutrition / diet* (1); tax evasion / trusts / foundations* (1); EU centralism (1); Brexit (1); democracy / participation in the EU (1); EU: quotas for refugees / immigrants / asylum seekers (1); digitalization / automation (general)* (1); environmental protection / sustainability / conservation (general)* (1); criteria for immigration (Green Card; credit system, skilled labor, …)* (1)
Economy (N=70)	economic growth (13); globalization / reduction of tariffs / open world market (12); promotion of self-employment / self-employment / business creation (general) (7); economic policy (general) (6); national competitiveness (6); promotion / measures for companies (general) (6); capitalism / market economy / entrepreneurs / property (general) (5); combatting inflation / price increase, maintaining purchasing power / price stability (2);); privatization / liberalization / deregulation: rail transport (1); social / fair / just world trading system (1); promotion / measures for small and medium sized companies (specific) (1); eco-social market economy (Austrian term) (1); economic stimulus program / public investment (1); competition policy / combatting cartels, monopolies, price agreements (1); protection of domestic markets / protectionism (1); high salaries / executive bonuses (1); supervision of companies (social dumping etc.) (1);); high salaries / severance pay for managers (private sectors) (1)
Environment (N=133)	climate protection (general) / Kyoto Protocol (32); environmental protection / sustainability / conservation (general) (22); pesticides / colony collapse disorder (bees) (20); animal protection (general) (18); organic farming (14); renewable energy (general) (11); public transport (5); energy from fossil fuels (3); ministry of the environment (competences) (2); eco-social market economy (Austrian term) (1); cyclists / pedestrians (1); energy saving (1); eco-tax / green tax (1); air pollution / particulate matter / fine dust (1); livestock transport / battery cages / use of hormones in animal breeding (1)
Corruption (N=75)	Illegal party funding / corruption (20); abuse of power by parties (general) (16); patronage / nepotism / favoritism (13); legal party funding (e.g. public and donations) (13); investigations of specific scandals and affairs (incl. parliamentary committees) (9); funding of political advertising by parliamentary party groups / ministries / state-owned enterprises (2); public disclosure / restriction of campaign expenditures (2)
Pensions (N=20)	pension reform (general) (11); pensioners / elderly people (general) (4); pension increase (general) (3); raise of retirement age / longer working life (2)

Data: AUTNES Coding of Facebook Pages 2017 (Müller et al. forthcoming b)

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[79] Codes that are marked with * belong to other issue categories (e.g., 'taxes'). However, they were assigned to the issue of 'European Integration' because a 'reference to the EU' was coded either for title and/or subtitle of the press release (e.g., when a party call for a harmonization of 'business taxes' on the European level).

Table A4: Coding of newspaper ads

Issues	Specific codes[80]
Job Market & Employment (N=0)	
Immigration (N=56)	Islam (24); asylum / refuges (10); integration of foreigners (7); foreigners and health and welfare system (7); immigration general (5); foreigners and school / education (3)
European Integration (N=1)	EU: general (1)
Economy (N=11)	economy (general) (10); market / liberalisation / deregulation (1)
Environment (N=13)	climate (13)
Corruption (N=0)	
Pensions (N=4)	Pensions (4)

Data: AUTNES Content Analysis of Party Newspaper Ads 2017 (Müller et al. forthcoming c)

Table A5: Placement of newspaper ads by parties during the election campaign

Issues[81]	Parties					
	SPÖ	ÖVP	FPÖ	Greens	NEOS	LP
Immigration	0	2 (Heute) 1 (Kl. Z.) 1 (Krone) 1 (Öster.)	4 (Presse) 17 (Heute) 9 (Krone) 5 (Kurier) 16 (Öster.)	0	0	0
European Integration	0	0	0	0	1 (Presse)	0
Economy	1 (Stand.) 2 (Presse) 2 (Heute) 1 (Kl. Z.) 1 (Krone) 1 (Öster.) 1 (SN)	1 (Kurier)	1 (Kurier)	0	0	0
Environment	0	0	0	2 (Stand.) 2 (Heute) 1 (Kl. Z.) 1 (Krone) 2 (Kurier) 1 (Öster.) 4 (SN)	0	0
Pensions	1 (Heute) 1 (Kurier)	1 (Öster.)	1 (Öster.)	0	0	0

Data: AUTNES Coding of Party Press Releases 2017 (Müller et al. forthcoming c)

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[80] The codes used for the coding of newspaper ads are broader (level 2 codes) than those used for the coding of party press releases and Facebook postings (level 3 codes).
[81] There were no newspaper ads for the issues ‚Job Market and Employment' and 'Corruption'.

Table A6a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
AIO (t-1)	0.9896*** (0.0682)	1.0068*** (0.0892)	-	1.2179*** (0.3003)	1.0507*** (0.151)	0.9934*** (0.0973)	1.1031*** (0.1478)
Media visibility	0.0491 (0.1375)	-0.0084 (0.1853)	-	-1.6858* (0.7105)	-0.2793 (0.3294)	-0.0544 (0.2021)	0.5258 (0.2874)
Media tonality	0.0987 (0.0608)	0.13 (0.0789)	-	0.1555 (0.2379)	0.3014* (0.1387)	-0.0223 (0.0845)	0.1731 (0.1334)
Press releases	0.3551 (0.3027)	0.6968 (0.3999)	-	1.8139 (1.1247)	0.8282 (0.6471)	0.2089 (0.4392)	0.7635 (0.6479)
Facebook postings	0.007 (0.0318)	0.028 (0.0449)	-	0.0576 (0.1447)	0.0174 (0.0906)	0.021 (0.0463)	0.001 (0.0577)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	0.0842 (0.1764)	0.1068 (0.2312)	-	0.335 (0.7505)	0.3497 (0.409)	0.0887 (0.244)	-0.1324 (0.4105)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1931 (0.1048)	0.1032 (0.133)	-	0.8087 (0.5049)	0.2513 (0.2459)	0.4082** (0.1514)	-0.1962 (0.2129)
Party Preference	0.7678*** (0.0482)	0.7444*** (0.0547)	-	0.784* (0.3295)	0.6754*** (0.1103)	0.749*** (0.0666)	1.0701*** (0.1119)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,687	1,028	520	139	339	834	514

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A6b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment'

Variables	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
				Models			
AIO (t-1)	-	0.9988*** (0.0689)	0.9783*** (0.0784)	1.1231*** (0.1581)	1.1153*** (0.0977)	0.8567*** (0.1166)	1.2505*** (0.2503)
Media visibility	-0.3044 (0.6119)	0.0778 (0.1456)	0.1062 (0.155)	-0.1704 (0.342)	-0.1120 (0.199)	0.0271 (0.2448)	1.0581* (0.4477)
Media tonality	0.5766* (0.287)	0.0841 (0.0635)	0.1596* (0.0708)	-0.0605 (0.1308)	0.1872* (0.0866)	-0.006 (0.1004)	0.1504 (0.2522)
Press releases	2.4087* (1.1301)	0.1812 (0.3222)	0.1957 (0.3474)	1.5343* (0.704)	0.3924 (0.4301)	0.55 (0.5117)	-0.0617 (1.0313)
Facebook postings	0.5737 (0.8953)	-0.0036 (0.0324)	-0.0045 (0.0373)	0.0199 (0.0676)	-0.0177 (0.0455)	0.0408 (0.053)	0.0199 (0.1223)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	-0.8736 (1.0896)	0.1040 (0.1814)	0.1128 (0.2032)	-0.2502 (0.3963)	-0.0198 (0.2517)	0.0296 (0.2931)	1.4162 (0.7442)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.1377 (0.4393)	0.2006 (0.11)	0.2674* (0.1216)	0.0047 (0.2323)	0.1750 (0.1487)	0.2594 (0.176)	0.1436 (0.3741)
Party Preference	1.0539*** (0.2198)	0.7655*** (0.0508)	0.7532*** (0.0546)	0.9519*** (0.1168)	0.7051*** (0.066)	0.8918*** (0.0871)	0.96*** (0.1692)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	113	1,574	1,229	458	846	638	203

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A7a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
CIO (t-1)	1.1763*** (0.0788)	1.1234*** (0.1039)	1.5103*** (0.1574)	1.0554*** (0.2997)	1.2834*** (0.1810)	1.1829*** (0.113)	1.2176*** (0.1703)
Media visibility	-0.186 (0.1509)	-0.1385 (0.2027)	-0.1254 (0.2893)	-1.0583 (0.6654)	-0.1938 (0.3426)	-0.0978 (0.2162)	-0.4231 (0.3242)
Media tonality	0.0913 (0.0674)	0.063 (0.0888)	0.0687 (0.1361)	0.1202 (0.2582)	0.0511 (0.1475)	0.0662 (0.0935)	0.1144 (0.155)
Press releases	0.3672 (0.345)	0.3974 (0.464)	0.0169 (0.6704)	1.0615 (1.3032)	0.5239 (0.7435)	0.5812 (0.4971)	-0.4104 (0.7613)
Facebook postings	0.0904* (0.0364)	0.0812 (0.0499)	0.061 (0.066)	0.0213 (0.147)	0.1291 (0.1148)	0.1047* (0.0522)	0.1151 (0.0665)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	-0.0459 (0.1868)	-0.1667 (0.2432)	0.3527 (0.3669)	0.377 (0.6424)	-0.0893 (0.4287)	0.1472 (0.2634)	-0.511 (0.4424)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1139 (0.1136)	-0.0193 (0.1475)	0.2892 (0.233)	0.5545 (0.4941)	-0.1076 (0.2585)	0.175 (0.1627)	0.1578 (0.2392)
Party Preference	0.9234*** (0.0563)	0.9167*** (0.0656)	1.0464*** (0.1284)	1.525*** (0.3607)	0.7239*** (0.1205)	0.9576*** (0.082)	1.2127*** (0.1335)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,527	945	458	124	299	741	487

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A7b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Job Market and Employment'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
CIO (t-1)	-	1.1994*** (0.0802)	1.1712*** (0.0908)	1.3389*** (0.1791)	1.2529*** (0.1151)	1.1283*** (0.135)	2.029*** (0.3279)
Media visibility	0.2011 (0.4544)	-0.2726 (0.1676)	-0.1534 (0.1733)	-0.2798 (0.3654)	0.0211 (0.2129)	-0.2215 (0.274)	-1.3525* (0.5442)
Media tonality	0.2514 (0.1836)	0.0823 (0.0747)	0.1111 (0.0775)	0.0437 (0.1518)	0.1657 (0.0962)	-0.0067 (0.1153)	0.1029 (0.2501)
Press releases	-0.7437 (0.9854)	0.5568 (0.3802)	0.206 (0.401)	1.0426 (0.7591)	0.3207 (0.4938)	0.4265 (0.596)	1.4407 (1.2497)
Facebook postings	0.3332* (0.1639)	0.0779* (0.0381)	0.07 (0.0439)	0.15* (0.0717)	0.0261 (0.052)	0.1338* (0.0632)	0.293 (0.1504)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	-0.1361 (0.7166)	-0.0018 (0.1988)	0.0432 (0.0439)	-0.4803 (0.3978)	-0.3466 (0.2611)	-0.0671 (0.3236)	2.2984** (0.7478)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.1135 (0.3324)	0.135 (0.1239)	0.1878 (0.132)	-0.1142 (0.2459)	0.0651 (0.1599)	0.2584 (0.1955)	-0.5132 (0.4385)
Party Preference	1.1332*** (0.1931)	0.9286*** (0.0613)	0.9161*** (0.0648)	0.9938*** (0.1261)	0.8203*** (0.076)	1.1344*** (0.1096)	1.2433*** (0.2187)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	156	1,371	1,113	414	762	569	196

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A8a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Immigration'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
AIO (t-1)	1.0762*** (0.0603)	1.0894*** (0.0779)	1.1201*** (0.116)	1.0991*** (0.2544)	1.1497*** (0.1437)	1.124*** (0.0867)	1.0439*** (0.1161)
Media visibility	0.2517 (0.156)	0.0911 (0.2147)	0.3341 (0.2885)	0.0157 (0.5807)	0.136 (0.3549)	0.311 (0.2386)	0.2382 (0.3103)
Media tonality	0.1133 (0.0632)	0.1571* (0.0796)	0.0999 (0.1226)	-0.0987 (0.2943)	0.5005*** (0.1433)	-0.0489 (0.0922)	0.1175 (0.1207)
Press releases	-0.6521* (0.3145)	-1.0617* (0.4144)	0.1467 (0.5741)	-1.518 (1.2555)	0.024 (0.6964)	-0.9006* (0.452)	-0.7114 (0.6112)
Facebook postings	0.1174*** (0.0321)	0.075 (0.0386)	0.2157** (0.0699)	0.1331 (0.154)	0.1779* (0.0759)	0.1337** (0.0475)	0.0814 (0.0583)
Newspaper ads	-0.0198 (0.0462)	-0.0818 (0.06)	0.1191 (0.0863)	-0.0791 (0.1814)	-0.1056 (0.1023)	0.0203 (0.0644)	-0.0044 (0.0965)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.2071 (0.1534)	0.1075 (0.1978)	0.4115 (0.2874)	0.3799 (0.5678)	0.3937 (0.3787)	0.1095 (0.2176)	0.2607 (0.292)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1423 (0.1011)	0.1472 (0.1292)	0.1262 (0.1862	0.4192 (0.4379)	-0.2732 (0.2569)	0.2322 (0.1471)	0.1987 (0.1867)
Party Preference	0.3059*** (0.0354)	0.3265*** (0.0411)	0.2807** (0.0835)	-0.0204 (0.2504)	0.303*** (0.0787)	0.2089*** (0.0506)	0.505*** (0.0722)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,824	1,124	552	148	385	892	547

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A8b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Immigration'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
AIO (t-1)	-	1.0775*** (0.0604)	1.0964*** (0.0848)	1.0655*** (0.0883)	0.972*** (0.0873)	1.1899*** (0.1022)	1.2313*** (0.1965)
Media visibility	-	0.2093 (0.1674)	0.2567 (0.2102)	0.1963 (0.2567)	0.1825 (0.2241)	0.3061 (0.3043)	0.4195 (0.5015)
Media tonality	-	0.0961 (0.0648)	0.1512 (0.0858)	0.0741 (0.0953)	0.1989* (0.0883)	-0.0211 (0.1103)	0.4057 (0.2116)
Press releases	-	-0.7746* (0.3254)	-0.6824 (0.442)	-0.5955 (0.4591)	-0.543 (0.4346)	-0.6503 (0.5452)	-0.81 (1.0495)
Facebook postings	-	0.1183*** (0.0328)	0.1112* (0.0489)	0.1209* (0.0441)	0.1594*** (0.0449)	0.0836 (0.0548)	-0.0423 (0.1117)
Newspaper ads	-	-0.0207 (0.0481)	0.0154 (0.0655)	-0.0685 (0.0668)	-0.1713** (0.0635)	0.1139 (0.0815)	0.1621 (0.1718)
Interpersonal canvassing	-	0.2212 (0.157)	0.2154 (0.2075)	0.1779 (0.2358)	0.1627 (0.2182)	0.3926 (0.2537)	-0.2624 (0.5194)
Impersonal canvassing	-	0.1661 (0.1035)	0.1998 (0.1395)	0.0881 (0.1512)	0.0989 (0.1408)	0.1814 (0.1788)	0.2769 (0.3198)
Party Preference	-	0.3013*** (0.0365)	0.2481*** (0.0493)	0.3651*** (0.0531)	0.3586*** (0.049)	0.266*** (0.0607)	0.1607 (0.114)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	86	1,738	853	971	936	675	213

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A9a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Immigration'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
CIO (t-1)	1.2583*** (0.0819)	1.2554*** (0.1144)	1.321*** (0.1481)	2.1143*** (0.3974)	1.5902*** (0.2133)	1.2563*** (0.121)	1.3154*** (0.1539)
Media visibility	0.0132 (0.1728)	-0.1179 (0.2513)	0.1715 (0.3003)	0.7292 (0.7494)	-0.143 (0.443)	0.0533 (0.2466)	-0.0384 (0.3512)
Media tonality	0.1384 (0.0884)	0.1603 (0.1187)	0.0289 (0.1634)	0.2645 (0.3632)	0.1918 (0.225)	0.17512 (0.1331)	-0.0056 (0.1571)
Press releases	-0.3871 (0.4017)	-0.6357 (0.5725)	-0.6161 (0.7075)	3.2323 (1.6526)	0.093 (0.9661)	-0.6669 (0.5839)	-0.4416 (0.7855)
Facebook postings	0.2316*** (0.0483)	0.2055** (0.0626)	0.3051** (0.09)	0.5746* (0.2417)	0.0689 (0.1194)	0.3364*** (0.0741)	0.0561 (0.065)
Newspaper ads	-0.0128 (0.0656)	-0.0035 (0.089)	0.1184 (0.1219)	-0.3798 (0.2414)	-0.1656 (0.1529)	0.0473 (0.0883)	-0.0545 (0.1401)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.3074 (0.1881)	0.4313 (0.2622)	0.0482 (0.3329)	1.3271 (0.7382)	-0.2433 (0.5537)	0.4305 (0.2745)	0.62 (0.3241)
Impersonal canvassing	0.2181 (0.1221)	-0.0263 (0.1687)	0.5286* (0.2092)	0.7072 (0.5604)	-0.3148 (0.3574)	0.1156 (0.1766)	0.6881** (0.2166)
Party Preference	0.8301*** (0.051)	0.8032*** (0.0607)	1.0438*** (0.1182)	0.6312 (0.3592)	0.8718*** (0.1211)	0.8145*** (0.0735)	0.9744*** (0.1021)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,516	963	426	127	314	736	466

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A9b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Immigration'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
CIO (t-1)	-	1.3113*** (0.0835)	1.4491*** (0.1133)	1.1155*** (0.1284)	1.3032*** (0.1296)	1.3307*** (0.1345)	1.5505*** (0.2778)
Media visibility	0.0848 (0.4665)	-0.0478 (0.1995)	0.2099 (0.2216)	-0.407 (0.2915)	-0.2423 (0.277)	0.0966 (0.2983)	0.7705 (0.5098)
Media tonality	0.3507 (0.269)	0.1337 (0.097)	0.134 (0.1124)	0.2186 (0.1508)	0.024 (0.1364)	0.1627 (0.1508)	0.7113* (0.2996)
Press releases	-0.1883 (1.2504)	-0.4125 (0.4444)	-0.5104 (0.5394)	-0.2005 (0.628)	-0.1963 (0.5862)	-0.0843 (0.6879)	-2.367 (1.3668)
Facebook postings	0.5554** (0.2029)	0.2133*** (0.0507)	0.1942** (0.0725)	0.271*** (0.0673)	0.2862*** (0.0742)	0.1458 (0.0756)	0.5247* (0.2054)
Newspaper ads	0.1392 (0.176)	-0.0308 (0.0733)	-0.0946 (0.0967)	0.025 (0.092)	-0.1012 (0.0987)	0.1034 (0.107)	-0.214 (0.2559)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.7285 (0.7072)	0.2732 (0.2)	0.0881 (0.2534)	0.5682 (0.3017)	-0.1352 (0.2827)	0.7852* (0.3114)	0.3778 (0.5822)
Impersonal canvassing	0.0707 (0.3844)	0.2466 (0.1331)	0.1342 (0.1623)	0.2547 (0.1974)	0.0666 (0.1865)	0.306 (0.2044)	0.254 (0.3963)
Party Preference	1.4278*** (0.1868)	0.7617*** (0.055)	0.7914*** (0.07)	0.9195*** (0.0805)	0.9606*** (0.079)	0.748*** (0.0825)	1.0139*** (0.173)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	182	1,334	672	844	770	564	182

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A10a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'European Integration'

Variables	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
AIO (t-1)	1.1616*** (0.0593)	1.1296*** (0.0785)	1.3112*** (0.1112)	1.3478*** (0.2394)	1.0038*** (0.1392)	1.1574*** (0.0851)	1.3747*** (0.1174)
Media visibility	-0.0049 (0.1033)	-0.1766 (0.1358)	0.4748* (0.1909)	-1.0685* (0.4452)	-0.1945 (0.2431)	-0.0597 (0.1516)	0.1166 (0.1915)
Media tonality	0.0166 (0.0541)	-0.0424 (0.0687)	0.1444 (0.1092)	0.0052 (0.1951)	0.1486 (0.1365)	0.0055 (0.075)	-0.076 (0.102)
Press releases	-0.1454 (0.0913)	-0.2642* (0.1174)	-0.1412 (0.1803)	0.571 (0.3295)	-0.075 (0.1926)	-0.1657 (0.1277)	-0.1238 (0.1964)
Facebook postings	0.1234*** (0.0355)	0.1361** (0.0464)	0.1066 (0.0648)	0.1472 (0.1738)	0.191 (0.1015)	0.1581 (0.0513)	0.0554 (0.0602)
Newspaper ads	0.0039 (0.0366)	0.0427 (0.0485)	-0.0118 (0.0584)	-0.5173 (0.3363)	0.1232 (0.1352)	0.0049 (0.0731)	-0.0155 (0.0489)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.2453 (0.145)	0.1908 (0.1868)	0.621* (0.269)	0.0033 (0.5962)	-0.0853 (0.3501)	0.4478* (0.204)	0.186 (0.2822)
Impersonal canvassing	0.0728 (0.0914)	0.0313 (0.1185)	0.1914 (0.171)	-0.1798 (0.3756)	0.0624 (0.2217)	0.209 (0.132)	-0.0813 (0.1723)
Party Preference	0.5011*** (0.0361)	0.507*** (0.0412)	0.5959*** (0.0844)	0.3572 (0.2568)	0.4493*** (0.0823)	0.4352*** (0.0504)	0.654*** (0.0739)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,629	997	502	130	324	794	511

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A10b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'European Integration'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
AIO (t-1)	-	1.1711*** (0.0595)	1.1305*** (0.061)	2.8396*** (0.6009)	1.1914*** (0.0855)	1.2168*** (0.0975)	1.238*** (0.2082)
Media visibility	-0.406 (0.4072)	0.0043 (0.1088)	0.0049 (0.1067)	-0.7727 (0.7538)	-0.1112 (0.1443)	0.0743 (0.1805)	-0.0135 (0.33)
Media tonality	0.2529 (0.1998)	-0.0076 (0.057)	0.0144 (0.0557)	-0.1462 (0.3804)	0.01 (0.074)	-0.0485 (0.094)	-0.1337 (0.1994)
Press releases	-0.1836 (0.335)	-0.1566 (0.097)	-0.1278 (0.0935)	-0.3503 (0.8793)	-0.3961** (0.1264)	0.257 (0.1576)	-0.3783 (0.3288)
Facebook postings	-0.1262 (0.1976)	0.1359*** (0.0367)	0.1289*** (0.0366)	0.0616 (0.2298)	0.1078* (0.0492)	0.1572* (0.0624)	0.2404 (0.1294)
Newspaper ads	-1.5232 (1.999)	0.0126 (0.0373)	-0.0028 (0.0397)	-0.0018 (0.1407)	-0.0165 (0.0532)	0.007 (0.0624)	0.0479 (0.1138)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.0664 (0.6506)	0.237 (0.1506)	0.2716 (0.1485)	-0.6385 (1.1785)	0.4018* (0.2025)	0.0536 (0.2428)	-0.1974 (0.486)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.6387 (0.387)	0.1163 (0.0954)	0.0566 (0.0936)	0.4164 (0.7911)	0.0674 (0.1293)	0.1663 (0.1526)	-0.1752 (0.2929)
Party Preference	0.7259*** (0.1289)	0.4798*** (0.0382)	0.474*** (0.0369)	1.7419*** (0.4378)	0.5174*** (0.0505)	0.4654*** (0.0604)	0.6581*** (0.1296)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	155	1,474	1,517	112	820	610	199

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A11a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'European Integration'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
CIO (t-1)	1.1873*** (0.0751)	1.0921**** (0.0993)	1.3586*** (0.1446)	1.5511*** (0.3174)	1.0783*** (0.1752)	1.1002*** (0.1125)	1.5169*** (0.152)
Media visibility	-0.1409 (0.1266)	-0.2709 (0.1704)	0.1686 (0.2288)	-0.996 (0.5899)	-0.0505 (0.3087)	-0.256 (0.1874)	-0.0309 (0.2498)
Media tonality	-0.0046 (0.0674)	-0.0377 (0.0851)	0.0476 (0.1363)	-0.027 (0.2764)	-0.0726 (0.1716)	-0.0498 (0.0951)	-0.0058 (0.1337)
Press releases	0.1238 (0.112)	0.1302 (0.1467)	-0.0862 (0.2204)	0.5239 (0.4106)	-0.0547 (0.2332)	0.1876 (0.1611)	0.2514 (0.2492)
Facebook postings	0.2444*** (0.0432)	0.2161*** (0.0551)	0.3497*** (0.0846)	0.3451 (0.2446)	0.0918 (0.1171)	0.397*** (0.0681)	0.2227** (0.0792)
Newspaper ads	-0.0004 (0.0473)	0.0256 (0.0555)	-0.0474 (0.1008)	0.1726 (0.3713)	0.3185 (0.1769)	0.0389 (0.0772)	-0.0582 (0.0776)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.2426 (0.1705)	0.092 (0.2167)	0.6427 (0.3404)	1.6148* (0.6791)	0.0969 (0.412)	0.8059** (0.2439)	-0.3508 (0.3332)
Impersonal canvassing	0.0902 (0.1098)	0.1411 (0.1438)	-0.0559 (0.2109)	0.0608 (0.4694)	-0.0607 (0.2632)	0.117 (0.1621)	0.2191 (0.2137)
Party Preference	0.8173*** (0.0464)	0.8361*** (0.0539)	1.0204*** (0.11)	1.3032** (0.3938)	0.7562*** (0.1059)	0.825*** (0.0675)	0.9622*** (0.1004)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,410	877	421	112	283	674	453

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A11b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'European Integration'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
CIO (t-1)	-	1.1955*** (0.0768)	1.1677*** (0.0784)	-	1.29*** (0.1142)	1.1387*** (0.1242)	1.4967*** (0.2718)
Media visibility	-0.0617 (0.3033)	-0.1799 (0.1439)	-0.1561 (0.1328)	-	-0.201 (0.1889)	-0.152 (0.214)	-0.1784 (0.4101)
Media tonality	-0.2213 (0.1775)	0.0342 (0.0753)	-0.0373 (0.0694)	-	-0.0144 (0.0947)	-0.0352 (0.1133)	0.1182 (0.2645)
Press releases	0.0242 (0.2719)	0.1474 (0.1255)	0.1006 (0.1148)	-	-0.0892 (0.1607)	0.532** (0.1881)	-0.2711 (0.4141)
Facebook postings	0.1384 (0.1384)	0.2522*** (0.0471)	0.2465*** (0.0454)	-	0.2435*** (0.0625)	0.2303** (0.0723)	0.625** (0.207)
Newspaper ads	-0.0043 (0.175)	0.0062 (0.0505)	-0.0331 (0.0548)	-	0.0113 (0.0652)	-0.0143 (0.0906)	-0.0678 (0.1358)
Interpersonal canvassing	-0.5942 (0.5023)	0.3951* (0.1846))	0.2465 (0.1765)	-	0.1083 (0.249)	0.4372 (0.2765)	0.3182 (0.6139)
Impersonal canvassing	0.3622 (0.3021)	0.0503 (0.1208)	0.1251 (0.1132)	-	0.2648 (0.1614)	-0.17 (0.1797)	0.3227 (0.385)
Party Preference	1.004*** (0.1238)	0.8064*** (0.0517)	0.8208*** (0.0481)	-	0.8899*** (0.0666)	0.7939*** (0.079)	0.9177*** (0.182)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	195	1,215	1,304	106	700	529	181

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A12a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Economy'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
AIO (t-1)	1.2958*** (0.0661)	1.3043*** (0.0867)	1.3713*** (0.126)	1.9889*** (0.4154)	1.2718*** (0.1482)	1.3253*** (0.0965)	-
Media visibility	0.122 (0.1264)	0.2434 (0.167)	-0.0391 (0.2389)	-0.3216 (0.7236)	0.3455 (0.2791)	-0.1353 (0.188)	-
Media tonality	0.064 (0.0965)	0.0383 (0.1223)	0.1575 (0.195)	-0.9556 (0.5872)	0.0074 (0.2004)	0.0002 (0.1368)	-
Press releases	0.013 (0.2041)	-0.0552 (0.2693)	-0.1044 (0.3705)	0.5237 (1.2209)	0.0589 (0.4546)	0.1324 (0.2989)	-
Facebook postings	0.0705* (0.0335)	0.0104 (0.0433)	0.1882** (0.0604)	0.1409 (0.2041)	0.0467 (0.092)	0.0832 (0.0474)	-
Newspaper ads	0.0081 (0.0346)	0.0606 (0.0449)	-0.0744 (0.0603)	0.1158 (0.1732)	0.0098 (0.0869)	0.0033 (0.052)	-
Interpersonal canvassing	0.2905 (0.1695)	0.1322 (0.2135)	0.3831 (0.3238)	1.8697* (0.9065)	0.5184 (0.3924)	0.3766 (0.2372)	-
Impersonal canvassing	0.1036 (0.1076)	0.2589 (0.1372)	-0.1702 (0.2062)	-0.3823 (0.5767)	0.1554 (0.2444)	0.2753 (0.1561)	-
Party Preference	0.5122*** (0.0403)	0.5201*** (0.0455)	0.5708*** (0.1004)	1.1221* (0.4753)	0.4272*** (0.0883)	0.4383*** (0.0569)	-
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,734	1,051	535	148	347	847	540

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A12b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Economy'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
AIO (t-1)	-	1.3102*** (0.0668)	1.3025*** (0.0704)	1.4773*** (0.2529)	1.3372*** (0.0972)	1.3694*** (0.1154)	1.4956*** (0.2197)
Media visibility	1.6443 (1.1125)	0.101 (0.1316)	0.0914 (0.1356)	0.0167 (0.4794)	0.1731 (0.1798)	-0.0504 (0.2237)	0.4392 (0.4171)
Media tonality	0.3759 (0.7432)	0.0537 (0.1009)	0.1237 (0.1019)	-0.1658 (0.4338)	-0.047 (0.1332)	0.0829 (0.1675)	0.5913 (0.3814)
Press releases	1.6235 (1.413)	-0.0674 (0.2124)	0.0314 (0.2147)	-0.5592 (0.8477)	0.1539 (0.2852)	0.1695 (0.0592)	-0.9352 (0.7204)
Facebook postings	-0.4677 (0.5749)	0.0784* (0.0343)	0.0865* (0.0369)	-0.0195 (0.105)	0.0266 (0.0495)	0.0888 (0.0556)	0.3268** (0.1151)
Newspaper ads	-0.1957 (0.2237)	0.0124 (0.036)	-0.005 (0.0369)	0.042 (0.1164)	0.0006 (0.0488)	0.1062 (0.0592)	-0.2371* (0.1201)
Interpersonal canvassing	-1.6927 (1.4342)	0.3346 (0.1746)	0.3449 (0.1779)	-0.646 (0.6399)	0.5148* (0.2425)	0.0248 (0.2795)	-0.5149 (0.6523)
Impersonal canvassing	0.9712 (0.7383)	0.0566 (0.1104)	0.1044 (0.1132)	0.0027 (0.4663)	0.1789 (0.1508)	-0.1425 (0.1898)	0.661 (0.3685)
Party Preference	0.4071 (0.2763)	0.5139*** (0.0418)	0.4816*** (0.0423)	0.8728*** (0.1722)	0.4621*** (0.0551)	0.5083*** (0.0704)	0.9834*** (0.1632)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	86	1,648	1,523	211	875	647	212

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A13a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Economy'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
CIO (t-1)	1.4361*** (0.0765)	1.3438*** (0.0999)	1.7151*** (0.1526)	1.9037*** (0.359)	1.3558*** (0.1768)	1.4346*** (0.1108)	1.6264*** (0.1666)
Media visibility	-0.1819 (0.1437)	-0.0285 (0.1948)	-0.2967 (0.271)	-0.3768 (0.6015)	-0.1154 (0.3321)	-0.2473 (0.2056)	-0.1539 (0.3259)
Media tonality	-0.0212 (0.1044)	-0.0273 (0.1331)	0.163 (0.2127)	-0.2604 (0.5021)	-0.1086 (0.2218)	-0.169 (0.1477)	0.2374 (0.2558)
Press releases	0.1202 (0.224)	-0.1187 (0.3014)	0.387 (0.4228)	1.3127 (0.9062)	0.7668 (0.4952)	0.1274 (0.3258)	-0.0162 (0.4866)
Facebook postings	0.1174** (0.0377)	0.1548** (0.0509)	0.0501 (0.0662)	0.2714 (0.1954)	0.1151 (0.0971)	0.1188* (0.056)	0.1496* (0.0729)
Newspaper ads	0.0133 (0.04)	0.0001 (0.0522)	0.0438 (0.0715)	0.1197 (0.1733)	-0.0849 (0.1007)	0.0088 (0.0583)	0.0681 (0.0758)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.5151** (0.1789)	0.6009* (0.2333)	0.1706 (0.3292)	0.5953 (0.7741)	0.4971 (0.4117)	0.7117** (0.2538)	0.3722 (0.4036)
Impersonal canvassing	0.079 (0.1191)	0.0869 (0.1546)	0.1357 (0.227)	-0.4278 (0.5422)	-0.0276 (0.2674)	0.1131 (0.1741)	0.0809 (0.2587)
Party Preference	0.6391*** (0.0467)	0.6376*** (0.0537)	0.6944*** (0.1126)	0.9147* (0.3936)	0.5328*** (0.1009)	0.5959*** (0.066)	0.924*** (0.1116)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,512	936	446	130	297	739	476

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A13b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Economy'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
CIO (t-1)	-	1.461*** (0.0777)	1.4119*** (0.0814)	-	1.584*** (0.1162)	1.4762*** (0.1324)	-
Media visibility	-0.7372 (0.5454)	-0.1272 (0.1529)	-0.1636 (0.1546)	-	-0.0346 (0.2079)	-0.4538 (0.2625)	-
Media tonality	-0.3197 (0.4033)	-0.0217 (0.1112)	-0.0286 (0.1103)	-	-0.0583 (0.15)	-0.1488 (0.1811)	-
Press releases	2.5935** (0.8139)	-0.1806 (0.2417)	0.0524 (0.2397)	-	0.3983 (0.3215)	-0.2765 (0.3998)	-
Facebook postings	0.2153 (0.1738)	0.1101** (0.0393)	0.1272** (0.041)	-	0.1667** (0.0594)	0.0981 (0.0589)	-
Newspaper ads	0.1242 (0.1769)	0.0044 (0.0418)	0.0232 (0.0424)	-	0.009 (0.056)	0.1263 (0.0701)	-
Interpersonal canvassing	1.8829* (0.9057)	0.4674* (0.1852)	0.603** (0.1897)	-	0.3654 (0.2608)	0.7074* (0.2887)	-
Impersonal canvassing	-0.5494 (0.5209	0.1055 (0.1255)	0.0581 (0.1257)	-	0.3069 (0.1723)	-0.2543 (0.2088)	-
Party Preference	0.8388*** (0.1887)	0.6254*** (0.0495)	0.6361*** (0.0491)	-	0.5796*** (0.066)	0.762*** (0.0823)	-
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	125	1,387	1,317	195	763	564	185

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A14a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
AIO (t-1)	1.7942*** (0.1056)	1.7821*** (0.1267)	2.0408*** (0.2859)	-	1.8618*** (0.2497)	1.8982*** (0.165)	2.0656*** (0.2434)
Media visibility	0.0778 (0.1755)	-0.2927 (0.2387)	1.1322** (0.3703)	-	0.0107 (0.398)	0.0441 (0.2573)	0.5427 (0.3447)
Media tonality	0.0504 (0.0953)	0.0802 (0.124)	-0.313 (0.2247)	-	0.0199 (0.2509)	0.079 (0.1372)	0.1248 (0.2026)
Press releases	0.2683 (0.2174)	0.1976 (0.26)	0.395 (0.532)	-	1.0469 (0.5568)	-0.0361 (0.318)	0.1857 (0.453)
Facebook postings	0.1661** (0.0639)	0.101 (0.0688)	0.3311 (0.2231)	-	-0.1058 (0.131)	0.2949* (0.1433)	0.2134* (0.1004)
Newspaper ads	0.1583 (0.2306)	3.8055 (148.4385)	9.0236 (16487.56)	-	0.3912 (0.569)	0.1095 (0.2579)	3.3071 (797.4626)
Interpersonal canvassing	-0.2943 (0.2737)	-0.3216 (0.34)	0.5975 (0.7476)	-	-0.9152 (0.6486)	-0.5234 (0.4233)	0.499 (0.5672)
Impersonal canvassing	0.5448** (0.1859)	0.4946* (0.225)	0.6075 (0.4805)	-	1.1777** (0.3984)	0.274 (0.2861)	0.2026 (0.4085)
Party Preference	0.6426*** (0.0849)	0.7607*** (0.1008)	0.6478** (0.2309)	-	0.4702** (0.1784)	0.6937*** (0.1299)	1.033*** (0.1972)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,727	1,036	541	150	383	836	508

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A14b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
AIO (t-1)	-	1.7949*** (0.1094)	1.8173*** (0.1127)	-	1.7338*** (0.1446)	2.0812*** (0.2137)	4.0141** (1.3182)
Media visibility	-	0.1728 (0.1925)	-0.1276 (0.2029)	-	0.0824 (0.2392)	-0.2316 (0.3607)	0.3903 (1.1344)
Media tonality	-	0.0023 (0.1053)	0.1015 (0.1085)	-	0.0836 (0.1194)	-0.1307 (0.1965)	1.4157 (0.788)
Press releases	-	0.1896 (0.2367)	0.2321 (0.226)	-	0.0626 (0.2851)	0.497 (0.449)	4.6997* (1.9251)
Facebook postings	-	0.1119 (0.0635)	0.1368* (0.0651)	-	0.1496* (0.0703)	0.1982 (0.2334)	1.4599* (0.7254)
Newspaper ads	-	0.1626 (0.3139)	0.1454 (0.2443)	-	0.118 (0.2808)	5.6661 (591.4061)	8.4555 (70,8617.2)
Interpersonal canvassing	-	-0.3934 (0.3002)	-0.3562 (0.2838)	-	-0.2114 (0.3709)	-0.3549 (0.5151)	0.311 (1.8037)
Impersonal canvassing	-	0.5638** (0.2058)	0.6009** (0.1953)	-	0.4324 (0.2455)	0.4412 (0.3734)	1.9834 (1.4421)
Party Preference	-	0.6491*** (0.0955)	0.6254*** (0.0909)	-	0.6172*** (0.1077)	0.8573*** (0.1921)	2.4804** (0.8979)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	119	1,608	1,471	256	860	657	210

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A15a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment'

Variables	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
				Models			
CIO (t-1)	1.546*** (0.0885)	1.6038*** (0.1117)	1.437*** (0.192)	1.6402** (0.5403)	1.9761*** (0.2406)	1.407*** (0.1297)	1.7093*** (0.1785)
Media visibility	-0.0297 (0.1503)	-0.2081 (0.2106)	0.3696 (0.2569)	-1.1776 (1.0606)	-0.4205 (0.4206)	-0.1054 (0.2205)	0.3263 (0.2843)
Media tonality	-0.1816* (0.0795)	-0.1615 (0.1036)	-0.2254 (0.1503)	-0.3615 (0.5096)	-0.636** (0.2356)	-0.2011 (0.1113)	-0.0149 (0.1533)
Press releases	0.0435 (0.1576)	-0.0939 (0.2018)	0.4939 (0.3225)	0.0483 (0.8929)	0.7608 (0.4454)	-0.0606 (0.2202)	-0.2504 (0.2998)
Facebook postings	0.0824* (0.0409)	0.0375 (0.0544)	0.0848 (0.0717)	2.7746* (1.2817)	0.2685 (0.4905)	0.151* (0.0715)	0.0483 (0.0568)
Newspaper ads	-0.0002 (0.0832)	4.0938 (251.0039)	-0.0384 (0.0649)	0.647 (0.5136)	-0.2931 (0.2023)	0.3888 (0.4034)	-0.0327 (0.0777)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.0515 (0.1993)	0.1492 (0.2464)	-0.3004 (0.4571)	0.2709 (0.9698)	-0.5286 (0.6059)	0.1061 (0.2715)	0.3765 (0.3973)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1316 (0.1424)	0.0211 (0.1812)	0.3122 (0.2914)	0.5247 (0.7738)	-0.1295 (0.392)	-0.0254 (0.2034)	0.6308* (0.2844)
Party Preference	0.7602*** (0.0685)	0.8283*** (0.0837)	0.7664*** (0.1523)	0.9721*** (0.4859)	0.9518*** (0.1869)	0.797*** (0.0995)	0.7594*** (0.1353)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,461	880	452	129	307	708	446

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A15b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Environment'

Variables	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
				Models			
CIO (t-1)	-	1.6136*** (0.0915)	1.5427*** (0.0941)	3.4248*** (0.623)	1.673*** (0.1229)	1.3913*** (0.1649)	2.4893*** (0.4774)
Media visibility	-0.6491 (0.4199)	0.0551 (0.1689)	-0.0573 (0.167)	-0.298 (0.5257)	-0.1798 (0.2103)	-0.0143 (0.2626)	0.517 (0.6088)
Media tonality	0.0625 (0.219)	-0.2044* (0.0897)	-0.1938* (0.0857)	-0.0941 (0.297)	-0.0853 (0.1047)	-0.3097* (0.1498)	-0.4792 (0.3221)
Press releases	0.0312 (0.4331)	0.088 (0.1789)	0.012 (0.1645)	1.1061 (0.9439)	-0.028 (0.2137)	0.0963 (0.2977)	-0.034 (0.6444)
Facebook postings	-0.0893 (0.107)	0.1085* (0.0467)	0.08 (0.0459)	0.1915 (0.1182)	0.1174* (0.055)	0.055 (0.0734)	0.0172 (0.1532)
Newspaper ads	0.5108 (0.827)	-0.0372 (0.0713)	-0.0084 (0.0815)	2.6285 (500.8429)	-0.0494 (0.0633)	5.3299 (337.1757)	8.7009 (328,956.2)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.0025 (0.6034)	0.0179 (0.2197)	0.0792 (0.0459)	-1.1948 (1.2443)	0.2708 (0.2706)	-0.204 (0.3665)	-0.2671 (0.8083)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.5189 (0.3984)	0.1641 (0.1610)	0.1889 (0.149)	-1.1248 (0.8144)	0.1578 (0.1907)	0.1548 (0.2691)	-0.2473 (0.5918)
Party Preference	1.0193*** (0.2066)	0.7313*** (0.0758)	0.763*** (0.0733)	1.29*** (0.2928)	0.6573*** (0.0846)	1.0724*** (0.1575)	1.1662*** (0.3038)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	205	1,256	1,228	233	719	554	188

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A16a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Corruption'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
AIO (t-1)	1.3398*** (0.0727)	1.3152*** (0.0946)	1.4435*** (0.1355)	2.7152*** (0.5617)	1.4891*** (0.184)	1.391*** (0.105)	1.4235*** (0.1412)
Media visibility	0.1213 (0.1494)	0.0101 (0.1907)	0.3687 (0.2896)	2.0216 (1.1481)	-0.1229 (0.3295)	0.0172 (0.2131)	0.5352 (0.3107)
Media tonality	0.1147 (0.0886)	0.1195 (0.1124)	0.0782 (0.1657)	1.1493 (0.612)	-0.0294 (0.205)	0.1411 (0.126)	0.1831 (0.173)
Press releases	-0.0406 (0.2077)	-0.0294 (0.2703)	0.1616 (0.3948)	-2.2792 (1.2517)	-0.5467 (0.4156)	0.2998 (0.3038)	0.1883 (0.4532)
Facebook postings	0.1415*** (0.0374)	0.1255** (0.048)	0.1509* (0.066)	0.4867 (0.3514)	0.194 (0.117)	0.2605*** (0.0601)	0.0378 (0.0548)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	0.4741** (0.1738)	0.5186* (0.2186)	0.0501 (0.3501)	6.4021*** (1.7396)	0.4518 (0.4517)	0.4507 (0.2353)	0.7334* (0.3528)
Impersonal canvassing	0.0505 (0.1204)	0.0998 (0.1501)	0.0912 (0.2334)	-0.3187 (0.9344)	-0.3869 (0.2939)	0.161 (0.1703)	-0.1158 (0.2353)
Party Preference	0.4828*** (0.0439)	0.4698*** (0.0504)	0.6075*** (0.0986)	1.0564* (0.5154)	0.4481*** (0.0977)	0.4792*** (0.0616)	0.596*** (0.0964)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,479	901	460	118	273	715	491

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A16b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Corruption'

Variables	Models						
	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
AIO (t-1)	-	1.385*** (0.0744)	1.348*** (0.0743)	-	1.4165*** (0.1088)	1.4708*** (0.1243)	1.2457*** (0.2282)
Media visibility	0.3772 (0.3935)	0.0223 (0.1677)	0.128 (0.1517)	-	0.183 (0.2195)	0.0191 (0.2659)	0.564 (0.4243)
Media tonality	-0.096 (0.249)	0.1428 (0.0976)	0.1124 (0.0905)	-	0.2013 (0.1282)	-0.1402 (0.1477)	0.6749* (0.3015)
Press releases	-0.9979 (0.566)	0.2064 (0.2282)	-0.0273 (0.2123)	-	-0.3695 (0.2823)	0.0802 (0.3737)	1.136 (0.6898)
Facebook postings	0.1424 (0.0866)	0.154*** (0.043)	0.1433*** (0.0385)	-	0.1486** (0.0522)	0.1548* (0.0683)	0.1439 (0.1081)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	0.374 (0.5148)	0.4768* (0.1896)	0.493** (0.1781)	-	0.8182** (0.2485)	0.1554 (0.3021)	0.3091 (0.5519)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.7445* (0.3479)	0.2072 (0.1328)	0.0272 (0.1226)	-	0.0165 (0.1752)	-0.0566 (0.2083)	0.5128 (0.3572)
Party Preference	0.9244*** (0.1227)	0.4087*** (0.0487)	0.4815*** (0.0446)	-	0.4703*** (0.0637)	0.5043*** (0.0751)	0.5892*** (0.1356)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	207	1,272	1,393	86	732	556	191

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A17a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Corruption'

Variables	Models						
	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
CIO (t-1)	1.4619*** (0.0807)	1.4184*** (0.1054)	1.7211*** (0.1583)	1.8366*** (0.4121)	1.4424*** (0.2067)	1.6017*** (0.1174)	1.519*** (0.1569)
Media visibility	0.2085 (0.1562)	0.0536 (0.2067)	0.3265 (0.2982)	0.9182 (0.7035)	0.3325 (0.3513)	0.4158 (0.2251)	-0.17 (0.3347)
Media tonality	0.1079 (0.0971)	0.2062 (0.1266)	-0.1277 (0.181)	0.4365 (0.5004)	0.5903 (0.2391)	0.1134 (0.1379)	-0.3052 (0.1954)
Press releases	-0.1311 (0.2309)	0.1691 (0.302)	-0.3775 (0.4442)	-0.2686 (0.9917)	0.3187 (0.4497)	-0.4746 (0.3491)	0.3725 (0.486)
Facebook postings	0.1982*** (0.041)	0.2076*** (0.0528)	0.1551* (0.0733)	0.3609 (0.2327)	0.2703 (0.1411)	0.284*** (0.0664)	0.1453* (0.0617)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	0.2206 (0.1854)	0.2763 (0.2374)	0.0278 (0.3594)	-0.0811 (0.8264)	0.0126 (0.4922)	0.2822 (0.2524)	0.2735 (0.4044)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.0804 (0.1293)	-0.0916 (0.1624)	-0.3149 (0.2599)	0.9276 (0.6082)	-0.4147 (0.3038)	0.059 (0.1879)	-0.2033 (0.2559)
Party Preference	0.6937*** (0.0504)	0.7193*** (0.0594)	0.8243*** (0.1139)	0.8857* (0.4123)	0.6546*** (0.1063)	0.723*** (0.0728)	0.7418*** (0.11)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,392	869	421	102	261	669	462

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A17b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Corruption'

Variables	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
			Models				
CIO (t-1)	-	1.4946*** (0.0825)	1.4524*** (0.0827)	-	1.6193*** (0.1211)	1.6707*** (0.1458)	0.9326*** (0.2473)
Media visibility	0.8277* (0.3335)	0.0429 (0.1844)	0.1808 (0.1588)	-	0.2258 (0.228)	0.139 (0.2902)	0.5009 (0.445)
Media tonality	0.2023 (0.2197)	0.0985 (0.1123)	0.0791 (0.0986)	-	0.1038 (0.1373)	-0.1045 (0.1766)	0.411 (0.3034)
Press releases	-0.3222 (0.4816)	-0.0669 (0.276)	-0.0868 (0.2366)	-	-0.4029 (0.3149)	0.1479 (0.4322)	0.1512 (0.7809)
Facebook postings	0.334** (0.1049)	0.1716*** (0.0465)	0.2128*** (0.0426)	-	0.2138*** (0.0579)	0.2282** (0.0761)	0.1879 (0.1172)
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	-0.0352 (0.5176)	0.2356 (0.2047)	0.2565 (0.1893)	-	0.379 (0.2724)	0.1431 (0.3269)	0.3939 (0.5611)
Impersonal canvassing	-0.5035 (0.315)	0.051 (0.1464)	-0.1029 (0.1317)	-	-0.2353 (0.1905)	-0.1158 (0.2247)	0.6498 (0.3855)
Party Preference	0.9615*** (0.12)	0.632*** (0.0575)	0.6788*** (0.0511)	-	0.7274*** (0.0741)	0.7858*** (0.2247)	0.7188*** (0.1499)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	253	1,139	1,305	87	700	512	180

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A18a: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions'

Variables	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
				Models			
AIO (t-1)	1.1887*** (0.0771)	1.1854*** (0.0975)	1.2161*** (0.1558)	1.3681*** (0.3775)	-	1.1915*** (0.1121)	1.3235*** (0.1719)
Media visibility	0.0288 (0.1369)	-0.025 (0.1749)	-0.1816 (0.3018)	0.6651 (0.5326)	-	-0.2418 (0.209)	-0.2405 (0.3058)
Media tonality	0.1248 (0.0734)	0.0605 (0.0884)	0.1693 (0.1637)	0.5935 (0.3928)		0.1205 (0.1023)	0.1323 (0.1743)
Press releases	0.0512 (0.0383)	0.1458 (0.1273)	-0.1949 (0.2069)	-0.3137 (0.4561)		-0.0871 (0.1444)	0.131 (0.2417)
Facebook postings	0.1268** (0.0414)	0.0798 (0.0548)	0.156* (0.0787)	1.7256** (0.5622)		0.1065 (0.0599)	0.2227** (0.0998)
Newspaper ads	0.0516 (0.0383)	0.0645 (0.0468)	0.062 (0.0732)	-0.0678 (0.223)	-	0.0384 (0.0497)	0.036 (0.0998)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.1764 (0.1863)	0.3372 (0.2352)	-0.2463 (0.3916)	0.3566 (0.7935)		0.4018 (0.2617)	-0.5609 (0.439)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1033 (0.113)	0.0024 (0.1393)	0.1334 (0.2367)	0.9823 (0.5798)		-0.03 (0.1654)	-0.1544 (0.233)
Party Preference	0.6743*** (0.0491)	0.694*** (0.056)	0.6903*** (0.1117)	1.1854** (0.4042)	-	0.7141*** (0.0725)	0.8367*** (0.1022)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,618	991	485	142	336	788	494

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A18b: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions'

Variables	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
				Models			
AIO (t-1)	-	1.1855*** (0.0784)	1.0805*** (0.0914)	1.4457*** (0.1574)	1.1988*** (0.1081)	1.2114*** (0.1354)	1.5124*** (0.2893)
Media visibility	-0.1752 (0.3687)	0.0339 (0.1523)	-0.0325 (0.1551)	0.3098 (0.3047)	0.1107 (0.1894)	-0.1389 (0.2597)	-0.2151 (0.4886)
Media tonality	0.3664 (0.1874)	0.0648 (0.0833)	0.0433 (0.088)	0.3238* (0.1457)	0.2177* (0.1018)	0.0759 (0.131)	-0.3028 (0.2945)
Press releases	-0.0747 (0.2978)	0.09 (0.111)	0.0179 (0.1157)	0.1831 (0.2213)	0.1426 (0.1368)	-0.228 (0.1762)	0.2212 (0.3551)
Facebook postings	0.5084** (0.1684)	0.078 (0.0433)	0.1266** (0.0478)	0.1422 (0.0888)	0.1673** (0.0603)	0.092 (0.0711)	0.2069 (0.1506)
Newspaper ads	0.0987 (0.0968)	0.0409 (0.0435)	0.0639 (0.0439)	0.0386 (0.0831)	0.1152* (0.0535)	-0.0058 (0.0698)	-0.1331 (0.1589)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.0131 (0.631)	0.2298 (0.199)	0.1338 (0.2221)	0.518 (0.362)	0.0773 (0.2577)	0.0588 (0.333)	1.1251 (0.7033)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1119 (0.3614)	0.1182 (0.1221)	0.1463 (0.1336)	-0.0689 (0.2269)	0.3051 (0.1577)	-0.0207 (0.197)	-0.9127* (0.4111)
Party Preference	0.7362*** (0.1464)	0.6881*** (0.0539)	0.6278*** (0.0586)	0.8243*** (0.0996)	0.6465*** (0.0682)	0.7388*** (0.0899)	0.7808*** (0.1669)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	175	1,443	1,082	536	814	603	201

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A19a: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions'

	Models						
Variables	Overall	Low party ambivalence	Medium party ambivalence	High party ambivalence	Low pol. sophistication	Medium pol. sophistication	High pol sophistication
CIO (t-1)	1.332*** (0.088)	1.4014*** (0.1138)	1.3842*** (0.1802)	-	1.324*** (0.1901)	1.3072*** (0.1295)	1.4015*** (0.1876)
Media visibility	0.109 (0.1542)	-0.0497 (0.2045)	0.1397 (0.3265)	-	0.2007 (0.3573)	0.2537 (0.2298)	-0.1239 (0.3249)
Media tonality	0.1675* (0.0819)	0.0917 (0.1001)	0.3633 (0.1969)	-	0.1136 (0.1649)	0.1618 (0.1181)	0.2786 (0.1836)
Press releases	0.045 (0.1209)	0.0752 (0.159)	-0.1072 (0.2349)	-	0.3153 (0.2516)	-0.1891 (0.1797)	0.2125 (0.2493)
Facebook postings	0.161** (0.0471)	0.1662* (0.0644)	0.1381 (0.0839)	-	0.1801 (0.115)	0.1517* (0.0658)	0.2075* (0.099)
Newspaper ads	0.0209 (0.0451)	0.0631 (0.0529)	-0.1152 (0.1187)	-	0.0739 (0.102)	-0.0252 (0.0626)	0.1661 (0.1053)
Interpersonal canvassing	0.2229 (0.2047)	0.3862 (0.2642)	-0.1026 (0.4189)	-	0.7936 (0.4666)	0.3198 (0.2919)	-0.0744 (0.4843)
Impersonal canvassing	0.2603* (0.1254)	0.0776 (0.16)	0.3797 (0.2591)	-	0.187 (0.2893)	0.2622 (0.1844)	0.3557 (0.2545)
Party Preference	0.8179*** (0.0576)	0.7979*** (0.0662)	1.0928*** (0.1417)	-	0.7177*** (0.1235)	0.8762*** (0.0861)	0.9597*** (0.1262)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	1,427	901	411	115	284	699	444

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table A19b: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions of 'Pensions'

Variables	No preexisting IO	Preexisting IO	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low media trust	Medium media trust	High media trust
				Models			
CIO (t-1)	-	1.3511*** (0.089))	1.4473*** (0.1054)	1.2392*** (0.1935)	1.3792*** (0.1326)	1.311*** (0.1436)	1.591*** (0.3474)
Media visibility	0.2935 (0.4532)	0.0295 (0.1731)	0.1401 (0.1747)	-0.0001 (0.3886)	0.0755 (0.2283)	-0.0512 (0.2731)	-0.0459 (0.5975)
Media tonality	0.5908** (0.2228)	0.0868 (0.0942)	0.1239 (0.0978)	0.2845 (0.1725)	0.1956 (0.1155)	0.1132 (0.1375)	0.1069 (0.3189)
Press releases	-0.353 (0.3254)	0.1309 (0.1348)	-0.0752 (0.1372)	0.5625 (0.2944)	0.1402 (0.1733)	0.0465 (0.2)	-0.5178 (0.4606)
Facebook postings	0.4846** (0.1692)	0.1048* (0.0512)	0.1674** (0.0546)	0.145 (0.107)	0.1973** (0.0735)	0.0963 (0.0734)	0.5606* (0.238)
Newspaper ads	0.2368* (0.1078)	-0.0333 (0.0532)	0.0016 (0.0534)	0.0633 (0.0916)	0.0098 (0.0649)	0.0717 (0.0762)	-0.2079 (0.1926)
Interpersonal canvassing	-1.0016 (0.5834)	0.3589 (0.228)	-0.1389 (0.2387)	1.5145** (0.4624)	0.2885 (0.2949)	-0.0871 (0.3393)	1.2271 (0.817)
Impersonal canvassing	0.1585 (0.3518)	0.283* (0.1411)	0.3447* (0.1487)	-0.017 (0.2595)	0.3482 (0.1797)	0.263 (0.2133)	-0.3738 (0.5128)
Party Preference	1.0149*** (0.168)	0.823*** (0.0644)	0.6963*** (0.0666)	1.2355*** (0.1394)	0.7226*** (0.0802)	0.9515*** (0.1024)	1.3559*** (0.2534)
Case-specific variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N (respondents)	195	1,232	961	466	704	538	185

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming; Müller et al. forthcoming a-c); variables 'Media visibility', 'Media tonality', 'Press releases', 'Facebook postings', 'Newspaper ads' and 'Party preferences' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A20: Conditional logistic regression for associative issue ownership perceptions (without control variables)

Variables	Issues						
	Job Market & Employment	Immigration	European Integration	Economy	Environment	Corruption	Pensions
AIO (t-1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Media visibility	0.1402 (0.0775)	0.215* (0.1029)	0.1536* (0.0678)	0.0926 (0.076)	-0.3077** (0.1143)	0.5486*** (0.0908)	-0.1654* (0.0813)
Media tonality	0.1211** (0.0376)	0.127** (0.039)	0.1458*** (0.0367)	0.1678** (0.055)	0.0248 (0.056)	0.4414*** (0.0559)	0.1358** (0.0429)
Press releases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Facebook postings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impersonal canvassing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Party Preference	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Case-specific variables	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
N (respondents)	2,535	2,719	2,450	2,587	2,630	2,214	2,430

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming); variables 'Media visibility' and 'Media tonality' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A21: Conditional logistic regression for competence issue ownership perceptions (without control variables)

Variables	Issues						
	Job Market & Employment	Immigration	European Integration	Economy	Environment	Corruption	Pensions
CIO (t-1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Media visibility	0.113 (0.0806)	0.5002*** (0.0967)	0.1734* (0.0753)	0.1048 (0.0791)	-0.3463*** (0.0991)	0.5746*** (0.0923)	-0.0791 (0.0819)
Media tonality	0.1006** (0.0386)	0.4742*** (0.0441)	0.2126*** (0.04)	0.2119*** (0.0557)	0.0357 (0.0465)	0.4161*** (0.0575)	0.1691*** (0.0432)
Press releases	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Facebook postings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newspaper ads	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal canvassing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Impersonal canvassing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Party Preference	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Case-specific variables	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
N (respondents)	2,285	2,283	2,136	2,270	2,223	2,064	2,165

Data: AUTNES 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020; Litvyak et al. forthcoming); variables 'Media visibility' and 'Media tonality' are standardized; SEs in parentheses; level of significance: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table A22: Short-term change of AIO perceptions (by issue importance)

Issues	% of respondents who changed IO-perceptions between waves			
	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low issue importance (only parties)[82]	High issue importance (only parties)
Job Market & Employment	41%	31%	35%	25%
Immigration	48%	41%	44%	38%
European Integration	54%	40%	49%	39%
Economy	35%	31%	30%	28%
Environment	22%	15%	15%	10%
Corruption	45%	41%	37%	32%
Pensions	41%	32%	32%	21%

Data: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020), wave 3 and wave 4 (N=1,249 – 2,337)

Table A23: Short-term change of CIO perceptions (by issue importance)

Issues	% of respondents who changed IO-perceptions between waves			
	Low issue importance	High issue importance	Low issue importance (only parties)	High issue importance (only parties)
Job Market & Employment	35%	30%	29%	23%
Immigration	41%	31%	33%	23%
European Integration	43%	35%	37%	34%
Economy	34%	30%	28%	24%
Environment	35%	25%	26%	16%
Corruption	42%	35%	32%	24%
Pensions	36%	31%	27%	20%

Data: AUTNES Online Panel Study 2017 (Wagner et al. 2020), wave 3 and wave 4 (N=1,249 – 2,337)

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[82] The columns labeled with '(only parties)' show the percentages when the option 'no party' is excluded.

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Abstract (English)

Political competition, at least to some extent, means competition between political actors regarding different political issues. However, the connection between parties and issues follows specific patterns. Some parties are more likely to be associated with an issue or perceived as more competent in dealing with it than their competitors. These patterns are described by the concept of 'issue ownership'.

This master thesis examines whether and under which circumstances 'issue ownership' perceptions are 'biased' by a person's news media consumption. In this context 'media bias' is defined as a *deviation of an equal treatment of parties in political coverage, that is neither a pure reflection of structural differences between parties, nor a reflection of parties' own communication activities.* Such 'bias' is expected when susceptible recipients (e.g., people with no preexisting issue ownership perceptions or a high level of media trust) are exposed to an issue-specific coverage in which some parties are more visible and better evaluated than their competitors.

To empirically investigate this expectation, I combine content analyses of newspaper coverage and party communication activities with survey data, in context of the 2017 Austrian election campaign (AUTNES 2017). Conditional logistic regression models with a lagged dependent variable are used to estimate the likelihood of a party (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, The Greens, Liste Pilz) to be perceived as associative or competence issue owner of seven different issues ('Job Market and Employment', 'Immigration', 'European Integration', 'Economy', 'Environment', 'Corruption', 'Pensions').

The results show that newspapers differed in how they have reported about parties in their coverage of specific issues, so that respondents were exposed to different information about the connection between parties and issues. However, a significant effect of this coverage in terms of 'media bias' is not found across the board, but only among specific groups. Attitudinal predispositions like preexisting issue ownership perceptions, party ambivalence, media trust or political sophistication enhance or limit a person's susceptibility to 'media bias'. But which kind of predispositions are important in this matter and how differs between issues and for different types of 'media bias' (visibility and tonality).

Abstract (German)

Politischer Wettbewerb zwischen Parteien vollzieht sich bis zu einem gewissen Grad entlang verschiedener politischer Themen („issues"). Wie die einzelnen Parteien mit den jeweiligen Themen verbunden sind, folgt dabei bestimmten Mustern. Manche Parteien werden häufiger mit einem Thema assoziiert als andere oder als kompetenter als ihre politischen Mitbewerber eingeschätzt, um mit dem jeweiligen Thema umzugehen. Diese Muster werden mit dem Begriff Themenführerschaft („issue ownership") beschrieben.

Diese Masterarbeit untersucht ob und unter welchen Umständen die Wahrnehmungen solcher Themenführerschaften durch den Konsum unausgewogener Medienberichterstattung beeinflusst wird. Unter unausgewogener Medienberichterstattung („media bias") wird in diesem Zusammenhang eine *ungleiche Behandlung von politischen Akteuren verstanden, die sich weder auf strukturelle Unterschiede zwischen Partien zurückführen lässt, noch auf Unterschiede in den Kommunikationsaktivitäten der Parteien selbst.* Ein solcher Einfluss wird erwartet, wenn Parteien in der Medienberichterstattung über ein Thema sichtbarer sind oder besser bewertet werden als ihre Mitbewerber und diese Berichterstattung auf Rezipienten trifft, die dafür empfänglich sind (z.B. Personen ohne existierende Wahrnehmung bezüglich ‚Themenführerschaft' oder Personen mit einem hohem Medienvertrauen).

Diese Erwartung wird in dieser Masterarbeit im Kontext des österreichischen Nationalratswahlkampfes 2017 untersucht, indem Inhaltsanalysen der Zeitungsberichterstattung und der Kommunikationsaktivitäten der Partien mit Umfragedaten verknüpft werden (AUTNES 2017). Mittels konditionaler logistischer Regressionen (mit einer verzögerten abhängigen Variablen) wird dabei die Wahrscheinlichkeit bestimmt, dass eine Partei (SPÖ, ÖVP, FPÖ, Grüne, NEOS, Liste Pilz) als ‚Themenführer' (Assoziation oder Kompetenz) von sieben verschiedenen Themen wahrgenommen wird („Arbeitsmarkt und Beschäftigung", „Zuwanderung", „Europäische Integration", „Wirtschaftspolitik", „Umweltpolitik", „Korruption", „Pensionen").

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Zeitungen sich darin unterscheiden, wie sie Parteien in ihrer Berichterstattung über bestimmte Themen behandeln, so dass Zeitungsleser mit unterschiedlichen Informationen über die Verbindung zwischen Parteien und Themen konfrontiert sind. Allerdings hat diese Berichterstattung nur für bestimmte Gruppen einen signifikanten Effekt auf die Wahrnehmung von Themenführerschaften. Ob Personen bereits

etablierte Vorstellungen darüber haben, welche Parteien sie mit einem Thema assoziieren oder welcher Partei sie die meiste Kompetenz bei einem Thema zuschreiben, sowie das Ausmaß ihrer Parteienambivalenz, ihres Medienvertrauens und ihrer politischen Gewandtheit („political sophistication"), wirken sich darauf aus, ob sie durch ‚unausgewogene Medienberichterstattung' beeinflusst werden können oder nicht. Welche Merkmale in diesem Kontext von Bedeutung sind und auf welche Art und Weise, variiert jedoch zwischen den verschiedenen Themen, sowie zwischen den unterschiedlichen Merkmalen der Berichterstattung (Sichtbarkeit und Bewertung der Parteien).