

Module 4. Sport Events Ethics

Unit 4.1

Introduction

This module aims to provide participants with an understanding of key issues surrounding ethics for sport events. Addressing ethical challenges and upholding standards is crucial for the long-term success of sport events, as they also strengthen the effectiveness of governance mechanisms and stakeholder engagement.

Firstly, we will attempt to refine our theoretical framework from the earlier module, to incorporate ethics and provide a background for the development of ethical sport events. Next, we will offer an overview of related developments in relation to athletes' and organisers' ethical behaviour, the ethics of event allocation and hosting, and transparency. Subsequently, we will present a case study to further discuss these developments. Finally, we will conclude by summarising the discussion in the module and introducing the related activity.

Sport events ethics: definitions and background

Theoretical framework

Defining ethics in the context of sport events can pose a particular challenge. This difficulty arises due to the extensive and varied use of the term, which limits its practical applicability. In many ways, anything that goes wrong in the management of sport events can be (or has been) viewed as contrary to the interests of stakeholders and thus largely 'unethical.'

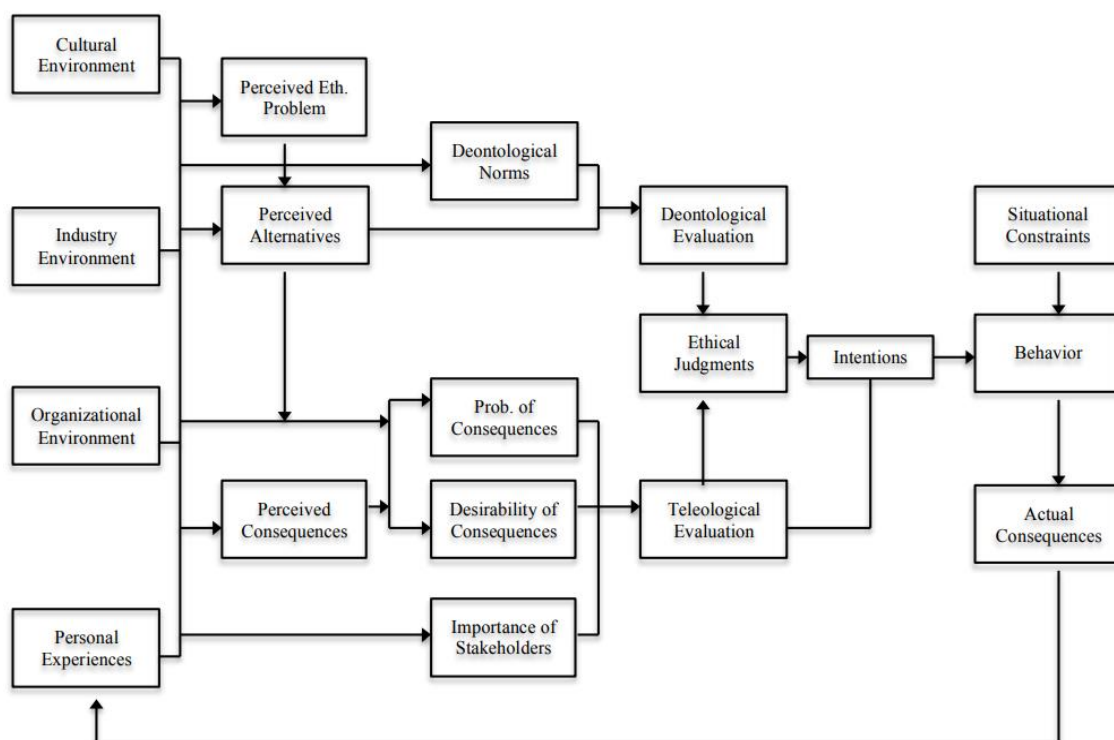
Ethics broadly refers to moral principles that govern individual behaviours or the conducting of activities. But can sport organisations be ethical? In the world of sport events, assuming sports organisations can act ethically and altruistically means believing they can understand responsibility, hold values, and make moral choices (Küskü and Zarkada-Fraser, 2004). Even though this idea has been debated for a long time in the organisational context (Laufer, 1996), both theory and real-world examples support the idea that sports organisations can be seen as moral actors, driven by their principles and the ethics embedded in their practices and culture (Küskü and Zarkada-Fraser, 2004). Some argue that these organisations not only make moral judgments, but also go through



stages of moral growth, like how humans develop morally (Kohlberg, 1976, Kohlberg, 1981; Logsdon and Yuthas, 1997).

When discussing ethical conduct within sports organisations, it is important to acknowledge that individuals within these organisations may face limitations that prevent them from acting on their ethical beliefs, even when they perceive certain actions as unethical. These constraints may arise from numerous factors within the sports environment, which can make it challenging for individuals to act in alignment with their moral principles. Pfleegor (2013) offers a graphical representation of ethical behaviour influences, as represented in figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Ethical behaviour influences



Source: Pfleegor, 2013, p. 47.

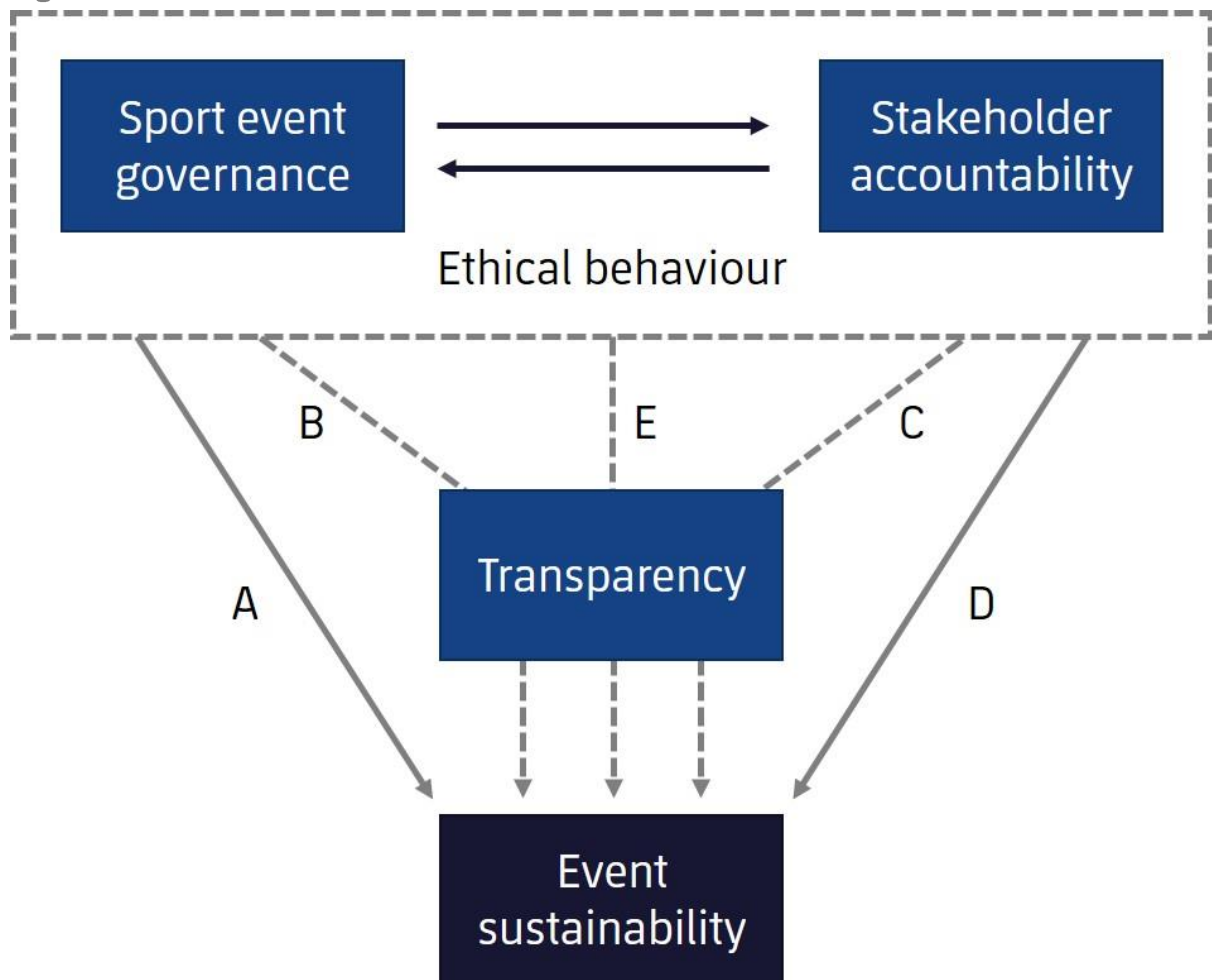
Importantly, figure 1 shows that ethical judgements can be based on deontological or teleological (consequentialist) evaluations. Theories of deontological ethics broadly state that the ethical judgment of an action must depend solely on its adherence to basic moral duties or codes of conduct. Consequentialism entails the weighing of the potential positive and negative impacts of a decision before rendering an ethical judgment (Mitra, 2015).

Where does ethics fit into the theoretical discussion we presented in the preceding module? Figure 2 revisits our previously introduced theoretical framework to also incorporate ethics. Ethical conduct by organisers and key stakeholders, such as athletes,



is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the direct relationships previously identified in the framework (i.e., A and D) to function, and thus for events to remain sustainable. This also applies to the indirect relationships through transparency (i.e., B and C), as disclosures provided by unethical organisers lack credibility. It should be acknowledged, however, that the existence of disclosures specifically related to ethics (e.g., in the form of relevant codes) can further enhance the sustainability of sport events (i.e., as indicated by link E below).

Figure 2. The revisited theoretical framework



Source: own source based on Arena *et al.*, 2020.

Background

Before discussing specific developments in the context of sport events, we need to provide a brief overview of the various initiatives that particularly promote and influence sport event ethics. As noticed earlier, ethical conduct is a prerequisite for good governance, accountability, and transparency, and for the sustainability of sport events. Hence, most of the initiatives reviewed in the previous modules also encourage ethical conduct.



Ethical conduct is often associated with integrity, fairness, responsibility, and respect. As discussed earlier, a crucial requirement of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) concerning integrity is for federations to establish a resolute unit responsible for ensuring compliance to the International Olympic Committee [IOC] Code of Ethics (2016), as well as developing their own Code of Ethics and internal ethics committees. Furthermore, ASOIF strongly promotes compliance with the World Anti-Doping Code, the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitors, and reporting incidents of harassment and abuse. All these areas are recognised as falling within the broader realm of ethics by ASOIF.

Sport events, leagues, and competitions are expected to follow the principles in the codes, whether explicitly adopted or not. Most international federations have developed their own code of ethics and related committees. Similarly, developing codes of ethics is a widespread practice among leagues and competitions. However, as we will discuss in the next section, having a code of ethics does not guarantee ethical behaviour.

The IOC Code of Ethics (2016) identifies several areas that can potentially pose ethical challenges. These areas can pertain to the ethical conduct of both athletes and organisers. Of particular significance are the aspects related to athletic behaviour, including anti-doping, fair play, sportsmanship, and respect. The code also recognises the importance of examining the ethics of event organisers and the host selection process. In our review, we will take a closer look at these areas. Consequently, we will overview issues such as bribery, corruption, commercialisation, exploitation of athletes, as well as human rights, inclusivity, and the socioeconomic impact of events. Prior to introducing the case study, we will also consider ethical transparency, particularly in the form of codes of ethics and conduct.

Ethical conduct is often associated with:

Integrity.

Fairness.

Responsibility.

Imposition.

Ethical issues with athlete behaviour

Anti-doping and fair play

Maintaining the integrity of sports and upholding the principles of fair play are paramount in sport events. Anti-doping measures play a pivotal role in ensuring a level playing field for all competitors. As also noticed in the governance module, the establishment of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in 1999 by the International Olympic Committee (IOC)



marked a significant step in the global fight against doping in sports. WADA's anti-doping code, introduced in 2004, has been widely adopted by major international and national federations worldwide (Chatzigianni, 2018).

The next box discusses one of the most notorious doping cases in history, the 100-metre race at the Seoul 1988 Olympics. Alongside this, WADA's effectiveness was highlighted when a probe revealed that the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), the world athletics governing body, was corrupted from within by a 'powerful rogue group' led by its president. They conspired to extort athletes and allowed doping Russians to continue competing (BBC Sport, 2020). Doping scandals are, of course, not restricted to athletics. They also extend to swimming (see, e.g., the 1776 Olympics scandal involving the East German women's team), football (see e.g., Maradona's ephedrine use in the 1994 World Cup), cycling (see e.g., 2012 Lance Armstrong case) and other sports (Kettler, 2023).

This revelation illustrates the ethical implications of athletes seeking unfair advantages through doping and the significant impact it has on the credibility of sports and the principle of fair play. Fair play in sports extends beyond the mere absence of doping: it comprises and embodies several fundamental values that are not only integral to sport, but also relevant in everyday life. Fair competition, respect, friendship, team spirit, equality, respect for written and unwritten rules, such as integrity, solidarity, tolerance, care, excellence, and joy, are the building blocks of fair play that can be experienced and learnt both on and off the field (International Fair Play Committee [IFPC], 2023), as also discussed in the next sections.

Figure 3. The dirtiest race in history



Source: Montague, 2012, <https://bit.ly/47G10Cf>.

According to Montague (2012):

Ben Johnson was the last man to settle into his blocks at the Seoul Olympic Stadium. It was September 24, 1988, a heartbeat before the start of the one hundred meters final and what was to become the most infamous sporting moment in Olympic history.

Johnson, like the rest of an all-star field that included then Olympic champion and fierce rival Carl Lewis, former world record holder Calvin Smith and future gold medallist Linford Christie, paced back and forth like caged panthers seeking the psychological advantage of settling last.

The field stretched, hopped, and feinted as they pretended not to look at each other. Johnson merely stared straight ahead, unblinking. Inevitably it was he who won the first battle. The gun fired and the Canadian leaped–leaped–from his starting position into a lead he would never lose. Just 9.79 seconds later, he had smashed the world record in a display of power and awe never seen in track and field, against the greatest field of sprinters ever collected.

What happened next has been seared into the collective memory of the Olympics ever since. Just 24 hours later, Johnson had failed a drugs test when traces of the banned steroid stanozolol were found in his urine. And after the delegation arrived at his room. Johnson handed the medal back to the IOC. One of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) officials present described the scene as like a 'wake.'

The race was just one moment in a two-decade-long story that began with Johnson as a Jamaican immigrant in Canada. His rise to prominence on the track for his newly adopted country would end with a descent into sport drug use and finally disgrace. Yet, he would not be the only one. Doping was so prevalent in the sport that six of the eight finalists that lined up on that September day in Seoul would fail drugs tests themselves or implicated in their use during their careers, including Lewis and Christie. As the writer Richard Moore describes in his new book on the 100m final in Seoul, it was the 'dirtiest race in history.' (para. 1-16).

Sportsmanship and respect



Sportsmanship and respect are the cornerstones of ethical conduct in sports, transcending individual disciplines. Major sports federations, such as FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) in football and the NBA (National Basketball Association) in basketball, have implemented strict codes of conduct to promote fair play and respect on and off the field. In tennis, notable players like Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal have consistently demonstrated exemplary sportsmanship. Famously, in the 2012 Wimbledon final, Roger Federer consoled a tearful Andy Murray, acknowledging the significance of the moment for the British player. Other tennis players have also exhibited high sportsmanship standards, as the following box also shows.

Figure 4. Sportsmanship in tennis



Source: Kuchal, 2018, <https://bit.ly/40SfVEO>.

According to Kuchal (2018):

Sportsmanship moments never go unappreciated in any sport, and **tennis** is no exception. The gesture shows that there is something much more at stake than just winning. There have been several occasions where players have themselves overruled the calls of the linesmen or the chair umpires, to reward the point to their opponent despite the score line or the duration of the match.

In the semi-finals of the **Australian open** in 2018, Roger Federer took on his friend and compatriot Stan Wawrinka. After battling through an epic five setter, Federer went on to reach the finals, but there was a moment in the match, where

Federer was two sets to one up, and Federer's serve was called 'out.' Wawrinka though noticed that it had caught a piece of the line, and asked Roger to challenge the call. Sure enough, the ball was in, and Wawrinka received a warm round of applause from the spectators and a thank you from Federer. (para. 1-4).

Figure 5. Respect in badminton



Source: Skene, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3QLmggB>.

According to Skene (2023):

When Viktor Axelsen defeated Chen Long in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, he broke down in tears, hugged his coach and then headed to his opponent to commiserate. They spoke in Mandarin, hugged, and then exchanged shirts. Axelsen said: 'I respect Chen a lot. He came over to my side of the court and told me I deserved it, and I said thanks so much. He has been a big inspiration to me and asked me if we could exchange shirts, and we did.' Axelsen also congratulated Chen on Sina

Weibo, adding that Chen, the previous Olympic champion in Rio, has been a major inspiration for his badminton career.

The 'win or lose' sportsmanship, camaraderie, and respect between elite badminton players across cultures and genders, provides a great model for other sports to follow. (para. 32-35).

Beyond the world of tennis, other sports, including badminton, uphold the principles of respect and sportsmanship. The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has taken steps to instil these values in the sport, Skene (2023) also shows. In a noteworthy display of respect during the 2016 Rio Olympics, Indian badminton player P.V. Sindhu and her Japanese opponent Nozomi Okuhara engaged in an epic, gruelling match that lasted over three hours. Despite the intense competition, the two players displayed remarkable sportsmanship, applauding each other's efforts, and embracing at the end of the match. The two athletes have produced cliffhangers every time they met, and their close head-to-head record underlines their competitiveness, as well as respect to each other (Venkat, 2023).

Ethical issues with event organisers

Bribery and corruption

Bribery and corruption in sport events have cast a shadow over their integrity and the quality of sport competition (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2021). These unethical practices are detrimental to the reputation of sport events, but also erode the fundamental principles of fairness and equity.

A famous example of corruption, as also discussed in the first module, can be found in the FIFA scandal of 2015, when several high-ranking officials within football's governing body were indicted for bribery, racketeering, and money laundering. This scandal, which saw allegations of bribes involving the selection of host countries for the World Cup, highlighted the far-reaching consequences of corruption within a major international sports organisation. It called into question the transparency and ethical standards that should be upheld in the global sports arena.

Additionally, the Olympics, which from the ancient times have been regarded as the epitome of athletic purity and unity, have not been immune to corruption scandals, as the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics bribery scandal of 2002 shows. Members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were found to have accepted lavish gifts and financial incentives in exchange for voting in favour of the city's bid to host the Games.



This revelation shocked the world and prompted calls for stringent reforms within the IOC to restore trust and uphold the Olympic values of fairness and impartiality (Siddons, 1999).

As we have seen in the first module, more recently, the IOC, ASOIF, and other international federations have made considerable progress in implementing governance requirements to combat bribery and corruption in sport events. Nevertheless, there remains substantial progress to be achieved, such as the introduction of mandatory governance reports and audits, among other measures. In 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a report on corruption in sports, providing an overview of initiatives introduced at the national level to address corruption in sport events, as illustrated next.

Table 1. Examples of initiatives to tackle corruption in sport events

<p>Algeria: the Ministry of Youth and Sport in Algeria has introduced a policy that limits the ability of a person to hold executive functions in the Government if they also hold administrative responsibilities in a sport organisation.</p> <p>China: in China, disciplinary inspection committees oversee the organisation of sport events. The committees are responsible for the supervision, correction, deterrence, coordination, and settlement of sport events, and must publish their reports. In addition, committees are responsible for the supervision of hotlines, emails, contacts, etc., through which they collect reports of wrongdoing, for conducting investigations and for ensuring that every report of wrongdoing is processed and answered with an official response. The 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo both utilised post-event supervision in the management of funds and materials to prevent asset loss. Following the conclusion of the 2008 Games, the Beijing Organising</p>	<p>Canada: in the case of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, the process of managing asset disposal was conducted by personnel within the Organising Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. They managed the distribution of non-market items, such as used beds in athletes' villages. These were delivered to community groups across Canada through a national sponsor that had originally supplied new beds for the Games.</p> <p>France: the 2024 Summer Olympics and Paralympic Games in Paris will be the first Games in which there is a contractual obligation under the IOC Host City Contract for the host city (and other related lead organisations for the Games) to adopt anti-corruption and human rights compliance measures. Clause 13.2. (c) of the contract requires the host city, the national Olympic committee, and the organising committee for the Olympic Games to</p>
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Committee for the Olympic Games categorised and disposed of all the assets using a variety of processes, such as public auction, paid utilisation by venues, recovery by suppliers, discounted transfer and, where appropriate, donation.

Brazil: in the years prior to the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil enacted extensive legislation to address key anti-corruption risk areas in procurement and corporate governance and to strengthen public access to information. The four important statutes, known as ‘the four pillars of anti-corruption legislation’ (in relation to procurement reform; access to information; addressing corporate participation in public corruption, and addressing organised crime), fundamentally reshaped the legal landscape of Brazil and enabled the creation of new anti-corruption institutions.

refrain from any act involving fraud or corruption, in a manner consistent with any international agreements, laws, and regulations applicable in the host country and all internationally recognised anti-corruption standards applicable in the host country, including by establishing and maintaining effective reporting and compliance.

Switzerland: in 2015, the Government of Switzerland and Swiss Olympic, the National Olympic Committee, collaborated to produce the Charter for Ethics in Sport. The charter applies to sport governance organisations in Switzerland, such as national sport federations, and is the ‘highest basic principle for Swiss sport.’ Compliance with the charter is monitored by Swiss Olympic and is a prerequisite for sport stakeholders to receive State subsidies.

Source: UNODC, 2021, <https://bit.ly/47rgfwK>.

Commercialisation and exploitation

Sport events have always grabbed people’s attention. For example, attendance at football games in the early 1900s regularly exceeded 40,000 and the stadium built for the 1908 London Olympic Games seated over 68,000 spectators and was a forerunner to the modern all-seater stadia. This means that sport events can reach and influence a wide range of people, although, as the following box shows, in these early days, sport events were not commercialised.

Figure 6. Charlotte Cooper at Wimbledon



Source: BBC, 2023a, <https://bit.ly/49MkHaD>.

Charlotte Cooper (pictured above) was a five-time Wimbledon winner and the first women's Olympic tennis champion in 1900. In her era, players wore tennis whites without any brand names or sponsors' logos. In more recent times, the combination of global media coverage, huge sponsorship deals and more athletes training full-time means that some elite sports are a very lucrative business (BBC, 2023a).

Commercialism in sport is about making a profit from sport. This involves three main groups: sport, media, and sponsors. As the following box shows, sport—particularly elite sport—, the media, and sponsorship are interlinked. This is called the **golden triangle**. As well as its many benefits, commercialism in sport can also be negative. For example, some people believe that the commercialisation of elite football in the UK has changed the game for the worse and is destroying the traditional community-based links between supporters and clubs.

Table 2. The golden triangle

Sport: it benefits from commercialism. Increased revenue helps individual sportspeople and sports organisations to increase participation, improve performances and attract support. As technology becomes an increasingly essential element of sport and sports compete to engage participants and spectators, funding is even more crucial.

Media: it benefits from the commercialisation of sport. High-profile sports stories help to attract audiences, listeners, and readers. In turn, the media makes sure that sport keeps a high profile.

Sponsors: they benefit from the commercialisation of sport. Their funding is essential for sport's growth. In return, high-profile coverage of sport ensures a high profile for their companies and products.

Figure 7. The golden triangle



Source: BBC, 2023b, <https://bit.ly/3uwR5xQ>.

Commercialisation has raised questions regarding the potential exploitation of athletes, particularly in amateur sports like those in the NCAA. While these athletes typically receive tuition scholarships, they often find themselves having to skip classes for games or even dropping out to seize professional opportunities. Notably, in the USA, football and basketball players, as the driving force behind a college sports industry generating millions in profits for universities, have prompted calls for salaries to be extended to them. Some professional coaches have additionally proposed measures that allow college athletes who leave school without being drafted to return for further education. In 2021, the NCAA implemented new guidelines permitting college athletes to profit from their names, images, and likenesses. This transformative decision, empowered half a million college athletes to explore sponsorship deals, online endorsements, and personal appearances, marking a significant step towards addressing concerns surrounding athlete exploitation in the realm of collegiate sports (Fitzsimons, 2021).

Commercialism in sport is about making a profit from sport. This involves three main groups:

Sport.

Media.



Sponsors.

Fans.

Ethical issues with event allocation and hosting

Country selection

Over the past two decades, there have been several high-profile corruption cases and investigations related to the bidding, implementation, and legacy of major sport events. These cases involve various issues, such as manipulation of host selection processes, financial kick-back schemes involving public funds in the development of sport event-related infrastructure, conflicts of interest within international sport organisations, the unauthorised resale of event tickets by organisers for personal gain, and corruption associated with sponsorship and media rights acquisition for major sport events (UNODC, 2021).

Sport events inherently demand substantial funds, complex logistical arrangements, and the collaboration of diverse stakeholders, all of which must be managed within strict and often inflexible timelines. In such exceptional circumstances, regulations and standard procedures may be relaxed, while monitoring, auditing, and accountability mechanisms can falter. In the absence of necessary independent oversight, public funds remain highly susceptible to misuse. The bidding for and awarding of major sport events pose unique corruption risks, affecting both bidding cities and countries and the international sport organisations responsible for selecting host locations (UNODC, 2021). These risks include:

- unclear bidding procedures and regulations.
- Lack of genuine equality in the bidding process, so that the processes favour a particular bidder in an unreasonable manner.
- Lack of transparency in evaluation and decision-making processes.
- Lack of integrity, including covert practices, corruption, and conflict of interest.
- Conflicted officials involved in the voting.
- A small number of voters, so that the results could be affected, or many voters, who have little direct stake in the decision and will not be held accountable for the decision.

In recent years, major international sports organisations have implemented substantial reforms in the bidding, bid evaluation, and selection procedures for major sport events. These reforms aim to streamline the bidding and host selection processes while fostering a more open, transparent, and collaborative approach to bidding. The next box presents FIFA's recently revised hosting selection process.

Table 3. FIFA World Cup Hosting Rights Selection Process



In the aftermath of criticisms expressed about the awarding of hosting rights to the 2018 FIFA World Cup (Russia) and the 2022 FIFA World Cup (Qatar), FIFA revised its process for evaluating bids and awarding hosting rights for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The key enhancements relating to the 15 processes for the 2026 competition included the following actions based on the highlighted guiding principles.

Objectivity: the introduction of a clear and objective evaluation model, including a precise scoring system relating to nine key criteria (stadia, media and marketing revenue, ticketing and hospitality, organising costs, FIFA Fan Fest, invitations to tender, international broadcast centre, transport and accommodation), as part of the technical evaluation that is performed by a specialised bid evaluation task force consisting of five members drawn from FIFA internal technical committees.

Participation: for the first time in fifty years, the decision to award hosting rights is now made by all 211 members associations represented on the FIFA Congress.

Transparency: every step in the bidding process is open to the public and the information is publicly available, from the bidding regulations, the guide to the bidding process, the hosting requirements, all bid books, the technical evaluation scoring system and the bid evaluation report to the voting procedures and results (including the shortlisting of bids votes by the FIFA Council) and the independent auditor's report.

Commitment to human rights and sustainability: FIFA has pledged to follow accepted global standards of sustainable event management (ISO 20121) and human rights (United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights), which will also apply to member associations and suppliers of goods and services.

Each of the stakeholders in the bid process (including the FIFA administration, the decision-making bodies and the member associations) are bound by the FIFA Bid Rules of Conduct that stipulate the obligation to always apply core ethical principles, the prohibition of inappropriate gifts and the prohibition of any form of unethical collaboration or collusion among member associations.

In addition, all stakeholders are bound by the FIFA Code of Ethics. All promotional activities, including any meetings with any FIFA decision-making bodies, must be comprehensively reported. All bidding member associations must also appoint independent compliance and ethics officers to support their obligation to abide by the FIFA Bid Rules of Conduct.

FIFA engaged BDO, an independent audit company, to monitor the entire 2026 bid process, including the compliance of FIFA with the FIFA Bid Rules of Conduct. The auditors provided interim reports to the FIFA Council and the FIFA Congress regarding the ongoing conduct of the bid process, and



a final report to the FIFA Congress one month after the vote by the Congress on the 2026 host. All auditor reports were made public.

Source: UNODC, 2021, p. 280.

Human rights and inclusivity

Human rights and inclusivity are key issues in sport events, as also discussed in the preceding modules. A particular related issue of attention concerns child exploitation. Brackenridge *et al.*'s (2013) extensive review of the literature, summarised in table 4, shows that some child exploitation at major sport events (MSEs) does occur universally. Specific risks for child exploitation before, during and after MSEs can be broadly categorised into the following: child labour, displacement of children resulting from forced evictions for infrastructure development and street clearance, child sexual exploitation, and human trafficking affecting children.

Table 4. Sources of risk to children associated with MSEs



Sources of risk	Before	During	After
Accelerated construction timetables with large numbers of men separated from their families and turning to commercial – and underage – sex	✓	✓	
Negative impacts on children arising from labour migration and high but temporary demands for commercial labour e.g. illegal passports and age verification documents enabling use of underage labour, involvement in street selling	✓	✓	
Media messaging that downplays bad news (child abuses)	✓	✓	
Detainment and unlawful stop and search, including of children	✓	✓	
Displacement of children from their established homes to temporary and/or unfamiliar locations	✓	✓	✓
Child coercion into illegal activities such as drug dealing, theft, sectarian or ethnic violence, especially if they stay in the area after the event	✓	✓	✓
Questionable celebrity, media and/or tourist activities dressed up as ‘sport for development’ yet distracting agencies from their normal child risk screening procedures	✓	✓	
Migrant labour not having access to childcare, education, health services	✓	✓	
Extension of school holidays without supervision or without holiday programmes for children		✓	
Elevated levels of sexual and physical abuse due to increased partying activity		✓	
Negative effects on children’s mental and physical health caused by contagious diseases if they are abused and/or forced to consume drugs	✓	✓	✓

Source: Brackenridge *et al.*, 2013, p. 13.

The literature suggests that child labour has been the most long-standing form of child exploitation associated with MSEs and may be the main cause of human trafficking to these events. Incidents include children’s involvement in the manufacturing of sporting goods, the construction of stadiums, and forced begging or selling of goods on the street (Morrow, 2008; Gustafson, 2011; Brackenridge *et al.*, 2013). Displacement of communities for infrastructure development is also commonplace before major sporting events (see also the case discussion of the Brazil 2014 FIFA World Cup). Child exploitation resulting from forced eviction for infrastructure development affects children from families that are already marginalised and vulnerable, as evidence provided by Brackenridge *et al.* (2013) further demonstrates:

- before the 1992 Barcelona and 2004 Greece Olympic Games, 90-100% of the Roma community were displaced away from the Olympic village.



- The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games displaced 1.25 million residents, with an additional 400,000 migrants from rural areas living temporarily in extreme insecurity.
- The Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games led to the eviction of 300,000 people from city slums. Some of these were violent and unplanned with no entitlements for the evictees who now live in resettlement camps far from schools and economic opportunities in Delhi.
- Before the South Africa 2007 FIFA Preliminary Draw, street children were 'housed' in Westville Prison, exposing them to violence, rape, and HIV.
- Media coverage of riots in Brazilian slums raised allegations of child exploitation associated with World Cup and Olympic infrastructure development.

Major sport federations (including FIFA, as seen earlier) have committed to adhering to established human rights standards, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. These pledges reflect a growing recognition within the sports community of its broader societal responsibilities. The organising committee for the 2024 Paris Olympics has also made it clear that they intend to align with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in all aspects of event planning and execution. This includes ensuring that the construction of Olympic venues respects workers' rights and environmental sustainability (Paris 2024, 2023).

Socioeconomic impact and development

Major sports events have the potential to be transformative for host cities and countries, acting as a catalyst for and accelerating the development of urban infrastructure. Major sport events are an opportunity for hosts to promote their country or city on the global stage as a place to visit and invest. They are also an opportunity to enhance social cohesion by engaging and empowering the local populations through their involvement in a shared experience (UNODC, 2021).

Legacies of major sport events became a particularly prominent area of focus in the 1990s because of concerns about the economic, environmental, and social sustainability and impact of such events on host communities. As a result, several initiatives were developed to address the issue, as we have also discussed in the second module, including:

- legacy strategic approach. Moving Forward, which covers the several ways in which IOC further encourages, supports, monitors, and promotes legacy in partnership with its stakeholders.



- Host city contract (as agreed by the IOC, the host community, and the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games).
- The Olympic Games Impact Study, which seeks to measure the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the Games through a set of common indicators, culminating in four reports over a period of twelve years, published both before and after the Games.

The 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver saw the creation of 2010 Legacies Now, a specific entity outside the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games that was mandated to collaborate with the host community to pursue positive social legacy outcomes in education, health, and fitness, and about previously underserved communities. The London bid for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games also envisioned that the Games would provide inspiration for increased sport participation among all societal cohorts across the country, thereby improving quality-of-life outcomes for communities by promoting engagement in physical activity.

More recently, major sport events legacy initiatives have become significantly more holistic in scope and may consider asset disposal, competition venues, as well as other event-related hosting infrastructure, transportation and hospitality, human capital (such as major-sports-event management expertise and a trained, experienced volunteer workforce), and social capital in the host community, achieved by leveraging the major sport event and the spirit of volunteerism. They may also include ethical procurement initiatives, as shown in the following box.

Ethical procurement in the Summer Olympics

The UNODC (2021) states:

In the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London, the United Kingdom Olympic Delivery Authority was formed by national legislation as a nongovernment body within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport to manage both the procurement of services required for the Games and the building, transition to legacy use and transfer of assets built for the Games. The delivery authority, after extensive consultations, developed its own procurement policy and guidelines for a procurement code for use by the procurement personnel of the Games.

This knowledge relating to the management of ethical and sustainable procurement is itself a 'soft legacy' of the major sports event, one that is valuable



to Governments, sports organisations, and the wider private sector. The post-2012 Games Report of the National Audit Office indicated that the public sector had gained practical experience in project risk management and that the Government would be able to use these skills to fill gaps in government competencies in the deployment of staff where needed. (p. 289).

Major sports events have the potential

To be transformative for host cities and countries, acting as a catalyst for and accelerating the development of urban infrastructure.

To preserve the current state of host cities and countries by temporarily slowing down the development of urban infrastructure.

Environmental considerations

Environmental considerations have become increasingly vital in the planning and execution of sport events, as respecting our natural habitat is also widely accepted as an ethical premise. As discussed in the sustainability module in more detail, from reducing carbon footprints to promoting eco-friendly practices, sport organisations are recognising their role in mitigating environmental impacts. Events now increasingly focus on minimising waste, adopting energy-efficient technologies, and implementing green transportation solutions. Venues are designed with environmental sustainability in mind, using renewable energy sources and sustainable building materials (see e.g., Paris 2024, 2023). The integration of environmental principles into sport events not only aligns with global environmental goals, but also enhances their ethical acceptance and societal impact.

Sport events ethics and transparency

Codes of ethics and codes of conduct

Codes of ethics and codes of conduct are increasingly employed by international and national federations and other (particularly major) sport event organisers. A code of ethics identifies the core ethical values, principles, and ideals of an organisation. This code provides the foundation for a code of conduct, which is a broader set of rules and regulations that can be applied to all relevant individuals and organisations involved in the bidding and selection processes to host a major sport event and in the other stages in the organisation and operation of the sport event life cycle. The box below provides some examples of relevant developments in badminton and athletics.

Figure 8. Examples of codes of ethics and codes of conduct

<p>Badminton World Federation</p> <p>The Code of Ethics of the Badminton World Federation (BWF) includes sections on integrity, gifts, accountability and conflicts of interest. Regarding conflicts of interest, the Code identifies the differences between actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest. BWF statutes also include a Code of Conduct for Bidding Organizations (statute 2.2.3).</p> <p>World Athletics</p> <p>In January 2021, World Athletics adopted new event bid rules designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» Establish a transparent, objective, honest, simple, feasible and fair bidding procedure for all relevant member federations and candidate cities» Identify the actions, timescales, criteria and the application and decision-making processes and procedures for selecting a host for a World Athletics event» Ensure that persons and entities involved in the bidding and selection process for all international competitions, including World Athletics events, comply with the applicable provisions of the Integrity Code of Conduct	<p>This new regime requires that candidate cities conduct themselves in accordance with the integrity standards of the Integrity Code of Conduct, paying specific attention to, without limitation, the rules and standards on honesty, disclosure of interests, minimal gifts and benefits, fair bidding and protecting reputation.</p> <p>Members of the World Athletics Council are not permitted to vote and must recuse themselves from the voting process for selecting hosts where the council member is from the country in which the candidate city bidding to host a World Athletics event is located.</p> <p>Any breach of these rules amounts to a breach of the Integrity Code of Conduct and will accordingly be subject to investigation and prosecution by the Athletics Integrity Unit under the athletics integrity unit reporting, investigation and prosecution rules (non-doping) and possible proceedings under the disciplinary tribunal rules. The Council, the chair of a bid evaluation panel or the Ethical Compliance Officer shall refer any potential breach of these rules for investigation by the Athletics Integrity Unit, and possible proceedings for breach may be held pursuant to the disciplinary tribunal rules.</p>
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Source: UNODC, 2021, p. 281.

Such codes outline policies and standards related to conduct by all participants in the ecosystem of a major sport event to safeguard the overall integrity of the event. For example, the code of conduct may set out specific rules applying to gift-giving and other forms of hospitality provided by bidding cities and countries to hosting rights voters as part of their promotional activity. However, evidence suggests that both codes are highly symbolic (Bodolica and Spraggon, 2015): just because ethical codes are in place, this does not guarantee adherence to ethical principles.

Ethics oversight bodies

In response to the above criticism, there is a growing trend for international sport organisations to actively support relevant stakeholders in their sport ecosystem to ensure compliance with stated ethical principles of behaviour and ethical norms, rules, and regulations. IOC, World Athletics, and FIFA, among other federations, have established and resourced ethics commissions or have engaged an independent private oversight body (such as an external audit company) or work with a government monitoring agency to supervise and enforce the terms of a code of ethics and/or a code of conduct. This helps ensure the compliance of stakeholders involved in bidding and selection processes in the



awarding of hosting rights for major sports events and in the ongoing work of the major-sports-event delivery authority.

An ethics commission can play an initiative-taking and supervisory role for international sport organisations by conducting background checks on the various stakeholders involved in the major sport event selection process. This helps safeguard against any undeclared conflicts of interest unduly influencing voting and awarding processes. In addition, an ethics commission may further help strengthen stakeholder engagement through the organisation of targeted awareness and public education initiatives in avoiding unethical conduct. Finally, an ethics commission can also play an active enforcement role by receiving complaints and reports by reporting persons, conducting investigations and, where appropriate, recommending penalties for or levying sanctions against offenders (UNODC, 2021).

Case study

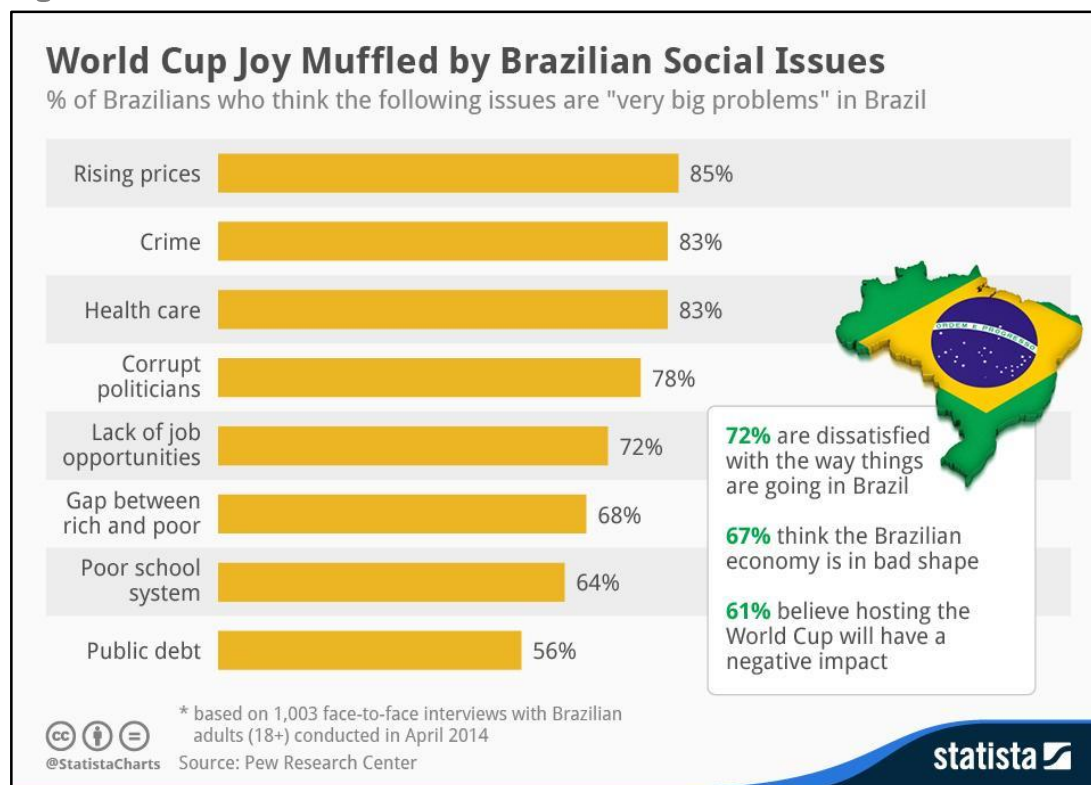
As a case study in this module, we will conduct an ethical analysis of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil. Our main reference will be the discussion presented by Mitra (2015), supplemented by additional relevant literature. We will adhere to Mitra's (2015) structure, beginning with an overview of the socio-economic issues prevalent in Brazil at the time of the World Cup. Subsequently, we will delve into specific controversies surrounding the World Cup and conclude by offering both deontological and consequentialist ethical analyses of the event.

Brazil overview

The kick-off of the tournament was overshadowed by protests from segments of the host country's discontented population. To host the World Cup, Brazil had to invest hundreds of millions in stadia and related infrastructure, while many unresolved social issues persisted in the divided nation. Brazil's recent economic growth has brought prosperity and wealth to some of the population, leaving many others behind. A published Pew Research report (summarized in figure 9 below) shed light on the key issues that concerned Brazil's citizens.



Figure 9. Brazilian social issues



Source: Richter, 2014, <https://bit.ly/3R5BVsl>.

Increasing prices, a high crime rate, and an inadequate healthcare system stood out as the primary factors contributing to a record 72% dissatisfaction rate among Brazilians with the state of their country (Richter, 2014). Moreover, only 57% of individuals aged 25 to 34 possess the equivalent of a high school degree, causing Brazil to lag most OECD countries where the corresponding figure stands at 82%. The 'Brazil Cost,' stemming from high taxes, bureaucratic corruption, and increased borrowing costs, poses substantial barriers to business operations in the country, significantly hindering the initiation of projects (Mitra, 2015).

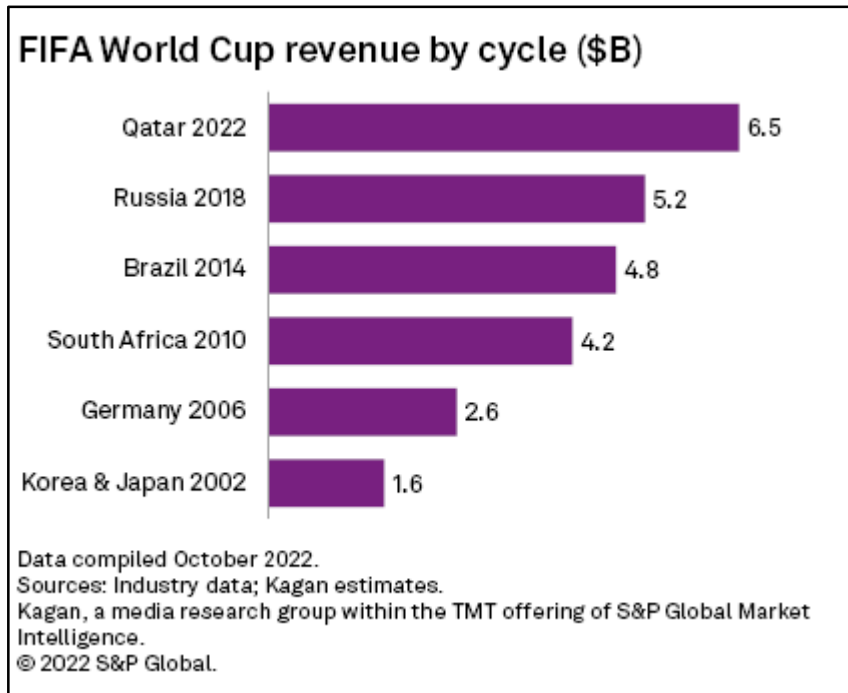
World Cup ethical controversies

The tournament was marked by several controversies, with the most prominent ones being FIFA's controversial tax exemption and the stadium costs.

FIFA generates income through the sale of television, marketing, and licensing rights for football events, including the World Cup. Consequently, the World Cup serves as a primary revenue source for the federation. As shown in the figure below, the relevant revenue has significantly increased from one tournament to the next.



Figure 10. FIFA World Cup revenue



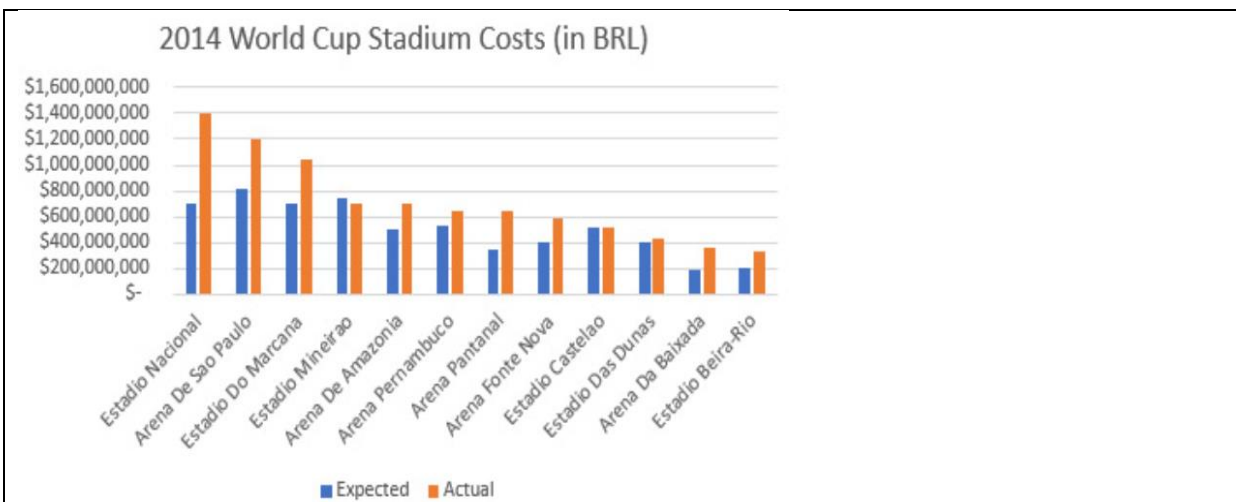
Source: Asian Lite, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3sKBIS4>.

Any direct or indirect expenses incurred by FIFA for the 2014 World Cup received complete federal tax exemptions as per Law Project 7422/2010, which was presented to the National Congress on May 31, 2010. These expenses encompassed imports conducted by FIFA directly, its Brazilian subsidiaries, or any third-party entities engaged by or affiliated with FIFA to assist in the event's organisation. While these exemptions reduced costs for FIFA and its private suppliers, they also diminished potential tax revenue for the Brazilian government, potentially leading to increased tax burdens for Brazil's citizens (Mitra, 2015).

Stadium construction costs exceeded budgets, as indicated in the next box.

Figure 11. 2014 FIFA World Cup stadium costs





Source: Schilling, 2018, <https://bit.ly/3Gawq5r>.

According to Schilling (2018):

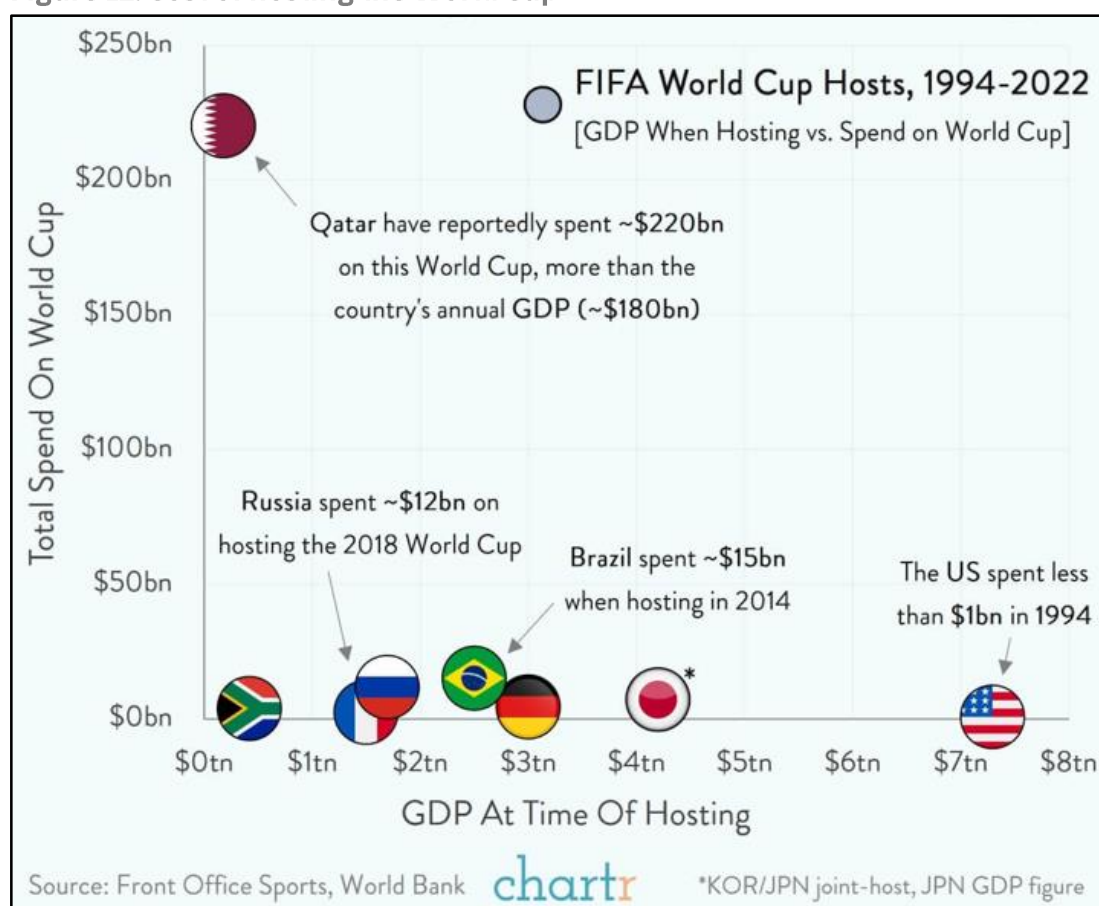
The **predicted cost** of the stadiums for the 2014 World Cup was overall **41% less than** what the **actual cost** ended up being. Only two stadiums, Estadio Castelao and Estadio Mineirao, came out even or less than expected (0% and -7% changes). In the case of Estadio Nacional, the actual price ended up being 101% more than the anticipated. Although this was a beautiful stadium in the nation’s capital for the World Cup, the overall cost may not have been worth it.

In 2015, Brasília was using **Estadio Nacional as a parking lot** for around four hundred buses during times where no matches were being played to recoup some of the lost money. Even when it is being used for club games, the stadium normally only houses about 5,000 fans (capacity around 72,000). It is not just in the capital city, however. Arena da Amazonia was built in the rainforest city of Manaus to spread the World Cup all over the country. A project that cost almost 700m BRL now goes unused by the local team because if they were to try to rent it out, they would lose money. (para. 5-6).

Actual costs exceeded budgeted figures for several reasons. For example, the construction of Arena Corinthians in São Paulo proceeded, despite the existence of an older stadium that could have been renovated at a much lower cost. Fraudulent billing and widespread corruption at the bureaucratic level also played a role in driving up expenses. It is estimated that up to one-third of the stadium's cost can be attributed to overpricing (Mitra, 2015). As depicted in figure 1, Brazil's 2014 World Cup ranked among the most expensive in history, especially when considering the country's GDP at the time.



Figure 12. Cost of hosting the World Cup



Source: Chartr, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3uyE6vB>.

Significant delays and continually rising costs, resulting from bureaucratic and operational inefficiencies, also hindered the attainment of the intended infrastructure objectives. Half of the initially promised infrastructure projects remained incomplete. Moreover, it is estimated that between 250,000 and 1.5 million individuals had to be displaced because of the World Cup projects, with only a small number receiving sufficient monetary compensation. As a resident commented: “we do not have hospitals, we do not have schools. But we have stadiums. Lots of stadiums” (Mitra, 2015, p. 12).



Ethical analysis

The next box presents the findings from a deontological and consequentialist ethical analysis of the tournament. The hosting of the tournament can be deemed unethical because of its diversion of government funds and attention away from the immediate needs of the Brazilian public.

Table 5. An ethical analysis of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil

A deontological approach

Agent-relative obligations: a fundamental duty of any government is to ensure an adequate standard of living and satisfaction for its citizens. The discussion of Brazil's poverty, income inequality, illiteracy and poor health shows the government has not devoted enough attention to its citizens' needs and demands. It has not fulfilled all its obligations to its citizens and therefore should not have undertaken the responsibility of hosting the World Cup. Hosting the tournament represented a violation of the government's duty and obligation towards its citizens and is unethical from a purely agent-relative deontological perspective.

Patient-centred perspective: this perspective dictates that people have the right against being used by another entity for the user's benefit without their prior approval. It was abundantly clear the public was opposed to hosting the tournament and the way the organisation took place. Thus, the patient-centred deontological theories reveal hosting the event violated the basic ethical rights of Brazilian citizens.

A consequentialist approach

Reputation of Brazil: the intention behind hosting the World Cup was to portray Brazil as a 'vibrant, rich, diverse and sophisticated country' on the global stage. However, numerous instances of delays in stadium construction, allegations of corruption and increases in construction costs tarnished the reputation of the country's bureaucracy and infrastructural capabilities.

Infrastructure: several public facilities were updated and beautified for the purposes of the tournament. However, the observed investments in public infrastructure should not be considered a direct consequence of the FIFA World Cup. In fact, they are victims of the tournament, since many planned public infrastructural facilities were not completed by their deadlines or were abandoned due to the government's focus on the tournament.

Structural reforms: the buildup to the World Cup exposed the deficiencies in Brazil's business environment and public service sector and signalled the immediate need for extensive structural reform. Had the hosting rights not been awarded to Brazil in the first place, the



Economic impact: it is estimated the 2014 FIFA World Cup brought approximately 3.7 million people to the country from around the world. Before the World Cup, a study by Ernst & Young Consultants optimistically predicted the World Cup to inject BRL 142b (USD 73.95b) into the Brazilian economy between 2010 and 2014. Instead, the World Cup only injected BRL 25.6b (Schilling, 2018).

government would have been able to address the unrest and target structural reform much earlier.

Influence on the national team's performance: for this football-crazy nation, winning the 2014 edition in front of a home crowd would have changed the public sentiment from one of brooding frustration to one of jubilant ecstasy. Unfortunately, Brazil exited the tournament at the semi-final stage after a humiliating 1-7 loss to Germany.

Source: Mitra, 2015, pp. 14-17.

Summary

This module has explored key ethical issues concerning sport events, with a focus on various aspects of event organisation, including athletes and transparency. While there is a growing recognition of ethics in sport event management, there remains significant room for improvement in all these areas.

In conclusion, this marks the end of our course on sport event governance and sustainability. Throughout this course, we have also provided an overview of related developments, particularly in the realms of accountability, transparency, and ethics. The activity below encourages you to not only concentrate on the content covered in this module, but also to consider the material discussed in earlier modules.

Activity

The purpose of this activity is to reinforce the knowledge you have acquired from these two modules. For these two modules, your task is outlined as follows: conduct an ethical analysis of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. In your review, you should consider the ethical conduct of the organisers and athletes, as well as ethical issues related to event allocation and hosting, along with the role of transparency, as covered in this module.

You may want to consider the following points:

- was the Qatar 2022 World Cup ethical?
- Are your findings from the deontological analysis consistent with the findings from a consequentialist analysis?



- Was the event sustainable? What is well-governed?
- Was the event transparent across all areas of concern?

This assessment should be presented in a maximum of five slides, and it is recommended to use Microsoft PowerPoint.



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