

POLITICS AND THE OLYMPICS: A COMPARISON OF THE 1936 BERLIN AND  
2008 BEIJING GAMES

BY

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THESIS

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite the fact that much research exists on the Olympics, limited publications address the relations between multiple Games. Furthermore, although the Olympics have been intertwined with politics from the founding of the modern movement, public perception of the 2008 Beijing Games was that of a political event unique to the Olympic experience. The aim of this study was to explore issues and controversies surrounding the 1936 and 2008 Olympics to determine if the political aspects of the Beijing Games were similar to or different from those of the Berlin Games. Information was obtained from scholarly literature on the Berlin and Beijing Games. Eight major themes with respect to similarities and differences between the political factors of the Berlin and Beijing Games were identified. They included reaction to host city decision, negative public perception, efforts to boycott, torch relay, opening ceremony, Olympic stage, importance of winning gold, and impacts of the Games.

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*Man is by nature a political animal.*  
-Aristotle

## **1.0 Introduction**

### *Olympic Games and politics*

In the most recent summer Olympics, the 2008 Beijing Games, the world witnessed division, controversy, and protests that intertwined the Olympics with China's social and political issues. From the moment Beijing was awarded the Olympic bid, China faced the challenge of preparing for hosting the Games while also working to address its social and political problems that the world was calling attention to. Many believed the Beijing Games lacked the pure Olympic spirit of a peaceful sporting event and that political controversy was something unique to these Games. However, this was not the case. As Brownell (2008a) stated, "the politicization of the Beijing Olympic Games [continued] a 102-year-old Olympic tradition" (p. 130). The history of the Olympic Games shows a clear path of such a relationship.

The three Latin words that comprise the Olympic motto - "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*" mean "*Faster, Higher, Stronger*". The phrase, adopted in 1894 with the creation of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), symbolizes the athletic standard for all Olympic Games. While the motto may imply a sense of competition, the Olympic Games were founded on the principle that taking part in the event is more important than winning (Maass, 2007d). The trademark logo of the Games, five Olympic rings that represent the five major regions of the world, is an international emblem that signifies the union of all mankind. Through the Olympic motto and Olympic rings, the Olympic Games represent the image of an all-welcoming, pure competition of equal opportunity in which the entire world can come together in a peaceful celebration of athletic talent.

While the IOC maintains the stance that the Olympic Games are not political, history shows that the Olympic Games are not just a pastime, and that they have been entangled in political controversies since their very inception. The mass appeal of the Olympic Games' elite competition gives it significance in the world of politics, culture, and economic life of the host nation (Dong & Mangan, 2008; Senn, 1999; Seppanen, 1984). Political controversy has accompanied many Olympic Games, including Mexico City in 1968 where two American athletes raised their fists in the Black Power salute; the 1972 Games in Munich that were the scene of a terrorist act against the Israeli delegation; the 1980 Moscow Games that were boycotted by athletes from the U.S. and its allies; and the 1984 Games in Los Angeles that were boycotted by the Soviet bloc countries. Moreover, in recent decades, Olympic Games have also grown from a sporting event to an industry fueled by almost 2 billion dollar broadcast revenues and \$866 million in sponsorship (Miller, 2008; Senn, 1999; Seppanen, 1984).

### *Berlin and Beijing Games*

The Berlin Games took place over 70 years ago, and were only the fourth Olympic Games of the modern Olympic Movement. The 1936 Olympics were the first to attract a high level of public attention due to the political and social climate of the host country. The pre-Olympic geopolitical situation of Germany was one of unease as Hitler and the Nazi Regime began taking over the government in the years preceding the Games. The change in leadership between the time the Games were awarded to Berlin and the 1936 Olympics lead to much negative public attention. The treatment of Jews was a top concern among the world community and Germany found itself in the midst of a major political controversy for the 1936 Games.



Hitler wanted to use the Berlin Games to showcase to the world the athletic ability of the Aryan people and the strength of Nazi Germany under his leadership. Much of the world community, however, did not feel it was appropriate for a country that practiced open discrimination against its own people to host the Olympic Games, which were supposed to be a celebration of pure competition and equal opportunity for all. Although protests and discussions of boycott preceded the Games, the Berlin Olympics took place without any significant interruption. The Germans placed first in the number of gold medals at the Berlin Games, providing re-assurance to Hitler and the Nazi Regime of the superiority of the Aryan race.

The Beijing Games took place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as the 29<sup>th</sup> Olympiad. China's history of involvement with the IOC has been long and quite tumultuous. Fifty years prior to hosting the 2008 Games, China withdrew from the IOC and was absent from Olympic competition for twenty years. Questions related to the Olympic representation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the preparation of young Chinese athletes for Olympic success were raised in the years preceding the Games. Prior to the 2008 Games, negative public attention also focused on human rights abuses in the country and the occupation of Tibet.

By the time of the 2008 bid, China had developed from a third world country to an economic super-power capable of competing with Japan, the United States or its Western European allies. Similar to Hitler wanting to use the Berlin Games to show the world the strength of Germany under his control, Chinese government officials saw the Beijing Games as an opportunity to re-introduce China to the world as a new and revitalized country. Moreover, through recent government initiatives, sport in China was

on par with countries such as the United States. Protestors, however, worked to ensure that the world would also be exposed to the aspects of China that they believed made the country unworthy of hosting an Olympic event. While protests accompanied the torch relay and boycott discussions preceded the Games, the 2008 Olympics took place without much disruption. Finally, as was the case in Germany, Chinese athletes finished first in the number of gold medals received at the Beijing Games, legitimizing their country's newfound athletic strength.

### *Objectives of the study*

The objective of this study is to explore issues and controversies surrounding the 1936 and 2008 Olympic Games. Specifically, the study will examine, based on scholarly literature, the ways in which controversies accompanying the Berlin Games are similar to and/or different from those accompanying the Beijing Games.

Much of the literature regarding the Olympics focuses either on individual Games or provides an overview of the history of the modern Olympic Movement. Studies that offer a comparison of two or more Olympic Games are exceedingly rare. However, scholarly work that examines similarities and differences among specific sets of Olympics is needed to enhance our understanding of the history and the role of the Games. By examining the issues and controversies surrounding the Berlin and Beijing Olympics, this study will contribute to our understanding of the role politics play in the Olympic Movement. One of the goals of this study is to show that the 2008 Beijing Games were not the first to provide a stage for the political manipulations of sporting events, but rather China was subjected to similar controversies as the ones experienced by other host-countries. A comparison with the Berlin Games will be used to portray the

relationship between politics and sport, and it is my hope that this new information will inspire further evaluation of the often over-looked links that exist among Olympic Games.

#### *Definitions of terms*

The terms “issues” and “controversies” are used for comparison purposes and, therefore, clarification is needed as to how each is defined in this study. The term “issue” refers to a disagreement or matter of dispute between any two parties (individual, organization, country, etc.). The term “controversy” refers to an opposing view between any two parties that existed at the time of the Games. When the terms “social” or “political” are used as a description of an issue or controversy, the implication is that the matter at hand began with, involved, or affected individuals/groups (social) or governments/countries (political).

#### *Delimitations of the study*

The scope of the study is limited to the 1936 and 2008 Olympic Games and the literature review provides an overview of select controversies accompanying the modern Olympics. Moreover, while a broad range of information related to the Berlin and Beijing Games is described in the Literature Review, only eight themes (reaction to host city decision, negative public perception, efforts to boycott, torch relay, opening ceremony, Olympic stage, importance of winning gold, and impacts of the Games) were chosen to be examined in-depth in the study findings.

The themes examined in this study cannot be considered reflective of all the literature on the Berlin and Beijing Olympic Games. I have reviewed information sources

that were most accessible to me as a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois. They included English-language books available at the university, in the Champaign Public Library, Urbana Public Library, through the inter-library loan system of Illinois universities, as well as selected on-line sources. Much more information on the Games has been published in foreign languages and is available in libraries outside of the United States, however, a result of language and access-related constraints, they were not reviewed in this study.

### *Summary*

The divisions and protests surrounding the 2008 Beijing Games made many in the world community feel as if China's experience was unique and shrouded in more controversy than that of previous host-countries. While it is true that the Beijing Olympics were accompanied by much political dispute both in the pre-Olympic years and, to a lesser extent, during the Games, it is false to view China's situation as unique. The Olympics have never been the pure-spirited, peaceful world sporting event that the founders of the modern Olympic Movement envisioned. Furthermore, as the findings of this study will show, China faced challenges similar to those that accompanied the 1936 Berlin Games. By analyzing issues and controversies related to Berlin and Beijing Olympics, this study will delve into a historical relationship between politics and the Olympic Games.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### *Founding of the modern Olympic Movement*

Pierre de Coubertin of France founded the modern Olympic Movement in 1894 (Maass, 2007d; MacAloon, 1981). Prior to the 1900s, France had failed to incorporate organized sport in its educational institutions. Shamed by France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, Coubertin saw this as a downfall of the country and an aspect that needed to be changed if France was to project itself strongly into the future. He believed that organized sport, implemented through educational institutions, would improve the moral and social strength of his country (MacAloon).

Coubertin conducted research in England and in the United States examining ways to successfully develop sport in France (Jennings, 1996; MacAloon, 1981). His international research on how to use sport to cultivate well-rounded school boys led him to view international sporting competitions as a way of increasing understanding, appreciation, and respect between countries. While pursuing the development of organized sport in France, Coubertin became interested in sport at the international level, which inspired his passion for revitalizing the Olympics through bringing about the modern Games (MacAloon).

After many years spent conducting research, networking, and developing international support for a return of the Olympics, Coubertin proposed the revival of the Games at an international congress in 1894 (MacAloon, 1981). The Congress led to the establishment of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and thus the official founding of the modern Olympic movement. Coubertin, who assumed the position of General Secretary, hand picked the founding members of the IOC who were expected to

represent internationalism and be titled nobleman. Alongside Pierre de Coubertin of France, the founding members included: Dr. Willibald Gebhardt of Germany, Jiri Guth-Jarkovski of Czechoslovakia, Ferenc Kemeny of Hungary, Viktor Balck of Sweden, Demetrius Vikelas of Greece, and General de Butovski of Russia (Miller, 2008). The modern Olympic Games began in Athens, Greece in 1896 (Guttman, 2002) (see Table 1 for a History of the Summer and Winter Olympiads 1896-2008).

Table 1: History of the Summer and Winter Olympiads 1896-2008

Olympiad	Year	Site
1	1896	Athens
2	1900	Paris
3	1904	St. Louis
4	1908	London
5	1912	Stockholm
6	1916	(games not held)
7	1920	Antwerp
8*	1924	Chamonix Paris
9	1928	St. Moritz Amsterdam
10	1932	Lack Placid Los Angeles
11	1936	Garmisch-Partenkirchen Berlin
12	1940	(games not held) (games not held)
13	1944	(games not held) (games not held)
14	1948	St. Moritz London
15	1952	Oslo Helsinki
16	1956	Cortina a' Ampezzo Melbourne
17	1960	Squaw Valley Rome
18	1964	Innsbruck Tokyo
19	1968	Grenoble Mexico City

Table 1 continued

Olympiad	Year	Site
20	1972	Sapporo Munich
21	1976	Innsbruck Montreal
22	1980	Lake Placid Moscow
23	1984	Sarajevo Los Angeles
24	1988	Calgary Seoul
25	1992	Albertville Barcelona
	1994	Lillehammer
26	1996	Atlanta
	1998	Nagano
27	2000	Sydney
	2002	Salt Lake City
28	2004	Athens
	2006	Turin
29	2008	Beijing

\*Beginning in 1924, and until 1992 when the pattern changed, Winter Games were held several months before the Summer Games for that year.

Source: *Guttmann, 2002*

### *Modern Olympic Games values and principles*

The values and principles of the Olympic Movement proposed by Coubertin are still upheld by the IOC as part of today's modern Olympic Games. The *core values* that Coubertin began the modern Olympic Movement with included:

1. Excellence – Stands for giving one's best through both sports and one's profession. This value means that the Olympics are not only about winning, but also about participating, making personal progress toward goals, striving to be and to do one's best, and benefiting from the combination of a strong body, mind and will.
2. Friendship – Stands for encouraging people to consider sport as a tool for mutual understanding among individuals and people from all over the world. Through this value, the Olympic Games inspire people to overcome political, economic, gender, racial or religious differences and to develop friendships regardless of those differences.

3. Respect – Stands for respecting oneself, one’s body, others, rules and regulations, the environment, and sport. Related to sport, the respect value means appreciating fair play and not engaging in unethical behavior (Maass, 2007d).

Coubertin’s founding Olympic values have served as the moral and ethical standards of the Olympic Games since 1896. Maass (2007d) reflected on the values:

The values of excellence, friendship and respect are the foundation upon which the Olympic Movement blends sport, culture and education for the betterment of human beings and humankind. They encompass the moral and ethical standards that are the basis of all Olympic Movement strategies and actions. They promote a concept of quality based on effort, not results. They encourage us to be the best we can be, achieving our personal dreams. Above all, they inspire us to nurture human and personal connections and to become true world citizens. The Olympic Games and the broader Olympic Movement show us the best of humanity and remind us of the part we can play (p. 33).

Along with implementing the core values of excellence, friendship, and respect, Coubertin added four *general aims* to the Olympic Charter to define the purpose of the Olympics Games. These aims included:

1. To promote the development of physical and moral qualities that are the basis of sport.
2. To educate young people through sport in a spirit of better understanding between each other and of friendship, therefore helping to build a more peaceful world.
3. To spread the Olympic principles throughout the world, resulting in the creation of international goodwill.
4. To bring together athletes of the world for a sports festival every four years (Maass, 2007d).

Through these four goals, the philosophy of Olympiasm was born. Finally, based on these values and a stated purpose of the Olympic Games, Coubertin created the *principles of the Olympic Movement* (Maass, 2007a):

1. Non-Discrimination – Striving to ensure that sport is practiced without any form of discrimination whatsoever.



2. Sustainability – Organizing and delivering programs in a way that promotes sustainable economic, social and environmental development.
3. Humanism – Activities placing human beings at the center of attention, ensuring that the practice of sport remains a human right.
4. Universality – Taking into account the universal impact sport can have on individuals and society.
5. Solidarity – Committing to developing programs that, together, create a meaningful and comprehensive social response to issues within its sphere of influence.
6. Alliance between sport, education, and culture – Committing to promoting the spirit of Olympism, which emerges at the convergence of sport, culture and education.

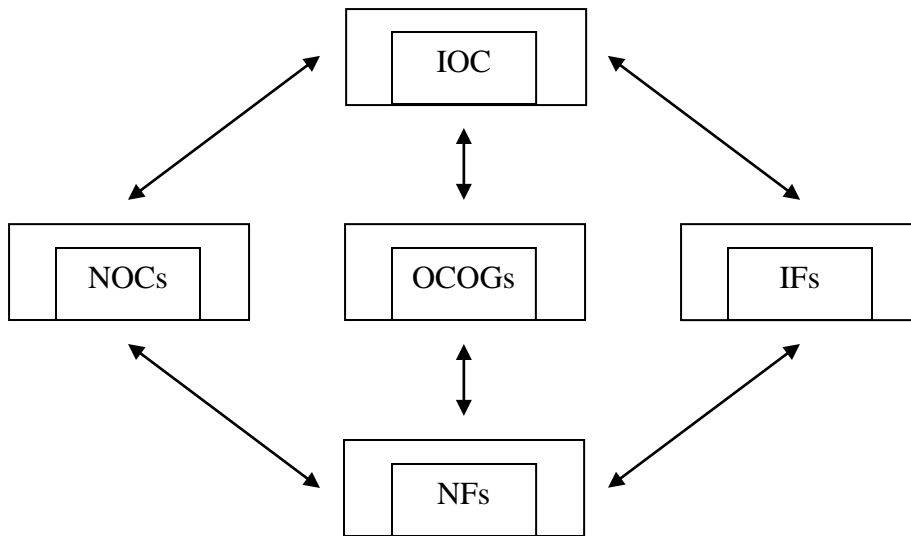
Coubertin's founding values, aims, and principles all defined the Olympic Movement's commitment to friendship and peace. Furthermore, they focused on universality and the concept of human dignity free from all forms of discrimination, whether based on race, religion, color, or gender (Maass, 2007a; Pound, 2004). To symbolize the Olympic Movement's purpose, Coubertin created the Olympic flag to represent the unity of the globe's five continents with five interlocked rings. The colors of those rings were created to represent those of all of the world's national flags (Guttmann, 2004).

#### *IOC structure*

The general policy of the IOC is that the IOC members represent the committee in their respective countries, rather than act as delegates of their countries to the IOC. The purpose of this structure is to free members from pressures by their national governments to represent government interests on the committee (Lenskyj, 2000; Miller, 2008). The phrase "Olympic family" is commonly used within the modern Olympic Movement, and

encompasses IOC members, their staff and guests, presidents and secretaries-general of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), International Federations (IFs), members of current organizing and bid committees, major corporate sponsors, accredited media personnel, and athletes (Lenskyj, 2000) (see Figure 1 for a model of the classic Olympic system comprised of the IOC, NOCs, Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs), IFs, and National Federations (NFs)).

Figure 1: The classic Olympic system



Source: Chappelet & Kubler-Mabbott, 2008

The IOC is an independent organization that has complete control of the Olympic Games. As rule 11 of the Olympic Charter states, “The Olympic Games are the exclusive property of the IOC which owns all rights relating thereto, in particular, and without limitation, the rights relating to their organization, exploitation, broadcasting, and reproduction by any means whatsoever” (Jennings, 1996, p. 12). Furthermore, in 1980, the IOC was granted legal immunity. As a result, Swiss investigators are not allowed to

cross the threshold of the Olympic House in Lausanne. The IOC is clearly a very independent and self-regulating organization.

Although the IOC claims to be an international organization reflective of the entire world, the Olympic movement is founded by and based on European and North American ideals (Guttman, 2004; Pound, 2004). The organization is not as universal as the IOC would like to portray, and all the sports included in the Olympic program (until the recent addition of judo) either have their origins in the West or are represented in the modern forms developed in Western culture. Furthermore, every IOC president except one has come from a European country (Guttman) (see Table 2 for the History of IOC Presidents).

Table 2: History of IOC Presidents

<b>IOC President</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of Presidency</b>
Demetrios Bikelas	Greece	1894-1896
Pierre de Coubertin	France	1896-1925
Henri de Baillet-Latour	Belgium	1925-1942
Sigfrid Edstrom	Sweden	1942-1952
Avery Brundage	United States	1952-1972
Michael Morris (Lord Killanin)	Ireland	1972-1980
Juan Antonio Samaranch	Spain	1980-2001
Jacques Rogge	Belgium	2001-present

Source: *Guttman, 2004*

Scholars tend to agree that the European and North American domination of the IOC structure is an issue that needs to be addressed and that the rules of the international sporting body should be reformulated to allow for greater representation of less developed and non-Western countries (Guttman, 2004; Jarvie, 2006). According to Jarvie, modern sport is a result of the Americanization process that began over a century ago and the global aspects of the Olympic Movement can only be found in the All-Africa,

Asian, and Pan-American Games. While the effectiveness of the current structure of the IOC is debatable, it is clear that the IOC and its Olympic System is a well developed entity that has emerged as a leading global institution.

While the IOC is recognized as a prominent organization, numerous scholars have pointed out severe problems with its structure and function, with its resistance to public oversight, public relations campaigns mounted by the IOC, and bid and organizing committees (Jennings, 1996; Lenskyj, 2000). Membership selection to the IOC has been often questioned, as political factors such as wealth and stature have historically played a role in the member appointment process. Moreover, members of the IOC often express a sense of entitlement in regards to bid city visits and accept gifts through the host city selection process. IOC members have also been accused of not being accountable to people who are affected by their decisions when, for example, housing is torn down to make room for Olympic venues (Lenskyj).

The IOC's resistance to public oversight is another area noted as a problematic feature of the Olympic industry. The IOC is exempt from all freedom of information legislations, which would require public access to information. Therefore, the IOC does not have to publish or promote any of their data. Confidentiality agreements signed with business partners further the level of privacy the organization maintains. As a result of detailed information not being public, the IOC can release misleading budget information that under-estimates the financial burden put on a host-city. Furthermore, secrecy in regards to the bid and organizing committee's communication with citizens is often maintained (Lenskyj, 2000).

Finally, public relations campaigns mounted by the IOC and bid and organizing committees have been noted as problematic. Information on negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of the Games is often concealed by the IOC that demands media complicity within the Olympic industry. Public debates and critiques are often suppressed at the Games and protests are only allowed in designated areas. Moreover, the IOC has been accused of depoliticizing the Games through using the phrases such as “pure athlete” and “pure sport” to describe the industry. Despite the evidence to the contrary, the IOC maintains the position that sport and politics are separate, and puts forth the image that the Olympics are a harmonious and peaceful celebration of the world’s athletes (Lenskyj, 2000).

#### *IOC stance on sports and politics*

The IOC does not have an official documented position regarding sport and politics as part of the Olympic Charter, but it has repeatedly insisted that it is independent of such issues (Jennings, 1996). While the IOC portrays, through its founding values and principles, the image of the Olympic Games as an event celebrating athletic talent only (Maass, 2007a; Maass, 2007d), the IOC’s attitude toward sport and the controversies that often surround the Games are unclear. There has never been an official policy forbidding members to engage in political aspects of the Games, and the closest reference to a policy has been the Fundamental Principle in the Olympic Charter that states that there will be no discrimination on the basis of color, religion, or politics (Brownell, 2008a).

There have been, however, a few instances where the IOC has acknowledged its political influence through sport (Jennings, 1996). For instance, when the IOC was able to bring about a workable compromise between the East and the West Germany on

forming a joint Olympic team for the 1956 Melbourne Games, IOC President Avery Brundage claimed that the IOC had succeeded in the field of sport where politicians had failed (Senn, 1999). Similarly, the IOC was able to peacefully resolve the issue of People's Republic of China and Taiwan having separate representations at the Games (Pound, 2004). Moreover, IOC member Dick Pound stated that a way to improve human rights issues in China would be to award them an Olympic Games (Jennings, 1996).

In 1991, after South Africa transitioned power from the White minority (following much demand by most democratic and non-governmental bodies), the IOC announced that it would readmit the country to the Olympic family. The IOC took partial credit for forcing South Africa to end its policy of apartheid and, as Pound (2004) claimed, "... the Olympic movement found an acceptable solution to a political impasse that had resisted all professional diplomatic efforts" (p. 125).

In 1993, the United Nations called for the revival of the Olympic Truce from ancient Greek times, which instructed member states to cease all warlike acts during the 15 days of the Games and one week before and after them (Chappelet & Kubler-Mabbott, 2008; Jennings, 1996). The ancient Greek truce forbade invasion of Olympia itself and prohibited the stopping of anyone, athlete or spectator, on the way to or from Olympia and the Games, even if they were required to pass through a hostile country to make the trip. Contrary to popular belief, however, the Olympic Truce was never a time when all the Greek nations completely ceased their wars and military hostilities. Similarly today, military hostilities often take place during the time of the Games (Young, 2004).

The IOC communicates the message that the Olympic Games bring people of the world together in peace and harmony (Senn, 1999). However, history shows that the IOC

has had to make contradictory decisions and choices. For example, prior to 1991, in order to keep the black African states as members of the Olympic family, it had to exclude South Africa; to keep American runners in Munich, it agreed to un-invite Rhodesia; in trying to force the Indonesians to accept Israeli and Chinese Nationalist athletes, it faced challenges from the Soviets; and in Tokyo the Iraqis refused to march beside the Israelis as the alphabetical order dictated (Senn). These situations run contrary to the IOC's goal of harmony, and as Jennings (1996) stated, "... there is no evidence that the Olympic committee has contributed anything to world peace" (p. 14).

#### *Past Olympic Games issue and controversies*

The Olympic Games are awarded to a city rather than the entire country. However, regional and national governments have often made major contributions to the organizing committee and to the host-city. The Olympic Charter states that NOCs must preserve their autonomy and resist governmental pressures of any kind, including political. This is not always possible when, for example, developing countries and/or host cities are dependent on the government to subsidize the operation costs (Chappelet & Kubler-Mabbott, 2008). Referring to the argument that the NOCs are expected to remain politics-free, Lenskyj (2000) stated, "In reality, Olympic sport has a long and continuous history of overt and covert political activity at both the macro and micro levels" (p. 94).

Olympic Games have been shrouded in controversy on many occasions throughout the history of the modern movement. At the time of the 1908 London Games, predominantly Roman Catholic Ireland struggled for independence from the Protestant British monarchy. There were few Irish athletes, but many Irish-American athletes present at the Games. As the teams marched into the stadium on opening day, the

American flag was not dipped as the team passed by the British royal box. The American team is known to not dip its flag at any opening ceremony, and still yet this action was viewed by many as politically driven (Guttman, 2002).

Germany invaded Poland less than one year before the 1940 Games were to be held in Helsinki, Finland. World War II thus began, and prevented the Olympics from being held in 1940 and 1944. The 1952 Games in Helsinki were the first at which Western athletes competed against athletes from the Soviet Union. The Olympics took on a political dimension as the Russian delegation, at the demand of Josef Stalin, was not housed in the Olympic Village and did not interact with other teams who participated in the Games. Athletes from the U.S. and the Soviet Union viewed each other as the enemy and the Games were referred to as the “battle of the giants” (Guttman, 2002).

Israel attacked Egypt in the Suez War, and as a result, Egypt, Lebanon, and Iraq chose to boycott the 1956 Melbourne Olympics rather than to compete against athletes from Britain, France, and Israel. Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands later decided to boycott the Games as well. The Melbourne Olympics also went down in history as the year of the Hungarian uprising against the presence of Russian occupying forces. The water polo match in which Hungarian athletes sparred against the Russians is considered the most memorable event of the Games, as it was so rough that blood colored the water and the Russians, behind by 4-0, forfeited the game instead of taking a loss to Hungary (Guttman, 2002).





Figure 2: A Hungarian water polo player's eye is injured during the 1956 Melbourne Olympics Hungary/Russian game

At the 1960 Rome Games, the Chinese Nationalist team was forced by the IOC to march behind a sign reading “Formosa” (the alternate name given to Taiwan) as a temporary solution to the two-China issue. As the Nationalists passed by the presidential box, the Formosa placard-bearer flashed a sign that read “Under Protest.” Prior to the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the South African government’s policy of apartheid resulted in severe discrimination of Black athletes and a breach of Olympic rules. Controversy developed for years between the IOC and the South African National Olympic Committee, as the South African government’s discrimination became more and more public. As a result, South Africa was not allowed to send a team to the 1964 Games (Guttman, 2002).

Before the 1968 Games in Mexico City, East and West Germany had been forced by the IOC to compete as a combined team. However, the IOC granted the German Democratic Republic the right to enter a separate team at Mexico City with the stipulation that both German teams had the same uniform and anthem. The stipulation proved ineffective, as the German Democratic Republic used its own team, flag, and anthem. Adding to political controversy, the U.N. Security Council condemned the

White-dominated government of Rhodesia, which had declared its independence from Great Britain, and asked that Rhodesian passports not to be accepted for international travel. Mexico's foreign minister enforced this rule and, therefore, there was no Rhodesian team at the Games.

The most historically remembered political moment of Mexico City is the Black Power protest by African-American athletes Tommy Smith and John Carlos who won gold and bronze, respectively, in the 200 meter dash. Frustrated with the slowing progress of the Civil Rights movement in the United States, the athletes raised their fists during the anthem while on the medal stand to symbolize the Black Power movement and to remind the world of the African Americans struggle for civil rights in the United States (Guttman, 2002).



Figure 3: Winners of the 200m gold and silver medals, Tommy Smith and John Carlos lower their heads and raise their fists in a Black Power salute at the 1968 Mexico City Games

At the 1972 Munich Games, Palestinian terrorists took hostage 11 Israeli athletes and officials. Part of the terrorists' ultimatum had demanded the release of 234 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel. As a result of an unsuccessful rescue attempt, all 11 Israelis, 5 terrorists, and a German policeman were killed. A memorial service was held

the next day instead of Olympic events, however, the Games continued as planned afterwards, raising criticism from the world community (Guttmann, 2002).



Figure 4: Black September Palestinian terrorist holding Israelis hostage at the 1972 Munich Games

Claiming national security concerns and as a retaliation for the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, U.S. President Jimmy Carter launched a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Games. Sixty-two countries ended up boycotting the Games, including Israel, Japan, and the People's Republic of China. The Soviet Union blamed the United States' boycott on American militarism and the American fear of the power of Soviet athletes. In retaliation for the 1980 U.S.-lead Moscow boycott, the Soviet Union, as well as 16 of its allies, boycotted the 1984 Los Angeles Games. The Russian National Olympic Committee issued a statement claiming that anti-Soviet hysteria in the United States created unbearable conditions for the stay of the Soviet delegation and performance by Soviet athletes (Guttmann, 2002).

When South Korea was awarded the 1988 Games, it was still technically at war with North Korea. Angered that the South won the bid, the North demanded that it host half of the 1988 Olympic events. At the time, 37 nation-states with National Olympic Committees did not have diplomatic relations with North Korea. The IOC offered an event-hosting compromise, which the North Koreans rejected and boycotted the Games. At the 1992 Barcelona Games, world-class Islamic runner, Algeria's Hassiba Boulmerka,

received numerous death threats from Islamic fundamentalists because of her refusal to wear a track suit that covered her arms and legs, which violated Islamic religious doctrine (Guttmann, 2002).

The worst bribery scandal in the Olympic history accompanied the 2002 Salt Lake City Games. The local organizing committee had given various IOC members and/or their relatives vacations, medical treatments, gifts, and direct cash payments to entice the members to cast their votes for Salt Lake City. The scandal was recognized as a direct consequence of the Olympic Games becoming a billion dollar industry, and drew nationwide negative attention to the International Olympic Committee and the behavior of the members of the organization. As a result, the IOC faced pressures to undergo major reforms of its policies and procedures regarding the Olympic Games' host-city selection process (Guttmann, 2002).

This brief overview is not an exhaustive list of the controversies that surrounded past Olympic Games and the IOC. Some of the other controversies, not discussed in this review include: doping in sport, discriminatory treatment of non-able bodied competitors, appointment of judges and their decisions, opportunities for women in sport and in IOC representations, election of IOC members, the power of large sponsors, post-Olympic bills being left behind for host city taxpayers, Olympic Games providing a stage for pro-democracy demonstrations, host city increased poverty and homelessness, and corruption within the IOC/bid city relationship (Jennings, 1996). Although all of these controversies are important when analyzing the political history of the Olympic Games, only pro-democracy demonstrations, increased poverty and homelessness, and corruption will be further discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

The Olympic Games have served as a catalyst for pro-democracy demonstrations on many occasions. For instance, such demonstrations by those seeking an end to government corruption, military dictatorship, torture, and repression, took place during the 1968 Mexico City and 1988 Seoul Games. The protests in Mexico City began a month before the Games, with protesters expressing their discontent with the government's corruption and misappropriation of resources, and the fact that hosting the Games would legitimize the image of the Mexican Regime. In reaction to a large protest three weeks before the Games, nearly 10,000 soldiers stormed a Mexico City college campus and opened fire on the protestors, killing 300 students and leaving another 1,200 wounded (Jennings, 1996).

In 1986, Korea hosted the Asian Games as a practice for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. A quarter of a million pro-democracy protesters took to the streets as President Samaranch and other IOC members arrived to the city. Protests continued to break out for weeks afterward, making the Korean dictatorship dispatch 70,000 police and troops to the capital city area. Protests took place throughout the time leading up to the Olympics. To decrease the chance of public unrests, the dictatorship declared Seoul a "peace zone" and sent 90,000 troops to secure the 1988 Games (Jennings, 1996).

At the 1996 Atlanta Games, a bombing by Eric Robert Rudolph killed two people and injured 111. Rudolph was angry at the United States government for legalizing abortion and, as a result, wanted to disrupt the Atlanta Games. He planted a pipe bomb in Centennial Park and the explosion occurred during a crowded concert. Contradictory to Rudolph's goal, officials and athletes agree to continue Games as planned (BBC News, 2005).

Hosting the Olympics increases the hardships that already exist in a city or develops new issues where none previously existed. Poverty and homelessness are two specific problems that can be exacerbated in cities hosting Olympic Games. As Lenskyj (2000) stated, “most aspects of the Olympics are organized to maximize power and profit rather than to promote the welfare of individuals and groups engaged in sport as a healthy and fulfilling human activity” (p. 3). City ordinances, referred to as the “criminalization of poverty” have historically been adopted in host-cities to sweep the streets of homeless people and criminalize a range of behaviors such as aggressive panhandling, loitering, camping in public, living in abandoned buildings, urinating in public, and lying down on park benches (Lenskyj). Poverty and homelessness were major concerns in Atlanta at the time of the bid process. In 1985, Atlanta had 5,000 homeless people and ranked second highest in the U.S. in terms of poverty rates among the local population. In 1990, when the bid was secured, the number of homeless people had increased to 15,000 (Jennings & Sambrook, 2000).

The same year Atlanta adopted the Quality of Life Ordinances, which placed many regulations (no loitering, no lying down on park benches) on homeless people and increased their likelihood of being sent to jail. Jennings and Sambrook (2000) stated, “They [Atlanta city officials] had a vision of a great and beautiful city which didn’t include poor people and the Olympics gave them that excuse” (p. 134). Two thousand beds in cheap room housing were lost in the years before the Atlanta Games. Lack of affordable housing further contributed to the growing number of homeless people in the city. Furthermore, many low-income African American communities were bulldozed to make room for the Olympic Game venues. The priorities seen in Atlanta follow the

traditional host-city decisions of neglecting the needs of lower class citizens (Jennings, 1996; Jennings & Sambrook).

Finally, when analyzing the relationship between sport and politics in the Olympic Games, the partnerships between the IOC and bid committees throughout the host-city selection process must be recognized. Beginning in the 1980s, rumors and allegations circulated regarding improper conduct of IOC members. Specifically, Atlanta and Sydney bid committee members were accused of providing the IOC officials with inappropriate incentives to cast a vote for their respective city. Investigations proved that many of the suspicions and allegations regarding the Atlanta and Sydney Games were correct. The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games claimed there was nothing unethical about the way they won the bid. However, an investigation showed that luxuries were provided for IOC members and their families throughout the bid process, including free medical treatment, scholarships to universities or help getting admitted, vacations to Disney World and the Augusta National Golf Course, and multiple holiday visits to the city. All the while, 200 million dollars in taxpayer money was put towards funding the Atlanta Games (Jennings, 1996; Jennings & Sambrook, 2000).

In an independent examination of the Sydney bid, evidence showed lavish treatment of IOC members by the bid committee, similar to that of the Atlanta Games. Examples of vote casting incentives provided by the Sydney bid committee to IOC members included accommodations, entertainment, medical and vacation services for members and their families, scholarships and financial incentives for athletes from developing countries, as well as offers of higher education and/or employment in the bid city or region for relatives of IOC members (Lenskyj, 2000).

As a result of the Sydney controversies, in 1999, the IOC founded an Ethics Commission to guard ethical aspects of the Games. The Ethics Commission defines and updates a framework of ethical principles, including the code of ethics that serve as a basis for investigating complaints raised regarding the non-respect of Olympic principles by IOC members, NOCs, candidature or organizing committees, and people involved in the Olympic movement. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the Ethics Commission is part of the IOC rather than an independent body, and reports to the IOC Executive Board and IOC President (Chappelet & Kubler-Mabbott, 2008).

To prevent its members from being involved in a misconduct, the IOC has also put in place certain rules and regulations, such as restricting the value of gifts and the number of trips that can be taken to a potential host city (Pound, 2004). There are skeptics, however, that question the authenticity and effectiveness of the IOC's self-regulation. Furthermore, the unique structure of the IOC exempts it from the 1997 OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials (one of the most significant global efforts to create a level playing field for international business transactions). The IOC's exemption from this regulation allows it to continue to operate freely in the business world, resulting in the potential for bribery within the organization to still exist (Jennings, 1996; Jennings & Sambrook, 2000; Lenskyj, 2000).

### *Summary*

In the most recent summer Olympics, the 2008 Beijing Games, a spotlight was cast on China calling attention to issues and controversies that members of the world community saw as contradictory to the Olympic ideals of peace, harmony, and friendship. Many people believed that these concerns were unique to the Beijing



Olympics, and that human rights violations, political manipulations, and/or corruption had never before affected Olympic Games to such an extent. However, as this review has shown, China is not alone in the experiences it faced by hosting the Games, but rather was subjected to controversies encountered by a majority of past host-cities.

Regardless of the IOC's stance, literature shows that there is a strong connection between politics and the Olympic Games. I believe that such a relationship exists, and it is my hope that this study will add to the argument in favor of this position. Scholars have provided examples of how, throughout the history of the modern Olympic movement, a majority of the Summer and Winter Olympiads have been accompanied by political controversies. I will contribute to this literature by conducting a case study of the 1936 Berlin and the 2008 Beijing Games that will compare select issues related to these two Olympics. It is my goal that by examining various aspects of the Berlin and Beijing Olympics, I can show that the 2008 Games were not unique in the issues faced by the host-city and country. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the research on international sport competitions, and help enhance our understanding of the powerful roles that sport and the Olympics have played, and continue to play, in society.

### **3.0 Methodology**

In an attempt to examine how the issues and controversies of the 2008 Beijing Games compare to those of the 1936 Berlin Games, a cultural, descriptive historical study was conducted based on the existing literature. In this historical analysis, a rare interpretation of the Olympic Games was constructed by collecting data on the Berlin and Beijing Games, including the classic foundational works on Olympic Games' history. Furthermore, primary documents and archives were incorporated into the data collection through consultation with a research librarian. Research in the Avery Brundage Collection at the University of Illinois Applied Health Sciences Library provided much insight and a base knowledge for synthesizing ideas.

Contextual and comparative sports history analysis was used in this study (see Table 3 for a descriptive outline of the objectives and epistemology of contextual and comparative sports history) (Booth, 2006). In this study, context was used to examine the relationship between the part (sport) and the whole (society). According to Booth, social and political contexts can help explain sport and legitimize the study of sport, which is what this research project aimed to achieve within the context of Olympic history. In this study, similar issues and controversies of Berlin and Beijing were used as tools of explanation. The descriptive historical component refers to reporting what happened at the 1936 and 2008 Olympic Games (Wiggins & Mason, 2005).

Sport contributes to the integration of diverse groups, and in the case of Berlin and Beijing, such diverse groups were often on opposing sides of issues and controversies related to the Games. The purpose of using the cultural, descriptive historical approach in this study was to explore the role of sport and the Olympic Games in the context of such

issues and controversies. Furthermore, a comparison between the two Olympic Games was performed to gain an understanding of how sporting ceremonies and festivals have evolved over time. Analyzing the 1936 and 2008 Games not only provides a comparison of the similarities and differences experienced by each host city, but furthermore, highlights cultural and historical aspects of the Olympic Games.

Table 3: Contextual and Comparative Sports History

	Objectives	Epistemology
Contextual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Situate subject in the entirety of events to which it is bound</li> <li>• Stress the interrelationship between part (sport) and whole (society)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical events constitute a single process</li> <li>• Broader social, economic, and political contexts “explain” sport</li> <li>• Broader social, economic and political contexts “legitimize” the study of sport</li> </ul>
Comparative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and analyze historical similarities</li> <li>• Identify and analyze historical differences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparisons are tools of explanation</li> </ul>

Source: Booth, D. (2006). Sport historians: What do we do? How do we do it? In Phillips, M. (ed.). *Deconstructing sport history*. (p. 27-54). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

This study was based on research that examined the existing literature on the Berlin and Beijing Olympic Games. In the beginning stages of data collection I used the Internet to search for journal articles on both the 1936 and 2008 Olympics. The journals that I reviewed included the *International Journal of the History of Sport*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *International Review for the*

*Sociology of Sport, Olympika, Journal of Olympic History, Sports History Review, and Sporting Traditions*. If a journal article was identified based on a keyword search (e.g., “1936 Olympic Games,” “Berlin Games,” “Nazi Olympics,” “Jesse Owens,” “Hitler’s Olympics,” “2008 Olympic Games,” “Beijing Olympics,” “China’s Olympics,” “China Games”), I would first read its abstract to determine if the manuscript contained information useful for the study. If that was the case, I would read the entire article noting valuable information that could be included in the study.

Very limited information on the Berlin Games was available in online journal articles. The majority of the information on the 1936 Olympics was related to the Holocaust, and included a description of the exhibits at the U.S. Holocaust Museum, the Nazi persecution of the Jews, and book reviews, and thus was deemed of limited usefulness for the purpose of this study. Furthermore, online sources such as the official Olympic website and the International Olympic Committee’s Berlin section provided only few statistical details of the 1936 Games, such as the number of participating athletes and countries. As I began to realize that online sources would yield only limited information about Berlin Olympics, I switched to a library search of print materials.

I conducted library searches at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Illinois inter-library loan system, the Champaign Public Library, and the Urbana Public Library. All books about the 1936 Games, Jesse Owens, Hitler’s role in the Olympics, and the state of Germany in the 1930s were briefly examined for their usefulness. Furthermore, I analyzed the reference sections of these books to develop more leads on the topic. I was able to use a majority of the books in their entirety, and the few that were not fully relevant often still contained multiple beneficial chapters.

My process of conducting research was to read a book in its entirety, making notes along the way of relevant information which was later formulated into categories (which then became the eight themes presented in the findings section). Since I had to use a majority of print resources for the Berlin section, this literature is subsequently not as current as that of the Beijing Olympics (which, for the most part, was published in 2008). The literature on the Berlin Games was typically published in the 2000-2005, with a few important works, such as Guttman's *The Most Controversial Olympics*, still included for their valuable information although published in the 1990ties.

As previously stated, a myriad of information on the 2008 Beijing Games was available online. Specifically, the *International Journal of the History of Sport* contained many articles valuable to this study. Websites of organizations such as the International Olympic Committee, Chinese Olympic Committee, City of Beijing, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, and Human Rights Watch were full of easily accessible information, statistics, and pictures of the Games. Only credible and relevant online sources such as the sites of organizations mentioned above were used in this study. While much information on the Beijing Games existed in the form of personal opinion pieces or non-scholarly editorials, these sources were not used.

Print material on the Beijing Games was also plentiful. Many publications came out immediately before the start of the Games, such as Brownell's *Beijing Games: What the Olympics mean to China* and Worden's *China's great leap: The Beijing Games and Olympian human rights challenges*. Furthermore, the November-December edition of the *Olympic Review* focused on the Beijing Games and therefore provided much information from the standpoint of the IOC. As with research conducted on the Berlin Games, any

print information that I had access to was reviewed for its potential usefulness. If a book was deemed useful for the study, I read it in its entirety and took notes that could be helpful in the development of the themes.

Finally, it is important to recognize that I was using social memory in this work. Social memory is an artificial recollection of experiences by groups, institutions, or individuals in society. The literature I referenced is a reflection of the authors portraying, in their own words, the events, issues, and controversies of the Berlin and Beijing Olympics. How we remember things is constantly changing and factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, income, education, and religion affect the memory we construct about an event (Nerone, 1989). All of these factors affected the literature I reviewed in this study. Furthermore, my findings are based on a review of secondary sources, including books and journal articles written by others. This should be taken into consideration when interpreting this study.

## **4.0 FINDINGS**

### **4.1 BERLIN FINDINGS**

#### Germany Background

##### *Pre-Olympic Geopolitical Situation of Germany*

The Weimer Republic, the democratic government that gained control after Germany's defeat in the First World War, was in power when Berlin was awarded the 1936 Games (Rippon, 2006). However, there were significant political changes in Germany that resulted in Hitler and the Nazi Regime gaining control of the country before the Olympics in Berlin. To understand the geo-political situation in Germany before the 1936 Games, it is necessary to acknowledge the timeline of events that occurred as Hitler rose to power and the Nazi Regime strengthened itself within Germany in the years preceding the Olympics.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the German revolution overthrew the imperial government and created a republic. In 1920, the Nazi party adopted the swastika as its flag and in 1924 Adolf Hitler was convicted of treason and imprisoned as a result of his work with the Nazi party. Hitler was banned from public speaking in Bavaria and other German states in 1926. Aside from Hitler's personal setbacks, in 1928, the Nazi party made a significant stride in its quest for power by winning 12 seats in the German parliamentary elections. By 1927, Hitler was again permitted to speak at public gatherings. On September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1930, the Nazi party won 107 seats in the German parliamentary elections. Then, in July 1932, the Nazi party won 230 seats in the elections making it the largest party in parliament (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009).

In August of 1932, the Nazi party had more than 1 million members. On January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1933 Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. The Nazi party won 43.9% of the vote in the final multiparty German parliamentary elections on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1933. On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1933, Germany was declared a one party state under the Nazi rule. On August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1934, German President von Hindenburg died and within three hours Hitler abolished the office of the president and declared that from that moment on he would be known as Fuhrer, Reich Chancellor, and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Finally, on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1934, Hitler merged the positions of Chancellor and President, thus making himself the most powerful leader in Germany (Senn, 1999; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009).

It is critical to understand the role of sport in Germany when analyzing the country's pre-Olympic geopolitical situation. Throughout history, sport in Germany was taught in the context of national education run by the government rather than as health education in schools. Therefore, the German state controlled physical education (Kruger & Murray, 2003). When Hitler came to power, he continued this tradition, and further strengthened the German government's control of sport. He increased the time devoted to physical education in schools and sports that promoted a spirit of attack, such as soccer and boxing, were added to the curriculum. Hitler used sport in his efforts to improve the Aryan race, and put forth the message that the strengthening of the entire community was valued over an individual's athletic achievements (Bachrach, 2000).

Competitive sports in Germany were run as club sports rather than as part of the educational system, so all youth that wanted to participate in sport were indoctrinated by the Nazis. Coaches had to be in line with Nazism, and the entire organization was funded



by the Regime. In fact, after the completion of the Games, all sports organizations in Germany were united under the control of the Nazi party (Kruger & Murray, 2003). The Nazis believed in the relationship between sports and politics, which is something that went directly against the Olympic ideals (Large, 2007).

To the Nazis, there was no difference between sport and militarism, and Hitler's expansionist plans for Germany were no secret (Duff, 1986). Within years of Hitler coming to power, millions of Germans, of all ages, became members of the Strength Through Joy organization. Germans were trained through a quasi-military style with a focus on being able to defend the country (Walters, 2006). The purpose of Nazi sport was to prepare boys for war and girls to become physically fit mothers. Hitler emphasized the importance of succeeding in sport so much that physical education teachers' report card comments became more important than those of math and science teachers, and a student could be expelled for poor sport performance (Bachrach, 2000).

Furthermore, prior to the 1936 Games, German officials had historically preferred German-only competitions and fitness programs. For example, in the 1920s Germany objected to German athletes competing with athletes from allied countries or those they considered racially inferior (Slavs, Blacks, and Jews). Nazi party members stated (before the Regime came to full power and would be in control for the Berlin Olympics) that Black athletes should not be allowed at Olympic Games. As the Nazis gained power in the years leading up to the Games, the IOC became concerned about the possibility of the Nazis trying to implement a Black- or Jew-free Olympics in 1936 (Large, 2007).

The troubled German economy is another pre-Olympic factor important to acknowledge. In 1930, Germany was hit by the Great Depression, which had significant

repercussions on the country in the years prior to the 1936 Games (Walters, 2006). By 1933, unemployment in Germany was at a high of over 6 million. Through job creation, Hitler found a way to use the struggles of the Depression to unify Germans and give people (specifically Aryans) a sense of purpose and national pride under his leadership. One hundred and twenty-five thousand men were employed with the construction of a transit system and a program was created in which 100,000 workers built autobahns, dug irrigation ditches, and planted new forests. Also, radios were mass produced to supply propaganda for the Regime and the previously unemployed youth repaired river banks and helped reclaim wastelands as part of the Voluntary Labor Service and Voluntary Youth Service (Duff, 1986).

By 1936, the number of unemployed in Germany had dropped to 1 million. Many German citizens believed that Hitler had saved their country and therefore fully supported him and the Regime in their political agenda. While Hitler did improve conditions in Germany by creating jobs, employment statistics were inflated by the fact that women were excluded from the count, Jews had lost their citizenship and therefore were not included, and people took any job possible to avoid the threat of being sent to a concentration camp for not working (Duff, 1986). Regardless of the statistical manipulations, Hitler clearly made a positive economic impact on the lives of many German citizens in the pre-Olympic years.

Since 1916, Germany's Olympic participation has been marred by controversy. The 1916 Olympic Games were cancelled because of World War I. For the 1920 Games in Antwerp, Belgium did not invite any teams from Germany or its allies that fought against Belgium in the war. For the 1924 Games in Paris, France did not invite Germany

either. The 1928 Amsterdam Games, which took place 10 years after the end of the war, were the first in which Germany was invited back to the Olympics (Bachrach, 2000; Senn, 1999). Upon re-entering the Olympic world during the 1928 Games, Berlin put forth a bid to host the next available Games (1936). Other cities who applied to host the Games were: Barcelona, Alexandria, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Cologne, Dublin, Frankfurt/Main, Helsinki, Nuremburg, and Rome (Hoffmann & Kruger, 2004).

By the 29<sup>th</sup> IOC session in 1931, all candidate cities except Berlin and Barcelona had withdrawn (Hoffmann & Kruger, 2004). With the Spanish Civil War progressing, Barcelona seemed like a risky choice and, as a result, Berlin felt confident that it would secure the Olympic bid. Only one-third of the IOC members were present at the 1931 decision meeting, and therefore IOC President Balliet-Latour sealed the present members' ballots and asked others to mail in their votes to the IOC headquarters in Lausanne. About two weeks later, President Balliet-Latour announced that Berlin had won over Barcelona by a vote of 43-16. The Winter Games were set for Garmisch-Partenkirchen which were to be followed by the Summer Games in Berlin (Hilton, 2008; Senn, 1999). Berlin being awarded the bid for the 1936 Games in 1931 was a sign of Germany being included again in the world community (Bachrach, 2000).

Questions and concerns regarding the 1936 Games began to arise in 1932 when, as the above timeline shows, it became clear to many that Hitler was gaining more and more power in Germany (Kruger, 2003a). During the 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, the IOC executive board inquired with Germany whether or not the Olympics could properly take place if the Nazis were in power by 1936 (the year in which the Games were scheduled for Berlin). Hitler assured the IOC that if he was in power by then

he would not interfere with the Games or take any action against non-Aryan athletes on other teams (Kruger). In the years preceding the Games, the IOC experienced many doubts about Germany's ability to uphold the Olympic rules and accept athletes of foreign countries that were not Aryan (Kruger).

### *Reasons why Germany Wanted to Host Olympics*

Berlin began its campaign for the 1936 Games on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1927 at a meeting of the IOC in Monaco (Large, 2007). German officials claimed that Berlin should get to host the 1936 Games because it had been denied them in 1916 and its location at the heart of Europe would help attract many visitors (Walters, 2006). Germany persuaded the IOC to hold its Ninth Olympic Congress in Berlin, giving the city the opportunity to show off Berlin to the delegates (Large, 2007). In May of that year the Olympic Congress met at Berlin University, giving government officials the opportunity to lobby for the 1936 Games. The city hosted a banquet for the Congress, and in hopes of impressing the members, 2,000 rowing boats formed a procession on the proposed Olympic course. The IOC would meet again in 1931 to decide the winner of the 1936 Games (Hilton, 2008).

The entire bid preparation process for the Berlin Games took place before Hitler rose to power (Guttmann, 1992; Hilton, 2008). However, Hitler took control of Germany right after it was awarded the 1936 Games, leaving the Nazis with responsibility they were not, at first, sure they wanted. The Nazi regime was originally not interested in hosting the Olympic Games because it was an international competition that allowed people of all races to compete against one another, which went against German ideals

(Guttman). The shift of political power in Germany resulted in an uncertain future of the 1936 Games. As Large (2007) stated,

Although no one could be sure that Hitler would still be in power in 1936, his government would undoubtedly hold sway during the crucial buildup to the games, allowing his regime to define the political atmosphere in which the preparations took place. Given the Nazi movement's open avowals of racism in all dimensions of life, including sports, anyone with an investment in the Olympic ideals of openness and fair play had to worry about what it would mean to hold the five-ringed festival in Germany (p. 62).

With Hitler in power prior to the Olympics, the IOC had reason to feel uneasy about the upcoming Games.

The question of whether or not the 1936 Games would still be held under Hitler's power was answered when Dr. Goebbels, Minister for Propaganda for the Nazi Regime, convinced Hitler of the possibilities of hosting the Olympics (Hilton, 2008). Goebbels was able to persuade Hitler that the Games could help showcase to the world Germany's vitality and expertise (Guttman, 1992) and that they would allow Germany to portray how happy and prosperous citizens were under Nazi control (Strenk, 1978). Hitler saw the opportunity for the Games to highlight the superiority of the Aryan race both to the German people and world, and decided that the propaganda potential of hosting the Olympics would be beneficial to the Regime (Kruger, 2003a).

The Nazis developed two main strategies in conjunction with the Games: to assure propaganda within Germany and to break the cultural isolation of the Reich's government by propaganda abroad (Kruger, 2003a; Kruger & Murray, 2003). Hitler and the Nazi Regime promised full financial support for the 1936 Games (Bachrach, 2000). Germany had been isolated from the world during the Weimer Republic, which had been in place prior to Hitler's raise to power, and the Nazis wanted to show both to its own

citizens and to foreigners that the country should be respected on the world stage. As Walters (2006) stated,

For him [Hitler], the Games [had] little to do with athletics. Instead, they [proved] that his fascist regime was an example other nations [should follow]. The XIth Olympiad [proved] that Germany, after nearly two decades of subjugation since 1918, was once more on top of the world. Far from being a festival of internationalism, the Games [were] one of over-arching nationalism (p. 22).

The Olympics were utilized by the Regime to accomplish Hitler's strategies of Nazi propaganda (Hoffmann & Kruger, 2004).

In 1933, Nazi propaganda for the Games began with a five language publication of Olympic bulletins, focused on Hitler's appeal to the youth of the world. Germany created an international press service to reach as many newspapers and press agencies around the world as possible in German, French, Spanish, and Italian. By October 1934, it was providing 24,000 copies worldwide to 2,030 Germans and 5,120 foreign addresses, which included 615 German and 3,075 foreign newspapers and journals. In April 1935, the press service was enlarged and was translated and printed in 14 languages. There was a press run of 156,000 copies in June 1935 and 2.4 million in September 1935 (Kruger & Murray, 2003).

The Reich Railway Central Office for Tourism was responsible for Olympic advertising and publicity efforts. The agency sent out posters and promotional brochures to more than 40 countries leading up to the Games. In terms of internal publicity, the Nazis set up Olympic volunteer groups in every German town with more than five hundred people to promote the idea that pursuing sports was a part of being a good National Socialist. In February of 1935, to generate further German enthusiasm for the Games, officials opened an exhibition in Berlin that emphasized Germany's central place

in the modern Olympic movement. The exhibit stayed in Berlin for six weeks before being moved to other German cities (Large, 2007).

A focus of Hitler's throughout the preparations for the 1936 Olympic Games was to show that there was a direct connection between the ancient Greeks and the Aryan Germans. Hitler saw the modern Germans as the new Greeks and believed there was a link between Nazism and pagan Greek culture. The Nazis followed the Greek idea of male beauty, they both linked sport and war, and the pan-Aryan Olympics were designed to mirror the ancient pan-Hellenic games (Pitsula, 2004). Hitler wanted to portray to the world that the Aryan Germans were similar to the "pure" ancient Greeks. To deliver this message, Germany promoted the Olympics with colorful photos and magazine spreads in which athletic imagery drew a link between Nazi Germany and ancient Greece. This symbolized the Nazi view that a superior German civilization, with their blue eyes, blond hair, and defined muscular features, were the heir of the Aryan culture of classical antiquity (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009).

The driving force behind Hitler's backing of the 1936 Berlin Games was the propaganda opportunities the Olympics would provide for the Nazi Regime. Not only did Hitler want to show the world that Germany had arrived as a world power under his leadership, but he hoped that hosting of the Games would facilitate national pride in Germany and increase support of his Regime within the country. Hitler wanted all Germans to feel and share in the responsibility of presenting the Berlin Games to the world, and he portrayed the message that the 1936 Games were a national mission for Germany (Hilton, 2008). Above all, it is certain that the Berlin Olympics were a national mission for the Nazi Regime.

### *Summary of Berlin Games*

Beginning in 1924, until 1992 when the pattern changed, Winter Games were held several months before the Summer Games for that year (Guttmann, 2002). From February 6<sup>th</sup> to February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1936, Germany hosted the fourth Winter Olympics at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the Bavarian Alps. Twenty-eight nations participated in the event. Germany finished second behind Norway in total number of medals. The Winter Games were a much less prestigious event than the Summer Games, but provided German Olympic organizers and the Nazi Regime an opportunity for a rehearsal before the upcoming August Games (Bachrach, 2000; Walters, 2006).

While there were no reported demonstrations and Hitler himself seemed to make a positive impression on visitors in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, the Germans had some issues from the Winter Games to correct before they would be ready for Berlin. For example, IOC president Baillet-Latour was very upset with the number of Nazi flags and swastikas around the city, as well as anti-Jewish signs, and demanded that Hitler have them taken down or else he would cancel both the Winter and Summer Games. Furthermore, the number of uniformed SS officers and army troops around the city had been overwhelming to foreign visitors. Hitler learned that he would have to remove all anti-Jewish displays and make the SS officers less visible during the Summer Games (Bachrach, 2000; Walters, 2006).

Twelve days after the winter Olympics ended, German troops entered the demilitarized zone of Rhineland. The Treaty of Versailles, a result of World War I, forced German soldiers to withdraw from the area of southwest Germany to provide a buffer zone between Germany and Western Europe. Furthermore, the Locarno Pact



prevented German troops from being in Rhineland. Hitler's actions went directly against the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact, and showed his intention to expand Germany through military conquest. However, France did not want to risk another war by moving against Germany, and plans for Berlin hosting the Summer Games in five months were not affected.

The XI Olympic Games were held in Berlin, Germany on August 1<sup>st</sup> through August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1936 (Greenberg, 2000) and were the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the modern Games (Senn, 1999). More than four thousand athletes (4,066) representing 49 countries participated in the Games (Greenberg). The Games featured 19 sports including 129 disciplines (Hofmann & Kruger, 2004). Basketball, canoeing, and handball made their first appearances (International Olympic Committee, 2009) and polo was included in the Olympic program for the last time (Wallechinsky & Loucky, 2008).

The Berlin Olympics shattered attendance records of previous Games. While the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles were the first to have more than one million spectators, Berlin attracted over 3.7 million (Kruger, 2003a). Furthermore, the opening ceremony of the Berlin Games had more spectators than the total number of people who attended the 1932 Winter Games (Kruger). There were 100,000 people at the opening and closing ceremonies (Hilton, 2008). Winning athletes received medals, a winner's crown, and an oak tree in a pot (International Olympic Committee, 2009). Germany led all countries in the number of medals won with 89, including the most gold with 33. The United States came in second in overall medals with 56, as well as second in gold with 24. Table 4 shows the entire medal summary of the 1936 Games in rank order according to number of gold medals.

Table 4: 1936 Berlin Games Medal Summary (Greenberg, 2000).

<b>Country</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
Germany	33	26	30	89
United States	24	20	12	56
Hungary	10	1	5	16
Italy	8	9	5	22
Finland	7	6	6	19
France	7	6	6	19
Sweden	6	5	9	20
Japan	6	4	8	18
The Netherlands	6	4	7	17
Great Britain	4	7	3	14
Austria	4	6	3	13
Czechoslovakia	3	5	0	8
Argentina	2	2	3	7
Estonia	2	2	3	7
Egypt	2	1	2	5
Switzerland	1	9	5	15
Canada	1	3	5	9
Norway	1	3	2	6
Turkey	1	0	1	2
India	1	0	0	1
New Zealand	1	0	0	1
Poland	0	3	3	6
Denmark	0	2	3	5
Latvia	0	1	1	2
Romania	0	1	0	1
South Africa	0	1	0	1
Yugoslavia	0	1	0	1
Mexico	0	0	3	3
Belgium	0	0	2	2
Australia	0	0	1	1
Philippines	0	0	1	1
Portugal	0	0	1	1

For the Berlin Olympics, the original plan was to extend upon the old Olympic Stadium that had been built for the cancelled 1916 Games. However, once Hitler decided to support the Games, he provided the full financial means to build a new venue. Hitler wanted to put on a grand showcase to the world and decided that the old stadium would not suffice (Hofmann & Kruger, 2004). The new Olympic stadium, Reichssportfeld, was

estimated to be built at the cost of 20 million marks, but ended up costing 70 million. Two thousand and six hundred workers were needed to build the venue, and the Nazis insisted that only Aryan Germans be employed. Other construction projects in Germany were stopped so that all resources and efforts could be poured into the project. The stadium that could seat 110,000 people and could hold 250,000 on the May Field area was completed just two weeks prior to the start of the Games (Large, 2007).

The construction of the Olympic Stadium was a massive project: more than 17,000 tons of cement and over 7,000 tons of iron were used. Hitler wanted these strong materials to be visible in the stadium to symbolize Germany's strength and the enduring nature of Nazi ideology. The new Olympic Stadium was just one part of the Reich Sports Field complex, which included the 15-acre May Field, a 20,000 seat open-air-theatre for gymnastics, a 16,000 seat swimming stadium, and a 20,000 seat hockey stadium (Rippon, 2006). Furthermore, a village of 150 buildings was built for the competitors (Greenburg, 2003). Finally, Nazi military funds were diverted to complete Berlin's new airport in time for the Games (Schaap, 2007).

For the first time in Olympic history, the 1936 Olympic Games were broadcast on the radio by the German Broadcasting Company. Three hundred million people followed the Berlin Games on the radio (Hilton, 2008; Kruger & Murray, 2003). Moreover, the 1936 Games were the first to be broadcast on television (locally). Twenty-five television viewing rooms were set up in the greater Berlin area allowing locals to follow the Games free of charge (International Olympic Committee, 2009). During the Games the most modern technology was used, such as electric starting pistols, electronic starting devices, photo-finish equipment, electronic devices to record touches in fencing, and the first ever

wirephotos of sports events were all innovations introduced by the Nazis in Berlin (Greenburg, 2000; Strenk, 1978). Media present at the Berlin Olympics included 593 foreign publishers, 700 foreign journalists, 225 German publishers, and 1,000 German journalists (Kruger & Murray).

Nineteen African Americans (17 men and 2 women) competed in the Berlin Games, which was three times the number that had competed at the 1932 Los Angeles Games. Prior to the Games, German officials said that Black athletes would be treated well in Berlin. In men's track and field, 10 out of 66 athletes were African American and they won 8 out of 12 events won by the U.S. The athletes were treated well and cheered enthusiastically by the German crowd. However, treatment of the athletes by the German officials was less warm. For example, Hitler would not shake Jesse Owens or the other African American athletes' hands after they won gold, as he had done with many other winners (Bachrach, 2000).

The majority of negative discussion raised regarding the 1936 Berlin Games was centered on Hitler and the Nazi Regime's disregard for the basic human rights and civil liberties of Jews in Germany. Multiple actions taken by the Nazis in the years leading up to the Games created controversy around the world. For example, on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the German parliament suspended the freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press and other basic civil liberties of Jews. Moreover, on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1933, the Nazis organized a nationwide boycott of Jewish-owned businesses in Germany (Bachrach, 2000). The discrimination of Jews in Germany also led ethnic and racial minorities in the U.S. and other countries to develop a negative attitude toward the Games. African-Americans and

Jews strongly criticized Hitler and his theory of Aryan racial supremacy. Negative discussions of the 1936 Games will be further explored in the following section.

### Issues and Controversies related to the Berlin Games

#### *Reaction to Host City Decision*

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1931, the International Olympic Committee announced that Berlin, Germany would host the 1936 Games (Guttman, 1992). On January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the Berlin Organizing Committee met for the first time. Within one week Hitler was appointed Chancellor of the state, and within the year the Nazi Regime implemented a national boycott against Jewish businesses, purged Jews from public office and institutions, took away the Jews' ability to train for Olympic-caliber sports, and took Germany out of the League of Nations (Kruger, 2003b; Senn, 1999). Hitler and the Nazi Regime's treatment of the Jews in Germany was the basis of much of the negative public perception of the 1936 Games.

With Hitler serving as Chancellor and the National Socialists in power, the Nazis vocalized their belief in the supremacy of the Aryan race. In the three years leading up to the Games, the Nazi Regime took many actions to bar Jews and other non-Aryans from sports club and facilities. Beginning in March of 1933, the city of Cologne banned Jews from city playgrounds and sports facilities. Moreover, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the German Boxing Federation banned Jewish boxers from competitive bouts and all contracts that had been arranged by Jewish fight promoters were cancelled (Bachrach, 2000).

The Reich Sports Office ordered all German gymnastic organizations to adopt an Aryans only policy on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1933. Furthermore, on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1933, the German Gymnastics Society mandated that members of their organization must prove Aryan

ancestry. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1933, the Ministry of Science in the German state of Prussia ordered that village, city, county, and district physical education organizations expel Jewish members. The All-German Chess Convention excluded Jews from its membership on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1933. On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1933, a new rule forbade Jews from using public swimming pools in Wannsee (Berlin), Fulda, Beuthen, and Speyer (Bachrach, 2000).

In September of 1933, it was ruled that non-Aryans could no longer work as professional or amateur jockeys. On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 1934 the Reich Youth Leadership announced that German Jewish youth groups could no longer wear uniforms. Finally, on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1935 the Minister of Interior for the German state of Baden prohibited group hikes and similar activities for all non-National Socialist Party youth groups. These discriminatory actions that placed severe restrictions on non-Aryan athletes in Germany caused much negative reaction from the world community. Many questioned how a country could host an Olympic Games when it prevented part of its population from participating in sport (Bachrach, 2000).

In the six years following the Nazi takeover, 300,000 Jews fled the country (60,000 in 1933 alone). Not only did this destroy the Jewish community, but also Germany's intellectual and cultural life with the mass departure of writers, artists, and musicians. Furthermore, plays, films, books, and music were tightly controlled by the German government (Duff, 1986). Sport was not the only part of a non-Aryan's life that was being taken over by the Nazi Regime. As the world community became aware of these other issues destroying the Jewish community, negative reactions to the Games intensified.

By 1933, strong public opposition to the Games being hosted in Berlin had arisen and became a serious issue that the IOC was forced to recognize. Referring to the political situation that was developing in Germany at this time, Guttmann said, “This state of affairs was certainly not what the IOC had expected when Berlin was chosen as the site of the games” (p. 53). In 1934, the Nazi’s power further increased when German president Hindenburg died, leaving Hitler the official patron of the Berlin Games (Kruger, 2003a). Around the world, tensions developed and anger about the situation in Germany continually increased until 1936.

### *Negative Public Perception*

Jewish athletes were un-officially prevented from competing on the German Olympic team. Since this went directly against the Olympic ideals of equal opportunities for all athletes, it was the cause of much negative public perception of the 1936 Games. Members of the world community called for Jews to be able to participate just as Aryans could. Hitler, wanting to avoid negative perception and looking out for the Nazi Regime’s political future, made a token of gesture to the West and agreed to allow two non-Aryan athletes (Helene Mayer and Gretel Bergmann) to compete on the women’s team (The Holocaust: The Nazi Olympics, 2009). Schaap (2007) commented on the situation:

... anyone could see that the Third Reich had no real intention of allowing Jewish athletes to compete fully on its Olympic teams. Almost since the day the Nazis came to power, it had been clear that they planned to discriminate against Jewish athletes, despite their assurances to the contrary (p. 65).

Bergmann was later denied a place on the team by German officials, therefore making Mayer, the half-Jewish fencer, the only Jew to compete for Germany (The Holocaust: The Nazi Olympics).



Figure 5: Helene Mayer, the half-Jewish fencer, and only Jew who competed for Germany at the 1936 Games

In defending themselves against negative public perceptions regarding the lack of Jewish athletes on the German team, the Nazis referred to their theory of racial supremacy and claimed that Jewish athletes simply were not as good as the Aryans, and therefore not able to make the team. However, in the years preceding the 1936 Olympics, Jewish athletes in Germany lacked the two critical components of Olympic preparation: financial means and communal support. Many Jews who were potential competitors left the country because they knew they would not be able to properly train in Germany. Those who stayed faced such challenges that qualifying for a team was virtually impossible (Hilton, 2008).

Although the Nazis allowed the nomination of several Jewish athletes for the Olympic team, none were actually invited to tryouts. Furthermore, the national sanctioning bodies for each sport chose Germany's Olympians, but Jews were not allowed to be members of any of these athletic associations. To make the Olympic team, an athlete had to be in one of the official sports clubs, but to belong to one of the official



clubs the athlete had to be Aryan (Schaap, 2007). The Nazis found a clever way to appease protestors and diminish the negative press, but yet still prevent Jewish participation on the German team.

Throughout the 1930s, Canada, Britain, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Palestine, and the United States were all home to protests of the Olympic Games being held in Berlin because of Hitler and the German's treatment of Jews. Protestors called for no discrimination of Jewish athletes by the Nazi Regime and for the IOC to take action to improve the situation (Strenk, 1978). Regarding the experiences of Jews in Germany, the IOC stated that its policy was to not concern itself with a country's domestic laws unless they impacted the Games. IOC members believed that they should not become involved in racial, social, or religious controversies of any kind (Kass, 1976).

The IOC did not want to intervene with the internal affairs of a host-country, and therefore, as the Germans indicated that they would observe Olympic rules, the Committee wanted to raise no further challenges (Senn, 1999). The IOC's position was that the 1936 Games would be held in Berlin as long as all people and every race would be able to participate in complete equality. The requirement of equality, however, did not mean that the IOC would involve itself with the Germany's situation involving Jewish discrimination (Large, 2007).

The IOC did not get involved in Berlin at all until the Nazi government ordered all athletic organizations to be Aryan-only (which prevented Jewish athletes from training for and having an opportunity to compete on the Olympic team). IOC President Baillet-Latour added two articles to the Charter in hopes of assuring that Jewish athletes had Olympic opportunities: 1) All the laws regulating the Olympic Games must be observed,

and 2) As a principle, German Jews must not be excluded from German teams at the Games. The Nazis agreed to these conditions, and President Baillet-Latour ensured in them his trust that they would follow the Charter guidelines (Hilton, 2008). The addition of the two articles did not benefit Jewish athletes, however, and as previously stated, only one was allowed on the German team.



Figure 6: The official 1936 Olympic Games poster prominently featured an Aryan-German athlete

The perception of the 1936 Games by the citizens of Germany was both positive and negative. A majority, particularly Aryans, appeared to support Hitler and the Berlin Olympic preparations. Jewish citizens also enjoyed a temporary pause in daily aspects of discrimination, which improved their lives during the period of the Games. The German press, operating under strict government regulations, strongly supported the Games and the Olympic festival under Nazi leadership (Senn, 1999). The Hitler Youth, originally established in 1922 as a recruiting tool for the SA, had the sole responsibility of recruiting for the Nazi party beginning in 1926, and saw a surge in membership in pre-Olympic years. By 1933, it had over 2.3 million members (Rippon, 2006). Within the Hitler Youth organization, Hitler developed a strong sense of national pride and passion, as well as a belief in Germany's strength and vitality.

Within Germany, however, there was also opposition to hosting the Games. Originally, and before Hitler rose to complete power, the National Socialists denounced the Games and the party's official newspaper called for Games free from African-American participants. Conservative Germans viewed the Games as a foreign intrusion into their native culture, and on the left wing of German politics, both the German Communist Party and the German Social Democrats opposed hosting the Olympics. Strong opposition also came from socialist and communist sport leaders, who were organized under the workers' sport movement in Germany. They created the Communist Red International of Labor Unions in 1936 and called on all workers' sport organizations to join anti-Olympic committees. This organization, unsuccessfully, pushed for hosting the Games in Barcelona instead of Berlin (Senn, 1999).

### *Efforts to Boycott*

The U.S. Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) accepted Berlin's Olympic invitation in 1933 under the agreement that there would be no discrimination of Jews during the Games. It was important to Germany that the AAU supported the Games because no American athlete could go to Berlin without its sanction. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1933, at its national convention, the AAU officially called for a boycott of the Games unless the Germans changed their policy towards Jews in sport. In defense, Germany assured participating countries that the Olympics would be run by the German Olympic Committee alongside the IOC, and not the Nazi Regime. German officials welcomed the United States to come see for itself that the Jews were being treated fairly (Kass, 1976; Lapchick, 1978).

In September of 1934, Avery Brundage, then president of the United States Olympic Committee, was put in charge of the trip to Germany to investigate the discrimination that Jews were facing. Brundage believed that sports and politics should remain separate, and was happy with the state of Germany he had been shown during his visit. He claimed to have seen no proof of Jewish athletes being denied opportunities, and was pleased that the highest Nazi Regime officials had agreed to accept the Olympic rules. He said that as long as the German Olympic Committee was following the promises it made to the IOC, the American Olympic Committee and others had no right to interfere with internal political, religious, or racial affairs of the country. Upon Brundage's return to the U.S., he and the American Olympic Committee voted to continue with the United States sending a team to the Berlin Games (Guttman, 1992; Hilton, 2008; Lapchick, 1978).

Whether or not Brundage witnessed the true treatment of Jews in Germany is debatable. Furthermore, various observers have questioned whether or not he was an impartial observer, as Brundage was known to be naïve and sympathetic to the Nazi Regime. Moreover, he had a personal desire to protect the image of the Olympic Games as a result of his position with the United States Olympic Committee. When analyzing Brundage's investigation, "...one must decide if a month long journey away from discrimination [while Brundage was in Germany] merited the tremendous propaganda value Hitler enjoyed as a result of the Games" (Lapchick, 1978, p. 4).

Jeremiah Mahoney, who succeeded Brundage as the AAU President in 1935, strongly opposed the Americans sending a team to the Games because of the discrimination taking place in Germany at that time. Mahoney claimed the U.S. should

not send a team to the Games because American athletes were viewed as the best in the world, and it would legitimize the importance of Hitler's Games if they were in attendance. He established the Committee of Fair Play in Sports, which campaigned for an American boycott of the Berlin Games. Mahoney succeeded in convincing the AAU to vote again on whether or not to send a U.S. team to the Games, and in December of 1935, the American Amateur Athletic Union voted by a narrow margin to still participate in the Games (Bachrach, 2000; Schaap, 2007; Senn, 1999).

A number of counter Olympics events were planned in 1936, but the People's Olympiad of Barcelona drew the greatest attention as an opposition effort against the Nazis and the 1936 Games. It was designed by antifascists to be an international sports festival that preserved the Olympic spirit of peace and cooperation between nations. It was expected to draw 6,000 athletes from 23 nations, making it an event comparable to the Olympic Games. The People's Olympiad was scheduled for July 22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>, 1936. The last practice for the opening ceremony took place on July 18<sup>th</sup>, but on July 19<sup>th</sup> Communist forces attacked the government and started the Spanish Civil War. As a result, the People's Olympiad was cancelled after many athletes had already arrived in Barcelona (Bachrach, 2000; International Olympic Committee, 1996; Walters, 2006).



Figure 7: A poster advertising the 1936 People's Olympiad of Barcelona

Olympic boycotts are an ineffective tool to work political change, but they can be relatively easily and inexpensively organized (Guttmann, 2002). The 1936 Berlin Olympics saw many individuals, organizations, and countries engage in protests, call for boycotts, and debate on whether or not to send a team to the Games. Smaller countries typically do not boycott, as the Olympics provide their nation with a moment of glory. However, there were even a few smaller states, such as Switzerland, Canada, and Australia that had opposed participating in Hitler's games. In the end, with the exception of Italy and Japan, almost every nation that participated in the 1936 Games did so over some form of domestic protest.

The American Jewish groups such as the American Jewish Congress and Jewish Labor Committee, joined by the Anti-Nazi League, staged mass protest rallies beginning in 1933. They urged American Jewish athletes not to participate in the Berlin Games. Some athletes boycotted, but others feared that such action would only lead to increased anti-Semitism in both Germany and the U.S. and therefore participated. Moreover, some did not fully understand at the time the extent of Nazi persecution of Jews and how it differed from American anti-Semitism (Bachrach, 2000).

The city of New York was the center of much public opposition to the Games. In March of 1934, a mass anti-Nazi rally of 20,000 people was held in Madison Square Garden to oppose the Americans sending a team to the Games and to draw attention to the Nazi political and racial policies. This protest was, in part, the result of the adoption of the Nuremberg Laws in Germany, which restricted German citizenship to those people who were not of Jewish or mixed descent. In November of 1935, American trade unionists in New York City rallied to boycott the Games as part of their wider boycott of

all German products. In August of 1936, the World Labor Athletic Carnival, sponsored by the Metropolitan Association of the American Amateur Athletic Union and the Jewish Labor Committee, was held at Randall's Island, New York, to protest the Berlin Olympics (Bachrach, 2000; Large, 2007; Strenk, 1978).

In Munich in 1935, SA officers sprayed acid and racist graffiti on Jewish shops, smashed store windows, and assaulted Jews in the streets in broad daylight. Munich was scheduled to host most of the larger social and cultural functions associated with the winter Games in Garmish-Partenkirchen. In response to the violence, the American Jewish Committee and American Jewish Labor Committee called once again for an Olympic boycott. Furthermore, 5,000 demonstrators boarded a German ship in the New York harbor, pulled down the swastika flag, and threw it in the Hudson River (Large, 2007).

Prior to the 1936 Games, Amsterdam hosted a counter Olympics art festival called The Olympics Under Dictatorship, but the event was closed because of pressure by the Nazi government. In December 1935, 300 former athletes from around the world formed the Committee Against the Hitlerian Games. The organization called for Olympic athletes around the world to boycott Garmisch and Berlin. Furthermore, members of the Protestant Christian clergy, churches, and organizations who did not acknowledge allegiance to the Nazi party and its policies were harassed, beaten, and imprisoned. As a result, Roman Catholic communities were vocal about their opposition to the Berlin Games (Bachrach, 2000; Large, 2007; Swanson, 2003).

In 1935, committees for the defense of the Olympic idea formed in many European countries. These committees were energized when, in March of 1936, Hitler

announced the German remilitarization of Rhineland, which the Treaty of Versailles had neutralized in 1919. The French temporarily postponed funding to send its athletes to Berlin; however, the French and the British authorities did end up sending teams to the Games (Senn, 1999). Moreover, despite warnings from high-level American diplomats regarding Nazi exploitation of the Olympics for propaganda, United States President Franklin Roosevelt refused to become involved in the boycott, as he did not want to appear too pro-Jewish or to upset the Germans (Jewish Virtual Library, 2009; Large, 2007).

Although President Roosevelt did not openly oppose the United States sending a team to the Berlin Games, the U.S. had many prominent public figures and important organizations participate in protesting the 1936 Olympics. The opposition included six U.S. Senators, 41 university presidents, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the American Federation of Labor (Bachrach, 2000; Lapchick, 1978). Furthermore, a poll taken in 1935 showed that 43% of Americans wanted to boycott the Berlin Games (Guttman, 1992).

Despite protestors' wishes, Canada, Britain, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Palestine, and the United States all sent teams to Berlin for the Games. Throughout all the controversy, only sporadic demonstrations by individuals or very small groups took place during the Games, and there was no major protest or significant security crises (Large, 2007). However, the days leading up to the 1936 Games were not without controversy. Politics overshadowed the Games until the last moment when Spain withdrew participation due to the outbreak of the Civil War (Lapchick, 1978). Germany seemed to have won in the battle of defending its good intentions for hosting the



Olympics. As a member of the AAU concluded, participation in the Games under the Nazi swastika meant a silent acceptance of the Nazi Regime's treatment of the Jews (Strenk, 1978).

The importance of Germany being able to withstand a boycott of the Berlin Games is significant. Internally, it was important for the Nazis to resist a boycott of the Games because the Regime depended on the support of the German youth, who needed to be convinced that the Nationalist Socialist prestige was gaining ground outside Germany. Nations such as the United States sending a team to the Games showed the German youth that their country was beginning to gain respect among the powerful countries of the world. When reporting information on boycott efforts, the German press argued that those calling for a boycott simply did not like the idea of the youth of the world learning the truth (meaning positive aspects) about the New Germany (Large, 2007; Senn, 1999).

Not only was it important to Germany that no significant boycott took place at the 1936 Games, but it was also crucial to the IOC. Kruger and Murray (2003) explained,

The IOC and the integrity of international sports may have suffered a moral blow [by allowing Hitler's Olympics to take place], but in monetary terms it was essential for the IOC to avoid an Olympic boycott. If the Games could take place under the Nazi regime- provided the rules of the sport were respected, if nothing else- any organizer in the future could be sure that it could stage and keep the Games no matter what its political regime, its involvement in warfare, in human rights violations, or even in contravention of the rules of the IOC itself. In this respect the immense Nazi propaganda helped the IOC as it made the Olympic Games even more visible as a top-class international sports event. It showed that there is an international sports culture that disregards much of the political culture – in spite of being financed by the political sphere (p. 237).

In retrospect, both the Nazi Regime and the International Olympic Committee benefited from the 1936 Games taking place uninterrupted by a boycott.

## *Torch Relay*

The tradition of using an Olympic flame began in 1928 at the Amsterdam Games. A flame was lit in 1928 and in 1932 for the Los Angeles Games, but remained stationary. The idea of a torch relay was brought about by Carl Diem for the 1936 Berlin Games (Young, 2004). Diem introduced the concept of carrying the Olympic flame by hand from Olympia in Greece to the site of the Games (Senn, 1999; Strenk, 1978).

The Berlin torch relay began on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1936 in Olympia. Thirteen maidens, led by one, used a magnifying glass to refract sunlight to create a fire into which the lead maiden dipped the torch to light it. The Fire Altar outside the stadium was then lit, and the first runner lit his torch from the altar. The Berlin Olympics marked the first time in which the flame was ignited by the sun (The Olympic Games, 2004). Not only did Germany introduce the torch relay, but it also introduced the idea of the relay ending at the opening ceremony with the purpose of turning the world's attention to the Olympic events (Kruger, 2003a).



Figure 8: The Olympic torch being carried into the Olympic Stadium by Siegfried Eifrig to end the torch relay and begin the Opening Ceremony in Berlin

More than 3,000 runners participated in the 1936 torch relay and the flame crossed seven countries in 10 days (Greenberg, 2000). The relay stopped in Athens (Greece), Delphi (Greece), Salonika (Greece), Sofia (Bulgaria), Belgrade (Yugoslavia), Budapest (Hungary), Vienna (Austria), Prague (Czechoslovakia), and Dresden

(Germany). The relay stop in Athens was celebrated with festivals attended by King George himself. In Austria, the torch was greeted by 10,000 Austrian Nazis. The event culminated with a large demonstration against the Jewish members of the Austria Olympic team who had also gathered to see the torch. A scuffle developed and 500 arrests were made. Furthermore, as a result of anti-German animosity in Czechoslovakia, the runner passing through the Slovak parts of the country had to be protected by a police escort (Hilton, 2008; Large, 2007; Walters, 2006).

A radio crew followed the entire relay, broadcasting coverage to the world. The last runner, Fritz Schilgen (a German champion student-athlete with light hair and blue eyes) was a representative image of Hitler's Aryan youth (Hilton, 2008). Before the torch was brought to the stadium, a flame at the Old Museum and Royal Palace were lit and burned throughout the Games as flames of peace (Large, 2007). As the torch entered the stadium, the German band played the anthem of the Nazi party army. Arriving in Berlin at the stadium, Schilgen ran down the track and ascended the steps of the Marathon Gate and threw his torch into the bowl causing a large flame to ignite (Guttman, 1992; Hilton; Kruger, 2003a; Large).

### *Opening Ceremony*

The Berlin Olympics opening ceremony was held in the Olympic Stadium complex that was the most modern facility in the world at that time (Kruger, 2003a). The venue ended up costing more than 30 times the original estimate, with 30 million dollars total spent on the Berlin opening ceremony (Kruger; Strenk, 1978). The stadium was filled to capacity for the ceremony, with 100,000 spectators in attendance (Lapchick,

1978). Nazi influence was clear throughout the event, which was exemplified beginning at the very entrance to the Olympic Stadium, where a 16.5 ton Olympic Bell had been created by the Nazis for the Games. The bell stood as a symbol of Hitler's Olympics, with the five rings, oath, and flame inscribed on front next to the phrase, 'I summon the youth of the world' (Hilton, 2008).



Figure 9: The Olympic Bell outside the Olympic Stadium in Berlin

The bell, created in Bochum, was brought to Berlin on a several week journey and cheered on along the way by German citizens, SA, and SS men. The parade of the bell created much anticipation within Germany for the Games to begin and generated goodwill among German citizens toward the Nazi Regime in anticipation of the Games (Walters, 2006). When the bell was put into place at the stadium in Berlin, its procession traveled past 1,600 members of the Hitler Youth and 45 youth from the Reich Association for Physical Training who awaited its arrival with flags and pennants (Hilton, 2008). With the Olympic bell, Hitler and his Regime welcomed the world's visitors with a symbol of Nazi ideology.

The completion of the torch relay was accompanied by an orchestra performance of over 100 instruments and a 3,000 person choir. Moreover, a previously recorded phonographic welcome by Coubertin (who was not in attendance due to illness) was played and Spiridon Louis (the legendary victor of the first Olympic marathon of 1896)

presented Hitler with an olive branch from the Sacred Grove of Zeus in Olympia (Senn, 1999). The opening ceremony then began with a five-act pageant performance by the Hitler Youth. Five thousand girls and 900 boys, dressed in the five Olympic colors, danced around the May Field and eventually formed the Olympic flag (Large, 2007).

Next to perform rhythmic dance routine were 2,000 older girls and 500 gymnasts. Finally, 1,200 youth descended the stadium steps carrying the flags of all nations followed by a sword dance of armor-clad youth warriors, representing the futility of war and showing the glory of death in battle (Large, 2007). Nazi presence at the opening ceremony was clear when, after the performances, the Regime's anthem played instead of the traditional Olympic hymn. Furthermore, the athlete who delivered the oath held the Swastika flag rather than the Olympic flag (the later being what is traditional Olympic procedure) (Hofmann & Kruger, 2004).

Greece led the parade of nations, followed in alphabetical order by all countries participating in the Games. The Germans marched in last, and the giant Nazi airship, Hindenburg, flew over the stadium when the team entered (Lapchick, 1978). The question of which nations would give the Nazi salute as they passed Hitler was on the mind of many spectators. The similarity of the Nazi salute and the Olympic salute complicated the situation, as it was often hard for spectators to tell the difference between the two. A thunderous applause accompanied the teams that saluted Hitler as they marched in (Riefenstahl, 1939). The most prominent teams to give the Nazi salute were the British and the French, who were wildly cheered by spectators. The Afghans, Bermudans, Bolivians, Icelanders, Italians, and Bulgarians, among others, also honored Hitler with the salute. The American team did not give the salute, and thus was greeted

with a mediocre applause from the crowd. Furthermore, the Chinese and Australians, among others, did not salute Hitler (Lapchick; Schaap, 2007).



Figure 10: Adolf Hitler arriving at the opening ceremony of the 1936 Olympic Games

Hitler's only public announcement during the Olympics was at the opening ceremony when he officially declared the Games open (Bachrach, 2000; Lapchick, 1978). Immediately following his opening declaration, doves were released into the sky as a representation of the Nazi's promise of peace that would linger over the Games (Riefenstahl, 1939). This gesture, however, did not make up for the many militaristic aspects of the ceremony that spectators had already witnessed (the Olympic bell, armor-clad youth warriors, Hindenburg fly-over, Nazi anthem, and Swastika flags). Referring to the Berlin opening ceremony, Walters (2006) stated, "It was as if the country were mobilizing, not putting on a sporting pageant" (p. 183).

### *Olympic Stage*

Every Olympic host realizes that the Games offer an exceptional public relations opportunity for their nation and, thus, wants to put on the best show possible in order to take advantage of the global media that will spotlight their efforts (Lovell, 2008). The 1936 Berlin Olympics opened a new era where politics and sport competed for attention in the Olympic Games. Hitler exploited the Games of 1936 in two main ways: he covered

up his military buildup and intentions by presenting to the world the image of a peaceful, sport loving nation and used the Olympics to showcase Nazi theories of Aryan superiority (Lapchick, 1978; Xiaobo, 2008).

Hitler and the Nazi Regime wanted to show foreigners that Berlin was not the place of racism and repression that their home newspapers reported. Officials went well out of their way to make foreign visitors feel welcome and well cared for, such as having 500 specially trained guides and translators available around the city, police and hotel workers were given language training, and tourist advice centers and multilingual guidebooks were made available. The Gestapo dressed as student helpers as not to frighten visitors with their uniforms, and military music on state controlled radio was scaled back for the duration of the Games (Large, 2007; Schaap, 2007).

The Hitler Youth played a vital role in displaying a positive image of Germany throughout the Games. Nine hundred students were trained as guides for an Olympic train that toured the country. Passengers were told how the New Germany would host the youth of the world in a grand celebration of peace and friendship (Senn, 1999). Furthermore, 170 youth trained for two years to be members of the Honorary Youth Service. They were stationed throughout the Olympic Village to provide assistance wherever needed. Moreover, for a month and a half preceding the start of the Games, the Olympic Village was open to the public for sightseeing, and approximately 400,000 people visited during that time. The tours were led by about 250 youth from track and field associations that had gone to school to be trained for the position and passed the proper examination process (Hilton, 2008).

For the time preceding and during the Games, the German press was tightly controlled by the Ministry of Propaganda. The scope and content of reporting by German journalist was strictly limited. Newspapers were instructed what to report and how to report it, and if an editor did not follow orders he would lose his job and not be hired anywhere else in that profession. Reports could not mention the possibility of Jewish athletes competing on the German team, negative coverage of African American athletes was stopped, no racial point of view was allowed to be expressed, and references to boycott movements were suppressed (Jewish Virtual Library, 2009; Kruger & Murray, 2003).

The Nazis did not want foreigners in Berlin to read or hear any news that would cast Germany in a bad light. As a result, the Reich Press strictly censored the German press, radio, and film industries (Bachrach, 2000). Near the start of the Games, the German multi-language publication that tried to spread anti-Semitism throughout the world, *Judenkenner* (Observer of Jews), was suspended and would resume publication only after the Olympics (Hilton, 2008). Furthermore, German press at the Games was tightly controlled. Only German photographers handpicked by the organizing committee were issued credentials, and only Leni Riefenstahl was allowed to film the Games (Schaap, 2007).

As part of the pre-Olympic Berlin cleanup, all anti-Semitic posters were taken down, houses on the main roads were whitened or repainted, street lighting was improved, street and building facades were decorated, and streets and squares were cleaned. The police were ordered to stop demonstrations and street violence against the Jews and the Nazi anti-Jewish campaign of open intimidation of Jews, previously



allowed, was suspended for the Games. In a pre-Olympic police cleanup sweep, 800 gypsies were taken off the streets and imprisoned in a Berlin camp to be out of sight of the tourists (Bachrach, 2000; Hilton, 2008; Kruger, 2003a; Kruger & Murray, 2003; Large, 2007; Schaap, 2007; Strenk, 1978).

Furthermore, agricultural workers in the fields were instructed not to pass near or take their meals by the roads so that they would be out of sight of tourists (because of their ragged appearance as a result of their type of work). To help citizens prepare for visitors, 'Laughter Week' was ordered in Berlin and citizens were told to be cheerful and polite to all Olympic guests. Two months prior to the Games, members of the Propaganda Ministry toured the country to ensure that the beautification and sanitation projects in Berlin had been properly completed and that the city was ready for foreign visitors (Bachrach, 2000; Hilton, 2008; Kruger, 2003a; Kruger & Murray, 2003; Large, 2007; Schaap, 2007; Strenk, 1978).

German officials contributed much effort toward cleaning up the city for the Games. All of the work that was done, improvements made, and temporary pauses in previously allowed behavior led some to question if the tourists were truly experiencing the city of Berlin. Bachrach (2000) stated,

When applied to the 1936 Olympics, Nazi 'propaganda' also refers to the effort to deceive foreign athletes, journalists, and spectators by showing off the positive side of life in Hitler's 'new Germany'. Visitors saw colorful advertising posters and beautifully decorated, clean streets. They read only glowing reports about athletes from all nations published in special Olympic newspapers. During the day they attended thrilling athletic events that took place in new, well-designed facilities and in the evening were entertained at lavish parties hosted by welcoming Nazi leaders. What visitors did not see behind this façade of hospitality was the censorship of German newspapers and other media to make sure that nothing was said to offend the guests. They did not see the brutal dictatorship in action, imprisoning its enemies in concentration camps and re-arming for war to acquire new territory for the 'Aryan master race' (p. 75).

Nazi propaganda efforts were undoubtedly present in Berlin for the 1936 Games, with Hitler trying his best to put forth a positive image of both the city and country.

The Nazi Regime Propaganda Ministry commissioned Leni Riefenstahl to produce a documentary film of the 1936 Games, titled *Olympia*, to be dedicated to the youth of the world (Bachrach, 2000; Riefenstahl, 1939). There is still debate as to whether the film was privately financed, as Riefenstahl claimed, or funded by the Nazis. However, general consensus of scholars is that the film was financed entirely by the Reich with officials mindful that the film had to seem independent of the Regime. Therefore, Nazis allowed Riefenstahl to create a private organization which covered for the Propaganda Ministry as the owner of the film (Guttmann, 1992; Large, 2007).

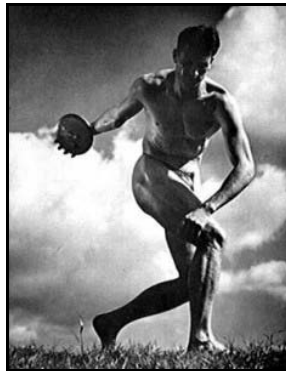


Figure 11: The prologue of Riefenstahl's film, *Olympia*, featured Aryan-German athletes engaging in various athletic maneuvers

Riefenstahl's film pioneered new heights in visual sports reporting and glorified the human body and man as an athlete with a boldness of vision never before achieved in the cinema (Duff, 1986). *Olympia* was shot by 60 cinematographers and before editing contained 4,000 meters of film including the prologue, torch relay, training shots, and some footage of every competitive event (Bachrach, 2000; Large, 2007). Jesse Owens was clearly the star of the film in terms of his athletic successes. However, Large stated,

The best slow-motion shots [were] reserved for the German performances. German victories [were] also emphasized by heightened musical pathos and close-ups of exulting national leaders. A huge amount of footage is devoted to the equestrian events, in which the Germans excelled. German athletes [were] sometimes featured even when they did not win medals (p. 306).

The film also favored athletes from countries such as Japan that were allied with or friendly toward Nazi Germany. *Olympia* was released in two parts: Festival of the Nation and Festival of Beauty (Bachrach, 2000). The film premiered on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1938 and it played to full houses in Germany night after night.

Guttman (1992) stated, “It is the nearly unanimous opinion of film historians that *Olympia* is one of the most impressive documentaries ever made...” (p. 71). The Propaganda Ministry presented Leni Riefenstahl with the National Film Prize and substantial funding to publicize the film. Copies were sent to every country that participated in the Games, and Riefenstahl made a European multinational publicity tour (Large, 2007). Nowhere is the image of the Nazi Olympics better represented and remembered than through Riefenstahl’s documentary, as the film shows what is to be the most perfect sport in a most perfect setting (Kruger, 2003a). Regardless of whether or not the film was created for Hitler’s propaganda purposes, *Olympia* showcased the Aryan athletes of Germany to the world and used the Olympic stage to communicate the Nazi’s message of racial supremacy.

### *Importance of Winning Gold*

Olympic achievements are important for the propaganda of powerful countries (Seppanen, 1984). Lovell (2008) described the concept as, “patriotic hunger for Olympic glory” (p. 759) and said that the link between sport performance and national pride has

been constantly maintained throughout Olympic history. It has often been a pattern in Olympic history that athletes are under intense pressure to win gold in order to show the power of their country. In the specific case of the 1936 Games, Germany supported its Aryan athletes in every conceivable way in their preparation for the Berlin Games (Lapchick, 1978), so that the Aryan supremacy could be communicated to the world.

Germany, absent from the 1920 and 1924 Games, came back to the Amsterdam Olympics of 1928 as an Olympic power by placing second to the United States in the number of medals (Walters, 2006). This sparked the confidence of the German athletes and increased the government's expectations of a powerful showing at the Olympic Games in Berlin. However, on the other hand, Germany was seen as an underachiever of the Amsterdam Games because of its lack of ability in track and field. At this time, track and field was the most important part of the Olympics and no German man has ever won a gold medal in either competition (Schaap, 2007).

At the 1936 Olympic Games, the importance of winning gold was clear, and Germany's final medal count of 33 gold (first place) was seen by the Nazis as a vindication of their racial supremacy theories (Strenk, 1978). Germany won more medals and scored more points than any other nation, and the Berlin Games went down in history as one of the biggest victories of political propaganda by a country (Seppanen, 1984). The Nazi flag was raised for the medal ceremony (wreath presentation) and all German medalists, including the Jewish athlete, were required to give the Nazi salute on the podium (Bachrach, 2000).

Although the United States placed second in the overall medal count and in the number of gold medals won in the Berlin Games, one American athlete did succeed in

showing Hitler and the Germans that their ideas of Aryan athletic supremacy were wrong. Jesse Owens, an African-American member of the 1936 U.S. Olympic team, won four gold medals: 100 meter, 200 meter, long jump, and 4x100 meter relay team. Black athletes combined for 7 gold, 3 silver, and 3 bronze medals, which was more than any national team including their own White teammates (Greenburg, 2000). Most of the German press celebrated Owens as a four-time gold medal winner and a hero of the Games (Kruger, 2003b).



Figure 12: Jesse Owens won four gold medals for the U.S. team at the Berlin Games

### *Impacts of the Games*

The International Olympic Committee viewed the 1936 Olympics as a great success. IOC president Baillet-Latour claimed that the Berlin Games were the best ever and in 1937 the committee awarded the Olympic Cup (awarded to an institution or organization with a reputation for merit and integrity that has been active and efficient in the development of the Olympic Movement) to the Strength Through Joy organization for its services to Olympism during the Berlin Games. The committee also awarded Reifentahl an Olympic Diploma for her film (Large, 2007).

To Hitler and the Nazi Regime, the success of the Berlin Games proved the power of their style of government. Upon completion of the Games, the Nazis continued with their propaganda and worked to make sure German citizens attributed the success of the Games to Hitler's leadership. For example, at the Nazi party rally in September 1936 (one month after the Games), the Strength Through Joy Nazi organization featured a march-in review of Germany's top Olympic performers to remind citizens that German athletic triumph was a result of Hitler's leadership (Large, 2007).

Furthermore, the Nazis believed the Games proved that fascism and a totalitarianism style of government better equipped a country for success. Mandell (2007) stated,

The tables of points kept by the sports reporters in Germany and abroad demonstrated that 1) Nazi Germany did better than the United States; 2) Italy outperformed France; 3) Japan did far better than Great Britain. Consequently the inescapable implication was that fascism and totalitarianism were more effective mobilizers of human energies... The more thoroughly a nation turned away from liberalism and democracy, and the more enthusiastically its people embraced totalitarian notions of the state, the greater power it seemed able to evoke from its human and natural resources (p. 280).

Hitler's image and the strength of the Nazi's style of government was showcased at the Berlin Games and set a powerful political tone upon the Olympics' completion.



Figure 13: Germans in the Olympic Stadium give the Nazi salute in support of Hitler

The 1936 Games transformed sport in Germany. As previously discussed, the Nazi Regime took complete control of sport clubs and facilities in the years leading up to the Games. After the Games, the Nazis overtook the Deutsche Turnerschaft, the oldest and largest sporting organization for physical activity in Germany. In post-Olympic years, German sports organizations were unified under Hitler, and by 1938, all became subsections of the Nazi party (Kruger, 2003a).

The less frequent incidence of anti-Jewish discrimination during the time of the Games was only a temporary pause. Upon the completion of the Berlin Games, Germany returned to life as it was before the Olympics and discrimination began again as soon as foreign visitors left (Kruger, 2003a). Moreover, as a result of Jesse Owens' and other African-American athletes' success at the Berlin Games, conversations arose internationally regarding African Americans having biological advantage in certain forms of athletic endeavors (Duff, 1986; Large, 2007). The 1936 Games also marked the first time in which athletes began to be de-individualized for the sake of the organization for which they were competing. It is through the Berlin Games that athletes began their transition from entertainers to complex figures exploited as a national asset (Mandell, 2007).

Hitler enjoyed the Olympic experience so much that immediately following the 1936 Games he commented that, after the already scheduled 1940 Tokyo Games, Germany should be the permanent Olympic host. He began plans for a new stadium in Nuremburg that would seat 400,000 spectators and could serve as a monument to Germany's superiority (Walters, 2006). However, the stadium was never built, nor was Hitler's hosting plan ever fulfilled (Bachrach, 2000; Walters, 2006). Tokyo ended up

withdrawing from being the 1940 Olympic host, and as a result, the IOC moved the Games to Germany at Hitler's request. But, after Germany invaded Poland in 1939, Hitler decided to focus on military operations and withdrew his offer to host the 1940 Games (Large, 2007).

Germany invaded Poland on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, and Britain declared war on Germany on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. By April of 1940, the Berlin Olympic Village fell to the Soviet zone of occupation and the Russians took control of the Olympic Stadium. The war in Europe ended on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Most buildings in Berlin had been bombed to the point of only external walls remaining. The Olympic Stadium, protected from the bombing because of its distance from the city, survived, and remains one of the only tangible memories of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games (Hilton, 2008).



## 4.2 BEIJING FINDINGS

### China Background

#### *Pre-Olympic Geopolitical Situation of China*

To understand the role of sport in the geopolitical situation of China on the eve of the Beijing Games, it is important to recognize China's history of involvement with the IOC and the steps it has taken to become a sports power, as well as the controversy between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Furthermore, China's recognition of its women being able to contribute to the country's international power through their athletic success makes gender issues in Chinese sport a pre-Olympic factor worthy of discussion.

As a result of China's disappointment with its struggling international sport presence and the Western-dominated IOC, China withdrew from the IOC and eight other international sports federations in 1958 (Dong & Mangan, 2008; Girginov, 2008). China was absent from the Olympic Games between 1959 and 1979 and did not regain its seat with the IOC for 21 years. During that time, however, China made significant internal strides in sport. According to Dong and Mangan, upon re-entering the IOC, China enacted many plans in order to achieve global sports supremacy:

- 1984 – *Notice on Further Developing Sports and Physical Education* was issued by the Central Government and aimed to turn China into a sport power in the twentieth century
- 1985 – *Olympic Strategy* was drafted by the National Sports Committee to concentrate resources on Olympic success
- 1990s – non-Olympic sport team funding was substantially reduced
- 1994-1995 – *Olympic Honour-winning Plan* was drafted and introduced to continue the policy of Olympic sports in the elite sports program
- 1995 – a special fund for Olympic-related sports facilities, nutrition, and sports research was established

In July 2002, the Communist Party and the central government issued the document titled *Strengthening and Progressing Sport in the New Era*, which emphasized that hosting the 2008 Olympic Games was the priority not only for Beijing but also for the whole country. Furthermore, as an action plan to ensure that the Chinese would achieve victory in the 2008 Games, two documents were drafted by the Sports Ministry: *The Outline Strategy for Winning Olympic Medals 2001-2010* and *The Strategic Plan for Winning Olympic Medals in 2008* (Hong, Wu, & Xiong, 2005).

In China, sports at the elite level are tightly controlled by the state, which is illustrated by the above government action plans aimed to achieve Chinese sport supremacy. Only in recent years has the government made an effort to develop and provide mass sport opportunities. For example, in 1995 the National Fitness Program was established, which promoted mass sport on an extensive scale throughout neighborhoods and parks (Huan, 2008). Such government initiatives are rare in China, however, and the scale of government support for elite sport has historically vastly outweighed that of mass sport.

The geo-political situation of China has not only been shaped by government support for elite sport, but also through the controversy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC). After the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1950, the PRC maintained control of the mainland and the ROC established itself on the island of Taiwan. Each wanted to be acknowledged as the official representative of China and struggled for recognition as the Chinese representative in Olympic Games. Since 1952, both the PRC and the ROC have entered and pulled out of domestic and international competitions to protest against the presence of the other (Dyreson, 2008).

Sport has played a role in the separation of China and Taiwan. Taiwan has used sporting events such as the Olympic Games to raise awareness of themselves as a nation. China, on the other hand, has used sport to move forward its agenda of emerging as a world power while suppressing any action of Taiwan related to separatism such as Taiwan flying its national flag or singing its national anthem. China has opposed any effort by Taiwan to assert itself through diplomatic recognition and has worked to prevent Taiwan from using sport as a cover for this diplomacy (Yu & Mangan, 2008).

After a long controversy between the PRC, ROC, and IOC, The Nagano Resolution was reached in 1979. The resolution laid out the “Olympic Formula” which stated that Taiwan could not use its national name, flag, or anthem during the Olympic Games. In 1980, Taiwan fought this decision in court and in an act of protest did not compete in the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics (China’s first Olympics since 1952). Both China and Taiwan supported the U.S. boycott of the Moscow Summer Games of the same year. The Sarajevo Winter Games and the Los Angeles Summer Games in 1984 marked the first time both China and Taiwan participated in the Olympics (S. Brownell, personal communication, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009).

Since the 1984 Games, Taiwan has used the name, flag, and anthem of its Olympic committee (Chinese Taipei) which were all approved by the IOC after meeting China’s approval. China took the name Olympic Committee of the People’s Republic of China (Brownell, 2008). According to Jarvie, Dong-Jhy, and Brennan (2008), regarding the Olympic Committee names for China and Taiwan, Taiwan had no choice but to accept the resolution if it wished to stay in the Olympic movement. The PRC consistently refused any resolution that implied two Chinas or one China and one Taiwan.

Finally, gender issues in Chinese sport are important to acknowledge if one is to understand the situation in China prior to the 2008 Beijing Games. Historically, opportunities for women to participate in organized and elite Chinese sport were minimal. For example, in 1936, Li Shen was the only woman in the Chinese delegation of 22 athletes to participate in the Berlin Olympics. After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party promised that the new China would embrace gender equality. Sport was chosen as a means of establishing a positive image of the New China and fundamental changes took place. Equality between men and women was promoted and women were encouraged to break down gender barriers in sport. Upon re-emerging into the Olympic world in 1980, China began to understand the impact of international sport success on the country's international standing. China, as a result, saw even more potential in its women (Dong & Mangan, 2008; Huan, 2008)

The Chinese realized the contributions female elite athletes could make to advance the country politically. With increased government support of women's sports, female athletes in China made vast achievements and quickly emerged as a strong force in international competitions. For example, women won 63.4% (270) of the 420 world titles won by Chinese athletes between 2003 and 2006. The important role of women in Chinese sports was shown in the *Plan to Win Glory in the 2008 Olympics*. According to the plan's 180 medal goal, over 80% were calculated to be won by women. It was predicted that 25 of the 40 expected gold medal events could be won by women. The change in view of women in sports played a key role in pre-Olympic China as the Chinese worked hard to change the country's traditional gender roles in order to attain a

level of international success in sport that would result in a more powerful image of China on the world scene (Dong & Mangan, 2008).

There is no question that Beijing's pre-Olympic geopolitical situation was closely tied to China's quest to emerge as a global world power. As Horton (2008) described, China's pre-Olympic power was "soft" and similar to that of the United States. Soft power is the ability of a government to cast influence in an indirect and positive fashion, through the appeal of its values or its culture. This is contradictory to hard power, which is military action or economic power. The Chinese used their soft power to shape other nations' perceptions of China throughout the pre-Olympic period (Horton; Lai, 2008).

In pre-Olympic years, China was inexhaustibly utilizing its soft power resources and was/is currently taking advantage of the United States' preoccupation with its costly military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. China's goal was/is to close the soft power gap between itself and the U.S., who is known to be the world leader in this respect (Horton, 2008). China's pre-Olympic international activities of providing peace keeping forces for the United Nations, forgiving the debts of 32 African countries, and sending ships to the coast of Somalia to fight piracy, showed that it does have emerging power and the Games would provide a means to showcase it (Caffrey, 2009).

China's economy has been growing at a very fast pace over the last few decades. For example, China has contributed more to the world economic growth since 2001 than the G7 countries combined (Girginov, 2008). As a result of China's good economic standing before the Games, economic advances throughout the Games were predicted to be second to political advances for the country (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008). Whereas most Olympic host-cities hope to gain economic benefits as a result of the Games, the

pre-Olympic economic prosperity of China led the Chinese to focus their hopes on China emerging as a world political power. The common attitude among Chinese citizens leading up to the Games was that the Beijing Olympics would showcase China's increasingly open economy and demonstrate the extent of its readiness to be recognized in the same league as developed nations such as the United States (Horton, 2008).

### *Reasons why China Wanted to Host Olympics*

China was well aware that the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games had marked their host countries emergence as world powers. Beijing, hoping to follow suite for China, bid for the 2000 Games. China suffered a disappointing loss in 1993 (Sydney won by two votes) and immediately began working on its bid for the 2008 Games (Brownell, 2005). China made vast improvements to its bid, developing a more sophisticated and lucrative marketing plan campaign (Dyreson, 2008). The second bid was a success, and Beijing won the 2008 Games by a landslide over Osaka, Paris, Toronto, and Istanbul. Beijing received 56 votes, which was twice more than the 22 received by the runner up Toronto (Ching, 2008).

When China bid for the 2008 Olympics, it had achieved a level of social stability and economic prosperity through internal political and economic reforms (Jinxia, 2005). China was eager for the opportunity to show its new self to the world, and thus adopted the motto, 'New Beijing, Great Olympics' for its Olympic bid (Jinxia). At the time of its bid, China felt as though it was a new and modernized country ready to appear on the world stage. China's yearning to host the 2008 Olympics was one of the country's last planned steps in securing a central position in the international political, economic, and

cultural realm of the world. China was hungry for the respect of the western world and sport was clearly made to play a central role in the effort to attain this goal (Lovell, 2008).

Prior to the 2008 Games, China had witnessed the role of Olympic power in helping the United States secure its image of world strength. Through serving as a host-nation or as an athletic powerhouse, the U.S. has frequently used the Olympics to project images of strength and superiority to the world (Dyreson, 2008). China bid for the 2008 Olympics in hopes of being able to achieve this image and show the world the face of the “New China.” According to Mangan (2008),

Beijing 2008 [was] to assist the restoration of China’s national greatness through the erasing of the memory of a humbled, reduced and subordinate people and its replacement with a confident, risen and superordinate people: physical effort twisted into skeins of political action (p. 751).

Political ambitions played an important role in the 2008 Olympic bid process. As Dong and Mangan (2008) stated, “Chinese political ambitions and Chinese sporting ambitions for the twenty-first century [were] two sides of the same coin” (p. 779).

Moreover, Zhang and Silk (2006) commented that,

The 2008 Olympic Games have been deployed as part of a strategic effort to seek both heightened visibility and prestige in a global marketplace and to gain from the supposed developmental, political, and sociocultural benefits derived from the pursuit of major Games (p. 440).

The Beijing Games were the golden opportunity for the Chinese to fulfill their persistent dream of becoming a leading Olympic power. A clear relationship between sports and politics in China was visible in the 2008 Beijing Olympic bid and political ambitions were a significant reason why China wanted to host the Games (Dong & Mangan, 2008).

The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games (BOCOG) provided the following as the goal of the 2008 Olympics:

The Beijing Olympic Games will be a perfect occasion to fully display China's 5,000-year history and its resplendent culture, a grand ceremony that will gather athletes from all over the world and present diverse and brilliant cultures. The Beijing Olympic Games will fully express the common aspiration of the Chinese people to jointly seek peace, development, and common progress together with the people of the world, and it will highlight the fact that the 1.3 billion Chinese people of 56 ethnic groups, along with 50 million overseas Chinese, are all most enthusiastic participants in the Beijing Olympic Games.  
(<http://en.beijing2008.cn/bocog/concepts/index.shtml>)

The BOCOG claimed that peace and common progress with the people of the world were what China wanted to focus on in its bid for the 2008 Games. The discussion of celebration of the Chinese culture and incorporation of 1.3 billion people of 56 ethnic groups showed that the Chinese were awaiting the opportunity to help the world understand China.

When analyzing why China wanted to host the 2008 Olympics, it is important to understand the perspective of government officials. The Chinese government has full control of the elite sport system in the country, and therefore the officials are at the forefront of such ambitions. In a letter to President Samaranch and the IOC reported in the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report, Yuan Weimin, President of Chinese National Olympic Committee (COC), said,

We sincerely believe that both the leaders and the residents of the city cherish noble feelings for the Olympic ideal and have great sense of enthusiasm and a strong sense of duty towards the hosting of the Olympic Games. With the full support of the Chinese Government and all the Chinese people, they will surely be able to create the best environment and conditions for the Games and turn it into wonder of Olympic history (p. 1).



Furthermore, Jiang Zemin, President of the People's Republic of China, in a letter to President Samaranch and the IOC stated in the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report:

It will be of extremely great significance to promoting and carrying forward the Olympic spirit in China and across the world and of facilitating the cultural exchanges and convergence between the East and West if the Games of the XXIX Olympiad are held in China... The Chinese people are ready to contribute to the cause of peace, friendship, and progress of mankind and to the development of the Olympic Movement by hosting the XXIX Olympic Games (p. 1).

Both Yuan Weimin and Jiang Zemin mentioned wanting to advance the Olympic ideal and Olympic spirit in China through the 2008 Games. Jiang Zemin specifically discussed bringing together the East and the West and used the words "peace" and "friendship" to describe the ways in which Beijing would host the Games. Both statements portray a desire by China to have the opportunity to open itself up to the world. Part of the Beijing bid conclusion reads, "We will deliver an Olympic Games, which will promote the Olympic spirit and give full expression to Olympic values for the benefit of China, the region and the world" (p. 133). Leading up to the Games, China left no question that it wanted to host the 2008 Olympics to benefit both itself and the world.

Alongside wanting to showcase its new image to the world, China wanted to host the Olympic Games because it would offer both the host-city and country an opportunity to reach out to various countries, spectators, global television audiences, and even its own people (Horton, 2008). As Gottwald and Duggan (2008) stated, "Essentially the Beijing Olympics [were] a political spectacle which [intended] to create a façade of sustainable and equal economic growth in China which has created a new world power" (p. 339). The image of the New China was at the forefront of the 2008 Games.

### *Summary of Beijing Games*

The XXIX Olympic Games were held in Beijing, China between August 6<sup>th</sup> and August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (The Beijing Olympics, 2008). The motto of the Games was “New Beijing, Great Olympics” and the themes of the Games were Green Olympics, High-tech Olympics, and People’s Olympics (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report; Yu & Mangan, 2008). The cost of the entire Games is estimated to be \$30 billion. China became the largest nation to ever host the Olympics and President Bush became the first sitting U.S. president to attend a non-American Olympics. One hundred and seventy Ministers of Sport attended, as well as more than 100 sovereigns, heads of state, and heads of government (Ebersol, 2008; Shrag, 2009) (see Table 5 for facts and figures of the 2008 Games).

Table 5: Facts and Figures of the Beijing Olympic Games

<b>Items</b>	<b>Description</b>
Sports	28
Events	302
Gold medals	302
Athletes	10,708
Competition venues in Beijing	31
Competition venues outside Beijing	6
Host broadcaster	Beijing Olympic Broadcasting Co, Ltd. (BOB)
Accredited written press and photographers	5,600
Rights holding broadcaster staff	12,000
BOB staff	4,000
Olympic Games volunteers	70,000

Source: <http://en.beijing2008.cn/media/usefulinfo/>

A record setting 204 National Olympic Committees (NOCs) participated in the Games and 87 NOCs had medal winners (International Olympic Committee, 2008a). All but one NOC (Brunei) that existed as of 2008 participated in the Games. Three countries participated in the Olympic Games for the first time: Marshall Islands, Montenegro, and

Tuvalu. Michael Phelps (U.S.) broke the record for the most gold medals in one Olympics and most career gold medals as an Olympian (Goodbody, 2008). Usain Bolt (Jamaica) was given the title of “World’s Fastest Man” after setting new world records in the 100 and 200 meter sprints.

China and the U.S. had the largest teams at the Beijing Games, with 639 and 596 athletes respectively. Forty-five percent of all participating athletes were women. Athletes set more than 40 world records and 132 new Olympic records (International Olympic Committee). China led all countries in gold medal count with 51, and the United States followed with 36. According to the overall count, the United States came in first with 110 medals and China finished second with 100 medals (Summer Games Medals, 2008). Table 6 shows the entire medal summary of the 2008 Games in rank order according to number of gold medals.

Table 6: 2008 Beijing Games Medal Summary

<b>Country</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
China	51	21	28	100
United States	36	38	36	110
Russia	23	21	28	72
Great Britain	19	13	15	47
Germany	16	10	15	41
Australia	14	15	17	46
South Korea	13	10	8	31
Japan	9	6	10	25
Italy	8	10	10	28
France	7	16	17	40
Ukraine	7	5	15	27
Netherlands	7	5	4	16
Jamaica	6	3	2	11
Spain	5	10	3	18
Kenya	5	5	4	14
Belarus	4	5	10	19
Romania	4	1	3	8
Ethiopia	4	1	2	7
Canada	3	9	6	18

Table 6 continued

<b>Country</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
Brazil	3	4	8	15
Poland	3	6	1	10
Hungary	3	5	2	10
Norway	3	5	2	10
New Zealand	3	1	5	9
Czech Republic	3	3	0	6
Slovakia	3	2	1	6
Georgia	3	0	3	6
Cuba	2	11	11	24
Kazakhstan	2	4	7	13
Denmark	2	2	3	7
North Korea	2	1	3	6
Argentina	2	0	4	6
Switzerland	2	0	4	6
Mongolia	2	2	0	4
Thailand	2	2	0	4
Mexico	2	0	1	3
Turkey	1	4	3	8
Azerbaijan	1	2	4	7
Uzbekistan	1	2	3	6
Slovenia	1	2	2	5
Bulgaria	1	1	3	5
Indonesia	1	1	3	5
Zimbabwe	1	3	0	4
Finland	1	1	2	4
Latvia	1	1	1	3
India	1	0	2	3
Belgium	1	1	0	2
Dominican Republic	1	1	0	2
Estonia	1	1	0	2
Portugal	1	1	0	2
Iran	1	0	1	2
Bahrain	1	0	0	1
Cameroon	1	0	0	1
Panama	1	0	0	1
Tunisia	1	0	0	1
Armenia	0	0	6	6
Sweden	0	4	1	5
Croatia	0	2	3	5
Lithuania	0	2	3	5
Greece	0	2	2	4

Table 6 continued

Nigeria	0	1	3	4
Chinese Taipei	0	0	4	4
<b>Country</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
Austria	0	1	2	3
Ireland	0	1	2	3
Serbia	0	1	2	3
Trinidad and Tobago	0	2	0	2
Algeria	0	1	1	2
Bahamas	0	1	1	2
Colombia	0	1	1	2
Kyrgyzstan	0	1	1	2
Morocco	0	1	1	2
Tajikistan	0	1	1	2
Chile	0	1	0	1
Ecuador	0	1	0	1
Iceland	0	1	0	1
Malaysia	0	1	0	1
Singapore	0	1	0	1
South Africa	0	1	0	1
Sudan	0	1	0	1
Vietnam	0	1	0	1
Afghanistan	0	0	1	1
Egypt	0	0	1	1
Israel	0	0	1	1
Mauritius	0	0	1	1
Moldova	0	0	1	1
Togo	0	0	1	1
Venezuela	0	0	1	1

Source: *Summer Games Medals, 2008*

Beijing National Stadium, or the “Bird’s Nest” built for the Games, served as the venue for the opening and closing ceremonies. With a seating capacity of 91,000 that was reached for the opening ceremony and almost reached (over 90,000) for the closing ceremony, the Bird’s Nest was a prominent facility of the Games. Other venues created for the Beijing Games included the Beijing National Indoor Stadium, Beijing National

Aquatics Center, Olympic Green Convention Center, Olympic Green, and Beijing Wukesong Culture and Sports Center.

Twenty-five thousand journalists covered the Beijing Olympics. The Beijing 2008 global broadcast had unprecedented success, with footage being made accessible to the largest audience ever (over 4.5 billion). Beijing was the biggest broadcast operation in Olympic history with Beijing Olympic Broadcasting producing more than 5,000 hours of live high-definition coverage to broadcasters in 220 territories over the 16 days of competition. Beijing was also the first to fully digitalize the Games with an online broadcast available to 78 territories across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (Olympic Review, 2008a).

The general negative discussion raised regarding the Beijing Games focused on two main issues: human rights and environmental concerns. International human rights organizations called attention to China's support of oppressive regimes such as Sudan and North Korea, China's oppression and alienation of Taiwan in the post-Chinese Civil War years, discrimination of religious minorities such as Falun Gong, and the communist Chinese takeover of Tibet and current oppression faced by Tibetans. Environmental problems in China such as air pollution and water quality were singled out as concerns by media and human rights organizations regarding the Chinese citizens' current living conditions and the health and well-being of the Beijing Games' future athletes. These negative discussions will be further explored in the following sections of this chapter.

## Issues and Controversies related to the Beijing Games

### *Reaction to Host City Decision*

On July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Beijing was chosen by the IOC as the host city of the 2008 Games (The Olympic Games, 2004). The announcement was accompanied by an outpouring of patriotic emotion in Beijing. The Chinese watching the live telecast of the voting burst into thunderous cheers and applause upon hearing the news. A public demonstration of national pride was witnessed on a scale rarely seen in Chinese history. National identity rose to an unprecedented level in China at this time. It is estimated that 400,000 people converged on Tiananmen Square and around 1 million more celebrated in the streets of Beijing (Jinxia, 2005; Lovell, 2008).

Before the Games began, there was a 95% approval rating for the 2008 Olympics from the citizens of Beijing. Thirty percent of Beijing citizens said that, if necessary, they would donate to the Games. More than one million Chinese people registered to be a volunteer for the Beijing Games, which was 15 times the number required. The statistics prove that Chinese citizens were eager to show off their nation to the world. The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report stated that the Beijing bid was “enthusiastically backed by Chinese people everywhere” (p. 5). For the Chinese government, winning the bid for the 2008 Games was confirmation of China’s 30 years of social and economic progress and its new status as a great world power (Ellegard, 2008; Jinxia, 2008; Lin, 2005;).

Not all, however, were in celebration of the 2008 Olympic bid being awarded to Beijing. Many Taiwanese, some Chinese citizens, and human rights groups had a less than favorable reaction. A majority of Taiwanese viewed the 2008 Games as a direct and indirect act of Chinese political dominance involving overt and covert messages that reunification of China and Taiwan is inevitable (Yu & Mangan, 2008). Many Taiwanese

saw Beijing 2008 as simply a costly exercise in political propaganda. Figure 14, a poster indicating that the spirit of the Olympics was killed by Beijing, represented the view of those who felt that China was using the Games for political purposes.

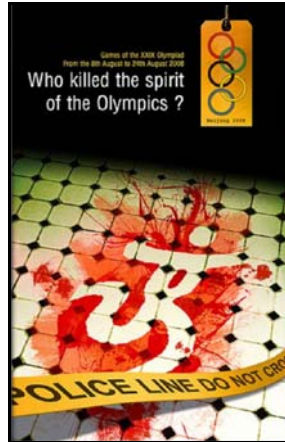


Figure 14: Who killed the spirit of the Olympics poster

Yu and Mangan (2008) reported that at a videoconference with foreign journalists in 2005, the Taiwanese President Chen Shuibian said, “We still hope that the Olympic theme ‘One World, One Dream’ can become ‘One World of Peace, One Dream of Freedom’. We also hope that China will conform to the Olympic theme and not consider the Olympics to be one thing and its military expansion and intimidation to be another” (Office of the President of the Republic of China, available online at <http://www.roc-taiwan.org/RU/ct.asp?xItem=5566&ctNode=1596&mp=212>). President Shuibian’s call for China to conform to the Olympic theme of peace and freedom during and after the 2008 Games was a symbol of the Taiwanese attitude toward China and the Beijing Games.

Some Chinese viewed the winning of the Olympic bid in Beijing as international recognition of China’s greatness. However, this was a confident view that many Chinese did not share (Caffrey, 2008a). Caffrey claimed there was “another China” where most



Chinese live, and where the Olympic Games was only a sideshow. There was disconnect between the euphoria of the Games among Beijing citizens and the larger Chinese population who did not experience positive aspects of China serving as Olympic-host. Many of those in poverty, specifically those in the Yunnan Province, felt as though such a large amount of money could have been better spent on helping citizens rather than hosting an extravagant sporting event.

Many human rights organizations and athletes were angry with the IOC's decision to award Beijing with the 2008 bid and felt that China's poor human rights record should have prevented it from the bid process entirely (The Olympic Games, 2004). In reaction to the IOC's bid choice, many Americans declared that granting the Olympics to China would mirror the mistake made in giving the 1936 Games to the Nazis (Dyreson, 2008). In both the Beijing and Berlin Olympics, mixed reactions to the host city being awarded the Games were present.

### *Negative Public Perception*

The modern Olympic ideal is that of promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity (Lovell, 2008). This ideal, however, was thought by many to have been neglected by China for the Beijing Games. Issues of press restrictions, government control of religion, China's takeover of Tibet, urbanization effects, unfair labor practices, challenges faced by citizens, and environmental concerns were all the basis of much negative public perception of the 2008 Olympics.

Press and media freedom in China has historically been an issue of human rights violation, as thousands of journalists have been jailed by the government. The Committee

to Protect Journalists annually tracks reports of imprisoned journalists across the world, and in 2007, for the 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, China was named as the world's leading jailer of journalists with twenty-nine. China's media is prohibited from reporting on issues that fall under the government's list of sensitive topics, which includes anything unflattering about the government, the Chinese Communist Party, or the stability of the country and its leaders. Journalists serve long term prison sentences for activities that would be considered normal political engagement to the rest of the world, such as general government criticism, challenging the human rights record, and calling for press freedom. Journalists in China face government harassment and intimidation, which was the cause for much negative public perception prior to the Games (Worden, 2008).

Freedom to worship was a human rights challenge in China throughout the Beijing Olympic Games. Chinese leaders view religious practice as a threat to the Chinese Communist Party's hold on political power. During 1966-67, as part of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government conducted a campaign which included the imprisonment and execution of clergy and destruction of artifacts and worship sites in an attempt to rid China of religious beliefs and practice. In the years prior to the Games, the Chinese government acted under the policy of tolerating religion but controlling public activity. The state-controlled religion allowed the Chinese government to regulate rituals and activities. Furthermore, all religious meetings and organizations had to be approved and registered, permission had to be granted to establish a worship site, any religious activities that the government was not in support of were broken up, and members of congregations that were not supported by the government were persecuted (the Chinese

government recognized only Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism, and a version of Protestantism labeled Christianity) (Worden, 2008).

The Chinese government's history of treatment of its citizens, specifically regarding Tibet, was also a cause of concern. In 1949, the Chinese Communists asserted a presence in Tibet and began trying to incorporate it into Communist China. For the most part, traditional Tibetan society continued to function. However, between 1959-1961 the Chinese engaged in a military crackdown and destroyed most of Tibet's 6,000 monasteries as part of the Cultural Revolution. There was organized vandalism against Tibetan cultural sites, and thousands of Buddhist monks and nuns were killed, tortured, or imprisoned. Since then, there has been a constant controversy between China and Tibet, as China claims it rules over Tibet, but Tibet pushes for independence. In pre-Olympic years, many called attention to this issue of ill-treatment of the Tibetans by the Chinese government as a reason why they should not host the Games (Worden, 2008).

The urbanization of Beijing was also the cause of criticism by much of the world's population. The accelerated urbanization of Beijing resulted in the price of land, homes, and home rentals dramatically increasing. In the "face-lift" of Beijing, hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents lost their homes with little to no legal recourse. In the Olympic preparations, old *hutong* neighborhoods (typical Beijing residence area defined by alleys created by rows of houses) were forcefully evacuated and gradually replaced by office towers, apartments, and shopping centers. The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions estimated that 1.5 million people were relocated in Beijing to make room for the Olympic projects. There was contradiction between the slogan of the 'Humanistic Olympics' and the fact that the pre-Olympic construction boom demolished *hutong*

neighborhoods and led to widespread property speculation and gentrification in the inner-city neighborhoods (Jixia & Mangan, 2008; Lin, 2005; Lovell, 2008; Ren, 2009; Xiong, 2007).



Figure 15: A Chinese woman walks through the rubble of demolished homes in a hutong neighborhood in Beijing

Abusive labor practices in China were not unique to the Beijing Olympics, as unfair working conditions have historically been common in this country (Worden, 2008). However, the Olympics called attention to these sometimes overlooked issues in regards to construction workers brought to Beijing to work on the Olympic venues. The construction workers who built the Olympic stadiums, support facilities, and transport system in preparation for the Games were almost exclusively migrant laborers who worked in extremely hazardous conditions, usually had no labor contract, no work-related medical insurance, could not form a trade union, and had no right to collective bargaining (Dongfang & Crothall, 2008). Human rights organizations brought attention to the mistreatment of the migrant workers and demanded better conditions on behalf of these Chinese citizens.

Beijing Olympic preparations had negative impacts on everyday Chinese citizens. For example, subway security systems had long security checks (making it hard for people to get to work on time), regulations were imposed in regard to the clean appearances of vehicles (constraint to taxi drivers), specific traffic lanes were restricted

for Olympic traffic only (they could not be used by citizens even in times of very heavy traffic congestion), and limits were placed on access to Beijing. Moreover, Beijing citizens were haunted by a sense of anxiety, uncertainty, intimidation, and public fear as a result of all the security precautions in place. These hardships that the Beijing citizens had to endure as a result of the Games were the basis of much of the world's negative public perception of the host-country (Guangtian & Caffrey, 2009).

Furthermore, the environmental problems of Beijing served as a basis for much debate surrounding the 2008 Games. There was criticism of Beijing's promise to host an ecologically clean Games when, according to the International Energy Agency, China was becoming the largest producer of greenhouse gases in the world. Olympic athletes were particularly concerned about the number of harmful particles in the air and the effect that would have on those participating in long distance events such as the marathon. Environmental issues such as air pollution and water quality also played a role in creating negative public perception of the Games (Terret, 2008).

Many saw the Beijing Games as an opportunity to bring attention to these internal issues of China as well as to the foreign policy of the Chinese government, specifically the Chinese support of oppressive regimes in Sudan and North Korea. Human rights organizations hoped that the Olympics would push China to improve conditions both internally and internationally. As Lai (2008) stated:

The Olympic Games will provide a unique opportunity to deliver a strong message to Beijing; in the long term, China cannot expect to be a major player in the global market without being a respected member of the world community. And to be a part of the world community, China must embrace the world's shared values and build a firm foundation based on democratic values, healthy civil institutions and basic protections of human rights for its citizens (p. 113).

Beijing's bid emphasized improving human rights for its people. However, when examining the forced relocation of citizens and working conditions of migrant workers, many questioned the Chinese government's follow through with its promises.

### *Efforts to Boycott*

The 2008 Beijing Olympic bid caused negative public perception around the world, which resulted in numerous discussions and debates of the socio-political issues surrounding the Games. As previously discussed, attention was brought to human rights issues in China and many protesters expressed their opposition to Beijing hosting the Games before the bid decision was even made. Moreover, after the announcement was made by the IOC that Beijing had won the bid, protesters demanded that action such as a boycott be taken to show that the world does not support China's historical treatment of its citizens. Examples of boycott demands of the Beijing Games show that human rights concerns were the focus of much of the protesters' efforts.

In April of 2001, a delegation of Tibetans, Uygurs, and Chinese democrats arrived at the IOC headquarters in Geneva to protest against Beijing's candidature for human rights reasons. In June of the same year, the organization Reporters Without Borders also launched a campaign against Beijing as a candidate city. The vans in which they drove to Lausanne, home of IOC headquarters, portrayed two of the five Olympic rings as handcuffs with a slogan along the side that read, 'Olympic Games in Beijing? China, gold medal in human rights violation' (Terret, 2008).



Figure 16: An electronic display board above the entrance to a megastore in Paris, showing the logo of Reporters Without Borders' Beijing 2008 campaign with the Olympic rings replaced by handcuffs

Human rights watch groups such as the Olympic Watch Committee for the 2008 Olympic Games in a Free and Democratic Society and the Society for the Defence of Human Rights worked to inform the press and conduct information campaigns on the human rights situation in China and how it contradicts the Olympic ideals (Terret, 2008). Leading up to the Games, letters were sent to IOC President Jacques Rogge asking him to reconsider the decision of awarding the Games to Beijing. Furthermore, in March of 2001, 41 members of the U.S. House of Representatives urged the IOC to reject China's bid (Jarvie, Dong-Jhy, & Brennan, 2008).

Organized protests increased after China received the Olympic bid, but protesters faced government pressure in China not to express their negative opinion of Beijing as an Olympic host. For example, in a protest by the organization Students for a Free Tibet, six activists climbed the Great Wall of China and unveiled a banner that proclaimed the group's slogan, "One World, One Dream, Free Tibet." The students were immediately detained. In June 2007, over 10,000 people, consisting mainly of farmers in Fujin City, signed a petition stating, 'We want human rights, not the Olympics.' A lead activist who

helped gather the signatures was detained (Hom, 2008). Though it was a struggle, as seen in Figure 17, Chinese citizens in protest of the Games found ways to express their view.



Figure 17: A Chinese citizen protesting human rights and the Beijing Olympic Games

In 2008, Chinese activists wrote protest letters titled ‘One World, One Dream, Universal Human Rights’ to the International Olympic Committee and the Chinese government (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008). The Olympic Watch, like many other human rights organizations, viewed the IOC as having an impassive attitude toward the situation. This impassive attitude by the IOC was a direct result of its opinion that sports and politics are separate and it would not get involved in the political issues of Beijing, or any other Olympic Games. In August and December of 2006, The Olympic Watch sent two detailed letters to the participating NOCs to warn them about the ongoing human rights violations in China and to remind them of their obligations to defend Olympic ideals (Terret, 2008). The fact that 204 NOCs sent a team to the Games proved such letters ineffective.

The discussion of boycotting the Beijing Games reached a national level during the French presidential campaign in 2007 when Nicolas Sarkozy and Segolene Royal were engaged in a debate being broadcast to more than 20 million French citizens. During the debate, Segolene Royal stated that pressure, including the threat of a boycott



of the Games, must be brought onto China (Terret, 2008). Interestingly, the prestigious human rights organization, Human Rights Watch, did not advocate boycotting the Beijing Olympics. Rather, it stated that the Games should be used as a way to put an unprecedented spotlight on China and its human rights record and that the Games should be used as leverage for capturing the attention of the Chinese government and national and international press (Human Rights Watch, nd).

### *Torch Relay*

The torch relay of the Beijing Games made historical marks just as the torch relay of the Berlin Games had 72 years earlier. The relay was themed *Journey of Harmony* and the torch was lit on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in front of the Temple of Hera at Olympia by a Holy Priestess according to the traditional ritual of using the sun's rays and a parabolic mirror. Throughout the four month journey, the torch made nearly 100 stops in China, passing through eight provinces with the help of 19,400 torchbearers (Light the Passion Share the Dream, 2008). It was carried 85,000 miles and traveled through 135 cities. According to Xiaobo (2008), the relay's inclusion of Hong Kong, Taipei, and Macao was intended to symbolize the great unity of the Chinese people.

The Beijing torch relay made multiple historic marks. Chinese mountaineers carried the Olympic flame to the top of Mt. Everest, being the first to combine mountaineering and the Olympics. All in all, the Beijing Olympic torch relay covered the longest relay route and broadest territory, reached the highest altitude, and used the largest number of participants. The torch relay ended in Beijing at the National Stadium

with former Chinese gymnast Li Ning lighting the Olympic cauldron (Ebersol, 2008; Light the Passion Share the Dream, 2008).

*A Journey of Harmony* was far from the reality of the Beijing Olympic torch relay. Mangan (2008) described the beginning stages of the torch relay as “...a symbol not of friendship but of friction, not of harmony but of disharmony, not of peace but of protest” (p. 753). The torch relay experienced violent protests when passing through London and Paris, and in London the route had to be altered to avoid pro-Tibet protestors. Before the torch relay reached San Francisco, Jacques Rogge and the IOC met to determine whether or not to allow the international leg of the torch relay to continue. While the leg of the relay was allowed to continue as planned, the IOC will likely re-evaluate the policy of the international leg for future Games.



Figure 18: A British activist protests during the torch relay in London

Public opposition to the Beijing Games due to China’s poor human rights record was clearly evident throughout the torch relay. The pure and harmonious feeling of the torch relay was hampered by protests, violence, and calls for improvement of human rights. China could not erase events of its history such as the occupation of Tibet, and it appeared that protesters would continue to bring attention to such issues until China made

vast improvements. As Xiaobo (2008) stated, “Unless the Chinese government can be persuaded to undertake meaningful human rights reforms, the flickering hope for a truly better China could vanish once the flame of the Olympic Torch has been extinguished” (p. 272).

### *Opening Ceremony*

The opening ceremony of the Beijing Games was an elaborate showcase of Chinese culture and economic power. Following is a description of the opening ceremony provided by Ren (2009):

Zhang Yimou’s production of the Olympic pageantry unfolded around one central theme – emphasizing the splendour of Chinese culture and downplaying messy politics. The performance began with a display of symbols of ancient Chinese civilization – the four great inventions of gunpowder, the compass, the printing press and paper – and then continued with other Chinese cultural icons. The modern replaced the traditional as Lang Lang, the world-renowned young Chinese pianist, took the central stage. Lang Lang is the symbol of the new China, a country that is eager to be portrayed not only as an economic powerhouse but also as a cultural giant. As Lang Lang filled the stadium with his fluent, strong and confident play, thousands of performers dressed in futuristic green costumes formed a human ‘bird’s nest’ around him. The enormous scale of the performance, along with the combination of blinking lights and Lang Lang’s piano brought ecstasy to the stadium. With the directive work of Zhang Yimou, the opening ceremony showed the extraordinary capacity of the Chinese state, which was determined to use this socio-political ritual to demonstrate the rise of China as a geopolitical and cultural power on the world stage (p. 1013).

It is not hard for an Olympic host to recognize the powerful opportunity it has within an opening ceremony. Not only will the ceremony impact the live audience, but it will have an effect on those watching from all over the world. According to Brownell (2008a), “BOCOG [considered] the opening ceremony to be the most important opportunity to show Chinese culture to the world” (p. 195). The BOCOG’s goal for the opening ceremony was to present symbols of China’s culture and to show historical

stories of communication and interaction between China and the rest of the world. Fifteen thousand individual performers were used in the ceremony, which focused equally on Chinese history and on modern times (Ebersol, 2008). The march in of children representing the 56 ethnic Chinese groups during the ceremony was a bold statement by China of its acceptance of all its cultures.

China hoped that people would be astonished by the ceremony and view it as the best Olympic opening ceremony yet. To accomplish this goal, \$300 million was spent on the opening ceremony (Davies, 2008; Schrag, 2009), although the bid had projected that only \$30 million would be spent (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report). China's goal of putting on the best opening ceremony in the history of the Olympic Games seems to have been accomplished (Ebersol, 2008). The Chinese poured more resources into this event than in any other Games in history and incorporated technology and state of the art equipment on a scale that has never been seen before.

Many messages were delivered through the 2008 opening ceremony. Interestingly, its narrative left out the second-half of the twentieth century. Referring to this fact, Schrag (2009) commented, "Certainly here the message is as much, if not more, for the Chinese audience – a message of a powerful authoritarian government with the will and the means to hold China together politically and territorially" (p. 1086). Not only did China use the opening ceremony to showcase itself to the world, but it also took advantage of the opportunity to deliver a message to Chinese citizens of its government's power. The Chinese military was observed projecting its image of power and authority throughout the entire Games, including at the opening ceremony (Figure 19).



Figure 19: Members of the Chinese military stand at attention during the opening ceremony at National Stadium

Remarking on the message delivered at the Games through its opening ceremony, Schrag (2009) stated, “The take-home message of the opening ceremony seemed to be that Confucianism was ultimately the ideology with which to harmonize the contradictions of capitalism and communism, as well as, in the short run, the contradictions of total media coverage and censorship” (p. 1,096). China’s goal for the opening ceremony was to present the symbols of China’s culture and to show the history of China through stories of the relationship between China and the rest of the world. It is safe to say that this message was delivered to both Chinese citizens and foreigners, and that through the opening ceremony spectators witnessed a show of politics and sports.

It is an Olympic custom that, upon completion of the opening ceremony festivities, the host-country president officially declares the Games open. Chinese President Hu Jintao, as many leaders before him, used this opportunity to portray a positive image of his country to the world. In his opening ceremony speech, he commented,

Hosting an Olympic Games has been a century-old dream for the Chinese nation. For seven years, ever since Beijing won its Olympic bid, the hearts of 1.3 billion Chinese people have been pulsating in unison with the Olympic Movement (<http://en.beijing2008.cn/ceremonies/headlines/n214518560.shtml>).



Figure 20: Chinese President Hu Jintao declared open the 2008 Beijing Games

President Hu Jintao's reference to the Olympic Movement was in regards to the three founding core values of excellence, friendship, and respect (Maass, 2007d). The message delivered through this part of his speech was that the Chinese people have been longing for an opportunity to increase mutual understanding and friendship between China and the rest of the world. He made a strong statement by implying that every Chinese citizen (1.3 billion people) had been in full support of the Games throughout the entire seven years of the bid process. Unity among all people of a country shows strength and power, and the implication of President Hu Jintao was that China was reflective of this unison, strength, and power. President Hu Jintao delivered an uplifting message of China and its people, and whether or not he was convincing to the world, he declared the 2008 Beijing Games open.

### *Olympic Stage*

In close resemblance to Germany's experience in 1936, China was showcased on the world stage throughout the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The Games were a political spectacle that was designed to show that China was no longer a developing country but rather a superpower in the making (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008). Just as Germany

prepared Berlin for foreign tourists in 1936, Beijing did in 2008. As Dong and Mangan (2008) stated,

There [was] a great deal riding on the games for the Chinese and their future. Arguably, it [was] a political gesture of national assertion similar in intent but exceeding them in effort and expectation to the pronounced nationalistic 1936 Berlin Games – the projection of a nation into the future through sport (p. 799). An Olympic host knows that hosting the Games puts not only the city, but the entire country on the world stage.

It was predicted that China would use the Beijing Games to improve the country's global status by presenting a polished image to the world (Yu & Mangan, 2008). Furthermore, the Olympics would provide the ideal showcase for the Chinese government as well as the Chinese people to present a modern vibrant state that is on the cutting edge of technology, art, culture and sport; a country that boasts global cities with exciting modern infrastructure, state-of-the art tourism and business; and a country that fosters companies that are at the forefront of the global economy (Gottwald & Duggan, 2008).

Chinese leadership saw the Olympics as a political tool with many audiences (Caffrey, 2009). Yu and Mangan (2008) commented that, "A great deal [was] at stake internationally and nationally – not least domestically, the enhanced cohesion of a huge population of different ethnicities, groups, classes and religions – a continual concern of the Communist leadership" (p. 828). With the pressure of the world's eyes on China in 2008, the Chinese implemented many policies, programs, and ideas to prepare the country for the Games. These included civilian improvement projects, education programs, increasing citizen sport involvement, environment improvement initiatives, and putting female athletes in the spotlight.

The Chinese government launched a massive civilian improvement campaign in Beijing to stop bad public habits that would tarnish foreigners' image of Beijing. For

example, taxi drivers were instructed to brush their teeth, change their clothes, and bathe more often. Moreover, great efforts were made by the government to stop people from spitting in public places (Lovell, 2008). Millions of pamphlets on social etiquette emphasizing acceptable behavior were handed out. This information was reinforced by television commercials, newspaper cartoons, and posters (Ellegard, 2008).

As part of the civilian improvement campaign, the BOCOG recognized the importance of language training for those interacting with foreign guests. While language training had been taking place in previous years, in the Spring of 2008, 4,000 staff members signed up for Internet training, one thousand attended English Corners at language training venues, and 500 signed up for English 100 Sentences classes. One thousand volunteers underwent a week-long training camp with 15 hours of language training a day. The other 70-80,000 game-time volunteers took foreign language courses (Brownell, 2008a).

Olympic education programs were an important part of preparing Chinese citizens for the world stage, as becoming familiar with and expressing the ideals of the Olympic movement were considered vital parts of hosting the Games. In the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report, China specifically stated that,

Celebrating the Games in Beijing in 2008 will afford a unique opportunity to inspire and educate a new generation of Chinese youth with Olympic values, and to promote the Olympic spirit and the cause of sport in China and the developing world (p. 3).

In 2005, the BOCOG partnered with the Education Ministry and the National Olympic Committee to launch an Olympic education initiative. Some of the programs included integrating Olympic education into the curriculum of schools in China by creating and distributing 800,000 textbooks to students and implementing the “Heart to



Heart” initiative, which linked 203 schools in and around Beijing with schools and athletes within other countries represented by an NOC (Olympic Review, 2007).

China also implemented the Beijing Olympic Education Project in which 400 million students from 500,000 schools were involved. China set up 200 model schools to ensure that youth would become familiar with Olympic issues prior to the Games. The textbooks that the government distributed were designed to teach students the history of the Olympic Movement, the Games, Olympic symbols, and the role of the Olympics in international peace (Jixia & Mangan, 2008). Moreover, through the education initiative, a lecture program the guided teachers on ways to incorporate the Olympic ideals in schools reached about 10,000 teachers in Beijing (Brownell, 2008a).

China also worked to channel the enthusiasm the Chinese people had for the Games by providing opportunities for and encouraging mass participation in sport (Caffrey, 2009b). The elite sport system had previously prevented the average citizen from having many sport opportunities, but China sought to change that throughout the bid process and upon winning the Beijing bid. The process began by revitalizing Chinese school extra-curricular athletic programs to make young people more interested in physical education (Olympic Review, 2007). It is apparent that China realized its ability to strengthen the Beijing bid by providing sport opportunities to all of its citizens rather than just a select few.

Furthermore, China created the National Fitness and Move with the Olympics campaign to gain citizens’ support for the Olympics. As a result of this campaign, 100 million people became involved in sports. Alongside the campaign, various other activities designed to generate the mass population’s interest in sport were enacted. They

included: National Fitness Week, National Fitness Month, Ice and Snow Event for a Million Teenagers, National Display of Hundreds of Millions of Women Fitness Enthusiasts, National Sunshine Physical Education and Sport for Hundreds of Millions of Students, National Display of Exercises for Hundreds of Millions of the Aged (Jixia & Mangan, 2008).

As the world called attention to environmental issues in Beijing, China felt a sense of urgency to make environmental improvements before it was showcased on the world stage during the 2008 Games. According to Jarvie et al. (2008), Beijing shaped its Olympic bid and tried to rectify environmental issues using a number of strategies:

- 1) Beginning in 1998, US \$15 billion dollars per year were invested in transport, communication, and environmental improvement
- 2) In October of 2000, the city banned the setting up of barbecue stalls in an attempt to reduce air pollutants
- 3) In November of 2000, the city, along with the World Bank, launched a US \$1.25 billion initiative to help Beijing approach World Health Organization clean air standards for cities by 2006, and twenty-two measures to reduce smog were introduced, including the closing of local steel mills by 2002
- 4) Tianjin, China's third largest city, launched six major projects aimed at Tianjin (a co-Olympic host city) becoming part of the Beijing-Tianjin Ecological Zone
- 5) In April of 2001, a total of 2,008 trees were planted in a park in Beijing to express support for a 'Green Olympics'.

Furthermore, Beijing implemented the Green Olympics Program (GOP) to complete 20 major projects, costing \$12.2 billion, aimed at improving the environment. The priorities of the GOP were: to improve the air quality by use of cleaner energy and prevention of pollution caused by vehicles; to speed-up the construction of the projects for waste water treatment and reuse; to prevent the pollution caused by solid wastes; to preserve cultural heritage; and to plant trees and improve the ecosystem as a whole (Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games Beijing Bid Report).

Finally, the Chinese government hoped to push its women onto the world stage to show that gender relations in the country were contrary to the popular Western belief of the dominant Chinese male and passive Chinese female. China began to show its women in dominant roles of powerful and accomplished athletes. China's both long-term planning and long-held political ambitions helped to advance Chinese women onto the world sports stage. Prior to the 2008 Games, a new trend in China was that elite women performers had been favored in the interest of increasing the number of gold medals and improving national image. Chinese women were in the spotlight for the Beijing Games, and on the world stage their national and international visibility was at the highest it had ever been (Dong & Mangan, 2008).

Chinese government leaders were well aware of the potential impact of hosting the Olympic Games. As Brownell (1995) stated, "In sum, the Olympic Games have become the world's largest single event for the production of national culture for international consumption" (p. 314). The success of the Olympics was indisputably a top priority for the Chinese government. Through the Beijing Games, China hoped to present an image not only of what it has already become, but of what it hoped yet to become. By promoting Chinese culture within China during the Games, China was also promoting an understanding of itself to the world. For 16 days China was on the world stage, and to both the domestic and international audience it presented a carefully constructed image (Black & Bezanson, 2004; Caffrey, 2009b; Schrag, 2009).

### *Importance of Winning Gold*

Just as in the Berlin Games, athletic performance at the Beijing Games meant more than simply winning a medal. The Olympic gold medal has significant socio-

political implications, and China hoped to use the 2008 Games to showcase the power of the New China in terms of its athletic success. Chinese leaders knew that athletic performance in the 2008 Games would be an important indicator of the overall success of the Beijing Games (Jinxia, 2005). Therefore, China’s mission for the 2008 Games was to win as many gold medals as possible (Lovell, 2008). In 2002, the *Plan to Win Glory in the 2008 Olympics* was drafted by the State Sports Administration, which outlined a strategy for the Chinese to win 180 medals at the Beijing Games. According to the plan, Chinese athletes would participate in all 28 sports competitions to obtain more medals in more events than in past Olympic Games (Dong & Mangan, 2008).

In the past few Olympic Games, China has made significant strides in increasing its overall medal appearance (see Table 7 for the recent history of China’s gold medal ranking in the Olympic Summer Games).

Table 7: China’s Participation in the Summer Olympics 1984-2004

<b>Games</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Host City</b>	<b>Gold Medals</b>	<b>Silver Medals</b>	<b>Bronze Medals</b>	<b>Total Medals</b>	<b>Gold Medal Ranking</b>
23	1984	Los Angeles	15	8	9	32	4
24	1988	Seoul	5	11	12	28	7
25	1992	Barcelona	16	22	16	54	4
26	1996	Atlanta	16	22	12	50	4
27	2000	Sydney	28	16	15	59	3
28	2004	Athens	32	17	14	63	3

Source: *Hong, 2008*

While the number of China’s total medals had been on the increase, its gold medal ranking had not been able to break into the top-three level. It is clear that China expected to finish at the top of the total medals for their home country Olympics and it can be assumed that China hoped to lead in the gold medal ranking as well (Terret, 2008).

Conrad (2008) explained how winning Olympic gold medals was one avenue for China to achieve new successes as a country. He commented,

Achievements of Chinese athletes in international sports, especially in events that are the focus of intense public attention, are a compelling way of asserting China's power and earning international esteem. International esteem is also a prerequisite for claiming a more influential position within the international political system. Therefore, the success of Chinese athletes does indeed yield a great political dividend on the international stage (p. 7).

The success of the Chinese athletes at the Beijing Games was a critical part of China's plan to emerge as an influential part of the international political system. As Mangan (2008) stated, "Medals are the ambition; world superiority is the intention" (p. 752). The relationship between sports and politics was highlighted throughout the 2008 Games with the desire by China to win Olympic gold medals for the purpose of solidifying its status as a world power.



Figure 21: After winning the gold medal, the Chinese men's gymnastics team stands on the podium and waves to spectators

To understand the importance that China placed on winning Olympic gold medals, it is necessary to elaborate on the Chinese elite sport system. In the 1980s, China adopted the sport policy of *jugo tizhi*, meaning that the whole country would support the elite sport system (Girginov, 2008). This system channeled all sports resources in the country into elite sport and in a short time effectively produced hundreds of thousands of young elite athletes. *Jugo Tizhi*, in pursuit of ideological superiority and national status,

functioned only to improve the level of elite sport and focused on a medal-oriented policy, centralized sports, administrative and management system, and a system of selection and training (Hong et al., 2005).

By the end of 2004, there were 3,222 full-time elite athletes training for the 2008 Olympic Games within the elite sport system. Through Olympic sport selection, training Olympic athletes, increasing Olympic resources, and preparation for Olympic competition, China had increasingly exploited its 'whole-country support for the elite sports system' to systematically produce more Olympic athletes in order to maintain and advance its position in the 2008 gold medal ranking. The purpose of the Chinese elite sport system was/is directly related to the Chinese goal of marking itself as a world power, both within the realm of sports and beyond (Hong et al., 2005).

Sporting success has been identified as an instrument to help reform or create a new national image, and specifically winning gold medals at Olympic Games was considered a way to achieve national glory (Ying, 2008). With China wanting to use the 2008 Games as a way of re-introducing itself to the world, success at the Games would help the new national image and give the citizens of Beijing a sense of national glory. As Hong et al. (2005) stated, "Medals [were to] bring Chinese people new satisfaction, new inspiration and revival of national pride. Victory in the Olympic Games [symbolized], above all, the ascension of the Chinese nation to the rank of a world sports power" (p. 521). As the world witnessed, throughout the entire 2008 Games, a high level of national pride existed in China.

Heading into the 2008 Games, China set its goal on finishing in the top three of the medal count. Specifically, the Chinese hoped to capture 180 medals from the 298

events (Jinxia, 2005). The Chinese were able to beat the United States' number of gold medals by earning 51 to the U.S.'s 36 (Summer Games Medals, 2008). However, the United States won the overall medal total for the Beijing Games with 110 to China's total of 100 (Summer Games Medals). Overall, China was able to reach its goal of ending the Games as one of the top three powers in terms of medal count.

### *Impacts of the Games*

Through hosting the 2008 Games, China wanted to open itself up to the world and build connections with other nations. China expected the Games to power a national drive toward modernization, provide a bridge to the West, and pave the way to it playing a greater role in world affairs (Jixia & Mangan, 2008). The Games did provide the opportunity for China to open itself up to the world and intensified the magnitude of Beijing's global connections. China accomplished its goal and through hosting the Olympics it influenced the far regions of the globe and in return, was influenced by them (Caffrey, 2009a; Ren, 2009).

Not only did China want to increase global interconnectivity through the Games, but it specifically hoped to enhance the relationship between the East and the West (Ellegard, 2008). Through the Beijing Olympics, China focused on how to bring together Eastern and Western cultures by promoting Chinese culture within China and an understanding of China abroad (Caffrey, 2009a). An increased level of appreciation of Chinese culture by Western countries seems to have been accomplished, at least to some degree, as a result of the Games. According to the Olympic Review (2008a), "In just a few short weeks the world's perception of China changed more than it has done over the

last twenty years” (p. 59). Furthermore, the approximately 25,000 journalists who covered the Beijing Olympics left with a greater understanding of the country’s culture, history, and way of life (Olympic Review).

The elite sport system, which had a direct impact on China’s success during the Beijing Games, could experience change in the years following the 2008 Games. For political purposes, the Olympics must be supported by the central government of host-countries who need to invest significant amounts of money into the Games (as was the case in Beijing with the elite sport system). However, some question whether the Chinese government will maintain such a large investment in elite sport after the completion of the 2008 Olympics (Hong et al., 2005). Hong et al. suggested that the 2008 Beijing Games could be the capstone of the elite sport system in China:

To become a winner of the Olympics has been the dream for generation after generation of Chinese. Once their dreams come true it will cease to be a dream. The Chinese will move to more practical and urgent social and economic issues and will be more interested in their living standards and working conditions. Sport patriotism will lose its important position in Chinese people’s lives (p. 526).

With the attention brought to human rights and environmental issues in China by the 2008 Games, many hoped that, upon completion of the Games, the country would focus on making still needed improvements. Time will tell if this potential shift in focus will deplete the government’s resources for and attention to the elite sport system.

By hosting the 2008 Olympics, China had the opportunity to promote sports at the grassroots level. Prior to the time of the 2008 bid, sport participation by the mass Chinese population was minimally supported by the government. This changed with the winning of the bid, and in the years leading up to the 2008 Games resources for mass sport



participation were at the highest levels ever in Chinese history. Xiong (2007) suggested six ways in which the Beijing Games will impact sport in China:

- 1) The newly constructed sports venues and facilities will be used by the general public after the Games, solving the problem of lacking sports equipment for mass sport
- 2) The Olympic Games will centralize social resources from different channels and make continuous development in the Chinese sports system and administration
- 3) Chinese people from all walks of life will be encouraged to share the sports opportunities brought by the Olympic Games
- 4) The Games will contribute to promoting the popularity of sports culture with the interaction between individuals and society through sport in the Olympic spirit.
- 5) Cultural exchanges of Chinese people and people from other countries in the field of sport will be advanced
- 6) The Olympic Games will contribute to an overall development of Chinese urban societies and Chinese sport will be further transformed by the interplay of the elements that comprise the process of urbanization.

An increase in the previously low level of Chinese participation in sport and recognition by the government that mass sport participation is worth funding are short term impacts of the Games. Moreover, the Olympic education programs that taught youth the Olympic values of excellence, friendship, and respect positively impacted the Chinese citizens.

The city of Beijing experienced tangible benefits as a result of the 2008 Games, which included many infrastructural advances in the city such as a new airport terminal that made Beijing the largest airport in the world, underground railways, a subway system that was doubled in size and capacity, 11 new stadiums, nine temporary stadiums, 11 old stadiums that have been modernized, the creation of 1.94 million new jobs between 2002 and 2007, and increased tourist accommodations (Caffrey, 2008b; Jinxia & Mangan, 2008). IOC President Jacques Rogge said, “The many improvements to mass transit and public infrastructure for the Games will improve the quality of life and environmental conditions in Beijing for years to come” (International Olympic Committee, 2008a, np). While the Games have resulted in major infrastructure

improvements, China was also forced to become more conscious of the need to balance economic development and environmental protection (Jinxia & Mangan).

Human rights organizations put a spotlight on Beijing's environmental conditions leading up to the Games and forced China to attempt to address the situation. IOC President Jacques Rogge explained that hosting the Olympic Games has significantly increased awareness of environmental issues in Beijing, leading to advances in energy consumption, sustainable water consumption, waste management, and air quality (International Olympic Committee, 2008a). According to Rogge, an impact of the Games is the improved living conditions for the people of Beijing and an environmentally friendly mindset by the Chinese government and citizens. Brownell (2008b) suggested that a green legacy in China would be a result of the 2008 Games. As a result of the Beijing Olympics, environmental improvements were attained in air quality, forest coverage rate, treatment of urban wastewater and solid wastes, new car emission standards, coal-generated energy, and natural wetland areas (Olympic Review, 2008b).

It is possible that as a result of Chinese women being showcased on the world stage for the 2008 Games, gender relations in China will also be impacted. Dong and Mangan (2008) questioned what will be the impact of the success of Chinese sportswomen on gender relations in China and East Asia beyond the realm of sport. They speculated that sport may serve as a means of changing gender roles. "If they [women] ensure glory for China in 2008 they will be seen as avatars of a political system, a rising nation and a gender revolution" (p. 791). The Chinese women did win glory for China at the Beijing Games and re-interpretation of gender roles has begun.

The Olympic Games provided many opportunities for the citizens of the host-city and country in general to gain real-world business experience. According to Jinxia and Mangan (2008), there will be a legacy of professional experience in China as a result of the 2008 Olympics. The BOCOG developed more than 30 departments with a total of over 4,000 personnel in architecture, marketing, finance, trade, transport, the environment, and tourism. Furthermore, according to Brownell (2008b), a legacy of the Games will be an improvement in the English language proficiency among many Chinese and therefore the possibility of improved understanding between the East and West.

The opening up of China as a result of the 2008 Games had an impact on freedom of press in the country. In 2006, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued Regulations on Reporting Activities in China by Foreign Journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period (Jinxia & Mangan, 2008). The regulations were set to be in effect from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 to October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008. They allowed foreign journalists to gather news with the consent of the interviewee only, rather than having to apply with the foreign affairs bureau. Furthermore, journalists were free to travel to other Chinese provinces to gather information, which would normally have also required an application with the foreign affairs bureau. The Chinese provided journalists with other accommodations such as that they could bring their reporting equipment into China duty free, install and use their own radio communication equipment, and hire Chinese citizens to help them in their reporting activities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006).

Throughout the 2008 Games, the media were given more freedom in China than they historically ever had (S. Brownell, personal communication, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2009). In

October of 2008, the Chinese government turned the temporary media freedoms of the Games into law. Allowing foreign media greater liberties when reporting in China is clearly an impact of the Games. However, the Chinese government continues to maintain tight control of the internet and what users can access, restricting sensitive terms and websites. Recent censorship controversy between Google and China (in which Google has threatened to shut down its Chinese language search engine rather than adhere to government censorship) has led to many people being skeptical of the freedom of press in China.

Jacques Rogge, in his speech at the closing ceremony said, “Through these Games, the world learned more about China, and China learned more about the world” (Olympic Review, 2008c, p. 3). The 2008 Olympics have sparked an international interest in Beijing. Moreover, increased tourism was a direct result of the Games. The Olympic Park has become the number one tourist attraction in Beijing. The park has had 150,000 visitors since the Games and more than 80,000 visitors came to the Bird’s Nest alone on National Day (October 1<sup>st</sup>) in 2008 (Ren, 2008).

With the significant amount of attention given to human rights issues throughout the 2008 bid process, China was forced to address a number of problems in the country. Some predicted that, as a result of hosting the Olympics, the Chinese government would be compelled to respond with a new degree of openness to discussions of human rights issues and implement liberalizing reforms. Furthermore, predictions were that an enhanced respect for human rights and dignity in domestic political practices would be an outcome of the Games (Black & Bezanson, 2004). While improvements were made to win the bid and appease human rights organizations and participating countries

throughout the Games, it is yet to be known if human rights issues will continue to be a focus of the Chinese government. Only time will tell if China will make human rights advances in post-Olympic years.

As the host of the 2008 Beijing Games, China opened itself up to the world. The question remains as to whether liberalizations of this country will be a lasting impact of the Games. There is speculation that the Games could lead to a more open and democratic China or, on the other hand, simply reveal shortcomings of the Communist Party of China (Lin, 2005). As one scholar suggested, the core symbolic point of the Beijing Games was not to strengthen the Chinese Communist Party (by convincing Chinese and non-Chinese alike that it alone is qualified to lead China), but rather was the symbolism concerning the place of Chinese culture and the Chinese nation in the modern world (Brownell, 2008b).

Increased national pride was a significant impact of the Beijing Games. Many Chinese citizens devoted time, energy, effort, and resources into the Olympic movement and the 2008 Games in hopes of showing the world a New China based on friendship and peace. Through all of the programs and initiatives supported by the citizens, it is hard to deny that a large portion of the Chinese people identified themselves and their “new” culture with the Olympic spirit. As Brownell (2008b) stated, “The greatest legacy of the Beijing Games will be its human and cultural legacy” (p. 189). Beijing 2008 will be remembered as the creation of a new China. Above all, the legacy of community cohesion, national pride, spirit, and morale will have a lasting impact on the Chinese people (Jinxia & Mangan, 2008; Mangan, 2008).

Beginning with the 2008 Olympic Games, the IOC has developed the Olympic Games Impact (OGI) study. This study requires all host cities to provide a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Olympic Games, in terms of environmental, social-cultural, and economic factors. The study will be conducted over a 12-year period beginning at the time of the Olympic candidacy announcement. One year after the Games, a Report of Initial Conclusions must be submitted, and three years after the Games the Final OGI Report must be submitted with assessment data, analysis, and interpretation (Maass, 2007b). For the OGI report, the local organizing committee contracts with a host-country university and both work together with the IOC to collect information on 150 economic, social, and environmental indicators (Brownell, 2008b). The OGI will be a new and profound way of understanding the impact of Olympic Games, and the Beijing Olympics OGI that will be released in 2011 will provide deep insights into the impacts of the 2008 Games.

Addressing the issue of the legacy of the 2008 Games, IOC President Jacques Rogge stated,

I think the boost to the confidence of the Chinese people is the most evident legacy. Everyone focuses on the environment and infrastructural improvements, which are enormous obviously; you only have to look at the new airport, public transport facilities, cleaner air and water to see that. What you don't see are the hundreds of millions of children who have learned about the Olympic values, and the way China captured the imagination of the watching world. The legacy of those things can only be judged in years to come (Olympic Review, 2008d, p. 36).

President Rogge's remarks symbolize the positive view of the Beijing Games and the impact on China. Similarly, BOCOG President Liu Qi's closing ceremony speech portrayed the impact of the 2008 Games as extremely optimistic.

"One World, One Dream." The world today is in need of mutual understanding, inclusiveness, cooperation and harmonious development. The Beijing Olympic

Games is a testimony of the fact that the world has its trust rested upon China. Owing to the Games, people have been united as one Olympic family, regardless of their nationalities, ethnic origins and cultural backgrounds. Their understanding has been deepened and their friendships renewed. The Chinese people, teeming with enthusiasm, have honoured the commitments they solemnly made. They have realized the concepts of “Green Olympic, High-tech Olympics and People’s Olympics”, leaving a huge and rich legacy both in culture and sport. The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games is a grand celebration of sport, a grand celebration of peace and a grand celebration of friendship... The Olympic flame atop the National Stadium will soon extinguish, and yet the Chinese people’s enthusiasm in embracing the world will be ablaze forever. At this moment, we hope you will bear in mind the vigour and vitality of Beijing and the co-host cities, bear in mind the Chinese people who are deeply faithful to the Olympic Movement, and bear in mind the smile and dedication of the volunteers. We sincerely wish the Olympic Movement a sustainable development (<http://en.beijing2008.cn/ceremonies/headlines/n214584104.shtml>).

IOC President Rogge and BOCOG President Liu Qi’s remarks represent the constructive view of the impact of the Games, but it must be recognized that a much different view of the 2008 Games also exists.

There were multiple negative aspects of the 2008 Games, such as lingering human rights issues, the relocation of many citizens, and the risk of a lasting negative public perception of China by foreigners. The Games did not advance the lives of many Chinese citizens. Media and human rights organizations targeted these aspects throughout the bid process and the Games, which without doubt cast a negative image on some aspects of the country. As Caffrey (2008) stated, “The image of poor people being sacrificed for the privileged, when it appears in Olympic coverage broadcast to the world, can have a strong blowback potential” (p. 815). This is not an image China wanted to show to the outside world as it attempted to re-introduce itself on the international stage. The overall impact of the Beijing Games on China in terms of world power is yet to be determined. It is too soon to know whether or not the Beijing Games lifted China into the position of a global superpower that it was hoping to reach as a result of hosting the Games.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

### *Issues and controversies in Olympic Games*

*Citius, Altius, Fortius: Faster, Higher, Stronger.* These three words were used by France's Pierre de Coubertin to symbolize a unified world that would together experience pure Olympic Games. However, Olympic Games have proven to be much more than simply a sporting event. The social and political issues and controversies that are intertwined with the Games have become a part of the modern Olympic movement. A comparison of the 1936 Berlin Games and the 2008 Beijing Games showed that not only have politics and the Olympics developed a relationship throughout history, but that this relationship continues to this day.

Protests, boycott discussions, and negative public perception seem to always accompany a winning Olympic bid. Sport, in the context of the Olympic Games, provides a world stage for countries and interest groups to promote their agenda and to display their image. A comparison of the Berlin and Beijing Games shows that the 2008 Olympics were not unique in the issues and controversies faced by the Olympic host. For both Germany and China, hosting the Games benefited the country's powerful elites. Hitler saw the Olympics as a way for him to showcase the supremacy of the Aryan race as well as to prove to the world that Germany was thriving under the Nazi control. In China, the desire to show the world the economic advances of the Chinese and to be recognized as a world superpower were the main reasons the country wanted to host the Games. In both the Berlin and Beijing Games, the desire by the host country to win gold proved successful, as Germany and China ended up leading in the gold medal count in their respective Games.



The 1936 and 2008 Olympics are looked back on as a success, both in terms of how the Games were ran as well as the impact they had on the host country. The Berlin Games boosted German citizens' patriotism, impressed foreign visitors, and set the bar for future Olympic Games. It is too soon to know the exact impact of the Beijing Games on China, but the most immediate impacts appear to be positive. The extravagant Beijing Games have gone down in the record books in terms of the torch relay, venues, and technology. Most important to China, the Games inspired much world respect and appreciation of the Chinese culture.

The eight themes that were the focus of comparison in this study were: reaction to host city decision, negative public perception, efforts to boycott, torch relay, opening ceremony, Olympic stage, importance of winning gold, and impact of the Games. Upon researching each of the two Olympic Games separately and analyzing the issues and controversies experienced by each host-city, I was able to draw similarities and differences between both Games within the context of these eight topics. Through detailed examination of the themes, my goal was to show that the 2008 Olympics were not unique in the political controversies that they raised and that many aspects of the Olympic Games that took place 70 years ago were extremely similar to the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing.

*Theme comparison: Reaction to host city decision*

In many respects, reactions of citizens, host-country governments, and the world community were similar when Berlin and Beijing were awarded the Olympic Games. A majority of Germans and Chinese experienced extreme patriotic emotions and national pride as a result of the bid decision. The Hitler Youth saw a surge in membership in the

pre-Olympic years and the number of volunteers for the Beijing Games far outnumbered the country's need. In both China and Germany, many people believed that being awarded the Games was a symbol of their country's greatness. Overall, the majority of upper class citizens (middle to upper class Chinese or Aryans/Nazis in Germany) had a positive reaction to the host city decision.

In both China and Germany, however, there were also groups of people who raised objections to their countries being awarded the Olympic Games. In Germany, Jews received the bid decision with skepticism because of the discrimination they faced, including not being able to train for Olympic-caliber sports or compete on the German team. In China, members of ethnic and religious minorities saw the Olympics as an opportunity for political propaganda on the part of Beijing and many working class people believed that the money spent on the Games could have been better utilized to improve conditions in the country. Both countries had their own reasons for wanting to host the Games, but it is clear that to both Germany and China winning the bid was a symbol of their country's strength and a confirmation of its status as a world power. Germany and China used the Olympic Games as a way of re-introducing themselves to the world and of showing their comfort on the world stage.

The reaction of the world community to Germany and China being awarded the Olympic Games was mainly negative. A poor record of human rights led to widespread anger and frustration when the bid decisions were announced. As a result of the severe discrimination of Jews, many human rights groups strongly opposed the idea of Germany being allowed to host the Olympics. Similarly, many believed that China's history of human rights abuses should have excluded it from being considered as an Olympic host.

While the majority of the public opinion was against Berlin and Beijing being awarded the Olympic Games, there were also others who chose not to believe the reports of widespread human rights abuses in these countries. Many of those who had not personally experienced the conditions in Germany questioned the reports of popular press that gave accounts of discrimination against the Jewish minority. In the case of China, some held the view that by serving as an Olympic-host, attention would be given to China's human rights record and provide the country with the motivation it needed to improve conditions for its citizens.

*Theme comparison: Negative public perception*

Strong negative public perception accompanied both Berlin and Beijing Games. These negative feelings were expressed through mass protests and boycott movements. The Nazi Regime and the Chinese government were well aware of these public sentiments and were forced to make certain adjustments in order to at least appear as though they embraced the Olympic values of equal opportunity and treatment for all. For instance, as a result of pressure from the world community, Hitler agreed to allow two non-Aryan athletes to compete for Germany. However, at the actual Games, only one (half-Jewish fencer Helene Mayer) was allowed to participate. Restrictions on freedom of the press, mistreatment of religious minorities, occupation of Tibet, uncontrolled urbanization, poor labor practices, lack of personal freedoms, and environmental concerns were the basis for much of the negative public perception of Beijing Games. While the Chinese government did not make notable strides in all areas of public concern, press gained temporary freedoms for the duration of the Games, and some

symbolic attempts were made to address environmental issues in the years and months preceding the Olympics.

Although Berlin and Beijing both experienced negative public perception, there is at least one major difference in how the IOC responded to these two Games. Protests that took place around the world prior to the 1936 Olympics called attention to the discrimination of Jews and demands were made by human rights organizations and Olympic committees to the IOC that action needed to be taken to improve conditions in Germany. The IOC originally held its stance that it would not get involved in racial, social, or religious controversies. However, as pressure increased, the IOC eventually took action and added two articles to the Olympic Charter that were meant to improve Jewish athletes' opportunity to participate in the Olympics.

As soon as the 2008 bid was announced, protestors demanded that the IOC move the Games to a country with a more positive human rights record. However, unlike during the Berlin Games, the pressure mounted on the IOC proved unsuccessful. From the outset, the IOC announced that it would not involve itself with such issues and no exception would be made for Beijing. Upon acknowledging that the IOC would not move the Games, protestors urged the IOC to assist in forcing China to make improvements in the area of human rights. However, again contrary to Berlin, the IOC refused to comply with the protestors' demands.

*Theme comparison: Efforts to boycott*

Although both Olympic Games were threatened with boycotts, much more action was taken by every day people, governments, and nations prior to the 1936 Berlin Games than before the 2008 Olympics. The AAU officially called for a boycott of the Berlin

Games unless the Germans changed their discriminatory policies towards Jews in sport. The United States went as far as sending an investigator (Avery Brundage) to learn about the conditions in Germany and to observe whether or not Olympic values were being upheld. The AAU did not consider boycotting the Beijing Games, nor did it conduct any type of investigation into the conditions in China.

Many organizations were established and events held to officially oppose the 1936 Olympics. The Committee of Fair Play in Sports, the Anti-Nazi League, World Labor Athletic Carnival, Olympics Under Dictatorship art festival, and the sports festival People's Olympiad of Barcelona are a few examples. Conversely, a minimal amount of formalized opposition existed for the Beijing Games. Reporters Without Borders was one of the few organizations who voiced their opposition to the Games being held in Beijing, and rather much of the protests were coordinated by individual citizens. Moreover, in the years prior to the Beijing Olympics, no counter-events on the scale of the ones preceding the Berlin Games were organized.

Another difference in the efforts to boycott the Berlin and Beijing Games comes with the size and the type of the protest rallies. The years leading up to the 1936 Games saw many large-scale protests. For example, in New York alone, 20,000 people attended an opposition rally at Madison Square Garden and 5,000 people later demonstrated at the New York harbor. For the Beijing Games, protests were on a much smaller scale. For example, a group traveled to protest at the IOC headquarters and students demonstrated at the Great Wall (each of these protesting groups had fewer than 20 people participate). The largest number of people organized in an opposition movement for the Beijing

Games was a petition signed by 10,000 Chinese farmers. This is the only example of such a large-scale coordinated effort.

Furthermore, there was no organized opposition effort by former or current Olympians for the Beijing Games. In Berlin, however, this situation was markedly different. Three hundred former Olympic athletes formed the Committee Against the Hitlerian Games and called for athletes to boycott Berlin. The lack of involvement in the boycott discussions by Olympic athletes during the Beijing Games is representative of how society has changed in the 70 years. Today, those in the public spotlight, such as professional and Olympic athletes, have to carefully monitor the opinions they express or the side of a controversial issue they take. Misconstrued off-hand remarks or political involvement on the part of the athletes can result in diminished public support and removal of endorsements – factors that did not constrain public expression of athletes at the time of the 1936 Games.

The sitting U.S. Presidents during the 1936 and 2008 Games (Franklin Roosevelt and George Bush, respectively) did not get involved in the controversial debates surrounding the Olympics and did not take an official stance regarding the situation of the host country. It was clear that they would face political ramifications regardless of the side they supported, and therefore it was in their best interest to remain neutral. However, not all members of the U.S. government took such a neutral stance. For instance, six U.S. Senators openly opposed the Berlin Games and 41 members of the U.S. House of Representatives urged the IOC to reject China's bid.

Although the opposition to the Beijing Games was quite strong, it did not match the scale of the worldwide protests mounted against the Berlin Games. In my opinion,

however, the scale of the protests did not reflect the extent of the negative public opinion that accompanied the Beijing Games. Although calls for a boycott of the Beijing Games were plentiful, it seems that there was a gap between feelings/opinions that were expressed and the actions that were taken in the case of these Olympics.

*Theme comparison: Torch relay*

Both the Berlin and Beijing Games set new standards for future Olympic torch relays. The 1936 Berlin Games marked the first time the torch was carried from Olympia, Greece, to the site of the Games. It was also the first time the relay ended at the opening ceremony. Torch relay developments have continued since the Berlin Games, and today the relay has reached the scale of an event of its own alongside the Olympic Games. The Beijing Games serve as an example of the extravagant event the torch relay has become. While for the Berlin Games the torch crossed seven countries in 10 days with the help of 3,000 torchbearers, the torch relay during the Beijing Olympics traveled 85,000 miles and through 21 countries and regions in 4 months with 20,000 torchbearers. Moreover, the 2008 torch relay went down in history in that it had the longest route, covered the broadest territory, reached the highest altitude, and had the highest number of volunteers and torchbearers of any Olympic Games in history.

It is important to recognize that the inter-connectivity of today's global society has allowed the torch relay to make many advances. Slower means of transportation and lack of communication technology such as the Internet would have made it difficult to coordinate a multi-country torch relay during the time of the Berlin Games. The technological advances made since the 1936 Games have facilitated the growth of the Olympic torch relay event.

Not only did the Berlin and Beijing Games differ in the size and the scope of their torch relays, but the scale of protests accompanying the event was different as well. In Berlin, the torch relay took place without many disturbances, as Czechoslovakia was the only country on route of the relay where notable anti-German sentiments were present among the local population. The only large scale rally was organized in Austria in support of Hitler's ideas of Aryan racial supremacy, as 10,000 Austrian Nazis demonstrated against Jews being allowed to compete on Austria's Olympic team.

The Beijing torch relay passed through multiple countries, providing protestors all over the world with the opportunity to express their view of opposition as the relay passed through their city. Large scale protests took place in London, Paris, and San Francisco as the torch passed through. Police were often involved, demonstrators and torchbearers were injured, and violence led to altering the relay route. While the advancements in transportation and communication have allowed the torch relay to develop into a global event, they have also made it easier for the protestors and demonstrators to interrupt, post-pone, and alter the relay process.

*Theme comparison: The opening ceremony*

Both opening ceremony venues were filled to capacity for the Berlin and Beijing Games. Radio was used in Berlin, and the Beijing ceremony was broadcast across the world via television and the Internet. Therefore, officials of both Games had a large audience to deliver their strategically planned message to. Hitler and the Nazi Regime chose to use the ceremony as a means of Regime propaganda by showcasing Germany under Hitler's control. China wanted to use the event to familiarize the world with its



culture and newly gained economic power. Furthermore, both countries used significant military presence to emphasize the government's strength and to provide security for the Games.

For both the Berlin and Beijing Olympic opening ceremonies, the most modern facility in the world at that time was renovated (Olympic Stadium, Berlin) or constructed (Bird's Nest, Beijing). Government officials of both countries wanted their opening ceremony to be considered the best yet, and therefore contributed an enormous amount of funding and resources to the event. Performances at the Berlin opening ceremony were conducted by the Nazi Youth and Regime officials. Hitler chose to use only Aryans to represent Germany to the world. However, likely due to pressure of countries and government officials who did not support his policies, he did not deliver a speech at the ceremony, and simply declared the Games open.

On the other hand, China used representatives of all 56 Chinese ethnic groups in the Beijing opening ceremony. This was strategically planned as well, as China wanted to show the world its new openness and acceptance of the entire population (which was contradictory to the popular belief that certain ethnic groups in China face discrimination). Furthermore, China's main goal was to send a message of friendship to the world, which was incorporated throughout the ceremony in the carefully scripted friendly smiles and demeanor of the performers. Finally, as President Hu Jintao gave his opening speech, he announced that the Chinese people desire friendship with the world and expressed his hope that the Olympics would aid in the process.

The Parade of Nations during the Berlin and Beijing Games showed different attitudes of the host country's population toward the athletes attending the Games. In

Berlin, as the athletes entered the stadium, the audience did not show much support for those who did not give the Nazi salute to Hitler or who represented countries that had strained relations with Germany. On the contrary, during the Beijing Games, every nation, regardless of its standing with China, was wildly cheered by the audience of mainly Chinese citizens. An outpouring of support and friendship for all was clearly present in China.

*Theme comparison: Olympic stage*

As is typically the case with Olympic host-countries, Germany and China recognized their opportunity to use the Games to showcase themselves to the world. To develop and maintain a positive image, in the months and years before the Games, both countries engaged in a city beautification project in which undesirable aspects were genuinely improved, temporarily fixed, or simply hidden from public view. Although the amount of time and effort devoted to the task differed, both countries took similar steps to ensure a positive public reception.

In both Berlin and Beijing, preparations to increase visual appeal included street cleanings and the painting of buildings and roads. In Berlin, anti-semantic posters and other evidence of anti-semitism (such as vandalism or spray painted messages on building walls) were taken down or removed. Furthermore, the main venue that was to be used for the Games, the Olympic Stadium, was renovated. In Beijing, much infrastructure modernization was completed because China wanted to use the Games to call attention to its global cities, modern infrastructure, state of the art tourism and business, and its companies at the forefront of global economy. To further enhance the host-city image, both Germany and China diminished the visibility of “undesirable” citizens who could

potentially tarnish the image of the country. In Germany, much of the local Gypsy population was imprisoned for the time of the Games. In Beijing, migrant workers who worked on the preparation for the Games were not allowed to appear by the roadside or in the city itself, but rather were forced to remain in the fields during the day and return home upon completion of work.

In Berlin and Beijing, a strong military and police presence was incorporated into the Games. In both 1936 and 2008, officials could be seen patrolling the city, at the many venues, and actively participated in the opening and closing ceremonies. In Berlin, the Gestapo were made to dress as student helpers as not to frighten visitors. Furthermore, there were reports that many of the performers at the Beijing opening ceremony were members of the Chinese army.

Finally, both German and Chinese government officials developed programs and initiatives encouraging citizens to be friendly and welcoming to Olympic guests. Members of the Hitler Youth went through special training to become Olympic guides who would either be available around the city and venues or lead bus tours throughout the country. Chinese citizens were encouraged to learn English and many people were enrolled in government-sponsored programs to improve their foreign language skills, polish their manners, and to gain an understanding of how to effectively communicate with tourists. In the 1936 and 2008 pre-Olympic years, public campaigns encouraged residents to be polite to others, smile, and have a positive attitude toward visitors.

Hitler and the Nazi Regime wanted to use the Games to portray Germany as a peaceful country and to show the superiority of Aryan athletes. To reach this goal, the movie *Olympia* was created to document and glorify the Aryan athletes at the Games.

The film, later distributed worldwide, communicated the message of Aryan dominance and the grace and beauty of the Olympic sport. China's goal was to send a message that it was no longer a developing country, but rather an established world power that should be recognized by the world community. To obtain this goal, China used the Olympic stage to showcase aspects of the country on the cutting edge of technology, art, culture, and sport.

Projecting a positive image of the city was the key goal for both the Berlin and Beijing organizers. However, in 1936, the expectations of a host-city were minimal compared to what Beijing experienced prior to the 2008 Games. Throughout the history of the Olympics, each set of Games has become a more extravagant event and the standards placed on a host-city have continually increased. As a result, China faced many more challenges than did Berlin in implementing improvements that would satisfy the world community.

Not only did China have to improve the visual image of the city for tourists, but expectations were also placed on the country in terms of improving its educational institutions and the environment. China developed programs and initiatives in both of these areas, and many of the projects began as soon as the bid was awarded. The country publicly embraced the green movement and proclaimed that it would host the first ever "Green Olympics." Through the Green Olympics Program, attention was given to recycling and reusing resources, and many factories in Beijing were closed prior to the Games to improve the air quality. Many areas of environmental concern, however, were not legitimately addressed, leaving the "Green Olympics" claim in question. While German government officials could satisfy the world with what seemed to be simple

improvements, much higher expectations are placed on today's Olympic hosts. Standards will undoubtedly continue to increase in the future, and in order to be showcased in a positive light on the Olympic stage, future host-countries will have much work to do.

### *Importance of winning gold*

A country's image is often established by its athletic success at the Olympic Games. Gold medals project an image of power and strength, and therefore, winning gold was a top priority for both Germany and China at their respective Games. At the 1936 Olympics, Germany placed first in the number of gold medals, reassuring Hitler of the supremacy of Aryan athletes. Similarly, at the 2008 Games, China took first place in the number of gold medals, thus achieving its goal of showing the country's ability to compete with the top athletic powers of the world.

At the time of the Berlin Games, Olympic athletes were everyday citizens whose coaches and training facilities were supported by the government. The Berlin Olympic athletes were similar to an amateur athlete of today, and each of them considered his or her sport involvement as a hobby rather than a job. The Nazi Regime, anticipating the positive impact athletic success would have on Germany's reputation, provided funding for the athletes to improve their skills. It supported advances in training and encouraged athletes to strive to win gold for the good of the country. The level of support by the government in Germany, however, was minimal compared to that of the Beijing Games.

The Chinese government enacted a much more detailed and structured plan to win gold medals at the Olympics. Athletic success was acknowledged by all government officials and Chinese citizens as a top priority for China. The amount of government funding and support of Olympic athletes set record highs, as Chinese government enacted

its *Plan to Win Glory in the 2008 Olympics*. Unlike the athletes for the Berlin Games, the Chinese trained for the 2008 Games as a full-time job. Furthermore, the number of athletes preparing for the Beijing Olympics (3,000) far outweighed that of Berlin.

At both the Berlin and Beijing Games, a similar relationship existed between Olympic athletes, government officials, and the country. The athletes wanted to achieve success for themselves and for their nation, and government officials wanted the athletes to win gold for the positive effects it would have on the country's morale and prestige in the world. As a result of their first place medal finish, both countries saw a rise in national pride and increase in their athletic reputation around the world. As the importance of winning Olympic gold medals continues to develop, we will no doubt see many more countries establish strategic plans to achieve athletic success in the future. No longer does an average amount of government support of athletics suffice, as the relationship between sporting achievements and the power of a country continues to define itself through the Olympic Games.

*Theme comparison: Impacts of the Games*

From the perspective of each host-country and the IOC, both the Berlin and Beijing Games were a success. The Nazi Regime felt that the 1936 Games provided evidence for the power of a totalitarian government and the strength of Germany under Hitler's control. Furthermore, the IOC acknowledged the Games as a success and referred to them as "better than all other previous Olympics." China also claimed that the 2008 Games were a success because they allowed the country to open itself up to the world and begin to develop a mutual understanding and friendship with many other countries. The

IOC also recognized that the Olympics were successful in building bridges between China and the world community.

Visitors who attended or watched the Games were generally pleased with their experiences. At the 1936 Olympics they witnessed pleasant conditions in Germany and left with a positive image of Hitler and the country's status under the Nazi Regime. This is one of the reasons why many scholars and opposition organizations argued that allowing Berlin to host the Olympics provided a silent acceptance of Hitler and the Nazi Regime. A majority of Beijing visitors were impressed with the improvements China made in preparation for the Games. However, while satisfied with the immediate changes, visitors were not in the position to witness long-term transformations brought about by the Olympics. It is likely that if conditions in China begin to transition back to the way they were in pre-Olympic years, the impact of the Games will need to be re-evaluated.

Hosting the Olympic Games had a strong impact on sport in both countries. Upon completion of the 1936 Games in which Hitler saw first-hand how sporting success could boost the image and reputation of Germany, the Nazi Regime took control of sport in the country. This marked the beginning of athletes being used as a national asset, which is a process that has continued to evolve ever since. Moreover, prior to the 2008 Games, for the first time sports were established at the grassroots level in China. While the elite sport system remains a top priority in the country, opportunities for everyday citizens to become involved in sport and recreation have improved and are now supported by the government.

Furthermore, for both the Berlin and Beijing Games, technological advances were pioneered by the Olympic host. Riefenstahl's documentary, *Olympia*, was the first documentary film of an Olympic Games ever made. Furthermore, Riefenstahl advanced motion picture techniques such as camera angles, cuts, close-ups, and perspective. Her techniques were groundbreaking at the time and are now admired around the world for their contributions to the film industry. For the Beijing Games, an enormous light emitting diode (LED) screen (147 meters long and 22 meters wide) was located at the center of the stadium ground in the Bird's Nest, and images were embedded on the screen for many aspects of the opening ceremony. Moreover, engineering designs and technical systems such as the suspension of athlete Li Ning for the lighting of the cauldron and chamber pressure launched computer ignited fireworks made epic technological advances in the Olympic Games and set new standards for future Olympic hosts.

Looking back at the 1936 Berlin Games, it is easy to see how controversies surrounding Hitler, the Nazi Regime, and the treatment of Jews brought a political aspect to these Olympics. As only the fourth Games of the modern Olympic Movement and the first to involve such a level of opposition and boycott discussion, the Berlin Games provided a platform for the relationship between sports and politics to develop. Three years and two weeks following the closing ceremony of the Games, Germany invaded Poland, which marked the beginning of the World War II. This proves that serving as an Olympic-host did not make Germany more accepting of others, but rather simply provided a pause long enough to give Nazis an opportunity to use sport to further their propaganda goals.



Although it has only been a few years since the completion of the Beijing Games, it is clear that the Olympics had many positive impacts on China and its citizens. New education programs in schools and infrastructure improvements such as railway lines and the subway system could be attributed to the Games. Furthermore, the attention brought to human rights issues has educated the government on changes that need to be made in the lives of Chinese citizens. One can be hopeful that conditions in China will continue to improve in the post-Olympic years.

I believe that as a result of the 2008 Olympics, China will adopt a more liberal style of government. By no means do I think that China will become a democracy or establish a system similar to that of the United States, but I do feel that the Games introduced Chinese government officials to a level of liberalism that they can feel comfortable with. For example, upon completion of the Olympics, officials recognized that the flexible press restrictions for the Games worked well, and immediately implemented a policy to open lines of communication for the press in post-Olympic years.

China was also able to use the Olympics, especially the opening ceremony, to introduce its culture to the world. The 2008 Games fostered a new interest in China and its culture, as is seen in the increased tourism since the Games' completion. While the 2008 Games did not provide a quick fix to the relationship between China and the rest of the world, they established a base for future positive relationships to develop.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

### *Overview*

The objective of this study was to explore similarities and differences in the issues and controversies surrounding the 1936 and 2008 Olympic Games. I used a cultural, descriptive historical angle to direct my research. Eight themes were identified in the findings, which included: reaction to host city decision, negative public perception, efforts to boycott, torch relay, opening ceremony, Olympic stage, importance of winning gold, and impacts of the Games. The findings showed that the 2008 Beijing Games were not the first Olympics to be entangled in political controversy, but rather followed a pattern of many other host-cities of the modern Olympic era, including Berlin. The findings compliment current research on both the 1936 and 2008 Games by adopting a comparative perspective to analyzing Olympic events.

Through this study, a new understanding of how politics are intertwined with Olympic Games has been developed. While the International Olympic Committee has typically maintained that the Olympics are not affected by political pressures of governments and interest groups, this study provided evidence to the contrary. The 1936 and 2008 Games both served as a stage for political propaganda, as Germany was able to showcase the superiority of the Aryan race and China its economic power. The study also called attention to the manipulation of public opinion that often accompanies Olympic Games. For instance, Germany was able to stifle reports of extremely negative treatment of Jews and actions by the Nazi Regime that were clearly against the IOC principles, while Beijing was able to divert attention from their poor human rights record. As a result, both Games took place without any significant interruptions and were attended by

many government leaders and thousands of spectators who were either oblivious to or chose not to pay attention to the controversies surrounding the Games.

### *Limitations of the study*

Although this study yielded some interesting results, it also had several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the literature used in this study was limited to that accessible to me through Illinois libraries, which may or may not be reflective of other information available on the Berlin and Beijing Games. The sample was limited due to time and feasibility constraints. Moreover, the sources that I reviewed were written solely in English and did not include works written in German. There are many books and reports on the Berlin Olympic Games that have not been translated to English, and therefore had to be left out of the data collection process. Moreover, a majority of the Berlin literature was written by American scholars and, thus the perspective of German authors might have been omitted from this study. This issue was not faced with the Beijing literature, as most information needed for this study was available in English and was written by scholars from various countries (including China). The language limitation could have led the Beijing findings to be more thorough than that of Berlin.

Finally, the use of second-hand sources in this study could be considered a limitation in that the findings are a reflection of my interpretation of other scholars' views. My personal background and opinions could have influenced how I interpreted the data. Although, while collecting the information, I made a conscious effort to remain neutral when analyzing issues and controversies related to the Games, the possibility of my thoughts, feelings, and emotions affecting my understanding of the authors' point of view must be taken into consideration.

Improvements could have been made to the design of this study. Regarding the fact that all of the information was obtained through Illinois libraries, I could have broadened my search to include data from other libraries and institutions. This would depend on my ability to access information from libraries around the United States and abroad. The language barrier could have been addressed by learning German or seeking out a German interpreter to assist in the data collection process. Lastly, the limitation of the use of second-hand sources could have been addressed by either obtaining information from original sources or by trying to remain unbiased throughout the data interpretation process and by working diligently to report findings that are reflective of the views and opinions of the scholars. Due to limitations inherent to the Master's thesis process, I chose to pursue the latter option.

#### *Suggestions for future research*

The 1936 Berlin Olympics have been thoroughly researched and published upon. Since the Games took place over 70 years ago, there has been much time for scholarly analysis. A myriad of sources exist that provide historical investigation of the Berlin Games, including analysis of controversies related to these Olympics. Information regarding the Berlin Games is readily available in books, but is nearly absent from online sources. In today's society of technology and the need for instant access, scholars of the Olympic Games, and of the 1936 Berlin Olympics in particular, should work to make online options more available for researchers. This important topic may attract less attention in the future, especially from young researchers, if only print material is available on the subject.

At the time of this writing, the 2008 Beijing Olympics were the most recent summer Olympic Games to take place. As a result, there is a need for research on these Games to continue to develop. Much information regarding issues and controversies related to the Beijing Games exists in non-scholarly sources such as Internet news articles and editorials. Multiple books and journal articles were published in the months preceding the Games, however, analysis from the post-Game perspective is missing. Thus, additional research on the 2008 Beijing Olympics is clearly needed. Specifically, more information regarding the ways in which the Beijing Games affected the Chinese society would be beneficial. Moreover, scholars should focus on examining social, political, economic, and environmental impacts of the Beijing Games and the ways in which Chinese officials fulfilled their mission of “bringing China closer to the world.” More comparative research is also needed that would examine the relationship between sport, politics, and the Olympic movement.

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