

Symposium: “(Il)liberal Nation Projection Through Sport, Culture, Entertainment, and International Broadcasting”

Date: 20 and/or 21 October 2022

Location: The University of Manchester’s campus and online

Contact: Send a 250 word-maximum abstract of your prospective paper, as well as a brief bio by 31 August 2022 to vitaly.kazakov@manchester.ac.uk

The upcoming FIFA World Cup in Qatar presents a fruitful opportunity to examine how illiberal regimes project the nation via the staging of sport, cultural, and entertainment media events. This workshop brings together scholars and non-academic stakeholders to explore and compare nation projection strategies of illiberal and democratic states across different contexts, channels, and platforms in the digital age.

The concept of ‘nation projection’ subsumes classic public and cultural diplomacy efforts and soft power activities, such as the hosting of sport and entertainment events. The term also refers to state-sponsored campaigns of external influence activities including international broadcasting and covert meddling in the affairs of foreign states. Sporting and cultural events and campaigns staged by Russia (e.g., the 2014 Winter Olympics and the 2018 FIFA World Cup), China (the 2008 Summer and 2022 Winter Olympics), the United Arab Emirates (Expo 2020), Brazil (the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics), and other states in recent years have prompted discussions about the consequences of nation projection. Liberal regimes’ responses to and participation in such events and projects have also been widely addressed. The overlap between nation projection and media events provides an important arena for understanding how the sphere of contemporary international politics is produced and shaped by political elites, media, and the public.

This symposium seeks to address some of these issues by expanding debates and bringing together comparative perspectives on how nation projection differs across: 1) sporting, popular culture, and international media events and channels; 2) liberal and illiberal contexts; 3) different kinds of illiberal regimes; and 4) various media formats and technological platforms.

We invite contributions from the following fields and related topics:

- 1) Sporting mega-events and their legacies
- 2) Sports diplomacy and ‘sportswashing’
- 3) Cultural and public diplomacy
- 4) Nation projection through state-sponsored and independent cultural and artistic production (both ‘high’ and popular culture)
- 5) Global media events and their audiences
- 6) International broadcasting, including informational influence via both traditional and new media
- 7) Propaganda and its effectiveness in the digital age

Richard Giulianotti (Professor of Sociology and UNESCO Chair in Sport, Physical Activity and Education for Development at Loughborough University), Sven Daniel Wolfe (Lecturer at the University of Lausanne, author of *More Than Sport: Soft Power and Potemkinism in the 2018 Men's Football World Cup in Russia*), Stephen Hutchings (Professor of Russian Studies at The University of Manchester, author of *Projecting Russia in a Mediatized World*), and Precious Chatterje-Doody (Lecturer in Politics and International Studies at the Open University, co-author of *Russia Today and Conspiracy Theory: People, Power and Politics on RT*) are among the provisionally confirmed speakers.

Please contact Vitaly Kazakov (vitaly.kazakov@manchester.ac.uk) to register your interest in the event and to submit a title and 250 word-maximum abstract of your prospective paper, as well as a brief bio by 31 August 2022. Successful applicants will be notified by 7 September.

A limited number of travel bursaries are available for presenters who are early-career researchers. Please indicate in your application if you wish to be considered for one of these. Thank you for your interest and time!