

INTRODUCING THE WORLD CUP AND GLOBAL POLITICS PROJECT: 2023 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP EDITION

Thanks to generous support from the [Balsillie School of International Affairs](#) (BSIA) in Waterloo (Ontario, Canada), scholars from Wilfrid Laurier University's Department of Kinesiology & Physical Education ([Tim Elcombe](#), [Alanna Harman](#)) in Canada and Cardiff Metropolitan University's School of Sport & Health Sciences ([Alun Hardman](#)) in Wales collaborated, along with students from the BSIA, to [create a resource](#) highlighting and exploring interconnections between the [World Cup and international affairs](#) during the [FIFA Men's World Cup 2022](#) event held by Qatar.

Sport governance and global political tensions plagued the 2022 Men's World Cup like no other sport mega event in history. From the surprising choice by FIFA of the tiny nation with little football (or mega event) infrastructure in 2010, to state-sponsored bribery scandals and migrant worker deaths, as well as ongoing criticisms regarding human rights, the lead up to Qatar 2022 revealed deep intersections between mega-sport and global politics. The [Men's World Cup and Global Politics project](#) delved into these sport and politics intersections by creating general profiles of each competing nation, a series of indexes to highlight participating countries' standing across a range of sporting and non-sporting measures (e.g. FIFA rankings, Human Development Index), as well as daily briefs that explored social, political, and/or sporting connections between each match's participants – 64 in total.

Qatar 2022 may have been the most overtly politicized mega sporting event in history – but it certainly was not the first nor the last. North American co-hosts of the next men's World Cup – Canada, Mexico, and the United States – will undoubtedly face a Global South backlash after sustained criticisms of the last 4 FIFA Men's World Cup hosts: South Africa (2010), Brazil (2014), Russia (2018), and Qatar (2022). But it is not just the men's tournament that serves as a socio-political instrument – the Women's World Cup co-hosted by Australia and New Zealand will be, we argue, a significant sporting and “beyond sport” event played out on a global stage.

Therefore, the World Cup and Global Politics project will turn its attention to the 2023 Women's World Cup beginning July 20 to advance critical understanding of the socio-political significance of, and instrumental uses for, football, particularly from a gendered perspective. The project is intended to be a platform to initiate dialogue, discussion and research that fosters collaborative engagement throughout the BSIA network and beyond. Content will include a background document that briefly outlines the history of the Women's World Cup and the evolution of women's mega sport more widely, international affairs profiles of the 32 participating nations, World Cup rankings through several social, political, and sporting metrics of the competing states, and intermittent reports and articles written by a

range of contributors to highlight issues of global political, gender, and sport governance interest. Furthermore, contributions from Laurier undergraduate students to the Women's World Cup and Global Politics project include stakeholder profiles and projects completed prior to the start of the 2023 event.

Like the Men's World Cup and Global Politics BSIA project, this Women's edition barely scratches the surface of scholarship and quality journalism related to women's sport, gender equity, and the Women's World Cup - apologies to work not recognized. As such, we will try to highlight additional resources wherever possible and whenever relevant. As the tournament progresses, content will be added to the web resource. If you are interested in contributing or highlighting relevant content (e.g. research related to gender equity, women's sport, football politics, or a combination of all!), please contact us at:

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