Panel 7: Media & Public Administration

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Rianne Dekker (Utrecht University)

A description of the proposed theme for the panel

The media have become a major influence on public opinion and decision-making processes (Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer, 2010). The importance of the media derives from their function as important channels of communication between policymakers and citizens, and between different parts of the administrative system. How institutions adapt to the exigencies of the media has been the subject of mediatization literature. "Mediatization" refers to a social change process in which the media have become increasingly influential in, and deeply integrated into, different spheres of society (Strömbäck, 2008).

The majority of empirical studies focuses on the mediatization of political institutions (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999). This panel is interested in a branch of mediatization studies that has been relatively underdeveloped, and that examines the relationship between the media and public administration. The mediatization of public administration refers to the structural change in which government organizations have become increasingly dependent on, and have adapted to, the media and their logic (Schillemans, 2012; Thorbjørnsrud et al., 2014).While recent studies indicate the importance of the media in the bureaucratic sphere, empirical studies have been scarce and fragmented. Existing research can be broadly grouped into three topics: media and democracy; media and organization; media and policy.

First, studies have discussed the function of the media in democratic systems, often focusing on the role of the media as informal forums for political accountability (Bovens, 2007; Maggetti, 2012). The media serve as the main source of information for citizens about the governmental agenda and performance. Media attention reduces the problem of asymmetric information between central government and organizations that operate at arms-length. As such, mass media and in particular social media can enhance government transparency (Meijer, 2009; Bertot et al. 2010).

Second, research focused on the active role of government organizations in adapting to media pressures (Fredriksson et al., 2015). Government organizations have been devoting

substantial time and resources to media monitoring and management (Deacon & Monk, 2001; Thorbjørnsrud et al. 2014; Fredriksson, Schillemans, & Pallas, 2015), and to strategically adapt organizational outputs in response to or in anticipation of media coverage (Carpenter, 2002; Maor & Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2015). The role of media in governance networks has been highlighted as well. Increased societal complexity and the erosion of existing institutions evermore require a 'governance beyond government' approach involving several actors from within and outside government (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2004). With the attendance of this multi-actor governance, the media have become more important. Actors in governance networks around specific issues are responsive towards media coverage as it can be strategically used to influence negotiations. This changes the power relations of the stakeholders in these networks (Korthagen, 2015).

Third, a more dispersed literature has zoomed in on the broad issue of media and policy processes and outcomes – both in the sense of developing specific media policies, such as social media strategies (Meijer & Thaens, 2013), and by zooming in on how media coverage influences public opinion and policy-making in general (Baumgartner & Jones 1993; Stone, 2002; Dekker & Scholten 2015). The latter tradition draws upon the agenda setting hypothesis by assuming that media coverage influences the salience and the framing of issues as media coverage perpetrates in policy making processes (Rein & Schön, 1993).

Linkage between the panel and subthemes of the NIG research programme

Following the mediatization literature (see panel description), we see "mediatization" as a social change process that affects public administration in several ways. The three themes that are distinguished in the panel relate to different NIG sub-themes. The NIG sub-theme 'Multi-actor governance in complexity' is best reflected in the theme 'Media and organization', which is interested in how organizations in networks adapt to, and strategically use, media coverage. The NIG sub-theme 'Political institutions and democracy' mainly relates to the theme 'Media and democracy' which is interested in the role of the media in affecting broader issues of accountability, transparency and democracy. The NIG sub-theme 'Public management' is touched upon by our interest in how organizations manage media pressures internally (see 'Media and organization'), and how policy-making is affected by the media (see 'Media and policy'). Note that these themes do not function in isolation from each other, but influence each other. For instance, increased social complexity and the erosion of existing institutions, as

stimuli for multi actor governance, ensure that the position of the media has been more important for democracy and for political institutions and management.

The type of papers (and topics) you would expect to be submitted for your panel

This panel invites empirical and conceptual papers that further academic understanding on the mediatization of public administration and public policy. While recent studies indicate the importance of the media in the bureaucratic sphere, empirical studies have been scarce and fragmented. Papers can link to one of the three topics outlined in this call: *media and democracy*; *media and public organizations* or *media and policy*.

We particularly invite papers that tackle existing gaps in the literature:
- Longitudinal analyses of media coverage on public organizations or policies.
- Studies focused on specific types of media, for example television, op-ed articles or social media.
- Studies focused on specific media-effects such as agenda setting, framing or effects on institutional processes.
- Studies dealing with the issue of generalizability: can generic media pressures in the public sector be distinguished?
- Micro-level approaches of the creation, maintenance, reshaping and interruption of the institutional properties of mediatization

Panel chairs

Jan Boon is a PhD candidate at the Department of Political Science at the University of Antwerp. From October 1st 2016 onwards, he will work as a postdoc at the University of Antwerp. Jan is involved in the REPGOV project (Comparative Research on Reputation in Government) which is interested in how reputational threats in the media affect government agencies.

Alette Opperhuizen is a PhD candidate at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. After receiving her bachelor and a master degree, she started her PhD in May 2015 for the project *supervision and governance*. The aim of this study is to explore determinants of the interrelationship between shifting media attention, the

political debate and changing governance processes of supervision organisations. The study focusses on a national case (gas drilling) and on a comparison between England, Italy and the Netherlands (smoking ban and horse meat scandal). Her approach is to search for different perspectives (policy-makers, citizens, front-workers) and be innovative in her methodology by testing and developing text mining and the use of big data in the social science.

Rianne Dekker works as assistant professor at the Utrecht School of Governance at Utrecht University. After obtaining her MSc, Rianne worked as a researcher in the international THEMIS project with the aim of explaining the dynamics of migration processes. Her interests and publications focused on the role of social media in migrant networks. As a PhD student, she was involved in the FP7 project 'UniteEurope' that dealt with researching and developing a social media analysis tool for analysing online discussions about immigrants and ethnic minorities. Her dissertation –which she will defend in October – is entitled 'Policy in the Public Eye'. It focuses on the question how traditional and social media coverage on immigration and integration influence the policy agenda.

Questions about this panel can be directed to Jan Boon (jan.boon@uantwerpen.be).

PANEL PROGRAMME

- 9u30-9u45: verwelkoming en voorstelling

- 9u45-10u15: presentatie 1 – paper Sabine Rys en Wouter Van Dooren: "Citizen or customer? The impact of frontline communication of public services on attitudes of citizenship"

- 10u15-10u45: presentatie 2 – paper Sandra Jacobs en Anke Wonneberger: "Did we make it to the news? Effects of actual and perceived media coverage on media orientations of communication professionals"

- 10u45-11u00: pauze

- 11u00-11u30: presentatie 3 – paper Jan Boon, Heidi Salomonsen en Koen Verhoest: "Identifying the Media Sensitive: Analyzing Differences in Media Salience and Media Valence between Public Organizations"

- 11u30-12u00: presentatie 4 – paper Sandra Jacobs en Harmen Binnema: "National media attention for local accountability processes: Heightened consequences?"

- 12u00-12u15: pauze

- 12u15-13u00: 'miniseminarie' media coding

    o 12u15-12u30: Alette Opperhuizen – automatisch coderen en natural language processing
    o 12u30-12u45: Eva Wolf – interpretatief coderen
    o 12u45-13u00: groepsdiscussie