

# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
Introduction: towards a new approach of the elections-to-policy nexus	1
1 From elections to policy	2
2 From theory to reality	4
3 Towards an agenda-setting theory of democratic mandates	7
4 Outline	11
1. Are mandates obsolete?	13
1.1 The end of party government?	14
1.2 'Not a dime's worth of difference'?	18
1.3 Policymaking beyond elections?	20
1.4 Towards a new perspective on mandate responsiveness	23
2. Snakes in a tunnel? Parties, mandates, and agendas	25
2.1 Issue competition and systemic boundaries: snakes in a tunnel	26
2.2 Mandates and agenda-setting	32
2.3 Conclusion: agenda-setting from electoral campaigns to policymaking	40
3. Cases and methods	43
3.1 Five Western European countries	43
3.2 Institutional setup and political context in the five countries	51
3.3 Data and empirical strategy	62
3.4 Conclusion	71
4. If not party mandates, then what? The determinants of legislative agendas	72
4.1 Policy change beyond party mandate	73
4.2 Evaluating non-partisan explanations of policy change	78
4.3 Conclusions	90

5. Issue competition in five countries: snakes in a tunnel	92
5.1 Snakes and tunnels: an approach to parties' electoral priorities	93
5.2 Issue competition within a tunnel	99
5.3 Overlap, issue competition, and the policy relevance of campaigns	107
5.4 Conclusion	111
6. Mandate matters: evaluating the effects of electoral mandates in Western Europe	113
6.1 Empirical strategy	115
6.2 From party mandates to legislative priorities	122
6.3 The electoral origin of high-profile reforms across political systems	135
6.4 Conclusion	139
7. Capacity, incentives, and mandate responsiveness	142
7.1 Capacity and the agenda-setting impact of platforms	143
7.2 Incentives and the agenda-setting impact of platforms	153
7.3 Conclusion	159
8. Conclusions	163
8.1 Snakes in a tunnel: a story on capacity and incentives	163
8.2 Snakes, tunnels, and representation	167
8.3 Perspectives for future research	170
<i>References</i>	173
<i>Index</i>	195