THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF SPORT: A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE INTERPLAY OF EMERGING POWERS, NATIONAL IDENTITY, AND GLOBAL SPORT EVENTS

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Abstract Many social scientists see Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa as emerging powers. Analyzing to what extent these countries have the size, the resources, and the will to achieve great power status they find that all these countries are the largest countries with the biggest economies in their regions and play an important role in the global polity. The effects of symbolic power accumulation, however, are frequently ignored and significantly underestimated. The paper contributes to the discussion on emerging powers by analyzing global symbolic power formation. Therefore, a field of global symbolism, namely the global field of sport is reviewed. Sport in general can be seen as a mechanism to strengthen the national identity of any country and its vision of itself. Hence, the paper argues that the investment into sport is a useful strategy to improve citizens' self-perception as an emerging power and to gain support for their 'expanding' politics. Furthermore, it argues that the power status of emerging powers can be read off from the supply and success in international and global sport events. Consequently, it is not of great surprise that emerging countries have started hosing major sport event recently (Olympic Summer Games 2008 and Olympic Winter Games 2022 in China; Soccer World Championship 2010 in South Africa, Commonwealth Games 2010 and Cricket World Cup 2011 in India; Olympic Winter Games 2014 and the FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia, FIFA World Cup 2014 and the Olympic Summer Games 2016 in Brazil).

Keywords: Globalization; International Relations; Emerging Powers; Collective Identity; Nation Building; Symbolic Power; Sport; Olympic Games; FIFA World Cup

1. Introduction

The process of globalization is constantly changing the existing world order, namely, it transforms the status and the role of the nation-state crucially (Giddens 1985; Appadurai 1996; Beck 2000; Kiss 2010). Consequently since the beginning of the 1990s the consciousness of the world and therefore of other countries and other cultures has increased decisively. Nation-states nowadays are not only focused inwards by controlling the internal issues of national societies like national security or social welfare, more and more they face outwards to the distance and compete with other countries on every level of interaction: not only in the sector of the world economy or global politics but also in the sector of transnational culture. Global sport events fashion among transnational cultures' symbolic icons. Recently, hosting global sport events has become a symbolic not only of a strong national identity but also a symbol of the capability in acting globally (Senn 1999; Black 2007; Cornelissen 2010; Jinxia 2010; Schaffer and

Smith 2000). With the fact that a country is able to organize a sports mega-event like the Olympic Games or a FIFA World Cup it shows the world its power on several sectors: the economic and administrative power by providing an adequate infrastructure (stadiums, public transportation, and accommodation), the political power by providing security for a huge number of guests, the cultural power by presenting the nation itself as good and friendly hosts, *etc.* (Short 2008: 323–324).

Sport in general can be seen as a mechanism to strengthen the national identity of any country and its vision of itself (Tomlinson 1986; Bairner 2001). Hence, this paper argues that the investment into sport is a useful strategy to improve citizens' self-perception as an emerging power and to gain support for their 'expanding' politics. Furthermore, it argues that the power status of emerging powers can be read off from the supply and success in international and global sport events (Cornelissen 2010: 3014).

Therefore, a field of global symbolism, namely the 'field of sport' (Schirato 2007) is reviewed. Traditionally, there are seven dimensions of power identified in international relations (Renard 2009: 24–26), divided into natural determinants (geography, population, and resources) and social factors (economy, military, diplomacy, and identity). However, most scholars mainly focus on the first six factors (domestic sociopolitical, international political, population, economic, agriculture, energy, technology, environmental resources and quality) (*e.g.*, Kennedy 1987; Treverton and Jones 2005). The question of how to influence and strengthen strategic soft factors like the perception of national identity and what can be done to support the general image of an emerging power abroad and at home has been to minor interest in academia (*e.g.* Tomlinson 2000). To overcome the image of a regional power, the status as an emerging global power has somehow to be anchored in the general perception of their citizens and sport is one way to do so (Bairner 2001; Jinxia 2010).

To analyze the phenomenon of global symbolic power, the paper is structured as follows: in Section 2 the social functions of sport are highlighted. Section 3 then analyzes the internal perspective of sport while Section 4 focuses on the external perspective of sport. Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. The Social Functions of Sport

The image of building social cohesion through sports can be traced back to England in the eighteenth century (Hoberman 1993, 1997; Guttmann 1994; Standeven 1994: 241; Bairner 2001: 13; Giulianotti and Robertson 2009). Although sport was based on the principles of physical capacity, competition, and the challenge of records, it was also conceptualized as a tool of education in the first English public schools. Following up on the notion that sport is an element of common activity with the potential of self-forming groups and group identities, it mediates social rules and the idea of respect towards other group members. At a later date sport was used in a related way for disciplinary issues of industrial workers and for socialization (respectively 'civilization') of postcolonial societies in India and Africa (Schirato 2007: 63–70; Whannel 1998; Bose 2006: 47, 57; Guttmann 1994: 39, 63–70). Thus sport in general can be seen as a tool to overcome the barriers within national societies (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009: ch. 5).

Despite a number of different ideas of transnationalism and conceptions of transnational communities across all borders of nation-states (Appadurai 1996), the traditional idea of nation-states as a container-model still is quite realistic for most countries (Giddens 1985: 119). The modern idea of the nation-state which contains society must

be regarded as the basic structure of the contemporary world (Beck 2000; Kiss 2010). In this national context it is widely accepted that sport can function as an element of uniting differences as well as for the transgression of local communalism (Maguire 2005; Tomlinson and Young 2006b).

Recognizing that sport is both connected to a uniting and bonding source of power between different peoples, social classes, religions, nations, *etc*., while being founded on the idea of competition and therefore linked to the idea of division and separation of people, it can be argued that sport seems to be a universal language, a cultural tool, for bridging the gaps of unequally developed states and continents.[1] Major sport events like the world championships in football in Germany 2006 or in South Africa 2010 were enacted as big party events where different people should meet and get to know each other.

Accordingly, those events are always accompanied by mottos linked to nations. For example the FIFA World Cup 2006 in Germany was themed 'World Cup – A Time to Make Friends' and the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa 'Ke Nako. Celebrate Africa's Humanity'. These events are presentations of the nation not only to their own citizens but especially to the rest of the world. The crucial points are not so much the real social problems in a society or the differences between different ethnic groups in a society but the idea of overcoming those differences and present a nation from two different perspectives: A 'true' and 'authentic' national identity (often a national cliché) is presented on the one side. On the other side, the nation is shown as an open-minded, friendly and communicative entity.

From such a point of view sport is seen as some kind of 'lingua franca' which can be decrypted by the poor and the rich, not depending on the color of the skin, the religious context or the national culture (for an overview on global inequality see Boatcă 2015; Lenger and Schumacher 2015). Sport events can be held across all national borders and beyond political systems because on the playing fields of sport every participant truly is equal since they all meet under the same objective rules and circumstances (Black 2007: 266). Consequently, sport has a transnational, transgressing potential (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009: 134–147).

In contrast, however, the instrumentalization of sport through nation-states is omnipresent. National success in global sport events conveys the people national pride and the faith in their national strength and national power. Since sport takes place on an assumed 'neutral' ground, collective identities can be linked to it and polarizations can easily take place: You always have the 'good us' against the 'bad others' (Bairner 2001: 174–175). In this opposition it seems to be impossible to give a categorical statement about the phenomenon of sport: depending on the specific context sport is linked to it can be disuniting on the one hand or universal on the other. Sport can be a factor of nationalism as well as a factor of transnationalism or globalization.

The twofold function of sport as an element of uniting as well as an element of dissociation constitutes the theoretical background of this paper. In what follows the impacts of global sport events on two different directions will be described. These events cause a number of internal effects to national societies as well as on the international or intercultural level in the external or global relations between nation states. On the internal level, sport contributes to social cohesion. On the external level, the competition is about gaining reputation in the existing international world order. Especially some rising nations of the Global South which are summarized with the conception of the emerging powers are more and

more interested in the role of hosts for global sport events to show and underline their rising and growing status in the changing world order.

The Internal Perspective: National Identity and Global Sport Events

Being the host country of – for example – the Olympic Games or a FIFA World Cup does not only demonstrate the world the ability, the culture, and the power of the hosting nation, it also has effects on the national identity of the hosting society (Short 2008).

In general, big sport events often are directly connected to nation-building processes and constructions of national identity (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Yu 2010): The 1954 'Wunder von Bern' often is seen as the emotional birth of the Federal Republic of Germany. The South African triumph in the rugby world cup in 1995 when the white 'Springboks' carried their black president Nelson Mandela on their shoulders and Mandela vice versa put on the rugby dress can also be regarded as a symbol of national identity.

Sport Events and the Social Construction of Imagined Communities

Theoretically, two different concepts of the nation exist: From a *subjective perspective*, the belonging to a nation rests on the free will of the individual. Consequently, the nation is conceptualized as a community open to everyone (*cf.* Renan 1996[1882]). While this voluntary concept is closely linked to the liberal ideas of the French Revolution, the *objective perspective* in contrast is linked to the idea of a cultural nation or people's nation (von Herder 1784–1791). An essential argument for this second view is the assumption that a designated group of people have a specific attribute in common given by nature. This is used as some kind of social substrate, in other words, a group of people can be organized as a collective subject. Accordingly, the national community does not result from a common subjective political idea of will but rather from objective attributes like a common history, a common culture, a common ethnicity or a common language (Hall 1991).

In the twentieth century, concepts of the nations developed in front of Neo-Marxist theories (Poulantzas 1978; Balibar and Wallerstein 1991) as well as on the background of the process of modernization (Gellner 1983, 1997). Against the background of the postcolonial nations in Africa and Asia, Benedict Anderson (1983) developed the concept of the 'Imagined Communities' which can be regarded as a change of paradigm. As the established common criteria for communities like history, culture or language fail for these 'new' nations, Anderson suggested a less dogmatic definition for the nation as an 'imagined community'. Instead of searching for a number of definitive criteria for the permanence of national communities, he let the nations define themselves endogenously. Hence for the multicultural, multiethnic and multilinguistic postcolonial nations, he does not try to identify a single collective criterion which can be regarded as the foundation of the nation. Rather he asks the more general question of how communities as imaginations are constituted in the mind of their citizens. In contrast to European nations, postcolonial nations are not established on a collective idea or common base. They are just founded on the existence of a former colonial territory. Consequently, the term 'nation-building' emerged in the theories of the nation-states (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). This term describes the formation process of a nation-state resulting from nothing else than a community feeling. If nations cannot be defined by a fundamental core, the criteria of affiliation can only be an imagined feeling of inclusion and

exclusion. So the question of national identity becomes the crucial question at hand. If nations can be comprehended as cultural constructions of communality, they can only be viewed by their internal perspective of imagined collectivity. Thus, the analysis has to focus on the issue how the concept of the nation as an 'imagined community' is constructed and reproduced within big sport events.

Collective Memory and the Lieux de Mémoire
To approach this question Maurice Halbwachs' theory of the *Collective Memory* and especially the refined concept by the German archeologist Jan Assmann can be adapted to the question of national identification in sports (Halbwachs 1980, 1992; Assmann 2011). Assmann replaces the term of the 'collective memory' by the term of the 'cultural memory'. His extension of the concept focuses on the aspect of the objectivity of culture which Halbwachs did not regard as a central point. So Assmann's extended concept is based on the trilogy memory, culture, and community. Starting from the idea of a cultural memory retention and memory are not so much seen as individual phenomena but rather are social, respectively collective phenomena. Collective patterns of thought and interpretation of social processes, events, memory and identity are essentially shaped through the context of societies. Thus, cultural and collective interpretations of the past, the present and the future are channeled to the collective memory of a group of people. Consequently, the entries to the collective memories of nations are directly linked to national identities. They evoke and generate common associations and emotions. The active constructive process of memory connects historical and current facts with statements and emotions and thus gives those facts social sense and social meanings. It is the task of the collective memory to explain the present: to organize and define the nation to a collective mind. To put it into simple words: It is the task of the collective memory to create a collective identity. Thus, the collective identity of a nation can be regarded as the link between the individual and the society, between personal experience and collective knowledge, as well as between past and future.

Resting on this concept, the French historian Pierre Nora (1999–2010) regards memories as real or imagined places, so-called *Lieux de Mémoire*. Lieux de Mémoire represents common national memories and emotions, triumphs and defeats, joy and sadness, overall the idea of the imagined nation. For the construction of communality and identity different items are useful: demonstrative images or meaningful events are important if we want to find out who we are and how we identify ourselves as a group. Specific national institutions in a broader sense like schools, cultural institutes, national galleries, national museums as well as national teams in sports frequently are constructed as cultural symbols. Thereby national memorials, flags, hymns, popular traditional songs, literature, sport events and their insignia are widely used instruments to link individuals to a community and generate a feeling of a common identity. The Lieux de Mémoire calls up and satisfies the social and the emotional needs for orientation and collectivity. To trigger the process of identity formation, national myths must be embodied in events and persons. They also must be connected to people's everyday life and must contain well known and positive messages of a society.

Hence, sports allow for communication between social classes bridging social inequality and differences between different members of society. Such a function is of utmost importance since emerging powers in particular struggle with the problem of social inequality and the problem of missing participation of lower classes. Thus, by rec-

ognizing the potential of sport to create social cohesion, global sport events must be analyzed in more detail.

The External Perspective: Emerging Powers and the Global Competition of Nation States

The second interest of the paper is the influence and significance spread out from the fact that global sport events are hosted by nation-states.[2] This can be very clearly shown by a number of rising nations which are summarized as the emerging powers in the current world order (Cornelissen 2010; Jinxia 2010). These nations like Brazil, Russia, India, China or South Africa have shown up on the global sphere of sports since the 1990s and have started hosting global sport events just recently. Hereinafter the modified role of these states in the world order will be approached by outlining the theoretical conception of the emerging powers in a first step, focusing on the altered function of the nation state in a second step, and highlighting the link between sports and international relations in a third step.

The Emergence of New Powers: BRICSA
Since the beginning of the 1970s, the current world order has changed through the expectations of the process of globalization on all sectors of international relations and issues of societies (Renard 2009: 13–20; Grinin and Korotayev 2010; Tausch and Heshmati 2011). Hermann Schwengel (2008) outlines three basic steps in the history of the emerging powers since the 1970s which are closely linked to the power structure of the world and to the process of globalization: In the 1970s, a new kind of flexible global capitalism emerged. The changes in the two decades until 1990 were limited to the economic sector. The economic integration in the world system increased dramatically as well as the quotas of import and export of products in a number of societies. Schwengel analyses this process as a process of quantity not so much as a process of quality because this change was mostly limited to the economic sector and can be regarded as a new dimension of the worldwide capitalism. In the sector of politics, however, the global landscape was clearly dominated by the two block system of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. In this tight political situation the emergence of a third player on the global agenda was not possible. Nevertheless, some commercial city-states like Singapore and Hong Kong and some 'Tiger States' like Taiwan and South Korea arose. These tiger economies, however, were commercial centers 'under the umbrella of American hegemony' (Schwengel 2008).

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the decline of the Eastern Bloc the political situation changed completely. The USA until today must be regarded as the only remaining super power in the world but without any equivalent. Instead of the two-bloc-system nowadays we are confronted with a number of regional centers of powers like Brazil, Russia, India or China simply called BRIC today (O'Neill 2001, 2009; Schwengel 2008; Renard 2009; Martinez-Diaz and Woods 2009). Moreover, instead of the 'stable' system of the Cold War we are confronted with a diffuse and multipolar system including different and changing centers of powers today (Chase-Dunn 2014). In this context the role of the EU and of a number of other more or less emerging states like South Africa, South Korea, Thailand or Japan cannot be conclusively determined. In the current situation of globalization, Eric Hobsbawm points out, it is the first time for two centuries

that the world does neither have a working international system nor a stable international structure (Hobsbawm 1990).

Thus, new global alliances are established following individual national economic and strategic interests in a multipolar world. The first-ever BRIC summit meeting of the leading emerging powers, held in June 2009 in Yekaterinburg, clearly represents the change in the world order (O'Neill 2009; for overviews on emerging powers see OECD 2008; Pieterse and Rehbein 2008, 2009; Renard 2009). Building new economic and strategic alliances the BRIC nations are economically catching up with the G-7 and are expected to overtake it in less than two decades and are likely to be the new driving forces in the global economy. A few years ago Goldman Sachs made the prediction that China will overtake the USA as the leading economy followed by India, Brazil, and Russia and that the combined economies of BRIC countries could outperform those six leading countries in monetary terms by 2050. A broad body of literature giving evidence that Brazil (Sotero and Armijo 2007; Lattimore and Kowalski 2008), Russia (Tarr 2008), India (Rusko and Sasikumar 2007; Grinin 2013), China (Liang 2007; Rusko and Sasikumar 2007; Cheng and Yang 2012; Grinin 2013), and South Africa (Kowalski, Lattimore, and Bottini 2008) will be very likely the leading global powers by the middle of the twenty-first century. Thus, we assume that those countries until today have reached enough economic, political, military and cultural power to play a major role in world politics.

Globalization and the Altered Role of the Nation-State
The current situation can be described as a third phase of globalization, that is as a period of inner globalization and the emergence of new powers (Schwengel 2008). Hence the national societies have to find their place in the processes of globalization which fundamentally affect their traditional ideas of local identities and global expectations (*Ibid.*: 4–5). Under the impressions of worldwide changes caused by globalization in the last four decades, two contradictory positions have been pointed out: some authors hold the position that the nation-state still must be viewed as the fundament of the world system and forecast the idea of the nation a great future (Mann 1986, 1993, 1997) while others expect the decline of a world constructed of nations and national societies (Hall 1991; Appadurai 1996; Pieterse 2004; Grinin 2012). Appadurai, for example, argues that cultures today more and more transcend nation-states. In his concept of different kinds of '-scapes' he does not only see the economic sector to be transnational but also social areas like technology through the internet, ethnology through migration and tourism or ideas and ideologies through the worldwide media. While in some globalization theories the dissolution of boundaries is posed as the end of the nation-state other more skeptical conceptions only expect the nation-state to change. Beck (2000) expects the traditional nation-states to transform into a single transnational entity which is dominated by the civil society. Other authors like Hall (1991) or Pieterse (2004) consider the backside of globalization and consequently identify a process of deglobalization. In opposition to the global ideas of transgressions of boundaries in all sectors the reinforcement of local identities is recognized. Starting from these observations, Robertson (1995) developed the concept of 'glocalisation' which considers both aspects in the process of globalization: the side of the globality as well as the opposite side of locality. Regardless of whether the status of the nation-states is weakened or strengthened in the

process of globalization in this current situation of a multipolar world system with different emerging centers of power the role of the nation state has definitely changed.

Ernest Gellner (1983, 1997), in his famous conception of the nation-state and modernity, traces the idea of the nation-state from agrarian societies to modern societies. He argues that modern societies are dominated by a capitalist economy which generates a need for a well-educated flexible workforce. The modern nation-state hence is based on well-educated people and strong regulations of all social sectors by administrations. With these elements, the sovereign nation-state claims not only the dominance over its citizens but also over its territory. This dominance is not so much dominance of oppression but of integration. The state monopoly above all is bounded inward. The traditional role of the nation-state consequently is found in the aspects like the regulation of the population by the establishment of a health system or in security issues like the undisputed power over legislative (jurisdiction) and executive (police).

With the changes of globalization at hand the domination of limited national territories or peoples not only become more and more difficult but also become basically insufficient. Nation-states successfully taking part in the global competition are not only able to control their own territory and their own people but also to shine outwards all over the globe. With the establishment of new information technologies like the internet and the existence of a global public sphere, the place of action has been transferred from a limited local point to a global sphere (with Appadurai it can be named a global mediascape). The sovereign nation-state within the last two decades has been transformed from a national welfare state to a global competitive state. Thereby the radius of action for nation-states has been dramatically enlarged. With every political action nation states today not only must be perceived as local players but also as global actors.

It has been pointed out before that empirical data indicates that the BRICSAs are emerging powers (*cf*. Grinin and Korotayev 2010). A glance at the share of the global gross domestic product, for example, shows that in 1995 they accumulated approximately 8 per cent of the global GDP; ten years later their share was already reaching 10 per cent, and in 2009 their share was hitting 15.5 per cent of global GDP, representing over 20 per cent of global GDP at Purchasing Power Parity (Renard 2009; Wilson and Purushothaman 2003). In fact, it is expected that China will catch up earlier with the United States. According to Jim O'Neill, the BRIC economies will reach equal real GDP levels with the EU by 2040 (O'Neill 2001).

However, it is important to acknowledge that there is a fundamental distinction between an emerging economy and an emerging power. Unfortunately, a detailed description of the economic, political, militaristic, population developments of emerging powers is beyond the scope of the paper (for an excellent overview see Renard 2009; for indicators of globalization see Drener *et al*. 2010; Heshmati and Lee 2010). Here, we assume that there is enough empirical evidence to treat China, Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa as emerging powers. There are many hard indicators that could be used to measure the power of countries like quantity of natural resources, level of urbanization or the level of technological advancement. However, to discover who the real emerging powers today are also the numerous non-traditional indicators of power, like soft power, the (self-)perception of power, or life satisfaction and happiness have to be included. Thus, it can be demonstrated that both India and China have been putting efforts into promoting its soft power in recent years, India through Bollywood Movies and China through hosting the Olympic Games. Thus, following this notion we want to highlight a develop-

ment that seems to us as striking as obvious at the same time. All emerging powers will host or are hosting major sport events recently demonstrating that the international competition among nations have reached the cultural sector as well.

The Politics of Global Sport Events

The importance of sports mega-events[3] has been recognized increasingly in a globalized world (Tomlinson and Young 2006b; Miller *et al*. 2001). The cultural-political and economic significance of such events has also been highlighted sufficiently (Simson and Jennings 1992; Sugden and Tomlinson 1998; Tomlinson 1996, 2000; Roche 2001). Nevertheless, the function of sports in its form as a global media event – transporting symbolic values – has not been understood sufficiently (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009: 63–73, 92–95; Tomlinson and Young 2006a: 4).

As pointed out before, the Yekaterinburg summit gives clear evidence that the BRIC nations are already seeking a greater role in the global (financial) institutions and the international monetary system (Khan and Roy 2011). To support their rising global status and to gain their citizens' support, those leading emerging powers have started to invest into sport and global sport events. Since there are high symbolic revenues it is not surprising that all rising nations compete intensively to host the next Olympic Games or FIFA World Cups. However, it is widely known that international sport is characterized by political and economic inequalities, unbalanced relationships and persisting conflicts (Cornelissen 2010). Moreover, within the sociology of sport it has been argued that the symbolic importance and sportive power of nations is reflected by the success in winning medals and titles therefore represented by medal tables of the Olympic Games or number of world cup titles, nowadays called 'sportive nationalism' (Hoberman 1993, 2004). Pierre Coubertin, for example, explicitly claimed that triumphant athletes promote national prestige and states that winning medals is the global accepted symbolic indicator for success in sport (Hoberman 2004: 185). Stamm and Lamprecht (2000) provide empirical evidence that the power structure of nations correlates to success in Olympic Games. The sportive success then is readily seen as a symbolic power in the existing world order (Jütting 2001). However, it has seldom been recognized that hosting these major sport events actually represents a much more important indicator for the symbolic power of a nation (*e.g*., Schirato 2007: 75–81). From the perspective of the organizers, the realization of a major sport event does not only represent the integration into the global community but also the competitive advantage of a country. Frequently, it can be argued that the independent observer might have the impression that the success within the field of sport correlates directly to political, cultural, and organizational resources of a society.

Accordingly, being much more than 'propaganda for tourism' (Krüger 2004) these motives emerge particularly apparent at the XI Olympic Games (Berlin 1936) before World War II and at the XXII (Moscow 1980) and XXIII (Los Angeles 1984) Olympic Games during the Cold War when the competition of social systems and cultures bore the markings of an arms race (for a detailed survey of the following see Hook 2002; Tomlinson and Young 2006a). However, the core of our argumentation says that even after the breakdown of socialism the competition of systems has not declined but rather persists represented, for example, in international sports (Das 2006; Palat 2008). Following up this argument the Olympic Games 1988 in Seoul represent the success of the

rising Asian dragons and the Olympic Games 2008, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2022 the increased importance of emerging powers like China, Russia, Brazil and South Korea.

Table 1

Host Cities and Countries of the Olympic Games

Year, City, Country	Place	Country
1	2	3
1896	Athens	Greece
1900	Paris	France
1904	Saint Louis	USA
1908	London	UK
1912	Stockholm	Sweden
1920	Antwerp	Belgium
1924	Paris	France
1924	Chamonix	France
1928	Amsterdam	Netherlands
1928	St. Moritz	Switzerland
1932	Los Angeles	USA
1932	Lake Placid	USA
1936	Berlin	Germany
1936	Garmisch-Part.enkirchen	Germany
1948	London	UK
1948	St. Moritz	Switzerland
1952	Helsinki	Finland
1952	Oslo	Norway
1956	Melbourne/Stockholm	Australia/Sweden
1956	Cortina d'Ampezzo	Italy
1960	Rome	Italy
1960	Squaw Valley	USA
1964	Tokyo	Japan
1964	Innsbruck	Austria
1968	Mexico-City	Mexico
1968	Grenoble	France
1972	Munich	Germany
1972	Sapporo	Japan
1976	Montreal	Canada
1976	Innsbruck	Austria
1980	Moscow	Soviet Union
1980	Lake Placid	USA
1984	Los Angeles	USA
1984	Sarajevo	Yugoslavia
1988	Seoul	Republic of Korea
1988	Calgary	Canada
1992	Barcelona	Spain
1992	Albertville	France
1994	Lillehammer	Norway

1	2	3
1996	Atlanta	USA
1998	Nagano	Japan
2000	Sydney	Australia
2002	Salt Lake City	USA
2004	Athens	Greece
2006	Torino	Italy
2008	Beijing	China
2010	Vancouver	Canada
2012	London	UK
2014	Sochi	Russia
2016	Rio	Brazil
2018	Pyeongchang	South Korea
2020	Tokyo	Japan
2022	Beijing	China

Source: http://www.olympic.org/en/content/Olympic-Games.

Table 1 gives clear evidence of this phenomenon: While being a global event it has been hosted only in the Western World in the first half of the twentieth century. It was not before 1956 that the Games arrived in the Southern hemisphere for the first time. But even then beside Mexico in 1968 and South Korea in 1988 it has been only already industrialized nations hosting the Summer Games. However, the emerging powers represented through China (2008) and Russia (2014) started hosting the Games (Jinxia 2010). More striking is that Brazil 2016, South Korea 2018, and China 2022 are the next hosts.

Table 2

FIFA World Cup (1930–2022)

1930 Uruguay	1982 Spain
1934 Italy	1986 Mexico
1938 France	1990 Italy
1950 Brazil	1994 USA
1954 Switzerland	1998 France
1958 Sweden	2002 South Korea and Japan
1962 Chile	2006 Germany
1966 England	2010 South Africa
1970 Mexico	2014 Brazil
1974 Germany	2018 Russia
1978 Argentina	2022 Qatar

Source: www.fifa.org

In contrast, hosting the FIFA World Cup frequently changed between the Global North and the Global South.[4] There are two correlating reasons for this. First, soccer was less important, therefore, investments were not that profitable. More precisely since soccer is the sport of the poor and lower classes, the Olympic Games represent sports closely connected to the upper classes, respectively elites. Accordingly, the ruling classes traditionally had more interest in the promotion of nationalism through the Olympic

Games rather than through Soccer World Championships or other team sports events like basketball (the sport of the black), football, or handball. This perception, however, changed drastically during the second half of the twentieth century which is the reason why hosting a FIFA World Cup today represents a high symbolic value.[5] Consequently, also nations not traditionally interested in soccer like the USA in 1994, South Korea and Japan in 2002, or Qatar in 2022 started hosting the FIFA World Cup thereby representing the new importance of such an event.

Table 3 shows the list of medals providing important information. First, the run for medals definitely represents the Cold War during the second half of the twentieth century. While the USA has won ten times after WWII, the USSR was successful seventeen times. Second there is a pretty clear correlation between hosting the Games and winning the Games. This, of course, can only be explained by the extraordinary efforts put into sports before such an event. A very good example again is China which only won its own Olympic Games in 2008 and is ranking 8th in the all-time Olympic Games medal table. Third, relatively small countries like Germany and Norway are extremely successful in the Olympic Winter Games thus demonstrating that Winter Games are much less representative and symbolic than Summer Games.

Table 3

All-time Olympic Games Medal Table

1896	Athens	USA/Greece	1968	Grenoble	Norway
1900	Paris	France	1972	Munich	USSR
1904	Saint Louis	USA	1972	Sapporo	USSR
1908	London	UK	1976	Montreal	USSR
1912	Stockholm	Sweden	1976	Innsbruck	USSR
1920	Antwerp	USA	1980	Moscow	USSR
1924	Paris	USA	1980	Lake Placid	USSR/GDR
1924	Chamonix	Norway	1984	Los Angeles	USA
1928	Amsterdam	USA	1984	Sarajevo	USSR/GDR
1928	St. Moritz	Norway	1988	Seoul	USSR
1932	Los Angeles	USA	1988	Calgary	USSR
1932	Lake Placid	USA	1992	Barcelona	CIS
1936	Berlin	Germany	1992	Albertville	Germany
1936	Garmisch-Partenkir.	Norway	1994	Lillehammer	Russia/Norway
1948	London	USA	1996	Atlanta	USA
1948	St. Moritz	Norway/Sweden	1998	Nagano	Germany
1952	Helsinki	USA	2000	Sydney	USA
1952	Oslo	USSR	2002	Salt Lake City	Germany/Norway
1956	Melbourne/Stockholm	USSR	2004	Athens	USA
1956	Cortina d'Ampezzo	USSR	2006	Torino	Germany
1960	Rome	USSR	2008	Beijing	China/USA
1960	Squaw Valley	USSR	2010	Vancouver	Canada/USA
1964	Tokyo	USA/USSR	2012	London	USA
1964	Innsbruck	USSR	2014	Sochi	Russia
1968	Mexico-City	USA			

The effect of television was even more important for the external marketing function of global sport events (Lisle 2010). The 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin were the first Games to be broadcast on television (though only to a local audience). The 1956 Winter Games were the first internationally televised Olympic Games, and the 1960 Winter Games in Squaw Valley had their broadcasting rights sold for the first time to specialized television broadcasting networks CBS (paid US$ 394,000) and EBU (US$ 660,000). Consequently, viewership increased exponentially from the 1960s until the end of the century. This was due to the use of satellites to broadcast live television worldwide in 1964, and the introduction of color television in 1968. Global audience estimates for the 1968 Mexico Games was 600 million, whereas at the Los Angeles Games of 1984, the audience numbers had increased to 900 million; that number swelled to 3.5 billion at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona.

Conclusion

It has been the goal of the paper to highlight a field of global competition and symbolism, namely the sphere of sport. Traditionally, in international relations there are seven dimensions of power identified, divided into natural determinants (geography, population, and resources) and social factors (economy, military, diplomacy, and identity). However, while many scholars focus mainly on the hard factors of global power the symbolic dimension of power somehow has been of minor interest in academia. Therefore, the question how to influence and strengthen the strategic soft factors like the perception of national identity and what can be done to support the general image of an emerging power abroad and at home has to be explored in more detail. Within the paper it has been argued that to overcome the image of a regional power, the status of an emerging global power has somehow to be anchored in the general perception of their citizens and shaping global sport events is a way to do so bearing low costs and high revenues.

To clarify our central argument the twofold social function of sport has been highlighted first. It has been argued that sport has two overlapping social meanings. On the one hand it has an internal function to create social cohesion among society. On the other hand there is some kind of external function promoting and advertising the power of a nation abroad. Following up on the concept of emerging powers hosting global sport events has been analyzed to illustrate the symbolic dimension of sport within international relations. Moreover, we have given empirical evidence that global sport events represent the contemporary structure of international power.

However, we are arguing that sport is much more than a 'proxy war' in international competition. Rather we want to highlight the fact that it plays a crucial role for establishing, setting and modifying the self-perception of emerging powers and therefore become a substantial element of the modern globalization process. Due to the twofold social function there are four reasons why global sport events matter: First, and paradoxically, because sport is not of any 'vital importance'. Precisely because sport can function as an alternative for global competition without bearing the huge costs of a war, a space race, an economic embargo, *etc.*, it is the ideal field for a proxy war about hierarchical positions in the world. Second, the field of sport is truly global and universal. That is to say it creates a global playing field where international comparisons can take place easily. Third, sport operates under equal rules and is seemingly free of power asymmetries, in other words it assumes a fair competition indicating the real global position of nation-

states. Finally, global sport events are global media events attracting the attention of the world without bearing additional costs.

To sum up, global sport events are an important factor for shaping the emerging world order. This is possible because sport has two complementary effects. First, it creates a positive reputation of the power states against outer countries. Second, it creates social cohesion among nations. Until there exists no other tool to delegate global competition on a symbolic level, global sport events will keep their function of creating and preserving international symbolic power.

NOTES

[1] Accordingly, the United Nations (2003) highlight the potential of sport affecting the lives of individuals, nations, and civilizations across the globe: 'The world of sport presents a natural partnership for the United Nations system. By its very nature sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. Sport brings individuals and communities together, highlighting commonalties and bridging cultural or ethnic divides. Sport provides a forum to learn skills such as discipline, confidence and leadership and it teaches core principles such as tolerance, cooperation and respect. Sport teaches the value of effort and how to manage victory, as well as defeat. When these positive aspects of sport are emphasized, sport becomes a powerful vehicle through which the United Nations can work towards achieving its goals'.

[2] Even though the Olympic Games are officially hosted by a town and not by a national state we assume a national dimension with every global sport event.

[3] In line with Tomlinson and Young (2006a) global sport events are defined as 'an event that has come to involve the majority of the nations of the world, that is transmitted globally, that foregrounds the sculptured and commodified body and orchestrates a physical display of the body politic, and that attracts large and regular followings of on-site spectators for the live contest or event'.

[4] In fact, Richard Cashman (2004) argues that World Cup Football is perceived as European, South American and African while Olympic Games are perceived as truly global.

[5] For example even after winning the World Cup in 1966 neither the *Mirror* nor the *Sun* did mention it on the front-page. In contrast, in 2006 every match England played was a front-page lead for the *Mirror* and the *Sun* and the *Times* ran a daily 16-page World Cup supplement (Lisle 2010).

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