Media and lawmaking: a case study analysis of the media’s role in legislative processes

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**Abstract**

Despite the ongoing debate about role the media play in democracies, there is little empirical research on its role in lawmaking. Yet such studies, especially when conducted at the micro-level, could provide insight into the influence journalists exert on this fundamental aspect of politics. This case study analyses the role of media attention in the legislative process that resulted in the legal regulation of (semi-)public officials’ remuneration in the Netherlands. The theory-building process tracing approach adopted provides insight into the media-politics dynamics regarding lawmaking. The chronological in-depth analysis of the claims made during the legislative process and in the media coverage for the issue of top incomes shows that political actors respond to media attention both directly and indirectly. Coverage of incidents inspires symbolic political action and contributions to parliamentary debates, which sometimes leads to subsequent substantial political action with consequences for the content of the bill.
1. Introduction

The media are a heavily and increasingly discussed subject, both in scientific and public debates on the functioning of politics. Although media effects are increasingly subject of empirical research, scholarly attention for media influence on the legislative process is rare. There is specifically a lack of studies showing the mechanisms through which the media affect lawmaking. As a result there is little knowledge of the role media attention plays in the behavior of legislators and its consequences for the content of laws.

In general, we know politicians adjust to the way journalists operate and anticipate on the media attention their performance may generate (Davis, 2009; Strömbäck, 2008; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2011). The contact between political journalists, members of parliament and members of government is defined as a complex interaction (T. E. Cook, 2006; Davis, 2009; Jones & Wolfe, 2010; Kleinnijenhuis, 2003; Louw, 2005; Sellers, 2010) and their power relationship turned into a reciprocal one (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2011, p. 307). Yet what the media-politics dynamic looks like when it comes to developing new legislation, a fundamental aspect of politics, remains largely unclear. In the Netherlands shows that 80% of all bills never receive any press coverage at all in national newspapers. In addition, only 10% of all bills receives serious attention, which means more than just a few short, descriptive articles (Van Aelst, Melenhorst, van Holsteyn, & Veen, forthcoming). Most lawmaking processes thus remain out of the media's spotlights. However, once bills are being covered by the media they often receive a lot of attention. It is reasonable to expect that policymakers, ministers, state secretaries, politicians and their assistants will closely follow what is being written and said about legislative processes they are involved with. As a result, we might expect them to be susceptible to the things they read in the newspapers, hear on the radio and see on television.

Existing studies however rarely connect media effects back to policy or agenda change (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2011, p. 297; Wolfe, Jones, & Baumgartner, 2013, p. 6). They do suggest media attention is influential, as the processes of news making and policymaking are increasingly intertwined (T. E. Cook, 2006) and political actors anticipate on media attention in their daily thinking and behavior (Davis, 2007). Interviews with political actors in the UK show that they themselves think legislative debates are influenced by journalists and media attention (Davis, 2009, p. 214). The impact may for example be in amplifying debates, forcing the speed of response or even changing policy directions. Over the last decades many large-scale studies have showed, as part of a more complex and interactive dynamic, the media can set and influence policy agendas (e.g. Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Soroka, 2002; Tan & Weaver, 2009).
Comparative studies of media effects on symbolical political agendas for example show that media attention influences parliamentary questions (Van Aelst & Vliegenthart, 2013; Van Santen, Van Aelst, & Helfer, 2013; Vliegenthart & Walgrave, 2011). Yet media attention may not only set policy agendas and influence symbolic agendas, but continue to play a role once the substantial political agenda is set and the legislative process starts. Is this actually the case, and if so, when and how do legislators respond to media attention? A quantitative study of media effects on bills in the Netherlands showed that legislative processes are indeed influenced by the media. If bills receive more media-attention, more amendments are introduced by both members of parliament and members of government (Melenhorst, 2013). Media coverage can encourage members of government and parliament to propose amendments to bills. This confirms the suggestion that the media can shape the contours through which policy moves (Wolfe, 2012). Yet, because micro level studies are lacking, how this mechanism precisely works is unclear. This leaves us with the intriguing question what exactly happens to bills when the media do report on them. In what way does media attention matter for lawmaking?

This in-depth study analyses to what extent and in what manner media-attention for a highly mediatized bill has influenced its content. It is innovative in that it entangles the role individual journalists and politicians play in the development of new laws. I conduct a content analysis of all claims that were made both in the media and in parliament. The most likely case under scrutiny here is the process that eventually led to the enactment in November 2012 of a law in the Netherlands that regulates the remuneration of senior officials in the public and semi-public sector (’Wet normering topinkomens’). I use a theory-building process tracing method by analyzing chronologically the occurrences of both media coverage and all steps in the legislative process, to see whether changes in the content of the bill are inspired by or a response to claims in the media.

2. Theoretical framework

Studies that examine media influence on the behavior of political actors have shown that media can influence the beginning of policy processes and symbolic political agendas (e.g. Cobb & Elder, 1981; Davis, 2007; Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer, 2010; Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006). This triggers the question whether the media also impact the substantial political agenda that has direct consequences for policymaking and legislation (Brants & Voltmer, 2011). Once an issue is on the political agenda, media attention may influence political debates and eventually also the resulting policies or
legislation. Politicians consider the media as the most important political agenda setter (R. Andeweg & Thomassen, 2007; Van Aelst et al., 2008), yet whereas some scholars assert the media’s political agenda setting impact is limited, others claim it is strong. These inconsistencies are explained by stressing the complexity of the interactions and the contingency of the media’s influence on politics (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006; Wolfe et al., 2013, p. 13). Studies that go beyond symbolic agenda setting indicate that the media can set or constrain substantial political agendas by shifting policymakers’ attention to a policy problem or a particular solution (Wolfe et al., 2013, p. 21). A longitudinal study of the Belgian legislative agenda suggests that media attention as an indicator of external pressure sometimes plays a role in policy change (Walgrave, Varone, & Dumont, 2006). The interaction between the media and policy actors can lead to policy change because the news media are an important source of information (Brown, 2010). Media attention attracts policy attention to public problems, and creates a sense of urgency to come up with short-term solutions (Yanovitzky, 2002). A study of US decision-making argues that media influence on international interventions occurs when policy is uncertain and media coverage is critical and emphatic with people that are suffering (Robinson, 2000). Yet Gilboa (2005) argues, based on his discussion of a broad range of studies on the so-called ‘CNN effect’, that global television networks’ influence on US foreign policy making processes is often exaggerated.

Although the media have no power to pass laws themselves, journalists may influence the behavior of legislators by paying attention to a bill (Wolfe, 2012, p. 123) with potential consequences for the content of bills (Melenhorst, 2013). Interviews with legislators about their behavior during decision-making processes in Switzerland show that parliamentarians, especially those in the opposition role, are mediatized in the sense that they are oriented towards the audience (Landerer, 2014). This suggests that during legislative processes, political actors anticipate the requirements of the media (Landerer, 2013). Yet what is lacks in previous research is how specific news items and articles impact the behavior of politicians, and what the resulting consequences for bills under consideration are. Because lawmaking touches the heart of the democratic process it is relevant to know whether the behavior of journalists indeed matters for legislative work. In-depth studies of the claims voiced in the media about the topic of bills and the claims made as part of the legislative process in Parliament could reveal the daily interaction between journalists and political actors and its consequences for legislation. In what way and to what extent does media attention matter for lawmaking?

Based on previous research I have developed a preliminary theoretical model (see Figure 1). The starting point of the model is media attention for the (subject of) the
bill. On the one hand, political actors may act in response to this media attention. On the other hand, their behavior may generate (more) media attention. The complex interaction between politicians and journalists may ultimately have consequences for the content of the bill. In this section I explain the model and derive from it the research questions that guide the case study analysis.

Figure 1

Preliminary theoretical model

Media attention
- Amount
- Claims & arguments
- Actors
- Media outlet
- Congruence

Behavior of political actors
- Symbolic action
- Contribution to debate
- Substantial action

Legislative consequences
- Content of bill

Political motivation
- Public opinion
- Information
- Communication
- Interest groups

Journalistic motivation
- Information
- Analysis and interpretation
- Investigation
- Political agenda setting

Media attention

The amount of attention for (the subject of) a bill is taken into account, as more media attention may be a stronger incentive for political actors to respond. The claims made and the arguments used reflect what elements of the content are in the public debate, which standpoints are voiced and what justifications are used. Negative coverage is in general expected to have stronger effects (Baumgartner, Jones, & Leech, 1997). Not all types of actors may have even access to the media, members of government for example tend to be more visible than other political actors. Therefore it is interesting to see which actors make claims in the media. And whereas the media may operate autonomously, they are also triggered by politicians’ actions (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2011). What is relevant as well is which media outlets paid attention to the bill and to
what extent the coverage is congruent. Because of what is known as ‘intermedia agenda setting’, radio and newspaper coverage are expected to influence television reporters (Bartels, 1996; Butler, 1998; Roberts & McCombs, 1994) and media effects are expected to be stronger if the various media focus on the same issue, frame it in a similar way and cover it persistently (Eilders, 1997, 2000, 2001).

The behavior of political actors
Media attention does not directly influence the content of bills: political actors are the ones that can respond to things that are said or written in the media. This behavior might then have consequences for legislation. The model distinguishes between three types of potential political responses. In whatever form political actors respond, they may either refer to the media attention explicitly, or respond to it implicitly by copying or mirroring – parts of – the media content. This means claims and arguments that were visible in the media are adopted in parliament.

First, politicians may conduct symbolic parliamentary action, for example by asking parliamentary questions. Previous studies have shown that many oral and written questions are a response to media coverage (Van Aelst & Vliegenthart, 2013; Van Santen et al., 2013). Political actors may ask such questions to gain additional knowledge about proposed legislation, yet earlier research shows parliamentary questions are also a means for politicians to gain further media attention. If the question concerns the topic of a bill that is under consideration, this may increase its likelihood to receive media coverage. Although parliamentary questions are not part of the legislative process in the narrow sense, they are in practice part of the it when they touch the topic of the bill under consideration. Therefore the first subquestion is: to what extent is symbolic political action a response to media attention?

Second, political actors may respond to coverage in their contribution to legislative debates. This is the perfect platform to communicate the standpoint of one’s party concerning the bill to the minister and other parties, as well as to the wider public. Therefore it the second subquestion is: to what extent are contributions to parliamentary debates a response to media attention?

Third, politicians they may respond to issues covered in the media via substantial parliamentary action, by introducing or supporting a motion (a request to take something into account concerning for example the implementation or evaluation of a bill) or an amendment (a proposal to change the actual content of the bill). Therefore the third subquestion is: to what extent is substantial political action a response to media attention?
These responses are not mutually exclusive, in fact they can occur at the same time or successively. They may not only have consequences for the legislative process, but might also trigger the attention of journalists, thereby evoking even more media attention. For this reason there is an arrow in the model from ‘behavior of political actors’ to ‘media attention’. Political actors may, for example, ask parliamentary questions or introduce an amendment to gain media attention. On the other hand, journalists can reveal problematic issues by paying attention to them, with the aim of triggering a political response.

**Journalistic and political motivations**

To grasp the reasons why they act as they do, the model also contains a conceptualization of what motivates journalists and politicians. Role conceptions are informative when it comes to the motivations of political journalists to cover an issue (Van Dalen & Van Aelst, 2011). They may see it as their task to get information to the public (‘information’), to provide analysis and interpretation (‘analysis and interpretation’), to investigate claims by the government or parliament (‘investigation’) and to influence the political agenda (‘political agenda setting’). Which ones play a role when it comes to coverage of legislation in the making is not yet known.

What is missing in previous research as well is an explanation why political actors respond to media coverage (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006, p. 99). Political actors may respond to media coverage because they believe it reflects or influences public opinion. Politicians often associate the content of media attention with public opinion (Davis, 2009, p. 207; Van Aelst, 2013; Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006, p. 100), either as a cause of public opinion, leading political actors to develop their strategy in anticipation of the expected media impact on the public (Eichhorn, 1996; Eilders, 1997; Schudson, 1995), or as a ‘proxy’, synonym or indicator of public opinion (F. L. Cook et al, 1983; Herbst, 1998; Kennamer, 1992; Pritchard, 1992; Pritchard & Berkowitz, 1993). Political actors may also respond to coverage because it contains important information (Baumgartner, Jones, & Wilkerson, 2011, p. 948; Brown, 2010; Wolfe et al., 2013, p. 9) or because it is a way for them to communicate with each other, promote initiatives or standpoints and solve conflicts (Davis, 2009, p. 207; Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006, p. 100). Messages are often meant for colleagues instead of for the larger public (Heffernan, 2006) and thus actors sometimes ‘go public’ to convince their colleagues in parliament (Kernell, 2007). They follow the news to gain insight into the standpoints of those actors (Sellers, 2010, pp. 8-9). To conclude, politicians may also be responsive under pressure of interest groups. Media coverage can be a window of opportunity for
interest groups to stress the importance of their position, and thus increase public awareness and concern (Bernauer & Caduff, 2004, p. 106).

Empirically, it is difficult to come to conclusions about motivations for action in this study because it is based on a content analysis. The journalistic and political motivations are conceptualized as part of the model however, because they are expected to provide insight into the mechanisms at work. Follow-up research based on interviews with politicians and journalists could shed light on the reasons why they behave as they do. This study is focused on the three central elements of the model: media attention, political action and legislative consequences.

_legislative consequences: content of the bill_

The interaction between media attention and political actors may affect the content of the bill. Journalists may provide legislators with new information, or have directed their attention to a specific aspect or consequence of a proposed bill. Once put forward in Parliament, the content of bills can still be adjusted via governmental and parliamentary amendments. Via motions parliamentarians can ask the government to take something into account when it comes to the implementation of the bill, which can be interpreted as consequential for its content as well. Whether an amendment or motion is passed may be influenced or reinforced by media coverage. The media-politics interaction may thus explain the difference in content between the proposed bill and the content of the actual law. Therefore the forth subquestion is: does the media-politics dynamic have consequences for the content of the bill?

3. Method and data

This in-depth case study is conducted to develop a very preliminary yet empirically grounded theory about the media's influence on lawmaking processes. Eventually this should lead to a theory that is able to explain both when, why and how political actors respond to media attention for proposed bills. A theory-building process tracing method is adopted to gain insight in the reciprocal process, by analyzing chronologically the occurrences of both media coverage and the parliamentary legislative process. The focus is on the changes in the content of the bill after it was introduced to Parliament by the Minister of the Interior. By focusing at the specific claims made by actors both in the media and in parliament, the course of the legislative process is reconstructed. Because of the exploratory nature of the study, research questions instead of hypotheses guide for the analysis.
Case selection

To explore the complex interaction between journalists and political actors I focus on lawmaking in one specific case in the Netherlands. The Dutch political system is a multiparty system that is typically characterized as a consensus democracy (Lijphart, 2012). As in most parliamentary democracies, both cabinet ministers and members of the lower house of parliament can initiate legislation (R. B. Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, p. 152). However, the vast majority of bills originate in cabinet (R. B. Andeweg & Irwin, 2009, p. 127; Bovend’Eert & Kummeling, 2010, p. 198; Voermans et al., 2012, p. 114) and private member’s bills hardly ever become formal laws. For this reason it is appropriate to study a bill that has been introduced by the government. Because of the unequal distribution of media attention to bills, it makes sense to study a bill that has been covered extensively by the media. If there would be any indications of media influence on legislative processes, one should be able to find it in a highly mediatized, and thus most likely case. Regarding the potential legislative consequences, it is desirable to study a bill with which quite a lot of amendments were proposed and passed – because more adjustments in the content means more potential moments of influence. In part because of the absence of the legislative discontinuity principle in the Netherlands, bills do not die after a dissolution of Parliament (Van Schagen, 1997) and are only very rarely rejected, therefore the bill under study should be passed.

The bill ‘Wet normering bezoldiging topfunctionarissen publieke en semipublieke sector’ suits all above-mentioned criteria. In this case all conditions for potential media influence are present, therefore it is a most likely case (but compared to other bills passed in the same period not an outlier, both in terms of media attention and proposed amendments). The bill legally regulates the remuneration of senior officials in the public and semi-public sector, and is the outcome of more than a decade of public and political debate about the top incomes of high public officials. This is an issue that is subject to discussion in many countries, as one can see in Dekker’s (2013) philosophical evaluation of the arguments used in the political discourse concerning this question in 17 liberal democracies. This case is thus very recognizable and finds resonance in many countries besides the Netherlands. The bill was introduced into Parliament by the minister in January 2011 and the legislative process took two years. The act of law was published in the law gazette in November 2012 and took effect as from January 2013. In the meantime four government amendments, 17 parliamentary amendments and three motions were introduced, of which eight amendments and two motions were accepted. This lead to fundamental policy changes concerning a. the bill’s scope (in addition to the initial sectors it also applies to the health care sector, organizations subsidized by the
state for 50% or more, as well as charity organizations), b. the type of remuneration regime applied (instead of the sectoral norm the stricter salary maximum applies to health insurance companies), c. the length of the transition period (specified at seven years) and d. the application of the law (also applies to interim managers instead of only to public officials with a regular employment contract, also contains regulation of the remuneration of members of supervisory boards, and holds a complete ban of bonuses). Since the bill was introduced to parliament around 1000 newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television items paid attention to the remuneration of officials in the (semi-)public sector.

Data
Parliamentary documents have been retrieved from the governmental website 'Officiële bekendmakingen', as well as the website of both the Ministry of the Interior and the Lower House. All documents that are part of the legislative process (the bill and the accompanying explanatory memorandum, government amendments, parliamentary amendments and motions) are studied. In addition other parliamentary documents that deal with the issue of (semi)public officials' remuneration, like the proceedings of other meetings of the parliamentary committee, letters from the government, the documents from the public consultation of the draft bill, advisory reports and parliamentary questions, are taken into account. This adds up to a total of 178 documents.

I analyzed all coverage from the 1st of January 2011 (two weeks before the introduction of the bill) until the 1st of December 2012 (two weeks after the law was published). Articles published in all national newspapers and magazines as well as radio and television broadcasts are taken into account for the analysis of the media attention. The articles published in national newspapers (510 in 2011) and magazines (40 in 2011) have been searched using LexisNexis. Radio and television broadcasts (12 and 2 respectively in 2011) have been searched using the catalogue of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision, which includes all television and radio programs broadcasted by the national channels, the website of the Dutch Public Broadcast Organization and the archive of commercial broadcast RTL Nieuws. As a rule of thumb, all articles and items that discuss the remuneration of officials, working either in the

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1 See Appendix I for the search strings and media outlets analyzed.
2 The analysis of the Upper House period (2012) is still in process. As a result the exact number of articles in this period is not yet known. The result section of this paper is based on the analysis of the Lower House period (2011).
public sector or in a semipublic sector, are taken into account, whether they specifically deal with the bill or not.

Content analysis
I conduct a content analysis of the media attention for the (subject of the) bill en of all parliamentary documents related to the legislative process, to study the relationship between the media attention and the changes in the content of the bill. The data is analyzed using MAXQDA, a software program for qualitative and mixed-methods data analysis. It allows both to code the text of the documents, as well as assign values to variables at the document-level. The study contains a deductive element, as is common in theory-building (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 17), with the preliminary theoretical model and the accompanying subquestions serving as a grid to detect patterns in the empirical material. The codebook is however developed inductively, which means that claims, arguments, actors, documents, developments et cetera that are mentioned in the documents are coded as they pop up. To start off with, a basic codebook was developed by scanning through a sample of 100 newspaper articles and reading the explanatory memoranda of the introduced amendments. By continuously adding new codes to the codebook and reorganizing them I made sure to end up with a comprehensive codebook. The theory building process tracing is Y-centric, meaning that I look at the outcome and work ‘backward’ to study to what extent changes in the bill can be understood as a consequence of prior debates in the media (and in parliament). Although the focus is on changes in the content, I expressly also take into account content that has was not amended, to make sure all debates (including those that eventually did not result in changes) are included in the analysis.

The content analysis is directed towards claims, which I define (inspired by Koopmans & Statham, 2010) as a verbal expression of a political opinion. Coding is done at the level of the (quasi)sentence and in addition at the document level relevant information (type of document, date etc.) is coded. A (quasi)sentence is coded as a claim if it is an expression of a political opinion. Once a claim-code is ascribed to a text segment, also the actor(s) making the claim, justifications mentioned, instruments referred to, and addressees to which the claim is directed are coded. Actors can be individuals (for example a politician), but also groups of individuals (f.e. a political party

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3 Because the issue of top incomes has been debated in parliament and in the media for years, in anticipation of regulation, a pre study of the years preceding introduction of the bill is being conducted. In 2005 the first of multiple plenary debates on top incomes took place in Parliament: therefore both media attention for the issue and its parliamentary history are currently being analyzed for the period 2005-2010. This will enable me to also study the role media attention played on the longer term.
or – a majority of – the Lower House). Justifications are arguments brought up to substantiate a claim (f.e. ‘because their salaries are paid out of tax money’). An amendment is an example of an instrument referred to in the context of a claim (‘therefore we are introducing an amendment’), the addressee is often the minister (‘we ask the minister to adjust the bill at this point’). Because the codebook is developed inductively, all expressions of political opinions that have to do with the issue of top incomes are coded as claims. Besides a large variety of ‘substantive claims’ there are a lot of ‘naming and shaming-claims’: whereas the former contain a position on what to do (f.e. ‘There should be a complete ban of bonuses in the public and semi-public sector.’), the latter only argue a remuneration is undesirable (f.e. ‘My party thinks is ridiculous that directors of housing corporations receive bonuses’).

4. Preliminary results
In this section the subquestions are discussed based on preliminary results of the analysis.

Symbolic political action as a response to media attention
In order to answer this question first the extensive media attention for the (topic of the) bill is mapped out. Media coverage for the remuneration issue is very congruent. Often similar claims or even similar articles occur in various national newspapers, and some of them are also reported on in magazine articles, television and radio items. Although only 45 articles mention a press agency (ANP/Novum) as the source, the strong resemblance between articles suggests journalists do rely quite a bit on their releases. Articles appear in a broad range of newspapers, including both the more left-wing quality newspaper (de Volkskrant), a more right-wing popular newspaper (de Telegraaf) as well as the financial newspaper (het Financieele Dagblad). The media attention is strongly event-driven. In the media various large incidents concerning top incomes or failing top-ranking officials were visible (‘naming and shaming’). As shown in Figure 2, throughout the year newspaper articles contain claims ‘naming and shaming’ the salaries paid to specific public officials (such as the president of a university), by a specific organization (such as a housing corporation) or in a sector as a whole (such as the health care sector). About half of all claims (385/759) in newspaper articles were naming and shaming.

When looking at the document level, 70% of all articles (346/491) contain at least one

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4 Based on the complete content analysis of the legislative process in the Lower House of parliament and the newspaper coverage in 2011, and a partial analysis of the legislative process in the Upper House of parliament and the media coverage in 2012.
such claim, often in combination with one or more others (a frequent combination is a claim that names and shames and a claim in favour of regulation). They concern a broad range of organizations, from education (in 67 articles) and health care (66) institutions to non-departmental public bodies (51) and state shareholdings (39). There is also substantial attention for top incomes in the semi-public sector in general, charity organizations and public transport, development organizations, and public transport.

The naming and shaming is also directed to bonuses and severance pays, as well as the remuneration of interim-managers and supervisory boards\(^5\). Two incidents a lot of attention is paid to at the end of March concern the salary of the president of the Port of Rotterdam, which is a state shareholding, and favouritism and top salaries at the development organization SNV. Media coverage, in newspapers but also in magazines and on the radio, provides new information about excessive salaries. Specific elements are highlighted, such as the (lacking) relationship between bonuses and performance and salaries earned by members of supervisory boards and in specific semi-public sectors such as health care institutions and housing corporations. One of the two television broadcasts concerning top incomes in the whole year 2011, and this is an item on the current affairs programme EenVandaag about the incident around the president of the Port of Rotterdam. Politically it is a conflict with the local council and as a result there is no reference to the national proposal for regulation

\(^5\) See Table 1 with all naming and shaming-claims in newspaper articles is in Appendix II.
A lot of the naming and shaming comes from journalists. 30% of the claims that are voiced in newspapers are not attributed to an actor (see Appendix III). This means that technically, journalists themselves are making these claims. Although there are only a few examples of journalists explicitly making claims about the bill in opinion pieces, as implicit actors they are responsible for a majority of the ‘naming and shaming’. By doing so they amplify the idea that public opinion is very hostile towards top incomes. The same happens more explicitly in a number of radio items, such as one in which a reporter argues research he and his colleagues did shows one fifth of the members of supervisory boards of housing corporations exceeds the norm of the branch, as well as one in which a reporter asks patients and visitors of the Maasstad Hospital about their opinion on the severance pay the director received. The topic of top incomes is (in voting research terminology) considered a ‘valence issue’ instead of a ‘position issue’. Most people agree about it: certainly about the idea that excessive salaries in the (semi)public sector are undesirable and also to a large extent about the idea that it is the task of the central government to regulate these incomes. By naming and shaming journalists contribute to this impression and thereby reinforce the ‘spiral of silence’ concerning arguments against regulation and the justification of high incomes.

To sum up, the media coverage is congruent, event-driven and contains a lot of naming and shaming. In addition, the claims that are visible in the media are unidirectional, in favour of regulation. Apart from only one exception (an opinion piece from a lawyer in which she argues that the regulation of severance pays that is part of the bill defeats its purpose) actors or institutions opposing the bill are not visible in the media. In a handful of newspaper articles current incomes exceeding the future maximum are defended, for the time being, with the justification that they are stipulated in contracts. Both members of government and parliament only voice (strong) support for the bill. The debates about whether to regulate or not only concern the question whether more sectors and elements should be added to the original bill. A broad range of political actors take position in these media debates. The most visible political actors are governmental actors (117 claims), Geert Wilders’ party PVV (81) that was supporting the minority government, the Lower House as a whole (74) and the socialist party SP (69). The claims concern important aspects of the bill: its scope, the norm level, and components of the remuneration such as severance pays and bonuses. When leaving the ‘naming and shaming’ claims aside, the political actors making most substantive claims are the government (93), followed by the PVV (39). Both more left- and right-wing

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6 See Table 2 in Appendix III.
populist parties, members of parliament are often quoted directly or paraphrased, which allows journalists to report on the bill without being perceived as biased.

The answer to sub-question 1 is that the symbolic political action concerning top incomes is to a large extent based on the naming and shaming in the event-driven media coverage. As could be expected based on previous research about parliamentary questions, a large majority of all symbolic action (21/26 parliamentary questions) is explicitly based on media attention. The first question asked is usually whether the minister or state secretary has read the article, the second questions is what his or her response to the main claim is. As a result members of government are often directly responding to the claims made in newspaper articles in their answers. The main claims referred to are always naming and shaming, for example about the severance pays former managers at a child care organization and at a college received or the salary of the newly appointed chairman of the executive board of the Authority for the Financial Markets. The five remaining parliamentary questions do not refer explicitly to a news item, but they do concern incidents that were covered by the media as well. An example is the list of questions asked about the severance pay the former chairman of a housing corporation received: they were asked based on the annual report of the organization, yet the day before the same issue received media attention as well.

**Contributions to parliamentary debates as a response to media attention**

Political actors echo claims in debates that were voiced in the media and refer explicitly to media attention. A clear example of the latter is visible in the first plenary debate about the bill: five of the eight parliamentarians that participated in this debate explicitly referred to articles that were in the newspaper that day, particularly about an article naming and shaming the education sector. It is used in the debate as an example to illustrate both the necessity of the bill, and the necessity of a transitional arrangement that does not allow current public officials to escape the new regulations. In his contribution to the debate the Minister of the Interior refers to ‘the reporting on and the images of excessive salaries’ in general, to argue that he understands why the discussion is taking place as it is (he warns the members of the Lower House against amending the bill heavily by broadening its scope and strictness). In a subsequent part of the debate about regulating the remuneration of members of supervisory boards, a member of parliament again refers to specific media attention of that day. To underline the fact that currently the salaries for supervisory boards are excessive he argues a newspaper that day revealed the remuneration the chairman of the COA (an organization for asylum seekers) receives for attending four meetings a year.
Media attention thus serves as a source of information for actors in the political arena. The minister refers to the media attention for excessive salaries in general, and a large majority of parliamentarians participating in the debate mentions specific newspaper articles published shortly before. In addition to these explicit media references, there is congruence between both the claims and the justifications as voiced in the media and during the legislative debates. Naming and shaming—claims in the debate concern, besides the (semi)public sector as a whole, also charities, presenters of public broadcasting companies, doctors, the education sector, severance pays, housing corporations, the previously mentioned COA and, most of all, the health care sector.

Substantial claims concern the development of a system of lower norms per sector (this is an uncontroversial topic), the level of the maximum salary (130% of the ministerial salary, as proposed by the government, or 100%, as proposed by various opposition parties), applying the maximum salary uniform to all (semi)public sectors, and the regulation of charities, bonuses, state subsidized institutions, interim managers, child care institutions, umbrella organizations, the transitional period, employees, severance pays, supervisory boards, housing corporations, and again the health care sector, both health care institutions as well as health insurance companies. Arguments used to justify these claims are the fact that organizations have a public task, work for the common good, the current economic situation, that it should not be possible to escape from the norm, that organizations are paid with tax money, that they do not operate in a market and therefore encounter little competition and risks, that there is no (necessary) relationship between the salary level and performance, the (long-lasting) public debate about top incomes, the fact that currently excessive salaries are being paid, that there is a disproportional difference with the salaries paid to ‘regular’ employees and that self-regulation does not work.

When looking at both the claims and justifications in the media, there is a strong resemblance with the above-mentioned claims. A lot of the claims that were previously visible in the media are also mentioned in parliament and very similar arguments are used. However, when looking at all claims made in parliament, several parts of the legislative debate turn out not to be visible in the media. Despite the fact that there is a lot of media coverage for the issue of top incomes in general, and also quite a bit for the bill more specifically, several important yet rather technical debates that were part of the legislative process are not visible in the media. This means journalists ignore some parts of the lawmaking process, whereas others are covered more extensively. One of the core debates in parliament (accompanied by a motion and an amendment) was about whether the bill should apply to child care organizations: there is no media
attention for the child care sector whatsoever. Another example is the judicial question whether the bill should be accompanied by transitional arrangement: this is ignored by the media (despite the fact that various amendments have been introduced), despite one sentence in a more general article in October and two short paragraphs in the week before the vote. This means that some parts of the debate remain out of the media’s spotlights, despite the strong journalistic interest for top incomes. The other way around, however, politicians seem to discuss most of the issues that have been in the media before, and most of them refer explicitly to media attention during debates. To answer sub-question 2, although certainly not the only source of information and inspiration, political actors in legislative debates thus quite often respond to media attention, by making claims about issues and using arguments that were present in coverage before.

Substantial political action as a response to media attention
The fact that political actors do respond to media attention in debates does not necessarily mean they do the same when it comes to introducing or supporting motions and amendments. However, because amendments are discussed in these debates and motions are even introduced during plenary debates, it is likely that there is some similarity in terms of content as well. However, first of all, political actors do not refer explicitly to media attention in the explanatory memoranda that accompany amendments or motions, nor do they directly refer to coverage when they are discussing amendments or motions during the debate. There is one example of a parliamentarian who, during the plenary debate, explains that her party supports the amendments introduced by a colleague that she read about in the newspaper that same day.

This is however quite exceptional, if only because there is very little media attention for substantial political action at all (see Figure 3). Newspaper journalists monitor parliamentary action but not very closely. 45 articles (9%) contain a reference to the bill as such, but this means the document itself and not specific parliamentary action regarding the bill. If something happens in parliament journalists sometimes report on it, but in only a majority of parliamentary questions is covered (19 articles contain an explicit reference) and their attention wanes further when it comes to substantial action. There are only 14 newspaper articles that refer to legislative debates. Most (11) of them are prospective and announce that the same or the next day a debate takes place. The finding that little articles retrospectively discuss debates should be nuanced, as there are various articles that seem to be based on a debate, but do not
mention it (but say, for example: ‘a majority in the Lower House wants to..’). There is media attention for parliamentary initiatives, but mainly for the more symbolic parliamentary questions, both oral and written. Some articles announce that questions are asked, often after an incident has been mentioned in the same text, some articles are more retrospective and discuss questions as well as the answers given to them. Yet parliamentary questions are always mentioned in the context of incidents. In the other media there is however practically no attention for symbolic action; in all magazine articles, television and radio items only once a journalist refers to questions the member of parliament he is interviewing asked in the past.

There is very little media attention for substantial parliamentary action, especially in newspapers, and most of the time journalists only refer to standpoints in vague terms (‘..party x wants that..’) without discussing whether they are captured in parliamentary initiatives. Although 10 newspaper articles refer to motions about the regulation of top incomes, none of these motions was part of this legislative process (motions can be introduced at any time). This means there is no coverage whatsoever of the three motions introduced to the bill under study here. Four articles pay attention to six (out of seventeen) amendments, mainly summarizing them in one or two sentences. In two articles a number of proposed amendments are mentioned explicitly in anticipation of them being passed (although one is erroneously referred to as a motion). Two retrospective articles published the day after the vote, discuss some amendments that were passed (yet only one explicitly mentions the vote on the bill, the other just mentions two proposals that were passed). There is no television coverage of the bill or the legislative process at all: one of the two items of all 2011 is the one on the salary incident at the Port of Rotterdam. The other does concern symbolic political action, but
it is a news item of RTL about a motion requesting for regulation of top salaries at the railway operator NS, however this is introduced in as part of the separate debate on state shareholdings (which are not part of the bill). On the radio, one programme pays attention to the new norm for the education sector two weeks after the bill is introduced to Parliament, however there is no reference to the bill or the legislative process whatsoever, nor to the fact that the whole (semi)public sector will be regulated. In one radio-item in October about an incident at the Maasstad Hospital a parliamentarian explains that there is a bill under consideration and that she wants to change its content, however she does not announce that she is going to introduce an amendment. There are two radio reports on the first legislative debate and two on the second, in which the legislative proposal, various amendments and the expected support for them are discussed, but there is no coverage of the vote on the bill and the amendments. In one of the items the word ‘amendments’ is mentioned explicitly, others refer to proposals to ‘sharpen’ the bill. The main sub-debate attention is paid to is the regulation of the health care sector: the difference of opinion between the minister and parties in parliament is stressed, with ample references to salary-related incidents.

There is thus only media attention for substantial political action in the context of plenary debates, not at the time the amendments were introduced, and mainly for those amendments that are expected to be, or (in newspapers) actually are, passed. This implies that whereas parliamentary questions are a way to receive media attention, amendments much less so, certainly not apart from the plenary debates. It is striking that there is little reporting on substantial political action, especially considering the importance of amendments in terms of policy consequences. This suggests that journalists lose their initial attention for the issue once parliament moves closer to the heart of the legislative process. To sum up, substantial action is not very often newsworthy for journalists, and substantial action is not a direct response to media attention.

Substantial political action sometimes is indirectly a response on media coverage. Various amendments and motions build further on parliamentary questions that were directly based on media coverage, and/or contain claims that were in the media before. For instance, there is a lot of incident media coverage containing ‘naming and shaming’ of the health care sector. In response to that, multiple times parliamentary questions were introduced about specific incidents, as well as about reports on top incomes in the health care sector. Subsequently, the same parties introduced amendments that proposed applying a stricter form or regulation to the health care sector. Two cases a parliamentarian explicitly links symbolic and substantial political
action. A member of the PVV argues during the legislative debate that the level of the salaries of interim managers is the most shocking and irresponsible, ‘witness the fact that innumerable parliamentary questions that have been asked by my party and others’. She uses this as the direct argument why her party introduced an amendment to bring back their salary. This is the most explicit linkage between media-inspired symbolic and substantial action. The second example is when a member of the socialist party asked a set of parliamentary questions about a newspaper article that names and shames the salary of an interim manager at a psychiatric hospital. Her last question to the State Secretary is whether the government is willing to embrace the amendments her party introduced with the remuneration bill. This indicates that also after substantial political action is introduced, parliamentarians connect such initiatives with more symbolic action. The fact that the relationship between media attention and substantial action is rarely direct can in part be explained by the nature of the both: whereas media attention is often quite specific, about a certain event, person or organizations, substantial political attention is necessarily less specific and sometimes even very general. What does happen, though, is that the standpoint of political actors is visible in the media before, but not related to a proposed amendment. For example, the Socialist Party introduced an amendment to apply the strictest norm to all sectors. The amendment is not mentioned in the media, however this specific claim (‘the ministerial salary should be the maximum norm for the (semi)public sector’) is visible in the media, when a member of the Socialist Party is quoted or paraphrased making the claim. In this case substantial action is not so much a direct response to media attention, but it is in line with claims that were in the media before, especially when made by the same actor.

This relates to the fact that in the media actors behave in line with the (perceived) public opinion. Both political actors as well as other actors involved, such as interest groups (unions, employers’ organizations, umbrella organizations), communicate their standpoint via the media. They respond to incidents, show their standpoints and present initiatives they are employing. However, only standpoints in favour of regulation are visible. This unbalance can to a certain extent be explained by the nature of the case, as the remuneration issue is not highly controversial. It is likely that interest groups opposing regulation and/or broadening of the scope of the bill (mainly employers’ organizations) were not willing to inform journalists about their standpoint, as journalists – who are trained in providing balanced coverage and to hear both sides – would have reported on those standpoints. An example that illustrates this concerns the organization of supervisory boards in the health care sector. They sent a letter to the parliamentary committee, that was not open to the public, and requested
not to apply a stricter norm to the health care organizations, as was proposed by several parties. They took the matter to court once the bill was passed (including the stricter norm for the sector), but have not been visible in the media. Interest groups opposing the bill were probably acting more ‘back stage’ rather than on the ‘front stage’ of the media. It seems like they were ‘afraid’ of the media, and thus subordinated themselves to the media-politics dynamics. On the other hand, the Christian party CU introduced an amendment to apply a less strict remuneration regime to the housing corporations, however this was not reported on in the media either. This suggests that journalists have either not noticed this amendment, or have decided not to write about it. In any case, as the media have reported very negatively about excessive incomes in the housing sector for years, this is a remarkable finding. It also shows that not only certain legislative ‘sub-debates’ were not visible in the media, but that also certain claims that were translated into amendments are invisible. However, concerning other issues there is some similarity between claims voiced in the media and in amendments. In sum, to answer subquestion 3, substantial action is to some extent, but mainly indirectly, a response to media attention.

Consequences of the media-politics dynamic for the content of the bill

The previous sections showed that the legislative behavior of political actors, more specifically Members of Parliament, is being inspired by media coverage for the issue at stake. The question is whether this responsive behavior has consequences for the content of the bill that is eventually passed by both chambers of Parliament. In line with the findings concerning the responsiveness to the media politicians show when it comes to symbolic action, contributions to legislative debates and substantial action respectively, in this case the media-politics interaction seems to have affected the content of the bill. Because of the extensive event-driven, one-directional, naming and shaming coverage for the issue of top incomes, the media clearly mattered for the course of the legislative process. The little media attention that covered the positions of parties towards amendments, shortly before the vote in the Lower House took place, reflects their positions as voiced in parliament. The fact that certain parties were announced to support specific amendments in the media, causing a majority, may have put pressure on them to indeed vote for these proposals. However, the claims that were visible in the media prior to the final debate and the vote in the Lower House concerned topics that had been visible in the media for a long time, such as the regulation of the health care sector and of bonuses. At the same time the ‘regular’ naming and shaming-coverage
continues: the fact that the legislative process came to its climax apparently did not change that.

Some of the changes in the content of the bill concerned debates that have been inspired or stimulated by media coverage, that was event-driven and contained a lot of naming and shaming, such as the regulation of the health care sector, of interim managers, of charities, of members of supervisory boards and the ban on bonuses. However, when looking at the debates that eventually not resulted in an amendment of the bill, either because the proposal was rejected or withdrawn, these are all sectors or issues that were not (extensively) covered by the media: health insurance companies, the child care sector, payment of expenses, regulation at 100% of the ministerial salary, applying one universal norm to all (semi)public sectors. This shows there is some resemblance in the attention for sub-debates in both the media and parliament. There are also changes in the content of the bill that cannot be related to media attention at all, such as the regulation of organizations that are at least 50% state subsidized (although argument of public money is often used as a justification for regulation, or at least to support indignation about top incomes) and the introduction and subsequent shortening of the transitional period. This shows that media attention is certainly not a prerequisite for changing the content of the bill. In addition, there was a lot of coverage for sectors that were already under the strictest regime of the bill as it was proposed by the minister, mainly the education sector and housing corporations. In these cases the media attention thus only could reinforce the idea that strict regulation of these sectors was necessary, and prevented loosening of the regulation (indeed the amendment to apply the less strict sectoral norm to the housing corporations was withdrawn, the claim to apply this norm was invisible in the media). The bill also contained a strict maximum for severance pays, based on the coalition agreement, so the extensive naming and shaming of ‘golden handshakes’ did not have consequences for the content of the bill.

News coverage of incidents probably raised awareness and put pressure on actors to regulate sectors and elements of the remuneration that were initially not part of the bill. This also occurred via symbolic action, as parliamentary questions that were based on incident media coverage were later on followed-up by motions or amendments about the same topic7. The clearest example is the health care sector, about which 18 times media-inspired parliamentary questions were asked, and three amendments were introduced (one about the norm for the health care sector, another about the norm for health care institutions and health insurance companies, and a third about the norm for the whole (semi)public sector including the health care sector). Another example is a set

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7 See Table 3 in Appendix IV.
of parliamentary questions about a severance pay in the child care sector, which was inspired by media coverage\(^8\), and followed up by an amendment and a motion. There were also a lot of questions about the education sector and severance pays, however as explained before concerning those the proposed bill was already very strict. Also there is one media-inspired substantial initiative that was withdrawn, yet that did influence policy in the end. This amendment to apply the legal regulation to the copyright organization for authors of musical works Buma/Stemra followed after a period of indignation in the media about the salaries of the board members and parliamentary questions about the issue, but was withdrawn because it suited better in a specific bill about copyright organizations\(^9\). In sum, to answer sub-question 4, the interaction between media attention and political behaviour in various ways did have consequences for the content of the bill.

5. Conclusion and discussion
Research on media effects on bills suggests legislative processes are influenced by the media, but because micro level studies are lacking, how this mechanism precisely works is unclear. Therefore this study analyzed to what extent and in what manner media-attention for a highly mediatized bill has influenced its content. Through a content analysis of all claims that were made both in the media and in parliament concerning the (topic of the) bill, it entangled the role journalists and politicians play in the development of new laws to answer the main question in what way media attention matters for lawmaking. The most likely case under study, the legislative process that led to the regulation of the remuneration of senior officials in the public and semi-public sector in the Netherlands process, indicates that some changes in the content of the bill were inspired by or a response to claims in the media.

The symbolic political action concerning top incomes is to a large extent based on the naming and shaming in the event-driven and unidirectional media coverage. Although certainly not the only source of information and inspiration, political actors also quite often respond to media attention during legislative debates, by making claims about issues and using arguments that were present in coverage before. And to some extent, but mainly indirectly, substantial action is inspired by media attention as well. Explicit references to media attention occur both in the context of symbolic action and in contributions to legislative debates. Journalists on the other hand do not refer to parliamentary action very often, especially not to the instrument that can actually

\(^8\) The article was published in a regional magazine and therefore not in the dataset for this paper.

\(^9\) That same week, the authorized minister announced in a debate that the maximum salary was also going to apply to these organizations – which was directly reported in the media the next day.
change proposed bills – amendments. Only very few of them do so, shortly before
Parliament votes on the bill. And although there are also sub-debates concerning the bill
that are ignored by the media, there is quite some similarity between the claims in the
media and in parliament. Most of the changes that were made to the bill during the
legislative process can thus be traced back to debates in the media before. The proposed
amendments that were not passed have a much link with prior media attention. There
are media sub-debates that cannot be traced to alterations in the content of the bill, but
these are predominantly about implementation of the bill, about sectors the strictest
regime already applied to and about sectors that are regulated via specific other policy.
In general it is fair to say that elements that are in the media’s spotlights are often also
discussed in parliament, and political actors do refer directly to media attention in
parliamentary questions and during debates. This leads to the observation that the
interaction between media attention and political behaviour in various ways had
consequences for the content of the bill. To be clear, this study does not suggest that
media attention is a sufficient, let alone a necessary, condition for changes in the content
of bills during the legislative process. However, for media attention to have
consequences for the legislative process, it is necessary that political actors respond to
things they see, hear and read in the media. This case study shows that they indeed
sometimes do so.

Of course the inferences made here are based on this specific case. Because it is a
most likely case of media influence, and there are indications that media attention has
affected the course of the legislative process, the same type of analysis should be applied
to other, less likely cases. If the same patterns occur in multiple cases, this would
contribute to the theory-building and strengthen the idea that, at least in the
Netherlands, media attention can impact legislative processes in certain ways. It would
also give an impression as to what extent the patterns found here are case specific,
because there multiple characteristics and context factors that may separate this bill
from other bills (the uncontentroversial nature of the bill, the economic situation at the
time, the political situation and how the political parties are balanced et cetera).

In order to check whether the mechanisms indeed function as observed it would
be helpful to take the experiences of the political actors and journalists that were
involved into account. For that reason a follow-up study will consist of interviews with
members of parliament and political reporters. This also makes it possible to study the
motivations of the actors involved, which would elicit even more of the mechanisms at
work and give more insights into the media-politics interaction. As conceptualized in the
preliminary theoretical model, various motivations could explain why political actors
respond to what is in the media and why journalists write about what happens in parliament. Getting deeper into these reasons behind the behaviour of politicians could help us understand why a politician uses a specific parliamentary instrument, and provide insights into the direct contact between politicians and journalists. It is quite conceivable that political actors inform journalists (in advance) of actions they are undertaking. The other way around, journalists may cover an issue more extensively if they know there will be parliamentary questions, amendments or a debate about it. These interviews may also cast light on other potential consequences of media attention for the legislative process, such as its duration and the (lack of) support for bills in Parliament. This case study, although only a first attempt to shed light on the media's role in lawmaking, suggests that legislative processes are on the one hand not immune to media attention, but on the other hand not dominated by the public debate in the media either. In terms of the functioning of democracy, these might be comforting thoughts. When it comes to something as fundamental as lawmaking, political actors are (at least sometimes) visible in and responsive to the media; however, there is little reason to believe legislative processes are confined to what is in the media.
Literature


Appendix I

Written media

The newspapers taken into account are AD/Algemeen Dagblad, Dagblad De Pers, De Telegraaf, De Volkskrant, Het Financieele Dagblad, Het Parool, Metro, Nederlands Dagblad, NRC.NEXT, NRC Handelsblad, Reformatorisch Dagblad, Spits, Trouw. The magazines are both general magazines and specialist journals and include Boerderij, Elsevier, Forum, de Groene Amsterdammer, Nieuwsblad Transport, Quote, Vrij Nederland, Zorgvisie.

The following search string was used to search for articles in LexisNexis:
(topinkomen OR (top! w/s inkomen*) OR topsalar! OR (top! w/s salar!) OR balkenendenorm OR balkenende-norm OR WNT OR bonus! OR ontslagverg! OR gouden hand! OR vertrekpre! OR ((bestuurder* OR topbestuurder* OR topma! OR topfunc! OR interi! OR exorbi! OR voorzitter OR directeur OR toezichthouder*)) w/p (inkomen* OR salar! OR beloni!))) w/p (semipublieke OR semi-publieke OR publiek-private OR semi-overheid OR publieke sector OR de zorg OR zorginstelling! OR zorgverzekera! OR zorgbestuurde! OR onderwijs! OR universite! OR HBO OR hogescho! OR corporatie! OR woningcorporat! OR woningbouw! OR staatsdeelne! OR ZBO OR ziekenhui! OR luchtverk! OR medisch specialisten OR kinderopval OR publieke omroep OR openbaar vervo! OR vervoersbedr! OR energiebedr! OR ontwikkelingsorganisat! OR ontwikkelingssamenwerking OR ANBI OR staatsbedrijf! OR SNV OR NS OR Schiphol OR Holland Casino OR Havenbedrijf OR GasUnie OR TenRen OR ProRail OR Sanquin OR COA)

Radio and television

The catalogue of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision has been used to search for the relevant radio and television items. It allows searching for terms used in the title or description (and, if available, in the transcription) of all television and radio programs broadcasted by the three national television channels and the two national radio channels. The following search terms are used: topinkomen(s), topsalaris(sen), inkomen(s), lonen, beloning, bezoldiging, topbestuurder, bonus, bonusregeling(en), ontslagvergoeding(en), Balkenendenorm, publieke sector, semipublieke sector.

To check whether no items have been overlooked, I have searched for items using the same search words on the website of the Dutch Public Broadcast Organization as well as the website of specific programs (NOS Journaal, EenVandaag, Zembla).
Political news is mainly provided by public broadcasting organizations, but the commercial channel ‘RTL’ does have a news show that covers political news. Unfortunately the archive of this show, ‘RTL Nieuws’, is not open to the public. They were however willing to cooperate, and an employee of the Program & Sales department searched the archive, using the following search terms: topinkomen(s), topsalaris(sen), Balkenendenorm, beloning, bezoldiging, topbestuurder(s). A colleague of the documentation centre repeated the search to make sure no items were missed.

Note: in the year 2011 there was a lot of media attention for the bonuses paid at banks, especially those that were ‘saved’ with money of the Dutch government. However, the debate about remuneration policy in the financial sector is a separate one, that is regulated with separate policy. Therefore the media attention for salaries in the financial sector is not taken into account.
Appendix II

Table 1 shows the number of articles that contain a claim that names and shames a specific sector or element of remuneration (category ‘other’ = employees, the police and water companies). The list is developed inductively, based on the sectors and elements that were debated at least once (either in the media or in parliament).

Table 1

*Naming and shaming of sectors/elements in newspaper articles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Naming and shaming of</th>
<th># of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-departmental public bodies</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State shareholdings</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Semi)public sector</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/charity organizations</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transport</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severance pay</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonuses</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing corporations</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public broadcasting</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory boards</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim-managers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-subsidized organizations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective rights management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance companies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>433</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix III

Table 2 shows the number of claims in newspaper articles per political actor. The list is developed inductively and includes all actors that were visible at least once (either in the media or in parliament). The first row shows all claims, the second only the ‘naming and shaming’-claims, and the third row contains the substantive claims (that go beyond naming and shaming).

Table 2

*Number of claims in newspaper articles per political actor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>All claims</th>
<th>Claims N&amp;S</th>
<th>Substantive claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVV</td>
<td>81</td>
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<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower House</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spokesperson of) public official</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VVD</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>GroenLinks</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers' organization</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee (semi)public sector</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor(y board)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest group</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PvdD</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1059</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV

Table 3 shows the number of parliamentary questions, amendments and motions that contain claim(s) about a specific sector or remuneration element per party. The party mentioned introduced the parliamentary instrument (the ‘&’ means it is introduced by two parties). The parties in bold show an amendment or motion is passed.

Parliamentary questions sometimes contained more than one claim in the list (for example both ‘health care sector’ and ‘severance pays’). In all cases the amendments passed were (at least) supported by all parties that asked parliamentary questions containing claims about that specific issue.

Table 3
Parliamentary questions, amendments and motions containing specific claims per party

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contains claim(s) about</th>
<th>Parliamentary questions</th>
<th>Amendments</th>
<th>Motions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education sector</td>
<td>D66, PVV, SP (2), PvdA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care sector</td>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>PvdA (support of SP, PvdD, GL, PVV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care sector</td>
<td>SP (12), PVV (5), GL</td>
<td>PvdA, <strong>PVV</strong> (support of SP, PvdD, PvdA, GL)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee members</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State shareholdings</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority Financial Markets</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buma Stemra/CBO's</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory boards</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>PvdA, <strong>PvdA</strong> (support of SP, PvdD, GL, D66 PVV), <strong>PvdA</strong> (support of SP, PvdD, GL, D66, PVV)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>SP (3), PVV (2), GL</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severance pays</td>
<td>SP (2), PVV</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing corporations</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>CU</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim managers</td>
<td>SP (2), PVV</td>
<td>CDA, PVV, <strong>CDA&amp;PVV</strong> (support of SP, PvdA, GL, SGP, PvdD)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm 100%</td>
<td>SP (2)</td>
<td>SP, SP&amp;CU</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One regime semipublic sector</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>SP, SP</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonuses</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>PvdA, PvdA, PvdA, PvdA, <strong>PvdA</strong> (support of SP, PvdD, GL, PVV)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charities</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>PvdA</strong> (support of SP, GL, PVV)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional period</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>PvdA, PvdA, <strong>PvdA</strong> (unanimously)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment of expenses</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>GL</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation of unions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>PvdA</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50% subsidized organizations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>CDA&amp;VVD</strong> (unanimously)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbrella organizations</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>PvdA</strong> (support of SP, PvdD, GL, PVV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public officials in general</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>CU</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>