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The Present Tense of Mediatization Studies

Abstract. This paper presents the theoretical and methodological analysis of mediatization understood as (1) the process of social transformation effected by media changes, and interrelated with other social processes, (2) and as the area of studies. Mediatization seems to be one of the most stable, capacious, and significant concepts in the last twenty years. Its influence on sociology, media and communication studies, and cultural studies, is substantial and followed by strong critique. Hence, the main goal of this paper is an up-to-date analysis of mediatization from theoretical and methodological perspectives. In three consecutive parts, I analyse the historical phases, dominant theoretical and research perspectives, and methodological perceptions of mediatization. In this inquiry I argue that: (1) historical and spatial mediatization studies need to be developed in a more complex way, (2) from dominant mediatization perspectives, the institutional approach is one of the most theoretically and methodologically elaborated, (3) mediatization is in a pre-paradigm phase in terms of scientific evolution, (4) critical mediatization studies should emerge, since mediatization analyses tend to neglect the economy as an important part of transformation processes.

Keywords: mediatization studies; mediatization perspectives; mediatization theory; methodology

Introduction

Scholars dealing with communication and media studies live in the reality of constant turns. Even a fast glimpse on a few recent issues of academic journals from the field shows extraordinary proliferation and fragmentation in this discipline. One would say that it is the specificity of such an unstructured group of disciplines like media and communication. However, what we face is the reality of conceptual shifts, which tend to capture the dynamics of social and cultural domains. How many of these "turns" have we observed in recent years? The big data turn followed by critical big data analysis, computational turn, cross-media communication, or digital humanities in general, to name just a few. On the one hand, such reality of turns helps to find new ways of understanding the dynamics in communication and media studies. On the other hand,

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each turn makes it difficult to set off, to accelerate and gain speed that guarantees an establishment of theoretical and methodological stability so characteristic of many "old" concepts.

This paper concerns one particular concept that seems to oppose these trends and, at the same time, develops as a strong theoretical and research position. Mediatization, as we know from its recent history, gains more and more interests every year. Mediatization seems to be one of the most stable, capacious, and significant concepts in the last twenty years. Its influence on sociology, media and communication studies, and cultural studies, is substantial and followed by strong critique. Hence, the main goal of this paper is an up-to-date analysis of mediatization from theoretical and methodological perspectives. Although it would be tempting to track how the mediatization is linked with broader processes of transformation and modernisation, I do not propose new theoretical arrangements in this manner. In fact, such a topic is so spacious that it requires a separate study [cf. Wojtkowski, in press]. Hence, this paper should be considered as a state-of-art analysis of mediatization studies.

My argument involves current conceptual work that links to historical writings on mediatization. Referring to the title, similarly to a usage of the present tenses in English, I will analyse how is mediatization perceived in terms of historical research. This leads to the inquiry on contemporary dominant mediatization perspectives. Finally, I will deliver a brief meta-methodological take on current operationalization of mediatization. In summary, I will sketch some possible future perspectives of mediatization studies.

The past – a brief history of mediatization

In this part, I will analyse temporal alterations of mediatization processes, but to start historical inquiry we have to assume that the process of mediatization has at least some temporal inclinations. Hence, in general, it could be understood as a process of social transformation effected by media changes.

In terms of historical development, mediatization as a process of transformation needs to be analysed also in a historical manner not limited to late modernity [cf. Couldry and Hepp 2013; Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2015; Jensen 2013; Livingstone and Lunt 2015]. In terms of historical development, mediatization is often considered to be characteristic of contemporary media times [Hjarvard 2008] or broader temporal modernization processes [Krotz 2009]. While mediatization studies have emerged in the mid-1990s, the subject literature, however, did not put strong emphasis on these historical processes. Thus, for clarity, it is worth drawing on two important understandings of historical mediatization processes.

Firstly, Johan Fornäs studies temporal forms of mediatization and describes how the process of mediatization of popular culture runs through four phases [Fornäs 2014]. The first is graphic mediatization that could be traced back to the 16th century,

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when the transition from domination of non-mediated interpersonal communication to the communication mediated with material artefacts took place. The second – from the late 15th to the 19th century – is print mediatization that "[…] affected low culture considerably more than scripture […], but still mainly by serving as a transmitter between high and low culture, after they had been polarized against each other than prior to 1600" [Fornäs 2014, p. 493]. The third is audiovisual mediatization caused by the media inventions, which is characteristic of the 19th and 20th centuries. This phase was directly connected to technological development in terms of broadcasting that enabled to reach mass audience. The final phase is digital mediatization, which is a phenomenon of the last two decades. Fornäs perceives two main effects of digitalisation in terms of mediatization: the compression of information that makes it possible to concentrate, transfer and virtually locate the data, and the convergence of production and distribution of the media [Fornäs 2014, p. 497].

Certainly, Fornäs gives a complete analysis of those four phases, which are interrelated to other concomitant social processes. Although the phases are not mutually exclusive and could overlap, such an approach gives a promising starting point for several reasons. It tries to capture the bigger picture of relations between mediatization and other processes in history. It ropes mediatization to the developments of particular media, and places them in particular temporal and spatial dimensions. Moreover, it is related to the development of culture, which was especially important in shaping historical formations of different societies.

Secondly, Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp [2017] in their recent book, *The Mediated Construction of Reality*, analyse how the construction of the social world has changed through time in terms of communicative development. They argue that history of mediatization could be perceived as four complex waves of mediatization, which are defined as

> […] a fundamental qualitative change in media environments sufficiently decisive to constitute a *distinct phase* in the ongoing process of mediatization, even when one allows for the very different forms that such media environments may take in particular local, regional and national contexts [Couldry and Hepp 2017, p. 39].

Every wave is directly connected with the media environments and their alterations. These waves are mechanization, electrification, and digitalization. Starting with the first one, Couldry and Hepp assume that the wave of mechanization enabled the media environment to be a mechanical one in terms of, for instance, developments of the printing press. But, at the same time, those environments became more diverse and complex, while different print and non-print media interrelated [Couldry and Hepp 2017, p. 43]. Linking mechanization with printing technology dates back to around 1450 in Europe (and the 8th century in China) and lasted until the 19th century. The second wave concerns electrification that was related to multiple media developments at the same time. During that wave, media became a part of broader

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technological network through access to the electricity grid and to cable broadcasting. In this manner, the authors name simultaneous transition of media content and personal communication across space, opportunities for constructing cultures in new ways across space and time as the interdependencies associated with electrification [Couldry and Hepp 2017, p. 47]. The third wave of mediatization is digitalization, and although Couldry and Hepp tend to capture it in the "last few centuries" [Couldry and Hepp 2017, p. 48], their analysis focuses entirely on communication technologies characteristic of the 20th and 21st centuries, foremost the Internet. Their detailed argument tracks back latest history of digital transformations in terms of infrastructure, connectedness, social media platforms, or mobile devices.

Couldry and Hepp, contrary to Fornäs, do not bridge a particular wave directly to other social and cultural transformations. Their study is rather an in-depth media history analysis of media transformations *per se*. Therefore, broader conclusions are done with some precaution in terms of media interrelations with the other processes.

Under such circumstances, two things still seem unclear. That is, first, how has mediatization effected or interrelated with other transformation processes across time and space? Second, how and from where to harvest the data in situation of the vague existence of historic data that could be used in temporal mediatization studies? Without filling those two gaps, historical mediatization studies will always face the risk of methodological ease and theoretical oversimplification. Yet, these problems might be solved with usage of traditional historical sociology [cf. Elias 2000; 2001; 2012; van Krieken 2005] and *longue durée* approach to historical transformation of society [cf. Braudel 1980]. Although Norbert Elias' processual sociology has been the object of interest of mediatization scholars for some time already, it was not used in the way that it was predicted to, namely, historical mediatization studies. It is relatively more often taken for granted in terms of figurations, or communicative figurations, to be specific [Couldry 2013; Hepp 2013; 2014; 2016; Hepp, Lunt and Hartmann 2014].The reluctance in the sphere of historical analyses seems to be one of the weakest points of mediatization studies in general. On the one hand, of course, it is entirely understandable in terms of the data tracking or the aversion to historical analysis as such. On the other hand, mediatization must be perceived as a historical phenomenon as well as a contemporary one. Mediatization is not limited only to digital media, since media and social developments altered the social stage with different dynamics from the very beginning of mutual interrelations.

The present – dominant perspectives on mediatization

Contemporary studies of mediatization are shaped in three dominant perspectives. Firstly, mediatization was focused on a media-centric approach connected to political communication and mutual relations of politics with institutional media as

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driving forces of the process. Mediatization of politics emerged in the mid-1990s and quickly evoked vast interest that still ferments in the field of political communication [cf. Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004; Strömbäck 2008; 2011; Strömbäck and Esser 2014a; 2014b; Wojtkowski 2012a; 2012b]. Although mediatization of politics has been well established in terms of theoretical and empirical analyses, it faces some substantial difficulties [cf. Brodzińska-Mirowska and Wojtkowski 2017, in press]. Since it is not the place for broader critique, I will briefly emphasise those obstacles. Mediatization of politics is focused mostly on the case studies that describe the relations between the media and politics. Hence, it follows a political communication guideline to decide if the media "colonise" politics or opposite. At the same time, mediatization of politics desperately omits the audience and its role in political processes. Finally, it is relatively loosely attached to other mediatization studies, for instance, to mediatization of social movements, which could bring some larger perspective for the process. Hence, I will focus on two other perspectives, which, in fact, gained vivid reception in contemporary mediatization studies.

Secondly, the media-centred perspective understands mediatization as "theoretical framework that will allow us to discuss the influences of media and communications in other social and cultural domains with researchers from other disciplines" [Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2015, p. 316]. In this manner, we could name two main theoretical approaches: institutionalist and culturalist. The first follows the sociological idea on the processes of institutionalisation (e.g. structuration) where the media and other social institutions interrelate, and make use of a media symbolic role in the social landscape. The second is the culturalist approach that defines mediatization as a process where relations of power between media and other social or cultural actors take place, on the one hand, and places mediatization within multiple cultural domains and historical developments, on the other hand [Fornäs 2014].

The institutionalist approach is one of the most expanded and operationalized in mediatisation [cf. Bolin 2014; Couldry and Hepp 2013; Jensen 2013; Lundby 2009; 2014]. It was developed in series of consecutive studies by Stig Hjarvard [2008; 2013; 2014a; 2014b], who analyses institutional consequences of media position in society. Hence, mediatization "[…] means not only that the media play a role of their own determination, but that they at once have attained the status of an independent institution and provide the means by which other social institutions and actors communicate" [Hjarvard 2008, p. 115]. In this manner, mediatization is a middle range theory that describes how the media have became institutionalized and interrelate with the other social institutions [Hjarvard 2014b, p. 204]. Institutional approach captures some general meso-level patterns of practices within social institutions. Such conceptualisation is derived directly from Anthony Giddens' [1984] structuration theory that, in fact, did not pay much attention to the media. So, at the same time, the institutional approach on mediatization is a form of "[…] »mediatizing sociology« by adding and specifying the role of media within a sociological theory of

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high modernity" [Hjarvard 2014b, p. 203]. It spotlights that media catalyse changes within culture and society as other social institutions become dependent on them.

As a driving force of these changes Hjarvard perceives logics defined as "the particular rules and resources that govern a particular domain" [Hjarvard 2014b, p. 204]. Such institutional logics are some sort of a transmitter, which causes institutional changes through symbolic power. Summarising Hjarvard's idea, we might assume that every social institution has (or at least may have) its internal logic, influenced by logics of other institutions. In sum, an institutionalist perspective on mediatization is composed of four main assumptions. First, mediatization describes long-term processes of social transformation effected by media changes. Second, it is placed at the institutional level of society. Third, institutionalised logics are driving force of transformations. Fourth, mediatization is a "reciprocal process between media and other social domains or fields" [Hjarvard 2014b, p. 202] and does not describe mutual "colonization" of social fields.

The culturalist approach on mediatization deals with the notions of media power and media hegemony as a key for understanding the role of media in society. However, it is not as homogeneously elaborated as an institutional one. It circles around critical studies, but does not explicitly use their framework. Hence, a culturalist perspective aims into analyses of media power [Asp 2014; Brodzińska-Mirowska and Wojtkowski 2017, in press], hegemony [Block 2013], popular culture [Fornäs 2014], subcultures [Encheva, Driessens and Verstraeten 2013] or cultural practices [Kaun and Fast 2013]. In terms of media powers and hegemony, the culturalist perspective draws on Couldry's idea that media power means that "[…] the concentration in media institutions of the symbolic power of »constructing reality« (both factual representations and credible fictions) – is a social process, which we need to understand in all its local complexity" [Couldry 2001, p. 4]. At the same time, they use Antonio Gramsci's approach on hegemony and Raymond Williams' materialistic take on culture and media [cf. Asp 2014; Block 2013; Fornäs 2014]. The combination of those concepts applies to the notion that media power "is not a binary relation of domination between »large« and »small« »actors«, with »large actors« (the media) having the automatic ability to dominate »small actors« (audience members) simply because of their »size«" [Couldry 2001, p. 17]. It is rather a symbolic power concentrated in media institutions that enables the construction of social reality [Couldry 2001, p. 4]. Moreover, as Kent Asp coins, "[…] when compared to other actors and institutions, the independent impact power of the media has increased regarding both audience and content" [Asp 2014, p. 361]. It corresponds with a common call to reframe studies on mediatization of politics in a culturalist manner [cf. Asp 2014; Brodzińska-Mirowska and Wojtkowski 2017, in press]. To do so we have to, however, (1) perceive mediatization of politics as if the audience matters [cf. Witschge 2014], (2) put stronger critical emphasis on media and the audience interactions in terms of media powers, (3) analyse economic and technological dimensions of powers. All those elements are crucial to capture the role of mediatization in late capitalism.

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Thirdly, the socio-constructivist concept of mediatization gained strong interest in the last years. It draws on social constructivism in a Luhmannian style [Knoblauch 2013], Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger's manner [Couldry and Hepp 2017], and Elias' processual sociology [cf. Couldry 2013; Hepp 2014; Livingstone and Lunt 2013]. From those streams, one has attracted bigger attention, that is, the one concerning Elias' processual sociology [Elias 2000]. Although it is loosely connected to Elias' rigid ideas of social transformation, it reframes the notion of figurations and repackages it as "communicative figurations" [Couldry 2013; Hepp 2013; 2014; 2016]. According to Hepp, communicative figurations are "patterns of processes of communicative interweaving that exist across various media and have a »thematic framing« that orients communicative action" [Hepp 2013, p. 10]. A single communication network builds a "specific communicative figuration", which "involves interwoven communicative action articulated in mediatized interaction by the use of media" [Hepp 2013, p. 10]. Moreover, communicative figurations consist of four instances [Hepp 2013, p. 11; Hepp 2014, pp. 89–90]: specific constellation of actors; thematic framing; forms of communication; media ensemble of each communicative figuration. However, they grasp only the very fundamental level of communicative figurations, and to superstructure them Hepp [2014] introduces four construction capacities of communicative figurations: (1) belongings that circulate around inclusion, communitization and socialization processes of media communication, (2) political, legal, social, and cultural rules, (3) segmentations that are related to media and communication studies of the inequalities, (4) the power that serves to depict processes of transformation related to "empowerment" and "disempowerment". Hepp [2014, p. 94] establishes three basic patterns of communicative figuration transformation: "break" as total change of existing communicative figuration; "new formation" when communicative forms, media ensembles and constellation of actors change not continuously; "variation" when communicative figuration is preserved with different media.

To sum up, in fact, all those perspectives require a solid and expanded methodological analysis that could capture their complexity and social relevance. Moreover, they need ongoing interpretation and, what is crucial, translation into research programmes that would proof whether the theory works. In fact, these are fundamental tasks of scientific development in general. Hence, here arises a question how mediatization will emerge in the following years. Whether it will deepen studies based on the perspectives that dominate so far, or it will flood on new domains.

The future – from concept to paradigm?

As we see so far, the ongoing discussion on mediatization runs on three levels. The first follows the actual mediatization process from historical and contemporary perspectives. The second concerns the development of different theoretical perspec-

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tives. The third is consolidated on meta-theoretical studies that hook the framework of sociology as science. For clarity, it is worth ending with this level, since it allows for elaborating some stabile methodological position. The aim of this part is to answer the question whether mediatization forms a concept, a coherent theory, a paradigm, or the area of studies. The best way to perform this intellectual exercise is to use two contradictory approaches to methodological investigations, which dominated social theory for many years, that is, Kuhnian and Blumerian one. To do so, I will briefly analyse mediatization literature that angles this issue directly.

Starting with Klaus Bruhn Jensen's essay [2013] that draws on Herbert Blumer's approach, we notice inclination to split mediatisation perspectives into two groups. One of them contains definitive conceptualisations, into which Jensen includes mediatization as institutionalisation and as hegemony. The second one comprises sensitizing conceptualisations, namely, mediatization as social structuration, technological momentum, and embedded communication. Jensen criticises definitive approaches for that they "pursued definitive strategies, and that these strategies do not warrant the kind of epochal and critical theories being claimed" [Jensen 2013, p. 218]. He, moreover, adds that "the mediatization literature has produced an additional range of less demanding, but still internally disparate conceptions of mediatization with variable interpretive, explanatory, and critical ambitions" [Jensen 2013, p. 218]. Instead, Jensen persuades to understand mediatization as "a broad and inclusive concept" and argues "that a plurality of sensitizing strategies holds the greatest promise" [Jensen 2013, p. 218] to the idea of mediatization. In this context, mediatization follows the pattern of a concept, whether it is a definitive or sensitizing one. It is worth noticing that Jensen divides mediatization against its actual theoretical development. What we need, however, is to read his contribution as an example of specific momentum (before 2013), when mediatisation gained a vivid interest not only in terms of politics, but of sociology, cultural studies, and media and communication as well.

Some broader perspective is delivered by Couldry [2013], who suggests that mediatization should be connected with social theory in general. He proposes that mediatization should "rethink itself" and contribute to social theory, but with stronger emphasis on "the requirements that social theory must meet to justify its formulations as plausible starting-points for analysing social action and social space" [Couldry 2013, p. 3]. Moreover, Couldry [2013, p. 6] notices that mediatization as "a meta-category of social description" serves as a starting point in establishing the link with social theory, and "it follows that mediatization research, conceived this way, should be interested in the new types of non-linear causality that follow when media become an irreducible aspect of all social processes and their interrelations" [Couldry 2013, p. 6]. Certainly, Couldry establishes the link between mediatization and social theory in general, with push on field theory in specific, but in terms of meta-category. This idea might seem too blurry, since the links between possible mediatization theory and research are not explicitly described.

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The more exact way of perceiving mediatization was coined by Couldry and Hepp [2013] in the opening paper of *Communication Theory* special issue on conceptualizing mediatization. The very notion of mediatization is perceived by them not as a possible theory, but rather, as "a more general approach within media and communications research" [Couldry and Hepp 2013, p. 197]. Hence, they lean towards mediatization as a concept, but with no further analysis in a Blumerian manner: "[…] *mediatization is a concept used to analyze critically the interrelation between changes in media and communications on the one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other*" [Couldry and Hepp 2013, p. 197, italics in original], and place mediatization in dialectics between a middle-range theory and meta-theory.

Here, a recent critical discussion between David Deacon and James Stanyer [2014; 2015], on the one hand, and Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby [2015], on the other hand, is worth considering in terms of meta-theoretical debate. Deacon and Stanyer, following Giovanni Sartori [1970], consequently perceive mediatization as a concept and give it a critical reception:

> While some might argue that mediatization is sensitizing concept, in our opinion such concepts are more blinding than guiding. The imprecise application of the term mediatization means it resembles what Sartori calls a 'universal concept' of no difference, a container in which different things can be placed [Deacon and Stanyer 2014, p. 1039].

Drawing on the distinction between universal and pseudo-universal concepts [Sartori 1970], Deacon and Stanyer argue that mediatisation exemplifies the latter one, and needs a major rework to match the universal one: "Unless we can differentiate between the changes in communicative practice involving the media that are instances of mediatization and those that are not then it will remain a pseudo-universal and researchers will discover the process everywhere" [Deacon and Stanyer 2014, p. 1041].

This rant drew attention of Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby [2015], who in response emphasised the methodological mistakes (superficial empirical study of 93 articles with word "mediatization" from 14 media and communication journals), terminological oversimplifications (i.e. mistaking media-centric with media-centred), and narrowing the research scope of mediatization (i.e. missing its historical frame) of Deacon and Stanyer's work. In those terms, Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby not only define and sketch research scopes of mediatization, but also consider it as "a theoretical framework that will allow us to discuss the influences of media and communications in other social and cultural domains with researchers from other disciplines" [Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby 2015, p. 316].

Indeed, two different meta-theoretical approaches on mediatization emerge: mediatization as a concept or a theory. In such a manner, Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt [2015] enter the dialogue with a statement that:

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> In our 2014 critical afterthought we argued that mediatization is best understood, at least in its present formulation, as a sensitizing concept that guides empirical research and the interpretation of findings rather than as either (ambitiously) a new paradigm or (modestly) a middle-range theory in competition with others. Now, however, we sense the promise of mediatization as a research programme [Livingstone and Lunt 2015, p. 8].

This third understanding is less rigorous and does not require strong theoretical uniformity. What Livingstone and Lunt do, in fact, is opening the mediatisation research framework for different theories and empirical approaches at the same time.

So far, we have three main takes on mediatization: as a concept, as a theory, and as a research framework. Presented papers followed, at best, a Blumerian method, derived directly from qualitative ethnographic studies. It is worth, however, tracking mediatization from a Kuhnian perspective in terms of possible paradigm creation as well.

Adapting Thomas Kuhn's idea of science revolutions [1996], we would probably agree that mediatization is in a regular phase of science development. To see how it matches a broader idea of the theory, we have to put it into disciplinary matrix, which enables to see if mediatization is in the pre-paradigm or in the paradigm period already. The pre-paradigm period is characterised by lack of consensus, rivalry of different schools, contradictory methodological approaches, and metatheoretical uniformity. It, accordingly, disables the scientific progress, unless one of the schools reaches a turning point. The matrix has to be composed of, but not limited to, three parts: symbolic generalisations, models, exemplars, and paradigms [Kuhn 1996]. If the paradigm has to be formulated, a group of scholars or schools, has to share, to some extent, formal parts of a theory, i.e. definitions, compose them into meta-level beliefs, be able to forecast and validate the theory, its internal and external coherence, or compatibility with other approaches, and, finally, translate it to research programme equipped with specific methodological tools.

Yet, a very complex study on mediatization schools, theoretical approaches, published books and articles, research programmes, and conferences is still required to fill missing brackets in disciplinary matrix. Do we agree, however, on one and coherent standpoint on mediatisation and exclude any orthodoxy? The answer would be "no". Mediatization is a stabile theoretical "movement", which is still in pre-paradigm transition, which is why we have been recently observing its increased dynamic, ongoing transformation, and growing criticism. It is not limited only to the dominant approaches, and still evolves in terms of theory and research programmes. However, three dominant perspectives of mediatization studies indicate coherence, which gives a chance for paradigmatic shift in the future, despite the fact that, for example, institutional and culturalist perspectives were shaped in a different theoretical tradition [cf. Ekström et al. 2016]. Therefore, it seems fair to stop nuancing methodological approaches on mediatization at this point, and assume it is relatively reasonable to perceive it as a field of studies that constantly develops theoretical and research consistency.

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Conclusions

Concluding remarks concern some underdeveloped and future directions of mediatization studies. Hence, I will concentrate on predictions in terms of temporal, spatial and theoretical possibilities for mediatization. Although it is important to seek how different perspectives of mediatization are translated into particular fields, i.e. mediatization of culture, religion, sport, social movements, family etc., my aim was to focus entirely on theoretical and methodological standpoints.

Firstly, media-centred perspective seems to be crucial for the further formation of mediatization as a coherent theoretical framework. So far, the institutionalist approach is best developed in the field and precisely illustrates the meso-level of society. Moreover, culturalist attitude grasps power relations between media and other social domains in terms of, for instance, social practices. However, this perspective misses one important puzzle, that is, macro-level where mediatization enters the relations with other metaprocesses, i.e. marketization, acculturation or globalization. Bridging those two approaches together despite apparent ontological differences might be the definitive solution. It would affect not only the research scope that would bind macro-, meso-, and micro-levels, but also the theoretical rearrangements in terms of finding the common methodological apparatus.

Secondly, if we assume that mediatization varies through time and space, spatial and longitudinal aspects of this process should be emphasised as well. I refer to multiple cultures of mediatization that are characteristic for different national or regional patterns and were shaped through time in constant relation with other processes, i.e. political culture, formation of civic society, historical market developments or the audience structuration.

Finally, critical mediatization studies should emerge, since mediatization analyses tend to neglect the economy as an important part of the transformation. Mediatization studies require the concept that starts with culture as its focal point, strongly draws on critical theory of capitalism and media, and binds together cultural studies and political economy. Such an approach involves (1) critical ontological questions about the nature of our interactions with media (i.e. social media platforms), (2) and a focus on powers in materialist terms, with stronger emphasis on symbolic media power, its possible shifts and interruptions.

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