

I Visible and Invisible Violences in the Global Media

Friday parallel sessions I 10.45 – 12.00 (Nov. 6th 2009)

Description

Contemporary network society is a society of mediatised fear and compassion. As social formations deterritorialize and globalize, media representations of violence, suffering and victimhood become important grounds for subjectivities and 'imagined communities'. However, all violence and suffering is not equally representable. As Žižek reminds us, on one hand, there is 'subjective' violence which is performed by a clearly identifiable agent, and which we perceive as a perturbation of the normal peaceful state of things. On the other hand, there is 'objective', systematic violence which is invisible insofar as it 'sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent'.

Papers in this panel address the relationship between images and violence from a broad perspective inspired by the themes of visibility/invisibility, and the possibility and impossibility of representation. What roles does the visibility/invisibility of violence play in contemporary societies and world politics? How might problematics of the invisible and the irrepresentable be incorporated in the practice and theorization of politics in the network society? And finally, how might questions of violence, representation and the irrepresentable relate to other themes that are central to social and political imaginaries –for example, themes of love and hope.