

Environmentalism, Mega-Events and the Global South

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Environmentalism has become one of the key issues in the bidding, building and legacy processes of sporting events. Thousands of sports fans converging to witness competitive sports, lasting anything from ninety minutes, five days, up to six weeks has an inevitable environmental impact. From 120,000 people attending the Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata, or 100,018 cricket fans heading for the Boxing Day test in Melbourne, Australia, to a summer or winter Olympic and Paralympics Games generates environmental problems. The average carbon footprint increases with the production, consumption, construction and transportation of goods, people and consumables. In the global north technology and governance can help overcome these problems—but what about the global south? Environmentalism can intensify existing economic and social problems found between the local and the global, and the global north and global south. Hosting a mega-event demands that the global south implements global north environmental policies in order to qualify as host. As power shifts from the West to the 'rest' of the world it brings new problems. The next three FIFA World Cup Tournaments (Brazil, 2014, Russia 2018 and Qatar, 2022) and the most recent (South Africa, 2010) have been awarded to 'less established' countries. The IOC's 2016 Summer Games will be held in Brazil. As the global north increasingly awards the hosting of mega-events to 'developing' nations, it creates new challenges for such countries to implement global policy defined by the rich and impacting on the poor. This paper will examine the eco-challenges facing the global south's ambition to host mega-events whilst countering the environmental impacts of major sporting events. It will examine the difficulties in striking a balance between mega-events and environmental governance, as defined by sporting bodies of the global north.

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