

Paul Bretherton



Abstract:

From the Renewed Policy of Sport Mega Events to Prosumerism: Articulating the challenges faced by the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar (Paul Bretherton and Billy Graeff)

Although research has long focused upon Sport Mega Events (SMEs) in the Global North, it is only in recent decades that a similar level of scrutiny has been applied to SMEs outside of this region, and particularly those held in the Global South. This interest in the organisation, delivery and implications of SMEs in these regions was a natural accompaniment to the unprecedented “tour” of SMEs staged outside the Global North between the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. At the same time, prospective SME host cities and countries in more ‘traditional’ destinations such as Europe and North America began to resist and reject the chance to bid for these events. The Renewed Policy of Sport Mega Events Allocation (RPSMEA) (Graeff & Knijnik, 2021) represented the first attempt to develop a comparative theoretical framework to explain this pattern of new SME hosts, and was accompanied by several trends including an increase in the cost of the realisation of SMEs, the externalisation of these costs to host governments, increased revenue for owners of SME franchises and benefits for partners of SMEs in areas such as construction and security. In response to these developments, various changes were implemented by SME organisers and franchise owners. For example, in 2014 the IOC sought to reform the Olympic bidding process with the announcement of Agenda 2020, which was followed by the New Norm in 2018 and Agenda 2020+5 in 2021. Even more significantly, in 2017 FIFA announced that the 2026 World Cup would feature 48 participant teams and three joint host countries. These changes in the bidding and organisation of SMEs can be seen as examples of prosumerism, which refers to “the tendency towards a market where the distinction between producers and consumers decreases, where consumers are producing their own goods and services” (IGI Global, 2022, para. 2). This paper therefore draws upon both the RPSMEA and the recent turn towards prosumerism in analysing the staging of the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar, which arguably represents the most extreme example of the RPSMEA in terms of both the expenditure associated with the event and the level of (primarily European-led) criticism that its realisation has received in relation to issues such as stadium construction, workers’ conditions and its impact upon the FIFA calendar. Drawing on public documents, biddings and reports, our aim here is to contextualise the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar within this broader context of RPSMEA and prosumerism, and to highlight the need for these new analytical tools to better understand the challenges faced by contemporary SME hosts in a dramatically changing environment

Bio:

Dr, Paul Bretherton graduated from the University of Bath (UK) before completing an MSc and a PhD in the School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University (UK). Paul's PhD research focused on Corporate Social Responsibility and health promotion in relation to the legacy of the London 2012 Summer Olympic Games. Paul has since gained a range of academic experience in different countries including South Korea, China and Brazil. In South Korea, Paul lectured on Olympic Studies at the International Sports Relations Foundation (iSR) course for retiring elite athletes, which was organized by the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) in conjunction with the South Korean Government's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Most recently, in 2022 Paul completed a post-doctorate in the area of Public Policy of Sport and Leisure at the Faculty of Physical Education (FEF) at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in São Paulo, Brazil. Paul's research focuses primarily upon the planning and legacies of Sport Mega-Events, physical activity promotion and the relationship between the Global North and South in the context of sport.