Intercultural Communication and Transnational Protests at the Olympics

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Intercultural Communication and Transnational Protests Circling the Modern Olympic Games: A Cross-Sectional Study Between the Cold War and the Post-Cold War Era

Introduction

When people hear "Olympic Games," they immediately think of its sporting side. They picture the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the athletes wearing their national uniforms, the various competitions ranging from cycling to gymnastics to swimming, and the extensive media coverage. They also recall the five interlocking Olympic rings: blue, yellow, black, green, and red. In addition, people also remember cheering for their home country and wishing their athletes bring back as many gold medals as possible. However, they often forget the other side of the story—the politics.

Originally, states were the first actors to change the Olympic Games from an international sporting competition into a political arena, which felt the effects of the states' boycotts and bans, beginning from the periods related to World War I and II. For instance, states demonstrated their frustrations of the wars' tolls by banning Germany from the 1920, 1924, and 1948 Games.[1] Furthermore, during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union brought their political differences into the Olympic arena, too. In 1980 Moscow, during the height of the Cold War, the United States led a boycott to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan where 63 countries participated in the boycott.[2] In return, the Soviet Union, joined by 14 Eastern bloc allies, boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Games.[3] Nevertheless, even though states "used up" the Olympic arena throughout those years, non-state actors began to mirror the states' demonstrations and started to "rent" the arena as well.

As a result, domestic non-state actors began to take a piece of the Games, starting in the 1936 Berlin Games, in which local Nazi foes protested against Germany's violation of the Olympics' racial equality, especially discriminating the Jewish people.[4] Likewise, during the Cold War, local protesters organized demonstrations against their state hosting the Games. For instance, during the 1968 Mexico City Games, Mexican student groups targeted the government of Gustavo Diaz Ordaz Bolanos, President of the Institutional Revolutionary Party from 1964-1970, for his government's role in oppressing their freedom of speech and assembly.[5] Along the same lines, in 1988 Seoul, South Korean student groups protested for democratic reform against the authoritarian government of Roh Tae-Woo.[6]

However, after the Cold War, non-state actors evolved from domestic to transnational activists. They did not target the host state but, rather, joined together to protest general issues such as the environment, animal rights, and anti-corporatism. For instance, in the 2006 Turin Games, the anti-globalization movement came together to protest against war and capitalism.[7] In addition, in the recent 2012 London Games, the anti-corporate Olympic group protested against the Games becoming increasingly known as the "Corporate Olympics," that corporations are more concerned about selling their products during the Games than promoting the Olympic spirit.[8] Hence, transnational

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activists seem to replace domestic non-state actors and states in using the Olympics as an arena for political protest.

Admittedly, the Olympic Games became the "soapbox" for protestors to deflect the Olympic spotlight away from the states' hosting privileges and onto their protests. First, representing the biggest consistently booked international gathering in the world, the Olympics include more nations (204)[9] competing in both the Summer and Winter Games than the number of state members (193) [10] in the United Nations. Second, the Games invite head of states and head of governments to watch and cheer for their competing national athletes.[11] Lastly, from the bidding process until the Games become a fading memory, the Olympics receive worldwide media attention that develops a global awareness of host cities and nations.[12] Through these three Olympic characteristics, protestors are likely to achieve their major goal: to gain significant media attention and to reach a broad audience.

Unfortunately, despite the Olympic Games influencing international relations (IR), very few researchers have examined the Games from the perspective of IR theory. Those who have written on this topic have argued that the Games are a worldwide gathering show where the features of sport mirror the contemporary developments in IR, and as a result, scholars should focus on the organization of sport to provide empirical evidence that may support or challenge arguments about these recent IR developments (Espy 1981; Beacom 2000; Allison & Monnington 2002; Torres 2011). However, none have aimed to answer questions about the relationship between intercultural communication, the modern Olympic Games, and transnational protests from an IR perspective. Why did the modern Olympic Games increasingly emerge as a political arena for transnational activist movements at the end of the Cold War rather than during the Cold War? What types of issues did the activists protest? And what does the rising role of non-state actors in IR tell us? As I intend to present, these questions have important implications for IR theory, especially constructivism's ground on universalism and ideas, identities, and norms, as well as the increasing role of transnational activists in a globalized world.

To answer these questions, using *ProQuest Historical Newspapers*, I look both quantitatively and qualitatively at a cross-sectional study of the modern Olympic Games between the Cold War era 1945 to 1989 and Post-Cold War era 1990 to 2012. I justify this time frame because non-state actors have gained increasing significance at the expense of domestic governments. I hypothesize that intercultural communication has caused a significant increase in the number of transnational protests surrounding the Modern Games, as well as a significant change in the nature of issues from domestic to transnational in the Post-Cold War. I label my independent variable as intercultural communication, the notion that with the growing number of contacts resulting in communication between people with different languages and cultural backgrounds, people acquire fresh ideas, attempt to act in new ways, and shape brand-new identities, in which they continually modify, build, and rebuild the unfixed international system. I include intervening variables such as globalization, institutions, political opportunities, and social media. Moreover, I label my dependent variable as protests, defined as a group of ten or more transnational activists whose actions the English-language media reports and who aim to demonstrate disapproval and/or to convince other political actors—states, individuals, and/or international institutions—to change their behavior.

The paper follows this order. First, I review existing literature about social movements, transnational activist networks, and intercultural communication. Second, I spell out the methodology I use to examine the relationship between intercultural communication, the modern Olympic Games, and transnational protests. Third, I test my hypothesis that intercultural communication has caused a significant increase in both the number and political issues of transnational protests surrounding the Olympic Games in the Post-Cold War era than in the Cold War. Fourth, I analyze, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the Olympic protests from 1945 to 1989 and 1990 to 2012. Finally, I follow up with larger implications of my findings, and propose further research to expand upon my results.

Existing Literature

The existing literature on social movements, especially protests during the modern Games, does not exist. Some IR scholars put forth a "case of mutual neglect"[13] and "sport no longer exists in the margins of international relations . . . .it poses no interesting questions for the student of society and politics."[14] But, given the broad appeal of the Olympics as an empirical topic, the Games are actually begging for scholarly analysis, with topics ranging from states and international actors exercising their voices in sports venues, to political nationalism erupting during sport

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events. Therefore, I have found broad scholarly sources written about social movements and have decided to review relevant driving forces relating to global social movements. I will start with a broad definition and influencing ideas of transnational social movements, followed by transnational activist networks, and end with intercultural communication.

Driving Forces of Social Movements

Nowadays, in order to address and resolve critical problems within society, rather than commit to political parties and elections, people rely more heavily on protests, demonstrations, petitions, and campaigns to pursue their demands for social change (Moyer 2001; Johnson 2011). These social movements, the modern forms of protest, are defined as "collective actions in which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilized . . . to challenge the powerholders and the whole society to redress social problems or grievances and restore critical social values."[15] However, driving concepts such as globalization, institutions, political opportunities, and social media, ignite social movements.

Globalization is the first concept that sparks the conditions under which social movements, desiring to advocate or counter global issues, develop (Guidry, Kennedy, Zald 2000; Ronaldo 2005). On the one hand, globalization seems to decrease the state's capability to operate within its own sovereign domain; as a result, social movements seek to gain resources from other international partners and networks, instead of petitioning directly to their state (Guidry et al.). On the other hand, globalization has supplied these movements with fresh opportunities and resources—ranging from an interchange of ideas to advances in transportation and telecommunication—to activate all actors to protest (Guidry et al.). Globalization has, therefore, become a "boomerang effect."[16] It starts with state actors, spins through non-state actors, and returns to the states.

A second concept influencing social movements is institutions. For instance, with the relationship between citizens and the European Union (EU) declining over the past decades, resulting from a deep distrust of EU institutions to list unemployment and social inequalities as their first concerns, protestors in Europe have mobilized against the EU's distribution and redistribution policy issues (Balme & Chabinet 2008). In addition, UN-backed conferences and World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings have influenced how social movements assemble as well (Smith & Wiest 2012). When activists communicate within these international arenas, by forming new networks, sharing knowledge, and assisting locals, they aim at human rights norms and environmental standards above the states' sovereignty (Smith et. al). Moreover, the states' changing structures have also impacted protests by each pushing and constraining the other (Johnston 2011). The state, composed of powerful political and economic elites, pursues its own interests and opens the door for social movement pressure (Johnston 2011). In return, through non-institutional means, protests make claims when state authorities limit, ignore, or close off their channels to access (Johnston 2011).

The third influence is political opportunities. When those who hold power increase their control, victims watch as unemployment skyrockets and the gap between the economic classes stretches, and so they demonstrate to overcome these issues (Moyer 2001). Moreover, these social movements exhibit an increase and a decrease trend, resulting in a change in political opportunities (Tarrow 2011; Kolb 2007). Therefore, based on the level of opportunity, social movements occur in "cycles of contentions": as the political circumstances stock up, the number of social movements grows, but as the circumstances fall, the movements die down (Tarrow 2011).

The last driving force is the emerging new information and communications technologies (ICTs) that help to gather and organize social movements through electronic mobility (Moghadam 2012; Donk, Loader, Nixon, Rucht 2004). Consisting of the Internet, e-mail, websites, and electronic forums, these communication tools can help coordinate mobilization of all the citizens across the world (Donk et al.) Furthermore, ICTs may contribute in bringing together people's identities and in opposing the established political interests of power holders (Moghadam 2012; Donk et al.).

However, not all social movements are built to last or even to succeed in their goals (Smith 2008; Tarrow 2005; Tarrow 2012). Some would be more effective in accomplishing their goals if they were to form a unitary strategy and if they communicated face-to-face with the UN and state governments (Smith 2008). These so-called "democratic globalizers" need coherence and financial resources (Smith 2008). Others, on politics issues, are "neither outside

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nor completely within"; they position themselves in the middle of being completely for policy integration and being completely opposed to it (Tarrow 2012). Yet, a few center their attention on their own localities, thus holding back from a unitary strategy for a universal cause (Tarrow 2005).

Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) and Interconnected Identities

Transnational advocacy networks have been changing the world (Keck & Sikkink 1998; Khagram, Riker, & Sikkink 2002; Smith, Chatfield, & Pagnucco 1997). They are "the voices that are heard in international and domestic policies" that "argue, persuade, strategize, document, lobby, pressure, and complain."[17] Nonetheless, TANs have an emerging relationship with international political institutions and have created a major influence in IR (Smith et al). TANs, for instance, gather constituencies for multilateral policy or target the European Union or the Human Rights Commission (Smith et al.). In addition, TANs transmit identities, ideas, and norms into the international system, but they also shape the practices all actors (Kech et al.). To be more specific, TANs address and reshape essential affairs in human rights, labor, democratization, etc. (Khagram, Riker, & Sikkink 2002). As a result, TANs force state actors to adjust and re-develop their understandings of sovereignty (Kech et al.).

In other words, TANs can shape international structures of norms, identities, and meanings. When people cross borders, they acquire fresh ideas, act in new ways, and shape brand-new identities (Tarrow 2005; Keck et al.). Through interaction with each other, they socially construct the norms, or rules, which largely dictate how actors behave (Wendt 1999). For example, when actors react towards objects, they create the meanings, understandings, and identities about the objects within a social world (Wendt 1999). As a result, since people give objects their meanings and can attach different meanings to different things, identities such as nationality, gender, and age can change through cooperative behavior and learning at any time (Munck 2005). In fact, with the increase of border crossings, people can potentially refuse to accept these binary categories (Munck 2005).

Consequently, globalization generates intercultural communication (Amin 1997; Munck 2005). As Ash Amin argues, "perhaps the most distinctive aspect of contemporary globalization" is the "interconnectedness, multiplicity, and hybridization, of social life at every level."[18] As a result, since the world is evolving into a much more interdependent place, the notion that globalization develops in a separate global sphere isolated from towns, villages, or cities becomes unacceptable (Munck 2005). Rather, the global sphere links the local levels of political, economic, social, and cultural processes (Munck 2005). Therefore, because communities and neighborhoods are no longer clear-cut, people can still live in one place and yet engage in global communication in their homes (Albrow 1997).

Thus, there been an increase in the ease and frequency of intercultural communication among members of different cultures (Sadri & Flammia 2011; Neuliep 2012; Jandt 2013). Some of these factors include developments in international politics; advances in transportation systems and telecommunications; increased social challenges related to health, the environment, and security; and changing immigration trends (Sadri et al.; Jandt 2013). As a result, the study of international communication can supply us with valuable visions into contemporary dilemmas and can assist in addressing them in the near future (Sadri et al.). More importantly, intercultural communication is the principal component of collectivism, meaning groups combine and assign collective responsibility and accountability to each member (Neuliep 2012).

Social Movements at the Modern Olympics

Existing well over 100 years, the modern Olympic Games have evolved substantially over this time in two ways. On the one hand, the numbers of nations, participants, and events have tremendously increased since the first Athens Games in 1896. On the other hand, and more importantly for this paper, transnational social movements during the Games have also grown in the Post-Cold War era. Though these are two basic highlights, a more in-depth historical record can tell us a much richer story.

Through newspaper reports of Olympic protest since 1945, this section aims to answer questions about the relationship between intercultural communication, the modern Olympic Games, and transnational activist protests in a constructivism perspective. Why did the Olympic Games increasingly emerge as a political arena for transnational

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activist movements at the end of the Cold War rather than in the Cold War? What issues do activists protest against? And what does the rising role of non-state actors in IR tell us? I hypothesize that intercultural communication has significantly increased both the number and the political issues of transnational protests surrounding the Olympic Games in the Post-Cold War era than during the Cold War. I include intervening variables such as globalization, institutions, political opportunities, and social media. I label my dependent variable as protests.

Terms and Definitions

Protest is a broad idea that refers to people taking direct action in order to display their discontent and/or to convince others to change their behavior. It can draw from a pool of potential actions: peaceful demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, political violence, etc. These actions are what the social movement literature calls "contentious performances," which are "relatively familiar and standard ways in which one set of political actors makes collective claims on one other set of political actors."[19]

With that said, here are how I operationalize "protest," "intercultural communication," and "Olympic Games." First, protest is defined as a group of ten or more transnational activists whose actions the English-language media report and who aim to demonstrate disapproval of and/or to convince other political actors—states, individuals, and/or international institutions—to change their behavior. Second, since the growing number of contacts resulting in communication between people with different languages and cultural backgrounds characterizes the world today, intercultural communication, the independent variable, is the notion that when people cross borders, they acquire fresh ideas, attempt action in new ways, and shape brand-new identities**,** in which they continually modify, build, and rebuild the unfixed international system. However, those intervening variables that come into contact with intercultural communication: globalization, institutions, political opportunities, and social media. Finally, the Games play the role as the political arena and soapbox for protestors to gain significant media attention, as well as to reach a broad audience, in the issues that matter to them—state policies, animals rights, environment, human rights, etc.

Consequently, a few limitations arise. The first is the size of the protest. I only include in my dataset those protests that the American media report and that involve at least ten or more people actively engaged in the activity. Although the specific number is subjective, my goal is to safely include only those protests that are effectively organized and could, by themselves, have a broader political weight. As a result, since broad demonstrations are more likely to be effective than individual action, I exclude isolated protests formed by individual athletes or activists.

Second, I focus on protests that activists actually carry out, not simply threaten. Because cases of threatened protest are more difficult to identify than cases of actual protest, I would not want to bias my analysis. Moreover, both types of protest are plainly poles apart: a threatened protest requires much less commitment and organization than an organized one.

Third, I exclusively admit protests into my database if they are expected for an Olympic audience and are undoubtedly political. I, therefore, leave out protests outside my range of analysis. For example, I exclude small groups of cab drivers who protested access to the Games and also exclude the event and dance staff who complained about working conditions, all of which occurred during the 1992 Albertville Winter Games.[20] Even though these protests involve politics and take place near the host city, they are not protests that use the Games themselves as a broader political arena. In addition, I leave out common Olympic protests regarding the results of the athletic events or the athletes' use of banned substances like steroids, because they are non-political.[21]

Lastly, though I do mention intervening variables such as globalization and institutions, I limit my independent variable to intercultural communication. As a result, my analysis will focus more on transnational activists' cooperation of interests, ideas, culture, and identities.

Mode of Investigation

With these limitations set, I use *ProQuest Historical Newspapers* to code and identify cases of Olympic protest occurring between Cold War era 1945 to 1989 and Post-Cold War era 1990 to 2012. I type in various keywords into

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the historical search box, which include "Olympic Games demonstrations," "Olympic Games protests," and "Olympic Games movements." I then search the results, one by one, for coverage of Olympic demonstrations that fit the criteria described in the previous section.

However, this methodology for case identification has some limitations as well. Since I am studying a cross-sectional analysis between 1945 and 1989 and another between 1990 and 2012, I omit the Olympic Games which occurred before 1945. I do so because the majority of those times, the states, by themselves, were protesting against other state(s) in the forms of boycotts, bans, and propagandas. Nonetheless, I focus on protests by transnational activists, not state actors, because I am aiming to justify constructivism's argument that transnational activists are increasingly becoming the new actors in IR.

In addition, because this methodology hits only on those demonstrations that the American media provided coverage for, by no means does it cover all protest activity associated with any given Olympics. Consequently, although I am able to cover the significant cases of protests, I end up missing the minor ones because they slip through the methodological cracks. Still, I should be able to find the major cases of transnational activist protests.

Furthermore, since I am using an English-language news source, I could come into contact with newspaper articles that may have potential biases in the types of groups and particular Olympic Games that they have covered. For example, *The NY Times* may have favored the United States during the Olympics and thus have provided greater coverage and detail throughout the Games. Luckily, I can assure that ProQuest's English-language sources do stretch outside North America or Europe.

Overall then, when I analyze my data, I can only accept this study's limitations and be familiar with these complications. Still, my coding method should, without a problem, catch all the significant protest activities at any of the thirty Olympiads.

Analysis of Protests Circling the Modern Olympic Games

In this section, I analyze the data found from Figure 1 (a line graph of Olympic protests from 1945-2012); Table 1 (number of Olympic protests from 1945-2012); Table 2 (scope of protest cases from 1945-2012); and the Appendix (all the Olympic protest cases from 1945-2012). [22] More specifically, using the chart and tables, I contrast the protests between the Cold War and the Post-Cold War era. I then use the protest cases to explore further issues related to the increasing role of non-state actors from an IR perspective.

First, despite my hypothesis that intercultural communication has significantly increased both the number and the political issues of transnational protests surrounding the Olympic Games in the Post-Cold War era than during the Cold War, Figure 1 interestingly contradicts my quantitative hypothesis. Even though Figure 1 does show that protests have increased since 1990, the number of protests are not significantly different. For instance, the protest mean during the Cold War is 2, while 3.4 for Post-Cold War, which is not a large difference. In addition, the number of protests remains inconsistent, reflecting in the line graph's increasing and decreasing trend after a specific Olympiad. For example, 2008 Games had 5 protests, but the 2010 and 2012 Games had 4. Hence, my quantitative hypothesis does not hold true maybe because my methodological limitations described above play a large role in the coded cases that appear in the *ProQuest Historical Databases*.

However, my qualitative hypothesis does hold true. As the Appendix shows, even though some protests still remain domestically orientated, transnational movements are beginning to sprout from the Post-Cold War to the present. Therefore, the second trend is the broadening and intensifying of the scope of issues.

In the Cold War era, most of the protests involved activists protesting the social and economic policies of the host state. For instance, the earliest protest fitting my coding took place in the 1960 Rome Summer Games, where a Neo-Fascists group protested against the government's deletion of inscriptions from the former Mussolini Forum.[23] Another protest includes Mexican students rebelling against Gustavo Oradaz in 1968 Mexico City.[24] Lastly, in 1988 Seoul, South Korean student groups demonstrated for democratic reform against the anti-government of Roh Tae-

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Woo.[25] In short, all of these protests involved specific complaints against the governing regimes, and all are examples of protesters using the Olympics sites to grab the world's attention about their repressive host state.

On the other hand, in the Post-Cold War, protesters who focused their ideas on the policies of the host state have now considerably broadened their issues. Although there are still significant domestic protests, such as those from various minority groups in China during Beijing 2008[26], a majority of Olympic protests is based on larger issues of general, transnational concern. Many of these protests concern globalization, the environment, animal rights, LGBT, multi-corporatism, and human rights. In fact, as the Appendix shows, every Olympiad since 1996 Atlanta has at least one of these key issues, showing how much the Olympics reflect on the issues surrounding the times of the Games. For instance, as discussed in the literature review, developments in international politics, advances in telecommunications, and challenges to the environment and security are some of the factors that are reflected in the Olympic Games (Sadri et al.; Jandt 2013).

However, a more solid explanation for broadening of transnational protests over time returns to the earlier discussed reasons the Olympics themselves are attractive venues for international and domestic protest. For instance, as the Olympics and their profile have grown over the past century, so have the protests surrounding them, where the 1945 Games simply exist at a much different scale from the 2012 Games. Not only has the number of athletes and states participating grown tremendously, but media coverage has dramatically grown as well, expanding recently into live Internet streaming. Therefore, with the increasing role of telecommunication, viewers from across the world are able to hear, read, and watch the protests, and thus are more likely to support them. In this way, protest groups can gain transnational and domestic allies.

In addition to the broadening of the scope of issues, a third pattern is that some of the most recent active protests have occurred, not at the Games themselves but at the Olympic torch relays that occur before the Opening Ceremony. For example, protests surrounding the Olympic torch were particularly strong and well organized even before the opening of the 2006 Winter Games in Turin[27] and the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.[28] A simple explanation most likely involves the IOC's 1986 vote to make the Summer and Winter Olympics two years apart on a four-year cycle, which started from the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, and gives protesters more time and space to organize.[29] Hence, protesters use the Olympic torch rally's route as a sort of "pre-game" for their actual protest later on when the Games begin.

A final trend relates to my intervening variables and my independent variable. If we first look at globalization, we can see that this process of international integration has indeed geared or fueled Olympic protests with fresh resources, ranging from telecommunication to transportation. Olympic protestors are coming from different parts of the world to win a cause, since many of them are not only locals, but internationals as well, and to spread their unique methods or ideas to one another. Second, if we look at institutions as a factor, protesters do know about worldwide conferences, summits, and debates. Hence, they hear about the topics that interest them and to put issues such as human rights norms or environmental standards above their states' sovereignty. Third, as far as political opportunities, transnational protests at the Games slightly reflect on Tarrow's "cycle of contentions" argument: when political opportunities stock up, the number of social movements grows, but as the circumstances fall, the movements die down (Tarrow 2001). As a result, we see from the Appendix that the political opportunities are indeed stacked up, which has caused the transnational issues to appear Olympiad after Olympiad. If, for example, issues on animal rights, the environment, anti-corporatism, and human rights abuses were resolved, then the movements would lessen, but that is not looking like the case anytime soon. Finally, protesters have relied on electronic mobility—the Internet, e-mail, websites, and forums—to coordinate their mobilization. Even if the protesters are miles apart, they use global communication as a tool to come together to the Olympics under one roof.

Moreover, based on these four driving forces, these like-minded people, organized as TANs, are building bridges rather than walls, when different cultures come together for a cause, mainly to shape international structures in terms of norms, identities, and meanings. For example, if we look at the categories under which non-state actors are placed in Table 2 and the Appendix, we see that they are not labeled by their specific nationality, such as was the case in the Cold War (Tokyo Students, Mexican Student Groups, Quebec group, etc.), but rather by their broader concerns for issues (environment group, animal rights group, LGBT movement, anti-Olympics movement, anti-globalization

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movement, etc.). As a result, identities such as nationality, gender, and age become arbitrary through cooperative behavior and learning. What matters then, however, is that the person believes in the same ideas and wants to accomplish a goal through protest. As a result, non-state actors are increasingly becoming the new focused actors of IR. If this statement holds true, they can, through intercultural communication, resolve contemporary problems such as social challenges to health, the environment, and security, as well as changing immigration trends.

Implications in IR

In many ways, as the previous section shows, the scope of issues in Olympic protest in the Post-Cold War mirrors processes such as globalization, social media, political opportunities, and institutions. During the Cold War era, non-state actors primarily used the Olympic arenas to protest against their own states. Then, as the dawn of globalization and the information revolution paved pathways for non-state actors, they changed their protests from specific domestic issues to broader transnational movements. I have explored these basic trends in protest activity, but now I need to explore the implications of the Olympic protests from an IR perspective.

First, this cross-sectional analysis has made the case that the Olympics provide a particularly interesting context in which to examine the important relationship between intercultural communication, the Olympic Games, and transnational protests. As discussed in the introduction, the Olympics is a worldwide event that occurs every two years, have athletes competing while representatives watch, and are full of symbolism. For many then, the Olympic spirit stands for something that transcends national boundaries and cultures.

As a result, universalism makes the Olympics an attractive site for political contention for non-state actors. On the one hand, non-state actors who can promote normative change through intercultural communication can reconstruct or redefine the links between established and new norms. They use the Olympics as reference points in framing their arguments, which could be an effective normative framework to use in framing and reframing the issues they are targeting. But on the other hand, non-state actors could also use the Olympics to show how their behavior is inconsistent with the Olympics spirit. For example, the Olympics' ecological and economic impact contravenes the intended goodwill of the universal Olympic spirit.

However, universalism of the Olympics does not necessarily mean that protest will be effective. Therefore, important questions remain for future research: is universalism of Olympic protest as effective as it is attractive? Have Olympic protests had any impact? Have some actors or strategies been more effective than others?

A second feature of the Olympics, which also requires further research, involves the role of the International Olympic Committee, a small and under-studied institution that has emerged as a surprisingly influential international non-state actor. As a gatekeeper of who hosts the Games, which delegations can participate in the Olympics, and even which sports are included, the IOC exerts power over issues that are of considerable importance to states and other international actors.

Perhaps, the most interesting idea about the IOC is its paradoxical nature. On one hand, the IOC portrays itself as a representative of international norms such as world peace and humanitarianism.[30] For instance, the IOC's Charter forbids athletes from political or religious displays and demonstrations during the Games. But on the other hand, many studies portray the IOC as an extremely wealthy, self-interested, and capitalistic organization, whose primary interest is in protecting the Olympic brand (Simson & Jennings 1992; Barney, Wenn, & Martyn 2002; Chappelet & Kubler-Mabbott 2008). As a result, being interested in selling the Olympic rings, the IOC has become more of a corporate entity, lessening its interests on promoting Olympic spirit than a representative of international norms (Barney et al 2002). But, regardless of the tensions between its mission and actual behavior, it is still a surprisingly powerful institution. Therefore, future work can examine the IOC as a distinct international organization.

The final feature of Olympics for IR involves the role of the state itself. While the Olympics have served as a springboard of influence for non-state actors, they clearly continue to reinforce what is effectively a state-dominated international system. In other words, "large states have opportunity to demonstrate their power, small states can win recognition for special achievements, and new states . . . receive worldwide validation as members of the

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international community."[31] For example, the state actors host the Games, organize the medal count, and participate in the most universal international meeting in the world. In addition, host states are responsible for protecting the participants, as well as the tourists, from domestic and international terrorist attacks during the Games.

Overall then, depending on which actors and by what means, two theories of IR can accompany the Games and protests. When viewing the Games through a great power prism, the realism approach fits where states battle each other for their own self-interests. But, when moving away from state-centered interests, constructivism fits in which activist groups and other non-state actors protest against the developments in the international structure.

Nonetheless, my analysis suggests that the Olympics have seen a jump in the number of transnational activists since the Post-Cold War rather than the Cold War era, and that the protests are now about transnational issues rather than domestic ones. Hence, we see why the Games are such an interesting object of inquiry from a historical and IR perspective.

Conclusion

Although the Olympic Games are an under-explored phenomenon in the study of IR, they represent one of the longest standing forums for global interactions that have evolved with the international political environment. Since the Games are a worldwide event which occurs every two years, has athletes competing while representatives watching, and are full of symbolism, many actors—from states to non-state—seek to take advantage of the unique political opportunity provided by the Olympics.

I have shown that there is an interesting history of protest surrounding the Modern Olympic Games. More importantly, I have demonstrated that this protest surrounding the Games, though not substantially increasing in the Post-Cold War, has evolved from state-based to an increasingly broad range of issues. Therefore, I have provided the claim that the Olympics serve as venue where multiple and different levels of society can interact and fight for a common goal.

However, while the aim of this study was to explore why the modern Olympic Games increasingly emerged as a political arena for transnational activist movements at the end of the Cold War rather during the Cold War, further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of Olympic protests. One study could investigate whether Olympic protests are more effective than protests during the FIFA World Cup or the EURO Cup. Another study could further explore the relationship between sport and nationalism. Finally, one could observe how the IOC has the power in selecting hosts and overseeing the process to the Games yet functions as a multinational corporation.

The take-home message is that the relationship between transnational activism, the Olympic Games, and intercultural communication is sprouting. From driving forces of globalization and social media, like-minded people, organized as TANs, are building bridges rather than walls when different cultures come together for a cause. Therefore, identities such as nationality, gender, and age are becoming arbitrary through cooperation and learning. What matters, however, is that the person believes in the same ideas as the group and looks towards accomplishing that goal through protest. As a result, TANs can, through intercultural communication, resolve contemporary problems such as social challenges to health, the environment, and security, as well as change immigration trends. With that said, none-state actors are, indeed, increasingly becoming the new focused actors of IR.

Figure 1. Bar Graph of Olympic Protests, 1945-2012

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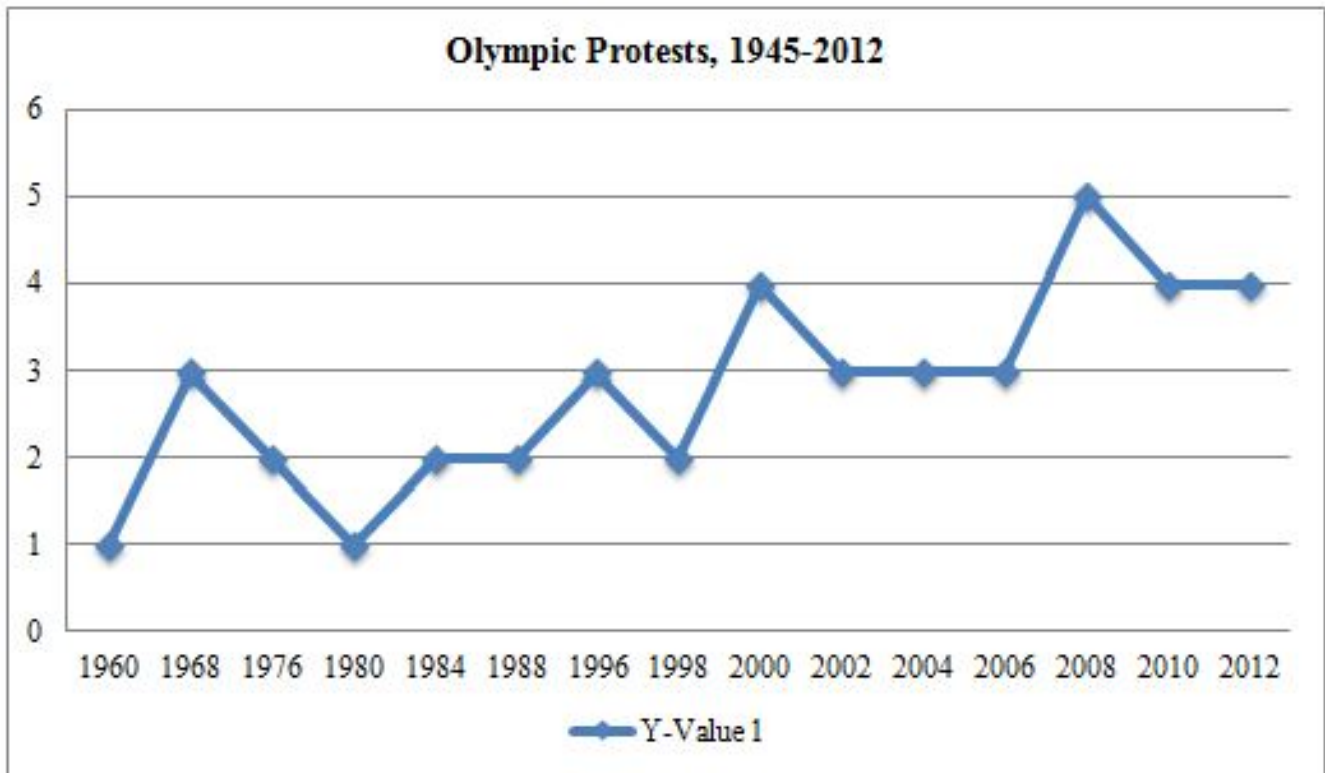
Table 1. Number of Olympic Protests, 1945-2012

Cold War

Post Cold War

1960: 1 **1996**: 3 **1968:** 3 **1998**: 2 **1976:** 2 **2000**: 4 **1980**: 1 **2002**: 3 **1984:** 2 **2004**: 3 **1988:** 2 **2006**: 3   **2008**: 5 **Cold War Mean= 2 2010**: 4 **Post-Cold War Mean= 3.4 2012**: 4

Table 2. Scope of Protest Cases, 1945-2012

Cold War

Post Cold War

Anti-American Animal Rights Anti-Government Anti-Olympics Anti-Soviet Anti-Globalization Anti-War Anti-Human Trafficking   Environmental   Feminine Groups   Islamic Protesters for Human Rights   Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)

Appendix. Olympic Cases of Protest, 1945-2012

Year Location Actors   Primary Issue 1960 Summer Rome Neo-Fascists Group [D] Gov't deleted inscriptions from the former Mussolini Forum **1968 Summer** Mexico City Tokyo Students Anti-War and Anti-American Group [D] Vietnam War and American Foreign Policy   Mexican Student Groups [D] Anti-government of Gustavo Ordaz Olympic Project for Human Rights [T] Racism in United States **1976 Summer** Montreal Quebec Group [D] Queen Elizabeth's II visit to open Games **1980 Summer** Moscow Ukrainian Olympic Committee [D] Ukraine not allowed to compete separately from Soviet Union **1984 Summer** Los Angeles Committee to Bridge the Gap [D] Shut down

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nuclear reactor near U.C.L.A.   LGBT [D] Athletic and human rights discrimination of homosexuals **1988 Summer** Seoul South Korean Student Groups [D] Anti-government and for democratic reforms   Koreans in New York Group [T] People's power movement for democratic reforms **1996 Summer** Atlanta Environmental Group [D] Degrading of black, low-income areas surrounding the stadium by destroying houses, plants, and small businesses   LGBT Movement [T] Gay-pride movement for civil liberties   European Women Groups [T] Sexual discrimination in Olympic Games **1998 Winter** Nagano Anti-Olympics Movement [T] Environmental and economic impact of Olympics Chinese and Pro-Tibetans Supporters [D] Chinese gov't crackdowns of protest in Tibet and human rights issues in China **2000 Summer** Sydney Aboriginal Groups [D] Aboriginal rights and recognition in Australia   Anti-Globalization Movement [T] Anti-free trade, anti- corporations, and anti-central banks   Environmental Activists [D] Building of an Olympic stadium near a beach   Muslim Women Group [T] Islamic regimes' treatment of women **2002 Winter** Salt Lake City Animal Rights Group [T] Alternatives to meat and the harsh treatment of animals   Generation Life [T] Condoms available for athletes   Citizens Action Network [T] Corporate sponsors and products **2004 Summer** Athens Anti-American Groups [T] American invasion of Iraq and proposed visit of Colin Powell   Anti-Globalization Groups [T] NATO expanded involvement in providing Olympic security   Anti-Olympic Movement Groups [T] Commercialization and doping **2006 Winter** Turin Anti-Globalization Movement [T] War, capitalism, and immigrants   Environmental Groups [D] High-speed train rail line   Anti-Olympic Group [T] General Electric as corporate sponsor, making engines that power American warplanes in Iraq **2008 Summer** Beijing Students for a Free Tibet Groups [D] Freedom for Tibet   French Envoy Group [T] Tibet's autonomy   New Yorkers for Anti-Beijing Gov't [T] Authoritarian Chinese gov't   Various Chinese Groups [D] Minority rights in China   Chinese Uighur Muslims [D] Gain religious freedom and autonomy from Beijing **2010 Winter** Vancouver Olympic Resistance Movement [T] Anti-capitalism, anti-war, anti-poverty, pro-environment   Environmental Movement [D] Environmental damage from a new highway   Anti-Corporate Group [D] Hudson's Bay Company and Royal Bank of Canada as sponsors   Anti-Human Trafficking Group [T] Anticipation of increase of human trafficking through forced prostitution **2012 Summer** London Islamic Protesters [T] China, US, and UK for human rights abuses   Anti-Corporate Olympic Group [T] Large involvement of corporations   FEMEN Ukrainian Women Group [T] Islamist regimes' treatment of women   Environmental Groups [T] BP and Dow Chemicals as corporate sponsors

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