

**Moral Panics and Punctuated Equilibrium in Public Policy: an
analysis of the criminal justice policy agenda in Britain**

Will Jennings, University of Southampton

Stephen Farrall, University of Sheffield

Emily Gray, University of Sheffield

Colin Hay, Sciences Po, Paris.

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Abstract

How and when issues are elevated onto the political agenda is a perennial question for the study of public policy. This paper considers how moral panics contribute to punctuated equilibrium in public policy; whereby a specific event contributes to, or reinforces, change in the dominant set of issue frames on an issue – by encapsulating broader societal anxieties or fears – creating opportunities for policy entrepreneurs to disrupt the existing policy monopoly. In a test of this theory, we assess the factors behind the rise of crime on the policy agenda in Britain between 1960 and 2010. We adopt an integrative mixed methods approach, drawing upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. This enables us to analyse the rise of crime as a policy problem, the breakdown of the political-institutional consensus on crime, the moral panic that followed the murder of the toddler James Bulger in 1993, the emergence of new issue frames around crime and social/moral decay more broadly, and how – in combination – these contributed to escalation of political rhetoric and action on crime, led by policy entrepreneurs in the Labour and Conservative parties.

Keywords: agenda-setting, punctuated equilibrium, moral panics, crime

How do moral panics around specific events lead to periods of rapid change in public policy?

The processes by which an issue is elevated onto the political agenda is a perennial concern of the study of public policy. Baumgartner and Jones' (1993; 2009) theory of punctuated equilibrium in public policy contends that policy changes occur due to the concurrence of a breakdown in an existing policy monopoly and a change in the policy image (or the 'issue frame' or 'issue definition'). In this paper we argue that moral panics are symbolic events or tales/stories which tap into much broader societal anxieties or fears, and which thereby impact on the set of frames associated with an issue. The distinguishing – and important – feature of moral panics is that they are associated with trigger events that are viewed as being *symptomatic* of a wider condition, malaise or societal pathology, which alters the framing of a given issue and prompts demands for policy action. They are thus one of the processes by which policy equilibria are subject to rapid and dramatic change, representing an extreme and distinctive case. Through understanding moral panics, it becomes possible to understand how patterns of policy change might vary across issues, and contingent upon events.

In Britain, between the election of the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and the landslide victory of Tony Blair's New Labour in 1997, crime went from being an issue of marginal concern to the public and to government, to being a central focus of the political agenda – subject to extensive policy activity and intense competition between the main parties. In less than twenty years, attention to this issue increased dramatically, following a long period of policy stability. The factors behind the politicisation of crime and its increased salience across numerous advanced democracies have been subject to considerable debate (e.g. Beckett 1997; Garland 2001; Gottschalk 2006; Enns 2014; 2016; Miller 2016). This paper explores how agenda-setting processes account for the rise of crime on the policy agenda in Britain between 1960 and 2010. Specifically it considers how punctuated equilibrium in criminal justice policy followed from the confluence of growing social problems (including rising crime rates), a moral panic over the murder of Liverpool toddler James Bulger that resonated with a broader shift in the framing of public disorder and social

decay, a breakdown in the existing policy monopoly over criminal justice (which previously had kept crime and policing largely off the political agenda) and the role of policy entrepreneurs in politicising the issue and shifting the policy agenda to a new consensus based around punitive rhetoric on sentencing and anti-social behaviour.¹

In the remainder of this paper we explain the analytical value of incorporating moral panics into the theoretical framework of punctuated equilibrium in public policy, briefly review the state of the art in debates over the politicisation of crime and criminal justice policy, and assess the evidence for a punctuation on the criminal justice policy agenda in Britain in the mid-1990s. We then deploy an integrative mixed methods approach to analyse the breakdown of the political and institutional consensus on crime, the rise of crime as a problem on the political agenda, the emergence of new issue frames around crime and social and moral decay more broadly, and how these contributed to an escalation of political rhetoric and legislative action on crime, driven by policy entrepreneurs in the Labour and Conservative parties. This approach is designed to reflect causal complexity; first describing the historical processes using qualitative and quantitative evidence where appropriate, and then undertaking time series modelling based on measures of each of the theoretical factors. This departs from previous efforts to account for politicization of crime in Britain during this period, through combining analysis of institutions, elites, media and the mass public.

Theories of Punctuated Equilibrium in Public Policy

The punctuated equilibrium theory of public policy (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; 2009) seeks to explain the observation that policy-making is often characterised by extended periods of stasis and equilibrium, but occasionally undergoes large-scale policy shifts that upset the status quo. This theory was developed in the context of U.S. politics, where the configuration of checks and

¹ It is hard to overstate the cultural importance of the murder of James Bulger. Newspaper headlines in the UK were dominated by the murder, the search for the perpetrators and then, months later, the trial and sentencing of those found guilty. Magazines which would not normally carry articles on either crime or the state of British society (such as *Good Housekeeping*) ran articles on exactly this topic. The murder changed the ways in which the country thought of itself (see Green 2012).

balances is associated with ‘institutional friction’ that induces much policy stability but occasionally contributes to infrequent but seismic disturbances. It has also been shown to apply to patterns of policy-making attention in a range of advanced democracies (e.g. Breunig 2006; Baumgartner et al. 2009; John and Jennings 2010; Chaqués-Bonafont and Baumgartner 2015). The key components of punctuated equilibrium theory are (1) policy monopolies as institutional arrangements that maintain stable and entrenched patterns of decision-making around an issue, supported by (2) an established issue frame or definition, and (3) positive feedback processes that give rise to sudden realignments in public policy (i.e. “policy punctuations”) – due to disruption of those policy monopolies and issue definitions. This theoretical framework provides important insights into the sometimes unstable dynamics of policy change.

Punctuated equilibrium theory rests upon the idea that much of policy-making is conducted outside the world of high politics in policy subsystems – i.e., institutional arenas with capacity to handle multiple policy issues on a routine basis, largely out of the limelight of national politics. These subsystems are built around the parallel processing of information, by communities of experts, bureaucrats and interest groups. Policy monopolies are typically buttressed by a supporting core value or idea – a policy image (also known as an ‘issue definition’) – which structures the social and political norms around which policy debates are organised. This exerts resistance against dramatic changes in policy, encouraging incrementalism, which is characterised as negative feedback by Baumgartner and Jones (1993). Such institutional arrangements act to keep policy-making ticking over but not to dramatically alter its course, excluding particular ideas or interests and insulating the system from shocks. A consequence of this is that substantial pressure for change can build up before any broad policy consensus is overturned, and an issue becomes the subject of attention on the macro-political agenda.

Under conditions of institutional stasis, when policy change occurs it is often sudden and disproportionate (Jones and Baumgartner 2005). Shocks to the policy system can become self-reinforcing, leading to policy bandwagons, cascades and over-reactions (Halpin 2011). Positive

feedback processes are thus associated with large scale punctuations in policy and reflect the possibility for periods of instability to occur, associated with the breakdown of an established policy monopoly and emergence of a new issue definition. Policy entrepreneurs are also a key component of punctuated equilibrium theory; as actors seeking opportunities to bring about policy change, who can draw on strategies such as venue-shopping (moving decision-making to new institutional arenas) and the reframing of issues to disrupted established policy communities.

Moral Panics, Focusing Events and Policy Change

Studies of agenda-setting find that unpredictable 'focusing' or 'trigger' events (Cobb and Elder 1972; Birkland 1997), can also prompt large and rapid shifts in policy-making. Such focusing events can initiate positive feedback, propelling issues into the public and media spotlight and generating societal demands for government action. Hood and Lodge's (2002) characterisation of 'Pavlovian' policy responses similarly observes knee-jerk policy reactions during moments of high anxiety, in their case relating to dangerous dogs. In the context of an underlying problem, such as rising crime rates or epidemics of drug abuse, high profile events are capable of becoming the focus of public anxieties that, in turn, are seized upon by political entrepreneurs. Focusing events thus directly draw attention to policy problems/hazards, by revealing current or potential future harms.

Moral panics (Cohen 1972) on the other hand do something different. Cohen's work on 'moral panics' sketches out the role of collective alarm over perceived 'folk devils'. Cohen (1972: 28) defines a moral panic as situations where "A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests". Hall et al. (1978: 20) offer a further element in their definition, explicitly noting that the response is disproportionate: "When the official reaction to a person, groups of persons or series of events is *out of all proportion* to the actual threat offered". The concept has relevance across a broad range of policy domains where a particular group or behaviour come to be labelled as deviant, or as posing a threat to the moral order; not just in relation to crime (such as outbreaks of gun crime or gang violence), but also for example public

health (especially relating to infectious disease), drugs, popular culture (such as outcries over video games and pop music), migrants and welfare recipients. As such, a moral panic takes an event or set of processes and sees it, typically, as representative of not just what it is, also as representative of *something else* – often something of which it is *not* representative. We will argue below that the murder of a young boy (James Bulger) by two other children came not simply to represent child-on-child murders (which are very rare) but rather came to represent a crisis with the moral fabric of British society at that time.

Moral panics typically proceed from and build out of a single focussing or trigger event. They constitute a form of amplification in which the details of that specific event are perceived as being symptomatic of a wider condition, a malaise or societal pathology which needs to be addressed. The moral panic thus takes a singular event and reads it as symptomatic of a wider societal problem(s) (even if this event is not representative of that society or the members of it), the identification of which then reveals the wider prevalence of the pathology that must be addressed. We consider moral panics a distinctive subset of punctuated equilibrium theory inasmuch as they similarly *entail* a change in issue frame which gives rise to disruption of the policy consensus around a given problem; but identify a specific trigger event which activates or amplifies that issue frame (or frames), thereby initiating the process of positive feedback leading to policy change. Moral panics are not inconsistent with public responsiveness to actual policy problems. For example, rising public anxiety about crime has been shown to be a function of actual crime rates (Enns 2014; Miller 2016; Jennings et al. 2016). They may explain, however, why certain problems are suddenly elevated onto the policy agenda at particular times, thus contributing to punctuations in public policy. Indeed, the conditions associated with moral panics may produce even more disproportionate policy responses, due to the pressure on policy-makers. Our argument is therefore that moral panics contribute to punctuated equilibrium in policy; whereby a specific event contributes to, or reinforces, change in the dominant set of issue frames on an issue – encapsulating broader societal anxieties or fears – creating opportunities for policy entrepreneurs to disrupt the existing policy monopoly. The extent

to which such events contribute to policy change may be contingent upon timing and characteristics of the policy domain in question. Unlike a focusing event (in which the events are read as being simply an example of what has gone wrong), moral panics speak to a wider, more inchoate and hitherto unarticulated set of processes in which the event which triggers the moral panic may not, per se, be terribly representative of the problems which are highlighted.

The Emergence of Crime as a Political Issue

There is a substantial and ongoing debate concerning the politicization of crime and why it emerged as a political issue in the U.S. as well as in other advanced democracies. A small number of scholars have argued that crime rates shape both public attitudes and political responses to crime in the U.S. (e.g. Weaver 2007; Miller 2013, 2016; Enns 2014; 2016; Fortner 2015), and in the U.K. (e.g. Downes and Morgan 1997; Newburn 2007; Jennings et al. 2016). In *The Myth of Mob Rule*, Miller (2016) offers rare comparative evidence – from the U.S., U.K. and Netherlands – on the connection between crime rates and policy responses. In their work on punctuated equilibrium in policy, Jones and Baumgartner (2005: 218-222; also Baumgartner et al. 2014) use criminal justice in the U.S. as a specific case of positive feedback in policy-making. Prior to the 1960s the federal government had been relatively inactive on crime policy, but a combination of rising crime, public anxiety, increased media coverage and a series of urban riots, led to an escalation of attention from policy-makers at the national level and a doubling of federal spending on crime and justice in a relatively short period (Baumgartner et al. 2014). Such a view of the politicization of crime is far from uncontested. Beckett (1997), for example, argues that public support for punitive policies is weakly related to actual rates of crime. Smith (2004) suggests that growth of prison populations has less to do with mass opinion or rising crime rates, and more to do with race, partisan politics and (gubernatorial) elections. Other accounts emphasise the role of institutional structures and interest group politics in expansion of the carceral state (e.g. Gottschalk 2006; 2008). The degree to which the punctuated equilibrium theory

of policy applies to the case of crime in the U.K. therefore offers an important contribution to these debates.

Punctuated Equilibrium in Criminal Justice Policy in Britain

What evidence is there of punctuated equilibrium in criminal justice policy in Britain? The rise of crime on the policy agenda has been one of the notable long-term shifts in the focus of post-war British politics. Prior to the late 1970s, crime rates had been low and law and order was given relatively little attention by Labour or Conservative governments, and a liberal policy consensus had largely remained intact (Downes and Morgan 1997). While the parties increasingly competed on the issue in their election platforms, this was not translated into policy programmes in government. It was only later, during the 1990s, that crime emerged as a prominent issue on the policy agenda of government. Before proceeding to our analysis of the processes that gave rise to these trends, it is necessary to assess the evidence for a large scale shift (i.e. a “punctuation”) in the policy agenda on criminal justice. Much of recent literature relating to punctuated equilibrium theory uses stochastic process methods to analyse aggregate patterns of policy change (see Jones and Breunig 2011). Our interest, however, is in identifying a large change in policy attention for a specific issue: crime. To do this, we use descriptive statistics and graphical illustrations to reveal how attention of government to the issue has fluctuated over time, and draw on tests that detect structural breaks in these time series. Our analysis uses data from the U.K. Policy Agendas Project (<http://www.comparativeagendas.net/uk>) regarding attention of government to the issue of law and order in executive speeches and primary legislation, focusing on the period since 1960.

Visual inspection of the data provide support for the claim that a major shift in attention of British government to the issue of law and order occurred during the early 1990s. The percentage of Acts of Parliament relating primarily to the issue of crime is plotted in Figure 2. This shows sizable spikes in legislative attention in 1995 and 1997. In terms of major legislation on crime, 1995 was an exceptional year – with a total of 17 Acts of U.K. Parliament passed relating to the issue comprising

31 per cent of the government’s legislative agenda, higher than at any other point during the post-war period. Bridging the Major and Blair governments, 1997 saw even more laws (21) passed relating to criminal justice (making up some 30 per cent of the legislative agenda). There is similar evidence for attention to the issue in the government’s annual statement of policy priorities, the Queen’s Speech. The percentage of the speech allocated to law and order is plotted in Figure 3. This also reveals that the year 1995 marked a large increase in government attention to law and order issues, followed by a further surge in 1999. This period is therefore notable for this level shift in legislative and executive attention to criminal justice issues. In the period between 1960 and 1994, British government on average used 6% of the Queen’s Speech for setting out law and order measures. In the period from 1995 onwards, it dedicated 12% to it. The period around the mid-1990s therefore appears to have seen a structural shift in policy activism of on the issue of crime under the Major government which lasted to around the end of the Blair era (in 2007), where attention began to subside.

We conduct two additional tests for the presence of structural breaks in the executive and legislative agenda.² First, Zivot-Andrews (1992) tests indicate that each of the series is stationary with a structural break – in 1993 for Acts of Parliament and in 1996 for the Queen’s Speech (see Appendix Table A2 for results). Further, we conduct Bayesian change-point analysis to confirm these findings.³ This follows the approach used by John et al. (2013). Notably, using this method identifies change-points in policy attention in the same years – 1993 for Acts of Parliament and 1996 for the Queen’s Speech. Specifically, we find that after 1993 the number of legislative acts on law and order increased by a factor of 1.5 with a credible 95% range of [1.3,1.7], while after 1996 the number of

² Note that these tests refer to the period between 1960 and 2004 in order to ensure consistency with the time series regression analyses presented later in the paper.

³ The detect the change-point parameter in the policy agenda we apply the following Bayesian model with non-informative priors:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{counts}_i &\sim \text{Poisson}(\mu_1), \text{ if } \text{year}_i < \text{cp} \\ \text{counts}_i &\sim \text{Poisson}(\mu_2), \text{ if } \text{year}_i \geq \text{cp} \\ \mu_1 &\sim 1 \\ \mu_2 &\sim 1 \\ \text{cp} &\sim \text{Uniform}(1960, 2004) \end{aligned}$$

mentions of law and order in the speech increases by a factor of about 2.4 with a credible 95% range of [1.9,3.1]. Note that as well as these significant increases in the attention of policy-makers to law and order, there was also a noticeable change in the tenor of criminal justice acts passed after the early 1990s; from this point government legislation became more punitive and also extended the ways in which punitiveness was ‘delivered’ (see Farrall et al. 2016).⁴

[insert Figures 1 and 2 about here]

Explaining Punctuated Equilibrium in Criminal Justice Policy in Britain

The puzzle of what caused this punctuation in the policy agenda on crime (in the increase in political attention to the issue and an increase in punitiveness) is the focus of the remainder of this paper. In what follows we develop the argument that, in a context of actual rising crime and rising fear of crime, individual high profile crimes (in this case the murder of the toddler James Bulger in February 1993) are capable of becoming the focus of a moral panic – which resonates with a wider set of issue frames – and that this, in turn, may be seized upon by policy entrepreneurs (in this case the Shadow Home Secretary, Tony Blair and Home Secretary Michael Howard). The effect, we argue, is to generate a rhetorical war between the parties over crime which then leads to heightened legislative activism, and an attempt to ‘outgun’ the opposition (producing a cycle of escalating ‘toughness’). The process is akin to the formation of a wave which is likely to build in size and endure for so long as crime rates continue to rise or remain high as issue salience persists. This, we argue, accounts for the politicization of British criminal justice policy since the early 1990s. These processes of agenda-setting may help explain the cross-national variation observed by Green (2012) in penal responses to cases of child-on-child homicide. They also may explain why the issue of crime more widely underwent a sudden period of expansion on the agenda during the 1990s and 2000s at a time when crime had started to fall.

⁴ Prior to 1993, criminal justice acts going back several decades had contained various measures which were aimed at reducing the punitiveness of the criminal justice system. Hence a desire to reduce the use of imprisonment (including for those on remand) can be found in the 1982, 1988 and 1991 Criminal Justice Acts and the 1985 Prosecution of Offenders Act.

Data and Analysis

Based on the theoretical framework outlined earlier, it is possible to assess evidence for the factors that contributed to these punctuations in the criminal justice policy agenda, i.e. considering the contribution of each component of the theories of punctuated equilibrium (i.e. policy conditions, the policy monopoly, changes in issue frames) and moral panics (i.e. the trigger event). For this, we adopt an integrative mixed methods analysis that draws on multiple sources of evidence; and uses qualitative or quantitative methods depending on what is considered appropriate for the object of analysis. For example, to understand the breakdown of the policy monopoly and the role of policy entrepreneurs, qualitative analysis of policy and institutions is combined with elite interviews (with three of the four longest-serving Home Secretaries during the period of analysis). To track increased severity of the policy problem (i.e. crime rates) and its salience to media and the public, quantitative data is presented. Our analysis considers evidence relating to the following factors: (1) the policy monopoly governing criminal justice (based on qualitative analysis of policy/institutions and elite interviews), (2) growing social problems and public concern (depicted using a range of quantitative data), (3) the incidence of a focusing event and moral panic (undertaking qualitative analysis of the trigger event), and (4) changes in issue frames (revealed with quantitative data on rhetoric used in parliamentary debates). We use these findings to inform specification of a time series model of the criminal justice policy agenda that tests the effect of each of these factors simultaneously. As such the paper offers a novel methodology that has general applicability for the analysis of policy change.

1. The policy monopoly: the Home Office liberal consensus

Our analysis of the policy monopoly on criminal justice relies on a combination of a review of existing accounts of policy and institutional arrangements during the period from 1979 to 2015 and a series of interviews with three out of the four longest-serving Home Secretaries of the 1979 to 2010 period who are still alive; Douglas Hurd (1985-1989), Michael Howard (1993-1997) and David Blunkett (2001-2004). The only person missing from this group is Jack Straw (1997-2001), while the

other long-serving Home Secretary from 2010 to 2015, Theresa May, is currently prime minister. See Appendix Table A1 for a full list of Home Secretaries during the period. Elite interviews such as these are especially useful in providing insights on the role of policy entrepreneurs and their perceptions of the existing policy monopoly on criminal justice. More importantly, Hurd, Howard and Blunkett were critical actors who presided over most of the major criminal justice acts of the 1980s and 1990s (see Farrall et al. 2016: 221).

In Britain, institutional dominance of criminal justice by the Home Office meant that a stable set of policy-making arrangements had been in place for an extended period up until the early 1970s combined with a broad liberal-progressive consensus among political parties (Downes and Morgan 1997). Chief amongst these was the desire to reduce imprisonment, albeit gradually so as to not worry members of the public (Faulkner 2014: 88). However, the 1980s saw this established policy start to come under strain. A number of previously uncontentious Home Office policy goals (such as the reduction of imprisonment) became vulnerable to challenge due to dramatic rises in recorded crime rates. For an extended period, the policy goal had been to keep offenders (especially young offenders) out of prison. The 1969 Children and Young Persons Act aimed to keep juvenile delinquents out of court, while the 1972 Criminal Justice Act tried to create more imaginative non-custodial sentences for some offenders (Hall et al. 1978: 48). Even during the 1980s the Home Office continued to try to avoid the use of prison; both the 1982 and 1988 Criminal Justice Acts developed criteria which had to be met before custody could be imposed and created various alternatives to imprisonment (Blackmore 1989; Thomas 1989), while the 1985 Prosecution of Offences Act introduced measures to reduce the numbers of people remanded to prison (Cavadino and Dignan 2007: 95). The idea that prison was an expensive way of making offenders worse initially survived as the attention of the Thatcher governments was focused on the economy, industrial relations, housing and social security initiatives (Farrall and Hay 2010).

Up until the early 1990s, the position of Home Secretary had been held for long periods by paternalists or non-Thatcherites (such as Willie Whitelaw and Douglas Hurd, both of whom were to

the left of the Conservative Party). Leon Brittan (Home Secretary from June 1983 to September 1985) later fell out with Thatcher, and his period in office was dominated by the miners' strike, while David Waddington, Kenneth Baker and Kenneth Clarke all were only in post for short periods. Of these, as Baker (1993: 424) notes, only Waddington shared Thatcher's support for the reintroduction of capital punishment. Consequently, during the 1980s and early 90s, there was a gap between the rhetoric and the substance of policies on this matter, as the Home Office pursued relatively liberal policies (at least where the use of prison was concerned) despite adopting popular punitive rhetoric (Farrall et al. 2016).

In 1991 a further criminal justice act was passed. The thinking behind the Act had been developed over many years (Windlesham 1993: 412-414), and it was viewed by many as a 'high watermark' of informed, liberal sentencing policy (Cavadino and Dignan 2007: 55). Despite the attempts which had been made to reduce imprisonment, none had reduced the prison population. Whilst the Court of Appeal had provided clearer guidance with regards to their desired sentences for particular crimes along with guidance as to which offences warranted incarceration, there was little to ensure that the guidelines were adopted (Koffman 2006). The Carlisle Committee (which reported in 1988, see Faulkner 2014: 91-92) advised that changes would have to be made to avoid further increases in the prison population. The White Paper which preceded the 1991 Act argued that imprisonment was "an expensive way of making bad people worse" (Koffman 2006, echoing the sentiments expressed by Whitelaw and Howell in 1978), and went on to argue that "more offenders should be punished in the community" (Ashworth 1992) and that offenders should not necessarily move 'up' the penal ladder (Koffman 2006). The approach to sentencing which was adopted was predicated on the idea that custodial sentences should only be made when no other sentence would suffice (Koffman 2006). In order to divert people away from prison, community disposals needed to be made to sound sufficiently tough, and in so doing tough rhetoric was given a boost. Such rhetoric can be found also in Douglas Hurd's speech in 1988 to the Conservative Party conference, where he argued that "... the aim is punishment and no Conservative should ever veer away from the notion of

punishment” (quote in May 1991: 174). Indeed, one leading commentator has argued that the intention of introducing these orders was to demonstrate that alternatives to custodial sentencing were sufficiently punitive (Newburn 2003: 147). The 1991 Act also introduced suspended sentences, which were less punitive in practice (Cavadino and Dignan 1992) as courts could only impose them if immediate custody would have been justified and if the suspension of the sentence could “be justified by the exceptional circumstances of the case” (Newburn 2003: 171). Therefore the Act reduced by about 7,000 those in prison (Cavadino and Dignan 2007: 115). But the 1991 Act was to end in failure; both Ken Clarke and Michael Howard disliked it, and members of the judiciary spoke out against it (see Faulkner 2006: 125; Balen 1994: 240 and Windlesham 1996: 20-21 for more details on the precise nature of their criticisms, which revolved around the limiting of the powers of sentencers, the use of ‘unit fines’, and a survey of 2,000 criminal justice staff conducted by the Home Office which suggested that groups as diverse as police officers, defence solicitors, probation officers and prison staff were united in their dislike of the ways in which the Act operated albeit to differing degrees).

Popular concern about crime – specifically the public’s fear of crime – was systematically measured for the first time via a new institution, the British Crime Survey, which was established in 1982. By the early 1990s crime was recognised by policy-makers to be rising dramatically, and the status quo on imprisonment increasingly came under pressure. It was during this period that there was a break in governmental policy on law and order (Farrall et al. 2009) and escalation of political contestation over the issue between the government and opposition (Newburn 2007). A rising star of the opposition Labour Party, Tony Blair, was appointed Shadow Home Secretary in 1992 and very quickly positioned the party as cognisant of public concern and being “tough on crime”, criticising the Conservative government for failure of both its policies and philosophies (Blair 1993). Soon after, in May 1993, Michael Howard was made Home Secretary in the Major government, becoming a key policy entrepreneur in the realignment of Home Office policy on imprisonment (Jones and Newburn 2007: 148). The goal of reducing imprisonment quickly came to be questioned by the new Home

Secretary. In an interview conducted with Howard in September 2014 for this study, he recalled that "the first presentation" given to him by civil servants stressed policy continuity, in the inevitability of rising crime and the overriding goal of managing public expectations. In another interview, David Blunkett recollected receiving similar advice from one of his predecessors as Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins (1974-1976). Howard argued that "there was a prevalent view among the criminal justice establishment which was that you shouldn't really send people to prison unless you absolutely have to. And they were reinforced by the Treasury which didn't like spending money on prisons." The institutional consensus, and prevailing set of norms that structured internal policy debates, was viewed critically by Howard who considered himself to be an outsider to criminal justice issues and more resistant to conventional wisdom in policy circles on the inevitability of rising crime rates: "I expect my predecessors were given the same sort of advice that I'd been given. And I think they were more prepared to go along with it than I was." Such comments are revealing of Howard's rejection of the Home Office's institutional view of crime. During Howard's term of office between 1993 and 1997, the prison population increased by around 40%.

Howard's appointment as Home Secretary in May 1993 therefore represents a critical moment. An outsider at the Home Office, he had not been indoctrinated into the Home Office's approach to crime ('it would always go up') or imprisonment ('it ought to be used as a last resort'). In this respect, Howard's appointment was akin to the idea of a 'critical nomination' (Ruckman 1993; Robinson 2013). This break from the past was commented upon in an interview with one of his predecessors, Douglas Hurd; "[Howard] hadn't very much patience with the kind of approach that I favoured and Ken Clarke ... and Willie Whitelaw favoured". For the first time, the Home Office was led by a Home Secretary with strong punitive preferences. From that point on, with the main parties seeking to present themselves as tough on crime (Newburn 2007), the post was held by a succession of Labour Home Secretaries who sought to extend the general tenor of the approach adopted by Howard. This marked a significant disjuncture in the previous liberal policy consensus, i.e. the policy monopoly, that had governed criminal justice for decades.

2. Policy problems and the public agenda: rising crime and public fear of crime

It is also possible – alongside this sequence of institutional and policy developments – to track the rise of crime as a social problem and topic of public concern, drawing on a range of official statistics and survey data on public attitudes. Recorded crime rates had risen steadily throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This trend accelerated in the late 1980s and peaked in 1992. Rising crime was linked to socio-economic shocks of the period (see Field 1990; Pyle and Deadman 1994) as well as to the heroin epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s (Morgan 2014). The crime rate for England and Wales per 1,000 head of population is plotted in Figure 3. The growth of this social problem had seen the total number of recorded crimes increase from 2.5 million in 1979 to 4.5 million in 1990 (an increase of 179 per cent). Rises in crime were repeated across different subsets of crime: over this period the overall recorded crime rate was highly correlated with rates of property and violent crime (Pearson's $r = 0.99$ and 0.77 respectively). As such, British government faced an upturn in crime across several areas of offending – even compared to the upward historical trend. Alongside this, other trends pointed towards growing social disorder, such as the rise in the number of children excluded from school (and hence 'at large' in residential streets and in trouble with the police), which had increased dramatically since the introduction of school league tables.

[insert Figure 3 about here]

Crime gathers its resonance not just from the meaning of the event itself, but also from wider social changes in society which it comes to symbolise. Throughout the 1970s, there was a growing awareness by conservative politicians and figureheads (such as Mary Whitehouse) of the emergence of such feelings in the minds of ordinary people. Citizens, it was claimed, believed that crime was a problem; that they themselves were more at risk than previously; and that these issues reflected broader changes and threats in society. The label 'the fear of crime' was born out of these observations and slowly emerged as an object of social scientific investigation against the backdrop of increased governmental interest in law and order (see Lee 2007). The late 1970s saw crime and

public concerns about crime in Britain become increasingly salient on the societal agenda. This can be seen in public opinion relating both to the salience of the issue and fear of crime. Figure 4 plots the proportion of the public naming crime or law and order as the most important problem or issue facing the country, as measured by the survey organisations Gallup and Ipsos-MORI between 1960 and 2010. For all of the period up to the 1970s, crime was a non-issue, only starting to register at all as a subject of public concern during the late 1970s. This trend went in parallel with the rising rate of recorded crime, and while there was a peak in the importance of crime to the public around the time of the peak in crime rates, the issue's salience continued to rise into the 2000s even after crime rates started to fall.

Fear of crime follows a similar, but somewhat different trend. Figure 5 depicts the public's fear of crime measured in the British Crime Survey (using the question "how safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?"). This shows public anxiety at its peak in 1993, and steadily declining thereafter, suggesting that while crime was perceived as an important issue facing society people were not necessarily more afraid of becoming victims themselves. Media interest in crime remained relatively stable throughout the 1980s, but increased substantially during the 1990s and 2000s. Figure 6 plots the annual percentage of front page stories of *The Times* relating to law and order (data from John et al. 2013), which remains relatively flat from 1960, before a surge in coverage in 1993 (followed by a later surge in 2003 to 2005). Much as Jones and Baumgartner (2005) observed for the U.S. in the 1960s, the emergence of a social problem coincided with growing public and media attention to the issue.

[insert Figures 4, 5 and 6 about here]

3. *Moral panics and focusing events: the Bulger murder*

As we have argued, focusing events can result in breakdowns in existing policy equilibria on issues. Moral panics, in particular, can lead particular problems or groups to be defined as a threat to the values or interests of society – and thereby create pressure for policy change on the basis of new

diagnoses and solutions. The focusing event in this case was the abduction and subsequent murder in February 1993 of the Bootle toddler James Bulger by a pair of 10-year old boys, Robert Thompson and John Venables. As Hay (1995: 199) outlines, this came to act “as a point of condensation for wider social anxieties”. The Bulger murder precipitated a moral panic about other aspects of (then) contemporary British society. It received intensive media coverage, leading to a moral panic focused around child delinquency in which media and, increasingly, leading politicians drew links between this single event and wider perceived trends in family breakdown and child delinquency. As such this moral panic went beyond simply the murder of a child by two other children; it spoke to a wider set of concerns about the decay of inner cities, the rise of single parents, ‘feral’ boys who were truanting or who had been excluded from school, industrial decline, loss of respect for ‘traditional values’ and ‘dependency’ culture. The killers of Bulger were playing truant from school on the day of the abduction, and had shoplifted earlier in the day. At least one of the boys was from a single parent family. Both lived in deprived areas of Liverpool. The media linked the murder to the children having watched a ‘video nasty’, *Child’s Play 3* (though this claim was never proven). In this context, the child killers were presented as exemplars of the breakdown of family values, and as the product of ‘broken homes’.⁵ As such, the murder acted as a focal event for anxiety over a set of other social processes which had been building up in many of the more impoverished parts of U.K. cities and larger towns, whereby young children (often boys) were regularly truanting from school or had been permanently excluded from school, where families were under stresses (such as divorce or separation) caused by un- and under-employment, where families were increasingly headed by single parents (often females with lower levels of pay from work, if they did work) and where increasingly local councils were legally obliged to house those people with high and chronic levels of social and economic needs.⁶ In this way the Bulger murder was rarely, if ever, constructed as a sign

⁵ Much of the relevance around the Bulger case tapped into a perceived loss of social control and social bonds in Liverpool. Additionally, legally this case was treated uniquely – which exacerbated/ facilitated the hysteria around it from various quarters.

⁶ Such is the potency of the case, that the killers are subject to occasional media reporting, despite anonymity granted to them upon release.

of the danger *of* children *for* children (for such cases are very rare); rather it was constructed as being about a far wider set of processes associated with rapid economic and societal changes.

The murder also changed widespread attitudes towards the ways in which the British thought about crime and punishment. Since 1986 the British Social Attitudes Survey has asked respondents to state the extent to which they agreed with a statement about the death penalty being appropriate for some crimes. In 1987, 43% strongly agreed with this statement; by 1991 this had fallen to 25%. In the immediate aftermath of the murder (the survey fieldwork in 1993 was conducted in the midst of the moral panic we outline here) the number strongly agreeing had jumped back up (to 45%). After 1993, public support for the death penalty resumed its decline, falling year-on-year. It was, however, not until 2001, some 18 years later, that support for the death penalty reached its pre-Bulger level (with 24% strongly agreeing). Similarly, public concern about crime – measured with the most important problem/issue (as shown in Figure 4) – had been falling steadily in the period between 1988 and 1992, but rose sharply in 1993 (with surveys in the month immediately following the killing revealing a doubling in the percentage of respondents naming the issue).

4. Issue frames: trends in parliamentary issue definitions regarding crime and society

The moral panic around the Bulger murder can be linked to a wider shift in the prevalent issue frames in political debate around crime and social problems. Political rhetoric around ‘broken homes’, ‘single mothers’ and other areas of perceived social and moral decay had been circulating well before, but the immediate aftermath of the murder saw a substantial spike in many associated issue frames. Figure 8 plots the number of references in parliamentary debates to key terms over the period from 1960 to 2004. The political salience of this focusing event can be seen both in the amount of attention it received at the time and in its frequent reappearance on the parliamentary agenda over subsequent years. Its impact on wider political debate can be observed in the spikes in discussion of juvenile and youth crime around this period, along with the longer-term emergence

and rise of the discourse of ‘anti-social behaviour’ from the mid-1990s onwards. Notably, many issue frames associated with broader social anxieties – such as ‘single mothers’, ‘truancy’ (or truants), ‘broken homes’ and ‘yobs’ – also became more prevalent in parliamentary rhetoric. Mentions of juvenile and youth crime, truancy and single mothers all spiked in 1993 *specifically*. These were followed by the later wave of political concern with anti-social behaviour (which by the early 2000s was receiving about as much attention as all other issue frames put together). On this basis, it is evident that the killing, although not the cause, resonated with these undercurrents of anxiety about social and moral decay – in which there was an implicit link between social breakdown and rising crime. Such concerns were starting to register in mass opinion. Data from the British Social Attitudes survey suggests that, from the mid-1990s, there was a growing perception that young people lacked respect for ‘traditional values’ (see Supplementary Materials Figure S1). Not only had crime started to receive more attention from British government, the related set of issue frames had become tied to anxiety about social breakdown, or ‘the causes of crime’ as Tony Blair had labelled it.

[insert Figure 8 about here]

Summary

To what extent do theories of punctuated equilibrium and moral panics account for the case of criminal justice policy in Britain? It is clear that the 1990s observed the breakdown of the policy monopoly that had overseen relative stability in criminal justice policy for several decades – the liberal consensus within the Home Office resistant to pressures for more punitive measures. Prior to that point, British government had been relatively inactive on criminal justice, but the combination of rising crime rates and related social problems, public concern about crime and disorder, increased media coverage and competition between policy entrepreneurs (Howard and Blair) looking to gain political ownership of the issue, led to an escalation of attention from government. As part of these dynamics, the sudden and large shift in policy attention was fuelled by a single shocking event – the

murder of James Bulger – and a change in the related set of issue frames around criminal justice, as crime became increasingly linked with a sense of social and moral decay.

While the Bulger murder in itself was a shocking event that led to societal anxiety around social breakdown and crime, the issue expansion around criminal justice policy during this period was heavily influenced by the role of policy entrepreneurs. As we noted earlier, policy entrepreneurs are a key component of punctuated equilibrium theory; as actors seeking opportunities to disrupt the status quo and gain political advantage. While Michael Howard was a critical actor, as we have argued, in overseeing a break with the liberal policy consensus that had governed the Home Office for decades, Tony Blair as Labour's Shadow Home Secretary (and later as Prime Minister) also played a key role in escalating political rhetoric and policy activism. Blair's response to the Bulger murder was a significant moment in his eventual ascension to the Labour leadership (the next year in 1994), with a widely publicised speech that described news reports of the murder as "hammer blows struck against the sleeping conscience of the country". Writing later, Blair (2010, p. 57) explained "Very effectively I made it into a symbol of Tory Britain in which ... the bonds of social and community well-being had been loosed, dangerously so". Blair thus connected the growing social anxiety around crime to a diagnosis of social breakdown and rebranded the Labour Party's reputation on law and order, famously invoking the slogan 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime', challenging the claim of the Conservatives to be the natural party of law and order. This politicization of criminal justice led to a process of issue expansion as government measures became increasingly punitive in both rhetoric and substantively in terms of legislation – first under Michael Howard and then under a series of Labour Home Secretaries. The stalemate had been broken.

The substantial shift observed in the policy agenda in such a short time period is consistent with a process of positive feedback – as the confluence of a growing social problem, public concern, media attention and escalating rhetoric by entrepreneurial politicians pushed criminal justice out of subsystem politics and onto the national political agenda, leading to heightened political activity on the issue. It is clear too that the Bulger killing was a focusing event that crystallised a series of

anxieties and frames of social and moral breakdown, leading to a shift in framing of criminal justice as an issue and the sorts of policy responses that were palatable to policy-makers. The upsurge in government attention following the rise in crime rates and increased public and media interest has clear parallels with the punctuation in attention to criminal justice that occurred in the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s (Jones and Baumgartner 2005).

Time Series Analysis of the Criminal Justice Policy Agenda

The final step of our integrative mixed-methods approach is to use these findings to inform specification of a time series regression model of the criminal justice policy agenda. This enables us to test the simultaneous effects of each of the factors identified as contributing to the emergence of crime as an issue on the policy agenda, having earlier identified the specific break points in the policy agenda. Where possible we draw on time series measures of each of the factors considered above: (1) the policy monopoly (where a variable is included for party control of government), (2) policy conditions (violent crime rates) and the wider societal agenda (public and media attention to the issue and public preferences for punitive policy), (3) the focusing event (measured with mentions of the Bulger case in parliamentary debates), and (4) the wider set of issue frames prevalent in political debate (also measured from parliamentary debates). Our dependent variables are the executive and legislative agendas on criminal justice, measured using the percentage of the Queen's Speech and Acts of UK Parliament relating to the issue in a given year. The time frame of our analysis is constrained to the period between 1960 and 2004 by data availability (i.e. our measure of media coverage starts in 1960 and our measure of issue frames in parliamentary debates ends in 2004).

Prior to modelling it is important to determine the order of integration of our variables. We use the Phillips and Perron (1988) test for presence of unit root (see Appendix Table A3). The test-statistics indicate that the executive and legislative agenda and parliamentary attention to the Bulger case are stationary, $I(0)$, processes, while crime rates, media coverage, issue frames and the public's preference for punitive policy are integrated, $I(1)$, processes. Additionally, the public agenda

is found to be trend stationary. In order to ensure equation balance and model the variables in the same form (Lebo and Grant 2016), we de-trend the public agenda and use the first difference (i.e. change) of all the integrated series. As we noted earlier, both the executive and legislative agenda series are stationary with a structural break. In normal circumstances one would want to transform the series to remove the break for the time series regressions, but since our aim is to explain what contributes to change in the policy agenda during this specific period we model the untransformed series. This enables us to test what contributed to the sudden increase of attention of policy-makers to criminal justice in 1993 and 1996.

We also use Granger causation tests to determine the temporal ordering of variables, i.e. to assess whether past values of the policy agenda are predictive of the media and public agenda, or vice versa (see Supplementary Materials Table S1). These confirm that the policy agenda does not shape the public or media agenda, and thus that our models are appropriately specified with it as dependent variable.

We therefore model the executive and legislative agenda as a function of the effect of (de-trended) public attention to the issue of crime (MIP'_t), change in media coverage ($\Delta MEDIA_t$), change in the frequency of parliamentary questions relating to anti-social behaviour and social breakdown ($\Delta FRAMES_t$) and parliamentary references to the Bulger case ($BULGER_t$) as well as change in the rate of violent crime ($\Delta CRIME_t$) and a control for Conservative Party control of government (equal to 1 when the Conservatives are in office, and equal to 0 otherwise). We also include interactions of the public agenda with the crime rate ($MIP_t \times \Delta CRIME_t$) and with media attention ($MIP_t \times \Delta MEDIA_t$). Our expectation is that the effect of public concern will be higher when amplified by high rates of crime and effects of media coverage will be greater at higher levels of public concern.

$$AGENDA_t = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 MIP'_t + \beta_2 \Delta MEDIA_t + \beta_3 \Delta CRIME_t + \beta_4 (MIP'_t \times \Delta CRIME_t) + \beta_5 (\Delta MEDIA_t \times MIP'_t) + \beta_6 \Delta FRAMES_t + \beta_7 BULGER_{t-1} + \beta_8 PARTY_t + \varepsilon_t$$

The results are reported in Table 1. These provide broad support for our theoretical expectations, revealing positive effects of the violent crime rate (holding the interactions to zero) and the Bulger

killing on the executive agenda, and of interactions of public concern with the crime rate and with media coverage. The results are far weaker for the legislative agenda, though the effects are signed in the expected direction for the public agenda, media coverage, issue frames and the Bulger case – but are not significant at the 95 per cent confidence level. Nevertheless, the size of effect of each parliamentary reference to the Bulger murder is noteworthy, being associated with just over a 0.25 point increase in the percentage of the policy agenda assigned to criminal justice in a given year. This suggests that the moral panic surrounding the killing was associated with an upturn in the attention of policy-makers to the issue.

[insert Table 1 about here]

In order to consider the effect of constitutive terms of the multiplicative interactions (i.e. the public agenda, media coverage and violent crime rates), it is necessary to calculate their conditional marginal effects. In particular we focus on how crime rates mediate the effect of public opinion, and how public opinion mediates the effect of media coverage. Figure 8(a) depicts the marginal effect of the public agenda (on the y-axis) on the executive agenda (the Queen's Speech) at different levels of change in the violent crime rate (on the x-axis). This reveals that the effect of the public agenda on the policy agenda is greater at higher rates of (rising) crime. Figure 8(b) plots the marginal effect of media coverage on the executive agenda at different levels of public attention to the issue of crime. This indicates that media have a greater impact on the policy agenda when the issue is also salient to the public.

[insert Figures 8(a) and 8(b) about here]

Together these results offer support for the mechanisms underlying the rise of crime on the policy agenda in Britain; indicating that the level of public concern (which reached the levels which one might reasonably refer to as a moral panic), media coverage, violent crime rates and a focusing event (the Bulger killing) contributed to dynamics of government attention to crime. The finding of significant interactions between crime, public opinion and media are further consistent with the idea of positive feedback – as these factors serve to amplify one another.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to explain why crime went from being a peripheral issue on the agenda of British politics to being a major concern for the mass public, media and policy-makers in a short period of time. This seismic shift in political attention, following an extended period of stability in criminal justice policy, is consistent with the argument that moral panics contribute to punctuated equilibrium in public policy – in which high profile events become a focus of public anxieties and lead to the framing of particular conditions, episodes, persons or groups as a threat to societal values or interests. In this case, the policy change on criminal justice was a response to the problem of rising crime and other forms of social disorder (e.g. truancy), a particularly shocking crime – the murder of James Bulger – which resonated with a wider political mood that all was not well in British society, the disruption of the policy monopoly that existed within the Home Office (which had previously kept crime and policing off the agenda and had tended to promote a liberal position on punishment) and the key role of new Home Secretary, Michael Howard and the Shadow Home Secretary, Tony Blair, as policy entrepreneurs who increasingly politicised the issue and moved the policy agenda to a new consensus based around punitive rhetoric on sentencing and anti-social behaviour.

Our integrative mixed-methods approach has enabled us to explore the political and institutional conditions that existed prior to the punctuation in the criminal justice agenda that occurred in the 1990s. Specifically, the material from elite interviews has offered insights into the prevalent policy mind-set of the criminal justice establishment that existed within the Home Office, while survey data enables us to track the rise and fall of crime as an issue of concern to the mass public, and data on the policy content of the executive and legislative agenda facilitates systematic measurement of the degree to which policy-makers were attending to crime. Likewise the use of data on parliamentary rhetoric offers insights into the emergence of a discourse around social decay and disorder, on the political agenda at least. Finally, by testing the simultaneous effects of each of the factors (where possible) using time series analysis – and the interactions between them in some

cases – it is possible to determine whether these findings are sustained within a dynamic model of the policy agenda at the aggregate level. We believe that this methodology has general applicability for the analysis of policy change, across a multitude of theoretical frameworks and policy domains.

Our study points to important directions for future investigation. Firstly, it highlights the importance of an agenda-setting perspective in understanding the politics of crime and punishment in Britain and elsewhere. Secondly, it demonstrates the added theoretical and empirical value of combining insights from punctuated equilibrium theory with the concept of moral panics, as a particular type of symbolic event or tale/story that encapsulates broader societal anxieties or fears, and which lead to reframing of issues in line with much wider sets of concerns. This may help explain periods of rapid and dramatic change in policy equilibria, both in relation to criminal justice and other policy domains as well. Thirdly, it points to the importance of the rise of issue frames relating to social decay and disorder that substantially influenced British government and wider political debate around criminal justice for much of the 1990s and 2000s. This may help explain why the issue of crime underwent a sudden expansion as a focus of British politics during the 1990s and 2000s at a time when crime had started to fall.

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FIGURES & TABLES

Figure 1. Percentage of Acts of UK Parliament, Criminal Justice, 1960-2010

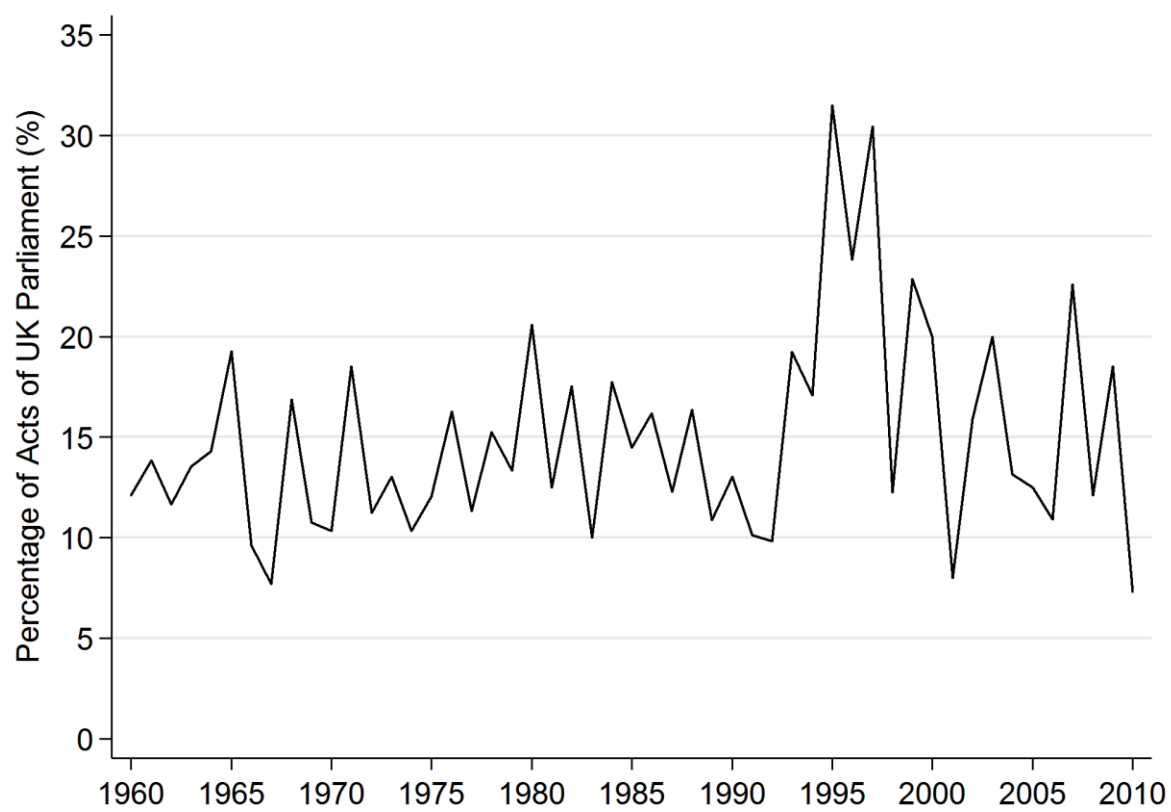


Figure 2. Percentage of the Queen's Speech, Criminal Justice, 1960-2010

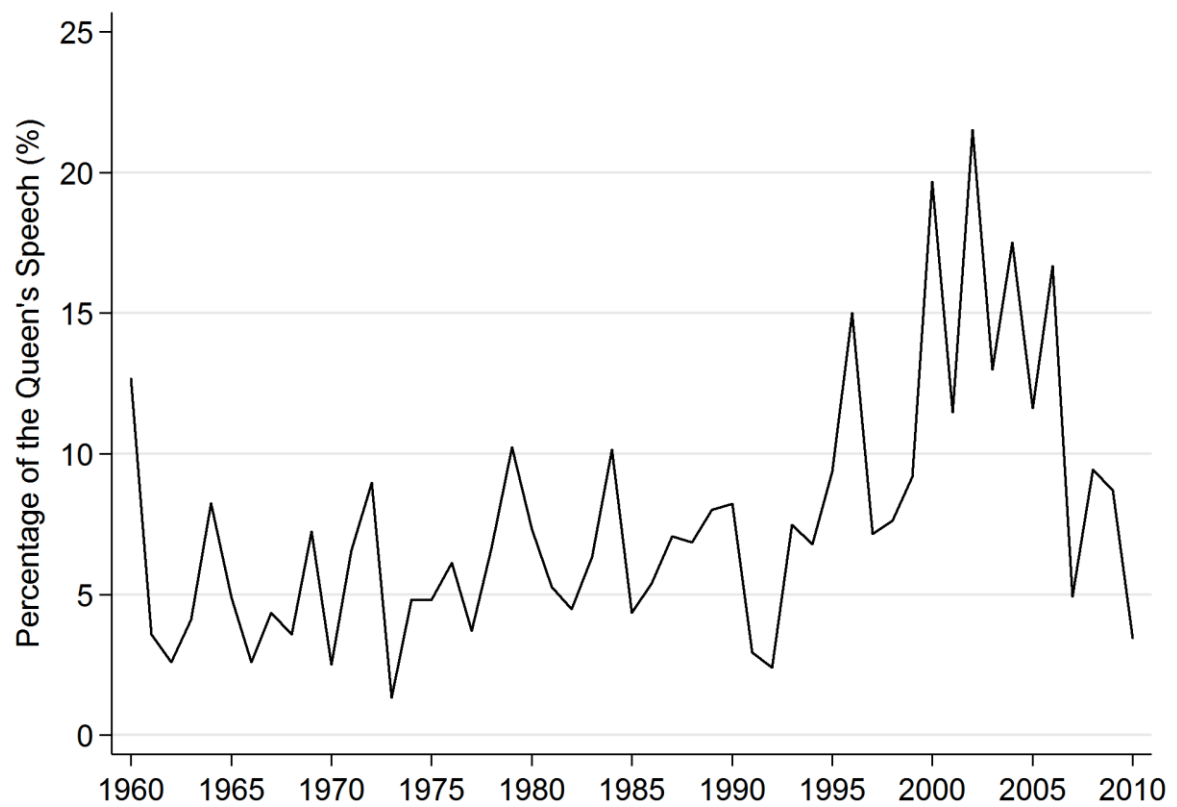


Figure 3. Recorded Crime in England and Wales, 1960-2010

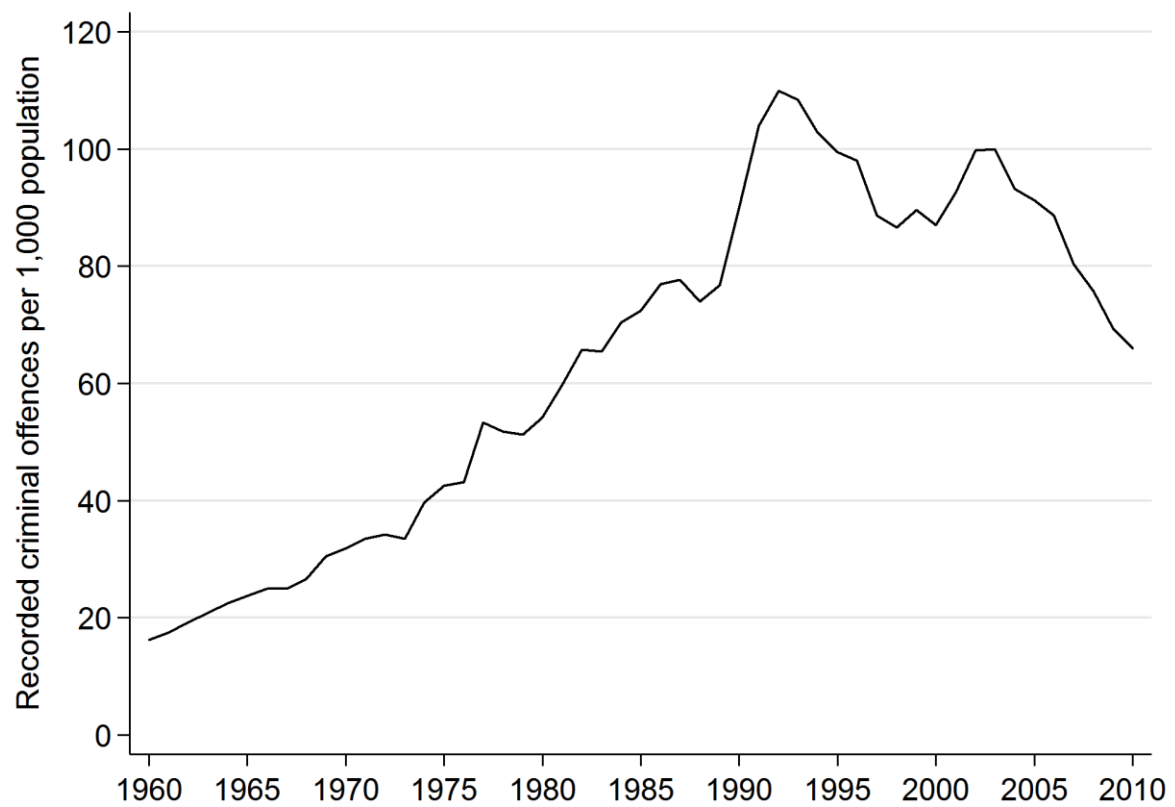
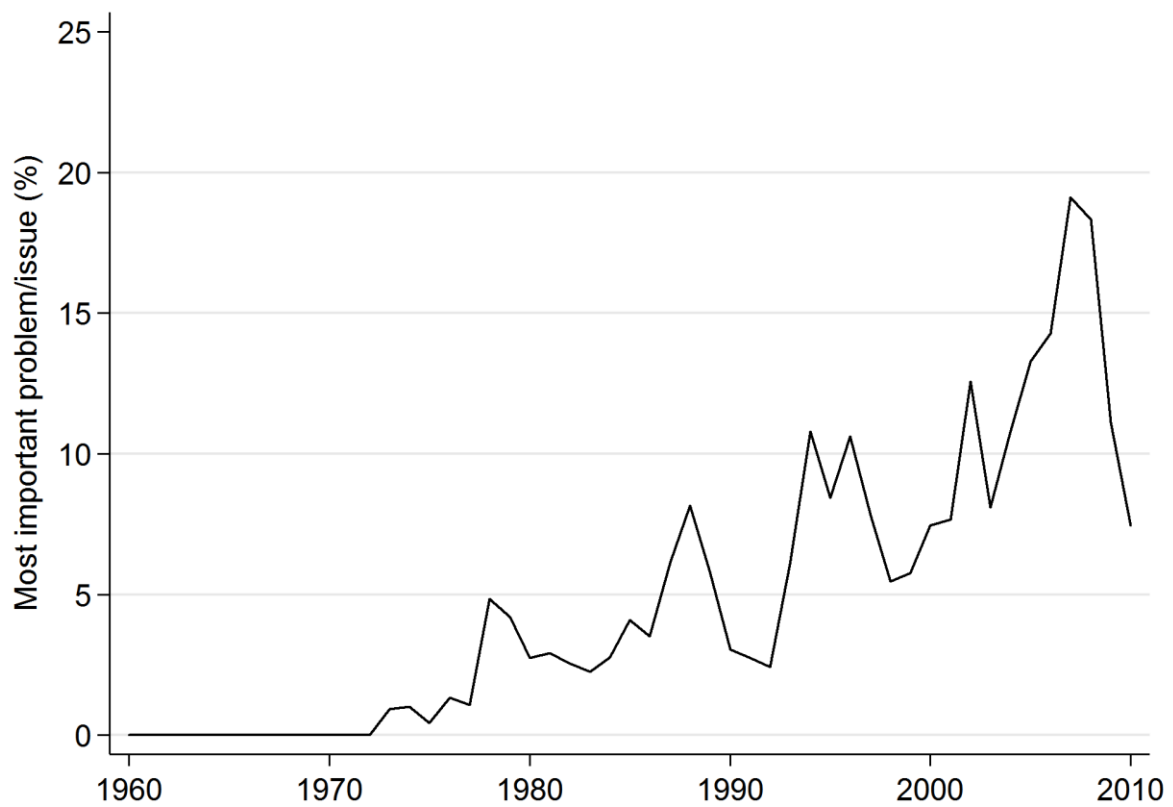


Figure 4. Crime as the “most important problem” or “most important issue”, 1960-2010



Source: Gallup and Ipsos-MORI, monthly surveys

Figure 5. Fear of crime ('How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?'), 1981-2010

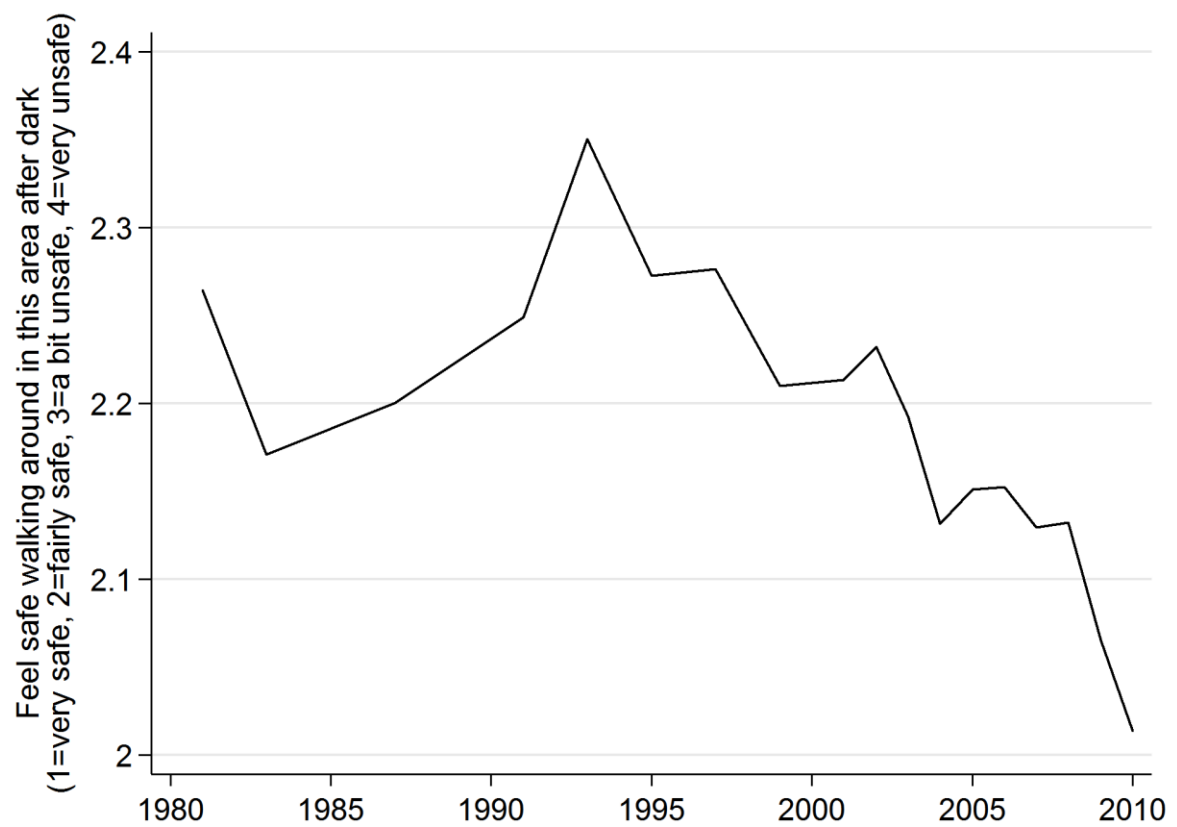


Figure 6. Percentage of front page stories of *The Times* relating to crime, 1960-2008

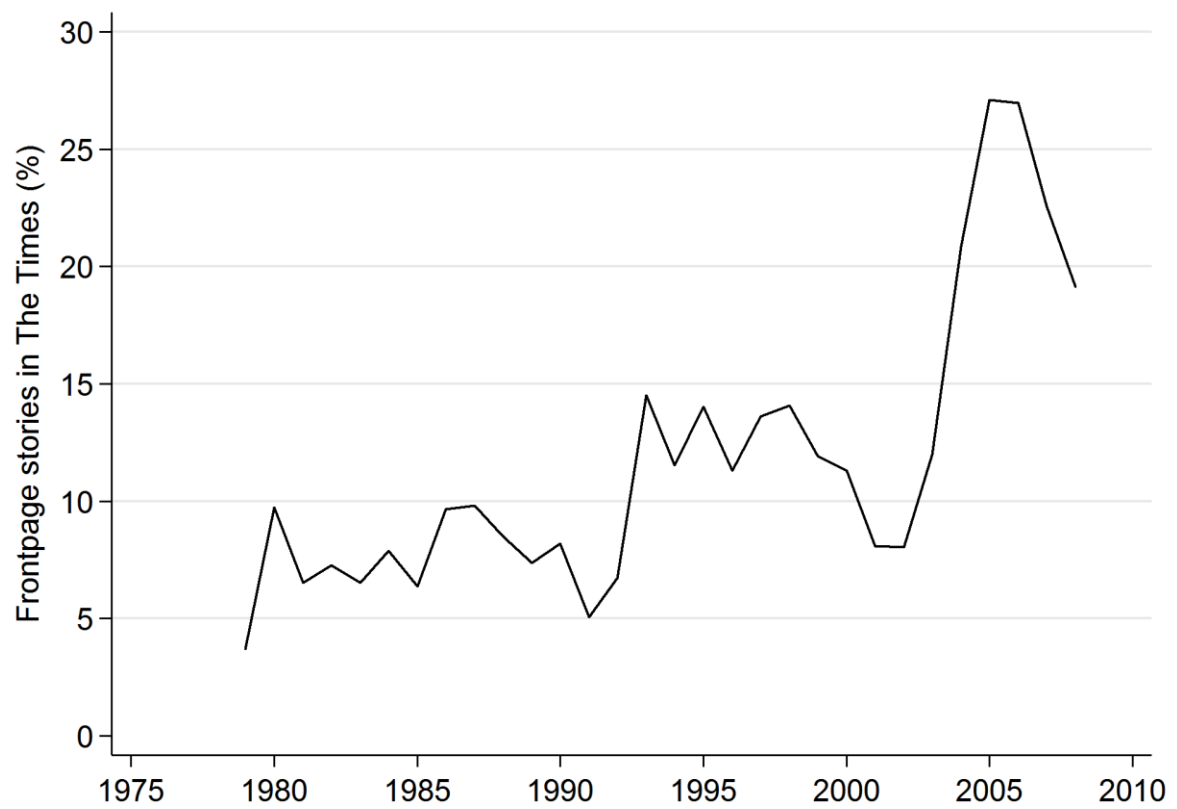


Figure 7. Number of mentions of issue frames in parliamentary questions, 1960-2004

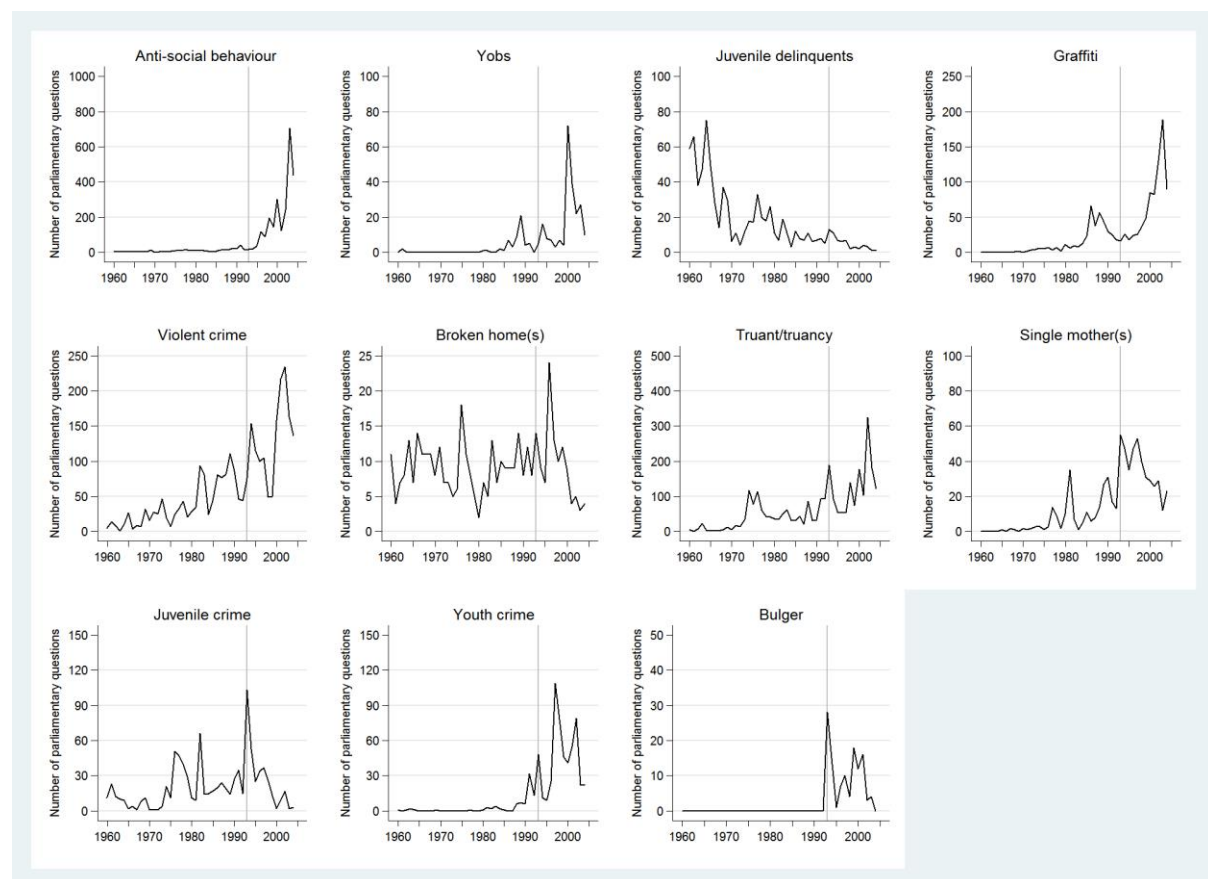


Figure 8(a). Marginal effects of the public agenda for values of change in the violent crime rate

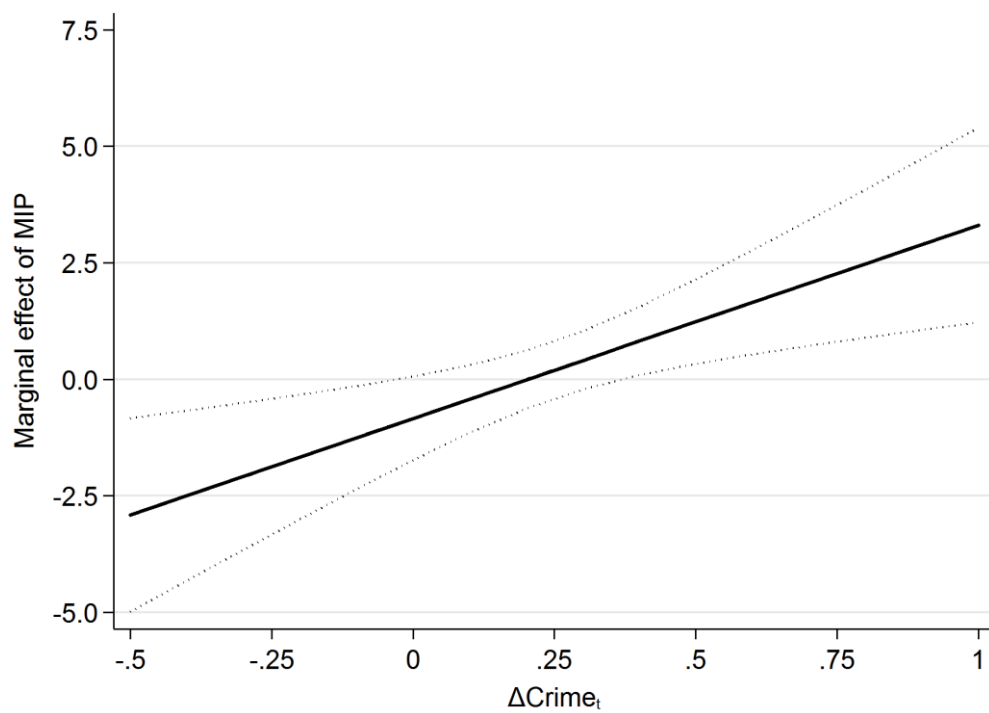


Figure 8(b). Marginal effects of media coverage for values of the public agenda

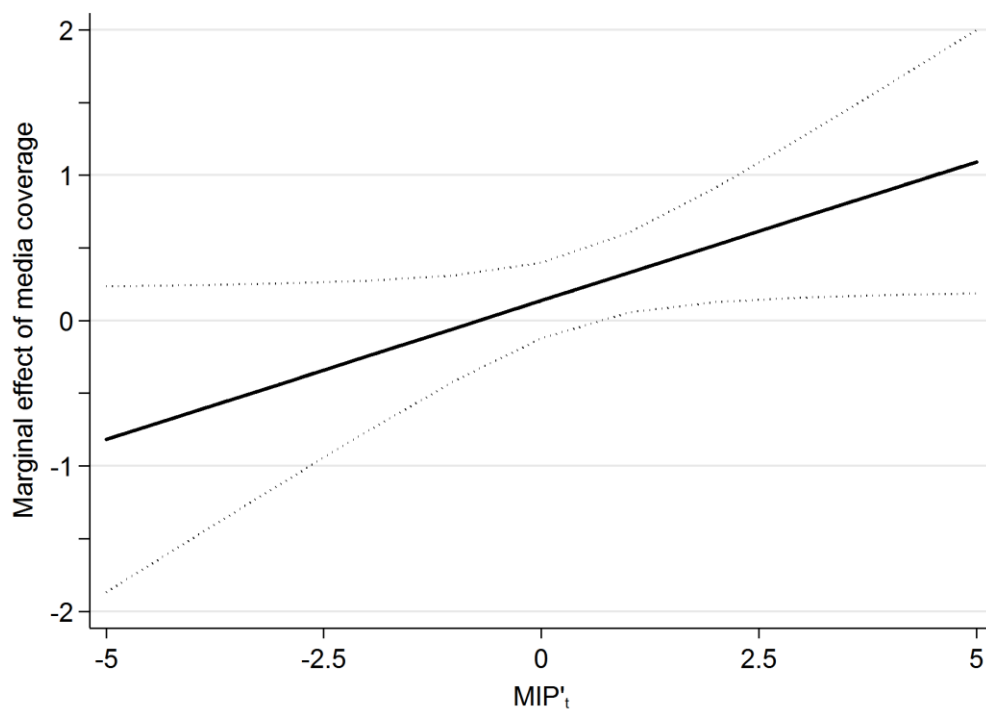


Table 1. Time Series Regression of the Criminal Justice Policy Agenda

	Queen's Speech	Acts of Parliament
MIP _t	-0.842 (0.442)+	1.197 (0.703)+
ΔMEDIA _t	0.137 (0.128)	0.378 (0.204)+
ΔCRIME _t	11.302 (2.514)***	1.416 (3.996)
MIP _t × ΔMEDIA _t	0.191 (0.093)*	-0.044 (0.148)
MIP _t × ΔCRIME _t	4.150 (1.308)**	-3.402 (2.080)
ΔFRAMES _t	0.008 (0.005)	0.014 (0.008)+
BULGER _{t-1}	0.279 (0.085)**	0.255 (0.134)+
PARTY _t	-0.719 (0.978)	0.974 (1.555)
Intercept	4.637 (0.949)***	13.634 (1.508)***
N	44	44
Adjusted R-squared	0.55	0.16
Durbin-Watson statistic	2.221	1.574
Start	1960	1960
End	2004	2004

+ $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

APPENDIX

Table A1. Home Secretaries, 1979-2015

Period	Home Secretary
1979-1983	William Whitelaw+
1983-1985	Leon Brittan+
1985-1989	Douglas Hurd*
1989-1990	David Waddington+
1990-1992	Kenneth Baker
1992-1993	Kenneth Clarke
1993-1997	Michael Howard*
1997-2001	Jack Straw
2001-2004	David Blunkett*
2004-2006	Charles Clarke
2006-2007	John Reid
2007-2009	Jacqui Smith
2009-2010	Alan Johnson
2010-2015	Theresa May

* Interviewed

+ Deceased

Table A2. Zivot-Andrew test for unit root allowing for a structural break

	Queen's Speech (%)	Acts of Parliament (%)
Structural break	1996	1993
Minimum t-statistic (at break)	-7.308**	-7.103**
Observations	44	44
Start	1960	1960
End	2004	2004

Note: * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$. Maximum lag set at 3 years.

Table A3. Tests for stationarity of dependent and independent variables

	Queen's Speech (%)	Acts of Parliament (%)	Violent crime rate (per 1,000 capita)	Public agenda (MIP/MII)	Public punitive preferences	Media agenda (The Times)	Parliamentary debates: social frames	Parliamentary debates: Bulger case
<i>Phillips-Perron (levels)</i>								
Random Walk	-3.712***	-5.548***	4.337	-1.058	-1.417	-2.070	-0.770	-3.811***
Trend	-5.743***	-6.124***	0.957	-3.942**	-1.990	-2.755	-2.752	-4.574***
<i>Phillips-Perron (first difference)</i>								
Random Walk	-	-	-6.087***	-	-7.471***	-8.087***	-11.224***	-
Trend	-	-	-7.688***	-	-7.467***	-8.164***	-13.300***	-
Observations	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
Start	1960	1960	1960	1960	1960	1960	1960	1960
End	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004

Note: * $p \leq .1$, ** $p \leq .05$, *** $p \leq .01$