



Mittuniversitetet

MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

The Mediatization of Politics

– Reshaping Politics and Transforming Democracies

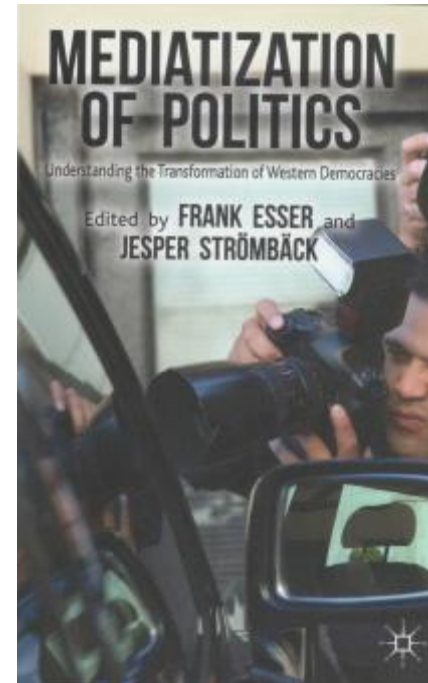
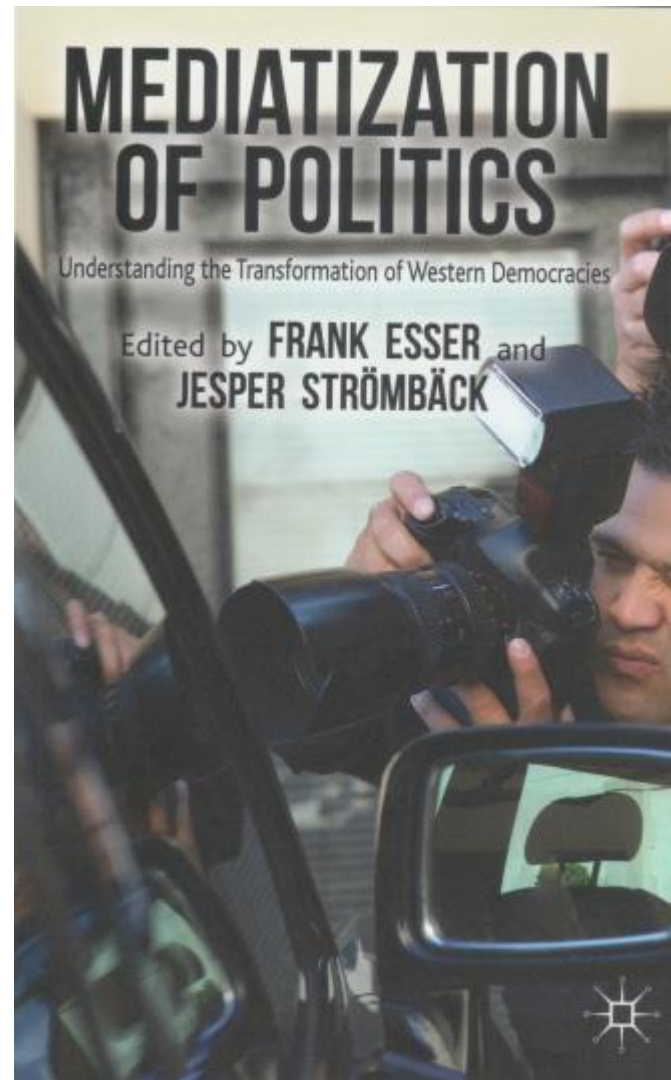
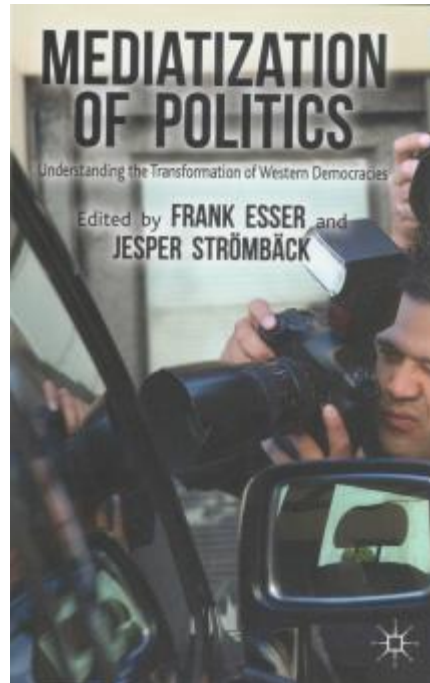
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Jesper Strömbäck

“The Media are Becoming Environmental”

(Roger Silverstone, 2007)





Definitions of Mediatization

- Mediatization refers to “a political system that is highly influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media in their coverage of politics” (Asp, 1986)
- “Mediatization relates to changes associated with communication media and their development” (Schulz, 2004)
- “The process whereby society to an increasing degree is submitted to, or becomes dependent on, the media and their logic” (Hjarvard, 2008)

Defining Mediatization of Politics

“The mediatization of politics refers to a long-term process through which the importance of the media and their spill-over effects on political processes, institutions, organizations and actors have increased”

(Strömbäck & Esser, 2014)

Four Dimensions of Mediatization

Most important source of information: Experiences or interpersonal communication



Most important source of information: The media

Media mainly dependent on political institutions



Media mainly independent on political institutions

Media content mainly guided by political logic



Media content mainly guided by media logic

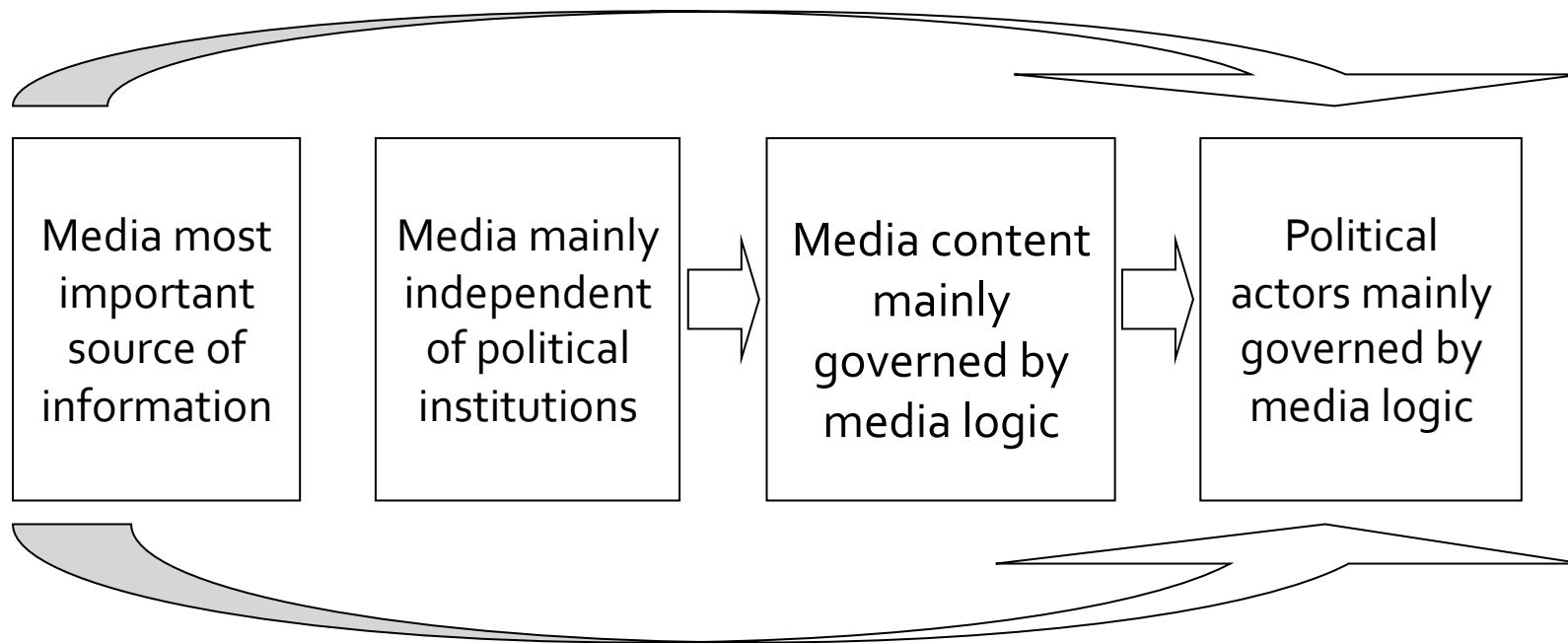
Political actors mainly guided by political logic



Political actors mainly guided by media logic



Mediatization of Politics as a Process

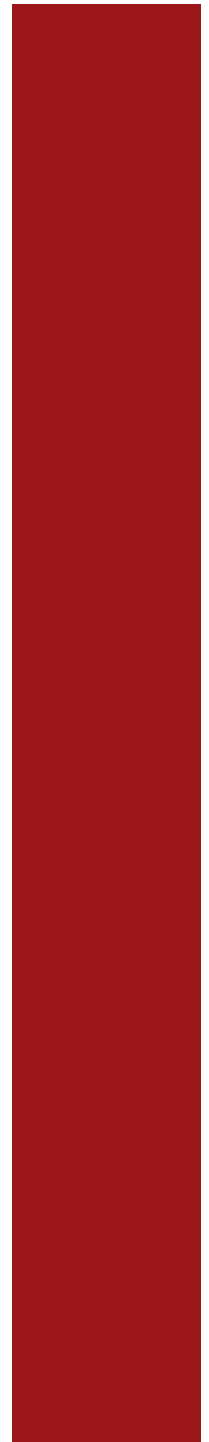


Key Concepts: Media and Logics

- Of relevance are news media in their role as socio-technological organizations and institutions
- News organizations should be conceived as institutional actors, pursuing certain goals on their own
- The news media are considered a singular institution insofar as they adhere to the same operating logic
- Logic as in media logic and political logic should be understood as “logic of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 1989)

Key Concepts: Media Logic

Professionalism	Commercialism	Media technology
News production according to distinctively journalistic norms and criteria	News production according to economically motivated reasons	News production according to different media technologies' affordances



Key Concepts: Political Logic

Polity	Policy	Politics
The institutional and formal frameworks of politics	Policy- and decision-based production of politics	Power- and publicity-gaining presentational aspects of politics



Key Concepts: Media Influence

- Media influence does not equal but includes media effects
- A media-centric vs. actor-centric approach
- Media influence refers to all activities and processes that are altered, shaped or structured by media or the perceived need of individuals, organizations or institutions to communicate with or through the media

Winning the Battle, Losing the War

By adapting to or adopting the media's standards of newsworthiness and logic "politicians may then win the daily battles with the news media, by getting into the news as they wish, but end up losing the war, as standards of newsworthiness begin to become prime criteria to evaluate issues, policies, and politics"

(Cook, 2005)

The Dynamics of Mediatization

- Media logic and political logic both have a situational and partly dynamic character
- Mediatization of politics NOT a linear, unidirectional process
- Degree of mediatization might vary across political actors, organizations and institutions equally within countries and across countries
- Degree of mediatization might vary across dimensions of politics (polity, policy, politics)
- Media-centric and actor-centric perspectives on mediatization complement each other

Challenges for Mediatization Research

- Defining operationalizations of mediatization
- Theoretical and empirical analyses of the linkages between mediatization along the four dimensions
- Theoretical and empirical analyses on the antecedents and contingencies of the mediatization of politics
- Theoretical and empirical analyses of different forms of direct and indirect adaptation to the media and their influence
- Theoretical and empirical analyses of media technological change for the mediatization of politics

Conclusions

- Mediatization key to understand the transformation of media and politics – hence democracy – during the last decades
- Mediatization not yet a theory, but rather a framework
- Mediatization as an integrative framework, linking micro-level with meso- and macro-level processes and phenomena
- Mediatization holds the promise of contributing to a broader understanding of the role of the media in the transformation of established democracies