Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada

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For Kim and Sara

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Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada

1
Introduction

Public concern about unemployment tracks the unemployment rate, whereas the salience of environmental issues or the public debt is only intermittently related to real-world conditions. Why do media, public, and policy agendas move together on certain issues but not on others? To what extent can such trends be explained by real-world factors? To what extent are they the product of media effects, public concern, or attention from policymakers? These are the questions addressed in this book.

An appreciation of the different ways in which media, the public, and policymakers interact is central to our understanding of political systems. These interactions do not simply tell us something about politics – they *are* politics. This book, accordingly, focuses on these relationships. It represents one effort to understand (and model) the Canadian political system; in doing so, it seeks to contribute to our understanding of media influence on the public and policymakers, of the connection between the public and elected officials, and of the way in which everyday politics works in Canada and elsewhere. Evidence presented below suggests that a single, relatively simple *agenda-setting* framework is a particularly valuable (and considerably flexible) tool for understanding the day-to-day relationships between media, the public, and policymakers.

This book tells the story of eight issues – AIDS, crime, debt/deficit, environment, inflation, national unity, taxes, and unemployment – in Canada from 1985 to 1995. In doing so, it points to the value of using issues as a unit of analysis; the importance of drawing together work on media content, public opinion change, and public policymaking; and the strength of an agenda-setting framework in accomplishing both these objectives. To a large extent, this work can be regarded as a study into the value of an agenda-setting framework in investigating media-public-policy relationships. It asserts that, by using issues as the unit of analysis, an agenda-setting framework allows us to both merge disparate fields of political science and empirically map the structure of political communications.

The bulk of these pages is spent demonstrating that this is true, and the exposition involves a considerable amount of data gathering and model building along the way. Canadian media, public, and policy agendas are analyzed, as are the relationships between them. As a result, this study offers both a theoretical discussion of the agenda-setting framework and a demonstration of its use in modelling Canadian political communications. It is hoped that forthcoming analyses address more than just the agenda-setting literature, and that the results make valuable contributions to research on media effects, public opinion change, political representation, and the policymaking process.

The current work also makes an explicit effort to address both political science and everyday politics. This is perhaps the greatest advantage of examining issues – not only does this emphasis allow us to draw together political communications and public policy, but it also highlights the link between academe and the "real world." In short, the academic hypotheses and conclusions investigated here have readily observable real-world consequences.

Practically speaking, this investigation has two primary goals. The first is to empirically map relationships between the media, the public, and policy institutions in Canada using an agenda-setting framework – an issue-centred scheme that has informed well over 200 inquiries into interactions among the media, public, or policymakers.[1] Despite the considerable volume of agenda-setting research, however, this work still covers uncharted territory. Only a select few agenda-setting studies have allowed for multidirectional links between multiple agendas, few have done so with more than one issue, and few have dealt with Canada. Accordingly, this work is uniquely situated to observe inter-relationships between the three major agendas in Canada and adds new information to several ongoing debates in agenda-setting research.

The second goal is in large part a product of the first. Considering its use of an agenda-setting framework, this work has a vested interest in confirming the role of agenda-setting as a coherent and useful model of communications. That agenda-setting is either coherent or useful is still being debated, however. Although Rogers et al. (1997) imply that the agenda-setting paradigm was established with the first empirical study in 1972, a number of researchers have questioned the clarity of agenda-setting in general and the usefulness of "agendas" in particular (e.g., Swanson 1988).

It is certainly true that agenda-setting literature reflects an unfortunate combination of diversity and division. The flexibility of the agenda-setting framework is likely an indication of its potential, but reviews have seldom made coherent the varied agenda-setting literatures and hypotheses. The

[1] Rogers and Dearing (1988) list 153 agenda-setting studies published before 1988. A brief search turns up at least another 100 published since that time.

second goal of this book, then, is to describe agenda-setting in a way that both draws together agenda-setting literatures and indicates the potential for this line of analysis in political science and political communications.

This chapter tries to fulfill the second goal by reviewing and synthesizing media, public, and policy agenda-setting research. There have been a number of recent attempts to describe the ever-expanding bodies of agenda-setting research (e.g., Dearing and Rogers 1996; McCombs and Shaw 1993; McCombs et al. 1995; Rogers and Dearing 1988; Rogers et al. 1993, 1997). The following history of agenda-setting literature draws in large part on these reviews, but makes an effort both to clarify important definitions and to develop an "expanded" model of the agenda-setting process. This expanded model serves as a guide for forthcoming empirical analyses and provides an integrative framework within which the different bodies of agenda-setting literature are combined and contrasted. Several authors have remarked on the divide that exists between media, public, and policy agenda-setting theory and research. This review, along with the empirical work that follows, is an effort to bridge the gap.

A Definition and History of Agenda-Setting Research

The study of agenda-setting is the study of issue salience – the relative importance of an issue on an actor's agenda. Moreover, it is the study of the rise and fall of issue salience over time, and of the relationships between actors' agendas. At a basic level, agenda-setting analysis seeks to draw empirical links between actors' agendas. As a body of literature, its more ambitious purpose is to track public issues and trace processes of political communication.

Agenda-setting research reaches across a wide range of political relationships, and the resulting diversity of agenda-setting work is both its greatest strength and most troubling weakness. Agenda-setting is certainly the only exploratory structure capable of incorporating mass media studies, public opinion research, and public policy analysis into a single framework. Swanson's criticism (1988, 604) that agenda-setting has suffered from "inconsistency of conceptualization, method, and result," however, points to the difficulties of such an integrative framework. Agenda-setting work is so varied and disparate that it is difficult for readers to assimilate even a small portion of what exists. Even simple categories are difficult for the reader to recognize – one author's "media agenda-setting" is another's "public agenda-setting," and so on. Despite the proliferation of agenda-setting frameworks, a single simple, integrative agenda-setting model continues to require definition and clarification.

The logical place to begin is with descriptions of the main components of agenda-setting work: "issues" and "agendas." Issues should not be confused with events. Shaw (1977, 7) notes the difference, suggesting that an event

"is defined as discrete happenings that are limited by space and time, and an issue is defined as involving cumulative news coverage of a series of related events that fit together in a broad category." Events, then, are components of issues. A single robbery is part of the larger crime issue, or a particular policy debate on gun licensing is part of the larger gun control issue. An issue often comprises a large number of events; it might also exist over time almost regardless of the number of recent and relevant events.

Issues have been variously defined, as "a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources" (Cobb and Elder 1972, 82), for instance, or as "a social problem, often conflictual, that has received mass media coverage" (Dearing and Rogers 1996, 4). Issues need not be conflictual, however: there is no opposing side for issues such as child abuse, but child abuse is certainly an issue. Nor should issues be defined by the existence of media coverage. A media-based definition is logical only if one assumes that the mass media are always the first link in the agenda-setting process. When one does not want to make assumptions about the causal ordering of agendas, this becomes problematic. If a contentious subject exists on the public or policy agenda without appearing on the media agenda, is it an issue?

The answer is probably yes. Accordingly, the best definition of an issue is one of the simplest: "whatever is in contention among a relevant public" (Lang and Lang 1981, 451). "Contention" should be taken to mean that conflict may, but need not, exist. Rather, all that is required is an observable degree of discussion or concern. "A relevant public" is taken to mean not the "public" per se but rather a defined group relevant to the agenda-setting process. The relevant public might be the public at large, as measured through opinion polls, but it might also be journalists as indicated by measurements of the media agenda, or politicians and bureaucrats as indicated by measurements of the policy agenda. Additionally, the relevant public is not restricted to the "big three" agendas: in Dearing's description (1989) of the polling agenda, for instance, the relevant public is pollsters. Thus, an issue – valence or two-sided – can exist or originate with any actor in the political process.

Agendas, on the other hand, are "a ranking of the relative importance of various public issues" (Dearing 1989, 310). Issues vary in importance or salience relative to other issues – the order of issues, based on salience, is an agenda. An agenda, therefore, can be measured by making a list of issues in order of salience. Because issues vary in salience relative to each other, however, an agenda can also be measured by looking at the relative salience of a single issue. A measure of the public agenda, usually based on responses to the "most important problem" question, could include a list of issues in order of importance or simply the percentage of respondents citing a single issue.

Turning to the vast body of agenda-setting research, the most practical way to categorize past work is to sort (and label categories) based on the dependent variable. Accordingly, the resulting three bodies of literature are: (1) media agenda-setting, (2) public agenda-setting, and (3) policy agenda-setting (Rogers and Dearing 1988).

These three bodies of literature are both methodologically and theoretically related. Nevertheless, they have developed almost entirely separately from each other. *Public agenda-setting* has been developed for the most part by political communications researchers. Two sources are widely regarded as the theoretical roots of public agenda-setting analysis. The first is Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (1922), in which the author describes mass media's role in the relationship between "the world outside and the pictures in our heads." The second is Cohen's *The Press and Foreign Policy* (1963). Cohen is the first to state what has become the central public agenda-setting hypothesis: the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (13).

Following directly from Cohen's hypothesis, public agenda-setting research seeks to establish links between the relative salience of issues on the media agenda and the relative salience of those issues on the public agenda. The concentration on issue *salience* rather than issue *opinions* both distinguishes public agenda-setting research from the work that precedes it and tends to lead to much more successful results. Previous tests of media influence, most thoroughly described in Klapper's *Effects of Mass Communication* (1960), find little evidence of media influence on public opinion (see also McGuire 1986). Changes in issue salience, on the other hand, are more easily detected.

McCombs and Shaw's study (1972) in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is widely regarded as the first empirical public agenda-setting analysis. These authors demonstrate a relationship between what survey respondents feel are the most important issues and the coverage these issues are given in primary news sources (print, radio, and television). Their results have motivated decades of public agenda-setting analyses, the cumulative product of which provides strong evidence of the original Chapel Hill hypothesis. The link between the mass media and public agendas has been shown to exist in studies that have been diverse both in their empirical methods – experimental and nonexperimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal – and in the subjects they address – for instance, the environment (Parlour and Schatzow 1978); pollution, inflation, and defence (Iyengar et al. 1983); home health care programs (Cook et al. 1983); energy and inflation (Behr and Iyengar 1985); civil rights (Winter and Eyal 1981); and the Gulf War (Iyengar and Simon 1993).

Cobb and Elder propose a similar framework for examining the policymaking process. In their initial *policy agenda-setting* article, they note

the potential for this type of analysis to describe the means by which "an issue or a demand becomes or fails to become the focus of concern and interest within a polity" (Cobb and Elder 1971, 903-904). Their subsequent work highlights the impact of the media and public opinion on the state and national policy agendas (Cobb and Elder 1972).

Succeeding research uses an agenda-setting framework to look at the relationship between both the mass media and policy agendas (e.g., Gilberg et al. 1980; Pritchard 1986, 1992; Wanta et al. 1989) as well as the public and policy agendas (e.g., Flickinger 1983; Mayer 1991; Page and Shapiro 1983). A further variant examines issue dynamics within the policy agenda. This work, perhaps better termed *inter-policy agenda-setting,* surveys relationships between, for instance, the US presidential and congressional agendas (Andrade and Young 1996) or British political parties and policymakers (Kaye 1994). Studies by Kingdon (1995) and Baumgartner and Jones (1993) represent the current state of this line of research, combining policy and inter-policy agenda-setting hypotheses in their descriptions of the US policy process. Both deal with interactions between bureaucracies, officials, committees, and – to a lesser extent – the public and media agendas.

While public and policy agenda-setting are the most popular lines of agenda-setting research, there are also a small number of *media* or *inter-media agenda-setting* analyses. In truth, most media agenda-setting observations have taken place as by-products of public or policy agenda-setting studies. Gonzenbach's suggestion (1996) that the presidential agenda has a significant impact on the media agenda, for instance, is the derivative of a public agenda-setting analysis of the drug issue (see also Berkowitz 1992 and Wanta et al. 1989).

Research by Reese and Danielian (1989), on the other hand, stands as an explicit example of inter-media agenda-setting analysis. This research explores the relationship between the press and television, and finds that (1) television takes its cues on the salience of the drug issue from the press, and (2) the relative coverage of this issue by various media converges over time. Protess et al. (1985) note a similar inter-media agenda-setting phenomenon – the strongest agenda-setting effects of a newspaper's investigative series on rape, they find, are on the newspaper itself. Along similar lines, Soroka's (2000) inter-media agenda-setting work explores the link between entertainment and news media agendas.

In spite of the assertion made by Carragee et al. (1987, 43) that "a significant shortcoming of agenda-setting research has been its failure to examine the institutional framework within which the media form their agenda," the use of the media as a dependent variable in agenda-setting studies remains relatively infrequent. The few studies that do exist demonstrate the potential for and importance of media or inter-media agenda-setting analysis,

however. These studies are the final link in the agenda-setting chain, connecting media, public, and policy agendas.

Towards an Expanded Model of the Agenda-Setting Process

A central goal of analyses in the chapters that follow is to integrate the three largely separate strands of agenda-setting research. Admittedly, this direction in agenda-setting analysis is not entirely new. Some policy agenda-setting work has dealt with both media and public opinion, although evidence tends to be anecdotal rather than empirical. Several public agenda-setting authors, on the other hand, have attempted to build a more complete empirical model of political communications by drawing together policy, public, and media agenda-setting fields. Rogers et al.'s study (1997) of the AIDS issue, for instance, explores agenda dynamics across media, policy, polling, and science agendas. Similarly, Gonzenbach's analysis (1996) of the drug issue examines relationships between presidential, media, and public agendas.

This broadened perspective demonstrates the primary advantage of the agenda-setting framework – its potential in linking media research and public policy analysis through a common vernacular and empirically comparable measures. This book aims to contribute along these lines. It draws impartially from media, public, and policy agenda-setting sources, and suggests that a combination of the different schools of agenda-setting research is both desirable and necessary. In order to both accommodate and take advantage of information in each body of agenda-setting research, however, the model of the agenda-setting process as it is presently understood must be updated and enlarged.

Models of the agenda-setting process have been explicitly described only intermittently. In most cases, authors imply relatively simple models, such as "media affect the public." There are a few exceptions; for instance, Rogers and Dearing's literature review (1988) includes an illustrated model of the agenda-setting process. These past models – illustrated or implied – tend not to adequately accommodate the vast agenda-setting literature, however. Perhaps more important, most are based on a view of causal links between the various agendas that is too restrictive.

A short review of agenda-setting research illustrates the difficulty with restrictive views of causal relations. To begin with, there are six possible directions of causality among the three major agendas. These directions vary both in their power and in their plausibility, so analysts have tended to concentrate on certain links and ignore others. Nevertheless, all of these links have been examined in one study or another, and the cumulative results point to the importance of taking each into account in models of the agenda-setting process.

The multidirectionality of the media-policy link is well documented. For instance, while Mayer's analysis (1991) of consumer issues reveals a rise in salience on the policy agenda preceding the rise in salience for the media, both Cook et al. (1983) and Protess et al. (1987) find that media reports – on home health care fraud and toxic waste, respectively – affect the salience of those issues for policymakers. Wanta et al. (1989) find similar examples of causal relationships running in both directions between the State of the Union address and the media agenda.

These findings are supported by studies of both the policy and the news-gathering processes. The latter indicate the significant role policymakers play as media sources – journalists often rely on government spokespersons and bureaucrats for quick, reliable information (Ericson et al. 1989). As a consequence, there is the distinct possibility that policymakers can affect the media content. Analyses of the policy process, on the other hand, suggest that the media play a role in setting policy agendas (Cook 1988; Kingdon 1995; Miller 1978; Mollenhoff 1965; Sullivan et al. 1993; Weiss 1974). Accumulated evidence, then, suggests that there is no single direction of influence between the media and policy agendas.

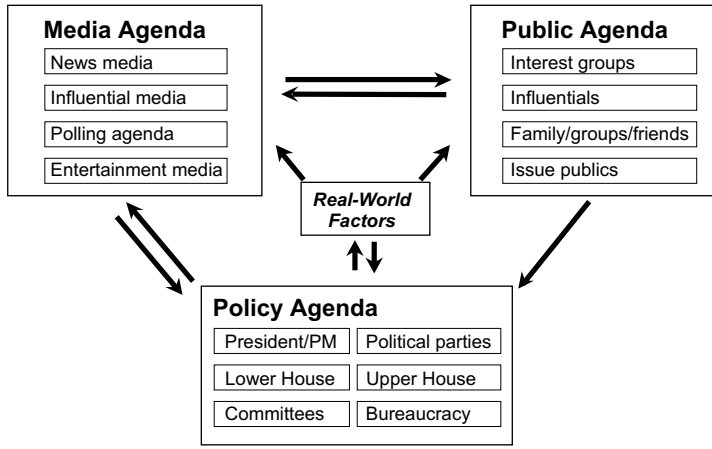
Evidence of multidirectional influence in the media-public link has been less clear. Certainly, the possibility of media influence on the public received considerable attention before the opposite relationship was hypothesized and examined. Nevertheless, there is evidence of public influence on the media agenda. Behr and Iyengar (1985) find evidence of a "feedback effect" for inflation, although results for other issues suggests that effects are more typically unidirectional. Neuman and Fryling (1985, 231-32) find much stronger support for bi-directional causality – their survey of ten issues finds "evidence of every pattern except consistent media agenda-setting. By far, the most dominant pattern was Interactive Feedback."

Other public agenda-setting research provides additional evidence that media-public effects may be bi-directional. For instance, Brosius and Kepplinger (1990) find that the direction of influence between German media and the public agendas varies depending on the issue. The authors suggest that the media tend to influence the public when television coverage is very intense; when there is a slow increase in issue salience, public opinion seems to precede issue salience for the media. In his survey of the drug issue, Gonzenbach (1992) finds it difficult to discern a single direction of causality; he suggests that the media can lead or be led at different times on the same issue. In sum, there is considerable evidence that the direction of causality in the media-public relationship cannot be assumed.

These issues of causality are taken into account in the expanded model of the agenda-setting process illustrated in Figure 1.1. The three primary agendas are shown, and causal arrows run in both directions between most of these agendas. There is no direct link from the policy to the public agenda,

Figure 1.1

An expanded model of the agenda-setting process



on the assumption that policymakers can affect the public through the media or real-world factors but not directly. Real-world factors are located at the centre, affected by policymakers and affecting each of the three agendas.

A number of subagendas are shown within each of the primary agendas. These lists are not intended to be comprehensive, but they do illustrate how the model accommodates both intra- and inter-agenda analyses. The effects of the *New York Times* on the media agenda are represented in this model in the same way as the effects of committees on the House of Commons agenda. More importantly, both these intra-agenda analyses are incorporated into a model of inter-agenda dynamics. Thus, the model accomplishes two tasks: (1) it provides a framework with which to compare, contrast, and combine a wide variety of agenda-setting analyses, and (2) it makes few assumptions about directions of causality, emphasizing the possibility of multidirectional agenda-setting and suggesting a structure for empirical investigation.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the agenda-setting model upon which the research described in this book is based. Assumptions are not made about the direction of causality; rather, statistical modelling is used to measure the significance of each of the causal links. All possible directions of causality are thereby measured and controlled for, with the aim of adding to current discussions surrounding agenda-setting causality and the wider agenda-setting process. In this way, the present study seeks to demonstrate the potential of the expanded model, using it not only as a means of reviewing of past work but also as a working guide for empirical analysis.

Research Strategy

Succeeding chapters rely on a "natural history" (McCombs et al. 1995) research design, studying the salience of single issues using aggregate data. This approach has been popular in the public agenda-setting literature (e.g., MacKuen and Coombs 1981; Winter and Eyal 1981; Gonzenbach 1996) and has tended to provide more convincing evidence of agenda-setting than studies relying on either individual-level data or aggregated lists of issues.

The difficulty with aggregated lists of issues is that the wide variety of intervening variables in the agenda-setting process – including real-world indicators and personal experiences – make a comparison of the distribution of salience across a set of issues problematic (Erbring et al. 1980). Furthermore, the varying nature of issues can lead to vastly different agenda-setting effects and dynamics. Not only can the identification of agenda-setting effects be lessened through aggregate issue measures but the effects can be masked entirely if various issues have opposing dynamics (Winter et al. 1982).

Perhaps more importantly, a longitudinal design provides more powerful evidence of causality than a cross-sectional set-up. While McCombs and Shaw's analysis (1972) stimulated a considerable body of public agenda-setting work, the authors assumed a direction of causality that their cross-sectional analysis could not prove. The problem is relatively simple: when both agendas are measured simultaneously, there can be no discussion of what comes first and what follows.

Worded differently, the problem with a cross-sectional design is that it is, by definition, static, while the agenda-setting process is, by definition, dynamic. This lack of congruence between the dynamic agenda-setting process and cross-sectional designs has been noted by a number of agenda-setting authors, aware of the possibility that cross-sectional methods may fail to identify the significance of a relationship over time between two agendas (Behr and Iyengar 1985; Brosius and Kepplinger 1990; Cook et al. 1983; Hill 1985; Iyengar and Simon 1993; MacKuen and Coombs 1981; Watt and van den Berg 1981; Weaver 1991). Perhaps most telling is Brosius and Kepplinger's comparison (1990) of dynamic and static analyses of the same data. Using dynamic analysis, these authors found a significant relationship where none was found in their static analysis, lending proof to Zucker's suggestion (1978, 226-27) that "the best way to make claims about the media and public opinion is to look at changes in both over time, and to use small enough intervals so that it is possible to determine if changes in one preceded changes in the other."

Funkhouser (1973) was among the first to use a longitudinal agenda-setting design. This author compared a media content analysis with answers to Gallup's "most important problem" question each year from 1964 to 1970. His conclusions were based on simply "eyeballing" the data, but longitudinal

analysis has since become much more refined. Recent studies have used statistical procedures such as ARIMA time series modelling (Gonzenbach 1992, 1996; Zhu et al. 1993) and Granger causality (Brosius and Kepplinger 1990, 1992a) to quantify movements and trends in the data. The development of advanced econometric procedures in political science makes a longitudinal analysis of agenda-setting dynamics especially attractive.

Unfortunately, researchers are rarely able to combine both a longitudinal set-up and individual-level data, since individual-level variables are rarely available over an extended period. Thus, while longitudinal analysis is most often well equipped to address "stimulus attributes" – those pertaining to the agenda setter, such as variations in the nature of different issues – it is poorly equipped to address "audience attributes," such as individuals' exposure to the media (Winter 1981). Panel studies have attempted to overcome the difficulty of tracing audience attributes over time (Roberts 1992). The amount of time and the number of observations necessary for a thorough analysis of stimulus attributes makes a combined study of both sets of attributes very difficult. Consequently, this has been attempted very infrequently, and with very modest success (Zhu and Boroson 1997).

The nature of the available data, then, is most often such that an investigator must decide which to examine, audience or stimulus attributes. In other words, researchers must often decide whether to examine causality or individual-level differences. The emphasis of this book is the former. This necessitates a longitudinal dataset with an extended time frame, and data availability forces the amalgamation of a wide variety of poll results. As a result, the dataset is not well equipped to examine audience attributes. With only a brief exception in Chapter 4, the analyses described here concentrate on questions of causality and on variations in stimulus attributes.

Synopsis and Prognosis

Agenda-setting has developed out of work by Cohen (1963), McCombs and Shaw (1972), and Cobb and Elder (1972) into a large and varied body of literature, documenting relationships between and within the media, public, and policy agendas. While most studies concentrate on a single relationship between two agendas, some recent work seeks to provide a more expanded framework. This book demonstrates the strength of an agenda-setting framework, capitalizing on the use of issues and agendas as the common conceptual threads linking media analysis, public opinion research, and studies of the policy process. Following this line of analysis, it examines links between media, public, and policy agendas through a longitudinal survey of eight issues in Canada; the resulting evidence is intended to fill several gaps and contribute to a number of ongoing debates in the literature.

Chapter 6 is the focal point of the project, and surrounding chapters offer theoretical, methodological, and empirical support. Chapter 2 offers

historical backgrounds for each issue examined in subsequent chapters, and introduces a threefold issue typology. While directions of causality should be tested rather than assumed, there are certain trends that past research leads us to expect. Chapter 2 reviews these trends and suggests hypotheses that inform subsequent analyses.

The next three chapters examine media, public, and policy agendas individually. These chapters provide the methodological background to each agenda measure, but also capitalize on the data collected to test a variety of additional hypotheses. Chapter 3 investigates the extent to which there is a pan-Canadian media agenda, and explores the relationship between individual Canadian newspapers. Chapter 4 looks at interprovincial consistencies and differences in the public agenda. Chapter 5 examines various measures of the policy agenda. Little effort has been made to measure the policy agenda outside the US, and the nature of the Canadian policy process makes this an especially daunting task.

The next two chapters form the empirical core of the project. Chapter 6 estimates issue-specific models of the agenda-setting process, exploring similarities and differences in causal issue dynamics and examining the validity of our issue typology. Chapter 7 then builds on these results. It divides the study period into shorter intervals, for instance, looking for changes over time. Hypotheses about the age of issues, mentioned briefly in Chapter 2, are dealt with here. Chapter 7 also examines the US media as an additional exogenous variable. Chapter 8 concludes with a review of the results, some further hypotheses regarding an expanded model of the agenda-setting process, and some suggestions for future work.

Methodological questions and problems have been a dominant theme in the literature, and this book is no different. The way in which media, public, and policy agendas are specified has a significant impact on the results; accordingly, a substantial effort has been made to review past work, clarify expectations, and build measures that are both theoretically justified and empirically sound. Having described and tested the individual agendas, this study then goes on to test causal links between them. When are there agenda-setting effects? Which agendas are leading, and which are following? How do causal dynamics change from issue to issue? How do they change over time? These are questions answered in the succeeding chapters. The answers provide valuable information about issue dynamics, agenda-setting hypotheses, and the nature of political communications in Canada.