Motivation

❖ Agenda setting matters, a lot
❖ Who leads, who follows?
  • Politicians, parties, traditional media, the public?
  • Still unclear; complex relationships
❖ Social media have implications for agenda setting
❖ Few studies take into account multiple types of actors, traditional and social media, mutual influences, long periods
Social media and political agenda setting

- Social media are a relevant channel for political communication
- Social media expand the number and types of actors who can potentially shape the agenda
- Social media help political actors reach the broader public via traditional media
Research question

We examine the connections between three agendas:

1. Traditional media agenda
2. Social media agenda of parties
3. Social media agenda of politicians
Research design

- Switzerland, January 2018–December 2019
- Period includes national elections and multiple referenda
- 2.78 million articles published in 84 newspapers (full text)
- 6,500 tweets posted by parties on their official accounts (excluding retweets)
- 210,000 tweets posted by politicians on their own accounts
- Machine-learning classifiers for four issues: environment, gender, Europe, immigration
- Vector autoregression (VAR) models (Barberá et al., 2019), controlling for press releases of parties and many organizations
Results: the three agendas are closely tied together
Conclusion

- Significant influences among most agendas across the four issues
- On balance, each agendas both leads and follows each other agenda to similar degrees
- Exception: environment issue \(\rightarrow\) parties lead newspapers
- Role of large-scale campaigns for the responsiveness of different agendas