



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

Date: 20 and 21 October 2022 **Location:** The University of Manchester’s campus and online

Schedule

All times are UK BST

Thursday, 20 October 2022

8:30 – 9:00	Day 1 Arrival and light breakfast	
9:00 – 9:10	Welcome: Vitaly Kazakov	
9:10 – 11:15	Panel 1: Nation projection through sport: ‘Soft power’, ‘sportswashing’, ‘sports diplomacy’ Chair: Jonathan Grix	
9:10	The Chair’s Introduction	
9:15	Paul Michael Brannagan and Seth Joseph Perkin	Small State Strategies through Global Sport: The Case of Qatar and the UAE
9:35	James Dorsey	The 2022 World Cup: Putting Qatar’s Best Foot Forward
9:55	Kaixiao Jiang	Supporting the Chinese football dream or not? Exploring the significance of football in the Chinese context from the fandom perspective
10:15	Adam Dinsmore	Royal Rumble! Bidirectional reputational washing in the Saudi Arabia-World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) strategic partnership: A discursive-theoretical analysis.
10:35	Laeed Zaghلامي	Football as a Soft power and Political Game in Algeria
11:15	Coffee Break	
11:30 – 12:15	Keynote 1: Richard Giulianotti	Sport and the ‘Illiberal Turn’: Globalization, Soft Power, and International Development
12:15 – 1:15	Lunch	



1:15 – 3:00	Panel 2: Nation projection through sport: Governance, Values, and Sport Diplomacy Chair: Gayle McPherson	
1:15	Barrie Houlihan	Challenges to globalisation and the impact on the values underpinning international sport agreements
1:35	Solomon Ilevbare	Sport washing: the nexus between international law and sports diplomacy, the case of Qatar 2022 FIFA World cup, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup
1:55	Malte Frank	beIN vs. beoutQ - Justifying Actions against sports Broadcasting under the WTO National Security Interests Clause
2:15	Michael Skey	Sportswashing: media headline or analytic concept
2:35 – 2:45	Chris Harvey	UK Sport's approach to international relations and engagement with the international sporting community
3 – 3:15	Coffee Break	
3:15 – 4:00	Keynote 2: Sven Daniel Wolfe	The Hard Edge of Soft Power: Mega-Events, Geopolitics, and Making Nations Great Again
4:00 – 4:10	Break	
4:10 – 6:10	Panel 3: Sporting events' legacies and audiences Chair: Vera Tolz	
4:10	Tom Fabian	Hungarian Heritage Populism: Soccer Diplomacy and Neo-Turanism
4:30	Jiri Zakravsky	Tweeting from Hungary. Giro d'Italia 2022 on Participants' Twitter
4:50	Valerio della Sala	The Olympic Villages and Olympic urban planning: Analysis and evaluation of the impact on territorial and urban planning (XX-XXI centuries)
5:10	James Saunders	Beyond Russia 2018: Analysing the Effectiveness of Differing Football Soft Power Strategies on Fan Perceptions
5:30	Richard Arnold	The Most Consequential World Cup in History: Russian Regime Projection and the 2018 World Cup
6:10 – 6:15	Break	



	Panel 4 (First part of the Friday panel): Nation projection through media	
6:15 – 6:30	Anton Shekhovtsov	Addressing the problem of media disinformation and presentation of the “RT in Europe and beyond” report

Friday, 21 October 2022

9:30 – 10:00	Day 2 Welcome Coffee	
10:00 – 12:00	Panel 4: Nation projection through media: the Case of Russia Chair: Stephen Hutchings	
10:00	Rui Wang	RT Videos Repurposed for Bilibili: Chinese Mediation of Russian Strategic Narratives
10:20	Maxime Audinet	Russia’s Informational Presence in Mali
10:40	Ryzhova, A., Vziatysheva, V., Kravets, D., Jungblut, M., and Toepfl, F.	How RT Covered Russia’s War Against Ukraine Across Its Six Language Versions: a Multilingual Topic Modelling Analysis
11:00	Maksim Alyukov	Reflexive propaganda: polarization, political deliberation, and war in an authoritarian regime
11:20	Mikhail Batuev, Claire Thornton, and Sandy Wolfson	Media agenda-setting and framing of risks in Russia in the run-up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup: A study of perceptions of international football fans
12:00 – 12:15	Coffee break	
12:15 – 1:00	Keynote 3: Precious Chatterje-Doody	Rethinking agency in il(liberal) nation projection: representing, resisting and reconstructing the nation in wartime
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch	
2:00 – 2:45	Keynote 4: Stephen Hutchings	Projecting Russia in a Mediatized World: Recursive Nationhood
2:45 – 3:00	Coffee break	



3:00 – 5:00	Panel 5: Nation projection through cultural production and outputs: cross-regime and historical perspectives Chair: Vitaly Kazakov	
3:00	Pınar Özdemir and Melike Aktaş Kuyucu	Public Relations in Turkey during 1920-1955: The Display of a Western Image
3:20	Peter Rollberg	Teaching Men How to Be Men: The Kazakhstani Inspirational Sports Drama
3:40	Kanika Ahuja	Cricket, Cinema, and the Spectacle of Nation Projection: Lagaan and 83 as Artifacts of Nationalism
4:00	Jonathan Ervine	Filming victory and defeat: cinematic images of the French men’s football team
4:20	Marco Biasioli	“Don’t Look There, Look Here!” Music as A State Tool for Distraction and Virtue Signaling in Russia (2019-2021)
5:00 – 5:05	Break	
5:10	Summary and farewell	



Full Programme (in chronological order)

Thursday, 20 October, 2022

Panel 1: Nation projection through sport: ‘Soft power’, ‘sportswashing’, ‘sports diplomacy’

9:10 – 11:15

Chair: Jonathan Grix (attending in person)

Paul Michael Brannagan and Seth Joseph Perkin

(attending in person)

Small state strategies through global sport:
The case of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates

Abstract: The state of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have experienced significant growth in the last twenty years. In facilitating these developments there has been an increased global visibility of these two small states within the Arab Peninsula. While this has consolidated Qatar’s and the UAEs position within global power structures it has turned the spotlight onto national and regional issues. In this paper, therefore, we take a cautious constructivist approach in the study of small states in international relations. Using the examples of Qatar and the UAE we explore the small state strategies of these countries through their investment on global sport. These states share similar characteristics: both have populations under 10 million; both have demonstrated significant international ambitions; both have significant natural resource wealth to support their ambitious plans. We chart the conversion of their natural resource wealth to their strategies on global sport, both locally and internationally. Our findings suggest that while the investment into global sport has increased regional competition, the investment in sport is being utilised as a survival tactic and also, for Qatar and the UAE to gain influence in their own right.

About the speakers: Dr Paul Michael Brannagan is a Senior Lecturer in Sport Management and Policy, International Lead in the Department of Economics, Policy & International Business, at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK. Paul is an International Relations scholar, specialising in the study of sport. His research primarily focuses on the role and use of sports mega-events by national governments for achieving certain political, economic, social and/or cultural objectives. Dr Seth Perkin is a Sport Policy and Management Lecturer at the Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.



James M. Dorsey
(attending online)

The 2022 World Cup:
Putting Qatar's Best Foot Forward

Abstract: 2022 was Qatar's year to put its best foot forward. A major producer of natural gas, the tiny Gulf state was under the magnifying glass as it entered the final phase of hosting the 2022 World Cup and emerged as a potential part of efforts to reduce European dependence on Russian energy. On balance, Qatar had already succeeded, as much on its own steam as with the help of its erstwhile detractors in the Gulf and the Arab world, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, over the past decade, much attention has focused on labour rights in the Gulf state due to world governing soccer body FIFA's awarding of the World Cup hosting rights to Qatar in 2010. Qatar remains a target of criticism by human rights groups, despite implementing far-reaching reforms of its kafala or labour sponsorship system that long put workers at the mercy of their employers.

In contrast to the geopolitical balance sheet that works in Qatar's favour, an evaluation in the final year of the run-up to the 2022 FIFA World Cup of the campaign to reform the country's erstwhile onerous labor system and accommodate fans whose lifestyles violate restrictive laws and/or go against deeply rooted cultural attitudes is more of a mixed bag. That is true even if one takes into account that Qatari autocracy has proven to be more responsive and flexible in responding to pressure from human rights and labour groups than its Gulf brothers in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.

About the speaker: Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar, an Adjunct Senior Fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, and the author of the syndicated column and blog, The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer.



Kaixiao Jiang
(attending in person)

Supporting the Chinese football dream or not? Exploring the significance of football in the Chinese context from the fandom perspective

Abstract: This article examines that Chinese football fans support the idea of the Chinese football dream by going through the history of Chinese football fandom. In 2015, football was nominated as a national strategy by the Chinese government to promote soft power. Previous research mainly focused on the significance of football to the Chinese economy and politics, thereby ignoring the investigation of Chinese fans' wishes. Hence, whether fans also support Xi Jinping's football dream is unknown. This article examines that Chinese fans recognise international football games as an influential platform to promote the nation, and such a fact encourages fans to support the Chinese football dream. The origin of the Chinese football fandom was associated with the occasional broadcasting of the 1978 World Cup finals which was also the Chinese people's first World Cup watching. The broadcasting not only helped the Chinese people develop football fandom and fan culture but also offered them a channel to know outside of China. The article also shows that fans' support for the football dream is associated with their desire for a great Chinese national football team. The fandom for the team was strongly associated with Chinese nationalism which requires people to be qualified against any challenges from the out of China. Nevertheless, the team's weak records, especially those in World Cups, have been recognised as a national humiliation, and event 5.19 in 1985, the largest fan riot in China, was a typical case to show fans' dissatisfaction.

About the speaker: Dr Kaixiao Jiang is a Lecturer in Sport Management in the Department of Sport and PE/Sport Psychology, Liverpool Hope University, whose major research interest focuses on sports fandom. Kai is also interested in other sport / leisure research topics such as leisure study, sport history, sport politics and sport policy.



Adam Dinsmore
(attending in person)

Royal Rumble! Bidirectional reputational washing in the Saudi Arabia-World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) strategic partnership: A discursive-theoretical analysis.

Abstract: On 5 March 2018, the Saudi Royal Family and World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) announced their intention to co-host twenty international pay-per-view wrestling events over the next ten years. To date the partnership has grossed a reported \$350m for WWE and granted the Saudi Government privileged access to the '1 billion television households' reached by WWE programming in an average week.¹

The shows are part of the Saudi Vision 2030 programme which seeks to project a liberalised vision of Saudi Arabia through partnerships with global sports and entertainment brands. Commentary has tended to contrast the reputational gains available to the Saudi Government with the assumed losses incurred by WWE through association with an illiberal nation state. However less has been said of WWE's attempts to leverage the partnership for its own gain by promoting its female performers as exemplars of feminist progress in a slowly liberalising Middle East. A framing which inverts the assumed direction of reputational washing between state and corporation, cuts against WWE's historical reputation as a 'low' cultural form which frequently objectifies its female performers and dovetails conveniently with the propaganda goals of Saudi Vision 2030.

This paper presents a discourse analysis of two WWE-Saudi broadcasts focusing on the mutually-reinforcing projection of the illiberal Saudi nation contra the apparently liberalising presence of WWE performers. The findings problematise the co-option of feminist and 'white saviour' discourses made possible by 'sportswashing' partnerships between actors at the geopolitical 'centre' and 'periphery'.

¹ WWE Company Information <https://corporate.wwe.com/news/company-information> [Accessed Tues 30th August 2022].

About the speaker: Adam Dinsmore is a PhD candidate based at the University of York's department of Sociology. Adam specialises in mediatized discourse analysis with a particular interest in state uses of (il)liberal and/or populist discourses.



Laeed Zaghlami
(attending online)

Football as a Soft power and Political Game in Algeria

Abstract: Football is earning worldwide popularity. FIFA, the international football federation association, is even larger, with over 205 members, than the 194- member United Nations. In my country, the “footballization” of society is a social reality that is hard to ignore and Football is not only the most popular sport but it has become an opium. Further, sports arenas have become not only spaces to express political views and opinions but also to escape from everyday hardships and difficulties. For these reasons, authorities in Algeria have been putting all their weight, including political weight, behind the national squad, as they hope to gain political dividends in the form of public support and loyalty.

In my paper, I will explain why since its first participation in the football World Cup in 1982, Algeria has placed football high on its soft power agenda. Still in popular memory and imagination is the victory of the Algerian squad against Germany, 2– 1, in the Spanish city of Gijón. In 1986, only four years after Algeria joined the tournament, I was a student at Surrey University in the United Kingdom. I was surprised to find out that some English boys still remembered details such as the names of members of the Algerian team that beat the Germans. To me it was a clear indication that football can exert soft power on the hearts and minds of people throughout the world. Other participation of Algerian squads in the World Cup – in Mexico (1986), South Africa (2010) and Brazil (2014) – are perceived as having been excellent opportunities for Algeria to build up soft power.

In sum, I will firstly recall the role played by football during Algerian Revolution and how National liberation front squad was the ideal ambassador to mobilise international public support for the Algerian cause. It was a typical example of sports diplomacy. Secondly, I will explain how sports and football mainly has become an addict for young population for social, economic and even political ascension and celebrity but equally how the state uses it to contain social discontent and political gains. Thirdly, nowadays, football (again) has become source of pride and achievements but also political tools to ‘speak out your minds’ and how in the absence of enough public spaces, football arenas become the place for freedom of political expression and opinion.

About the speaker: Dr Laeed Zaghlami holds a PhD from Algiers University, MPhil from University of Surrey, UK and Diploma from International Academy of Broadcasting Montreux, Switzerland. He is Professor in the Faculty of Information and Communication, Algiers University and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Politics and International Relations.



Richard Giulianotti

Keynote 1, 11:30 – 12:15 (attending in person)

Sport and the 'Illiberal Turn':
Globalization, Soft Power, and International Development

Abstract: This paper explores key themes and issues for sport with respect to the perceived greater prominence and influence of illiberal governments and ideologies in recent times. A particular focus is on this 'illiberal turn' vis-à-vis globalization processes, the pursuit of soft power, and international development agendas within the field of sport. Consideration is given, inter alia, to the staging of sport mega-events, sport club ownership, 'sportswashing', and pursuit of influence within international sport systems.

About the speaker: Richard Giulianotti is Professor of Sociology and UNESCO Chair in Sport, Physical Activity and Education for Development at Loughborough University. Professor Giulianotti's research interests are in the fields of sport, development, peace, globalization, youth, sport mega-events, crime and deviance, sport and policing/security, migration, sport policy, and social theory.



Panel 2: Nation projection through sport: Governance, Values, and Sport Diplomacy
1:15 – 3:00

Chair: Simon Rofe (attending online)

Barrie Houlihan
(attending in person)

Challenges to globalisation and the impact on the values
underpinning international sport agreements

Abstract: Accompanying the spread of sport as a global business and a political/diplomatic resource have been attempts to underpin the organisation and practice of sport with a set of Kantian values that maintain its economic/cultural utility while also protecting the rights and dignity of key stakeholders especially athletes. In recent years there has been growing evidence of challenges, at both the grassroots and corporate/governmental level, to the globalisation of liberal Enlightenment values. The paper addresses three research questions: 1) to what extent are the Kantian values that underpin international rights conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under threat; 2) to what extent are these challenges evident in sport, and 3) how secure are the liberal values that underpin international sport documents/agreements such as the Olympic Charter, the WADA Code, the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport and the Universal Declaration of Player Rights? It is argued that the challenges are substantial and have significant consequences for the values underpinning global sport. The focus for analysis is on three elements of the global sport infrastructure: international sport agreements/declarations; national identity politics; and international sport organisations. It is argued that the strength of the challenges is undermining the values on which global sport has been built either by attempts to redefine core liberal values or by simply ignoring them. The same countries that are seeking to undermine global human rights conventions are also reluctant to be bound by sports-related institutions and conventions.

About the speaker: Professor Houlihan has degrees from the universities of Liverpool and Salford. Prior to his appointment as Professor of Sport Policy at Loughborough University in September 1998, he was Professor of Public Policy at Staffordshire University where he was also Head of the Division of International Relations and Politics and Associate Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

In addition to his work as a teacher and researcher, Professor Houlihan has chaired, or been a member of, various committees for Sport England, UK Sport, and the Centre for Social Justice. He has also undertaken consultancy work for the European Union, the Youth Sport Trust, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, PEAK, BAALPE, the Department for Education and Skills, the Council of Europe, the World Anti-Doping Agency, UK Sport, Sport England, sportscotland, and UNESCO.



Solomon Ilevbare
(attending in person)

Sport washing: the nexus between international law and sports diplomacy, the case of Qatar 2022 FIFA World cup, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup

Abstract: Human rights have become a serious issue and growing debate among scholars and stakeholders alike. This paper seeks to discuss and argue that scholars of sports diplomacy need to consider first that sport and international politics do mix. Secondly, this mixture transcends the impact of international law on a state's behaviour by considering the characteristics of international law as non-binding law. This paper argues that 'sportwashing' and the hosting of sports mega-events by illiberal nations are related to the failures of international law as non-binding. However, to effectively tackle issues of the hosting of sports mega events by illiberal nations, scholars and stakeholders need to consider the role international law plays in influencing sports organisations and illiberal nations of their choice to host such events. Therefore, by discussing the issues of human rights from the lens of international law and the consideration that international politics is mixed with sport mega events, more light can be shown into a nation's projection to consider public and cultural diplomacy efforts and soft power activities, such as the hosting of sport events. Also, to explore and compare nation projection strategies of illiberal and democratic states across different contexts, channels, and platforms in the digital age. This article seeks to discuss sport diplomacy and sports washing by examining illiberal nations, nations accused of human rights violations with ties to hosting sports mega event like the FIFA world cup. The primary case study for this article is Qatar and the 2022 FIFA world Cup. The secondary case studies, such as the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup, will serve as supporting case studies to the main argument for this paper.

About the speaker: Solomon Imoudu Ilevbare is a final year PhD student researching in sports diplomacy as a soft power tool focusing on the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at the University of the West of Scotland. MSc- In security studies, peace-building and diplomacy at Loughborough University; BSc- International and diplomacy at Babcock University.



Malte Frank
(attending online)

beIN vs. beoutQ - Justifying Actions against Sports Broadcasting
under the WTO National Security Interests Clause

Abstract: The paper will discuss the conflict between Qatar and Saudi Arabia on the broadcasting of beIN and beoutQ and the respective ruling of the WTO in the case WT/DS567/R. Based on this conflict, the paper will analyse whether actions against sports broadcasting used as a propaganda tool can be justified under the WTO's national security interest clauses.

About the speaker: Dr. Malte Frank is a German attorney at law and a Senior Associate at Hengeler Mueller. Malte is working on a thesis *The Second Half – A Comparative Legal Study of the Exclusive, Tied, Territorially Restricted and Centralized Marketing of Sports Broadcasting Rights*, forthcoming in December 2022.



Michael Skey
(attending in person)

Sportswashing: media headline or analytic concept

Abstract: Sportswashing is a neologism that has begun to appear with increasing regularity in the English-language media over the past few years. Broadly speaking, it has been used to refer to the actions of illiberal states seeking to bolster their reputation at a regional or global level and/or obscure a problematic social, political or human rights record. However, there has been limited academic discussion of the term or what it might offer, notably when trying to make sense of the significance of sporting mega events.

Therefore, this paper has three main objectives. First to situate sportswashing within the wider literature on sports and state relations so as to better assess what, if anything, makes it different from cognate terms, including propaganda, public diplomacy, soft power and place branding. Second, to reflect on the utility of the concept with particular reference to work on mediatization and, what Asekgaard has labelled as, the 'logic of branding' (2006). Third, to address the vexed question of who labels, and is labelled as, sportswashing, with reference to a number of recent case studies.

About the speaker: Dr Michael Skey is a Senior Lecturer in Communication and Media Studies at Loughborough University. Michael's research interests are in the areas of; national belonging, globalisation, sociology of everyday life, media events and rituals, mediatization, sport and discourse theory.



Chris Harvey
(attending in person)

UK Sport's approach to international relations and engagement with the international sporting community

Abstract: Chris will provide a talk outlining UK Sport's approach to international relations and engagement with the international sporting community, explaining how the UK compares to other nations. He will address sports diplomacy and how the UK navigates some of the difficult issues in international sports governance, explaining why global partnerships are essential, and highlight what the UK aims to achieve through hosting major sporting events.

About the speaker: Chris Harvey has worked in international relations at UK Sport since 2010 and has helped to advance the UK's international sporting interests by developing, guiding and supporting successful international relations strategies with a range of national partners; as well as developing networks and managing relationships with international partners and sports federations / organisations to ensure the UK is positively shaping the direction and development of the international sporting system through its strong voice, ethical approach and global reputation.



Sven Daniel Wolfe

Keynote 2, 3:15 – 4:00 (attending in person)

The Hard Edge of Soft Power:
Mega-Events, Geopolitics, and Making Nations Great Again

Abstract: Scholars have long explored the ways in which sports mega-events have been instrumentalized as vehicles for soft-power (Grix, Brannagan, and Lee 2019; Nygård and Gates 2013). This lecture is built on two ambitions: the first follows work that explores the domestic application of soft power projects (Wolfe 2020) in order to explore how Russia's mega-event decade – hosting both the 2014 Sochi Olympics and the 2018 Men's Football World Cup – contributed to a revanchist Russian nationalism. These nationalist narratives were distributed during the preparation for and staging of the Russian mega-event decade, propagating official discourses that would later legitimize the so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine.

The lecture's second ambition is to identify and unpack the functioning of geopolitical soft power projects more broadly, with the understanding that these political technologies are attractive to states around the world. Thus, the Russian case becomes the entry point for a more general exploration of the geopolitics woven into mega-event hosting. Ultimately, the lecture demonstrates how the machinery of narrative creation and distribution was created and tested during Russia's mega-event decade, and traces uncomfortable linkages between the ideas of a nation great at sport and a "great nation" defined militaristically and imperially. With reference to the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine, it concludes that discussions on soft power and sport should not forget the vital dimension of the hard, military edge baked into the soft power narratives of mega-event-led international unity.

This lecture is based on an article currently under peer review, and also comprises the introduction to an edited volume currently under construction. If interested in contributing to this volume, please contact SDW at dwolfe@geo.uzh.ch.

About the speaker: Dr Sven Daniel Wolfe is a Lecturer at the University of Lausanne, and the author of *More Than Sport: Soft Power and Potemkinism in the 2018 Men's Football World Cup in Russia*. He is interested in mega-events, urban development, and the cultures of protest and resistance.



Panel 3: Sporting events' legacies and audiences

4:10 – 6:10

Chair: Vera Tolz (attending in person)

Tom Fabian
(attending online)

Hungarian Heritage Populism: Soccer Diplomacy and Neo-Turanism

Abstract: Of all the right-wing populist movements, the Hungarian case is the most multifaceted. Viktor Orbán and his Christian conservative party (Fidesz) have skillfully navigated diverse interests – anti-Russia and anti-EU, Islamophobia and “Eastern diplomacy,” global capital and local traditions – through the “cult of heritage” (Lowenthal, 1998). With multi-billion-euro investments in heritage reconstruction, dozens of new museums, and what Teodor Shanin (1990) refers to as the “mystification of the peasant,” heritage populism is at the fore of Fidesz’s nativist, back-to-roots nationalism. Heritage is the representation of the past in the present, and one of the most heralded aspects of national heritage is in the realm of physical culture. Sporting heritage is often drawn from nationalistic discourse, and Orbán is no different, especially with his unbridled support of Hungarian domestic football (Molnar & Whigham, 2021). His aim is to reclaim the national heroics of the “Mighty Magyars” of the 1950s, as was clear during the brief success of the national team at Euro 2020. However, although Orbán, like most other heads of state, respects soccer’s soft power in international affairs, he is also a proponent of the ability of local folk games to promulgate neo-turanism, a cultural and political movement to link Hungary both ethnically and economically to Central Asia. The aim of this paper is to present the case for Hungarian heritage populism through both modern sport (soccer) and traditional games by analyzing the media representations of the national soccer team and the mass pageantry of the Kurultáj cultural festival.

About the speaker: Dr Tom Fabian is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Queensland. The focus of his work is on traditional games, having done research on Indigenous games and reconciliation in Canada, ethnic identity and traditional games in Central Asia, and traditional games and populism in Europe. Tom is currently working on a book about Hungarian heritage populism.



Jiri Zakravsky
(attending online)

Tweeting from Hungary. Giro d'Italia 2022 on Participants' Twitter

Abstract: In April 2019, it was announced that the Grande Partenza, the start of three-week road cycling race across Italy, Giro d'Italia, will take place in Hungary next year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was postponed until 2022. Grande Partenza 2022 was another example of a sporting event organized by Viktor Orbán's Hungary; in general, Orbán's government is extraordinarily active in using sports diplomacy tools for their political goals. On the other hand, hosting famous sporting events does not automatically mean positive publicity abroad. The perception of the sporting event by sports fans can also be influenced by the social media of the direct participants, in this case cyclists. How did cyclists reflect the fact that a traditional Italian cycling race was held in Hungary on their Twitter accounts? In other words, what sports diplomacy messages did the participants send to the public? Did they comment on the political situation in the country, or did they instead focus only on positive messages related, for example, to the behaviour of the fans? These are questions that should be answered in the presentation.

About the speaker: Dr Jiří Zákřavský works as an assistant professor at the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, Czech Republic. His central area of research includes sports diplomacy and the use of sport as a political tool in general.



Valerio della Sala
(attending online)

The Olympic Villages and Olympic urban planning:
Analysis and evaluation of the impact on territorial and urban planning (XX-XXI centuries)

Abstract: The editions of the Olympic Games created a major urban transformation, which allows for a new critical perspective on the new urban dimension of the Games, especially in the construction of the three main physical elements built: the athletics stadium, the swimming pool facilities and, above all, the "Olympic Village".

The study analyses the Winter and Summer Olympic Villages in a general way with a special focus on the relationship between the Olympic Village and the urban fabric. I will examine the Olympic Villages based on the quantitative treatment of statistical data referring to a series of criteria or parameters useful to characterise each specific experience. My research aims to demonstrate how socio-urban implications, impact, legacy and sustainability are key aspects to consider when planning and evaluating the Olympic Games.

The analysis identifies the different subsequent uses of the Olympic Villages after the end of the Games. The project involves a multi- and interdisciplinary methodology that, through a critical analysis approach, aims to develop an innovative analysis of Olympic urbanism in general and Olympic Villages in particular. Establishing and consolidating the field of study that represents Olympic urbanism as a useful tool for the future construction of new Olympic Villages in the coming decades. This research shows how cities must consider the intangible heritage that Olympic Villages represent, as part of the legacy of transforming host cities. It is only through these new philosophies that cities and regions could benefit from the intangible benefits associated with the Olympic Games, such as employment, infrastructure structure and use, tourism, job offers, SMEs, cultural development, decision-making and trade.

About the speaker: Dr Valerio della Sala, is based at the Department of Urban and Territorial Planning, Autònoma University of Barcelona, Olympic Studies Center (CEO-UAB), and at Department of Urban and regional studies, Urban and Regional Development, Politecnico di Torino, Università di Torino. He is a Visiting Lecturer on the MA Sport Management programme at the University of Bologna.



James Saunders
(attending in person)

Beyond Russia 2018: Analysing the Effectiveness of Differing Football Soft Power Strategies on Fan Perceptions

Abstract: The presentation will focus on fan perceptions of the Russia 2018 World Cup - drawing on my earlier research – with a view to predicting how fans will respond to Qatar 2022, and analysing the ‘best’ way of connecting with football fans as an illiberal regime. My presentation will be broken up into three sections: 1) Positive Fan Engagement - To a Point: My Dissertation Findings on Russia 2018; 2) Potential Fan Receptions and Media Framing in the Run-Up to Qatar 2022; and 3) World Cup Hosting Versus Club Buyouts: Harnessing Tribalism and Community for Soft Power Gains. All three sections will draw on soft disempowerment theory due to the increased attention these illiberal regimes are receiving as a result of being involved with football.

About the speaker: James Saunders’ BA Politics dissertation titled “Футбол’s Coming Home: Did Russia’s Use of Soft Power via the 2018 FIFA World Cup Effectively Change Perceptions of Itself for an English Football-Attentive Audience?” has received a first class mark. This research has been completed during his studies at the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies at the University of Bath.



Richard Arnold
(attending in person)

The Most Consequential World Cup in History:
Russian Regime Projection and the 2018 World Cup

Abstract: What was the impact of the 2018 World Cup on Russia's image abroad? How do Sporting Mega-Events (SMEs) affect the position of illiberal states in the world order? Do successful SMEs promote the "soft power" of a country abroad and for how long? Grix & Houlihan (2014) demonstrated that SMEs performed well can increase a nation's "soft power" whereas Mikhaylova (2021) argued that SMEs do not affect a global realignment of power politics. The one audience who might be persuaded differently is the domestic audience, who may come to think foreigners esteem their nation more. However, this pursuit of different tactics can have significant strategic consequences. A recent PONARS memo (Arnold, under review) argued that the 2018 World Cup was "the most consequential World Cup in history," but to the detriment of Russia's war in Ukraine. The biggest impact of the 2018 World Cup was to delay the timeframe for the invasion, as the regime still hoped to achieve its goal of promoting Russia as a great power through influence rather than force (Arnold & Foxall, 2014, 2018; Orttung & Zhemzukhov, 2017; Laruelle, 2022). The extra time afforded to Ukraine as a result allowed for significant improvement of its military, to the point where they might defeat Russia. This paper evaluates those claims against the empirical record, using sentiment analysis of "Russia" in Russian and Western Twitter records as well as contemporaneous newspapers. All told, the presentation makes the claim that illiberal regimes face significant obstacles in using SMEs to promote positive conceptions of their nations, which can even be a strategic misstep.

About the speaker: Dr Richard Arnold is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Muskingum University. He is the author of *Russian Nationalism and Ethnic Violence: Symbolic Violence, Lynching, Pogrom, and Massacre* (2016, Routledge), editor of *Russia and the 2018 FIFA World Cup* (2021, Routledge) and a member of the PONARS Eurasia network. His work has appeared in numerous journals and book series, including *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Theoretical Criminology*, *Problems of Post Communism*, *Nationalities Papers*, *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and the *Oxford Handbook on the Radical Right*. He was guest co-editor (with Andrew Foxall, Henry Jackson Institute [London]) on special editions of a journal on the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics and the FIFA 2018 World Cup.



Part of **Panel 4**: Nation projection through media
6:15 – 6:30

Anton Shekhovtsov
(attending online)

Addressing the problem of media disinformation and presentation of the “RT in Europe and beyond” report

Abstract: The Russian state-controlled “Russia Today” media network was founded in 2005 and later emerged as the Kremlin’s primary instrument of influencing international audiences. The network’s editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan openly admitted that it was waging an information war against the West and compared RT to the Russian Ministry of Defence. Especially since 2009, when Russia Today was re-organised into RT, this media network became notorious for targeting European and other societies with polarising and divisive rhetoric, for promoting and amplifying conspiracy theories, spreading disinformation, and subverting liberal democracy.

The report “RT in Europe and beyond” is a result of the collective endeavour of academics, journalists, experts and members of civil society, who produced the first detailed exploration of RT and its services in English, French, German and Spanish languages, as well as RT’s problematic reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic and use of conspiracy theories.

About the speaker: Dr Anton Shekhovtsov is a political scientist focusing on the European far right and Russian malign influence in Europe. Anton is the author of the Russian language book *New Radical Right-Wing Parties in European Democracies* (ibidem-Verlag, 2011) and the book *Russia and the Western Far Right* (Routledge, 2017). He was born in Ukraine but lives in Austria, where he chairs the non-profit organisation the Centre for Democratic Integrity.



Friday, 21 October 2022

Panel 4: Nation projection through media: the Case of Russia

10:00 – 12:00

Chair: Stephen Hutchings (attending in person)

Rui Wang
(attending online)

RT Videos Repurposed for Bilibili:
Chinese Mediation of Russian Strategic Narratives

Abstract: The free circulation of online videos across platforms, languages, and cultures due to their low-cost and easy-to-produce characteristics allows participatory media agents (Jenkins, 2004) to reuse and repurpose ready videos for their own political and commercial aims. This paper explores this understudied phenomenon through a case study of videos which were originally produced by a Russian international broadcaster, RT, for YouTube but were later repurposed by a Chinese state-aligned media agent for Bilibili. Through a comparative analysis, this paper examines the editing strategies that the Chinese media agent has adopted in its appropriation of the source videos for Bilibili users. This paper also examines how micro edits by the media agent, such as the selection of videos and the addition of subtitles, contribute to macro changes to Russian strategic narratives (Miskimmon et al. 2014, 2017) in the target context. The results of this study demonstrate that reusing political videos is a complex task. As part of their editing process for the target media context, the Chinese media agent has taken into account various factors such as its own propaganda mission; the Bilibili audiences' consumption habits; their entertainment needs; and their pre-existing stereotypes of Russia and China.

About the speaker: Wang Rui is a doctoral candidate of Russian and East European studies at the University of Manchester, where she is currently working on her dissertation on the dissemination and reception of Russian strategic narratives in the Chinese digital sphere. She has research interests in media studies, digital cultural studies, and translation studies.



Maxime Audinet
(attending online)

Russia's Informational Presence in Mali

Abstract: After an abrupt disengagement following the fall of the USSR, Russia stepped up its presence in Africa in the late 2000s. In October 2019, the Sochi summit materialized this comeback. While military-technical cooperation is its main marker, the footprint of Moscow's information influence has expanded and diversified in recent years. This presentation highlights its heterogeneous practices and ecosystem in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa. The case of Mali prevails, as Russian actors have been increasingly involved in the country since the deployment of the Wagner Group in December 2021, following four months of negotiations with the "transitional government". Although most of Russia's information operations in Mali are conducted by the so-called "Prigozhin's galaxy" (Laruelle & Limonier, 2021; Audinet & Dreyfus, 2022), I focus here on their official dimension, by exploring Moscow's mediated public diplomacy in the Sahel region. More specifically, I observe the rising footprint and coverage of Malian news by the two French-speaking branches of Russia's international broadcasting, RT France and Sputnik France. Using lexicometric analysis, I examine the contents these actors have produced over the past years, especially when it comes to covering the Russian and French presences in Mali.

About the speaker: Dr Maxime Audinet has been a Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM, Paris) since December 1, 2020. He holds a PhD in Political science and Slavonic studies from Paris Nanterre University and a master's degree in political theory from the Doctoral School of Sciences Po Paris.

His research focuses on the role of influence in the foreign policy of authoritarian states and analyzes their actors, practices, and propagation, in the continuation of his previous work on Russia's public diplomacy (cultural diplomacy, international broadcasting). He is particularly interested in the information influence of post-Soviet Russia and its projection in the post-Soviet space, Europe, Africa and Latin America. He has recently published a book on RT, the Russian state-sponsored network (Russia Today (RT): A media of influence in the service of the Russian State, INA, 2021), and two reports on Russia's influence in Sub-Saharan Africa.



Ryzhova, A., Vziatysheva, V., Kravets, D., Jungblut, M., and Toepfl, F.
(attending online)

How RT Covered Russia's War Against Ukraine Across Its Six Language Versions:
a Multilingual Topic Modelling Analysis

Abstract: RT, Russia's prime official foreign communication outlet, is one of the main sources spreading Russia's official narratives globally. After Russia has invaded Ukraine on 24 February, 2022, it has become a crucial instrument of state propaganda on the war, widely relying on intentional deception and openly calling for perpetrating war crimes. Yet, thus far, research has not examined how RT adjusts its messages for different audiences abroad. This study compares how six language versions of RT (English, German, Russian, Spanish, French, and Arabic) cover Russia's war against Ukraine. We collected the dataset of 86.790 Facebook posts published in six months since the beginning of the full-scale invasion and developed a list of keywords to identify messages related to the war, its justifications, and consequences. This resulted in a sample of 35.013 posts. In the first stage of this research, we analyze how prevalent is the coverage of the war in Ukraine and related issues in different languages. This study also looks at the engagement level (reactions, shares, comments) and its dynamics over months. Second, using multilingual topic modeling, we will identify the most common frames appearing in different languages. This study will provide insights into how RT covers Russia's war against Ukraine and how it frames the invasion for different audiences.

About the speakers: The presenters are members of the "RUSINFORM: The Consequences of the Internet for Russia's Informational Influence Abroad" project at the University of Passau. It investigates how, and with what consequences, new Internet-based technologies have contributed to the emergence of novel resources, techniques, and processes by which political elites in Moscow can influence media audiences abroad.



Maksim Alyukov
(attending in person)

Reflexive propaganda:
polarization, political deliberation, and war in an authoritarian regime

Abstract: When Russia invaded Ukraine, experts argued for the importance of delivering facts about the war to the Russian public. The proposed measures varied from targeted advertising to establishing platforms allowing citizens of other countries to reach Russians directly via messages. This strategy failed. While some Russians actively protested the war, most were either questioning alternative information as fake or distancing themselves from the war. Why? Just as people in other authoritarian regimes, Russian citizens live in a peculiar information environment. While they encounter tremendous amount of propaganda, they still have access to plenty of information which challenges the regime's narratives via digital media. I argue that when regime propaganda cannot rely on full dominance in a hybrid highly saturated information space to persuade citizens, other more subtle effects of propaganda come to the fore. Relying on 213 interviews with Russian citizens, I show that this response is partly explained by the reflexive rather than direct effects of propaganda. Instead of making citizens accept official interpretation of events, Russian state media make citizens question all political information and provoke a communicative closure: people actively attempt to avoid discussions with opponents. Perceiving opponents as manipulated by propaganda, pro-war citizens refuse political discussions and instead consume propaganda without exposure to alternative views. Citizens with no clear attitudes, perceive all political information as untrustworthy and political discussions as futile, and so avoid formulating opinions about the war. By trapping citizens in their own (a)political worlds, reflexive propaganda reinforces pro-war attitudes and increases political disagreement.

About the speaker: Dr Maxim Alyukov is a postdoctoral fellow at King's Russia Institute (King's College London) and a researcher with Public Sociology Laboratory (St. Petersburg). His research focuses on media, political communication, and political cognition in autocracies with a particular focus on Russia



Mikhail Batuev, Claire Thornton, and Sandy Wolfson
(attending in person)

Media agenda-setting and framing of risks in Russia
in the run-up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup:
A study of perceptions of international football fans

Abstract: Previous studies dealt with crime-risk perception in tourism management and how negative media coverage affected tourism. However, the FIFA 2018 World Cup in Russia presented a very complex case with multiple risks that were perceived to exist in the host country, such as football hooliganism, racism, homophobia. The purpose of this study was to examine the extent of and differences in perceptions of agenda-setting and framing in media coverage preceding the 2018 FIFA World Cup across the globe and analyse those perceptions against visitors' actual view on safety and image of the host country. The data was collected by surveying a broad range of international fans in four Russian cities. Overall, international media agenda-setting and framing had a substantial negative impact on visitor perceptions: they felt less safe and less likely to return to Russia. In particular, the place of residence was a significant predictor for both agenda-setting and framing perceptions, as well as for safety concerns. In particular, visitors from Europe noticed much more media agenda-setting and framing about Russia, felt less safe and were less likely to return or recommend visiting Russia. Previous visitation also significantly predicted perceptions of safety: surprisingly, the more times respondents had visited Russia before, the less safe they felt during the FIFA World Cup. Whilst the findings on visitor perceptions of Russia's destination image are very positive based on the FIFA World Cup 2018, they will not necessarily translate into the country's image improvement in the long term due to the "co-branded" event effect and broader political concerns.

About the speaker: Dr Mikhail Batuev is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation, Northumbria University Newcastle. Previously, he worked in football business and completed the MBA Football Industries degree at the University of Liverpool. In addition to his football management background, Mikhail has also got a very substantial expertise in organisation and marketing of extreme sports. He worked with Red Bull energy drink for a number of years and contributed to athlete marketing programme of this brand. Mikhail completed his PhD in Sport Studies from the University of Stirling, Scotland. He is the programme leader for MSc International Sport Management at Northumbria University. Mikhail's research interests focus on organisation of new/youths sports and issues surrounding mega-sport events, such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup.



Precious Chatterje-Doody

Keynote 3, 12:15 – 1:00 (attending in person)

Rethinking agency in il(liberal) nation projection: representing, resisting and reconstructing the nation in wartime

Abstract: As with many concepts associated with nation-building, the idea of ‘nation projection’ tends to be conceptualised in top-down terms. It is usually applied to interrogate how ruling regimes instrumentalise cultural phenomena to build up their national brand for international audiences. Yet, recent years have seen an increased attention to the calls of everyday nationalism studies to shift the focus away from elite actors. Its concern instead is how ordinary people exert their agency to co-produce – or resist - nationalism in both banal and controversial everyday settings. Adapting such an approach, this paper interrogates ‘everyday nation projection’ in the longer-term context of Russia’s war on Ukraine. Through a series of cultural vignettes beginning before the 2022 invasion, it examines some of the ways in which ordinary Ukrainian and Russian people have engaged in, and resisted, nation projection initiatives from the bottom up. The paper argues that mediatization processes have fundamentally altered the prospects for undisrupted elite-led national projection initiatives, and that attention to individual and group agency is crucial when assessing the successes and failures of contemporary nation projection.

About the speaker: Dr Precious Chatterje-Doody is a Lecturer in Politics and International Studies at The Open University (UK). She is co-author of *Russia Today and Conspiracy Theory: People, Power and Politics on RT* (Routledge, 2022). Her most recent journal articles interrogate the relationship between humour and legitimation in Russian international broadcasting, and the lessons that public service broadcasters should draw from Russia’s (information) war on Ukraine.



Stephen Hutchings

Keynote 4, 2:00 – 2:45 (attending in person)

Projecting Russia in a Mediatized World: Recursive Nationhood

Abstract: This talk, based on Professor Hutchings's most recent book, offers a new perspective on how Russia projects itself internationally. Distancing itself from the instrumental, agent-led models that predominate in IR paradigms, but taking into account Russia's violent invasion of Ukraine, it argues for the need to pay attention to deeper, trans-state processes over which the Kremlin exerts much less control. The notion of mediatization--how social and political practices in Russia follow media-driven logics--is central. Of these logics, the feedback loop is the most important in understanding how recent issues, events, and scandals have played out in international arenas ranging from television, through theatre, film, sporting occasions, and performance art, to warfare. In providing Russia-specific examples of such feedback loops, Hutchings shows how they form part of what he terms 'recursive nationhood', which he presents as a new way of understanding how the articulation and projection of national identity more generally works in our increasingly mediatized world.

About the speaker: Stephen Hutchings is a Professor of Russian Studies at The University of Manchester. His most recent book is entitled *Projecting Russia in a Mediatized World: Recursive Nationhood* (2022, Routledge). Stephen has research interests in Russian cultural and media studies, Russian and Soviet television and film, Russian and Soviet literature and literary/cultural theory.



**Panel 5: Nation projection through cultural production and outputs:
cross-regime and historical perspectives**

3:00 – 5:00

Chair: TBC

Pınar Özdemir and Melike Aktaş Kuyucu
(attending online)

Public Relations in Turkey during 1920-1955: The Display of a Western Image

Abstract: This paper focuses on the early evidence of public relations in Turkey from 1920 to 1955, through analyzing national image cultivation and projection efforts in the international settings. It is argued that significant public relations activities were employed in order to cultivate a modern national image and promote a westernized image of Turkey to the West. Agencies were founded to manage media relations and produce materials targeting foreign audiences, and special attention was paid to international exhibitions and fairs overseas. However, due to the economic constraints and the lack of prevalent media during that period, alternative public relations tools were created to sustain national promotion. For this paper, a historical research approach was undertaken, and archives and many secondary sources were researched to reveal the endeavours of the image cultivation and projection of a new nation. Initially database searches were conducted to identify sources that discussed Turkey's presentation and promotion in international contexts. Books, articles, essays, dissertations, conference papers, documentaries were collected and examined thematically. Turkish newspaper archives were scanned to identify important events and activities, and based on these findings digital archives containing international newspapers published in English were also examined. In addition, all 49 issues of *La Turquie Kemaliste* journal were thematically examined. Furthermore, individual and personal texts such as voyage notes, articles and autobiographies were taken into consideration. From this data, the important agents and events were identified, and goals, strategies and tools were explicated.

About the speakers: Prof. Dr. B. Pınar Özdemir and Prof. Dr. Melike Aktaş Kuyucu are based at the Faculty of Communication, Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Ankara University.



Peter Rollberg
(attending online)

Teaching Men How to Be Men: The Kazakhstani Inspirational Sports Drama

Abstract: The sports drama has been popular in Kazakhstani cinema since the Soviet era. Following national independence, Kazakhfilm studio made several state-funded attempts to revitalize this subgenre in a new social context while preserving its traditional didactic charge: depicting sports as a civilizing force that helps promote and preserve specific national values. A conspicuously large number of Kazakhstani feature films focus on martial arts and related athletic disciplines; the earliest is Sharip Beisembaev's *The White Square* (1970), starring Abdrashit Abdrakhmanov, a real-life boxer. The film formulates an ideal of manliness that is derived from patriarchal tradition, where the highest goal for a man is to protect his loved ones and to become a *djigit* as his forefathers. Indeed, in Kazakhstani sports drama, the successful athlete is a traditionalist fighter whose behavior should be emulated by viewers. *The Breakthrough* (2009), *Path of a Boxer* (2013), *Bekzat* (2020), and *The Boxer* (2022) continue the tradition of Kazakh inspirational sports dramas, featuring men in doubt about their mission in life who end up finding masculine identity and personal salvation in sports. These films demonstrate a remarkable thematic, didactic, moral, and cultural continuity between Soviet and post-Soviet Kazakh cinema, reinforcing the validity of behavioral principles such as courage, selflessness, and honor. Their main unifying element is the stabilizing function of sports in Kazakhstani society and the successful representation of national prowess at international sports competitions.

About the speaker: Peter Rollberg is Professor of Slavic Languages, Film Studies and International Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. His main field of expertise is Russian literature and film, as well as Georgian and Kazakh cinema.



Kanika Ahuja
(attending online)

Cricket, Cinema, and the Spectacle of Nation Projection:
Lagaan and *83* as Artifacts of Nationalism

Abstract: This paper explores how popular media and popular opinion feed off each other in the nationalist projection of sport (specifically Indian cricket), using narrative, cultural, postcolonial, and film theory. Focusing on sport cinema in India, and not just the sport itself, allows for the acknowledgement of a state-sponsored narrative and investigates the role of this superimposed narrative in influencing the film's potential in being a cultural artifact of nationalism.

Considering the films *Lagaan* and *83* and their representation of mythical and biographical accounts of cricket matches of epic proportions, this paper questions the ways in which the spectacle of sport can be used as a platform to project the nationalist ideal. The use of cricket in the films offers a backdrop for critical analysis of colonization, nationalism, and digital storytelling. Similarly, the protagonist's transcendence into the portrait of a symbolic national identity in the postcolonial era extends the propagandist impulse within the larger narrative.

Both films are fueled not only by the social milieu they're set in but also produced in, allowing the scope of this paper to interrogate how historical and contemporary political agendas come together to appropriate the moral metaphor of the sport. Furthermore, emphasizing on the metaphor of "moving images", the paper also aims to delve into the very genre of the sport film, further indulging in the dualities of fantasy and realism in the dramatization of sport, and how they both influence the aesthetic production of the genre and its widespread consumption.

About the speaker: Kanika Ahuja is a poet, educator, and researcher from New Delhi, India. She holds a master's degree in English Literature from Ambedkar University Delhi and currently serves as the Assistant Director of Creative Writing at Purdue University where she's an MFA Candidate in Poetry. The winner of Quarterly West's Inaugural Contest in Poetry and the AWP Intro Journals Project 2022, her work appears, or is forthcoming, at *The Margins*, *Puerto Del Sol*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, and elsewhere.



Jonathan Ervine
(attending in person)

Filming victory and defeat:
cinematic images of the French men's football team

Abstract: As discussed by Michael Billig in *Banal Nationalism*, the performances of sports teams in major tournaments can become powerful symbols and used in order project images of a nation that transcend sport. This paper will explore depictions of the French men's football team – and implicitly the French nation – in contrasting documentary films about the 1998, 2002, and 2006 FIFA Men's World Cup tournaments.

The first of these films will be Stéphane Meunier's fly-on-the-wall documentary *Les Yeux dans les Bleus*, which provides an intimate portrait of the team's victory at the 1998 World Cup in France. This was a triumph that came to be associated with national togetherness and tolerance due to the racial diversity of the French squad. The second film will be Meunier's sequel *Les Yeux dans les Bleus 2*, which follows the French team before and during their World Cup defence at the 2002 tournament in South Korea and Japan.

Finally, this paper will also consider Vikash Dhorasoo and Fred Poulet's more experimental 2006 film *Substitute* as it chronicles Dhorasoo's feelings of isolation and frustration at being a largely uninvolved member of France's 2006 World Cup squad in Germany. Collectively, these films will facilitate discussion of nation projection during times of victory and defeat, the balance between focusing on individuals and the group, as well as the differing methods cinema can employ in order to depict major sports events.

About the speaker: Dr. Jonathan Ervine is a Senior Lecturer in French and Francophone Studies, Bangor University. He specializes in French popular culture as well as debates about identity and belonging in contemporary France. Jonathan is the author of two books; *Humour in Contemporary France: Controversy, Consensus and Contradictions* (Liverpool University Press, 2019) and *Cinema and the Republic: Filming on the Margins in Contemporary France* (University of Wales Press, 2013). He has also published several articles and book chapters about debates on French national identity in sport, music and comedy, and also written several articles about videogames in France.



Marco Biasioli
(attending in person)

“Don’t Look There, Look Here!”
Music as A State Tool for Distraction and Virtue Signaling in Russia (2019-2021)

Abstract: This article investigates how the Russian state used contemporary popular music for its own ends in the period 2019-2021: first as a tool for internal legitimation through *distraction*; secondly, as a medium for the advancement of soft power in the global arena through *virtue signaling*. In doing so, the state exploited, respectively: the abstract nature of music, its escapism (the capacity to transport people somewhere else and offer relief from unpleasant realities); and the social function of music, its engagement with political issues, its entwinement with civic society and its capacity to advocate for collective change. The Russian state turned these two dimensions of music upside down: escapism (read: apoliticism) became political strategy and the engaged (read: progressive) potential of music turned into an insincere global spectacle. Both strategies, the article shows, were performed in order to conceal state problems with legitimation and civic discontent, while promoting a different, (neo)liberal official image of Russia.

About the speaker: Dr Marco Biasioli is Lecturer in Russian Studies at the University of Manchester. He received a BA in Modern Languages and a master’s degree in Translation Studies at Sapienza University of Rome. In 2020, he completed his PhD in Russian Studies at the University of Manchester. His research interests include: Russian popular music and its relationship with social and political contexts; Russian popular culture; Russian media; Russia-West relations.