

11:

Topics and challenges in sport journalism and society (2)

Sport Journalism
Beijing Sport University

Dr. Simon Ličen

1

“Hard news” in sports

- Examples of “hard news” stories:
 - Doping/performance-enhancing drugs use
 - Match-fixing
 - **Mega-events and their consequences**
 - **Bribery and corruption**
 - **and Athlete safety, sexual abuse, DSD...**

...Why they matter, how they can be dealt with

Mega-events

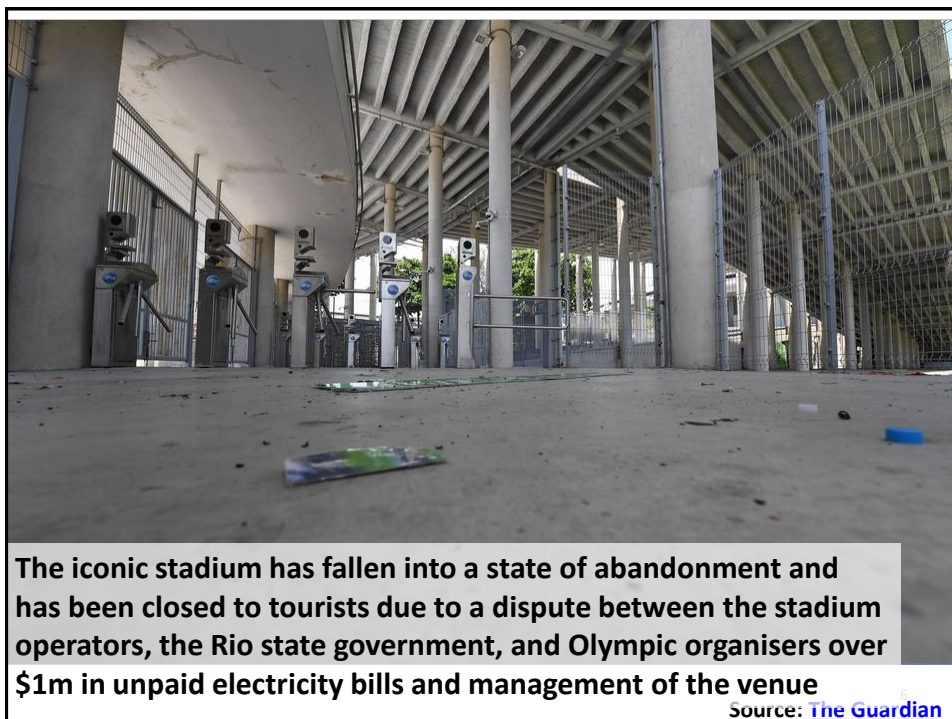
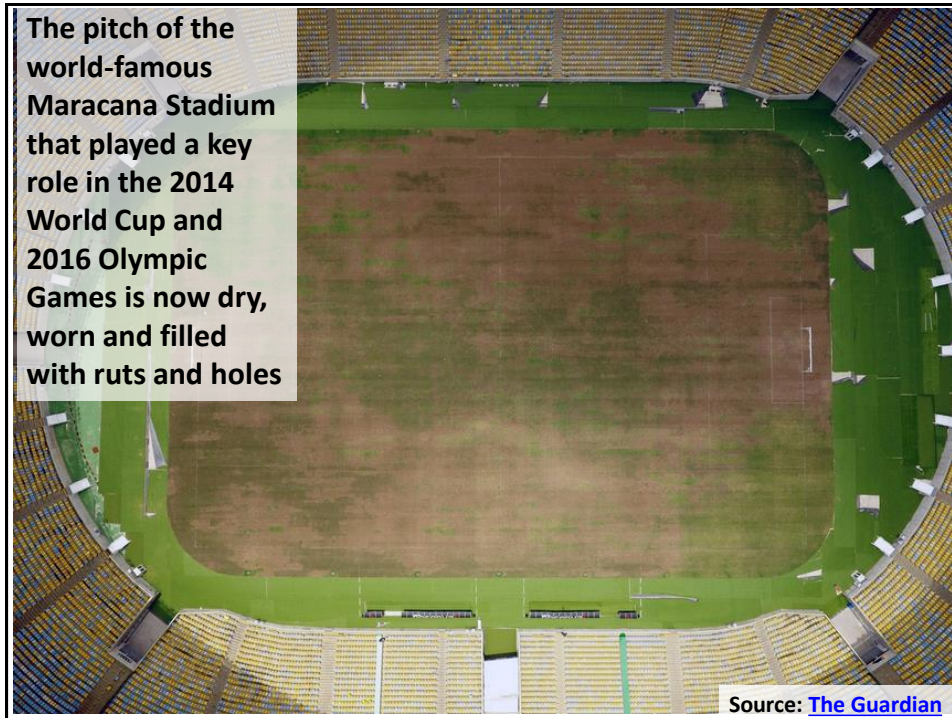
- Great opportunity, enormous costs:
 - Improve (build?) infrastructure; upgrades may or may not be sustainable (Montreal 1976, Athens 2004)
 - Costs paid with public funds; nothing better to spend them on?
 - Schools? Hospitals? **Public** sports facilities?
 - Sochi: \$50b to host Winter Ol (SA 2010? Other?)

3

Legacies

- Mega-events are usually touted as opportunities for progress and investment
- Rio 2016 outturn cost (operational costs + direct capital costs but not indirect costs): \$4.6b (*Oxford Olympics Study 2016*)
 - London 2012: \$15b; Beijing 2008: \$6.8b

4



The stadium has been hit by vandals who have ripped out thousands of seats ...



Source: [The Guardian](#)

And stolen televisions.



Source: [The Guardian](#)

An aerial view of the Olympic Park



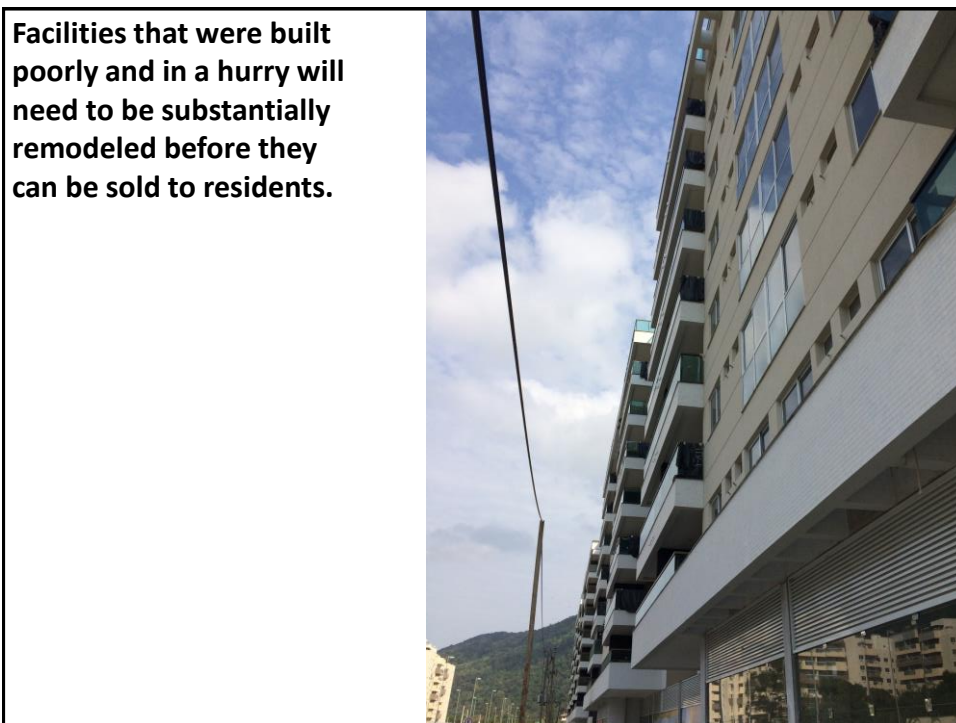
Source: [The Guardian](#)



Translucent tapestries created by Brazilian artist Adriana Varejao fall from the exterior of the aquatics centre as a combination of mud, rainwater and dead insects have contributed to the rust colour of the water in a practice pool

Source: [The Guardian](#)





Facilities that were built poorly and in a hurry will need to be substantially remodeled before they can be sold to residents.



Gentrification and forced evictions

- G.: A community where the value of the land has increased but the wealth of the residents has not; dwellers are priced out
- Forced eviction of residents:
 - 1988: 720,000 ([source](#))
 - 1996: 30,000 ([source](#))
 - 2000: Rents rose 40% ([source](#))
 - 2008: 300,000 until 2004 ([source](#)), perhaps 1.5m ([source](#))
 - 2012: 450 ([source](#))
 - 2016: 77,000 ([source](#))

FIFA bribery scandals

- Two investigations into corruption at FIFA:
 1. **Bribes and kickbacks, 1990-2014 (multiple generations)**
 - More than \$150m (over 1 billion RMB) to stage tournaments including Copa América, Copa Libertadores
 - *2010 FIFA World Cup, 2011 FIFA presidential elections?*
 - **Awarding of TV rights**
 - US investigation (corruption planned in U.S., exec. through US bank accounts); **trial in New York**

17

FIFA scandals

- Outcomes of New York FIFA trial:
 - 23 guilty pleas
 - Guilty of racketeering, wire fraud*:
 - Juan Ángel Napout, fmr. President, Conmebol (South American football's governing body)
 - José Maria Marin (pictured), former President, Brazil's football federation; 2014 WC LOC



18

FIFA scandals

2. Awarding of 2018, 2022 WC to Russia, Qatar

- Fmr US Attorney Michael Garcia hired, prepares 430 pg report. Only 42 pg summary published, “breaches of very limited scope.” Garcia: “Incomplete and erroneous”
- **Swiss investigation**
- Misconduct, money laundering



FIFA scandals

- FIFA in Switzerland:
 - Charitable organization: “Unifying, educational, cultural, and humanitarian values...youth and development programmes.”
 - Earns more than \$1b/year (4y cycles) from WC (about 87% of total revenue)
 - No taxes in Switzerland on World Cup revenues
 - Demands tax exemptions (FIFA, suppliers, ath...)
 - \$17 million tax expenses

Why this matters?

- FIFA runs global football
- The World Cup is one of the biggest sporting events in the world and generates **billions of dollars in revenue**
 - Questionable transparency and honesty for the process of allocating the last **three** tournaments
- **Who profits? At whose expense? What happens to costs? (Why?)**

21

Why this matters?

- Media rights fees (sale, resale, profits, total cost): 3.2b audience, 1b WC Final
- Organizing expenses (fixed + bribes; at whose expense?)
 - Brazil: \$4 billion cost
 - FIFA: \$2 billion profit
- Competitors' expenses
 - FA: \$30 million failed bid attempt
- Sponsors' expenses...Consumers' expenses

22

Recommended resources

- FIFA trial in NY outcome in the [Guardian](#), [BBC](#)
- [BBC Panorama](#) documentary (!)
- [Associated Press](#) overview of the matter
- BBC Stories:
 - Chuck Blazer in US: <http://www.bbc.com/news/32998735>
 - Early story: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32895048>
 - Key questions answered: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32897066>
 - Context: <http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/32909649>
 - Blatter quits: <http://www.bbc.com/sport/0/football/32982449>
- [Forbes article](#)
- Also look at related stories, links, etc.!

23

Athlete safety

- Strong concerns over brain trauma (esp. CTE) deriving from repeated hits to the head
 - American football, boxing: [GQ](#), [NY Times doc.](#)
 - US parents sued **FIFA, US Soccer** for not doing enough to prevent
- Professional level (top athletes, coaches, trainers, doctors):
youth sports with inexperienced **coaches?**



24

Sexual abuse

- USA Gymnastics: 368+ gymn. sexually assaulted by gym owners, coaches, staff over 20+ years
- Larry Nassar (doctor for USAG, Mich. State U.): 265+ women over 14+ years
 - Indianapolis Star reports about USAG routinely dismissing sexual abuse allegations
- Recently: Richard Strauss allegedly abused 177+ athletes as a doctor at Ohio State University

25

Differences in Sexual Development (DSD)

- Caster Semenya's chromosomes
- CAS: Rules discriminate against her, *but* policy "necessary, reasonable and proportionate" to ensure fair competition in women's sport
- High testosterone level...*But* athletic success depends on more
- Phelps, Bolt *also* have genetic adv.!
- Hormone-suppressors...*Why?* (Did not cheat.) Risks, side effects?
 - Or just quit?



Why ALL this matters?

- Most of these events are **timely** and are **not isolated**
- Inform, educate, entertain to **protect the public interest**. Power can corrupt; journalists act on behalf of public, voters, taxpayers, stakeholders
- Also inform, educate, entertain to **protect sport**: Nothing against [FIFA, Olympics, professional sport], only against **crooks** in it. **Want to make sports better.**

27

Review

- PED: Types of infractions; implications
- Match-fixing: How to fix a soccer match
- Mega-events: Opportunities, risks; gentrification, legacies
- Bribery & corruption. Who pays?
- Athlete safety: Professional **and** youth
- Sexual assaults
- Differences in sexual development
- Role of journalists: Report & be objective! (Even) people **expect and need** it!

28