



EUROPE

Alcohol and international football tournaments

Case study

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This case study has been produced as part of an independent research project conducted for Qatar University by RAND Europe on 'Connections between misuse of alcohol, antisocial, violent and destructive behaviour at major sporting events, and promising strategies to minimise the incidence of and harm from these behaviours'.

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Key findings

- Alcohol is a common feature at international football events, although not all fans drink alcohol, and not all fans who consume alcohol become intoxicated.
- There are significant cultural differences in attitudes to alcohol across and within countries, but fans from many parts of the world expect to be able to consume alcohol as part of the experience of watching international football matches.
- While alcohol may be a factor contributing to antisocial behaviour, there is no robust evidence clearly linking alcohol consumption to disorder at the group level during football matches. However, organisers at most domestic and international football events try to restrict the consumption of alcohol and employ strategies to respond to people who are intoxicated.
- A range of alcohol control strategies have been implemented at previous international events, both inside and outside stadiums. However, there is no robust evidence that alcohol control strategies such as bans on consumption are effective in reducing antisocial and violent behaviour.
- Some international lessons pertaining to alcohol may not be transferrable to the Qatari context. For instance, existing alcohol restrictions in Qatar and the absence of unsanctioned sources of alcohol may make alcohol control strategies more effective.
- Planned alcohol restrictions should be communicated to fans and local stakeholders well in advance of a sporting event; too restrictive a regime may play a role in fans' decisions about whether to travel to Qatar for an event.

1. Introduction

This case study is part of a research project which RAND Europe was commissioned to undertake by Qatar University, examining violent and antisocial behaviours at football events, the factors associated with these behaviours, and strategies to prevent and reduce their occurrence. In line with the overall aim of this study, this case study reviews the available evidence on the connection between alcohol and international football.

Consumption of alcohol is part of the experience of watching major international football events for fans in many parts of the world (Lee Ludvigsen 2018; Wong & Chadwick 2017; Dart 2009). Indeed, there is a long-standing relationship between international football and the alcoholic beverage industry: Heineken has been an official sponsor of the UEFA Champions League since 1994 (Faw 2017) and Budweiser has been one of the main sponsors of the FIFA World Cup. FIFA General Secretary Jérôme Valcke stated in the run-up to the 2012 World Cup: 'Alcoholic drinks are part of the FIFA World Cup, so we're going to have them' (Cording 2018).

Alcohol is recognised as a factor that may contribute to antisocial and violent behaviour at football matches although the causal relationship remains unclear (the evidence on this point is reviewed in Strang et al. (2018), a separate report produced as part of this project for Qatar University). Organisers of major football events are faced with the challenge of

delivering an experience that meets spectators' expectations while ensuring a healthy and safe environment for all.

As part of its objective to review evidence on alcohol and international football, this case study focuses in particular on:

1. The relationship between alcohol consumption and problem behaviours.
2. Fans' preferences and expectations regarding alcohol at international football events.
3. International approaches to managing the sale and consumption of alcohol at football events.
4. The effectiveness and fans' perception of these approaches.

The case study is based on a targeted literature and document review and a series of interviews with researchers working in the field of sports and disorder, representatives of European fan associations, and practitioners involved in the organisation and management of football matches. The focus of this case study is on international football events with a view to providing recommendations for the 2022 World Cup. However, where applicable, we also draw on broader lessons from domestic football spectatorship in contexts where alcohol consumption can be considered an integral part of fans' experience. Further details on the methods used can be found at the end of this report.

2. Alcohol consumption, intoxication and behaviour

Studies have described a link between alcohol consumption and displays of aggression in some individuals (Bushman & Cooper 1990). It is for this reason that many sporting venues have decided to restrict alcohol consumption and turn away intoxicated fans (see Section 3). However, alcohol affects each individual differently (Ostrowsky 2014) and does not always give rise to negative behaviour.¹

One representative of a fan organisation (FO1) expressed the view that where individuals are in situations of conflict, intoxication may exacerbate the situation, but that alcohol is not a factor for overall levels of violence. Similarly, an academic expert on football crowd behaviour (AE1), noted that while

alcohol can be linked to aggressive behaviour at the individual level, there is no evidence of correlation between alcohol availability and conflict at the group level.

As such, when considering the relationship between alcohol consumption and antisocial or violent behaviour at football events, several key observations apply. Not all football fans drink alcohol. Of those who do, only some will consume alcohol in quantities that lead to intoxication. Furthermore, only some intoxicated fans may engage in antisocial behaviour. Finally, consuming alcohol is not a precondition for engaging in anti-social behaviour – fans who do not drink alcohol may engage in these behaviours as well.

1 For instance, for some individuals, consumption of alcohol may lead to an increase in happiness, which may in turn decrease violent behaviour (Begue 1999).

3. Football fans and alcohol: preferences and expectations

For many fans, alcohol is part of the social occasion of attending or watching a match

Every interviewee who commented on the topic stated that many fans consider drinking alcohol a vital part of their experience of attending football matches or visiting international football tournaments. It would be common for those watching a match to consume alcohol before, during (if available, since alcohol consumption at football grounds is sometimes prohibited – see Section 4) and after the game. An academic expert (AE2), who researches the policing of football crowds, commented that for many fans:

Fortunately or unfortunately, alcohol does play a very important role within supporting your national team. [AE2]

Another academic expert (AE3) suggested that the social dimension of drinking at football events may be as important, if not more important, than watching the match itself. Others (AE2, FO2) pointed out that for many fans, travelling to an international football tournament is how they spend their holiday and treat their time at the tournament accordingly. Therefore, their attitudes towards alcohol may be more relaxed than during their normal daily routines. The fan organization representative (FO2) stated:

Compare it to holidays, when most people are a little bit more relaxed when drinking alcohol. It's the same with football. [FO2]

Attitudes and expectations with respect to alcohol vary across and within countries

The general preference of fans for alcohol to be available at international football events has been well documented across countries and football competitions. For instance, fan associations expressed their satisfaction with a recent decision by UEFA to overturn a ban on serving alcoholic beverages in stadiums during

UEFA competitions (ESPN 2018). On this point, one representative of a fan association (FO1) commented that the decision would bring football matches in line with other sports:

The vast majority of football fans [wish to be treated] just like the rest of the population, which means being able to purchase and consume alcohol at public events. [FO1]

However, an academic expert (AE3) suggested that while drinking is inextricably tied to football experience among fans from Northern Europe, this link may manifest itself differently in other regions. In their view, it would be inaccurate to view all national fan groups as monolithic and not to recognise the multiple subcultures with distinct attitudes towards football fandom and alcohol. Another academic expert (AE1) noted:

When you go to a football tournament, as a football fan, normatively it's about enjoying yourself and you do that by gathering together in groups, expressing your identity and consuming alcohol. Particularly for countries like the UK, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, it's normative for football fans to drink. [AE1]

In contrast, there are many countries in which drinking alcohol while watching football is not the norm. For example, an academic expert (AE4) who has written extensively about football and fan behaviour in the Middle East advised that alcohol is not a feature of football culture in that region in relation to both domestic and international matches.

Such differences in the role of alcohol in football culture are related to the position of alcohol in national cultures more broadly. Individual countries vary in a range of alcohol-related preferences and behaviours. Examples of such alcohol-related aspects include drinking age (e.g. legal drinking age, actual onset of drinking), legality and social acceptability of public consumption of alcohol, levels of consumption and prevalence of problem drinking, and

availability and affordability of alcohol for sale (Savic et al. 2016).

There is limited evidence on the prevalence of alcohol consumption and intoxication at football events

Several studies have analysed fan consumption of alcohol, finding that some fans engage in heavy drinking during international tournaments (Lee Ludvigsen 2018; Wong & Chadwick 2017). However, there is little evidence on the prevalence of intoxicated fans inside the stadium during football events, particularly at the international level.

Eberhardt et al. (2016) surveyed a subset of German fans travelling to Brazil to attend the 2014 World Cup and compared their health-related behaviours and outcomes with individuals who travelled to Brazil after the conclusion of the tournament. The authors found that travellers to the World Cup were significantly more likely to report having drunk alcohol than the other travellers (72 per cent vs 41 per cent).

At the national level, Durbeej et al. (2017) reported the results of breathalysing 4,420 randomly selected spectators at 12 Swedish Premier League matches to assess their alcohol consumption. The authors found that almost half (47 per cent) had alcohol in their bloodstream. The average blood alcohol content (BAC) among fans in the study sample who tested positively was 0.063 per cent, which is somewhat higher than the drink-driving limit in most European countries. Under 10 per cent of the fans in the stadiums had consumed sufficient alcohol to meet the authors' definition of a high level of intoxication, set at 0.1 per cent.²

These findings are in line with the view expressed by several interviewees (AE1, FO1,

FO2) that while some fans will consume excessively, most travellers to football matches and tournaments either do not drink or drink in moderation.

Public venues and specialised establishments can offer alcohol for sale throughout host cities

In addition to in-stadium sales and consumption, fans who consume alcohol may also drink before and after matches. For instance, Eberhardt et al. (2017) report that almost half of surveyed fans at the 2014 World Cup reported having consumed alcohol prior to entering a stadium. Anecdotal evidence from the 2018 World Cup suggests broad uptake of alcohol during the tournament in host cities, meaning that a large proportion of visiting fans drank alcohol. The tournament's official beer sponsors reported substantial increases in the sales of beer in existing outlets compared to regular turnover before the World Cup (Sharkov 2018). Some establishments reported having run out of beer during the tournament (Reevell 2018).

In addition to regular licensed establishments, FIFA World Cup organisers have established so-called 'Fan Fests' at all World Cups since 2006. These are designated areas, typically cordoned off public spaces with specific regulations and security arrangements, for fans to congregate, watch matches on giant screens and enjoy other forms of entertainment. In these spaces, alcohol purchases are typically permitted via official vending points (Jacobs 2018). During the 2018 World Cup, nearly 7.7 million people visited Fan Fests across all host cities (Welcome 2018 2018). An observational study on Fan Fests from the 2010 World Cup found that principal expenditure by visitors to fan zones was for food and drinks (Bob & Swart 2010).

² These findings are broadly in line with findings from national-level studies undertaken at other sporting events, e.g. baseball and professional American football (Erickson et al. 2011), and baseball (Wolfe et al. 1998), although somewhat lower than in a UK-based study on cricket fans (Wright 2006).

4. Existing alcohol-related policies

Football event organisers have an array of alcohol strategies at their disposal

Alcohol-related policies and restrictions continue to be an important aspect of strategies to prevent and reduce violence at large football events, as demonstrated by a guidebook for cities hosting sporting events sponsored by the European Commission (Bures & Comeron 2012). These policies may be broadly categorised into two groups: 1) restrictions on alcohol sales and consumption (as summarised in Table 1), and 2) the response to intoxicated fans (see Section 5).

Examples in this section are drawn primarily from international football events in Europe and the Americas. Previous international football tournaments in the Gulf region do not demonstrate much variation in how alcohol was regulated. In line with general local rules, this case study did not identify an example of a tournament in the Gulf region where alcohol sales and consumption were permitted either inside or outside stadiums, beyond a very small number of designated places. As such, policies implemented during past Gulf-based tournaments would be placed on the restrictive end of the spectra discussed below.

Restrictions on alcohol consumption inside the stadium

Restrictions inside the stadium can take multiple forms:

- **Total bans on sales:** The strictest option is to ban any alcohol sales in the stadium. This was the official FIFA World Cup policy until 2004 (i.e. the 2002 World Cup was the last one to prohibit alcohol sales). Until recently, UEFA club competitions also did not allow alcohol sales inside stadiums, although this policy was changed in 2018.
- **Spatial bans on sales within the stadium:** Another option is the partial prohibition

of alcohol sales in certain areas within the stadium and/or at certain times. For instance, matches in the English Premier League allow alcohol sales and consumption only in designated areas.

- **Product bans:** Partial bans may also be applied to the alcoholic strength of drinks that are available. For instance, Italian football stadiums do not allow sales of beer stronger than 5 per cent (AS Roma n.d.; SSC Napoli n.d.); elsewhere, only non-alcoholic beer is sold (FC Barcelona n.d.).
- **Prohibitions on bringing alcohol into the stadium:** All major international tournaments (including FIFA World Cups and the upcoming 2019 Asian Cup) prohibit fans from bringing their own alcohol to stadiums. The effectiveness of these rules depends on their enforcement and the quality of screening processes. As demonstrated most recently during the 2018 World Cup, some fans will attempt (at times successfully; BBC 2018) to smuggle in their own alcohol (Madensen & Eck 2008).

Restrictions on alcohol consumption outside the stadium

There may also be restrictions on alcohol sales and consumption outside of stadiums, as fans may drink before and after attending matches, or travel to host cities without intending to go to the stadium. As with in-stadium rules, several forms of restrictions exist:

- **Spatial bans around the stadium:** These prohibit the public consumption of alcohol except in licensed establishments or designated areas. An example of a designated area is the fan zone. This was the official arrangement at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, during which drinking on the street (outside of fan zones) was prohibited. However, the rule was not strictly enforced.

In other instances, spatial bans can take the form of designating a perimeter (e.g. defined as a radius of certain distance from the stadium) in which alcohol sales and consumption are not allowed. This was the approach taken during the 2017 FIFA Confederation Cup in Sochi, where authorities prohibited alcohol within 500m of the stadium and the training grounds of participating teams (Welcome 2018 2017). International club competitions may also impose city-wide or area-wide bans during match days (Bentson 2018).

- **Temporal bans:** These define when alcohol can be sold. For instance, host cities may impose closing times on establishments serving alcohol, in order to curb post-match and night-time drinking. Restrictions may also be imposed during the run-up to a match; for instance, during the 2018 FIFA World Cup, the city of Moscow imposed bans on alcohol sales outside fan zones during match days and the day before (Zykov 2018; De Menezes 2018).
- **Product bans:** Another measure is to restrict the availability of high-alcohol volume products. For instance, sales of only half-strength beer may have contributed to the lack of disorder during Euro 2000 (Weed 2001). Elsewhere, while not restricting the sale of other products, authorities have ensured that non-alcoholic alternatives are available to spectators. For instance, fan zones during the 2018 World Cup sold an alcohol-free beer in addition to regular drinks in an effort to ‘promote responsible drinking’ (Mencimer 2018).
- **Other limitations:** In the Dutch domestic league, for example, there is a ban on alcohol consumption during transportation provided to away-game fans to matches (Schaap et al. 2015).

Table 1. Restrictions on alcohol consumption

Policy	Description	Example of use
<i>Inside stadiums</i>		
Total bans	No alcohol sold in the stadium	World Cups before 2004, 2016 Euro, 2011 Asian Cup
Spatial bans	Alcohol sold in designated areas only	English Premier League (highest domestic tier)
Product bans	Sales of certain alcoholic products (e.g. high-alcohol volume beer) prohibited	Italian Serie A (highest domestic tier)
Prohibitions on bringing alcohol into the stadium	Fans prohibited from bringing their own alcohol to stadiums	FIFA World Cups and the upcoming 2019 Asian Cup
<i>Outside stadiums</i>		
Spatial bans	Alcohol sales allowed only in designated areas (e.g. Fan Zones) or alcohol sales prohibited in a certain area (e.g. 500-m radius from stadiums)	2018 World Cup, 2017 Confederations Cup
Temporal bans	Alcohol sales prohibited during certain periods (e.g. before and during matches)	2018 World Cup
Product bans	Sales of certain alcoholic products (e.g. high-alcohol volume beer) prohibited; non-alcoholic alternatives made available	2018 World Cup, 2000 Euro
Other limitations	E.g. ban on alcohol consumption during transportation to matches	Dutch Eredivisie (highest domestic tier)

5. Responding to intoxicated fans

There are a broad set of policies that relate to dealing with intoxicated people. These include:

Denial of entry/service for and removal of intoxicated fans: Organisers may refuse entry to stadiums to intoxicated fans and refuse to serve alcohol to fans who become too inebriated during the match. However, these rules are not always fully observed (Elgan et al. 2018) and two academic experts (AE5, AE6) stressed the importance of training stadium staff on enforcing denial policies, and adopting precautionary measures (e.g. conducting security screening in pairs) to diffuse any conflict situations that may arise.

Removal of intoxicated fans from stadiums: Match organizers also put in place rules for the removal of intoxicated fans from stadiums. This may be necessary if spectators become too inebriated or if they have managed to enter when already drunk. To help prevent either situation, matchday staff need to be trained to recognise people who should be denied entry or service in the first place. However, this may be difficult as some individuals may not show visible signs of intoxication despite previous (heavy) consumption of alcohol (Madensen & Eck 2008).

Sobering stations inside and outside the stadium: Instead of removing intoxicated fans from stadiums, another option is to move them to a separate area inside or outside the stadium where they can sober up before safely rejoining their group or leaving the stadium. This kind of arrangement was highlighted by one fan organisation representative (FO1) as a feature at Russian stadiums during the 2018 FIFA World Cup as well as at German stadiums

for domestic club matches. An added benefit of these sobering rooms is that they represent a non-law enforcement response to addressing a potential disturbance. The interviewee also noted the potential contribution of sobering stations outside stadiums where people can be taken if they are a risk to their own safety or that of others. Such facilities were available during the 2018 World Cup in Russia (Stewart 2018).

Provision of water/soft drinks: The fan organisation representative (FO1) also stressed the importance of providing free water in stadiums to help mitigate the effects of alcohol consumption. This policy is expected to be in place at some Euro 2020 stadiums, where soft drinks will be affordable so that fans are not discouraged from purchasing non-alcoholic drinks due to their price.

Awareness-raising measures: Organisers may also produce awareness-raising campaigns to warn fans of the risks of alcohol consumption and urge them to drink in moderation. According to a fan organisation representative (FO1), these efforts appeared to be somewhat lacking during the 2018 World Cup, with relatively few public announcements regarding the risks of alcohol.

Crowd management strategies: Outside stadiums, the effectiveness of alcohol management regimes is closely linked with other aspects of crowd management. First and foremost among these are strategies taken by the police and other security personnel; however, an important role in this regard is also played by event organisers and volunteers (e.g. fan embassy representatives³) as well as

3 Fan embassies are fan-operated services for football spectators travelling to foreign countries for international matches. They provide information, advice and other forms of support to football fans. They may also offer assistance in emergency situations and serve as conflict mediators if required (Football Supporters Europe n.d.).

the fans themselves (and their associations). In this context, as discussed in a review of interventions conducted as part of this study (Taylor et al. 2018), a number of studies on

dialogue-based policing have reported positive effects on antisocial behaviour and violence, albeit based on comparatively less rigorous study designs.

Table 2. Other alcohol-related policies

Policy	Description	Example of use
Non-admission/ removal of intoxicated fans	Intoxicated fans not admitted to the stadium or ejected from the stadium if they become intoxicated during the match	Commonly put in place
Sobering stations inside and outside the stadium	Designated rooms/facilities where intoxicated fans spend time sobering up until they can safely rejoin their group or leave the venue	2018 World Cup
Provision of water/ soft drinks	Water and soft drinks made widely available for free or at affordable prices	Free water planned for 2020 Euro
Awareness-raising measures	Efforts to raise fans' awareness of the risks of alcohol consumption	Commonly put in place, albeit to varying degree
Crowd management strategies	Efforts to prevent and resolve conflict situations among fans, some of whom may be drinking	Commonly put in place, albeit using different tactics

6. The effectiveness of alcohol strategies

There is no robust evidence available that alcohol restrictions are effective in preventing and addressing problematic behaviour

One academic expert (AE1) and one fan organisation representative (FO1) pointed out that there is no demonstrated link between the availability of alcohol at football matches and disorder. In addition, every interviewed researcher as well as a representative of fan associations who commented on the topic noted that there was no robust evidence on the effectiveness of various forms of alcohol restrictions with respect to preventing and responding to antisocial and violent behaviours. The same finding was made by a review of interventions (Taylor et al. 2018) conducted as part of this research project.

In past tournaments, preventing fans from accessing alcohol has been difficult

The available research, as well as interviewees offered several reasons for why alcohol restrictions do not appear to be effective. One academic expert (AE1) argued that fans tend to circumvent any restrictions put in place:

The reality is the denial of alcohol never works. Fans always get it. They always find it somewhere. [AE1]

With respect to restrictions outside of stadiums, in line with findings from previous research (Pearson & Sale 2011), two academic experts (AE1, AE3) and one fan organisation representative (FO1) reported that fans appear to be able to circumvent any restrictions and find access to alcohol despite the existence of limitations on sales. This can happen through at least three means. Firstly, as one academic

expert and the fan organisation representative suggested, local retailers may not comply with alcohol restrictions, in order to take advantage of the opportunity to maximise sales:

Local traders will exploit the opportunities that are afforded by the authorities attempting to prevent access to alcohol and they will create avenues through which they can disseminate and distribute that alcohol because they make a profit out of it. [AE1]

Secondly, unofficial makeshift alcohol sale points may emerge, particularly after official businesses close for the night. And thirdly, fans may be able to bring their own alcohol to the stadium or venue. Similarly, having alcohol-free transportation to matches may not be effective if fans are allowed to seek out other modes of transit.⁴

Alcohol restrictions may work contrary to their stated aims

Limitations on where and when alcohol can be purchased and consumed may have unintended consequences. For instance, as research (Pearson & Sale 2011) has documented and a few interviewees (AE3, FO1) noted, bans on drinking in the stadium may simply lead to fans drinking more before the match to compensate for future unavailability. This means their consumption is less gradual. The fan organisation representative reported:

Instead of having a reasonable, graduated consumption of alcohol... a lot of people choose to have a high consumption before entering the stadium, which then creates health risks and security risks. [FO1]

In addition, the interviewee pointed out that stadium bans on alcohol can give rise to

4 Alcohol-free transportation may be more effective when it is mandatory, i.e. where fans have to take part in officially provided means of transport to gain access to the stadium. Schaap et al. (2015) examined the effectiveness of such a scheme for away fans in the Netherlands and observed a reduction in violent incidents both inside and outside stadiums.

queues and congestion at entry points because at least some fans tend to delay their entrance in an effort to maximise drinking time outside. This is in line with findings by Pearson & Sale (2010), who observed fans arriving to matches at the last minute, at times leading to a crowded situation at stadium turnstiles. By contrast, where fans have access to drinks inside the stadium, they may decide to go in and take their seats earlier, spreading the inflow of people across a longer period of time. Based on personal observations, the fan organisation representative offered a comparison between the Euro 2016 (with no alcohol permitted inside stadiums but long queues) and the 2018 FIFA World Cup (with alcohol available inside stadiums and no long queues).

Alcohol restrictions can be counterproductive if not seen as acceptable by fans

Two academic experts (AE1, AE2) noted that alcohol restrictions may lead to tension amongst some fans. This is because denying opportunities to drink could be seen by fans as an encroachment upon their rights, particularly, as one academic expert (AE2) stressed, if fans perceive the arrangements to be unjustified or disproportionate. Referring to fans who may dedicate substantial financial resources as well as time off to attending international football tournaments, the interviewee stated:

...it [alcohol] gives them a sense of enjoyment, if police try and stop that, in a way, they're going to begin to see that as entirely illegitimate, as problematic. [AE2]

One fan organisation representative (F01) pointed out that fans generally recognise the utility of some alcohol-control measures, such as limits on high-alcohol volume drinks or temporal limits on alcohol sales. However, according to the interviewee, fans would be opposed to broad bans, which can be seen as singling football fans out, in comparison

with other sports where sales of alcohol are generally allowed:

Of course restrictions apply in the period of time when the distribution of alcohol is permitted, restrictions apply on the type of alcohol that can be sold. Restrictions apply to the conditions in which it's sold, in a plastic glass and so on. But this is perfectly understandable. What is not understandable is when this difference is created between football fans and any other part of the population. [F01]

Dialogue-based policing can help address alcohol-related risks

The existing evidence on policing strategies can also offer lessons in dealing with intoxicated fans. Dialogue-based and low-profile policing can be helpful in establishing a relationship between the fans and the police. This enables a differentiated response from the police, which recognises that not all instances of intoxication are problematic and require a robust reaction. An academic expert (AE2) added that by distinguishing between drunk fans who are aggressive and those who are simply enjoying themselves, the police are able to demonstrate acceptable behaviour. This approach can in turn be expected to foster greater self-policing on the part of the fans if they perceive that some individuals are a threat to their enjoyment of the event, further minimising the need for a response from law enforcement and crowd management personnel. The expert noted:

If, for example, you took a zero tolerance approach to drunkenness, that all drunkenness is bad and it's going to be banned, it would be problematic. But, if you can differentiate between drunkenness and people are having a good time but are capable, and drunkenness and people are becoming aggressive and violent, and specifically target those, you are helping to demonstrate what is accepted and what isn't accepted. [AE2]

7. Key reflections and lessons for Qatar

Fans may have expectations about alcohol availability

Several Europe-based interviewees (AE2, AE3, FO1, FO2) commented on how fans' expectations of alcohol availability may factor into their decision to attend the 2022 World Cup. A fan organisation representative (FO2) suggested that alcohol bans would be perceived as signalling that international fans were not welcome. As noted above, multiple interviewees (AE2, AE3, FO2) pointed out that travelling to an international tournament represents a major investment, and is often the principal foreign trip of the year for fans. As such, some fans may be reluctant to dedicate their financial and time resources to an event that would not meet their expectations.⁵ Another fan organisation representative (FO1) added that high alcohol prices may have an effect similar to that of an alcohol ban; if fans perceive alcohol to be unaffordable with no readily available cheaper sources, they may opt out of visiting the tournament.

According to an academic expert (AE2) and a fan organisation representative (FO2), this dynamic may be particularly pronounced for Qatar for two reasons. Firstly, for some European fans, the costs of travelling to Qatar may be relatively high. Fans who may view alcohol restrictions particularly negatively may therefore be more inclined to select other tournaments to attend instead, such as the Euros in 2020 or 2024. Secondly, the fan organisation representative expressed the view that Qatar is not a well-known holiday destination for many football fans. If fans are not familiar with other, non-football related

attractions in the country, they may place even more importance on their football-related expectations when deciding about their travel. Of course, the 2022 World Cup is the first time the tournament will be hosted in a country where alcohol is not widely available. This means that there is no precedent to estimate the extent to which the considerations above may affect fans' willingness to travel.

Restrictive sales policies may not necessarily be transferable to countries where alcohol supply is more regulated

As several interviewees (AE2, AE3, FO2) suggested, some of the measures discussed in this case study may be less applicable to the Qatari context, where the availability of alcohol is already heavily regulated. One academic (AE3), who has researched football crowd management extensively, commented that the absence of a previous World Cup held in the region makes it difficult to assess how much the specific context affects alcohol control strategies:

We've never had a tournament in a country like Qatar before so... it's very difficult to predict what would happen but I wouldn't expect those kind of mass gatherings with fans drinking alcohol from containers that they had bought and things like that. I just don't think that's likely to happen. [AE3]

Similarly, with respect to tournaments held in Europe such as the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, another academic expert (AE2) noted that ease of travel impacted on the implementation of alcohol bans as it was relatively easy for fans to bring their

⁵ Other fans may arrive at a different conclusion and accept local restrictions on alcohol, abiding by local culture and custom. For comparison from a different sporting context, see interviewees with fans traveling to Qatar for the 2016 world cycling championship (Hood 2016).

own alcohol into the country. Again, this consideration may not be applicable to the 2022 World Cup, where international fans can be expected to arrive predominantly via air travel.

Communication with fans and local stakeholders about planned alcohol rules is important

One security practitioner and two academic experts (AE1, AE2, SP1) stressed the importance of communication about alcohol-related policies with fans and fan organisations in the run-up to and during the tournament itself, as well as about acceptable standards in the host country.⁶ Fan associations and fan embassies on the ground have an important role to play in this regard. In addition, one academic expert (AE2) suggested that it may be equally important to communicate with residents of host cities so they know what to expect in the event of alcohol sales during the tournament:

It will also need community engagement and that kind of approach as well, so that, not

only the supporters know what to expect, but people who live within these match cities also know what's going to occur, how and why. [AE2]

Personnel not experienced with handling drinking fans may particularly benefit from training

Two academic experts (AE5, AE6) noted that it is likely that at least some staff working at or near stadiums during the 2022 World Cup (e.g. stadium staff, security staff, police officers) will not be used to working with fans who drink alcohol or are intoxicated. Therefore, it may be particularly important to provide these staff with training on implementing alcohol-related policies and how to deal with intoxicated individuals. In this regard, learning from counterparts from other countries where alcohol consumption is common may be highly beneficial. For instance, several interviewees (AE1, SP2) noted the value of collaborating with representatives from foreign police forces and facilitating dialogue with national fan groups where appropriate.

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About this case study and the research project for Qatar University

Qatar has hosted a number of international sporting events and will host the World Athletics Championship in 2019 and the 2022 FIFA World Cup. In preparing for these events, there is an opportunity to learn from research into the prevalence, nature and causes of violence and disorder at other sporting events that have drawn together spectators from a range of countries with diverse cultural and religious characteristics, and to draw on promising practices to prevent and respond to these harms.

Qatar University commissioned RAND Europe to research the current available evidence on these topics to identify insights that may be relevant for Qatar's preparations.

Project aims

The goals of this project were to understand:

1. What has been the nature (types of behaviour, types of perpetrators, victims, location, etc.) and prevalence of antisocial, violent and destructive behaviours among populations watching and attending major sporting events, in particular international football matches?
2. What factors are associated with these behaviours (e.g. alcohol misuse, ethnicity and nationalism; group dynamics) and what is the nature of the association?
3. What approaches have been taken to prevent and respond to these behaviours?
4. To what extent have these approaches proved effective?

5. What specific recommendations follow from the findings that could be used in Qatar in planning for the World Cup in 2022, and where are the opportunities for further research?

Project methods and approach

The project drew mainly on the identification and critical assessment of international literature and media reports, as well as interviews with a wide range of stakeholders in Qatar and internationally.

Full details of the methodology for the research can be found in the final evaluation report available at

<https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/violent-and-antisocial-behaviour-at-football-events.html>

About this case study

A total of six case studies were undertaken to investigate a range of issues relating to safety and security at international sporting events.

This case study drew on two data collection methods. Firstly, a targeted review of academic and grey literature was undertaken to identify sources relating to consumption of alcohol at international football events and strategies designed to control alcohol sales and consumption. During this process, the research team ran a number of Google Scholar, Advanced Google and general Google searches utilising a set of selected search terms.⁷

This review was supplemented by targeted searches of media sources that focused on alcohol and large football tournaments.

⁷ Examples of search terms (and their combinations) utilised in this process include: 'alcohol sport culture', 'alcohol football', 'alcohol football policies', 'alcohol aggression', 'report alcohol football', 'report alcohol soccer', 'alcohol soccer', 'alcohol sales stadium world cup', 'alcohol sales data stadium', 'alcohol negative effects', 'alcohol sales stadium world cup', 'alcohol coupe du monde'.

Secondly, a series of telephone interviews was undertaken with the following types of key informants: 1) academic researchers working on football-related topics, such as policing, disorder and alcohol use; 2) representatives of fan associations; 3) practitioners involved in the organisation and management of football matches.

The interviews were semi-structured and took approximately 45 minutes. We developed broad interview protocols tailored to each group of key informants, and these served as the basis for each interview. In addition to questions included in the protocol, this approach allowed the team to discuss unanticipated topics that interviewees considered relevant. With the permission of interviewees, all calls were recorded and then transcribed. Data collected through the two data collection processes were triangulated by the research team. Interviews were analysed utilising standard qualitative methods in order to identify salient themes, which were subsequently matched with information collected from the literature review.

This process in turn informed the development of the case study's structure.

This case study is subject to several limitations. Firstly, existing literature on alcohol and behaviour at football matches remains limited or inconclusive. Particularly with respect to international football tournaments, sources frequently limit themselves to an acknowledgement of alcohol as an important feature. For that reason, this case study placed considerable emphasis on presenting stakeholder testimonies in a robust fashion as a source of novel relevant insights. Newspaper sources were also incorporated to complement collected qualitative data, although these largely offer only anecdotal information. Secondly, interviews were conducted only with European stakeholders, which precluded the inclusion of testimonies that could offer insights from other football and drinking cultures. We were unable to secure interviews with any stakeholders from Gulf countries, although insights from interviewees familiar with the region are included.

Project results and reports

Details of the other case studies and wider project results are available at <https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/violent-and-antisocial-behaviour-at-football-events.html>. These are of interest not only to those responsible for preparing for upcoming events in Qatar, but to anyone involved in the safety and management of international sports tournaments.

Contact information

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