H-ermes. Journal of Communication
H-ermes, J. Comm. 30 (2026), 288-320
ISSN 2284-0753, DOI 10.1285/i22840753n30p288-320
http://siba-ese.unisalento.it

Bourdieu, politics and the media: Visibility as capital in the field of institutionalized elite politics

Johan Lindell, Uppsala University
Julia Malmberg, Uppsala University

Abstract: *Employing Bourdieusian media studies this study sets out to study institutionalized elite politics as a social field, and how positions in this field relate to mass media visibility and reach on social media platforms. Using multiple correspondence analysis and logistic regression on data covering the 349 members of the Swedish parliament and the 24 ministers in the government (n = 373) the study demonstrates that levels of mass media visibility closely mirror levels of political capital. Although ideological differences emerge in the types of platforms from which politicians amass large social media followings, the tendency to attract followers primarily depends on political capital. The capital that mass media and social media can bestow upon politicians in terms of granting visibility is absorbed into existing inequalities in the distribution of field-specific capital. While focusing empirically on the political field the study evokes broader questions about the relationship between visibility capital and field-specific capital across different social fields.*

Keywords: Political field, media visibility, social media, mediatization of politics, political capital, visibility capital, multiple correspondence analysis.

Introduction

This study presents a broad, overall, analysis of the Swedish parliament as a social field, and how positions in this field relate to visibility in mass media and on social media platforms. In previous research on the interplay between the political field and the media, focus has been put on politics in the abstract (the "supply side" in political communication [Strömbäck 2008; Klinger & Svensson 2015; Nord & Grusell 2021]), political parties (e.g. how parties use the affordances of social media [Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016; Kalsnes 2019; Larsson 2020]) or individual behaviour (e.g., how politicians communicate [Haßler et al. 2014; Jost 2023]). Given the prevalence of mediatization as a conceptual lens, focus within the research field tends to be put on the degree to which politics adapts to genre conventions, technical affordances or journalistic norms and practices – media logics, in short (see e.g. Altheide & Snow 1979; Esser & Strömbäck 2014 Klinger & Svensson 2015).

In advancing an alternative approach, this study tackles the relationship between media and politics from Pierre Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu 1996). We focus on the field of institutionalized elite politics – a social microcosm with norms, struggles, and positions. Through this theoretical lens, and the use of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) and regression analyses of data including the 349 members of the Swedish parliament (MPs) and the 24 ministers of the government formed after the 2022 elections (n = 373) we set out to understand how visibility in professional news reporting and followings on social media relate to different positions in the field. This provides a power-sensitive understanding of the interplay between the political field, the mass media and social platforms. The study supplements work on the mediatization of politics, illustrates key steps in Bourdieusian media studies and opens a space for discussing visibility as a capital, in politics and in other fields.

We set out to answer three research questions, where the first focuses on the structure of the field and the second questions turn to media visibility in relation to positions in the field of elite politics:

RQ1: What are the main principles of division in the Swedish field of elite politics?

RQ2a: How do mass media visibility and social media following connect to positions in the Swedish field of elite politics?

RQ2b: In comparison to age, gender and education, what is the relative importance of position in the field of elite politics for high mass media visibility and large social media followings?

Bourdieu offers a research program to be applied in empirical work in different social contexts, not least to "refute or generalize" (Bourdieu 1991a: 255) its key concepts. We conduct our study on the Swedish field of institutionalized elite politics, that is, on Swedish MPs and the ministers in government. Since the 1974 reform, Sweden has had a unicameral parliament, Riksdagen, consisting of 349 legislators elected by voters,

who appoint a prime minister responsible for forming the government (Arter 2004; Lindvall et al. 2020). Following the 2022 national election, the government was composed of the Moderate Party (M), the Christian Democrats (KD), and the Liberal Party (L), with the Sweden Democrats (SD) cooperating in the Riksdag and holding political staff positions in the Government Offices (Parliament of Sweden, 2025). The Social Democrats (S), the Green Party (G), the Left Party (V), and the Centre Party (C) constitute the opposition. Besides its long-standing democratic tradition, Sweden is one of the most digitalized countries in the world, meaning that "no part of the Swedish society is untouched by the new opportunities offered by digitalisation and new media technology" (Nord & Grusell 2021, p. 128). On the one hand, this makes Sweden an ample case for studying politicians' visibility in mass media and reach on social media platforms. On the other hand, we should not transpose findings to other countries, particularly to those with other political and media systems. Still, the empirical study of social fields can reveal generalized social dynamics of, for instance, principles of division in fields, social reproduction and capital convertibility.

Given that we are concerned with specific interactions between the political field and the media, the next section charts previous research in the area, particularly research on the mediatization of politics. Next, we theorize our object of study from the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory. We then discuss our methodology. The last sections spell out our findings and discuss their implications.

From media logics to field-specific capital

For more than three decades, research on the relationship between media and politics has frequently been organized around the concept of mediatization. This concept has been used as a framework for theorizing how media increasingly shape cultural, social, and political institutions (for an overview, see Esser & Strömbäck 2014). Scholars have employed this concept to understand the media-politics nexus as a structural, long-term process through which political actors become intertwined with – and potentially dependent on – media institutions (Asp & Esaiasson 1996; Mazzolini & Schulz 1999;

Strömbäck 2008). Because of its emphasis on institutional interrelations rather than media effects, mediatization has a key perspective for analyzing political communication in contemporary democracies (Strömbäck & Esser 2014). The institutional variant of mediatization theory – particularly influential in studies of political communication – frames the media–politics relationship as multi-directional and complex. According to Strömbäck & Esser (2014), the political and journalistic fields each possess distinct "logics" that interact with one another. In their theory of the mediatization of politics, Strömbäck & Esser explicitly distance themselves from simplistic claims that politicians have become "slaves" to media dynamics, instead arguing for a more reciprocal and negotiated relationship between the two fields (2014, p. 8).

However, there are notable inconsistencies between this theoretical ambition and the ways empirical studies on the mediatization of politics have been conducted. A large portion of the empirical literature continues to conceptualize mediatization in terms of *adaptation* to media logics (Nölleke et al. 2021) – a much-critiqued concept (see e.g., Lundby 2009; Couldry 2014). Schulz (2004, p. 89) famously argued that "political actors adapt to the rules of the media system trying to increase their publicity and at the same time accepting a loss of autonomy". This assumption remains influential and has been transposed to the current media landscape. It is argued that politicians must adapt both to "news media logics" (Strömbäck & Esser 2014) and "network media logics" (Klinger & Svensson 2015). Previous research thus includes studies on how politicians modify their message style to fit news values (Haßler et al. 2014) and how they tailor communication to platform-specific logics such as emotionality, simplicity, and visuality on social media (Klinger & Svensson 2015; Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016; Kalsnes 2019; Larsson 2021; Jost 2023; Abu-Ayyash 2024).

This raises a deeper issue: "media logic" is far from a unified concept. Altheide and Snow (1979) described media logic as the formats, production routines, and genre conventions guiding journalistic practice, the "rules or 'codes' for defining, selecting, organizing, presenting, and recognizing information" (Altheide 2004, p. 294). Hjarvard (2008) includes aesthetic, technological, and institutional modus operandi of the media

while Strömbäck & Esser (2014, p. 14) discuss "logics of appropriateness" within a given institution (for them, either journalism or politics). However, empirical research still predominantly examines how political actors align with journalistic genre conventions (or "news media logic" [Strömbäck & Esser 2014, p. 17]) or platform-specific affordances (Klinger & Svensson 2015; Abu-Ayyash 2024). Jost (2023), for example, analyzes how politicians tailor online communication to platform algorithms to optimize visibility. Similarly, studies of legacy media continue to focus on political actors' adjustment to news values and journalistic routines (Brants & van Praag 2006; Haßler et al. 2014). In practice, empirical research emphasizes conformity to media logics despite theoretical claims about reciprocity between social fields.

A related blind spot in mediatization research is that the political side of the media-politics relationship is often "left unspecified" (Strömbäck & Esser 2014, p. 14). Research tends to focus on politics either abstractly by theorizing an overarching mediatization of politics (Mazzolini & Schulz 1999; Schulz 2004), through party-level behavior (e.g. Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016; Kalsnes 2019), or by examining the communication patterns of individual politicians (Jost 2023). Although some studies link power hierarchies within politics to adaptation to media logic – showing, for example, that party leaders or ministers adapt more than backbenchers (Elmelund-Præstekær et al. 2011) or that high-status politicians are better equipped for algorithmic amplification (Jost 2023) – research still privileges the perspective of how political actors adapt to media. Recent work also shows that established politicians are more visible in traditional media and gather more followers online (Kruikemeier et al. 2018; Vos & van Aelst 2018; Poljak 2025). While there are empirical works that stress that media logic is "nested in the broader political context" (Vos & van Aelst 2018, p. 371; Casero-Ripollés et al. 2016) what is largely missing is an approach that begins with the political field itself – its internal positions and hierarchies – and examines how these are tied to forms of media visibility.

As argued by Maurer and Riedl (2021), field theory offers a promising alternative for understanding the interplay between politics and media. Here, we can approach mediatization as change in a field's "communicational doxa" (Jansson 2015) or, in a

similar fashion, view it as the process whereby "social systems are increasingly becoming structurally tied to the media system while upholding their operational autonomy" (Eskjær, 2017 p. 86). This implies a focus on how practice ensues in a given field under evolving communicative circumstances instead of relying on much more radical notions of change in field's structures (e.g. Schulz 2004; Hepp 2019). By conceptualizing politics as a social field structured by power relations and varying volumes of political capital, field theory foregrounds the political side of the relationship before asking how media visibility is distributed. Rather than focusing on how political actors adapt to media logics, this approach situates media and platform visibility as resources that interact with pre-existing hierarchies in the political field (cf. Chadwick 2017). In this view, media logics do not reshape politics in a one-directional manner; instead, they become incorporated into existing power asymmetries within the political field. The next section spells out our theoretical approach in detail.

Media visibility as capital in the political field

This section presents one way to address two gaps in previous research on the mediatization of politics: the tendency to leave the political side of the equation unspecified and the media-centric tendency to direct attention to politicians' adaptation to media logics. We begin by conceptualizing politics as a social field, we then move away from the media logic concept and posit that media visibility is a peculiar kind of capital in the political field.

For Bourdieu, modernity is a process of social differentiation. This manifests in the formation of a series of semi-autonomous fields (Bourdieu 1996). A field is a social microcosm revolving around a specific "game" populated by agents that are invested in the given game (*illusio*), who share tacit presuppositions (*doxa*) with other players. Agents have accumulated more or less of the given field-specific capital that is recognized and struggled over. As such, fields are almost always hierarchical and divided primarily in terms of difference in access to field-specific capital (Bourdieu

1996). In the field of politics, agents have accumulated more or less political capital (Kauppi 2003; Bourdieu 1991b).

In this study, we approach the Swedish parliament (Riksdagen) as a social field and the MPs (and their parties) as agents in this field (cf. Bourdieu 1991b; Thompson 2000). We refer to this social microcosm as the Swedish field of institutionalized elite politics. It is "institutionalized" because political capital is delegated by the citizenry within a democratic system, it is "elite" for the simple reason that all agents in this field have vast amounts of political capital (and power within the nation-state). There are, nonetheless, internal differences in the distribution of political capital. Some have more while others have less amounts of both personal-embodied political capital like seniority in the field and delegated capital, for instance, membership in a governing party or having been elected to chair a committee or appointed minister (Bourdieu 1991b; Kauppi 2003). Approaching Swedish MPs as agents in a field implies that we focus on a space of positions. What the main positions and principles of division are in this field (RQ1) remains an empirical question to be answered with the method tied to empirical work in field theory (MCA). There are, however, reasonable assumptions to be made, since it is (still) rather obvious that in Western contexts the "political space has a left and a right, it has its dominant and dominated" (Bourdieu 1991b, p. 215).

As discussed in the previous section, the literature on the mediatization of politics stress change, which manifests in the argument that practices in one institution ("politics") are shaped by various characteristics or technical affordances of the media, that is "media logic" (Strömbäck 2008; Hjarvard 2008; Esser 2013). The field theoretical approach is, however, at unease with the focus on one-directional influence (Couldry 2014). Field transformations are negotiated within the existing structure of the field; fields are also interrelated and semi-autonomous (Bourdieu 1996; Champagne 2005; Maurer & Riedl 2021). In this vein, Attencourt (2024) argues that since the mid 20th century an interstitial space of mediated visibility emerged at the intersection of fields of cultural production, media and politics. Thus, visibility and recognizability (what Driessens [2013] refers to as celebrity capital) can be posited as a key form of capital in the field of elite politics, since it is a relatively rare resource that oftentimes take

time to accumulate, is unequally distributed and sought after, that can also generate other capitals in the field (political capital yields visibility and followership, and vice-versa, far-reaching social media networks and high visibility may grant political power) (Bourdieu 1986; 1991b; Thompson 2000; Davis & Seymour 2010; Heinich 2012; Watts 2019; Maurer & Riedl 2021). One peculiar aspect of this capital is that it is granted by agents in other fields, as stressed by Driessens (2013) among others. In this sense, Couldry (2003) speaks of media meta-capital – the tendency of (mass) media to permeate other social fields since it grants visibility to social groups. Adapting this concept to the contemporary media environment, Lundahl (2022) introduces the notion of algorithmic meta-capital as the "extension of the power traditionally held by the state and legacy media" (2022, p. 1451). Social media visibility is, in other words, valuable across many fields and ultimately made possible by the dominant actors in the digital field (Verweibe & Hagemann 2025). Another peculiarity is that visibility, through mediated scandal, may swiftly "deplete the symbolic capital upon which the exercise of political power depends" (Thompson 2000, p. 103; see also Zulli 2021; Åkerlund 2025).[1]

Regarding politicians' mass media visibility, it is well-established that "high-standing officials have better media access and get plenty of news coverage, which then again confirms their position on the political ladder" (Vos & van Aelst 2018, p. 371-372). This is observed across a range of theories and works in political communication and journalism studies. Lazarsfeld & Merton (1948) identified the status conferral function of the mass media, whereby chances of media visibility increase with social status and, subsequently, visibility in the media reproduces status. News value theory highlights how journalistic norms and concerns with the public interest promote a focus on those holding most power in society (Vos & van Aelst 2018). Research on journalistic sources has provided "mounting evidence that official and elite sources clearly dominate the news" (Strömbäck & Nord 2006, p. 148). Politicians, furthermore, have

[1] The ambivalent character of visibility capital is further clarified in an extensive interview study with Swedish MPs. The study shows that mediated visibility is included among the things that generate status inside the political parties, alongside sociability, experience and knowledge. At the same time, MPs argued that various forms of "media failures" affect status negatively within the group (Barrling Hermansson 2004, p. 103, 152, 160, 184).

unequal access to the media, where high-standing politicians have "habitual access" (through e.g. press conferences) while "ordinary" politicians rely on so-called disruptive access (Molotch & Lester 1974). In terms of social media, Lundahl (2022) stresses how algorithmic visibility tends to reproduce existing power structures. In a similar vein, Kruikemeier et al (2018) and Jost (2023) find correlations between social media visibility and adaption to social media logics and politicians' social status. However, a dominant academic discourse on social media and politics stresses the "elective affinity" between platforms and populism (Gerbaudo 2018; Postill 2018; Flew & Iosifidis 2020). In other words, newcomers in the field of elite politics, oftentimes far-right populist parties, seem to gain from the platformization of the public sphere and the logics of social media. According to Gerbaudo (2018, p. 748), this is because social media is constructed as the "voice for the underdog and the unrepresented in opposition to mainstream news media". Indeed, in Sweden, research shows that the populist far-right party Sweden Democrats is, relative to their size, successful in generating traffic on social media platforms (see e.g. Larsson 2017; 2020). Recent measurements on reach and engagement in the Swedish social media sphere show a far right-wing and populist right-wing dominance on all platforms except for Instagram (Maktbarometern 2025).

Assuming that transformation (mediatization) is negotiated within fields, and that fields interact with one another – that capital produced by the journalistic field (mass media visibility) and in the "digital field" (Verweibe & Hagemann 2025) (social media visibility) is valuable in other fields, particularly the political field, we end up in a different focus compared to the "adaptation to media logics" argument that prevail in previous research. Vast networks on social media and mass media visibility may effectively reproduce existing power inequalities. Precisely how social agents' media visibility in the political field is linked to political capital (and other oppositions in the field) nonetheless remains an empirical question (RQ2a, RQ2b).

Data and method

Data collection and variables

To study institutionalized elite politics as a field of positions, and in a second step to analyse mass media visibility and social media following in relation to positions in this field, we analysed data collected through elite prosopography (Lunding et al. 2020). Prosopography has clear affinities to field theory (Broady 2002). It involves using available repositories to collect data on individuals belonging to the same field with the aim of grasping the dynamics of the field (Broady 2002). It goes without saying that in the study of elites, this method constitutes an attractive alternative to surveys and other methods that presuppose personal access to the elites in question (Lunding et al. 2020). Our prosopography was realized by way of a content analysis of material from online, publicly available, repositories, mainly the official website of the Swedish parliament (www.riksdagen.se), social media platforms, and the media database Retriever.

The work on collecting data on the 349 Swedish MPs and the 24 ministers of the government formed after the 2022 national elections took place between September 29, 2025, and January 15, 2026. To be able to analyse the overarching structure of the field of elite politics, we used five variables measuring different aspects of political capital. *Years in parliament (YIP)* denotes the total number of years that a given MP has had a mandate in the Riksdag (M = 7.10, SD = 5.18). *Additional political experience (APE)* is the total number of years of experience in political tasks outside the regular mandate as MP, including e.g. work in the War Delegation, the Nordic Council etc. (M = 2.42, SD = 3.86). *Field activity (FA)* is the sum of an MP's activity in parliament, including motions, debates, speeches in the Chamber, Q&A:s, interpellations, and written questions to the Government (M = 335, SD = 350). *Chairmanship (CH)* is a binary variable separating MPs who have held positions as chairman or vice-chairman (25.2 %) in any of the committees of the parliament from those who have not (74.8 %). The variable *Minister* separates agents who have held position as minister in government (10.5%) from those who have not (895%).

To also account for political standpoints, we used two variables. The variable *subjective left-right-scale* draws from data from Swedish public service media's political survey leading up to the elections of 2022 (https://valkompass.svt.se/2022/svar/riksdag). Candidates were asked to position themselves on a five-point left vs. right ideological scale. 93 out of 373 politicians (25 %) were, however, not included in the survey. To code these missing values, we relied on the mode values of their respective party colleagues and coded them as such. *Standing in parliament (SIP)* uses information on party affiliation to separate the governmental parties (M, KD and L) from both the supporting party of SD and the opposition (V, C, G, and S). The distribution of these variables is found in Table 1.

Table 1. Active variables for constructing the Swedish field of elite politics.

Active variable	**Categories**	**N**	**%**
Left-right scale	Right ++	138	37
	Right +	65	17.4
	Centre	27	7.2
	Left +	82	22
	Left ++	61	16.4
Standing in parliament (SIP)	Government	129	36.4
	SD	71	19
	Opposition	173	46.4
Years in politics (YIP)	0-3 years	137	36.7
	4-6 years	54	14.5
	7-11 years	41	11
	>11 years	141	37.8
Additional political experience (APE)	0 years	218	58.4
	1-3 years	68	18.2
	4-7 years	48	12.9

	>7 years	39	10.5
Field activity (FA)	0-110 counts	92	24.7
	111-250 counts	105	28.2
	251-500 counts	102	27.3
	>500 counts	74	19.8
Chairmanship (CH)	Chairman	94	25.2
	Not chairman	279	74.8
Minister	Minister	39	10.5
	Not minister	334	89.5

We used six variables to study both mass media and social media visibility. *Mass media visibility (MMV)* uses data from the media archive Retriever and describes the sum of appearances of an MP across Swedish news desks including, the press, radio and television, as well as industry magazines between 1 January of 2022 and 15 September 2025 (M = 1108, SD = 3110). *Social media following* includes five different variables: no. of followers on X (M = 6660, SD = 23378), no. of followers on Facebook (M = 5075, SD = 15278), no. of followers on TikTok (M = 976, SD = 6041), no. of followers on Instagram (M = 5332, SD = 23715) and, lastly, no. of followers on LinkedIn (M = 950, SD = 3065). These were recoded into variables holding five categories (to avoid skewing our MCA which requires at least 5% of observations in every category). Table 2 shows the categories and distribution within these variables.

Table 2. Supplementary variables.

Supplementary variable	Categories	N	%
Mass media visibility (MMV)	0-79 counts	70	18.8
	80-173 counts	70	18.8
	174-304 counts	70	18.8
	305-999 counts	104	27.9
	>999 counts	59	15.8
Nr. of followers on X	0-124 followers	144	38.6
	125-993 followers	69	18.5
	994-3665 followers	42	11.3
	3666-9999 followers	76	20.5
	>9999 followers	42	11.3
Nr. of followers on Facebook	0-816 followers	71	19
	817-1500 followers	77	20.6
	1501-4200 followers	141	37.8
	4201-9999 followers	57	15.3
	>9999 followers	27	7.2
Nr. of followers on Tiktok	0 followers	289	77.5
	1-330 followers	19	5.1
	331-915 followers	21	5.6
	916-2500 followers	22	5.9
	>2500 followers	22	5.9
Nr. of followers on Instagram	0-159 followers	70	18.8
	160-607 followers	70	18.8
	608-1874 followers	142	38.1
	1875-8000 followers	59	15.8
	>8000 followers	32	8.6

Nr. of followers on LinkedIn	0-32 followers	142	38.1
	33-401 followers	69	18.5
	402-952 followers	71	19
	954-1750 followers	47	12.6
	>1750 followers	44	11.8

Intercoder tests between two coders (Cohen's kappa) were conducted on a random sample that included nine percent of the full, recoded, material. These tests yielded satisfactory to excellent results for all variables (Table A1).

Analytic approach

Bourdieu's field theory is tied to correspondence analysis, since this method allows the study of spaces of positions relative to one another (Bourdieu 1991a). MCA extracts dimensions from oppositions in categorical variables and these are represented as axes in a multidimensional space. Supplementary variables can then be positioned in the space (without affecting its structure) (see Lindell [2025] for a conceptual introduction with examples). We used our variables on political capital and ideology as active variables to construct a statistical representation of the Swedish field of institutionalized elite politics (RQ1). The variables measuring media visibility and social media following were set as supplementary, to study their positions in the field (RQ2a). MCA also allows identifying clusters in data, in our case groups of agents that share properties and overall positions in the field. After identifying groups, or clusters, in the field a variable was generated within which the categories/values correspond to the clusters. This variable was used as an independent variable in regression models to study how overarching positions in the field (clusters) predict high media visibility and large social media networks when controlling for other factors (RQ2b). Age (M = 50,

SD = 11), gender (55% men, 45% women), and university degree (56% with degree, 44% without) were control variables.

This study is well set up to shed light on how degrees of media visibility interplay with the power dynamics and position-takings inside the field. While the concept of political capital is open to many interpretations, our variables capture degrees of both personal-embodied (e.g. seniority in the field through experience and activity) and delegated capital (e.g. chairmanship, having been minister, and governance) (Kauppi 2003), as well as key ideological standpoints. Our media variables capture the broad differences in visibility in the mass media and on social media which are guided by the networked logics implying that size of following is central (Van Dijck & Poell 2013; Klinger & Svensson 2015). Limitations include the fact that we cannot, like in surveys and interviews, grasp detailed position-takings (e.g. attitudes or feelings towards social media). We are also unable to differentiate between positive vs. negative framing. Focusing on following and appearances in mass media implies that we deal with proxies of "recognizability" (Driessens 2013). We cannot consider the cases of extremely large social media following (this is the case for relatively few agents, and extreme values have been incorporated in larger variable categories) nor actual impact on social media.

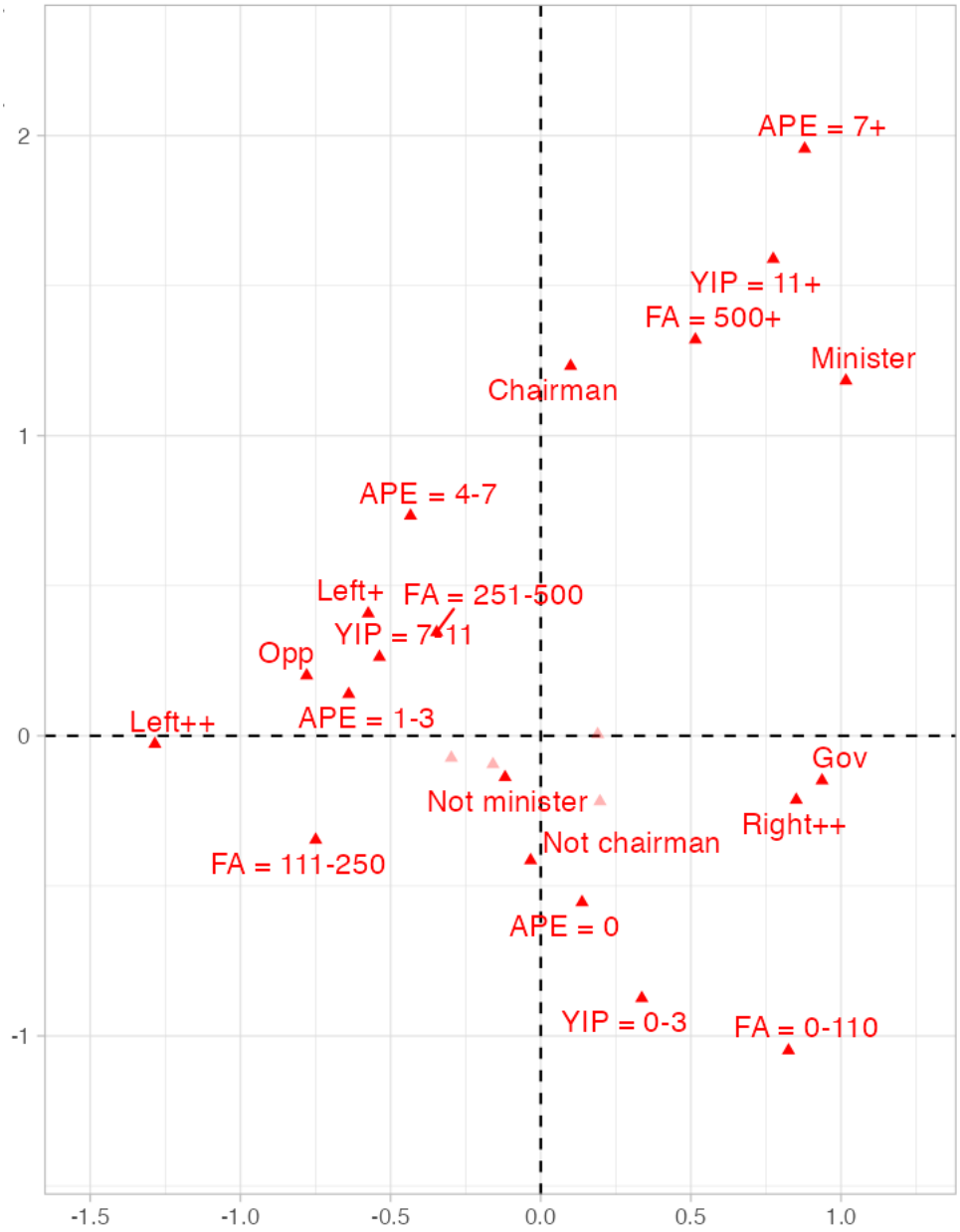
Results

Our concern with how social media following and mass media visibility connect to positions in the Swedish field of elite politics requires an overarching analysis of the field in question (RQ1). Figure 1 shows the MCA of our active variables and a statistical representation of the Swedish field of elite politics. Focus is put on the twenty variable categories that contribute most to axis 1 and 2. Axis 1 (vertical) mainly captures differences in access to field-specific capital. At the top, we find senior and well-experienced agents in the field, chairs of committees, former and current ministers. At the bottom, we find newcomers and politicians with less field-specific capital (cf. Hjellbrekke & Korsnes 2019; Lebaron & Bonnet 2019). Axis 2 (horizontal)

mainly describes an ideological opposition between socialism (left-hand side) and conservatism and liberalism (right-hand side). Table A2 showcases how each individual active category contributes to both axes. At the general level the structure of the field is made up one opposition between high vs. low political capital, and one between right-wing ideologies/the government and left-wing ideologies/the opposition. The highest form of political capital studied here, being a minister, is drawn not only to the top of the space but also to the right-hand side, where right-wing ideologies prevail. This is because the 24 ministers of the government formed after the 2022 election were liberal/conservative (M, L, KD).

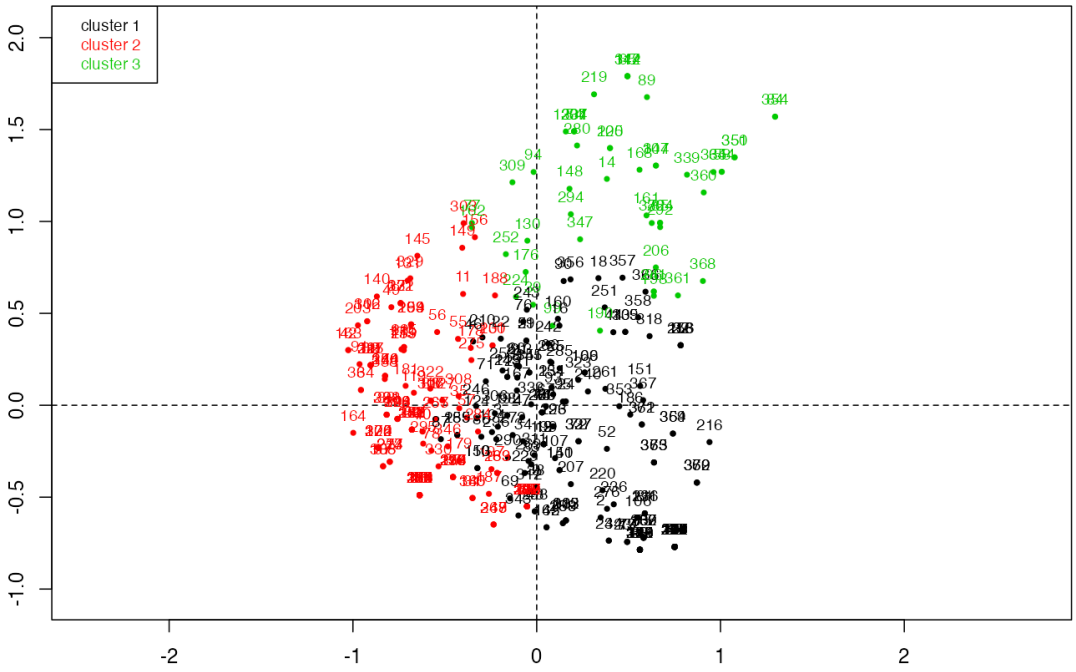
A cluster analysis allows us to empirically summarize broad positions in the field – i.e. to identify groups wherein agents share field-specific properties. Figure 2 illustrates three clusters identified. Cluster 1 is constituted mainly by conservative and liberal agents while cluster 2 includes politicians from the Left Party, the Social Democrats, The Centre Party and the Green Party. Cluster 3 captures an elite within the field. This cluster is characterized, above all, by the fact its members have amassed significant volumes of political capital. It thus includes party leaders (such as Jimmie Åkesson, SD), the prime minister Ulf Kristersson (M), ministers from older governments and leaders of the opposition (Magdalena Andersson, S), experienced Sweden Democrats such as Mattias Karlsson and, of course, members of the 2022 liberal-conservative government.

Figure 1. The Swedish field of elite politics, MCA, axis 1 and 2 (contrib 20).



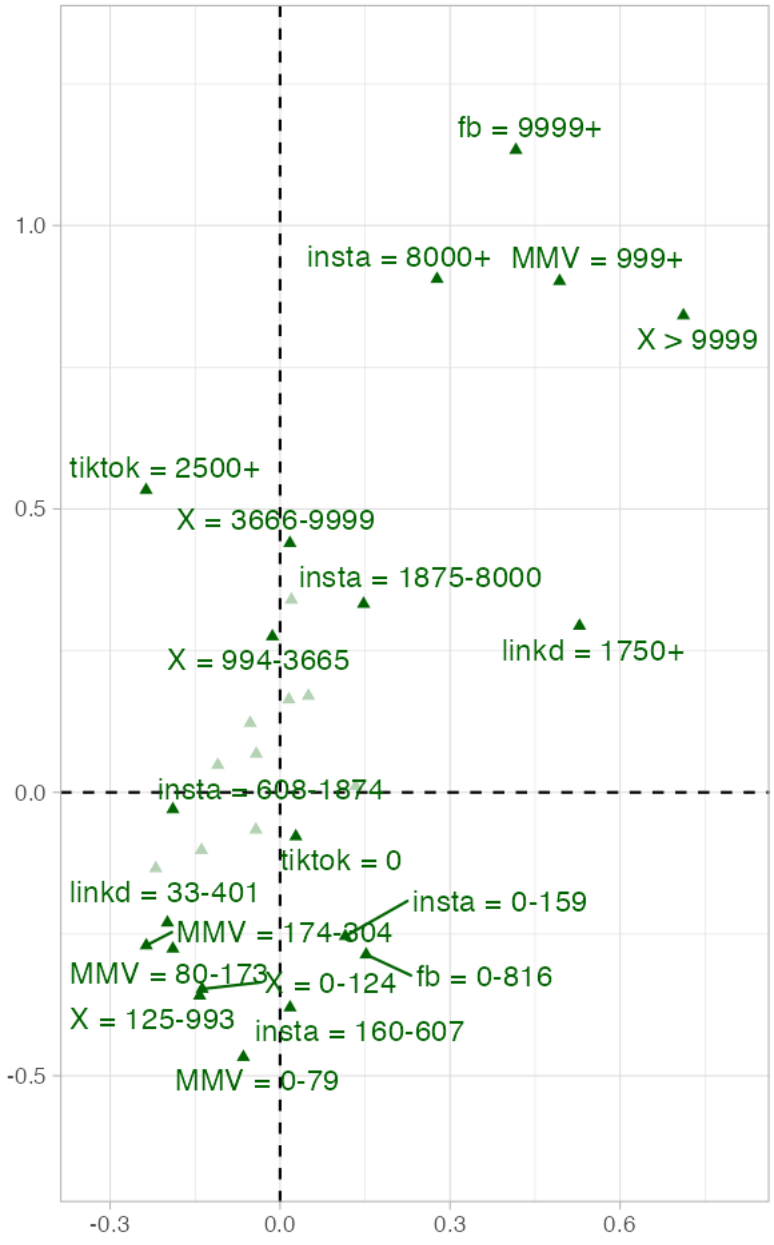
Note: Axis 1 explains 16% of the variation in the active variables, axis 2 explains 12.8% (not Benzécri-adjusted). FA = Field activity, YIP = Years in parliament, APE = Additional political experience.

Figure 2. Three clusters in the Swedish field of elite politics, axis 1 and 2.



Having analysed the main structure of the field, we now turn to how social media following and mass media visibility connect to different positions in the field (RQ2a). Figure 3 plots the 20 supplementary categories that are best represented on the two axes identified above. We draw two main conclusions from this analysis. First, frequently appearing in the media spotlight and having amassed large followings on X, Facebook, and Instagram clearly connect to levels of political capital (these categories are located at the top of the map at around 1 deviation from the centre of the map, indicating strong associations with axis 1). More political capital equals more media visibility. Second, there exist ideological differences (shown along axis 2) in terms of the platforms from which politicians gather their digital flocks: right-leaning politicians tend to have more followers on X and on LinkedIn, while left-leaning individuals have comparably more followers on TikTok.

Figure 3. Mass media visibility and social media following as supplementary variables in the Swedish field of elite politics, axis 1 and 2 (cos^2 20).



We now focus on whether the associations between field-specific positions and mass media visibility and following on social media remain when we control for factors that do not explicitly connect to the field itself, that is, demographic differences in age and gender and educational capital (RQ2b). Tables 3-8 show the outcome of logistic

regressions that predict the odds of relatively high mass media visibility and large social media followings. To account for unique "field effects", we include our clusters (see Figure 2) as an independent variable. Important to note here is that an odds ratio below 1 indicates a negative association between the independent and the dependent variable. For instance, belonging to cluster 2 (left-leaning opposition) is associated with a substantially lower odds ($OR = 0.112$, $p < 0.001$) of having appeared in the mass media relatively frequently, compared to cluster 3 (the elites). This may be interpreted as cluster 2 having about 88,8% lower odds of appearing relatively frequently in the mass media compared to the elite cluster. By contrast, values above 1 indicate a prediction that the odds of an event happening increase with higher values in the independent variable.

The results displayed in Table 3-8 echo our previous analyses in that elite positions in the field (cluster 3) imply more visibility and social media following overall. However, we learn that this association holds when we control for age, gender, and education. In some instances, the analyses highlight the importance of educational capital in attaining media visibility, and all analyses point to the fact that young politicians are more visible than older ones, particularly on social media.

In predicting mass media visibility, results suggest that chances of visibility are higher in the elite cluster compared to the other clusters, and that well-educated MPs are more visible than MPs without tertiary degrees. Chances of a large X following are higher among younger MPs with university degrees, and among members of the elite segment of the field. For TikTok, young age and belonging to the field's elite increase chances of having many followers, although this association is not significant when it comes to the difference between the left-leaning opposition and the elites. On Instagram, young MPs with high volumes of political capital have more followers than others. The number of followers on Facebook is predicted to increase with younger age, high education and high volumes of political capital. Lastly, LinkedIn following is expected to increase with younger age, higher education and elite positions in the field, although the difference between the liberal/conservative cluster and the elite cluster is not significant.

Table 3. Predicting MPs' mass media visibility (>305 times). Logistic regression (odds ratios).

	p	Odds-ratio	95 % CI Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	0.050	0.980	0.9604	1.000
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.776	0.937	0.6001	1.464
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	0.009	1.815	1.1616	2.837
Cluster:				
Cons/liberal cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.206	0.0999	0.426
Leftist cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.112	0.0519	0.242
Nagelkerke R^2 = .146				

Table 4. Predicting followings on X (>3665 followers). Logistic regression (odds ratios).

	p	Odds-ratio	95 % CI Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	<.001	0.9476	0.9219	0.974
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.323	1.3273	0.7569	2.327
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	<.001	3.1215	1.7227	5.656
Cluster:				
Cons/liberal cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.1465	0.0709	0.303
Leftist cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.0534	0.0222	0.129
Nagelkerke R^2 = .255				

Table 5. Predicting followings on TikTok (>916 followers). Logistic regression (odds ratios).

	p	Odds-ratio	95 % CI Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	<.001	0.943	0.9120	0.975
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.098	0.567	0.2896	1.110
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	0.884	1.051	0.5381	2.054
Cluster:				
Cons/liberal cluster (Ref: Elites)	0.003	0.243	0.0953	0.621
Leftist cluster (Ref: Elites)	0.084	0.451	0.1827	1.114
Nagelkerke R^2 = .110				

Table 6. Predicting followings on Instagram (>1875 followers). Logistic regression (odds ratios).

			95 % CI	
	p	Odds-ratio	Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	<.001	0.940	0.9158	0.964
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.370	0.789	0.4704	1.324
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	0.106	1.539	0.9122	2.596
Cluster:				
Cons/liberal cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.170	0.0831	0.348
Leftist cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.188	0.0885	0.397
Nagelkerke R^2 = .166				

Table 7. Predicting followings on Facebook (>4200 followers). Logistic regression (odds ratios).

			95 % CI	
	p	Odds-ratio	Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	0.021	0.972	0.950	0.996
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.465	0.829	0.501	1.372
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	0.046	1.685	1.010	2.813
Cluster:				
Cons/liberal cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.282	0.144	0.553
Leftist cluster (Ref: Elites)	<.001	0.213	0.102	0.444
Nagelkerke R^2 = .094				

Table 8. Predicting followings on LinkedIn (>953 followers). Logistic regression (odds ratios).

			95 % CI	
	p	Odds-ratio	Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	0.014	0.971	0.949	0.994
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.527	0.851	0.516	1.403
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	<.001	2.660	1.568	4.512
Cluster:				
Cons/liberal cluster (Ref: Elites)	0.675	0.859	0.422	1.749
Leftist cluster (Ref: Elites)	0.030	0.420	0.192	0.919
Nagelkerke R^2 = .094				

Answering our research questions, pointing to how degrees of media visibility follow levels political capital, raises the question on the convertibility between visibility capital and political capital. Indeed, high levels of political capital is converted into visibility without much "effort of transformation" (Bourdieu 1986, p. 252) since journalists report on those wielding political power, and since the electorate is

interested in its representatives. The reverse – the extent to which visibility can be converted into political capital – is not as straightforward (as shown by e.g. Davis & Seymour, 2010; Watts, 2019). Within the context of the present study, it is nonetheless possible to begin to uncover this relationship. In Table 9 we study the extent to which the forms of media visibility that most clearly connect to high levels of political capital (X, Instagram, Facebook and mass media [Figure 3]) are estimated to increase chances of being granted political capital (chairmanship of a committee) by peers. Interestingly, the effects of visibility on the platform X and in the mass media yield significant and positive effects, alongside seniority in the field ($OR = 1.2413$, $p < 0.001$). A politician that appears frequently in the mass media is predicted to be about three times ($OR = 3.1237$, $p < 0.001$) as likely to be elected to chair a parliamentary committee by his or her peers. The same pattern holds for X, as politicians with many followers on the platform are estimated to be twice ($OR = 2.2065$, $p = < 0.05$) as likely to be elected as chair. Other variables (age, gender, education, and high levels of visibility on Instagram and Facebook) yield non-significant effects. While we are unable to exhaust this relationship here (stressing that we deal with correlations rather than causality, and that future research needs to be able to demarcate temporal dynamics [e.g. Åkerlund 2025]) we arrive at a hypothesis on the interexchangeability between political capital and visibility capital in the political field.

Table 9. Predicting MPs' odds of being elected to chair a parliament committee. Logistic regression (odds ratios).

			95 % CI	
	p	Odds-ratio	Lower	Upper
Age (25–79)	0.495	0.9898	0.96105	1.019
Man (Ref: Woman)	0.149	1.5419	0.85643	2.776
Uni. degree (Ref: No degree)	0.283	1.3986	0.75841	2.579
Years in parlament (0–29)	<.001	1.2413	1.16486	1.323
MMV_binary:				
MMV >= 305 – 0	<.001	3.1237	1.68561	5.789
X binary:				
X >= 3665 – 0	0.034	2.2065	1.06145	4.587
Insta_binary:				
Insta >= 1875 – 0	0.860	1.0720	0.49530	2.320

Fb_binary:				
Fb >= 4200 – 0	0.916	1.0387	0.51355	2.101
Nagelkerke R^2 = .400				

Conclusion and Discussion

We have conceptualized and empirically analysed the Swedish parliament as a social field and studied how MPs' and ministers' levels of mass media visibility and social media following connect to positions in this field. Our Bourdieusian approach constitutes one way to address blind spots in the literature on the mediatization of politics, specifically the tendencies to leave the political side of the analysis "unspecified" (Strömbäck & Esser 2014, p. 14) and to focus on politicians' adaptation to media logics. We relied on MCA to construct a representation of the field of institutionalized elite politics, showing that the main forces of differentiation include ideological differences (left-wing vs. right-wing) and the unequal distribution of field-specific capital (RQ1). We then studied how mass media visibility and social media following connect to positions in the field (RQ2a and RQ2b).

Echoing a range of theoretical traditions in media studies, including media effects (Lazarsfeld & Merton 1948), news value theory (Vos & van Aelst 2018) and research on journalistic sources (Strömbäck & Nord 2006) our findings support the contention that the mass media, or more specifically, the institutional norms of the journalistic field that guide journalistic practice and grant visibility to politicians, reproduce political capital. The level of politicians' appearances in the mass media closely follows the distribution of political capital. Regarding social media, ideological differences emerge in the types of platforms from which politicians attract large social media followings. Right-wing MPs gather more followers from X where visibility is largely connected to illiberalism and far-right discourse (X) (Magalhães et al. 2025) and LinkedIn, which is associated with professional branding and networking. Left-leaning MPs tend to have more followers on TikTok, where female users outnumber male users and the number of followers is less important than algorithmically geared virality (which, in effect, implies that "impact" or overall "visibility" on this platform is less

connected to sheer number of followers). However, like mass media visibility, politicians' number of followers on social media depends on their political capital (see e.g. Kruikemeier et al. 2018; Poljak 2025). This seemingly contrasts the notion of an "elective affinity" between social media and populism (Gerbaudo 2018) and measurements on reach and impact in the Swedish social media sphere (Maktbarometern 2025). It must be stressed, however, that we have exclusively focused on the field of institutionalized elite politics. In Sweden, a significant portion of the far-right opinion leaders with vast social media impact (e.g. former moderate MP Hanif Bali, neo-liberal influencer Henrik Jönsson and alternative far-right media entrepreneur Chang Frick) remain outside the field of institutionalized elite politics. And, unlike rankings of the five or ten profiles with the highest social media impact we have focused on overarching patterns. The correlation between political capital and social media visibility also highlights that an impactful social media presence may be facilitated by organizational resources (e.g. the employment of social media managers) which are greater among established agents. This echoes previous observations on the unequal access to media in the political field (Molotch & Lester 1974).

An overarching conclusion is that visibility is absorbed into existing inequalities in the distribution of field-specific capital. This echoes previous works that stress the convertibility between media visibility (or "celebrity capital" [Driessens 2013]) and political capital (Davis & Seymour 2010; Heinich 2012; Chadwick 2017; Watts 2019; Maurer & Riedl 2021). Against this backdrop, we find it fruitful for scholars concerned with the mediatization of politics to supplement the notion of media logic with that of visibility capital (Heinich 2012; Driessens 2013; Watts 2019) that operate in the field of politics, alongside political capital. Rather than studying adaptation to content characteristics or media affordances, this puts focus on the convertibility of capitals that are produced in different social fields with particular logics of practice (in our case the political field, the journalistic field [Champagne 2005] and the digital field [Verweibe & Hagemann 2025]). While mediated scandals or "cancel culture" may swiftly destroy non-embodied forms of political capital (cf. Thompson 2000; Åkerlund 2025), the correlations between political capital and visibility suggest that visibility is

an essential component in hierarchizing the political field. It follows that mediatization can designate the increased integration of media across social domains without fundamentally transforming the structures of those domains (Eskjær 2017). Still, we have observed connections between age and media visibility, especially for social media following, where younger MPs tend to have more followers. If it is true that media visibility generates political capital, we are faced with questions regarding transformations of the field since young and media savvy MPs may, to a greater degree than their older peers, successfully transform their visibility into political capital and power.

We end by highlighting that conversion costs associated with media visibility differ between fields. Despite a specific doxa, peculiar logics of practice and the power they exert on other fields, institutionalized elite politics in liberal democracies are heteronomous microcosms in the sense that they depend, among other things, on citizenries for mandates. In such fields, visibility functions as field-specific capital that closely mirrors degrees of political capital, and visibility is highest among the field's elites, as we have shown. Although the platformization of society may imply a general movement towards "digital heteronomy" (Lindblom et al. 2024) whereby fields become structurally more similar, not least due to the increasing value of visibility and engagement in the attention economy (Lundahl 2022; Lindell 2025), in more autonomous fields such as (regions of) artistic fields and academia, the value of media visibility may decrease as we move into more autonomous and elite regions (cf. Bourdieu's discussion on "media intellectuals" [1999]). In heteronomous fields, media visibility readily translates into field-specific capital – a social media star gets to host a popular television show and start a career in broadcasting, a reality-TV celebrity gets voted into parliament, an influencer becomes a successful businessperson. In highly autonomous fields, by contrast, the conversion of media visibility (which per definition involves some form of interaction with other fields) to field-specific capital more likely implies a conversion in the literal sense, that is, an actual loss of field-specific capital. The forms and types of visibility are important in autonomous fields. The dynamics of capital conversion and how fields are affected by visibility are nonetheless complex,

not least since visibility not only generates but also destroys capital. We thus call on future research to study how forms of visibility operate within different, more or less autonomous, social fields.

References

Abu-Ayyash, S. (2024). Mediatized politics in Palestine: Online platforms' influence on framing of politicians' messages. *Communication and the Public*, *9*(1), 100-113.

Altheide, D. L. (2004). Media logic and political communication. *Political Communication*, *21*(3), 293-296.

Altheide DL and Snow RP (1979) *Media Logic*. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE.

Arter, D. (2004). Parliamentary democracy in Scandinavia. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *57*(3), 581-600.

Asp, K., & Esaiasson, P. (1996). The Modernization of Swedish Campaigns: Individualization, Professionalization, and Medialization. In D. L. Swanson & P. Mancini (Eds.), Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences (pp. 73–90). Westport: Praeger.

Attencourt, B. (2024). How to study the stability of interstitial spaces: an analysis based on the case of the visibility of French intellectuals. *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique*, *162*(1), 182-211.

Barrling Hermansson, K. (2004). *Partikulturer. Kollektiva självbilder och normer i Sveriges riksdag* [Party Cultures. Collective Self-Images and Cultural Norms in the Swedish Parliament]. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital, in Richardson, J.G. (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education,* 241-258. New York & Greenwood: Greenwood press.

Bourdieu, P. (1991a). Meanwhile, I have come to know all the diseases of sociological understanding. In P. Bourdieu, J.-C. Chamboredon, & J.-C. Passeron (Eds.), *The craft of sociology: Epistemological preliminaries* (pp. 247–259). Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Bourdieu, P. (1991b). *Language and Symbolic Power.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The rules of art: Genesis and structure of the literary field*. Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1999). *On Television*. New York: New PR.

Brants, K., & Van Praag, P. (2006). Signs of media logic half a century of political communication in the Netherlands. *Javnost-the public*, *13*(1), 25-40.

Broady, D. (2002). French prosopography: definition and suggested readings. *Poetics*, *30*(5-6), 381-385.

Casero-Ripollés, A., Feenstra, R. A., & Tormey, S. (2016). Old and new media logics in an electoral campaign: The case of Podemos and the two-way street

mediatization of politics. *The international journal of press/politics*, *21*(3), 378-397.

Chadwick, A. (2017). *The Hybrid Media System: Politics and Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Champagne, P. (2005). The "double dependency": The journalistic field between politics and markets. In Benson, R., & Neveu, E. (Eds.). (2005). *Bourdieu and the journalistic field, pp.* 48-63. Cambridge. Polity.

Couldry, N. (2003). Media meta-capital: Extending the range of Bourdieu's field theory. *Theory and Society*, 32(5–6), 653–677.

Couldry, N. (2014). Mediatization and the future of field theory. In Lundby, K (ed.) *Mediatization of communication*, 227-245. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Davis, A., & Seymour, E. (2010). Generating forms of media capital inside and outside a field: the strange case of David Cameron in the UK political field. *Media, Culture & Society*, *32*(5), 739-759.

Driessens, O. (2013). Celebrity capital: redefining celebrity using field theory. *Theory and society*, *42*(5), 543-560.

Elmelund-Præstekær, C., Hopmann, D. N., & Nørgaard, A. S. (2011). Does mediatization change MP-media interaction and MP attitudes toward the media? Evidence from a longitudinal study of Danish MPs. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *16*(3), 382-403.

Eskjær, M. F. (2017). Mediatization as structural couplings: Adapting to media logic (s). In Thimm, C., Anastasiadis, M & Einspänner-Pflock, J (eds.) *Media logic (s) revisited: Modelling the interplay between media institutions, media technology and societal change* (pp. 85-109). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Esser, F. (2013). Mediatization as a challenge: Media logic versus political logic. In *Democracy in the Age of Globalization and Mediatization* (pp. 155-176). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Esser, F., & Strömbäck, J. (Eds.). (2014). *Mediatization of politics: Understanding the transformation of Western democracies*. Springer.

Flew, T., & Iosifidis, P. (2020). Populism, globalisation and social media. *International Communication Gazette*, *82*(1), 7-25.

Gerbaudo, P. (2018). Social media and populism: an elective affinity?. *Media, culture & society*, 40(5), 745-753.

Haßler, J., Maurer, M., & Oschatz, C. (2014). Media logic and political logic online and offline: The case of climate change communication. Journalism Practice, 8(3), 326-341.

Heinich, N. (2012). *De la visibilité: Excellence et singularité en régime médiatique.* Paris: Editions Gallimard.

Hepp, A. (2019). *Deep mediatization*. London, New York: Routledge.

Hjarvard, S. (2008). The mediatization of society: A theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change. *Nordicom review*, *29*(2).

Hjellbrekke, J & Korsnes, O. (2019). Field analysis, MCA and class specific analysis: Analysing structural homologies between, and variety within subfields in the

Norwegian field of power. In: Blasius, J., Lebaron, F., Le Roux, B & Schmitz, A (eds.) *Empirical Investigations of Social Space*, pp. 43-60. Cham: Springer.

Jansson, A. (2015). Using Bourdieu in critical mediatization research: Communicational doxa and osmotic pressures in the field of UN organizations. *MedieKultur: Journal of media and communication research*, *31*(58), 13-29.

Jensen, K. B. (2013). Definitive and sensitizing conceptualizations of mediatization. *Communication Theory*, 23(3), 203–222. doi:10.1111/comt.12014

Jost, P. (2023). How politicians adapt to new media logic. A longitudinal perspective on accommodation to user-engagement on Facebook. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, *20*(2), 184-197.

Kalsnes, B. (2019). Examining the populist communication logic: Strategic use of social media in populist political parties in Norway and Sweden. *Central European Journal of Communication*, *12*(23), 187-205.

Kauppi, N. (2003). Bourdieu's political sociology and the politics of European integration. *Theory and society*, *32*(5), 775-789.

Klinger, U., & Svensson, J. (2015). The emergence of network media logic in political communication: A theoretical approach. *New media & society*, *17*(8), 1241-1257.

Kruikemeier, S., Gattermann, K., & Vliegenthart, R. (2018). Understanding the dynamics of politicians' visibility in traditional and social media. *The Information Society*, *34*(4), 215-228.

Larsson, A. O. (2017). Going viral? Comparing parties on social media during the 2014 Swedish election. *Convergence*, *23*(2), 117-131.

Larsson, A. O. (2020). Right-wingers on the rise online: Insights from the 2018 Swedish elections. *New Media & Society*, *22*(12), 2108-2127.

Lazarsfeld, P. F., & Merton, R. K. (1948). *Mass communication, popular taste and organized social action* (pp. 95-118). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, College Division.

Lebaron, F & Bonnet, P. (2019). Class-specific analysis: Methodological and sociological reflections. In: Blasius, J., Lebaron, F., Le Roux, B & Schmitz, A (eds.) *Empirical Investigations of Social Space*, pp. 359-376. Cham: Springer.

Lindblom, T., Lindell, J., & Gidlund, K. (2024). Digitalizing the journalistic field: Journalists' views on changes in journalistic autonomy, capital and habitus. *Digital Journalism*, *12*(6), 894-913.

Lindell, J. (2025). *Bourdieusian Media Studies*. London, New York: Routledge.

Lindvall, J., Bäck, H., Dahlström, C., Naurin, E., & Teorell, J. (2020). Sweden's parliamentary democracy at 100. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *73*(3), 477-502.

Lundby, K. (2009). Media Logic: Looking for Social Interaction. In K. Lundby (Ed.), Mediatization: Concept, Changes, Consequences (pp. 101–119). New York: Peter Lang.

Lundahl, O. (2022). Algorithmic meta-capital: Bourdieusian analysis of social power through algorithms in media consumption. *Information, Communication & Society*, *25*(10), 1440-1455.

Lunding, J. A., Ellersgaard, C. H., & Larsen, A. G. (2020). The craft of elite prosopography. In Denord, F., Palme, M & Réau, B (eds.) *Researching elites and power: Theory, methods, analyses* (pp. 57-70). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Magalhães, J. C., Iglesias Keller, C., & Gorwa, R. (2025). The Great Sysop: Elon Musk, X, and the emergence of platform illiberalism. *New Media & Society*, 14614448261424889.

Maktbaromentern 2025. (2025). *Maktbarometern 2025: En kartläggning av makt i våra största digitala kanaler* [The Power Barometer 2025: Mapping Power in our Biggest Digital Channels]. https://medieakademin.se/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Maktbarometern-2025.pdf

Maurer, P., & Riedl, A. (2021). Why bite the hand that feeds you? Politicians' and journalists' perceptions of common conflicts. *Journalism*, *22*(11), 2855-2872.

Mazzoleni, G., & Schulz, W. (1999). Mediatization of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy? *Political Communication*, 16(3), 247–261.

Molotch, H., & Lester, M. (1974). News as purposive behavior: On the strategic use of routine events, accidents, and scandals. *American sociological review*, 101-112.

Nord, L., & Grusell, M. (2021). Media and politics in Sweden. In E. Skogerbø, Ø. Ihlen, N. N. Kristensen, & L. Nord (Eds.), Power, communication, and politics in the Nordic countries (pp. 113–132). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg. https://doi.org/10.48335/9789188855299-6

Nölleke, D., Scheu, A. M., & Birkner, T. (2021). The other side of mediatization: Expanding the concept to defensive strategies. *Communication Theory*, *31*(4), 737-757.

Parliament of Sweden. (2025). https://www.riksdagen.se/en/members-and-parties/the-parties-in-the-riksdag/

Poljak, Ž. (2025). Give the media what they need: Negativity as a media access tool for politicians. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *30*(3), 727-751.

Postill, J. (2018). Populism and social media: a global perspective. *Media, culture & society*, *40*(5), 754-765.

Strömbäck, J. (2008). Four phases of mediatization: An analysis of the mediatization of politics. *The international journal of press/politics*, *13*(3), 228-246.

Strömbäck, J., & Nord, L. W. (2006). Do politicians lead the tango? A study of the relationship between Swedish journalists and their political sources in the context of election campaigns. *European journal of communication*, *21*(2), 147-164.

Strömbäck, J & Esser, F. (2014) The mediatization of politics: Towards a theoretical framework. In: Esser, F., & Strömbäck, J. (Eds.), *Mediatization of politics: Understanding the transformation of Western democracies*, pp. 3-28. Springer.

Thompson, J. B. (2000). *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age.* Cambridge: Polity.

Van Dijck, J., & Poell, T. (2013). Understanding social media logic. *Media and communication*, *1*(1), 2-14.

Verwiebe, R., & Hagemann, S. (2025). Bourdieu revisited: new forms of digital capital–emergence, reproduction, inequality of distribution. *Information, Communication & Society*, *28*(11), 1861-1883.

Vos, D., & Van Aelst, P. (2018). Does the political system determine media visibility of politicians? A comparative analysis of political functions in the news in sixteen countries. *Political Communication*, *35*(3), 371-392.

Watts, E. (2019). *Celebrities as political representatives: explaining the exchangeability of celebrity capital in the political field* (Doctoral dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London).

Zulli, D. (2021). Socio-mediated scandals: Theorizing political scandals in a digital media environment. *Communication Theory*, *31*(4), 862-883.

Åkerlund, M. (2025). The co-construction of political scandal in hybrid media: A Swedish case study. *Nordicom Review*, *46*(2), 194-216.

Appendix

Table A1. Results from inter rater tests.

Variable	**Kappa**
Age	1.00
Gender	1.00
Education	0.937
Left-right scale	1.00
Political party	1.00
Years in parliament	1.00
Additional political experience	0.699
Field activity	0.960
Chairman/vice	0.870
Minister	1.00
x_followers	0.896
fb_followers	0.753
insta_followers	0.803

linkedin_followers	0.804
tiktok_followers	0.728
Mass media visibility	0.925

Table A2. Contributions of active categories to axis 1 and 2.

	Dim.1	Dim.2
YIP = 0–3	10.12637	1.9057
YIP = 11+	13.17674	3.9735
YIP = 4–6	0.02140	0.4459
YIP = 7–11	0.93934	4.9918
APE = 0	6.48470	0.5069
APE = 1–3	0.12673	3.4105
APE = 4–7	2.49564	1.1082
APE = 7+	14.42453	3.6983
FA = 0–110	9.77832	7.6884
FA = 111–250	1.22014	7.2368
FA = 251–500	1.17333	1.5034
FA = 500+	12.46597	2.4096
Not chairman	4.64692	0.0386
Chairman	13.79246	0.1145
SD	0.32805	0.3392
Gov	0.27729	13.8924
Opp	0.67509	12.9002
Not minister	0.61637	0.5772
Minister	5.27869	4.9434
Right++	0.60878	12.2652
Right+	1.53e-4	0.2869
Center	0.02353	0.0838

	Dim.1	Dim.2
Left+	1.31500	3.3188
Left++	0.00445	12.3605