

A Comparative Study of the Olympic Games in East Asia: the nexus between politics and sports

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| Abstract |

East Asia has grown its importance in the field of international sports as host of series of significant mega-sports event, such as Olympic Games. These events are often blended with cultural and political dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region, exhibiting certain features specific to the region. A comparative study of Olympic Games in East Asia has demonstrated that they have been strongly state-centric and predominately attached to national identity and nationalism. Hosting of an Olympic Games often featured in the national agenda, and accompanied direct involvement of the state. Despite the vastly different aspirations and economic, political and social situations that the cities confronted when they bid for the Olympic Games, the case studies of the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games and the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

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showed that the legacies tend to converge for the betterment of the host country and the society in general. Whereas the debut in the Olympic stage has been strongly state-centric in connection to national development, future Olympic Games in East Asia is likely to bring different vision, objectives, and expectation as the transnationalistic ideals and goals gain more importance in international sports movement.

▪ Key words: East Asia, Olympic Games, Sport and Politics, State-Centric Development, Transnationalism

I . Introduction

Much of the focus in the world politics today is shifting to East Asia. Whether it is the rise of China, the Taiwan Straits issue, the persistence of security issues on the Korean peninsula, Japan's frictions with its neighbors, or the technological prowess of many of the regional economies, East Asia's importance in the international stage is ever rising. With the growing economic and political importance of the region in the international stage, East Asian countries have been aggressively seeking to host international sporting events, and aspiring to host the biggest sporting event of the world. Three Asian nations - Japan, Korea, and China - have been fairly successful in winning and staging international sporting events including Olympic Games.

Since Tokyo Olympic Games of 1964, the first Olympic Games ever held in Asia, there have been three editions of Olympic Games hosted in the region, namely Seoul 1988 Olympic Games, Nagano 1998 Olympic Winter Games and Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Two more Games will come to the region as PyeongChang of Korea won

the 2018 Olympic Winter Games and Tokyo won the second Olympic Games in 2020. Asia won two consecutive summer Youth Olympic Games: Singapore hosted the inaugural Youth Olympic Games in 2010, and China will host the 2014 Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing. The bidding of Beijing for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games is now adding a prospect of three major East Asian countries hosting both Summer and Winter Olympics.

While region's importance to world sport is ever rising, the motive behind the competition among the Asian nations to host major international sport events is questionable. Following the vision of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founding father of the Modern Olympic Games, the spirit and philosophy behind the hosting of an Olympic Games may be noble (International Olympic Committee 2013b). In East Asia, Olympic Games may mean something quite different. Within the context of politics of sport in East Asia and contrasting views on the function of sport, this paper focuses on the implications of Olympic Games to East Asian countries and their influence on the transformation of the respective country. The paper, in particular, looks at the aspects of motivation, objectives, games preparation, and outcomes of hosting Olympic Games in three East Asian countries, and examines to what extent they were framed within their grand national strategy. The study is intended to facilitate our understanding on the nexus between politics and sports as well as regional differences in defining this nexus.

The paper will first provide a conceptual framework for the nexus between politics and sports. The major contention is between the state-centric feature, which places sport subordinate to state's policy so that governments and state actors can employ sport as a political tool, and the transnational feature, which stresses the network of transnational non-state actors in the field of sports, such as the

International Olympic Committee (IOC), and their agenda having prominence and impact. Objectives and actors in bidding and preparation processes for the Olympic Games could be examined through the prism of these two distinct approaches.

The next section will compare and contrast the cases of summer Olympic Games in Asia – namely, Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games, Seoul 1988 Olympic Games, and Beijing 2008 Olympic Games – to pinpoint the peculiarities of East Asian features in framing the Olympic Games within the context of national agenda. The different aspirations and political, social and economic climates that influenced the country to bid for, and host, the Olympic Games may bring about different legacies. The case study will look at this cause-effect relationship between international sporting events (i.e. Olympic Games) and country's developments in order to examine to what extent the political agenda has been realized through sports. In reference to the Olympic legacy in East Asia, the final section will speculate the challenge of balancing the state-centric and transnational features in the future Games organization in Asia in order to maximize the benefits and to ensure its success.

II. Conceptual Frameworks

Debates that animate the discussion on the nexus of sports and politics can be three folds. The first is whether sport is a tool for politics and means to national interests or whether sport is an end in itself that defines relationships and interactions. The second debate centers on whether sport and politics are inseparable or the two need to be separated to preserve the purism of sport. The third is whether international sports relations display state-centric features or

transnational features.

IR specialists may claim that sport is a political tool employed either as a subordinate means to an end or a strategic selection by the state (Allison 1986; Cha 2009; Riordan et al. 1999). In the framework of international relations, the function of sport may be broadly categorized in association with three different themes. First, a competitive nature of sports may be associated with national pride and nationalism. This is often observed during the Olympic competitions, football matches, or bidding for international sporting events. In some countries, sport played a significant role in nation-building, integration, constructing nationalism, or gaining recognition in the international community (Levermore & Budd 2004, 20-21). Where a sport system grew with building of a strong nation-state, as evident in communist states, central control and planned application of resources were concentrated on organizing and developing talent in specific sports and were oriented on Olympic success (Riordan 1999, 48-64). The performance-based competition through sport among nations was highlighted in midst of the Cold War rivalry. The rivalry between the West and the Soviet bloc in competitions was considered a matter of national importance and winning the match was taken as an act of patriotism. Such a trend still persists among the nations in rivalry or conflict, and manifests during the international competitions.

Second, sport may be associated with international politics and diplomacy. Some exemplary cases can be pinpointed such as “black power” protest by two Afro-American athletes on the medal podium at the 1968 Mexico Olympics, the massacre of Israeli athletes in the 1972 Munich Olympics, the “ping pong diplomacy” between the United States and China in the 1970s, the Olympic boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games by the western bloc and 1984 Los Angeles

Games by the Soviet bloc, and diplomatic efforts prior to the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games (Riordan & Krüger 1999; Cha 2009; Shin 2012). These cases illuminate an intertwined nature of sports and politics, highlighting the roles sport play as a political and diplomatic tool.

Third, sport may be associated with the themes of international cooperation, reconciliation, peace and development. Activities of international organizations, sporting organizations, NGOs, and governments that employ sport as a tool for promoting peace and development and tackling global issues may be such examples (Kwon & Hong 2014, 150-163). On the premise that sporting institutions have responsibilities towards the “greater good”, partnership and collaboration among the transnational actors, notably that of the UN and the IOC, promote global movements for peace and development through sport.¹⁾

The core in this categorization is how one views the role of sport, and places sports in its national policy. From an IR perspective, sport is regarded as a tool for attaining certain objectives. It is, therefore, important to clearly set an agenda based on given problems, as to whether sport should be an independent variable or a dependent variable. For instance, bidding for Olympic Games or lobbying for inclusion/exclusion of specific national sports in the Olympic program often requires involvement of the state and national strategy. In this case, sport becomes a dependent variable and national strategy becomes an independent variable. When the country wants to utilize the success of hosting the Olympic Games to

1) Bach, Thomas (2013), “Building a Peaceful and Better World through Sport and the Olympic ideal”, IOC President’s statement on the occasion of the adoption of the resolution at the 68th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York on November 6, 2013. Full text is available at the website of the International Olympic Committee: www.olympic.org/Documents/IOC_President/2013-11-6_Speech/IOC_President_Bach-Olympic_Truce_adoption_Speech_4_November.pdf. (accessed on February 15, 2014)

improve relations with other countries, or give pressure on some countries through boycott, or seek economic gains, sport becomes an independent variable. The strategic choice of a country may change depending on the national objectives the country wishes to achieve through sport.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC), on the other hand, has been claiming that Olympism and the Olympic Games have to be insulated from any political interest and that sports and politics must be separated. It stressed the preservation of the autonomy of sports for successful functioning of the international sports movement and the worldwide application of sporting rules, though it recognizes that sport development needs good cooperation with governments and public authorities. The IOC President, Thomas Bach, states that the sports movement must remain politically neutral, but not apolitical in the mutual interest of sport and politics. He further states: "It is the IOC's position that sport should never be used as a political tool and IOC will work with governmental organizations to defend the autonomy of sport" (International Olympic Committee 2013c). Within this view, sport may be an independent variable and politics an intervening variable. A multitude of actors, such as private and non-governmental actors that have build a dense network of former athletes, national sporting associations, and international federations, are supposedly shape and influence the world sport while states are expected to support the realization of the vision and values of international sports movement. Olympic Games is a platform to realize the Olympic ideals and values of Excellence, Respect, and Friendship (International Olympic Committee 2013b) in which the IOC and non-state sporting actors take a leading role.

In a similar context, there exists a debate on state-centric and transnational nature of international sports relations. The state-centric

interpretation is based on a neorealist view that stresses state power and national interests. Within this perspective, sports performance is considered representation of state power and state plays a dominant role in all aspects of sport-related matters. Sport is perceived as a means to competition, a political tool for national interests, and an element of nationalism. State, therefore, invests heavily on the athletes' performance, bidding for sport events, and hosting of mega events. Strongly state-centric features could be found in East Germany and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. To them, sport was not only for the society or the general public, but equaled to national victory as part of the superpower competition with the West. Sports was a way to express desire to gain international prestige, and an important means to maintaining unity within the communist bloc (Riordan 1999).

In contrast to the state-centric nature, transnationalism focuses on the role of non-state actors and their networks making up a community that has a deep impact on politics, economy, and societies of many nations. Sub-state actors, including individuals and international organizations, operate relatively independent of government oversight across traditional state boundaries to influence both domestic and international politics broadly (Keohane & Nye 1973; Risse-Kappen 1995). Facilitated by globalization, growing transnational movements have defined a new relationship between transnational actors and states. The trend has also endowed a new role to sports. The complex and multifaceted organizations and networks that make up the Olympic Movement governs the world of sports, and set new rules and agendas for the movement (Chappelet & Kubler-Mabbott 2008). This, in return, minimized state's direct involvement in international sports and gave more room for the autonomy of sports. In Western Europe and North America, governments tend to play

relatively passive role in the sports movement while private non-state actors and organizations act more independently from the central government policy.

The two distinctive views on sports more-or-less reflect the reality and ideal of the Olympic Games. In Olympic studies, political approach has been very much limited to observation of specific incidents of the past. Olympic boycotts have been commonly pinpointed as a representative case of state using the Olympic Games to achieve their particular political interest. However, structural features of Games organization may point to more practical reasons for state intervention in the Olympic Games. Although the reason for participation and involvement of national government in sports differs in different country, some studies on Olympics and politics offer generalized explanations on political use of sports and state intervention in mega-sport events (Dayrit 2003; Yoon 2009; Herguner 2012). A foremost reason for state intervention being a necessity in some countries is financial, for state is regarded as the sole mechanism with the capacity to build facilities or venues for big sports events. Developing countries, in particular, have difficulty in securing financial support from the private sector, which makes sports strongly dependent on government funding. Other reasons are pinpointed as enhancing citizen's health and physical activities; protection of public order; social and political unity and national identity; increase in the prestige of the nation; increase legitimacy of the state; and economy (Herguner 2012, 178-179; Yoon 2009, 4-7).

Asian governments have also played a significant role in certain areas of sports policy, from actively working with local officials and other sport actors in bids to upgrade national profile through hosting major events to framing such bids within a broader national agenda to promote government policy and state interests. The state-centric

characteristic accounts to the organizational structure and feature, in which government funding and state budget is allotted to sports organizations, including National Olympic Committees, and international sporting events. With financial dependency on the government, many domestic sport organizations and individual leaders are not free from government interference, and therefore, from politics. Consequently, sport tends to be a dependent variable rather than an independent variable in the national policy. In the following section, three cases of summer Olympic Games in Asia will be examined to demonstrate the extent to which the national (political) agenda was reflected in Olympic bidding, planning, organizing and setting goals, etc. The cases will consider why political importance was attached to the Olympic Games in this region and how sport helped achieve national objectives and secure national identity in Japan, Korea, and China.

III. Case Studies

1. 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games - Japan rejoining the World

Initially, Japan won the right to host the 12th Olympic Games of 1940 at the 35th IOC Session held in Berlin in 1936. Tokyo was involved in a straight contest with Helsinki and won the final vote by 36 votes to 27. Japan's position as a world power at the time helped the IOC decision to grant the Olympic Games to the first Asian city. However, Japan later pulled out from hosting the event due to the Sino-Japanese War. Accounting to its wartime actions during the World War II, the IOC did not invite Japan to participate in subsequent Olympic Games.

In 1955, Japan bid to host the 1960 Olympic Games, but timing

was not right as the memories of the war were still too vivid in the minds of many. The bid was unsuccessful. Tokyo applied once again, this time for the 18th Olympic Games. Its rivals on this occasion were Detroit, Vienna and Brussels. The vote took place at the 55th Session of the IOC in Munich in May 1959, and Tokyo won 34 out of 56 votes in the first round of voting, thereby securing the absolute majority required to become the host city for the Olympic Games of 1964.²⁾

The 1964 Olympic Games was a matter of priority for the Japanese government and the entire nation since Japan had been trying to redeem its image after the World War II and decades of shame from defeat in the war. Japan wanted the Olympic Games to regain respect from the global community and win international acceptance. The goals were to demonstrate to the world that Japan had fully recovered from the war, abandoned imperialism and militarism, and sought to engage the peoples of the world on a grassroots level (Abel 2012). In the background of seemingly apolitical and peaceful gesture, political agenda was encoded in Tokyo Olympics as a way to rally support for reviving nationalism (Tagsold 2009). Olympic Games provided the ruling conservative elite a perfect arena to revive and re-plot – even reinvent – key symbols of nationalism. The restoration of national pride involved deliberate rehabilitation of classical national symbols such as the Emperor Hirohito as the head of state, hinomaru (rising sun) flag, and the army featuring at the opening ceremony. Clear political intention for Tokyo Olympics was to retain legitimacy of these renationalized symbols and rally political support for the ruling conservatives against the tide of anti-government protests of the 1960s.

2) The history of 1964 Olympic bid can be found on the website of Japan Olympic Committee: www.joc.or.jp.

Despite the powerful political subtext, which was not clearly discernible at the time, the Tokyo Games marked a turning point for the country to make a transition from imperialist and nationalist country to a peace-loving, affluent, and supportive member of the international community. In retrospect, the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games had an immense political significance for Japan both domestically and internationally. The Games offered an opportunity to provide the people with some separation between Japan's prewar and postwar identities (Cha 2009, 51). Japan had successfully presented a newly rebuilt city of Tokyo, and impressed the world with their hospitality, organization, and technological development. Japan managed to reconstruct the image it sought to present to the world, which helped Japan's reintegration to the international system as a reformed global power.

The hosting of the Olympic Games brought about success of postwar economic recovery and brought Japan back to the status of a major power. As part of its national project, the Japanese government allocated the funds equivalent to US\$ 2 billion for the purpose of the Games celebration (Bulatova et al. 2013, 381-382). The Games preparation facilitated post-war reconstruction, with building of modern sport facilities of innovative architecture, new hotels, highways, and fast-speed trains. By 1964, Japan became the fifth largest industrial nation, enjoying 10 percent annual average growth and full employment. The legacy of the 1964 Games was closing one period in Japanese history and opening up a new chapter with a new image of globalized and modernized Japan as a rising power in Asia.

With regained confidence after the 1964 Olympic Games, Japan continued bidding for subsequent Olympic Games. Japan won to host the Sapporo 1972 Olympic Winter Games and Nagano 1998 Olympic Winter Games, but did not have much luck with the Summer Games

for over 50 years. The defeat to Korea of its bid for the 1988 Olympic Games may have been a bitter blow to its pride as the only Asian country that had hosted the Olympic Games.

2. 1988 Seoul Olympic Games - Harmony and Progress

The idea for bidding to host the Olympics originated during the Park Chung Hee regime (1961–1971). The Olympic bid was motivated by the desire to emulate the 1964 Tokyo Games, which affected positively on the Japanese economy and re-integration to the international community in the post-war era. The Olympic Games was conceived as an opportunity to demonstrate to the world South Korea's rapid "economic success," confidence as a developed nation, and Korea's new identity. Most importantly, it was taken that an Olympic Games would help legitimize the authoritarian regime under Park (Cha 2009, 54–59). Over two years of debate within the Korean Government on the bidding of the Games of the 24th Olympiad, a written application answering the IOC's 151-page questionnaires was finally submitted to IOC on 26 February 1981. (Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee 1989, 29). On 30 September 1981, on the occasion of the 84th IOC Session and the 11th Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden, the neighboring East Asian cities of Seoul and Nagoya battled to win the hosting rights to the Games of the 24th Olympiad in 1988. The Korean city of Seoul eventually scored a decisive 52 to 27 victory.

The bid to host the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul was submitted at a time of political and social uncertainty. South Korea had experienced an authoritarian regime under the military rule since 1960. Following President Park Chung Hee's assassination in 1979 and another coup d'état by then General Chun Doo-hwan, the Fifth

Republic was eventually established on 3 March 1981 and lasted until 1987. The Fifth Republic began with the landmark Gwangju Democratization Movement, when more than 50,000 students and civilians clashed by the military government (Savada & Shaw 1990).

The South Korean government saw the Olympic Games as an opportunity to gain some political legitimacy and power consolidation of the unpopular military regime (Larson & Park 1993, 158). The Chun government saw hosting the Games as much more than sport – political means. In the hind sight, it is thought that winning the Games would divert Korean people’s attention to the national project of organizing a mega sporting event. The Olympic Games could also help presenting a refined image of the best of Korea, and alleviating the international criticism and demands. For the South Korean regime, hosting the Olympic Games was a way to gain international stature while validating the legitimacy and national power. Winning the bid against the city of Nagoya, also meant a victory over Korea’s former colonizer, Japan, and a symbol of Korea’s rise. Koreans worked hard to win the votes of IOC members, for it was a matter of national pride.

Economically, the Republic of Korea was at much better situation. Due to the Five-Year Economic Development Plans, the South Korean economy grew at breakneck pace through private investments, trade incentives and tax benefits. While the original target was for an annual seven percent growth until 1971, the growth of the real Gross National Product (GNP) between 1967 and 1971 was in fact more than 10 percent; in 1973, real GNP growth was 16.5 percent (Frank et al. 1975, 11). The growth-oriented Economic Development Plans produced their desired results and helped transform South Korea into a fast developing nation. It was in this emerging economic climate and the prediction of continued

growth, partly due to the hosting of the Olympic Games, that South Korea decided to bid for the 1988 Olympic Games. Spectacular economic growth notwithstanding, the costs for hosting the Games was predicted at US\$ 3 billion; the actual investments would eventually cost almost US\$ 300 million and more (Kang 2007). Nonetheless, when the South Korean government was debating over the right to bid, it felt confident based, in part, on the fact that Japan's per capita GNP when it hosted the Tokyo 1964 Olympic Games was US\$ 800 and Mexico's per capita GNP in 1968 was even lower at US\$ 631. In 1978, Korea's per capita GNP stood at US\$ 1,242.

In the foreign policy aspect, the Korean government seized an opportunity to establish diplomatic ties or its form with socialist countries and the Third World countries. In the early 1980s, South Korea still had no formal diplomatic relations with the socialist bloc, which at that time numbered 44 National Olympic Committees of the IOC. The boycott of countries to the previous Moscow 1980 Games and Los Angeles 1984 Games reflected the heightened international standoff between the two contesting blocs. South Korea wanted to make the 1988 Olympic Games an opportunity to improve relations with the countries without diplomatic ties under the banner of global peace. Of the 160 nations that participated in the Olympic Games in 1988, which was the largest in the history of the Olympic Games at the time, 121 of them were developing nations of which 24 had no diplomatic ties with South Korea. ³⁾ By 1990, South Korea had formed diplomatic ties with 133 countries and was represented by 138 diplomatic missions around the world. This was important for South Korea, for it meant winning the contest for legitimacy with North

³⁾ Participating nations at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games can be found at Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988_Summer_Olympics.

Korea.

One of the most important achievements of the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games was a diplomatic breakthrough with the Communist bloc and expansion of international relations, while marking the end of inter-Korean competition for legitimacy. One of the most important legacies of the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games was facilitation of South Korea's diplomatic ties with China and the former Soviet Union; both long-time allies of North Korea. While there was indirect trade between South Korea and China, it was not formal until a hijacked Chinese airliner landed in Seoul in May 1983, which served as a catalyst for cooperation between the South Korean and Chinese governments. This quickly led to the initiation of a sports diplomacy involving the invitation of athletes to attend in international events, including Asian Games in Seoul and Beijing, and eventually led to the visit of officials for international conferences (Cha 1999, 90-93). The Olympic Games in 1988 helped resume the unofficial relations between South Korea and the former Soviet Union, such that by 1990, South Korea and Moscow shared official diplomatic relations through a consulate department in Moscow.

Another remarkable, but rather unintended, achievement is political change in Korea. Getting closer to the Olympic Games, international and domestic pressure was mounting on the Chun government to give way to a democratically elected government. In June 1987, South Koreans were out on full force in the streets to protest for democracy, and in the next month, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution (421-0) asking for South Korea to democratize. As vibrant and organized political demonstrations emerged in the summer of 1987, the possibility of jeopardizing the hosting of the Olympic Games resulted in the historical "June 29" declaration, which led to direct presidential election in December 1987.

Interestingly, the desire not to taint the Olympic Games with military dictatorship and riots served as an impetus for Korea's transition to democracy. Roh Tae-woo was directly elected by South Koreans in December 1987 to be the transitional president, and he was represented as the head-of-state at the opening ceremony of the Seoul Olympics. As the late Juan Antonio Samaranch, who presided over the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games as IOC President said in his memoir, the "political maturity throughout the country was encouraged by the equilibrium and tranquility that the Olympic Games always bring with them" (Samaranch 1994, 415). The impact of the Seoul Olympic Games on Korea's democratic transition is still considered as an exemplary case of political change engendered by sport.

For any host country, the organization of the Olympic Games is a great source of national pride and opportunity to unite the nation. The Seoul 1988 Olympic Games was no exception. South Korea government pulled in all the concerted effort into the Games organization to portray national power and identity in the games and its confidence as an advanced, developed nation. In a survey conducted after the Games had ended, more than 87 percent of the Korean respondents expressed their pride that the Games were "a great success" while 84 percent of foreign respondents felt the same (Kim et al. 1989, 28). To put it simply, the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games is recognized as one of the most successful Olympic Games of all time, and one of the most significant contributors to the transformation of South Korea into a developed first world nation. The Seoul 1988 Olympic Games was a watershed moment in the history of South Korea, signaling arrival of a prosperous and developed nation on the global stage. The immediate impact of the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games on the political, social and economic

sectors of South Korea were profound and are still evident today.

3. 2008 Beijing Olympic Games - New Beijing, Great Olympics

Beijing was elected as the host city of the 2008 Summer Olympics during the 112th IOC session in Moscow in 2001. China wanted to host the Olympic Games from the 1990s to show the world the crowning achievements of Deng Xiaoping's era of modernization reforms. Its failed bid for the 2000 Olympic Games added more intensity to China's aspiration to host the Olympic Games. The bid for the 29th Olympiad was competed with the city of Toronto, Paris, Istanbul, and Osaka, and won by majority in the second round with 56 votes.

The slogan of Beijing's bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games was "New Beijing, Great Olympics", which embedded its clear vision and national objectives. The Olympic Games meant a showcase of new advanced China emerging on the world stage. To the Chinese, the Olympic Games were more than just sports. It was all about state power, Chinese nationalism, and China's national image to the outside world as a strong, prosperous and modern China (Brownell 2008). It was making of new Chinese identity overwriting the negative perceptions that foreigners hold of China as well as the stereotypes of "Red China". Successful Olympic Games meant not only the rise of China, but also a victory over the western power (Lee 2009, 174-176).

Like in the cases of Tokyo and Seoul, Beijing's Olympic transformation was remarkable in scale and pace. The cost of staging the Olympic Games amounted to over US\$ 40 billion, though some reports estimated the total cost between 40 billion to 44 billion ⁴⁾

4) "Beijing Olympic to Cost China 44 Billion Dollars", in Pravda on August 8,

(Rabinovitch 2008; *Pravda* 2008/08/08; *The Guardian* 2008/07/28). Construction of skyscrapers, the world's largest airport, and the grandiose "Bird's Nest" Stadium and the "Water Cube" national aquatics center changed the city's physical appearance in an unprecedented manner. The city built a range of high-tech sports venues and facilities. The stadiums were considered a reflection of the party-state's power and prestige, and the technologically advanced Olympic facilities were the pride of a high-tech Olympic Games. The preparation went beyond infrastructure and transportation. It included a rapid acceleration and prioritization of national projects to meet the global standards. One of the major projects was the environmental clean-up and massive forestation (Sands 2008). The Games awakened many Chinese to environmental issues such as air quality and deforestation that they might not have otherwise confronted.

According to the evaluation documentations, it is noted that Beijing has upgraded its urban infrastructure as well as sports venues and facilities, improved urban environment, enhanced urban civility, improved scientific management of the city, and left rich spiritual and material legacies for the Olympic Games. It is further claimed that the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games made major contribution to the world in resisting global warming and other worldwide environmental threats. These were reflected in a number of aspects related to the concept of "Green Olympics, High-tech Olympics and People's Olympics." The Olympic knowledge was disseminated among 400 million adolescents, and it provided an unprecedented platform for people, including physically impaired ones, to enjoy a healthy life

2008, http://english.pravda.ru/sports/games/06-08-2008/106003-beijing_olympics-0/. (accessed on November 19, 2013); "The Cost of the Beijing Olympics", in *The Guardian* on July 28, 2008, www.theguardian.com/sport/2008/jul/28/olympicgames2008.china. (accessed on November 19, 2013)

through participation in sports. Significant progress was made in promoting mutual understanding of the people in different cultures and with different beliefs while significant and lasting progress was made in ensuring media coverage of major events to the widest extent.

The spectacular grand-scale Opening Ceremony was the supreme confidence of China and show off to create a sense of “shock and awe.” As reflected in the Olympic motto of “One World, One Dream,” many in China viewed the Olympic Games as “an affirmation of nationalistic dream” placing Beijing at the center of the universe (Cha 2009, 72). In fact, many of those who were involved in the Olympic working group and the Games Organizing Committee, including the chairman himself, were top-level party elites from the Central Party propaganda department. Production of these Olympic slogans and campaigns had direct involvement of the Party propaganda office in order to design the Olympic Games for a propaganda purpose and to endow nationalistic meaning to the event (Lee 2009, 176). The Chinese government boasted that Beijing presented to the international community a “truly exceptional” Olympic Games with the unique and high level objective attained.⁵⁾ It was clearly China’s intention to use the mega sport event for the purpose of national unity and social integration, diverting people’s attention away from political-economic discrepancy and emerging social problems (Lee 2009, 172).

The significance of the 2008 Olympic Games was that it was an occasion for China to open its door to the world to showcase new China as an emerging world power. China clearly wanted to use the Olympics to achieve many objectives: to showcase its economic

5) The Final Report of the IOC Coordination Commission: Games of the XXIX Olympiad, Beijing 2008 can be found at the website of the International Olympic Committee, www.olympic.org.

growth, establish itself as a global player, improve its international stature, deligitimize Taiwan, extinguish memories of the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989, and enhance internal credibility and control of the Chinese Community Party. For this, there was a price to pay. As a government that hosts the Olympic Games, China had to embrace the ideals and values consistent with the Olympic Movement to maintain its reputation and stature. The concept of “clean and green” environment-friendly Olympic Games could be understood in this context.

When nations bid for a world sporting event, this creates tremendous impetus for physical change and development of the host city. But, sporting events also create certain pressures for change of domestic and international policies (Worden 2008). The fear of being boycotted, getting excessive international media coverage, and embarrassed before the world, compel change. As in South Korea’s case, the host government had to conform to the pressure to address certain practices because not doing so might impinge directly and immediately on the nation’s reputation. Prior to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, there was civil unrest in Tibet, boycott of Olympic torch relay, anti-government demonstrations, and international criticism over human rights issues, and etc.

How much political change has the Olympic Games affected China is a matter of contention. In comparison to the physical changes, pressure for political and societal change was met with calibrated changes in policy designed to release some of the pressure. In order to bridge the gap between its illiberal political system and the liberal values embodied in the Olympic Games, China brought forward neutral themes like “Green Olympics” and “High-tech Olympics” and stressed conformity to the IOC. The Olympic Games bolstered domestic support for the Chinese government, and for the policies of

the Communist Party. Reports indicated that efforts to control any unrest before and during the Games, in effect, strengthened China's internal security force (*The Economist* 2011/04/14). The Chinese government successfully managed to overcome these challenges in hosting the Olympic Games.

China has achieved national unity and regime stability as well as legitimacy of one-party rule domestically, while achieving increased national prestige externally (Lee 2009). A long-term economic impact of the Olympic Games on China is not yet clear. Some sectors of the economy may have benefited from the influx of tourists, and other sectors such as manufacturing lost revenue because of plant closings related to the government's efforts to improve air quality. It was noted that many of the constructed facilities especially for the Olympic Games were under-used, or even deserted (*The New York Times* 2012/07/15). Nevertheless, change is evident in respect to the growth of middle class, urbanization, maturity of market economy, people's exposure to the international world, and concerted efforts to conform to the global standards. The changed foreign perception of China and a strong sense of pride in China were the biggest legacy of the Beijing Olympic Games.

IV. The Olympic Legacy of East Asia and Future Challenges

A comparative study of Olympic Games in Japan, South Korea, and China has demonstrated that hosting of prestigious sport events is all deeply connected with national identity and legitimacy. To them, the Olympic Games was an opportunity to project national image to the world and to bring national unity for a common

objective. The desire to host major sporting events and to perform well in them is very much connected to the country's sense of its self-image and national power. Winning the Olympic bid in East Asia is also regarded as national pride, thus featuring competitions among the neighboring countries rather than an event for harmony and cooperation within the region.

<Table 1> Summary of Comparison of Olympic Summer Games in Asia

	Year	Vision	Objectives	Legacies
Tokyo Olympics	1964	Japan Rejoining the World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New post-war identity as globalized, peace-loving and friendly Japan - Nationalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New image of Japan - Socio-economic development
Seoul Olympics	1988	Harmony and Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regime legitimacy - New identity as diplomatically and economically successful nation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New image of Korea - Socio-economic development - Democratization and Globalization - Expansion of diplomatic ties
Beijing Olympics	2008	New Beijing, Great Olympics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New identity as a rising super power - National pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New image of China as prosperous & modernized nation - Socio-economic development - Globalization

The first-time hosting of the Olympic Games in East Asia accompanied a massive national development project, expensive fast-pace infrastructural changes, and “face-saving” conformity to the external pressure in these countries. The Olympic hosting was orchestrated and fully-supported by the government or the Party, and considered an opportunity to show a new image one country intends to project to the world along with national pride and confidence. In return, the Olympic Games brought about new political

and economic developments, improved international relations, and change of behavior in those countries. As seen in the table below, the three cases commonly pinpoint that successful hosting of Olympic Games resulted in country's nation building, socio-economic developments, globalization, and reformation of national identity as a new responsible global actor. The East Asian experience represents a case of newly industrialized countries seizing an opportunity of national development and economic gains through hosting Olympic Games (Manheim 1990; Brian & Stephen 1999). The East Asian model has left a positive legacy of state-centric management ensuring the success of Games organization and providing an impetus for rapid development.

In the past few decades, the Olympic Games was a product in demand; Olympic bids had heightened interest by cities, regions, and countries (Iepkey et al. 2010; Herguner 2012, 182-183). In spite of the financial risk of organizing Games, there was competition among the major cities to host them because it was taken as a long-term investment and return on investment can come in both material and non-material forms. A study of past editions of the Olympic Games in the world highlights the benefits of Olympic Games in both tangible and intangible forms, as summarized in Table 2, stretching from sport benefits to social, economic, urban, or environmental gains (International Olympic Committee 2013a). The tangible benefit includes new sporting and transport infrastructure, urban regeneration, beautification of the city, or economic gains and increased foreign investments. The intangible benefit may be listed as globalization, ⁶⁾ increased sense of national pride, international

6) Globalization does not only refer to the economic integration to the world system, but also includes psychological and behavioral aspects of globalization (i.e. international recognition of an emerging nation relatively unknown to the international circles; renewed confidence in the country's

recognition, increased awareness to global issues, and changed attitude and behavior of the people of hosting nations. To developing countries, hosting Olympic Games may offer a package deal opportunity to achieve multiple national objectives at once. The East Asian countries have been such a case, and they have fully enjoyed the benefits that the Olympic Games can offer.

<Table 2> Categorization of legacies of the Olympic Games

Legacies	Tangible	Intangible
Sporting	New sporting infrastructure Upgraded venues and facilities	Improved Sporting Performance Boost interest for sports (Physical and Sport activities) New training programs
Social	Olympic Games cultural programs Cultural Olympiad Olympic education programs	National pride and renewed confidence Changed attitude and behavior Reappraisal of national culture and heritage Desire for Openness Integration to the international community (emerging nations)
Environmental	Environmental protection and sustainable development projects Urban revitalization (creating public parks and green spaces) New energy sources	Environmental awareness and consciousness
Urban	Urban regeneration City beautification Improved living standards New transportation	High quality life for the local residence
Economic	Increased economic activity (GDP) New job opportunity Construction project Growth of tourism sector Increased FDI and further opportunities and increased investment for future	New and enhanced workforce skills based on participation and cooperation Improved ways of decision-making, planning and delivery New products and services and improved administrative process

* International Olympic Committee(2013a)

dealing with the rest of the world, or a desire for more openness through organization of other international events).

The Olympic Legacy in East Asia offers both opportunity and challenge to the future Olympic Games in the region. The Olympic Games to East Asia has been a national project that necessitates strong state support and government involvement in order to transform the country to suit the national agenda of each state. The irony is that the second-time hosting might not show the same level of intensity or interest to employ Olympic Games as a national development project. Without state-centric features or national agenda attached to it, countries would find bidding or hosting of Olympic Games less attractive and economically burdensome. To some countries, the Olympics will offer yet another opportunity to enhance country's standing in the international sporting scene. However, the serious imbalance in costs and benefits shown by the recent editions of Olympic Games as well as increasing transnational features in the Olympic movement are imposing new demands to potential host cities.

The Olympic Movement has changed significantly. It has become bigger, richer, and more global.⁷⁾ It has moved beyond nationalism, politics, state-centric feature, and quickly became transnational, autonomous, and commercialized. The IOC as a transnational organization has become a vital actor in setting agendas and establishing preferences in international sports, especially in regards to Olympic Games. The Olympic Movement came to embrace more

7) 1984 LA Olympic Games was participated by 6829 athletes from 140 countries; 1988 Seoul Olympic Games by 8391 athletes from 159 nations; 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games by 9456 athletes from 169 nations; 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games by 10318 athletes by 197 countries; 2000 Sydney Olympic Games by 10651 athletes from 199 countries; 2004 Athens Olympic Games by 10625 athletes from 201 countries; 2008 Beijing Olympic Games by 10942 athletes from 204 countries; and 2012 London Olympic Games by 10820 athletes from 204 countries. This information can be found at the website of International Olympic Committee, www.olympic.org/olympic-games.

values and more target groups. The major themes on the key target groups such as youth, athletes, women, the disabled, and the disadvantaged are entangled with the Olympic values, featuring in the Olympic Games of the New Century (Kwon & Hong 2014, 153-155). The growing importance of “Olympic Legacy” is another noticeable phenomenon. The host city is now expected to provide significant and lasting legacies for the Olympic movement through the given edition of the Olympic Games. Therefore, a potential host city must have a strong vision and clear objectives of how to take full advantage of the opportunities given through the Olympic Games and what the Games can contribute to its citizens, city, country, and the overall Olympic Movement. As Jacques Rogge, the former IOC President, put: “creating sustainable legacies is a fundamental commitment of the Olympic Movement. Every city that hosts the Olympic Games becomes a temporary steward of the Olympic Movement.” (Intranational Olympic Committee 2013a). This changing trend has created a new rule of the game from bidding to organization and imposed challenges to the future Olympic Games in East Asia.

Whereas East Asia had benefit greatly from hosting the Olympic Games in the past, the new transnational trend in international sports may bring a paradigm shift in the olympics-politics axis. There will be lesser room for national interest to come into play. Accordingly, the impact of states will be undermined. It has already become difficult and meaningless to show the superiority of a nation in the Olympic Games or to project national pride over common global values (Herguner 2012, 183). Meeting the worldwide criticism and problems associated with high cost of the games organization and decreasing interest in Olympic bid by European cities, the IOC has initiated a bold reform known as Agenda 2020 which suggests

co-hosting of the Games, minimizing the bid cost, and use of existing facilities to reduce the burden and ensure Games sustainability (IOC 2014). The change will inevitably affect the motivations, goals, and actors involved in the Games bidding and hosting, therefore, state-centric approach to the Olympic Games will have little relevance in the future.

The 2018 Olympic Winter Games and the 2020 Olympic Games came back to East Asia. After losing the bid twice to host the Olympic Winter Games, PyeongChang of Korea finally won to host the 2018 Games at the 123rd IOC session in Durban by 63 out of 95 cast votes. The city of Tokyo also won the bid to host the 2020 Olympic Games against Istanbul and Madrid at the 124th IOC session in Buenos Aires. The experience of bid failure helped these countries refine the vision and focus in line with the IOC recommendations and better understand the Olympic Movement. They did not promise the “nationalistic, gaudy, and transformative”⁸⁾ visions of past host cities. The change of the Olympic Movement was clearly reflected in these bids to a certain extent, and newly defined the objectives they pursue.

The vision of “New Horizon” of Pyeongchang 2018 Olympic Winter Games aligns with the IOC’s focus on engaging the youth. The “Dream Program” in PyeongChang was created to offer opportunities to experience winter sports to youths who come from regions without winter or where winter sport is underdeveloped.⁹⁾ This program is complimented as a way to facilitate winter sports, promote cultural exchange and friendship among the youth, and

8) “Tokyo 2020: A perfect Olympic Vision?”, *New Yorker*, September 10, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/sportingscene/2013/09/tokyo-2020-a-perfect-olympic-vision.html>. (accessed March 31, 2014)

9) The statistics are found the official website of PyeongChang 2018 organizing committee, www.pyeongchang2018.org.

provide a strong Olympic legacy for the future generations. With a slogan “Discover Tomorrow”, Tokyo 2020 also stressed global inspiration and dynamic innovation of the Games while stressing the future of the young people of the host country when the Olympic values are added to their life. The “Sport for Tomorrow” program was introduced by the organizing committee as a new government initiative that target at promoting sports and the Olympic movement around the globe, fostering international sport leaders, and further supporting international anti-doping efforts. It includes overseas projects of dispatching coaches and sports equipment and helping build sport facilities in developing countries in order to benefit the athletes of tomorrow and future Olympians (*Sport Features* 2013/07/03).

Although state support and government involvement are still evident, the bids of PyeongChang 2018 and Tokyo 2020 seem to follow a paradigm shift in the Olympic Movement. Time would tell if the PyeongChang 2018 and Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games will deliver the vision and goal of the Olympic Games free from the respective national agenda or political intention. These two Olympics may be a testing ground for transition from state-centric to transnational orientations towards the Olympic Games. Further studies on the upcoming Olympic Games in East Asia are needed to trace the change in progress, and to advance conceptualization of the nexus between politics and sports in the regional context.

V. Conclusion

East Asian countries have historically witnessed a more central role for the government in politics and economic policy. Similarly,

there has been relatively more active involvement by the state in sports in East Asia. The experience of the East Asian countries illustrated a political importance of sport. In all cases, national interests were taken into the framing and execution of the Olympic Games. The Games vision was very much attached to the national agenda and national identity and the aspiration was primarily to showcase their country, people, culture and economic success. Hosting an Olympic Games itself was regarded as state power and national prestige within the international community. The Olympic Games in East Asia reflect region-specific characteristic on the nexus between politics and sports: sport is employed as a tool for politics and a means to national interest; sport and politics are inseparable; features are strongly state-centric. Simply put, the Olympic Games to East Asia was a national project aiming at formulating a brand new national identity in the world stage.

Interestingly, the Olympic Games have provided a turning point for Japan, South Korea, and China and a platform for further development. The Olympic Games promoted national redevelopment, modernization, and globalization. The host cities also experienced an economic and employment upturn in the run-up to the Games caused by the increased public spending and construction projects (Andranaovich et al. 2001). The Olympics gave impetus for change politically and socially, and in some cases, improvement of international relations. Despite the vastly different aspirations and economic, political and social situations that the cities confronted when they bid for the Olympic Games, the studies of the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games and Beijing 2008 Olympic Games showed that the legacies tend to converge for the betterment of the host country and the society in general. They represent a case of external impetus bringing about internal change through a international mega-sport

event.

The upcoming Olympic Games in PyeongChang of Korea and Tokyo of Japan have projected a vision and aspiration different than in the past. Although there have been government support and state engagement in bid activities, the Olympics are considered as a regional project rather than a national project. It also conformed to the guideline given by the IOC to design the Olympics as part of the transnational agenda of international sports movement rather than the national agenda. These future Olympics in East Asia, as they are planned, are likely to face new challenge since they need to struggle to balance between the state-centric features and the transnational features in organizing the Games. However, the implication of change brings a new perspective to the nexus of politics and sports as well as a positive prospect of the East Asian region playing a leading role in the Olympic Movement. The vision of the forefather of the Modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin put: "holding an Olympic Games means evoking history." In East Asia, a new chapter awaits in the storied history of the Olympic Games with the upcoming editions of the Olympic Games and legacy they will bring.

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ABSTRACT

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동아시아의 올림픽 비교 연구: 정치와 스포츠의 연계

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동·하계 올림픽 등 주요 매가스�포츠이벤트를 유치하면서 동아시아의 위상이 국제스포츠 사회에서도 높아져 가고 있다. 국제스포츠대회 개최는 지역의 문화적·정치적 역동성과 어우러져 그 지역 특수성을 부각시켜 준다. 본 논문에서는 지금까지 동아시아에서 개최되었던 하계 올림픽 사례연구를 통해 아시아에서 올림픽의 의미는 무엇이며 어떠한 특징을 보여주었는지를 살펴보았다. 일본, 한국, 중국 3국에서 개최되었던 올림픽의 유치 배경과 목표에는 국가 정체성과 민족주의의 성향, 국가 중심적인 특징이 지배적이었다. 스포츠가 정치의 종속변수로 간주되는 동아시아에서 올림픽 유치는 국가정책 목표에 귀속되었고, 국제사회에서의 국가 이미지와 위상 확립에 초점이 맞추어져 있었다. 유치 당시 각국의 염원과 비전, 정치·경제·사회적 배경은 달랐지만, 결과적으로 64도쿄올림픽, 88서울올림픽, 2008베이징올림픽은 각국의 경제와 사회에 놀라운 발전을 가져왔다는 공통점이 있다. 과거 동아시아의 올림픽이 국가발전 전략과 맞물려 국가 중심적인 성향을 띠었던 반면, 최근 초국적인 올림픽 운동의 이상과 목표가 국제스포츠사회에서 더 중요시되면서 평창과 도쿄 올림픽은 시대적 요구에 맞춘 비전이나 목표, 기대효과를 설정하고 실천해 나갈 것으로 기대된다.

▪ 주제어: 동아시아, 올림픽게임, 스포츠와 정치, 국가주의, 초국주의