

Media Rituals in Eusébio's Exequies

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Abstract

While celebrating collective representation, the media can be seen as spaces of ritualization that are fundamental to the consolidation of wider social values.

In this paper we give an empirical frame to the concept of "media rituals" considering it as an entrenched symbolic practice that could be traceable in Eusébio's exequies television broadcasting. Three sorts of media rituals are identified: rituals dealing with immediacy, rituals dealing with collective prominence and rituals dealing with the revelation of reality.

Each media ritual exemplifies how a space of comprehensive ritualization is erected. It is through this generalized and mediated ritualization that the idea of a major social occurrence is refreshed and worked through.

Keywords: Media Events; Media Rituals; Ritual Communication; Television; Publicity; Eusébio; Public Mourning.

Introduction

Today's television narrative model is based on the screening of the common person and the everyday life (Silverstone, 1994). Reality Television is perhaps the genre where this is most visible bringing individuals from the traditional reception instance to the core of the television's production. In some ways, television has adopted a personal perspective. That's why Dovey (2000) talks about first-person media. The *I* becomes a central figure on the construction of media discourses. As television is less concerned with an outside, formal and distant reality, it refers to the everyday life, building a close connection to personal expectations. Umberto Eco was, in the 1980's, among the first to signal a major development and called this new emphasis on the interpolation of triviality and its public display, a *neo-television* (Eco, 1985). What is called *infotainment* (as something between *hard news* and *soft news*) is just one of the effects of the relevance of banality in media discourse.

One may ask if individualization, trivialization and banality leave space to the unifying dimension of media events. If so, is the integrative role of media something inherent to them or is it an object of social construction? Do media events' syntactic, semantics and pragmatic aspects (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 10-14) make us immediately acknowledge their unifying function?

What one should question is the role the media (and specially television) perform on the level of social integration and the renewal of loyalty (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 9). Even if a media event may contain in itself some form of interruption of daily routines, even if it is broadcasted live and is presented with reverence and ceremony and even if it excites a very large audience that does not mean the media event

evokes on itself a reintegration of the whole society in a collective heartbeat. Maybe one can suspect of the all too affirmative assertion on the social totality (and centrality) these events represent: "All eyes are fixed on the ceremonial centre, through which each nuclear cell is connected to all the rest. Social integration of the highest order is thus achieved via mass communication" (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 15).

The integrative role of media must not be assumed. Instead, it needs to be investigated (Couldry, 2003: 37). Media do not simply *communicate* and *foster* social belonging; media also *communicate* and *create* social belonging. In the celebration of collective memory, media *re-present* it and strengthen the collective sentiment (Saenz, 1994). Thus, one must look to the ways mass communication articulate contingent and historically specifically patterns of (symbolic) power (Couldry, 2003: 37). Hence, one needs to connect symbolic power to social rituals *enacted by* and *enacted through* the media. Social integration does not exist *per se*. We should study the making of symbolic forms media events put fourth enabling them to reconnect the dispersed and disjointed society.

In this paper, we will take on these premises and address the symbolic modes of social convergence. Some media rituals will be identified in a particular media event: Eusébio's funerary ceremonies. These will serve us as a point of departure to ponder on the ritual actions media may still embrace.

Media Rituals' (re)definition

The bibliography on media rituals is extensive and may be divided (for didactic purposes) in three approaches: a careful analysis of the role of media may play on the performance of pré-existent social rites (Hjarvard, 2008; Pantti & Wieten, 2005); a perspective on ritualised modes of communication (Rothenbuhler, 1998; Rothenbuhler & Coman, 2005); and the ritual process of the media functioning (Elliot, 1980; Ettema, 1990; Becker, 1995; Ehrlich, 1996; Liebes, 1998; Cottle, 2006; Sumiala, 2014). We will be dealing with the ritualistic dimension of television, therefore we will be working mostly through the ritual process of the media functioning approach.

Dayan and Katz's *Media events: the live broadcast of history* (1992) claims that mediated events involving a secular sacralisation of public matters, large audiences, and a committed response actually bind society together. Yet, unlike Couldry (2003), this does not mean that social integration happens spontaneously or that the media impose a uni-directional message around the values that keep a cohesive society.

What is not always recognised is that Dayan and Katz defend, above all, a message of *proposed reintegration* (Bolin, 2010: 134). By focusing on the negotiation of Media Events (1992: 54-77) between the organizers, the broadcasters and the audiences, Dayan and Katz open the discussion to the event's definition (and re-definition). They talk on a contract relating to political, aesthetic and financial bargaining where each of the actors is a free and independent agent who carries a process of negotiation that precedes and befalls the media event (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 55). When they claim media events are rituals that affirm a common set of values this does not necessarily mean societies have a unique centre or have a stable core of immutable values like Couldry (2003: 63) contends. Some critiques to neo-durkheim perspectives consider Dayan and Katz' theory does not enable us to consider that power-related, hegemonic imagination of media (Couldry, 2003: 63).

Binding the society together can be a never- ending process. This assumption is already present (although underdeveloped) on Dayan and Katz seminal theory in the chapters dealing with negotiation and

performance. Especially in plural, diverse and fragmented post-modern societies, the negotiation of media events obliges us to consider them away from hegemonic readings. Take for instance Diana's life in the image switching between a Lady, a Princess and a Saint (Bennett and Rowbottom, 2009: 273) or the media script as a Cinderella story (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 38). More, even if media events represent a certain set of shared values, this does not make us necessarily accept that those set of core values cannot be subject to reinterpretation, dispute, objection and conflict.

In order to prevent an easy linkage between a given event and its integrative power we must have in mind that the integrative impact of a public event varies according to different societies. We must consider the large-scale dimension of contemporary publics and the ways these events are publicly discussed, used (and eventually defiantly appropriated). A very useful definition of media event on a global age is given by Hepp and Couldry: "*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*" (Hepp&Couldry, 2010: 12). It is this definition we will be working upon.

Having in mind the contingent nature of the integrative power of media events, we will take a simple snap-shot of Eusebio's funeral centered, integrative power at 2014 historical time. As such, it must be understood as a preliminary study. The question concerning us has more to do with the symbolic performativity of the event and the way it explores media rituals or "condensed forms of action where category distinctions and boundaries are worked upon with particular intensity" (Couldry, 2003: 47).

As any media event, Eusebio's exequies was a public event with a specific narrative. It was arranged and presented with a collective orientation triggering the audience participation and the active involvement of society as a whole. It is this symbolic configuration that qualified it as common, mass mediated experience, conveying emotional integration.

But how did the event achieve it? To which symbolic forms did it recur? What are the media rituals involved? Eusebio's public mourning provides us with an illustrative case of how symbolic engineering supports the emotional construction of national identity and encourages us to see ceremonial television as a central agent of the creation of socially shared meanings. These are the premises this paper is looking at while focusing on the social constructed delivery of a commonly accepted framing.

If media events are subject to constant negotiation and entail in themselves relations of symbolic power, we need to, first of all, denaturalise the frame according to which Eusebio's funeral was understood by its institutional organizers, television broadcasters and audience.

Spaces of Ritualization: media as communication

One of the ways to render evident the invisible frame of the symbolic network of the media event is to conceive, what Couldry calls a *space of ritualization*, that is, "the principles that have generated the media's 'ritual space' and which

in turn therefore generate the possibilities of specific media rituals" (Couldry, 2003: 23). In other words, the space of ritualization configures a field generating the possibility of specific media rituals (even if latent). According to the author of "*Media Rituals*", the space of ritualization encompasses patterns of action and understanding or frames that stand for wider values. Actions comprising rituals "are structured

around certain categories which stand for an underlying value capturing our sense that *the social* is at stake on the ritual" (Couldry, 2003: 26). Media rituals would be "any actions organised around key media-related categories and boundaries, whose performance reinforces, indeed helps to legitimate, the underlying value expressed in the idea that the media is our access point to our social centre" (Couldry, 2003: 2).

In using "media rituals", Couldry (2003: 56) wants to point out that media events are constructions, not only expressions of the social order. In fact, they are privileged moments, not because they operate on the revelation of society's fundamental solidarity but because they entail the *performativity of the revelation* and the *ritual construction of media as providers of a unique access to solidarity or social order*. It is not without consequences that Dayan and Katz often refer to the idea of ceremonial performances. Recalling Austin's Speech acts theory (Austin, 1975), this notion enables us to understand media events as symbolic performers, as institutions that do social things on the moment of their own enunciation. Media rituals may, thus, be conceived as "an identifiable and variegated class of performative media enactments in which solidarities are summoned and moral ideas of the 'social good' are unleashed and exert agency in the public life of societies" (Cottle, 2006: 411).

Media rituals denote all the proceedings and social situations where media appear to stand in for something wider in the context of society. In other words, media rituals are symbolic forms that rework the notion of *media as communication*, media as symbolic (technological) devices that enables a sense of simultaneous community and connection with all members of society. As Cottle (2006: 415) puts it: "Mediatized rituals are those exceptional and performative media phenomena that serve to sustain and/or mobilize collective sentiments and solidarities on the basis of symbolization and a subjunctive orientation to what should or ought to be".

Media events are the condensed version of this inter-relation or social shared experience. They summon the entire community to be (mediated) present on the socially relevant happening.

Media Events and Publicity

Media events, perceived as the performance of media rituals, are close to the notion of publicity. The socio-anthropological principle of publicity (Mateus, 2011) is the symbolic principle media events count for its maximum expansion. Without it, media rituals would not reach the entire society. Put differently, media rituals depend on publicity to enact the idea that they are the revelation of the social order.

Indeed, social solidarity, a common axiology and the sacred value of "society", are all linked to an active publicity able to manage the symbolic and communicational repository according to which societies renew themselves in each day. That's why the public definition of media events are in constant motion and why the publicity is so important to antagonistic social groups in their divergent appropriations of the media event.

Because media rituals claim to be the access to a social centre (what Couldry (2003: 37) would call it the *myth of the mediated centre*¹), we need to envision them in conjugation with publicity. Media events are public occasions where collective attention converges. Community, solidarity and communality are

¹ This idea will not be of concern in this particular paper. Due to its richness and controversial character the discussion of its pertinence to media theory, it will be better discussed in other opportunity.

constructs media publicly articulate (express) and represent (recompose). So we must be interested in see not only what media events do with publicity but also what the public exposure signifies to them and in what extent it rewrites the collective narratives.

Dayan and Katz themselves recognize this affinity between publicity and media events when they remark: "public events are not fixed in a given form once and forever. Throughout history they have tended to adapt themselves to the prevailing modes of making an event now. The dominant mode of publicness is changing now. We are witnessing the gradual replacement of what could be a theatrical mode of publicness (...) by a new mode of publicness based on the separation of performers and audiences" (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 118).

We can understand publicity and media according to a dual perspective: either in performance of media rituals deep related to media, either in media rituals as collective celebrations.

In the first case, media events transform the home into public spaces (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 206). Each screen set (television, computer, mobile devices) participates in a vast network of similar and simultaneous miniforuns. So, the communicative potential is, in theory, at its full extent. In the second case, publicity establishes a bridge between local, *situated* events and global *re-situated* events. The public dimension involves rituals of communion and transforms them in media events endowed with specific media rituals. In becoming public media rituals construct the revelation of the social centre.

Thus, to look at media events means to ponder on the space of ritualization and identify the latent strategies of performance and negotiation of the event. Media forge consensus. But this is not a kantian "common sense" concept; instead, it is foremost a fabric or weaving of a sense, of a collective logic. Something like a social work of framing. Media events cannot, apparently, be separated from its own retellings.

The ritualized media space and its public contours we have just mentioned will be key aspects in Eusébio's death media event.

Eusébio's Funeral and Ritualized Behaviour

On January, 5th 2014 the world bear witness to the demise of Eusébio da Silva Ferreira (aged 71), one of the greatest football players (often compared to Pelé) and one of the first personalities to give an international dimension to Portugal. More than a national icon, he was also a symbol of strength, perseverance and modesty².

As a player, he was known for his speed, technique and his fierce right-footed shot, making him an exceptionally prolific goalscorer. He is still today considered S.L. Benfica's and National Team's most renowned player and one of the first world-class African strikers. Although born in Mozambique, Eusébio played for the Portuguese national team, since at the time, African countries were overseas territories and their inhabitants were considered Portuguese. In 1966, he helped Portugal reach third place at the World

² The Portuguese newspaper "*Público*" tells the following story: «Father Delmar Barreiros, who presided over the ceremony at the cemetery, has no memory of being in a funeral so agitated. He had once been with Eusébio on a trip and told him: "I've never done a trip in the company of the King". Eusebius replied: "No father. You know better than I that King is another, the one that is hugging Lisbon ", referring to the Cristo-rei monument». You can read it in: <https://www.publico.pt/desporto/noticia/o-adeus-a-eusebio-ao-minuto-1618567>

Cup, becoming the top goalscorer of the tournament with nine goals (including four in a single match) and received the Bronze Ball award. He won the Ballon d'Or award for European footballer of the year in 1965 and was runner-up in 1962 and 1966. And in 1968, he was the first ever player to win the European Golden Boot, a feat he replicated in 1973. He was also the European Cup top scorer in 1964/65, 1965/66 and 1967/68.

Eusebio's death was, since the start, scripted by institutional agents, media and audience as a coronation, that is, "the recognition and glorification of a hero" (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 29). Shils and Young (1956: 71), who coined the term within media enactments, argued that the coronation represents the ceremonial affirmation of society's moral values and are key aspects of national communion. Just like the case reported by the authors, Eusébio's media event was presented as a sacred rite where individuals inside the stadium as well as spectators at home participated. "The Coronation, much like Christmas, was a time for drawing closer the bonds of the family, for re-asserting its solidarity and for re-emphasizing the values of the family – generosity, loyalty, love – which are at the same time the fundamental values necessary for the wellbeing of the larger society. On this occasion one family was knit together with another in one great national family through identification with the monarchy. A general warmth and congeniality permeated relations even with strangers" (Shils & Young, 1956: 77).

The death of the "black panther" or the "black pearl" (as he was warmly called) reminded portuguese society of their cultural and historical heritage providing social reassurance in a time of financial and economic crisis. It remembered a time when the shadow of Portugal reached Africa and saw one of its children to rise and become the first international personality taking the name of the small nation's name abroad. This coronation was negotiated towards the suspension of social conflict in favour of common symbols of tradition and unity.

The occurrence was promptly configured as a major media event. The passing of Eusébio was a world event appearing in major news channels such as *CNN*, *BBC*, *Euronews*, *France 24* or *Sky Sports*. To *The New York Times*, Eusébio "represented the best of soccer". The *Wall Street Journal* considered him "a star" and *The Australian* called him "the king of this sport". In all the news bulletins the underlining assumption was that a prodigious football legend had died.

A daily newspaper, *Diário de Notícias*, wrote with an outstanding respect and reverence: "Gone is the body, it remains the myth. Thousands of people have said, on Monday, the last "Goodbye" Eusébio da Silva Ferreira. Father, husband, footballer, friend, Idol and Portuguese, now remembered with four more words uttered by the hundreds of people who wanted to pay homage to the "King", "simple", "humble", "eternal" and "immortal"³.

When we look into media rituals in Eusébio's death media event we must not be thinking strictly in anthropological terms. Indeed, taking media rituals as any habit, repeated pattern or a formalized action would not be of much help. Also we must not ponder media rituals from the perspective of media ethnography. We are not interested seeing media rituals in terms of *regular use* of media on the same tv shows at the same time of the day (Larsen and Tufte, 2003: 97). Although we should consider the integrated use of media in social settings as a necessary part of the situation, media rituals, in this case, has to do not so much with routines but with *ritualized behaviour*.

³ "Os últimos "adeus" e "obrigado" a Eusébio", newspaper article, January, 6th 2014. <http://www.dn.pt/desporto/benfica/interior/os-ultimos-adeus-e-obrigado-a-eusebio-3616876.html>

So, we will not be searching for *rituals in media* (associated with media use). Instead, our focus will be on the *media rituals* constitutive of media experience: any activity structured around media-related categories whose performance reinforces the primary value of media as the fundamental symbolic provider to the social centre (Couldry, 2003:2). In other words, we see media rituals as symbolic performances having a high public status and having the recognized capacity to mobilize collective attention. As rituals, the media formalities are able to set a common focus, a common mood and a common space (Durkheim, 2001: 42). But, furthermore, they open up a space of generalized ritualization that capture a large naturalised dimension of social life that acknowledges the power of media to frame collective life.

In Eusébio's ceremony we will not find media rituals confined to a single social space such as the church, the stadium or the cemetery. Media processes are truly dispersed and can be seen in a variety of social settings and symbolic objects. In fact, media rituals on this specific media event reproduce the myth of media as the ministers of public attention. Media confer to the event a sacred dimension reinforcing the idea that they are a kind of portal to the ceremony itself. As the main negotiators of publicity in contemporary societies, media call upon those rituals to confirm themselves as the chief providers of the symbolic status of the public event. The sheer presence of media attest Eusébio's funeral with an aura of authenticity and social relevance difficult to challenge. As if media provided (with the multiple and simultaneous presence on Lisbon's streets, church and Benfica's stadium) the ultimate experience of the funeral.

Television, in particular, assumed the mission to bring the funerary rites to its viewers. Media rituals supported the belief spectators would have the full and real experience of the exequies. Contrasting with people in the funerary sites, viewers would have a complete and better understanding of the ceremony: they would be near the corpse, they would listen to public figures, they would testify, in front row, the institutional tributes paid to Eusébio.

Media assumed the task of social mediation, a pure access to the authentic experience of mourning the "black panther". In fact, in the media rituals we will identify, media portrayed themselves as the public grief's master of ceremonies, bringing the death of a cherished figure from the private realm to the public and collective realm. They worked within a funeral ritual framework and generated a public *forum* for national mourning (Kitch, 2003). A patriotic pride was built around media while they tried to sustain a "community of mourning" (Wouters, 2002: 21) at the same time it provided a symbolic space to public grieving.

We will concentrate on three main media rituals presents in the broadcasted funeral rites. They are not the only ones but, for the purposes of this paper, they are particularly relevant to the symbolic construction of public mourning by a death media event.

Immediacy Media Rituals

In the case of Eusébio's televised demise media ritualization was, first of all, present in the way communicational devices were rendered visible on the live coverage of the exequies⁴. It is quite banal to assume media presence through its cameras, spotlights or microphones. However, it is quite unusual in a

⁴ A cable channel (TVI24) transmitted nearly 14 hours of live coverage of the event. And the major Portuguese broadcasters (RTP, SIC, TVI) dedicated at least three full hours to the live broadcast.

funerary ceremony to expose technology as a clear sign of immediacy, ubiquity and media presence. In one word, (spatial and temporal) proximity with the event.

Throughout the lap of honour, the display of the corpse on *Estádio da Luz*, or the burial, the multiple technical apparatus came to the foreground. Cameras filmed other cameras, reporters rushed in to the same places without embarrassment of showing up in other channel' images; sound recording devices were not concealed. In the procession that crossed Lisbon, it was visible the big apparatus involved on the live broadcast. Dozens of cars, cameras filming from motorcycles, and an imposing and audible helicopter accompanied the funerary convoy. A photojournalist recalls that day: "I have my colleagues from Reuters, AFP, AP, RTP, SIC, etc screaming I can't arrive like that and get in front of them. This happened after 3 hours standing. [I was] occupying a small place that disappeared in seconds when the funeral car arrived (...) The only way people found to fit was push those who were already there⁵".

The sheer number of media professionals, plus the live moments involved may be interpreted as sign of the social importance media were giving to this death event. "My holistic perspective of the universe makes me believe that on that evening, in Lumiar cemetery, where the mythical former Benfica's striker was returned to Earth, the sky cried, too⁶".

It was impossible not to notice how every broadcaster was keen to participate in the national mourning of the "Black Panther".

Picture 1. Technical apparatus.



Source: edition.cnn.com

In the other hand, the technical apparatus as a media ritual was also evident in the participants and anonymous people that accompanied the motorcade. The ritualistic profusion of smartphones taking pictures and video-recording all the moments of the exequies concur to strengthen the belief of media as

⁵ This statement was made by a photojournalist who wrote about his experience on <http://www.vice.com/pt/read/o-outro-lado-do-funeral-do-eusbio>

⁶ <http://www.vice.com/pt/read/o-outro-lado-do-funeral-do-eusbio>

providers of the social centre, or media as the key managers of the public eye. It seemed people preferred to view the ceremony through the lenses of media. This can be traceable in two facts: almost 2 million people followed live the television national broadcast (among several channels). They chose to follow the public mourning of Eusébio having television as the main host. And concerning the 10.000 people present on the stadium to assist the lap of honour and say farewell to "the King" (as we was fondly called), many of them did not prescind to follow the ceremony while recording it in their own cell phones. As if the media (their own use of technology) could deliver a better perspective on the events: one viewpoint that was believed to be far superior to the simple viewpoint of those who were simple bearing witness of ceremony.

We are here facing an interesting paradox: by one hand, the physical presence is considered the ultimate sign of immediacy; yet, in this case, physical presence was not deemed sufficient and was clearly supplemented by technical devices. It was as if technology was considered a fundamental condition to greater identification with Eusébio. Its use seemed to pay reverence to the football player, as if technological memorialisation was comparable to collective and public memory.

Picture 2. Digital devices were omnipresent.



Source: esportes.estadao.com.br

The production technologies were, thus, credited with important presumptions.

The ritualized behaviour around the advantages of mediatisation represented the expectations of media personnel and individuals in the ceremonies. The authenticity of the exequies was felt to be better reported by the sheer presence of media apparatus. Although people could be aware media intervention meant an intrusion on the reality, the performativity of media in the development of this event was judged to be something akin to the media event itself.

Eusébio's funerary rites would not be the same without the assumed presence of media. These were media rituals on faithfulness. Hence, media rituals dealing with the technological dimension of media suggested the belief of media as fundamental providers of the exequies' sacred nature. It was almost as if the media presence, made Eusébio's funeral a master ceremony on collective life.

Figura 3. Media Cortege accompanying Eusébio's coffin.



Source: www.dailymail.co.uk

In sum, the ritualized display of technical apparatus served two well-defined objectives: first, it demonstrated the significance of Eusébio's demise prompting a quick response from all the fans of sports as well as appealing to the national pride. The attendance of media was so great⁷ that triggered collective mobilization. In this case, the visible presence of media coverage was also a contributing factor to the sentiment of reverence and worship. The syntactic dimensions of media event (the interruption of daily activities) (Dayan and Katz, 1992: 10) corresponded, hence, to the performativity of a media ritual. Behold the media ritual's belief: since media were massively present, the event should be of public relevance, *ergo* the interruption of the everyday is perfectly justified. Syntactics and media rituals were, thus, interpenetrated. One corroborated the other.

Second, the ritualized display of technical apparatus also served to expose the intuition that the mere presence was not sufficient. The prominence of smartphones recording all aspects of the exequies (procession, coffin, cemetery etc.) was part of a ritualization of memory that individuals put in place. It

⁷ It is believed that the name "Eusébio" was searched in Internet more than 100.000 times just in the first hours on the announcement of his death.

was not enough to testify the funeral rites in the stadium. It was not fully satisfactory to follow the massive broadcasting. People also felt important to record themselves the death media event. This points to the ways media can re-work personal and collective memory. But, foremost, it shows us how the simple use of technological devices may contribute to the definition of the media event as a coronation that deserves, at all costs, to be remembered.

Technological exposure, thus, concerns a ritualized behaviour concurring to strengthen the impact of media coverage in this double configuration of technological reverence and technological immediacy.

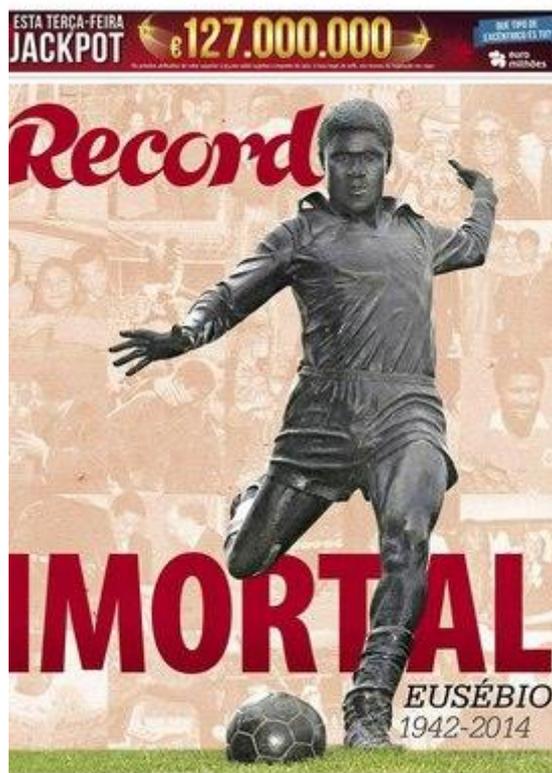
Collective Prominence Media Rituals

Another example of media generalized ritualization is given by the role of media personalities *versus* laypersons.

Media persons enjoyed a special status in the funerary ceremony of Eusébio corresponding to a media ritual based on its conspicuous character. It was because they were considered as special figures taking the public mourning to the entire society, that media persons, such as journalists, were permitted not only to impose the emotional tone and sentimental ambiance of the media event, as also a privileged access to the event *pathos*.

The majority of newspapers front-pages referred to Eusébio's death. But the way some of them noticed it was a very peculiar (and rare) one. Instead of adopting a referential perspective giving the news, being objective and neutral, some sports newspapers preferred a more emotive, eulogistic and acclamative approach. The character of the message revealed the high esteem they felt for Eusébio, setting the tone to the behaviour the general public could envisage this occurrence. Take, for instance, "Record" newspaper that simply dedicated the entire front-page to this happening choosing to describe Eusébio as immortal.

Picture 4. Sports Newspaper front-page setting the sacred tone to Eusébio's death.



Source: esporte.ig.com.br

Hence, media were in a privileged position to motivate public expressions of sorrow and grief. Media presented themselves as tone providers: they offered access to the core of funerary rites. They were proud of that and they made sure everybody recognised their privileged access to the ceremony. In doing so, they had given the ceremony a special media aura. They flaunted their special role as broadcasters, and at the same time, as master of ceremonies. So, there were some kind of ritualization involving the conspicuous function of media as platforms of representation and expression of public feelings.

To resume, in the case of this second media ritual on Eusébio's exequies, media presented themselves as providers of two distinct things: to begin with, they showed as providers of public mourning. They were key to a non-presential bereavement taking the ceremony to the world and giving them a kind of sacred dimension. Secondly, they also provided the representation of the ceremonial value itself, functioning as master of ceremony or, in Dayan and Katz's terms (Katz & Dayan, 1992: 7) a "priestly role".

It is this ostentation of a special role within the media event, this special access to its core, that the conspicuous ritual performs. And it is precisely because media events contain rituals that we should study them and their role in the integration of societies (Hepp & Couldy, 2010: 4). It is interesting to observe that these media rituals of ostentation are embedded in mainstream media processes of legitimation. We are again dealing with Couldry's proposal to view media as proving access to the mediated centre (Couldry, 2003: 37).

Eusébio's death media event contained a kind of invisible code that instructed people to follow certain mourning behaviour over others. Also, the coverage of laying flowers or Benfica scarves by public figures on Eusébio's statue may have had a significant impact on the perspective of a correct expression of public mourning. Seeing the example of media personalities on television, spectators may have felt compelled to steer their public manifestation of grief in a concordant way.

Picture 5. Crowd paying respects to Eusébio's statue in Benfica's stadium.



Source: www.publico.pt

One could obtain a media status in two ways: by professional performance (journalist, production personnel) and by media interpellation (interviewed personalities for example). In this case, professional performance took the leading role over media interpellation. In other words, journalists were able to approach people, inquire them, take them to publicly expose themselves and their sentiments. Reporters were, thus, in control of the subjective emotion.

The visibility accorded to media persons and the activities granted to journalist are part of a media ritualization that entrusts them a special status and a differentiator role. *They are seen as sacred providers of a collective event.* As such, they could manoeuvre inside and outside the stadium, near the burial site and were able to invite family, friends and laypersons to express their sorrow to the entire society.

Media rituals are, thus, signalling media with collective prominence.

Revelatory Media Rituals

Following the conspicuous character of media rituals, we should address the character of formal media-relations and how media activities tend to be part of the "intimate circle" of the event.

For instance, in Eusébio's funeral, reporters instigated the mayor of Lisbon to speak about this subject. They exhorted Portugal's President to discourse; they prompted the president of the national assembly to

say a few words about the extraordinary person Eusébio was. More, media could join the ceremony, unlike common citizens, that took place in front of the City headquarters, in Praça do Município, inside "Estádio da Luz", or inside the church. Besides, through television spectators listen to important Benfica and Football's personalities speaking about the qualities of the "black panther".

Picture 6. The President of the portuguese Republic adresssing media by occasion of Eusébio's death.



Source: presidencia.pt

The media rituals around the universal access reinforce the idea of media as special and fundamental agents on the collective life. *They work on both front stage and in the back stage.* At the same time, they function as acolytes of the ceremonial communication and as *inside actors* capable of taking viewers to more restricted social spaces. They are present both in formal and informal settings. What media do is *to move between social restrains and controlled spaces.* They opened up to common individuals institutional settings clearly restricted to laypersons.

In Eusébio's exequies, one could not only testify the ritual ceremony as also observe how media rituals were associated with disclosure. Hence, television paid special attention to the funeral preparations giving emphasis to the unusual aspects of the ceremony: a funerary limousine, the coffin in display on the centre of the football field, or the concerns with the security of the funerary procession.

Picture 7. The crowded Lumiar cemetery in the northern district of Lisbon. Note how media meddles in the ritual burial of Eusébio.



Source: <http://www.vice.com/pt/read/o-outro-lado-do-funeral-do-eusbio>

Media rituals dealing with the showing off backstage and restricted aspects contribute to give them a special status and a prominent role on social integration. They strengthen this social status through media rituals and media rituals, on the other hand, are fundamental to build the assumption media are distinctive gateways to social universes usually barred to common people. The revelation of the back stage's preparations on Eusébio's exequies is one simple example of the exposure power media are endowed with.

Media are, thus, seen as revelatory instances; they unlock hidden aspects of reality given an augmented perspective on the events. This has to do with immediacy media rituals (the first kind of media rituals we identified). Media are felt to be both authentic and exact reporters of social reality. Both media rituals portray them as the magnifiers of existing social relations. They uncover social layers to expose events as they really occurred, even if spectators initially did not noticed how backstage influenced the front stage of the event.

These media rituals describe, thus, media as vital seers (*seeing through*) and betrayers (*disclosing events*).

This take us to the famous distinction between front stage and backstage (Goffman, 1959) because these media rituals tend to blend these two modes of presentation. In effect, showing off semi-restricted aspects of Eusébio's media event leads to the indistinctness between the public presentation for others (front stage) and the letting down our guard (back stage). What these rituals show is that the typically out of bounds aspects of the ceremony tend to become accessible to the audience. This takes the performativity

of actors characteristically of front stage right to the back stage. By showing more or less intimate aspects of the ceremony, media rituals oblige actors to extend their performances.

Take, for instance, the burial of Eusébio's body in Lumiar cemetery. These disclosing rituals entered the logic of a private, everyday ritual burial. In picture 7, we can see the public broadcasting of an intimate ceremony, usually reserved for family and close friends. In this case, media rituals dealt with the exposition of these intimate procedures taking the common spectator into the very core of the entombment. This configures a revelation of what could be considered the back stage of Eusébio's exequies. Of course this is not new. The same occurred with Princess Diana's death. Eusébio's funeral also had these revelatory rituals that opened up the ceremony and took it entirely to the public realm. In fact, much of this media event depended on this capacity of media to expose a rather mundane event (death) and transform it in a major, public event. To be more precise: the revelatory rituals of Eusébio's exequies were fundamental in the integrative dimension of the media event and the construction of "the myth of the mediated centre: the belief, or assumption, that there is a centre to the social world, and that, in some sense, the media speaks 'for' that centre" (Couldry, 2003: 2).

Conclusion

In this paper we tried to give an empirical frame to the concept of "media rituals" based on the death of Eusébio's media event. We dwelled on Nick Couldry's concept of Media Rituals (Couldry, 2003) trying to study social rituals *enacted by* the media. Since, social integration does not exist *per se*, it is crucial to exam the making of symbolic forms of media events.

We envisaged media rituals as entrenched symbolic practices that could be traceable in three sorts of media rituals: rituals dealing with immediacy, rituals dealing with collective prominence and rituals dealing with revelation of reality.

These intertwined media rituals were separately acknowledged exclusively for explanatory purposes. Indeed, media rituals concerning immediacy are closed connected to revelatory media rituals. And media rituals concerning the collective *pathos* are also linked to symbolic forms where revelatory media rituals are constructed. They are *inter-dependent rituals* and it is this network of complementary meanings that configures media's space of ritualization. That's why we could better describe *media ritualizations* rather than *media rituals*. Media ritualizations (cf. Couldry, 2003: 49) involve a multiple set of symbolic activities, each one intimately connected with other rites. They are not always separate actions but a continuous and naturalized flow of media-related behaviours. Media's space of ritualization is built around the claim of an extraordinary authority media have in today's societies. It contains a certain rhetoric of the singular status of media as presenters and representatives of collective conscience.

As such, superior (sacred) attributes are credited to media. The media rituals analysed on Eusébio's media event help to explain how media manage to demand institutional and personal compliance, or in other words, how they are granted with a special status in topics encompassing individual and collective life. Eusébio's media rituals are, then, fundamental ways which keep updated the space of ritualization involved in the idea of media as the legitimate access to a social centre.

In the present case-study, all the three media rituals have subsidized Eusébio's funeral media event as a major social occurrence. Media rituals play with wider collective values and, at the same time, endow

them with a sense of togetherness and national identity. So, we have described media rituals in Eusébio's exequies as emphasising the technological apparatus as providers to immediacy and authenticity; as special agents that conduct the tone of the ceremony and influence the way spectator's interpret and act towards it; and, thirdly, as providers of a mediated and exclusive admission to a sacred ceremony.

The claims positing media as providers of a representational realm of wider social values (the paying respects to a recently died legend, for instance) is supported by immediacy collective prominence and revelation media rituals. In each case, these media ritualizations are playing with the putative capacity media have for fostering social connection (Shils & Young, 1956: 77). By giving a ubiquitous experience of Eusébio's public mourning (immediacy media rituals), by giving public emphasis to social *pathos* (collective prominence media rituals) and by giving the idea media can reveal the essence of the event (revelatory media rituals), media are conceived as gateways to social integration, singular openings to society's core values.

In sum, media rituals played their part on the creation of the myth of Eusébio as one of Portugal's greatest symbols and one of the most respected international sports figures.

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