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BIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

“Next year they will also want to do something crazy”: Contesting media events in a complex media landscape

In their seminal work on media events, Dayan and Katz suggested that a key characteristic of such events was that they ‘integrate society in a collective heartbeat’ (1994: viii). Subsequent work has argued that whether, and in what ways, media events integrate different groups is *always* an empirical question (Skey, 2021). In this presentation, I want to pick up on this idea and explore it in relation to the Eurovision Song Contest. In the first place, I will identify the different interest groups associated with the ESC as they mark it out from other notable media events (Skey, 2020). Second, I want to focus on the tensions between two of those competing interest groups, fans at the event and media audiences and local media producers and the organisers (the EBU). The first tension can be usefully explored in relation to Gray’s (2003) work on fans and anti-fans, while the second points to the importance of planning and design (a key characteristic of media events that has been overlooked in subsequent reformulations) as well as what particular interest groups hope to achieve from staging and/or participating in the event (Skey et al, 2016). The ESC offers a particularly telling case study as it seeks to maintain its relevance to European audiences and broadcasters whilst also looking to appeal to a more global media marketplace.

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