

## Topic List for BA / MA Theses

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Dear student

If you are interested in writing your final BA or MA thesis in one of the below mentioned research areas, please reach out.

How to:

Drop me an email with the following information:

- Format of the thesis (BA or MA)
- When do you plan to start?
- Research interest in the chosen topic
- Preferences for methods
- A list of lectures and seminars that you have attended at the chair and/or preliminary work you have conducted in the research area
- CV and performance record

Consider also the documents provided on the [chair homepage](#) (top right "Downloads"):

- «Hinweise für die Übernahme / Gestaltung einer wissenschaftlichen Arbeit»
- «Kriterien zur Beurteilung wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten»
- «Tipps für Seminar- & Abschlussarbeiten»

In the following, five research topics are outlined. Feel free to hand in self-selected topics that are related to the research areas presented below. Also, case selection and research question may be modified. In general, I am interested in topics and research questions that revolve around organizational misconduct, organizational corruption, meta organizations, organizational responsibility, organizational reactions towards environmental, normative demands (such as sustainability or transparency), organizational governance and deviance. You will find a section on potential methods and methodological strategies at the end of the document.

### **1. Organizational Misconduct and (International) Sports Federations**

The list of corruption cases at international sports federations is long. The best-known cases are attributed to FIFA or the IOC, but there are also cases of smaller sports organizations (weightlifting, biathlon, table tennis and so on). The question that arises from a mesolevel perspective might be: Are international sports organizations particularly prone to corruption and organizational misconduct and why? One possible approach is to elaborate typological features of international sports organizations. What do they have in common, where do they differ? The same applies to the corruption incidents. Are there patterns and regularities and where is each case different? With the help of the literature on partial and meta-organizations (Ahrne/Brunsson 2005), conceptual questions can be answered, which help to outline possible solutions in terms of better anti-corruption governance.

## **2. Anti-Corruption Governance: More than Compliance? What is the role of culture & professions?**

Corporate scandals such as those at Siemens or Enron have among other things led to modern companies operating a compliance department, which helps to check compliance with rules, laws and a code of conduct (Kette/Barnutz 2019). Nevertheless, organizational misconduct occurs time and again. While on the one hand a culture of look-away and self-enrichment is blamed, on the other hand those departments come into focus as they should actually prevent this. How are these departments organized? What competencies do the employees have? How are decisions made? Who works there?

«Ganz grundsätzlich bin ich der Überzeugung, dass es auch bei den grossen Verbänden viel mehr Sportler und weniger Politiker in der Führung braucht. Sportler verstehen die Athleten und deren Denkweise. Wir Funktionäre arbeiten schliesslich im Dienst der Sportler» (Urs Leeman, Swiss Ski President in [Blick-Interview](#))

What role do new professions in the sense of organizational specialists play in the constitution of international sports federations? What organizational solutions are there for organizations that identify a deficit in compliance? Why do self-appointed ethics or investigation committees only function to a limited extent?

Selected newspaper reports on the case:

<https://www.blick.ch/sport/ski/schwierige-tage-fuer-swiss-ski-boss-urs-lehmann-spricht-ueber-krise-und-ruecktritt-id18061881.html>

## **3. Transparency issues for highly responsive organizations**

Transparency is considered an institutional master trend (Christensen/Cornelissen 2015). More and more organizations are facing ever increasing demands for transparency performance, be it with regard to their supply chains, production methods or internal issues. Yet it is not so easy for organizations to meet these transparency expectations (Gibel/Nyfeler 2022). What possibilities arise in this area for organizations that go beyond mere deviation and decoupling between formal structure and actual practices or hypocrisy? To what extent can the claim of more transparency be located against the background of corporate social responsibility (Scherer/Palazzo 2011)? What does this mean for organizational efficiency claims? The empirical illustration can be done with manifold cases.

## **4. Whitewashing by Networking? The Case of FIFA Loans for Swiss Municipalities.**

It recently came to light that Swiss municipalities have received substantial sums in loans from FIFA over the years. The transfers were financially rewarding for all parties involved. From an ethical perspective, however, the question arises as to whether it is fair for the municipalities to draw money from an international sports federation such as FIFA, which has come under criticism. Furthermore, the question arises as to the motives of the sports federation. Do these practices possibly go beyond financial investment strategies? Is it a matter of buying legitimacy or at least goodwill? What does the financing of the Swiss community mean for FIFA's organizational network? The focus of interest is on the interaction of different institutional logics (state vs. community vs. market) and the resulting frictions.

Selected newspaper reports on the case:

<https://www.finews.ch/news/finanzplatz/49720-FIFA-darlehen-kredite-gemeinden-schweiz-zuerich-baselland-sandro-fuchs-zhaw>

<https://www.blick.ch/politik/stadt-ueberdenkt-jetzt-kredite-bern-lieh-sich-1-8-milliarden-von-der-FIFA-id18225452.html>

<https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/FIFA-milliarden-fuer-das-rot-gruene-bern-ld.1721187?reduced=true>

## 5. How Fourth Actors Influence Competition and Governance: The Case of LEX FIFA.

With the "Lex FIFA", the Swiss parliament reacted to repeated cases of corruption in international sports associations that have their headquarters in Switzerland. In future, anyone who pays or accepts bribes will automatically be liable to prosecution. Swiss prosecutors can now initiate corruption investigations without a private individual or group filing a complaint. However, the law only applies in "serious" cases, which is why supporters spoke of "watering down" the law. What interests clashed in this legislative process and who is co-organizing (cf. Arora-Jonsson et al. 2020)? Why is Switzerland having such a hard time fighting corruption? What does competitiveness and location marketing have to do with it? In 2018, the canton of Zurich rejected the introduction of the Lex FIFA on the grounds that there was a threat of the sports association moving away. This justification is reminiscent of the taxation of international companies and can thus be located in a larger discourse.

Selected newspaper reports on the case:

<https://www.limmattalerzeitung.ch/limmattal/zueroich/lex-FIFA-abgelehnt-der-weltfussballverband-wird-weiterhin-als-gemeinnuetziger-verein-besteuert-ld.1324946>

<https://www.nzz.ch/zueroich/keine-chance-fuer-lex-FIFA-ld.1434139?reduced=true>

[https://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/wirtschaft/kampf-der-korruption\\_gruenes-licht-fuer-lex-FIFA/41660020](https://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/wirtschaft/kampf-der-korruption_gruenes-licht-fuer-lex-FIFA/41660020)

### Methods and Methodology

Descriptive Statistics, Regression analysis, Simple and multiple Correspondence Analysis, Semantic Analysis, Gioia-Methodology (Gioia et al. 2013), Content Analysis (e.g. Mayring 2015), Case Studies (Yin 2011), Anti-Model Cases (Krause 2021), Qualitative Methods (document analysis, media report analysis, Interviews, participatory observation, shadowing). Conceptual and theoretical research aims are welcome as well.

### Literature

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