

# Corruption In FIFA: Organisational Structure And Corruption Susceptibility

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## **Aim of the research**

The purpose of this research is to examine the susceptibility of the formal FIFA network to a grand vote rigging corruption scheme of the FIFA World Cup host elections. To date, little research has been published on the vulnerabilities of FIFA's inter-organisational network structure. Following the elections of Russia to host the World Cup in 2018 and Qatar to host the World Cup in 2022, 34 FIFA officials and two corporations were indicted by the FBI on charges of different forms of corruption. The indictments reveal an organisation deeply embedded with corruption and with complete disregard for democratic processes in the placement of the World Cup. This research is set out to examine if the formal network structure is part of the blame.

## **Theoretical background**

Much literature is covering the concept of inter-organizational relationships, with the majority of this literature purposed to gather insights into the advantages of inter-organizational networks. However, in this study, the main objective is to uncover whether the inter-organizational network structure renders the organization susceptible to corruption in terms of a vote rigging scheme. The first section outlines a conceptualization on inter-organizational networks — federations, coalitions, cliques and voting blocs (e.g. Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999; Hanneman & Riddle, 2005; Hart & Kurz, 1983; Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007; Waugh, 2009) — and situates FIFA within the contending conceptions. Further, other forms of inter-organizational cooperatives are conceptualised according to the purpose of this research. The second section reviews the concept of vote mobilization under the secret ballot, utilized in FIFA (e.g. Gingerich & Medina, 2013; Morgan & Vardy, 2012). The third section clarifies the concept of power, and discuss it in the context of this research; ultimately with the purpose of operationalizing the concept for analytical purposes (e.g. Burt, 1992; 1995; 2004; Gould & Fernandez 1989; Granovetter, 2002; Podolny & Baron 1997). The fourth section discusses the concept of trust and its applicability for the analysis of inter-organizational networks (e.g. Todeva & Knoke, 2005; Täube, 2004; Waugh, 2009). The fifth section outlines competing conceptualizations of corruption and the applicability for to the purposes of this research. Finally, the sixth section will focus specifically on the conditions that render an inter-organizational network structure susceptible to corruption (e.g. Burt & Knez, 1995; Coleman, 1988; Granovetter, 1992; Koschade, 2006; Mullins, 2013), and thus serves as a baseline for the conditions expected in the FIFA network structure, if the organization indeed has a susceptible network structure.

## **Methodology**

The research is a cross-sectional, mono-method, single exploratory case study. Quantitative secondary data was collected to create a sociometric dataset based on frequency of participation in either a FIFA committee, Confederation executive committee or a Sub-confederation executive committee. The data was assigned on a frequency based attribute and thus numerical. The network is extended to include all confederations and sub-confederations of FIFA. Data was structured according to an actor-by-actor matrix. A rectangular data structure was created to record which faction each actor belonged to. The factions were split according to confederations or sub-confederations. The spreadsheets were imported into UCINET and symmetrized to account for human errors in the typing procedure of the frequency based data. The research examined the susceptibility of the formal network towards two types of corruption regimes: A centrally controlled corruption regime, and a horizontally controlled corruption regime.

## **Results and discussion**

The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part examines the susceptibility of the network to a centrally controlled corruption regime. For this to be the case, the FIFA network should exhibit a low structural cohesion, indicating low embeddedness in the network, and a high level of network centralization and correlation between the actor centrality distributions. The second part examines the susceptibility of the network to a horizontally controlled corruption regime. For this to be the case, the FIFA network should exhibit group differentiation and broker monopolists in the sub-confederations and confederations. The findings do not suggest that the inter-organizational network is susceptible to a centrally controlled corruption regime, but does suggest that the formal FIFA network at a moderate to low degree renders the FIFA World Cup host elections susceptible to a horizontal vote rigging corruption scheme.

## References

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