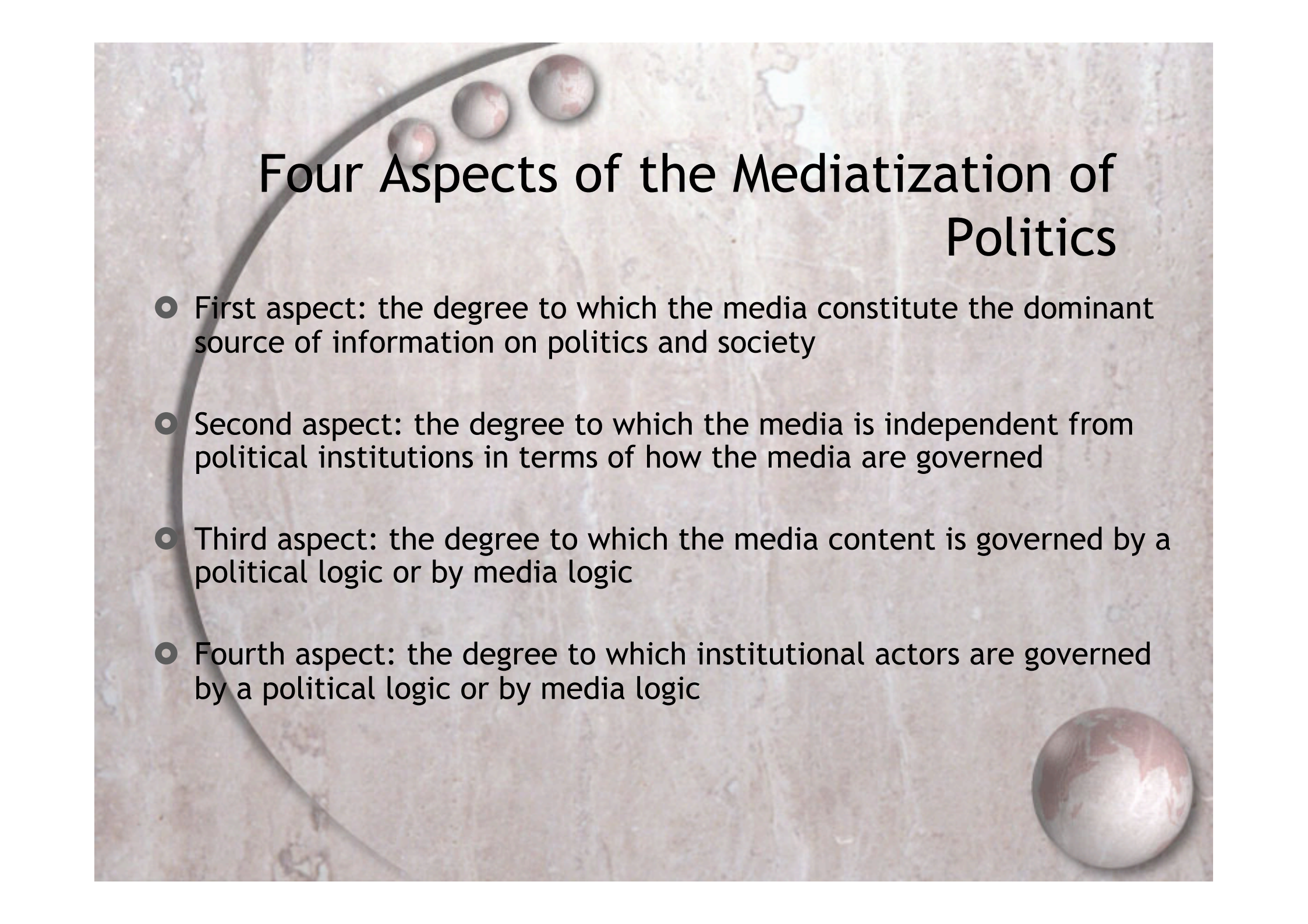


The background is a light beige, textured surface. A large, dark grey circle is positioned on the left side, partially overlapping the text. In the upper left quadrant, there are three small, semi-transparent globe icons arranged in a slight arc. In the bottom right corner, there is a larger, semi-transparent globe icon.

Mediatization of Politics in Western Democracies

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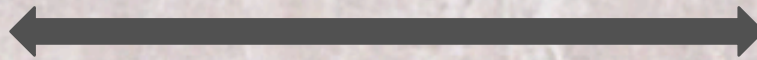


Four Aspects of the Mediatization of Politics

- First aspect: the degree to which the media constitute the dominant source of information on politics and society
- Second aspect: the degree to which the media is independent from political institutions in terms of how the media are governed
- Third aspect: the degree to which the media content is governed by a political logic or by media logic
- Fourth aspect: the degree to which institutional actors are governed by a political logic or by media logic

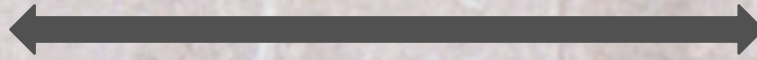
Four Aspects of the Mediatization of Politics

Most important source of information: Experiences or interpersonal communication



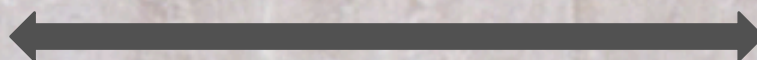
Most important source of information: The media

Media mainly dependent on political institutions



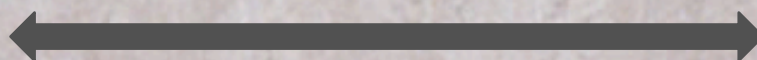
Media mainly independent on political institutions

Media content mainly governed by political logic




Media content mainly governed by media logic

Political actors mainly governed by political logic



Political actors mainly governed by media logic





The First Phase of Mediatization

- The first phase is reached whenever the media constitute the most important source of information and channel of political communication
- The first phase of mediatization thus corresponds to the concept of mediated politics
- It is a prerequisite for higher levels mediatization



The background features a large, dark, semi-circular arc on the left side. Several small, realistic-looking globes of the Earth are scattered across the top and right areas. The overall background has a light, textured, parchment-like appearance.

The Second Phase of Mediatization

- The media continue to constitute the dominant source of information and channel of communication
- But, the media have become largely independent of political or governmental bodies, and
- The media have begun to be governed according to the media logic rather than according to a political logic
- The media gain independent influence over their publics
- This creates incentives for political actors to increase their efforts at news management



The Third Phase of Mediatization

- The media's independence has increased further; now they hold the upper hand in the "negotiation of newsworthiness"
- Political institutions and actors adapt to the media logic and their standards of newsworthiness; the active mechanism is adaptation
- The independence of the media from politics has increased, while the independence of politics from the media has decreased
- The distinction between "the media world" and "the real world" begins to lose its significance



The Fourth Phase of Mediatization

- The media have become as independent as institutions can be from a social systems perspective
- The insight that the mediated reality matters more than any kind of actual reality has become widespread, leading political actors to constantly think about the media
- Political actors not only adapt to the media logic and the standards of newsworthiness - they adopt and let the media logic and standards of newsworthiness become a built-in part of politics and governing
- The media colonize politics, with the latter perhaps not even recognizing the distinction between a political and a media logic



The Fourth Phase of Mediatization

- The intensity of media experiences is much stronger than in earlier phases
- Politics and society - from the micro to the macro level - are permeated with the media
- The mediated and mediatized realities are what matters
- The significance of the mediated realities is thus inversely correlated to the importance of the distinction between the mediated versus the actual reality




Conclusions

- The mediatization of politics is a dynamic process in which the media successively become more independent from political bodies whereas the latter become less independent from the media
- From a social systems perspective, the media logic becomes more important, to the extent that it becomes naturalized and all parts of society adopt the media logic
- In this process, the important question shifts from being concerned with the independence of the media from politics and society to being concerned with the independence of politics and society from the media and the interdependence between media and politics



Conclusions

- Over time, politics has become increasingly mediatized in Western democracies
 - However, it is still an open question how mediatized politics has become, i.e., which phase different countries has reached in this process
 - The process must not be linear
 - Some parts of politics and society more vulnerable to the mediatization than other parts
 - There are differences across institutions, actors, countries and - to some extent, across circumstances
- 

Conclusions

- When the media become increasingly independent from politics, they also become more dependent upon a market logic
- This might trigger a reaction
- The degree of mediatization of politics is not only an effect of the media's behavior,
- If the mediatization of politics is considered problematic, there might be solutions
- Such solutions must not only be directed towards changing the media, but rather changing the circumstances under which the media operate