

Media, Memory and Sporting Mega-Events

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‘Media, Memory and Sporting Mega-Events’

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Abstract

Whether examining interpretations of the ‘past’ in Hollywood blockbusters or when critiquing the ways in which mediated representations can undermine ‘historical truth’, it is apparent that ‘the media’ occupies a unique position in how explanations of the past are (re)presented, interpreted and disseminated. At the heart of this dissemination is how the ‘past’ is routinely used and re-used in making sense of the ‘present’. One notable example of this is in media coverage of national and international sporting mega-/media events. Here, the interrelationship between sport and the media offers a unique opportunity to examine how ‘mediated memories’ form a constitutive feature in the reporting of sport.

Accordingly, by way of exploring the intersections between media, memory and sport, this paper will examine recent debates on the mediatization of memory. Drawing upon examples from the 2012 London Olympic Games and the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, it will examine how the media and, in particular, national newspapers provided a pivotal role in employing collective memories of the past in order to make sense of contemporary social and political debates. This included accounts of the former British Empire, its relation to the contemporary Commonwealth of Nations and its impact on the UK and its constitutive ‘home nations’.

More importantly, attempts will be made to build a theoretical interpretation that examines the ways in which mediated memories center on a past-present alignment which, in this instance, served to influence the ways in which ‘history’ was mediated.

Keywords

Jacques Lacan, media, collective memory, London 2012, Glasgow 2014, British Empire, retroactive causality

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