Heads of Government and Their Media Biographies:
How the Media Socialization of German Chancellors
Influenced Their Strategies Toward the Media

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The relationship between the political strategy of the German chancellors after the Second World War toward the media and their media socialization as well as their media biography is analyzed using secondary sources, (auto)biographies, and other media sources. We interpret the influence of the chancellors' social background and early influences, their experiences in journalism, the interplay between the chancellors(-to-be) and the media, and their media politics from the perspective of their media socialization and mediatization theory. We identify different types of fundamental perspectives on the media the politicians have taken, and conclude that media socialization continues on a new strategic level during their whole career while their social background continues to play an important role.

Keywords: media socialization, media biographies, political communication, media politics, mediatization

The aim of this article is to analyze the interrelations between the political strategy of heads of government toward the media and their media socialization and media biography. We analyzed the eight German chancellors of the post-World War II era from Konrad Adenauer to Angela Merkel and focus on the fundamental perspectives the politicians have taken on the media and the main features of their strategies. We interpret these basic dispositions in the light of their experiences with the media before and during their time in office.

In contrast to the American tradition of presidential studies, especially concerning media relations (cf. Coe & Bradshaw, 2014; Kernell, 2007; Lee, 2014; Liebovich, 1998), there is a decisive research gap with regard to German heads of government and their relationship to the media (Rosumek, 2007). More generally, there has been much research on how politicians receive the media, think about the media, or interact with the media, but their media experiences, their media socialization, and their media biographies are seldom analyzed.

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We are well aware of the opposition between person-centered historiography and structural or social history in the field of media history and in historiography in general. By using a framework of social theory, we reduce the risk of relapsing into the tradition of the historiography of great men's deeds while highlighting the relevance of individual politicians for media history and the political field. The article thus analyzes the relationship between politics and media from both an actor-centered and structural (mediatization) perspective, using Bourdieu's field theory (further strands of literature on political communication and media policy may add to our understanding of the media socialization of politicians, but we have to leave a more encompassing review and discussion to further publications).

The higher actors are situated in a field, the greater the challenge to analyze their relationships using existing approaches to media biographies and media socialization, which are mainly concerned with ordinary citizens or adolescents. We therefore try to address this challenge in our theoretical section before analyzing our cases empirically. We opt for a historical approach, using documents, (auto)biographies, and media sources. This research contributes to the field of the history of political communication, knowing that researching eight heads of government has its limitations.

Theory

Media and Politics: Concepts of Mediatization

If the relationship between politics and the media is to be analyzed, we can choose among a large variety of approaches. We cannot discuss their respective merits, but in our view, the notion of mediatization can provide a conceptual basis, in particular if the focus is on the societal context of that relationship and on the changing structures of the political and the media system. Two complementary approaches have been developed that seek to describe the processes of social change that involve different media (Couldry & Hepp, 2013).

First, in an institutional perspective, the adaption of other social fields or systems to the functioning of the mass media (or most often journalism) is described (Hjarvard, 2013; Marcinkowski & Steiner, 2014; Meyen, 2009; Schulz, 2004). This framework has been criticized for its assumption that a single (mass) media logic is at work (Brants & van Praag, 2015), leading to similar processes wherein different social fields such as politics are "colonized" (Meyer, 2002) by the media (colonization is also the last step in Strömbäck's, 2008, model of phases of mediatization). More precisely, one should speak of a specific journalistic logic (Birkner & Nölleke, 2015) that, of course, is not static but driven, for example, by commercialization (Landerer, 2013). However, it can be argued that politics is indeed a field in which something like such a logic can be said to be at work or is at least perceived by the politicians (Couldry, 2012). Couldry (2003) also proposed the concept of "media metacapital" to describe the advantages that actors in politics gain if they anticipate relevant patterns of journalistic practice and if they receive ample and positive coverage. From a Bourdieuian perspective, *capital* is defined as "accumulated work," such as the time, effort, and structural resources invested into the management of media relations (the concept is not restricted to economic capital, but includes cultural capital, i.e., cultural competences and resources, or political capital). Social fields are structured by the distribution of some main forms of capital. The state then has the function of redefining the mechanism of accumulation and the relative weight and the rate of

exchange of different forms of capital; it therefore commands a form of metacapital (Bourdieu, 2012). Being successful in controlling one's image in the mass media or a positive outcome of such attempts is then an important resource to compete with state-based power or one that is convertible into the metacapital of the state.

Second, from an interactionist or social–constructivist perspective, media are used in new forms of communicative practices and shape social interactions, social fields, and the way social reality is symbolically constructed (Hepp & Hasebrink, 2014; Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2010; Krotz, 2009). According to this approach, for example, televised addresses, call-ins with politicians, or data journalism change the very definition of the relationship between politicians and their constituency.

If media are important to politics, analysts of political communication should also study the media socialization of politicians as individual actors. Although from a structural perspective, politics can be described as a social field with its own rules that guide social practices, there is a restricted space for individual strategies. Small groups or single persons can be at the dominant poles of social fields and contribute to determine their whole structure (Bourdieu, 1980; cf. also his analyses on single persons in their fields, such as Heidegger in Bourdieu, 1975, or Flaubert in Bourdieu, 1992). Our aim is then to analyze how media socialization in a changing media landscape translates into politicians' strategies toward the media.

Media Socialization and Media Biographies

We draw on a theory of media socialization in which this process is defined as the acquisition of socially relevant dispositions related to the media during the life span (Krämer, 2013). We use the term *media biography* to refer to aspects of the life course related to the media and to the politicians' dispositions and actions, not to biographies as a genre (i.e., the narrative description of a person's life), although we will use such as sources. Dispositions toward the media can be socially relevant in at least two ways: At the level of stratificatory differentiation, politicians' dispositions toward the media are influenced by their class background and their trajectory in the social space (upward or downward mobility). According to models of stratification such as Bourdieu's (1979), large groups in society differ in their basic dispositions, guiding their actions and in their general lifestyles. They make distinctions (between objects and persons they classify and evaluate) and thus distinguish themselves (objectively and sometimes also subjectively) from others. We can therefore try to relate chancellors' dispositions to the descriptions of the typical habitus of social classes by Bourdieu.

At the level of functional differentiation, practices based on similar structures of meaning are grouped into autonomous realms such as the economy, politics, education, and so on (this type of differentiation is not only emphasized in Bourdieu's field theory, but also, from a different perspective, by other theories of functional differentiation, e.g., Luhmann, 1998; Schimank, 2007). The functions of many realms of practice are mainly fulfilled in professional productive roles instead of consumptive roles (Stichweh, 2009). Journalism is such a field (Benson & Neveu, 2005). If politicians have professional productive experiences in journalism before starting their career, they may have acquired some strategic knowledge on the functioning of journalism as a field. Otherwise, they can rely only on dispositions

acquired during consumptive media use. When the mass media become the object of political strategies, practical knowledge in journalism that may be restricted to the perspective of a single position in the field or on a subfield has to be transferred into, or complemented by, an understanding of the functions of the media in general and how they work together—not only in cases in which one seeks to influence their coverage of single events or of one's person, but also when it comes to regulating or restructuring them by means of media policy. These strategies require a bird's eye or multiperspective view of the field, and the (future) politician may change her or his perspective accordingly, with different success.

The starting point is a receptive perspective on the media with its individual functions and dispositions influenced by one's position in the structure of stratification (today, this can also include competences for some nonprofessional production). Some future politicians have acquired a professional perspective and some practical productive competences. Their dispositions have been influenced by work in media organizations—in the journalistic field or other fields related to the media. Finally, they have to take a systemic perspective. Their dispositions then refer to the perceived role of the media in the functional differentiation of society and how they can be used for strategic purposes and shaped politically: how one can adapt to them and control them. In terms of capital, this process starts with the acquisition of general cultural capital depending on the class background and leads to an acquisition of media metacapital and its conversion into political capital. However, we would assume that the class-specific habitus and perception of the media (including cognitive as well as evaluative dispositions) remain important during the later career. The conversion of perspectives can be more or less complete and successful. The challenge of theorizing the media socialization of powerful actors then can be answered by adding a productive and a systemic perspective to the more established analysis of media socialization in terms of social stratification and consumptive (or nonprofessional productive) roles.

Field theory (e.g., Bourdieu, 1980, 1992) describes how actors pursue strategies based on their habitus (their schemata of perception and the attitudes that drive their actions). We argue that the (relative) persistence of the habitus (*hysteresis* in Bourdieu's terms) is what connects earlier media socialization and political strategies. The hysteresis can even lead to their complete failure if dispositions are not sufficiently adapted to changing environments. However, actors are no "structural dupes" whose fate is determined by their social background and the field structures. Both field structures and habitus evolve over time while actors contribute to reproducing and transforming structures, adapting to them, and striving to maintain and convert their resources during their career. Therefore, media socialization cannot be described in the abstract. It always depends on historical context: changes of the political system, media technologies, and their institutional usages, and what is described as the "media system," that is, the organizational structure of the mass media. Theories of mediatization describe these transformations and refer to actors' conceptions of, and attitudes toward, the media that guide their strategies. We may then analyze these attitudes and trace back their formation and transformation during politicians' media biographies and in changing media environments.

We also have to take into account how the chancellors themselves have contributed to shape media structures. Media policy may seem to be a minor policy field with limited impact on society and political careers, particularly at the federal level in Germany. However, chancellors have made important decisions in this field (even if they have led to the preservation of the status quo). Thereby, chancellors

contribute to shape the conditions of their own communication strategies and of political communication in general. Chancellors' own experiences and attitudes may also be particularly relevant in this field just because media policy is not at the center of attention.

However, the power of even the most important actors has its limits. Their strategies are restricted by the preexisting structures and the reliance on an apparatus and electorate. At the same time, it is not only politicians' personal power that links their habitus and conceptions of the media with political outcomes. Their power is certainly based on their formal position and institutional resources. They shape organizational structures, but they also recruit, or ally with, functionaries whose attitudes and aims fit their own. To a certain degree, politicians also represent or symbolize decisions rather than making them (given the complexity, preconditions, and restrictions). Their habitus then contributes to determine how they can present themselves and represent a policy on different media platforms.

In our present analysis, we can point to only some of the affinities between earlier experiences that have shaped politicians' habitus and subsequent strategies instead of tracing the interplay between the chancellors and the media in every detail. Therefore, our analysis has to remain somewhat static and may seem to overemphasize the personal level as we also are unable to describe the organizational context in every detail. From our theoretical framework, we can then deduce the following four dimensions for our empirical analysis:

- social background and early influences,
- experiences in journalism,
- the interplay between politicians(-to-be) and the media over time (with regard to journalistic practices as well as technological developments and processes of mediatization), and
- media policy.

Method

The individual cases have to be analyzed with regard to their position in the different fields, their social origin and career, and the historical development of the media. Their media-related strategies are interpreted in a way that allows us to make inferences as to their possible generative principles and to explain the acquisition of the underlying disposition in the light of the theoretical assumptions.

Our analysis is based mainly on secondary sources, (auto)biographies, and other media sources about the seven men who were German chancellor since the Second World War and the one woman who still holds this position. We conducted a systematic interpretive analysis of these media. Of course, these kinds of sources have their weaknesses that need to be reflected in the research process. Particularly, autobiographies are constructions of one's personal life and must be deconstructed by the researcher (Birkner & Nölleke, 2015; Williams, 2012). On the other hand, Kepplinger (2007) rightly doubts that prominent politicians would participate in standardized surveys or would allow being observed. In our case, this option is often void anyway, as half of the persons to be examined have already died. Kepplinger (2008) is also quite skeptical about access to relevant sources for document analysis. In the case of Helmut Schmidt, the fifth chancellor, we were able to use additional information gained from his

private archive, the documentary material in the Archive of Social Democracy of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn, and personal interviews.

Our choice and interpretation of sources then have to be reflected on two levels: the formats of publicly available sources—the kinds of channels and formats the chancellors and observers had at their disposition to express themselves (such as printed autobiographies, televised addresses, or Internet sources), and the strategic use of these media and formats by the chancellors or other actors, with the possible resulting biases. For the sake of brevity, we cannot provide detailed evaluations of the sources but present only those interpretations we found justifiable.

Table 1 provides an overview of our sample and the most important historical dates.

Table 1. Overview of the Sample (Chancellors of the Federal Republic of Germany).

Chancellor	Party	Born	Term of office	Died
Konrad Adenauer	CDU	1876	1949–63	1967
Ludwig Erhard	CDU	1897	1963–66	1977
Kurt G. Kiesinger	CDU	1904	1966–69	1988
Willy Brandt	SPD	1913	1969–74	1992
Helmut Schmidt	SPD	1918	1974–82	2015
Helmut Kohl	CDU	1939	1982–98	
Gerhard Schröder	SPD	1944	1998-2005	
Angela Merkel	CDU	1954	2005–	

Note. CDU = Christian Democratic Union (conservative); SPD = Social Democratic Party of Germany (social-democratic).

Results

Social Background and Early Influences

At least two chancellors may be said to share a somehow "bourgeois" background, but they have been socialized in very different epochs and milieus. One of them inherited the religious conservatism of the epoch before the Second World War, and the other experienced a conversion to liberalism (emphasizing the freedom of the press) in early adulthood after the Nazi era.

Konrad Adenauer grew up during the time of the German Empire and was already a mayor during the interwar Weimar Republic, a period characterized by a strong partisan press and the newly emergent radio. According to Küsters (1988), his image of the press took shape mainly during that period. He had a rather authoritarian, antisocialist vision of democracy in Germany, and he was willing to put the press to the use of state power and of conservative politics. Helmut Schmidt (1992) describes himself as apolitical

(as was his family) and indoctrinated by Nazi propaganda during his youth and early adulthood, although his parents forbade him to read the newspapers. However, his wartime experience led him to adopt a liberal stance toward the media, combined with a somewhat bourgeois habitus (although coming from petty bourgeoisie, Schmidt is often seen as a prototypical "Hanseat," i.e., a member of the cosmopolitan but elitist North German upper class), as we will see from his criticism of sensationalism in the media and some occasions when he demanded that the press should respect the *raison d'état*.

Other chancellors with a more modest background have exhibited an ambitious and upwardly mobile habitus. Kurt Georg Kiesinger, who later joined the National Socialist Party, emphasized his and his parents' use of liberal and democratic newspapers during his adulthood (Kiesinger, 1989). His autobiography mentions a great number of Weimar newspapers and magazines, maybe as an attempt to demonstrate his liberal attitude in earlier years and thus to counter the criticism that a Nazi official (see below) should have never become chancellor. During his years of study, he was a member of a conservative student association (with both liberal and antidemocratic members) that valued rhetorical skills and political discussion (Feldkamp, 2005). Kiesinger, coming from a petty-bourgeois family, obviously had a habitus that let him strive for upward mobility and some rhetorical talent.

Two social-democratic chancellors had even more modest origins: Gerhard Schröder (2007) emphasized that he grew up without TV at home and that his family was among the poorest in postwar Germany. He successfully completed evening classes and law studies and established himself as a lawyer. On one hand, he emphasized social justice and progressive positions during his political career (although he admitted that he never had a real sense for problems of gender inequality and sociopolitical questions). On the other hand, he also displayed his proximity to the industry and his taste for luxury goods. Willy Brandt, whose political opponents later used his "illegitimate" birth against him, also came from a modest background (Brandt, 2003). His habitus was more that of a charismatic intellectual than that of a careerist—maybe his early involvement in political struggles and as a political journalist (see below) instead of a career in other sectors led him to prefer intellectual leadership over other forms of status (Münkel, 2005). However, the first chancellor who had to escape Nazi persecution was esteemed by parts of the press and the citizens for his whole style, not only for his programmatic work.

On the other side of the political spectrum and less liberal toward journalism, we find Helmut Kohl. Both Brandt's and Kohl's social background and ideological positions polarized the political landscape—even as they were deeply rooted in opposed politicized milieus. Kohl grew up in a conservative Catholic family in a southwestern industrial town (although he is generally associated with a more rural part of the town where he later lived and received international guests) and continued to read the local newspapers when he entered federal politics (Kohl, 2004). Despite his academic career, he probably never really adopted the liberalism of conservative intellectuals, but always preserved a moralizing attitude toward the left and preferred and privileged conservative media for ideological reasons.

Angela Merkel grew up in the German Democratic Republic, but she avoided the ideology-laden humanist studies in the GDR and opted for an academic career in the natural sciences (she got involved in youth organizations, but did not join the socialist party or the opposition). She was not socialized in her present conservative party and does not come from one of its constituent West German milieus

(Langguth, 2009). She generally exhibits a pragmatic attitude (in particular toward media organizations with different political standpoints) and mostly avoids taking strong positions. Her rhetoric is oriented toward common sense; her discourses are often almost arid. She also is reluctant to disclose information about her private life (at the same time, she is said to be efficient in organizing support and using opportunities by relying on informal contacts). She has neither a thoroughly traditionalist nor elitist habitus or an overtly ambitious appearance, but she is conservative in the sense of moderately following the Zeitgeist.

Experiences in Journalism

One of the aspects we intensively looked for was whether or not the individuals under analysis had experiences in journalism. This has not yet been analyzed for German chancellors, whereas it has played a role in American history, for example, in judging the presidency of Ronald Reagan (cf. Ritter & Henry, 1992). The social democrats Brandt, Schmidt, and, to a much smaller degree, Schröder had some journalistic experience, whereas this was more rare among the conservatives: Ludwig Erhard wrote a few articles for the political journals *Das Tagebuch* [The Diary] and *Der deutsche Oekonomist* [The German Economist] (Mierzejewski, 2004) and continued this work after 1933. At the beginning of 1945, he introduced a concept for the postwar German economy in the journal *Bankwirtschaft* [Bank Economics] (Mierzejewski, 2004).

Kiesinger, as a young man, wrote poems and critical articles on the Weimar Republic (Lang, 2005, pp. 96–98), sport news and theater critiques for the *Schwarzwälder Bürgerzeitung* [Black Forest Citizens' Newspaper] (Gassert, 2006), and published a magazine for members of his conservative students' fraternity (Feldkamp, 2005). On the other hand, as a member of the Nazi Party, he did not have to fight in the war but served in the broadcasting unit of the foreign ministry. There, he worked as a censor for those American journalists who were still in Germany during the war (Rundel, 2006).

The day he started to work was the day the Germans invaded Norway, and Kiesinger's successor as chancellor, Brandt, had to flee on that same April 9, 1940 (Gassert, 2004). Brandt had come to Norway shortly after the troops under the National Socialists took command, and he continued his journalistic work right after his arrival, writing for the *Arbeiderbladet* (Grebing, 2008). Brandt became a foreign correspondent during the Spanish Civil War and for a Jewish press agency in the United States (Grebing, 2008). Brandt initially returned to Germany as a war reporter, wearing the Norwegian soldier's uniform, and then decided to go into politics.

Schmidt, Brandt's successor, had to wear the uniform of the German armed forces "Wehrmacht" during the whole war and became a social democrat in a British prisoner-of-war camp. He entered the political party and wrote for the party press (Birkner, 2014). He had the idea of becoming a journalist but was rejected by the editors he approached (Helmut Schmidt, personal interview, January 6, 2011). However, he continued writing articles as a member of the German parliament and later as chancellor. The third social democrat in office, Schröder, never worked as a journalist, but nonetheless had some journalistic experiences when writing articles in social- democratic papers and quality papers.

On the opposite side of the political spectrum, there are no journalistic experiences known from Adenauer, Kohl, and Merkel. Still, the latter became vice press secretary of the new democratic party *Demokratischer Aufbruch* (Stock, 2000) only four months after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this position, she was able to study the requirements of journalists (Langguth, 2009). We assume that journalistic experiences helped the emerging politicians in the field of politics as a source of cultural capital and media metacapital. Nonetheless, that alone would not explain political success with regard to the media, as our findings on the chancellors' political careers indicate.

The Interplay Between the Chancellors(-to-Be) and the Media

One would assume that a professional career in journalism helped chancellors to successfully manage their relations with the media. In fact, Schmidt has been quite successful in this regard. As a consequence of his conversion to a liberal worldview, he defended the freedom of the press not only as a journalist (his first articles were about the transparency and accountability of the state; e.g., Birkner, 2014) but also during his early political career: In 1962, journalists of the investigative weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* were prosecuted at the urging of the Adenauer government for an article that revealed that the German armed forces would be unable to protect the country against an invasion from the East. As a *Senator* (minister of the interior) in Hamburg, Schmidt backed the journalists and wrote to one of the imprisoned authors offering his help. As a chancellor, he said that he spent four fifths of his time "explaining his intentions and decisions and making them transparent" (Schmidt, 1979, pp. 186–187). This may be a realistic guess, and also a lament. His self-construction as a critical friend of the press must also be reflected by referring to other sources. We also can consider the implementation of private TV in Germany a turning point. Whereas he had been a harsh critic of public TV before, he now began to complain about the commercialization of the media, defending the public media (Birkner, 2015).

Brandt should have been predisposed to a very efficient management of media relations given his professional background (Münkel, 2005). However, he was socialized not just as a reporter or a news editor but also as a political writer. More progressive milieus and journalists welcomed him as an alternative to the bourgeois elite that had been in power since the formation of the Federal Republic, but he was attacked by conservatives for his rapprochement with the Eastern bloc and for his past. Especially in the U.S. media, he was promoted as representing a new Germany (Münkel, 2004).

Other chancellors, sometimes without any particular experiences in journalism, sought to get in touch with the electorate in another way: not by adapting to journalism but by focusing on a technical medium itself that seemed to provide a more direct, seemingly unmediated access to people's homes. Adenauer thought that television would be this medium (Schwarz, 1991). However, he felt that it was under the control of the wrong ideological camp (see below).

Kiesinger saw the media from the perspective of rhetoric, public intellectualism, and self-presentation, with the messages coming from him instead of being molded by autonomous media organizations. He can be considered a modernizer in the way he introduced opinion polls into the campaigning of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (Gassert, 2006). Later, his hostile reaction to the student movement showed that he no longer felt in touch with important parts of the population.

Finally, Merkel was the first head of government worldwide to launch a video podcast to communicate to the electorate while bypassing journalism (cf. Rosumek, 2007). These chancellors obviously had the idea that audiovisual media are particularly suited to create a new relationship with the population that is, however, still essentially unidirectional. The case of Merkel's podcast also shows that this seemingly personal format reveals nothing about her private life, its setting being more that of a televised address instead of an audiovisual diary. Even in the era of social media campaigning, it still remains open in what way the new media environment can become constitutive for chancellorship.

Some chancellors(-to-be) matched a developing autonomous and partly depoliticized media logic of personalization and diversion for some time (or at least responded to what they believed to be the media logic—we will see how genuinely politicized these relationships became later). Kohl started as a charismatic innovator, a progressive within his conservative party. He was acclaimed by the liberal press as he seemed to be a better alternative to his more conservative rival, Franz Josef Strauß (who was the minister of defense during the *Spiegel* affair; cf. Schwarz, 2012). When coverage of his person and politics became more critical, the same media sometimes instilled sheer contempt in him. He called some of the left-wing liberal media the "Hamburg mafia" (as many of them are based in that city; cf. Rosumek, 2007) and called *Spiegel* a "paper of pigs" and the magazine *Stern* a "criminals' paper" (Schuler, 2010). The relationship between the ambitious, down-to-earth but charismatic politician and the press was politicized in an interplay of critical coverage and his ideological dispositions. Deeply rooted in his conservative milieu and increasingly convinced of his historical mission (as the chancellor of the reunification), he was led to perceive parts of the press in terms of ideological hostility.

Schröder famously said that to govern, he only needed *Bild* (the main tabloid newspaper in Germany), *BamS* (*Bild am Sonntag*, the Sunday edition of the same newspaper), and the tube. The good press he had during his career probably reinforced the ambitious, pragmatic, and sometimes decisionist attitude of the "media chancellor" (Meng, 2002). Schröder was very successful in direct confrontation with his opponent Stoiber on TV and, unlike Kohl, Schröder had tried to not only work with the friendly media but also with those from the opposite part of the political spectrum. However, his frequent appearance on television in talk shows and media events quickly backfired on him. When substantial criticism of his policies arose in his coalition and in the media, he withdrew somewhat from his narrow relationship with the press, but not in the same ideologically selective way as his predecessor. However, he revised his earlier dictum, claiming that *Bild* had always opposed him (Diekmann, Quoos, & Zauritz, 2012), and answered the tabloid paper's critique with a boycott. In many cases, Schröder acted as really driven by the media (Hogrefe, 2002) or—instead of merely adapting to some media logic(s)—he even contributed to setting the standards of the personalization and "eventization" of political media coverage.

Has Merkel learned from the recent developments of mediatization and the experiences of former darlings of the media (who first experienced success, then disenchantment and political criticism)? Langguth (2009), in his biography of Merkel, summarized her strategy in a number of fundamental rules she seems to follow when dealing with the media: to talk to all of them, especially those who tend to view her critically; to avoid any personal tone; to paradoxically stage her unstagy appearance; and to strictly separate private and political life. This professional, distanced friendliness (at least on center stage) is probably in line with her habitus and a strategy that has kept strong criticism at bay—at least by the

domestic media, although the European press also has described her as cold and ruthless when pursuing the national interests and austerity policy on the EU level. One remarkable moment in the way she has interacted with the media was in the article in the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Merkel, 1999) in which she blamed Helmut Kohl for his misconduct in a major financial scandal. Thus, there have been exceptions to the general nonconfrontational strategy she particularly pursued during her chancellorship.

Media Policy

After the end of World War II, the Allies were especially interested in giving Germany a liberal media system to avoid the potential influence politics had had on the media under National Socialism, when the media had become submissive to propaganda. In the West, the United States, Great Britain, and France decided to implement a public service broadcasting system inspired by the BBC. Adenauer was quite skeptical about this as he felt that the British Labour Party used it for propaganda for the social democrats (Appel, 1988). Here, we can sense his media socialization in the Weimar Republic and under the Nazi regime (see above) that he shared with many politicians of his generation from different parts of the political spectrum, but this rather authoritarian (and interest-led) disposition was already met with criticism by a younger generation and a more liberal milieu of politicians and intellectuals. Adenauer, like many of his contemporaries, regarded television as highly influential in manipulating the masses and feared a left-wing broadcasting service would destroy the chances of his political camp. Therefore, he tried to implement his own branch of television, nicknamed "Adenauer TV," which was stopped by the Federal Constitutional Court in Germany. Nonetheless, in building up resources under his command for propaganda (or what would be called "PR" today), Adenauer can be regarded as very important for the infrastructure of political communication in postwar Germany (Niclauß, 2015).

Adenauer's successor was Erhard, who had been extremely successful as minister of economic affairs. As he was socialized in an economic context, Erhard was an expert in the field of marketing (Löffler, 2002). That notwithstanding, he failed with his communication policy as chancellor because political communication cannot be reduced to advertisement. Erhard and his successor Kiesinger never really developed their own institutionalized communication strategies and media policy.

On the other hand, Schmidt was quite conscious of the function of the media for modern politics and tried to cope with it. After the decisive press scandal in 1962 (see above), he, as the responsible senator, introduced a new press law in Hamburg, declaring that any form of occupation of newsrooms, censorship, or confiscation would be forbidden (Schmidt, 1967). As chancellor, he tried to continue with his open media policy, but journalist Dieter Buhl is quite sure that Schmidt became more and more disillusioned regarding the media during his chancellery (Dieter Buhl, personal interview, September 14, 2012).

We may even say that his liberalism had been ambivalent from the outset because from his elitist perspective, he tended to discount a large part of journalist output as unsatisfactory. Later, Schmidt was particularly alarmed by the plans for private TV in Germany. He was heavily criticized for an article in

which he suggested that every family should switch off their television one day per week (Schmidt, 1978) and failed with this idea.

When he had to leave office, his successor Kohl very quickly installed private broadcasting with a similar motivation as Adenauer had planned with his own branch of television: creating a more conservative counterpart to the left-wing public broadcasting service (Bösch, 2012). Kohl never really tried to interact with the liberal press. On the basis of his media biography, we can see Kohl as thinking in a black-and-white mindset of "friendly" and "enemy" press. While he tried to ignore his enemies, he quite cleverly used the up-and-coming private TV channels—which he had made possible with his own media policy—for political promotion. In this regard he must be judged as highly influential on the current German media system.

Discussion

We have argued that powerful persons leave their receptive and even their productive roles in the media and enter a strategic interplay with them. Our analysis of the chancellors' media biographies has shown that their media socialization and biography continue, but partly on a new level. They acquire a systemic, strategic character, but they are still guided by social stratification. We would like to classify the chancellors' relationship by distinguishing between types of fundamental perspectives on the media the politicians have taken and relating them to different stages of mediatization of politics (Strömbäck, 2008) and to an understanding of mediatization as changes in the interaction between political actors and the electorate or the communicative construction of the political. These attitude types depend on the socialization before and during the term of office, and chancellors partly had the opportunity to realize these visions in media policy.

The first attitude could be called a bourgeois concept of the primacy of the political: Media act as representatives of political ideologies that have to be forced to fulfill their function for the state that legitimately represents society and controls it to a certain degree. This perspective is exemplified by Adenauer, but Schmidt borrowed from this understanding when he appealed to the *raison d'état* or criticized sensationalism as a deviation from the media's genuinely political function. However, he was more liberal and pluralist than others, such as Kohl, who boycotted and condemned the left-wing media for their error of being on the wrong side of the political spectrum and of history. Here and in the case of Adenauer's criticism of allegedly left-wing broadcasters, the political function of the media is measured in terms of ideological reliability.

Other politicians have followed a logic of self-presentation: The media, and television in particular, create the illusion of a personal, charismatic, almost unmediated relationship to the population (chancellors from Adenauer to Kiesinger started exploring this form of mediatization in the sense of a new form of interaction with the electorate). Many chancellors had the experience of being journalism's darlings; their habitus as social climbers matched this logic and the media's interest in success stories. But such experiences in the earlier career led to a disappointment over partisan judgments and the idiosyncrasies of the media when they were tried by the newcomers. In these cases, mediatization took the paradoxical form of the return to the political that does not easily match phase models of changing

relations between the political field and the media: Autonomous and critical media started to judge the chancellors in terms of politics and their policies.

These perspectives were later complemented by an increasing awareness of or even deep-seated respect for autonomous journalism, often driven by a liberal attitude and professional experiences in journalism or public relations. Politicians arranged themselves well with the perceived functioning of the postwar mass media. They fed institutional mediatization or even strategically contributed to the continuous redefinition of political journalism, and acquired media metacapital. However, this attitude did not preclude critical distance, and functional adaptation does not require being unpolitical even if politicians cooperate with journalists from the whole spectrum of Western democratic ideologies. For example, Schmidt and Brandt also looked at the media from a political perspective, as political authors.

Erhard, with his technocratic perspective, represents the transition from the authoritarian, conservative to the liberal, functionalist tradition. The media are still subordinate to the state, but their function partly shifts from a transmission of ideologies or as parties in ideological struggles toward control or coordination by information and marketing (in line with his professional background). This understanding fits the liberal–conservative Zeitgeist of a regulated market economy and market-based instead of production-based management. However, these paradigms in economics and politics still had to be "marketed" themselves as alternatives to socialist goals and as a consumerist vision of a prosperous future. Although this ideal of technocrats was never fully realized and remained a somewhat contradictory cold-war ideology in itself, the conception may have paved the way for a pragmatic management of public relations by politicians.

Despite their flexibility, the dispositions once acquired and the changing media structure restrict strategies—the chancellors are successful for some time, but structural and cultural changes limit their success. We may not go as far as to postulate a law-like life cycle for chancellors in relation to the media that ends in a mutual disenchantment or a phase when the politicians seem out of touch with the latest developments of the media, but this schema seems to match some of the biographies.

Conclusion

Of course, investigating only seven men and one woman must have its limitations. But studying the German chancellors of the post-World War II era might be a starting point to enrich our understanding of the complex and complicated relations between heads of government and the media. With the help of Bourdieu's field theory and a theory of media socialization, we were able to research the media biographies of German chancellors within some determining or restricting structures. And we observe a more-or-less consistent failure to keep up with media change in each respective era. The chancellors(-to-be) were all socialized in their milieu and their media socialization shaped their ideas of the interaction between politics and the media. In their careers, they all had to cope with new developments in a dynamic media system. Some did better, others worse, but the role of structural conditions demonstrates the limited potential of person-centered historiography.

Notwithstanding the limitations of our research, we clearly found dependencies between the role of the social background and ongoing media socialization. We think that there can be a theory of media socialization that also covers individuals at the extreme dominant poles of social fields. However, we do not claim that we can establish a direct causal link between a politician's social background, their vision of the media, and certain policies. But the chancellors' dispositions were probably shaped by past experiences, and at least, these persons (often ideal typically) embody certain attitudes that they certainly shared with larger parts of their generation, milieu, and so on, and that then manifested themselves in political strategies and decisions.

Further research is certainly needed. From a theoretical perspective, we have to advance the theories in the field of media socialization to describe extraordinary media biographies more adequately. As to the empirical aspect, we should try to intensify our research of the media socialization of heads of government. To realize comparative studies and to address the problem of small samples, politicians and functionaries from other countries and in other positions should be studied. We think that our approach can be fruitful for this type of analysis and that our results call for generalizations or differentiation with regard to different media, political systems, and countries with different varieties of social stratification.

The interrelations with journalism on the individual and the institutional level can still be investigated much more closely. Media organizations or journalists as political actors should be studied using journalists' biographies and content analyses of media coverage of the heads of government over time, including their careers after chancellorship. On the other hand, their strategies should be analyzed in more detail, leaving the level of general visions in favor of an operative perspective and a description of the organizational structures created to implement the strategies. Still, our findings point to the interrelations between the media socialization and political performance of politicians. This helps us understand how and why politicians interact with the media in such different ways.

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