

## Culture of Fairness: Sport in Foreign Policy - Opportunities and Challenges: Conference Report, Brussels 10 December 2014

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ifa-Edition Culture and Foreign Policy

## Culture of Fairness:

Sport in Foreign Policy – Opportunities and Challenges

Conference Report, Brussels 10 December 2014



Julia Haß

## Culture of Fairness: Sport in Foreign Policy – Opportunities and Challenges

Sport is a complex and challenging political and societal issue in international relations. It is bound up in the interplay between the policies and practices of nation states and the strategies and activities of transnational corporations and non-governmental organisations.

In what ways can sport be seen or used as a form of “soft power”? To what degree can global sport play a part in achieving wider foreign policy goals? How can the governance of global sport be improved? Should nation states formulate an approach that is based more strongly on ethics or “realpolitik”? To what degree can sport be used to aid wider development goals? To what extent can sport enhance intercultural communication and mutual understanding?



*(L to R): Ronald Grätz, Joseph Maguire, Detlef Dumon, Cora Burnett, Bart Vanreusel, Grant Jarvie, Martina Taubenberger, Monika Staab, Johannes Axster, Jonathan Grix, Odila Triebel, Photo: ifa*

On 10 December 2014 academics and practitioners from the field of global sport discussed these issues at the international conference entitled “Culture of Fairness: Sport in Foreign Policy – Opportunities and Challenges”. The conference took place at the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU. It was organised by ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”, in which academics and

practitioners carry out research on current issues and fields of foreign cultural and educational policy and formulate initiatives for foreign cultural policy actors. This conference was the kick-off event for the EUNIC Yearbook on this topic, which will be published in spring 2016.

**Main outcomes of the conference:**

- Sport can be a social, cultural and political force and therefore an essential tool for anyone involved in contemporary cultural relations.
- Sport can contribute to winning friends, be a resource of hope and help to develop human capital.
- Sport can contribute to developing effective cultural relations based on mutuality, reciprocity, trust and co-operation.
- Sport can be an effective tool because of its universal appeal, capacity to develop feel-good factors and its ability to connect people at all levels.
- Nations use sport to gain influence – both in sport and through sport.
- Credibility is a prerequisite for nation branding via sport. It requires a well-thought-out strategy based on the mapping and analysis of mega-events and a well-functioning political, economic and social structure.
- Western nations are gradually losing interest in hosting the Olympics.
- Sports mega-events are shifting from sport-based to event-based programmes.
- Transnational sports corporations and national governments are both responsible for ensuring good governance and respect for human rights in global sport.
- Sports mega-events only have a temporary impact and do not promote national development. Global sports organisations need to find a more sustainable way of organising and performing global sport.

## Sport, Culture and Foreign Policy



Grant Jarvie, University of Edinburgh,  
Photo: ifa

In our fragmented, tense and increasingly divided world, a world that is simultaneously more interconnected than at any other time in human history, there is a growing need for effective cultural relations that are capable of mitigating the risk of major conflicts caused by misunderstandings or lack of understanding between different countries, communities or groups. In this context, sport can be a social, cultural and political force for fostering cultural relations and is, therefore, an extremely useful tool for anyone who is involved in contemporary cultural relations – foreign diplomats, ambassadors, civil servants, cultural agencies, communities and countries.

Like any other tool of cultural relations (such as art, music, dance and film) sport cannot serve as a solution in and of itself, but it can contribute to winning friends, building hope and developing human capital.

Grant Jarvie from the University of Edinburgh put forward three broad premises on sport, culture and foreign policy:

- Sport is outward looking: it contributes to the broader goals of cultural and foreign policy.
- Sport is inward looking: sports organisations, agencies, clubs and institutions manifest and negotiate their own internal cultural and foreign policy within and through sport.
- Sport is both outward and inward looking

## **New framing of cultural relations with sport**

The forging of meaningful international cultural relations requires the development of mutuality, reciprocity, trust and cooperation. According to Grant Jarvie, sport has the capacity to contribute in the following ways:

- **Connectivity:** Sport can create an opportunity for people, cities and countries to connect and communicate.
- **Relationships:** Sport helps foreign leaders to meet and form relationships, often in a more informal setting. They may not be transactional, mutual or trusting, but they can still be helpful. Building sustainable relationships allows countries to talk to each other at a multitude of different levels.
- **Mutuality and trust:** Sport can help to build mutuality and trust and leads to higher levels of social capital.
- **Influence:** This is the route of soft power and public diplomacy. Sport can help to facilitate and achieve outcomes, usually in a one-directional manner. It is normally guided by a country's foreign policy or by the key messages it wants to convey at a particular time. It is about reducing risk through listening and through influencing the risk levels of conflicts or heightened tensions.
- **Inter-cultural skills and perceptions:** Effective international cultural relations are also about perception and projection. We need to ask how the language of sport or the inter-cultural tool that is sport can help us to talk to the other or the other to talk to us. How does sport project an image of a place and how do others see and act upon that image.

## Global sport, international politics and societal development

Over recent decades, the United Nations, UNESCO and the Olympic Committee have adopted conventions relating to sport, such as the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (UNESCO) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN). These agreements are essential because they defend human rights and key democratic principles, including within sport. However, they tend to fall short when faced with the wide array of issues and challenges that have to be tackled on the international sporting agenda.



*Detlef Dumon, International Council for Sport, Photo: ifa*

For Detlef Dumon of the International Council for Sport Science, other issues that need to be given more attention by global sports organisations include the decline of interest in hosting the Olympic Games on the part of Western countries and the shift from a sport-based to an event-based programme in sporting tournaments and competitions.

Dumon emphasised how important it is to try to create a holistic vision of sport and physical activity. Every human should have the right to participate in sport and physical education. Dumon criticised the lack of public investment in physical education and grassroots programmes, such as specific youth sports projects, and explained the positive impact of a physically active society on a nation's economy and development.

Therefore, Dumon stressed that we need to make better use of the potential of sport for personal emotional and intellectual growth as well as societal development. He also emphasised the importance of taking into account new sports and the persistence of established sport structures.

## Sport as an instrument of soft power for nation branding

Jonathan Grix from the University of Birmingham defined “soft power” as attraction based on credibility. Recent scandals (global corruption, doping etc.) have made it more difficult for sport to act as an instrument of soft power in order to promote the image of a country.



Jonathan Grix, University of Birmingham, Photo: ifa

To change national and/or international perceptions of a nation’s image via sports mega-events is difficult but not impossible. Jonathan Grix believes the key to success lies in presenting the nation in a credible manner. This requires a great deal of hard work to be done in advance: from the events and meetings that take place around the Olympics or international sports events to the analysis of sports conversations through social media. It is essential to map and understand what works where, when and how when planning to use sport as a tool for improving a country’s image.

Jonathan Grix named the Football World Cup 2006 in Germany and the Olympic Games 2000 in Australia as examples of best practice for sports mega-events. In Germany, a long-term leveraging strategy showed its worth by credibly demonstrating to the world that Germany is much more than just a “boring, manufacturing country”.

Mega-events also represent a challenge and double-edged sword for host countries. They are chosen well in advance of the sports event, so the media has plenty of time to research the country and expose its negative aspects. Consequently, Jonathan Grix posed the question: what are the mechanics of producing soft power? He explained that the relation between “hard power” and “smart power” is crucial. If a sporting event is to have positive effects, it is vital for the host country to have well-functioning political, economic and social structures.

Since 2003, sport has become a major factor in Brazil’s foreign policy as a way of increasing the country’s recognition and symbolic power in the international arena. However, specific foreign policy outcomes after the Football World Cup 2014 have not yet been evaluated.

Western countries are increasingly losing interest in hosting sports mega-events, such as the Olympics. The BRICS economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and the MINT countries (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) are gaining in importance as the hosts of global sporting events. However, some of these rapidly developing countries are characterised by internal weaknesses, such as social inequality and lack of respect for democratic principles.

Soft power can also be used for domestic nation branding in order to enhance the internal coherence of a nation. This was the case with the Olympic Games in China and Russia in 2008 and 2014. According to Grix, the aim of these two sports mega-events was not so much to impress an international audience but rather to demonstrate the countries' strength to their own citizens. Joseph Maguire from Loughborough University concluded that sport could act as "social glue" within the nation state; but at the same time it could be a "social acid" by strengthening nationalist movement.

### Problems of governance and opportunities for change in global sport



Joseph Maguire, Loughborough University,  
Photo: ifa

The image of global sport has suffered over recent years. FIFA has attracted strong criticism from international organisations and sports federations for the way it has handed out the rights to host the World Cup. Media reports suggest that, on several occasions, corruption rather than a democratic vote has been behind decisions about which country would host the next sporting mega-event. These occurrences seem shocking in light of the major economic and social impact of sports mega-events. FIFA also requires

potential host countries to agree to a broad range of concessions, such as liberalising their markets within the framework of the event. Host countries with lower economic potential and their local residents are particularly likely to suffer from the imposition of such rules. On the other side, the international media have exposed how host countries have exploited their workforce, and even caused the deaths of many workers during the construction of sports infrastructures. Joseph Maguire called for a more ethically-based approach in global sport. Governments and transnational sports federations should take into account the United Nations Millennium Goals when managing global sport and hosting sports mega-events, and pay more attention to the human factor.

Participants argued that the benefits of mega-events were not significant enough for host countries. Hosting a mega-event often only has a temporary effect and does not contribute to a nation's development. The panellists suggested reducing the event's character and wastage in the framework of mega-events and thinking about how to organise and perform global sport in a more sustainable way.

It was also seen as problematic that democratic countries and politicians participate in the bidding process for mega-events when the processes are generally characterised by a lack of transparency and democratic procedures. Transnational sports corporations and national governments should both feel responsible for good governance and respect for human rights in global sport. The development of new charters and conventions could contribute to a change in the management of global sport.

With regard to hosting mega-events, panellists and participants agreed that more respect should be afforded to the local context of the host country. The interests of the local population and respect for human rights in the host country should not be neglected. This led to a discussion on the issue of Qatar as hosts of the Football World Cup 2022. While participants criticised the country's lack of clear democratic principles, panellists also stated that every country should have a chance of hosting a mega-event. The country should be allowed to reveal and prove its strengths and its "good side" and not be judged prematurely by Western media.

## Sport in development work



*Bart Vanreusel, University of Leuven,  
Photo: ifa*

The universal appeal of sport makes it a valuable tool in development work. Professor Bart Vanreusel from the University of Leuven noted a significant emergence and growth in sports-related NGOs since 2000. Although every continent is covered by sports-based programmes as part of development work, the vast majority of these programmes are found in Africa. Based on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, NGOs tend to focus on social issues in their sports projects. These include primary education, gender equality and the fight against HIV/AIDS. With regard to physical activity, the NGOs' programmes generally try to

respect the local cultures' attitudes towards sport. The work of the NGOs in this sector has generally improved, but Bart Vanreusel believes governmental institutions' lack of commitment to sport and development is a problem.

streetfootballworld is an NGO that aims to achieve social change through football. Johannes Axster from streetfootballworld pointed out that the NGO represented a platform for non-profit organisations worldwide that use the potential of football for social and development projects. It focuses on health education and helping young people to enter local labour markets. Along with establishing a network of 101 local organisations, streetfootballworld supports its members, for example by developing appropriate fundraising strategies. streetfootballworld also intends to take advantage of the financial and capitalist side of global sport by forging alliances and collaborations with transnational sport federations and private entrepreneurs.



Photo: streetfootballworld

Development work in sport has to be considered in the context of social divisions. As in other areas of society, not all individuals are considered equal in sport and there are social hierarchies. Joseph Maguire commented that social categories such as class, gender and ethnicity highlight differences between people. Monika Staab, Germany's 2014 Football Ambassador, works to develop women's football worldwide. She argued that every person, women and girls included, should have the opportunity to play football. She has presented her projects in Muslim countries such as Bahrain, Pakistan, Jordan, Syria, Eritrea, Iran and Qatar, where she has contributed to grassroots projects and trained national women's football teams.

Everywhere she went, Staab observed difficult local training conditions such as poor quality pitches or the assignment of unfavourable training periods to female football players. In many countries, women's football is very negatively perceived and female players face discrimination in society.

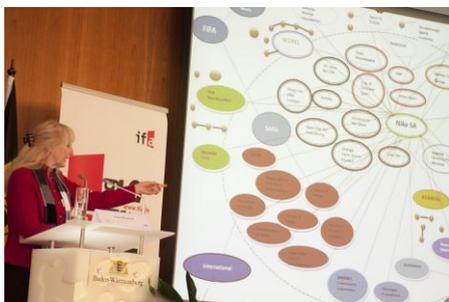


*Monika Staab, Football Ambassador 2014,  
Photo: Monika Staab*

Staab supports girls and women who are interested in playing football and offers them exclusive training sessions. She also advises the management boards of national football associations regarding the development of women's football. She aspires to gaining stronger recognition and an improved image for women's football. Different obstacles in every country often make it challenging to organise and run training sessions for women and girls.

However, she observed that playing football increases women's and girls' self-confidence and helps them to cope more easily with the problems of everyday life. The game helps girls to learn some important values for their lives. In conclusion, Monika Staab stressed the importance of stronger support for women's football. More funding for women's football, more help in promoting teams, competitions and infrastructures and more female representatives in national football associations would allow women's football to take a clear step forward.

## Youth development through football – implementing sport and development programmes



*Cora Burnett, University of Johannesburg, Photo: ifa*

Cora Burnett from the University of Johannesburg presented the GTZ/ Youth Development through Football (YDF) initiative and introduced a way of effectively implementing sport and development programmes. The aim of the 2012 and 2013 GTZ/ YDF initiative was to leave a sustainable legacy in poverty-stricken areas of Africa. The programme initiators worked with governments, NGOs and international and national football federations. Burnett explained that every country where they ran the programmes was characterised by very different circumstances and levels of commitment among their project partners.

The researchers developed instruments to analyse the networks and educational context of local communities. They also set up a range of educational activities, events and programmes within the framework of sports training. One of the focus groups involved secondary school children and the significance of volunteerism for the construction of a social identity. It was discovered that linking participation in sport, further education and volunteering was very beneficial for the personal development and career perspectives of the adolescents.

## **A time for change in global sport**

Sport has to play a crucial role in external cultural relations and foreign cultural policy. Physical activities and sport have the capacity to connect people, build bridges between countries, create global communities and contribute to mutual understanding and intercultural communication. Moreover, sport holds the potential for social change and development. It can have an impact on the success of social projects and help in the attainment of broader development goals.

Mega-events are opportunities to draw the attention of governments to the topic of sport and social development, both within a country's borders and further afield. In future, the hosting of mega-events by BRICS and MINT countries will play a crucial role. Global sports organisations and governments have to face up to this fact and develop suitable models to ensure a lasting, positive impact for the host country and its citizens. Despite significant growth in sports-related projects in the development work of NGOs since 2000, commitment by governments remains weak.

## Order of the day

- 1.30 pm            **Registration and Snack**
- 2.00 pm            **Welcome Remarks**  
Johannes Jung, Head of the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU  
Ronald Grätz, Secretary General, ifa  
Annika Rembe, President 2014, EUNIC
- 2.20 pm            **Keynote: Sport, Culture and Foreign Policy**  
Professor Grant Jarvie, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
- 2.45 pm            **Discussion I: Global Sport, Mega-events, Governance, Responsibility and Ethics**
- Key Questions
- To what degree can global sport be said to be democratic?
  - How can the governance of global sport be enhanced?
  - What type and form of responsibility does global sport have to the wider society?
  - How can big sport events contribute to nation-branding?
  - What are the pitfalls and opportunities?
- Detlef Dumon, Director, International Council for Sport Science and Physical Education, Germany  
Dr Jonathan Grix, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom  
Professor Joseph Maguire, Loughborough University, United Kingdom
- 4.00 pm            **Coffee Break**
- 4.30 pm            **Discussion II: Global Sport, Development, Nation-Building and Legacy**
- Key Questions
- What role can global sport play in conflict resolution, post-disaster areas and/or peace building?

## Order of the day

- To what extent does the hosting of mega-events develop sustainable legacy in developed and developing societies?
- How can global sport achieve wider development goals?

Johannes Axster, Head of Partnership Development,  
streetfootballworld, Germany

Professor Cora Burnett, University of Johannesburg,  
South Africa

Monika Staab, German Football Ambassador 2014

Professor Bart Vanreusel, University of Leuven, Belgium

5.45 pm

### **Concluding Remarks**

Joseph Maguire, Loughborough University,  
United Kingdom

Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga, President 2015, EUNIC

6.00 pm

**End**

## Speakers



**Johannes Axster** is co-founder of streetfootballworld. He is heading streetfootballworld's partnership department, initiating and managing relationships with partners from all sectors – governments, corporations, individuals, foundations and football industry. Before starting streetfootballworld, he headed a Berlin based NGO developing new formats on youth participation and worked as programme manager at the Leadership Academy of the German Olympic Sports Federation. He holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration and Sports Sciences.



**Cora Burnett** is a professor at the University of Johannesburg, lecturing in the field of the Sociology of Sport and Research Methodology in the Department of Sport and Movement Studies. She holds two doctorates – a PhD (Human Movement Studies) and a DLitt et Phil (Anthropology). Cora Burnett published numerous peer reviewed research articles, research reports, international academic books and manuals. Some of the most acknowledged accomplishments include national studies on: impact assessments of the national community and school mass participation projects, indigenous games research, the status of women and girls in South Africa's democracy, sport in the higher education sector and several high profile CSI projects.



As Executive Director since 2007, **Detlef Dumon** fills a strategic key position within the global network of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education. He facilitates contact between academic experts and their findings in various sport science disciplines and areas such as physical activity, sport and development, and physical education, with policy makers in governments, public administration and organised sports. Detlef Dumon has been engaged with several global and national policy development, moderation and rapprochement initiatives between ministries, as well as between governmental and non-governmental organisations. He holds a Master degree in linguistics and journalism.



**Ronald Grätz** is the Secretary General of ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen). Before assuming his current position at ifa, he was Director of the Goethe-Institut in Portugal. Ronald Grätz worked as Division Director for German Language at the UNESCO scheme Colégio Benjamin Constant in São Paulo, of which he was also Deputy Director. In 1993, he qualified as a lecturer at the Goethe-Institut in Munich, Cairo and Göttingen and worked as consultant for pedagogical support and as a teacher with the Goethe-Institut in Barcelona from 1994 to 1998. From 2002 to 2005, Ronald Grätz was a consultant for new media and the director of local programme activities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia at the Goethe-Institut in Moscow.



**Dr Jonathan Grix** is a Reader in Sport Policy and Politics in the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, Director of the Sport Policy Centre and Head of the Sport Pedagogy and Sport Policy research and teaching group at the University of Birmingham. He has authored or edited twelve books and published over 40 referred articles in sport studies and political science journals. His latest books include *Sport under Communism. Behind the East German 'Miracle'* (Palgrave, 2012); (ed. with Lesley Phillpots) *Understanding UK Sport Policy in context* (Routledge, 2014) and *Sport Politics: An Introduction* (Palgrave, 2015).



**Professor Grant Jarvie** is currently Chair of Sport at the University of Edinburgh where he serves the Institute of Sport, Physical Education and Health Sciences and the Centre for Cultural Relations. He served as a University Acting Principal and Vice-Principal for almost a decade, held established Chairs in two other universities and is currently Director and Chair with the National Sports Agency-Sportscotland. He is author and contributor to some 200 scientific papers and books mainly to do with sport, higher education, and policy. In connection with this conference Grant recently helped to organise and Chair a workshop on Sport, Persuasion and Power in the Modern World during the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.



**Johannes Jung** has been Head of the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the European Union and Head of Department VI of the Ministry of State of Baden-Württemberg since 2012. He studied Political Science, Public Law, European Law and Sociology and holds a Master's Degree in Political Science with a focus on International Relations from Heidelberg University. Before joining the Representation he worked as a Senior Advisor at Roland Berger Strategy Consultants, and was a member of the German Bundestag (2005-2009) for the Social Democratic Party.



**Joseph Maguire** is Professor of Sociology of Sport at Loughborough University, United Kingdom. He is Past-President of the International Sociology of Sport Association and on the Executive Board of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Copenhagen and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. His work focuses on globalisation, the Olympics and mega-events, and national identity, sport and development. Recent books include: *Process Sociology and Sport*; *Sports Across Asia*; *Social Sciences in Sport*; *Sport and Migration*; *Power and Global Sport*; *Japan, Sport and Society*.



**Annika Rembe** is Director-General of the Swedish Institute (SI). Annika Rembe's professional background is in the law, and she holds a Master of Law from the University of Stockholm. Prior to her assignment at SI she was Commissioner-General of the Swedish Committee for Sweden's participation in Expo 2010 in Shanghai. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Swedish Trade and Invest Council, Business Sweden, a member of the Board of the Association Swedes Abroad, as well as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Swedish-American Foundation. Annika Rembe is President of EUNIC in 2014.



**Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga** is Secretary General of the Instituto Cervantes since 2012 and EUNIC-President in 2015. Between 2001 and 2004 Rafael Rodríguez-Ponga had been Secretary General of AECI (the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation), and a director general in the Ministries of Education and Culture (1996-

2000) and of Foreign Affairs (2000–2001). He has been a Member of Parliament for Partido Popular (People's Party) representing the provinces of Madrid and Cáceres (2011–2012) and spokesman of the Congress Commission of Culture. He is also a member of the National Board of the Partido Popular. He holds a PhD in Linguistics from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.



**Monika Staab** has been awarded “German Football Ambassador” in May 2014. From 2013 until November 2014 she was the women’s football national coach of Qatar. Monika Staab was active in over 60 countries in the name of the FIFA and shaped women’s and girls’ football especially in Muslim countries.



**Martina Taubenberger** is a trained moderator for conference moderations and concert talks and teaches Arts Management, Project Management and Music Education at the University of Mannheim (DHBW) and the University of Linz. She also works as project management coach for institutions in the Arts. Martina Taubenberger studied English and American literature and musicology in Bamberg, Chicago and Munich. She holds a PhD in American Studies from the University of Mainz with a thesis on jazz reception in Germany after 1945.



**Bart Vanreusel** is a full professor at the KU Leuven in Belgium. He is a member and former head of the department of Kinesiology. In a research group on sport and physical activity his focus of research and teaching is on the sociology of sport and human movement. He is involved in the international and the European academic associations for the sociology of sport. Recent publications include a co-edited book on sport, development and issues of governance and articles on the globalization of sport mega-events. He was or is involved in local, national and international policy making organisations such as the UN, UNESCO, EU, Panathlon and an Interuniversity Cooperation project between Belgium and South Africa. Recent research focuses on emerging NGO work for sport and development and on the debate on the legacies of mega sport events with sport organisations as transnational corporations.

## Imprint

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## Culture of Fairness: Sport in Foreign Policy – Opportunities and Challenges

In what ways can sport be seen or used as a form of “soft power”? To what degree can global sport play a part in achieving wider foreign policy goals? How can the governance of global sport be improved? Should nation states formulate a more ‘realpolitik’ or ‘ethically based approach’? To what degree can sport be used to aid wider development goals? To what extent can sport enhance intercultural communication and mutual understanding?

On 10 December 2014 academics and practitioners in the field of global sport discussed these issues at the international conference “Culture of Fairness: Sport in Foreign Policy – Opportunities and Challenges”. The conference took place at the Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU. It was organised by ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”.