



Analyzing the Roles of Country Image, Nation Branding, and Public Diplomacy through the Evolution of the Modern Olympic Movement

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Yoav Dubinsky

University of Oregon, USA

ABSTRACT

Since the Ancient Greek athletics and through the revivals of the Olympic Movement and the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896, countries, cities and governments have sought to take advantage by hosting Olympic Games and other sport events. The purpose of this study is to analyze the different facets of country image through the evolution of the Olympic movement. Countries and governments used and will continue to use the Games to renovate infrastructure, build new facilities, expose local products and new technologies, leverage tourism, improve the local and international political and social image, promote tourism and show superiority on the sports field that will enable them to try and reach their economic, political and social goals. The article is significant as it analyzes how countries, cities, communities, and other pressure groups used the Olympic Games, since the revival of the Olympic Movement in the late 19th century, the new traditions after World War I, the political era after World War II and during the Cold War, the commercialized era and the legacy-oriented era in early 21st century.

KEYWORDS

country image, Olympic Games, sports diplomacy, nation branding

Introduction

For over 2,500 years, from the athletic competitions in 776 BC that were held in Ancient Olympia in Greece to the Modern Olympics in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the Olympic Games were used as a leverage tool for economic, social and political goals (Dubinsky, 2019; Miller, 2004a; Preuss, 2015). The purpose of this study is to analyze how different facets of country image reflected in the Olympic Games through the evolution of the Modern Olympic Movement: How through the historical evolution of the movement, hosting and participating countries used the Olympic Games in more sophisticated ways. The athletic competitions in Ancient Greece set some of the foundations for the Modern Olympic Games, not only in terms of the competitions, but also on their social, political, economic, and cultural importance (Murray, 2018). The uniting impact they had as a Pan-Hellenic tradition (Miller, 2004a), could be found in the Olympic Games in the Twenty-First Century. Some of the positive impacts of the Modern Games are rooted in the Ancient athletic competitions in Olympia (Guttmann, 2002; Murray, 2018). The concepts of Ekecheiria that is now known as the Olympic Truce, the value of Arête that embodies the philosophy of Olympism and the promotion of values through athletics and the importance of arts and culture can all be found both in Ancient Olympia and in the

Modern Olympic Movement (Binder, 2007; Miller, 2004a; 2004b). However, cheating, corruption, exclusion, politics and violence which are part of modern sports (Boykoff, 2016) could also be traced back to antiquity (Miller, 2004a; 2004b). The Modern Olympic Games were revived by French Baron Pierre de Coubertin as athletic competitions for amateurs (Georgiadis, 2003), yet in a few decades they became a mega event broadcasted to 220 countries and territories (IOC, 2018), generating revenues of billion USD from broadcasting rights, TOP (The Olympic Partners) programs, OCOG (Olympic Games Organizing Committee) sponsorships, ticketing and licensing (IOC, 2018). From Ancient times until the Twenty-First Century, different Olympic stakeholders tried and are still trying to use them to enjoy a better image that will help them achieve or improved their political, social, and economic goals.

Countries, cities, and other stakeholders used the Olympic Games to improve their images. Country image is a multidisciplinary field of research (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015) influenced by disciplines such as sociology and psychology, political science, business management and communications. Fields of research such as public diplomacy (Cull, 2008) and soft power (Nye, 2008), national and collective identity (David & Bar-Tal, 2009), agenda setting and framing (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Yoo, Smith & Kim, 2015) Countries, and place branding (Anholt, 2010) influence the field of country image (Fan 2010). Countries, cities and communities have been using sports for public diplomacy (Arning, 2013; Dubinsky, 2019) to achieve social, political, and financial goals, and improve the image of the country. According to Anholt (2010, p. 81), “a successful Olympics is the start of the process not the end”. The international exposure, the focus on culture, and peaceful values in sports make it a useful tool for countries to use soft power (Nye 2008) to achieve national and international goals and improve their images. However, according to Anholt (2010, p. 81) “it takes more than sporting events to build a national image: policy, products, people, culture, tourism, and business have to work together to *earn* the country a better reputation”. This study discusses the historical development of the Modern Olympic Movement through the different lenses of country image and related fields.

Revival of the Olympic Games

The role of country image is reflected through the first period of the revival of the modern Olympic Games, especially through national identity and public diplomacy. The revival of the Olympic Movement is mostly attributed to the French Baron Pierre De Coubertin (Georgiadis, 2003), but it is also a result of countries such as France, England, Prussia (today Germany) and Greece to use physical activity, and athletic competitions for social and political goals (Boykoff, 2016; Guttmann, 2002). While country image was not the goal of the influencing European countries, collective identity (David & Bar-Tal, 2009) and the idea of creating a united community through sports was. De Coubertin wanted to re-create that society - a society of people with harmonious balance of body, mind and spirit (Georgiadis 2013). He saw the athletes as ambassadors of Peace and Truce, an idea going back to the ancient Ekecheiria (Miller, 2004a) – the respected truce between the Ancient Greek City-State around the athletic competitions in Olympia.

Unlike public diplomacy that comes from the government and is tied to foreign policy (Cull, 2008), De Coubertin saw the Olympic Games as a non-political movement that connects between communities. One of the most influential people on the French Baron Pierre De Coubertin was the British Doctor, William Penny Brooks, who started the Much Wenlock Olympian Games in 1850 (Georgiadis, 2003). The popularity of the Wenlock Games and emphasize on education, captured De Coubertin's mind. He was highly influenced and inspired by his correspondences with Dr Brooks and his visit to the Much Wenlock Olympian Games in 1890, played a key part in the way the modern Olympic Games were revived and the ethos they were founded on. Influenced by the collegial athletics system in the United States, by Brooks' Much Wenlock Games and by the Greek "Zappas Games" (Georgiadis, 2003) and with International sports federations joining, the International Olympic Committee was established in 1894 (Guttmann, 2002). As Dubinsky (2019) argues, the use of sports

for public diplomacy goes back to the athletic competitions in Ancient Greece. De Coubertin recognized the importance of centralizing the Modern Olympic Games around Greece and the Ancient Mythology.

To connect the new Modern Olympic Games to the Ancient Olympics, Greek businessman Dimitrus Vikelas was named the first President of the International Olympic Committee and the first modern Olympic Games and Athens was chosen to host the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 (Guttman, 2002). Much like in the Ancient ones, women were not allowed to compete there as well. After Athens 1896, De Coubertin became the President of the IOC and the second modern Olympics were held in Paris in 1900, the hometown of the French Barron. During the first period countries did not identified ways to use the games to improve their images and the Games had mostly marginal international impact (Dubinsky, 2017). The games were mostly part of other international events and festivals and suffered from many organizational and economic problems. In Paris 1900 and in St. Louis in 1904, the games were part of the World Fair and in 1908 in London they were part of the Franco-British exhibition (Dubinsky, 2017). The Olympic Games were revived, but there was still a learning curve (Guttman, 2002).

However, international politics were part of the games almost from their establishment. After the Americans used the 1904 Olympic Games in St. Louis to show their athletic superiority (Guttman, 2002), in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in London in 1908 the American flag was not raised (Boykoff, 2016). As a reaction the American delegation did not lower their flag when they paraded before the British King and Queen. In 1912 the games went to Stockholm and for the first time the question of independence was raised when Finland and Bohemia were forced to march in the opening ceremony under the flags of Russia and Austria respectfully (Guttman, 2002). Thus, countries did start to recognize the potential the Olympic Games had in serving broader international goals. Because of the World War I (1914-1918) the planned 1916 Berlin Olympic Games that were scheduled got cancelled (Guttman, 2002). When analyzing through disciplinaries Buhmann and Ingenhoff (2015) argue that influence country image research, in the first period of the Modern Olympic Games countries started to recognize the potential of the Olympic Games, but the use for branding and image purposes was mostly done through limited public diplomacy and was reflected especially through national identity.

Recognizing the potential

The first significant use of the Olympic Games to change countries images started after World War I (Dubinsky, 2019). If before World War I the Olympic Games were still struggling to find their place, in the period between the wars, the Games started to form their own structure and create their own traditions and countries started to recognize the potential of using the games for their own goals (Dubinsky, 2017). Country image also started to play more significant roles, especially through public diplomacy and the way countries used the games for foreign policy purposes. Antwerp was the first city to host the games after the war in 1920; however Germany and its war allies, Austria, Bulgaria, the Ottoman Empire and Hungary were excluded (Guttman, 2002; Murray, 2018). Germany was also excluded from the 1924 Olympic Games in Paris. An Olympic flag was used for the first time in Antwerp 1920 and the Five Olympic Rings made their first Olympic debut there. In 1924 the first Winter Olympic Games took place for the first time, in Chamonix, France and in the 1928 Games in Amsterdam the Olympic flame was burning in the Olympic Torch at the Olympic Stadium (Guttman, 2002). Thus, countries started to recognize the development of the Olympic Movement and contributed to forming new traditions. During the Great Depression, in the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, the local business Helms Bakery, supplied bread to the Olympic Village (George, 2012). Helms Bakery associated itself with "Olympic bread", being "Olympic Games bakers", and "Choice of Olympic champions" (George, 2012), which later started a long legal dispute about the intellectual properties of officially being associated with the Olympic movement. Yet, this shows that even in times of depression, the American capitalist system recognized the sponsorship potential of the Olympic Games, perhaps even before the IOC did.

When Pierre De Coubertin revived the Olympic movement his vision was to revive art and cultural competitions as well and indeed during the first half of the Twentieth Century, in every Olympic Games between Stockholm 1912 and London 1948, art, culture, music, literature, painting, sculpture and architecture were part of the Olympic program (Stromberg, 2012). Since the 1950s, the art competitions were replaced by art exhibitions and artistic programs during the Olympic Games. Until today, culture and art are celebrated in each Olympic Games through the Opening Ceremony, the Closing Ceremony and the various cultural activities which are called the Cultural Olympiad (Garcia, 2011). The opening and closing ceremonies gradually became a platform where countries could expose their culture and heritage as well (Arning, 2013).

Yet, when discussing the role of country image in the modern Olympic Games, one of the first to truly make a significant use of the games to change the image of the country was Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party, while hosting the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin (Dubinsky, 2017; Murray, 1992). The games were used for Arian propaganda and show the German people, foreign athletes and spectators how powerful and organized Germany could be under the governance of Hitler and his Party (Davis, 2008; Guttmann, 2002; Murray, 2008). Every German victory was perceived as a victory for the Arian race, "Heil Hitler" salutes were made during the flashing opening ceremony and Germany exposed their new developed technology by National Television Broadcasting for the first time. More traditions were introduced, such as the lighting of the torch in Olympia and the relay to the Olympic Stadium was done in the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin (Guttmann, 2002; Murray, 2008). The Games played a key role in the establishment of Hitler and the Nazi Party as the leaders of Germany. Hitler was not the only, nor the first dictator to use sport events to reaffirm his governance. Benito Mussolini used the 1934 FIFA World Cup to promote fascism and the superiority of Italy under his regime (Murray, 2018). Before Italy's semi-final and final matches, Mussolini even met the referee, thus securing Italy will win the cup on home soil. Later on, in 1978, the generals Junta regime in Argentina used controversial tactics to win the FIFA World cup that the country was hosting.

Nazi Germany managed to use the 1936 Berlin Olympics to promote their propaganda and tried to show international stakeholders a friendly peace-seeking country (Boykoff, 2016). Yet, the hero of the Games was black American athlete Jesse Owens, who won four gold medals, refuting the racist Arian on Hitler's home soil. Owens became a symbol not only for his sportive accomplishments against the Nazi regime, but for suffering from racism in the United States of America (USA), not even being able to ride the bus in America after coming back as a national hero. "I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the President", he told years after (Schwartz, 2000). During World War II (1939-1945) the Olympic Games that were scheduled in 1940 and 1944 were cancelled (Guttmann, 2002). In this period country image, with the Olympic Movement establishing its role as an international event, blunt manifestations of international relations (Dubinsky, 2017) started to appear and showed that hosing and participating countries recognize the potential for using the Olympic Games for country image purposes.

The political era

Since the end of World War II, countries have been using the Olympic Games for political purposes, to rebuilt their cities, infrastructure and technologies, and achieve national and international goals (Dubinsky, 2018; 2019). With the world being dominated by two superpowers and with new countries receiving independence, the International Olympic Committee became more international, and more countries saw opportunities through hosting and participating in the Olympic Games to showcase themselves on an international stage (Dubinsky, 2018; Guttmann, 2002). For most of the second half of the Twentieth Century, the ideal idea of De Coubertin od amateurism was facing a very hard and contradicting reality. During the Decades after World War II, the peaceful idea of the Olympic Games was clouded by International Politics that threatened the existence of the Games. Germany and its allies were excluded from the first Games after the war that took place in London in 1948 (Guttmann, 2002). Israel declared independence a few months before the Games but was not invited for

technical reasons as the country didn't have a recognized National Olympic Committee and after Arabic countries threatened to boycott the Olympics if Israel would participate. The Israeli-Arab dispute will continue to manifest itself through the next decades with boycotts, and even terror, using the Games as a platform to showcase their political agendas (Dubinsky & Dziku, 2018). In 1952 Israel participated for the first time, but East Germany boycotted the games after the IOC did not recognize the independence of the country.

Boycotts continued through the 1956 Games in Melbourne. Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon boycotted the games (Davis, 2008) because of the English involvement in the Suez Canal, China boycotted the Olympics because Taiwan was allowed to participate and during the Games the Soviet Army invaded Hungary, which resulted in Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland withdrawing in protest. With the Hungarian Revolution in the background, the water polo match in Melbourne between Hungary and USSR was remembered by the red bloody water due to the constant fighting and violent behavior game, especially by the Soviet players (Boykoff, 2016; Guttmann, 2002).

The Cold War between the Western Bloc led by the USA and the Eastern Bloc led by the Soviet Union provoked both blocs to try and show their superiority by developing elite athletes, using drugs steroids and performance enhancers (Hunt, 2007). The problem of doping became evident to all when Danish cyclist Knud Enemark Jensen collapsed during his race under the influence of Ronicol and died in the hospital. Countries recognized the potential to achieve international exposure through winning gold medals, having the anthem played, their flag raised and being recognized as an athletic powerhouse. Through the 1970s and the 1980s doping became an evident problem in the Olympic movement, as East Germany used a systematic doping system to achieve international recognition by dominating competitions in the swimming pool and in track and field (Dubinsky, 2017; Guttmann, 2002). More recent reports indicated that systematic governmental backing doping took place in West Germany as well during the 1970s (The Associated Press, 2013).

After World War II countries used the games to renovate destroyed cities and to try and change their images. Italy tried to disassociate itself with its fascist history, and prior to the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome monuments praising Mussolini were revamped (Boykoff, 2016). The Olympic movement also became more international, with more continents hosting the games. Japan became the first Asian country to host the Olympic Games in 1964 in Tokyo. Although China, Indonesia and North Korea boycotted the Games (Davis, 2008), Japan managed to use the Tokyo Olympics to shift the image from a post war country that suffered from two nuclear bombs only 20 years ago, to show the world a peaceful developed country using high technology such as satellite broadcasting for the first time. By using the Olympic Games to showcase its new technology, Japan managed to reposition itself and became recognized as a highly developed country. Japan became a market leader and continued to host high profile sports events, such as the Winter Olympic Games in 1972 (Sapporo) and 1998 (Nagano), the FIFA World Cup together with South Korea in 2002 and won the bid to host the Olympic Games again in Tokyo 2020.

Mexico used the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games to fight the stereotype of being undeveloped by having the games broadcasted live in color for the first time. During a protest against social injustice in Mexico City, just a few days before the Opening Ceremony, hundreds of students were killed by Mexican authorities in what became known as the Tlateloco Massacre (Guttmann, 2002). The 1960 Olympic Games in Rome were the first ones that the TV rights were sold for 1.2 Million dollars. Since then the rights fees have been increasing significantly in every games reaching billions of dollars (IOC, 2018).

With the growth of exposure, agenda setting and framing theories became relevant when analyzing the use of Olympic Games to shape an international image by different stakeholders (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Yoo, Smith & Kim, 2015). The increasing international coverage made the Olympic Games a useful platform not only for countries to achieve international goals, but also for pressure groups and individuals to impact the images of their own countries through protests (Dubinsky, 2017; IOC, 2018). It was also during the Games in Mexico when the most famous political protest was done by athletes, when American black medalists Tommie

Smith and John Carlos lowered their heads and raised their fists while standing on the podium during the American National Anthem in protest against racial discrimination in the United States (Boykoff, 2016; Guttman, 2002). While the athletes were sent home and scrutinized in the USA, decades later they became national heroes in America and inspired new generations of athletes to take a stand against social injustice.

While Japan managed to shift its image from a hawkish country to a peaceful one during the 1964 Games, the West German attempt in 1972 backfired. West Germany tried to organize "The Happy Games" in Munich and to give the world a complete different experience than the 1936 Berlin Games and show a very different Germany (Dubinsky, 2017; Guttman, 2002). Instead of armed soldiers marching and patrolling, unarmed security guards were in charge of the order. The result was a tragic terror attack by Palestinian Terror group "Black September", who kidnapped and murdered 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and referees (Dubinsky, 2017). It took Germany 34 more years until they managed to get it right. After suffering from a militant image in 1936 and from criticism about the lack of security in 1972, Germany showed the world a different, happy, developed and safe during the 2006 FIFA World Cup, making it a celebration in the stadiums, the host cities and all around the country (Murray, 2018; Sark, 2006).

From a county image perspective, the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal were a political and an economical disaster for Canada and Quebec (Whitson 2004). More than 20 African countries boycotted the games as a protest against the decision to allow New Zealand to participate after they played a rugby match against South Africa that was suspended from Olympic Movement because of the discriminating Apartheid regime (Dubinsky, 2017). The Games also left a huge debt as the Quebec government did not receive the support from the Federal Canadian government and tried to use the 1976 games to promote Quebec and Montreal (Dubinsky, 2017). The result was corruption and over spending of public money on the Olympic Stadium, and a debt that was covered only in 2006, 30 years after the Olympics (O'Reilly & Seguin, 2009). It was also the first and only Summer Olympic Games where the host country has failed to win a gold medal on home soil.

The peak of the tension cold war was in the 1980's as countries from the Western bloc and from the Soviet Union used the Olympic Games for public diplomacy to achieve international goals and to showcase their power (Murray, 2018). The 1980 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid in New York State, are mostly remembered by "The Miracle on Ice" (Billings, 2009), when the young college based American team beat the "Mighty Red" USSR ice hockey team in what was considered one of the biggest wins in US sport history. Yet, while USSR did come to compete in the USA, when Moscow hosted the summer Olympic Games in 1980, the Western Bloc, led by the USA boycotted the games as a protest against the invasion of the Soviet army to Afghanistan (Davis, 2008; Murray, 2018). Four years later, in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, the Soviet Union retaliated with a boycotting the games in the USA (Davis, 2008; Murray, 2018). With politics, terrorism and financial deficits and doping overshadowing sports, the future of the Olympic Games was at risk.

Research on country image is traced back to the 1970s and the use of public diplomacy as a foreign policy strategy is associated with the Cold War (Cull, 2008). Thus, it is not surprising that the two biggest superpowers and its allies, identified sports and especially the Olympic Movement as a tool to reach international goals and especially to improve the country's image. The political use of the Olympic Games became more sophisticated, with countries using both hard power and soft power (Dubinsky, 2017; Nye, 2008) to achieve foreign policy goals through the Olympic Movement. Through the political period, big countries, small countries, democratic and non-democratic countries, communities, non-governmental organizations and private citizens, all see the potential of using the Olympic Games to improve their images (Dubinsky, 2017; 2019; Murray, 2018). Through the lenses of agenda-setting and theories from communications studies (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Yoo, Smith & Kim, 2015), the period is also identified by attempts to capitalize on the exposure of the Olympic Games to achieve an image that serves political goals.

The commercialized era

The commercialized era brought a new dimension to country image – aiming not only to improve the political image but to have a long last successful financial impact (Davis, 2008; Dubinsky, 2017). With the Cold War coming to an end, new countries becoming independent, the capitalist financial system establishing itself as the predominant economic system and the USA left as the only superpower, the way countries used the Olympic Games in the late 1980s and 1990s was shifted from being mostly politically oriented, to being market oriented (Dubinsky, 2017). After three very problematic Olympic Games in Munich, Montreal and Moscow, the Olympic Movement was in a crossroad. President Juan Antonio Samaranch came into office after the 1980 Moscow Games, understanding the Olympic movement must go through another reform. The 1984 Olympic Games were significant not only because of political reasons. It was the first the Olympic Games were funded by the private sector and used existing facilities which led to an operational profit (Davis, 2008). The result was a flashy production of what became known as the "Hollywood Olympic Games" (Dubinsky, 2017), funded by private companies, and although being boycotted by Soviet countries, became a commercialized success (Davis, 2008). Private sponsorship and especially the TOP program that was established in 1985 changed the face Olympic Movement.

Very much like the 1964 Olympics in Japan, the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul were the coming out party of South Korea. The Asian country showed the world advanced technology and used the 1988 Seoul Olympics to reposition itself from a country that was recovering from a civil war, to a market leader in Asia (Kang & Perdue, 1994). North Korea boycotted the 1988 Olympics. The impact of the major sports events continues on South Korea continued in the Twenty-First Century as well. In 2002 Japan and South Korea have shown how much they have developed and how technologically advanced they are, by hosting the FIFA World Cup (Lee et al., 2009). South Korea hosted the World Championship in Athletics in 2014 and in 2018 joined the prestigious group of countries who hosted both summer and winter games, after hosting successful Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang in 2018. South Korea and North Korea had several joint activities during the winter games including a joint women's hockey team, showing that sports can be a platform to build bridges between communities even in sensitive times.

The 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona had an opposite impact than the 1976 Montreal Games. Although Barcelona is the capital of the Catalan region in Spain that seeks independence, the national government of Spain supported the games and helped Barcelona to re-build itself, renovate the city's infrastructure and make the bay area a tourist attraction (Belloso, 2011). The result was that a city that was ranked number 16 in Europe became the third most attractive tourist destination in the continent (Davis, 2008). Unlike in Montreal, where the federal Canadian government objected the way Quebec hosted the games, in 1992, the Spanish supported Barcelona, which became a counter example to Montreal, of how a country can use Olympic Games and create a positive and sustainable legacy. These were also the first fully professional Olympic Games, dominated by American basketball icons such as Michael Jordan, Ervin Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and the other members of "The Dream Team".

The Atlanta Games in 1996, celebrating 100 years to the revival of the modern Olympic Games, were an attempt by the United States to brand Atlanta as a new world city. Former Heavyweight Champion in boxing Mohamed Ali (and Olympic Champion in Rome 1960), who was protested against racial discrimination in the USA and refused to be drafted to the Vietnam War, light the Olympic Torch in the Opening Ceremony. Although the offices of big global corporations such as Coca Cola and CNN are based in Atlanta and Atlanta is a business center, it was never perceived as culturally attractive as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Moreover, two people were killed and 111 were injured by a car bomb in a terror attack in the Centennial Olympic Park. The Atlanta 1996 received the nickname of the "Coca Cola Olympics" based on the global corporations in Georgia, making them another symbol of the commercialized era. The games were even criticized for being too commercialized (Davis, 2008).

The growing revenues from TV rights and through the TOP sponsors started a gift giving culture that threatened to corrupt the Olympic Movement (Booth, 1999). The scandals broke out in the bids for the 2000 Olympic Games and for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, when that several IOC members received expensive gifts to vote for the winning bids of Sydney and Salt Lake City respectively (Davis, 2008). The result was a complete reform in the IOC, the membership of the corrupted IOC members was revoked and new strict rules were made about who can become an IOC member and the relations they can have with the bidding cities.

Through the political and commercial era the Olympic Games gradually neglected the idea of amateurism (Dubinsky, 2017). Money, politics and professionalism were part of the Olympic Movement, but after the very difficult periods in the 60's, 70's and 80's, not only the Olympic Games were saved, but their future was secure. Countries saw the Olympic Games as a tool not only for public diplomacy purposes, but also to improve create an economic impact and improve their positioning to be associated as a developed countries and global leaders. The two predominant approaches in place branding research are tourism based that focus on branding the country as a tourism destination and product based, that focus on associating countries with products (Dubinsky, 2018). Through the political era and the commercialized era, countries identified ways of how to use the Olympic Games for these purposes. The growing impact on TV coverage and the role of private sponsorships, gave countries opportunities to be associated with the Olympic movement and expose their products internationally. The American dominance as a world hegemon (Dubinsky, 2017) reflected also in its influence in the IOC revenues (IOC, 2018) through TOP sponsors such as Visa and Coca-Cola and ever growing TV rights deals led mostly by NBC (IOC, 2018) which positioned the USA as the most dominant country in the Olympic movement at the end of the Twentieth-Century. Through the commercialized era was a celebration of the capitalist world, where countries shifted from focusing how to use the Olympic Games for political goals to focus on commercial ones, generating revenues and improving tourism. Nation branding, and the use of the Olympic Games to improve tourism or showcase products associated with certain countries (Anholt, 2010; Fan, 2010), became a predominant leading goal through this period, for countries using the Olympic Games for nation branding purposes.

The legacy oriented era

In the Twenty-First Century, the commercialization of the Olympic Movement took a step forward and now each bidding city does not only focus on having an immediate positive financial impact but on the Games having a lasting long term legacy (Dubinsky, 2017). Yet this step brought also much criticism and concern regarding the long-term profitability of the Olympic Games for countries and communities (Dubinsky, 2017). Australia used the 2002 Olympic Games to develop Sydney, making it one of the leading cities in the country and the continent. Since the Sydney 2000 bid, every bidding city must include an Olympic Education program in their bid. According to Anholt (2010, p. 63) hosting Olympic Games and other mega sports events “can be a highly effective way of communicating warmth and depth of national character”. Anholt (2010, p. 63) specially mentioned the role of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney “in helping to create the strong affection which people around the world feel for the Australians today”. Moreover, a message of peace was shown when South Korea and North Korea marched in the Opening Ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games under the same Korean Unification flag. Yet the optimism from the commercial era, faced a harsh reality as the Olympic Games started to become a financial burden on the hosting country. The Salt Lake City Olympic Games in 2002, signified not only corruption in the Olympic movement, but also another bump in security costs (Boyle, Clement & Heggerty, 2014; Coakley, 2015), taking place only months after the 2001 September 11 terror attacks on US soil. While the terror attack in Munich during the 1972 Olympic Games made security a concern for hosting countries, since the terror attacks of 9/11, the security costs of hosting Olympic Games increased to even billions making security another financial burden for hosting countries (Boyle, Clement & Heggerty, 2014; Boykoff, 2016). The Athens 2004 Olympics were used by the Greek government not only to show the world the history

of the Olympic Games and the mythology around it, but also as an opportunity to renovate roads, renovate the airport and build an underground train system (Fola, 2011). Yet, the Olympic Games in Athens are also characterized by public spending, facilities and venues that were barely ready on time (Davis, 2008) that later on became burdens on taxpayers.

Two different philosophies of hosting Olympic Games were used during the first decade and a half of the century (Dubinsky, 2018). The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games that were used by totalitarian regimes as a demonstration of power, and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games and the 2012 London Olympic Games, that were used by western democracies focusing on sustainability and community involvement. China saw the 2008 Olympic Games as an opportunity to reposition itself from a developing country to a powerhouse, and spared no expenses doing so (Preuss, 2008). The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were the most expensive summer games in history with an estimated cost of more than 44 billion USD. China renovated the airport and built new facilities such as the aquatics center The Water Cube and the Olympic Stadium, The Bird's Nest, that are hardly used after the games and stands as a white elephant (Dubinsky, 2018). China tried to open up to the western world, and to expose the Chinese culture from the design of the Olympic Torch, through the opening ceremony and during the games. Thus, both democratic and non-democratic countries have been using the Opening Ceremony of the Olympic Games as a soft power tool (Nye, 2008) to expose their culture and values (Arning, 2013). The 2008 Olympic Games also exposed China to global criticism about Tibet, human rights violations, relocation of poor population, the air pollution in Beijing and other negative aspects. Since the Beijing Olympics, China hosted the IAAF Athletics World Championship in Shanghai, the Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing and Beijing won the bid to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2022. Through the first decades of the Twenty-First Century, Chinese companies such as Lenovo and Alibaba also saw potential in the Olympic movement, becoming TOP partners (IOC, 2018), contributing to the branding of China as a global technological powerhouse.

The 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic Games were the Olympic redemption for Canada. After failing to win a gold medal in both the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games and the 1988 Calgary Olympic Games, Canada finished first in the gold medal table. Unlike the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games that left a debt that was covered only in 2006, it took Vancouver one year after the Games to break even, while establishing itself as a global city. Both were a result of public and private initiatives and programs to leave a better legacy for Canada such as Own the Podium (Boykoff, 2016) and Paint the Town Red (Burton & O'Reilly, 2016). Yet, there was also internal protests and criticism by activists in Canada about building facilities for the Olympic Games on land owned by Native Americans (Boykoff, 2016). Also, just before the Games started a Georgian athlete Nodar Kumaritashvili died in training. IOC president Jacques Rogge described this tragedy as the worst moment of his presidency. The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games started to integrate social media and especially Twitter and Facebook (Miah & Jones, 2012) promoting the openness of Canada.

Social media platforms were only making their first steps in the Olympic Movement (Fernández Peña, 2011). The Youth Olympic Games, arguably the main legacy of former IOC President Jacques Rogge, were held for the first time in the summer of 2010 in Singapore and the first winter edition in Innsbruck in 2012, trying to approach young audiences through social media as well. The Youth Olympic Games also gave smaller countries who cannot afford to host the Olympic Games a chance to host Olympic sanctioned competitions, thus be associate with the Five Rings. In London 2012 the integration of social media was complete and much of the success of the Games was through the constant engagement through various social media platforms (Miah, 2012). The London 2012 official Facebook, Twitter and Google + sites attracted 4.7 million followers, having 150 million tweets about the games (IOC Communications, 2013) making them the real first "Social Media Olympics" (Miah, 2012).

Unlike Beijing, London did not need the Olympic Games to introduce itself to the world, as it was already a global city that hosted the Games twice before in 1908 and 1948 (Dubinsky, 2018). The English capital used

the 2012 Olympic Games to renovate the poor Stratford area in East London and to include minorities in the work force while promoting British Pride in Great Britain (MacRury & Poynter, 2010), two years before the referendum for Scotland's independence where Scotland decided not to separate from the United Kingdom. The emphasize was on having sustainable green Olympics (London Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Ltd. 2012), cleaning the polluted Lee Valley, improving Stratford area, while hosting the Games in temporary venues or venues that will be used by the public after and will not become a burden on taxpayers. The rich British impact on the Olympic movement was also celebrated during the London Olympic and Paralympic Games as the two mascots, Welcock and Mandeville were named after Much Wenlock where Dr. Brooks started the Much Wenlock Games and after Stock Mandeville, where Dr. Ludwig Guttmann started the Paralympic Movement (Polley 2011).

Much like the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, Russia and President Vladimir Putin wanted to use the 2014 Winter Olympic Games to show a powerful strong country, and much like Beijing 2008 there was much controversy around the Games regarding spending unprecedented amount of public money and protest about human rights violations. The estimated cost of the 2014 Sochi Olympics was reported over 50 Billion USD (Boykoff, 2016) and were surrounded by controversies about corruption and various human rights violations. The Sochi Olympics were criticized internationally, yet there were no political incidents while they were going on. During the Paralympic Winter Games that followed, the Russian Army invaded Ukraine's Crimea Peninsula (Murray, 2018). Following the Sochi Olympic Games, evidence of systematic doping were found in Russian sports and Russian athletes and sports federations were suspended from competing in several international sports events (Murray, 2018). In the following Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang, Russian athletes did not march under their national flag but competed under the Olympic Athletes of Russia delegation with the Olympic flag. The suspensions, sanctions and international scrutiny did not prevent Russia from continuing to use sports for nation branding purposes, hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2018.

With sustainability and green Olympics at one end of the sphere and with countries wanting to use the exposure of the Olympic Games to improve their international image, different regimes will continue to bid and have interest to host the Games. Brazil, a developing country that hosted the 2014 FIFA World Cup under local protest, hosts the 2016 Olympic Games with the goal of becoming new market leader. However, because of a financial and political crisis in Brazil Rio de Janeiro did not manage to use the 2016 Olympic Games to position the city as the most important city in South America, but just managed to survive the organization (Dubinsky, 2017). Thus, while Rio de Janeiro promised to hold sustainable games, the games did not result in a positive legacy (Boykoff & Mascarenhas, 2016). The Tokyo 2020 bid focused on sustainability through renovating the country from the 2011 Tsunami and Earthquake disasters and on showcasing advanced Japanese technologies. Yet despite having a very detailed sustainability plan, the Tokyo 2020 also faced sustainability threats regarding the safety of fans and athletes (Denyer, 2019; McCurry, 2019). In 2019 over 40 percent of the athletes who competed in the women's marathon in the IAAF Championship that was held in Doha, Qatar, did not finish the race due to the heat conditions. Qatar who won the bid to host both the 2019 IAAF Championship and the 2022 World Cup in very controversial way and facing constant criticism for human rights violations and corruption, aimed to host the Olympic Games as well.

The threat of gigantism and the lack of involvement of local community in the bidding process and in the hosting of the games, resulted in Democratic countries like Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Sweden and Norway, either not bidding or withdrawing their bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, leaving Beijing and Almaty from Kazakhstan as the only final bids. Recognizing future challenges of the Olympic Movement, one of Bach's first major acts as the president of the IOC was to divide the member into working groups and come up with Agenda 2020: 40 recommendations about the future of the Olympic Movement (International Olympic Committee, 2014), including more flexible ways in the bid process. The bid for the 2024 Olympic Games also resulted with most of the candidates withdrawing, leaving only Paris and Los Angeles as the only candidate cities. The IOC recognized the problem and the opportunities, awarding the 2024 Games to the French Capital and the 2028

Olympic Games to the Americans. Another example of change in the bidding process was in the bid for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games as the two finalists had joint bids, with an Italian bid of Milano and Cortina selected over a Swedish bid of Stockholm and Åre (Burns, 2019).

One method for country image that did not change since the ancient competitions in Greece, is the role of the athletes as ambassadors (Georgiadis, 2003). From Jesse Owens who defined the Nazi regime in 1936; Abebe Bikila's barefoot marathon victory in Rome 1960 and the legacy of long running in Africa; Nadia Comaneci and Romanian gymnastics breaking records and barriers in Montreal 1976; and Usain Bolt and Jamaican sprinters in the Twenty-First Century, big and small saw and continue to see the Olympic Games as a platform to put the spotlight on their culture and history through athletic success (Boykoff 2016; Guttmann, 2002; Murray 2018). With national pride and international goals at stake, trying to take short cuts through different methods of doping and cheating, and by speedy nationalizing athletes, became common practices in almost every recent Olympic Games (Boykoff, 2016; Coakley, 2015; Dubinsky, 2018; Murray, 2018). Countries and communities are cautious and skeptical about the way the Olympic Games can impact their images (Dubinsky, 2017). The third decade of the Twenty-First Century might signal if the Olympic movement is still focusing on legacy or will be starting a new Olympic era where countries will be targeting other opportunities to use the games to improve their images.

Conclusion

The naked athletics competitions held in Ancient Olympia started as a religious festival and were based on a mythological horse race that was won by bribery (Miller, 2004a). Yet those competitions embodied some of the foundations of the human society almost 3,000 years later. Concepts of national traditions, local pride and certain equalities that without them Democracy could thrive, were part of those Greek competitions. The Ekecheiria, the sacred Olympic truce, was one of the most respected Pan-Hellenic traditions. The modern Olympic Games that were founded on some of those ancient traditions as competitions for amateurs are very different than the ones Pierre De Coubertin dreamt on.

Towards of the second decade of the Twenty-First Century every country in the world is involved with the Olympic Movement and every region and territory in the world is exposed to the Olympic Movement (IOC, 2018). Countries, communities and non-governmental organizations are targeting the Olympic Games, trying to reach local, national and international goals. The Olympic Games are getting bigger and with the ever technological development of media and social media, they reach larger population. But with the growth of the Games, come bigger resistance, protests from local communities and various activists groups causing countries and cities to drop bids or to reject hosting future Olympic Games (Boykoff, 2016; Dubinsky, 2017).

This article identified different periods through the Modern Olympic Movement that had a common link that applies to country image and that can be analyzed through some related fields of research. Every era discussed in this study is influenced by the previous era. Dividing the periods is of course subjective and socially influenced. Moreover, there are overlaps between the periods. Aspects of legacy could be found in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games during the commercialized era, political impact of course could be found in the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games before the political era, the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles apply both the political era and the commercialized era and many other examples and anecdotes could be given. Yet, the significance of this study is to show a systematic continuation in how countries used the Olympic Games to improve their image and through the suggested periods this study illustrates and analyzes that. Country image is multidisciplinary (Fan, 2010), influenced by fields of research such as sociology, political science, business management and communications (Buhmann & Ingenhoff, 2015). Through these lenses, countries and communities have been using the Olympic Games for to improve their images and reach local, national and international goals.

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AUTHOR'S ADDRESS:

Yoav Dubinsky
393A Anstett Building
Lundquist College of Business
University of Oregon
Oregon, 97403
USA
Phone: +1-541-346-3532
E-mail: yoavd@uoregon.edu

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