
 <p>Norbert Merkovity</p>	 <p>25-30 minutes</p>	<p>Thing to remember:</p> <p>Mediatization of politics means a political system that is greatly influenced by the media</p>
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Parties and Political Systems in Europe: Communication of the Actors

3. Mediatization and media effects in European politics

Mediatization refers to the centrality of the mass and social media in (social and political) communication.

Media logic, mediatization and mediation

The concepts of media logic and mediatization (and mediation) are often synonyms of each other in political communication literature. Aside from the literature's inconsistencies, in this lecture, we will look at the two concepts as two different phenomena but similar in their effects. Some researchers regard mediatization as an all-encompassing, collective term, while others approach it as a continuously 'unfolding historical process'. A related term is mediation, which refers to the transmission function of communication and mass media. However, due to its descriptive nature, mediation cannot answer the nature of the actions and reactions among the actors of political communication. Despite all this, in the literature of international political communication, the phenomenon of mediation is regarded as more useful than mediatization and use it – in the broader sense than transmission – as a collective term.

Media logic means the adaptation to the work of media, while mediatization means a political system that is greatly influenced by the media and adopted to the mediation of politics.

Others say that politics has lost its autonomy against media with mediatization as it communicates to the public based on its regularities. This thought is strengthened by the influence of traditional media on political communication. The case is different on community sites where other regularities prevail as well.

Self-mediatization

Political actors do not only get mediatized by the media, but they will have a directive to be effective in raising the attention of their potential audience. Therefore they cannot choose but accept the regularities of the community sites. That is how we find *self-mediatization* or reflexive mediatization: *mediatization, which happens on social networks*.

In the process of self-mediatization, the emphasis is still on the politicians getting attention from traditional media. However, using it in social media changes into a fight for the attention and retention of followers. Political actors set the communicational stage with self-mediatization, from which they hope to forward their messages in a favorable climate for them. This also means that politicians do not take the interactivity of social media into consideration, instead, they consider the one-way communication of the traditional media as a foundation in the spaces of social media as well.

From the mediatization of politics to the self-mediatization of politics

To understand the different forms of mediatization, we need to separate vertical media from horizontal media, where vertical media refers to its mediator nature while horizontal media refers to its sharing nature.

Horizontal media implies great expectations, such as citizens being able to get in touch with political actors directly by going around the vertical media channels or getting a new platform to exchange information with

each other. The exchanged information is not exclusively political in their content, but political interactions will be subjects to research on political communication. We often see this direction to be followed in citizens' research, and so interprets events like the Arabic Spring. Phenomena like these imply the logic of network action that partly shifts the logic of collective action.

Daniel Boorstin was the first to research the correlations between politicians and media in the age of television. He realized that media produces pseudo-events for the audience that politicians accept and adopt to. They recognize how media builds up reality and how it can be used during political actions. Before this recognition, the general concept used to say that (political) event were an independent form of media. However, Boorstin showed that *pseudo-events are planned for immediate broadcasting*, and the connection between pseudo-event and its environment is incidental because motivations behind the action can be questioned. Also, the pseudo-events can become self-fulfilling prophecies as the created event appears as a real event for the viewers.

However, neither Boorstin nor his followers gave definition for such events, so it is questionable that the dramatization of political action or personalization is part of the pseudo-events. On the other hand, we have to see that there are events that would not happen in politics if there were no media or would happen, but there would be different conduct of the events. Typical examples are press conferences or the intensive atmosphere during the parliamentary sessions in many of the world's parliaments. At the same time, the same mood cannot be observable when cameras are turned off. We can find examples in everyday life. The same attitude-modifying effects work in the case of permanently installed traffic police cameras (so-called Fixed Speed Boats) on drivers. Those who know the locations of the cameras keep the speed limit approaching them. They check if they wear seatbelts, glance if the light is on do not even look at their mobile phones. They will behave differently than usual. At the time of parliamentary coverages, something similar happens to the politicians. They wear a role knowing their utterances are being observed. This role wants to meet

those expectations that politicians think about their own voters or their party leaders would like to see from them. It is hard to determine where a real person ends a role starts because it is easy to imagine that some of the politicians act like this according to a conviction. A pseudo-event is really close to a media event, and it can seem that it is the negative form of the latter one.

According to the proposal, there are real events, which typically occur by some natural events (volcano eruption, earthquake, tsunami, etc.), broadcasting of events, which come from some cultural tradition (New Year's Eve celebrations, sports events, national holidays, etc.) and staged or pseudo-events that would not happen if there were no media.

Simultaneously, pseudo-events can have a reverse effect on real events, for example, when a politician gives information to the press on the reality of an event or denies it. Different events affect each other in a complicated way. Therefore, we need to strengthen the fact that media does not only broadcast the existing reality, but some events come from the presence of the media (e.g. press conferences). In this sense, the broadcasting of the media does not only come from the event, but the event comes from the broadcasting of the media; also, the changes in the broadcasting of the media do not only happen because reality changes but reality changes because the broadcasting of the media changes. That is why the broadcasting of the media can cause spontaneous events or pseudo-events as well.

Mediatization – dimensions

Jesper Strömbäck sticks to the term of mediatization. According to him, it is the process where politics' independence from media can be studied, i.e. politics is not exclusively connected to the editing and display formats used in the media. The mediatization of politics can be studied by the degree of constraint, based on which four dimensions of mediatization can be differentiated. The mediation of politics, i.e. the realization of the transmission of media, is the first dimension. In the second dimension of mediatization, politics uses media logic under its power. In the third dimension, media logic becomes dominant, which is

adopted by politicians. By doing so, they ultimately put party logic in the background. In the fourth dimension of mediatization, politicians adapt and adopt media logic and use it not only during the campaigns but between two political or election campaigns as well. Thus, the four dimensions of mediatization show the process of the adoption of formats used in media by politics.

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Mediatization is not a linear but a multidirectional and multidimensional process in community sites. Among its effects, we can find strategic adaptation. Also, this term is not normative, and consequences do not depend on normative aspects. In other words, mediatization does not have a starting or ending point, but it is influenced by the events for which politicians adapt for the sake of their success and cannot be described as a recipe. We need to see that politicians make use of this force, the different ways of mediatization that eventually leads to the self-mediatization of politics on social sites. The emphasis is switched from the parties to the politicians, whose communicative representation is interpreted as mediatization, but it can mean being a 'spin doctor'. However, in all cases, it ends with self-representation and 'self-managed stage direction'.

A fairytale about mediatization: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqRuemiyUU8>

Questions

1. What is mediatization?
2. What are the pseudo-events?
3. How the media creates pseudo-events, and how they connect to real events?
4. What are the systemic effects of mediatization?
5. What are the consequences of mediatization (media effects)?
6. What are the dimensions of mediatization?

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7. What are the political effects of mediatization?
8. What personalization means?
9. What means spectacularization?
10. What is self-mediatization?

See:

Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul A. Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, Pierre Ostiguy (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Populism. Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0198803560.

Kate Kenski, Kathleen Hall Jamieson (eds.): The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication. Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-0199793471.

Pippa Norris, Ronald Inglehart: Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism. Cambridge University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-1108595841.

Caramani, Daniele: The Nationalization of Politics: The Formation of National Electorates and Party Systems in Western Europe. Cambridge University Press, 2004. ISBN: 978-0511185182

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