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# **NEWSPAPER FAVORITES?**

## **A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL PARALLELISM ACROSS TWO DECADES**

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# BACKGROUND

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- Parallelism matters for democracy
  - It influences which viewpoints the public is exposed to
  - Which affects opportunities for democratic debate
- Conflict between theoretical assumptions and observed trends
  - Decreasing parallelism due to commercialization and professionalization of journalism
  - But increasing polarization in most Western-European countries
  - And no empirical support

# DEFINITIONS OF PARALLELISM

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- Press-party parallelism (Seymour-Ure, 1974)
  - Organizational links
  - Loyalty to party goals
  - Partisanship of readers
- Political parallelism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004)
  - Strict press-party parallelism might still occur
  - The extent to which news content reflects different political orientations

# MEDIA LOGIC

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- Professionalization and commercialization of journalism (Altheide, 2013)
- Shared norms lead to increased importance of news values
- Journalists should be impartial and objective, no parallelism

# PARTISAN BIAS

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- Dutch, Spanish, UK results indicate continuing bias
- In terms of endorsement and party evaluations  
(Baumgartner & Bonafont, 2015; Brandenburg, 2006)
- But also in terms of issue attention and partisan readership  
(Pas, Brug, & Vliegenthart, 2017)

# HYPOTHESES

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- Party-newspaper alignment results in increased attention
- Party-newspaper alignment results in more positive attention
- The positive effect of party-newspaper alignment on the amount of attention decreases over time
- The positive effect of party-newspaper alignment on the tone of attention decreases over time

# DATA

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- ~5.4 million newspaper articles from three countries during the period 2000-2019

	Left-wing broadsheet	Right-wing broadsheet
Denmark	Politiken	Jyllands-Posten
The Netherlands	Volkskrant	NRC Handelsblad
United Kingdom	The Guardian	The Daily Telegraph

# METHODS

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- Parallelism as the effect of political alignment between party and newspaper on:
  - The amount of attention a party receives
  - The sentiment context of attention a party receives



# UNITS

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- Sentences mentioning one or more parties
- Sentiment of those sentences
- Monthly occurrences and sentiment per newspaper-party

# MEASURING PARALLELISM

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- Relative measure (proportion of attention)
- Average sentiment of attention
- Alignment between newspaper and party

	Left-wing alignment	Right-wing alignment
Denmark	Politiken/Socialdemokratiet	Jyllands-Posten/Venstre
The Netherlands	Volkskrant/PvdA	NRC Handelsblad/VVD
United Kingdom	The Guardian/Labour	The Daily Telegraph/Conservatives

# REGRESSION (ATTENTION)

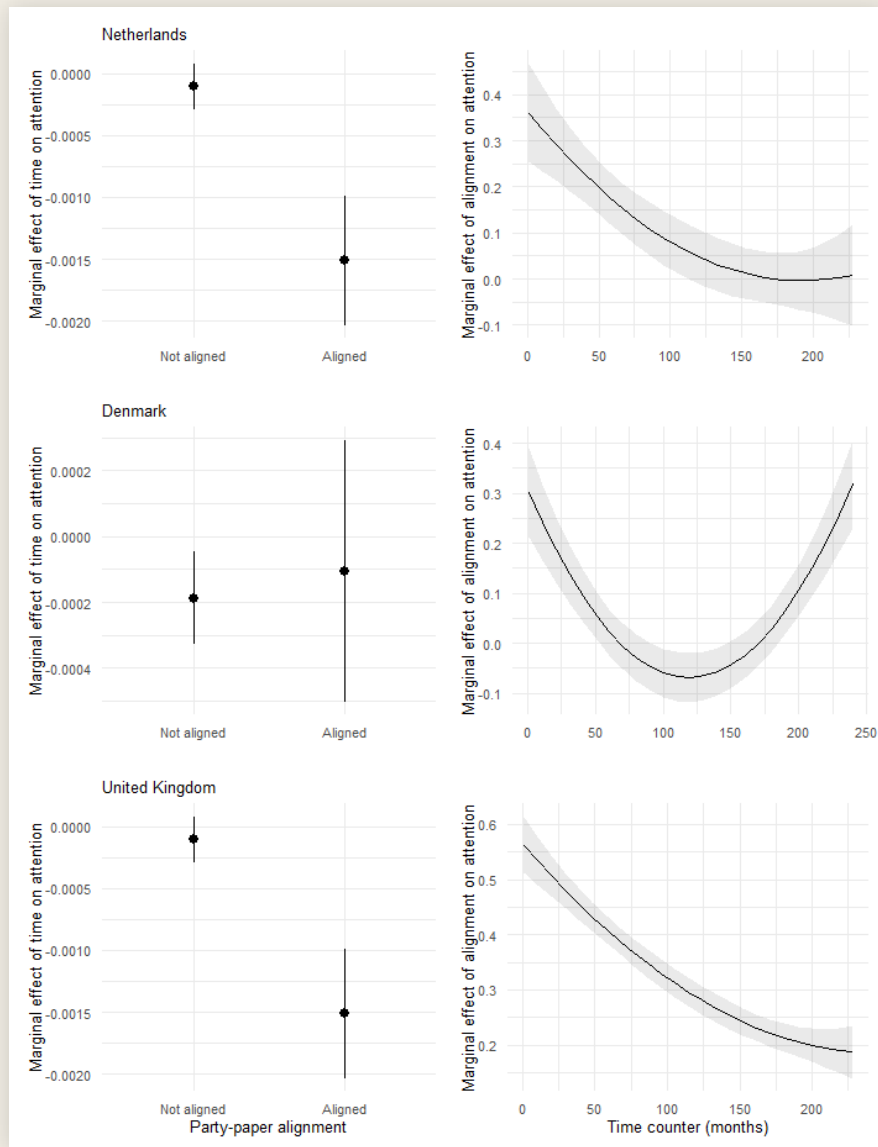
Table 6: Multilevel regression models, dependent variable: party attention in newspaper. The Netherlands, Denmark and United Kingdom, 2000-2019.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	NL	DK	UK
Vote share	.435*** (.016)	.597*** (.018)	.167*** (.017)
Party extremity	-.061 (.067)	.027 (.069)	-.199 (.155)
Cabinet party	.744*** (.021)	.420*** (.021)	.185*** (.022)
Prime minister party	.187*** (.032)	.321*** (.032)	.873*** (.024)
Time (in months)	-1.148** (.472)	-.859** (.388)	-.189 (.188)
Time, squared	-.975** (.447)	.194 (.364)	.227 (.188)
Alignment	.100*** (.028)	.059*** (.023)	.318*** (.012)
Constant	-.218*** (.062)	-.199*** (.072)	-.143 (.157)
No. of groups	14	13	11
SD(group)	0.227	0.255	0.517
Observations	4,252	4,570	4,544
Log Likelihood	-2,361.188	-1,779.312	1,160.702
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,742.375	3,578.624	-2,301.405

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

# TIME TRENDS (ATTENTION)

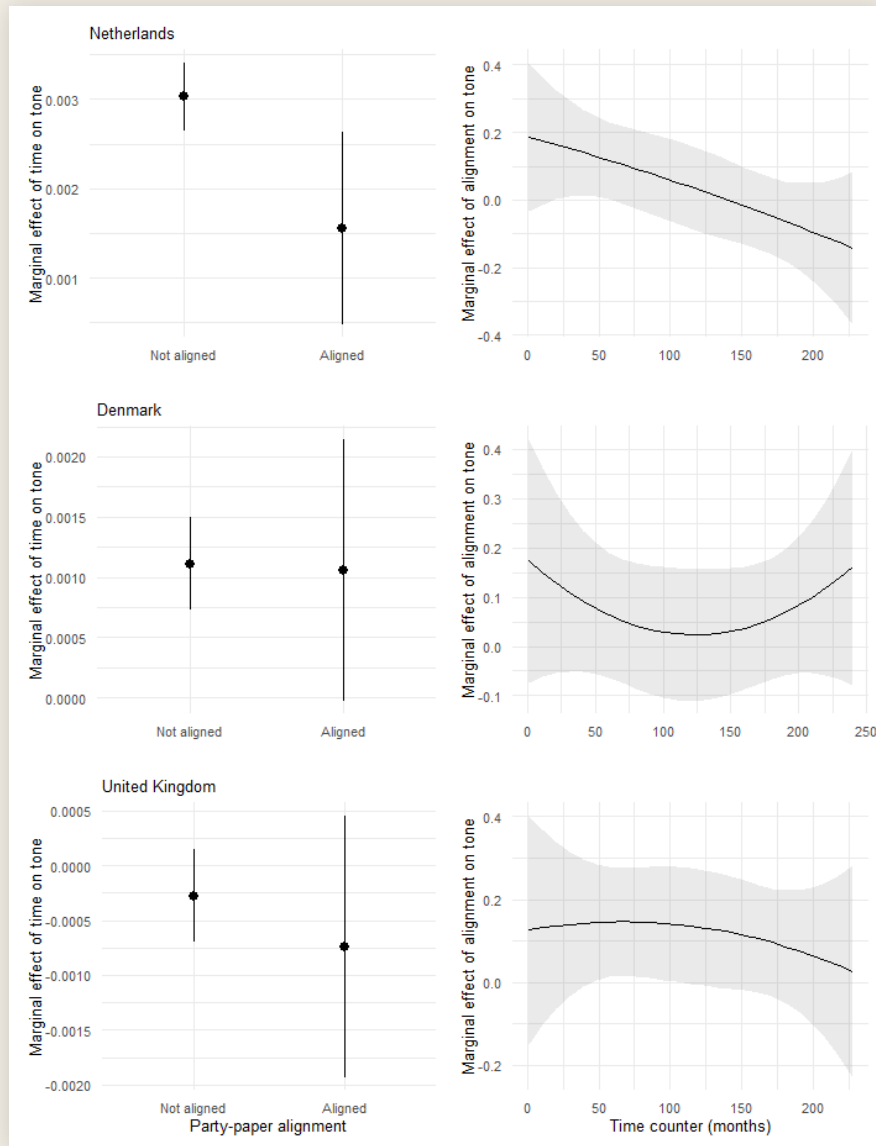


# REGRESSION (SENTIMENT)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	NL	Tone DK	UK
Vote share	.053* (.032)	-.036 (.035)	-.0004 (.055)
Party extremity	-.033 (.082)	-.118*** (.039)	-.017 (.055)
Cabinet party	-.077* (.043)	.023 (.055)	.230** (.111)
Prime minister party	-.061 (.065)	-.069 (.085)	-.099 (.125)
Time (in months)	12.814*** (.968)	5.300*** (1.051)	-1.403 (1.048)
Time, squared	-1.540* (.920)	.524 (1.006)	-2.292** (1.055)
Alignment	.032 (.057)	.072 (.062)	.117* (.066)
Constant	-.018 (.077)	.008 (.042)	-.053 (.053)
No. Of groups	14	13	11
SD(group)	.272	.127	.164
Observations	4,248	4,520	4,094
Log Likelihood	-5,419	-6,353	-5,778
Akaike Inf. Crit.	10,859	12,727	11,577

*Note:* \* p<0.1; \*\* p<0.05; \*\*\* p<0.01

# TIME TRENDS (SENTIMENT)



# CONCLUSION

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- Parallelism continues to be visible in the amount of attention a party receives
- But declines over time in NL and UK
- Danish trends for party attention and alignment are puzzling

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION!**

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