



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

PUBLIC OPINION IN RUSSIA: ATTITUDES TOWARD HOSTING THE 2014 OLYMPICS AND 2018 WORLD CUP

An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll finds that most Russians believe hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics and 2018 World Cup improves their country's international image. However, the public is divided over the impacts of these international sporting events on the Russian economy.

Russia spent about \$50 billion hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, and the country is in the process of building dozens of stadiums and training facilities for the 2018 World Cup.^{1,2}

Asked generally about problems facing the country, most Russians report corruption as a serious problem. Russians' beliefs about corruption are associated with their opinions about the effects of the 2014 Olympics and 2018 World Cup on the country's economy.



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The AP-NORC Center directed the study, funded by NORC at the University of Chicago, to explore Russian attitudes toward both domestic and international affairs, and it includes a nationally representative in-person survey of 2,008 Russian adults between November 22 and December 7, 2014.

RUSSIANS EXPRESS MIXED VIEWS ON THE IMPACT OF BIG SPORTING EVENTS ON THEIR COUNTRY'S ECONOMY, BUT ARE MORE POSITIVE ABOUT ITS IMPACT ON RUSSIA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE.

Most Russians believe hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi improved the country's international image, and they are expecting the same outcome when the 2018 World Cup takes place in Russia. Seventy-eight percent say the Olympics had a positive or very positive effect on Russia's international image, and only 2 percent say it had a negative effect.

¹ Leicester, John. "Costly, political, successful: Sochi Olympics end." *The Associated Press*. February 23, 2014. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/farewell-sochi-russia-closes-costliest-olympics>

² "A look at the venues hosting 2018 World Cup." *The Associated Press*. July 15, 2014. http://www.apnewsarchive.com/2014/A_look_at_the_venues_hosting_2018_World_Cup/id-3a3a810d0d0e4f11a993f411f0bb9c79

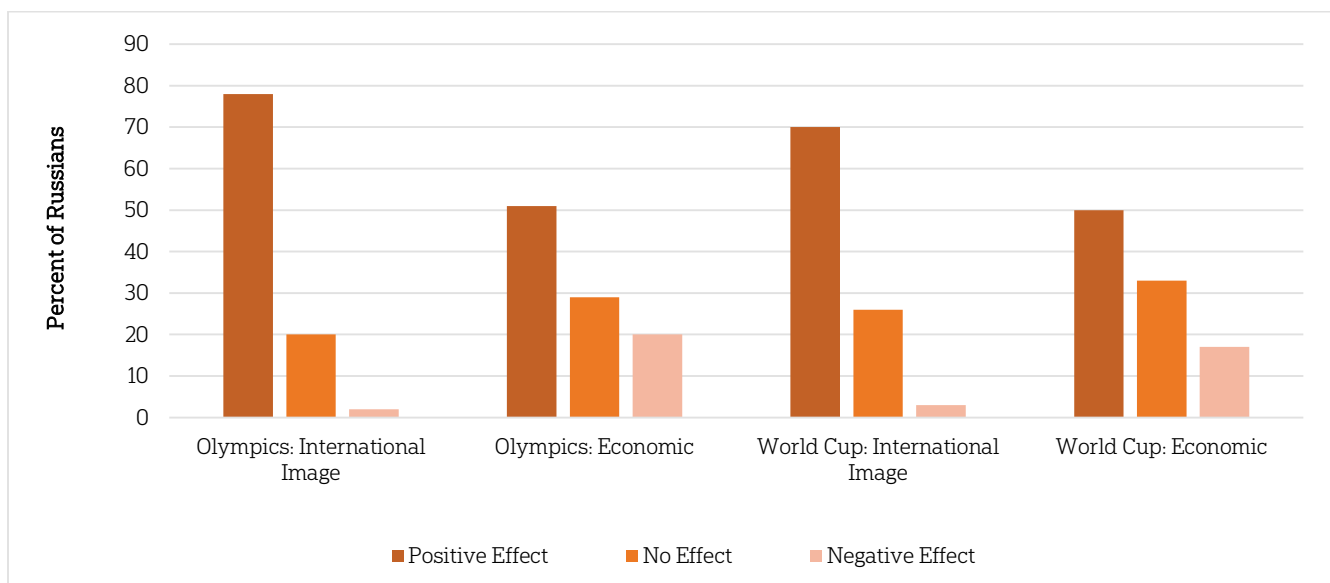
Seven in 10 Russians expect the World Cup will have a positive effect on the country's international image, and only 3 percent expect it to have a negative effect.

Russians are divided about the economic impacts of the 2014 Olympics and the 2018 World Cup on their country. Fifty-one percent report the Olympics had a positive economic effect, 29 percent say no effect, and 20 percent say a negative effect.

Public opinion is similar regarding the potential economic effects of the World Cup. Half say it will have a positive effect, 1 in 3 say no effect, and fewer than 2 in 10 say negative effect (17 percent).

Younger people are more optimistic about the impact of the World Cup on the country. Russians between the ages of 18 and 34 years old are more likely than those 55 or older to say the World Cup will have a positive effect on the country's economy (54 percent vs. 43 percent) and international image (74 percent vs. 65 percent).

Perceived impacts of hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics and 2018 World Cup



Questions: All things considered, what, if any, was the effect of hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics on Russia's [international image/economy]? Would you say very positive, positive, no effect, negative or very negative?

All things considered, what, if any, effect will hosting the 2018 World Cup have on Russia's [international image/economy]? Would you say very positive, positive, no effect, negative or very negative?

Soccer fans are also more optimistic about the effects of hosting the World Cup. Sixty-four percent of soccer fans say the World Cup will have a positive economic effect on Russia, compared with 46 percent of those who prefer to watch another sport. Likewise, 82 percent of soccer fans say the World Cup will help Russia's international image, compared with 68 percent of those who prefer to watch another sport.

When asked about their favorite sport to watch, 19 percent of Russians say soccer, which is the second most popular sport behind only figure skating (27 percent). Nine percent say hockey is their favorite sport to watch, 6 percent report skiing, snowboarding, or biathlon, and 5 percent say gymnastics.

RUSSIANS WHO VIEW CORRUPTION AS A NATIONAL PROBLEM ARE MORE LIKELY TO PERCEIVE NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF HOSTING THESE SPORTING EVENTS.

In Russia, corruption is the second most frequently cited problem facing the country. When asked about 14 different problems, Russians most often identify drug abuse (83 percent), corruption (79 percent) and pollution (71 percent) as serious problems.

Slightly fewer Russians identify corruption as a serious problem now than did two years ago (79 percent vs. 85 percent); however, this is part of a larger trend as fewer Russians today identify each of the 14 issues as a serious problem compared to two years ago.

Russians who view corruption as a problem are more likely to perceive negative economic impacts for the country of hosting these sporting events.

Twenty-one percent of those who believe corruption is an extremely or very serious problem say the 2014 Olympics had a negative effect on Russia's economy, compared with 15 percent of those who do not see corruption as a serious problem. Likewise, 18 percent of those who believe corruption is a serious problem report the 2018 World Cup will have a negative effect on Russia's economy, compared with 13 percent of those who do not see corruption as a serious problem.

There are no differences between Russians who think corruption is a serious problem and those who do not when it comes to perceptions of the impacts of these sporting events for Russia's international image.

For a full description of findings and study methodology, go to www.apnorc.org.