

Integrity policies in a trap of ineffectiveness

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National platforms against the manipulation of sport competitions

- ✓ The Council of Europe “Macolin” Convention (2014)
- ✓ The challenging search for manipulation proofs
- ✓ The sport omerta



Questioning the effectiveness of National Platform's reporting policies

- ✓ Have they been successful in promoting and attracting reporting persons?
- ✓ Which factors promote or hinder whistleblowing behaviour on manipulation issues?
- ✓ To what extent do national context differ on the matter?

Literature review (1): reporting conditions in sport

- ✓ Individual, contextual and social factors of reporting behaviour (Verschuuren, 2020)
- ✓ Sport specificities:
 - ✓ Team sport vs individual sport (Erickson, Backhouse and Carless, 2017)
 - ✓ Intense loyalties (Adler and Adler, 1988)
 - ✓ Moral disengagement (Newman, Warburton and Russell, 2022)
 - ✓ Retaliations (Erickson et al., 2019)
 - ✓ “Grayness” of manipulation issues (van der Hoeven et al., 2022)

Literature review (2): managing whistleblowing

- ✓ The theoretical benefits of reporting policies (Brown et al., 2008)
- ✓ Trend towards “national sport integrity systems” (Kihl, 2022)
- ✓ The evading effectiveness question (Verschuuren, 2021; Moriconi and de Cima, 2020)

Research design

- ✓ Configurational approach (Bottenburg et al. 2021)
- ✓ Four case studies: Cyprus, France, Greece & Portugal
- ✓ Qualitative method: Perceptions of effectiveness and trustworthiness

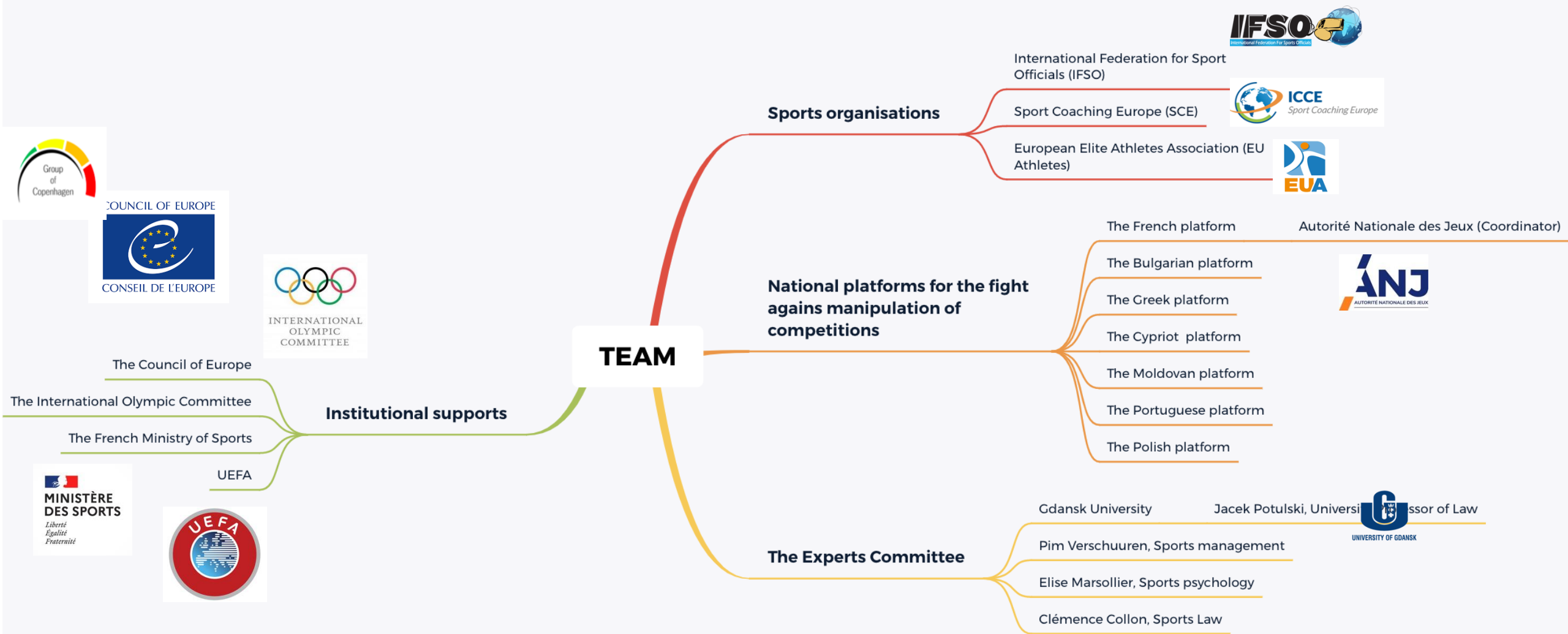


SIGNALE!



CESS
Committee of Ethics and
Sport Safeguarding

MotivAction Erasmus+ project 2022-2025



Data collection & analysis

- ✓ Documentary sources
- ✓ Semi-directive focus groups with athletes, coaches and referees
- ✓ Semi-directive focus groups with representatives of authorities composing the national platform
- ✓ Content and thematic analysis

Stakeholder sample (79)

	Athletes focus groups			
	Portugal	Greece	Cyprus	France
Number of participants	10	12	3	7
Disciplines	Tennis, Athletics, Gymnastics/trampoline, sailing, Triathlon, Swimming	Volley-ball, Waterpolo, Handball, Basketball	Football	Basketball, Rugby, Handball
	Coaches focus groups			
	Portugal	Greece	Cyprus	France
Number of participants	4	9	10	5
Disciplines	Futsal, Para-rowing, Triathlon	Volley-ball, Basketball, Handball, Waterpolo	Football, Basketball, Volleyball	Football, Figure Skating, Athletics, Boxing, Swimming
	Referees/judges focus groups			
	Portugal	Greece	Cyprus	France
Number of participants	3	7	6	4
Disciplines	Futsal, volleyball	Volleyball, Football, Handball, Waterpolo	Handball, volleyball, basketball, football	Boxing, Football, Ice-Hockey, Tennis

National platform sample

Cyprus	France	Greece	Portugal
Federation focus group (Volleyball, football, basketball) Individual meetings: -Police division dealing with sport manipulation -National betting authority -National Ethics Committee -Football Players Association	Focus group: -Judiciary police department dealing with sport manipulation -French national Olympic committee (CNOSF) -French gambling regulator (ANJ) -National lottery and betting company (FDJ) -French association of the multisport refereeing corps (AFCAM) -French national association of professional sports leagues	Focus group: -National transparency authority -Hellenic gaming commission -Financial Police -General Secretariat for sport -Hellenic Olympic Committee -University of the Peloponnese (in charge of the awareness-raising campaigns)	Focus group: -National lottery and betting company -Betting regulator -Portuguese olympic committee -Portuguese criminal police) -National ministry in charge of sport (SEJD) -IPDJ (Institute in charge of awaress-raising campaings) -Coordination Office for the National Plan for Ethics in Sport

Results (1): Actions from National platforms and perceived results

	Whistleblowing tool	Awareness-raising programmes
Cyprus	Confidential email address linked to an independent Ethics Committee (2018)	Clubs visits coordinated by the Football federation only
France	Specific IT-supported and anonymous platform for all sports (2021)	E-learning tools, club visits and communication strategies coordinated by the main team sport federations
Greece	Specific IT-supported and anonymous platform for all sports (2021)	E-learning tools, club visits and communication strategies coordinated by the Platform
Portugal	No specific platform	National programme coordinated by a specific Institute (IPDJ)

2. Reporting policy results

- ✓ Lack of substantial reports and the absence of whistleblowers willing to testify in court
- ✓ Explanation:
 - ✓ Insufficient awareness-raising strategies
 - ✓ Lack of trustworthiness and credibility
 - ✓ Fear of reprisals and social pressure
- ✓ Length of judicial proceedings

3. Perception of whistleblowing behaviour from potential whistleblowers

Positive appraisal of whistleblowing as a behaviour
“Everybody has to report” CY.R.3 “it remains essential. It is the panache of the brave” FR.C.1 “ethics in the broadest sense is central to our profession, all coaches should be concerned” PO.C.3 “Referees are part of the game. We work for the respect for the sport. It’s an expectation of spectators” CY.R.2
Reluctance to report
“in Greece we still have a negative approach of whistleblowers” (GR.C.1); “On sport-related manipulation, most coaches would choose an easy way to the final” (GR.C.4). “ “Better to lose your eyes than your name” (CY.R.3).
Ambivalences
“At the end of my career, I wouldn't mind reporting, but I would understand if a young referee was reluctant to do so” (PO.R.3) “There is a difficulty in defining what an alert is and especially from when the alert should be raised. “The threshold is hard to find” (FR.A.4) “the alert must be given with a minimum of evidence and certainty” (FR.C.3)

4. Perception of the prevalence and nature of manipulation risks

Heterogeneity of perceived prevalence

"I'm a coach for younger athletes. I saw ridiculous things happening. Opponents score against themselves to let the other score" (GR.C.4)

"Many things happen between referees and teams. We have to manage it. It's getting worse and worse. Everybody knows about corruption" (GR.A.6)

"Betting is the heart of the issue" (PO.A.5)

Poor state of governance and ethics

"With so many financial problems and the lack of regulation, match-fixing and reporting is not the priority" (GR.A.3)

"The presidents have "their" players that are on the team. They can change games" (CY.A.4)

"Cyprus is a small island. Everybody is suspicious. The whole system. No trust in general. We all hear this corruption." (CY.C.2)

"The main problem is the clubs who do not protect referees and players. The public is a big problem (crowd violence)" (PO.R.3)

"We are approached daily, even our relatives" (FR.A.6)

Stakeholders precarity

"A big club has the power to destroy a referee's career" (PO.R.3)

"Referees are not paid very much, even at national level" (PO.R.1)

"The financial precariousness of certain high-level coaches, in several sports disciplines could lead to accepting cheating" (FR.C.3)

"In Greece the promises of budget and salaries are not kept" (GR.A.7)

5.Level of awareness and trust towards reporting mechanisms and responsible organisations/persons

Distrust
“It’s difficult to report at the moment: the sports world is very small in Portugal, and everything is known. If you speak out, your career is ruined” PO.A.2. “I do not trust my federation” FR.A.1 “Federations are voted by the clubs and so can be influenced” GR.A.3 “Even with the prosecutors nobody can be trusted” GR.R.2; “Cyprus is a small island. Everybody is suspicious. The whole system. Committee of football also is suspicious. Financial interests are mixed. No trust in general. We all hear this corruption” CY.C.1”
Futility of the reports
“Right from the start I knew they would not act [on a report]. There is no independence.” GR.A.2 “I have not seen anyone in jail, any investigation” CY.C.1 “If you report something, then the people don’t act about it. I reported an incident. I trusted them but nothing happened. It was a private complaint to the superior authorities. There is no will. People go against strong interests. They are not ready to fight the powerful.” GR.R.1; All these years and we did not have one investigation. Nobody cares.” GR.R.2 “National authorities do nothing”, PO.R.2

6. Level of expected support in case of reporting

Retaliation expectations
“The sports world is very small in Portugal, and everything is known. If you speak out, your career is ruined” (PO.C.1) “Everybody knows about corruption. How can I prove. I will get punished so how can I say” (GR.A.1) “One referee spoke up and got injured. He was threatened. He has a lot of evidence; but the media and social media then saying he is crazy, corrupted. Even the court went against him because he gave the names” (CY.C.1)
Variations
“As a volleyball female athlete, I fully agree. I know about red button but I’m not aware about problems. About stigma, I don’t care. I want volley to be clean” (GR.A.3) “If I become a whistleblower, my community yes would accept. My teammates and colleagues no” (GR.A.1) “Yes I agree. The close environment would support. For the rest it would be stigma” (GR.A.4)

Discussion

- ✓ Stakeholder ethical precarity
- ✓ Whistleblowing policies: the trap of ineffectiveness
- ✓ Towards an holistic understanding of sport integrity

Limitations and future research

- ✓ Limits of the data set
- ✓ Future directions:
 - ✓ Longitudinal analysis
 - ✓ Identification of good practices
 - ✓ Multidisciplinary perspectives

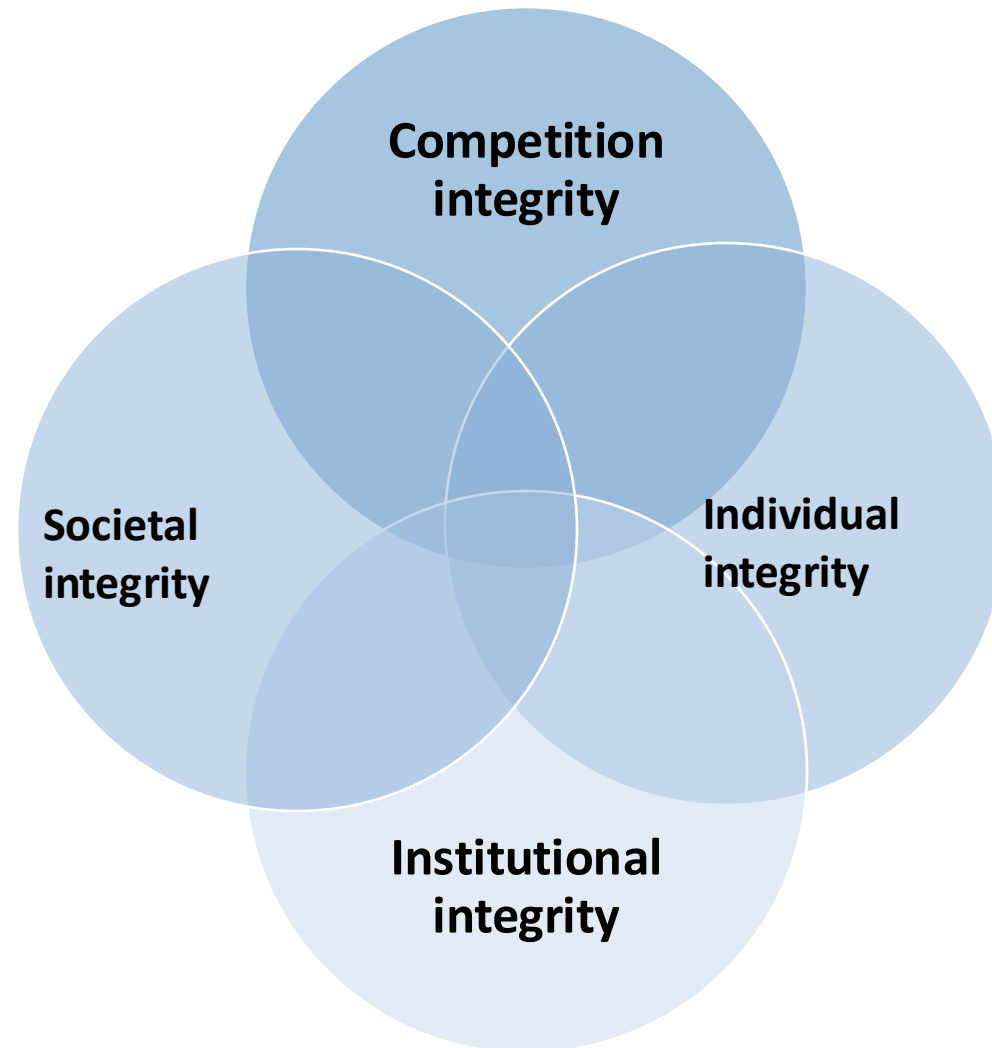
Thank you for your attention

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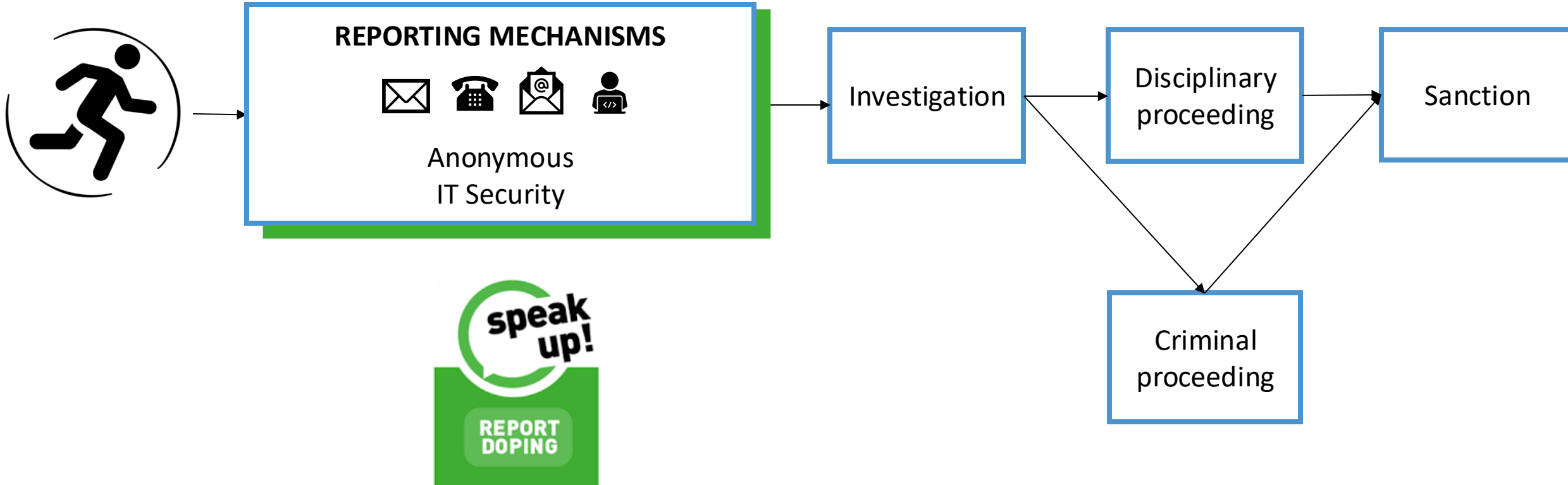
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Towards a global vision of sports integrity

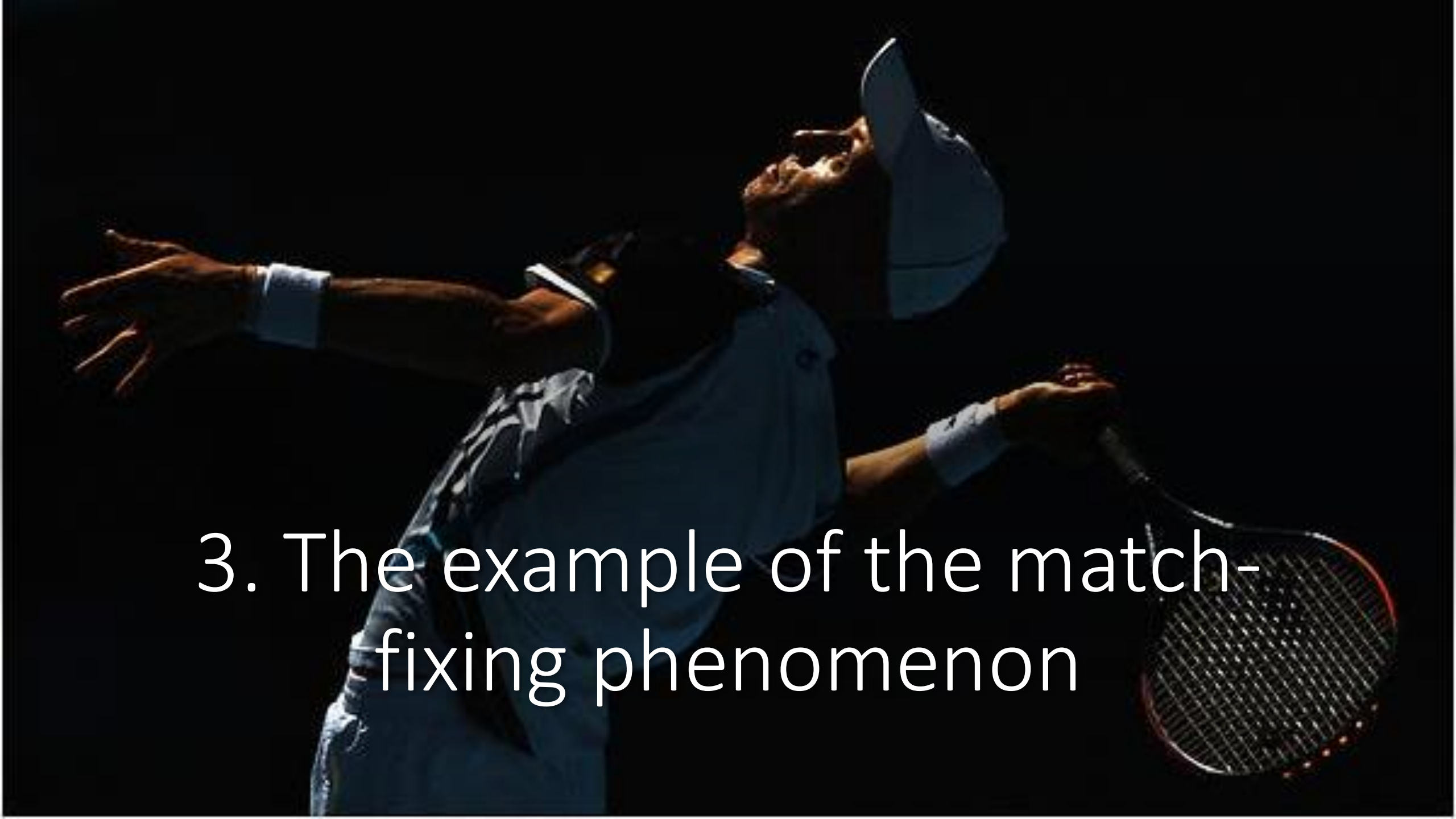


The role of reporting mechanisms



Global policies
vs
local values



A tennis player in a white shirt and cap is shown in a celebratory pose, with arms raised and a tennis racket in hand. The player is wearing white wristbands and has a joyful expression. The background is dark, making the player stand out.

3. The example of the match-fixing phenomenon



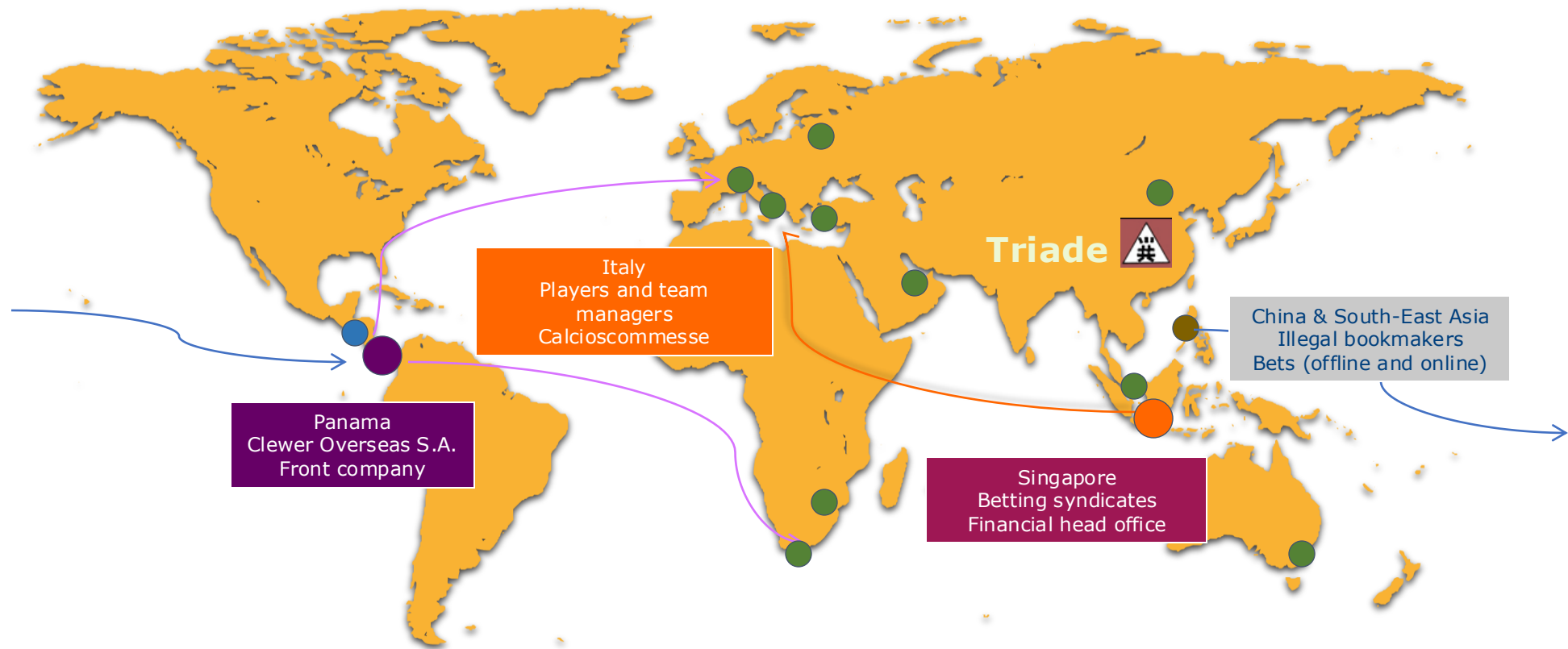
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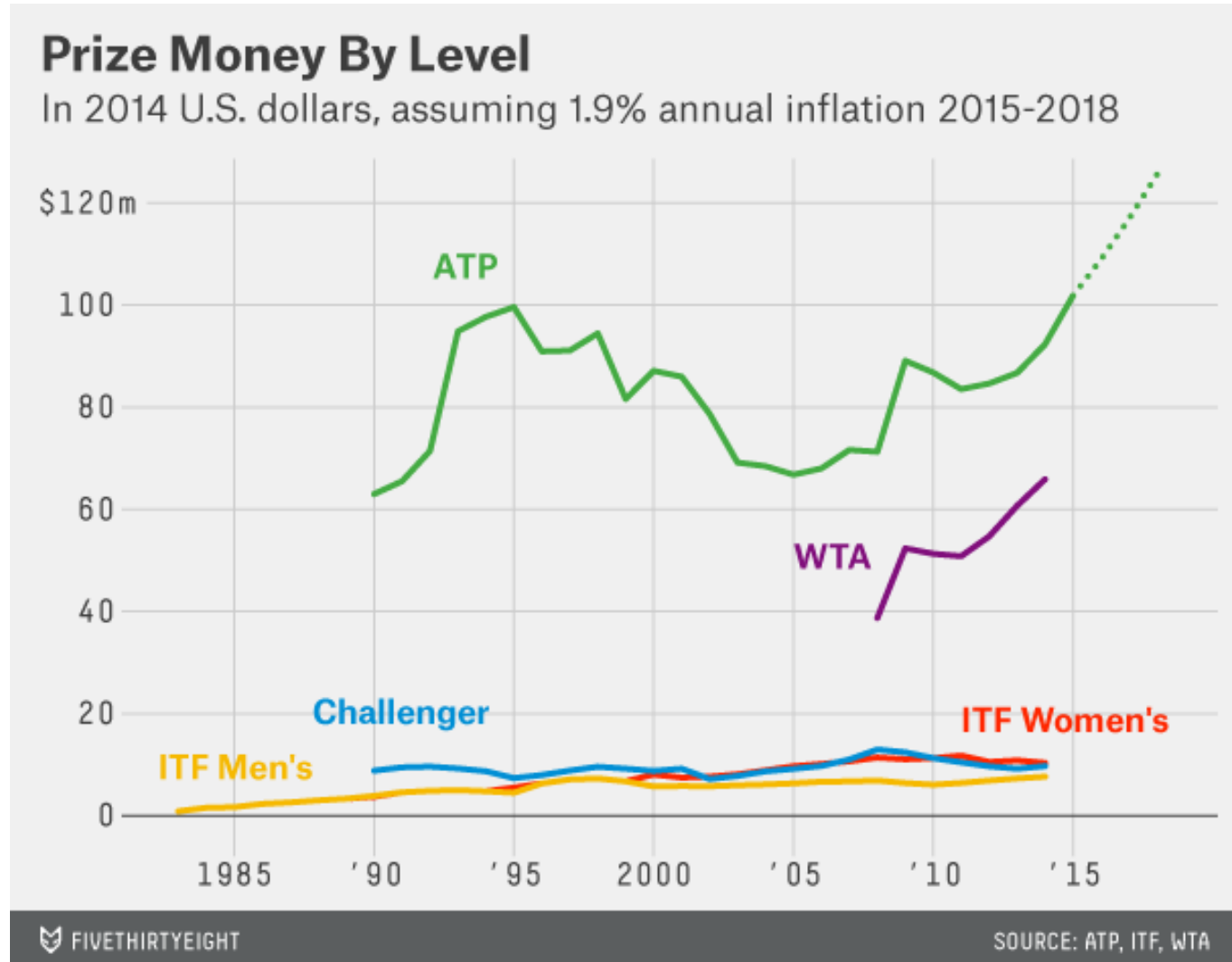
20 november 2009



The calcioscommesse network (2010-2012)



FIRST CAUSE: YOU CAN FIX ANY SPORT COMPETITION YOU WANT



SPORTS OMERTA

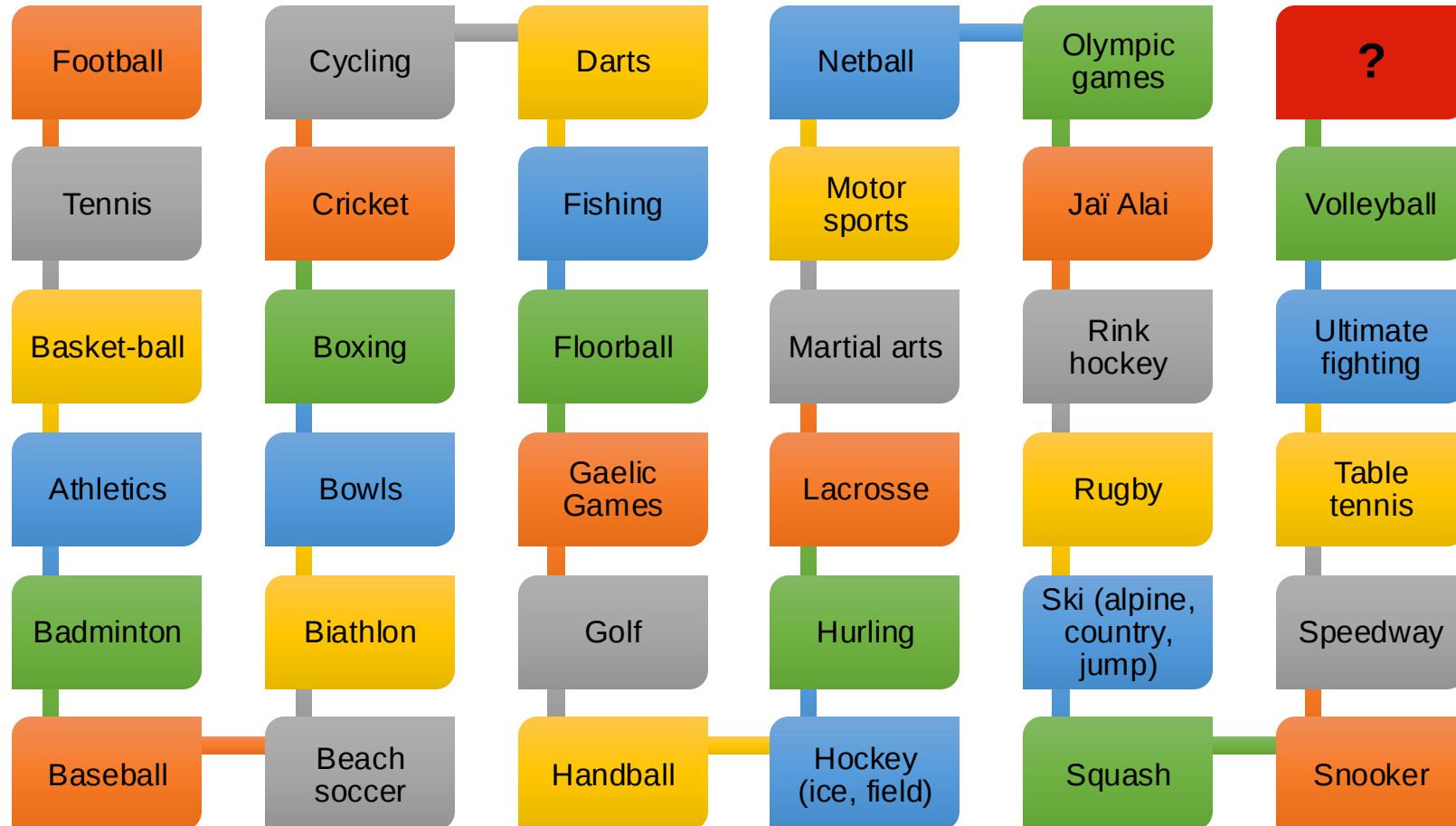
Performance,
performance,
performance

Team & club loyalty

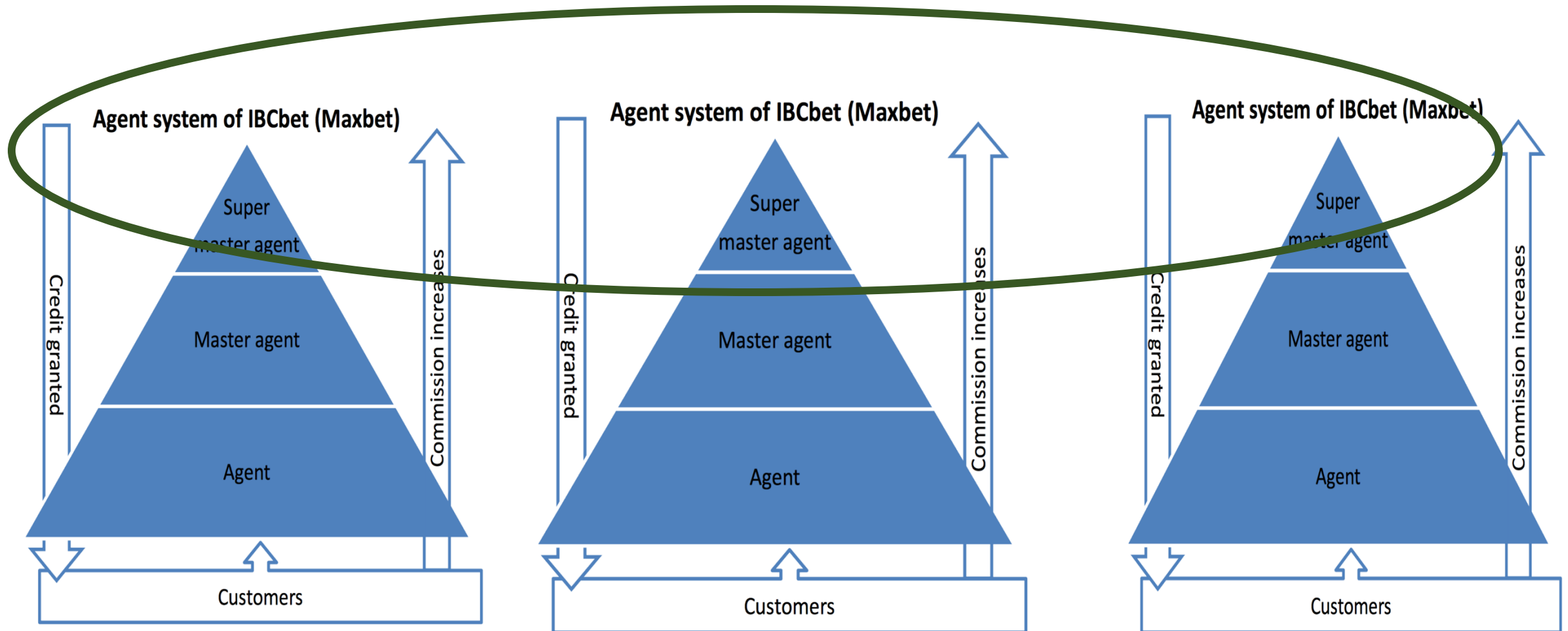
« Moral disengagement »



SECOND CAUSE: YOU CAN BET ON ANY COMPETITION YOU WANT



Understanding the liquidity of the world betting markets

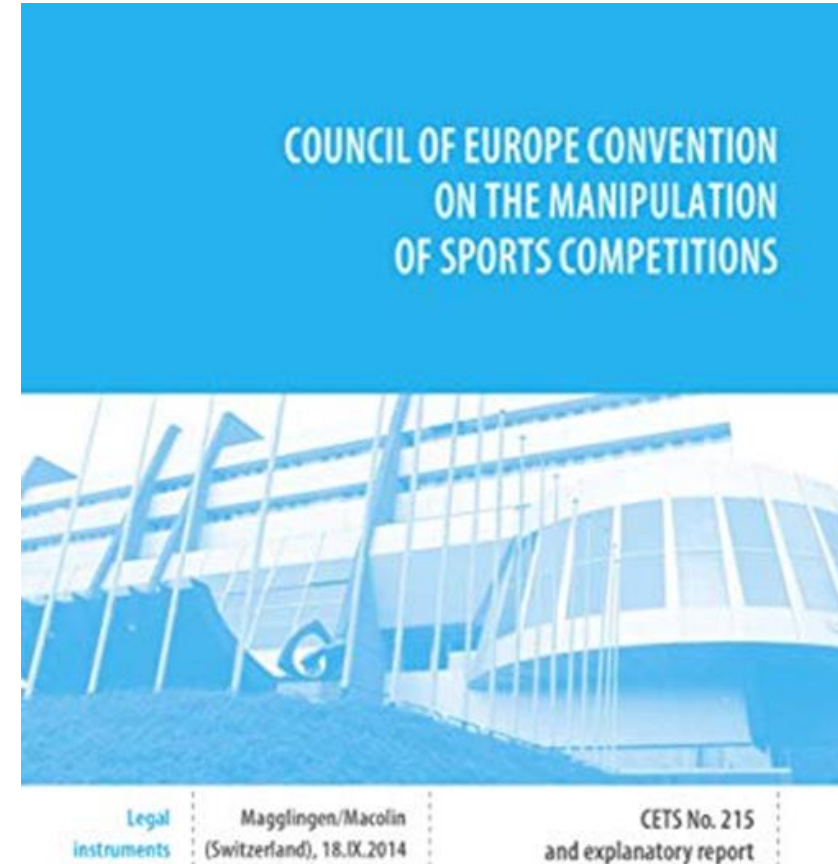


The Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (the Macolin Convention) - 2019

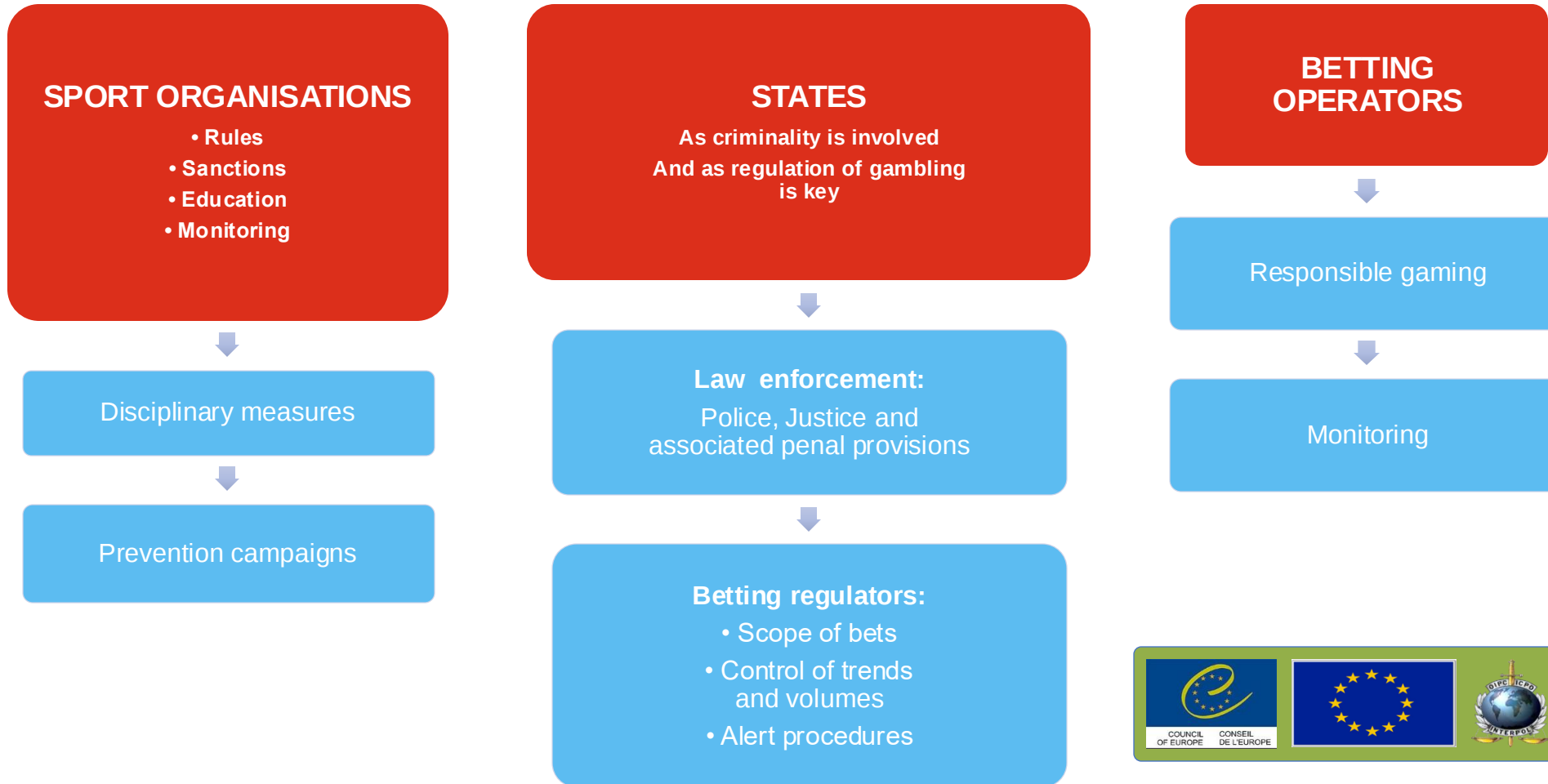
- **Definitions** (Art. 3) : Manipulation, illegal betting, etc.
- Sport organisations **responsibilities** and public funding (Art. 7 et 8)
- Sports betting **regulation** (Art. 9, 10 et 11).
- Cooperation and **national platforms** (Art. 12 et 13)
- The adequation of **penal codes** to manipulation (Art. 15)
- The **Secretariat** and Follow-Up Committee (Art. 30 et 31)

Where do we stand?

- 41 signatures and 9 ratifications
- Open to non-CoE countries
- The EU signing process
- Institutional development: The Secretariat, the Follow-up Committee, the National platforms and the Group of Copenhagen



The multi-stakeholder framework against match-fixing





4. The role and protection of whistleblowers

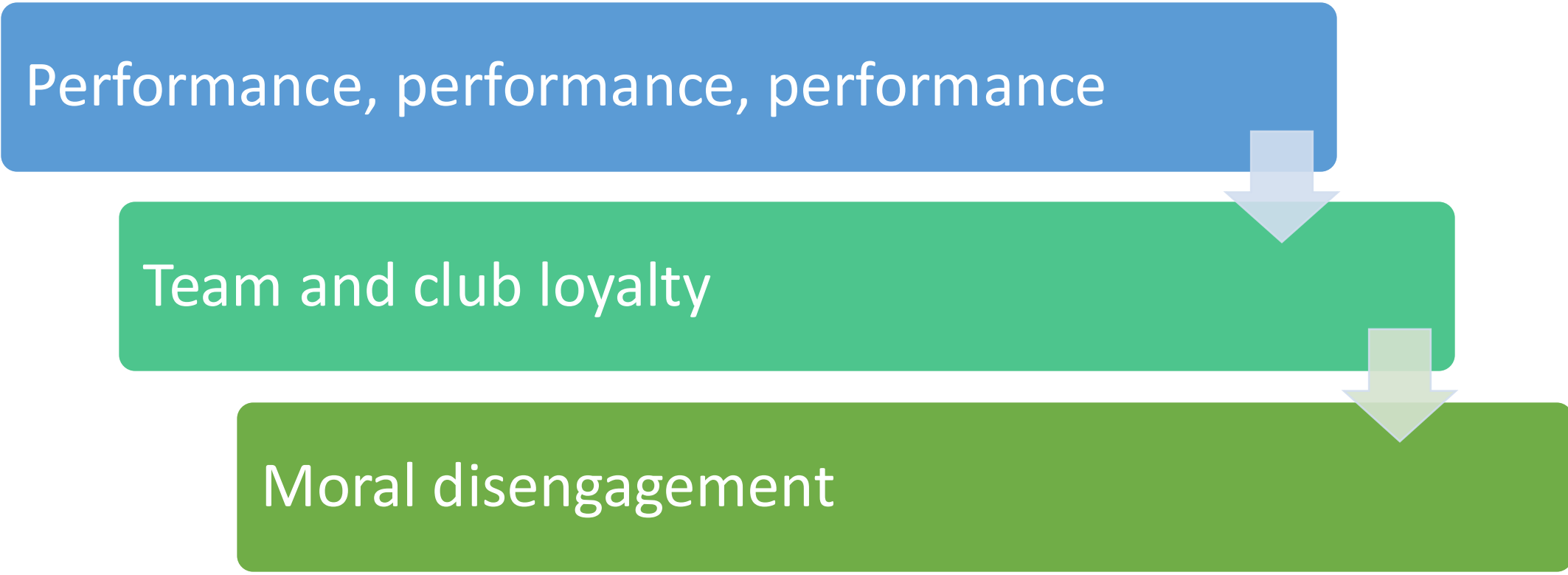
The crucial role of sport whistleblowers

- ✓ Key role in landmark cases
- ✓ Rarity of sport whistleblowers
- ✓ General dependence on human intelligence
- ✓ Reprisals and ostracism



Sport culture vs whistleblowing

Performance, performance, performance



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graph TD; A[Performance, performance, performance] --> B[Team and club loyalty]; B --> C[Moral disengagement]
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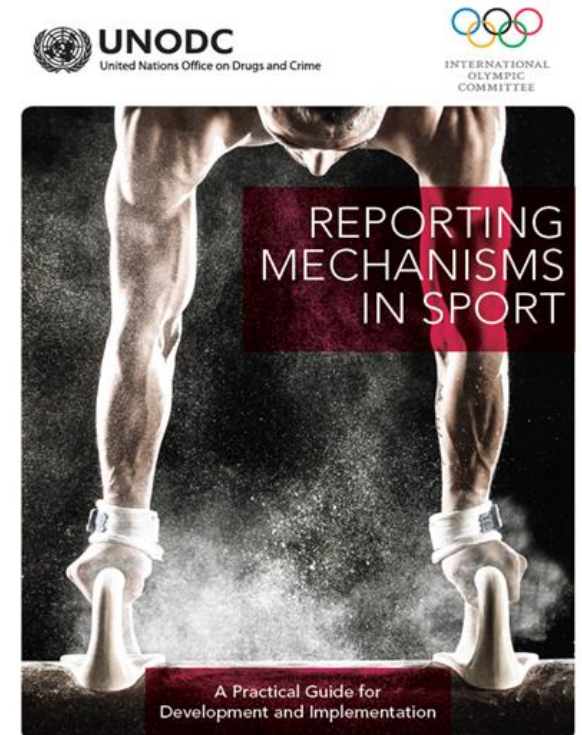
The diagram consists of three horizontal rectangular boxes stacked vertically, each containing text. The top box is blue, the middle is green, and the bottom is a darker green. Downward-pointing arrows connect the right side of the top box to the middle box, and the middle box to the bottom box, indicating a sequential flow.

Team and club loyalty

Moral disengagement

Responses from sport organisations

- Multiplication of reporting mechanisms at national and international levels
- Regulatory measures (duties to report)
- Amnesties and « substantial assistance » clauses
- Protection: confidentiality & anonymity



Existing reporting
policies are
**necessary, but not
sufficient**



Leadership
commitment

Ethical
culture

Reporting
mechanisms

Public frameworks

- Whistleblower protection legislation rarely apply to sport stakeholders
- The limits of witness protection measures
- Potential solutions: national platforms or dedicated integrity agencies

A man in a dark suit is walking on a city sidewalk, carrying a large, empty white barrel. In the background, a blue car is parked on the street, and a building with a sign that says "VANITY" is visible. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

Bad barrels
make bad
apples

Why does poor governance and leadership lead to integrity risks?

- Lack of risk-management: SGB are mostly reactive to problems
- Lack of internal trust: ethical tools from SGBs are not used
- Lack of external legitimacy: law enforcement will not cooperate
- Conflicts of interest: short terms revenues > integrity
- Less long-term economic revenues and unfit financial redistribution make sport actors more vulnerable