

THE PLANNING, DESIGN, AND LEGACIES OF
MEGA-SPORTING EVENTS

by

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This thesis focuses on the decision-making processes that go into a city or region hosting mega-sporting events, such as the Olympics or World Cup, as well as the legacies they leave behind when these events ultimately conclude. It first provides a history surrounding the beginnings of FIFA and the IOC, and how the controversies of today are deeply connected to organizational operations and individuals of the past. It then analyzes four specific case studies of mega-sporting events within the last 12 years. Each case study considers the planning processes that went into a city or region being selected to host the mega-sporting event as well as how well the outcomes of the competition reflected goals and promises. The thesis then compares the case studies with each other, and they varied significantly in terms of legacies left behind and benefits realized. Success is measured by how costs are minimized and distributed, how legacies via venues and other infrastructure hold up, and what a region's constituents feel towards the process and results. While some were adept at establishing long-term uses for venues and taking the necessary steps in the planning process to ensure positive outcomes, others were not as successful, resulting in high costs and infrastructure not suited for post-competition use. The thesis then takes a closer look into what challenges played a role in limiting success, such as organizational decision-making and accountability, and what steps could be taken to lead to more positive outcomes in the future; these include greater transparency and public participation in decision-making and the relatively recent idea of having more mega-sporting events hosted by multiple countries at once.

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Introduction

Sporting competitions have existed across the globe for thousands of years, perhaps best exemplified by the Olympic Games first held in Ancient Greece. Since then, sports have continued to grow in popularity as new ones were invented and competitions became more organized and standardized; this growth has been particularly noticeable in the last few hundred years with sports like baseball, association football (better known in the United States as soccer), American football, basketball, cricket, and others that have seen tremendous growth. The relatively recent phenomenon of globalization that has sparked countless effects has also played a part in the spread of sports across the globe. What followed was an increased interest in international competition, seen in the athletes competing, the nations they represent, and the audiences filling up venues and following along at home. This thesis focuses on two of the largest, most renowned, and visible of these competitions: the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games. These events have a large footprint in the athletic world because of their prestige, rarity, and name recognition. Both events are seen as the pinnacle of their respective sports worlds. Their impact, however, goes beyond sports, entertainment, and incredible athletic feats.

This thesis discusses the impact that mega-sporting events have on cities, regions, and peoples, with a particular focus on the planned changes a region must make in order to accommodate these events as well as the lasting impacts of these developments. For the purpose of this writing, a mega-sporting event is defined as some form of competition that requires significant resources and is international in its approach to athletic competition as well as its audience. This work will analyze four different case studies that constitute as mega-sporting events including: the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver; the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil; the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro; and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. These

events were chosen in part because of their similarities. The Olympics and the World Cup inherently share similarities that revolve around athletes on national teams competing against each other at the highest level. They each occur once every four years, which emphasizes their prestige and importance, as well as the fact that there is often a heavy price to pay that comes with hosting, limiting its frequency. These events in particular were all closely monitored by either the IOC or FIFA, and took place within 12 years of each other. Their recency means that they can all be identified as events that occurred during a time when hosting costs were increasing, and the relatively small time gap between the competitions increases comparability. These events also featured significant renovation and construction costs, providing examples of venues designed for mega-sporting events and what may play into them becoming ‘white elephants’; these venues are structures that put significant financial strain on a region and become largely unusable after the event has concluded.¹ These factors are important considering the necessity to make comparisons between these events. Additionally, these competitions all have unique characteristics that deserve to be analyzed and incorporated into the idea of what makes a mega-sporting event successful or unsuccessful. These differences don’t take away from comparability, but rather provide intricate and useful insights that paint a bigger picture as a whole. These differences include the general contrasts between FIFA’s requirements illustrated through its sole focus on football and the Olympics, which have more niche requirements for certain sports. On an individual case study scale, Brazil’s unique position of hosting two mega-sporting events within two years of each other instills a certain fascination. Qatar’s relative recency makes it difficult to fully unpack legacies, but its prominence on worldwide media and its explicit ties to organizational decision-making provide certain intrigue. And Vancouver is

¹ Saylor Caitlin, “Sport’s ‘White Elephants’: the economic, environmental, and human cost of mega-tournament infrastructure.” *The McGill Daily*, January 16, 2023.

thought of as being one of the few success stories and provides a much needed model to learn from.

The individual case studies are broken down into sections highlighting specific elements of a region's bid to win the right to host their respective event. It details what infrastructure was planned and what other promises were made to constituents. These goals and projects are then evaluated to determine the congruence between the proposals and what really occurred.

Takeaways are split into a section that details comparisons and measures success based on costs, legacies, and the sentiment displayed by a region's constituents following the conclusion of the competition. These three factors play a crucial part in defining what a 'successful' mega-sporting event looks like. A second section delves deeper into the specific challenges and obstacles preventing mega-sporting events from being more successful. It additionally outlines potential solutions, often embodied by certain event organizers, which could play a significant role in improving these events in the future.

The sentiment found around the world, particularly in developed countries, is that the benefits of hosting mega-sporting events are not worth the cost. However, mega-sporting events do not have to be pigeon-holed into being exclusively for developing countries attempting to bring themselves to the international stage or for those looking for rapid infrastructure development. There is space for developed regions and cities to host events and continue to thrive without throwing money down the drain. Additionally, through proactivity and thoughtful planning, venues don't have to become 'white elephants' within years of construction. Instead, they can be suited for long-term use that is both feasible and practical. Moreover, there are avenues that can shift the operation of organizations like FIFA and the IOC away from being self-serving or detached from reality and towards the people who are most affected by their

decisions. This thesis helps illustrate what should and shouldn't be done in order to better the reputation and usefulness of mega-sporting events in the regions they operate in.

Background

Two of the biggest sports organizations in the world are the International Olympic Committee, or IOC, and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, better known as FIFA. Together, these organizations govern over some of the most important sports in the world and the competitions that showcase them. In particular, these are the Olympic Games and the World Cup, global sporting events with a level of prestige unlike anything else in the world of sports. The World Cup and the Summer and Winter Olympics are held only every four years, which adds to the drama and importance; while television has helped create a huge audience that can access sports better and more frequently than ever, for many of the athletes involved these are once-in-a-lifetime events. The World Cup, the Olympics, and other international sporting phenomena are often extensively planned for and take a lot of time and resources in order to be successful. But for many countries, regions, and cities, the opportunities to host such events are few and far between, and the events are often seen as worth the incredible cost that comes along with it. One dimension of this is the fact that these events bring a region to a global stage; people tune in from all over the world to watch the sports taking place and get an introduction to a city or culture that they may not have been very familiar with previously. But another dimension is the legacy these events have on a city's function itself and the infrastructure they leave behind.

The Olympics and the World Cup require a great deal of resources, and as such regions have to not only be capable of effectively and efficiently hosting them, but express a desire to do so.² These places welcome not only the teams, athletes, and associated personnel, as well as millions of visitors, tourists, and media members who have their own needs and desires, from hotels and restaurants to transport. The World Cup and Olympics also require venues for their

² Lisa Abend, "2022 Winter Olympics: Why Nobody Wants to Host the Games," *Time*, October 3, 2014.

respective sporting events. While the World Cup is relatively straightforward in that it only hosts football/soccer matches, many stadiums are needed considering the volume of matches and the fans they have to accommodate for. The Olympics by contrast require a variety of venues for the numerous different sports that take place, from track and field to water polo. All of these venues must be world class considering the prestige of the events and the skills of the athletes. As such, most host cities and countries don't have this infrastructure in place prior to these events and have to build new construction. This new construction is ultimately an investment of millions of dollars by the region itself, and like any project of this scale has considerable implications and legacies associated with it. Depending on the planning and design around these projects, they have the potential to be staples of a city's culture and a reminder of international glory, or can go unused and ignored the moment the World Cup or Olympics inevitably walk away. While stadiums or other venues are the most visible forms of infrastructure, preparing for such events also takes into consideration transportation networks, urban layouts, and other factors that tremendously affect a region.

Ultimately, it's incredibly useful to understand what makes a region suitable or not suitable for hosting events as large and with such substantial implications as the World Cup and the Olympics, specifically when considering usefulness for a region in the long-term. When the projects that are connected to mega-events are well planned for and thought of as more than just a product of a temporary event, they can be strong elements of a city that represent culture and are positively reflected on as a legacy from hosting such a powerful international competition. But when regions fail to look forward and build only for the present, they are potentially misusing, if not wasting, millions of dollars that can be more effectively used elsewhere. They may end up with giant infrastructure projects that don't suit a region's needs nor add any

significant cultural value. Stadiums that lay empty and forgotten are often a byproduct of such large and demanding events, and are a very visible example of a missed opportunity for development. It isn't just about building legacies and looking towards the future either. In urban areas that are already congested or densely populated, new construction, especially on this scale, often means displacement. Building out in less populated areas often adds to sprawl and premature building and growth. It is also important to discuss the interests and desires surrounding organizational bodies like FIFA and the IOC and what their decision-making processes look like when it comes to choosing hosts. When it comes to planning for mega sporting events, it's important to take into consideration what makes a host suitable or unsuitable and what the decision-making processes are for making that determination; the ramifications are nothing less than the present and future of hosting regions through how they develop, what they financially support, and what is being left out or ignored as a result.

Historical Context and Controversies

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, is the international governing body of association football, also known as soccer. It was first formed in 1904 by several European football associations as the draw of international matches began to increase. Its success in organizing Olympic tournaments prompted the organization to create one of their own, and the first World Cup was played in 1930 in Montevideo, Uruguay. Following the World Wars, membership quickly expanded and the World Cup, held every four years, became not only FIFA's marquee event, but a renowned world stage to showcase the best talents in football. Since the 1970s, the commercialization of the World Cup has grown rampantly, as FIFA presidents João Havelange and Sepp Blatter shifted from FIFA's roots as an organization valuing

amateurism to an international business.³ This was in part due to embracing sponsorship, marketing, and the growing presence of sports on television. Under the leadership of Havelange and Blatter, international football not only grew in popularity and its impact on cultures, but there was also the clearly stated intention of wanting to foster and develop football in every corner of the world, a rhetoric they still espouse today.⁴ The controversy around the host locations for the FIFA World Cup that we see today can largely be traced back to 1978, when Argentina hosted that year's World Cup. While they were selected as hosts in 1966, a decade later the country was taken over by a military junta led by Jorge Rafael Videla as part of the larger "Operation Condor" supported and sponsored by the United States.⁵ What followed was a period of state-sponsored terrorism that killed up to 30,000 Argentinians until the junta ended in 1983.⁶ Questions swirled around Argentina's suitability to host the World Cup, but it continued as planned. Subsequent World Cups have been under increasing scrutiny surrounding the appropriateness of hosting countries for such a unique phenomenon. Some of this stems from questions around human rights abuses and the autocratic regimes of host countries; Argentina in 1978 is an appropriate example of this, as well as both Russia and Qatar hosting the World Cups in 2018 and 2022, respectively.⁷ A second issue regarding appropriateness discussed in this thesis regards questions around whether a country has the infrastructure necessary to host the World Cup and the costs of making up for any deficits in this regard; i.e. the technological and infrastructural feasibility of hosting, as well as if effort is being put into limiting the development of "white elephant" infrastructure and the planning of newly built venues, housing, training

³ *FIFA Uncovered*, directed by Daniel Gordon (2022), Netflix.

⁴ "The Vision 2020-2023: The Year in Review." *FIFA*. Accessed April 4, 2023.

⁵ Erin Blakemore, "30,000 People Were 'Disappeared' in Argentina's Dirty War. These Women Never Stopped Looking." *History*, March 7, 2019.

⁶ Blackmore, "Argentina's Dirty War."

⁷ "Former Host Russia Frozen out as World Cup Begins in Qatar," *AP News*, November 14, 2022.

grounds, transportation, etc. after the World Cup leaves. While these topics of land use, planning, and policy are largely the focus of this thesis, they are intrinsically tied to the decision-making and value systems FIFA adheres to, which in turn are connected to human rights, labor, and corruption issues that have plagued recent World Cups and undermine faith in FIFA as an organization. These subjects are all deeply related, and as such must be discussed to illuminate a bigger picture.

The International Olympic Committee, or IOC, is the governing body of the modern Olympic Games. It was first founded in 1894; at that point in time there had been numerous imitations of ancient Olympic Games across the world, and so it was proposed that there would be one event every four years and the host would rotate.⁸ The first modern Olympic Games was held in 1896 in Athens. It wasn't until the 1924 Olympic Games, with the addition of winter games for the first time, that the Olympics asserted itself on a global stage, as over 3,000 athletes across 44 countries competed, a far cry from the 241 participants only 28 years prior.⁹

The IOC, while not quite as scandalous or nefarious when compared to FIFA's image over the last several years, has nonetheless faced its share of controversies and allegations of corruption, particularly within the last three decades and in the early-to-mid 20th century. The early 1930's saw the Nazi Party attain power in Germany, and while the scheduled 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin were thought to be moved or boycotted, the IOC and Avery Brundage, then head of the American Olympic Committee, defended Germany and ruined the chances of a boycott.¹⁰ Brundage became IOC president in 1952 and continued to oversee and create controversies surrounding race, sexism, anti-Semitism, and amateurism, the belief he held that

⁸ "The Olympic Games: Locations, Facts, Ancient & Modern," *History*, February 7, 2022.

⁹ "The Olympic Games."

¹⁰ Dave Zirin and Jules Boykoff. "Racist IOC President Avery Brundage Loses His Place of Honor," June 25, 2020.

athletes shouldn't be paid or rewarded but compete purely for the love of the game. In 1957, he stated that women should not participate in events that aren't "truly feminine" such as shotput and distance running.¹¹ 1968 saw the protest in Mexico City where Tommie Smith and John Carlos, after finishing first and third in the 200-meter race, performed a Black Power salute. Brundage ordered them suspended and banned from the Olympic Village and threatened to ban the entire U.S. track team if the U.S. Olympic Committee didn't comply.¹² And at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, Palestinian terrorists took 11 Israeli athletes hostage, who died after a failed rescue attempt. Brundage announced a memorial service to take place the next day, and at that service he stated that "the Games must go on."¹³ Brundage was the face of the Olympics for the better part of a century, and his thinking and viewpoints could be seen within the decision-making of the IOC. His life and his reputation played an important part in creating the Olympics as we know it and underpinning some of the issues that arise today.

Operations and Decision-Making

It is necessary to understand the operations of FIFA as an organization. It is a nonprofit based in Zürich, Switzerland, and gets the vast majority of its revenue from selling marketing, television, and licensing rights, as well as ticket sales. In terms of decision-making, those in charge of choosing World Cup hosts, as well as a slew of the most important decisions, is the FIFA Council, called the Executive Committee until 2016, which is the true governing body of FIFA. It is headed by current FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who has been president since 2016. Within FIFA there are member continental federations that are made up of a collection of member associations that represent individual countries or territories; the Confederation of

¹¹ Zirin, "Racist IOC President."

¹² Zirin "Racist IOC President."

¹³ Allen Guttman. *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press), 252.

North, Central America, and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), for example, is a FIFA member confederation and consists of football associations representing countries like the United States, Costa Rica, Jamaica, and others.¹⁴ These confederations elect a body of members to be in the Council, and that number of members varies by confederation. Through the existence of the Executive Committee, there were 24 total members. Today as the Council, there are 37. Besides Infantino, each confederation has a vice president (with the exception of the Union of European Football Associations, or UEFA, which has three) along with anywhere from two to six members. Each confederation elects their respective representatives, but all 211 national member associations each get one vote for FIFA president. Everyone on the Council is elected to a term of four years, and three terms is the maximum anyone can serve. Every year, a FIFA Congress is held and defined by important decision-making, like the presidential election.

The IOC consists of 99 members, each of whom are elected by other IOC members at a Session held usually once a year. Many of these members are former athletes or have previously served as leaders of international sports federations or other international organizational roles. These members, while often affiliated with a country, are not representative of it; rather, they represent the IOC in these countries.¹⁵ This is an important distinction to make when compared to the decision-making processes of FIFA, where its members are in theory representative of their respective confederation or national association. The IOC has an Executive Board, consisting of the IOC president, who has been Thomas Bach since 2013, four vice presidents, and ten additional members.¹⁶ The Executive Board is responsible for the administration of the IOC, but doesn't possess singular decision-making capabilities on matters like who hosts

¹⁴ *FIFA Uncovered*.

¹⁵ "IOC Members List." *Olympics*. Accessed January 18, 2023.

¹⁶ "IOC Executive Board." *Olympics*. Accessed January 18, 2023.

Olympic Games; these fall to all IOC members via vote during the annual Session. The IOC president can serve a term of eight years and be renewed for a second, four-year term. Normal IOC members are elected for a period of eight years and can be constantly renewed, while those serving Executive Board positions can serve a maximum of two successive four-year terms and be out of office for two years before being elected again.¹⁷

FIFA and the IOC play important roles in governing mega-sporting events and outlining rules and regulations regions must comply with. They also make the crucial decisions around what places get to host. This thesis will focus on investigating these bidding processes and the planning regions do in order to host, as well as the impacts that mega-sporting events have on their host cities and in the long and short term. The case studies outlined provide effective individual examples of how these events form and what happens when they end. Case studies like World Cups and Olympic Games both provide the general framework regions must adhere to based on rules and regulations, and they give a geographic and socio-economic context that provides greater insight into what legacies occurred and what molded them. This thesis analyzes information from a variety of sources, including academic research, investigative reporting, official FIFA and IOC documents, and sports media. These sources all provide valuable data that details what is required of hosts, how hosts plan to meet said requirements, evaluations of this planning framework by FIFA and the IOC, and the conclusions and questions brought on when expectations aren't met and legacies go unfulfilled. This data is then compared across the case studies and provides details on which host locations had longer term, more sustainable outcomes and which failed to leave lasting legacies.

¹⁷ "Factsheet: IOC Members." *IOC*, October 18, 2021.

These are then further analyzed and when considered within the context of the region help further show why these hosts had the success, or lack thereof, that they did.

2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games

Bidding Process and Promises

On July 2nd, 2003, the IOC at the 115th IOC Session faced the task of selecting the host for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The cities competing for the honor included Salzburg, Austria, Vancouver, Canada, and Pyeongchang, South Korea. The first round of voting saw Pyeongchang top Vancouver 51 to 40, with Salzburg getting only 16 votes. Because no one earned the majority, Salzburg was eliminated and had its votes redistributed; Vancouver narrowly edged out Pyeongchang by two votes to earn the rights to host.¹⁸ This didn't come as a particular surprise to many voters and observers alike, as Vancouver was thought to have a strong bid. Other factors came into play, including that European cities like London and Paris wished to host the Summer Olympics in 2012, and feared the IOC would be hesitant to award Olympics to European cities within two years if Salzburg did win.¹⁹ Additionally, Pyeongchang lacked the global recognition and size that Vancouver B.C. exhibits. The 2010 Winter Olympic Games were set to take place in Vancouver proper, as well as north of the city at the Whistler Ski Area, which is located about 75 miles to the north.

The Vancouver-Whistler 2010 Bid Corporation had the goal of creating a successful bid for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The bid emphasized Vancouver's consistency with both the well-defined and intangible characteristics of winter sports as one of the area's strengths. Much of the bid was built on logistics and characteristics that Vancouver already exhibited that made it a feasible and reasonable choice to be a host. This included tangible reasons, such as the fact that Vancouver's consistent winter weather suited successful outdoor events being held. The bid

¹⁸ Richard Sandomir. "OLYMPICS; Vancouver Wins 2010 Winter Olympics by 3-Vote Margin." *The New York Times*, July 3, 2003, sec. Sports.

¹⁹ Sandomir, "Vancouver Wins."

appealed to more intangible factors too, like the views of British Columbia's snow-capped mountains or Vancouver's waterfront.²⁰ Once the Bid Corporation won the process, the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic Games (VANOC2010 or simply VANOC) would actually plan the Games based on the Bid Corporation's findings.

It was clear from the start of the bidding process that decision-makers valued their constituents and those that would be most affected. The bid put focus on garnering the support of the region's residents, and nowhere was that clearer than in its commitments to inner-city demographics and Aboriginal Peoples. The First Nations, the Inuit, and the Métis are the three groups of Aboriginal Peoples recognized by the Canadian government, and the former was the primary focus considering that it is their ancestral land that Vancouver sits on top of. All four of the First Nations tied to the Vancouver-Whistler area signed agreements of understanding with the Bid Corporation; additionally, each of the Nations had a representative on the Bid Corporation's board of directors. Both the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations signed a Shared Legacies Agreement with British Columbia in 2002. This agreement had three main objectives: "to respect the Nations' historic and current presence in the region; protect the Nations' Aboriginal rights and title; and to take advantage of economic opportunities, including the proposed hosting of the Games."²¹ Beyond these goals, this agreement outlined commitments to these communities that included contributions to a cultural center, a legacy fund for Aboriginal youth sports, and the shared ownership of any new athletic facilities.²² The Bid Corporation additionally recognized that there were communities, particularly in the inner-city and on the eastside of downtown, who disproportionately lived in low-income households, received

²⁰ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." *VANOC*, November 2009, 4.

²¹ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 21.

²² "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 12.

government assistance, and struggled with mental health and drug/addiction issues.²³ The Bid Corporation and government partners worked to establish a framework that detailed participation and equality regarding the Games for all, especially those who may lack the resources to otherwise be involved in a mega-sporting event. This covered a number of goals and themes, including making the Games accessible, maximizing affordable recreation, preventing involuntary displacement, and emphasizing low-cost public transportation.²⁴ The Bid Corporation seemed to show an understanding of the social issues potentially clouding an Olympic bid. While one can't truly know the motives behind the Bid Corporation's language and efforts, it likely played a role in the favorable viewing of Vancouver as a potential host and created important allies in the process.

Months before the IOC held its Session to determine the 2010 Winter Olympics host, Larry Campbell was elected the new mayor of Vancouver. One of his first campaign promises was to hold a vote asking Vancouver residents if they wished for the city to participate in the upcoming Winter Games. This was a move considered consequential given that hosting the Olympics has never been particularly popular with the host city's population — indeed, there had been 16 votes previously held by various governments to gauge support of hosting the Olympics, and not one had ever passed.²⁵ And yet, when the vote was held on February 22nd, 2003, 64% of voters in Vancouver supported hosting the Games.²⁶ It is unclear if the Vancouver-Whistler 2010 Bid Corporation and the Vancouver-Whistler region as a whole would've gone ahead with the bidding process if residents had voted against hosting the Olympics, but the emphasis on voting and building connections seems to illustrate that the decision-makers in the

²³ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 10.

²⁴ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 11.

²⁵ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 22.

²⁶ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 23.

process value the views of the people they directly or indirectly represent and that they showed a willingness to be vulnerable in asking honest questions.

The 2010 Vancouver Bid Report further outlines the venues, existing and proposed, necessary for the hosting of the Winter Olympics. The following information is based on the bid proposal as finalized in the Candidature File, more commonly known as the Bid Book.

Alpine Skiing

The speed events of downhill and super-G skiing would be held on Whistler Creekside, part of Whistler Mountain's facilities that had existed since 1966.²⁷ However, major renovations would be needed at a projected cost of \$10.5 million USD. The technical skiing events, slalom and giant slalom, would be held on Blackcomb Mountain's facilities that were first built in 1980. Like Whistler Creekside, it was in need of renovation, costing \$4.4 million USD.²⁸ Creekside would be located less than six miles from the Whistler Olympic Village, while Blackcomb would be under nine miles away.

Sliding Sports

The sliding sports found at the Winter Olympics include bobsled, skeleton, luge, and their minor variations. All three main sports would be hosted by one venue, the Whistler Sliding Centre, a proposed ice track ten miles from the Whistler Olympic Village.²⁹ The construction budget was projected to be \$35.5 million USD and the facility would have a capacity of 12,000 observers.

Curling

²⁷ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 33.

²⁸ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 33.

²⁹ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 34.

The Hillcrest/Nat Bailey Stadium Park Curling Centre was proposed to be built in Hillcrest Park, which is about two ½ miles away from the Vancouver Olympic Village. Following the Winter Olympics, the facility would be altered into a community center that includes a hockey rink, gym, and fitness area. The venue would cost \$18.2 million USD.³⁰ Additionally, training would occur at the Richmond Curling Club, a preexisting venue based in the city of Richmond.³¹

Freestyle Skiing and Snowboarding

Aerial and mogul skiing are the two freestyle skiing competitions in the Winter Olympics, and both these and all of the snowboarding events were planned to take place at Cypress Mountain, about 12 miles away from the Vancouver Olympic Village. The venue had existed since 1984 but required significant renovations. These were projected to cost \$7 million USD, a total cost that covered both the needs of the skiing and snowboarding events.³²

Ice Hockey

Two sites were proposed to host Olympic ice hockey competitions. The first was General Motors Place, home to the Vancouver Canucks National Hockey League (NHL) team. It would seat 17,000 spectators and be just over a mile from the Vancouver Olympic Village, but require significant renovations to expand the playing surface to Olympic regulations, which were forecasted to cost \$6.2 million USD.³³ A second ice hockey venue was proposed to be constructed at the University of British Columbia, which is seven miles away from the Olympic Village and could hold 8,000 fans. This project was seen as beneficial for the university

³⁰ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 36.

³¹ “The Sea to Sky Games: Vancouver 2010 Candidate City.” Vancouver 2010, 2002, 43.

³² “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 37.

³³ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 38.

following the Games from an entertainment and research standpoint for the 35,000 students enrolled.³⁴ Construction costs were forecasted to be \$18.6 million USD.³⁵

Nordic Events

The Nordic Winter Olympic events include the biathlon, the Nordic combined biathlon, cross-country skiing, and ski jumping. These events were all proposed to take place at the yet-to-be-built Whistler Nordic Centre in the Callaghan Valley. The Nordic venues for their respective sports would be less than ½ mile apart from each other, and the general facility is five miles away from the Whistler Olympic Village.³⁶ The construction costs were estimated to be \$65.8 million USD.³⁷

Figure Skating and Short Track Speed Skating

The Pacific Coliseum at Hastings Park, a facility built in 1967, was chosen to host both short track speed skating and figure skating. This space was under five miles from the Vancouver Olympic Village.³⁸ Additionally, renovations were needed to add additional safety measures and update the venue for future use, with costs projected to be \$14.9 million USD.³⁹

Long Track Speed Skating

It was decided that the long track speed skating oval would be constructed at the Simon Fraser University campus, about eleven miles from the Vancouver Olympic Village, as part of an effort to create a shared legacy encompassing all of the major universities in the Vancouver area. The speed skating track would be part of a larger venue that could be used year-round, and construction was estimated to cost \$44.3 million USD.⁴⁰

³⁴ “The Sea to Sky Games.” 49.

³⁵ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 38.

³⁶ “The Sea to Sky Games.” 27.

³⁷ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 40.

³⁸ “The Sea to Sky Games.” 69.

³⁹ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 41.

⁴⁰ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 43.

The Vancouver bid had emphasized that two Olympic villages would exist. This was due to the fact that Whistler was separated from Vancouver by about 75 miles, and each location offered access to significantly different events; Vancouver was tied to stadiums and venues, many of them preexisting, that were hosting sports like hockey and curling, while Whistler provided a ski area necessary for other Olympic winter sports. The Vancouver Olympic Village would be placed in the False Creek area, which sits in the heart of Vancouver, is walking distance away from BC Place, and isn't more than 40 minutes away from any of Vancouver's existing or proposed sporting venues.⁴¹ Plans insisted that this village wouldn't cause displacement; rather, it would build on almost 650,000 square feet of former industrial and then-undeveloped land along the oceanfront.⁴² They would build permanent buildings meant to accommodate 2,100 athletes and coaches. After the Olympic Winter Games, these low- and mid-rise apartment buildings would be converted into 314 residential market units and 250 residential non-market units for those with low-income or others in need.⁴³ The Whistler Olympic Village would be placed within ten miles of the greater Whistler Ski Area near the entrance of the Callaghan Valley. This village was designed to accommodate close to 2,000 athletes and coaches across 554 dwelling units.⁴⁴ The belief was that the new facility would be a mix of permanent facilities and pre-manufactured ones that would be moved offsite following the conclusion of the Games. Much of this would go to First Nations communities while the permanent housing would fill a non-market housing gap for Whistler employees and for future athletes who visit the site.⁴⁵ The total cost of this project was estimated at \$63.2 million USD.

⁴¹ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 45.

⁴² "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 45.

⁴³ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 46.

⁴⁴ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 48.

⁴⁵ "Vancouver 2010 Bid Report." 48.

Additional infrastructure proposed to be built, renovated, or used for a successful Winter Olympics included the main press center, which would be located at the existing Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre in close proximity to the heart of Vancouver and the Games. The international broadcast center was planned to take place in Richmond at a proposed Richmond Trade and Exhibition Centre near the Vancouver International Airport.⁴⁶ BC Place, which had existed since 1983 as the first covered stadium in Canada, would host the Opening, Closing, and Medal Ceremonies. It was chosen due to its central location in downtown Vancouver and the fact that it had the capacity and surrounding infrastructure to handle large crowds.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 49.

⁴⁷ “Vancouver 2010 Bid Report.” 51.



Figure 1. BC Place and Rogers Arena (formerly General Motors Place) in Vancouver.⁴⁸

The gateway into Vancouver and greater British Columbia was considered to be the Vancouver International Airport. It had experience in handling significant traffic and operating 24 hours/day in any snow and ice conditions.⁴⁹ Vancouver had no plans to make specific road improvements, feeling that its existing road infrastructure was satisfactory. Additionally, public transit had a firm foothold in how Vancouver citizens moved through the region. It was clear that Vancouver's existing road and public transit infrastructure, combined with experience in hosting other large events and the intra-region travel it spawned successfully, lead to confidence in its

⁴⁸ *The Spectacular at BC Place and Rogers Arena in Vancouver 2019*. Parq Vancouver.

⁴⁹ "The Sea to Sky Games." 63.

ability to effectively host the Winter Olympics. An important exception to make is in regard to the Sea to Sky Highway connecting Vancouver and Whistler. While upgrades to this road were in the works already via the region's long-term plans, the construction would take place in the lead up to the Winter Games.⁵⁰

In terms of accommodation, the IOC required that Winter Games hosts have 20,000 hotel rooms for fans and spectators in close proximity to the Olympic venues. The Vancouver area already had nearly 25,000 hotel rooms, while the Whistler area had almost 6,000 existing hotel rooms.⁵¹ While some hotel projects were in various stages of development that would add 4,000 new rooms, Vancouver's existing hotel inventory was felt to be satisfactory and would exceed requirements by 10,000 rooms.

The Vancouver Organizing Committee initially set out a budget of \$1.7 billion USD, which accounted for many, if not all, of the projected expenditures. Much of the infrastructure required for the 2010 Winter Olympics already existed in Vancouver and Whistler, a nod to the role they already served as premier winter sports destinations. Their bid put a strong emphasis on sustainability, which covered not only the natural environment but also the legacies they wished to leave behind. This included the venues, as new construction was relatively limited and the Bid Corporation justified its existence by connecting it to specific future uses. Legacies were population-based, as the bid recognized the importance of having Aboriginal communities and low-income populations on-board with the Olympics as well as actively participating in the decision-making process reaping the benefits of the Games. Other infrastructural costs were minimized as the Vancouver region seemed to focus on building upon an existing city, area, and

⁵⁰ "The Sea to Sky Games." 67.

⁵¹ "The Sea to Sky Games." 50.

culture rather than divert resources into creating something new or emphasizing development and growth over practicality and logic.

Legacies

It is estimated that the total cost of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics fell between \$7 and 9 billion USD.⁵² While the Games did go over budget and more money was spent on new construction and renovation than intended, it's important to keep in mind that much of the construction occurred during the heart of the 2007 - 2008 financial crisis that increased the costs of building materials and construction workers.⁵³ The financial crisis had other implications on the legacies and financial well-being of the 2010 Winter Olympics. Perhaps the most consequential was that the cost and creation of the Vancouver Olympic Village was to be shared with the developer Millennium Development Corporation. However, Fortress Investment Group stopped advancing funds to the developer, which left the agreement when struggling financially.⁵⁴ The increase in monetary expenditures towards this project as a result forced the housing once the Olympics ended to be sold off at higher prices than intended, significantly reducing the legacy the Village would have left behind in providing non-market, low-income housing.⁵⁵ Other projects, however, didn't face the burden of complete financial fallout, and were able to carry on their intended legacies and purposes at the conclusion of the Olympics. The

⁵² Mark Hume, "Vancouver Olympics Worth the \$7-Billion Price Tag, Study Says," *The Globe and Mail*, October 23, 2013.

⁵³ Matthew Leixner, "2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games - A Case Study on the Integration of Legacy with Urban Planning and Renewal Initiatives Relative to Planning," 176

⁵⁴ "Olympic Village May Cost Vancouver Taxpayers \$875M: Mayor." *CBC*, January 10, 2009.

⁵⁵ Leixner, 179

Whistler Olympic Village, for example, went on as planned and fulfilled its role as employee housing for the Whistler Ski Area.⁵⁶



Figure 2. Site of what was the Olympic Village in Vancouver, now a housing complex.⁵⁷

Renovations to General Motors Place, now known as the Rogers Arena, likely played a significant role in keeping the Vancouver Canucks, the area's NHL team, in town.⁵⁸ The facility was in need of upgrades, and in the world of professional sports it's often easier for a franchise to relocate rather than be stuck in negotiations pushing for better facilities. A hockey team provides a certain amount of value as a revenue generator and city attraction, but it also holds a certain value connected to city and regional pride. This is especially true regarding hockey in

⁵⁶ Leixner, 179

⁵⁷ *The Village on False Creek*. Aquilini Development.

⁵⁸ Leixner, 177

Canada, which is the country's most popular sport. This contributes substantially to the emotional capital generated from hosting such an event, as it helps the city and region create pride and empowerment among its population.⁵⁹ A related legacy that Vancouver built was knowledge diffusion.⁶⁰ Organizations and individuals acquired know-how from running a successful event; this knowledge not only spreads out as organizations shift directions and people find new jobs, but it also allows for the continuation of work and legacies that have only just begun with the conclusion of the Olympics.

Questions have been posed about the legitimacy of the participation of native peoples, which was described in the Vancouver bid as a crucial part of a successful Games. Some feel that the First Nations leaders that partnered with the various moving parts of the Vancouver Olympic Committee and Bid Corporation had effectively "sold out," settling for small moments of appreciation instead of pushing for larger issues.⁶¹ One of these issues concerns land and the belief that British Columbia is unceded indigenous territory that falls under the rule of Aboriginal communities in the area. The sentiment among many low-income natives is that those who have actively engaged and partnered with Olympic decision-makers no longer represent native communities. Additionally, some have argued that VANOC has constructed an image of itself as benevolent towards First Nations peoples, but that this contributes to the systemic denial and erasure of the violence committed against natives.⁶² Other Aboriginals disagree, and believe that not only is there an importance in making the voices of natives heard throughout the process of the Olympic Games, but that this cooperation is a significant part of the healing journey and

⁵⁹ Kiki Kaplanidou and Kostas Karadakis, "Understanding the Legacies of a Host Olympic City: The Case of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games." *Sport Marketing Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (June 1, 2010), 115.

⁶⁰ Kaplanidou and Karadakis, 115.

⁶¹ Martin Kaste, "Olympics Met With Mixed Emotions By First Nations." *NPR*, February 12, 2010, sec. Winter Olympics 2010.

⁶² Robyn Bourgeois, "Deceptive Inclusion: The 2010 Vancouver Olympics and Violence against First Nations People." *Canadian Woman Studies* 27, no. 2-3 (March 22, 2009).

moving towards a more equitable future.⁶³ Furthermore, many view that the processes and operations of the Bid Corporation and VANOC were courteous, sensitive, and respectful towards native cultures and peoples,⁶⁴ and that this should be reciprocated instead of looked down upon. This topic is one that clearly draws lines within native communities; it is deeply complex and rooted in emotion, real-life experiences, and a disturbing history. While the phenomena surrounding this should be further explored and researched, it is clear that Vancouver hosting the Winter Olympics and its efforts in reaching out to the First Nations has had a significant impact on native life. These relationships will only grow in complexity as there is a current indigenous-led bid to bring the Winter Olympics back to British Columbia in 2030.⁶⁵ While there are a number of obstacles, including B.C.'s unwillingness to fund it, questions around what the Olympics will look like in the upcoming decade have created room for hope to grow.

⁶³ Kaste, "Mixed Emotions."

⁶⁴ Bourgeois, "Deceptive Inclusion."

⁶⁵ Myles Dichter, "Indigenous-Led Bid to Bring 2030 Olympics to B.C. Finds Hope as Province Remains Steadfast in Rejection." *CBC*, December 12, 2022.

2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil and 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro

Bidding Process and Promises: 2014 World Cup

In the span of two years, the country of Brazil hosted two of the largest and most prestigious mega-sporting events in the world: the 2014 FIFA World Cup that encompassed cities and regions across the country, and the 2016 Summer Olympics largely confined to the city of Rio de Janeiro. On March 7th, 2003, FIFA announced that the 2014 World Cup would be held in South America. This came amidst the facts that the continent had not hosted a World Cup since Argentina did in 1978, and that the FIFA Executive Committee felt it only fair that World Cup hosting would rotate to another federation.⁶⁶ Out of all of the South American countries, only Brazil and Colombia launched an official hosting bid. On April 11th, 2007, Colombia formally withdrew from the bidding process, making Brazil the de facto host which was made official in October of that year.⁶⁷

On October 2nd, 2009, the IOC called its 121st Session, where after a series of voting rounds Rio de Janeiro beat out Tokyo, Madrid, and Chicago to win the rights to host the 2016 Summer Olympics.⁶⁸ This was the fourth attempt by Rio to host an Olympic Games, and marked the first time in the history of the Olympics that a South American city would host the event. This pick came as a bit of a surprise to some members of the IOC and other bid cities.⁶⁹ There were some concerns that Brazil would be overextended because of the additional task of hosting the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Tokyo, Madrid, and Chicago were seen to all have very strong bids; Chicago in particular was shocked they didn't make it out of the first round, let alone win, after spending close to \$50 million USD in efforts to bring the Summer Olympics back to the United

⁶⁶ "2014 FIFA World Cup to Be Held in South America." *FIFA*, April 18, 2015.

⁶⁷ "Brazil Confirms Bid - Colombia Withdraws." *FIFA*, January 29, 2013.

⁶⁸ Juliet Macur. "Rio de Janeiro Is Awarded 2016 Olympics." *The New York Times*, October 2, 2009.

⁶⁹ Macur, "Rio de Janeiro."

States for the first time since Atlanta in 1996.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Rio de Janeiro and the entire country of Brazil was very quickly in the unique position of hosting two huge sporting phenomena within two years of each other.

The choice of Brazil to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup and for Rio to host the 2016 Summer Olympics were met with a mixed reaction, both internationally and throughout the country itself. It is well-documented that football is a very popular sport in Brazil. It is inextricably tied to the nation's culture and sense of pride, which makes it on the surface a perfect choice to host the world's most important soccer event.⁷¹ Brazil has also had incredible success in the football world: they are the only nation that has appeared at every FIFA World Cup to have been played and has won the competition five times, more than any other nation.⁷² Additionally, that pride and desire for recognition was only magnified considering that this would be the first time a South American country had hosted the World Cup in 36 years. A similar sentiment swirled around Rio's hosting duties as it, by being the first South American city to host the Olympic Games, in many ways was representing the entire continent. However, the cultural pride on display and the love of the game only thinly masked an undercurrent of discontent. While media depicted scenes of jubilation and celebration along the Copacabana when the bids were awarded to Brazil and Rio,⁷³ the following years saw many take to the streets as citizens felt that the billions of dollars that would most likely be spent on the World Cup could and should go to funding other sectors, like health care and education.⁷⁴ Many felt that public education in particular was being ignored, and that there was a very tangible contrast between the

⁷⁰ Macur, "Rio de Janeiro."

⁷¹ Melissa Block, "Is Brazil Ready To Host The World Cup In 2014?" NPR, September 16, 2013.

⁷² "Brazil Bid Inspection Report for the 2014 FIFA World Cup." *FIFA*, 16.

⁷³ Macur, "Rio de Janeiro."

⁷⁴ Block, "Is Brazil Ready."

grandiose stadiums being constructed across the country while schools were forced to shut down. Additionally, there were concerns that Brazil had bit off more than it could chew in terms of its capabilities in hosting the World Cup and the Olympics. Question marks first started appearing in 2006, when Brazilian president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva announced that there was not one stadium in the country that was in condition to host a World Cup game, and as a result 12 would have to be constructed.⁷⁵ Additionally, there were concerns that the stadiums would not be done in time, carving a path for logistical nightmares if events had to be pushed back or moved to other venues.⁷⁶ Beyond this was the fear that the rush to finish building infrastructure on time was compromising safety standards for not only workers but potentially for spectators as well.⁷⁷ The climate leading up to both the World Cup and the Summer Olympics was one that seethed of both palpable excitement at the novelty of what was about to take place as well as worries and concerns that the government had put its efforts, money, and resources into the wrong objectives. Combined with time crunches and serious safety concerns, these mega-sporting events were struggling to get off of the ground.

The 2014 Brazil World Cup and the preparations for it saw intense infrastructure development as the country attempted to meet the requirements of FIFA that come with hosting such a prestigious competition. Brazil's Bid Inspection Report stewarded by FIFA provides some crucial details around the strengths and weaknesses of Brazil's bid, as well as highlighting the necessary adjustments. The Bid Inspection Report notes that Brazil's bid included 18 prospective host cities. This includes Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Brasília, Natal, Recife, Maceió, Fortaleza, Salvador, Belém, Manaus, Rio Branco, Cuiabá, Goiânia, Campo Grande, Curitiba, Belo

⁷⁵ Reuters. "Brazil Needs to Build 12 Stadiums for World Cup - President." Times of Malta, September 15, 2006.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Watts, "Fifa Issues Ultimatum to Host City over Brazil World Cup Stadium Delays." *The Guardian*, January 22, 2014, sec. Football.

⁷⁷ Watts, "Fifa Issues Ultimatum."

Horizonte, Florianópolis, and Porto Alegre.⁷⁸ Six of these cities had a population under 1 million, and only two cities, Rio Branco and Florianópolis, had populations of less than 500,000.⁷⁹ The number of host cities was expected to decrease as a city selection process took place and bidding cities secured finances. The inspection team additionally noted that while the Brazilian Football Federation (CBF) estimated stadium construction and renovation costs at \$1.1 billion USD, it doesn't take into account the fact that host cities had yet to be chosen.⁸⁰

Because of Brazil's strong football culture, there wasn't a need to construct additional team base camps across the country, as there were many local clubs equipped with training centers. However, many of these facilities required significant renovation, often along the lines of turf quality and dressing rooms.⁸¹

At the time of the Bid Inspection Report, accommodations were of the utmost concern. FIFA requires a minimum of 55,000 contracted hotel rooms spread across all of the host cities for the benefit and comfort of supporters. But the number of hotel rooms contracted in the Hotel Agreement fell short of this minimum.⁸² This was particularly concerning to FIFA surrounding both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, which fell woefully short of required accommodations.

Airport infrastructure played a significant role in the transportation logistics of a successful World Cup in Brazil. Stadiums were located in cities that are spread across the country, so there was little centrality and travel by car between most stadiums is unfeasible due to distance. Brazil is a large country in all respects. It has a total area of over three million square miles and in 2014 had an approximate population of 203 million people; this makes Brazil one of

⁷⁸ "Brazil Bid Inspection Report," 39.

⁷⁹ "Brazil Bid Inspection Report," 40-41.

⁸⁰ "Brazil Bid Inspection Report," 38.

⁸¹ "Brazil Bid Inspection Report," 26.

⁸² "Brazil Bid Inspection Report," 35.

the largest countries by area and population in the world.⁸³ Air travel between stadiums was proved to be necessary due to the distance between stadiums and the lack of accommodations around them; FIFA anticipated that the number of supporters and workers would surpass room inventory in stadium cities and nearby communities.⁸⁴ The inspection team felt Brazil nevertheless had the necessary air travel infrastructure to help fix this issue. Additionally, FIFA showed confidence in the ability of Brazil to facilitate urban transport within most of the prospective host cities.⁸⁵ The majority of intra-city movement would be facilitated via buses, minibuses, and taxis. Rail, outside of a high-speed line connecting Rio de Janeiro with São Paulo and small metro networks in a handful of other cities, was not expected to play a factor in transportation.

Bidding Process and Promises: Rio 2016

Similarly to the 2014 FIFA World Cup, the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics required significant infrastructure to be built or renovated. The initial concept of the Games was to create four distinct zones with certain socio-economic conditions that would supposedly mesh well with the intended renovations and constructions.⁸⁶ These zones included Barra, an expanding part of the city where much of the new construction would take place; Copacabana, which would be the site for temporary venues to hold outdoor events; Maracanã, a densely populated area that would hold the ceremonies and face redevelopment and revitalization; and Deodoro, where a high proportion of younger people and a lack of infrastructure would provide social opportunities.⁸⁷ These four zones were to be connected by a transport ring that would consist of a metro,

⁸³ “Brazil: Overview.” *World Data*. Accessed February 17th, 2023.

⁸⁴ “Brazil Bid Inspection Report,” 32.

⁸⁵ “Brazil Bid Inspection Report,” 33.

⁸⁶ “Report of the IOC Evaluation Commission for the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in 2016,” *International Olympic Committee*. Accessed February 26, 2023, 46.

⁸⁷ “IOC Evaluation Commission,” 47.

suburban rail and bus rapid transit (BRT) networks.⁸⁸ The costs of extending and increasing the capacity of rail, the development of BRT lines, upgrading the Rio International Airport, and other transportation-related costs added up to a projected price of nearly \$5 billion USD.⁸⁹ The total cost of putting on the Rio Olympics was expected to exceed \$11 billion.⁹⁰

The 2016 Rio Summer Olympics required 34 competition venues along with 29 additional training facilities. Of the 34 competition venues, ten already existed and required no significant work due to most of them being newly constructed for the Pan American Games in 2007; eight facilities already existed but needed serious modifications or renovations; nine venues were entirely new and made to be permanent; and seven venues were completely temporary.⁹¹ What follows is a brief list of some of the sports exhibited at the Rio Olympic Games and their corresponding facilities deemed as significant due to capacity or construction/renovation costs.

Football

The Maracanã Stadium would host football events as well as the Opening, Closing, and Medal Ceremonies for the Rio Olympics. It was set to undergo renovations that were part of the process of getting the stadium up to par with requirements for the 2014 FIFA World Cup. \$5.5 million USD was the estimate for what those upgrades would cost as well as increasing the capacity of the stadium.⁹² There were a number of other football stadiums, like the Fonte Nova Stadium in Salvador and the Morumbi Stadium in São Paulo, that were planned on being used in

⁸⁸ “IOC Evaluation Commission,” 53.

⁸⁹ “IOC Evaluation Commission,” 60.

⁹⁰ “IOC Evaluation Commission,” 51.

⁹¹ “Rio 2016 Candidate City: Candidature File for Rio de Janeiro to Host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.” *Rio 2016 Bid Committee*. 2016, 2008, 19-21

⁹² “Rio 2016 Candidate City,” 22.

both the FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympics; football was the only event planned in this Olympics that would require athletes to leave Rio and play matches elsewhere in the country.

Cycling

The Rio Olympic Velodrome was originally built in 2007 for the Pan American Games and would be home to track cycling competitions during the Olympics. Despite being less than a decade old by the time the 2016 Olympic Games occurred, it would require over \$39 million USD in renovations and meeting IOC requirements.⁹³

Track and Field

The João Havelange Stadium, first created in 2007 like the Rio Olympic Velodrome and other venues for the Pan American Games, was chosen to be the sole venue for all of the track and field events. The work needed to be done to improve it to IOC standards and be useful after the Olympic Games meant a cost of over \$52 million USD.⁹⁴

Basketball, Judo, Taekwondo, Wrestling, and Handball

One of the most ambitious permanent facilities planned to be built was the Olympic Training Center. It would consist of four halls: one for basketball, one for both judo and taekwondo, one for wrestling, and one for handball. These facilities would serve as competition venues during the Olympics and training locations both before and after the Games. The projected cost for this is over \$195 million USD.⁹⁵

Swimming

The proposed Olympic Aquatics Stadium was projected to cost \$56 million USD. It was one of the later projects scheduled, with construction only slated to start in 2013.⁹⁶ When

⁹³ “Rio 2016 Candidate City,” 23.

⁹⁴ “Rio 2016 Candidate City,” 23.

⁹⁵ “Rio 2016 Candidate City,” 25.

⁹⁶ “Rio 2016 Candidate City,” 25.

completed, it would host all swimming and synchronized swimming competitions outside of the triathlon and marathon swimming. The stadium would be one of the highest capacity venues in Rio, hosting a maximum of 18,000 fans.⁹⁷

Weightlifting

The most expensive temporary venue was the Riocentro - Pavilion 6. It would feature weightlifting events and have a capacity of 6,500 people. It would cost close to \$18 million USD to build and, like most of the other temporary features, would start being constructed in 2015.⁹⁸

The IOC Evaluation Commission curiously did not come across as concerned regarding the accommodation for fans and supporters. The Rio plan guaranteed room inventory of over 48,000 rooms, with 45,000 of these being within 31 miles of the center of the Games.⁹⁹ This contrasts significantly with FIFA, who expressed concern regarding Brazil's ability to provide 55,000 rooms and Rio's ability to supply a fraction of that. It's worth noting that the IOC evaluation took place approximately two years after FIFA officials did the same, so it's possible Rio was able to alleviate concerns in that timespan. Rio's accommodation includes 13,000 guaranteed hotel rooms but promises 25,000 rooms in new developments, 8,500 rooms via cruise ships, and 1,700 rooms in apartment hotels.¹⁰⁰ The Olympic Village in Rio de Janeiro would occupy 75 hectares of land that would comprise 34 different apartment blocks that would each reach 12 stories high.¹⁰¹ Within the village will be over 17,000 beds for athletes and coaches. Following the conclusion of the Olympics, the village would be turned into a residential community that will be medium to high quality and in a rapidly growing part of the city.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ "Rio 2016 Candidate City," 17.

⁹⁸ "Rio 2016 Candidate City," 25.

⁹⁹ "IOC Evaluation Commission," 58.

¹⁰⁰ "IOC Evaluation Commission," 58.

¹⁰¹ "IOC Evaluation Commission," 56.

¹⁰² "IOC Evaluation Commission," 56.

It is difficult to gauge what the excitement was around Rio de Janeiro hosting the 2016 Summer Olympics specifically. However, it wouldn't be unreasonable to conclude that due to the similarity of issues and opportunities between the Olympics and the World Cup, the populace shared similar concerns around use of resources and Brazil's capabilities, as well as excitements around national pride and sports intrinsically tied into culture. According to the IOC, a public opinion poll was commissioned as part of the evaluative process, and it found 85% support for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio and 69% support nationally.¹⁰³ Considering that the IOC launched the poll and numbers like sample size weren't recorded, it's difficult to say for certain if this is an accurate representation of opinions on the matter.

Legacies

Brazil in a brief two-year span saw two enormous sporting events, the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics, come and go. It is estimated that Brazil spent \$3.6 billion USD renovating and constructing the 12 host stadiums, which is \$2.5 billion USD more than what the anticipated costs were.¹⁰⁴ Figure 1 highlights which stadiums ended up getting built or renovated, and what projects never came to fruition.

¹⁰³ "IOC Evaluation Commission," 48.

¹⁰⁴ Tony Manfred, "FIFA Made an Insane Amount of Money off of Brazil's \$15 Billion World Cup," *Business Insider*, March 20 2015.

Stadium	City	Approximate Capacity	Build Status
Stadiums Used in World Cup			
Maracanã	Rio de Janeiro	71,000	Renovated
Mineirão	Belo Horizonte	56,000	Renovated
Estádio Nacional de Brasília	Brasília	66,000	Renovated
Arena Castelão	Fortaleza	58,000	N/A
Arena Fonte Nova	Salvador	54,000	New (2013)
Estádio Beira Rio	Porto Alegre	42,000	Renovated
Arena Pernambuco	Recife	40,000	New (2013)
Arena da Amazonia	Manaus	40,000	New (2014)
Arena Pantanal	Cuiabá	40,000	New (2014)
Arena das Dunas	Natal	39,000	New (2014)
Stadiums Used in World Cup – Incomplete at Time of Event			
Itaquerao Stadium	São Paulo	60,000	Renovating
Arena da Baixada	Cuitiba	38,000	Renovating
Stadiums Proposed But Not Built/Completed			
Zagallo Arena	Maceió	45,000	N/A
Orlando Scarpelli	Florianópolis	42,000	N/A
Morenao	Campo Grande	44,000	N/A
Mangueiro	Belém	44,000	N/A
Serra Dourada	Goiânia	40,000	N/A
Forest Arena	Rio Branco	41,000	N/A

Figure 3: Stadiums for the 2014 Brazil FIFA World Cup^{105 106}

¹⁰⁵ “Brazil Bid Inspection Report,” 40-41.

¹⁰⁶ “FIFA World Cup 2014 Stadiums,” *The Stadium Guide*, Accessed March 1, 2023.

The total costs of the FIFA World Cup for Brazil were around \$15 billion USD.¹⁰⁷ The 2016 Rio Olympics didn't fare much better; it is estimated that it cost at least \$13.1 billion USD.¹⁰⁸ These numbers accompany a growing trend seen with the World Cup and the Olympics in terms of rising costs. Some contend that Brazil's national image strengthened as the world paid attention the moment Brazil and Rio de Janeiro won their respective bidding processes.¹⁰⁹ In this sense, there is inherent value to the publicity and name recognition that Brazil's mega-events have fostered. But, in the measurement of the effectiveness of this, it has yet to be realized. For example, the boost in tourism and visits from across the world were expected to surge throughout the World Cup and Olympics as well as after the events had concluded. But it is likely that the benefits of tourism development from hosting mega-events was overestimated as the flow of international tourists remained stable for the two years after the World Cup.¹¹⁰ It's unlikely tourism would increase farther removed from these events, so it is within reason to say that tourism goals were never realized.

Brazil, and its world-renowned cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, struggled throughout the tournament to supply hotel rooms and other accommodations for fans and supporters.¹¹¹ As demand thoroughly outpaced supply, prices skyrocketed. Rio hotel prices for the tournament reached an average of \$461 USD a night.¹¹² The operation of the Brazilian government, primarily its complex use of bureaucracy, played a critical role in limiting the

¹⁰⁷ Manfred, "Brazil's \$15 Billion World Cup."

¹⁰⁸ Renata Brito and Stephen Wade, "AP Analysis: Rio de Janeiro Olympics Cost \$13.1 Billion," *AP News*, June 14, 2017.

¹⁰⁹ Rômulo Reis et al., "Management and Legacy of the Brazil 2014 Fifa World Cup during Its Candidacy Bid." *Motriz: Revista de Educação Física* 25 (January 1, 2019), 10.

¹¹⁰ Roberto Bondarik, Luiz Alberto Pilatti, and Diogo José Horst, "Sports Mega-Events and Overestimated Promises: The Case of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 18, no. 3 (May 3, 2020), 364.

¹¹¹ Dom Phillips, "The Hotels Brazil Needs for the World Cup Never Got Built," *The Washington Post*, January 31, 2014.

¹¹² Phillips, "The Hotels Brazil Needs."

country's ability to build hotels. This proved to be true with not just the construction of new buildings, but it was also in accordance with the fact that cities like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo are littered with run-down or abandoned hotel buildings; unfortunately, bureaucratic holdups and frankly uncreative planning efforts meant these former hotels couldn't be used in any beneficial form despite accommodation shortages.¹¹³

Ironically, it was once the World Cup left that most stadiums would truly be complete. The tournament began with multiple stadiums missing roofing pieces, safety barriers, and other items that weren't installed in time.¹¹⁴ Issues around these venues continued well after the World Cup festivities left Brazil. Unfortunately, poor long-term planning meant that private owners and consortiums that assumed control of the stadiums struggled to not lose money. Many Brazilian club teams took over as the main users of these stadiums, but poor revenue-sharing deals with stadium owners and a host of other factors make these stadiums unsuitable for use.¹¹⁵ A relevant example of this is the club Corinthians, one of the largest and most successful clubs in the history of Brazilian football. The club must pay \$1 million USD a month just to maintain the São Paulo Arena, which has proven to be unsustainable.¹¹⁶ Illogical planning decisions have also contributed to this. For the World Cup, the Estádio Nacional was built in Brasília with the price tag of \$570 million USD. But when the event left, the stadium fell into disrepair because there wasn't a single club team in Brasília that played in the top Brazilian leagues.¹¹⁷ This made it very difficult for any team to generate revenue. The city of Recife, in comparison, had multiple large clubs, but the World Cup stadium was built over 40 minutes away; this meant the stadium wasn't

¹¹³ Phillips, "The Hotels Brazil Needs."

¹¹⁴ The Associated Press, "World Cup Stadiums Leave a Troubled Legacy in Brazil." *The New York Times*, May 2, 2015, sec. Sports.

¹¹⁵ The Associated Press, "World Cup Stadiums."

¹¹⁶ Billy Munday, "From the Beautiful Game to Birthday Parties: The Brutal Reality of What Happened to Brazil's World Cup Stadiums," *These Football Times*, May 5, 2019.

¹¹⁷ Munday, "Beautiful Game."

an integral part of the community and it limited crowd sizes.¹¹⁸ Brazil ultimately left stadiums in unfeasible locations and with costs that couldn't justify their use.



Figure 4. Estádio Nacional in Brasília in 2022.¹¹⁹

Brazil has also been plagued by allegations of corruption and bribery, including around the venue building for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Rio Olympics. Over 100 politicians since 2014 have been investigated by the Brazilian supreme court, and there have been convictions that have found decision-makers guilty of receiving bribes in exchange for

¹¹⁸ Munday, "Beautiful Game."

¹¹⁹ Arne Müsseler, *Estádio Nacional de Brasília, Brasília, Brazil*. 2022, Wikimedia Commons.

approving stadium contracts.¹²⁰ This includes the former governor of Rio de Janeiro Sérgio Cabral, who was one of the biggest proponents of bringing the Olympics to Rio and is currently facing jail time due to embezzlement and corruption charges, along with members of his former cabinet. As of 2018, only the two World Cup stadiums in Porto Alegre and Curitiba have been cleared of bribery.¹²¹



Figure 5. Arena Pernambuco outside of the city of Recife (background).¹²²

Issues around Brazilian governance and financial mismanagement in relation to the mega-events hosted in the country continue to make themselves known. Following the World Cup, Brazil entered a recession where by 2015 its GDP dropped 30% and by 2017 its

¹²⁰ Jamil Chade, “Stadium Deals, Corruption and Bribery: The Questions at the Heart of Brazil’s Olympic and World Cup ‘Miracle,’” *The Observer*, April 23, 2017, sec. Sport.

¹²¹ Mauricio Savarese, “4 Years Later, Graft Taints 10 Brazilian World Cup Stadiums,” AP News, June 13, 2018.

¹²² Ana Araújo, *World Cup Host City: Arena Pernambuco in Recife*. The Rio Times.

unemployment rate had doubled; this led to the cancellation of any salary increases and cuts to social programs.¹²³ In early 2016, wage payment was delayed to a number of civil servants in order to ensure there would be enough funding for Olympic infrastructure work, and almost 400,000 workers across schools, hospitals, and administrations were affected.¹²⁴ This wasn't the only way that Brazil's decisions caused active harm. In the rapid efforts to develop mega-event infrastructure, the poorest citizens living in favelas, who constitute 11 million Brazilians, felt their existence was under threat due to the evictions and destruction perpetuated by the government.¹²⁵ The World Cup and the Olympics were used as both justification and catalysts for removals from what the government often refers to as illegal settlements. This rhetoric was actually reflected in the IOC's Evaluation Report, which states that "to construct the Olympic Park, approximately 300 families that Rio 2016 stated were living in illegal settlements, would be relocated."¹²⁶ Raquel Rolnik takes this a step further, arguing that these evictions, which have existed, will continue to exist, and that the mega-events in Brazil have only magnified, are a purposeful urban land management strategy, designed to realize the monetary value of well-placed land.¹²⁷ This highlights the power governments can flex and the underlying motives that can drive decision-making and have so often been the heart of why mega-events so often fail to live up to noble intentions and legacies.

¹²³ Munday, "Beautiful Game."

¹²⁴ Chade, "Stadium Deals."

¹²⁵ Donna Bowater, "For Some in Brazil, World Cup Means Evictions." *Washington Post*, January 25, 2014, sec. The Americas.

¹²⁶ "IOC Evaluation Commission," 62.

¹²⁷ Raquel Rolnik, "Ten Years of the City Statute in Brazil: From the Struggle for Urban Reform to the World Cup Cities." *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development* 5, no. 1 (May 1, 2013), 62.

2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar

Bidding Process and Promises

It was decided that in 2010, FIFA would vote for who would host the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. Those competing in the 2022 bid included the United States, Korea, Japan, Qatar, and Australia. On December 2nd, the voting went to four rounds as potential host countries repeatedly failed to receive the majority of votes needed, but Qatar ultimately beat out the United States, 14-8.¹²⁸ This is notable considering that Qatar was considered a large underdog to win the 2022 FIFA World Cup hosting rights and numerous high-ranking officials within FIFA, including former CONCACAF General Secretary and FIFA Executive Committee member Chuck Blazer as well as former FIFA president Sepp Blatter, voiced their opposition to Qatar's selection.¹²⁹ The choice of Qatar as World Cup hosts was part of a paradigm shift in FIFA's operations and the goals of the World Cup as an event. The majority of the host countries selected in the 20th century were relatively large countries with history competing in global football events and an established football culture tied to a passionate fanbase; these countries include the likes of England (1966 hosts), Italy (hosts in 1934 and 1990), France (1938 and 1998), Mexico (1970 and 1986) and Argentina (1978). However, FIFA in the 21st century, as led by Sepp Blatter from 1998 to 2015, has deviated significantly from this pattern. FIFA in recent years has put more emphasis into the narrative of growing the game of football and expanding competitions beyond established national powers.¹³⁰ So far, some of the FIFA World Cup competitions have been held in Japan and South Korea in the first-ever joint bid (2002), South Africa (2010), Russia (2018) and most recently Qatar (2022). These countries do not have the

¹²⁸ "Russia and Qatar to host 2018 and 2022 World Cups, respectively," *FIFA*, December 2, 2010.

¹²⁹ *FIFA Uncovered*.

¹³⁰ Jerrad Peters, "How Qatar Won the Right to Host the 2022 FIFA World Cup." *Bleacher Report*. September 30, 2013.

football culture nor the domestic or international success most of the previous hosts have exhibited. The reasons behind awarding these countries the right to host as well as why they desire to host the event vary significantly and are intertwined with geopolitics and the more nefarious themes of corruption and sportswashing, but on the surface are presented as opportunities to expand football across the world. Qatar's selection can be seen as representative of a larger shift heralded by FIFA towards fostering new football cultures and identities.

The idea of Qatar hosting the World Cup, and thus the country's selection to do so, was met with critical reception across the globe for cultural, humanitarian, and monetary reasons tied to football yet indicative of larger issues and policies exemplified by Qatar as an absolute monarchy. One of these is the ongoing migrant worker crisis in the country, in which the last decade has seen the employment of two million migrant workers who, along with domestic workers, are trapped in a cycle of abuse, non-payment, and human rights violations.¹³¹ It has been reported that at least 6,500 migrant workers have died since Qatar was awarded the World Cup in 2010, and this is in many ways a byproduct of the intense push to build infrastructure that has been present in Qatar throughout the century and has only accelerated to meet the needs of the World Cup.¹³² Qatar additionally has been criticized for its treatment of women and members of the LGBTQIA+ community with laws that criminalize same-sex relations and repeated reports of police harassment and intimidation.¹³³ This has led to accusations of "sportswashing," when an oppressive government or regime uses sporting events to better their international representation and potentially mask issues. There were questions around Qatar's bid claiming that their hosting of the World Cup would be carbon neutral, a claim met with skepticism

¹³¹ "Reality Check: Migrant Workers' Rights in Qatar," *Amnesty International*, February 5, 2019.

¹³² "Reality Check."

¹³³ Yasemin Smallens, "LGBT Qataris Call Foul Ahead of 2022 World Cup," *Human Rights Watch*, November 24, 2021.

considering the enormous toll mega sporting events have on the environment and the tens of billions of dollars Qatar earns every year exporting petroleum.¹³⁴ Additionally, corruption charges that clouded FIFA in 2015 have called into question the integrity of the bidding processes and the merit behind Qatar receiving the World Cup,¹³⁵ which is discussed in greater detail in the section surrounding decision-making.

In addition to the socio-cultural differences of Qatar through the lens of football success and popularity, Qatar presented a number of technical challenges that additionally makes it unique compared to the previous generations of World Cup hosts. Firstly, Qatar is small, both in geographic size and population: its total area is less than 4,500 square miles and it's home to only 2.6 million people.¹³⁶ To put this in perspective, if it were a U.S. state it would be the 2nd-smallest by area and 16th-smallest by population. This makes it one of the smallest countries to ever host a World Cup; the next closest countries are Switzerland, which hosted in 1954 and had an area of almost 16,000 square miles,¹³⁷ and Uruguay, which hosted the inaugural World Cup in 1930 and at that point had a population below 2.5 million.¹³⁸ It should be noted that the World Cup, from the number of teams competing to the requirements imposed by FIFA to the scale and popularity of the competition, have increased dramatically since the mid-20th century. Qatar's small size in relation to today's demands of World Cup hosts put it in a unique position and presented challenges surrounding the proximity of World Cup venues, many of which at the time Qatar was awarded the bid had yet to be built. An additional challenge was temperature. The World Cup is played in June and July after domestic football leagues across the globe have

¹³⁴ "Qatar (QAT) Exports, Imports, and Trade Partners," *OECD*. Accessed March 14, 2023.

¹³⁵ Tariq Panja and Kevin Draper. "U.S. Says FIFA Officials Were Bribed to Award World Cups to Russia and Qatar." *The New York Times*, April 6, 2020, sec. Sports.

¹³⁶ "Qatar: Overview." *World Data*. Accessed February 17th, 2023.

¹³⁷ "Switzerland: Overview." *World Data*. Accessed February 19th, 2023.

¹³⁸ "Uruguay: Overview." *World Data*. Accessed February 19th, 2023.

concluded their season, but Qatar’s average daytime temperature exceeds 104° Fahrenheit during these months.¹³⁹ Ultimately, FIFA in 2015 made the unprecedented move to push the 2022 World Cup back to November and December for player safety, which interrupted domestic league play.¹⁴⁰ Ultimately, Qatar to many observers came across as an unprecedented country of choice for hosting the World Cup.



Figure 6: Doha’s West Bay, Qatar, in the late 1970’s (top) vs. 2019 (bottom).¹⁴¹

Qatar’s bid for the 2022 FIFA World Cup named seven host cities to contain the infrastructure necessary for a successful event. These were Al-Rayyan, Al-Daayen, Umm Salal,

¹³⁹ “Qatar: Overview.” *World Data*. Accessed February 17th, 2023.

¹⁴⁰ “World Cup 2022: Why Is Qatar a Controversial Location for the Tournament?” *Reuters*, November 29, 2022.

¹⁴¹ Sheraton Grand Doha. *West Bay area in Doha, Qatar, in the late 1970’s and the present*. Frommer’s.

Al-Khor, Al-Wakrah, Al-Shamal, and the capital and main urban center of the country, Doha.¹⁴² Qatar's small size and its focused urban development around Doha means that five of these cities are within 16 miles of the capital.¹⁴³ Only Doha exceeds 500,000 inhabitants, while the cities of Al-Daayen, Al-Shamal, and Umm Salal have less than 50,000 people. It's important to note that while the close proximity of the cities and, therefore, the stadiums they host is appealing in terms of reducing distance traveled and confining a huge event into a small space, it presents a number of questions surrounding logistics and security considering that stadiums during the World Cup have to host multiple matches per day.¹⁴⁴ The Qatar Bid Evaluation Report states that the FIFA World Cup would be the first to be carbon-neutral, although declines to go into much detail regarding the calculations behind this. Additionally, Qatar would promote sustainability by building a modular stadium that could be taken apart and then donated to developing countries.¹⁴⁵ FIFA requires 12 stadiums, all of which must have a capacity exceeding 40,000; additionally, stadiums hosting the semi-finals of the competition must have a capacity of at least 60,000 and the stadium with the opening match and final needs a capacity greater than 80,000.¹⁴⁶ In order to meet these space requirements as well as other technical needs, Qatar needed to build nine entirely new stadiums and significantly renovate the three existing stadiums in the area.

FIFA requires additional infrastructure to be built for a World Cup competition to ensure comfort and safety for the 32 competing teams. Venue-specific team hotels (VSTHs) and venue-specific training sites (VSTSs) are generally required by FIFA so that teams have travel and training accommodations in the vicinity of the stadium they play at on a given day. FIFA

¹⁴² "2022 FIFA World Cup Bid Evaluation Report: Qatar," *FIFA*. Accessed October 4, 2022, 12.

¹⁴³ "2022 Qatar Report," 7.

¹⁴⁴ "2022 Qatar Report," 9.

¹⁴⁵ "2022 Qatar Report," 8.

¹⁴⁶ "Guide to the Bidding Process for the 2026 FIFA World Cup," *FIFA*. Accessed January 4, 2023, 26.

regulations require the existence of 24 VSTHs and 48 VSTSs for a given World Cup.¹⁴⁷ For the 2022 Qatar World Cup, however, Qatar's bid encompassed 24 VSTHs and only 36 VSTSs; this is because all of the team base camps (TBCs), which serve as the homes of the teams and are not connected to a specific venue, would be within 30 minutes travel time from almost any given stadium, thereby reducing the need of the VSTH/VSTS system.¹⁴⁸ This is one of the benefits of Qatar being such a uniquely small country and the hosting cities being so close to one another. FIFA requires 64 TBC hotels and 64 TBC training sites, and Qatar's bid met these requirements. Qatar's bid encompasses 188 team accommodations in total, and at the point Qatar was awarded the rights to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, 93 had yet to be built and 44 required significant renovation.¹⁴⁹

In terms of fan accommodation, FIFA required 60,000 contracted rooms for those attending the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Qatar's bid included close to 100,000 rooms, all within 13 miles of a stadium.¹⁵⁰ At the time of the bid, 44,000 rooms existed across 100 properties in only three of the host cities; the remaining 140 properties and 55,000 rooms were to be newly constructed. This includes adding 12,000 rooms to the city of Al-Daayen, where there were none meeting FIFA criteria before.¹⁵¹ Qatar's justification behind these numbers was that they were planning for rapid growth in tourism that's in line with the rapid economic boom the country has seen in recent decades. Additionally, Qatar's bid set aside around 250,000 square feet of office space for FIFA personnel, meeting the 86,100 square feet required, as well as 963 hotel rooms.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ "2022 Qatar Report," 15.

¹⁴⁸ "2022 Qatar Report," 15.

¹⁴⁹ "2022 Qatar Report," 15.

¹⁵⁰ "2022 Qatar Report," 16.

¹⁵¹ "2022 Qatar Report," 16.

¹⁵² "2022 Qatar Report," 19.

Qatar's rapid growth in recent years has been coupled with the vast expansion of the country's transportation system, and it has ambitious plans to continue growing. The Qatar Bid Evaluation Report emphasizes planned high-speed rail networks connecting the country to its neighbors Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that would be mostly operational by 2022.¹⁵³ Additionally, at the time of the bid Qatar had committed \$20 billion USD over five years to build upon a relatively new road network. This plays well into the transportation plans for the host cities which, due to their proximity, will be heavily reliant on public transport and short transfers.¹⁵⁴ Transportation between host cities and travel hubs will be served primarily via rail networks and public transit, while intra-city travel between accommodations, stadiums, and fan zones is largely served by bus or metro lines. While air travel between host cities is not necessary and not expected, the Bid Evaluation Report mentions Qatar was in the midst of building a new airport that by its completion would have a throughput capacity of 50 million people per year; this airport further cements Qatar's ambitions of continued growth past the World Cup and its desire to increase tourism capacity.¹⁵⁵

Qatar's bid proposal and subsequent awarding of the 2022 FIFA World Cup are defined by the country's uniqueness as a host nation. Its size is unprecedented given the scale of today's World Cups, which presents both new challenges around security and management while showing promise through the connectivity between host cities and the overall centralization of the event. There were numerous other challenges posed through hosting, including socio-cultural factors that ignited criticism across the world. Through the eyes of FIFA, the most imposing drawbacks surrounded the vast infrastructure that needed to be complete in only 12 years. For

¹⁵³ "2022 Qatar Report," 19.

¹⁵⁴ "2022 Qatar Report," 20.

¹⁵⁵ "2022 Qatar Report," 21.

Qatar, this development played well into long-term plans to grow the country's tourism industry and increase its value as a destination through long-term planning. The planned building of stadiums, hotels, training sites, and other accommodations, as well as the significant renovation of existing structures, put the projected stadium and renovation cost for the 2022 Qatar World Cup at \$3 billion USD.¹⁵⁶

Legacies

One of the enduring legacies of the 2022 Qatar World Cup will no doubt be cost. Qatar's Bid Evaluation Report stated that projected cost for stadium building and renovation would hover around \$3 billion USD, but this was very quickly proven to not be the case. In 2017, Qatar's minister of finance Ali Sharif Al Emadi stated that every week, the country was spending \$500 million USD on infrastructure projects.¹⁵⁷ Based off of these numbers, it is estimated that in the 12 years that Qatar had between being awarded the FIFA World Cup in 2010 and the conclusion of the event in 2022, the country spent \$220 billion USD.¹⁵⁸ This estimate is in lieu of the fact that the Qatari government has never confirmed or denied this estimate nor reported an alternative. This is 15 times the amount that Russia, the hosts of the 2018 World Cup, spent. While a range of estimates exist, it is likely that Qatar spent \$6.5 billion to \$10 billion USD on just the construction of the stadiums for the World Cup.¹⁵⁹ This is relevant because not only did new stadium costs outweigh the projected costs by a factor of 2.2 to 3.3, but also due to the fact that not all of the stadiums that were projected to be built or renovated actually got completed. Qatar's Bid Book and FIFA's Bid Evaluation Report initially called for three stadiums to be

¹⁵⁶ "2022 Qatar Report," 14.

¹⁵⁷ Matt Craig, "The Money Behind The Most Expensive World Cup In History: Qatar 2022 By The Numbers," *Forbes*. November 19, 2022.

¹⁵⁸ Craig, "By The Numbers."

¹⁵⁹ Craig, "By The Numbers."

significantly renovated and nine stadiums to be newly constructed, meeting the 12 required by FIFA to host the World Cup. However, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, after meeting with Qatar's organizing committee in 2013, revealed that the cost of 12 stadiums would push construction costs over estimates.¹⁶⁰ Following this, then-FIFA secretary general Jérôme Valcke said that Qatar could in fact host with only eight stadiums.¹⁶¹ Figure 3 shows the eight stadiums that were built as well as the four planned projects that were discontinued after FIFA's approval of fewer stadiums. Seven of these stadiums were newly built, while only one was renovated. Throughout this process, there were additional reports that projects, particularly the new airport being constructed and metro links between cities, were suffering major delays.¹⁶² The infrastructure demands placed on Qatar in order to successfully host the World Cup with only 12 years of notice were severe, and the absence of four stadiums shows they did not quite meet these demands. Yet in terms of competition success, this seemed to be negligible. Schedule management and logistics seemed to account for the lack of stadiums, which calls into question why FIFA demands 12 stadiums and where accountability lies in falling short of projections. While costs were astronomical compared to the previous World Cups, the rest of the infrastructure was largely delivered on, averting the crisis that would have been inevitable if come 2022 Qatar was unable to effectively host one of the largest competitions in the world.

¹⁶⁰ Associated Press, "FIFA: Qatar Can Host World Cup in 8 Stadiums," *ESPN*, May 3, 2013.

¹⁶¹ Associated Press, "Qatar Can Host."

¹⁶² Liam Newman, "Qatar to Reduce Number of World Cup 2022 Stadiums." *Bleacher Report*. April 22, 2014.

Stadium	City	Approximate Capacity	Build Status
Stadiums Used in World Cup			
Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium	Al-Rayyan	40,000	New (2020)
Khalifa International Stadium	Al-Rayyan	40,000	Renovated
Education City Stadium	Al-Rayyan	40,000	New (2020)
Lusail Iconic Stadium	Al-Daayen	80,000	New (2022)
Al-Bayt Stadium	Al-Khor	60,000	New (2021)
Al-Janoub Stadium	Al-Wakrah	40,000	New (2019)
Stadium 974	Doha	40,000	New (2021)
Al-Thumama Stadium	Doha	40,000	New (2021)
Stadiums Proposed But Not Built/Completed			
Al-Gharrafa Stadium	Al-Rayyan	44,740	N/A
Al-Shamal Stadium	Al-Shamal	45,120	N/A
Sports City Stadium	Doha	43,520	N/A
Umm Salal Stadium	Umm Salal	45,120	N/A

Figure 7. Stadiums for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.^{163 164}

It bears mentioning that the 2022 Qatar World Cup was successful, lucrative, and widely observed. FIFA claims that this edition of the World Cup engaged over 5 billion people, making

¹⁶³ “2022 Qatar Report,” 12-13.

¹⁶⁴ Utathya Nag, “FIFA World Cup 2022 Venues and Stadiums in Qatar,” *Olympics*, September 19, 2022.

it the most watched and engaged-with tournament in the history of the World Cup.¹⁶⁵ The World Cup Final saw a sellout crowd and 1.5 billion viewers.¹⁶⁶ FIFA often measures the revenue they generated in three year cycles, and the 2019-2022 cycle, which encompasses the World Cup and little other competitions FIFA has rights to, saw over \$7.5 billion USD generated.¹⁶⁷ The largest source of income was from FIFA selling broadcasting rights, which were worth \$3.4 billion USD; the second-largest source of revenue is the \$1.8 billion from marketing rights.

Questions surround what becomes of the stadiums built after the World Cup, and all of its related festivities, leave Qatar. Initial plans were that most of the stadiums would be downsized and reduced in capacity by close to half.¹⁶⁸ The current plans are relatively unchanged, although actual capacity reduction may be extended farther into the future. Qatar is hosting both the 2023 Asian Football Cup and the 2030 Asian Games, and it is likely that their new and technologically advanced stadiums will play a role in those competitions, despite how much smaller they are than the World Cup.¹⁶⁹ There are also reports that Qatar is launching a bid for the 2036 Summer Olympics, and it is very possible existing stadiums can be remodeled and configured in ways that suit the Olympic Games and are more cost-effective than creating additional, new venues. The Qatar Bid Evaluation Report briefly mentioned the building of a modular stadium that could be deconstructed and mostly reused in another part of the world. This took the form of Stadium 974, which was situated in Doha and had a capacity of around 40,000. It consists of reused shipping containers outlined by a steel structure. This makes it the first stadium design to be completely

¹⁶⁵ “2019 - 2022 Revenue.” *FIFA*. Accessed May 2, 2023.

¹⁶⁶ “One Month On: 5 Billion Engaged with the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™.” *FIFA*. Accessed May 2, 2023.

¹⁶⁷ “2019 - 2022 Revenue.”

¹⁶⁸ “2022 Qatar Report,” 14.

¹⁶⁹ Aryn Baker, “Here’s What Will Happen to Qatar’s Billion Dollar Stadiums Now That the World Cup Is Over,” *Time*, December 20, 2022.

demountable in the history of the World Cup.¹⁷⁰ Additionally, it could prove to be a blueprint of limiting the ‘white elephants’ left behind by mega-sporting events while reducing the cost, waste generated, and the resource usage that constantly goes into stadium construction. Most of the other stadiums will be scaled down and host domestic football clubs and other sporting events. Uniquely, the Lusail Iconic Stadium, the largest stadium in the country and host to the World Cup Final, is being turned into its own community, complete with residences, schools, shops, and clinics.¹⁷¹ Similar plans are in place for the Al-Bayat and Al-Thumama stadiums. Qatar’s displayed self-awareness around the use of large stadiums, the difficulties around their upkeep, and the willingness to transform them in order to serve completely different purposes is a unique step to take.



Figure 8. The modular, first-of-its-kind Stadium 974 outside of Doha.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Lizzie Crook, “Demountable Stadium Built with Shipping Containers Reaches Completion in Qatar,” *Dezeen*, November 24, 2021.

¹⁷¹ Baker, “Qatar’s Billion Dollar Stadiums.”

¹⁷² Fitria Ramli, *Workers Begin Dismantling Qatar’s Stadium 974, the First Temporary World Cup Stadium*. 2021, Shutterstock, ArchDaily.

An additional factor that's important to consider in the impact of the 2022 Qatar World Cup is how the people in the country perceive the event. Al-Emadi et al. (2017) completed over 2,000 interviews with both Qatari nationals and expatriates in order to better understand their feelings towards the event and its impacts. It's clear from their work that their reactions constitute a mixed bag and a wide range of emotions that often split down the line that divides expatriates and nationals. Expatriates, for example, were found to be excited about the prospect of tourism development and concerned most about the disruptions the World Cup would cause in daily life through things like traffic and other disruptions.¹⁷³ Additionally, they tended to see the benefits from global exposure and excitement was weakened from beliefs about the cost of living increasing.¹⁷⁴ This contrasted significantly with Qatari nationals, who were found to be quite indifferent regarding economic impacts, perhaps because of the overall wealth of Qatari citizens and the nation's high standing in affluence, particularly when measured by per capita income.¹⁷⁵ Qatari women in particular were often excited about hosting the event, specifically around the idea that it could improve knowledge development through giving the country more experience in hosting such events and creating leaders for future generations.¹⁷⁶ This particular theme is a recurring phenomenon in the discourse around Qatar and the 2022 World Cup. Nadine Scharfenort mentions how the Qatari government has pushed certain policies and directives in the name of building a knowledge-based economy. The incentivization of knowledge and its value in Qatar has gone hand-in-hand with the rapid development of the country in recent decades.¹⁷⁷ While Qatari nationals and expatriates had different reasons behind their opinions

¹⁷³ Al-Emadi et al., "2022 Qatar World Cup: Impact Perceptions among Qatar Residents," *Journal of Travel Research* 56, no. 5 (June 2016), 690.

¹⁷⁴ Al-Emadi, 689.

¹⁷⁵ Al-Emadi, 690.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Emadi, 690.

¹⁷⁷ Nadine Scharfenort, "Urban Development and Social Change in Qatar: The Qatar National Vision 2030 and the 2022 FIFA World Cup," *Journal of Arabian Studies* 2, no. 2 (December 1, 2012).

around the 2022 World Cup, what these groups shared in common was their support for the event as a whole. Both groups were asked about their excitement to host the World Cup, if they supported it, and if they believed the positive outcomes would outweigh the negative.

Respondents were to evaluate their answers to these separate questions on a five-point scale where one indicated a “strongly disagree” and five indicated a “strongly agree”; the average score for each question was over 4.3.¹⁷⁸ This provides a limited but useful insight into how those who spend time in Qatar felt about the prospect of hosting the World Cup, and their consistent support, albeit for different reasons, should be noted. Future research could reflect back on the World Cup and ask Qatari nationals and expatriates alike if they felt the costs of the event, financially or otherwise, was worth it.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Emadi, 685.

Discussion and Conclusion

Through comparing these case studies, what made a World Cup or Olympic Games successful covered three main areas: the costs associated with the event and, more specifically, how that cost was dispersed; legacy by way of realized infrastructure and venues through future use and practicality; and overall sentiment and feeling towards the games, often illustrated through direct expression, by both the global audiences these events are purposefully reaching and the people most directly affected.

A common theme among the cost of the World Cups and Olympic Games considered was that they exceeded budgets and were generally considered expensive. The 2022 World Cup's total estimated cost of \$220 billion USD was by far the most expensive event among these case studies. The sheer amount of infrastructure built and the relatively short amount of time it took to complete it played a significant factor as to why it was so costly, as well as the overall lack of suitability Qatar had as a host as highlighted by media reports and bid evaluations. However, its cost came across as a bill the country could afford. Indeed, the rapid development the World Cup posed seemed to align with the tremendous growth and construction Qatar has seen in recent years. Its long-term plans call for significant costs, but it should be noted that at the time of this writing one can only predict the direction Qatar's economy will follow. The 2010 Winter Olympics had a total cost estimated to be around \$7 - 9 billion USD, which was more than expected considering its bid strength was based on minimal new construction. However, the 2007/2008 financial crisis and the issues around the development of the Vancouver Olympic Village as detailed earlier unpredictably increased these costs. Vancouver nevertheless sees the construction and improvements as beneficial in the long-run in part because its value as a destination, which was already high before the Olympics, has in all likelihood increased as a

result of hosting. The 2014 World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics were each close to double the Vancouver Games' cost. This was largely connected to the intense renovations and in some cases new and rapid construction of venues that needed to be up-to-code with FIFA and IOC regulations. These events, which coincided with controversy around government corruption and general funding struggles, saw Brazil face an economic downturn and higher unemployment.

In terms of infrastructure, Brazil oversaw many structures and buildings being created, renovated, and not completely finished by the time the mega-sporting events occurred. Planning issues made worse by bureaucratic complexity and slowness, as well as uncreative planning efforts, led to venues that were simply ill-suited for their location following the conclusion of the World Cup and the Olympics. There was little forethought into who would use and pay for these buildings in the future, and many quickly became “white elephants” that were no longer worth their upkeep costs. The Qatar World Cup, meanwhile, saw primarily new construction, and plans to reduce the capacity of stadiums, as well as completely disassemble a modular one that can be set up elsewhere, are promising. Plans for continued expansion and development, as well as their recent success at it, emphasize that venues will have a clear use in the future and upkeep costs can be maintained in the present. Vancouver's Winter Olympics venues mostly existed previously and had a specific function in the region. New construction emphasized this idea, as these structures had a clear purpose outlined for them following the Games that resulted in long-term use beneficial for the community.

The sentiment toward the 2010 Winter Olympics was largely positive both before and after the events took place. Even though it proved more costly than intended, it left a number of developments that tied into the community, like General Motors Place, or filled a gap, like the Whistler Olympic Village. It is important to mention that the Aboriginal Peoples in the region,

namely the First Nations, had mixed feelings regarding their involvement (or lack thereof) in Olympic planning. Both Qatari nationals and expats were excited to put Qatar on the international stage, albeit for different reasons that included tourism and knowledge development. It is too early to know if their opinion has changed following the conclusion of the World Cup, and this would be a fascinating avenue for future research. The international audience, however, voiced concerns throughout the process regarding FIFA corruption, LGBTQIA rights, and the working conditions of migrants. The feelings of Brazil were quite mixed leading up to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics. As a country that highly values football and other sports, it was a prestigious honor, yet it raised questions as to if money would be better used in other areas. The ending of the events, the cost they generated, the country-wide economic downturn, and the now uselessness of constructed infrastructure soured opinions significantly.

The case studies within this thesis highlight some of the common themes that help determine the success of mega-sporting events. In addition to this, they illustrated some of the challenges that are unique to organizations like the IOC and FIFA and that hinder better World Cups and Olympics from being held. A better understanding of these issues can help generate solutions that, by altering the status quo of operations, decision-making, and the motives behind both, can help make mega-sporting events more enjoyable, sustainable, and more productive of legacies that are long-term and directly beneficial to communities.

Challenges

Decision-Making and Value Alignment

It would be difficult to discuss the policies, decisions, and processes that have such a significant impact on the development and success of both Olympic Games and World Cups

without addressing what has become a major talking point: corruption, particularly around the recent scandals that the 2022 FIFA World Cup magnified. Suspicion was raised when during the same FIFA Congress Russia and Qatar were selected to hold the 2018 and 2022 World Cups despite the issues that plagued their bidding. A yearslong corruption case helped shed light on the extent that bribery and misconduct took place among top soccer officials around the world. Just months before votes were cast in 2010 to decide the hosts of these World Cups, two Executive Committee members, Amos Adamu and Reynald Temarii, were suspended by FIFA when the organization viewed video and transcript evidence of them offering to sell their votes and asking for direct monetary payments they claimed would be used for soccer projects.¹⁷⁹ Phaedra Almajid, who worked in communications for the Qatar World Cup bid, alleged that three FIFA executives, including Adamu, were given \$1.5 million each to vote for Qatar.¹⁸⁰ Additionally, Michel Platini, a former French footballer and president of UEFA from 2007-2015, openly acknowledged having lunch less than a month before the 2018 and 2022 World Cup voting with then-president of France Nicholas Sarkozy and current Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad al Thani.¹⁸¹ Numerous events followed this meeting: Platini voted for Qatar to host in 2022; Qatar Sports Investments, who own a sportswear company whose chief executive is Platini's son, bought the French football team Paris Saint-Germain; and beIN Media Group, a Qatari state-owned entertainment network, acquired broadcasting rights for the highest division of French football, Ligue 1. In 2011, Mohammed bin Hammam, then Asian Football Confederation president running for FIFA presidency, was accused of offering Caribbean

¹⁷⁹ Associated Press, "FIFA Suspends Officials in Vote-Selling Scandal," *The New York Times*, October 21, 2010, sec. Sports.

¹⁸⁰ Owen Gibson. "Whistleblower Phaedra Almajid Hits Back at Fifa's Dismissal of Complaint." *The Guardian*, December 16, 2014, sec. Football.

¹⁸¹ David Conn. "Michel Platini Detained over Award of 2022 World Cup to Qatar." *The Guardian*, June 18, 2019, sec. Football.

football federations \$40,000 in cash for their vote, and was soon banned for life from football activities.¹⁸² An FBI investigation came to a head in 2015, when 14 soccer officials were arrested in connection to FIFA corruption and \$150 million in bribes.¹⁸³ And yet only months later Sepp Blatter, FIFA president since 1998, was reelected. As he faced increasing public scrutiny over his leadership during these scandals, he shortly resigned. Infantino was selected to become the new FIFA president after Platini, who was largely considered a frontrunner for the position, was quickly banned from football activities after it became apparent Blatter paid him \$2 million in 2011, claiming it was overdue pay for work in 2002.¹⁸⁴ What followed in 2016 was a self-controlled attempt to purge FIFA of corruption, which included banning other members who had been connected to corruption charges or allegations and redesigning the Executive Committee into the FIFA Council we see today. FIFA has maintained that the institution itself was not corrupt, but instead the victim of corruption; this sentiment was backed by the U.S. Department of Justice which in 2021 announced that \$201 million seized from the bank accounts of officials who have been prosecuted for corruption would go to the FIFA Foundation, which in 2018 was set up as an “independent foundation aimed to promote positive social change around the world through football.”¹⁸⁵ The FIFA Foundation Board, which makes the decisions on where funding goes, originally consisted of two FIFA Council members and Infantino himself, and has since appointed two additional members.¹⁸⁶

All of these details surrounding both alleged and proven conduct illustrate the brazen way that many of the top soccer officials in the world were connected to corruption, bribery, and

¹⁸² *FIFA Uncovered*

¹⁸³ Stephanie Clifford and Matt Apuzzo, “After Indicting 14 Soccer Officials, U.S. Vows to End Graft in FIFA,” *The New York Times*, May 27, 2015, sec. Sports.

¹⁸⁴ Conn, “Michel Platini Detained.”

¹⁸⁵ “US Department of Justice Awards FIFA Foundation USD 201 Million Compensation.” *FIFA*, August 24, 2021.

¹⁸⁶ “FIFA Foundation Activity Report 2020,” *FIFA*, July 2021.

payoffs. Money was often exchanged or promised for votes, often around key decisions surrounding FIFA presidency or the awarding of World Cups to countries. As questions around the suitability of host nations swirl, it is clear that much of the decision-making by the FIFA members is not based on merit or other factors one would assume to be important for the hosting of the world's largest sporting event, but instead wealth and self-interest. The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar and the corruption associated with it has put this on international display and shows where values truly lie. Over half of the 22 people who voted in the awarding of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups have been accused of wrongdoing.¹⁸⁷ The IOC and related organizations, while not chastised in the media as severely as FIFA, suffer from similar corruption. It was previously mentioned that in connection with the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Summer Olympics, around 100 politicians were investigated at some part in regard to corruption, and that as many as ten of the 12 stadiums built for the Olympics were in some way connected to payoffs or bribery. Additionally, there is a growing scandal surrounding the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics, in which Tsuguhiko Kadokawa faces allegations of bribing a member of the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee in order for the Kadokawa Group to be an Olympic sponsor.¹⁸⁸ While the scale of this pales in comparison to FIFA's scandals and even that of Brazil's woes, it is indicative of a greater theme: those with power and significant decision-making authority actively making choices with apathy to the potential consequences it may have on others.

Moreover, it isn't that there is a lack of self-imposed regulations or credos to follow and guide decision-making. Bid reports and other requirements theoretically provide strict rules to follow and present knowledge so that those with decision-making authority are well-informed.

¹⁸⁷ Panja and Draper, "FIFA Officials Were Bribed."

¹⁸⁸ Yuri Kageyama and Stephen Wade, "Tokyo Olympic bribery scandal rolls on; company apologizes," *AP News*, February 2, 2023.

But these same decision-makers shun this crucial information. For example, Harold Mayne-Nicholls, chief FIFA inspector for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup bids, was not contacted by anyone in Executive Committee to discuss the bid report for Qatar, illustrating to him that many didn't read the report and didn't care about the challenges and controversies that would come with Qatar hosting a World Cup.¹⁸⁹ As noted earlier, Qatar stated that they would only have 2/3 of the required stadiums ready by the World Cup, and yet the event continued and was successful; Brazil, meanwhile, was not given much leeway and met the 12 stadiums required, despite many of them being unfinished. This highlights the lack of consistency in approaches and calls into question the point of certain stringent requirements if they can be ignored the moment after a successful bid to host and don't necessarily dictate success or effectiveness. The events presented show that it is difficult to have faith that systems of power make remotely logical and reasonable decisions when there is so much evidence that illustrates the opposite.

Self-Regulation and Accountability

The analysis of mega-sporting events indicates that organizations like FIFA and IOC rarely have to answer to anyone outside of themselves. These are large organizations that even while they facilitate partnerships with countries, they face little accountability. One of the best examples of this again stems from the corruption that is intertwined with FIFA. In efforts to enact anti-corruption reform in 2012, FIFA appointed Michael J. Garcia and Hans-Joachim Eckert to be chairmen for the investigative and adjudication chambers of the FIFA Ethics Committee, respectively.¹⁹⁰ Garcia subsequently launched an investigation into the bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups and published a 350 page report in 2014. Eckert ruled the report wouldn't be made public, and instead released a 42-page summary clearing both

¹⁸⁹ *FIFA Uncovered.*

¹⁹⁰ *FIFA Uncovered.*

Russia and Qatar of any wrongdoing. Garcia immediately criticized this summary as incomplete with “erroneous representations of the facts and conclusions”¹⁹¹ and when FIFA dismissed his appeal one month later, he resigned from the Committee. In every possible consequential decision surrounding these measures of anti-corruption and displaying the truth, FIFA had supreme authority. When the organizations around mega-sporting events answer only to themselves, it opens the door for self-serving decisions that fail to value any external input. This, like in most other organizations, hierarchies, and cultures, breeds exclusivity and limited knowledge. And when these organizations oversee events that both cost and are worth billions of dollars, these competitions inherently run the risk of not meeting community or regional needs.

Who Wants to Host

It is necessary to mention that one challenge in determining where events end up is what regions or cities are willing to host. Developed, wealthier countries that either have existing infrastructure or the means to build it without putting undue stress on the economy tend to avoid wanting to host World Cups and Olympic Games. They are seen as a use of money that doesn’t provide the recognition or development benefits that it would to a developing country. As a result, FIFA and the IOC have fewer developed, often democratic and humanitarian options and more developing, authoritarian regimes that see the opportunities that come with hosting. Additionally, it’s important to note that more authoritarian governments play into the hands of these organizations, who would face less resistance and frankly wouldn’t have to account for additional voices. Jérôme Valcke reflected this sentiment, stating that less democracy can be better for hosting a World Cup because there are less decision-makers and those with input to

¹⁹¹ Richard Conway, “Fifa corruption report: Who is to blame and what happens now?” *BBC Sport*, November 13, 2014.

negotiate with.¹⁹² As countries are in complete control of deciding if they want to bid for being a host, it is difficult to prevent mega-sporting events from going to places marred in controversy and undemocratic values, especially when organizations like the IOC or FIFA see value in that.

Potential Solutions

Good Governance and Participation

Perhaps the most straightforward and least practical path towards better mega-sporting events is a drastic change within FIFA and the IOC itself. This would mean changing election processes in order to reduce the power of individuals and their influence over a session or meeting; it could also mean greater accountability to the greater international community. This is especially true with the IOC, where members don't represent a sports association or country, but rather just themselves. Transparency and accountability are key here. Additionally, both FIFA and the IOC could be tied to some kind of check and balance system where their decisions require additional approval from a third party or other organization. The last century has shown that the unyielding power wielded by these organizations has severely affected human lives, often indirectly. These recommendations would be difficult to implement because they would require the approval of FIFA and the IOC which, given it would be a loss of power, is unlikely to be seen. The dissolution of both FIFA and the IOC, perhaps by the governments of the countries that they are based in, could be viable and beneficial despite the panic it would temporarily generate.

Additionally, it is crucial that governments and organizations listen to community concerns throughout the entire planning process, including while making the choice to submit a bid or not. Region populations are those that are directly impacted the most, and deserve to not

¹⁹² Peters, "2022 FIFA World Cup."

only have a say in decision-making but also feel valued and heard. These people constitute a huge knowledge base to pull from, and considering their experiences and values is important in creating a competition that is positively reflected back upon. The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, when compared to the other case studies, did a great job facilitating this and incorporating those from historically marginalized communities while emphasizing their value.

Continued Value in Evaluation Reports

Throughout the research required of this thesis, evaluation and inspection reports continued to prove to be useful tools in illustrating the strengths and weaknesses of a region's bid and ability to host. Despite being sponsored by and a part of the IOC and FIFA, they are useful tools that aren't necessarily non-critical of prospective host countries. In some ways, the unwillingness of these organizations to listen to or engage with these reports is a sign of their value. It would be crucial to expand efforts that lead to increased interactions between FIFA and IOC members and these reports, perhaps through incentivization or mandates. Again, there are difficulties around instilling a change in the status quo among these organizations where the status quo has been so beneficial for their members for such a long time.

When to Develop

The 21st century marked a shift in both the IOC and FIFA towards development. It was important to spread the competitions wherever possible and build up their respective games. Today, development of the game goes hand-in-hand with building the infrastructure to accommodate it. Recently, the result has been requiring infrastructure that isn't suitable or feasible for many host countries and regions in the long run. Venues, stadiums, and other structures are more beneficial and useful when they are designed for a specific long-term purpose, as illustrated by Vancouver. At the very least, these stadiums should have the capacity

and capabilities that reflect the present situation with minimal projections into an ultimately unpredictable future. While it is important to recognize the benefits of using mega-sporting events to facilitate development, organizations like FIFA or the IOC should shift away from using some of the largest events in the world to do this, especially considering that the temporary needs of World Cups or Olympic competitions are not congruent with the long-term needs of most cities and regions across the world. Both organizations steward smaller events, like the Under-20 (U20) World Cup or the Paralympics that require much less infrastructure but can still lead to growth and create an environment where new construction and renovation is feasible and reasonable, guided by lower long-term expectations. These events deserve more study, but shifting development towards them and away from the rare, highly attended, and highest level competitions could prove to initiate development that is more sustainable while also generating intrigue and cultural benefits from smaller events.

Host Sharing

A phenomenon that has seen recent momentum is the idea of a multiple country bid for one event. This first gained traction in 2002 when Japan and South Korea shared the World Cup. The next World Cup in 2026 will be hosted by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, and while there has not yet been a decision on who will host the 2030 World Cup, multi-country bids are growing increasingly popular.¹⁹³ These types of bids help share the cost of hosting as well as the infrastructure necessary to be built or renovated, reducing the number of venues in one area and theoretically how many ‘white elephants’ are left over. While these bids add additional challenges around geopolitics, international relations, and international travel, they could prove

¹⁹³ Associated Press. “2026 World Cup hosts confirmed as automatic qualifiers; 2030 host vote set for 2024.” *ESPN*, February 14, 2023.

to be a more consistently sustainable path to take. Fans, countries, and sports organizations across the world will be watching North America in 2026 to determine if multi-country hosts are the way of the future.

Mega-sporting events like the World Cup and Olympic Games continue to be popular competitions with a truly global audience. Unfortunately, as the events have grown in prestige and renown, the 21st century has seen the requirements for hosting these competitions and the costs associated with them skyrocket. Questions have swirled regarding the legitimacy and suitability of hosts, the operations of the organizations that steward these events, like the IOC and FIFA, and the infrastructure these events leave behind. While the 2014 and 2022 World Cups in Brazil and Qatar as well as the 2010 and 2016 Olympics in Vancouver and Rio de Janeiro have unique themes, there are overlapping outcomes and legacies. Hosts often have to build venues in a short amount of time that, while meeting the needs of large competitions, often don't meet the needs of the communities they surround. The rhetoric of rapid development is enticing to some regions who are willing to foot the bill, while more developed and often more democratized areas that have infrastructure in place have little desire to host. The IOC and FIFA show little willingness to change the status quo so that these events cost less and set up regions for future success instead of bankruptcy and 'white elephants.' However, there are moves these organizations can make to be more transparent and accountable while also valuing community input and applying it to operations. Switching the rhetoric of development to smaller-scale events could ensure more sustainable, long-term growth, and the growing idea of multi-region hosting shows promise to be a more cost-effective way of hosting mega-events in the near future.

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