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Introduction

In 1996, an article was published by Bernd Hamm in German on ‘The Reformation as a media event’ (Hamm, 1996). Here, the media event was a more than 400-year old historical occurrence, one that was conceived of as taking place long before most of the media that dominate everyday Western life today existed at all. This research contribution is strikingly different in its approach to the media event from those discussed in the tradition familiar to readers of English-language media studies. The latter has been more concerned with

broadcasting than with other media, more with contemporary history than with the rest of history. The English-language tradition is commonly traced back to a work published only a few years before Hamm's article, Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz' Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History (1992). Dayan and Katz' definition of media events contained many parts, but in this article's context, the key criteria were that media events are 'proclaimed historic' and broadcast live (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 5-9). This work was oriented toward ceremonial events from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, such as the landing on the Moon, the Senate Watergate hearings, the wedding of Diana and Prince Charles, and Anwar Sadat's peace-bringing address to the Knesset in Jerusalem.

Dayan and Katz' notion of a media event was highly restrictive, in effect making it conditional on broadcast technology and limiting it to the post-war period. Hamm's conception of a media event was highly inclusive, on the other hand, suggesting a historical sweep of more than half a century. This article argues for developing the approach suggested by Hamm and by a number of German media historians. It engages critically with the English-language research tradition initiated by Dayan and Katz, and then outlines some core characteristics of what will be called the German approach to media event history. (note 1) Building on research into media events from the Reformation to the present, the article then outlines three key themes for the historically informed study of media events: how to understand the ways temporal acceleration has shaped media events historically; how increasingly pervasive forms of planning have produced over time a notion of the media "pseudo-event"; and how media events have been shaped in varying ways by the dynamic

and shifting relationships between interpersonal and mediated forms of communication.

These themes, it is argued, can best be understood by applying a deep historical perspective – in the sense of one that reaches back to include in principle all media technologies from the diffusion of print in Western societies. By way of conclusion, the article relates its four themes to “mediatisation” – a key concept in current theoretical debate that carries strong assumptions about historical development. The overall aim, then, is to contribute to media event theory by using the arc of modern history from the time examined by Bernd Hamm until today as a key to understanding more fully what a media event is.

The English-language media events tradition

Dayan and Katz' Media Events was written in conscious counterpoint to a then-dominant interest in the uneventful and unexceptional main flow of broadcast output. Its accent was on the 'media' in media event; it had much to say about the former, relatively little about events as a more general phenomenon.

The authors started from a basis in ritual approaches to communication (Carey, 1992; Rothenbuhler, 1998 and 2010) and from an explicitly durkheimian perspective, discussing how media events strengthen solidarity in society. This has since been much criticised and discussed (see e.g. the review in Bolin, 2010), but the book's canonical status has if anything been affirmed in these discussions. In a mixture of appropriation and revision of the concept's reach, the media event framework has been applied also to live news events (e.g.

Blondheim and Liebes, 2015; Muschert and Sumiala, 2012; Nossek, 2008); to a wide range of national cases (e.g. Evans, 2010; Niemeyer, 2011; Ryfe, 1999; Sun, 2001); to global/international events (e.g. Rivenburgh, 2010; Roche, 2000; Seeck and Rantanen, 2014), and to convergent/cross-platform media (e.g. Kjus, 2009; Rothenbuhler, 2010; Author, 2009).

Although largely responsible for introducing the concept of 'media event' into the media studies vernacular, the two authors have not mainly been concerned with policing conceptual boundaries. In later works, they have readily incorporated important types of contemporary events that do not fit their emphasis in Media Events on planned and celebratory media events (see their contributions to Couldry et al, 2010). Daniel Dayan has since sought to incorporate in a broader definition of the media event what he terms agonistic events (such as terror attacks), the attempts in reality TV and 24/7 news to manufacture eventfulness, the proliferation of digital channels and platforms. At the same time, he reiterates the key importance to media events that: "In principle, radio and television are capable of reaching everybody simultaneously and directly" (Dayan, 2010: 27). Perhaps in an acknowledgement of the importance of the recent proliferation of digital platforms and audiences, another influential recent formulation of the media event concept dispenses with broadcasting and instead emphasises the multiplicity in all stages of communicating the media event: 'Media events are certain situated, thickened, centering performances of mediated communication that are focused on a specific thematic core, cross different media products and reach a wide and diverse multiplicity of audiences and participants.' (Couldry et al, 2010: 12).

Here, liveness and broadcasting are helpfully removed from the definition. Still, the general question remains of how the English-language media studies tradition from Dayan and Katz has accommodated history in its treatment of media events. History plays a curiously shadowy role in Dayan and Katz' Media Events. The word is right there in the subtitle, and also features in their comprehensive definition, where it is emphasised that media events are 'proclaimed historic'. This seems to mean that the events are of formative, even sometimes epochal importance to the societies they happen in. At the same time, Media Events is relatively unconcerned with the historical development of media events. In the book subtitle, ('The Live Broadcasting of History'), the term 'history' speaks to a certain societal importance Dayan and Katz ascribe to the events they discuss, not to the way they may be placed within deeper historical trajectories. Their conceptual and modelling approach is derived largely from anthropology, and is characterised by a certain temporal flatness or suspension. There is little by way of interest in historical contingency in what Dayan and Katz write, as has been pointed out among others by Paddy Scannell in a comprehensive critique of Dayan and Katz' book. In his review of their book, Scannell concludes that Media Events in a quite basic sense 'lacks historical depth' (Scannell, 1995: 152).

Scannell's own approach to media events is historically informed, but in the main, the historical forces he engages with, arose broadly at the same time as broadcasting did. Scannell is deeply interested for instance in television's role in shaping a national collective through its affordances for broadcasting live events, and its role in eroding the auratic authority of the persons who preside over events in politics and state life. In his influential discussion, Scannell (1996)

emphasises two closely interconnected features of live broadcasting as keys to their eventfulness: 'double articulation' is his term for broadcasting's ability to join up the time and place of an event and the time and place of telling about it to an audience. This liveness brings such a powerful sense of immediacy and closeness that Scannell speaks of 'presencing'; the audience feels as if being there and somehow directly involved in the event, as it is unfolding. In this research approach, broadcast liveness and eventfulness go hand in hand, and the two are rarely separated, neither on the theoretical nor the analytical level. Such an approach accounts convincingly for live broadcasting's contribution to events. At the same time it tends to leave unanswered the question of how a compelling sense of eventfulness might be built via other and earlier media. Scannell's writing implies, still, that a media event is a broadcast event.

The German-language media history tradition

Generally it has been well established in media-historical research that technological media of mechanical production and distribution played a central role in Western societies as far back as to the 16th century (for a key account of this century, see Eisenstein 2005). If it seems plausible to say that media played an important part in major events in the early modern period, the evidence is incontrovertible for the subsequent period of industrialisation. This evidence has been produced particularly by an important recent body of German scholarship (see particularly Bösch, 2010; Bösch and Schmidt, 2010; Lenger and Nünning 2008). In a summary overview of the available research, Frank Bösch starts by

establishing media events as a phenomenon that encompasses the whole of the modern era. Bösch lumps together key events of the modern era such as the Reformation, the 1789 revolution and the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 with contemporary events such as the 1969 landing on the Moon, arguing that they all 'were based on specific medial structures which transformed these occurrences into events, thereby generating shared collective perceptions and emotions.'

(Bösch, 2010: 1)

In the German-language media history research tradition, it is commonly held that narratives are what make events intelligible, and that media are what makes it possible to communicate these narratives. The tradition is heavily indebted to the conceptual history of Reinhart Koselleck, who emphasises above all the foundational importance of narrative to eventfulness. For acts or happenings to become events, a structure of meaning will have to be applied, and narratives provide such structure. Any act or happening must be narrated to become an event, says Koselleck. In this, events are distinct from historical structures, since "'events" can only be narrated, while "structures" can only be described' (Koselleck, 1985: 105). The fact that events are narrated means they need to be articulated in terms of chronology; in order to become an event, the raw material of history must be articulated in terms of "'a minimum of "before" and "after"' (:106). Koselleck could be considered part of an interdisciplinary resurgence of interest in the event roughly from the 1990s on, which happened concomitantly with the rise of interest in the constitutive role of culture and of narratives (see e.g. Burke, 2008; Ricoeur, 1984; White, 2008). The resurgence could also be seen as a swing of the pendulum in relation to the post-war period of the 1950s and 60s, which was a time for deemphasising events, under the

influence of structuralism, materialism and the notion of 'longues durées' (as formulated particularly in Braudel, 1995).

This move of the 1950s and 60s was in its turn a conscious, even demonstrative goodbye to events as understood in 19th century historiography, as well as in popular historical accounts - the coronations, wars, conquests, deaths, etcetera, of great white men. When the pendulum swung back towards events, individuals had become secondary to the stories and cultural meanings they share with others. In many ways, the notion of the event became greatly expanded this time around. No longer centred on eminent individuals as driving forces, the Koselleckian approach saw events as involving the construction of narratives that are near omnipresent in culture. To this, researchers in the German-language media history tradition add that the articulation and spread of narratives vitally involves mediation. In their view, media are precisely the means by which actions and happenings are narrativised and become eventful. As Frank Bösch (2010: 3) argues, 'Occurrences first develop into media events through narrativisation, i.e. being pressed into a story.' The German-language tradition in effect views narrative, mediation, and eventfulness as inseparable since mechanical production and distribution took hold in Western societies.

(note 2)

Temporality in media events

The acceleration of communication in the modern world is a familiar theme from philosophy and social theory (e.g. Eriksen, 2009; Virilio, 1977). However one

conceptualises them, media technologies are clearly central to such processes. They make possible a lifting out of communication from the confines of physical co-presence and a reconnection of parties in communication over distance. At the same time, a traditional link is loosened between that which is far away and that which is distant – distant both in terms of belonging to the past and in being experienced as less affecting. This goes for media events as for other media output. Starting from book printing during the Reformation, mechanical production and distribution start to make it possible for those who are far away from the event to access it via media in a way that brings them closer to it, both in temporal and experiential terms.

Concrete case studies of media events in the early modern period are relatively scarce. The 1755 Lisbon Earthquake is a frequently referenced case, however, because of the mediated reception of this disaster internationally. At this time, networks for distributing news had developed to the point where it was possible for people in England, France and Germany to read about events in Lisbon as they were unfolding – that is, while aftershocks were hitting and while the people of Lisbon were struggling to cope with the disaster's aftermath (Wilke, 2010: 57-8). An account of temporal acceleration in media events could easily be constructed from this early starting point. Various subsequent media technologies could be recruited to explain what caused the speedings-up. A key moment happens with industrialisation, particularly in the later phase when electricity takes over from steam, with the establishment of mass production, distribution and consumption (for an overview, see Briggs and Burke, 2002). At this time, the combination of telegraphy and mass-circulation newspapers made possible an intensive and on-going coverage of major events. One might speak of

a sense of simultaneity with the event, where continuous updates produced a general sense of experiencing and following events as they unfolded (cf. Kern, 1983). Updates were intermittent rather than continuous, however, and the intervals could be considerable if the event took place in a location that was difficult to access. An extreme case of this was the conquest of the South Pole in 1911. Media interest in this event was great, but journalists were limited to wire cables that came with several months' intervals. The intervals were used by newspapers to increase the on-going suspense as to the outcome of the so-called race to the pole between the expeditions of Roald Amundsen and Robert Falcon Scott (Author, 2014b).

In the 20th century, a further acceleration happened with broadcasting, which introduced mass-communicated instantaneity. The time of the event, of its mediated reporting and of the event now coincided in real time: this is the essence of liveness and the strong effect it produces of vicarious presence in the event (Scannell, 1996: 84). Since the establishment of broadcasting, the history of major events has been closely linked with broadcasting (particularly television) technology, a connection many researchers have pursued (e.g. Dayan and Katz, 1992; Marriott, 2007; Scannell, 1996). The live streaming of digital media could be said to have intensified the experience of liveness and instantaneity further, in that it makes reality available both instantaneously and more or less permanently. Still, the process of acceleration here reaches a kind of historical end point. One can hardly get more instantaneous than in live broadcast transmission. For media historians who emphasise the connection between media events and television technology, the recent demise of television

has therefore been framed as both an ‘end of television” (Katz and Scannell, 2009) and as a demise of the ‘classical’ media event (Dayan, 2010).

In a comprehensive account of how temporality has worked in media events historically, acceleration cannot be the whole story, however. With the historical waves of new media, coverage of the media events not only increases but also gets spread on to more and more platforms. In other words, what German media historians call the ensemble of media that together mediate the event becomes more composite and diverse. This is perhaps most striking for the explosion in media following on from 19th century industrialisation (telegraph, telephone, gramophone, film, the popular press) and the wave of digital media platforms (individualised, social, mobile and locative) introduced since the late 1980s. As a consequence, media events of the early 20th century routinely involved the audience via multiple mediated temporalities. Newspapers and journals previewed the event and provided periodical updates for a mass audience; telephone and telegraphy facilitated person-to-person instantaneous communication; film and audio recording gave a rich and particularly immersive experience mostly in retrospect (see e.g. the discussions in Ekström, 2010; Gunning, 1994; Author, 2014b).

Shifting between various media platforms, audiences to the media event would at the same time be shifting between different mediated temporalities. Experiencing for instance a national election today means being invited to shift between the micro-temporal updates and discussion on social media such as Twitter, the real-time experience of live television, and the one-time intensity of voting or otherwise participating in online discussions via text messages or mails. If it is right to say that much of this happens at a greatly accelerated pace,

historically speaking, it is necessary to add that an increasingly intricate layering of different mediated temporalities is also involved, as well as increased demands on the ability to navigate them and shift between them.

The coming of the pseudo-event

The comprehensive planning of communication has been in evidence throughout the modern period, as illustrated for instance in Peter Burke's (1992) account of what he calls the fabrication of the 'Sun King' Louis XIV's image and public appearances. In early reflection on events, such as the event-centered history writing of the earlier 19th century, the intentions of individual actors were not necessarily of pressing interest, however. The acts of 'great men' were routinely seen as guided by the general principles of Progress, Fortune, and Virtue. As François Dosse (2010: 26) has pointed out, their visible actions and public appearances were at the center of historians' attention, more than their covert or backstage manoeuverings.

In terms of how pervasively the coverage of events could be premeditated by media, the later parts of the 19th century again marked a period of transition, following great technological advances. The radically improved facilities for transporting people, goods and information introduced in this period have already been mentioned. As a result, the reach of newsgathering for instance widened dramatically – partly because journalists could now use machine-driven transport to seek out events, partly because they were able to utilise the affordances of telegraphy for spatio-temporal compression. Also, the later 19th

century saw the spread of mass markets for popular media consumption. In a review of developments, the historian Frank Bösch (2010; see also Lenger, 2008) emphasises the drastically increased reach of events, thanks to the newsgathering and distribution facilities particularly of the press.

In this period, the media could also be said to start moving from coverage of pre-existing events to also becoming an integral part of the processes that generate it. They provided a forum not just for distributing information on how an event unfolded but also for discussing it, uncovering its mechanics and engaging with how it should develop in the future, as in the case of the Dreyfus affair (Nora, 1974). In that sense, the media event from this time on ‘... moves in a characteristic field of tension between the expected and the surprising’, as Frank Bösch (2010: 6-7) points out. The element of the expected started to play a role even in the most sudden events, as the media developed pre-available interpretative schemata, generic scripts and professional procedures that could be used to manage the unexpected.

Bösch makes the key point that the time around the previous turn of the century saw the first wave of entirely media-initiated events. Among these were investigative journalist reports that turned into scandalous media events, such as when the writer Upton Sinclair infiltrated the Chicago slaughterhouses undercover on a news assignment, and exposed their appalling working conditions in 1906. There were famous instances where major news publishers commissioned events outright: famously, James Gordon Bennett, editor of the New York Herald, sent the journalist-adventurer Henry Morton Stanley to find David Livingstone, which Stanley did to international renown in 1869. In historical significance, such events were hardly of the first order. However they

provided high-exposure examples that were fuel for suspicion against the media, in that they were wholly initiated by the media, controlled and exploited by them for purposes of revenue and legitimacy. A major event could now be the result of media premeditation, of systematic and pervasive planning by the rising professions of media and communications, with dedicated technological and logistical expertise.

The seminal critique of the rise of media-initiated events in an Anglo-American context belongs to Daniel Boorstin and his widely read *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, first published in 1961. Boorstin saw events as greatly increasing their reach and impact in contemporary societies because the media were taking them over. He associated this development with a loss of sense, significance, and proportion. Boorstin's arch-example of a pseudo-event was the ritual of the press conference. Nothing of substance or consequence needed to be said at such an occasion, he argued. It was manufactured specifically to provide the semblance of a real event, in a way that was reportable by news writers and provided a photo opportunity so that the media's hunger for images was catered to. Boorstin's outrage over pseudo-events was strong and unreserved: he saw it as having created a 'thicket of unreality that stands between us and the facts of life' (Boorstin, 1992: 3). In his historical outline, the pseudo-event was borne of the growth of the American popular press and particularly images, first via photos in newspapers, then film and especially television, where 'vivid image came to overshadow pale reality' (:13).

Real events are spontaneous, said Boorstin, whereas pseudo-events are premeditated and generated by the media. They are events where "men in the news" simply act out more or less well their planned script' (:18). Precisely

because they are comprehensively planned in this way, pseudo-events can offer more of everything than real events: the pseudo-event is more dramatic, vivid and intelligible, more dependable and marketable, according to Boorstin. What print and particularly visual media did to the event was also a matter of regularisation, he claimed: Their power to distribute images of events to all homes on an everyday basis made people expect a constant supply of vivid events as a matter of routine. Pseudo-events existed to meet this continuous demand and therefore essentially had to be repeatable, although this essential character was hidden behind a semblance of novelty.

Daniel Boorstin has been comprehensively criticised for drawing a too simple distinction between media events and 'real' events, and for being too one-sidedly nostalgic about the latter (see e.g. Arquembourg, 2011: 6; Bösch, 2010: 2; Marshall McLuhan cited in Whitfield, 1991: 304). When Boorstin's work continues to be cited, it may be because the suspicions he raised about covert and pervasive media premeditations of the event were and are widely shared. This is reflected for instance in more current critiques of the media event for its tendencies toward affirming the status quo, its cultivations of nationalist and other myths (see particularly Couldry, 2003). Building on the vocabulary and radical critique of Guy Debord, Douglas Kellner (2010) has recast contemporary media events as media-orchestrated 'spectacles' that reach over numerous mass and digital media, that colonise the everyday, and that often have a global reach, such as the Olympics and the US elections of later years. These critical scholars do not build their critique from the same theoretical premises that Boorstin used, they avoid his nostalgia and somewhat naïve philosophical realism. Their

target seems much the same, however: the event usurped by the media and shaped according to their needs, by means of various myths and rituals.

Boorstin's critique in many ways belongs in a historical period dominated by the mass media, to the powerful journalists and PR people of the time who were able to generate pseudo-events wholesale, by means of a highly centralised and professionalised mode of media production. The current proliferation of media platforms, with its tendencies toward de-professionalisation and fragmentation of the public agenda, could be seen as working against those in the media who want to generate and stay in charge of major events. Each media outlet or actor's hold on events may have become more attenuated. Attempts to generate and control media events are still in evidence, however, for instance in the ways television formats go 'multi-platform' in order to generate a sense of pervasive eventfulness across channels and platforms (see e.g. Kjus, 2009; Author, 2009).

Research into media events from the last few years has moved from an interest in planned and largely celebratory events toward a greater emphasis on disasters and terrorist events, where the media are not in charge (e.g. Dayan, 2010; Katz and Liebes, 2007; Nossek, 2008; Seeck and Rantanen, 2014). Natural disasters are of course not subject to dedicated premeditation by the media, but news media do have ready generic and often quite comprehensive plans and scripts for media coverage that build on their experience with similarly sudden events. As for terrorist events such as those around 9/11, they have of course been surrounded by suspicions of being conceived of with the media in mind, even of being a grisly kind of advertising for the terrorists' ideological agendas. A deeper historical perspective on media events, then, allows us to see that our

understanding of them have long been infused with assumptions about covert and pervasive premeditation, about media usurping the event for questionable purposes.

Mediated and interpersonal communication in the event

The further back one steps from our media-saturated present, the more clearly media events appear as the result of interweavings between mediated and interpersonal forms of communication. This is a matter of media technologies being limited in their reach, but also of the fact that such interweavings have affordances of their own. Robert Darnton has emphasised the importance of communication networks in pre-revolutionary France whose components were sometimes print-mediated, sometimes handwritten, sometimes a matter of private interpersonal communications, and sometimes of public ones. He has studied the censorship of publications in Paris and the ways communicative networks shifted between interpersonal and mediated communication forms among other out of a need to keep information clandestine in a time of absolutist censorship. These communication networks were, as Darnton says, '... an amalgam of overlapping, interpenetrating messages, spoken, written, printed, pictured, and sung' (Darnton 2000: 8). Already in 18th century Paris, then, events were multi-medial and featured intricate connections between mediated and interpersonal modes of communication. Their reach was limited by the available distribution technologies, however, and by the repressive measures taken against the flow of information by absolutist regimes.

The history of media could be seen as a history of changing ways to organise and move people and information by means of communication technologies. A number of media-historical contributions of the latter years have pointed to the close-knit relationship between communication-technological networks and transport networks. Armand Mattelart (1996) has demonstrated how closely interlinked was the transport of symbolic messages and of people in the period of industrialisation. On a more general theoretical level, David Morley (2011) has argued for the enduring importance of material networks of communication – what he calls the transport of people, commodities and information. Such networks allow a mobility that is material, that involves cables, wires and storage spaces – even if this is not easy to see when the media produce powerful effects of presence and immediacy across space, as broadcasting and digital media do. Communicative networks are also social, in the sense that they vitally involve the organization of groups and crowds. Again, major events are obvious examples of how this works, since they require people to be physically moved and socially organised. News of the event needs to be transported to audiences, who can then be made collective participants in the event by means of physical transport. Upon arrival at the site of the event, these audiences/participants need to move around the site and interact with the event. Again, media help to make this possible – and at the same time, media are used to control the audiences/participants.

The period of industrialisation greatly expanded not just the range of media platforms available for communicating the event, but also the facility for transporting great numbers of people over great distances. Thus, planned media events became sites that accommodated crowds of record size, and that were set

up specifically for the purposes of mediation. Thus, events such as revolutions, coronations and jubilees increasingly involved a combination of great crowds and intensive media coverage via newspapers, magazines, journals and various other forms of popular media such as advertisements, posters, post cards, caricature, popular songs and picture albums (see e.g. Gudewitz, 2010; Hölscher and Rupp, 2010; Reichardt, 2008; Author, 2014a). Even though unplanned events such as natural disasters could be difficult to access, extensive networks of communication were set up after disaster struck. The transport networks that rescued survivors from the Titanic and transported them back to their homes were infiltrated by journalists who boarded rescue boats and fought with each other to report the news, intensively and via a number of media platforms, to an international mass audience (Bösch, 2008: 84-6).

The great exhibitions and world's fairs of the later 19th and early 20th centuries in many ways provide that time's most striking examples of sites that were planned as a rich multi-medial environment, and for a correspondingly rich set of interconnections between the mediated and the interpersonal. A number of research contributions have zoned in on the record-sized crowds that gathered for these expositions, and described the media environments that attracted them, helped in orienting them through the expositions, provided them with information for cultural uplift as well as entertainments and strong sensory stimuli (see e.g. Ekström, 2010; Geppert, 2013; Gunning, 1996). The entertainment sections of these exhibitions are particularly interesting from a media perspective; here, groups and crowds gathered in an environment constructed from scratch by that time's entertainment and media industries. Often, the attractions involved both the latest technologies of mediation and an

array of participatory practices, such as engaging with early filmic and proto-filmic technologies, dancing to popular music, visiting halls of mirrors, roller coasters and variety performances. Anders Ekström (2010; 2011) has argued persuasively that the active and pervasive participation of audiences during these exhibitions had important consequences beyond the event itself. These exhibitions did not just invite media participation on a broad basis, but also witnessing others participate. Their arenas for combining mediated and interpersonal public communication were a training-ground for becoming modern citizens in a society marked on the one hand by more democratic forms of publicness, on the other by private entertainment and leisure consumption.

The period during the 20th century when broadcasting dominated the media situation was very different, in terms of interrelations between the mediated and the interpersonal. As broadcasting technology was developed for mass audiences, it came with very limited affordances for participation. Certain genres such as the phone-in and the vox pop are worth considering as counter-examples (see Griffen-Foley, 2004). Still, participation in the broadcast era was predominantly vicarious, a matter of experiencing the event virtually, via the instantaneity and liveness of broadcast technology. This has of course changed since the late 1980s, with the processes of digitalisation. For a short while, strong notions of technological convergence were in play, sometimes combined with the idea of an 'uber-box' (for a critique, see e.g. Jenkins, 2006). The development turned out to be just as much about divergence, however (Fagerjord and Storsul, 2007). Households now access media content via more platforms than ever. The common family experience of living room television culture has been at least partially replaced by mobile and individualised modes

of media experience, as well as by more plural social contexts: the bedroom culture of children and the young has for instance become markedly more media-saturated with digitalisation.

With the explosion of technological affordances for interactivity, possibilities for interweavings of interpersonal and mediated forms of communication also expand. Some of this could be framed as an expansion by the mediated at the expense of the interpersonal, since much social interaction now takes place on social media sites, inside the media so to speak. On the other hand, social media still depend on various connections and negotiations between the participants' online and offline worlds. The use of text messaging to vote on contestants in entertainment television, the use of mobile phones during concerts and everyday conversation, or the interactions on Twitter between politicians, journalists and 'ordinary people', all illustrate how the distinction between digitally mediated and interpersonal communication becomes blurred. As the ensemble of media and their facilities for interaction grow, so the web of interconnections between the mediated and the interpersonal grows with it, seems to become more extended and intricate.

Mediatisation and the event

It seems clear that with the media-technological developments in recording, representation and distribution since the advent of print, events have become increasingly dominated by media – in a word, events have become mediatised. In the last years, “mediatisation” has been established in media research as a key

concept and theoretical tradition. In many ways it rearticulates some older, foundational question for media researchers: how media interrelate with, shape and are shaped by society. At the same time, the concept of mediatisation is contested, among other its historical implications. Some researchers have argued that the term strongly implies certain kinds of historical process, but that mediatisation research is not able to deliver in terms of actual historical research. Others acknowledge a partial lack of historical work but believe that mediatisation research will be able to fill that gap, given time (see particularly the debate in Deacon and Stanyer, 2014 and 2015; Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby, 2015). This debate turns in part on the definition of “mediatisation”. If the concept is defined as a process where the media become more of an independent institution in society, while at the same time both influencing institutions and becoming more integrated with them (e.g. Hjarvard, 2013: 16-27), then mediatisation carries with it strong assumptions about media-historical development. At the same time it may face accusations of being overly unidirectional and teleological in its thrust.

The existing body of research on the history of media events may be used to shed some light on the historical dimensions of mediatisation. The three themes outlined in this article provide both support for a strong historical mediatisation hypothesis, and some possible correctives. The theme of temporal acceleration is perhaps the clearest example within the field of media event history of a strong hypothesis about unidirectional development, where media-technological acceleration transforms the very nature of key events in society over time. At the same time, the teleological problem presents itself: instantaneity of production, distribution and reception was reached with live

broadcasting, which makes it difficult to account for the distinctness of what came in the subsequent period of convergence and digitalisation. Something similar could be said for the notion of a more and more comprehensive planning of the event that ends up suppressing any element of the genuinely new and of real change, as the critics of “pseudo-events” would have it. In both these cases, time seems to speed up to the point where it becomes a permanent and expanding moment. By the same token, the possibility of real transformation seems to fade away, and we become prisoners of what the historian François Hartog (2003) has called “presentism”.

The temporality of media events cannot be contained under these kinds of unidirectional trajectory, however. Indeed one may hypothesise that media events have tended since at least the 19th century to become more internally differentiated in terms of their temporalities, as the media ensembles that enable them have become ever more complex. The temporal experience of such media events could be described in terms of what Reinhart Koselleck has called multiple temporality – that is, ‘several layers of time of differing duration and differentiable origin, which are nonetheless present and effectual at the same time’, as he says it (cited in Jordheim, 2012: 157). As this article has argued, the transition from a broadcast-dominated to a digital period involves the media event moving toward a richer set of temporal layerings on a host of digital platforms.

The tendency toward an ever more differentiated and intricate layering could also be suggested for the relationship between mediated and non-mediated forms of communicating the event. As the work of planning a event today routinely involves coordinating and synchronising a host of platforms and

media, it may in effect have become harder, so that pre-planning and managing the event becomes correspondingly harder. The proliferation of media may mean that increasingly, we are moving toward the "mediation of everything" (cf. Livingstone, 2009), but by the same token, it seems that mediatisation may render more and more permeable the interface between what is and is not the media.

The relationship between mediated and interpersonal forms of communication are a case in point, as has been outlined in this article. A deeper historical focus reveals a richness of both tensions and functional relationships going back to well before the 19th century media explosion following from the Industrial Revolution. Today's events are clearly more comprehensively mediated. At the same time, digital and social media platforms illustrate how events of today feature ever more complex interweavings with the everyday lives of audiences/users, via its affordances for participation, contribution and discussion. A historical perspective on media events, then, may help us see the march of mediatisation as an increasing hold of media over other domains of life. It also suggests, however, that this hold may have become more tenuous as the event has become ever more internally diverse, as well as more intricately woven into everyday life and other domains in society.

Notes

(Note 1)

This is somewhat simplified; research contributions that take a deeper historical approach to media events have come from France (e.g. Arquembourg, 2011; Dosse, 2010; Nora, 1974), the US (Siskin & Warner, 2010) and Scandinavia (Ekström, 2010 and 2011; Author, 2014). Still, the research done particularly by a research network based at the University of Giessen stands out for its articulation and application of a deep historical approach to a large number of historical cases.

(Note 2)

Although this expanded notion of the event has been highly productive, it is not without problems. The researcher is tempted to treat all major historical events as narrated media events. Seeing even something as durational and gradually processual as the Reformation and the Enlightenment as ‘a episode in the history of mediation’ (Siskin and Warner, 2010; cp. Hamm, 1996) creates challenges of delineation. For instance, it is difficult to see what becomes of notions of structure (or process) in this expanded notion of events. The twin concepts of event and structure are a basic pairing in historiology: an advocate of the narrated event such as Reinhart Koselleck is careful to keep them both operative (Koselleck, 1985: 109). Conversely, a key critic of the traditional ‘wars and coronations’ concept of the event such as Fernand Braudel still reserves part three of his two-volume main work The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean

World in the Age of Philip II (1995) for events connected with the life and exploits of that Spanish regent.

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