



# A conceptual and theoretical framework for deep mediatisation

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## Abstract

Among the processes related to network communication, the study presents the concept of deep mediatisation resulting from digitisation. In the theories related to traditional mass communication (printed press, radio, television), the nature of the process of mediation has been problematic since the 1980s, and some researchers have focused on researching the process of mediatisation instead of the media phenomenon. In this study, I explore the research traditions of mediatisation in terms of both media sociology and cultural theories. While the concept of mediatisation is used to describe traditional mass communication technologies and processes that operate in a classical, analogue way, deep mediatisation is the key word for network communication on a digital infrastructure. After highlighting the differences between traditional mediatisation and deep mediatisation, I present the theory of Couldry and Hepp, which underpins a new kind of social construction theory based on deep mediatisation in the social world.

## Keywords

datafication, deep mediatisation, digitalisation, mediatisation, social construction.

## 1 Research traditions of mediatisation

The history of media research can look back about a hundred years: it was brought to life by the “new” media of the 1920s: the mass communication possibilities offered by radio and cinema. Up until the 1950s and 1960s, the research approach was dominated by the effect paradigm, which was replaced by the reception theory. In the first case, the effect on consumers was studied by focusing on media content, be it news, movies, radio ads or even soap operas. This approach assumed that media consumers were mostly a homogeneous, passive mass (Andok, 2015b). The emergence and dominance of reception theory from the 1960s coincided with the spread of television, and not by chance: the construction and creation of meaning by the recipient in relation to media content was problematised in this approach. Scholars committed to critical cultural studies, primarily British and American ones, have identified the demographic, social and situational factors that play a role in the meaning-making practices of recipients in relation to media content (Hall, 2007; Ang, 1995; Császi, 2008).

Since the 1990s, there has been a perceivable desire among researchers to revisit questions on the functioning of the media in order to draw attention to the consequences of their use.

They did not define their ideas as effect studies, but they did declare that the presence of the media would have “consequences” in everyday life (Silverstone, 2008; Silverstone, 2010). At the same time, one can see a shift in the focus of analysis and approach in the 1990s, from a static, systemic concept of the media to an analysis of the process of mediatisation. This also means a shift in the concept of the medium, from the position of factum to the position of agent. As British media researcher Roger Silverstone, a prominent figure in the mediatisation approach, put it: “We should think of the media as a process of mediation. Mediation means the movement of meaning from one text to another, from one event to another. The circulation of meaning goes beyond Katz and Lazarsfeld’s two-step flow of communication theory. Namely, mediated meanings circulate in a much wider range, in an infinite intertextuality.” (Silverstone, 2008, 28).

Silverstone’s theory, however, does not aim to describe a different conception of meaning-making from that of reception theory, but to show how the meanings offered by the media and their creation become everyday, mediatised, shared practices and experiences. It is exactly this shared experience that allows us to view the media as a permanent source of existence in community: “The essence of a community lies in the fact that its members interpret things in general, or certain specific and significant things in a similar way, or at least they believe so, and also believe that this interpretation is different from interpretations provided by others. The reality of a community, in people’s perception, is thus the result of attachment and commitment to a common set of symbols.” (Silverstone, 2008, 117).

All in all, the media or the process of mediatisation plays an important role in defining the ways of everyday being and acting (Silverstone, 2010, 125). Although Silverstone also stresses that mediatisation is a social and a technological process at the same time, his theory focuses on the former. The technological aspect of mediatisation is more clearly developed in Jay David Bolter’s and Richard Grusin’s remediation theory, inextricably linked to socio-cultural projection, without one aspect being subordinated to the other (Bolter & Grusin, 2011). The American authors argue that a communication technology tool is not a medium in itself – it is the social and cultural practices and functions associated with it that turn it to one: “a medium is what remediates. It takes possession of the techniques and forms of other media, and their social significance, and attempts to compete with them or transform them in the name of the real. The medium in our culture can never function in isolation, because it is in constant contact with other media through respect and rivalry (Bolter & Grusin, 2011, 2). At the same time, in addition to the symbolic, meaning-building function of the media, we cannot forget their material, objective character, since remediation often means social practices that are associated with the (media) means themselves.

Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp, who have developed a theory of deep mediatisation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017), take four key points from the approaches outlined above and incorporate them into their own concept:

- an emphasis on media as a process, which is essential for understanding the digital software-based, fast-changing, adaptive nature of digital media (Couldry, 2004; Couldry, 2012; Hepp, 2019);
- the extreme embeddedness of the media in everyday life, both in their content-experiential and in their use-object dimensions (Couldry, 2004; Couldry, 2012; Hepp, 2019);
- stressing that the media do not operate in isolation, that it is not the operations and changes of a single medium that are significant, but the interdependence and interconnectedness of the media (Hepp, 2019, 84);
- the objective and material aspects of media tools are as important as their content or the way they are used; the emphasis on the material side is also important in the case of social construction practices.

In the scientific characterization of mediatisation, it is important to note that, since it creates links between different geographical areas, it must be assumed to be trans-local and, in certain cases, transcultural.

## 2 The social constructionist research tradition

To better understand the theoretical roots of deep mediatisation, Couldry and Hepp contextualise their conceptualization in terms of media sociology. They identify the presence of two media research trends in the 2000s, institutional and social constructivist approaches. In the institutional tradition, the media is only one of the social institutions, but it has the capacity to impose its “media logic” on other social institutions. In other words, it does not subjugate other institutions, it does not completely penetrate their functioning; it “merely” forces or encourages them to adopt its own logic in order to be effective and efficient in the sphere of social communication and publicity.

Media logic, in their view, refers to the fact that the forms, genres, organizational rules and technology of the media have an impact on other segments of society (Hepp, 2019, 60–61). In other words, if these social institutions wish to gain social attention through their media presence, they can do so more effectively by adopting the formal elements of media genres and adapting to the requirements of production and technology. For example, to be included in news programmes, they must take into account the logic of news value; the length of the speech and the content elements should be adapted to the formal criteria of the media genre, while the timing of a press conference should follow the daily routine of content creators. It can be seen, therefore, that this approach is rooted in the tradition of mass communication and journalism studies, and, in Hepp’s view, originally reflects the thinking of David Altheide and Robert Snow, as well as Stig Hjalvard (Hepp, 2021, 207). The theory of deep mediatisation does not draw on this school of thought, but on the social constructivist approach, although it is repeatedly mentioned that the two schools of thought are not sharply separated (Hepp, 2019, 9).

The social constructivist tradition highlights the role of the media in creating our social reality, our culturally and meaningfully saturated reality. Two researchers who followed in the footsteps of phenomenological sociology, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, published their epochal work, *The Social Construction of Reality*, in 1966 (Berger & Luckmann, 1998). Their view is that reality is a social product and that the sociology of knowledge studies the process in which this reality is produced. They repeatedly stress their phenomenological starting-point, that the social world is not reducible to material foundations: “no existing social order can be derived from biological endowments; social order itself necessarily follows from the biological constitution of man” (Berger & Luckmann, 1998, 80). Although they acknowledge the presence of ideas and thoughts in societies, they consider them to be only a minor part of social knowledge, because what an ordinary person *knows* about reality is not theoretical but *everyday, commonplace knowledge*. And the media have been the dominant source of this commonplace knowledge since the second half of the 20th century.

The everyday world in and through which social reality is constructed is ordered in space and time. Intersubjectivity is also an important element of constructivist theories. Zoltán Hidas describes the phenomenon from the sociological perspective in this way: “The human world is made human by its meaningfulness, i.e. by its interpreted being, and it is made social by its being interpreted together with others.” (Hidas, 2018, 12). The concept of institutionalization plays an important role in the theory of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, and they also describe its process. Any action that is repeated many times is hardened into a model that can be later repro-

duced automatically. We save energy by not having to think through the situation step by step on every single occasion. Institutions are created when actions are typified by actors interacting. (In a purchase situation, the actions of the seller and the buyer are typified. In everyday life, this action becomes also habitualised.) This institutional world is no longer experienced as subjectively created but as an objective world - the fact that we “experience” these institutions as objective reality constitutes a guarantee that we can pass it on to the next generation.

The Berger-Luckmann volume was undoubtedly the most important base for Couldry and Hepp in the development of deep mediatisation, so much so that they even referred to it in the title of their book: *The mediatized construction of reality* (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 6). By incorporating mediatisation, they emphasise that the media are these days an inescapable element in the construction and maintenance of social reality. This requires an examination of how people use media in everyday life for the most mundane actions, from waking up through counting steps to predicting the weather. From this perspective, the influence of the media has both an institutionalization and a materialization side (Hepp, 2019, 8). Institutionalization means that certain communication patterns become stable; people start to communicate according to the technological capabilities offered by that medium and expect others to do the same. This was the case, for example, with the spread of emojis in the early days of network communication (Wallace, 2015, 32), and Messenger is cited as an example of materialization, which accustomed people to a special form of dialogue.

Through observing these new practices, we can witness that medium-specific forms would emerge in the communicative shaping of the social world. To sum up, one can say that most of our social practices today are medium-bound, from family photo albums through program design to document-sharing. Earlier, these were linked to non-mediatised forms of interpersonal or group communication, whereas today they exist on digital media platforms. We can however even mention school administration, which now replicates the institutional structure in a digital system. This is also to point out that we are witnessing a process of (digital) re-creation in new, media-specific social constructivist practices.

Couldry and Hepp adopt a materialist phenomenological position, which they parallel with Raymond Williams’ cultural materialism (Hepp, 2019, 9). According to this view, media and communication research should explore both the material and the symbolic levels of a phenomenon. In other words, it is not only the context materialised in the data that is important, but also the way in which meaning is attributed to it by its users. An example of it from the economy is that the data series for financial products do not mean anything in themselves; they also require people’s practices of meaning-creation and meaning-attribution. It is also important to note that, in a period of deep mediatisation, social practices that were not previously associated with media have also become mediatised.

In the period of traditional mass media, in the 1980s and 1990s, we distinguished between social actions and practices that were specifically related to the media world, for example reading newspapers and watching television, and practices that were not in any way related to the media world, such as going on a trip, cooking or playing sports. Nowadays, these also have a media connection through various apps (performance tracking, calorie counting, educational videos). In addition, any social action that requires coordination is (also) medium-linked, and organised through network communication interfaces. In other words, the boundary is blurred between physical and mediated communicative action in areas such as home, communities, work, education, health, economy, public administration, entertainment etc. This is why Couldry and Hepp believe that a renewed practice theory is needed, with sociological foundations reaching back to Anthony Giddens, and in which the process character is highlighted.

In the social constructivist tradition, the technological medium is not an isolated institution (system) within society; it is rather part of the others, integrated into them. Therefore, the medium becomes a powerful agent of the construction of social reality, a shaper of communicative and social practices, and at the same time it institutionalises and objectifies these social practices. The authors incorporate four important elements from social constructivist theory, rooted in phenomenology, into their theory of deep mediatisation:

- the reality of the social world and of everyday life is ordered in space and time (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 81–122), but a third element is added: the concept of data and orderliness according to the data;
- the primacy of everyday knowledge over academic knowledge (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 19);
- intersubjectivity (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 18);
- the process of institutionalization, and more specifically the involvement of the media in the process of institutionalization (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 21–24).

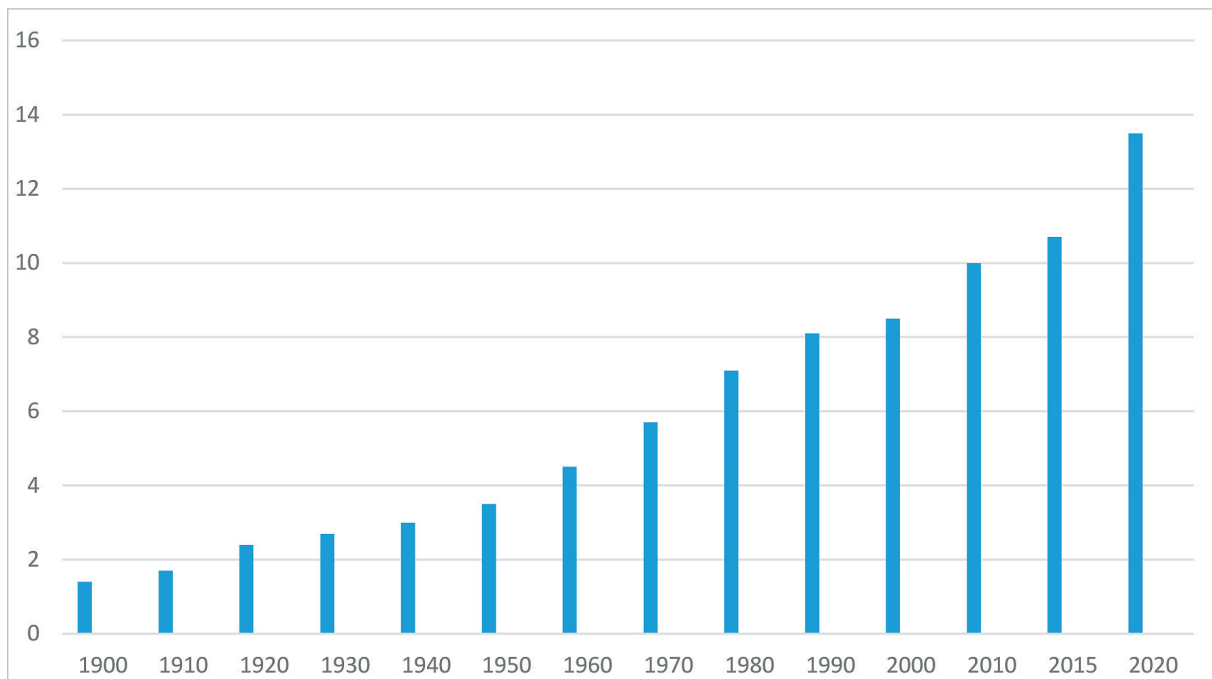
In their view, mediatisation (rather than technological determinism or critical technology studies) is the concept within which the relationship between the change in the media and communication and the change in society and culture becomes critically analysable. This phenomenon has qualitative and also quantitative dimensions. The qualitative dimension refers to the role of certain media in socio-cultural changes and explores this both in its theoretical aspects and in the course of empirical research. The quantitative dimension refers to the spatial, temporal and social expansion of mediatised communication. Today, in a world of networked communication, social media, we use digital media for work, learning, playing, shopping and keeping in touch with our family, friends and colleagues.

The COVID-19 epidemic has further reinforced this trend. Previously, media consumption was not available every day, only for a few days a week for a few hours, whereas today it is available 24 hours a day. To achieve deep mediatisation also required people to spend more and more time in front of screens in their everyday lives. This screen time includes not only content consumption, but also time for socialising, working, learning, doing business or shopping. In other words, the tools of media are used for more than one thing and for much longer periods of time each day. In the last 120 years, the time spent consuming media content has seen a tenfold increase. While in 1900, the adult population spent around 1.4 hours a day reading the newspaper; screen time reached 13 and a half hours during the 2020 coronavirus quarantine. The data concerns primarily US adults, but illustrates well the international trend.<sup>1</sup> In 1900 it was 1.4 hours, in 1910 1.7 hours, in 1920 2.4 hours, in 1930 2.7 hours, in 1940 3 hours, in 1950 3.5 hours, in 1960 4.5 hours, in 1970 5.7 hours, in 1980 7.1 hours, in 1990 8.1 hours, in 2000 8.5 hours, in 2010 10 hours, in 2015 10.7 hours; and in 2020, during the quarantine, 13.5 hours were spent in front of screens (see Figure 1). Add to this the change in the frequency of consumption. While at the beginning of the 20th century people read a newspaper once a day, i.e. every 24 hours, in 2020 the number of times people look at their smartphones and check their screen is in a chain, on average, they look at a screen or display every three minutes (Zalani, 2022).

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<sup>1</sup> Sources of the data used: The Brand Builder Marketing (2012); Eyesafe Inc. (2020).

*Figure 1: Time allocated for media content consumption and media use, measured in hours per day*



The quantitative dimension in spatial terms refers to the phenomenon that whereas media used to be available in a fixed location (predominantly in the home), today, with the presence of mobile internet they are available from virtually anywhere. And the social practices associated with it are widely observable, both in social spaces and in private spaces.

Theories of mediatisation and social construction are also linked to James Carey’s approach to communication, i.e. to the ritual model. According to him, media and communication technology are also culturally embedded, as the human mind has created technological tools to solve various problems and to assist human work. Of course, technology leaves its imprint on socio-cultural organizations, but far from being in a deterministic way or following a causal connection. According to Carey, modern communication has radically changed perception, awareness, interest, and the way we perceive life and the everyday existence of social relations. Deep mediatisation will also influence these areas. One of the tenets of Carey’s work is consistent with the ideas of deep mediatisation: the media of communication are not means in terms of will or ends, rather forms belonging to human life, which reproduce our thoughts, actions and social relations (Carey, 2008, 24).

In sum, according to Carey’s theory, the study of communication equals the study of genuine social processes that create, give meaning to and make available for social use the symbolic cultural forms that are important to the community. This idea is very close to the idea of mediatised social constructions. The social world, in Hepps’ conception, is an intersubjective sphere of human (mediated) experience and social relations, which people not only “encounter” but also participate in maintaining and shaping it through their ongoing interactions. Although the world of everyday life is intersubjectively a social world, this does not mean that it is also homogeneous (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 19–20).

### 3 The difference between mediatisation and deep mediatisation

The nature of mediatisation has changed fundamentally over the last decade and a half or so, not because of the emergence of a new medium but because of the transformation of the overall media environment. The change in the media environment may be characterised by five trends; these being: (1) differentiation; despite media convergence, we are confronted with an increasing number of media; (2) interconnectedness; (3) ubiquity; (4) innovation and (5) datafication (Hepp, 2019, 41–51). When the British media researcher and his German co-author reviewed the history of technologically mediated communication, they identified four major waves of mediatisation:<sup>2</sup> mechanization, followed by the change brought about by electricity, digitization and finally, datafication (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 34–57; Hepp, 2019, 5–6).<sup>3</sup>

Of these, mechanization appears in the practice of creating and sharing media content, with the first example being printing books, from 1450. However, the process did not stop there, of course; all the phases of printing presses and telecommunications can be mentioned: the spark-gap transmitter as well as the typewriter. The advent of electronic media gave rise to the second wave of mediatisation, including the spread of radio and television. Thanks to electronics, broadcast content became instantaneous in the media sense, i.e. the time of content distribution and reception coincided. Digitization is the third wave of mediatisation, in which classical media have been transformed in such a way that they no longer resemble the previous devices in terms of their appearance, but have retained their autonomy in terms of content and their image, even if adapted to the digital environment. Digitization and the emergence of datafication, a process of interconnectedness and networking, have given rise to the fourth wave, which also resulted in the emergence of deep mediatisation. Datafication is the conversion of expressions, places and social interactions into real-time and online measurable data, not only to describe social behaviour and its context, but also to anticipate it. In effect, it provides a new way of accessing and understanding human behaviour. This not only means monitoring behaviour, but also enabling planning on this basis (Mayer-Schönberg & Cukier, 2013, 79; van Dijck et al., 2018, 198). Datafication is an automated process, which can be done for purposes going beyond the actual purposes, manifest or latent, of social actors. This challenges classical phenomenology because it only considers people using these means for their own purposes. Along this, the results of the process of datafication will generate certain elements of our social knowledge, knowledge about ourselves, about our communities. Couldry compares this to the science of statistics that emerged at the end of the 19th century, because in that case, too, a new source of knowledge of our communities was added. Nevertheless, the authors consider data as a kind of black box, a tool whose mechanism we do not need to know in order to use it. We have many of these tools, indeed most of them are like this: cars, home lighting, etc., but devices using datafication collect data about their users in a different manner.

The decisive element in the process described above is the emergence of digitization, which has also resulted in the broadening of the media concept. Digital media have not only changed technologically mediated communication, but also many other segments of social reality. We

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<sup>2</sup> Couldry and Hepp do not follow the theory of technological determinism, but their definition of eras is identical to McLuhan's division on two points: they separate the era of the printed press (mechanization) and the era of electronics.

<sup>3</sup> These waves are also highlighted in the lectures presenting the volume, see The Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society (2017, 9:22).

can approach this phenomenon in such a way that media are no longer just a medium for communication, but also for social action. The idea of the medium as a vehicle of action makes the procedural character of the media even more obvious (Pólya, 2011; Andok, 2015a). In the everyday use of digital media, use patterns are automatically recorded and stored in data, commonly called digital footprints: the automated nature of the data collection, storage and use process cannot be overemphasised.

Deep mediatisation is a new stage in the process of connecting every aspect of our world to digital media and the infrastructures that power them. As a researcher, it is worth focusing not only on how everyday social practices have been transformed, but also on the role of the big technology companies, such as the big five, i.e. Alphabet, Amazon, Apple, Meta and Microsoft. Couldry and Hepp distinguish three types of actors involved in deep mediatisation: individual, collective (communities, social movements) and organizational ones. The latter include large technology firms, but also public or supranational agencies (Hepp, 2019, 10). Deep mediatisation is not only a phenomenon produced by large companies: ordinary people also contribute to its maintenance through their daily use of media.

Hepp also positions the question of deep mediatisation within German media studies. He suggests that media sociology needs to be broadened and rethought in three key categories: alongside the issues of (1) agency, (2) social order and (3) social relations. In the case of agency, the emphasis is on practice theory (Hepp, 2021, 207). Social order refers to relatively stable patterns of interconnection of individuals, groups and institutions. Hepp mentions two of the theories for describing this new type of social order: one is Shoshana Zuboff's theory of surveillance capitalism (Hepp, 2019, 125), and the other is the framework of data colonialism developed by Couldry and Ulises Mejias (Couldry & Mejias, 2019; Hepp, 2022a). They deal in more detail with the transformation of the world of social relations, attempting to find an adequate form from three directions and incorporate it into the theory of deep mediatisation, which eventually became Elias's concept of figure/figuration.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4 The role of figure/figuration in deep mediatisation theory

The authors show three possible frameworks for rethinking social relations: (1) the notion of the network as a theoretical framework (Lee Rainie, Barry Wellmann, Manuel Castells), (2) assemblage theory (Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari) and (3) the notion of figuration (Norbert Elias) (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 57–78; Hepp, 2021, 217–219). They end up with the concept of figuration, because they consider it the most appropriate to describe the new type of complexity that characterises deep mediatisation. It is also possible to include the notion and process of meaning and meaning-making, whereas the network and assemblage are not suitable for this (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 67).

In Elias's conception, figuration is a model of the processes of interconnectedness, the more or less stable interactions of individuals, in which social meaning is created (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 63). The Hepps adapt the concept to communicative situations and talk about communicative figurations, which can be grasped along four characteristics:

- Each communicative figuration can be described by a specific constellation of actors; this provides its structural basis;

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<sup>4</sup> There is no complete consensus among Hungarian sociologists on the translation of “figuration”: some translate it as “figure (alak)”, while others opt for “figuration”. See Hadas (2014, 108).

- each communicative figuration has a thematic framework that helps and serves to guide its action;
- it is associated with a specific communicative form and a specific communicative practice, indicating whether it is characterised by, for example, reciprocity, virtuality, etc;
- it can also be characterised by a specific set of media used by the actors to operationalise the figuration (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 66–67).

Communicative figurations are patterns of communicative processes, and as such are rarely linked to a single medium. For example, the public sphere is a communicative figuration, and social organizations also have communicative figurations (the family, the community, etc.) by which they reorganise the social sphere, bringing a new order into it (Hepp, 2013, 623). The figuration of figurations as a communicative pattern emerges through the interaction of three dimensions: the frames of relevance, the media technologies and the pattern of actors and their communicative practices.

During the third and fourth waves of mediatisation, i.e. the period of digitization and datafication, the former social communicative figurations are being partially transformed, i.e. they are undergoing a process of refiguration. The essential difference, however, compared to the previous figurations, is that the new ones also have a data imprint, thus continuously linking the social and the economic process: the social space becomes an economic space at the same time. This means both new types of tensions and increasing interdependence. Existing figurations are being transformed, such as the reorganization of newsrooms, and new figurations, such as platforms, are emerging. Reconfiguration is a structural change, a linking of the figuration (internal perspective) and its interconnections (external perspective). It even appears as a meta-flow, creating a figuration of figurations. Couldry's point here is that the figuration of figurations is both a media infrastructure and a site of meaning-making.

Overall, this change in the media environment, built on new figurations, is identified as a meta-process, in addition to other meta-processes such as individualization, globalization or commodification. In their thinking, deep mediatisation, the continuous contact with media technology, also means the state of being observed. On the one hand, deep mediatisation is a medium created by large technology companies and settled in by users. Technology-based media communication permeates societies, communities and relationships in a manner that also dramatically transforms them. In other words, mediatisation is both a reflection of the changes in the communication system and the social and cultural changes that are taking place as a consequence. Deep mediatisation is a long-term, non-linear, often recursive process (Hepp, 2019, 109).

## **5 Deep mediatisation empirical research**

In the last five years, empirical studies of deep mediatisation have also emerged. These have focused on three levels:

- Individual level - changes in habits and coping with everyday life in the new media environment;
- social relations level - analysis of local and social movements, identity, constructions, communication networks;
- social domains - the world of economy, religion, politics, education.

For example, they looked at the number of apps that helped us in our daily lives during the coronavirus epidemic. Not only did they help us to understand the virus and the course of the infection, but also how we should deal with it, how we should try to overcome the situation. Many of the solutions were also media-related (distance learning and work, online shopping) (Hepp, 2022b).

It raises the question of how one can govern effectively and legitimately in an age of deep mediatisation, and how a society can remain governable when, in a world of new communicative figurations, decision-making about our social world is delegated to the level of technology, whether intentionally, unintentionally or willingly. What kind of public sphere can we talk about in a technological arena where, for example, 15 percent of online political conversations in the 2016 US presidential election campaign were related to chatbots (Hepp, 2019, 130)? Empirical research has also pointed to the potential for discrimination by the way data categorise us, as the dominant purposes of data use are linked to economics, marketing and surveillance (Couldry & Hepp, 2017, 131, 206–212).

The deep mediatisation can be seen in the online event spaces. In their research on the squares of Leipzig and Bremen, Andreas Hepp, Piet Simon and Monika Sowinska have analysed what mediatisation means for young people in their everyday urban environment, in terms of their perception and construction of community. The sixty in-depth interviews with young people aged 16–30 revealed practices such as how the city becomes a context for collective action through organizing action on social media sites, how events are continuously “monitored” and then real-time actions adapted to it, how continuous group communication can be characterised, or how virtual communication space is linked to real space as a place of encounter (Hepp et al., 2018, 51–80).

## 6 Summary

Couldry and Hepp set out to describe the process and theoretical framework of the data-based new deep mediatisation enabled by digitization. In deep mediatisation, we construct our social reality in everyday life, relying on digital media, and its elements are institutionalised. Deep mediatisation is a process that is technologically based on digitization and datafication - they ensure that, for the social reality we construct together, with digital media as its support, interface and source, not only construction process is completed but it is also to be imprinted in data. This datafication is then also a source for the creation of new or renewed social figures/figurations. Communicative figurations can be rewritten and can also appear at the meta-level, making deep mediatisation a highly complex, non-linear process.

Out of research tradition, they draw from mediatisation and social constructivist theories. From the former, the emphasis on the process nature of media, the embeddedness of media in everyday life, the interaction and interconnectedness of media and the objective and material aspects of media tools have been highlighted, while, from the theory of social constructionism, based on phenomenology, the spatial, temporal and data ordering of everyday life, the primacy of everyday knowledge, intersubjectivity and the process of institutionalization have been highlighted. In addition, their main resource is Elias’s concept of figuration. However, in addition to media sociology, some names from the field of culturalist media studies are mentioned, such as Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz whose work on media events is referred to, and they think it would be worth updating their insights on television to the world of network communication

(Dayan & Katz, 1992).<sup>5</sup> It is worth pointing out that what the notion of figuration has meant from the point of view of media sociology is very close to that of imagination, introduced in cultural studies by Charles Taylor, which he links to the question of modernity. The Canadian philosopher emphasises that modernity has general structural features (market economy, suffrage) that are ubiquitous and pervade modernising societies. On the other hand, the experience of modernity makes different cultural and social practices possible, i.e. modernity is not synonymous with social structures, economic structures, political institutions or technical and technological modernization, but also includes culturally patterned ideas and social imaginaries, related to everyday social life. On this basis, modernity is a cultural system, i.e. cultural meanings, concepts, local models of everyday life, knowledge and practice (Taylor, 2007).

To mention a criticism of the theory of deep mediatisation: it does not (so far) address the question of legitimation, although, in Berger-Luckmann's theory, questions of institutionalization and legitimation are closely linked. The institutional world needs continuous legitimation, possibilities to explain and justify the existence of an institution. The function of legitimations is to make already institutionalised, primary objectifications objectively accessible and subjectively foreseeable. In this way, legitimation becomes in effect a secondary objectification. In their theory, the Bergers also anticipate that, in most societies, alternative symbolic worlds may emerge, which are competing definitions of reality. In the clashes between these worlds, the question of power always arises: it is always the power rather than the genius of the legitimators that determines which of them wins. Their competition is decided by interests beyond theory. In modern pluralistic societies, this means in everyday life that "they contain certain basic elements of a common intellectual world that prevail with the nature of certainty, but beyond this there are further partial worlds of meaning, which coexist in a state of mutual agreement" (Berger & Luckmann, 1998, 174). Add to this the fact that, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these legitimation processes and clashes are not only reflected and mediated by the media, but also shaped by the media in the deep mediatisation processes.

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<sup>5</sup> The idea has already been partially updated, see Couldry (2003), Couldry et al. (2009), Andok (2017).

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