

**Media Systems and Information Environments  
A Comparative Approach to the Agenda-Setting Hypothesis  
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**ABSTRACT**

The present dissertation aims at the comparative study of agenda-setting (i.e., the impact of media content for the importance people give to several political and social issues) in Europe. The focus is set on the 2009 European Parliament election campaign period and one of the central objectives is to establish whether or not the media agenda-setting capacity varies from country to country, and why this may be the case. The hypothetical causes of cross-country variability are the nature of the several European media systems (in terms of development of press and TV markets, freedom of press, journalist professionalization, state intervention, media partisanship) and their effects in the informational environment, both from the perspective of the supply (information quality, diversity of agendas) and demand (trust in the media, patterns of exposure). The results show that these macro-level dimensions vary considerably in Europe, and that there is a link between media system dimensions related to political balance and agenda-setting, mediated by information quality.



**Jury Members:**

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## SHORT BIO

José Santana Pereira, born in Portugal in December 1982, holds a BA in Social Psychology (ISCTE, Lisbon, 2004), a MA in Comparative Politics (ICS-UL, 2008) and a MRes in Political and Social Sciences (EUI, 2009). After completing his BA and before starting his PhD research, José worked as a research assistant in the Portuguese *National Election Study*, coordinated by Drs. Marina Costa Lobo and Pedro Magalhães. As a PhD researcher at the EUI's Department of Political and Social Sciences, Jose's work was mainly focused on media effects in public opinion (and, in particular, agenda-setting), as well as on media systems' characteristics and their moderating effects. His research interests also include electoral behaviour and political attitudes (namely attitudes towards Europe), José published several chapters and articles in Portuguese, English and French-language outlets, focusing on issues such as economic voting, strategic voting, patterns of exposure to media during election campaigns, participation in referenda, national and European election's contexts and results, or party's attitudes towards the European Union. His most recent article (co-authored by Dr. André Freire) explores the issue of economic voting in Portugal after the year 2000, and was published by *Electoral Studies* in 2012. José is also one of the researchers in charge of the project *Media Systems in Europe* (with Drs. Marina Popescu and Tania Gosselin), and a member of two research teams at the Robert Schuman's Centre for Advanced Research (RSCAS, Florence). The first team studies the role of Portugal within the European Union, whereas the second is developing a tool to match citizen's preferences and outlet/system's characteristics in terms of media pluralism (*Media Profiler*).