

Leiden University

MA Thesis Asian Studies (60EC)

How and Why Does South Korea Use the Olympic Games as a Political Tool Effectively?

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Word Count: 14,993

Supervisor: Prof. dr. R.E. Breuker

Submission date: July 15, 2020

Introduction

In light of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games, talks between the North and South Korean leaders resumed after an impasse of high-level talks since December 2015.¹ South Korean President Moon Jae-In proposed talks on the topic of the North's participation in the Winter Olympics after Kim Jong-Un mentioned the possibility of sending athletes to Pyeongchang in his New Year's speech.² This specific event and the Winter Olympics as a whole seemingly served as a tension reducer in inter-Korean relations, and this sentiment held for a while. However, all good things come to an end, and tensions between the two Koreas returned. In this case, the effect of the Olympics did not last, which leaves the question of whether the Republic of Korea (ROK) makes use of mass sports events such as the Olympic Games to obtain political objectives. And if so, how and why? I ask this question against the backdrop of the thaw of tensions in inter-Korean relations during the 2018 Winter Olympics and its aftermath. However, the tensions between North and South Korea returned after North Korea demolished the liaison office in Kaesong.³

Considering the failure of the Pyeongchang Olympics to bring lasting peace to the Korean peninsula, I will pose the question of whether the Olympic Games hosted by South Korea are useful as a political tool. A political tool is an instrument of (sports) diplomacy for an increase in image, communication and advancement of policy.⁴ Most commonly, these are international events or devices of diplomacy, such as news media and social media, which states can use to influence image perception around the globe.⁵ Additionally, I will consider whether the ROK hosts these mass sports events to improve the relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or if the Games are more of a tool to improve the nation's image through nation branding. Aside from nation branding, I will assess the obtainment of political objectives in hosting the Olympics through policy implementation with a focus on tension reduction between the two

¹ Justin McCurry, "North Korea agrees to send athletes to Winter Olympics after talks with South," *The Guardian*, January 9, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/09/north-south-korea-talks-winter-olympics-nuclear>.

² "North Korea: South proposes Olympics delegation talks," *BBC News*, January 2, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42538323>.

³ Scott Snyder, "Back to square one for inter-Korean relations," *East Asia Forum*, June 23, 2020, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/06/23/back-to-square-one-for-inter-korean-relations/>.

⁴ Stuart Murray, "Sports Diplomacy," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 8, No.3-4 (2013): 192; Martin Griffiths, Terry O'Callaghan and Steven Roach, *International Relations: The Key Concepts* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 83-85.

⁵ Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach, *Key Concepts*, 84.

Koreas by pursuing unification policy. So, the two case studies will be on whether the South Korean government in hosting the Olympic Games achieved its objectives and goals.

This thesis will consist of a literature review, a methodology section, two case study chapters, a discussion chapter and a conclusion. In the literature review, I will elaborate on my definition of a political tool, highlight the essential literature and developments in the field of sports diplomacy and discuss other concepts and aspects of the Olympic Games as a political tool. In the case study chapters, I will cover the objectives and outcomes of the Olympics. In section three, I will assess the efficacy of employing the Olympic Games for these objectives. Their level of obtainment that pertains to nation branding and reunification or tension reduction between North and South Korea will be of particular interest. Following this assessment, I will compare both cases and discuss the limitations of my research. This is important because the differences in the results of the case studies could also be a result of other factors and circumstances. For example, the fact that the South Korea of 1988 was strikingly different from the country in 2018. The nation changed from a military dictatorship on its last legs to a prosperous, democratic state with a significant presence among the other powerful states.⁶

In the conclusion, I will seek to propose steps for further research, after answering the following research questions concretely. My main research question is: Does the South Korean government use the Olympic Games as a political tool, and if so, how and why? An additional question as an extension of why the South Korean government uses the Olympic Games as a political tool is: Are the Olympic Games an effective political tool for South Korea? The answers to these questions contribute to the field of sports diplomacy and two salient aspects to the Olympics that require further research, according to Jonathan Grix. So, this thesis will aid in understanding the rationale behind why states host the Olympics and what the legacies of the Olympics offer to countries.⁷ Which makes my research a relevant contribution to the literature on (public) diplomacy and sports diplomacy.

⁶ Jarol B. Manheim, "Rites of Passage: The 1988 Seoul Olympics as Public Diplomacy," *The Western Political Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1990): 291, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/448367>.

⁷ Jonathan Grix, "Sport Politics and the Olympics," *Political Studies Review* 11 (2013): 15, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1478-9302.12001>.

Literature Review

Political tool for diplomacy

A political tool is a tool of (sports) diplomacy for an increase in image, communication and advancement of policy.⁸ Most commonly, these are international events or acts of diplomacy, such as news media and social media, which can influence image perception around the globe.⁹ Included in definitions of foreign policy tool are mass international sporting events, by a.o. Udo Merkel who has contributed a significant amount of research on sports diplomacy in the field. Merkel has argued that instead of using other diplomacy methods, using sport as a tool to achieve foreign policy can be more accessible.¹⁰ In this view, sports provide opportunities for the implementation of soft power techniques to become more efficient.¹¹ While the use of international sports to achieve foreign policy objectives is one type of sports diplomacy, the traditional and most covered type in academic literature and the, it is not the only usage.¹² The other type covers the use of sporting events for soft power strategies, conflict resolution, nation branding and more.¹³ Therefore I define the Olympic Games as a political tool as more than a foreign policy tool: a tool of (sports) diplomacy for an increase in inter-state trust, international image, inter-state communication and advancement of foreign policy.

Diplomacy

Mass sporting events can be beneficial in the process of states conducting their foreign relations.¹⁴ Instead of managing these relations through force, states use one of the several varieties of the peaceful medium of diplomacy.¹⁵ There are three main functions of diplomacy: intelligence gathering, image building and the executing of policy.¹⁶ The Olympics lend itself mostly for image management both internationally and domestically and policy implementation in terms of functionality for diplomacy. Commonly, diplomacy has two sides. It can be an

⁸ Murray, "Sports Diplomacy," 192; Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach, *Key Concepts*, 83-85.

⁹ Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach, *Key Concepts*, 84.

¹⁰ Udo Merkel, "The Politics of Sport Diplomacy and Reunification in Divided Korea," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 43, no. 3 (2008): 307, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690208098254>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Murray, "Sports Diplomacy," 193.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Griffiths, O'Callaghan and Roach, *Key Concepts*, 83.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

instrument for a state to present itself in a certain way to the outside world, but on the other hand, diplomacy can bring conflicting national interests together.¹⁷ These two uses of diplomacy are used by a state to obtain objectives, without particularly aggravating others.¹⁸ By nature, diplomacy as a practice is high-level, between nations. The expression of a sports event used in this field that best suits these purposes is as a kick-starter to initiate or rekindle dialogue between states. The Olympics function through public diplomacy, soft power, nation branding and more specifically through sports diplomacy.

Public diplomacy

Public diplomacy is similar to diplomacy in its use to gather information and to build image or relationships. But the main difference is that instead of advancing policy, states use it to influence opinions and actions of the public, be it foreign, domestic or both.¹⁹ Scholars also define the difference between diplomacy and public diplomacy in a contrast where diplomacy takes place between states and public diplomacy between states and non-state actors.²⁰ These actors range from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to individuals to municipalities, etc. The Olympic Games lend itself for public diplomacy purposes. Hosting mass sports events can be useful in influencing public opinion. Governments can produce, construct and control access to newsworthy events to influence public opinion. Major international sports events such as the Olympic Games offer many and highly influential opportunities for public diplomacy efforts. Political leaders commonly use the appeal of sport to their benefit, for example, throwing the first ball in an important baseball game.²¹ They also use the appeal of sports by congratulating victorious athletes on their successes in the name of the nation to get a more friendly image or becoming associated with a national symbol of victory.

The exact appeal and use as a political tool of international sports events for public diplomacy lie in the audience. The audience of sports events is guaranteed to be of the unsuspecting kind, due to factors such as the atmosphere, the possibility of the team or athlete that they came to support winning, etc. The fact that the audience is unsuspecting and focused on the sports event itself makes it a perfect target for public diplomacy, especially in the case of

¹⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Bruce Gregory, "Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 2008): 274, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311723>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 280.

a large-scale event such as the Olympic Games which has an audience of over millions of people across the world. Such a sizeable audience is a perfect target not only because of its size but more importantly, because they are unsuspecting. Due to their lower mental defences, the audience is more susceptible to propaganda by targeting emotions. The emotional investment of supporters of teams complicates the use of sports matches for facilitating understanding of state relationships.²² However, this can be worked around by fielding combined teams, such as the unified Korean women's ice hockey team in the 2018 Winter Olympics.²³ In this way, the Olympic Games convey simple and highly symbolic messages.

There is a difference between the study and the practice of diplomacy, and the two usually do not communicate. The same is true for public diplomacy for which Bruce Gregory attempted to initiate a bridge between the study and the practice of public diplomacy.²⁴ Gregory and other scholars called for cooperation between researchers and practitioners of public diplomacy to develop a theory or theoretical framework for the emerging academic field in 2008.²⁵ By 2014 public diplomacy, along with soft power and nation branding were treated as concepts prominent in academic discourse.²⁶ However, the scholarship on these topics was criticized by James Pamment to be overly positive, and scholars selected models to acquire the desired results.²⁷ Pamment argues that public diplomacy questions and soft power practices are subject to power structures. This is related to how soft power organizations justify their campaign for public diplomacy. The campaigns for public diplomacy have to be impactful, efficient and preferably guarantee the outcome or obtainment of the policy objectives.²⁸ Policymakers can assess these factors in-depth to predict the result of soft power or public diplomacy strategies.²⁹ However, this does not mean that all studies of usage of soft power and diplomacy are redundant, as there is much to be learned from the contexts and power structures that influence diplomacy strategies. Regardless of influential power structures, the Olympic Games can be used to change public

²² Udo Merkel and Misuk Kim, "Third time lucky!?! Pyeongchang's bid to host the 2018 Winter Olympics—politics, policy and practice," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 28, no. 16 (2011): 2368, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2011.626691>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Gregory, "Public Diplomacy," 274.

²⁵ Ibid.; Eytan Gilboa, "Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 2008): 55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207312142>.

²⁶ James Pamment, "Articulating Influence: Toward a Research Agenda for Interpreting the Evaluation of Soft Power, Public Diplomacy and Nation Brands," *Public Relations Review* 40, no. 1 (2014): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.11.019>.

²⁷ Ibid., 51.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

opinion even if only to a certain extent due to the limitations of the power structures. However, public diplomacy is just one dimension of the different usages of an event such as the Olympics.

Sports diplomacy

As much as there is a rift between practical and academic research about (public) diplomacy, there is a rift between the practicalities and theory of sports diplomacy. Practically, governments of different kinds have made use of international sports to test the political system.³⁰ States employ sport to aid in economic development and social awareness, peacebuilding and as a well-known form of conflict resolution. Theoretically, the relationship between sports and politics has been a much-debated issue as well, while discussing and trying to advance the field of sports diplomacy.³¹ The field of sports diplomacy saw an increase in research in the past 7-9 years.³² At the forefront of this development was Stuart Murray, who argued for the theory and practice of sports diplomacy consisting of two types.³³ The first, the traditional type, views sports diplomacy as a tool to realize foreign policy objectives as part of inter-state interaction. The second type concerns communication and the creation of networks and negotiation and representation. This is among all actors involved in international sport governments and non-state actors alike. Sports diplomacy has aspects of both diplomacy and public diplomacy.

The traditional type of sports diplomacy was what the early sports diplomacy scholars viewed the use of sport in politics as in the mid-twentieth century. At this point, sports were a tool that states used only for prestige, propaganda and as a reflection or reinforcement of rivalries.³⁴ Popular topics of study were the use of sport by Nazi Germany, the use of sport in the Cold war to reflect rivalry and the desire of states to show prestige by being on top of the medal count.³⁵ Adding to this is the forceful and negative view of George Orwell, who argued that sport was only “War minus the shooting.”³⁶ However, globalization and the introduction of the concept of soft power contributed to the newer type of sports diplomacy. Hosting significant international

³⁰ Murray, “Sports Diplomacy,” 191.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 192.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Andrew Strenk, “What Price Victory? The World of International Sports and Politics,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 445, no.1 (1979): 140.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ George Orwell, “The Sporting Spirit,” *The Tribune*, December, 1945, http://www.orwell.ru/library/articles/spirit/english/e_spirit, accessed 26/06/2020.

sports events provide an opportunity to project a nation's values and identity to the world.³⁷ An example is South Africa, that hosted several World Cups. South Africa hosted the World Cup in 2010 and promoted it as the African World Cup to show the world that the state had moved past the era of Apartheid and became more democratic³⁸.

Soft power

Joseph Nye first coined the term soft power. He first defined it as: "when one country gets other countries to want what it wants might be called co-optive or soft power in contrast with the hard or command power of ordering others to do what it wants," when writing about the power of the US in 1990.³⁹ Nye's book on soft power covers his full description of the concept of soft power.⁴⁰ Power in general for Nye is the ability to realize the desired outcome by influencing others, which can be done with either hard or soft power. While hard power encompasses coercion, including threats and payment, soft power makes the other party want the same things that you want, the opposite of coercion. Nye defined three resources that nations and non-state actors can use to execute soft power. These are culture, political values and foreign policies. The conditions for these to work are that culture has to be attractive to others, political values adhered to, and foreign policies should be legitimate and morally sound. Nye's three resources for soft power are reflected in the Olympic Games as culture is showcased in the opening and closing ceremonies to appeal to the public and increase image and tourism. States adhere to values for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to select the host country, and nations advance foreign policies by hosting the event as well. These are all expressions of the new type of sports diplomacy.

New type of sports diplomacy

The new type of sports diplomacy can bypass traditional political challenges by serving as an initiator of dialogue between states and non-state actors, instead of intensifying their differences as Orwell argued before. Sports diplomacy occurs during conflicts between different countries when there is no dialogue going on between those countries.⁴¹ In this context, a single

³⁷ Scarlett Cornelissen, "The Geopolitics of Global Aspiration: Sport Mega-events and Emerging Powers," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no. 16-18 (2010): 3008, 3017.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (London: Basic Books, 1990).

⁴⁰ Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁴¹ Doosik Min and Yujeong Choi, "Sport cooperation in divided Korea: an overstated role of sport diplomacy in South Korea," *Sport in Society* (2018): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2018.1536120>.

match or even an entire event might be the kick-starter that sparks a dialogue between the countries in conflict. Countries use the kick-starter strategy because it is often successful, as well as the fact that the solution to any dispute must start with dialogue. The first and a well-known instance of a sports event used to aid in rekindling relations is known as ‘ping-pong diplomacy’. To approach the issue of strained US-China relations, the US table tennis team was invited to China to play several friendly matches in 1971. This visit warmed the relations between China and the US in preparation of President Nixon’s visit to China, through which he intended to normalize relations between the two countries. In this sort of use of sports diplomacy, political leaders or state us sports diplomacy for peacebuilding.⁴² Bypassing differences through international sport is also possible for emerging nations like China in 2008 when it hosted the Olympics despite not adhering to the IOC’s Olympic values of peace, harmony, solidarity and fair play.⁴³ In this case, the IOC chose to ignore the problem of China’s lack of human rights compared to the standard.⁴⁴

While most often states use sports diplomacy, non-state actors’ actions can also be significant. In his article on the first strategy of sports diplomacy, Murray points out that the relationship between two states can be strengthened publicly and politically by involving non-state actors.⁴⁵ He illustrates this with the many different types of events that framed the football match with Brazilian and Australian children.⁴⁶ This point contributes to the aspect of sports diplomacy that highlights the complex network of interactions between the different parties involved, much like the networks of communication used in (public) diplomacy. While supporting this theory, Simon Rofe also emphasizes the role of the individual in sports diplomacy.⁴⁷ The most influential individuals are state leaders such as Chinese President Xi Jinping. Rofe highlights the influence of social media and acts of other actors with Xi Jinping’s business dealing when the President visited the Manchester City, football team.⁴⁸ Through the twitter of one of the players, the whole world came to know about this visit.⁴⁹ The importance of individuals in sports

⁴²Håvard Mokleiv Nygård and Scott Gates, “Soft power at home and abroad: Sport diplomacy, politics and peace-building,” *International Area Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (2013): 236, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2233865913502971>.

⁴³ Qingmin Zhang, “Sports Diplomacy: The Chinese Experience and Perspective,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 8, no.3-4 (2013): 214.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Stuart Murray, “Sports Diplomacy in the Australian Context: Theory into Strategy,” *Politics and Policy* 45, no.5 (2017): 845.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Simon Rofe, “Sport and Diplomacy: A Global Diplomacy Framework,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 27, no.2 (2016): 212.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 213.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

diplomacy is a shared opinion among scholars. Jeremy Goldberg even went so far as to suggest a replication of the well-known ping-pong diplomacy.⁵⁰ His advice to the US to invite North Korean basketball star Michael Ri to play in the NBA, was published in 2000. Goldberg argued that individual players and not only state leaders, could act as a mediator between two states and soften relations.⁵¹ If this happened, it would be an example of sports diplomacy serving as a kick-starter of dialogue or of it rekindling strenuous ties.

Both the new and traditional type of sports diplomacy are relevant to my research. The traditional type is suitable because I assess the efficacy of the Olympic Games in obtaining government goals, and (foreign) policy or hosting objectives signify these goals. As for the second type, communication plays a significant role in the rekindling of dialogue, which is also a result of hosting the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics. Additionally, negotiation plays a role in taking steps forward in the unification policy objectives and tension reduction between the two Koreas. Representation is also present in the aspects of the Games as a political tool, mostly in the shape of image building and nation branding. Image building and nation branding are closely related because the image of the nation affects the popularity of its products.

Image building

Image building is a common objective for the host country of mass sports events such as the Olympic Games.⁵² One of the first examples of image building was public diplomacy executed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Amidst the intense competition with the US for influence, the Soviet Union promoted their high culture and sponsored nuclear protests, peace movements, etc. to convince the world of the attractiveness of Communism. An extensively studied example of soft power from South Korea would be Hallyu or the Korean Wave.⁵³ The Korean Wave is the spread of South Korean entertainment, mostly K-pop, which influenced people to purchase other South Korean goods such as food and Korean language classes. The South Korean government has been promoting Korean dramas and most significantly K-pop abroad to appeal to other countries and cultures. One of the objectives of this was the promotion of South Korea as a tourism destination which is evident in the advertisements the Korea Tourism organization did. In part organized by the Korean tourism organization, foreigners could get free

⁵⁰ Jeremy Goldberg, "Sporting Diplomacy: Boosting the Size of the Diplomatic Corps," *Washington Quarterly* 23, no.3 (2000): 68.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Grix, "Sport Politics," 17.

⁵³ Youna Kim, *The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global* (London: Routledge, 2013).

access to K-pop festivals and workshops and the like. Many scholars view the promotion of K-pop as a successful use of soft power, as South Korea's image has become more positive and the sales of Korean goods increased as well as tourism to the country.

Nation branding

Nation branding is another type of soft power and public diplomacy, which was first coined by brand consultant Simon Anholt in the late 1990s.⁵⁴ It originated from the observation that “most of the really successful international brands have come from countries that are successful brands in their own right, and substantial transfer of imagery and brand equity can often be seen to occur between the two”. Anholt's observation prompted the development of strategies for states to use their nation's image to advance the economy and improve their international image. This happens by improving the nation's image or brand, which subconsciously changes the perception of the country and its associated brands and products positively, which in turn increases the sales of the nation's brands and products because they became more desirable based on the change in the nation's image. A recent example of nation branding is Japan's Cool Japan campaign and rebranding.⁵⁵ While Japan has actively tried to change its image since the Second World War to improve its economy, the Cool Japan rebranding campaign started only after the establishment of the Creative Industries Promotion Office in 2010 by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Japanese pop culture is the critical element for the campaign focusing on the overseas promotion of anime and food, to the most substantial government investments go. In the case of sports diplomacy, sports events can be useful for the increase in sales of items at those events to show support for a local or the national team, for example, T-shirts or banners.

Sports are political and risky

Sports diplomacy as a practice has received more attention than sports diplomacy as an academic field. Within the discipline of political science, sports diplomacy has received less attention than, for example, public diplomacy. Another one of these hierarchies is noticeable within the study of sports diplomacy itself. This pertains to the Olympic Games specifically. There

⁵⁴ Enric Castello and Sabina Mihelj, “Selling and consuming the nation: Understanding consumer nationalism,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 18, no. 4 (2018): 560.

⁵⁵ “Cool Japan / Creative Industries Policy,” Policy Index, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, last updated April 20, 2020, https://www.meti.go.jp/english/policy/mono_info_service/creative_industries/creative_industries.html.

is perceived inferiority of the Winter Olympics to the Summer Olympics.⁵⁶ The general public that watches the event casually holds a similar view, which is evident in the view count for the Games on worldwide television. The Winter Olympics are generally viewed by around 2 billion people, while the Summer Olympics records approximately 3 to 4 billion viewers.⁵⁷ When compared to the FIFA World Cup final views that average about 500 million viewers, the Winter Olympics attract a broader viewership.⁵⁸ Granted, the Olympics is an event that spans for several weeks. So, while inferior in reach to a global audience and therefore also less of an ideal tool for public diplomacy, the Winter Olympics are still of a massive scale. However, if one takes into account the amount of media coverage of each event, one can see that the numbers and content are highly event-specific.⁵⁹ A particularity such as the location of the Games or the host country's image in media before the event, influence viewership. Regardless, the numbers are significantly high for both the Winter and Summer Olympics in general. So, at least in the case of South Korea and the Olympic Games' significance for its use as a political tool, the Winter Olympics should be considered on equal footing. After all, both the Summer and Winter Games are massive international events with political aspects and reflections of international politics.

Even before the increased research into sports diplomacy, states employed sports political motives in mind. Especially the Olympics, despite that the original intention of the event was to offer a respite from it.⁶⁰ Several elements from sports diplomacy in practice make this event highly political and negate its original purpose. Think boycotts and blacklists, terrorist threats, medal counts and their celebration, as well as praise by political leaders for accomplishments in sports.⁶¹ So, sports at first glance seem non-political, which results in a malleable unsuspecting audience perfect for public diplomacy. Still, sporting events, especially the Olympics, are highly political in ways that are noticeable in scholarship on sports diplomacy. They include sports being a kick-starter of dialogue or aid in rekindling relationships, a means for image building and a tool to achieve policy objectives. One aspect that I have yet to discuss is that of legacy.

⁵⁶ David Rowe, "The Worlds That Are Watching: Media, Politics, Diplomacy, and the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics," *Communication & Sport* 7, no. 1 (2018): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479518804483>.

⁵⁷ "Number of Olympic Games TV viewers worldwide from 2002 to 2016," Statista Research Department, Statista, published Aug 18, 2016, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/287966/olympic-games-tv-viewership-worldwide/>.

⁵⁸ Felix Richter, "Super Bowl Can't Hold the Candle to the Biggest Game in Soccer," Statista, published January 31, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/chart/16875/super-bowl-viewership-vs-world-cup-final/>.

⁵⁹ Statista, "Olympic Games TV Viewers."

⁶⁰ Grix, "Sport Politics," 15.

⁶¹ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 280; Grix, "Sport Politics," 15.

The legacy of hosting the Olympics can be an objective or motive to bid for the right to host it. Legacy strategy is a required part in the bidding document that hosting candidates submit to the IOC.⁶² The most common definition of Olympic legacy is how the Games are remembered in the public sphere. The media heavily influences legacy by singling out one aspect of a past Olympic Games and focusing on it.⁶³ This single aspect can also be changed depending on the current need.⁶⁴ So legacy is a fickle and singular aspect, the one thing these Games are remembered for, of the massive sporting event. Nevertheless, it is seen as important by the host nation, and a specific legacy is usually one of the objectives in bidding for the right to host the Games. Developmental goals most easily explain this. If a country, especially a developing country like South Korea in 1988, hosts the Olympics successfully it showcases a certain level of prosperity, economic welfare and development.⁶⁵ The legacy of hosting a massive sports event in the aspect of development can be the improvement of infrastructure and sports facilities or in the case of a developing country, the establishment of an image of a developed or rapidly growing country.⁶⁶ Although, the legacy in the case of image change or how the general public will remember the Games is highly dependent on the media.

Sporting events are both viewed as mere sports events and a reflection of politics. There can be sporting events that have little to no connection to politics. Still, many have political interests depending on them or are a reflection of the political landscape.⁶⁷ The Olympic Games are the most politicized sports event for many reasons, even though the original intention of the Olympic Games was to provide respite from politics.⁶⁸ Although from the very first modern Olympic Games political interests have always been intertwined with the event, because the origination of the Olympics itself was political.⁶⁹ However, this does not mean that scholars studied it as a political event for a long time. Within the field of international relations and political science, sporting events were still under-researched in 2013, five years after Murray's start of an increase in research.⁷⁰ There was indeed an increase, but there are still areas in sports diplomacy that require further study as identified by Jonathan Grix in 2013.⁷¹ He calls for more research into

⁶² Grix, "Sport Politics," 20.

⁶³ Rowe, "The Worlds," 13.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 280.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Grix, "Sport Politics," 15.

⁶⁸ A. Guttmann, *A History of the Modern Games*, (Urbana IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Grix, "Sport Politics," 16.

⁷¹ Ibid., 15.

answers to the most salient questions of the field: “Why do governments invest so much into elite sport and sports mega-events? What kind of legacy can an Olympic Games produce?”⁷²

In examining the risk of hosting the Olympic Games and especially the limited influence that states have on legacy, one can see the relevance of these questions. Hosting the Olympics comes with high-risk factors, such as the potential of large debts afterwards due to for instance the construction of new sporting facilities that will never serve another purpose.⁷³ Another risk is that in the age of globalization the actors that are involved in sports diplomacy are more diverse, which makes it more complicated, as can be seen in the bidding process of the Pyeongchang Games. The complexity of using international sporting events for political gains that Udo Merkel and Misuk Kim describe illustrates the importance of an evaluation of the efficacy for such events in achieving political objectives.⁷⁴ Because even though the consensus among governments is that the Olympics are attractive due to their potential gain, are the risks worth it? There is no guarantee that the desired outcomes will be what will occur. The danger of legacy lies mostly in the media, as it is almost impossible to influence what will become the one memory associated with that particular Olympics. While these are prominent questions that require further study, these are not the only questions that slip under the radar of sports diplomacy scholarship. Primarily how states use the Games to improve the nation’s image and obtain the desired legacy or outcome of the Olympics require more attention.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Edward Burgo and Fred J. Cromartie, “The Benefits of Bidding and Hosting the Olympic Games are Difficult to Justify Due to the Overall Costs,” *The Sport Journal*, (2018), <https://thesportjournal.org/article/the-benefits-of-bidding-and-hosting-the-olympic-games-are-difficult-to-justify-due-to-the-overall-costs/>.

⁷⁴ Merkel and Kim, “Third Time Lucky!?” 2366.

Methodology

To contribute to understanding the rationale behind why states host the Olympics and what the legacies of the Olympics offer host states, I will answer my main research question: Does the South Korean government use the Olympic Games as a political tool, and if so, how and why? Additionally I will pose another question as an extension of why the South Korean government uses the Olympic Games as a political tool is: Are the Olympic Games an effective political tool for South Korea? I intend to obtain answers to these questions by conducting two case studies before comparing them.

Mass sports events used for sports diplomacy are most often tailored to the surrounding situation, with sometimes the results depending on the context more than on the event itself. Although this is not necessarily so, the uniqueness of the political playing field around an Olympic Games does require particular research into these two unique events. Therefore, a case study or a focused analysis would best suit this research. However, a variety of actors use mass sports events for reasons identifiable by either of the two types of theories in sports diplomacy. This provides the common ground that is beneficial to a comparison of particular and detailed cases. The information for these case studies I will primarily gather from academic articles on the respective Games and news articles.

In contrast with the existing literature, I discuss two Olympic Games instead of one, because I expect that the differences and similarities between the two cases will contribute to clarifying the importance for the use of the Olympics as a political tool. Looking at two Games instead of one might limit the number of details and information that I can include in this paper. Additionally, my access to information is limited by language, as I am only able to use English-language sources, which could result in a biased point of view. The two Olympics hosted by South Korea also have a 30-year long gap between them in which the country and the international landscape changed drastically, which I will address appropriately. It is necessary to view both Olympics in their appropriate context, but a comparison can indicate that the Olympics are effective and useful in a variety of situations when similar.

Chapter 1

1988, Summer Olympics in Seoul

The first Olympic Games that were hosted by South Korea had a tremendous impact on the country in several aspects. The main area of improvement was the global image of the nation that changed to that of a prosperous economy. The domestic political landscape also saw a significant change. The objectives that the Korean government had in bidding for and hosting the Seoul 1988 Olympics and other factors I will consider as motives for hosting in the developments prior, during and after the Games. In this chapter, I will explore the South Korean government's objectives in hosting the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics and how they used the Games to obtain them. Additionally, I will assess whether that was done successfully. The focus will be on the objectives that have to do with nation branding and reunification, or more likely tension reduction between the two Koreas.

Before the start of the bidding for the right to host the 1988 Summer Olympics, fundamental changes happened that shaped the domestic political challenges of South Korea, which gave shape to the objectives in hosting the Games. These changes started with the assassination of President Park Chung-Hee, after which a period of political instability for South Korea followed.⁷⁵ The event that had the most effect on domestic Korean politics was the conflict between the military forces and the students that were demonstrating in Gwangju in May of 1980.⁷⁶ After this ordeal, Chun Doo-Hwan was inaugurated as President of South Korea, which was partially made possible courtesy of the US.⁷⁷ The Chun administration then faced three significant economic and political issues which problematized the administration's position. For this reason, the Chun administration focused on winning the bid to obtain the right to host the Olympics, because they hoped for the Games to assist in achieving government objectives that were essential to solve these three challenges.

Nation branding of a developing state

The first challenge that the Chun administration faced was a rapidly developing and expanding economy. The economy shifted from being predominantly agrarian to an industrial

⁷⁵ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 280-281.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 281.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

economy.⁷⁸ This resulted in a higher standard of living for a significant part of the population. The growth numbers from this period are impressive. South Korea's Gross National Product (GNP) increased with almost 19 billion dollars from 1975 to 1980, which was followed by an increase of another 14.3 billion in the next three years under the Chun administration.⁷⁹ The improvement of the South Korean economy also caused a rise in urbanization and was mostly driven by exports.⁸⁰ The Chun administration sought to cement South Korea's budding position as a prominent player in international trade by organizing a successful Olympics.⁸¹ Additionally, being recognized as a significant global actor was to also aid in providing legitimation for the government in domestic politics.⁸²

The most crucial objective in hosting the Olympics by far was the goal to showcase the phenomenal growth of the South Korean economy to the rest of the world. When looking at South Korea in 1988, it becomes clear that the economy improved significantly in several aspects and that the world knew about it as well. At this point, the industrial sector was already well-established, and the country held a stable place in the world market for durable goods.⁸³ To secure South Korea's position, the government took protectionist measures. These included the prevention of the won rising too much relative to the US dollar and import barriers that protected domestic industries.⁸⁴ The recognition of South Korea's economic position is evident in the coverage that the Wall Street Journal did on the country.⁸⁵ However, there were also disadvantages to the economic objectives in hosting the Olympics. A side goal for the government on the economy was to gain financial benefits from the sizeable investments in the Olympics. There were costs such as a million people being evicted from their homes but also benefits such as providing a springboard for companies such as Samsung to gain more visibility around the world.⁸⁶ Although it depends on which methodology they used, scholars are generally positive on the benefits outweighing the costs in this case.⁸⁷ Due to the many risks in hosting the Games only states with affluent money reserves host the Olympics,⁸⁸ which also shows the economic

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 282.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 291.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Brian Bridges, *The Two Koreas and the Politics of Global Sport* (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 70-71.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 71.

⁸⁸ Burgo and Cromartie, "Benefits of Bidding."

development of South Korea before the 1988 Games. The legacy of the 1988 Olympics that was produced by the media highlighted South Korea's economic growth.⁸⁹ So, it is possible to say that the government objective of showing off the country's development to the world was fulfilled. However, the legitimating of the government turned out to be a more difficult challenge.

Legitimizing the government through national pride

The second challenge that the Chun administration faced was that it lacked legitimacy from the people. While the Chun administration hoped to gain some legitimation for its political leadership from hosting a successful Olympics and putting the country on the international map as a force to be reckoned with, at least economically, this was not the main objective for solving the legitimacy issue. The discontent among the population of South Korea was deeply rooted, and the voices of the people increased in significance due to the increase in their economic standing which gave their voices more weight on the issue of political stability.⁹⁰ The government lacked legitimacy, which they intended to solve by playing on the sense of national pride. The Chun administration hoped to gain this sense of national pride from obtaining the right to host the Games and preparing for them, which the people would then view as "thanks to the government we got awarded this great opportunity."⁹¹ Indeed in previous cases, winning the bid for the Olympic Games comes with a great sense of national pride and some of that pride was due to the government which was able to win the nation that bid.⁹² The pride in hosting the Olympic Games comes from the requirements for hosting it. Up until the Games of 1988, only developed nations had hosted the Olympics, so for South Korea to be the first developing country to do so, would be a significant show of progress.⁹³ Winning the bid to host the Olympics also means that the host has the financial and other means to host the event.⁹⁴ Additionally, getting awarded the right to host this mass event would mean that the host also adheres to the Olympic values, which would signal to the world that the country adheres to the values of peace, harmony, solidarity and fair play as judged by the IOC.⁹⁵ Based on these aspects, the Chun administration to broaden the support for the government abroad as well.⁹⁶ And once the bid was won the government lifted a

⁸⁹ Sung-Jun Chung, "National Pride and Global Citizenship," Olympic.org, published June 24, 2020, <https://www.olympic.org/news/olympic-legacy/seoul-1988/national-pride-and-global-citizenship>.

⁹⁰ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 282.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Chung, "Global Citizenship."

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Burgo and Cromartie, "Benefits of Bidding."

⁹⁵ Zhang, "Sports Diplomacy," 214.

⁹⁶ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 282.

nationwide curfew that was in place since the Second World War to show its confidence in the prospect of gaining political support both internationally and domestically.⁹⁷

The Gwangju uprising and the hosting of the Olympics problematized the legitimation of the government. The student protests that started the Gwangju uprising continued after the incident, up until the election of the new President Roh Tae Woo, who called for fundamental political change during his candidacy.⁹⁸ The situation that the Chun administration hoped to solve by hosting the Olympics worsened in the run-up to the event. The demand for democratization originated from the population that had a higher standard of living and with that required a different political system.⁹⁹ The lack of openness of the Chun administration amplified the demand for democratization.¹⁰⁰ But, instead of the Olympics dissolving the heightened tension, the Games became a catalyst for political change. In June 1987 the student protests increased significantly, which may or may not have been influenced by the impending Games.¹⁰¹ But the difference with the Gwangju uprising is that the world's press came to cover the protests.¹⁰² If the protests continued, the media would publicize a negative image of South Korea and especially of the government and its lack of legitimacy. In light of this possibility, the ruling party adjusted its political agenda.¹⁰³ So, instead of catching the eye of the world's media with both South Korea's economic progress and the government's legitimacy, the political system was forced to change before the Games to avoid only negative press coverage. This shows that the Olympics and other international sporting events are high-risk and are never a guarantee to provide the desired kind of attention or legacy, especially when taking into account that a state has little influence on the press that covers the event. In this respect, the Olympics functioned more as a catalyst for political change than as a political tool for achieving government objectives.

While the Olympics in 1988 is the catalyst for domestic political change, it is also one of the many events that spelled Chun's demise. The massive protests in 1987 and the threat of Chun imposing martial law on the country were significant stand-alone events already.¹⁰⁴ However, there is also evidence for Jarol Manheim's argument on which other scholars agree. In early 1987

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 291-292.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 291.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Bridges, *The Two Koreas*, 77.

Chun provided the Olympics as an excuse for the delay in democratization until after the event.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, Chun refrained from imposing martial law partially because the protests subsided, but also because if he imposed martial law, the IOC would have changed the location of the Games.¹⁰⁶ While it may not be the only factor at play, there is a consensus that the Olympics played a significant part in the democratization of South Korea.

Despite the public opinion that the Olympics are a political project of a military dictatorship, a sense of great national pride originated from the Games. According to public opinion surveys, the view that the Olympics is a project of military dictatorship was only held by radicals in 1987.¹⁰⁷ Most Koreans wanted to make a success of the Games mostly because of national pride.¹⁰⁸ The Seoul Olympics served as a symbol to both Koreans and the world that the nation successfully hosted the event and that it was a collective effort.¹⁰⁹ The people united to host a successful event and show the country from its best side, but also to convey cultural values.¹¹⁰ The 1988 Olympics were the largest yet with over 13,000 athletes from 160 nations competing, which also helped in the amount of exposure for both South Korea's economic development and the cultural aspects of the country.¹¹¹ Traditional and sporting culture was heavily promoted during the Olympics and in the period before, to increase the sense of national pride to the government's benefit.¹¹² Due to tv coverage on a large scale, the Korean people started to view the event not as a military show, but as an event that was to be completed successfully for the sake of national pride.¹¹³ And it is the tv coverage that helped change the image of South Korea positively around the world.¹¹⁴ The positive message that was carried out by the 1988 Seoul Olympics was that of a successful Olympic Games hosted by a nation of South Koreans and the projecting of a positive image abroad. Projecting a positive image of South Korea abroad was also one of the Korean government's goals, putting the miraculous development of the Korean economy to use to change the perception of South Korea internationally. After the scars left by colonialism, division, civil war and authoritarian governments, the uniting together

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Chung, "Global Citizenship."

¹⁰⁹ Bridges, *The Two Koreas*, 65.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 71.

¹¹³ Ibid., 74.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

of the people to host this event of global scale, added to the increase of nationalist sentiment and the portrayal of a thriving nation to the world.

Confronting the threat from North Korea

The third reason for the South Korean government to decide to bid to host the 1988 Olympics was to confront the perceived threat from the North. The Chun administration hoped to gain two benefits from hosting the Olympics in this regard: renewing world awareness about the threat that North Korea poses and gaining allies to fall back on amidst the aggression from the conflict between North and South.¹¹⁵ The animosity between the two states was so intense that the government banned public debate on reunification.¹¹⁶ Additionally, the animosity was reflected in the bidding and awarding the right to host both the Asian and Olympic Games. The Chun administration also specifically based the goals in hosting the Olympics on the animosity between North and South Korea. Then North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung's regime was perceived to be a threat to the longevity of the Chun administration and the political stability in the South.¹¹⁷ So with this third challenge to be overcome by hosting the Games, the Chun government fully committed to the bid for hosting the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics.

Not many countries had diplomatic relations established with South Korea, so South Korea and the IOC were concerned that many countries would boycott Seoul Games out of solidarity with North Korea.¹¹⁸ But only a few did. North Korea's key allies intend on boycotting the 1988 Seoul Olympics were the Soviet Union, China and East Germany (not due to its political significance but due to its sporting prowess it was a key ally).¹¹⁹ However, North Korea's key partners did eventually participate. They were motivated by the economic advantages that South Korea's growing economy had to offer.¹²⁰ China had another motive that weighed heavier, which was that for China to be eligible to host the 1990 Asian Games, all member states of the Olympic Council of Asia had to be allowed to send athletes to the Olympics in Seoul.¹²¹ However, the communist countries did pressure South Korea to make concessions on co-hosting options of the 1988 Games to North Korea.¹²² This was to facilitate the talks with North Korea about its allies

¹¹⁵ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 282.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Bridges, *The Two Koreas*, 75.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

participating in the Games that it hoped would be boycotted by them.¹²³ For the Olympics to run more smoothly, China even sent a high-ranking official to persuade Kim Jung-Il that they required the event to proceed without disruption.¹²⁴

The possibility of diplomatic recognition from North Korea's socialist allies was further pushed for by South Korea through cultural politics. These entailed, for example, inviting specifically Eastern European sculptors or using Eastern European equipment when cheaper alternatives were available.¹²⁵ Contributing to the cultural politics was the nordpolitik policy (northern diplomacy) that was set out by President Roh in July 1988. Through this policy, the South Korean government planned to establish ties with the North's socialist allies, more specifically the Soviet Union, based on pure pragmatism and economic profits.¹²⁶ Roh modelled his nordpolitik policy on how West Germany approached East Germany and the other communist states.¹²⁷ Roh's northern diplomacy also included a willingness to rekindle dialogue between the two Koreas, along with an offer of support for the North's improvement in relations with Western states.¹²⁸ This support was on the condition that the North would not hinder the South's tentative ties with the communist states.¹²⁹ South Korea's efforts all added up and aided in improving its relations with China and the Soviet Union, which ultimately culminated in the two communist states recognizing the ROK.¹³⁰ However, it is still debatable whether this was mostly due to the changing political situation in Eastern Europe or the Olympic Games serving as a catalyst.¹³¹ The other objective of the northern diplomacy, improving inter-Korean relations, failed. Not even a sports event could serve as a kick-starter for dialogue at that time. Based on the context and failure of the nordpolitik policy, one can argue that Roh, like his predecessor, may have had no real inclination that improving inter-Korean relations through dialogue could have worked.¹³² Because the success that South Korea enjoyed during and after the Olympics, was in stark contrast with North Korea's failure in profiting of potential co-hosting of (parts of) the Games.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 82.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 76.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 82.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 76.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 82.

Chapter 2

2018, Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang

The objectives that the Korean government and other parties had in bidding for and hosting the Pyeongchang 2018 Olympics and other factors I will consider as motives for hosting in the developments prior, during and after the Games. In this chapter, I will explore the South Korean government's objectives in hosting the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympics and how they used the Games to achieve them. Additionally, I will assess whether that was done successfully. The focus will be on the objectives that have to do with nation branding and reunification, or more likely tension reduction between the two Koreas. The objectives for hosting the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games changed with every attempt at bidding. The first objective was similar to the Seoul Olympics because, with the Pyeongchang Games, the government hoped to improve the nation's image and economic development. The second objective evolved throughout the bidding process from a desire to co-host the event with North Korea to merely providing humanitarian aid to the North and the use of the Olympics as a political tool for reunification became a goal with less priority. However, the Pyeongchang Games saw significant developments towards tension reduction between the two Koreas. The original intention of the first two bids and the return to Sunshine policy under President Moon Jae-In at the time of hosting the Olympics prompts me to consider improvement in inter-Korean relations as a desirable outcome of the Games and an objective that the event was supposed to assist in.

Bidding process

The plan for Pyeongchang to host the Winter Olympic Games originated from the provincial governor in 1996. Then in 2000, the first official plans were made to host the event in 2010.¹³³ The objectives in hosting the Games in 2010 were mostly twofold. Through sports, the government intended to improve the image of South Korea as the 'centre of the world', and as a powerful sporting nation.¹³⁴ Additionally, the original intention was to bid to host a joint Winter Olympics with North Korea.¹³⁵ The bidding document focused on the co-hosting of the Games to contribute to peace and reunification between the two Koreas and simultaneously adding to a

¹³³ Merkel and Kim, "Third time lucky!?" 2371.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 2372.

principle of the Olympic spirit: contributing to world peace.¹³⁶ The bidding document focused on Gangwon province (in which Pyeongchang is located) because the region was the perfect location for reunification.¹³⁷ Some of the reasons were that the province was the only divided one, the area that bore immense suffering from war and that it also houses many separated families.¹³⁸ This bidding campaign was mainly playing on emotions, which was very effective, but the objective of significant steps in the direction of unification was perhaps too ambitious to be feasible.

For the second bid, this time for the 2014 Winter Olympics, the government had a strong presence which made the bidding garner national attention.¹³⁹ The goals were more ambitious this time, driven by the government. Nationally the Olympics were to enhance the development across the whole country in a balanced way and to increase sports tourism for economic growth.¹⁴⁰ Internationally the status of South Korea was to be increased significantly, and winter sports were to be globalized.¹⁴¹ As well in the bidding phase, South Korea took steps toward cooperation in the field of sports, which could have swayed the IOC's decision. Two North Korean officials proclaimed their support for the bidding process, the head of the North Korean National Olympic Committee and the North Korean IOC member.¹⁴² The first steps of co-hosting were the joint training of athletes from both countries and the participation of a North Korean team in the Ice hockey League in Gangwon.¹⁴³

Amidst divided public opinion on whether investing in another bid was the right decision, the majority of the people, Gangwon province and the government all cooperated in this third bidding process.¹⁴⁴ The main goal for them was to improve South Korea's image abroad and to see an increase in economic development by hosting the 2018 Winter Olympics.¹⁴⁵ The actors behind the third bidding expected awareness of the brands of the country to increase by enhancing South Korea's image abroad.¹⁴⁶ The improvement of the image of the country would cause (sports) tourism to grow at least temporarily. The organizers expected that hosting the 2018

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 2373.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 2374.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 2375.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 2375-2376.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 2376.

Winter Olympics would create 230,000 new jobs, which would be beneficial due to the high unemployment rate.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, the bidding document predicted an increase in civic consciousness and sense of community by mainly depending on the national pride that accompanies the hosting of the Games.¹⁴⁸ National pride was already substantial due to the hosting of the Seoul Olympics and the 2002 FIFA World Cup, so a renewed surge was expected.¹⁴⁹ Finally, the actors behind the bidding hoped that the 2018 Games would be useful as a political tool in reunification. However, this was not a primary objective during the final bidding.¹⁵⁰ So in the ultimate bid unification was an objective still, but not the main focus, the main focus was to gain an increase in image and economic development.

Economic development

South Korean sources predicted that the Pyeongchang Olympics would be a profitable event. The Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade estimated the economic impact of the Games on the national economy to be around 18 billion dollars.¹⁵¹ In comparison, the Hyundai Research Institute estimated it to reach approximately 58 billion dollars.¹⁵² These numbers include indirect profits such as a predicted increase in brand awareness due to the improvement of South Korea's image, in the same that the 1988 Olympics contributed to the nation's brand.¹⁵³ Additionally, the institutes expected a lasting rise in tourism to the Pyeongchang area and consequent improvement of the local economy.¹⁵⁴ However, American sources criticized these estimates for being overly positive when compared to American estimates. For example, Forbes business magazine points out that there is a likely chance of the Olympic infrastructure to be costly to maintain after the Games.¹⁵⁵ The maintenance of stadia being costly is a common problem when hosting the Olympic Games and for the event to become sustainable there is

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.; Carl Harris, "The Hidden Benefits of the Pyeongchang Olympics," *Dartmouth Business Journal*, April 2, 2018, <http://dartmouthbusinessjournal.com/2018/04/02/hidden-benefits-Pyeongchang-olympics/>.

¹⁴⁸ Merkel and Kim, "Third Time Lucky!?" 2376.

¹⁴⁹ Hyun-Jeong Kim, Dogan Gursoy and Soo-Bum Lee, "The impact of the 2002 World Cup on South Korea: comparisons of pre- and post-games," *Tourism Management* 27 (2004): 86, 88, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.07.010>.

¹⁵⁰ Merkel and Kim, "Third Time Lucky!?" 2376.

¹⁵¹ "Economic Benefits of Hosting Pyeongchang Winter Olympics," Business Watch, KBS World Radio, published February 19, 2018, http://world.kbs.co.kr/service/contents_view.htm?lang=e&menu_cate=business&id=&board_seq=146859

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

increased focus on the use of existing facilities and guaranteed future use of the newly built stadia.¹⁵⁶

While Pyeongchang used existing stadia, new facilities were built as well. An example of newly constructed facilities is the Pyeongchang sliding centre which was the location for the bobsleigh, luge and skeleton competitions.¹⁵⁷ Initially, the organizers expected that the public would use the new facilities after the Games. However, the sliding centre serves as an excellent example that the result can be the opposite. The sliding centre has high maintenance costs, is difficult to access by the public and the sports that people would practice there are lacking in popularity amongst the general public.¹⁵⁸ These factors led to the closing of the venue in February 2019, leaving Pyeongchang with a considerable debt for its construction.¹⁵⁹ Another Olympic venue that only cost money was the stadium for the opening and closing ceremonies. Instead of using the ski jump complex for the ceremonies, an exclusive stadium was built and consequently demolished, resulting in a bill of nearly 200 million dollars.¹⁶⁰

However, it is now known that the Pyeongchang Olympics achieved a surplus of at least 55 million dollars.¹⁶¹ While the repurposing of the facilities might not have worked out in all cases, the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics proved beneficial due to its small budget and high efficiency.¹⁶² Although a surplus of 55 million is not even close to the estimated 18 or 58 billion, it has to be noted that the 55 million does not include intangible profits for the nation's economy. In the areas of media exposure and nation branding, the Pyeongchang Games did contribute significantly. A precise instance of nation branding was during the opening ceremony, whose organizers prominently promoted two of many characteristics of South Korea. These were the performances of leading K-pop artists CL and EXO stressing the country's cultural spread as they are worldwide

¹⁵⁶ Hany Kim et al., "For Sustainable Benefits and Legacies of Mega-Events: A Case Study of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics from the Perspective of the Volunteer Co-Creators," *Sustainability* 11 (2019): 6, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11092473>.

¹⁵⁷ Jung-Woo Lee, "A winter sport mega-event and its aftermath: A critical review of post-Olympic Pyeongchang," *Local Economy* 34, no. 7 (2019): 747, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269094219889608>.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. 746

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 748.

¹⁶¹ Min-Young Lee, "Pyeongchang Olympics achieves \$55 million surplus," *The Korea Times*, October 10, 2018, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/sports/2018/10/702_256723.html.

¹⁶² Kim et al., "For Sustainable Benefits," 6.

popular artists, and the use of using augmented reality and drones showed the technological progress of South Korea.¹⁶³

Reunification

In early 2018, media attention focused mostly on the thawing of the frozen inter-Korean relations by the Pyeongchang Olympics and for this legacy that the public remembers the event.¹⁶⁴ Unexpected steps to reunification or tension reduction between the two Koreas followed the highly tense atmosphere on the Korean peninsula near the end of 2017. Near the end of 2017, tensions between North and South Korea and the US were escalating up to the point where war loomed. Preemptive strikes from both the US and North Korea were expected in a threatening nuclear war.¹⁶⁵ The deterioration of inter-Korean relations was partially due to then South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's 3000 Vision that replaced the Sunshine policy in 2008.¹⁶⁶ The 3000 Vision entailed that South Korea would only provide humanitarian aid to the North in place of political reforms. The South Korean President's influence on the inter-Korean relations in the aspect of sporting events is best illustrated by the 2008 Beijing Olympics where the Koreas conveniently forgot the prior agreement of fielding a unified team, and both countries' teams marched separately during the ceremonies.¹⁶⁷ So, the President's influence was significant in the deterioration of the inter-Korean relations.

Factors that contributed to the thaw in inter-Korean relations in 2018 were advances in North Korea's technology for missiles and nuclear weapons, the liberal administration under Moon Jae-In in South Korea, pressure of economic sanctions on North Korea and increased cooperation between China and the US¹⁶⁸ Based on the advances in North Korea's technology for missiles and nuclear weapons, it can be said that North Korea gained the self-confidence of leverage to confer with the South and the US. The military and verbal threats from the US, with Trump vowing to "totally destroy North Korea,"¹⁶⁹ added to the existing pressure of international economic sanctions on the DPRK. The cooperation between the US and China on economic

¹⁶³ Jessica Vomiero, "K-pop, drones, pandas and other highlights from the 2018 Olympics closing ceremony," *Global News*, February 25, 2018, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4046359/k-pop-drones-pandas-2018-olympic-closing-ceremony/>.

¹⁶⁴ Rowe, "The Worlds," 16.

¹⁶⁵ Snyder, "Back to Square One."

¹⁶⁶ Merkel and Kim, "Third Time Lucky!?" 2378.

¹⁶⁷ Rowe, "The Worlds," 16.

¹⁶⁸ Dok and Park, "Prospects," 5.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

sanctions and consultation on war management would have also added to the pressure on North Korea. These circumstances can prompt the argument that North Korea would have also approached a conservative South; the liberal Moon administration certainly helped in accepting and accelerating cooperation and talks.

These factors contributed to North Korea's decision to attempt cooperation and improvement in inter-Korean relations, which were not thawed by the Olympics but helped along by them. The lack of improvement in inter-Korean relations despite hosting the Seoul Olympics and attempts at co-hosting then, indicates that a certain level of willingness from the North is required for the Olympics to work as a political tool for improvement in inter-Korean relations. Because in 1988 there was no desire for North Korea to improve the inter-Korean relations as it boycotted the Seoul Olympic Games. A different type of administration in South Korea helped as well with the Moon administration attempting to decrease tensions and promote denuclearisation to North Korea, while also making an effort to mediate talks between North Korea and the US.¹⁷⁰ These efforts indicate that the Moon administration also believes that without improving relations between the DPRK and the US lasting peace on the Korean peninsula is impossible. Several events followed the thaw in relations, such as the reiteration of the north-south hotline, the joint march of the two Koreas under the united flag during the opening ceremony and the inter-Korean summits in 2018.¹⁷¹ The two Koreas even fielded a unified women's ice hockey team to compete in the Games.¹⁷² During the first exchanges of words during the North and South Korean high-level talks, the North Korean side stressed the willingness and desire of Kim Jong-Un for the advancement of inter-Korean relations and reunification.¹⁷³ Additionally, the US-North Korean summit was held, with President Trump becoming the first active American President to enter the DPRK.¹⁷⁴

After the inter-Korean summits in 2018 and successful and historic advancement toward reunification or at least tension reduction for the Moon administration, June of 2020 had the

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Jon-Min Dok and Hyeong-Jung Park, "After the Pyeongchang Olympics: Prospects for Inter-Korean Relations," *Focus Asia* (2018): 3, The Institute for Security and Development Policy.

¹⁷² Aimee Lewis, "When sports and politics collide -- what happened when North and South Korea unified on the ice," *CNN*, February 7, 2019, <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/02/07/sport/south-korea-north-korea-unified-ice-hockey-team-winter-olympics-2018-spt-intl/index.html>

¹⁷³ Dok and Park, "Prospects," 3.

¹⁷⁴ Josh Lederman and Hans Nichols, "Trump meets Kim Jong Un, becomes first sitting U.S. president to step into North Korea," *NBC News*, June 30, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/donald-trump/trump-kim-jong-un-meet-dmz-n1025041>.

opposite in store for inter-Korean relations. On June 16, 2020, North Korea blew up the Inter-Korean Liaison Office in Kaesong that was a symbol for the improvement of inter-Korean relations.¹⁷⁵ Several statements by Kim Yo-Jong, the influential sister of Kim Jong-Un, in June targeted the Moon administration for failing to achieve several objectives.¹⁷⁶ These included failing to open economic cooperation between the two Koreas in the June 14th statement and failure to contain the spread of anti-North Korean leaflets by North Korean defectors according to the June 4th statement. In the statement after North Korea demolished the liaison office, Kim Yo-Jong reproached Moon Jae-In for shifting the responsibility for resolving certain obstacles in inter-Korean relations to the US. The inter-Korean relations are back to square one with war looming as North Korea intends to resume military exercises near the border, to which South Korea has warned that it will retaliate.¹⁷⁷

Dok Jon-Min, the Director of the Institute for Disarmament and Peace of the DPRK, wrote an essay on the thaw in inter-Korean relations and requirements for lasting peace on the Korean peninsula for the Institute for Security and Development Policy.¹⁷⁸ Although the article presents the opinion of an individual and is not necessarily a reflection of the government's view, an interesting point is made, which is supported by the recent news of deterioration in inter-Korean relations. Dok Jon-Min proposes that to break the vicious cycle of confrontation, inter-Korean relations should be treated as a national issue and therefore be "free from external influence."¹⁷⁹ While the international community has shown support for improvement in inter-Korean relations before, they should provide a peaceful environment for improvement by opposing acts by the US that aggravate North Korea.¹⁸⁰ Based on the statements by Kim Yo-Jong and Dok Jon-Min, it is rightfully pointed out by Merkel that the US is a crucial player in reunification or establishment of lasting peace between the Koreas.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Snyder, "Back to square one."

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Dok and Park, "Prospects," 2-4.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁸¹ Merkel and Kim, "Third Time Lucky!?" 2378; Dok and Park, "Prospects."

Chapter 3

Discussion

By looking at the cases of the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988 and the Pyeongchang Winter Games in 2018, it became clear how the South Korean government intended to use the Olympics to achieve political objectives and how it turned out. Now, I will assess for each objective the efficacy of the Olympic Games as a tool to achieving it. After which, I will discuss the similarities and differences between the objectives, outcomes and efficacy of the two Olympics. I will also highlight the limitations of my research more.

Efficacy of the 1988 Games

The Olympic Games are an event that states desire to host mainly because of the opportunities for exposure to the world that pulls the attention of billions of people to one country for a few weeks. The Chun administration expected the Seoul Olympics to expose South Korea to the world as an economically developed country and no longer as a developing country. After the change in domestic politics, the media attention did indeed shift from domestic political troubles to a prosperous Games. The Olympics did succeed in providing more media attention, but as per the unpredictable nature of media, what it produces as the legacy of the event is hard to influence. If the domestic political issue had not calmed before the Games, the legacy of the 1988 Olympics would have been different. South Korea might have become known as a nation with an illegitimate government and full of protests and military retaliation, or the IOC would have deemed it necessary to relocate the event. As a result of this objective, brand awareness increased, as well as the country's image.¹⁸²

The Olympics did aid in resolving the issue in domestic politics by providing a time limit for the Chun administration to either become legitimate or democratize. But the original objective set out by the government for domestic politics was not achieved. Instead of granting legitimation, the Olympics forced the Chun administration to make concessions and democratize. With this failure to obtain the objective, it is interesting to consider whether the goal was feasible and realistic. In general, the hosting country overestimates the impact of the Olympics and the

¹⁸² Bridges, *The Two Koreas*, 71-74.

degree of influence that it has on the Games.¹⁸³ Miscalculations of economic profits show this best, such as for the Sochi and Rio Games.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, one can see that the estimated profit of the Pyeongchang Games is many times more than the actual surplus. While it is true that in several cases the Olympics have worked as a catalyst for political developments, it was always in combination with other, already fulfilled factors. In the case of the legitimacy of the Chun administration, the other factors, such as public support for the government, were inadequate. There was already great discontent among the public with the system which grew more after the Gwangju uprising. Along with the increase in the economy of the country, the people gained a position of more leverage. This discontent was of the scale that a mere catalyst would not be sufficient to sway the public by playing on national pride and the government taking all the credit for the hosting of the Olympics. The media pressure that came along with the event and the possibility of the IOC changing the hosting country might have also increased the protests that eventually led to changes.¹⁸⁵

The third objective that the Chun administration hoped to achieve through the exposure of the media that covered the Games and its host was confronting the threat from North Korea and gaining recognition from the North's socialist allies. North Korea's socialist partners mainly participated due to the Olympics functioning as a catalyst or kick-starter of relationships. The Seoul Olympics gave the North's allies an excuse to engage with the ROK and profit of trade with the thriving South Korean economy. China sending an official to talk to Kim Jung-Il about the smooth passing of the Olympics displays the willingness of the socialist states in forming relations with South Korea. Additionally, with the new recognition from and relations with North Korea's allies, South Korea had a smaller socialist threat to confront.

Efficacy of the 2018 Games

Based on the success of the Seoul Olympics, South Korea expected a profitable Pyeongchang Olympics. The Pyeongchang Olympics recorded a surplus of 55 million dollars and additional benefits such as an increase in brand awareness and the nation's image. Both of those additional aspects were also based on the success of those factors after the Seoul Olympics. It seems that the Pyeongchang Olympics provided a similar improvement, but after only two years it is too early to tell if it is a lasting effect as was desired. Another factor that also contributed to

¹⁸³ Burgo and Cromartie, "Benefits of Bidding."

¹⁸⁴ Kim et al., "For Sustainable Benefits," 6.

¹⁸⁵ Manheim, "Rites of Passage," 291; Bridges, *The Two Koreas*, 77.

an increase in brand awareness and the national image is the continued promotion of South Korea by using Hallyu and promoting the country as a leader of technological development. These are only two of the many images that the ROK promotes through nation branding and soft power strategies. Primarily Hallyu has been studied extensively as a medium for soft power.¹⁸⁶

Although the progress towards reunification or tension reduction in inter-Korean relations was not explicitly aimed for nor expected in the months before the Games, historical development occurred in 2018. Unfortunately, in 2020 the tensions on the Korean peninsula returned, so the objective of permanent steps toward lasting peace failed. For this objective, it is more difficult to say whether the Pyeongchang Olympics contributed significantly to the thaw in inter-Korean relations or not. This is difficult because North Korea did not voice its motives for approaching the South. However, the Pyeongchang Olympics did provide a venue for symbolism: the march of unified Korea, the unified women's ice hockey team, etc. Following the Olympics, several summits took place between the Koreas and North Korea and the US. While the Olympics can be viewed as an aid in the reunification process, the factors that prompted North Korea to avoid nuclear war were necessary to have the Olympics be of any use as a political tool at all. If this were not the case and North Korea would have for instance boycotted the Pyeongchang Olympics, there would have been no show of a desire for reunification.

Similarities

The similarities in successes of achieving the objectives indicate that the Olympics were effective in a certain way more than once and are therefore more likely to be generally effective and applicable in such scenarios. Both Olympics had the goal of improving the national image internationally, which the South Korean government expected to lead to an increase in brand awareness. The Olympic Games assisted in providing opportunities for exposure, for which it is useful. However, a high-risk factor is the media and its independence and lack of influence on what they emphasize, also do the costs outweigh benefits? Both Olympics recorded a profit either through tangible or intangible (e.g. brand awareness) ways. For the 1988 Games, there was an expected result of gaining a position in the international field, while in 2018 South Korea already had a stable place. Additionally, for the 2018 Games, a full image of the success of this objective (e.g. increase in brand awareness) cannot be provided yet as it has been only two years since the event occurred.

¹⁸⁶ Kim, *The Korean Wave*.

While both Olympics had an objective of increasing economic development by hosting the Games, the objective in 1988 was focused more on making South Korea's progress known to the world. Both Olympics left a positive legacy. Although, the progress towards lasting peace on the Korean peninsula reverted to high tension this year, which means that the legacy of the 2018 Games that are known for the historic steps towards reunification did not last. Lastly, there is a similarity concerning national pride. In 1988 the government expected legitimation of the political system by playing on the national pride of hosting the Olympics, but this did not happen. However, there was a strong sense of national pride in the years following the Olympics, which was ascribed to the people and the country, not to the government.¹⁸⁷ For the 2018 Games the government expected the sense of national pride to rekindle and increase even more, which was indeed the case.¹⁸⁸

Differences

I categorize the differences in the objectives for hosting the Olympic Games in 1988 and 2018 into two objectives: domestic politics and reunification. The objective that the Olympic Games would assist in the challenges in domestic politics in South Korea in 1988 was an objective of that time. The domestic political situation in South Korea in 2018 was considerably different, so such an aim is not applicable. Likewise, the objective for reunification was only applicable to the 2018 Games. Although the final bidding document did not include complete reunification, it was a desired objective. Therefore I consider it as an objective for the 2018 Games because South Korea achieved the objective of making progress towards reunification in 2018, albeit temporarily. In 1988 the circumstances made reunification impossible, which was partially due to North Korea boycotting the Games after failing to co-host the event or gain other benefits to a satisfactory level.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, there was little interest on the South Korean side, because it was more focused on gaining profitable relations with the North's socialist allies and renewing the threat of North Korea to the world. A surprising similarity in this respect is that there was also no interest in reunification at the time of the third bidding for the Pyeongchang Olympics (or at least less than a few years earlier). This was due to North Korea sinking the ROK's navy vessel

¹⁸⁷ Chung, "Global Citizenship."

¹⁸⁸ Michael Pavitt, "Pyeongchang 2018 President claims Winter Olympics can help restore national pride," *Insidethegames.biz*, published February 7, 2017, <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1046744/Pyeongchang-2018-president-claims-winter-olympics-can-help-restore-national-pride>.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

called the Cheonan, the North's artillery attack on YeongPyeong island and the different vision of President Lee Myung-bak.¹⁹⁰

Limitations

In addition to limitations to my research, such as source language and allotted time, there are limitations to the Olympic Games as a political tool. Hosting the Olympics and trying to achieve objectives by doing so comes with a high risk. As seen in many Olympics, the expected economic profits can instead become a substantial debt, or the expected positive image portrayed by the international media can become a negative one. These aspects limit the certainty of the Games as a political tool. A related aspect is that the Olympics are dependent on other factors for the achievement of objectives. If these factors are inadequate, the risks of hosting the Games are higher, the objectives will not be obtained at all, or the opposite of the predicted outcome will happen. These circumstantial factors relate to power structures that scholars in public diplomacy also identify.

Pamment argued that public diplomacy questions and soft power practices are subject to power structures.¹⁹¹ Then, for the Olympics to work as a catalyst for political change, the required other factors in achieving objectives, for example, the involved actors, the system or society, etc., have to be ready. Another example is that in 1988 the hosting of the Games and the objectives in doing so were only government motivated, while in 2018 it ended up being a combination of actors led by the government. Generally, to win the bidding for the right to host the Olympic Games, it has to be supported by the government, and one has to be able to convince the IOC, which can be tricky. An important source of the pre-set for objectives to succeed is the status of the host country before the Olympics and the issues it faces. In 1988 South Korea was a military dictatorship on its last legs, that had to overcome quite a challenge to sustain itself. It was not a challenge that could be overcome by merely hosting the Olympics as all the other factors leaned towards democratization. Similarly for the increase in economic development and brand awareness in 2018, South Korea already had a prosperous economy and an established nation brand, so it was highly likely for the media exposure that came along with hosting Olympics to increase those aspects further.

¹⁹⁰ Merkel and Kim, "Third Time Lucky!?" 2376.

¹⁹¹ Pamment, "Articulating Influence," 51.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined the Olympic Games as a political tool for South Korea and determined whether it is an effective tool or not. I did this to answer my main research question: Does the South Korean government use the Olympic Games as a political tool, and if so, how and why? Additionally, I included a question per extension of why the South Korean government uses the Olympic Games as a political tool: Are the Olympic Games an effective political tool for South Korea? Before answering these, I first defined the Olympic Games as a political tool as a tool for achieving government objectives set out in the bidding document and advancing policy. This is most often done as part of diplomacy or public diplomacy as most often the objectives in hosting the Games include economic development and increase in the national image. While the event has been popular among states for these reasons, the profitable Pyeongchang Olympics have made the event more popular in recent years.¹⁹² Additionally, the Olympic Games, or international sports events in general, are used as a kick-starter for dialogue in inter-state relations or as a catalyst for political change. South Korea has hosted the Olympics two times and has utilized the event for these motives as well. South Korea expected both Olympics to assist in economic development and improvement of the national image in the international landscape. For the Summer Olympics in 1988, the Chun administration expected to gain legitimation for its political system, but instead the event catalyzed political change towards democratization. In 2018 the Pyeongchang Olympics did not function as a kick-starter of dialogue between the two Koreas. Still, the Games did provide a venue for steps toward reunification and acceleration towards inter-Korean summits.

However, the Olympic Games are never the sole factor in achieving the objectives set out during the bidding process. This is best illustrated by a case where solely hosting the Olympic Games could not achieve the objective in favour of the government. This objective of gaining legitimation for the Chun administration in 1988 failed because other factors worked against the objective, so the Olympics became a catalyst for democratization instead. The objectives set out in the bidding documents are always achieved through a combination of factors. There is academic support for the conclusion that the Olympic Games are dependent on other factors. And therefore, some scholars claim that the event is merely a reflection of the political

¹⁹² Kim et al., "For Sustainable Benefits," 6.

situation.¹⁹³ However, the Olympics can also be a catalyst for political change and accelerate economic or political development or the improvement of a nation's image.

But the influence of the Olympic Games is still significant. This is because without the event, in some cases, the objectives would not be achieved at all, while in others they would be achieved at a much later date. Such as the accelerated steps toward reunification in 2018. The Olympics can be useful as a political tool, and states use it widely for these reasons and the possibility of massive gains, but it has its limits and is certainly not without risk. The risk can be high because the stakes are high, and failure can be detrimental, especially for developing countries. There are several instances of developing countries or even developed countries hosting the Games and gaining nothing but debt, But the opposite scenario also occurs. Despite a considerable debt, there are instances of massive gains in the national image, such as after the Summer Games of 1988 in South Korea. The dependency on other factors and the risks that accompany the Olympic Games as a political tool are disadvantages that could prompt states to look for a replacement tool.

So why do states continue to desire to host the Olympics to achieve political and economic objectives if it is a high-risk and dependent tool? My answer to this question contributes to two salient aspects to the Olympics that require further research, according to Jonathan Grix. It aids in understanding the rationale behind why states host the Olympics and what the legacies of the Olympics offer to states, so they continue hosting this specific event. Despite the risk and dependency of the Olympic Games as a political tool, countries host the event because the prediction is to gain despite the risks. Even though the host countries often exaggerate the predicted gains. Legacies are difficult to control, but the perceived gains in hosting the Games outweigh the risks beforehand, at least for South Korea. Further research on other Olympic Games should be done to affirm this statement further.

¹⁹³ Min and Choi, "Sport Cooperation," 10.

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