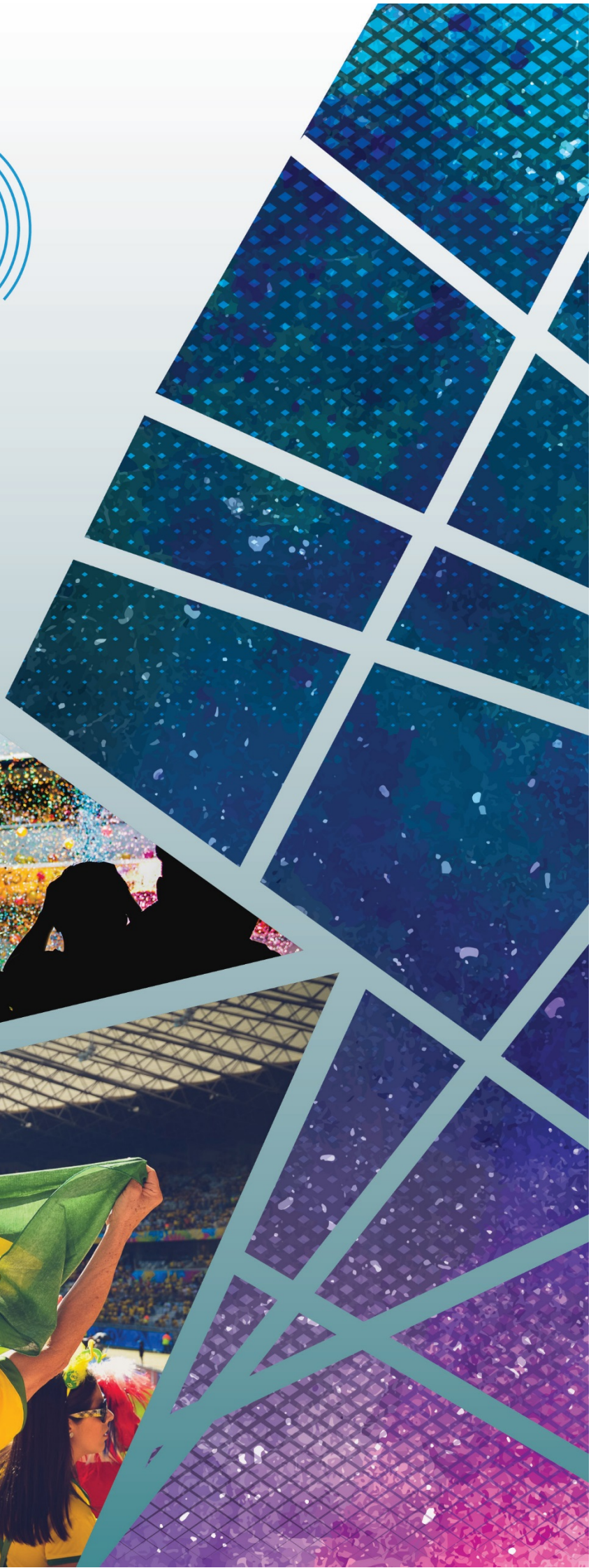


Event Rights



Eventrights Project – What Is It?

EventRights seeks to explore, and share knowledge, on the extent to which the landscape of mega sport events (MSEs) can be improved to ensure a progressive, rights-focused agenda is pursued by awarding organisations, host governments and implemented in the formal institutions tasked with organising these events. The project will produce recommendations as to how MSE organising committees, awarding bodies, and the local/national state can be mandated to ensure that opportunities to address inequality, enhance diversity and facilitate greater dialogue are enshrined in the planning, delivery, and legacy plans for the events themselves.



Source: Marcin Dampc - Pexels

We extend previous evidence provided in the scientific literature, practice, and public policy in three ways: (1) we refer to the different stages that determine social outcomes of MSEs; (2) we study the peculiarities of the different stakeholders that are involved in MSE management from an interdisciplinary perspective, providing insights into the different facets of the concept; and (3) we build up sustainable platforms for learning and knowledge sharing across European countries.

The project is 4 years long (Dec 2018 to Nov 2022) and is funded by the European Commission under the Marie Curie Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Staff Exchange Scheme. It has ten partners in eight countries. These are Coventry University and the University of the West of Scotland (United Kingdom); Technical University of Munich (Germany); University of Gothenburg (Sweden); University of the Peloponnese (Greece); Western University (Canada); Fundacion Getulio Vargas (Brazil); North Carolina State University and George Mason University (USA) and Meiji University (Japan).

Project Website: www.eventrights.net

Human Rights, Diversity and Inclusion

Human Rights

According to the United Nations “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination” (UN, n.d.) The United Nations goes on to state that international human rights law lays down the obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups.

Human rights legislation or policy is a legal mechanism, which if properly enacted and enforced can act to lessen power differentials between dominant and marginalised groups that the dominant group seeks to capitalise upon for their own gain at the expense of others (Brittain 2019).

Diversity

Diversity means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising our individual differences.

Inclusion

Diversity often focuses on the differences, and is referred to as "the mix." Inclusion is the deliberate act of welcoming diversity and creating an environment where all different kinds of people can thrive and succeed. Diversity is what you have. Inclusion is what you do. True inclusion, therefore, is about valuing all individuals, giving equal access and opportunity to all and removing discrimination and other barriers to involvement, such that people feel a sense of belonging, feel respected and valued for who they are and feel a level of supportive energy and commitment from others that allows them to do their best (Miller and Katz, 2002).

So what do we really mean by inclusion? At its simplest it is the state of being included or having the opportunity to take part, but in reality it is more complicated than that as it is bound up in ideas of equality, equity, fairness and distributive justice. An example of equality in a sporting context would be that everyone in a team gets the same shirt to wear (of exactly the same size). In this way no one can claim to have been treated differently, whereas in reality the shirt may actually only fit a small number of the team members. What is lacking from this view of equality is a sense of equity and fairness. If the team is all given the same shirt, but in a size that suits each individual member of the team then it can be claimed that

everyone has been included in an equal and equitable manner. However, fairness isn't just about everyone getting the same thing. It is about everyone getting what they need in order to try and achieve their goals in order that they feel that they have been fully included within society and given the same opportunities as everyone else (Brittain 2016).

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Access to Public Space

Historically, public space has been considered a critical public good, used to socialize, debate, and recreate. However, evidence suggests that mega sport events can create and reinforce geographies of exclusion associated with access to housing, transport and freedom of movement and assembly before and during the event. There are concerns that the legal and social rights of citizens are (temporarily) suspended when exceptional legislation is passed to enable host cities to plan and deliver these events.



Source: Dr David McGillivray

There are also concerns from civil liberty advocates that when planning and hosting a mega sport event increased securitisation is an outcome, including a proliferation of surveillance systems installed around host cities. There is also a concern that temporary exceptions to the legal and social rights of citizens to access public space, for example, can be extended as an outcome of hosting the mega event. For example, Smith (2016) has highlighted that parks, squares and streets are increasingly opened up to commercial exploitation as 'venues' as a result of legislation put in place for the hosting of a mega event. Though public space is always contested, it is the overt processes of commercialisation associated with the planning and delivery of mega sport events that has generated debate in academic and civil society spheres in recent years. The deployment of public investment to subsidise the enclosure of public space for private gain opens up further questions about democracy, planning and decision making and the rights of citizens to access and use common land in urban environments.

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Freedom of Expression

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Source: UN Convention of Human Rights

Mega sport events represent opportunities for organisers to promote their nations to a worldwide audience. However, there are concerns that freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are curtailed for citizens before and during the event. In the passing of legislation to enable the event to be delivered to the technical requirements of the awarding bodies (IOC, FIFA, CGF), host cities have to protect commercial assets including use of brand logos, advertising space and the like. The requirements of the mega event project mean that local or national laws on freedom of expression can be suspended, or amended, for the duration of the event.

Alternatively, host countries that restrict the freedom of expression and assembly of their citizens are expected to loosen these in order to host the mega event. For example, in China and Russia, there are normally heavy restrictions placed on media organisations in terms of what they can report which do not apply elsewhere. Finally, advocacy and civil society organisations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and UNICEF have sought to pressurise awarding bodies, like FIFA and the IOC to more effectively intervene to ensure host nations protect human rights defenders during the planning and delivery of their mega events.

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Planning and Decision Making

In order to address the perceived problems associated with human rights being infringed or violated in the planning and delivery of mega sport events, NGO advocates, civil society organisations and activist communities have been lobbying awarding bodies and sport federations to embed principles, protocols and penalties in their event governance arrangements. There is some evidence that the pressure exerted by these groups, supported by the work of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights (and its predecessor IHRB), has led to the awarding bodies strengthening their commitments. For example, in 2017 the International Olympic Committee made a commitment to incorporate human rights principles in its Host City Contract (HCC), with explicit reference to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) (IOC, 2017). Similarly, the Commonwealth Games Federation also has a Human Rights Policy and produced a 2022 Games Candidate City Manual which includes details on human rights expectations (CGF, 2017). Finally, FIFA has also produced a Human Rights Policy which was a requirement of the bidding process for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and it has also developed a policy to protect the work of Human Rights Defenders who operate in countries hosting the World Cup (FIFA 2018).



Source: FIFA Human Rights Policy document

The launch of the Centre for Sport and Human Rights in 2018 represents significant progress in the campaign to protect and promote human right at each and every stage of the vision, planning and delivery of mega sport events (<https://www.sporhumanrights.org>). This Centre has membership from key actors and influencers in the mega sport event landscape including governments, inter-governmental organisations, sport governing bodies, sponsors, broadcasters, trade unions and civil society/national human rights institutions. The organisation publishes guidelines for host cities including a document on the Mega Event

Lifecycle: Embedding Human Rights from Vision to Legacy which advises host organisers where and when they need to be addressing human rights issues starting from the creation of an event vision to the legacy period (MSE Platform, 2018) and ‘Sport Broadcasting and Human Rights’ (MSE Platform, 2017).

Other advocate organisations, including UNICEF (UK) and Terre des Homme have also developed useful advice and guidance for host organisers to ensure the rights of children affected by the planning and delivery of mega sports events, and within sport itself, are given due consideration.

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Children's/ Youth Rights



Source: Harsh Kushwaha - Pexels

Mega sporting events have been tagged by several academics, and sporting event experts to be an important tool for generating positive outcomes for cities and countries at large. However, the aftermath of hosting these games, most times, goes beyond the success stories, positive impacts and legacies as child rights issues such as police violence, forced eviction, child labour, sexual exploitations, and so on have been highlighted to be associated with hosting these events. Recently, there have been talks round about how children's rights are being infringed upon by sporting events (see Brackenridge and Kirby, 1997; Giulianotti, 2004; Farstad, 2007; Weber, 2009) and how these issues can be resolved. As sport is a highly child-populated domain, the establishment of child protection measures to reduce the potential for child rights infringement in sport is critical (Kerr and Stirling, 2008). One way to reduce the potential for the infringement of child rights is by listening to what the child wants, and subsequently involving them in the decision making processes of sporting events. Listening to children properly will inform significant change in many social and institutional practices. Roche (1999) argues that the cost of not listening to the child is felt mostly by the child, hence it is pertinent to consider what the child thinks, wants and to act on them. Several International bodies such as Terres Des Hommes and UNICEF have been lobbying to ensure that the child has a voice in sporting event policies, as they consider the child smart enough to know what they want. The Children Win Campaign ensures that child rights are protected, preserved and respected before, during and after the organisation and delivery of MSEs, and that every event ensures a positive legacy for future generations. Sport and play are a crucial part of every child's life. By taking part in sport, children learn to develop self-confidence, motivate themselves and lead active lifestyles. It is, therefore, crucial that sport is safe for all children around the world (UNICEF, 2019).



Source: Thedailystar.net

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Gender/LGTBQ-Rights

Historically, women and the LGBTQ communities have been marginalised in the context of large sport events. Their participation and inclusion has been low or non-existent. Looking at female participation in the Olympic Games, it was close to zero up until the 1920s and at around 20% all the way into the 1980s. Today, women account for more than 40% in both the summer and winter games (Brown, Mielke & Kolbe-Alexander, 2016). Giving women access to sport nationally has been one factor to this increase.



Source: Sharon McCutcheon - Pexels

Since 1982, the Federation of Gay Games (FGG) has organized the international sport and cultural event known as the Gay Games promoting LGBTQ rights, inclusion and participation, fighting homophobia and transphobia in sports. The first Gay Games was organized in San Francisco (1982) and the next will be set in Hong Kong (2022).

The mission is to promote equality and inclusion with competitions in 36 sports and hosting of cultural events, from aquatics to athletics and cycling to urban dance, open to all. It has grown into a large international sport event and the Gay Games in Paris 2018 had over 10 000 registered participants, 3000 volunteers and 750 000 spectators (www.paris2018.com).

The FGG lobbies sporting bodies, media and governments to increase opportunities for all athletes “regardless of gender, age, ability, or physical challenge” (gaygames.org). Some of their impacts on sports have been a transgendered inclusion policy adopted by for example the Olympic movement, more women’s sport categories, and the inclusion of athletes with HIV/AIDS.

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Labour Rights - Do Mega-Events Harm Labour Rights?



Source: Tom Fisk - Pexels

Labour rights deal with the relationship between workers and their employers. They are obtained under labour and employment laws and encompass both legal rights and claimed human rights. These rights concern, for example, salaries, benefits and safe working conditions. Since mega-events often need (re-)construction of sites by a fixed date as well as due to the cost pressure for construction work, labour right issues are common. Often, migrant workers are recruited and the organisers are pressured by delays, time pressure and cost saving. This creates a difficult situation: They are tempted to get the job done without closely considering the workers' rights. However, because of the world's attention on the event, there is the potential that some labour rights might actually improve for the better in a region. To date, there is no research that shows when and how labour rights are strengthened or weakened in the mega-sport event context. It is important that independent journalists report on potential positive and negative effects. The following extract from a complaint of the International Labour Organization (2017) describes the situation in Qatar: "From the moment migrant workers begin the process of seeking work in Qatar, they are drawn into a highly exploitative system that facilitates the exaction of forced labor by their employers. This includes practices such as contract substitution, recruitment fees and passport confiscation... Of particular concern, the sponsorship law [Kafala System], among the most restrictive in the Gulf region, facilitates the exaction of forced labor, by among other things, making it very difficult for a migrant worker to leave an abusive employer."

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Environmental Issues - Can Mega-Events Be Green?



Source: Pixabay - Pexels

Mega-events are rarely green per se. The hosting of a mega-event changes the natural environment. Often, new infrastructure is needed at the expense of green space. However, there are also examples where spaces are in need of revitalisation and where the mega event hosting has contributed to a well-designed harmonisation of the environment. Mega-events also have an impact on the environmental sustainability of our Earth. In particular, the contribution of the construction of new sites to greenhouse gas emissions should always be referenced to alternative development plans for the region; as well as to the benefits and costs that the post-event usage has. Most importantly, it should be reduced to the lowest amount possible. The same applies to people who travel to visit events or participate as athletes: the carbon-footprint related travel and other activities that go along with the event (e.g., food consumption and other purchase behaviours) should be minimised to the lowest amount possible. The less non-regenerative energy is spent, the better for our planet. As any event-related activities need to be considered here, it remains a challenge to come up with a simple formula that allows us to assess how green events can be. Warren (2017) argues that there should be full disclosure and transparency of processes during the hosting of mega-events, that environmental, social, and economic information should be made readily available in the local language, that there is early and meaningful community involvement in decision-making, and that there is a commitment to sustainable energy and environmental sensitivity, and longevity of community investments. These factors promote the consideration of sustainability concerns.

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Corruption/ Governance of MSEs - Can mega events help fight corruption and implement good governance?



Source: CoWomen - Pexels

Sylvia Schenk (Transparency International) states that the “the contribution sport can give to society would be stronger and more effective if sport was organized in a more open, transparent and structured way.” A lack of transparency and structure gives room for corrupt practices. Corruption means that the people act in their own (or their institution’s or country’s) favour while breaching important well-accepted ethical norms. These norms can be implicit or explicit. Examples of corruption in the context of mega-events include bribery and match fixing. Mega-events that prevent and fight corruption propose and implement sport governance that has installed a code of ethics, zero-tolerance and role modelling. In recent decades, the term "good governance" has developed a management approach for both public and private purposes. The main focus is on the inclusion of concepts such as participation, transparency and anti-corruption. Structures and guidelines are developed so that corruption is prevented and reduced, and the monitoring allows whistle blowers to raise their voice. Investigations and sanctions might then follow. The transparency of the process and the independency of actors is germane to any honest activities to prevent and fight corruption and install good governance in leading sport organisations worldwide.

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Poverty – Rio 2016, Favelas and Gentrification

Although the promoters and hosts of mega sport events often highlight their positive elements, many negative impacts have been reported in the media and scholarly work (e.g., Ribeiro, Correia, Biscaia, & Figueiredo, 2018). For example, the critics of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games often mention that the infrastructure built for the event has come at a high price for some poorer residents. In this respect, Gaffney (2016) states that the build-up to the Rio Olympic Games led to a process of gentrification in the city (i.e., displacement of one social group by a wealthier group that exhibits different cultural patterns), while Faulhaber and Azevedo (2015) reported that more than 60,000 people were evicted from their homes between 2009 and 2013. This phenomenon has been reported for different editions of the Olympic Games, with Watt (2013) noting that the Olympic Park for the London 2012 Olympic Games led to an acceleration of gentrification and displacement of residents.



Source: Tiago Ribeiro

These occurrences are summarised by De Lisio, Hubbard and Silk (2018, page 180), who claim that “the construction of hypermodern sport stadia and the associated playscape for tourist and consumer classes relies upon the removal of disposable bodies—setting in motion a wave of corporate gentrification, rippling from the epicentre of host cities to peripheries, displacing the very communities purported to benefit from event investment.” Consistent with this view, some observers claim that mega events often don’t take into account the welfare of the host citizens, being conceived and produced as privileged events for elite (Conchas, 2014). Thus, it is now up to researchers to observe and analyse how to tackle these negative aspects and produce new tools of interest for countries aiming to host future mega-sport events.

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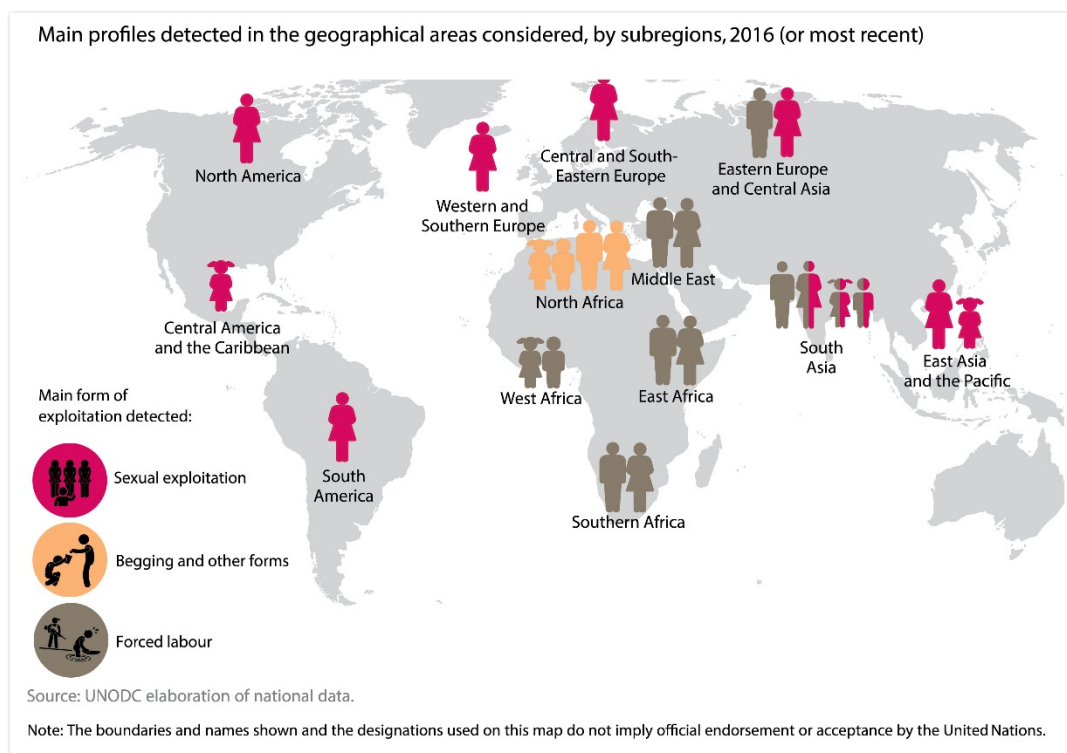
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Sex/ Human Trafficking

When thinking of international sport events such as the Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup or the Super Bowl, most people tend to remember memorable achievements by particular teams or athletes and a great festive atmosphere promoted by the organisers and the media. However, although sport events always have joy and compelling stories, they also tend to have a dark side as these events are major targets for potential human trafficking threats and we can no longer ignore this shadowy side.



Source: United Nations Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018

Matheson and Finkel (2013) state that while numerous factors come into play, a certain correlation between mega sport events and an increase in human trafficking cannot be discounted, with these cases being mainly related to commercial sex and labour exploitation, especially with the construction of sports venues. De Lisio, Hubbard and Silk (2018) further claim that the ambiguous nature of prostitution legislation/enforcement is a fertile realm for these situations, and that former host cities have ranged from those that completely oppose sex work, to those partially tolerant and those open/supportive. Regarding labour exploitation, labour abuses such as wage theft, unsafe working and living conditions, and a lack of access to state-guaranteed social services have often affected migrant and foreign workers (U.S. Catholic sisters against Human trafficking, n.d).

As noted by Lapchick (2019), events that draw big audiences often create environments ripe for human traffickers and it is important to acknowledge the severity of this problem in world sport in order to tackle it and promote better human rights environments in future events. To that end, centralised strategies should be developed given that the success of mega events

depends on the performance of a dynamic cast and crew both on the main stage and behind the scenes (De Lisio et al., 2018).

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People with Disabilities

People with disabilities form the largest minority group globally at roughly one-fifth of the world's population. As a group they also suffer exclusion from and discrimination within society. The Paralympic Games are now the second largest multi-sport competition on earth after the Olympic Games and the overall vision of the International Paralympic Committee is to make for an inclusive world through Para sport (IPC Strategic Plan 2019-2022).



Source: Dr Ian Brittain

Whilst it has been shown that sport can have a positive impact upon the physical, mental (health) and social aspects of people with disabilities lives (c.f. Specht et al., 2002) the claims that the Paralympic Games and Parlympians in particular can positively change societal attitudes towards people with disabilities have been challenged by a number of academics. Brittain and Beacom (2016) claim that by making Paralympians the “norm” by which all other people with disabilities are measured simply further isolates those who are unable or simply do not wish to take part in sport and reinforces ableist perspectives of their capabilities.

This is not to say the potential for the Paralympic Games to positively impact upon the lives of people with disabilities should be ignored as the media coverage now achieved by these Games is such that they form an amazing platform from which to begin debates around the issues of how people with disabilities are treated by the wider society and to raise awareness of the potential negative impacts this can have upon their lives.

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