

Call for Papers

Media Events, Globalization and Cultural Change

Friday 6th July – Saturday 7th July 2007, University of Bremen

Organiser: Media Sociology Group of the German Communication Association (DGPuK) and Psychology and Public Opinion Section (PPO) of the IAMCR

Conference team: Nick Couldry, Andreas Hepp, Friedrich Krotz

Since Dayan and Katz' groundbreaking study *Media Events*, the 'eventization' of media communication has become an important area of international media and communication studies research. In the early discussions, the implicit assumption was that media events are a form of ritualised mass communication, which offers the opportunity to integrate people into 'rituals' and/or 'celebrations' of national societies. One can call this a ritual view on media events.

However, recent empirical research on media events, globalization and cultural change has demonstrated that this is only one aspect of the phenomenon: Specific kinds of so-called 'ritual media events' may integrate into national rituals (for example, national celebrations), but fail to do so on a global level. Thus, if one understands the 11th September attacks or the last Iraqi war as phenomena that resulted in (global) media events, one has to conclude that these events produced conflict beyond 'rituals'. At the same time, we have new hybrids of 'ritual' and 'commercialised' media events like the Catholic World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany. Here, empirical research has shown that ritual media events are only integrating with regard to certain social groups while being rather disintegrating and conflict-inducing as far as others are concerned.

In addition, one has to take into account that media events are part of popular culture. In times of the differentiation of media technologies and the fragmentation of media landscapes as part of the ongoing process of global deregulation, the 'eventization' of the media is increasingly important for the marketing and everyday appropriation of popular media texts. On the one hand, many Hollywood and Bollywood blockbusters, many TV shows, dailies, reality and talk shows are marketed as media events – which, in the case of formats like Big Brother or Who Wants to be A Millionaire, is done transculturally. On the other hand, 'events' like blockbusters or mediated concert shows offer people an opportunity for joining situative communities in individualised and fragmented societies. This kind of media event, which in many ways differs from the ritual media events described above, could be called a 'popular media event' as it is a main part of present popular culture. It is important to note though that these media events are not just 'made' by the media industry, but articulated in the interaction between media actors and everyday people.

Finally, it has to be assumed that the character and the role of media events will change in relation to foreseeable contextual changes: the strategies of media enterprises are changing as media events become part of their planning, while political forces (including governments) increasingly draw no media spectacle as a strategic tool. The role for the individual is also changing, as people, for example through weblogging, can participate in a different way. Besides, social institutions, politicians and others might be variously involved in this 'eventization'

process.

The international conference “Media Events, Globalization and Cultural Change” will articulate these discussions. Based on empirical research and present theoretical work, its aim is to develop media events theory further in order to understand the role of media events in an increasingly globalised but nevertheless fragmented world marked by conflict.

Papers – both theoretically oriented and/or empirically grounded – are invited on the theme of media events in the context of globalization and cultural change. Topics might include:

- Defining and theorising media events
- Exploring processes of ritualization, as worked out in and around media events
- Empirical studies on media events, their globalization and change
- Studies on the relation of media events and (global) popular culture
- Analysing media events production and consumption
- Everyday appropriation of media events
- Transnational media flows, global media events and the global public sphere
- Ritual media events and the changing nature of religion
- The role of digital media (the internet, weblogs etc.) within media events

Invited keynote speakers are Daniel Dayan, Eric Rothenbuhler and Ingrid Volkmer.

We encourage contributions from different academic perspectives on media events. Please send your abstracts (not more than 300 words) by Sunday 31st March 2007 to:

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