

MASTER'S THESIS

Exploring the Role of Political Agenda: Triadic Network Agenda-Setting on Asylum Seekers and Refugees Issues in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This study examines the complex interplay among media, public, and political agendas during a period of significant political transition, utilizing the agenda-setting framework to analyze these dynamics. By employing a novel Triadic Network Agenda-Setting (TNAS) model, the study provides valuable insights into how these agendas interact and influence each other as a political landscape shifts from semi-democratic governance to a more authoritarian regime. The study utilizes structural topic modeling to identify agenda attributes from a comprehensive dataset of news articles, public discussions, and legislative posts across two distinct political periods. Vector Autoregression models and Granger causality tests are then applied to examine the causal relationships among the different agendas.

The findings reveal that agenda-setting processes are not unidirectional, but involve dynamic and often reciprocal interactions that vary across political contexts. In the semi-democratic period, a notable reciprocal relationship between public and media agendas was observed, particularly regarding certain key issues. However, the transition to a more authoritarian system saw a shift towards more controlled and unidirectional agenda-setting dynamics, with political priorities increasingly disconnected from media coverage and public discussion. These results contribute significantly to agenda-setting theory by demonstrating the importance of considering political contexts in understanding media effects. The study's innovative application of the TNAS model provides a more nuanced framework for examining the complex relationships among media, public, and political agendas, particularly in transitional political environments. Furthermore, the study offers important practical implications for policymakers, media professionals, and advocacy groups, highlighting the need for more balanced and nuanced approaches to communication and policy development in complex sociopolitical landscapes.