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Emerging powers and the bids for sport mega events

Bachelor's Thesis

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Declaration

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3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 01.05. 2023

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References

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis is an introduction to the topic of emerging powers and their relationship with sport mega events. Sport mega events have become a global phenomenon that is not restricted to only developed Western countries anymore. In the last twenty years, states labelled as emerging powers hosted the biggest sport events and it caused a stir. On the example of three emerging powers – Brazil, China, and South Africa, and the events they have hosted – 2014 FIFA World Cup, 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, and 2010 FIFA World Cup, this thesis examines the question of why emerging powers are interested in hosting sport mega events. A combination of realism and soft power, and liberalism as restated by Andrew Moravcsik was applied in the extensive literature review. Both theoretical explanations were relevant. The state was a primary actor in all three cases. South Africa and Brazil used the events for their national interests, to improve their international position while in the Chinese case, the national interest was not important. In Brazil and China, domestic actors were also heavily vested in the bidding. Private companies and politicians wanted to make a profit. The Communist Party used it to legitimize its rule. Realism and liberalism cannot explain every reason like if the state wants to use the sport mega event to boost nationalism.

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce slouží jako úvod do problematiky nastupujících velmocí tzv. emerging powers a velkých sportovních událostí. Velké sportovní akce se staly globálním fenoménem, který již není určen pouze pro vyspělé Západní země. Během posledních dvaceti let začaly státy, které označujeme jako nastupující velmoci, pořádat největší sportovní události, čímž vzbudily velký rozruch. Na příkladu tří nastupujících velmocí – Brazílie, Číny a Jižní Afrika a událostech, které uspořádaly – Světový šampionát 2014, Letní Olympiáda 2016 v Rio de Janeiru, Letní Olympiáda 2008 v Pekingu a Světový šampionát 2010, hledá táto práce odpověď na otázku, proč mají nastupující velmoci zájem o uspořádání velkých sportovních událostí. Teorie realismu, spojená s konceptem soft power, a teorie liberalismu ve znění od Andrewa Moravcsika, byla aplikována na rozsáhlý přehled literatury. Výzkum prokázal, že obě perspektivy jsou relevantní. Primárně to byl stát, který chtěl zorganizovat velké sportovní události.

Jižní Afrika a Brazílie využily sportovní události pro naplňování svých národních zájmů, ke zlepšení jejich mezinárodního postavení. V Číně byl národní zájem druhořadý. V Brazílii a Číně měli zájem pořádat sportovní události i domácí aktéři. Soukromé společnosti a politici využili akce k vlastnímu profitu. Čínská komunistická strana chtěla legitimizovat svoji vládu. V některých případech však realismus a liberalismus nedokázaly vysvětlit všechny důvody, proč by chtěl stát zorganizovat velké sportovní akce, jako například posílení nacionalismu.

Keywords

Emerging powers, sport mega events, Brazil, China, South Africa, FIFA, IOC, 2008 Summer Olympics, 2010 FIFA World Cup, 2014 FIFA World Cup, 2016 Summer Olympics

Klíčové slova

Nastupující velmoci, velké sportovní události, Brazílie, Čína, Jižní Afrika, FIFA, MOV, Letní olympijské hry 2008, Světový šampionát FIFA 2010, Světový šampionát FIFA 2014, Letní olympijské hry 2016

Název práce

Nastupující velmoci a snaha pořádat velké sportovní události

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Introduction

The now infamous phrase that politicians and sports functionaries keep repeating is that sport does not belong to politics. However, times and times again, we see evidence that sport does belong to politics, from how the resources are awarded to schools, and how much money are sportsmen and sportswomen granted, to more visible proof such as political protests or boycotts of sports competitions. Even with this common knowledge, sport is still a marginalized area in Political Science and International Relations. The global value of the sport has increased over the decades, and sports events are much bigger, more important, and with different kinds of effects than we could have ever predicted when the Olympics were reinstated in 1896.

One of the reasons why sport is such a prominent part of the global political economy is the events connected with it. Sport events, big or small, generate huge profits for everyone involved, be it companies that can use it as an advertisement platform, media that televise the events, or individuals who benefit from new roads and stadiums being constructed. Mega events, in general, have become an important part of states' foreign policy – "... states seek to profile themselves for foreign investors or potential tourists; more importantly, they have become markers of distinction for states and channels through which states may seek to communicate messages to counterparts." (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 481).

Sport is now a global affair which makes sports mega events a perfect theatre of sorts for states to engage in, either on the international level or the domestic one. Staging, bidding, or even participating in a sport mega event can be a particularly interesting tool of foreign policy for smaller or peripheral states to showcase their power. As Cornelissen (2008, p. 483) says about mega events and their nature in line with the hybrid nature of the global political domain: "is made up of the confluence of governmental/state actors (at various levels), (media and sport) corporations, sport federations, and societies (or 'consumers') who all interact and pursue often divergent agendas.". Participating in the Olympics can be an efficient way of promoting states, especially smaller ones like Tonga. In what is now an iconic moment from the Olympics, Tonga's flagbearer wore traditional clothes to the opening ceremony at Rio 2016 and stole the hearts of millions of people while advertising his country.

Arguably, the most prominent sport mega events are the Summer and Winter Olympic Games and the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup. What is even more interesting is that in the last two decades, several sport mega events have been hosted by the so-called “emerging powers”, starting with Summer Olympics in 2008 in Beijing to FIFA World Cup in 2022 in Qatar or with Brazil and Russia which hosted both the Olympics and the football championships. This phenomenon thus begs the question of why such states are interested in these events. What are their objectives in bidding for the events? Are there some hidden benefits that attract them?

In this bachelor thesis, I will try to answer the question of why emerging powers bid for sport mega events. I will critically examine the scholarly literature regarding the sport mega events in emerging countries, specifically China, Brazil, and South Africa, as well as official bidding documents for the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cups and respective governments, and newspaper articles. Using two theoretical approaches to International Relations – realism and liberalism, I will explain the relationship between emerging powers and sport mega events. In realism, the key actor is the state. The state directs the national interest, which is to gain more power in the international environment. Traditionally, realists put emphasis on hard power connected with military and economic capabilities. However, to increase their influence, states can also use soft power. Soft power is a concept made by Joseph Nye (1990) in the 1990s, that has been well integrated into Political Science. The concept generally refers to culture, political values, and foreign policy that can be used to attract other states and alter their behaviour. Consequently, the state uses the sport mega event as a venue to gain international prestige/influence. Thus, examples of nation branding, emphasis on the competence of the state or state taking its rightful place in international relations should be mentioned in the bidding documents, scientific or newspaper articles.

On the other hand, the main premise of liberalism is that individuals and domestic groups are the key actors in the international environment. As such, their competing interests decide the national interest of the state. Domestic groups and individuals, be it private companies, political parties, or individuals, can have a vested interest in bidding for and hosting a sport mega event. It can be a simple business opportunity or to spread a message. As a result, they influence the government to pursue candidature for the

event. If this theory is correct, the evidence of “bottom-up” pressure, like an emphasis on preferential treatment of local businesses or legitimization of the political parties should be visible in the bidding documents and scientific or newspaper articles,

Sport is a marginalized area of International Relations, however, as the sport has become a globalized phenomenon, the topic has found its place in numerous social sciences. Sport mega events have become popular research topic among social scientists, and there is a growing body of literature about them. In the first chapter, I will look at the sport mega events and mega events in general. Describing what constitutes a mega event and why it became a noteworthy phenomenon. I will continue with an introduction to the emerging powers. What is an emerging power, and why it is hard to define one. Emerging powers have been successfully bidding for mega events in recent years, however, the perceived legacies are hard to back as we cannot talk about something being a legacy when it is barely ten years old.

The chapter on theory and methodology begins with a short literature review on the relationship between sport mega events and emerging powers and the potential benefits of hosting a mega event such as national cohesion, urban regeneration, or economic growth. Further explanation of the theoretical frameworks follows. I have chosen realism as well as liberalism to examine the connection between emerging powers and bidding for sport mega events. The description of the theoretical foundations of realism and liberalism and why these theories could help with finding the link between the two phenomena ensues. I have also derived two hypotheses from chosen theories and how they should be verified. Connected to theory is the methodology section, where I explain why I have chosen Brazil, China, and South Africa as sample countries as well as respective events – the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, 2014 World Cup in Brazil and 2016 Summer Olympic in Rio de Janeiro. Then, I proceed with a description of the resources and data I was working with. The difference between the FIFA and International Olympic Committee (IOC) and what statistical data was used. After that, I delve into the literature compiled from academic articles, official bidding documents from FIFA and the IOC and governments, as well as newspaper articles. The next chapter is focused on empirical analysis, where I describe my findings and whether they correspond with the hypotheses. The bachelor

thesis ends with a conclusion and a brief discussion on future research on sport mega events and emerging powers.

1. Sport mega events and emerging powers

1.1. Sport mega events

As was mentioned previously, mega events are a unique topic in Political Science. They overlap in multiple social sciences such as Public Administration, Economics, Urban or Cultural studies, and of course Sport studies. However, even across all these disciplines, there is no unified definition of what constitutes a mega event. There are several factors we can choose from when deciding what is a mega event. There is visitors' attractiveness, mediated outreach, high costs, transformative impact, or an ambulatory nature of such events (Müller, 2015). But the question still stands. What makes a mega event a mega event? Does it have to sell thousands of tickets, how many countries must participate, and what number of journalists and media have to cover it? Does it have to have a budget of billions of dollars? Do we have to build new stadiums and infrastructure? Can it happen every four years or every year? Can it last for a week, a month, or half a year? These are the questions we must answer in distinguishing, for example, between the Beyonce concert, the World Expo, and the Olympics.

In his article, Müller (2015) proposes a comprehensive definition of a mega event. It is based on four dimensions, as mentioned above: visitors' attractiveness, mediated outreach, cost, and transformative impact. Visitors' attractiveness is measured by the tickets sold. Mediated reach is how much money the broadcasting rights cost. Cost is the whole budget for the event, and the transformative impact is the total sum of investments made. As such, the mega event has an ambulatory character and attracts large numbers of people, has a large, mediated reach, comes with a high cost, and has large impacts on the built environment and the population (Müller, 2015, p. 638). He later combines it with Maurice Roche's research on differentiating the scale of events (Roche, 2002), categorizing them into major, mega, and giga events. The combined definition is "Mega-events are ambulatory occasions of a fixed duration that attract a large number of visitors, have a large mediated reach, come with large costs and have large impacts on the built environment and the population." (Müller, 2015, p. 638). This combined definition is what I will work with in this bachelor thesis.

Sport mega events are then a type of mega events, mainly the Olympics and the men's football championship – FIFA World Cup. Sport mega events are generally divided into

two tiers or orders based on their importance (Grix et al., 2015, p. 468). First-order events are both Summer and Winter Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. Second-order have a more regional character like Asian Games or Commonwealth Games or do not attract a global audience like Rugby or Cricket World Cups (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 481). Increasingly, the sport has become a significant part of the global economy, in particular sport events. Horne (2007, p. 83) identifies three main reasons why sport mega events are so popular. Firstly, the change in technology, mainly television and now the internet, created a global audience. The price of broadcasting rights has been rising since the 1970s and is now over a billion dollars. Secondly, the new audience and its size are directly connected to the influx of corporate sponsorships and made it viable for hosting cities to turn a profit. Lastly, sport events can be used for the promotion of the region or the city. These events can have a multitude of short-term and long-term effects on the hosting country, both positive as well as negative. To organize such an event, the country needs access to numerous resources like money, labour, and time. Sport mega events are unique in that they usually attract a high number of people, resulting in high media attention from all around the world, giving various opportunities to the hosting country. Cornelissen (2008) describes sport mega events as not only important for the global economy but to the arena of international politics as well. As such, sport mega events ought to be studied not just by Urban studies but by scholars in Political Science and International Relations. Sport mega events are now part of foreign policy, whereby states attempt to attract foreign investors, distinguish themselves from other countries, and share their own message with the world (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 481). Thus, we are in a cycle where countries, by competing against each other, reinforce the significance of a particular sport event, and the sport event then provides a venue for politics to happen (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 485). These kinds of events, especially for emerging powers like Brazil, China, and South Africa, can serve as a new tool of foreign and domestic policy where for “fracture” of money, if well spend, states have opportunities to impress and attract other international figures, such as heads of states or companies, and to change their nation’s image. In addition, sport events can serve as a tool for domestic policy. This can be seen in the transformative impact mega events can have, like building new infrastructure (roads, railways) or as a way to unite a population and strengthen national cohesion.

These sport mega events are watched all over the world by billions of people, with thousands of them coming to watch in the hosting country. Tickets are bought, bets are made, and accommodations, infrastructure, and stadiums are built. Companies are fighting each other for various sponsorships, for advertising placements (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 483). The spectacle of such mega events is attracting everyone everywhere. Although we can find several examples of non-western countries hosting (Japan, Uruguay, Mexico, South Korea), in the history of the Olympics and the World Cup, predominantly Western countries were chosen to host the events. In not so distanced past, the IOC and FIFA had to persuade states to host their respective events. During the Cold War, the Olympic Games and other major sport events served mainly as a venue where the West and East met. Both blocs tried to showcase their superiority in organising, technology, or the number of medals, and use the events as propaganda tools (Vonnard & Marston, 2020). However, as the salience of the sport in the global economy and appeal to the governments has increased, so did the competition for staging events has become fiercer. Nowadays, states are willing to spend millions just for the bidding campaign, even countries such as the United Kingdom, which spent over 17 million pounds in a bid for the 2018 FIFA World Cup (Grix & Lee, 2013, p. 522). Notwithstanding that, there seems to be a shift in perception of these events that happened with the successful hosting of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3009; Dowse & Fletcher, 2018, p. 747) for the Olympics and the South African World Cup of 2010 for the FIFA World Cup. Since the 2010 World Cup, every tournament was held in a non-western country (Brazil, Russia, Qatar). By hosting such successful events, China and South Africa made it practically viable for other emerging powers or developing countries to bid for such a big event and win. Now the competition for even the second-order events such as the Asian Games or Cricket World Cup is cutthroat (Grix & Lee, 2013, p. 522).

The Olympic Games are managed by the IOC, National Olympic Committee (NOC), and the hosting country. The Games are held every four years with two years between the Summer and Winter Olympics. Nowadays the Games last up to one month. The bidding process starts approximately ten years before the Games. The NOCs submit an application to the IOC. The cities get a status of an applicant city and must fill in a questionnaire from the IOC. After the analysis of the questionnaire, the IOC Executive Board declares Candidate Cities who then need to submit their Candidature files. Both

the questionnaire and Candidature files are similar in nature and contain the same information. Basic characteristics of the states, legal aspects, finance, marketing, environmental protection, and so on. The Candidate Cities are visited by the IOC Evaluation Commission, which reports on the readiness of the city. After the scandal regarding the 2002 Winter Olympics, members of the IOC are not permitted to visit the candidates. The winner is declared at the IOC session after final presentations from the candidates (Olympic Studies Centre, 2010).

The FIFA World Cup is organized by FIFA, National football associations, and the organizing state. The tournament takes place every four years. Like the Olympics, the bidding process for the FIFA World Cup starts roughly seven years before the tournament. Firstly, FIFA provides regulations and guidelines for the process in the form of a “Hosting Agreement”. Secondly, the National football associations must submit their proposal in the “Bid Book”. It contains sections on the vision, marketing, finance, accommodation, or transport. After filling out the form, the states are candidates. A rotation principle, where the hosting rights were alternating between continental governing bodies (UEFA, CAF), was briefly introduced after the tight loss of South Africa for the 2006 FIFA World Cup but was abandoned after the 2014 World Cup. Associations from continental governing bodies that hosted two previous championships cannot apply for the next one. As in the Olympics, an inspection visit follows to determine whether the countries meet the strict requirements of FIFA. The winner is decided by the vote of the FIFA Council, after a final presentation (FIFA, 2004).

1.2. Emerging powers

Emerging powers are states, whose influence is significantly rising and that have the ambition to play a bigger role in the international system. These states want to change their position to a position of power either regionally or on a global scale. This new position would allow them to reach new goals, open new opportunities, and add to their already significant resources (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3009-3010). As with other abstract concepts in Political Science, there is no single conceptualization of an emerging power. The only thing that scholars agree upon is that these states have large areas and in the last twenty years had a progressively growing economy. Possessing a powerful

economy is a precursor to further political and military development (Keukeleire & Hooijmaaijers, 2013).

As there is no unified definition, there is no concrete list of emerging powers. However, most scholars agree upon five countries that together make up the BRICS group. It is an acronym for the five fastest-growing economies of the world – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3009-3010). The term was coined by the Goldman and Sachs chairman in 2001 to describe economies that would dominate the global economy by 2050 (O’Neill, 2001). The BRICS is the main competitor for the G7 countries, which are made up of seven states with the leading advanced economies. BRICS countries have their financial initiatives like development banks or payment systems and meet annually and even consider inviting other states to join the group.

On the other hand, the list of emerging powers is also being copied from the G20 economies, with countries like Argentina, Australia, Mexico, or Turkey being on the list together with the BRICS states. The term has also been used to describe Algeria, Poland, Thailand, or Colombia. Besides the BRICS there are a handful of other organizations that unify countries with similar economic or political backgrounds such as BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China), IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa), or ASEAN (Association of the Southeast Asian Nations) with the MINT group (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey) currently being on the rise. These multilateral organizations in the Asia Pacific or in the global south are increasingly important in global affairs. As their significance raises, so thus their power to influence the global order and push their worldview, which can pose a threat to other countries, especially the Western countries, whose worldview is the dominant one (Keukeleire & Hooijmaaijers, 2013). These emerging powers leverage their power to push for a change in the international financial system and the over-representation of the Western countries in the IMF, WTO, and the World Bank or to reform the UN, especially the Security Council (Grix et al., 2015, p. 466-467, 474). The salience of such organizations can be perceived in the context of who is hosting the biggest events and for the last two decades, most sport events were staged by states that could be described as emerging powers. Although, this era of awarding hosting rights to less developed countries is seemingly coming to an end, for example, the next five sport mega events will be hosted by Western countries.

What is interesting about the BRICS countries is that all of them hosted some mega events especially, a sport mega event. As mentioned before, Brazil hosted both the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, the same goes for Russia. Beijing was the first city ever to host both the Summer and Winter Olympics. South Africa was the first country to host the World Cup on the African continent. Only India lags behind and does not seem to be interested in hosting sport mega events, with “only” hosting the Commonwealth Games which is considered a second-order event (Grix et al., 2015, p. 468). Black and Van Der Westhuizen (2004) talk about the allure of sport mega events have on the semi-peripheral polities and spaces. They describe major sport events as a pivotal strategic response to the demand of globalization. “... it is contended that pursuing such events is intimately connected to the perceived expansion of ‘marketing power’ on the one hand, and to the legitimisation and celebration of conceptions of national identity and political orders, on the other.” (Black & Van Der Westhuizen, 2004, p. 1195). In another study, Cornelissen (2010) suggests that there is a common explanation for why emerging powers want to organize sport mega events. They use it to demonstrate their economic achievements, signal their diplomatic importance, and project their soft power. They can use them to distinguish themselves from other developing countries, indicating their shift in power, as being a host of a mega event is an exclusive club. Members of this club then tend to organize even more mega events in the future (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 485).

2. Theory and Methodology

2.1. Theoretical explanations

2.1.1. General Considerations

What is the relationship between the sport mega events and emerging powers? The previous chapter shed some light on what the answer could be. Mega events can serve as venues for emerging powers where they can advertise themselves to foreign heads of state or attract foreign investors as well as strengthen national cohesion. In addition, emerging powers can use them to signal their achieved status. Showcase their economic power and diplomatic stature, and project their soft power.

Probably the most emphasis, when it comes to the benefits of organizing sport mega events, is put on the potential economic boost for the country. Economic benefits are

often at the centre of bid campaigns to win the hearts of the citizens that organizing a mega event is good for the country and them. However, economic benefits are frequently overestimated as there are only a few cases when the event brought surplus to the country and the hosting city (Los Angeles Olympics 1984). What are more interesting benefits are the political or ideological ones. Researchers are slowly debunking the myth of the economic benefits sport events can have, and as such, politicians are now praising the social aspects of the mega events (Heere et al., 2013, p. 451) or the notion of legacy (Grix et al., 2017, p. 204-208). Nonetheless, predictions of economic growth are still popular.

Sport is connected to high emotions and can serve as a way to inspire people, to convey a message. Thus, sport mega events can enhance patriotism. We can be sure to claim that everybody is proud to be a member of their country when athletes are winning gold medals. Emotions run high, positive as well as negative, whenever there is an important match or championship. Even friendly countries can turn into “enemies” when playing against each other. Strengthening national cohesion can be another goal for societies with many cleavages, like race or language. Under particular circumstances, governments can use them to support unpopular programmes or enhance their legitimacy (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3013).

History can show us many examples when sport mega events such as the Olympics were used as a ground for political battles. During the Cold War, there were numerous boycotting campaigns from both sides of the Iron Curtain, notably the USA and its allies boycotting the Moscow Olympics of 1980, or the famous Ping Pong Diplomacy, where sport was used as a tool to bring closer the USA and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The IOC played an important role in the decolonization process, whereby granting the newly independent countries of Africa a spot in the organization, the IOC gave them a *de jure* recognition helping them solidify their status as a state. “... the domain of international sport has long constituted an alternative realm of state interaction. Sport has been a sphere of world engagement in which states selected to signal their interests, to follow particular courses of actions or to forge diplomatic alliances.” (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3012).

Another reason that is often cited for hosting is the projection of the country's soft power. Again, sport mega event serves as an environment to practice public diplomacy and project or boost soft power in the international arena. Grix and Lee (2013, p. 521) see successful bids and organization of such events as a homecoming for emerging powers or developing countries. "The acquisition and successful hosting of such SMEs is now looked upon as a significant "litmus test" for would-be leading states globally." (Grix et al., 2015, p. 477). By staging sport mega events, states are seen as credible actors that are capable as well as signal new order in the international sport and system overall. The new order can be observed in how emerging powers, in this case Brazil, China, and South Africa, attempt to communicate their identity to the world. They use the universality of sport and its values and customize them to suit their message, to attract other people and states.

States also see an opportunity to change their nation's image. Being constantly under the watch of international audiences can backfire, but when used right, the state can change how it is perceived internationally. Changed perception can help the country with finding new investors or bring more tourists, donors, and consumers and earn their trust (Knott et al., 2015). Emerging powers are in many cases developing countries. The status of a developing country has many negative connotations in the world connected to the high crime rate, corruption, bad infrastructure, authoritarian regimes, or human rights violations. As such, they have a hard time combating their negative image. Even though many things have changed for the better, without an international environment where states could showcase this change, people will still connect, for example, South Africa with racism. Through organizing a global event such as the World Cup or the Olympics, states have enough time to change the mind of people watching in their homes, celebrating on the streets, the athletes themselves, and most importantly, the minds of other high-ranking politicians in attendance. Knott et al. (2015, p. 55) have found in their research on nation branding and the South African World Cup that media and local citizens are the key influential factors. There are numerous stakeholders in creating and sustaining a nation brand. There are government officials, NGOs, private companies, tourist organizations, etc. Nonetheless, the primary responsibility is on the government (Anholt, 2007 in Knott et al., 2015, p. 47).

Transformative reasons are often used to promote staging a mega sport event as well. The staging of a sport mega event serves as an incentive for the government to revitalize urban planning. Development of new infrastructure such as roads, railways, or airports is often stressed as an important tangible legacy of the events and is also connected to the rise in employment as governments promise that the construction will make hundreds of new jobs. Then there are numerous new sport facilities. Usually, new stadiums are built, and old are refurbished for every FIFA World Cup. For example, South Africa built six new stadiums for the tournament. Building sport facilities is even more prevalent in the Olympics, as there are countless sports that need their own place. There is also the Olympic Village that accommodates thousands of athletes. Nowadays, the budget for infrastructure is billions of dollars. A successful example is the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, where the whole region of Catalonia benefited (Horne, 2007, p. 88). As such, the transformative effects are very desirable for emerging powers. Winning the bid opens new possibilities to change the cities or the regions for the better.

There are numerous possible reasons why would any state want to bid for a sport mega event. The next part will look into two theories that could help solve the question of why emerging powers like Brazil, China, and South Africa are interested in organizing sport mega events. To analyse the research question, two possible explanations will be formulated. The first explanation will combine the insights from realism with Joseph Nye's theory or the concept of soft power. The second will depart from liberalism in the variant restated by Andrew Moravcsik.

2.1.2. Realism and Soft power

Realism is a school of thought in Political Science, especially in International Relations. Realism was formed from Realpolitik – a German term used for describing policymaking based on real facts and not bound by an ideology. Realpolitik's most famous protagonist is Otto von Bismarck, a politician who served as chancellor under Kaiser Wilhelm I., who used Realpolitik to unite Germany. However, a modernized version of realism came to be in the 20th century and was one of the dominant political theories until the end of the Cold War. The influential proponent was Henry Kissinger, a political scientist, and former Secretary of State under the administrations of Richard

Nixon and Gerald Ford. Other famous political realists are E. H. Carr, Kenneth Waltz, and a more contemporary figure John Mearsheimer.

Although there are many theories of realism, all of them stem from the same foundation. In realism, the dominant actor who counts is the state. Foreign policy is influenced by national interest, not by the interests of competing domestic groups. States exist in anarchy. There is no higher authority that controls them. As such, the most important thing in international relations is power. Power in the sense of having the ability to influence other states, power as in having material resources such as a capable military, size of the state, and economic performance. The main interest of the state is to strengthen its power continuously. Consequently, states are competing against each other, making alliances to stop other states or to find power in numbers. Realism sees the development of international relations as cyclical. Conflicts thus repeat, and peace is only temporary. Cooperation is limited, with the next conflict erupting at the moment's notice. In the classical realism of the early 20th century (E.H. Carr, H. Morgenthau), the conflictual nature of international relations is based on human nature. International organizations cannot make way for peace. They are controlled by the dominant state and therefore serve the state's vision. The only way to have international cooperation is through diplomacy and compromise, where all states are satisfied, as it was during the Concert of Europe. In rest the of the 20th century, neorealism took its root in the works of Kenneth Waltz. Neorealism sees human nature as less arbitrary to the international environment. What is crucial is the structure of the environment – anarchy, reliability of oneself, and disposition of the power among different actors. The key term is a balance of power. Here states try to balance each other, as such poles are created based on the number of powerful actors – unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity.

Realism and its focus on the state as an actor who dictates national interest can help answer the question of why states want to organize sport mega events, especially emerging powers. However, the type of power must be considered first. Staging a sport event is not part of the traditional depiction of power. But it can be part of the soft power, a term coined by Joseph Nye in his article of the same name. Nye (1990) gives us his perspective on the events of the 20th century, where he sees a great power shift. There are new challenges that cannot be beaten by the military. States are no longer afraid of being directly attacked. They are afraid of not having enough energy or

lagging behind the newest technology (Nye, 1990). Although Joseph Nye is not a realist scholar, on the contrary, he is a liberal one, I will use his theory of soft power in the context of realism and its focus on the state as the dominant factor in international relations. To combat new challenges, posed by globalization and interdependence, states must use different tools to achieve their interests and gain power. These non-military strategies, such as national image, are part of the soft power. Nye defines soft power as "... the ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own." (Nye, 1990).

If the state is the dominant actor, then it is more likely that soft power, not coercive power in the sense of the military, will be used to gain power in the international environment. Military capabilities are becoming progressively expensive; thus, it is better and more efficient to use other means of attaining power. That could be the case for emerging powers that do not have to have the military capacity to be considered powerful but can attract other states to see their interest as their own. Soft power uses culture, political values, and foreign policies for attraction. However, if those qualities do not hold international appeal, there is nothing to attract with (Nye, 2008). As such, emerging powers can "borrow" the image of the event (Grix & Lee, 2013; Preuss & Alfs, 2011). In the context of hosting sport mega events: "The key advantage, as we have stated, of a sports mega-event is that the hosting state is able to communicate their attractiveness through the shared cultural values of sport." (Grix & Lee, 2013, p. 528). By hosting sport mega events, countries can show the world that not only do they share the same universal values, but they also want to spread them further by hosting the events (Grix & Lee, 2013, p. 528). Sport mega events can thus be initiated by the government as a means of soft power. The most infamous example is the Berlin Olympics in 1936 which were hijacked for Nazi propaganda.

Connected to soft power is nation branding. A nation's image is important when using soft power. Without having attractive qualities, we cannot talk about soft power. For realism, changing the perspective of other states is essential for making alliances or projecting power over them. Coming back to South Africa, the country was an international pariah with no real power in global politics until the end of apartheid. This was a nightmare for realists. By staging sport events, among other things, the rainbow

nation was able to change its image and is now part of several political alliances and a regional leader (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3017).

Thus, Hypothesis I is based on the realist concept that the state is the dominant actor in international relations as well as that the state can no longer rely on “hard” militaristic power but must be able to utilize soft power. The main interest of the state is to gain more power in the international environment. To achieve this goal, states nowadays use the politics of attraction to influence other states to do their bidding. Mega events, therefore, serve as a projection of soft power. They can be venues to showcase emerging powers’ progress and influence, to change the viewer’s perspective on the country, and appeal to them. Emerging powers who lack a military or are cautious about using it can leverage their culture, political values, and foreign policy to gain power. If these countries do not have qualities that are attractive to the international audience, they can use the image of the sport event and values connected with it to make themselves attractive.

H I: Emerging powers like Brazil, China, and South Africa are the primary actor in instigating the bid and are interested in hosting a sport mega event as a tool of soft power to project their power on the international level.

2.1.3. Liberal theory of International Relations

Liberalism is a political philosophy based on the rights of the individuals, such as the rights of free speech, liberty, consent of the governed, political equality, and that everyone is equal before the law. As with many other philosophies, it changed over time. In the Age of Enlightenment, early liberals were opponents of the monarchy, the divine rights of the kings, and traditional conservatism as can be seen in the works of John Locke. The philosophy evolved with the help of many historical events that it also helped to propel. Such as the French Revolution or the creation of the United States of America. During the turbulent 20th century, liberalism was challenged by other ideologies like fascism or communism, however, it prevailed, and after the end of the Cold War, famously Francis Fukuyama, like many others, declared liberalism a winner and predicted universalization of the liberal democracy in the world.

The core concept of liberalism is that foreign policy is governed by a domestic policy that stems from domestic actors – individuals and different social groups such as companies, unions, minority groups, and political parties. Another concept is that the interest of that state does not have to be the acquisition of power, but there are alternative interests like economic prosperity or spreading an ideology. Liberalism sees a bright future in international relations and believes there will be further strengthening of the peaceful coexistence and cooperation between states. In this regard, it opposes realism's negative view of the future. There are different liberal theories, such as the Theory of Democratic Peace that stands on the premise that democratic institutions and society can prevent war and strengthen the relationship between states. It is based on the control people have over their elected representatives, the transparency of democratic institutions, and democratic values. Another famous theory is the Theory of Complex Interdependence developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. It is based on the societies that are irreversibly connected as such war is not a solution for conflict as it would hit all actors hard. However, liberalism has been more established as an ideology than a proper theory in Political Science and was often criticized for it by proponents of other directions, such as realism, for instance, Kenneth Waltz (Moravcsik, 1997).

The Liberal theory of International Relations claims actions of the state are influenced by domestic and transnational society. “Societal ideas, interests, and institutions influence state behavior by shaping state preferences, that is, the fundamental social purposes underlying the strategic calculations of governments.” (Moravcsik, 1997, p. 513). Andrew Moravcsik (1997), in his article *Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics* restates the Liberal theory of IR from being merely an approach in International Relations to a theory that is equally important and influential as realism and institutionalism. He proceeds to explain three core assumptions that make up the Liberal IR theory. The first assumption is that the main actors in international politics are individuals and private groups who are rational and risk-averse and operate in mind with the scarcity of resources and conflicting values to further their interests. The state has to react to pressure from individuals, interest groups, political parties, etc. The second assumption claims that the state represents a fraction of domestic society, and the preferences of this group are the base of state policy. The state is not an actor but a representative. Individuals turn to the state when the private sectors are unable to help them. The government thus has set out borders by the diverse

interests of different interest groups and individuals who want the state policy to be in line with their preferences. The third assumption is that state policy is interdependent on other states. The state tries to realize its goal under the constraints of other states' preferences. Moravcsik then continues to explain three types of liberalism – Ideational, Commercial, and Republican. For research purposes, Commercial liberalism was chosen to help to explain why states would want to organize sport mega events.

Commercial liberalism explains the behaviour of the state on the basis of incentives from the market to which are domestic and transnational actors exposed. The greater the potential benefits for the individual or group, the more pressure they will put on the government to facilitate the appropriate actions to reach the benefits. Commercial liberalism could thus explain if there is some “bottom-up” pressure from, for example, local companies that could turn a profit, different interest groups and individuals who may have other non-economic benefits, or political parties who want to stay in power. These domestic actors then influence government officials to bid for a sport mega event. This pressure could be seen in the construction of new facilities for the events. Usually, the government pays for the new infrastructure which means public funds are used to foot the bill. This provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity for construction businesses. Horne (2007, p. 84) writes that developers have been able to extract public subsidies and other financial benefits (tax holidays) from governments. The hosting country is under a time constraint and that makes them often desperate and willing to make concessions otherwise unthinkable. The same goes also for other types of businesses. For example, in the UK in the lead-up to the 2012 Olympics, new laws were introduced to protect official sponsors from ambush marketing (Horne, 2007, p. 89). Political parties may want to organize sport events to appease the population, to legitimate themselves in their eyes, or to stay in power. This pressure could be even more prevalent in the emerging powers or developing countries where “...colonial and neo-colonial ties have shaped and continue to shape external relationships with sports mega-events as well.” (Horne, 2007, p. 90).

Cornelissen (2010) described international sport as an alternative way of communication between states. As such, liberals would claim that sport mega event is a great venue for spreading an ideology. Arguably, both USSR and USA used their Olympics as a propaganda tool to showcase their superiority. It is also an interesting

opportunity for domestic actors in emerging powers that do not have access to an international audience. Global media report on a daily base about the event, easily spreading the message of the sporting bodies like FIFA or IOC and the organising state as well. Many of the emerging powers want to change the status quo, and using the channels of international sport is a compelling way to show the world there is another equally successful course of action.

Hypothesis II stems from the Liberal theory of IR assumption that different domestic groups make up the national interest. National interest is thus based on domestic policy which is composed of the interests of individuals and private groups. The main actors in international relations are thus individuals and private groups. In the context of the sport mega events, the rationale behind the bidding process is from individuals or private groups that want to use them for their own interests. Hosting a sport mega event is an opportunity for numerous consultants, analysts of any kind, economists, political scientists, etc. people who have the know-how (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 138). As such, the “bottom-up” approach should be visible in the bidding process. Some kind of pressure from society on the state officials to host the mega event. These individuals or private groups are exposed to the market, thus bidding, and staging a sport mega event can be considered a business venture. The Olympics or the FIFA World Cup are highly commercialized events and represent countless opportunities for economic growth or the spread of ideology/message.

H II: Emerging powers like Brazil, China, and South Africa are interested in hosting a sport mega event as a response to the demands of individuals, political groups, and private companies who see the sport mega events as a business opportunity and tool for economic prosperity or to spread an ideology.

2.2. Methodology

2.2.1. Case selection

To answer the research question, I chose a case study as an appropriate method. The case study uses qualitative methods as it is a detailed study of a specific subject. In this

case, the question is why emerging powers like Brazil, China, and South Africa are interested in hosting a sport mega event.

Because of the limited time and resources as well as the length of the bachelor thesis, the selection of cases was not random. The bids from the year 2000 onwards were chosen because the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing mark the start of successful bids from emerging powers or developing countries. From 2000, there were sixteen attempts for both the Summer and Winter Olympic games from six different countries. For the FIFA World Cup, eight emerging powers tried for the tournament. I have decided to include only emerging powers that were successful in their bidding for the sport mega events. Because of the limitation, I only picked countries that belong to the BRICS groups as it is the most recognized example of emerging powers – Brazil, China, Russia, and South Africa. All four are leaders of their regions and have the fastest-growing economies. As such, their ambitions ran high, and each state wants to become a bigger international player, especially China, with Xi Jinping’s project to make China a superpower by 2049.

Secondly, Russia was omitted from the research. Even though it belongs to the BRICS countries and organized both the FIFA World Cup and Winter Olympics. Russia is not an emerging power as was previously described. Russia, as a successor state of the USSR, is trying to manage the subsequent decline in power, and international prestige. Russia experienced decades of struggle on all fronts in contrast to other BRICS states that were dynamically developing (Macfarlane, 2006). As such, its narrative is more about re-emerging as a global superpower than changing the status quo, for example, in reforming the UN Security Council. India was not chosen because it did not bid for first-order sport events (Grix et al., 2015).

To select sport mega events, I have applied the classification method developed by Müller (2015). Although there are other sport events that can be classified as “mega” like the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China (Müller, 2015, p. 636), only Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup are first-tier mega events (Grix et al., 2015, p. 468). Consequently, the research is focused only on the Olympics and FIFA World Cup. Brazil bided four times for the Summer Olympics and two times for the FIFA World Cup. China wanted to organize the Summer Olympics two times and Winter Olympics

one time with no attempt for the football tournament. South Africa submitted the application for one Summer Olympics and two football championships. Only the winning bids were selected because there is more study material available. Therefore, five sport events that took place and are generally considered to be mega events – the 2008 Summer Olympics in China, the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil are part of the research.

As seen in Table 1. two events are mega events, and two events are considered to be giga events. However, the distinction between mega and giga events is not significant for the research. At first glance the Beijing Olympics in 2022 should not be part of the study, however, the low score on Visitor attractiveness is due to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting restrictions which lead to minimum tickets being sold (Number of sold tickets is a proxy measurement for Visitor attractiveness). Without the pandemic restrictions, it can be assumed that over 1 million tickets would be sold as it was during the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang. Nonetheless, I have chosen not to examine the event as it has happened recently and there is not enough study material available. Both events staged by Brazil are categorized as giga events. It is mainly due to several increases in budgets although it cannot be compared to the budget of over 40 million USD for Beijing 2008. As such, there are four observations across three countries and continents.

Event	Location	Visitor attractiveness	Mediated reach	Cost	Transformation	Total	Class
Summer Olympics	Beijing, China 2008	3	2	3	2	10	Mega
FIFA World Cup	South Africa 2010	3	3	2	2	10	Mega
FIFA World Cup	Brazil 2014	3	3	3	3	12	Giga
Summer Olympics	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 2016	3	3	3	3	12	Giga
Winter Olympics	Beijing 2022	0	3	1	2	6	Major

Table 1. Size of Classification of selected events Sources: FIFA, Müller (2015), IOC

2.2.2. Data

To verify the hypotheses, I have done an extensive literature review and have compiled together numerous documents, ranging from peer-reviewed articles, official documents from the bidding campaign from states as well as the IOC and FIFA to newspaper articles written about all four events from the early 2000s until 2023 plus statistical data. These events have to be put into the context of their time, as such, the newspaper articles and statistical data were used to “stage a scene”. This helps with a better understanding of the reasons behind bidding campaigns, as official documents do not have to include the needed scope of information. In addition, hosting rights are awarded seven to ten years before the actual event, as such, states are in different circumstances at the beginning of the process than at the end, which must be considered, as it may affect their actions.

Most of the peer-reviewed articles were not primarily about reasons states have made a bid for the mega events but were discussing the potential benefits and failures they could bring to the different countries or what kind of legacy they have left behind. Most articles discussed numerous effects, trying to decipher whether they are positive or negative. Grix et al. (2017, p. 205) find five possible legacies of the sport mega events – economic, urban regeneration, national pride, increased participation in sports, and international prestige/soft power. The authors looked at diplomatic legacies, displacement, citizens’ and residents’ opinions, etc. As such, possible reasons can be found by backtracking and looking at what the countries consider to be the greatest benefit of the staging or what they are trying to downplay. Scientific articles provide a less biased perspective on the events and thus can complement findings from the governments and sporting bodies who tend to have rather positive views on staged events.

Official documents from the bidding campaigns slightly differ from each other. FIFA and the IOC have different regulations for the campaign, and many of those, have been reformed over the years. Besides differences in the conditions of the sport governing bodies, there are differences in what IOC and FIFA want from the candidates. FIFA is more interested in promoting football in the world and opening up to new markets

(Jerabek et al., 2017). In addition, it did not shy away from “controversial” places. The World Cup was alternating between Europe and South America until 1994, as they have the biggest fan base and tradition of football. FIFA has a bigger budget than the IOC, consequently, it can afford to take on more risks. IOC’s goal is to promote sports and the good values associated with them and “...to dedicate its efforts to ensuring that, in sport, the spirit of fair play prevails and violence is banned” (IOC Mission, n.d.). However, both organisations work together, not just regarding football being an Olympic sport. Although, there has been a recent altercation regarding FIFA’s suggestion to have the World Cup every two years (BBC, 2021). Besides documents from the FIFA and IOC, I have used documents published by respective governments, that includes evaluation reports and other reports connected with them. I have been able to acquire the Candidature files, evaluation reports, and official reports for the 2008 and 2016 Summer Olympics. Only a questionnaire for the Beijing Olympics was available. For the World Cup, there are two reports, the bid book, and the inspection report for the South African World Cup, but only the inspection report for the Brazilian, as the bid book was not officially published by FIFA.

Newspaper articles, together with statistical data from organizations such as the UN, help us set a scene. They contain information that is often not included in official documents. Newspaper articles, although they can be biased, shed light on problems that governments would rather not see or are downplaying. On the other hand, they can show issues that the state wants to fix by bidding/organizing a sport mega event. Statistical data like Human Development Index (HDI) can tell us what the real situation in the countries was. HDI measures the development of the state by human development, not only by economic growth. It combines dimensions of a long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living to assess how is country developing (United Nations, n.d.). Other data regarding corruption, democracy, or status of the human rights in the country are a proxy measurement for how society works. For corruption, the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) developed by Transparency International was utilized. The index aggregates data from different institutions that provide information on how businesspeople and country experts perceive corruption in the public sector (Transparency International, 2023b). Freedom House provides information about the state of democracy and human rights in the countries (Freedom House, n.d.) Together, this paints a picture of whether there are domestic groups or

individuals who can and know how to pressure the government or if the government directs national interests. Additionally, annual reports from these organizations provide broader information about the political environment of the countries. As with statistical data from trustworthy organizations (UNDP, Transparency International, Freedom House), selected newspaper articles are also from well-known and established broadsheets (The Guardian, The Independent, The New York Times, The Washington Post) and international news agencies (BBC) that were available in the Charles University discovery service UKAŽ or on the Internet. The statistical data was gathered for two periods – the start of the bidding process and awarding of the hosting rights.

3. Empirical analysis

3.1. 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China

The bidding process for the 2008 Summer Olympics started in the year 2000. China at the turn of the century was the most populous country in the world, a fact that was much emphasized in the Chinese bid. After the failure to win the 2000 Summer Olympics, China put everything into bidding for the 2008 Games. However, the country was not perceived well in the world. Being under the communist regime, Freedom House classified China as “not free” in the report of 2000/2001. The communist government cracked down on workers’ protests while liberalizing the economy and preparing to join to WTO (Freedom House, 2001). The violations of human rights were behind numerous protests against Chinese candidacy, with people trying to boycott China, however, no real international opposition formed (Mackay, 2001). On the other hand, human rights were one of the reasons why members of the IOC voted for China in the hopes that it will see the error, as now the current president of the IOC Thomas Bach said: “...I hope this vote contributes to improving the human rights situation.” (Shipley, 2001). The HDI was for the observed period 0.59, indicating that human development in China was lacking (United Nations, n.d.). Chinese officials were aware of the fact and were not trying to hide it, claiming that the Olympic games will accelerate the development (Shipley, 2001; Khan et al., 2004). In CPI, China was in 63rd place from ninety in 2000/2001. It improved to 57th place from ninety-one in the 2001/2002 edition. Despite the improvement, China was still a corrupt state (Transparency International, 2023a).

In the official bidding documents, China builds its bid on the decades-long desire of Chinese people to be part of the Olympic movement. The questionnaire and Candidature files emphasize China's status as the second biggest market and most populous country in the world (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, 2000a, p. 19; 2000b). As such, Beijing Olympics would be a tremendous opportunity for growth. An interesting point is how China narrates its history with the IOC, claiming it is the only country to be represented by two national committees. In addition, China was a politically and financially stable country, which would ensure the smooth organization of the event. The Bid Committee (BOCOG) had the full support of all tiers of government, with their members being an integral part of the process, such as the mayor of Beijing. The bid had also great support from the public. The Evaluation report claims that 96% of residents of Beijing and other urban areas supported the Chinese Olympics as well as, states that it is a government-driven bid. (IOC, 2001, p. 60, 74).

Communist Party has been using sport for political reasons for a long time to bridge the gap between the state and society, and the world (Askew, 2009, p. 107-111; Xu, 2006, p. 91-95). The research revealed that the dominant actor in the bidding process was the Chinese government. Its members were part of the Bid Committee, and the president of NOC was also the Minister of Sport. The results show that China was more interested in "selling" the Olympics to Chinese citizens, to boost their nationalism. For example, in the Candidature files, the BOCOG claims that thousands of people from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan entered competitions for slogan or logo design (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, 2010, p. 27-29). The bidding documents mention the Chinese hope of bringing together the Eastern and Western cultures in a harmonious way, with an emphasis on the ancient history of China as a nation. The three principles of the Olympics (Green, High-tech, and People's) are rooted in Chinese history and philosophy which can be read as an attempt to portray an alternative way of doing things in the world. However, the scientific articles argue that China was more concerned about projecting soft power to the domestic audience than international ones (Chen, 2012; Miles, 2014). Although Preuss and Alfs (2011, p. 66) found that the Communist Party wanted to reduce information asymmetry to attract tourists and foreign direct investments as well as to build up social capital. Xu (2006) and Jinxia and Mangan (2008,) claim that China had certain international ambitions in hosting the Olympics. The Games were supposed to pave the way for China to play a bigger role in

global affairs and project China as a strong nation. On the other hand, Manzenreiter (2010, p. 42) discovered that China had no clear strategy for outside communication, and the Olympics were not part of it: “I have demonstrated that the efforts and attention of the Chinese government were overwhelmingly addressing domestic concerns and the need of educating the Chinese for the challenges of globalization and immediate encounters with the West.”.

As demonstrated above, the Chinese government was heavily involved. However, corruption in China was a big problem at that time, as such it is likely that private entities with ties to the government were interested in staging the Olympics. China was preparing to join the WTO and further liberalize its economy. Organizing such a mega event promised to accelerate the development of the market and the growth of the economy. This is also evident in the High-tech principle of the Olympics, which sets a challenge for Chinese technological companies (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, 2010, p. 22-23). For developers, the construction of new infrastructure, sport facilities, etc. represented a huge business opportunity. An article in the Asian Wall Street Journal describes the Olympics as an opportunity for Chinese companies to get international exposure. For instance, Lenovo devised a strategy based on Samsung’s success at marketing during the Seoul Olympics to get international exposure (Khan et al., 2004). It is not unreasonable to assume that Chinese companies would push on the government to bid for the Games but there is no concrete evidence.

In addition, Communist Party had a worse image after the Tiananmen Square massacre in the world as well as amongst the people. Nobody believed in communism anymore, the party had to legitimate itself in another way. Organizing the Olympics would prove the progress made under the Communist Party to the public and avert attention from the human rights violations to the spectacle of the Games (Askew, 2009, p. 106; Brady, 2009). The evidence is pointing out that the Olympics were an accelerator for further economic growth, development, and legitimation of the Chinese government in the eyes of the public. The development of the country was a big part of the Chinese bid. “... bid officials and politicians took turns pleading with the IOC membership, urging the body to contribute to China's development by awarding Beijing the Games.” (Shipley, 2001). China’s confidence would be elevated, and the status of a great nation restored by winning the bid. China planned countless activities for the public to spread the Olympic

values, cultural events, and educational programmes to help prepare citizens for the Games (Jinxia & Mangan 2008, p. 2028-2032). The Evaluation report predicts that the Olympics would leave behind a great and unique legacy for the country, with several projects for example for environmental protection and air pollution progressing because of the bid (IOC 2001). Manzenreiter (2010, p. 35) claims that by tackling environmental challenges, the government proved to citizens it can improve their quality of life. Chen (2012, p. 733) writes that the Games could have been to show the government – Communist Party in a more favourable light. The Olympic bid was a common interest of the state and the public. It was a tool of national cohesion and legitimization of the government as well as a symbol of progress for the Chinese people (Xu, 2006; Manzenreiter, 2010).

China was a primary actor in the bidding process. Members of the government were part of the Bidding committee as well as the Organizing committee. The bid had the full support of all tiers of government. However, China used the Games to influence its citizens and prepare them for the effects of globalization. It's a continuation of the state's policy of using sport to reconcile the state and the public. Consequently, only part of Hypothesis I is correct. On the other hand, the Communist Party had an image crisis. Nobody believed in communism anymore, as such, the Party needed to assert itself in the eyes of the public. The Communists, therefore, use the Olympics to showcase Chinese achievements made under their rule and avert attention from other issues like human rights violations. As such, Hypothesis II is correct and the bid for the Olympics was a device of the Communist Party to further economic prosperity and legitimate itself in China.

3.2. 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa

In 2001 FIFA introduced a policy of rotation of the World Cup after South Africa lost the 2006 World Cup to Germany because of the abstention of one member of the FIFA Council. The rotation would begin in Africa, a continent that has never hosted the championship (Pierce, 2001). The bidding started in 2002 and ended in 2004, with only African countries permitted to apply. South Africa was ranked 107th place from 173 countries in HDI, with the classification of medium human development (UNDP, 2002).

Although the third highest ranking African country, it is a low figure. The biggest problems were high rates of HIV infections and crime. Facts that were pointed out several times by other countries, as well as FIFA (Carroll, 2004; Gleeson, 2004; FIFA, 2004, p. 73). Freedom House classified South Africa as “free”, showcasing how big of a leap the country made since 1994 (Freedom House, 2002). South Africa was a leading champion in Africa at that time, a middle-income country with an emerging economy. Everyone was excited by the possibility of the World Cup. South Africa put everything into making a perfect bid. Cornelissen (2010, p. 3017) sees the 2010 bid as a culmination of South African efforts to enhance its integration into the world system. After decades as the black sheep of the international environment, when South Africa was banned from various sport associations including FIFA, bidding for and hosting sport events has become a tool of foreign policy to shed the stigma of apartheid. Just one year after the end of the regime in 1995, South Africa hosted and won the now-famous Rugby World Cup, which had tremendous positive effects on its population (Cornelissen, 2008, p. 487).

The racial history of the state was mentioned several times in the Bid Book. The Bid Committee argued that FIFA World Cup would help to unite the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual South Africa (SysOps, 2010). Football is generally considered a black sport in the country, while rugby and cricket are for whites. As with everything else, the sport was segregated during the apartheid and black South Africans could not play at the representative level. However, football slowly became the sport of the people and was used in the anti-apartheid movement (Ndlovu, 2010; PwC, 2011). South African win at the Rugby World Cup in 1995 started a government policy to reclaim sport to foster national cohesion instead of dividing society. The report from the Inspection visit also mentions the uniting potential of the World Cup on South Africans – “The 2010 FIFA World Cup™ will contribute to the establishment and confirmation of the process of democratisation and unification that started about a decade ago.” (FIFA, 2004, p. 14). Overall, the tainted history of football and how it helped to end apartheid was prominent throughout the bid, claiming that the love of football, not economic opportunities, had driven the bid (Sysops, 2010).

Connected to South Africa’s low development, the Bid Committee portrayed the World Cup as a solution for many of its domestic problems and emphasised acceleration of

development. The South African government used it for a prevention campaign against HIV/AIDS (Cornelissen, 2004, p. 1301). Despite the lack of security, South Africa profiled itself as a peaceful country with the knowledge to tackle the problem. During the final presentation in Zürich, three Nobel peace prize winners, including Nelson Mandela, were present. "...South Africa is a model for the rest of the world." said Joseph Blatter after the country won the rights (Cornelissen, 2004, p. 1306). South Africa presented its success as an African one, an opportunity to showcase Africa in a different, better light and fight Afro-pessimism. South Africa would cooperate with its neighbour countries as well as with the African Union (Ndlovu, 2010, p. 148-149).

All sources point out that the government was involved in the preparation and marketing of the bid. The government fully supported the bid and provided guarantees for FIFA. Several high-ranking officials were part of the marketing and travelled the world to persuade voters. Nelson Mandela came out of retirement and travelled to Trinidad and Tobago to earn votes from North and Central America (Bose, 2004). Government officials, including the president, met with the FIFA Inspection group during their visit, accompanying them along the country (FIFA, 2004, p. 63). The support was probably the most visible at the second inauguration of President Mbeki in 2004, where many foreign delegations were invited, including a delegation from FIFA. FIFA could see first-hand the progress South Africa made in 10 years of democracy and freedom, as one bid ambassador said: "Everybody has pulled together to show South Africa could hold a magnificent World Cup finals." (Carroll, 2004).

On the other, numerous businesses were also very enthusiastic about the bid. South African biggest companies with international standing (Vodacon, Anglo American) sponsored the bid from the beginning (Ndlovu, 2010, 149-150). Local companies were interested in the bid as the sponsorship market in South Africa was growing more than the global one. In addition, the bid was also supported by international companies and several of the official FIFA sponsors (Coca-Cola) that already had business ventures in the country (SysOps, 2010). South Africa is a free democratic country, as such there should not be a problem with private businesses reaching out to the government. The CPI classified South Africa in 36th place from 102 in 2002 and in 2004 in 44th place from 146, which does not indicate widespread corruption (Transparency International, 2023a). However, I did not find where the money from the sponsors went to. On the

other hand, Cornelissen (2008, p. 486-487) writes that Anglo American – a mining company, announced its sponsorship of the bid shortly after a class action suit about post-apartheid reparations. As many South African corporations have white ownership, sponsoring such an event could improve their image. Most of the needed investments for transport, telecommunications infrastructure, and sport facilities were funded by the government and municipalities, paid by public funds. Although the government declared that many projects would be built irrespective of the tournament, the evidence points to event-driven projects that had been more concerned about FIFA requirements than urban planning (Steinbrink et al., 2011). Concerning the material costs, several protests were held around the country (Cornelissen, 2012), and initial public support declined, although as the first African World Cup, it was still popular (Van Der Westhuizen, 2021). Consequently, the bid for the 2010 World Cup was mainly a project of the South African Football Association (SAFA) and the government of South Africa.

Staging sport mega events has been a part of South African foreign policy to improve the international standing (Cornelissen, 2010; Ndlovu, 2010). South Africa clearly states that it wants to use the World Cup to develop its “nation brand” (Knott et al., 2015, p. 46-47). South Africa portrayed the World Cup as an African one to promote Africa in a better light playing on Pan-Africanism. The country had developmental programmes on the continent, trying to bring on an “African Renaissance”. Activity that would profit from the South African World Cup (Ndlovu, 2010, p. 148-149). “The notion of the ‘African legacy’ is a political programme underpinned by the leadership's desire to fashion a different international image for the African continent – one not of victimhood and disadvantage but one built on positive constructs of African agency.” (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3018). This indicates that South Africa wanted to organize the World Cup as a continuation of their efforts to improve their international image as well as representation of Africa in the world.

The Bid Book demonstrates the want of the government to replicate the national pride and unification brought by previous sport events, especially the 1995 Rugby World Cup and 1996 African Cup of Nations as well as to stimulate the development of the country. South Africa was a divided country, with many of the cleavages from apartheid still evident in its society. Strengthening national cohesion is one of the reasons why the South African government bided for and hosted many sport events. The sport was a

point of contention during the previous regime and was divided along racial lines (Ndlovu, 2010, p. 144). There were three football associations in South Africa – for the white, black, and Indian populations (PwC 2011, p. 27). Black & Westhuizen (2004, p. 1209) mention the improvement of prospects and quality of democratic life as a potential benefit of hosting a sport event. Civil society has a space to build social capital, for example, through volunteering. The hosting of sport mega events, which are in their nature liberal, can enhance the liberalization of the whole political system (Black & Westhuizen, 2004, p. 1209). The decision to bid for a football championship was probably made with the intention to bring closer all ethnicities in the country, especially black and white people as football is predominantly associated with the black population (Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2011, 174).

Staging sport events has been part of the foreign policy of South Africa since the change of the regime. The sport was a point of contention during the apartheid. However, it was used in the anti-apartheid movement, for example, by excluding South Africa from competing in international competitions. South Africa used it to shed the stigma associated with the racist regime and integrate into the international system. The 2010 FIFA World Cup was a culmination of these efforts. The government fully supported the bid. Even Nelson Mandela came out of retirement to gather votes for South Africa. As such, Hypothesis I is correct, and the South African government wanted to use the World Cup as a soft power tool to improve its international position. The bid was also strongly endorsed by South African biggest companies. However, the extent of the support they provided is not identifiable. Therefore, only part of Hypothesis II is confirmed. In addition, there were other reasons, why South Africa wanted to organize the championship, that are not explained by realism or liberalism, such as to boost national cohesion similar to other hosted sport events.

3.2. 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The rotation policy continued for the 2014 World Cup, with only South American countries participating in the bid. The process started in 2006. Only two countries applied – Colombia and Brazil. However, Colombia soon withdrew, leaving Brazil the only candidate. In contrast, Brazil had to compete with seven other countries for the

Olympics just a year later (IOC, 2009a). In 2006, Brazil had a medium human development (UNDP, 2006), and in 2007, it had high human development (Akbarov, 2008). The economy was growing, and life was improving for everyone. Brazil, under President Lula, was on the rise and more ambitious than ever. The country has already hosted one football championship in 1950 and has tried several times for the Olympics. As an emerging power, Brazil was very active on the international stage, for instance, by attempting to change the UN Security Council. However, Brazil was perceived as a country for fun and tourism, not for investments (Anholt, 2010 in Buarque, 2015, p. 1304). To demonstrate its progress, Brazil wanted to host a sport mega event. (Grix et al., 2015, p. 474). After unsuccessful bids for the 2004 and 2012 Summer Olympics, Brazil staged impressive Pan-American Games in 2007 and other international events to prepare for the World Cup and the Olympics (BOC, 2010, p. 17). However, the international growth did not manifest at home, where poverty and crime were still present in the infamous slums – favelas all around the country (Conchas, 2014, p. 168)

As the Bid Book is not available, important information about the motivation behind the bid is missing. Although, FIFA declared the tournament would not go to Brazil, if there were problems, it was clear from 2003, when South America got the World Cup, that Brazil will be the host (Vickery, 2012). Brazil had no other competitor but still had to meet the strict requirements of FIFA. We can only generalize the reasons from similar events. Brazil was at a unique stage at the time of the bidding. The country had the potential to rise from a regional player to a global one. Because of the lack of military, Brazil learned to leverage its soft power and make a good name for itself using soft power (Grix et al., 2015, 467, 474). The fact that Brazil was the only contender already spoke volumes about its admirable shape. De Almeida et al. (2014, p. 272) say that Brazil wanted to challenge the traditional order and identify itself as the leader of the change. The orientation to the international audience can be seen in VIP lounges and the price of the tickets. The most famous Brazilian cities – Sao Paolo and Rio de Janeiro, had the smallest number of lounges which could indicate that Brazil wanted to attract people to less-known cities (FIFA, 2007, p. 22). This corresponds with the fact that the Local Organizing Committee (LOC) persuaded FIFA to have twelve hosting cities instead of the eight proposed (Vickery, 2012). FIFA (2007, p. 22) also pointed out that the ticket price is higher than Brazilians are used to and will need some persuasion to buy them. Again, implying that Brazil was relying on foreign tourists who could afford

higher prices, making the tournament for foreigners, not Brazilians. The World Cup would boost the economy and bring in new investments. Even though the country was classified as a high-development country, it was last in the section (UNDP, 2006). The tournament could help revitalize the hosting cities and their urban areas and accelerate other projects to improve living standards or the environment. The slums of Brazilian cities were full of gangs and drug-related crime (Vox, 2016a) however, FIFA concluded that the government had sufficient know-how to solve the problem (FIFA, 2007, p. 30). Many of these slums were also supposed to be dismantled for World Cup-related infrastructure (Butler & Aicher, 2015, p. 307).

Brazil built its bid on its love for football and world-class fans (FIFA, 2007). The country holds a world record for winning five times, and hosting the tournament seemed a natural development. Everyone showed support for the bid. FIFA believed the World Cup would have a long-lasting legacy in transportation, accommodation infrastructure, and football facilities (FIFA, 2007, p. 11). The bidding had the support of all tiers of government. The Inspection group met with President Lula, besides meeting mayors of potential hosting cities and governors of the states. Cities were fighting each other to become the hosts. Contrary, there was no real representation of the government in the LOC. The head of the Brazil football association (CBF), Ricardo Teixeira, was solely responsible for the organization while the government stood by (Vickery, 2012). Only in 2009, a subcommittee was created in the national parliament to supervise the financing of the World Cup and the Olympics and counter the influence of Teixeira (De Almeida et al., 2015).

Interestingly, there seemed to be no financial support from the Brazilian private sector. The proposed budget did not contain revenues from sponsorships. The tournament was to be funded by public money. However, the construction and refurbishments of the stadiums were to be financed by long-term concessions and later public-private partnerships (FIFA, 2007, p. 25). Consequently, private companies had the chance to influence the government on a tight schedule. In addition, Brazil had a decades-long corruption problem. The CPI index gave it a score of 3.3 in 2006 (Transparency International, 2023a). Ricardo Teixeira was investigated and removed from his position in CBF and LOC during the preparations for the World Cup. Members of the governing

party of President Lula had been accused of taking bribes as well. The president himself was not exempt from allegations (Chade, 2017; Vickery, 2012).

Public approval was high at first (BBC, 2007). However soon, protests erupted all over the country. People protested against rising costs and expenditures. Angry about the resources for education and health that were allocated to the World Cup instead (Butler & Aicher, 2015; Conchas, 2014; Grix et al., 2015). Local government took advantage of the new policies prepared for the World Cup to remove the unappealing parts of society and failed. Connected with corruption, Jung (2022) found that people perceived the World Cup negatively. An interviewee said: „... Politicians here in Brazil exploited the World Cup to steal our money. This is because, in Brazil, football is one of the most effective ways to cover up political corruption!” (Jung, 2022, p. 5)

The Olympics Games were like the World Cup in many ways. The bidding process started in 2007 when Brazil had already secured the World Cup. After the questionnaire phase, Brazil was the only developing country competing against Japan, Spain, and the USA (IOC, 2009a). The bid focused on the beautiful nature of Rio de Janeiro and its youthful atmosphere connected with the tradition of carnivals. The Brazilian Olympic Committee (BOC) emphasized that the Games were never held in South America, which would be a tremendous opportunity to spread the Olympic movement. In addition, Brazil had one of the youngest populations in the world, as such the Olympics would reach younger audiences more easily with the help of Rio’s famous energy (Rio 2016 Bid Committee, 2008, p. 21). The Olympics would leave a great social and infrastructure legacy, stimulating change in the city and its urban areas. The BOC planned to change neglected neighbourhoods into Olympic sport venues and training facilities. The bid emphasized the stable economy of Brazil and its status as an emerging power with global ambitions and how the country is a reliable partner to FIFA (BOC, 2010, p. 62-67).

The government supported the bid, which was visible in the high engagement of President Lula in the campaign. Lula visited athletes during Beijing 2008 and met with the IOC president. He was also the only president that met with the Evaluation Commission during their visit. Other high-ranking officials and former Olympians have also met with the Commission (BOC, 2010, p. 104-106, 111-114). The Evaluation

report clearly states that the bid is driven by the government and the city of Rio (IOC, 2009b, p. 84). Like the World Cup, the Games were to be financed by federal, state, and municipal governments. Unlike the World Cup, the Olympic bid had the support of Brazilian international companies (BOC, 2010, p. 192-205), and many Olympic sites were to be built by private investors. After the Games, allegations of corruption were investigated by the FBI. The BOC and affiliated businessmen were supposed to bribe members of the IOC to vote for Rio. Brazilian authorities also investigated malpractice related to Olympic infrastructure. Members of the local governments were supposed to accept bribes in exchange for contracts (Kiernan & Davis O'Brien, 2017; Chade, 2017).

Brazilians often think that other countries see them as inferior. As such, they are obsessed with how they are perceived internationally and seek affirmation (Buarque, 2015, p. 1304). Winning the rights to the two most prestigious sport mega events shortly after each other was an immense boost for Brazilian confidence. However, that changed as the economy deteriorated, and the government became unstable (Van Der Westhuizen, 2021). Public support declined with the rising costs of the World Cup and the Olympics. The pacification programme to sort out the situation in Rio's slums resulted in violence between police and its residents (Vox, 2016a; Vox, 2016b). People have been evicted without proper notice from their homes to make space for Olympic sites. The city was a construction zone for ten years with many projects finishing after the Olympics, making everyday life complicated. In addition, most people would not be able to afford the tickets (Watts, 2015). As a result, both bids were driven by the government as well as with the private sector having a vested interest in the bid (Chade, 2017).

Both the World Cup and the Olympics were pursued for similar reasons. The acceleration of development, great economic opportunities, and lasting infrastructural legacy were all mentioned in the bidding documents. The Olympics were part of the long-term plan for Rio. Neighbourhoods would have been cleaned, residential buildings built, and a new sense of community created (Rio 2016 Bid Committee, 2008, p. 21-25). Brazilians still had trauma over losing the 1950 World Cup finals at home. The home tournament would be an opportunity to strengthen the Brazilian nation built on the love of football. The World Cup was supposed to bring benefits to all states, attract new tourists, and leave behind new airports, roads, and world-class stadiums (De Almeida et

al., 2015). However, during the preparation of the events, the opposite came true. Jung (2022, p. 11) writes: „The events were largely funded and organized by the government in collaboration with the private sector, with little or no accountability to its citizens.”. Both events focused on the international prestige they could bring to Brazil and its efforts to become new global power (Buarque, 2015, p. 1304, 1314).

Winning the World Cup and the Olympics indicated that FIFA and the IOC had trust in Brazil to organize successful events only two years apart. Conchas (2014, p. 168) writes that the sport mega events were chances for Brazil to assert itself as a capable nation. Direct proof of that is the Candidature files. One of the five strategies of the Bid Committee was to promote Brazil globally (Rio 2016 Bid Committee, 2008, p. 21). This is also supported by the fact that there was no long-term plan for the legacies of the World Cup, with the exception being Rio de Janeiro (Butler & Aicher, 2015; Rocha, 2017). De Almeida et al. (2014, p. 278) write: “Leveraging the country’s image is not only to attract tourists or business, but to position itself as a rising economic power and as a regional leader that intends to have a political role in a global arena.”. Rocha (2017) found that Brazilian diplomats agree that the two most expected diplomatic legacies were the improvement of Brazil’s image and the increase of soft power.

Brazil wanted to affirm its new status as an emerging power by organizing a sport mega event. The country had an effective foreign policy and was trying to challenge the status quo. Both bids were supported by all tiers of government. Most visible in the engagement of President Lula. The preparations for the events revealed that Brazil had no concrete plans to actualize the promised benefits to the public. Instead, the sport events were used to promote Brazil globally and improve its international image, which confirms Hypothesis I. However, allegations of corruption arose involving high-ranking politicians and private companies. Politicians were accepting bribes in exchange for lucrative contracts. Thus, Hypothesis II is correct. The domestic actors wanted to use the sport mega events to make a profit.

Conclusion

The research found that there are numerous potential benefits of hosting a sport mega event. The first reason is an acceleration of development which is highly attractive to emerging powers that still have low development. Roads, airports, and transport systems

are often cited as a tangible legacy. They are also business opportunities for local companies and offer thousands of jobs. However, with economic benefits often overestimated, politicians are also talking about social or political benefits. Winning the rights and successfully staging the event can strengthen the nation, which can be another reason for emerging powers with divided societies. Sport mega events can also be used for soft power. States, that host these world events, are seen as credible actors for organizing sport mega events. Connected with soft power is an improvement of the nation's image. Emerging powers must repeatedly fight against negative stereotypes connected with their development status. By organizing the World Cup or the Olympics, emerging states can "borrow" the values associated with sport and these events to change the perception of an international audience and foreign investors.

Two political theories – realism and liberalism have been chosen to answer of the question why emerging powers are interested in organizing sport mega events. Firstly, realism sees the state as the principal actor in the international environment whose sole purpose is to gain more power. States try to balance each other. However, they exist in anarchy and can only rely on themselves. As a result, conflict is inevitable. Power is mainly associated with the military. However, Joseph Nye came up with a new concept of soft power. He saw that having a capable military cannot get you everywhere in a globalized world. Thus, states need to learn how to wield their soft power. Soft power uses culture, political values, and foreign policies to influence other states. The combination of these two frameworks forms Hypothesis I: Emerging powers are the primary actors behind the bid to use the sport mega event as a tool of soft power to project their influence on the international level. Secondly, in liberalism, the primary actors are domestic ones whose different interests determine national interests.

Domestic actors can be individuals, private companies, or political groups. These actors are rational and risk-averse and behave based on incentives from the market. The greater the benefit for them, the more they push on the government. The national interest also does not have to be to gain power but to spread an ideology or for economic prosperity. As such, Hypothesis II is that emerging powers want to host sport mega events because they respond to the pressure of domestic actors who see the event as an opportunity for a business or to spread an ideology.

To verify the hypotheses, I have critically examined the official bidding documents, peer-reviewed articles as well as newspaper articles. I have used statistical data from UNDP, Transparency International, and Freedom House to find out what were the conditions in the bidding countries. The analysis shows that both theoretical explanations are relevant. In general, emerging powers are interested in staging the sport mega events to gain power and influence in international relations. Domestic actors also have particular interests in bidding for the events. At the same time, it is evident that some factors are not always relevant.

In the case of the Chinese Olympics, the interest to gain power was not significant, but the interests of the Communist Party were the important ones. Communists used the spectacle of the Games to legitimize its continuing rule by pointing out the progress China made. It was a celebration of Chinese culture and an affirmation of its status as a great nation for the Chinese public.

In South Africa, the interest to improve the country's international image was evident. It was a culmination of the government's effort to reintegrate into the international system. The private sector provided strong support for the bid; however, the particular reasons why were not confirmed. There were also other reasons why South Africa wanted the World Cup as sport events are not only part of foreign policy but domestic ones as well. The government wanted to emulate the success of previous sport mega events to unite the population.

Brazilian case revealed that both the national interest and the interests of domestic groups were present. The government used the events to affirm its status as an emerging country with global ambitions. Brazil does not have an adequate military; thus, it became good at leveraging soft power. At the same time, the private sector and individual politicians saw the sport mega events as an opportunity to make a profit. Both actors supported the bid. The politicians had contracts to offer, and companies had bribes to give.

This study proves there is a relationship between sport mega events and emerging powers such as Brazil, China, and South Africa. Realism and liberalism can explain their relationship to some extent. On the other hand, there are other reasons that were

not possible to explain, such as a boost in the nation's confidence. The status of developing a country is a disadvantage when bidding for a sport mega event. There are prejudices connected to it, like high crime rate, corruption, lack of infrastructure, etc. But these countries proved the world wrong and organized successful events that helped to shape the perception the world had of them. There are still more interesting angles to research regarding sport mega events and emerging countries. Further research needs to be done to expose the nuances between the domestic groups in liberalism. Russia as a re-emerging power is an interesting case with hosting both the World Cup and the Winter Olympics. We also cannot forget about the FIFA and the IOC, as entities that play important role in international relations and have an intriguing relationship with developing countries. These organizations possess primarily Western values that often contradict the values of other cultures but have an attractive product to sell. Developing countries have to "mould" themselves to fit their requirements challenging their traditions, which creates a peculiar dynamic worth exploring.

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