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The effect of hosting the Olympics on national image: An analysis of US newspaper coverage of host countries with reputation problems

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The effect of hosting the Olympics on national image:
An analysis of US newspaper coverage of host countries with reputation problems

by

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A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Ames, Iowa

2010

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ABSTRACT

Does hosting the Olympic games boost the image of a country from a problematic to a more positive one? This study examines how three American newspapers covered four Olympics host countries whose reputations, based on historical records, have come into question. Newspaper articles published before and after the games were analyzed in terms of visibility, valence and the overarching framework of news stories. The findings suggest that the host countries received less attention from the US press after the games. The results also showed a decline in the negative coverage of the four host countries after the games, accompanied by a rise in stories with a more positive slant. The politics frame dominated the coverage across the four Olympiad before and after the games. The findings suggest that the Olympics can indeed be harnessed as a tool with which to repair a host country's image in the world community.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The summer Olympics, considered the biggest sports event in the world, are held every four years and attracts hundreds of millions of spectators. To the host country, it offers a number of benefits, including drumming the world's interest in its cultural wealth, providing job opportunities for its people, attracting revenues from tourism, and opening friendly relations with the global community. This study focuses on an important Olympics function—that of enhancing the image of the host country.

The modern Olympiad has been held with regularity since 1896, interrupted only in 1916, 1940 and 1944 due to the outbreak of the two world wars. So far, there have been a total of 29 modern Olympic games hosted by 26 countries.

Table 1 lists the nations that have hosted the Olympics since 1896.

Table 1. The Olympics host city and host country since 1896

Year	Olympiad	Host City	Host Country
1896	I	Athens	Greece
1900	II	Paris	France
1904	III	St. Louis	United States
1908	IV	London	United Kingdom
1912	V	Stockholm	Sweden
1916	VI	Cancelled due to the outbreak of World War I	
1920	VII	Antwerp	Belgium
1924	VIII	Paris	France
1928	IX	Amsterdam	Netherlands
1932	X	Los Angeles	United States

Table 1 (continued)

1936	XI	Berlin	Germany
1940	XII	Cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II	
1944	XIII	Cancelled due to the outbreak of World War II	
1948	XIV	London	United Kingdom
1952	XV	Helsinki	Finland
1956	XVI	Melbourne/ Stockholm	Australia
1960	XVII	Rome	Italy
1964	XVIII	Tokyo	Japan
1968	XIX	Mexico City	Mexico
1972	XX	Munich	West Germany
1976	XXI	Montreal	Canada
1980	XXII	Moscow	Soviet Union
1984	XXIII	Los Angeles	United States
1988	XXIV	Seoul	South Korea
1992	XXV	Barcelona	Spain
1996	XXVI	Atlanta	United States
2000	XXVII	Sydney	Australia
2004	XXVIII	Athens	Greece
2008	XXIX	Beijing	China

Without any doubt, hosting the Olympics can be very costly. It is estimated that the 2008 Beijing Olympics required an investment of US \$14.3 billion (Bidding Committee, Beijing 2008, as cited in Preuss, 2004), excluding what was spent on the bidding efforts. Despite the cost, cities, regions and nations wanting to host the event spare no effort for a variety of reasons. According to Preuss (2004), hosting the Olympics brings both tangible and intangible benefits to the host country within a seven-year period which otherwise would take several decades. Many studies (e.g., Weed, 2008; Alpha Bank, 2004; Australia Tourist Commission, 2000) have demonstrated the impact of hosting the Olympics on the nation's tourism, housing,

sports facilities, transportation, and economics. Other impacts, such as its effects on the host country's or city's image, are more subtle, but no less important.

Newsworthy events have been used by many governments for the purpose of enhancing their national images as seen by foreign publics (Manheim, 1989). Its newsworthiness has made the Olympics a superb venue through which the host country can project a positive image to the rest of the world. For example, according to the International Olympic Committee (2004, as cited in Young & Wamsley, 2005), the broadcast of the 2004 Athens games reached 3.9 billion viewers in 220 countries and territories. Indeed, the power of the electronic media to beam these events to many parts of the world makes the Olympics a potent channel for showcasing the host country to the whole world. Many host nations have taken advantage of such an opportunity. For example, in 1964, Japan used the Olympics as a tool to rebuild its image that was in tatters following the role it played in World War II. The 24th Olympiad held in Seoul in 1988 became the impetus for the cessation of autocratic rule in South Korea (Walkosz and Foss, 2009).

Many studies (Dong et al., 2005; Espy, 1979; Giffard and Rivenburgh, 2000) have provided evidence that the Olympics affords the host country an opportunity to display its military, economic, political, and cultural importance in a favorable way. Studies on the Olympics (Wang and Wang, 2007; Dong et al., 2005) held in South Korea, Spain, Australia and Greece showed that the host countries became

more visible in the international media, and the tone of the reports about them became more positive over time. Stories about the host countries published after the games depicted them as less threatening to the global status quo and to common values.

This, however, is not always so.

The Olympics held in Beijing in 2008 is a case in point. Considered by many as an overwhelming success, its opening and closing ceremonies have been praised the world over, and the number of viewers who followed the games exceeded expectations. Despite this, China still received a fair amount of negative foreign media coverage during and after the games. These less than palatable news reports came in the heels of protests against the Chinese incursion in Tibet and the country's general national policies toward human rights. Although many agree that the Olympics should not be tainted with politics, many take advantage of this event to express their grievances against perceived infractions by host nations.

According to Guttman (1992), "whenever the games are diminished by massive boycotts, as was the case in 1976, 1980, and 1984, the International Olympics Committee and most of the world's sportswriters lament the intrusion of politics into the domain of sports. Politics, however, has always been part of the Olympics" (p.1). Some even say that the modern games were, in fact, "revived to propagate political messages." Was Beijing alone in having to grapple with this

problem?

The experience of other host nations indicates they have also faced tremendous public relations challenges that may have been exacerbated by hosting the games. The Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 is an example. It was the first Olympics not heavily subsidized by the government; the capital to host the games was raised exclusively by the Los Angeles Olympics Committee. To raise funds, the Committee asked those who participated in the torch relay within the US borders to pay \$3,000 dollars per mile, among other initiatives. This move was heavily criticized as being overly commercial. Other—and even more intense—public relations problems bedeviled and presented national image challenges to the following countries that hosted the Olympics (dates in parentheses indicate when the games were held):

1. 1936 Berlin Olympics (Aug. 1-Aug.16): This event is best remembered for Adolf Hitler's failed attempt to use the games to prove his theories of Aryan racial superiority. After the Nazi regime took the reins of government, it attempted to exploit the games to tell the world that fascist Germany "aimed for peace."

2. 1956 Melbourne/Stockholm Olympics (Nov. 22-Dec. 8): Members of the International Olympic Committee were skeptical about Melbourne as an appropriate site due to its location in the southern hemisphere (i.e., the reversal of seasons means the games were to be held during the northern winter). It was also the first Olympics to be boycotted by countries such as Cambodia, Egypt, Iraq,

and Lebanon in response to the Suez War when Egypt was invaded by Israel, the United Kingdom, and France. Meanwhile, in 1956, the Soviet Union crushed the Hungarian Revolution, and the Soviet presence at the games led to the withdrawal of the Netherlands, Spain, and Switzerland. Less than two weeks before the opening ceremonies, the People's Republic of China chose to boycott the event because the Republic of China (Taiwan) had been allowed to compete under the name "Formosa."

3. 1964 Tokyo Olympics (Oct. 10-Oct. 24): Japan had been immersed in massive reconstruction after its misadventures during World War II and many thought it could not competently handle being the Olympics host. In addition, some saw post-war Japan as an American puppet.

4. 1968 Mexico City Olympics (Oct. 12- Oct. 27): Ten days before the start of the games, the Tlatelolco massacre happened, in which more than 300 student protesters were killed by the army and the police. The massacre was preceded by months of political unrest in Mexico City, echoing student demonstrations and riots all over the world during that year.

5. 1972 Munich Olympics (Aug. 26-Sept. 11): Many African countries threatened to boycott the games if Rhodesia, whose white-dominated government was perceived to be severely racist, was allowed to participate. African nations asked that Rhodesian passports not be accepted for international travel. The IOC acquiesced and disallowed Rhodesia from the events.

The games were also marred by what has come to be known as the Munich massacre. On September 5 (during the games), a group of eight Palestinian terrorists belonging to the Black September organization broke into the Olympic Village and took 11 Israeli athletes hostage in their apartment. By the end of the ordeal, the terrorist group had killed all hostages, including their coaches and one German police officer.

6. 1976 Montreal Olympics (July 17-Aug. 1): The Olympics were a financial disaster for Montreal as the city faced debts even 30 years after the games. In December 2006, the stadium's costs were finally paid in full, but the total expenditure, including repairs, renovations, construction, interest, and inflation amounted to 1.61 billion Canadian dollars. Besides, 28 countries boycotted the games due to the refusal of the IOC to ban New Zealand after the country's national rugby union team, whose players were all blacks, toured South Africa in 1976. South Africa had been banned from the Olympics since 1964 due to its apartheid policies.

7. 1980 Moscow Olympics (July 19-Aug. 13): The 1980 games were disrupted by the large-scale boycott led by the United States followed by 60 other countries in protest over the 1979 Soviet-instigated war in Afghanistan.

8. 1988 Seoul Olympics (Sept. 17-Oct. 2): Seoul was clearly a risky choice in 1988. Not only was South Korea ruled by an authoritarian government, it was

also the capital of a divided nation and was still technically at war with its Communist neighbor to the north. In 1980, 100,000 university students marched in protest of the autocratic central government and demanded freedom of speech. In June 1987, millions of people took to the streets of Seoul, clamoring for amendments to the constitution.

9. 1992 Barcelona Olympics (July 25-Aug.9): Spain was trying to recover from a financial crisis in the 1980s while preparing for the 1992 Olympics. Failing to adjust to a drastically changed economic environment brought on by two oil price shocks in the 1970s, Spain quickly confronted plummeting productivity, a reversal of migration trends, and a steady outflow of labor from agricultural areas despite declining job prospects in the cities. These factors combined to produce a sharp rise in unemployment. Government budgetary deficits swelled.

10. 1996 Atlanta Olympics (July 19-Aug. 4): Atlanta's heavy reliance on corporate sponsorship caused many to consider the games to be overly commercialized. In addition, the city was found to have been competing with the IOC for advertising and sponsorship dollars. Apparently, the city licensed street vendors who sold certain products over others, and therefore provided a presence for companies who were not official Olympic sponsors.

This study attempts to examine recent evidence concerning the impact of media coverage of the host nation. Specifically, it asks: Does hosting the Olympic games boost the image of a country from a problematic to a more positive one?

Such a question calls for the examination of the newspaper coverage of host countries whose reputations, based on historical records, have come into question before and after their sponsorship of the games. The content of these news reports, appearing one year before and after the games, will be analyzed. The objective is to determine whether newspaper coverage of the host country improved after the games. Three nationally-circulated English-language newspapers with international reputation and worldwide influence in the United States are selected for analysis.

By understanding the impact of hosting the Olympics on the media's portrayal of host countries, public relations practitioners will be able to fully exploit the potential of sponsoring and staging international sports events as a venue for projecting themselves to the world in their a positive light. The results of such studies will be helpful to public relations practitioners, public information officers, national government leaders and organizations, and prospective host countries as they fashion strategies to improve national reputation.

In short, this study investigates the hosting of the Olympic games as an image management strategy. The purpose is to provide an empirical analysis of whether hosting the games is indeed a valid approach that can enhance national image. As countries and cities compete fiercely for the honor to host the Olympics, they should recognize that doing so could be a double-edged sword.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter investigates the function of hosting the Olympic games as an image management strategy of countries that experienced image or reputation problems. The impact on national image will be gauged from the quantity and quality of newspaper coverage before and after each Olympic event. This chapter also discusses the underpinnings of framing theory, the theoretical framework of this study. The research questions are outlined in the last section.

National Image

National image refers to the worldwide public's perception of and opinion about a given country's politics, economics, culture, and citizens. Simply put, it is the way a nation is viewed by foreign audiences. Nimmo and Savage (1976) define image as "a human construct imposed on an array of perceived attributes projected by an object, event, or person" (p. 8). Although scholars differentiate between the message sender's projected images from the receiver's perceived image (Nimmo & Savage, 1976; Wang, 2003), this study concentrates on the foreign publics' perception of Olympics host countries over the years as seen in newspaper coverage.

The mass media are the main channels through which people perceive the world and impose their own construct on a series of perceived attributes projected by a remote country (Smith, 1973; Nimmo & Savage, 1976). Because most people do not always have first-hand, personal experience with foreign countries and

cultures, people tend to rely on the mass media for information about those distant countries. As Lippmann (1992) claimed, people form a picture of the world through the media; thus it can be assumed that media coverage will have a significant influence on how people build their image of the Olympics host countries.

Factors that Influence National Image

National images are influenced by several factors. Manheim and Albritton (1984) identified visibility and valence as two dimensions of the media's portrayal of a given nation. Visibility refers to the amount and prominence of media coverage of a nation. Valence is assessed by the extent to which a nation is covered in a favorable or unfavorable light. A positive national image is often derived from the coverage of progress, prosperity, resources, strength, stability, and trustworthiness. On the contrary, coverage of retreat, weakness, instability, inefficiency, and untrustworthiness is regarded as negative. Neutral coverage contains neither positive nor negative elements, or offers an even balance of positive and negative information (Wang, 2007).

The factors that influence media coverage could be explained by developing a matrix with four quadrants as shown in Figure 1. In this matrix, valence can be positioned in the x axis and prominence in the y axis to denote the orbit of national image change (Manheim & Albritton, 1984). Countries in Quadrant 1 (upper left) receive relatively heavy media attention but with negative slants. Prominence is sufficiently low in Quadrant 2 (lower left), while the coverage

remains quite negative. In this case, the public is unlikely to know or to think much about the country. In Quadrant 3 (lower right), valence turns positive but the visibility is still limited. Valence and prominence are both high in Quadrant 4 (upper right), representing an ideal national image in the media.

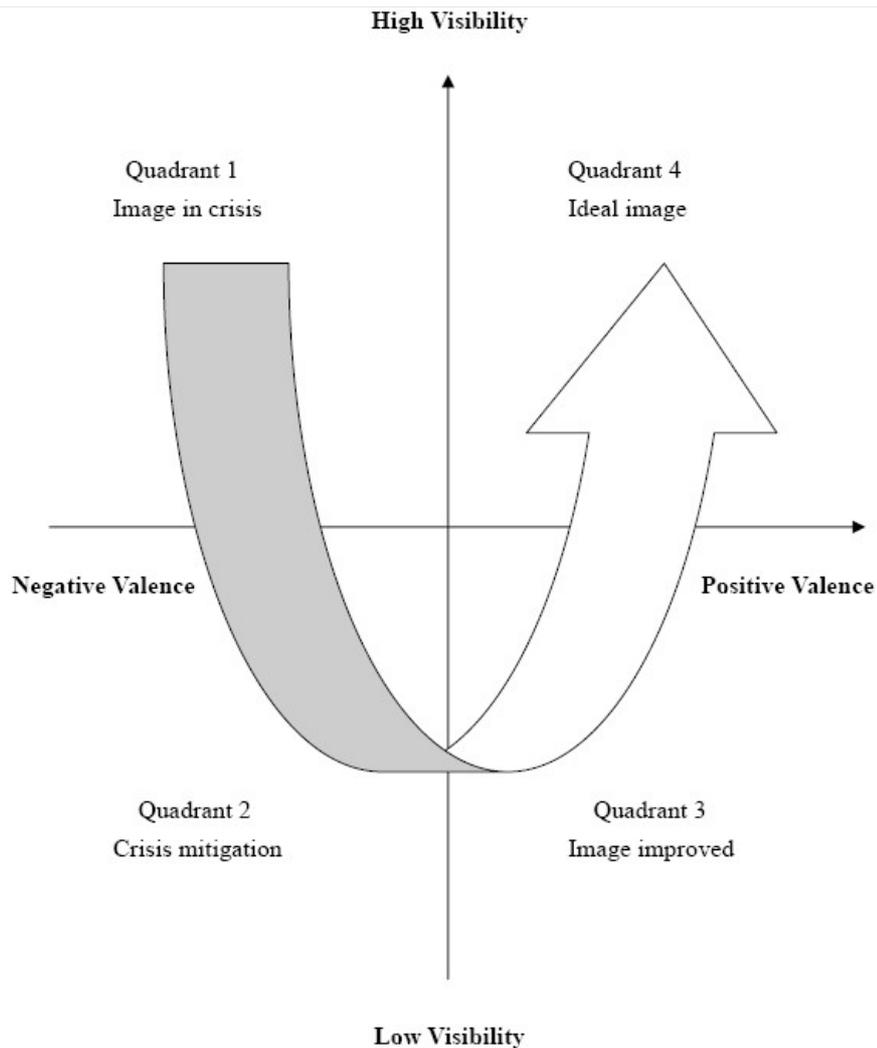


Figure 1. Direction of national image change based on visibility and valence (Manheim and Albritton, 1984, p. 646)

Countries intending to improve their national image are supposed to locate their position in the coordinates and follow the counter-clockwise sequence for the

best outcome. Albritton and Manheim (1985) report that public relations efforts by some Third World countries improved both valence and visibility of their coverage in the US media. The model suggests that at Quadrant 1 can be found countries that are already enjoying high visibility and substantial public awareness. Such countries should control access to news or reduce the quantity of government-generated information to manage national image. To move from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant 2, an effective strategy should focus on substantive forms of image enhancement measures rather than mere withdrawal from the media and public agenda. In other words, the lower a country's initial visibility, image change efforts should move to the valence dimension. Crossing into Quadrant 3 is like passing the boundary between reactive manipulation and active manipulation. Quadrants 3 and 4 are mirror images of their negatively valenced counterparts (Quadrant 2 and 1, respectively). Countries in these two quadrants are in a more positive position. Thus, the key point of the public relations strategy is to increase visibility while reinforcing valence. McGuire (1964) has suggested that for such purposes, a strategy of inoculation against negative slippage using persuasive themes and devices can forge links between the image in question and the various values and goals of audiences thereby encouraging public acceptance.

In Figure 2, the moving orbit from solid point to hollow point indicates the direction of national image change after countries had hired public relations agencies. In the case of South Korea, various points were initially distributed in Quadrant 2, which suggests that the country scored relatively low in visibility, and

that stories about it had a predominantly negative valence. After implementing public relations strategies, the country moved to Quadrant 3, which is in line with the ideal direction of national image change suggested by Manheim and Albritton (1984).

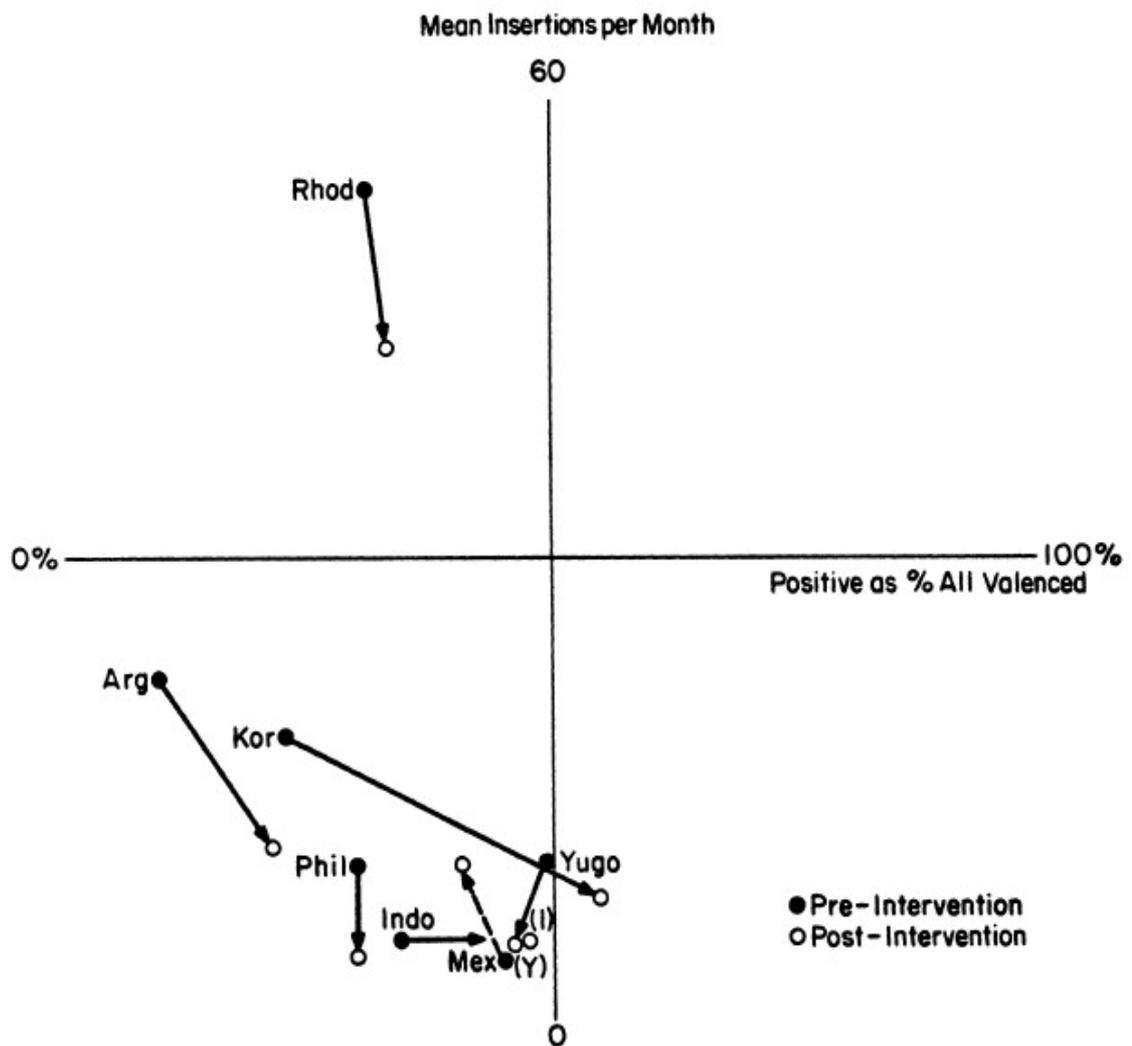


Figure 2. Direction of image change (Manheim and Albritton, 1984, p. 654)

Most countries in the world recognize the value of developing a good image of themselves with respect to audiences in other countries and make an effort to

manage it in a favorable way. With globalization and advancements in digital communication, international public relations require more attention. Thus, national policies toward foreign countries tend to influence a country's image to a large extent. According to Zhang and Cameron (2003), most national governments conduct international public relations programs with varying strategies and effects. "These public relations programs are closely connected to the mediation of their images and foreign policies" (p. 13).

The aim of the media is to satisfy audiences to the fullest extent. As a result, the way the mass media transmit issues and opinions affects public perceptions and opinions, which, in turn, may have a major impact on a country's political, diplomatic, business and other transactions with the rest of the world.

How a host country conducts itself has been known to attract the attention of media outlets all over the world. No other television event is remotely like an Olympic telecast. Dominating 17 consecutive nights of Nielsen ratings in the US and stirring social consciousness around the world, the Olympics represents a mix of nationalism, internationalism, sport, and human drama unmatched by any other event (Billings and Eastman, 2003).

The Olympics and National Image

The Olympics, as a global event, is covered most prominently over several weeks before and after the games. To the host country, it can bring prestige and glory. A paragraph in the Olympic Charter of 2004 states the noble mission of the games:

Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sports with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles (as cited in the Olympic Charter, 1997, p.7).

Beyond simple image associations depicted in media coverage, the games can engender a concentration of images about the host country. Aside from the individual events featured, attention is paid to extra-Olympics and extra-sports aspects. Thus, the games, which have emerged as an international cultural event, offer a way for the host country to promote its global image. The chance of succeeding or failing to do so is equally large using this “spectacular event” approach, according to Deutsch and Merritt (1965). Because content regarding the host country in international media coverage varies, the Olympics offer opportunities and challenges for host countries to pursue their global image-building strategies.

Host nations attempt to transfer the values and ideals of Olympism to their tangible and intangible products, thus attaching a sort of Olympics “halo effect” upon their country-of-origin image. Furthermore, host nations use the Olympics to showcase their economy, technology, political stability as well as the positive attributes of their peoples. The Olympics have become an unparalleled opportunity for worldwide media exposure—a proud flagship promoting a host nation and city. The strategic implication is that nations, especially emerging

economies, should vigorously compete for the right to host this most prestigious event.

Since the inception of the Olympics in 1896, the 1936 Berlin Olympiad was perhaps the first case in which the games were used as an instrument of national image promotion and propaganda. Adolf Hitler hosted it with the ulterior motive of demonstrating the superiority of the German nation. Guttmann (2002) argues that the Nazis were moderately successful in persuading the world that the new Germany was producing technological and logistical wonders with their propaganda both at home and abroad. As Graham (1986) points out, the Germans impressed the world with their efficiency, the size of the games and their associated infrastructure, and also by the accomplishments of their athletes. The Nazis were able to show that the Germans were full of goodwill and civility toward the whole world. As a probable effect of this effort, German exports rose significantly during the two years following the Berlin Olympics. In Berlin, the Olympic rings were first considered as a major promotional logo. Thus, the Berlin Olympics could be regarded as a landmark in the exploitation of the games for political propaganda purposes.

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics marked the use of the games as an instrument for the marketing of products made in the host nation—a means of promoting a favorable country-of-origin effect. As Chattalas (2004) points out, “by all accounts, the Tokyo games were an enormous organizational success. Japan used the games to announce its ascendancy in post-war international trade, and cultivated

the image of a new industrial Japan that is progressive, peaceful and friendly” (p. 270).

As Japan struggles to reconstruct after World War II, hosting the Olympics served as a turning point as well as a big challenge to make the world shed its stereotypical views toward a previously dreaded Axis power. Due to its success in hosting the games, the “made in Japan” tag especially on electronic products was greatly enhanced. For instance, Japan’s watch industry received a solid boost, and the automobile industry timed its annual show that year to wind up just as the games began. This effect was coordinated with the Japanese business people’s expectation that the Olympics is a chance in a lifetime to show their wares to the international set. The Japanese “miracle” is evidence of how much the Olympics helped promote the country’s ethnic image badly tarnished by the war. As a result, the world witnessed two Japans—the one before the 1964 games and the one thereafter. Starting with the Tokyo Olympics, the “made in Japan” label became progressively associated with an image of high workmanship and quality products.

Another successful world-famous Olympiad followed in 1988 in Seoul. It came at a time when the autocratic South Korean government was in the verge of collapse due to the people’s strong desire for freedom and democracy. The government placed a bid to host the games in hopes that increased international exposure would legitimize an authoritarian regime facing increasing internal political pressure for democratization and external threats from the North. The government launched an all-out effort to showcase the Korean economic miracle

to the international community. In an attempt to follow the model of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics as a rite of passage for the Japanese economy and the re-integration of Japan in the family of nations in the post-war era, the government hoped to use the Olympics as a “coming-out party” for the newly industrialized Korean economy. The Korean government hoped the Olympics would symbolize a new legitimacy for Korea in world affairs. Thus, the Seoul Olympics helped anti-Communist South Korea build economic relations with former Soviet-bloc countries and China (Haberman, 1988). This case demonstrates that hosting global sports events could be a means to reinforce a country’s trade and economic relations.

In modern history, there are examples of other countries that have improved their national image as a consequence of hosting the Olympics. According to Wang (2007), the 1968 Olympic games offered Mexico an opportunity to demonstrate its ability to stage a global event and thereby be perceived as an advanced nation (Giffard and Rivenburgh, 2000). During the 1992 Barcelona games, Catalonia was introduced to the world as a region culturally and economically distinct from the rest of Spain; Barcelona was promoted as the southern business hub of Europe (Spa, Rivenburgh and Larson, 1995).

Framing Theory

The axioms of framing theory can be applied to guide analysis in this study. Entman (1993) states that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation

and/or treatment recommendation of the item described” (p. 52). McQuail (2005) agrees that frames function to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. A number of devices—textual and visual—can be used to perform these functions. They include using certain words or phrases, the deployment of metaphors, making certain contextual references, choosing certain pictures or images, giving examples as typical, and referring to certain sources.

According to Hertog and McLeod (1995), “the frame used to interpret an event determines what available information is relevant” (p. 4). As such, news frames are perceived to be powerful. Indeed, Reese (2001) states that framing is an exercise in power; “the power of framing comes from its ability to define the terms of a debate without the audience realizing it is taking place” (Tankard, 2001, p. 97). Besides, Kensicki (2004) notes that frames influence how the public thinks about an issue by defining the issue, presenting what or who is the cause or who is to blame, and suggesting what should be done to remedy the identified problem.

Scheufele (1999) proposes a process model of framing effects that recognizes frames as outcomes of the interaction among three different actors: interested sources and media organizations, journalists (media), and audiences. According to him, there are two kinds of frames: individual (receiver) frames and media frames. Individual frames are those overarching cognitive themes that

develop among audience members exposed to the ways issues, topics or objects may have been framed by the mass media. Media frames, on the other hand, are constructed following journalistic routines, especially the pressure of constantly dealing with sources and applying “news values” and “news angles” to report events.

The current study deals with media frames—the way newspapers portrayed an Olympics host country before and after the games. In this case, the media can frame a host country not just in two-dimensional terms when it comes to valence (positive versus negative), but the selection, emphasis, and exclusion of facts to report may also have a great bearing on how audiences come to understand issues and events pertaining to the hosting nations (Tankard, 2001).

Framing is considered an active process. Goffman (1974) suggests that journalists package news stories and in doing so imbue meaning to these stories. Journalists, like gatekeepers, decide which elements to include or to exclude in a news story. Thus, an event can be framed in various ways, producing different versions containing different attributes (Tankard, 2001).

Framing theory proposes that media frames influence audience frames. In the current study, this suggests that the media’s attitude toward a country can affect how different publics view Olympics host countries. As Johnson-Cartee (2005) notes, “Newsgathering processes affect how issues are named and defined by reporters, thus shaping the raw materials from which people inevitably

draw to form their own versions of reality” (p. 31). According to Chyi and McCombs (2004), “the news media often re-frame an event by emphasizing different attributes of the event—consciously or unconsciously—in order to keep the story alive and fresh” (p. 22). They call this “frame changing.” The ways in which the Olympics and its host are framed in the media over time, therefore, can affect the likelihood that particular public opinions will be formed (Price & Tewksbury, 1997).

According to Price, Tewksbury and Powers (1997), a news story can provoke certain “trains of thought” that publics can use in subsequent opinions or judgment. Furthermore, “news frames affect attitudes by stressing specific values, facts, or other considerations and endowing them with greater relevance to an issue than would an alternative frame” (p, 481).

Frames have been found to make certain aspects of a news story more prominent for subsequent opinions and judgments (Nelson, Clawson and Oxley, 1997). Other findings have suggested that frames in television news have the ability to direct viewers’ thoughts when conceiving of a contemporary public issue (De Vreese, 2004). Tewksbury et al. (2000) posit that “in terms of creating opinion change or other long-term effects, it may be that issue frames have their most dramatic impact when they suggest novel associations” (p. 810).

Thus, examining how the hosts of past Olympic games that have been challenged with national image problems were framed is important not only because it can reveal mass media practices and the opinions and values they held

about those host countries. They can also denote potential audience effects of media coverage. Such effects are directly related to the meaning that most audiences may have derived from the news coverage of the Olympic games.

Frames of National Reputation

One of most widely used models to determine national reputation is the national branding index. In 2002, Simon Anholt proposed a way of measuring how a country is perceived by nations around the globe. Over time, this instrument has been expanded in cooperation with public relations agencies to produce what is now known as the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index or NBI. This study employs six dimensions of this index that are pertinent to the research objectives. These six dimensions of national image can also be regarded as the “frames” newspapers used to portray the Olympics host country to their audiences. They are defined as follows:

1. People: Measures the reputation of a host city or country’s population for competence, education, openness and friendliness and other qualities, as well as perceived levels of potential hostility and discrimination.

2. Politics: Perceptions of the country’s political status such as internal relationships, democracy, and stable political environments. Measures national government competency and fairness and describes beliefs about each country’s government, as well as its perceived commitment to global issues such as democracy, justice, poverty and the environment.

3. Exports: Determines the image of products and services from each country and the extent to which consumers proactively seek or avoid products from each country-of-origin.

4. Tourism: Captures the level of interest in visiting a country and the draw of natural and man-made tourist attractions.

5. Culture and heritage: Reveals global perceptions of each nation's heritage and appreciation for its contemporary culture, including film, music, art, sports and literature.

6. Investment and immigration: Determines the power to attract people to live, work or study in each country and reveals how people perceive a country's social and economic situation, specifically, their perceptions of the country's competitiveness, profitability, growth prospects, and risk of investment.

Research Questions

This study attempts to determine whether the images of countries with known reputation problems improved after hosting the Olympic games. The objective is to determine the visibility and valence of coverage of each of these countries as well as the frames employed in the accounts of three leading American newspapers. Specifically, this study asks:

RQ1: Did newspaper coverage of the host country improve after the games in terms of visibility and valence?

RQ2: What frames or national image index dimensions were used by newspapers to describe the host country before and after the games?

Chapter 3

Method

This study examines changes in the representation of Olympic host countries with reputation problems in mainstream American newspapers. To gather data, a content analysis of the coverage of the Olympic games by the three most widely circulated US dailies was conducted.

Content Analysis

A quantitative content analysis was employed in this study. Content analysis has been defined as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). It is therefore an appropriate method to describe communication content, test hypotheses about message characteristics, and establish a starting point for studies of media effects.

Moreover, content analysis is useful in determining the underlying attitudes, biases and themes frequently employed in news coverage (Rubin and Piele, 1986). It is thus a useful method with which to investigate whether hosting the Olympics as a public relations effort indeed influenced the national image of host countries as projected by news coverage. This study aims to compare the visibility and valence of news stories, as well as the frames used to portray the countries and cities before and after hosting the games.

The Population

Three newspapers were examined in this study: the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post*. These newspapers were selected for their established reputation as exemplars of good journalism, for their wide national circulation, for their relatively long history of covering significant events in sports in general and the Olympics in particular, for their devotion to foreign news coverage in terms of resource and space allocation, and for their demonstrated strong agenda-setting effects on their respective publics (i.e., their audience agenda-setting capability) and other mass media channels and outlets (i.e., their inter-media agenda-setting capability).

The *New York Times*, founded in 1851 and published in New York City, is the largest metropolitan newspaper in the United States with a national circulation. It is owned by The New York Times Company whose chairman, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., belongs to one of the country's newspaper family dynasties that has held major controlling interest in the *Times* since 1896. When the paper went public in the 1960s, the family continued to exert influence through its ownership of the vast majority of Class B voting shares. (In the dual-structure management, Class A shareholders cannot vote on many important matters relating to the company, while Class B shareholders can vote on all matters.)

The *Times'* weekday daily circulation is about 928,000, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, a non-profit circulation auditing organization. It has

16 news bureaus in the state of New York, 11 national news bureaus, and 26 foreign news bureaus. Considered by many as the country's newspaper of record, the *New York Times* targets intelligent, general-interest adult readers with tastes for cultural and international coverage, a set of preferences for which college education seems a reasonable proxy (George, 2005).

The *Los Angeles Times* is a daily newspaper published in Los Angeles, California since 1881. In 2000, the Tribune Company, one of the country's leading media companies with businesses in publishing, the Internet, and broadcasting, took over the ownership of the *LA Times* from the Times-Mirror Company. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, its weekday daily circulation is 657,000. During its incipient stage, the paper focused more on local issues. It gained national fame, however, when it expanded its coverage to include national and international news. The *LA Times* caters to well-educated and knowledgeable groups that pay attention to national and international politics and cultures. It is known for its probing reports.

The *Washington Post* is Washington, D.C.'s largest and oldest newspaper, founded in 1877. It operates under its parent company, the Washington Post Company, a public media company. As of September 2009, the *Post's* average weekday circulation was recorded at 582, 844, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. Located in the United States' capital, the *Post* has a particular emphasis on national politics. It has distinguished itself through its political reporting on the workings of the White House, Congress, and other aspects of the

US government. However, it does not print a daily national edition for distribution away from the east coast; the majority of its newsprint readership is in the District of Columbia, as well as its suburbs in Maryland and Northern Virginia. The *Post* is one of a few US newspapers with bureaus in Baghdad, Beijing, Berlin, Bogota, Islamabad, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Kabul, London, Mexico City, Moscow, Nairobi, New Delhi, Paris, and Tokyo. In order to focus on “political stories and local news coverage in Washington,” it announced the closure of its US regional bureaus in Chicago, Los Angeles and New York in favor of four local bureaus in Maryland and five in Virginia. The *Post’s* readers are highly educated; if they are not already at the top of their careers, they are on their way up.

Of the host cities since the inception of the modern Olympic games, four have been known to have received considerable media coverage and were chosen for analysis because coverage intensity allows for concrete comparisons before and after the games as well as across the games. These host countries and cities, listed in Table 2, will enable a comparative analysis of nations with reputation problems as they were seen by American newspapers before and after the Olympics.

The modern Olympic games were revived in the late 19th century in Greece to celebrate both summer and winter sports. This study considers only the summer games. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was founded in 1894 on the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin, considered the major founder of the

Olympic games. The IOC is the governing body of the Olympic movement, which is defined by the Olympic Charter. The Committee initiates the games by selecting a host city usually announced six to seven years in advance of the games. The host city is responsible for organizing and funding a celebration of the games consistent with the Charter.

Table 2. The countries to be analyzed and the Olympiad they hosted

Host city	Host country	Year in which the games were held	Order of Olympic games (12th, 28th Olympiad, etc.)
Moscow	Russia	1980	22nd
Seoul	South Korea	1988	24th
Barcelona	Spain	1992	25th
Beijing	China	2008	29th

Over the years, the Olympics have witnessed some changes. Adapting to the economic, political, and technological realities of the 20th century, it has, among other measures, began to welcome the participation not just of amateur athletes but also of professional ones. The medium of television also created the issue of corporate sponsorship and spurred the commercialization of the games. The games have grown in scale to the point that nearly every nation of the world is represented. This growth has created numerous challenges, including boycotts, doping, bribery of officials, and terrorism.

The games encompass many rituals and symbols, such as the Olympic flag and torch as well as the opening and closing ceremonies. Every four years, the

Olympics enable athletes who compete in relative obscurity the chance to attain national, and in the case of some, international fame. The games also afford the populations of host cities the opportunity to showcase their home to the world (Guttman, 1992).

The headline and the first two lead paragraphs of each news article served as the unit of analysis. The articles were collected by searching the Lexis-Nexis database as well as the *Los Angeles Times* archives, lodged in the paper's official website, using the key terms "Olympics" and the name of the host country or host city in the headline and lead paragraphs. Only those stories with strong and direct connections with national image were examined following the procedure outlined by Wang (2007). News reports about the performance of athletes from the host countries were not analyzed because such stories are weakly related to the host country's national image. Stories that discuss the general conduct of the athletic events also were discarded. In addition, readers' comments and letters to the editor and/or newspaper about the games were not included in the dataset.

Newspaper reports about the Olympics were examined one year before and one year after the games.

Variables and their Measurement

Visibility refers to the intensity of coverage in terms of the number of stories published, the length of the stories that saw print, and the prominence of the coverage. Intensity of coverage was measured by the number of stories about the

host country published over the study's timeframe. The proportion of the number of stories that dealt with the Olympics to the total number of stories published within an issue was determined. Length of story was measured in terms of the number of words that constitutes a news story. Prominence refers to the placement of the article in the newspaper edition. News articles found in the front page were coded "3," those published in the front pages of specific sections (i.e., business and financial, lifestyles, entertainment) were coded "2," and those found in other pages were coded "1".

Valence refers to the overall tone or orientation toward the host country as manifested in the individual stories. It was used to judge how newspaper coverage reflects prevailing impressions toward a host country, and has three categories: positive (coded "3"), neutral (coded "2"), or negative (coded "1"). Valence was determined by examining the headline, the first paragraph of the story, and the number of positive words about the host country present in the entire story.

This study uses Wang's (2007) categorization scheme in which *positive* news is operationally defined as one in which the primary aspects suggest progress, growth, prosperity, strength, stability, security, and trustworthiness of the host countries in their political, economic, cultural activities, which contribute to a favorable image. For example, a robust growth in GDP shows a positive aspect of a country.

Neutral news is operationally defined as one in which the primary aspects are balanced between positive and negative sides. A story also was coded neutral

when it was hard to determine whether a story is positive or negative toward the host country.

Negative news is operationally defined as one in which the primary aspects suggest unreliability, untrustworthiness, weakness, instability, insecurity, danger, retreat, and inefficiency of the host countries in their political, economic, cultural activities, which contribute to an unfavorable image. For example, stories that discuss inequitable business practices that cause imbalance in trade between two nations were coded as having a negative valence.

If visibility (measured by multiplying length by position) increases after hosting the games, this will be taken to indicate that the image of the host country has become more positive. Such will also be the case when valence changes from negative to positive over time.

Frames refer to the main ideas or overarching themes used by journalists to report on the host country. A leading frame employed in each article was determined following a thorough analysis of headlines and lead paragraphs. These frames include (1) people, (2) politics, (3) exports, (4) tourism, (5) culture and heritage, and (6) investment and immigration. The following are examples of how these frames are manifested in the lead paragraphs.

These news items about Moscow and Beijing may be considered as exhibiting the *people* frame:

About 70,000 workers at the Togliatti Automobile Plant on the Volga River southeast of Moscow went on strike for two days early in May, according to

unconfirmed reports reaching here. It was not clear from the reports what had caused the strike or how it was settled. One version was that work stopped May 6 at the huge plant, about 500 miles from Moscow, to protest food shortages, particularly in meat and dairy products.

Drivers of buses linking the plant and the town of Togliatti went on strike to protest additional routes without extra pay. The auto workers stayed home in a gesture of solidarity, though many could have reached the plant in private cars or other vehicles. -- *New York Times*, June 13, 1988.

Prominent Chinese intellectuals and writers have signed a petition calling for the release of a well-known ethnic Uighur economist in Beijing who was apparently detained last week during a bloody outbreak of ethnic violence in western China.

The economist, Ilham Tohti, 39, who had written critically about government policies toward the Uighurs, is the best known person to be detained so far in relation to the ethnic strife. Mr. Tohti, a professor at the Central University for Nationalities, vanished from his Beijing home sometime last week and made a call to a friend to say he would be detained. -- *New York Times*, July 15, 2009.

These news accounts from Seoul may be considered as demonstrating the

politics frame:

President Kim said North Korea was not going to participate in the Games because they did not want to condone the policy of two Koreas. North Korea has said it would boycott the competition unless Seoul gave in to demands to co-host the Games. The North Korean authorities showed reporters plans for a World Youth Festival that would coincide with the Olympics in September. -- "North Korea: Boycott will go off peaceably," *Washington Post*, May 25, 1988.

The news items below can be considered as employing the *exports* frame: Many Chinese have been expecting a post-Olympics economic slowdown, but it has already started and the Games have not even begun. Chinese factories reported a plunge in new orders last month. Exports are barely growing. The real estate market is weakening, with apartment prices sinking in southeastern China, the region hardest hit by economic troubles. -- *New York Times*, August 5, 2008.

Amid recurring Chinese product safety scares, the US Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday opened an inspection office in Beijing that officials said would help China export safer products to America and the world. -- *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 2008.

The following news clips that report about Moscow as well as Barcelona can be regarded as demonstrating the *tourism* frame:

Soviet officials have begun to acknowledge that far fewer foreign visitors will be coming to the Moscow Olympics this summer than were expected before the American-led boycott movement began. Vladimir F. Promyslov, Mayor of Moscow, and other officials say 70,000 foreign tourists are expected during the period of the Games, from July 19 to Aug. 3. The organizers of the Games were predicting as little as two months ago that 300,000 would attend. --*New York Times*, June 6, 1980.

The key word has been “excuse”—the Olympics have been an excuse to modernize and spruce up Barcelona, an excuse to mobilize the money and energy necessary to do in five years what might normally have taken 30 years. And now the results of \$9.3 billion worth of investment can be seen.

“You have to remember that Barcelona was in very bad shape,” said Oriol Bohigas, an architect who has been a major promoter of the city’s urban renewal. “For 50 years, nothing had been done. Even without the Olympic Games, we had to act. The Games just made it all much easier.”--*New York Times*, July 2, 1992.

The following sections of news reports about Beijing Olympics exemplify

the *culture and heritage* frame:

As a result, the way Chinese experience sports is vastly different from the way that Americans do... But for the most part, Chinese athletes perform best in sports that few Chinese care about. This is a country without private guns but with crack sharpshooters; with few public pools but the best divers. Fencing, canoeing, women's softball—China excels at these despite the fact that very few Chinese show an interest in them.

Why? Because the cabinet-level General Administration of Sports does its job well. It predicts which Olympic events could yield gold medals for China. It allocates extra money to train athletes in those sports, and dispatches scouts to locate children who fit certain sports molds. Those scouts may recruit a 6-year-old village girl with double-jointed elbows into a diving program, for instance, because a decade later she could arc into the water with a smaller splash. -- *New York Times*, August, 6, 2008.

It's the morning after. The splashy fete that was the 2008 Olympics is yesterday's news. We're out of the Bird's Nest and back into history, faced with the obvious question: What comes next? Party time in Beijing may be over, but a one-party rule is still firmly in place. New China is still, in significant ways, Old China.

Under that party's auspices, a month ago, some 16,000 performers offered an awesomely dressed, drilled and illuminated paeon to China's cultural brilliance, past and present, as a global audience watched the Olympics opening ceremony. Also under its auspices, beginning nearly half a century ago, uncounted millions of Chinese died from starvation and political violence, both the direct result of a utopian social movement that was intended, among other things, to rekindle China's luster in the modern world. --*New York Times*, September 5, 2008.

The following news sections are considered to demonstrate the *investment and immigration* frame:

After a quarter-century of welcoming and even courting foreign investors, Beijing officials are starting to show considerably more caution. Chinese lawmakers are set to pass legislation this week that would limit foreign acquisitions in China on national security grounds.

Authorities in Washington recently said they would review foreign attempts to purchase American companies working in certain military or technology sectors, including Chinese companies.--*New York Times*, August 28, 2007.

Intercoder reliability

Intercoder reliability is the extent to which independent coders evaluate a

characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion. To achieve acceptable levels of reliability, especially for the categorical variables placement of story, frame and valence, two graduate student coders were trained on the coding protocols using news reports from the three newspapers under study. To determine intercoder reliability, both students coded articles that constitute 10% of the entire sample.

In order to arrive at the sample with which to pre-test the coding protocols, the stories from each Olympiad were numbered. Then, a number was selected from a table of random numbers. Starting from the story that corresponds to that number, every tenth article was chosen for a sub-sample of 263 articles. The test or practice articles were not included in the final analysis. Intercoder reliability for nominal variables was assessed by computing for Scott's pi (π) in which:

$$Pi = \frac{PA_0 - PA_E}{1 - PA_E}$$

where PA_0 stands for the proportion of observed agreement and PA_E stands for the proportion of agreement expected by chance (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 151). A high pi value means more agreement between the two coders. Intercoder reliability for quantitative variables was determined using correlations.

Table 3 lists the intercoder reliability results for all the variables coded. The Scott's pi figures obtained indicate that the average intercoder reliability for the eight variables varied from 0.82 to 1.00, suggesting acceptable reliability values judging by social science standards. Five variables were in the upper range: the

newspaper that published the story (1.00), Olympiad with image problem (1.00), date of story publication (1.00), period of publication (before or after the games) (1.00), and length of article (1.00). The three remaining variables were in the lower range: position or placement of article within the newspaper (0.97), valence of the story (0.86), and lead frame of the article (0.82).

Table 3. Intercoder reliability results

Variables	Scott's pi
Newspaper that published the story	1.00
Olympiad with image problem	1.00
Date of story publication	1.00
Period of publication (before or after the games)	1.00
Length of article	1.00
Position or placement of article within the newspaper	0.97
Valence of the story	0.86
Lead frame of the article	0.82

Chapter 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examines how three American newspapers covered four countries that hosted the Olympic games in terms of (1) visibility (coverage intensity, the articles' length, and placement of news stories), and the valence of the coverage before and after the Olympic event. In addition, (2) the frames or national image index dimensions used as the overarching framework of news stories that discussed the host country or city were ascertained. The goal was to determine whether newspaper coverage of the host country improved after the games and to uncover the frames applied to describe the host country before and after hosting the Olympic games. Is there a significant difference in these aspects of coverage and in the frames employed before and after each Olympiad?

The Population

A total of 2,634 articles from the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* published before and after the selected four Olympic events composed the final sample. The breakdown of the sample by newspaper is shown in Table 4. The stories that discussed the host country or city were gathered one year before and one year after each Olympic event. Table 5 specifies the time span for data collection for each of the four Olympic sessions under study. The sample size does not include 289 stories (10% of the total number of stories collected) used to determine intercoder reliability.

Table 4. Breakdown of the study sample

Newspaper	Moscow		Seoul		Barcelona		Beijing	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<i>New York Times</i>	198	297	167	61	31	12	211	190
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	197	55	75	21	29	7	121	58
<i>Washington Post</i>	218	181	84	33	20	4	298	66

Table 5. The timeframe for data collection before and after the games.

Newspaper	Moscow		Seoul		Barcelona		Beijing	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<i>New York Times</i>	7/19/79	8/15/80	9/17/87	10/4/88	7/25/91	8/11/92	8/8/07	8/26/08
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	7/18/80	8/14/81	9/16/88	10/3/89	7/24/92	8/10/93	8/7/08	8/25/09
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	7/19/79	8/15/80	9/17/87	10/4/88	7/25/91	8/11/92	8/8/07	8/26/08
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	7/18/80	8/14/81	9/16/88	10/3/89	7/24/92	8/10/93	8/7/08	8/25/09
<i>Washington Post</i>	7/19/79	8/15/80	9/17/87	10/4/88	7/25/91	8/11/92	8/8/07	8/26/08
	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
	7/18/80	8/14/81	9/16/88	10/3/89	7/24/92	8/10/93	8/7/08	8/25/09

Visibility

The first research question asks: Did newspaper coverage of the host country improve after the games in terms of visibility and valence? In this study, visibility has three dimensions: (1) the intensity of coverage (in terms of the number of stories published about the host country or city), (2) the length of stories (in terms of the number of words in an article), and the (3) prominence of the coverage (in terms of the placement of the story within a newspaper issue or

edition).

The first visibility dimension, *intensity*, refers to the complete count of newspaper reports published in the three newspapers regarding the host country or city before and after the official games. These figures are shown in Table 4. To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in terms of intensity of newspaper coverage before and after the games, a series of independent samples t-test was conducted in which the before and after stories published in the three newspapers were combined.

The results shown in Table 6 indicate that the number of stories published about the four host countries declined after hosting the games. The general trend in absolute values (in terms of the number of stories combined the selected three newspapers) indicate that coverage was more intense before than after the games.

Table 6. Number of articles before and after each Olympic games

Olympiad	Period	Number of articles	% of total
Moscow	Before	613	23.3
	After	533	20.2
Seoul	Before	326	12.4
	After	115	4.4
Barcelona	Before	80	3.0
	After	23	0.9
Beijing	Before	630	23.9
	After	314	11.9

Length, the second dimension of visibility, measures intensity of coverage in terms of number of words in a news article. Table 7 compares the average length of stories published about the host country before and after the games. The figures suggest that the articles were relatively long, with averages ranging from 577 to 1,130 words per story. For three of the host cities, the average number of words per story decreased after the games, indicating waning press enthusiasm. The shortened stories apparently went with the general decline in intensity.

Table 7. Average length of stories before and after the Olympic games

Newspaper	Moscow		Seoul		Barcelona		Beijing	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<i>New York Times</i>	798.81	760.14	670.27	584.80	849.45	650.17	981.58	729.70
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	696.00	756.31	731.80	538.88	1397.20	1121.30	1011.60	829.31
<i>Washington Post</i>	836.87	769.44	694.33	616.14	1179.40	932.25	826.93	887.44

To determine if there is a difference in average length of stories before and after the games, a series of independent samples t-test was conducted. The results, shown in Table 8, suggest that only the Moscow Olympiad went against the trend of diminished length over time. Indeed, the average length of news stories about the Soviet Union increased slightly after the games; that is, the length of news reports published in the *Los Angeles Times* increased by 80 words after the Moscow games. However, this difference was not statistically significant.

The news stories about the other host countries were trimmed off a bit after the games in Seoul, Barcelona, and Beijing, and this decline was statistically significant in each case.

Longer stories about the Soviet Union after the Moscow Olympics may have been due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which was launched when most of the Western world was celebrating Christmas in 1979. Airborne troops branched out into two forces to begin nine years of military occupation. In response, the United States put a ban on the export of grain to Russia, ended the bilateral Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), and boycotted the Olympic games in Moscow in 1980. The Russian offensive took the world by storm and naturally drew much attention—and scorn—from the international media, perhaps prompting a lengthier treatment of stories.

Shorter articles after the games, observed for the other three countries studied, was predicted following the general reduction in media attention that goes with the termination of any sports extravaganza. A cursory examination of the sample indicates the predominance of editorials and commentary pieces before the games. After the sports events, hard news stories that discussed diplomatic initiatives, tourism and other topics related to the economy took over.

The coverage of Spain was markedly different. Although intensity dipped after the games, the country attracted long stories post Olympics. In fact, Spain received the longest articles even before the games began. This may be explained by the long-standing friendly ties between Spain and the US. In this

case, stories with the tourism frame accounted for the second largest proportion of articles, nearly the same as the number of stories that adopted the politics frame. Accounts about tourism ran as long as 1,000 words as they describe Barcelona's municipal transformation, the efforts being done to beautify the city for international visitors, and the details of infrastructure buildup.

Table 8. Differences in length of news reports before and after the Olympic games

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	SD
Moscow	-.669	1142	.751	Before	745.32	416
				After	762.90	473
Seoul	2.117	439	.035	Before	690.63	493
				After	577.35	496
Barcelona	1.519	101	.039	Before	1130.49	873
				After	842.61	458
Beijing	3.657	874	.000	Before	905.94	518
				After	781.26	416

The third dimension of visibility is the placement or location of the article within the newspaper edition, a measure of the prominence of coverage. To determine whether story placement changed before and after the games, a series of chi-square tests was conducted. The results, outlined in Table 9, show that the three newspapers positioned news about the host country or city differently in the case of the Moscow ($\chi^2=36.934$; $df=2$, $p=0.000$) and the Beijing Olympiad ($\chi^2=7.121$; $df=2$, $p=0.028$). The results show significantly fewer articles in the sectional front pages (e.g., page one of the Sports section) after the games in

Moscow and significantly fewer articles in all newspaper sections (front page, sectional front page and inside pages) after the Beijing Olympics.

Table 9. Differences in placement of news reports before and after the Olympic games

	χ^2 value	df	Asymp. sig. (two-tailed)	Period	Inside pages	Section front page	Newspaper front page
Moscow	36.934	2	.000	Before	417	93	103
				After	409	23	101
Seoul	.626	2	.731	Before	271	33	22
				After	97	9	9
Barcelona	1.108	2	.575	Before	62	14	4
				After	20	2	1
Beijing	7.121	2	.028	Before	431	71	60
				After	258	39	17

A closer inspection indicate that, again perhaps due to the Soviet encroachment in Afghanistan, stories about the USSR received more newspaper front page treatment. However, the number of stories in the newspaper front pages, the sectional front pages, and in the inside pages was lower after the games. Indeed, the number of section front page stories was considerably reduced over time, from 15% to 4%. Before the games, the US newspapers were questioning whether Moscow was genuinely prepared for the sports pageant and the competition in the light of its actions in Afghanistan.

Initially, there were more newspaper front page stories about China (from 11% to 5%), and many of these were relegated to the inside pages after the

games (from 77% to 82%). There were more reports about South Korea and Spain on the inside pages than on the newspapers' page one and the front page of newspaper sections both before and after hosting the games. In these two cases, the number of articles that appeared on the inside pages rose in varying degrees. Except for Moscow, all host countries received much less front page coverage. After the games, the majority of the stories across all four Olympic events were found on the inside pages (87% for Seoul, 87% for Barcelona, and 82% for Beijing). Before the event, 82% of the articles about Seoul, 78% about Barcelona, and 79% about Beijing were found on the inside pages (Table 10).

The results in terms of placement of the news reports roughly follow the path specified in the four-quadrant national image matrix proposed by Manheim and Albritton (1984) because the number of front page news items went down while those relegated to the inside pages increased. Before the games, the majority of the newspaper front pages dealt with the politics frame. Front page stories that exhibit the politics frame were also less frequently observed after the Olympics in much the same way that front page treatment of host countries went down quickly after the games. The few that found their way into the front pages featured the politics frame with a clear negative tone toward the host country.

Table 10. Percent of stories placed in the newspaper front page, the sectional front page, and the inside pages before and after the Olympic games

	Inside page (%)		Section front page (%)		Newspaper front page (%)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Moscow	68	77	15	4	17	19
Seoul	82	87	10	7	8	6
Barcelona	78	87	18	9	5	4
Beijing	77	82	13	12	11	5

Valence

In addition to visibility, another aspect of the newspapers' coverage, *valence*, was analyzed. Valence refers to the overall tone or orientation toward the host country as manifested in the individual stories. Each story was coded as to whether it demonstrated a positive, negative or neutral tone toward the host country or city. The results, shown in Table 11, indicate a significant shift in valence before and after all four Olympic events [Moscow ($\chi^2=124.668$; $df=2$, $p=0.000$), Seoul ($\chi^2=92.872$; $df=2$, $p=0.000$), Barcelona ($\chi^2=72.428$; $df=2$, $p=0.000$), and Beijing ($\chi^2=139.168$; $df=2$, $p=0.000$)]. Across host countries, the absolute number of news stories with a negative orientation dropped dramatically after the games. That is, during the one-year period after each Olympiad, without exception, negative coverage was substantially reduced, and the number of articles with a positive tone went up.

Before the Olympics, all host countries received a fairly negative coverage

from the three American newspapers. As Table 12 shows, over half of the stories about the individual events published in the US papers were negative (Moscow, 75%; Seoul, 71%; Barcelona, 64%; and Beijing, 77%). These percentages of negative news reports were reduced by more than one-third after the games (Moscow, 43%; Seoul, 27%; Barcelona, 4%; and Beijing, 36%). Barcelona demonstrated the greatest reduction in negative reporting—from a high of 64% to a low of 4%.

News stories that displayed a neutral stance toward the host country also increased with time [Moscow (from 21% to 44%), Seoul (from 24% to 36.5%), and Beijing (from 16% to 41%)] with the exception of Barcelona whose neutral coverage was markedly reduced from 31% to 4%. In addition, positive coverage of host countries after the Olympics also increased in varying degrees. For example, as listed in Table 12, positive news coverage about Spain went from 5% to 92%. Moscow's share of positive reports moved from 4% to 13%; Seoul's went from 6% to 36.5%, and positive reports about China after the Beijing Olympics rose from 7% to 23%. Therefore, the results suggest that the Olympic games had a positive effect on the valence of coverage across all four events, but especially that of Barcelona with more than 50% of stories adopting a positive tone after the Olympics (Table 12).

Again bucking the trend, Spain did not exhibit an increase in the number of stories with a neutral stance. Instead, Spain showed an outstanding climb toward positive coverage as time progressed. Most positive news items displayed the

tourism frame. Bowing to internal and external pressure, Spain did not skimp on beautification and infrastructure improvement measures, which made Barcelona a tourist magnet, bringing in revenues that helped the nation recover from a lingering economic crisis.

The three other host countries displayed the same trend in valence, with coverage becoming more positive after the games. Articles that demonstrated the politics and the tourism frames, the two most frequently occurring frames in the coverage, went positive. Specifically, the negatively toned stories became more neutral or positive in their orientation toward the host nation.

Applying Manheim and Albritton's model of assessing the impact of public relations initiatives on national reputation, the number of articles published about the host country can be positioned on the y axis and the valence of coverage positioned in x axis. The results for the four Olympic hosts are plotted in Figure 3. The figure shows the location of each country in this "reputation space" before and after the games. As illustrated, each case followed the general route to image transformation suggested by Manheim and Albritton. The slightest change was observed for the USSR whose coverage moved from 613 to 533 articles and whose mean value for valence moved from 1.29 to 1.7. The country can thus be located in Quadrant 1 before and after the games. The three other host countries underwent more significant changes. South Korea shifted from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant 2 (number of articles from 326 to 115 and mean valence from 1.37 to 2.10), Spain moved from Quadrant 2 to Quadrant 3 (number of articles from 80 to

23 and mean valence from 1.41 to 2.88), and China transitioned from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant 2 (number of articles from 630 to 314 and mean valence from 1.30 to 1.87).

Table 11. Differences in valence of news reports before and after the Olympic games

	χ^2 value	df	Asymp. sig. (two-tailed)	Valence	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Mean valence value
Moscow	124.668	2	.000	Before	460	130	23	1.29
				After	230	233	70	1.70
Seoul	92.872	2	.000	Before	231	77	18	1.37
				After	31	42	42	2.10
Barcelona	72.428	2	.000	Before	51	25	4	1.41
				After	1	1	21	2.88
Beijing	139.168	2	.000	Before	430	90	42	1.30
				After	114	127	43	1.87

Table 12. Story valence before and after the Olympic games

	Negative (%)		Neutral (%)		Positive (%)	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Moscow	75	43	21	44.0	4	13.0
Seoul	71	27	24	36.5	6	36.5
Barcelona	64	4	31	4.0	5	92.0
Beijing	77	36	16	41.0	7	23.0

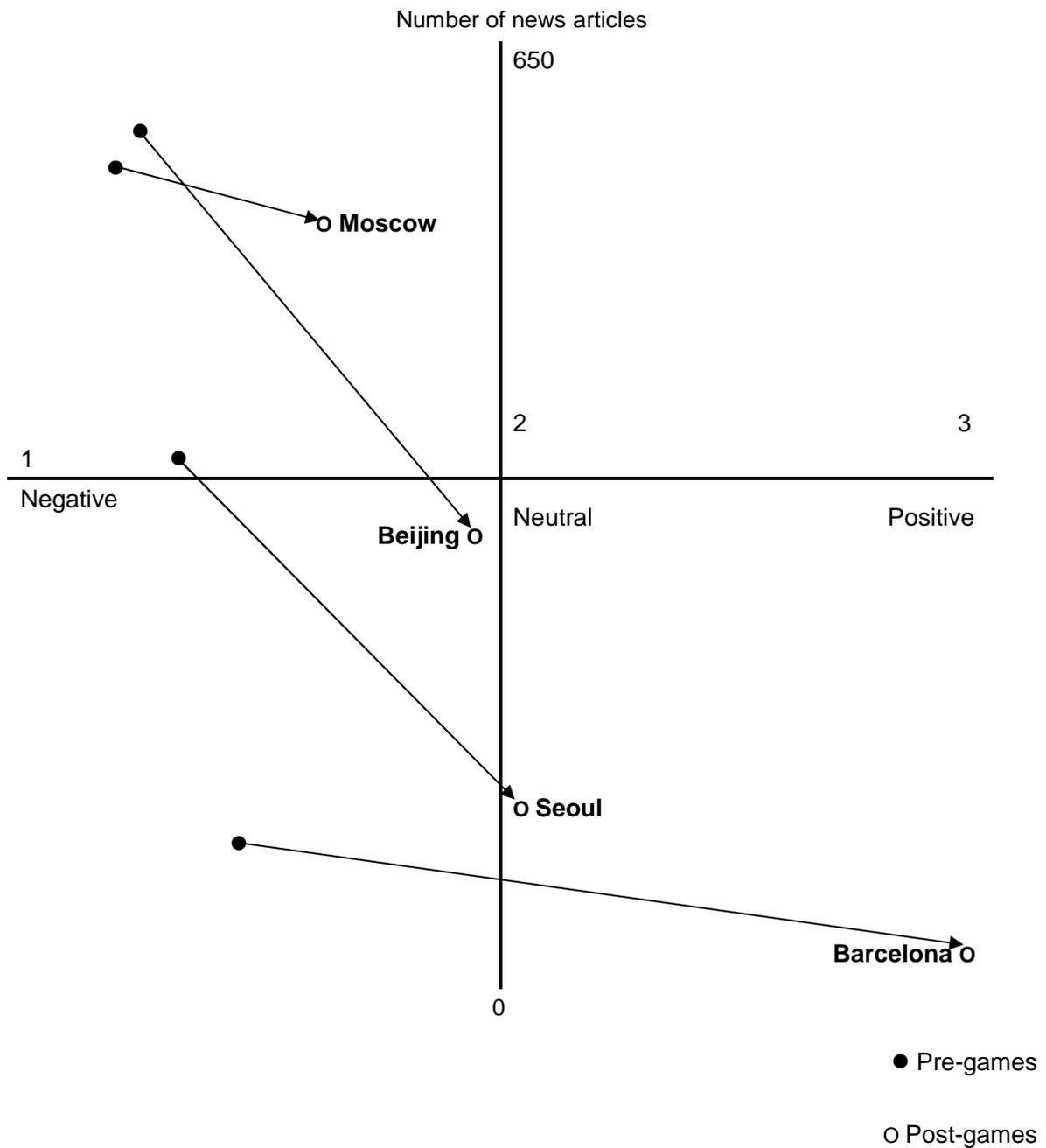


Figure 3. Direction of image change of the 4 host countries

Frames or National Image Dimensions

The second research question asks: What frames or national image index dimensions did the US newspapers use to describe the host country before and

after the games? Because a story may contain more than one frame, each article was analyzed to determine the dominant frame it exhibited. In this study, the story frames were equated to national image index dimensions culled from public relations literature. Thus, the articles were examined for six national image index dimensions—or frames—identified through literature review: (1) people, (2) politics, (3) exports, (4) tourism, (5) culture and heritage; and (6) investment and immigration. The frequency distribution of the frames used across all Olympiads is shown on Table 13. The objective of this study is to determine whether the use of each of the six frames changed after the games.

To ascertain whether the frames changed before and after the games, a series of independent samples t-test was conducted. No statistically significant difference was found in the use of the first of the six frames, the people frame, before and after each Olympiad (Table 14). Although the number of stories that employed this frame when discussing the Soviet Union increased (from a mean of 4.33 before to a mean of 15.00 after the games), this change was not statistically significant. By and large, stories that exhibited the people frame occupied a fairly small percentage (only 6%) of news articles as shown in Table 13.

As the frequency of frame use shown in Table 13 suggests, the politics frame was employed most frequently by the American newspapers in their discourse regarding the host countries. The politics frame was observed in 77.3% of the articles coded. However, as can be seen in Table 15, a significant difference in the frame's use was evident only for the coverage of Spain ($t= 5.821$, $p= .004$,

df= 4).

Table 13. Frequency distribution of the dominant frames detected in newspaper coverage across the four Olympiads

Frames	Moscow		Seoul		Barcelona		Beijing		Number of frames detected	% of total
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After		
People	13	46	23	12	5	1	31	28	159	6.0
Politics	536	454	263	97	37	13	420	223	2043	77.3
Exports	5	9	3	0	0	0	5	4	26	1.0
Tourism	29	13	23	4	28	5	72	16	190	7.2
Culture and heritage	15	21	12	4	12	5	19	18	106	4.1
Investment and immigration	35	14	15	11	0	0	18	26	119	4.5

The overwhelming use of the politics frame may be due to several reasons.

First, it appears that the nature of the public relations problem confronting each host country was inherently political whether they concern domestic or foreign affairs (i.e., the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, the authoritarian rule in South Korea and the nation's continuing conflict with the North, China's incursion into Tibet). Second, international news coverage is often determined by considerations of international diplomacy. As Bazaa and Hsiao (2010) indicate, international news coverage is largely influenced by the diplomatic relationship between and among countries; in this case, the relationship between the host country and the US. It has been suggested that more vibrant and more positive

stories characterize the American press coverage of a foreign country with which the United States has historically strong and amiable diplomatic ties.

Table 14. Differences in the use of the people frame before and after each Olympiad

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	SD
Moscow	-.999	4	.086	Before	4.33	4.163
				After	15.00	18.028
Seoul	1.279	4	.351	Before	7.33	4.509
				After	3.67	2.082
Barcelona	1.061	4	.184	Before	1.33	1.528
				After	.33	.577
Beijing	.100	4	.861	Before	10.00	7.937
				After	9.33	8.386

The political character of the Olympic games *per se* cannot be discounted as an important reason for the dominance of political frames in news reports. Cha (2009) suggests that Chinese authorities sought to use the Olympic games as a diplomatic tool with which to reach out to the world and to bolster China's status as a global economic powerhouse, but the Chinese government must pay the price in terms of greater public pressure for political change. He also suggests that the Republic of Korea decided to bid for the 1988 summer games to show off its economic prowess and to gain legitimacy in the face of a ruling military dictatorship.

It can be surmised that the relatively hostile relationship between the Soviet

Union and the US may have led to a more negative assessment of the USSR in the American press, especially when journalists deploy the political frame. Unlike the other three host countries, the USSR still received a substantial number of negative reports even after the games. The negative newspaper reports must echo the free world's strong dismay over the country's incursion and interference with the internal affairs of a sovereign state. The Soviets showed little good faith in reaching *détente*, and acquiesced only to minor demands such as a partial troop withdrawal.

Indeed, Olympic pressure has prompted host countries to institute reforms. This was most evident in the case of South Korea where an autocratic military regime strongly desired to showcase its economic achievements to the whole world. To pacify a global community that is always cautious about autocratic rule, the government staged liberal elections. What resulted is perhaps one of the most peaceful transition to a workable democracy the world has ever seen.

Spain, mired in an economic crisis before the games, received a fairly negative coverage from the American press. The coverage of China, however, was predictably highly political and negative as stories highlighted the Tibetans' clamor for independence and China's "meddling" with Burmese affairs. Advocates for a free Tibet interrupted the Olympic torch relay race and boycotted the games. Despite the government's determination to maintain the status quo in Tibet, some changes were instituted in the area of human rights. Before the Olympics, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi announced Beijing's intention to restart a bilateral human

rights dialogue (suspended since 2004) with the US. This announcement attracted considerable media attention, lending some credence to the view that the regime was liberalizing in the run-up to the games.

Table 15. Differences in the use of the politics frame before and after each Olympiad

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	SD
Moscow	.508	4	.133	Before	172.00	26.851
				After	144.00	91.652
Seoul	2.174	4	.059	Before	84.33	42.194
				After	29.00	12.767
Barcelona	5.821	4	.004	Before	12.33	1.155
				After	4.33	2.082
Beijing	1.141	4	.295	Before	140.00	84.433
				After	74.33	30.601

The third frame, exports, accounted for the least proportion of the total coverage (1%) before and after each Olympics. Each newspaper averaged only one or two stories that exhibited this frame. Not a single story about Spain discussed exports (Table 13). This may be because at the time of the Olympics, the country was in the midst of a deep economic depression less than ten years after Franco's autocracy cut off Spain's connection with the entire world. The exports frame was also absent in the coverage of South Korea. Except for Spain, there was no significant difference in the deployment of the exports frame in the papers' coverage of other host countries (Table 16).

Table 16. Differences in the use of the exports frame before and after each Olympiad

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	std. dev.
Moscow	-1.342	4	.148	Before	1.67	.577
				After	2.67	1.155
Seoul	1.732	4	.116	Before	1.00	1.000
				After	.00	.00
Barcelona	None					
Beijing	.354	4	1.000	Before	1.67	1.115
				After	1.33	1.115

The t-test results shown on Table 17 indicate that there was significant difference in the use of the tourism frame to portray the host countries before and after the Olympics (Seoul: $t=3.162$, $p=0.034$, $df=4$; Barcelona: $t=3.637$, $p=0.022$, $df=4$ and Beijing: $t=3.777$, $p=0.019$, $df=4$). Overall, this frame was the second most frequently deployed. There was a sharp decline in the use of the tourism frame in the coverage of South Korea, Spain and China, although a slight decrease in the use of the frame was observed in the coverage of the Soviet Union (from a mean of 9.67 before to a mean 3.67 after the games).

Stories that displayed the tourism frame in the papers' coverage of South Korea, Spain and China, ranged from neutral to positive in terms of tone. Such stories performed a vital role of introducing the host city and country to the world and thus contained a variety of information intended to make the city more attractive to international guests. Although the content of stories that adopted the tourism frame did not change significantly, there was a stark difference in attitude.

Before the games, the stories tended to raise doubts about a host country's environmental management capability and how it supervises the infrastructure development process against some performance standards. After the games, the newspapers allocated considerable space to travel notes, portraying the host nation in a more positive light.

Table 17. Differences in the use of the tourism frame before and after each Olympiad

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	SD
Moscow	.232	4	.655	Before	9.67	3.055
				After	3.67	4.041
Seoul	3.162	4	.034	Before	7.67	3.215
				After	1.00	1.732
Barcelona	3.637	4	.022	Before	9.00	3.606
				After	1.33	.577
Beijing	3.777	4	.019	Before	23.67	6.028
				After	5.33	5.859

The second least used frame concerns the country's culture and heritage, which constituted only 4.1% of the overall coverage. The t-test results shown in Table 18 reveal no significant difference in the coverage of the four host countries with respect to the use of this frame before and after the games. No regular pattern in the use of this frame was also detected. After the Moscow Olympiad, the number of articles manifesting the culture and heritage frame rose slightly (from a mean of 5.00 before to a mean 7.33 after the games), but this increase was not

statistically significant. Stories that exemplified this frame highlighted exhibitions, concerts, food, and the arts. Basically, stories that depicted the culture and heritage frame were neutral in tone.

The same results can be gleaned regarding the use of the last frame, the investments and immigration frame, which accounted for only 4.5% of the entire sample of stories. The t-test results displayed on Table 19 reveals no significant difference in the use of this frame across the four Olympiads. Spain was not at all portrayed using this particular frame.

Table 18. Differences in the use of the culture and heritage frame before and after each Olympiad

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	std. dev.
Moscow	-.661	4	.074	Before	5.00	1.732
				After	7.33	5.859
Seoul	1.180	4	.058	Before	3.67	3.786
				After	1.00	1.000
Barcelona	1.750	4	.205	Before	4.00	1.000
				After	1.67	2.082
Beijing	.158	4	.065	Before	6.33	1.155
				After	6.00	3.464

Because the host countries had different capacities to draw the attention of the international media, each Olympiad was analyzed to determine what frames were best utilized to describe the host country before and after the games. The results of a series of chi-square tests conducted to determine differences in frame use by host country revealed significant differences in the frames employed to

discuss the Soviet Union and China ($\chi^2=38.127$; $df=5$, $p=0.000$ and $\chi^2=28.969$; $df=5$, $p=0.000$, respectively). Stories about South Korea and Spain, however, were not significantly different in terms of the frames deployed before and after the games ($\chi^2=9.176$; $df=5$, $p=0.102$ and $\chi^2=2.484$; $df=3$, $p=0.478$, respectively).

Table 19. Differences in the use of the investments and immigration frame before and after each Olympiad

	t value	df	Sig.	Period	Mean	std. dev.
Moscow	.948	4	.298	Before	12.00	6.506
				After	7.234	4.177
Seoul	.372	4	.875	Before	4.67	3.055
				After	3.67	3.512
Barcelona	None					
Beijing	-.763	4	.639	Before	5.67	3.786
				After	8.33	2.728

Table 20. Differences among the Olympics games in terms of news frames employed

	χ^2 value	df	Asymp. sig. (two-tailed)
Moscow	38.127	5	.000
Seoul	9.176	5	.102
Barcelona	2.484	3	.478
Beijing	28.969	5	.000

In summary, after the Olympic games, the host countries became less visible in the American newspapers in terms of intensity, length as well as placement. Such a trend is consistent with the trajectory of newspaper coverage of any issue. That is, over time, the host countries, despite their image problems,

received less attention from the US press. The results also showed less negative coverage of all four host countries studied after the games. The decline in negative news reports was accompanied by a rise in stories with a more positive slant. In short, the Olympic games brought about a positive effect on the valence of coverage.

The findings also indicate that coverage across all four Olympiads was dominated by the politics frame before and after the games. This was followed by the tourism, people, investment and immigration, and culture and heritage frames, in that order. The percentage of stories that exhibited each of the six frames used to discuss the host country did not change after the games.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

For more than a century, the Olympics have been the modern sports world's "mega-event." It is generally recognized that the games deserve much credit for globalizing sports beyond the boundaries of the Anglo-American universe where it originated into broader realms. By the 1930s, the Olympics had become an event that served as historical landmarks and against which human strides have been measured. Projected by television, funded by global capital, and fattened by the desires of nations to garner international prestige, the Olympics gradually assumed greater significance. According to Mangan and Dyreson (2009), in the course of its epic history, the Olympics have left numerous legacies, from unforgettable feats to monumental stadiums, from shining triumphs to searing tragedies, from the dazzling debuts on the world's stage of new cities and nations to notorious campaigns of national propaganda. Indeed, the Olympics now represent an essential component of modern world history. As the findings of this study demonstrate, the Olympics are a powerful tool with which host nations—even those with major reputation problems—can enhance their stature in the global community.

This study analyzed the content of three US newspapers, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*, to determine the effect of the Olympic games on the coverage of four host countries that, from the outset, were beset by reputation and image problems—China (Beijing), Spain (Barcelona),

South Korea (Seoul), and the Soviet Union (Moscow). Specifically, the study sought to determine whether hosting the Olympic games produced changes in the visibility and valence of the newspaper coverage of these host countries. The study also sought to find out the most dominant frames the newspapers used to portray the host countries and/or cities before and after the Olympic events.

Visibility and Valence

The findings provide empirical evidence to support the common observation that, after the Olympics, newspaper coverage of the host country improved in terms of visibility and valence.

First, this study finds that the visibility of host countries followed the route to national image formation as proposed by Manheim and Albritton (1984). These scholars offer a matrix composed of four quadrants each of which specifies attributes of coverage that may have a bearing on national image. These attributes include intensity of media attention and tone of media coverage. In this four-quadrant matrix, a host country that receives intense but negative media attention can be positioned in Quadrant 1. Less intense media attention and scrutiny will move a host country to Quadrant 2 following a counter-clockwise path. At Quadrant 2, the news reports become less negative; some positive news items may also seep through. A positive media portrayal goes with less intense media coverage of the host country at Quadrant 3. At Quadrant 4, a highly positive tone of coverage accompanies heavy media attention.

Manheim and Albritton (1984) proposed that a host country can move its

reputation progressively from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant 4, a pattern that was observed in all host countries examined in this study. Except for Spain, the three countries (South Korea, China, the USSR) already confronted by national image problems, were hauled into the international mass media spotlight in Quadrant 1. At this stage, they received heavy negative coverage prior to the games. This eventually moved to a lighter but more positive coverage during the course of and after the Olympiad. The only case that differed from this trajectory was the Barcelona Olympiad, which can be located initially at the bottom of Quadrant 2, having received the least attention and consequently, less newspaper space before the games.

In this study, media attention was operationalized as having three dimensions—news intensity, story length and the placement of the article in the newspaper. For the Moscow Olympics, the mean intensity of coverage went from 204.33 stories before the games to 177.67 articles after the event. However, the average number of words increased from 745 to 763. The number of stories that can be found on the inside pages rose by 9%. There was a sharp decrease (11%) in the count of stories featured in the sectional front pages, but those published on the front pages grew from 17% to 19%.

The general visibility of the Soviet Union waned although the articles about this country grew slightly longer. Three of the four host countries gradually lost their newsworthiness as average number of stories declined from 108.67 to 38.33, and the average length of stories went down from 690.63 to 577.35 words after

the games. There was a 5% increase in the number of stories found in the inside pages, but there was a subtle drop in the number of stories printed on the sectional front pages (3%) and the newspaper front pages (2%).

South Korea received the least attention from the US newspapers after the games. Thus, it can be said that the USSR moved from the upper site in Quadrant 1 to lower site in the same quadrant and Korea moved from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant 2 of the reputation matrix as the coverage of the two nations demonstrated a sharp decrease in visibility and a move to a more positive coverage over time.

Spain can be said to be at Quadrant 2 before the games. Its visibility declined after the games as evidenced by drastically reduced intensity (from 26.67 to 7.67 average number of stories), a big drop in length (from 1,130.49 to 842.61 words), a rise in the number of stories depicted on the inside pages (from 78% to 87%), and a drop in the number of stories in the sectional front pages (from 18% to 9%) and on the newspaper front pages (from 5% to 4%). Together with a more upbeat and positive tone, this level of coverage intensity pushed Spain to Quadrant 3.

Before the Beijing games, China received heavy newspaper attention with an intense coverage intensity of 210 stories. That number dropped sharply to 104 after the games. The length of stories was shortened (from 905.94 to 781.26 words). After the games, news items about China located on the inside pages grew from 77% to 82%. In contrast, stories found on the sectional front pages and

newspaper front pages dropped to 1% and 6%, respectively. These findings showing China moved from Quadrant 1 to Quadrant 2 indicate that China attracted less international media attention compared to the other host countries analyzed.

The Soviet Union received more media play in terms of longer stories published about it in the American press after the games—an artifact, perhaps, of the long-standing struggle between these two nations for world supremacy and an offshoot of Cold War policies. At the time of the Moscow games, the invasion of Afghanistan to begin a war that lasted for nine years stirred severe condemnation from the majority of nations. As a reaction, the United States passed six resolutions in international venues demanding the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Ignoring global opinion, the Russians continued their crackdown of Afghan dissidents and enforced military occupation, igniting diplomatic and organized resistance that captured the headlines. The news reports that greeted the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan demonstrated a lot of context, scenarios, opinions and commentaries from multiple sources.

The intensity of coverage, however, generally fell after the Olympics, suggesting the mass media's inability to sustain any issue for long-term public scrutiny and discussion. Like individuals, the mass media are known for having their own information processing thresholds, and, in the absence of compelling values of newsworthiness, an issue tends to decline in prominence. With the games wrapped up and the winners declared, the immediacy and salience of the

games subsequently died off, a pattern observed in all four Olympiads. The stories were shortened and were displayed in less prominently after the games. In short, the host countries were not as visible as they were before the games.

The results clearly show that the number of stories that carried a negative tone or orientation about the host country declined significantly after each Olympiad. Over time, too, the number of positive reports increased.

An exemplar of strong positive coverage is the Barcelona Games, well known as an Olympiad that produced relatively significant and long-term benefits to the local economy, a phenomenon later referred to as the “Barcelona effect.” Spain, attempting to recover from an economic crisis, earned a berth in hosting the 1992 Olympics. The games effectively promoted the renewal and construction of urban Barcelona. Since then, the city has etched a name as a center of tourism, electronics, communications, and ports development in that part of Europe. The economic impetus lowered the rate of unemployment, which dropped to an absolute minimum on July 1992, when the games began. Among tourists, Barcelona became the gateway to Spain so that by 1993, the World Tourism Organization rated Barcelona the third best tourist destination, up from 16th place before the Olympic games.

The city of Seoul and the whole of South Korea underwent a similar pattern of upgraded infrastructure and environmental cleanup, enhanced tourist visits and hotel services, and rapid beautification. In effect, the Seoul the world knows today is largely a product of South Korea’s preparations for the Olympic games (Cha,

2009). The Koreans restructured and refurbished Kimpo airport, undertook a massive cleanup of the Han River (the once heavily polluted main waterway through the city), moved all power and telephone lines underground, and installed new international broadcasting facilities and a foreign press center. The government undertook a massive campaign to beautify everything around the city. Furthermore, the authorities financed public education campaigns aimed at reducing noise pollution by teaching merchants how to cater to Westerners, and enhancing public etiquette, among a number of measures. But to some Koreans, the very visible changes brought by the sporting event also intruded into their daily lives. As Cha (2009) observes, “In the end, the national project of hosting the Olympics could not have come to Seoul without such a physical transformation, one that touched the life of every city dweller” (p. 111).

Beijing also underwent physical transformation on an unprecedented scale. More than 400 miles of new expressways, four new subway lines, a new airport terminal, and 37 new stadiums in six cities were built at an estimated cost of US\$67 billion to ensure China's pre-Olympics facelift. The environmental cleanup was nothing short of massive. The authorities shut down factories with very active smokestacks, increased the use of clean energy, seeded clouds to effect rain, and banned cars from the streets to clean up Beijing's air.

Frames

The articles also were coded to determine the frames or the overarching themes portrayed in the news reports regarding the host country. Six

pre-determined frames, culled from the public relations literature, were coded. These were people, politics, exports, tourism, culture and heritage, and investment and immigration. The transgressions that caused a host country's image to be tarnished in the first place were highly political in nature, perhaps the reason why the politics frame was the most frequently employed major storyline in newspaper reports before and after the Olympics. In terms of frequency of application, the politics frame was followed by tourism, people, investment and immigration, culture and heritage and exports, in that particular order.

According to Cha (2009), the impact of the Seoul Olympics on South Korea's democratic transition from a military dictatorship to a republic stands as a positive model of the influence of sports on political change. Cognizant that its stakes in avoiding an Olympic failure were real and critical, the South Korean government accommodated the requests of democracy activists and human rights groups to free political dissidents, a move that drew considerable attention and praise from the American press. Indeed, the Olympics was part of a confluence of factors that triggered political change in the country. Basically, the Olympics had the effect of illuminating the domestic political crisis to the world and constraining the government's behavior. Mass media exposure drew links between the resolution of the democratic crisis and the successful staging of the Seoul games. Today, South Korea is seen as one of the most successful and peaceful cases of transition to democracy in world history. In effect, sports played a quiet but critical role in the political transformation of the Republic of Korea.

The Beijing Olympics also elicited very strong political frames from the American newspapers. The news reports discussed the government's plans for meaningful changes in environmental management with timelines extending beyond the games and clear enforcement policies extending outside Beijing. Many groups sought to use Beijing's pre-Olympic emphasis on new and cleaner technologies as a way to press long-term reforms in Chinese energy practices.

As a consequence of hosting the games, China's policy toward Burma (renamed Myanmar by a military junta) underwent subtle but important changes, bringing the People's Republic more in line with the norms of the international community. This highlights the Olympics' ability to prompt enduring changes in policy that years of traditional diplomacy were unable to achieve. Faced with mounting pressure and the prospect of an Olympics haunted by demonstrations about human rights, the Chinese authorities took minor steps toward accommodation but tried to keep the international focus on sports.

Implications of the Findings to Communication Theory and Practice

The findings of this study suggest that the Olympics can indeed be harnessed as a tool with which to repair a host country's national image in the world community. Although visibility declined with the termination of the sports events, the valence or orientation of the coverage uniformly moved in a positive direction after the games. In effect, hosting the Olympics can help the host country gain a relatively more neutral or positive news coverage in the face of a public relations dilemma. The results also indicate the utility of Manheim and Albritton's

four-quadrant matrix in mapping the trajectory of the national image before and after the games.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that magnificent sports events such as the Olympic games are difficult to divorce from politics as evidenced by the predominance of the politics frame in the newspapers' coverage of the four Olympic events. Except for the Soviet Union, the host countries exploited the Olympiad to galvanize international public opinion, attract tourists, and mount efforts that will spur economic development.

Indeed all four host countries offered lessons about how to enhance people's capacity for national image management. Such best practices include listening to the international clamor for peaceful reforms. For instance, putting China on the international spotlight and pressing it to reassess its foreign policies arguably led to more cooperative and productive stances with respect to Africa, specifically the tragedy at Darfur, a feat that years of traditional diplomacy had failed to accomplish. As activists tried to leverage the games to force China to reconsider its position regarding Tibet, new diplomatic avenues opened up by which discussions regarding outstanding issues can be resolved.

At no time has sports been more political than during the battle between the superpowers at the height of the Cold War (Cha, 2009). The US led a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics in protest over the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. In retaliation, the Soviets boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Olympiad. These were arguably the darkest years of the Olympics. The Soviet

Union had wanted to exploit the Moscow Olympics to the hilt since it decided to abandon the Marxist notion of sports as a bourgeois enterprise designed to divert attention away from its struggle with the West. Politically, the Olympics was important for the Soviets as a way of organizing the communist bloc and its satellite countries to focus on a common objective. The Carter Administration's decision to stay away from the Moscow games disgruntled many American athletes who felt they were prohibited from achieving their dreams of Olympic medals by a government that did not finance nor in any way support their training.

For Seoul, the Olympic games offered an opportunity to make a bold statement about South Korea's emergence from the ashes of the Korean War, and its arrival on the world stage as a prosperous and developed nation. For the political regime, hosting a scene-perfect Olympics was critical for domestic legitimacy. Infrastructure was upgraded, the environment was cleaned up, more tourists visited the country, hotel services were enhanced, and the city underwent a major facelift due to pre-Olympic pressures. Human rights activists forced the administration of then President Chun to choose between democracy or martial law, all under the glaring spotlight of the Olympics. The authorities emphasized the need for a peaceful resolution to the strife and tacitly advised against any military action. Later, the government agreed to the demands of the political opposition, including amendments to the constitution, especially the holding of presidential elections in December 1987.

Still recovering from the trauma of dictatorship, Spain hosted the Olympic

games with great optimism. The government invested much on infrastructures so that the main legacy of the games was a dramatic change in Barcelona's physical make up. The sports venues built in scenic spots attracted hordes of visitors, enhancing Barcelona's stature as one of Europe's most famous tourist attractions and investment centers.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

This paper analyzed the content of three newspapers circulating in a developed Western country, in effect privileging the United States as a nation that proclaims and shapes the image of other countries. The sampling universe thus constrained the study's ability to generalize the results to other areas of the world, especially in countries where the media may practice different gatekeeping rules and reporters hold different journalistic values.

Because only newspaper content was analyzed, the findings also cannot speak in broad terms about the impact of the mass media in shaping the image of nations. Analyzing television, radio, and online news content will certainly benefit future studies that aim for more comprehensive conclusions.

Furthermore, the sampling frame was limited to news reports published one year before and after the actual games. Expanding the time period of analysis to two years may offer a clearer trajectory of coverage over time and produce more reliable and valid longitudinal data. For example, anticipating close international scrutiny as host countries, South Korea and China promoted policies and enforced practices to effect short-term changes. These changes, however,

could lead to more permanent ones as people become socialized to new behavior and new ways of doing things. According to Cha (2009), China clearly intended to use the Olympics to improve internal credibility and control, showcase its economic growth, delegitimize Taiwan, and enhance its international stature, among other purposes. However, the lack of enduring change in any of these identified fronts because the country is no longer under the media microscope only serves to undercut the Chinese government's reputation and stature. A longer timeframe of analysis, therefore, may be able to capture potential longer-term outcomes.

The findings of this study indirectly support the notion that the Olympics and the concept of Olympism are not merely about sports alone; they are a collection of values and prescribed practices about humanity and its treatment (Close, Askew and Xu, 2006). The lessons learned from the experience of host countries seem to indicate that it is not enough to effect cosmetic changes in governance and public diplomacy in the face of long and intense and media scrutiny and ideational pressures to conform to the rules. However, not doing so has potentially damaging implications for the enhanced reputation so desperately sought through the Olympic games.

APPENDIX

Coding Sheet: The Effect of Hosting the Olympics on National Image

Variable name	Variable label	Instructions and values	Values	Missing values
Coder	Coder's name			
ID	Article ID number			
Newspaper	Newspaper being studied	1= the <i>New York Times</i> 2= the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> 3= the <i>Washington Post</i>		
Olympiad	Olympiad with image problem	1=Moscow Olympics 2=Seoul Olympics 3=Barcelona Olympics 4=Beijing Olympics		
Date	Date of publication	Enter as mm-dd-yy		9
Period	Period when the article was published	1= before the games 2= after the games		9
Length	Length of article in number of words	Enter as a numerical variable		9
Position	Article position	1= Other pages 2= Section front page 3= Front page		9
Valence	Tone of the article	1= Negative 2= Neutral 3= Positive		
Frame	Lead topic discussed in the article	1= People 2= Politics 3= Exports 4= Tourism 5= Culture & heritage 6= Investment & immigration		

Appendix (continued)

Variable name	Variable label	Instructions and values	Values	Missing values
People	Examples of people frames	Enter as string; document exact, word-for-word paragraphs from news reports		
Politics	Examples of politics frames	Enter as string; document exact, word-for-word paragraphs from news reports		
Exports	Examples of exports frames	Enter as string; document exact, word-for-word paragraphs from news reports		
Tourism	Examples of tourism frames	Enter as string; document exact, word-for-word paragraphs from news reports		
Culture	Examples of culture and heritage frames	Enter as string; document exact, word-for-word paragraphs from news reports		
Invest	Examples of investment and immigration frames	Enter as string; document exact, word-for-word paragraphs from news reports		

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