

Politics/ Law are increasingly intertwined with the global sports landscape. Analyse the impact of these factors on governing bodies, sports, teams, athletes and fans. Discuss, using real world examples the implications for future sporting generations.

Introduction:

Politics and law have always played a role in sport and are interlinked in the global sports landscape. The most common platform for sport diplomacy is when global sports is on the highest stage, getting everyone's attention. Sport is constantly evolving globally, this is due to driving forces such as the economy, technology, demography, social science, governance, conflict and religion (Westerbeek and Smith, 2003). Politics and law are something that will always be involved with sport. Typically it's not the fault of our favourite games - the logos we wear on our crests represent our nations, opinions, feelings etc. Therefore, sport will always be political and as it becomes more global, more controversies occur. We define globalisation as both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson, 1992). Fans and athletes come together through sport, and the impact of everything that comes with it will always change modern sport for future generations. In this essay, I will discuss some of the impacts that politics/law has on our sports, governing bodies, teams, fans and athletes. Some real world examples will include: FIFA, the Olympics, Russia, SAAF, WADA, South Africa and a few more key terms from my Globalisation of Sport Business module.

Most commonly seen, politics/law are intertwined with sport through large-scale global events. Events such as the Olympics hold the brightest lights in the world for athletes and fans to communicate internationally. Rule 50 in the Olympic Charter states that no kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted at Olympic sites, venues or other areas (IOC 2019a: 90). In the past however, we have seen Olympic games go through boycotts, protests, wars, and even terrorist attacks (Boykoff and Goldball, 2016). These events often take place at the Olympics because of its opportunity to protest a perceived social injustice and generate notice across a well-known globally mediated platform (Price, 2008). In 1980, we saw the United States communicate politically through sport by boycotting the Moscow Olympic Games showing that they share no relations with the Soviet Union. A total of four hundred and sixty-six American athletes

were told that they could not go to the Games, and this decision sparked sixty-four other nations to join what became collateral damage of the 1980 Olympic boycott (Brennan, 2020). This massive boycott altered the Olympics for good as sport served as a tool for politics. Sport became a catalyst for cooperation (Jung, 2013) between these nations by providing a platform for dialogue and interaction. It unfortunately did impact thousands of athletes as those Games were their last opportunity to participate in an Olympics. The next Games provided not just new economic realities for the Olympics, but global political patterns that shaped the Games movement (Dyreson, 2015). Dyreson claimed that the 1984 Games marked an era of the end of boycotting in the Olympics. The few nations that did boycott the Games such as East Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union still purchased broadcasting rights. Despite these Games being a platform for two superpowers (Russia and U.S) to play out their geographical tension (Noor, 2020), the Los Angeles Olympics reached great success. The main reason for this was the USOC making an agreement with the city of Los Angeles to be the financial guarantor (Yaroslavsky et al, 2015). This prevented any re-occurrence of Montreal's financial disaster for the 1976 Games. For context, Montreal had won the bid to host the Olympics: however, actually lost as it cost more than it had originally anticipated to host. They won but were cursed hence the term "Winner's Curse" (Andreff, 2008).

FIFA is one of the biggest governing bodies in global sports, and has a uniquely persuasive platform. The recent World Cup in Qatar became a very controversial tournament as it took place in a nation that has different societal norms than most countries participating. Due to the Islamic sharia law there are no LGBT rights in Qatar. FIFA decided to hand out punishments and threatened yellow cards to European captains if they wore rainbow-coloured armbands. This law also affected fans, spectators could not wear anything pride-related in the stadium and items were confiscated by security. Free speech was limited due to Islamic laws. Another controversial aspect of Qatar's World Cup was their migrant worker program. It was reported from The Guardian that more than 6,500 workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka died during the preparation for the tournament. Human rights groups reported unsafe working conditions, workers being paid less than expected wages, and an overall lack of freedom of speech (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Passports were reportedly stolen, rendering workers stuck in Qatar and if caught without possession of a permit, they could be arrested (Pattison, 2013). This was a really bad look for FIFA as it showed they supported the methods being implemented to construct stadiums for the upcoming tournament.

As sport has evolved, it has become a universal language. Sport has become a global idiom meaning a form of international communication (Maguire, 1999) for athletes to use their platform and speak their opinions. At the World Cup in Qatar, Germany covered their mouths in their pregame photo suggesting they had been gagged by football's governing body FIFA (Ingle and Steinberg, 2022). President of DFB Bernd Neuendorf stated "banning us from the bandage is like banning our mouths. Our stance stands." (Whitehead, 2022). FIFA is known to have some questionable decisions made by members. Back in 2015, former President Sepp Blatter resigned from his position in the governing body due to a corruption scandal. A tendency to think in dichotomous (thinking in black or white) ways is one of the four traps of globalisation (Wolf, 2004). In this real-world example, FIFA had to think in a dichotomous way by maintaining their mission of promoting the sport globally and also acting on the unethical practice that took place within their organization. Following his resignation, the FIFA ethics committee suspended Blatter for eight years and he has not returned since.

Sports law is another topic that will always be entwined with politics and globalisation. This consists of doping violations, negligence, criminal/civil law, corruption, violence and more. We ask ourselves, where and when should law be involved in sport? Does whatever happens on the field, stay on the field? Simon Gardiner claimed, "only when clear acts of violence occur, criminal law should be involved in sport" (Gardiner, 1993). WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency), was formed to combat doping after the disastrous 1998 Tour de France. For disciplinary matters, athletes are held accountable for socialising beyond curfew and drinking alcohol outside club rules. Each athlete is strictly liable to whatever substance found in his/her system under the WADA code. If a prohibited substance is found, whether intentionally consumed or not, is still at fault (WADA, 2018). The goal of CAS (court of arbitration), is 'to create a specialised authority capable of settling international disputes and offering flexible, quick and inexpensive procedures (Reeb, 2000). CAS deals with ordinary cases such as contract disputes as well as appeal cases such as eligibility and doping. Further, the IOC Executives decided to invent the OSAKA rule. This prohibits athletes from participating in the next Olympic Games if they had been previously suspended for more than six months for an anti-doping rule violation, even if they had previously served their suspension.

Russia is an established sporting nation that has a core global power network. This is due to the significant global success that Russian sport has accomplished in history. The nation stands out for their rigorous ideologies and standards of practice which although is a different approach from other core nations, remains successful. However, politics/law are always intertwined in the nation's sports. In last year's NHL draft, top prospect Matvei Michkov made the headlines as his father had disappeared two months before his commitment to North American Hockey. Andrei Michkov, Matvei's father, went out for a late night walk saying he'd be right back, his body was found in a pond a few days later. Coverage on this situation is very small, but it is said that Matvei's father was actively trying to invalidate his son's KHL contract so he could get to America as quickly as possible (McGuire, 2023). A nation like Russia is regarded similar to a state sport system for athlete development with its communist ideologies often linked with their athletes. NHL-drafted goaltender Ivan Fedetov was planning on moving to the United States before being abruptly detained by the Russian military. He was arrested for allegedly dodging Russia's military draft, moved to a base up north and then was said to be hospitalized for unknown circumstances (Fischer, 2023). Now he has a contract with CSKA Moscow despite an ongoing NHL-signed deal and his return to America seems unlikely. The NHL currently has several elite Russian stars but most had joined the league before 2020, now it seems very unlikely for rookies to migrate. We often see migration methods such as the Bosman Ruling work for other sports, but those practices do not take place in the NHL and only unsigned athletes can sign an NHL contract.

Certain governments use sport to develop the economy and a national identity. This was seen with the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, when an emerging nation needed an event to put them on the map. Hosting the most globally known tournament was the goal. Back in 1963, FIFA suspended South Africa due to apartheid policies, this ban was part of the global effort to fight apartheid in South African Football. In 1994, negotiations concluded a removal of apartheid which re-instated their participation in the federation, and hosted the tournament. (Gates and Nygard, 2013). Fifteen years before that, the 1995 Rugby World Cup played a role in post-apartheid reconciliation. What was typically seen as a "white" sport had changed as President Nelson Mandela used the event to champion South African unity. The South African team won the tournament and became a mechanism employed to move towards reconciliation and integration of a divided nation (Gates and Nygard, 2013).

The Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) has changed Football worldwide in the last two years. The nation's top league, Saudi Pro League, has taken over by signing well-known players such as Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar Jr and Karim Benzema. Football is an emerging powerhouse in Saudi Arabia and this is also thanks to Qatar hosting the World Cup. It is said that Globalisation is triggered by three key trends. One of them being: "television broadcasting of big sports events helps people all over the world watch" (Andreff, 2008). The recent World Cup opened up Football in the Middle East for the world to recognize. Last summer in the Saudi Pro League, teams spent over seven hundred million euros on players. This amount is second in the world behind the English Premier League (Noble, 2023). In an article written by the Hindustan Times, the main theory for what led to the rise of Saudi Football came down to money. What was once a 126th-ranked nation in the world back in 2012, turned it around through their recent success and is now in line to host the World Cup in 2034. Promoting economic development is the seventh step in global government involvement in sport (Houlihan, 2000). This means the government is often motivated and justified to promote economic development (Schimmel, 2002). In this case, Saudi Arabia's government has been the most recent real-world example of a nation becoming highly involved with sport in order to appear as a top nation. Elite Football is taking over in Saudi Arabia, therefore its priority is higher than achieving nation-wide mass participation due to the results it can receive globally. Peter Ueberroth, President of LA OCOG, stated "we now have to face the reality that the Olympics constitute not only an athletic event but a political event (US News and World Report, 1983)". I believe this applies to the potential hosting of the 2034 World Cup. There will be controversy since most of the profit in the nation comes from its successful petroleum sector therefore, sport will become a political tool once again on our planet's most captivating event. With all of this change to Football in the Middle East, one could decipher that Saudi Arabia wishes to become a global hegemonic power (Wright, 1999). Their goal has needed the involvement of Westernization and I believe it will be achieved without the influence of Americanization.

Lastly, I will touch on some final key terms from this module that I felt relevant to this topic, beginning with consumer ethnocentrism. It is defined as the belief that products from their own country are best (Klein, Ettenson and Morris, 2008). Consumers in developed countries tend to perceive their domestic products as being of higher quality, than imported (Ahmed and Astous, 2001). In the Beijing 2008 Olympics, the nation reactivated its sponsorship with Lenovo

(Chinese-based company) which is considered to be a source of national pride for the majority of Chinese citizens (Meng-Lewis, 2014). Lenovo is seen as part of the nation by the Chinese audience, while foreign sponsors tend to be the opposite, therefore, the need to bring in globally known sponsors was not as necessary as Beijing had local options. Secondly, one thing we see a lot of is homogenization and heterogenization at the Olympics. This is the act of different cultures coming together in the same image through sport. The opening ceremony for the Olympics is a great opportunity to express what a nation's culture is all about. In 2016, Rio's complex design of the Olympic torch was inspired by the "Olympic spirit, our country's nature and harmonious diversity and energy of our people" (Chin, 2015). As more than 6.6 million foreign tourists came to Brazil, the opening ceremony in Rio showed the world its country's rainforests and the forming of three large ocos (huts) to symbolise the indigenous peoples who call this nation their home (Anon, Olympics.com, 2016). This demonstration was an example of heterogenization when people came together through sport but remained different by culture.

Future Implications:

I believe that there is one significant factor that will continue to affect the globalisation of sport for future sporting generations - that is political conflict/wars. The IOC has decided that in the upcoming 2024 Olympics, we will see Russian and Belarus athletes participate as "individual neutral athletes". This is because Russians can no longer represent their countries' crest in international competition. Over the last two years, Ukrainian Footballers have had to deal with season cancellations and being forced to play all over Europe after Russia's invasion. Modern sport in some of these nations has had to go global to continue. Increased activism and social responsibility have come into play as we have seen Ukrainian athletes swapping their racquets and gloves for Kalashnikovs and body armour (Jack, 2022). As more countries get involved in politics/war, sport will directly be affected and we may see the protesting/boycott era return to global sport. The goal must remain the same for large-scale global sport federations to promote their respective event and unite the planet as there is no better way than through sport. A terrific idea that is set for the future is the cross-border collaboration of hosting the World Cup in USA-Mexico-Canada. Using a platform like the FIFA World Cup to unite more than one country together, almost makes them feel closer as neighbours, and will demonstrate how connected we are to other nations, despite being divided by name.

Conclusion:

Globalisation is further defined as “the growing network of political, economic, cultural and social interdependencies that bind human beings together” (Maguire et al, 2002). In this essay, we discussed how the use of international communication through sport binds people together as globalisation. With examples such as WADA, FIFA, SAAF, Russia, the Olympics, and emerging nations such as South Africa, politics/law remain intertwined with sport and will continue to be for future sporting generations to come. As sport evolves, things will constantly change, globalisation will differ, and history may repeat itself but we will also learn very new things about the processes of global sport. Academic theory in this assignment was mostly pulled from online databases and powerpoints/readings in this module to back up my real-world examples varying from Andreff papers to Maguire readings. Further research on the future for sporting generations should be attempted as the last four years have had much more political impacts on sport than usual.

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