

# World History Bulletin

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## World History Association

Denis Gainty

*Editor*

bulletin@thewha.org

Editor's Note

From the Executive Director

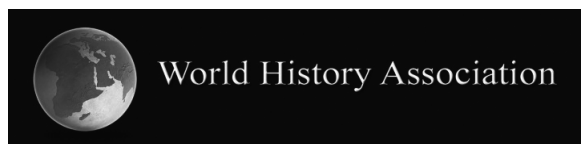
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I am deeply sorry to have to relay the news that my dear friend and colleague Dr. Denis Gainty died suddenly and unexpectedly two weeks ago. A scholar of modern Japanese history, Denis wrote a fascinating book, *Martial Arts and the Body Politic in Meiji Japan* (Routledge, 2013), that traces the history of the Japanese body as it was imagined by nationalists after the Meiji Restoration. At the time of his death he was deep into the research and writing of a volume about the inclusion of American bluegrass in the repertoire of Japanese musicians after the Second World War. His history of transpacific crosscultural exchanges in the wake of war and in the context of occupation promised to expand our understanding of how the soundscapes of the postwar period depended – perhaps more than anything else – on the historical processes of contact and exchange that transformed the American South as well as the nation of Japan.

The photo of Denis you see opposite was taken last fall in the north Georgia mountains, near the beginning of the Appalachian Trail that connects the American South with Denis's beloved Berkshires of Western Massachusetts. The Appalachian Trail joins north and south; Denis's interests connected east and west, rendering those labels obsolete. If anyone could see the ways that occupied Japan and north Georgia were a part of the same story, it was Denis. In his life, Denis was a member of many communities – from the Oakhurst Dog Park to the Southeast World History Association – but he was perhaps most proud of his citizenship in the hybrid cultural territory of we might call “Japan/Appalachia,” a utopian space whose residents bridge multiple continents, generations, and cultural traditions. History is in part a demonstration of the skill of translation, and Denis was one of the most sensitive translators of human experience I knew.

Denis Gainty, 31 August 1970 – 24 March 2017, is survived by his mother, Mary Kate; his brother Chris, and sister Caitjan; Jen Patico; and his children Eliza and Clem, whom he adored.

--Jared Poley

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Managing Editor: Denis Gainty (Georgia State University)

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# From The Executive Director

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This issue of the *World History Bulletin (WHB)* focusing on “the global event,” which promises great reading, has me thinking of these events and how studying them has influenced my life. World Fairs & Expos have shaped areas of modern cities as we know them today. After reading the *WHB*, those interested in further reading should consider the fascinating book, *The Devil in the White City*, by Erik Larson. This well-researched account, which won the Edgar Award for best fact-crime writing, centers around the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893.

Many expos have borrowed from urban redevelopment in parts of cities in disrepair or disuse. For the Expo ’98 in Lisbon, Portugal, acres of shabby land became transformed with a beautiful metro station, an aquarium and new convention buildings. I was fortunate enough to attend the Expo several times while residing in Portugal during 1998. Although I remember enjoying the Expo overall, what still stands out is the fantastic exhibit from Argentina, complete with tango dancers and an outstanding live performance by Van Morrison.

While sports have played a significant role in portions of history, I look forward to enlightening myself with this issue. During graduate school, one of my professors, who taught British History, would start each class with facts from baseball history. It was a perfect beginning to a summertime class. Ballparks carry with them great histories and as you may already know, Fenway Park will be one of the tours we are offering during this summer’s conference.

Here at WHA Headquarters, we are working to improve our services and keep things efficient. Most exciting, we have brought in our new webmaster, Gautham Ramesh. He is a first-year graduate student at Northeastern and has extensive experience working on websites. One change that he implemented is the overhaul of our website, which keeps our design current and ensures greater security. On the WHA homepage, we have added information about our publications front and center. In addition, Gautham is overseeing the creation of our Members Only page, which will provide information and special access to WHA publications and forums. Additionally, graduate student members will also be able to logon to a graduate student portal, where the exchange of

conversation and ideas should prove valuable.

In the area of budget and finances, we are moving toward a more effective model of accountability.

Thanks to some intensive work with our treasurer, quarterly budget reports have helped us to track our profits and expenditures carefully. This has been welcomed by the WHA Executive Council, as these reports lay out our progress clearly and highlight areas for improvement. Another benefit to our office has been finding an accountant in Boston, Rich Durham. We were so lucky to connect with him in 2016 and will be meeting with him again soon. Thanks to Mr. Durham, the WHA now works on Quickbooks instead of outsourcing this accounting procedure, saving financial resources for other things.

Meanwhile, WHA Governance has been analyzing location ideas for our 2019 and 2020 conferences. Our 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin promises to be engaging, as well as the home city of our future president. Save the dates! We will be in Wisconsin from June 21 – 23, 2018, and are already talking about enticing tours that will introduce many of us to this city on Lake Michigan, known for authentic breweries.

While the looking glass guarantees exciting future conferences, I am thinking mostly about our 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Boston. The bulk of office time right now is dedicated to conference preparation. This work is being handled by myself and Bridget Keown, WHA graduate assistant, and the various committees that are needed to make our event successful. Sessions focused around our themes, “The Atlantic World” and “Food in World History”, as well as a number of other fascinating themes, are taking shape. Inspired by these topics, we are offering tours that complement these ideas. By the time of this reading, many of these events and tours should still be available for booking via our website.

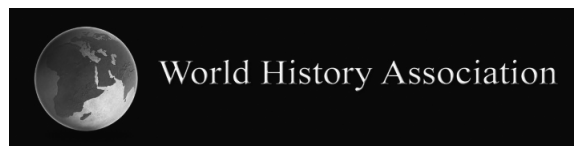
Our signature event, “Cooking World History: An Atlantic World Feast” will feature five recipes from prominent historians who work within food history. We hope you will consider joining the WHA Governance for this event in Northeastern’s Exhibition Kitchen, a world-class kitchen with cutting-edge technology. To celebrate our charming port city, we are offering a variety of walking tours

that highlight different histories and neighborhoods around downtown Boston. These include the “Fenway Park Tour”, celebrating our prestigious and historic ballpark; “Brahmins of the Back Bay” complete with stories of our city’s most prominent citizenry and how they influenced the city we share today; “Avenue of the Arts” highlighting the art museums and cultural venues near the Northeastern campus; “Historic Waterfront” a tour focused on our seafaring and waterfront culture and “The North End Walking Tour” in one of our oldest neighborhoods, which boasts great Italian food and connections to famous Bostonians such as Paul Revere and Rose Kennedy. Our one very unique museum tour will be a favorite of 20<sup>th</sup> Century

or military historians: “Museum of World War II” containing over 7,000 artifacts from the war. Whichever activities you choose to enjoy in Boston, there is really something for everyone. We welcome your feedback, so please call or email with suggestions or ideas. We can be reached at [info@thewha.org](mailto:info@thewha.org) or 617-373-6818.

Best wishes,

Kerry Vieira  
Administrative Coordinator/Executive Director  
World History Association



## *Letter from the President of the World History Association*

Richard Warner, Wabash College

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Good Colleagues,

I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Bulletin, which once again is a rich expression of the good work going on in world history. I begin by thanking Denis Gainty and his staff for their continual efforts in producing this great publication, that links us together between conferences and other chance encounters. I also wish to thank Kerry Vieira, whose steady guidance of our organization has strengthened our ranks and sustainability over the past couple of years. I am thankful as well for the work of our officers and Executive Council, who have made my own work as president seem so easy.

I begin this message with thanks because I know that our membership, as with many other people who truly care about international matters and people, is feeling nervous and perhaps even exasperated due to current conditions in our society. Without sounding overly political, I think that it is safe to say that the current climate has posed significant challenges for those of us in international education. The WHA and world historians generally have a role to play to build

empathy towards all the world’s peoples. We write and teach world history at least in part to develop in ourselves and in our students this sense of empathy for the “other.”

The World History Association is concerned about these issues as an organization. We have signed on to recent American Historical Association statements of concern about travel restrictions, funding for the National Endowment on the Humanities, and other issues that affect our mission and our membership. I encourage all of us to maintain awareness and vigilance on international matters. Let us know how the WHA can continue to do our part.

Allow me to move onto brighter matters. We look forward to a busy conference in Boston, as Kerry notes in her message. Boston was chosen as this year’s location to celebrate our new headquarters, but the city has so much more to offer! The local world history affiliate, NERWHA, has been quite supportive as we prepare for the conference in June. The Research Committee, shepherded by Laura Mitchell, has worked hard to bring the quality of programming to a high level. Our web site will continue to keep us up

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to date about conference plans and happenings. Of course, I am particularly excited about the Xibition Kitchen event but there is so much more going on! You will not be bored....

Finally, I want to share with you that the WHA is once again on stable financial ground, thanks to the work of many people. More information will be shared at our annual meeting. Although we must continue to be responsible stewards of our resources, the organization is on a sustainable path. You will note that we have been able to cut the registration fee of our conference by fifty dollars this year. And perhaps you have already noticed that this is my first message in which I have not pleaded for more donations to repair our Endowment... though we are still working on that and would welcome your help.

As an old Irish friend of mine used to quip, “sweetest rose, sharpest thorn.” Challenges often come with more positive opportunities. We do indeed live in “interesting times.” Let’s weather our challenges together, as we continue our work to build empathy in the world, through understanding of the cultures and histories of diverse peoples on our planet.

Cheers

Rick Warner  
President, The World History Association

### Guest Editor’s Introduction: The Global Event



### Guest Editor’s Introduction: The Global Event

Robin Kietlinski, *City University of New York – LaGuardia Community College*

Globalization as a concept is new, but as a phenomenon is as old as the earliest civilizations. Curiosity, need, and desire have brought societies into contact with one other organically since people had the means to cross land and sea. However, the deliberate construction of events that bring together people from different corners of the world is a relatively recent phenomenon that is both made possible by and reflective of the complex tides of globalization. These manufactured festivals offer unique spaces within which we can trace change over time from many different vantage points, making them a rich site for historical study and interpretation. Particularly at a moment in which many nations are turning inward and

focusing on negative consequences of globalization, thinking critically about the larger significance of these global events takes on a new importance.

As John Horne and Wolfram Manzenreiter have discussed elsewhere, ‘mega-events’ are “important elements in the orientation of nations to international or global society,” and have come to be an “increasingly central, rather than peripheral, element of urban modernity.”<sup>1</sup> They discuss these issues in the context of East Asia for their contribution to this issue of the *World History Bulletin*, as the region prepares to host the next three Olympic Games in Pyeongchang (2018), Tokyo (2020), and Beijing (2022). They offer an incisive analysis of the role that “global spectacles” have played in East Asia with particular attention to the often-overrated potential of “soft power.”

Yoav Dubinsky also looks holistically at the Olympic movement (and specifically at notions



of “soft power”), using paradigms and theories from the field of international relations to highlight specific historical moments in the development of the movement. Given that historians may be prone to using traditional historiographical approaches when looking at global events, Dubinsky offers less familiar but potentially beneficial avenues of inquiry to historians considering the significance of global events.

Derek Catsam’s paper considers how “success” can be defined when it comes to a host country’s execution of a global event such as the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. While its critics identified inherently South African problems, Catsam puts forth a convincing argument that whatever challenges the event faced (e.g., logistical confusion, evictions of local residents from their homes) they were less connected to its African location than to a universal condition.

The World Cup (2014) and Summer Olympics (2016) recently brought Brazil into the global event spotlight and brought much global attention (both good and bad) to that nation. Anthony Tipping’s piece focuses on a less well-known but nonetheless ambitious and influential global event in Brazil, the 1922 International Exposition in Rio de Janeiro. He considers the contradictions and tensions between the rhetoric of the event (i.e., international friendship and cooperation) and the realities of national partisanship that actually undergird many such global events.

Ian Richie, too, explores tensions between rhetoric and reality in his piece on the Olympic Games. His historical overview of the mythic construction of the Games addresses often overlooked questions about this now universally-recognized event, arguing that the Olympics’ success and lasting power are deeply connected to the subtle intersections of how we narrate both our pasts and our aspirations.

Just as Richie questions the imagined past and success of the Olympic Games, Jörg Krieger questions how global events begin and take shape. The focus of his article is the IAAF (track and field) World Championships, a relatively recent event originating in the 1980s well after most other international sports federations had established World

Championships. Contrary to often-stated ideals about peaceful competition and international camaraderie, Krieger argues that the real foundation and continued motivation for this event has always been commercial. His article asks how concurrent (or staggered) global sporting events may be in dialogue or competition with one another, especially with respect to how they continue to fund themselves. He notes that the IAAF World Championships have intentionally distanced themselves from the Olympic Games for financial reasons, and considers the way that recent scandals may be tied into the very genesis of the event.

While the Olympic Games, World Cups, and World Championship tournaments receive the most popular and scholarly attention, Beth Malchiodi’s piece on a huge annual Mexican mariachi festival offers a fascinating example of how post-colonial invented traditions can inform national (and international!) identities. While less of a globally-recognized event, her article highlights numerous parallels and overlap between the *Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería* and larger events with respect to complex issues of nationalism, amateurism, authenticity, and identity politics.

Indeed, these themes run throughout all the contributions to this volume, and in reading them together, one is struck by the similarities between seemingly disparate events that bring together participants from around the globe. The lasting power, size and transformative potential of such events as the Olympics tells us that they continue to have resonance to people around the world, even if for less noble and more pragmatic purposes. The media landscape today enables the reach of these events to go well beyond what their creators ever could have envisioned, which opens this field up to new lines of inquiry as scholars consider the continued impact and relevance that global events hold in the twenty-first century.

#### Notes:

1. In the introduction to their edited volume *Sports Mega-Events: Social Scientific Analyses of a Global Phenomenon* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 1-2.

## **Global Events and Soft Power Dreams in East Asia**

Wolfram Manzenreiter, *University of Vienna*,  
*Department of East Asian Studies*  
John D. Horne, *University of Central Lancashire*,  
*School of Sport and Wellbeing*

### *Introduction*

Mega-events, which Roche famously defined as large-scale cultural events of international significance and mass popular appeal, have also been assessed and praised as hallmarks of modernity.<sup>1</sup> Their design, structure, and organization largely resonate with key issues of modernity, providing host cities with unique opportunities for place-making and place-branding. Unlike any other global event, sports mega-events also offer the opportunity for an enormous cultural celebration. They bring the nations of the world together to compete in sports under commonly agreed rules and regulations. And as far as television spectacles go, there is nothing that can rival the Olympic Games or the Football World Cup. But these mega-events take place within fractured social structures and amid enormous inequalities that persist and develop over time.<sup>2</sup>

The next five years will see an “East Asian Era” unfold in the hosting of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Pyeongchang (South Korea), Tokyo (Japan), and Beijing (China) prepare to act as hosts for the next three Winter and Summer Games between 2018 and 2022. This spatial concentration in East Asia is historically unique and interesting in itself, particularly as it occurs at a time when hosting sports mega-events seems to have lost much of its glamor and appeal among publics in other parts of the world. This article is concerned with the seemingly unbroken zealousness for hosting sports spectacles among East Asian governments and tries to explain this phenomenon by linking the idea of hosting sports mega-events with notions of branding the nation-state and the role of national media systems. This combination continues to be salient in this part of the world while it is heavily contested in many others. We argue here that the main attraction catching the attention of decision-makers in East Asia is the supposed “soft power” benefits of hosting what MacAloon famously coined as “global spectacles” (see also Tomlinson and Young).<sup>3</sup> However, we also

advise caution with this view for two main reasons. Firstly, expectations that a sports event can alter the perception of a country are excessively overrated. Secondly, East Asian hosts of sports mega-events (and other subaltern hosts) have little or no chance in a contest for meaning-making abroad which the global media usually wins hands down.

### *The uncertain power of soft power*

Soft power in general refers to the culture and values of political or social entities that their representatives can efficiently employ in order to pursue their interests in outward relations or to alter the attitudes and behavior of other actors. The term, which was added to the vocabulary of political science by twenty years ago, closely resonates with fairly older attempts of international actors to advance foreign policy by engaging foreign publics.<sup>4</sup> Public diplomats therefore monitor foreign publics and adjust their policy accordingly; they engage in practices to build good feeling abroad, and they make use of communication channels like the international media to provide news to foreign publics.<sup>5</sup> Talk of soft power leads us to be concerned with the way images are crafted and perceptions are shaped, reproduced or transformed in global society – those cultural intermediaries who are in charge of steering national images, or at least responsible for the proliferation of discourses on “nation branding.”

Sports mega-events like the Olympic Games seem to be an appropriate occasion to enhance the soft power of their hosting nations, particularly because of the easy association with positive images of excellence, fairness, universal friendship and mutual exchange (on the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and China’s attempts to use them for public diplomacy see Manzenreiter 2010).<sup>6</sup> Their global significance turns a sports mega-event into a powerful platform for the transmission of information and representations. However, these platforms are extremely difficult to control. Since sports has turned into a leading content for globalizing media markets, sports mega-events are not only employed by political elites, but also by global capital and quite different lobbyists for their particular needs. New forces such as transnational civic movements and partisan interest groups, which challenge political and economic elites, have joined the circle of forces competing for access to the



network of 'primary definers', whose material and ideological relevance to the sports mega-events has a direct bearing on the shaping of narratives as well as the production of the events and their regulation.<sup>7</sup>

As an extensive body of media research demonstrates, hosting in general produces little new knowledge about the place in question; but the mediated correlation of a place with a significant event promotes lasting impressions and associations that audiences make with cities and nations.<sup>8</sup> As much as Olympic discourses of a certain event are inexorably linked with the specific historic constellations in which they are embedded, questions of representation and signification are ultimately tied to the geography of social relations that constitute the world system of sports, on the one hand, and the comparative standing of cultures and civilizations on the other hand. In this regard, markers of advanced and advancing, or developed and under-developed, gain in significance for the relational positioning of nations. In between competing ideologies and identity politics, sports mega-events were employed as seemingly apolitical and neutral venues for the display of universal and humanist achievements, albeit always of a deeply locally entrenched variation.

#### *Sports mega-events in the global spotlight*

Any mega-event, standing in the spotlight of the media, focuses the world's attention on a particular place and a nation and the success thereof, in either hosting or performing well in the event. In terms of global reach, the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup are probably the only examples that truly deserve the label of mega-event in front of the background of an increasingly connected, condensed and compressed globality. Sports mega-events have always provided a stage for the symbolic contestation of modernity between elites and the masses, as well as between different models of development. Their monopolistic position within the symbolic contestation of nations secured their international significance, while the border-crossing appeal of sports guaranteed their mass appeal. Technological innovations of mass communication, particularly the development of satellite and broadband television, created the premises of transmitting promotional messages to billions of people. As the Cold War rivalry between the Soviet bloc and the "Free World" has shown

both in sports competitions and in hosting them, particularly in the latter decades of the 20th century sports mega-events were assigned high significance for "official" versions of public culture, and they served as points of reference for the collective orientation of national societies toward international audiences.

To be accurate, it is a city and not a nation or state that in a strict sense of the word is designated as Olympic host. However, the local and the national level are usually combined in the public discourse on the Olympics. As in most instances a capital city is staging the Games, more often than not the name of the Olympic City serves as a well-established metonymic reference to the hosting nation state. In practice candidate city and nation-state are impossible to separate, for any Olympic bid without the explicit support from national government would not be successful - and could not be so because of the very application rules stipulated by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The IOC that eventually bestows hosting rights on the successful bid city also insists on proof of popular excitement about the future event (for a succinct description of IOC demands, the bidding process and host city selection, see Horne and Whannel).<sup>9</sup>

The representational usage or function of mega-events has gained in weight since cities and regions have replaced states as competitors for international investments and tourist flows. Within an increasingly global competition for capital, people, and attraction, sports mega-events emerged as one of the means by which metropolitan areas attempt to achieve prestige and growth through urban regeneration and place branding strategies.<sup>10</sup> The idea was that by putting the host city up in lights in front of both a broader domestic and global audience, such events could bring more direct investment and more tourists (along with the revenue they generate). Sporting mega-events, particularly the Olympic Games, acquired central status for urban development agendas especially after the 1984 Los Angeles Games suggested for the first time that a sports mega-event would not leave a financial disaster and burden for future generations (as in Montreal 1976) but possibly produce an economic surplus for the host region.<sup>11</sup> For 20 years from the early 1980s to early 2000s, the attractiveness of, and expansion

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in, hosting the Olympics and other sports events had been underpinned by three social developments: technological, economic, and political. Firstly, sports mega-events eventually came to reach a global audience as a result of technological innovation in mass media and communication technologies. The spread of the internet that followed thereafter and the even more recent growth of its so-called social media have not (yet) dislodged TV as the main way of consuming the Olympics, which continues to guarantee broadcasting as valuable source of revenue for the IOC: For the period 2009-2012, the *IOC Marketing Fact File 2015* reports a total income of USD 8 billion, of which nearly 50% (USD 3.9 billion) came from television rights.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the related formation of a sports-media-business alliance transformed sports mega-events and professional sports generally in the late 20th century. The idea of packaging, via the tri-partite model of sponsorship rights, exclusive broadcasting rights and merchandising, attracted potent sponsors willing to invest many millions in the Olympics in exchange for the positive association with sports and the vast global audience exposure that the events provide. Thirdly, political interest in hosting sports mega-events grew as they became seen as valuable promotional opportunities for cities and regions. With the emergence of the “entrepreneurial city”, sports mega-events have come to capture first and foremost the desires and dreams of power alliances combining corporate interest with those of urban government with respect to place-making, both in a symbolically and a very “concrete” sense of the word.

Investments into sports events and sports facilities have captured a leading position in consumption-based economic development politics, even though virtually all case studies of the economic impact of hosting sports mega-events have indicated that they are not the magic growth engine they purport to be.<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding the lack of hard evidence, promises of direct revenues and indirect returns on investment continue to feature as dominant arguments in favor of subsidizing sports mega-events with public money. Mainstream media have only recently come to acknowledge the empirical pauperism of the growth hypothesis. Wishing to avoid negative media crossfire, politicians are therefore now more likely to accentuate the immaterial benefits accruing from hosting sports

mega-events: forging regional solidarity, providing first class entertainment, enriching the festival calendar, gaining world class status, or branding the region.

### *Conclusions*

By 2020 only 23 different cities will ever have hosted the 32 Summer Olympic Games that have occurred since 1896. Leading the field are London with three and Athens, Los Angeles, Paris and Tokyo with two. Hence in an era when “world class city” status has been seen as a vital asset in attracting and redirecting flows of capital, investment, and people, the fame and celebrity thought to accompany being one of a small number of Olympic host cities remains a heady brew. Yet at the same time the rising costs of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo in 2020, announced again and again after the bid was secured, and Rome city council’s vote against supporting a bid for the 2024 Games, suggest that disenchantment with sports mega-events, that cost a lot to put on but fail to deliver on the promises of legacies, which are used to win public support for bids, is growing. The allure of hosting the Olympics started to lose its shine a decade ago, partly but not wholly, due to the credit crunch and recession of the mid to late 2000s. Since then, local electorates and media in many European and North American regions have shown themselves increasingly unwilling to support the ambitions of governments bidding for the flagship events of world sports. Then why are East Asian nation-states still eager to win Olympic bids despite the price tag?

The Olympic Movement’s claim of universalism and moral superiority has effectively been flushed away by the paradoxical ease with which it has found itself co-opted by authoritarian regimes and paired with exploitative capitalist corporations in the past.<sup>14</sup> The ambivalence of Olympic universalism, which is actually deeply tainted by Eurocentric appropriations of human rights and modernity, is paired by another Olympic paradox. Participation rights are based on national membership to the IOC and citizenship of the athletes, even though many of them exemplify the archetype of the cosmopolitan nomad, for whom place of residence, tax obligations, training opportunities and work place are far from being confined to the country of their citizenship. The

retro-futuristic design of the Olympic principle of one nation, one representation is rooted in the political landscape of the late 19th century. This mode of representation has accompanied more than a century of world sports without any changes that would have assigned agency, voice, and representation to ethnic or cultural minorities or stateless nations.

The suppression of alternative conceptions of humanism and body cultures has been aggravated by the transformation of the sports festival into a global spectacle of mediated consumption which amplifies the reliance of their principal agents on financial and technological assistance by multinational corporations. Pursuing their own interests, these agents devised the “domesticating techniques” of the media which deliver customer-tailored media productions of the global event to national audiences and localized consumer markets. The professional class of public relations specialists, advertisement agencies and consulting experts that captures central position in an attention economy where “a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention” (Herbert Simon, quoted in Aronczyk), switches back- and forward between corporations, cities, states and other dissimilar clients.<sup>15</sup> While they may be less effective in changing or making the national image, they have certainly been successful in winning the media and popular belief over to the claim that hosting the Games will benefit the image of the nation abroad. We can infer from continuing and sustained East Asian interest in hosting sports mega-events that this idea has found fruitful reception in that part of the world; still haunted by the relics of Cold War partition, and in a larger time frame, of the colonial period, national unity remains a contested issue to be addressed in ritual and discourse.<sup>16</sup> This is why the process of nation-building is still ongoing among East Asia’s divided nations Korea and China; while the issue of national identity has always been highly controversial in Japan. Issues of national sovereignty, collective identity and self-assurance not only in face of the Western powers, but also towards domestic audiences, neighbouring countries, former colonizers, and rival ideological systems, are therefore of much greater popular interest and political weight.

Meaning is never uncontested, but with hired experts, free-riders and interlopers striving to seize the opportunity to perform in a global theater of

representation, soft power can only be effectively realized in cases where autonomy of the media and its critical role as observer of the political sphere are severely curtailed. While most national media systems in East Asia are far from being totally controlled by a dominant state (with the exception of North Korea and China, of course), in some, they are too often willing to sacrifice neutrality and critical reporting for the privilege of staying in contact with political elites. As common sense would have it that years of stereotyped views about a country are hardly going to disappear overnight, it appears that such an environment has contributed to the proliferation of the myth that nation-making and nation branding can be achieved through hosting global events.

**Notes:**

1. Maurice Roche, *Mega-Events & Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1.
2. John Horne and Wolfram Manzenreiter, “An Introduction to the Sociology of Sports Mega-Events,” *Sociological Review* 54, s2 (2006), 1-24.
3. John MacAloon, “Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle,” in John J. MacAloon, ed., *Rite, Drama, Festival Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward A Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 241-280. Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young “Culture, Politics and Spectacle in the Global Sports Events. An Introduction,” in Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, eds., *National Identity and Global Sports Events. Culture, Politics and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 1-14.
4. Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).
5. Nicholas J. Cull, “The Public Diplomacy of Modern Olympic Games and China’s Soft Power Strategy,” in Monroe E. Price and Daniel Dayton, eds., *Owning the Beijing Olympics. Narratives of the New China*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 117.

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### **The Evolution of the Olympic Games through International Relation Theories**

Yoav Dubinsky, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

International politics have been influencing the development of the Olympic Games from their revival in the late 19th Century, through the challenges of 20th Century and until the early 21st Century. The two

main rational choice theories, Realism, focusing on states and their constant seek for survival and Liberal Institutionalism, focusing on the role of international institutions, explains different aspect of the Olympic Movement.<sup>1</sup> This essay reflects on some of key theories and paradigms in International Relations (IR), how they were reflected in the Olympic Games, and how they shaped one of the largest and most inclusive events of humanity.



### *Idealism & Realism*

While the theory of Idealism or Utopianism did not become a predominant theory in the 21st Century, in the early 20th century it was an impacting normative theory, which saw the world in bright glasses.<sup>2</sup> During times of peace Utopianism focused on morality, ideals, and the desire to prevent war. The establishment of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the first period of the games between 1896 and 1932 were much influenced by idealism and morality. The philosophical ideal of Olympism, which the founder of the modern Olympic Games Barron Pierre de Coubertin coined, strived to create a utopian society. The Olympic Charter regulates the role of different stakeholders within the Olympic movement and requires their compliance with the peaceful and inclusive philosophy of Olympism.<sup>3</sup>

Between the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 in Athens, Greece, and the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, Sweden, the games were mostly marginal events, usually used as part of an international fair. Paris 1900 and St. Louis 1904 were part of the World's Fair and London 1908 was part of the Anglo-Franco Exhibition.<sup>4</sup> The Olympics started to form their own traditions during the 1920s and early 1930s using the symbol of the Five Rings, the Olympic anthem, the Olympic flame, etc. These all were part of an attempt to unite people from all over the world, under the same peaceful traditions. Another idealistic philosophy that embodied the spirit of the Olympic movement was Amateurism, where athletes were not allowed to be compensated. While there was a universal ethical ideal behind this philosophy, this regulation was very much contested and later cancelled as the games progressed. The games between Athens 1896 to Los Angeles 1932 were mostly peaceful, with the exception of the cancellation of the 1916 Berlin Olympic Games during World War I and the exclusion of Germany and its allies from the post war games.

The main criticism of Idealism and Utopianism come from more cynical and pessimistic approaches arguing that Idealism does not stand the test of time and has internal contradictions explaining the complex reality of international relations.<sup>5</sup> The most predominant theory in IR that claims to be relevant through history is the Realist approach. Realism is

a structural rational approach looking at the state as the unit of analysis and on the international system as anarchy. It is a pragmatic approach, rational, looking at survival and self-interest as the main goals of states, where war is state of nature.<sup>6</sup> Actors are rational and unitary political. Conflict groups exist and act in a rational way in an anarchic setting with no world government or no one sovereign power. States seek preservation at minimum and at maximum drive for universal domination.<sup>7</sup> The international structure is defined by primary material capabilities with gain being relative rather than absolute.<sup>8</sup>

With states being rational and unitary actors, with anarchy meaning not having a global government and with survival and self-interest being the key goals, the role of international sports competitions and the role of a regulating International Olympic Committee becomes marginal compared to national security and foreign policy. Realism was manifested since the beginning of the modern Olympic Games, but especially during the political period between Berlin 1936 and Los Angeles 1984. Idealism as a paradigm was rarely used after World War II, and the idealistic ideals that were behind the revival of the Olympic movement were either cancelled or needed to adapt to a different reality.

Realists would argue that the cancellations of the 1916 Olympic Games during WWI and of the 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games during World War II, showing that the importance of the Olympic Games pails in significance compared to national security of states. The first leader to understand the potential significance of the Olympic Games was Adolph Hitler, who inherited the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.<sup>9</sup> Nazi Germany used the games to showcase a strong, united and functioning Germany, having a flashy opening ceremony, a torch relay staring at ancient Olympia, nationalistic atmosphere in the stadiums, military parades in the streets and a level of organization that has never seen before. Every German victory was perceived of a victory of Germany under the Nazi Regime and as a victory of the Aryan race and the racist Nazi Regime. Hitler and the Nazi Regime used the political and financial chaos Germany was in to promote their nationalistic, racist ideology and through propaganda and terror improve their political statue both nationally and internationally. A realist or even researchers who come from rational choice paradigms



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would emphasize the international significance of the 1936 Olympic Games in the way Hitler showcased Nazi Germany to the world, as a new growing power house to maximize his political interest.<sup>10</sup>

Other significant manifestations of Realism in the forms of foreign policy were the boycotts of the United States and its allies of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and the retaliation of the Soviet Union four years later, leading a boycott of the Soviet countries of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. While both the USA and the USSR saw importance in participating in the Olympic Games during the Cold War, sending a political message was much more significant.<sup>11</sup> In 1980, the USA boycotted the Moscow Games as a protest of the Soviet invasion to Afghanistan in 1979. Not only did the Americans boycott the Games, the White House pressured over sixty other countries to join such a boycott, putting their foreign policy and their alliance with the Americans ahead of their aspiration to participate in an international event. Four years later, the Soviet Union retaliated, pressuring its allies for a joint fourteen countries boycott of the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

On the other hand, by looking at the state as a unitary actor and giving little importance to international institutions, Realism fails to explain some significant incidents that happened during the most political period of the Olympic Movement.<sup>12</sup> One of the most significant peaceful protests took place in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City, when African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who respectively won the gold and bronze medals, lowered their heads and raised their fists during the national anthem when they received their medals, protesting racial discrimination in the United States. The “Black Power Salute” could only be explained by understanding domestic socio-political issues within the United States, the murder of Martin Luther King Jr. that year, racial discrimination and domestic stakeholders such as the Black Panthers. Moreover, by focusing only on states, Realism fails to explain violent behaviors of non-state actors, including terrorism.<sup>13</sup> The most famous manifestation of terrorism in a sport event happened during the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, in West Germany, when eight terrorists from the Palestinian terror organization “Black September” sneaked into the Olympic Village

and kidnapped and murdered eleven Israeli, athletes, coaches, and referees. The terror attack could not be explained without understanding different non-state actors related to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

The 1976 Montreal Olympic Games left a legacy of a financial deficit, due to the lack of collaboration between the federal government of Canada and the government of Quebec who had separatists’ goals.<sup>14</sup> The result was inefficiency in the organization which led to financial problems that the people of Quebec only finished paying in 2006, thirty years after the games were over. This again will not be understood by only looking at Canada as one unit, without understanding internal politics and domestic pressure groups.

### *Liberalism*

Unlike Realism, Liberal Institutionalism does put a lot of emphasis on international institutions like the International Olympic Committee.<sup>15</sup> Liberal Institutionalism is also a rational choice theory that sees states as important actors and the world as anarchic, but also acknowledges non-state actors, institutions, and domestic actors as well. It significantly differs from Realism in the perception of gain, arguing that gain is absolute, rather than relative. Liberalism will see the IOC as a much more significant institution than Realism. The idea that countries that might be at war, or not acknowledge the existence of each other, will march together in the same opening ceremony, or compete against each other in a sports competition, shows that they work together getting mutual gains. There are absolute gains, for just participating in an event, where collaboration is needed for its success.

The force of the IOC was shown when South Africa was excluded from the Olympic Movement in the 1960s because of the Apartheid regime. Unlike the boycotts of the Western boycott of Moscow 1980 and the Soviet boycott of Los Angeles 1984, the African 1976 boycott could be seen from a more liberalist approach, where countries are collaborating without a direct order by the hegemon, but on an idealistic interest.

With Liberalism differing from Realism about relative gains, arguing that gain is absolute, the most significance manifestation of Liberalism though the Olympic Movement was when the movement became

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more capitalist, opening itself to new sources of revenues such as private sponsors or increased TV rights and officially cancelling amateurism. After three very problematic Olympic Games in Munich 1972, Montreal 1976 and Moscow 1980, the Olympic Movement was at a crossroad and IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch decided to reform, starting the “commercialized era” of the Games in the 1980s and 1990s.

While Realists will look at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and point out the boycotting countries from the Soviet bloc, Liberalists might emphasize that for the first time, the games were funded by private sponsors and ended with a financial profit. The financial success of the “Hollywood Olympic Games” lead the IOC to establish The Olympic Partners (TOP) program, which generated new revenues to the movement and changed it completely. Together with the significant growth of TV rights, the Olympic movement was generating billions. This resulted in the official cancellation of amateurism (that in many cases was not being followed for decades), allowing athletes to become full professionals. The Seoul 1988 Olympic Games are considered the first professional Olympic Games where only the American basketball team was still based on amateur collegial athletes. This also changed in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, when fully professional NBA stars such as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, lead the American basketball team, known as “The Dream Team”. The new generation of revenues also changed the way hosting cities used the games, with Barcelona using the Olympics to renovate the city’s facilities and infrastructure, making it a tourist attraction. The impact of American companies on the IOC TOP program and TV rights, lead Atlanta to receive the games in 1996, which were nicknamed “The Coca-Cola Olympics”, because of their proximity to one of the most important sponsors of the movement.

Realism would also fail to explain internal shifts within the IOC, which lead to different decision making choices by the members of the movement. In the early days of the IOC, between 1896 to the 1950s, the movement was mostly lead by Europeans and American and all the games were held either in Europe or in the United States. After World War II, the collapse of the British Empire, with new countries

gaining independence and with the world becoming bi-polar, the IOC also became more international and since the 1950s the summer Olympic Games are held every four years on a different continent. Since the 1980s, led by American capitalism, the IOC adapted to the current international situation, cancelling the ideal of amateurism the Games were founded on and allowing private sponsors to fund the Games. Most of the revenues from private sponsors came from American Companies such as VISA, Coca-Cola and McDonalds and most of the revenues from TV rights came from American broadcasting companies such as NBC.<sup>16</sup> The growing revenues also generated corruption. The corruption scandals broke out in the bids for the 2000 Olympic Games and for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, when several IOC members received different forms of bribes to vote for the winning bids of Sydney and Salt Lake City respectively.<sup>17</sup> This resulted with a complete reform in the IOC, the membership of the corrupted members was revoked, and new strict rules were made about who can become an IOC member and the relations they can have with the bidding cities.

There are several smaller theories in IR that are worth discussion in the context of the Olympic Games. Constructivism for example might not aspire to explain everything or to predict the future, but it puts emphasis on norms, which not necessarily reflected in Realism or Liberalism.<sup>18</sup> In the context of the Olympic movement, Constructivism can be seen in the Twenty-first Century, with the implementation of educational programs about the movements, the growing focus on sustainability and environment or even with the fight against doping and cheating. Constructivism will focus on each test case at a time, such as analyzing the complexity of the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, that resulted in stadiums that are rarely full and non-sustainable public spending in a country that is going through a financial crisis, but also with underground transportation that would not have been completed without hosting the Olympic Games, enriching even more the historical, social, political and economic heritage of Greece and the Olympics.

Joseph Nye’s Soft Power theory puts emphasis on the way countries use non-militant fields to improve state’s public diplomacy their international position.<sup>19</sup> Using the Olympic Games to showcase the state’s culture and history have been a goal

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of almost every hosting country, regardless their political regimes. Huntington argues in his book *Clash of Civilizations* that following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the challenges for the United States will come from non-western civilizations, such as China.<sup>20</sup> It could be seen in the Olympic Movement with Beijing becoming a significant actor, hosting the 2008 Olympic Games and winning the bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, thus becoming the first country in the history of the modern Olympic Games hosting both the summer and the winter Olympics.

Globalization of course is an important theory in IR, looking on global patterns.<sup>21</sup> With cross-nations opposition movements arising, traditional and social media are becoming more important for the movement to expand and global issues such as sustainability and the environment on one hand and terrorism on the other, globalism has of course a significant impact on the Olympic Games as well.

Domestic politics and issues such as accountability of the leaders and governments to the residents of the state when forming foreign policy also became significant in the context of the Olympic movement, with protests of the Brazilian people around the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro while the state was going through political and economic turmoil and more referendums being held about the will of the residents to bid to host Olympic Games.<sup>22</sup> The people of Munich and Hamburg voted against bidding for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games and the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in the respected German cities and in various public opinion polls the people of Boston were very much against bidding for the 2024 Olympic Games. Based on the low rates of approval, none of those bids was put forward.

### *Conclusions*

In the 21st Century cities from almost all the liberal democratic countries hosted the Olympic Games (Sydney 2000, Salt Lake City 2002, Vancouver 2010, London 2014), but also cities from non-democratic countries (Beijing 2008, Sochi 2014) and from developing countries (Athens 2004, Rio de Janeiro 2016). Realism, which is still one of the predominant theories in International Relations, is perhaps the best theory to explain how states use the Olympic Games to improve their international position and

boycott competitions when it serves their international policies. Since the terror attacks on September 11, 2001, the security costs of the Olympic Games have increased significantly from 180 Million USD in Sydney 2000 to 1.5 Billion USD in Athens 2004 and 6.5 Billion USD Beijing 2008, showing that remaining the idealistic ideals of the movement, pale in comparison to realist national security.<sup>23</sup>

Liberalism is also significantly important explaining other aspects of the Olympic Games that Realism fails to when it comes to the role of international institutions, such as the IOC and the World Anti-Doping Agency and with Agenda 2020 evaluating almost every aspect of the Olympic movement.<sup>24</sup> While Realism and Institutional Liberalism are the most significant theories to explain the movement, smaller scale theories and approaches also continue to be relevant and add to how the Olympic Games continue to grow as a global event, influencing local and global politics, including international relations.

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World History Association

### **The Great Gift of Low Expectations: South Africa and the World Cup**

Derek Charles Catsam, *University of Texas of the Permian Basin*

Readers of the British tabloids in the lead-up to the 2010 World Cup knew that anyone foolish enough to visit South Africa for the world's largest sporting event was taking their life into their hands. Orgies of

violence, including rape and car-jackings; infestations of HIV-AIDS; undeveloped infrastructure and inept public servants; witch doctors at the games and lions in the streets: These were the things that awaited the British tourist who dared brave Africa's first attempt to host the World Cup. The *Daily Star* prophesied a "machete race war."<sup>1</sup> Naysayers, including some within FIFA, global football's governing body, continually harped on "Plan B" for when South Africa proved unequal to the challenge of hosting the event.



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The subtext: Europe should have received the bid to host the 2010 World Cup.

If one read the South African newspapers or watched South African television or followed South African social media in the days and weeks of the World Cup they knew that South Africa had hosted the Greatest Event Ever. That South Africa had shined. Foreign visitors were made aware that “It’s time for Africa,” as the ubiquitous lyrics of the Shakira song told them. By the end of the tournament FIFA Secretary General Jerome Valcke was able to proclaim that perhaps South Africa might become “Plan B” for future Cups. Supporters embraced another “Rainbow Nation Miracle.” And it seemed that most fans wanted to believe it.

Which interpretation was correct? It is possible to recognize the germs of truth in the tabloid fever dreams about what would happen in South Africa without succumbing to their inherent Afro-pessimism, driven by hoary (and sometimes racist) Dark Continent clichés of Africa. Even South Africa’s most ardent defenders cannot deny that the country faces a serious crime problem, that its economy has not helped millions living in intractable poverty, that the country’s service sector can be frustrating, that infrastructure is hit or miss, and that South African politics has more than its share of corruption and venality. The nightmare scenarios put forth by skeptical pundits were based in a perception of the realities of South African society. Nonetheless it seems fair to agree with British journalist David Smith’s observation at the end of the World Cup that “low expectations were the hosts’ greatest gift.”<sup>2</sup>

### *Crime and Policing*

Fears of crime preoccupied much of the pre-Cup concern of the skeptics. South Africa has been well known for virtually the entirety of the post-Apartheid era for having one of the highest violent crime rates in the world. There is no doubt that the fears of the tabloids were also the fears of South Africa’s planners. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) probably spent more than a few sleepless nights envisioning the nightmare scenario of the family of apple-cheeked British tourists on their first trip to South Africa being mugged, assaulted, raped, and shot on the Durban beachfront. Because of the narrative of crime that had been spun in the lead-up

to the Cup, even one brutal crime tailor-made for BBC News, CNN, the world’s newspapers, and the hothouse of the internet would have dominated the World Cup going forward. Fair? No. Inevitable? Yes.

And so South Africa countered with a massive police presence. It was perhaps most visible in Durban precisely to avoid the nightmare scenario. Each day and especially into the night, hundreds of police made their presence known simply by being there in full force. The police presence was particularly strong in and near the Fan Zones, set up in each host city to allow thousands without tickets (including the mass of ordinary South Africans who could not afford tickets to matches) to congregate and enjoy the games and more importantly, perhaps, the spirit of the games, on massive screens in public viewing areas.

South Africa hired some 40,000 police for the Cup, the overwhelming majority of whom were to continue on after the tourists left, albeit with duties considerably more onerous than patrolling Durban’s beachfront. These police were to be one of the tangible legacies going forward, and were to serve as a deterrent as much as anything. But for those who did not take heed, justice was swift. South Africa set up 56 dedicated World Cup courts throughout the country to deal with crime perpetrated against (or by) foreign tourists. The time from arrest to punishment oftentimes took no more than a few days and consequences were stiff, with long prison sentences sometimes awaiting those found guilty. The swiftness and harshness of the justice raised serious questions as to just how much justice was actually achieved.

Police found themselves overburdened in the second week of the Cup when security guards for stadium venues went on strike, forcing the police to pick up the slack. This cost the government tens of millions of rands (with the dispute over who was responsible for paying for the police stopgap a bone of contention long after the event ended) and placed police in crowd control situations for which many were not trained.

Although there was a smattering of serious crime the reality is that the nightmare scenario never occurred. South Africa earned near universal praise for the fact that safety was simply not a major issue, no more so than any recent World Cups. Crime provided some of the most elaborate fantasies of the early critics of South Africa’s winning World Cup bid. By



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any standard the most vocal critics were made to look foolish.

### *SNAFUs*

Corruption, especially among ANC high rollers, is a common worry in South Africa and it emerged during the World Cup when the media uncovered that state entities had expended millions on World Cup tickets. Furthermore, Andrew Jordaan, the brother of LOC head Danny Jordaan, seems to have benefitted from his family tie with lucrative contracts from at least one World Cup-connected business. Going forward corruption is among the most serious issues that the country's government, which for the foreseeable future means the ANC, must address. The fact that many South Africans saw the Cup-connected corruption as business-as-usual is perhaps the most disquieting aspect of all, especially as Jacob Zuma and the rest of the party seem to have largely paid lip service to prioritizing addressing corruption.

Corruption is a major problem going forward. But the overwhelming majority of World Cup attendees, both from abroad and within South Africa, had more immediate concerns. Transportation problems emerged at some World Cup stadiums, especially in some of the smaller host cities. Of little comfort to the fans was that the transportation snafus were due in large part to obsessions over stadium security.<sup>3</sup> There was no parking at stadium venues. This meant that at every match between 30,000 and 100,000 fans had to utilize Park and Ride or Park and Walk facilities whereas with an ability to park those numbers might have alleviated transportation burdens.

However, in the major cities and at those stadiums accustomed to hosting major sporting events things usually went off without a hitch. And as the tournament progressed these cities hosted virtually all of the matches. If some aspects of the match-day experience in Nelspruit and Rustenberg, where only a handful of games were played, left much to be desired and warrant criticism, the fact that events went off smoothly in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria, and Durban warrant praise. Things should have gone better in the smaller areas, but locals also were made to feel part of the action as a result of hosting Group Stage matches. Organizing the Cup represented a delicate political and geographical balance within South Africa and it makes little sense to make the perfect the enemy of the good in making assessments. And this

comes from someone who shivered in Rustenburg and Nelspruit and who, in the former at least, really did think he was going to be stranded in a parking lot far, far away.

Another serious concern that loomed over the host cities in particular was the threat of strikes from unionized public sector employees. And there were some protests over wages and benefits over the course of June and July. Police skirmished with strikers, with riot police descending upon security stewards protesting at Durban's Moses Mabhida Stadium after the 14 June Australia-Germany match. Police had to open fire with rubber bullets with at least seven people arrested and one injured in similar protests in Cape Town on 17 June. The Cape Times referred to the "fiasco surrounding the security contract for the host city stadiums" as "a spectacular own goal."<sup>4</sup> These protests represent legitimate issues between the state and the unions but both sides relented before prolonged strikes disrupted South Africa's showcase event. Like so many of the things that could have gone wrong, the compromise between labor and the state represented less a solution to problems than a strategic delay for the perceived larger good.<sup>5</sup> At one point the CEO of the state utility company, Escom, publicly begged the trade unions not to strike and he used the World Cup and especially the issue of global perceptions to try to draw sympathy. "There were critics who constantly said we were not going to be able to host the FIFA World Cup and they have been proven wrong. My plea to all our trade unions is for them and everyone else to put South Africa first and not to go on strike at first . . . or even later . . . and put South Africa in the spotlight."<sup>6</sup>

Ticketing was another area that left a lot of unhappy customers. But ticketing was FIFA's responsibility. From the rigorous application and vetting process, the Byzantine picking-up procedures, and the set-up at stadiums, FIFA, not the Local Organizing Committee, was responsible for everything. Virtually all ticketing-related complaints belonged rightly to Zurich.

Another major failure came in Durban before the 7 July Germany-Spain semifinal at Moses Mabhida Stadium. Chaos reigned at King Shaka International Airport where there was not enough space on the runways for planes to land in the hours leading to the match. Hundreds of people who had cut their travel plans too close missed parts or even the entirety of

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the match. Bad planning by airport authorities, who inexplicably were not prepared for the increased volume of flights to Durban on match day, played a part. But the biggest source of the logjam was arrogant VIP's (including government officials of several nations, international celebrities, and at least one official delegation from FIFA) who left their private planes in parking bays and abandoned them to rush to their luxury suites and pre-match festivities. According to airport authorities there were 488 flights booked to land in or depart from Durban's main airport on the day of the semifinal and in the evening there were only four parking bays available to handle the volume – nowhere near sufficient for even the most efficient system.

In some cases snafus and safety issues have to be chalked up to poor planning on the part of visitors. It might be convenient to blame South Africa in the abstract when, say, someone missed part of a match or found themselves on the business end of a gun in an unfamiliar part of a foreign city at night when they had been told to stay put and call their hosts for a ride, but while it may not be popular to blame the victim sometimes the victim warrants blame. Someone who leaves Johannesburg only two hours before the kickoff to a match in Pretoria or who flies in to the city of a semifinal match with only hours to spare on match day and then blames anyone but themselves when things go awry is a fool and a boor. Such foolishness and boorishness was not lacking among entitled American, British, and other visitors to the 2010 World Cup.

### *Evictions*

One ugly element of the pre-cup planning that cannot be blamed on FIFA or poor planning on the part of tourists or anyone else is the eviction of people from their homes, many in squatter settlements or hostels, in the months leading up to the World Cup. The removals were undertaken for reasons ranging from the pragmatic – informal hostels had been established on or near football facilities that were to be used by international teams for training – to the aesthetic – authorities did not want visiting fans to see ugly settlements on their routes between airports and the cities.

The state exacerbated these decisions by engaging in forced removals evocative of the apartheid era. That the state created “temporary relocation areas” (TRA) for those subject to evictions hardly improved

matters. One such example, “Blikkiesdorp,” which locals derisively called “Tin Can Town,” resembled, in the eyes of some observers, a concentration camp, or an apartheid-era township into which more people crammed than space allowed, facilities and services were at a minimum, and police brutality was rampant.<sup>7</sup> Residents complained about poor hygiene and resulting diseases such as tuberculosis, crime, overcrowding, hunger, police brutality, absence of schools, hospitals and other necessities, and general privation. Most residents of the informal settlements and observers recognized that the World Cup was the reason for their plight, though officials insisted that Blikkiesdorp, for example, was simply an attempt to address overcrowding.

Similarly, informal traders in areas surrounding some of the stadiums complained about “exclusion zones” that allowed only approved businesses and thus cost them significant income. And in Durban and other cities street children were removed to “safe areas” far away from the gaze of tourists, which raised the simple but disquieting question: safe for whom? It seems clear that South Africa traded perceptions of one kind – those of visiting teams and fans – for those of tens of thousands of locals who saw in the World Cup not great opportunities or a global celebration of South Africa, but rather evocations of the grim years of apartheid.

### *Economics*

Money was supposed to be the measuring stick for the World Cup in South Africa, or at least that is how organizers stoked the popular imagination. The government's coffers would fill, more than compensating for the billions of rands spent to put on the globe's premier sporting event. By the time the trickle-down-effect played out every South African would see the benefits of the World Cup. Or at least this was what many South Africans believed they had been promised.

This is the basic line of thinking for boosters who try to lure the Olympics, various sporting World Cups, and other events on the year's jam-packed sporting calendar. In the United States in particular similar lines of argument are used to convince cities to build stadiums with taxpayer money for professional sports teams populated by millionaires and owned by billionaires. People always seem to fall for it. But the realities are that for the typical country that hosts a

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World Cup or Olympics any financial benefits, usually end up being modest at best. Most Olympic hosts lose money. Most economic studies show stadium deals to be boondoggles. “Economic impact studies” serve as the impetus for these sporting investments. But despite their empirical-sounding titles, these are slippery documents.<sup>8</sup> The scholarly literature ranges from depicting luring major sporting events and stadium ventures as being economically insignificant to being actively detrimental to local economies.

So what were the returns from South Africa’s hosting of the World Cup? Well, they are mixed and they are subject to interpretation. Or to put it another way: We may never really know.

Managing expectations, sometimes of its own making, proved to be one of the great challenges the government faced. In the words of one assessment, the government in the days, weeks, months, and years leading up to the World Cup engaged in a “curious mélange of hyperbole and underestimation.”<sup>9</sup> Another significant issue surrounding the Cup was simply the question of who stood to benefit, and as important, who did not. For all of the outsized expectations it was pretty clear from the outset that South Africa’s most vulnerable populations, the poor masses, were unlikely to see any tangible benefits from South Africa capturing the global spotlight for a month. If the fruits of the Cup trickled down, they did not trickle all that far down.

FIFA and the South African Football Association (SAFA) both reaped rewards from the Cup. FIFA practically guarantees itself massive profits – football’s governing body outsources the vast majority of expenses to the host nation while reaping the bulk of profits from ticket sales and the almost unimaginably lucrative broadcast and commercial rights. SAFA stood to gain millions of rands for local football development, a welcome addition to a football-mad population, to be sure, but perhaps not the preferred allocation of money for the poor. But even if SAFA’s coffers were fuller after the World Cup there is fairly significant debate as to how much the grassroots game benefited from these riches.<sup>10</sup>

Then in early July the government proudly hailed the news that the World Cup would add R38-billion to the economy in 2010. Was it sheer coincidence that 38 billion rands was almost exactly the amount that the government had spent to bring the

World Cup to South Africa? One need not be a cynic to wonder about the coincidence.

And that is probably why we should be wary in assessing all of the economic news from the World Cup. Because at the end of the day, it is impossible to separate causality and correlation and coincidence from the assessments. The World Cup became part of a comprehensive strategy for the South African government and by many measures it appears to have been a legitimate success. The trickle-down effect has been modest. Some of the infrastructure, such as some of the World Cup stadiums, has proven to suck resources for maintenance and upkeep while not hosting enough events on a regular basis to make their existence worthwhile.<sup>11</sup> It is clear, for example, that in developing the stadiums in some parts of the country there was not enough critical inquiry as to what would happen after the Cup. In a few cases assumptions that professional rugby teams would take over use of the stadiums proved wrong, as those teams decided to stay in their own facilities for a host of reasons that range from the wholly legitimate to the dubiously intransigent. Some of the World Cup facilities have become gorgeous white elephants astride a barren landscape.

### *Nation Building/Happiness*

There is evidence, however, that indicates that even if the financials are a wash, hosting a World Cup might be worth it: It seems to bring about collective happiness.<sup>12</sup> Or as Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who stands second to none in advocating for the masses of South Africans, often said in justifying the World Cup, “Man doth not live on bread alone.”<sup>13</sup>

It may seem nearly impossible to measure happiness, but in their book *Soccernomics* Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski reveal otherwise. Replicating the methodology of the “Eurobarometer” of the European Commission, which for four decades has been asking a representative sample of people in each European country the following question: “On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the life you lead.” Kuper and Szymanski maintain, “Staging a World Cup won’t make you rich, but it does tend to cheer you up.”<sup>14</sup> Another study, by researchers at the United Kingdom’s City University, has discovered that people living in a country hosting a major football

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tournament are 1.5 times happier than those who have just been married.<sup>15</sup> Yet politicians tend not to sell hosting major sporting events or building stadiums in these terms because it seems squishy, a “feel-good factor” from which modern politicians sometimes steer.

Anecdotal evidence is not data, to be sure. But it is evidence, and I was in South Africa for the entirety of the Cup and have at times lived and have continued to work and travel in South Africa regularly and extensively for two decades. I can acknowledge my own observational bias, but during those four weeks South Africans, white and black, sure seemed happier than I have ever seen them since 1997. And a perusal of hundreds of articles in newspapers and magazines reinforces this impression. Perhaps someone will conduct a study confirming these observations. Perhaps a one-off study will be of limited utility (after all, we would need a “happiness baseline” by which to compare). Happiness is fleeting, to be sure. And the bulk of South Africans still had to go on with their lives for the duration of the tournament and beyond. Happiness was not a panacea. But something need not be a panacea to be valuable. Furthermore, when assessing what the Cup might have done for South Africa’s global image it is worth taking into account the impressions South Africa made on the hundreds of thousands of visitors who flooded the country during that month. The bulk of what evidence does exist indicates that from a global public relations vantage point the Cup was an overwhelming success, which will bring a smile to the faces of South Africa’s many boosters, official and otherwise, as well as to FIFA.

“I am so surprised that everything is so safe and clean. We are simply loving it.”<sup>16</sup> This was the response of a South African who had shared the country’s hopes but also the trepidations fueled by global skepticism of South Africa’s ability to pull off the World Cup. Yet in assessment after assessment visiting fans were even more ebullient. Journalists reported how celebrities gushed; how fans declared how safe they felt; how those who chose to stay in Europe lamented their decision; how “star-struck” everyone was about the whole thing. “We love you, South Africa” was a fairly common sentiment.<sup>17</sup> Fans lamented having to leave when all was done, swore that they would return, and generally provided the

South Africans with the validation that so many, even among the local skeptics, craved.

The Western Cape provincial government – to be sure, not a disinterested party – constructed “snap polls” in the departure lounge at Cape Town International airport with respondents giving South Africa 9.06 out of 10 overall as a destination with 66% claiming they would return to the country in the future and half saying they felt “much more positive about South Africa” than they had upon arrival. Even if we discount these numbers as inflated, of dubious scientific merit (the sample size consisted of 50 respondents from 13 countries) and the result of an amorous afterglow, the results still serve to buttress the impressionistic evidence.<sup>18</sup> The 2010 World Cup was a success in the eyes of those who saw it first hand.

Happiness is one factor to help us understand the spirit surrounding the World Cup in South Africa. But in South Africa, unlike anywhere else that has ever held an event of this magnitude, the biggest benefit of the event may be the hard-to-measure but very real ideal of nation building. South Africa is still very much dealing with the country’s nasty Apartheid legacy. For most people (including some South Africans) the Apartheid years seem like another world. But in terms of history, it was just yesterday. The legacies of apartheid are ubiquitous – poverty, crime, inequality, and most facets of the economy and social structure represent remnants of Apartheid policies. Thus so much of South Africa’s political dialogue is about the transformative process of quite literally building a nation – a process that began with the CODESA negotiations, continued through the epochal events of the April 1994 elections and Nelson Mandela’s inauguration that May, that included the symbolic highs of the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the fraught years of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and that continue to this day. As one framework for comparison, in the United States conservatives constantly invoke the very much living memory of Ronald Reagan, who left office before FW de Klerk took power in South Africa, five years before Mandela’s inauguration. We may see the end of Apartheid as “the bad old days,” as so many South Africans refer to the era before 1994, but in history’s gaze the interceding years represent barely a blink. Understanding this reality, South Africa’s historical and political backdrop, is central to understanding the



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real role of the World Cup.

### Notes:

1. Daily Star (London), 10 April, 2010. This paper is based on research but also on my own reportage in South Africa during the World Cup.
2. David Smith, "World Cup 2010: Sceptics drowned out by another rainbow nation miracle," *Guardian* (UK), 11 July 2010.
3. See Eddie Pells, "10 Years After 9/11, Stadiums Still a Target," *Associated Press* July 27, 2011 and Derek Catsam, "Stadiums and Security," *The Public Sphere*, December 2008.
4. *Cape Times* 18 June, 2010.
5. The widespread strikes that engulfed South Africa throughout the country's winter in 2011 revealed just how vital achieving peace, or at least détente, was during the World Cup.
6. *Star* (Johannesburg), 2 July 2010.
7. David Smith, "Life in 'Tin Can Town' for the South Africans evicted ahead of World Cup," *Guardian*, 1 April 2010.
8. Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski, *Soccernomics: Why England Loses, Why Germany and Brazil Win, and Why the U.S., Japan, Australia, Turkey – and Even Iraq – Are Destined To Become the Kings of the World's Most Popular Sport* (New York: Nation Books, 2009) p. 238.
9. Niren Toisi, "The completely miscalculated World Cup bid book that cost us a bundle," *Mail & Guardian*, 11-17 June, 2010.
10. Peter Alegi, "The Political Economy of Mega-Stadiums and the Underdevelopment of Grassroots Football in South Africa," *Politikon*, 34 (3) (December 2007), pp. 315-331.
11. See Alegi, "'A Nation To Be Reckoned With': The Politics of World Cup Stadium Construction in Cape Town and Durban, South Africa," *African Studies*, 67 (3), December 2008, pp. 397-422.
12. See Kuper and Szymanski, *Soccernomics*, Chapter 12, "Happiness: Why Hosting a World Cup is Good For You," pp. 235-252.
13. On Tutu see, for example, "Transcript of Ley-Tutu Interview," 23 June, 2010, available at [http://soccernet.espn.go.com/world-cup/story/\\_/id/5317765/ce/us/bob-ley-sits-archbishop-desmond-tutu?cc=5901&ver=us](http://soccernet.espn.go.com/world-cup/story/_/id/5317765/ce/us/bob-ley-sits-archbishop-desmond-tutu?cc=5901&ver=us) and *Independent*, 21 June 2010.
14. See Kuper and Szymanski, *Soccernomics*, pp. 245-252. They did warn that South Africa might not benefit from the happiness effect in 2010, but my own observations and the limited evidence we have does not indicate their pessimism to have been warranted.
15. *FourFourTwo*, October 2010, p. 122.
16. "It's Party Time for All the Fans," *Sunday Times*, 13 June 2010.
17. See, for example, an article with that same name in the 18 to 24 June 2010 *Mail & Guardian*.
18. "Survey finds visitors are upbeat about SA," *Business Report*, 2 July 2010.





### A Question of Participation: The United States and Rio's International Exposition of 1922

Anthony Tipping, *Emory University*

"In September, Brazil celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Birth of the Republic by entertaining the nations of the world in a great exposition. There travelers will gather. There the business opportunities of the great continent will be studied. All eyes are now turned toward South America... A giant market has been brought to your door." - Munson Line 14 May 1922

In March 1923, an American tourist to Brazil had just returned home to the United States. He had just attended the Centennial International Exposition hosted in Rio de Janeiro in 1922-23. This tourist had much to say about "the city of 1,000 views." His words stimulate a reader's imagination with the imageries he invokes of the beautiful colors, which made up the city's urban fabric. "The houses in delicate pinks, blues and yellows add to the fairyland appearance of this bay and mountain... Sidewalks in black and white squares worked out in most elaborate designs are found in all the modern parts of the city."<sup>1</sup> In walking Rio's neighborhoods of Ipanema and Copacabana today, a modern-day traveler is presented with the same sights and curiosities of a century before. Just as a 1920s American tourist could gawk in wonder at the elaborate black-and-white tiled sidewalks, tourists to the city today can admire the same patterned designs. The enduring attraction of Rio to the outside world becomes accentuated periodically by mega-events, which attract foreigners in abundance. These foreigners come to the city to partake in the cultural and economic vibrancy related to an international event; an opportunity made manifest most recently in the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. Less attention has been given, in scholarship as well as in the public sphere, to Rio's International Exposition hosted almost one-hundred years before, in what was Brazil's most ambitious event of the early twentieth century.

The international exposition had already, by the turn of the twentieth century consolidated its position as an important form of modern mass medium in Europe and the United States. London's Great Exhibition of 1851, Paris's *Exposition Universelle* of 1889, and Chicago's World's Fair of 1893, stand out

as spectacular archetypes of the medium.<sup>2</sup> These acted as shop-windows to the countries' economies and were visited by millions of visitors respectively. All subsequent showcasing cities and countries promoting national projects on a global stage would aspire to the standards set by these expositions. As case studies for historical analysis, these well-known European and U.S. expositions have attracted the most scholarly attention. A particularly influential work is Alexander Geppert's *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (2010). Geppert focusses on five expositions in his analysis, all in Berlin, London, and Paris. Using these as his framework, he suggests that international expositions should not be considered in isolation from one another. The motivations and values of international expositions, he argues, were commonly emphasized as fostering mutual understanding and universal peace, as an intellectual standard applied since the first international exposition in 1851. At the same time, Geppert acknowledges that in rendering the medium international, organizers gave rise to new international rivalries and ambitions.<sup>3</sup> Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo affirms that Mexican participation in Rio in 1922 offered opportunity to express anti-American sentiment on an international stage.<sup>4</sup> Rio's Exposition, as the first and only international exposition hosted in Brazil, and therefore in a country traditionally on the margins of exposition culture, provides unique opportunity to further delve into the relationship and rhetoric between "peace" and "competition."

Traditionally, international expositions have not been the focus of much study. Sociologist Maurice Roche argues that social scientists avert from exposition studies because of the mega-event's fleeting nature, which does not incentivize an informed theoretical analysis.<sup>5</sup> For many historians however, expositions can tell us a lot about the dominant culture in society, acting as microcosms of study to a wider political, socio-economic, and cultural standard of the period.<sup>6</sup> Livia Rezende's recent article on "Nature and the Brazilian State at the Independence Centennial International Exhibition" (2015), analyzes Rio's Exposition in the context of urban and national modernization. Tenorio-Trillo's chapter on Mexican participation at Rio's Exposition in *Mexico at the World's Fairs* (1996), explores how concepts such as nationalism, race, cosmopolitanism, and modernity,

could be spoken on the exposition stage. Bruno Bontempi Jr. and Noah Sobe's short yet informative analysis on "Rio de Janeiro 1922-1923: Exposição Internacional do Centenário do Brasil" (2008), explores the architectural makeup of the fair. The latter also boasts a useful bibliography of relevant primary and secondary sources, which should prove invaluable to further analyses of Rio's Exposition.<sup>7</sup> These three works are welcome additions to a neglected subject matter. The still negligible attention granted to expositions of Latin America informs and inspires my own writing in this particular paper.

Alan Trachtenberg, Professor Emeritus of English and American Studies at Yale University, said of Chicago's World's Fair that: "Visitors... found themselves as spectators, witnesses to an unanswerable performance, which they had no hand in producing or maintaining. The fair was delivered to them, made available to them."<sup>8</sup> Trachtenberg's reflection provides the focus for this short analysis, as I trace the reaction by a U.S. audience to Rio's hosting of an international exposition in 1922-23. I argue that visitors to the fair, although they were not producers in the "performance" *per se*, were active agents in molding the Exposition for their own purpose. I analyze a wide range of newspaper articles of the period to determine the most prevalent issues, communicated by a U.S. press, concerning the participation of the United States in Rio. I demonstrate that an overpowering *economic* preoccupation dominated a U.S. discourse surrounding Rio's hosting of its only international exposition to date. A U.S. rhetoric of international economic rivalry contrasted to how the exposition was framed by the Brazilian organizers, who outlined foreign participation in the fair as acts of "cordiality," "friendship," and "nobility."<sup>9</sup>

A total of thirteen countries were officially represented in Rio in 1922 through the construction of national pavilions at the Exposition site. Alongside the United States, representatives of Britain, Portugal, Sweden, France, Italy, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Belgium, Japan, Mexico, and Argentina, all had pavilions erected for the purpose of commemoration and display. Each country had a different rationale for participating, with nation-specific agendas. Whether to strengthen bilateral ties or to simply showcase industrial and commercial exhibits for the

purpose of multinational commerce, the motivations for participating varied considerably. However, the display of products and manufactures became intrinsically linked to the economic capacity of the respective exhibiting nation. This fomented an economic competitiveness. The British government, for example, initially hesitant to participate in Rio's fair, accepted the invitation because of an economic fear that Britain would "fall behind" other participating nations. Rezende highlights how British rhetoric of economic rivalry contrasted to how the Brazilian organizers framed foreign participation as congenial.<sup>10</sup> I build on this to demonstrate that the United States presence in Rio was just as competitively and economically motivated, and that this dominated public debates surrounding U.S. participation.

U.S. clout in the Exposition was first made apparent by the astuteness in U.S. representation. The commission to Rio comprised seven individuals. Charles Evans Hughes and David C. Collier were at the helm, both poised to bend over backwards in salutation. For Tenorio-Trillo, Hughes' representation in particular was a demonstration of the event's importance for the United States.<sup>11</sup> Hughes was the U.S. Secretary of State at the time and was granted the title of *Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of Brazil*.<sup>12</sup> His representation at the fair was particularly important because it was seen as a reply to the visit by Dom Pedro II – Brazil's monarch from 1831-1889 – to Philadelphia's Centennial International Exposition of 1876. Dom Pedro's visit in 1876 was suggested by the *New York Times* as a catalyst in a burgeoning political and economic relationship between the two nations.<sup>13</sup> Collier was also a significant choice of delegate. He had a proven track record in organizing and promoting expositions in the United States, in particular as the director of San Diego's Panama California Exposition of 1915-16.<sup>14</sup> In helping attract millions of visitors, and in generating national publicity for the fair, Collier was instrumental in pumping millions of dollars into the city.<sup>15</sup> For Rio, the *American Brazilian* magazine suggested that Collier could become "a concrete dealer in visions."<sup>16</sup> Brazilian representatives had participated at great expense in eight expositions in the United States. The participation of Hughes and Collier in 1922 was publicized by many newspapers as a

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fitting opportunity to return such a compliment and, in doing so, strengthen economic relations and presence in Brazil. Hughes and Collier represented a pragmatic move, which would strongly exercise U.S. influence in the Exposition grounds.

If Hughes and Collier could help promote an increasingly benevolent relationship between Brazil and the United States, it would go a long way to strengthening their country's ever-developing economic interests in the region. Brazil had been part of the world economy since the sixteenth century. However, trade between southern Latin America and the United States only became noticeably lucrative by the end of the nineteenth century with developments in communication lines and technology such as efficient steamships.<sup>17</sup> Exports from Brazil, primarily in the form of raw materials, boomed after this latter period, attracting increasing amounts of foreign capital into the country. In 1914, total U.S. investments in Latin America as a whole stood at 1,641.4 million US dollars. By 1929, this amount had risen to 5,369.7 million US dollars.<sup>18</sup> This meant that by 1922, the U.S. had become the primary investor in Brazil. An economic preoccupation would accordingly dominate the discourse surrounding U.S. participation in Rio's Exposition, acting as a platform for wider economic interests in Latin America as a whole.

One of the most heated topics of discussion surrounding U.S. participation in Rio consequently focused on investment and cost. In many international expositions around this period, an "Expenses versus Effects Argument" found a voice. With the prospect of an uncertain economic *return*, many governments were reluctant to participate.<sup>19</sup> In August 1921, a proposal for an appropriation of \$1,000,000 towards the construction and maintenance of a pavilion in Rio was submitted to the U.S. Senate and Congress. The amount was heavily challenged, and a subsequent proposal to half the suggested appropriation also gained traction. One newspaper reported that the slashing was "urged on the ground of the economy."<sup>20</sup> The million-dollar appropriation was nonetheless finally agreed upon after a less than unanimous vote. The cost of financing for U.S. participation in Rio remained a contentious issue throughout the exposition's lifetime; a fact reported on throughout 1921 and 1922. The Democratic Senator of Arizona at the time, Henry Fountain Ashurst, fervently pleaded

for a better allocation of federal funding. Ashurst "beseeched" the Senate appropriations committee on the "exorbitant" amount of money allotted for American participation in Brazil. Why not, he suggested, invest in the 900 former veterans who were dying of tuberculosis on the streets of Arizona.<sup>21</sup> One article, which supported Ashurst's plea, offered its readers the contentious choice: "American trade or life for soldiers."<sup>22</sup> Preoccupations surrounding the implementation of fiscal policy dominated debates in the United States in relation to the country's participation in Rio.

The United States invested more in Rio's Exposition than any other participating nation.<sup>23</sup> In this way, the cordial nature of the Exposition was explicitly overshadowed by an international economic rivalry. The *New York Times* reported that the U.S. exhibit in Rio measured a mere 30,000 square feet. "Although it is gratifying to know that we will participate on this scale, the gratification is somewhat dulled when we learn that little Belgium is to have displays covering 70,000 square feet."<sup>24</sup> A United States readership was encouraged to feel emasculated at their government not exerting itself fully in the competitive platform of the Exposition space.<sup>25</sup> As the *New York Times* indicated, rivalry prevailed. "...it might have been wished that the United States should lead instead of permitting commercial rivals across the world to go us one better right at our own back door."<sup>26</sup> Cooperation and "international comparison" here take a tumble down the rabbit hole of impending megalomania.<sup>27</sup>

After entering this rabbit hole, a visitor to Rio would find the greatest display of international rivalry at the Avenue of Nations. This was the location of all foreign pavilions at the Exposition site. The designated area extended over a mile along the city's bay shore. Annie Peck, journalist and writer to the Exposition, suggested that the Brazilians, with "notable courtesy, present[ed] to the foreign participants the choicest section of the grounds."<sup>28</sup> This "courtesy" allowed the U.S. government to represent itself with the construction of an imposing edifice, two stories high, built to a Portuguese neocolonial standard. It mirrored the general architectural style of the rest of the Exposition.<sup>29</sup> The pavilion showcased several U.S. government departments, designed to demonstrate the influence of U.S. invention and technological superiority.<sup>30</sup> It would stand as an impressive beacon



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of U.S. presence in Rio, particularly evidenced in the desire for the pavilion to serve as the U.S. embassy to Brazil at the Exposition's conclusion.<sup>31</sup> The Exposition thus acted as a catalyst to further U.S. political ambitions in Brazil.

A concerted effort was made to strengthen "ties of friendship and commerce," predominantly seen as opportunity to promote American business in the region. As one U.S. newspaper reported, "The Exposition will form an unusual opportunity for... manufacturers to form export and import relationship with South America."<sup>32</sup> The construction of an "unofficial" or "industrial exhibit" building in the exposition grounds was a purely commercial enterprise for U.S. companies to exhibit their manufactures and products. As one U.S. newspaper declared, this pavilion would have "no direct connection with the exhibition plans of the American government, it was explained at the department of commerce."<sup>33</sup> Granting space for international commercial manufacturers to exhibit their products was common in most expositions of the period, including in a previous national exposition that Rio hosted in 1908.<sup>34</sup> Geppert observes that European expositions of the twentieth century have often been described as "sites for mere consumption and amusement, deprived of any serious content or political meaning."<sup>35</sup> This fact does not seem to hold true in relation to U.S. commercial ambitions in Rio.

U.S. commercial interests in Rio's 1922 Exposition were often intermeshed by a rhetorical overtone. A memorial bestowed with the name "Friendship," measuring twenty-five meters in height and resembling the design of New York's Statue of Liberty, was gifted to the Brazilian people.<sup>36</sup> Hughes, at the memorial's unveiling at the opening of the Exposition in September 1922, declared, "The monument will commemorate the constant interest to Americans in everything that concerns the aspirations of Brazil, as well as our confidence that all Brazil's hopes will be realized... The United States desires no territory. The United States demands no right which is not in willing accord with others. The United States has no imperialistic sentiment of any kind toward any South American country."<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, it was the North American Chamber of Commerce which spearheaded the campaign to have the statue built.<sup>38</sup> Economic opportunity provided an underlying

incentive behind Hughes' proclamation of peace. Despite the prevalence of economic issues dominating discussions of U.S. participation in Rio, a minority of newspapers reported strictly on the cultural promises of the fair. This opens a small window which sanctifies the Brazilian organizers' perceived motivations of "friendship," "cordiality," and "nobility." One article underlined the plans of two men from Colorado Springs, Fred Morath and Donald Doubt, who would venture southwards in anticipation of the Exposition's inauguration. These men would go to Rio to bask in the city's "imposing structures" and "elaborate architecture," amidst a scenery and harbor recognized to be "one of the most beautiful in the world." Another newspaper illuminated the opportunity for tourists to travel from Rio to the nearby city of Petropolis; a city recognized as the *Land of Flowers*. On the train journey there, passengers would be struck by a view of "tropical paradise," on a road as developed as "Switzerland's."<sup>39</sup> The medium of the international exposition attracted a conglomeration of diverse people and ideas, in an environment both unique and global in setting.<sup>40</sup> For Morath and Doubt, it was Rio's uniqueness, which provided its attraction. "It has been said that the hospitality of Rio de Janeiro is like the flavor of some old wine which, once tasted, makes the palate ever after conscious of a lack in other countries."<sup>41</sup> The complex interplay between the national and international, and the vibrancy of local tradition, was an aspect not disseminated widely in the U.S. press of the time. It must be noted that discussions surrounding U.S. participation focused fundamentally on economic interests.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the United States was increasingly winning out over Britain and France in traditional spheres of economic interest in the world.<sup>42</sup> This economic clout was showcased explicitly in Rio's Exposition of 1922-23. In this short paper, I have highlighted economic preoccupations and rivalry as the focus of U.S. discussions surrounding U.S. participation in the Exposition. This contradicted the official rhetoric of the Brazilian Exposition organizers who emphasized friendship and cordiality as the bastions of the fair. As Tenorio-Trillo suggests, deeper motivations lay under the "elegant diplomatic excuse."<sup>43</sup> As well as instigating international economic rivalry and competition, the Exposition afforded to American businesses

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the opportunity for investment and commerce. Thus, through participation in Rio's Exposition, the United States was provided with the opportunity to exhibit and exert its economic power at a political and commercial level. In contrast to U.S. economic interests, the cultural promises of the fair struggled to find their way into questions and dialogs surrounding U.S. participation in Rio. My palate, after tasting this old wine, will forever be conscious of the overarching imbalance.

### Notes:

1. New York Times, *Rio, World's Cleanest City, at its Best in Exposition*, 25 March 1923, 165.
2. This paper will prioritize the use of the term "exposition," in reference to the international exposition. However, "exposition," "exhibition," and "world's fair," can be used interchangeably, depending on the particular region of the world in which the exposition was hosted.
3. Alexander Geppert, *Fleeting Cities: Imperial Expositions in Fin-de-Siècle Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 202-205.
4. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 216.
5. Katherine Smits and Alix Jansen, "Staging the Nation at Expos and World's fairs," *National Identities* 14, no. 2 (2012), 175.
6. The possibilities for theoretically informed analyses are abundant in scope, as demonstrated most explicitly by the sociologist Tony Bennett and his dialogue on the "exhibitionary complex." This theory, proposed in 1988, sits at the heart of a discourse on representations of elite culture, and has informed most analyses of international expositions. See works by Alexander Geppert, Paul Greenhalgh, and Matthew Rampley, for particularly influential analyses of international expositions.
7. Of particular note in the context of this essay are the collections of the U.S. commission to Rio, which are housed in the U.S. National Archives in Washington, D.C., Record Group 43.
8. Smits and Jansen, "Staging the Nation," 180.
9. Livia Rezende, "Nature and the Brazilian State at the Independence Centennial International Exhibition" in Marta Filipová, ed., *Cultures of International Exhibitions 1840-1940: Great Exhibitions in the Margins* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 166.
10. Ibid.
11. Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 203.
12. *Relatorio do Ministro de Estado das Relações Exteriores: 30 De Abril 1922 a 3 de Maio 1923* (Rio De Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1924), 6.
13. New York Times, *Rio, World's Cleanest City, at its Best in Exposition*, 25 March 1923, 165.
14. <https://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/v56-4/v56-4amero.pdf> [Accessed 5/15/2016].
15. Matthew Bokovoy, "San Diego 1915-1916: Panama- California Exposition," in John Findling and Kimberly Pelle, eds., *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2008), 222-228.
16. *American Commissioner Making Hurried Trip to United States in Interests of Brazilian Centennial*, in "Brazilian American," *Brazilian Centennial Publication in English: Official Organ of the American Commission* 6, no. 136 (1922), 15.
17. There are many scholarly works focusing on the integration and development of Latin America in the world economy. For an introduction, see: Robert Allen, *Global Economic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
18. Victor Bulmer-Thomas, *The Economic History of Latin America Since Independence: Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 171.
19. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 33.



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20. Salt Lake Telegram, 20 October 1921, 2.
21. Albuquerque Journal, 13 December 1921, 2.
22. Duluth News-Tribune, 14 December 1921, 12.
23. Annie Peck, "The International Exposition of Brazil," in *Current History Magazine* [*New York Times*] 17, no.1 (1923), 1043.
24. New York Times, *Our Part in Brazil's Big Show*, 27 August 1922, 84.
25. It is important to note that in spite of having a smaller exhibit area, the size of the U.S. pavilion itself was the largest within the exposition grounds.
26. New York Times, *Our Part in Brazil's Big Show*, 27 August 1922, 84.
27. I use the term "comparison" purposefully. Geppert describes the "comparison of national achievements" as a contribution to progress. See: Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 204.
28. Peck offers concise descriptions of the displays and representations of many of the participating nations at the Exposition. See: Peck, "The International Exposition of Brazil," 1043-1049.
29. Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 201-202.
30. Peck emphasizes the impressive showcases by the U.S. departments of war and agriculture at the exposition. See: Peck, "The International Exposition of Brazil," 1044.
31. Bruno Bontempi, Jr., and Noah Sobe, "Rio de Janeiro 1922-1932," in Findling and Pelle, eds., *Encyclopedia of World's Fairs and Expositions*, 228.
32. Baltimore American, 8 May 1922, 14.
33. Duluth News-Tribune, 13 May 1922, 2.
34. Ministerio da Industria, Viação, e Obras Publicas, *Relatorio Apresentado ao Presidente da Republica dos Estados Unidos do Brasil: V. 1* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1908), 32.
35. Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 208.
36. "The selected design...symbolic of friendship... supporting with her left hand the flags of Brazil and the United States of America...indicative of prosperity and peace." Anaconda Standard, 2 April 1922.
37. Salt Lake Telegram, 7 September 1922, 7.
38. Idaho Statesman, 1 January 1921, 3.
39. Salt Lake Telegram, 3 June 1922, 3.
40. For examples relating to the complex interplay between the national and international in the context of the mega-event, see: Geppert, *Fleeting Cities*, 11, or Christopher Gaffney, "Mega-events and Socio-Spatial Dynamics in Rio de Janeiro, 1919-2016," *Journal of Latin American Geography* 9, no. 1 (2010), 9.
41. Colorado Springs Gazette, 23 May 1922, 10.
42. C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World: 1780-1914* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 482.
43. Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs*, 203.



World History Association

## Special Section: Collective Memory and the Global Event

### The Olympics as ‘Something Else’: Understanding the Success and Tensions of the Olympic Games through its Foundation Myths

Ian Ritchie, *Brock University (Ontario)*

To say that the Olympic Games has an impact globally is an understatement. The Games have for decades motivated sportsmen, sportswomen, and fans; driven state and private sports systems; played at times a central role in nation building and international diplomacy; and in recent times provided an international stage upon which immense sponsorship and television revenue production have been generated. In many ways the Olympic Games are an unparalleled economic, political, and cultural force. With television viewership reaching upwards of four billion people for recent Summer Games’ broadcasts, it is difficult to think of an event – sports or otherwise – that has the global reach of the Olympics.

But the Games success was never predestined. Indeed, during the movement’s nascent days in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there were several sports movements competing for global attention, including the very successful workers’ sports and Women’s Olympic Games movements that during the 1920s and 1930s rivalled and challenged the International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) bourgeois and male-centred Games.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there were several attempts to revive an ‘Olympic Games’ previous to Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin’s attempt in the early 1890s, including important attempts in Greece and England in the mid-1800s.<sup>2</sup>

What made Coubertin’s event ultimately the one with the most staying power? How has it come to pass that today we take for granted the IOC’s particular version of the Olympic Games as ‘the’ only Olympic possibility?

The history of Coubertin’s Games is, like all social forces of such magnitude, complex. At minimum the Olympic Games’ success owes itself to careful planning, the ability of Coubertin and the nascent IOC to assuage other powerful interests in the global sporting world during the turn of the century, alongside a lot of being in the right historical place at the right historical time – good old-fashioned luck.

But another major source of Coubertin’s success was ‘le rénovateur’s’ ability to sell his Games to powerful elites who influenced and controlled much

of the dominant forms of sports in the late nineteenth century, alongside the fact that Coubertin created a unique set of myths about ‘his’ Games that both sold the Games to others but also created a unique aura around the event that has lasted arguably to this day. But Coubertin’s unique system of myths and ideals would also create the most important tensions in the Olympic movement during the twentieth century and now into the twenty-first. The IOC’s ability to maintain itself as the (largely) unquestioned global powerhouse in sports has been directly correlated to its ability to overcome these tensions.

Pierre de Coubertin wrote in *Fortnightly Review* in 1908 that his Olympic movement was “something else,” “not to be found in any other variety of athletic competition.” Other events, including world championships, he claimed, represented “unbridled competition” and he warned of the “dangerous canker” of increasingly professionalized and commercialized forms of sports. The model upon which his movement was based, Coubertin continued, was ancient Greek sports because it preserved the “Spirit of fair play.” It was at Olympia, Coubertin maintained, that “athleticism ... remained pure and magnificent.”<sup>3</sup>

Classics historian David Young has shown that Coubertin’s account of the ancient Games was largely based on misrepresentations of history, in part because of the available knowledge and sources in the late-nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> But it is important to recognize the reason Coubertin was evoking the ancients in the first place. Historian Bruce Kidd maintains that Coubertin’s ability to link the ancient Games to his modern version was “a genius stroke of public relations” because the imagery of an everlasting form of ‘sport’ essential to the human condition helped Coubertin overcome the struggles of competing groups over the ultimate purpose of sports while simultaneously drawing attention away from the restricted class traditions upon which the Games were actually founded.<sup>5</sup> It gave Coubertin’s movement, in other words, ‘rightful ownership’ of sports and this helped set the foundation for IOC claims to ‘purity’ and ‘universalism’ in Olympic sports in the decades to come. By linking his Games to the ancients, Coubertin could indeed claim that his Games were “something else.”

Some of the historical sources, literature, and personal observations Coubertin took his inspiration from was based on real human sporting practices,

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but much of it was also based on falsehoods and exaggerations of human history. Some of it was pure mythology. But in any case, Coubertin was a sophisticated social marketer who was able to win the support of some of the most important sporting elites in the world during his day.<sup>6</sup>

In 1894 Coubertin sent out his invitation to an elite cadre of well-connected sportsmen for what would become the founding conference of the Olympic Games. He specifically held the occasion at Paris's Sorbonne University because he knew that the location had considerable cachet. Invited delegates sat in the Sorbonne's grand amphitheatre surrounded by Pierre Puvis de Chavannes's neo-classical mural *Le Bois sacré* – "The Sacred Wood." Delegates gladdened, listened to speeches, drank Champaign, listened to an ode to athleticism by well-known French poet Jean Aicard, and took in a musical performance of the "Delphic Hymn to Apollo."<sup>7</sup> Coubertin was a great salesman and he would later comment that "under the venerable roof of the Sorbonne the words 'Olympic Games' would resound more impressively and persuasively on the audience."<sup>8</sup> Coubertin saw the impact of the Delphic Hymn in particular as "immense." "Hellenism thus infiltrated the vast enclosure," he ruminated. "Henceforth I knew ... no one would vote against the restoration of the Olympic Games."<sup>9</sup>

But the conference itself was in some respects a ruse. Coubertin recognized that support for an "Olympic Games" was mixed, and so Coubertin enticed delegates, who were to a man defenders of amateur sports. Young refers to amateurism as it stood in the late nineteenth century, without historical exaggeration, as "the fetish of the aristocrats." The misleading title of the original invitation was the "International Congress of Amateurs" and it included a preliminary eight-item program that emphasized the conditions of amateur rules in the first seven items but the possibility of reviving an Olympic Games inauspiciously as the eighth.<sup>10</sup> But upon their arrival, Coubertin's true intentions were made plain to the delegates: "For the Reestablishment of the Olympic Games" was the title of the final program.<sup>11</sup> Coubertin's ruse was entirely deliberate. He admitted later in his life that amateurism was a "screen" and that his interest in amateurism leading up to the conference was "zeal without real conviction."<sup>12</sup>

A careful reading of the first paragraph of the

original invitation gives clues as to Coubertin's true intentions in the revival of the Olympics. It read in part that "it is vital that athletics retain the noble and chivalrous quality which distinguished it in the past, so that it can effectively continue to play within the education of modern peoples the admirable role which the Greek masters attributed to it." Furthermore, Coubertin laments that "Amateurs, in the majority of countries, have created complicated legislation full of compromises and contradictions; what is more, too often the letter rather than the spirit of this legislation is respected."<sup>13</sup>

What, for Coubertin, inspired the true "spirit" of the otherwise overly "complicated" legislation of amateurism? Coubertin was inspired by sporting ideals derived from three different epochs: ancient, modern, and medieval.<sup>14</sup> A complex combination of these ideals would for him inspire the ideal male athlete upon which the Games would be based, and create a movement that he would later refer to as a "religion."<sup>15</sup>

The links between Coubertin's Games and antiquity has been well documented, but it is important to highlight that the link made Coubertin's Games appear to stand above the crass materialism of industrial capitalism – one of the goals Coubertin saw for his movement – while simultaneously overcoming the amateur conflicts by appealing to a 'universal' form of sports. In Coubertin's words, unlike the material world of "advertisement and bluff ... [where] athletic sports are likely to be commercially exploited," Coubertin claimed his Games and Olympic athletes would "show beauty and inspire reverence."<sup>16</sup> The young male athletes of ancient times, he wrote, "imbued with a sense of the moral grandeur of the Games, went to them in a spirit of almost religious reverence."<sup>17</sup>

Second, the influence of modern English sports on Coubertin's project was vital. Heavily involved in French educational reform in the 1880s, he traveled on government fact-finding missions to North America and the United Kingdom. Greatly affected by Rugby School headmaster Thomas Arnold and the School's practice of student-run football to instill masculine moral values, alongside the writings of Thomas Hughes (*Tom Brown's School Days*) and Charles Kingsley, the values of "Muscular Christianity" that Coubertin took from these experiences influenced his image for the ideal athlete for the Olympic Games. The morally sound athlete was one who embodied

duty, courage, honour, and self-discipline.<sup>18</sup>

The third epoch – the medieval – and specifically mythologized ideals of chivalry that Coubertin celebrated in much of his writing and speeches had a profound impact, although the influence of chivalry has been somewhat overlooked by historians. Historian and Coubertin biographer Patrick Clastres and American sports historian Jeffrey Segrave have both revealed this aspect of Coubertin's belief system.<sup>19</sup>

Honour, loyalty, and prowess were the three major values that Coubertin took from accounts of medieval literature.<sup>20</sup> Coubertin wrote that “[w]e must establish the tradition that each competitor shall in his bearing and conduct as a man of honour and a gentleman endeavour to prove in what respect he holds the games and what an honour he feels to participate in them.”<sup>21</sup> The athletes of the Olympic Games “must also be a *knighthood*. ... “brothers in arms”, brave, energetic men united by a bond that is stronger than that of mere camaraderie.” “In chivalry,” Coubertin continued, “the idea of competition, of effort opposing effort for the love of the effort itself, of courteous yet violent struggle, is superimposed on the notion of mutual assistance, the basis of camaraderie.”<sup>22</sup>

The codes of knightly conduct that Coubertin so admired were based on idealizations and myths, in a double sense. First, the exploits of the feudal knights from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries in Western Europe upon which the chivalric code was based were idealized in literature. The knights themselves were at times closer to barbaric violent plunderers than the honourable warrior represented in literature.<sup>23</sup> Second, it was the reconstruction of already pre-existing myths in English and French literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that directly influenced Coubertin's revival of the chivalric tradition in the Olympic movement. Revived chivalric traditions met the needs of conservative empire building and national revitalization in both countries. But for Coubertin, it provided a model upon which to instill “honourable” values in French youth through a revitalized physical education program, especially after France's loss in the Franco-Prussian War. Moreover, the particular English resurgence of chivalry that infused itself in the Muscular Christianity movement was the closest and most perfect model of the honourable and virtuous athlete that Coubertin wanted for his movement.<sup>24</sup> As so it was to the closest sporting tradition of his

day – and the most powerful one – that Coubertin turned for support for his nascent movement because it came closest to his ideals of chivalry: English-based amateurism.

Why have Coubertin's myths and ideals been important to the Olympic movement, and why do they continue to be important today? What emerged from Coubertin's defense of his ideals was the idea that the Olympic Games was defending not just any old form of sports. The Olympics were representing an essentialist, transhistorical form, passed on from the ancients, through the chivalric actions of knights, to the ‘pure’ amateurs of the late-nineteenth century. What Coubertin instilled in the Olympic movement, in short, had, or claimed to have universal appeal, and indeed this was a crucial part of his marketing the Games to the delegates at the Sorbonne in 1894.

But Coubertin's claims to a universal form of sports also created tensions within the Olympic movement. First and foremost, these tensions manifested themselves in terms of regular squabbles during the movement's early days between Coubertin and those within the upper ranks of the IOC who sought to create and defend increasingly strict definitions of amateurism. For Coubertin amateur restrictions missed the moral and educative goals of his project and the complex ideal system he intended to build. Later in his life we would write that “To me, sport was a religion ... it seemed to me as childish to make all this depend on whether an athlete had received a five franc coin as automatically to consider the parish verger an unbeliever because he receives a salary for looking after the church’.<sup>25</sup> But the IOC started to enshrine and then enforce amateur restrictions right from the start. The first *Olympic Bulletin*, published just after the Sorbonne congress, stated a definition of an amateur and then in the 1920s and 1930s a more formal definition was included in the Olympic Charter.<sup>26</sup>

But eventually Coubertin's original ideal system would fade and in its place amateurism came to embody the quintessential Olympic athlete and ‘pure,’ ‘universal’ Olympic Sport.<sup>27</sup> But the defense of amateurism manifested its own tensions. An important early conflict came against the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), which proposed a scheme of broken time payments to allow better players and more teams to take part in the Games leading up to the Games in Amsterdam



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in 1928. The IOC Executive Board voted in favour of such a scheme in 1927, a blatant contradiction of its own rules. Both sides revisited the issue leading up to 1932, but the IOC this time rejected the broken time payments proposal, only to have soccer excluded from the 1932 Los Angeles Games. FIFA countered the move by initiating the World Cup championship in 1930. A compromise was made by 1936, FIFA allowing amateur players into the Games knowing that this move would not threaten its professional status. The second biggest global sporting events today, the World Cup, emerged out of amateur tensions in the Olympic movement.<sup>28</sup>

But the 'FIFA affair' merely pre-shadowed greater threats to amateurism after World War Two. With the IOC under the presidency of American Avery Brundage (1921-1972), who defended the strict letter of the law of amateur restrictions more so than any IOC president before, contradictions between 'pure', universal' Olympic sport – now embodied within amateur principles – and outside political and economic forces in the world of sports, mounted. Brundage held strong, proclaiming that "[t]he amateur code, coming to us from antiquity, contributed to and strengthened by the noblest aspirations of great men of each generation, embraces the highest moral laws. No philosophy, no religion, preaches loftier sentiments."<sup>29</sup> But the social forces at large eventually won. The most important threat to Olympic ideals was cold war competition pushing athletes far beyond anything remotely akin to Coubertin's chivalrous athlete, or for that matter the amateur one acting as chivalry's understudy. This combined with the dual pressures of television corporations pouring ever-increasing amounts of money into the movement alongside transnational corporations seeking out an internationally visible – and seemingly politically neutral – conduit for their sales efforts, leading to the IOC abandoning the amateur rule and taking it out of the Olympic Charter in the 1970s.

Certainly Olympic controversies have continued since the fall of amateurism: political boycotts, the increasing threat of the use of performance-enhancing drugs, bribery controversies, blatant commercial motives interfering with the 'neutrality' of Olympic sport, and others. But the IOC has more or less been able to manage those controversies and tensions by continuing to proffer an image of Olympic sport as 'pure.'

The revival of the Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin wrote in 1896, "is not owing to a spontaneous dream ... it is the logical consequence of the great cosmopolitan tendencies of our times."<sup>30</sup> One of the strongest legacies of Coubertin's system of ideals and myths is that the Olympic Games offers a universal, pure form of sport. Today, the IOC continues to defend Olympic sport as "something else." But the Olympic Games' continued success as a global monolith depends on the IOC's ability to defend Coubertin's legacy that Olympic sport is 'pure.'

### Notes:

1. Bruce Kidd, "'Another World is Possible': Recapitulating Alternative Olympic Histories, Imagining Different Games," in *Global Olympics: Historical and Sociological Studies of the Modern Games*, eds. Kevin Young and Kevin B. Wamsley (Amsterdam: Elsevier JAI, 2005), 143-158.
2. David Young, "From Olympia 776 BC to Athens 2004: The Origin and Authenticity of the Modern Olympic Games," in *Global Olympics*, 3-18.
3. Pierre de Coubertin, "Why I Revived the Olympic Games," in Pierre de Coubertin, *Olympism: Selected Writings*, editing director Norbert Müller (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2000), 543. Originally published in *Fortnightly Review* July (1908): 110-15.
4. David Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (Chicago: Ares Publishers, 1984).
5. Kidd, "'Another World in Possible'," 146.
6. Dikaia Chatziefstathiou, "Pierre de Coubertin: Man and Myth," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Olympic Studies*, eds. Helen J. Lenskyj and Stephen Wagg (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 26-40; "The History of Marketing an Idea: The Example of Baron Pierre de Coubertin as a Social Marketer," *European Sport Management Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2007): 55-80.
7. John MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 194; Coubertin, *Olympism*, 308-312.

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8. Cited in MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*, 194.
9. Ibid.
10. David Young, "How Amateurs Won the Olympics," in ed. W.J. Raschke, *The Archeology of the Olympics: The Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) 64-65. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 300-2.
11. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 305.
12. Cited in Young, "How the Amateurs Won," 74, note 22.
13. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 301. Originally printed as a circular letter, "Cirulaire Annonçant le Congrès International Athlétique," Paris, Jan. 15, 1894.
14. The literature on Coubertin's ideals is immense, although a two sources can be highlighted: Coubertin, *Olympism* is the largest collection in English of Coubertin's writings and speeches, while MacAloon's *This Great Symbol* is considered the quintessential biography of Coubertin in English. However, at the time of writing this article, Professor Patrick Clastres at the University of Lausanne is completing a much more comprehensive biography on Coubertin (personal communication with Dr. Clastres, Oct. 13, 2016).
15. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 580.
16. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 543, 545.
17. Ibid., 543.
18. Doug Brown, "The Olympic Games Experience: Origins and Early Challenges," in *Global Olympics*, 22-23.
19. Patrick Clastres, "The Humanitarian Ideas of Pierre de Coubertin," proceedings of the 48<sup>th</sup> International Session for Young Participants (Greece: International Olympic Accademy, 2008); Jeffrey Segrave, "Coubertin, Olympism and Chivalry," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* XXII, 1-38.
20. Segrave, "Coubertin, Olympism, and Chivalry."
21. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 546.
22. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 581. Originally from a radio broadcast by Coubertin in Geneva, August 4, 1935 and published as "Les Assises Philosophiques de l'Olympisme Moderne" in *Le Sport Suisse* 37, no. 7, 1.
23. Segrave, "Coubertin, Olympism, and Chivalry."
24. Ibid.
25. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 654.
26. The 1894 Bulletin is available in the original French through the LA84 Foundation website: <http://www.la84foundation.org/OlympicInformationCenter/RevueOlympique/1894/BCIF1/BCIF1e.pdf>; for the 1924 Charter see Comité International Olympique, *Charte Olympique*, 1924: 12 – 13, 18. <http://www.olympic.org/olympic-charters?tab=1>.
27. Matthew P. Llewellyn and John Gleaves, *The Rise and fall of Olympic Amateurism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016).
28. Llewellyn and Gleaves, *The Rise and Fall*, 69-71.
29. Cited in Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 116.
30. Coubertin, *Olympism*, 308.

**A late but lucrative sporting mega-event: The World Championships of the International Association of Athletics Federations**

Jörg Krieger, *German Sport University Cologne*

In August 1983, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) became one of the last international sports federations to introduce World Championships for its sports. Therewith, it created its showpiece competition as a sporting mega-event almost a century after Pierre de Coubertin had introduced his idea for modern Olympic Games. The inaugural edition of the IAAF World Championships, held in Finland's capital Helsinki, saw 1,355 athletes competing in 41 events. In the following decades, the event developed into a global sporting mega-event, attracting more than 50,000 daily spectators in giant athletics stadia and large television audiences in over 200 territories.

Until the early 1980s, the IAAF had considered the athletics events at the Olympic Games to be the crowning of world champions in its sports as it had amateur-based roots. Moreover, there had always been close links between the IAAF and the International Olympic Committee (IOC), personified through the first two IAAF presidencies that together lasted for 63 years.<sup>1</sup> However, when the second IAAF President David Cecil Brownlow, Lord Burghley (Great Britain, in office 1946-1976) retired in July 1976 and Adriaan Paulen (The Netherlands, in office 1976-1981) took the helm, such links vanished. Moreover, international sports found itself in a period of change increasingly open for the processes of commercialization and professionalization due to the IOC's liberalization of its amateur regulations at the end of the 1970s.<sup>2</sup>

Against this background, this essay argues that the IAAF World Championships, one of the biggest global sporting mega-events, was introduced predominantly on commercial grounds. Until today, such close associations between the event and the IAAF's financial interests are evident and have contributed negatively to the Federation's conceptualizations in recent years due to corruption, doping and bribery scandals.

*Experimentation*

The IAAF Council discussed the idea of their own international athletics event for the first time

in 1975 towards the very end of David Burghley's presidency. The majority of the IAAF Council members wished to raise the profile of the Federation and intended to adapt to an evolving event-culture in sports. However, the leading IAAF figures were aware that the installation of an international athletics event entailed the specific danger of potential conflicts with the IOC: its main source of income was its share of the IOC's television rights of the Olympic Games.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the conservative David Burghley warned about such negative consequences. Hence, the IAAF Council proposed staging a World Cup for continental teams instead of individuals.<sup>4</sup> This event format allowed them to explore the possibility of generating revenue through an international athletics event whilst ensuring that there was still a considerable difference from World Championships. These would remain the Olympic Games for the time being, but it is evident that commercially driven arguments were beginning to be exchanged. Henceforth, the Federation openly communicated objectives relating to the generation of revenue through the IAAF World Cup:

'(...) finally, to provide a much-needed source of revenue to be distributed among participating teams and Area Group Associations as well as the IAAF.'<sup>5</sup>

This can also be seen within the immediate subsequent discussions about the distribution of the money and the IAAF Council's great interest in holding talks with television broadcasters and sponsors.<sup>6</sup> Clearly, commercial reasons were as much a key factor in the establishment of the event as the creation of an international athletics competition for leading athletes.

The IAAF Council selected Düsseldorf (West Germany) as the host city for the initial 1977 World Cup.<sup>7</sup> The decision on the participating teams and their appearance constituted an important element of distinction from what could be considered World Championships and the Olympic Games. Two successful European national teams (Europe 1 and Europe 2) competed together with a combined European team (Europe III).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, 'America I' consisted solely of US American athletes whilst the teams 'America II', 'Asia', 'Africa' and 'Oceania' were chosen based on continental requirements and selection events.<sup>9</sup> The format gave the world's best athletes a possibility to compete but did not mirror the intention to enable universal participation. Thus, the

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World Cup did not pose a challenge to the Olympic Games in terms of its event format, but the set-up of teams reflected the global nature of the competition.<sup>10</sup>

The location of West Germany for the first World Cup contributed immensely to the success of the event. The involvement of the West Germany and the East Germany teams in the men's events (women's events: GDR and the Soviet Union) because they qualified from the European Cup final was a key factor in this regard.<sup>11</sup> 135,000 spectators attended the first IAAF World Cup over the three competition days. Overall, the IAAF was also very satisfied with the success of the achieved financial result. The net surplus from the 1977 IAAF World Cup exceeded DM1 million.<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, the explorative strategy to install a World Cup with a team format proved to be a great success for the IAAF. The IAAF World Cup experiment was the first international mega-event under the auspices of the IAAF but a means to an end. It enabled the Federation to make considerable financial profit and hence make a significant step towards the IAAF Council's intended economic independence from the television revenue of the Olympic Games. This was achieved through the creation of an international sports competition.

### *Implementation*

The proponents of the World Championships' introduction profited from the success of the first IAAF World Cup. Significantly, Primo Nebiolo (Italy) evolved as the main advocate for the event, considering it 'great propaganda for athletics'.<sup>13</sup> He envisaged that if the event was to be staged every four years, it would accumulate more profit than that received from the Olympic Games. Primo Nebiolo also opposed arguments that two international athletics events were not profitable and would overload the international sporting competition calendar.<sup>14</sup> He wanted to stage both, the IAAF World Cup and IAAF World Championships, in order to make the highest possible profit. Under Primo Nebiolo's leadership, a Subcommittee proposed the installation of World Championships for the year 1983, which was accepted by the IAAF Council in autumn 1977.<sup>15</sup> Again, emphasis was on financial matters. It was decided that the IAAF would retain 75% of the television revenues and keep the entirety of sponsorship funds because of their potential to be beneficial.<sup>16</sup>

The IAAF World Championships were, in contrast to the IAAF World Cup, an event for individuals rather than teams, whereby athletic excellence was to make the event as lucrative as possible.<sup>17</sup> It appears that the IAAF wanted to distinguish its event from the Olympic Games by emphasizing the quality of competition.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, demonstrating awareness of the fact that ceremonial aspects were a central characteristic of the Olympic Movement, the IAAF backed away from staging opening and closing ceremonies in order not to give 'the World Championships too similar an appearance to the Olympic Games'.<sup>19</sup> This also indicates that the IAAF had a strong interest in marketing its World Championships in a distinctively different manner from the Olympic Games. Eventually, the IAAF Council awarded Helsinki the IAAF World Championships with 11 votes over the rival city of Stuttgart's (West Germany) six votes.<sup>20</sup>

The year of 1981 proved to be the next major step for the future development of the IAAF World Championships as the Federation successfully staged its 1981 World Cup in Rome. With around 175,000 spectators over three days, television transmission to 40 different countries and a total income of \$628,716, the IAAF Council unanimously praised its positive impact.<sup>21</sup> The great realization of the IAAF World Cup in Rome was largely down to the role of Primo Nebiolo, who secured lucrative sponsorship deals, a rent-free stadium and no IAAF contribution to the salaries of the Organising Committee.<sup>22</sup> On the back of this success in the preparation phase, the IAAF elected Primo Nebiolo as its fourth President.<sup>23</sup> Once appointed, he made no secret of his plans to raise the income of the IAAF through the immediate staging of an extended program of major events. For this reason, he initiated a new IAAF Marketing Committee, implemented to study means for increasing revenues, sponsors and television opportunities.<sup>24</sup> These activities were linked to the finalization of the negotiations with the marketing consultant firm West Nally, which had secured FIFA its sponsorship with Coca-Cola and five other major sponsors ahead of the 1978 FIFA World Cup. Thereby, West Nally had created a template for what became the Olympic Movement's exclusive international sponsorship program.<sup>25</sup> Accordingly, the IAAF wanted to make similar financial profits.<sup>26</sup> These interrelated developments accelerated the processes that led



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towards a more prominent commercialized athletics sports. Therewith, the IAAF acted in line with newly emerging policies within the IOC under IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, elected in 1980 and close ally of Primo Nebiolo.<sup>27</sup>

Beyond doubt, the IAAF's strategies for the World Championships succeed with its first edition, eventually staged from 7 to 14 August 1983 in Helsinki. Overall, the IAAF received \$5.5 million from its lucrative broadcasting and sponsorship deals.<sup>28</sup> In terms of the sporting events, the IAAF Council perceived the event to have been very successful. In total, 1,355 athletes from 153 nations participated in the 41 medal competitions. The Finish Organising Committee surpassed its original estimations for spectators with a total attendance of 332,402 people.<sup>29</sup> Hence, overcoming initial difficulties, the IAAF had successfully created a global sporting mega-event – the first one solely featuring the sport of athletics.

The outlined processes reveal that by the second half of the 1970s, the IAAF's leading sport administrators adapted to the prevalent zeitgeist of sports' growing commercialization and professionalization. The final impulse towards increased marketing initiatives that were closely related to the installation of the IAAF World Championships came with the beginning of Primo Nebiolo's increasing influence. His visions and actions for the event are a prime example for individual human intent in the creation of a global event as he coined the IAAF World Championships implementation and its long-term development.

### *Globalization*

The installation of the 1983 World Championships marked the beginning of an increasing global event culture in the sport of athletics. In 1985, the IAAF introduced the IAAF Grand Prix, a series of invitational meets, for which the IAAF paid prize money to the competitors – a novelty in the Federation's history and a final renunciation of the amateur regulations. In the same year, Primo Nebiolo signed a contract with the controversial marketing firm International Sport and Leisure (ISL).<sup>30</sup> ISL made guarantees that it would generate a minimum of \$30 million in selling sponsorship deals lasting for a period of four years.<sup>31</sup>

When analyzing the further development of

the IAAF World Championships that quickly found its place amongst the biggest international sporting events, the above-detailed backdrop has to be taken into account. The second edition took place in Rome in 1987 and it was once again heavily influenced by Primo Nebiolo's efforts to make the event a grand success in his home country. For the 1991 World Championships, the IAAF selected Tokyo as host city in order to achieve a more global reach for the event and its sponsors. These aspirations also become evident when dwelling into the Federation's attempts to include South Africa within the event in order to allow the country its first global sporting appearance following the nation's slow abolishment of apartheid regulations.<sup>32</sup> Whilst this initiative eventually failed, ISL successfully convinced the IAAF to stage the event every two years in order to increase revenues.<sup>33</sup> This move was characteristic of the increasing event culture in international sports at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>34</sup> Clearly, the further development of the IAAF World Championships confirms the processes detected for its installation period: marketing and commercial purposes dominated the sports political debates of this mega-event.

The dramatically progressing commercialization and eventization, recognized also in other global sports events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, also coined the IAAF World Championships in the new millennium.<sup>35</sup> By the end of the 1990s, the IAAF's assets had multiplied from less than \$100,000 to around \$40 million. Following Primo Nebiolo's death in 1999, Lamine Diack (Senegal) took over the IAAF presidency. Under his leadership, tendencies towards an increasing incorporation of the Asian markets are evident.

Between 2007 and 2015, three Asian cities acted as hosts of the event and in 2019 Doha will be the first host city from the Middle East. Therewith, the IAAF World Championships also reflect the tendencies in global sports to enter new markets. Finally, it is necessary to highlight that the IAAF also faced growing public criticism on suspicions regarding corruption and doping during the presidency of Diack. These difficulties are closely linked to the IAAF World Championships. The IOC Ethics Committee revealed that Lamine Diack had been bribed by ISL in 1993 in connection with marketing negotiations that included the IAAF's main event. In 2015, he was arrested together with other IAAF Council members due to

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evolving evidence on his involvement in covering-up the Russian doping scandal during and after the 2013 IAAF World Championships in Moscow. An independent report by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) proved that Lamine Diack had organized corruptive practices within the IAAF and had been informed about the illegal drug cheating system in place in Russia.

### *Rehabilitation?*

In August 2017, London's Olympic Stadium will be host to the sixteenth edition of the IAAF World Championships and the first one on British soil. Whilst the sport of athletics was originally based on amateur regulations that have their roots in Great Britain, it appears that the event will have to be a turning point for the IAAF for the exact opposite reason.<sup>36</sup> In contrast to Pierre de Coubertin's vision for the Olympic Games in which financial aspects played a marginal role, the introduction of the IAAF World Championships was the final turn of the IAAF towards professionalism and commerce.<sup>37</sup> Hence, this global mega-event has always been a commodity.<sup>38</sup> Whilst the IAAF's reorientation has resulted in significant financial benefits for the Federation, the event that gathers over a hundred thousand spectators every two years has also implicated negative consequences. Hence, the IAAF proposed new reforms in December 2016. In addition, it is crucial for the Federation that the 2017 IAAF World Championships will become a success to regain public credibility. The final major international appearance for the Jamaican sprinting star Usain Bolt might contribute to such a positive image. The Federation will have to accept, however, that it organizes a mega-event born solely on the wings of commerce, a long way from the sport's original amateur intentions.

### **Notes:**

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*Symposium for Olympic Research*, eds. Robert K. Barney, Michael K. Heine, Kevin B. Wamsley, and Gordon H. McDonald (London: University of Western Ontario, 2008), 84-93.

3. For example, in 1973, the IAAF received £186,520 of the IOC from the sales of the television rights for the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. This was 95.2% of the total income, with the other 4.8% coming from the interest on bank deposits and investments. IAAF, Minutes of the 33<sup>rd</sup> IAAF Congress, Athens, 2-4 September 1982, (IAAF Archive, Monaco).

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5. IAAF, Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> IAAF Congress, Montréal, 21-22 July 1976 (IAAF Archive, Monaco).

6. IAAF, Minutes of the Meeting of the IAAF Council, Düsseldorf, 5-6 September 1977 (IAAF Archive, Monaco).

7. IAAF, Minutes of the Meeting of the IAAF Council, Rouen, 10-12 October 1975 (IAAF Archive, Monaco).

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9. Ibid.

10. There is no evidence in the sighted protocols of the IOC Executive Board meetings and the IOC Sessions that they had discussed the installation of the IAAF World Cup.

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14. Ibid.

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17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
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25. Alan Tomlinson, *FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association). The Men, the Myths and the Money* (London: Routledge).
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33. IAAF, Minutes of the Meeting of the IAAF Council, Tokyo, 25-27 May 1991 (IAAF Archive, Monaco).
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### Marketing *Mexicanidad*: Encounters with the *Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería*

Beth Malchiodi, *Department of Social Studies,  
Brooklyn Technical High School*

From late August through early September, hundreds of thousands of people converge on the city of Guadalajara, Mexico to attend the annual *Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería*, or International Mariachi and Equestrian Festival.<sup>1</sup> Spectators line Chapultepec Avenue on the first Sunday of the festival to cheer the participating mariachis as they parade through Guadalajara. Visitors traverse the neighborhoods of Jalisco to attend free outdoor performances, and purchase tickets to see the best mariachis in the world perform backed by a symphony orchestra at the stately Degollado Theater.<sup>2</sup> Fans assemble at the appointed hour to witness the annual attempt to set a new Guinness World Record for the most mariachis playing simultaneously. Some attend mass at the Cathedral of Guadalajara or the Basilica of Zapopan, at which the mariachi *Misa Panamericana* is performed. The mariachis themselves hail from myriad nations beyond Mexico, from France to Australia to Croatia. They, too, come to Guadalajara to celebrate the quintessential Mexican music in the land of its birth.

The potent symbolism of the mariachi is inextricably linked to that of the *charro* (traditional horseman). Visitors to the *Encuentro* attend the concurrent *Campeonato Charro*, or equestrian championship, to watch teams of *charros* demonstrate their skill through a series of competitive events that mirror the tasks of the working horseman on the hacienda.<sup>3</sup> The spirit of the *charro* pervades the *Encuentro* far beyond the *charreada* arena, such that the casual observer may have difficulty distinguishing mariachis from *charros* given the similarity of their attire. The *traje de charro* has long signified Mexican ranch identity and visually marks its wearer as being of the land. Even the Emperor Maximilian, feigning legitimacy, designed and wore a “royal” version of the *traje*.<sup>4</sup> Mariachis commissioned to play for Porfirio Diaz in 1905 and U.S. Secretary of State Elihu Root in 1907 appeared in the *traje de charro*, a dramatic departure from their typical appearance at the time but a harbinger of developments yet to unfold.<sup>5</sup>

By showcasing these two events

simultaneously, the *Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería* facilitates mass consumption of Mexico’s *de facto* soundtrack and national sport. Moreover, it is a heavily promoted, international celebration of the standard-bearers of *mexicanidad* (the essence of “Mexican-ness”). Less well known is its younger national counterpart, the *Encuentro Nacional de Mariachi Tradicional*, which takes place approximately two weeks earlier in the same location.<sup>6</sup> Each less than a quarter of a century old, both *Encuentros* are truly invented traditions which not only reinforce the centrality of mariachis and *charros* to Mexican identity, but also export this vision on a global scale and serve to position mariachi as the centerpiece of internationally sanctioned cultural preservation efforts.<sup>7</sup> The present examination seeks to illuminate the historically symbiotic relationship between mariachi performance, Mexican identity, and national interests. Specifically, this survey will demonstrate how the two *Encuentros*, though not initiated expressly for this purpose, were utilized to achieve UNESCO recognition of mariachi music as a form of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The *Encuentros* can best be understood as the culmination of a century-long process that transformed mariachi from a variable folk music into a standardized agent of the state through which “what it means to be Mexican” is promulgated. To that end, the evolution of mariachi must be situated within its broader political and cultural history.

Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821 but struggled to reconcile the legacy of three centuries of colonial hegemony with an independent national identity. As in neighboring nations faced with similar challenges, Mexico embraced *mestizaje*, the “convivial hybrid amalgamation of black, white, and Indian in the liberal imaginaire.”<sup>8</sup> Such notions percolated throughout Latin America to varying degrees, but Mexico’s 1910 revolution amplified their significance as “the Mexican version of *mestizaje* became central to its post-revolutionary national project.”<sup>9</sup> If *mestizaje* posits racial amalgamation as the biological basis of national identity, *mexicanidad* embodies the corollary repertoire of social mores that must be internalized and performed to demonstrate cultural identity. This creates “an inseparable nexus between the geo-political and the bio-political construction of *mexicanidad*,” *mestizaje* defines who is Mexican, while *mexicanidad* comprises the essence



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of *how to be Mexican*.<sup>10</sup>

That the construction and reproduction of this imagined identity became a central concern of intellectuals is clearly illustrated by two brief examples. Manuel Gamio's *Forjando Patria* (Forging a Nation), published in 1916, articulated a vision of Mexican identity that blended the often contradictory ideas of *mestizaje*, *indigenismo* (valorization of Indian culture), and cultural relativity. This collection of essays became "a broad manifesto for a nationalist cultural project, [which] served as a crucial work of political positioning and intellectual diffusion."<sup>11</sup> José Vasconcelos, during his tenure as Secretary of Public Education, initiated universal education programs and declared Jalisco's *jarabe tapatio* the national dance of Mexico; it was henceforth included in all school curricula. At the same time, migrating soldiers and displaced civilians promoted an unprecedented degree of diffusion and blending of regional subcultures, and the heightened nationalism of the period promoted a resurgence of popular musical forms.<sup>12</sup> Post-revolutionary land reform benefited some former peons, but subsequent commercialization and industrialization efforts forced even more peasants into the cities in search of employment.<sup>13</sup> In reaction to ongoing social upheaval and post-revolutionary projects, rural musicians were embraced by government actors and the masses alike as living manifestations of an imaginary pre-Hispanic heritage. Such nostalgia positioned the mariachi as a primary vehicle for the dissemination of *mexicanidad*, but this was no buffer against forces of globalization. Once transplanted to an urban setting, mariachi performance underwent significant transformations in both visual presentation and sound.

Until the late 1930's, regional mariachis were comprised primarily (but not exclusively) of various indigenous and European stringed instruments; it was not until the mariachi emerged as a permanent feature of city life that the trumpet became a standard component of the ensemble. Initially controversial and resisted by many mariachis and their fans, adding trumpets to the ensemble "situated [mariachi] in a broader, thoroughly modern, cosmopolitan and urban style of music that was linked to other musical styles such as jazz and Cuban music which were immensely popular at that time."<sup>14</sup> Establishing an internationally palatable sound was clearly an important precursor

to the *Encuentro*. The new sound represented a "unique" Mexican identity that nonetheless "fit in" with international (dominant) cultural aesthetics. This enhanced its appeal to international audiences, rendering mariachi an effective aural emblem of Mexico on a global stage. At the same time, radio broadcasts and recordings played on home phonographs increasingly shaped Mexican listeners' expectations and consequently standardized the sound and repertoire of live mariachi performances.<sup>15</sup>

The simultaneous evolution of mariachi performance attire merged the image of the *charro* with that of the musician. Archival photographs from the nineteenth and early twentieth century reveal mariachis still wore rural clothes and huaraches (leather sandals).<sup>16</sup> Even as late as 1931 when Mariachi Vargas first instituted a uniform, it consisted of "the traditional garb of the peasants in Jalisco: loose-fitting, white cotton muslin pants with a red sash for a belt, a muslin shirt tied at the waist, straw sombreros (hats), and a red bandanna around the neck."<sup>17</sup> Gradually, the formal *traje de charro* of the hacienda owner of western Mexico became standard mariachi attire, completing a visual transformation precipitated by earlier performances at state sponsored political events.

The late mariachi historian Francisco Sanchez Flores bitterly lamented that mariachis had begun to wear the suit of their former oppressors.<sup>18</sup> This shift from peasant garb to the *traje de charro* linked mariachis to the land-owning elite of Jalisco. The inhabitants of the highlands of Jalisco are notably taller and have lighter complexions than other Mexicans resulting from less admixture with people from other regions.<sup>19</sup> The mariachi was thus transformed into an upper-class, light-skinned mestizo who wore the formal *traje de charro*: a suit consisting of a short, fitted jacket and tightly fitted pants adorned with embroidery and silver *botonaduras* (buttons), leather boots, bowtie, and sombrero. Visual references to African or Indian musical roots were obliterated, and "the performance of the mariachi slipped from Indigenous peasants to wealthy cowboys."<sup>20</sup> Ultimately it was this image that, beginning in the 1930s, the Golden Age of Mexican cinema disseminated in its "singing charro" genre: a tall, light-skinned, *traje*-clad, land-owner, as the idealized mestizo, and the *traje* rapidly became

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the near-universal uniform of working mariachis.<sup>21</sup> It is this mariachi, the product of myriad government policies and demographic shifts, that saturated the popular media beyond Mexico's borders, and that draws spectators and performers alike from all over the world to the international *Encuentro* year after year.

The mariachi clearly achieved the task with which it was charged. Recent multi-sited fieldwork in Mexico indicates a cross-section of mariachi aficionados identify the music as mestizo in both origin and essence, despite the ambiguity of the label "mestizo" and the indigenous roots of the music. The international *Encuentro* would be a fitting coda to this centuries-long tale, but the nation-building work of the mariachi was not yet complete.<sup>22</sup> Whereas inventing a national identity to unify Mexico's myriad *patrias chicas* ("little nations") dominated twentieth century government concerns, the focus has now shifted to valorizing and preserving indigenous practices. The mariachi has once again been pressed into service, and both the national and international *Encuentros* are at the forefront of these reconceived efforts.

It must be noted that growing concerns over the sustainability of indigenous cultural knowledge in the face of globalization are not unique to Mexico; they in fact dovetail with an emergent international agenda. The 1972 World Heritage Convention laid the groundwork for preserving physical heritage, but various UN Member States additionally sought to protect living, quotidian practices and ideological expressions of the world's diverse cultures.<sup>23</sup> In 1982 Mexico City hosted the World Conference on Cultural Policies, and in 1989 UNESCO adopted its "first specific international legal instrument" intended to protect Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (RSTCF).<sup>24</sup> Within five years of the RSTCF, the first annual international *Encuentro* was held in Guadalajara. Despite this seemingly clear trajectory of events, the mariachi festival was not an outgrowth of Mexico's active participation in UNESCO initiatives, but rather a fortuitous parallel development which would in due course be invoked to fortify the nation's application for ICH recognition.

The origins of the international *Encuentro* are recounted in language reminiscent of a creation myth: While traveling in Tucson, Arizona, the

president of Guadalajara's Chamber of Commerce "discovers" an established annual mariachi festival. Upon returning to Mexico he recommends creating the biggest mariachi festival, "that's how the meeting is born."<sup>25</sup> In partnership with various corporate sponsors, the *Encuentro* grew into one of the "most visible tourism projects" in the state of Jalisco.<sup>26</sup> The immediate reproduction, elaboration, and sponsorship of an international mariachi festival by the Chamber of Commerce in Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, is seemingly tantamount to Mexico announcing its cultural patrimony to the world at large. Nonetheless, it must be emphasized that the Chamber of Commerce's interest in promoting a homegrown tradition rediscovered in their neighbor's backyard was in fact a calculated measure to capitalize upon musical *mexicanidad*, and not an initiative conceived to safeguard mariachi as an element of ICH.<sup>27</sup> The focus of the RSTCF upon "safeguarding," as opposed to protecting or preserving, was a deliberate semantic choice intended to reflect the reality that culture is fluid and changes over time; preservation produces static museum exhibits, while safeguarding supports and sustains the ongoing development of ICH.<sup>28</sup> By contrast, the mariachi celebrated at the international *Encuentro* is a product of deliberate manipulation, cultivated and standardized by forces external to indigenous sensibilities as previously discussed, and not an organic extension of traditional practices or the result of natural cultural changes anticipated by the RSTCF. The international *Encuentro* is a carefully constructed, shrewdly marketed event designed primarily to appeal to tourists rather than to safeguard cultural heritage.

Origins and motives notwithstanding, the *Encuentro* unwittingly inspired efforts that, though unrelated to the ongoing international dialogue surrounding ICH, converged with the UNESCO agenda. The inception of the international *Encuentro* prompted local concerns that the surviving traditional ensembles were being overlooked and that *mariachi antiguo* (traditional mariachi) would be erased from the regional memory.<sup>29</sup> The statecraft and forces of globalization which had produced the universally recognizable mariachi celebrated at the international *Encuentro* had undermined traditional practice.<sup>30</sup> Unlike their urban, professional counterparts, traditional mariachis in the countryside did not

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adopt the now standard instrumentation of the ensemble nor the *traje de charro*. They favor aural transmission of their craft and repertoire from one generation to the next, rather than formal instruction and written transcriptions.<sup>31</sup> Ensuring the continuity of these practices was among the priorities voiced by traditional mariachis and scholars who perceived the increased threat to *mariachi antiguo*. (Notably, these are precisely the features that the RSTCF seeks to identify and safeguard as well.)

Proposals ensued for events to be held in conjunction with the international *Encuentro* for “the rescue of the traditional mariachi.”<sup>32</sup> What began as a series of annual workshops, academic colloquia, and performance contests supported by the Guadalajara Chamber of Commerce and variously under the direction of renowned mariachi scholars like Jesús Jáuregi and traditional musicians like Cornelio García, coalesced into the *Encuentro Nacional de Mariachi Tradicional* which convened for the first time in 2002.<sup>33</sup> The traditional *Encuentro* was not an outgrowth of UNESCO initiatives, but rather a direct response to the original *Encuentro Internacional* itself as previously described. Now under the auspices of the Department of Culture, the traditional *Encuentro* emerged as a parallel but distinct annual festival intended to validate traditional mariachi and combat perceptions that it was merely a forerunner to its modern counterpart.<sup>34</sup>

For the first decade of its history, the traditional *Encuentro* coincided with the international *Encuentro*, simultaneously heightening the visibility of traditional mariachi and broadening conceptions of musical *mexicanidad* in the national consciousness. Unlike the international *Encuentro*, this national meeting exclusively features traditional mariachis from various Mexican states (rather than modern mariachis from Mexico and abroad), and is dedicated to showcasing regional variation in traditional mariachi forms.<sup>35</sup> Renowned mariachi scholars remain intimately involved with the program, and multiple events are scheduled to document and record divergent stylistic forms and interpretations of music; there is also an emphasis upon sharing knowledge with fellow musicians and especially the younger generation.<sup>36</sup>

When the Mexican government created the *Grupo de Trabajo para la Promoción y Salvaguarda del Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de México* (Work Group for the Promotion and Safeguarding of the

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mexico) in 2002—coincidentally the same year the traditional *Encuentro* debuted—the mariachi festivals were imbued with an even greater significance.<sup>37</sup> Both *Encuentros* were already in place when the Convention for the Safeguarding of ICH was passed in 2003, to which Mexico became a State Party in 2005.<sup>38</sup> When the Inventory of ICH commenced three years later, Mexico was poised to nominate mariachi music for formal recognition as Intangible Cultural Heritage. The *Encuentros* were clearly not created for the express purpose of safeguarding ICH, but they were invoked to bolster the application submitted to earn the official designation. Though the initial 2008 draft inventory of cultural heritage identified only traditional mariachi, the formal application Mexico submitted in 2010 nominated both traditional and modern “mariachi, string music, singing, and trumpet” for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.<sup>39</sup> The international *Encuentro*, and its younger national counterpart, were both cited as evidence of “current and recent efforts to safeguard the [cultural] element.”<sup>40</sup> The authors argued for recognition of the modern mariachi as ICH since it is a component of lifecycle rituals of Mexicans, a source of identity for those of Mexican descent outside of Mexico, and a musical *lingua franca* that promotes Mexico to the world. The bulk of the application, however, is devoted to discussion of current and proposed initiatives to revitalize and preserve the traditional mariachi. This includes detailed explanation of the aforementioned activities connected with the traditional *Encuentro*, as well as the proposed establishment of a mariachi school.<sup>41</sup> On November 27, 2011, UNESCO inscribed “mariachi, string music, song, and trumpet” on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, cementing its status from this point forward.<sup>42</sup>

One year later, (recalling Vasconcelos’s institution of universal education and the addition of *jarabe tapatio* to the curriculum), the *Escuela de Mariachi Ollin Yoliztli en Garibaldi* opened in Mexico City, its three-year program a sequence of formal coursework that covers music performance, theory, history and “Musical Cultures of Mexico.”<sup>43</sup> Like the traditional *Encuentro*, the school is under the auspices of the Department of Culture of Jalisco. The school has proven highly controversial,

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underscoring the divide between those musicians who favor aural transmission and regional aesthetic variability, and those who value standardization and institutionalization; perhaps its rigid, formal curriculum and professional faculty were not anticipated by all parties, given that the creation of the school was specifically proposed in the ICH nomination as a method for safeguarding traditional mariachi music.<sup>44</sup>

Paradoxically, Mexico's recent efforts to safeguard mariachi music have codified the divisions between professional and traditional musicians further, privileging each in turn depending upon the audience. Since 2013, the dates of the two *Encuentros* have ceased to overlap, typically with a gap of several days between the two festivals. The *Encuentro Nacional de Mariachi Tradicional* remains heavily attended by scholars and traditional musicians, but seemingly does not enjoy the wider appeal of its international predecessor.<sup>45</sup> There is no dedicated website promoting the traditional *Encuentro*, which is described as an academically-oriented event on various pages scattered across different official government websites.<sup>46</sup> Though both *Encuentros* occur within days of each other in the same location, there is no obvious cross-promotion linking the two events. The official website of the international *Encuentro* does not, for example, invite visitors to arrive earlier and attend *both* festivals, to witness the full spectrum of mariachi performance.<sup>47</sup> This omission is especially striking since the *Campeonato Charro*, a largely non-musical, national sports event, is a fully integrated component of the international *Encuentro* that visitors are encouraged to attend to receive their full dose of *mexicanidad*. Furthermore, one does not typically see traditional mariachis performing at the international *Encuentro*; at the 2009 Guinness World Record gathering, this author observed three lone traditional mariachis standing front and center wearing their customary white cotton garb. Playing their regional instruments amidst a sea of professional mariachis wearing the *traje de charro*, they seemed more like silent protesters than honored celebrants; yet it was precisely this style of traditional mariachi musicianship emphasized in the application that garnered ICH status the following year. Though both *Encuentros* now bear the ICH imprimatur, the international *Encuentro* especially promotes itself as a celebration of Mexico's newly-

minted, UNESCO-designated cultural patrimony. The feedback loop resulting from the convergence of the UNESCO agenda and the evolution of the *Encuentros* is a testament to the ongoing synergy between mariachi performance in all its manifestations and the marketing of *mexicanidad*.

If visibility and popularity are reliable indicators of what the future holds, comparison of the two *Encuentros* suggests the modern mariachi will remain the ultimate arbiter and purveyor of *mexicanidad*. The *Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería* is a pre-packaged distillation of *mexicanidad* sponsored by the Guadalajara Chamber of Commerce, embodied in the slogan "*Jalisco para el mundo*" (Jalisco for the world).<sup>48</sup> It draws mariachis from across four continents, many of whom are not of Mexican descent, who solidify their status as "real mariachis" by performing in this rarified setting. It creates a space for Mexicans, Mexicophiles, musicians, and music-lovers from around the world to commingle and undergo enculturation. This is especially true at events occurring in smaller venues or delineated outdoor spaces, where intimacy and informality promote interaction and a sense of connectedness between spectators. At the *Campeonato Charro*, a Mexican family invited this "gringa" into the fold, offering *caballitos* (shots) of tequila from their own bottle along with running commentary and guidance on the horsemanship of the *charros* as they progressed through each of the technical *suertes* (events). Like the foreign mariachis who descend upon Jalisco, locals and visitors do not attend the international *Encuentro* merely to appreciate the spectacle of it all, but rather to participate. They come to have their own encounter with tradition, ever-changing though the concept may be. They come to embrace *mexicanidad*.

### Notes:

1. Author's translation; technically, the term *encuentro* signifies an "encounter" or meeting of experts to share knowledge, the English word "festival" better conveys the activities and overall spirit of this *Encuentro*.

2. The term mariachi may refer to the genre of music, an individual musician, or an entire band depending upon context; one may be a mariachi (musician), hire a mariachi (group), or enjoy mariachi (music). Since the middle of the twentieth century the standard



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professional mariachi ensemble includes violins, trumpets, a Mexican *vihuela* (small five-stringed guitar with a rounded back), a *guitarrón* (large bass guitar with a rounded back), a guitar, and increasingly rarely a Mexican harp.

3. For a succinct outline of *charreada* (rodeo) events, see International Arts and Artists, “*Arte en la Charrería: The Artisanry of Mexican Equestrian Culture*,” *Educational Program*, accessed November 13, 2016, [https://www.eiteljorg.org/docs/learn-doc/educational\\_program.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.eiteljorg.org/docs/learn-doc/educational_program.pdf?sfvrsn=2), 4-5.

4. Literally *charro* suit; for a discussion of the origins and types of suits, see Kathleen Mullen Sands, *Charrería Mexicana* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), 78-81. Patricia Shehan Campbell and Leticia Soto Flores, “Mariachi Music: Pathway to Expressing Mexican Musical Identity,” in *Sustainable Futures for Musical Cultures: An Ecological Perspective*, eds. Huib Schippers and Catherine Grant (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 276.

5. Donald Andrew Henriques, “Performing Nationalism: Mariachi, Media and the Transformation of a Tradition (1920-1942)” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2006), 156.

6. The National *Encuentro* of Traditional Mariachi; in this case the true definition of *Encuentro* (previously noted) is accurate, though there are also festival-like performances associated with this meeting.

7. Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Invention of Traditions*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-14.

8. Michelle A. McKinley, “The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Black): Legal and Cultural Constructions of Race and Nation in Colonial Latin America,” in *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Daniel Martinez HoSang, Oneka LaBennett and Laura Pulido (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 118.

9. Edward Telles and Denia Garcia, “Mestizaje and Public Opinion in Latin America,” *Latin American Research Review* 48, no. 3 (2013), 134.

10. Talia Weltman-Cisneros and Candelaria Donají Méndez, “Negros-Afromexicanos: Recognition and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary Mexico,” *Journal of Pan African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2013), 141.

11. Fernando Armstrong-Fumero, trans. “Manuel Gamio and *Forjando Patria*: Anthropology in Times of Revolution,” in *Forjando Patria: Pro-Nacionalismo*, by Manuel Gamio (Boulder, University Press of Colorado, 2010), 5.

12. Perhaps better known for his 1925 publication *La Raza Cosmica* (The Cosmic Race). The mariachi song popularly known in the United States as “the Mexican hat dance.” Patricia Greathouse, *Mariachi* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2009), 22. For a discussion of changes to the musical landscape following the Revolution, see Chapter 2 in Jesús Jáuregui, *El Mariachi: Símbolo Musical de México* (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, México: Taurus, 2007), 68-69.

13. Olga Najera-Ramirez, “Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, and the Mexican Charro,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (1994), 5.

14. A brief discussion of traditional mariachi instrumentation can be found in Jeff Nevin, *Virtuoso Mariachi* (New York: University Press of America, 2002), 1-4. Nevin, *Virtuoso Mariachi*, 5-8. Mary-Lee Mulholland, “Mariachi, Myths and Mestizaje: Popular Culture and Mexican National Identity,” *National Identities* 9, no. 3 (2007), 255.

15. Henriques, “Performing Nationalism,” 66-90.

16. Compiled in Jáuregui, *El Mariachi*.

17. Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán is one of the most popular professional mariachis to this day. Nevin, *Virtuoso Mariachi*, 9.

18. Interview with Francisco Sanchez Flores, recounted in Jáuregui, *El Mariachi*, 153.

19. Áurea Toxqui, ““That Mariachi Band and That Tequila”: Modernity, Identity, and Cultural Politics in Alcohol Songs of the Mexican Golden Age Cinema,” in *Mexico in Verse: A History of Music, Rhyme, and Power*, eds. Stephen Neufeld and Michael Matthews

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- (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 260-261.
20. Mulholland, "Mariachi, Myths, and Mestizaje," 254.
  21. Toxqui, "That Mariachi Band and That Tequila," 257, 261. Jáuregui, *El Mariachi*, 150-153.
  22. Mulholland, "Mariachi, Myths, and Mestizaje," 66.
  23. Such as monuments and archaeological sites; UNESCO. "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," accessed November 10, 2016. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>. For an excellent conceptual overview of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and the history of relevant UNESCO Conventions, see Federico Lenzerini, "Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Living Culture of Peoples," *European Journal of International Law* 22, no. 1 (2011), accessed November 12, 2016, doi: 10.1093.
  24. UNESCO, "World Conference on Cultural Policies," accessed November 12, 2016, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0005/000525/052505eo.pdf>. Lenzerini, "Intangible Cultural Heritage," 104.
  25. Author's translation; Cámara de Comercio de Guadalajara, "*Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería*," accessed November 30, 2016, <http://www.mariachi-jalisco.com.mx/index.php/encuentro-internacional-del-mariachi-y-la-carrería/sabias-que>.
  26. Mary-Lee Mulholland, "Mariachis Machos and Charros Gays: Masculinities in Guadalajara," in *Masculinity and Sexuality in Modern Mexico*, eds. Víctor M. Macías-González and Anne Rubenstein (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 2012), 238.
  27. One of the states where mariachi originated; see Jáuregui, *El Mariachi*, 212-215.
  28. Ibid., 108-109.
  29. J. Arturo Chamorro Escalante, *Mariachi Antiguo*, 32.
  - Jarabe y Son: Símbolos Compartidos y Tradición Musical en las Identidades Jaliscienses* (Jalisco, Mexico: Secretaría de Cultura Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, 2006), 115.
  30. Conversely, Nevin, "Virtuoso Mariachi," 8, asserts that professional mariachis advanced and sustained the traditional mariachi.
  31. Shehan Campbell and Soto Flores, "Mariachi Music," 272-273.
  32. Chamorro Escalante, *Mariachi Antiguo*, 115.
  33. Ibid., 115-116.
  34. Shehan Campbell and Soto Flores, "Mariachi Music," 298.
  35. Secretaría de Cultura, "*Encuentro Nacional de Mariachi Tradicional*," accessed November 2, 2016 [http://sic.gob.mx/ficha.php?table=festival&table\\_id=695](http://sic.gob.mx/ficha.php?table=festival&table_id=695).
  36. Ibid..
  37. Shehan Campbell and Soto Flores, "Mariachi Music," 291.
  38. Ibid..
  39. Ibid.. UNESCO, "Mariachi, string music, song, and trumpet; Nomination File No. 00575 for Inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2011," accessed October 28, 2016, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/mariachi-string-music-song-and-trumpet-00575>.
  40. UNESCO, "Mariachi, string music, song, and trumpet; Nomination File No. 00575 for Inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2011," accessed October 28, 2016, <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/mariachi-string-music-song-and-trumpet-00575>, 7.
  41. Ibid., 10.

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42. UNESCO, "Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 6.COM 13.30," accessed October 28, 2016, [www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/6.COM/13.30](http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/6.COM/13.30).

43. Shehan Campbell and Soto Flores, "Mariachi Music," 279.

44. Ibid., 280.

45. As illustrated by film footage of interviews and performances from the XV *Encuentro Nacional del Mariachi Tradicional*; see, for example, C7 Cultura, "Especial Mariachi Tradicional, Parte 2" Filmed [August 2016]. YouTube video, 08:17. Posted [September 26, 2016]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0apjs2g0t5Y&t=33s&spfreload=10>.

46. The most detailed of these descriptions are typically daily schedules or press releases; for example, see Secretaría de Cultura, "El 15 Encuentro Nacional de Mariachi Tradicional en Jalisco ofrecerá 100 actividades entre galas y conciertos," Published August 10, 2016, <http://www.gob.mx/cultura/prensa/el-15-encuentro-nacional-de-mariachi-tradicional-en-jalisco-ofrecera-100-actividades-entre-galas-y-conciertos?state=published>.

47. Cámara de Comercio de Guadalajara, "Encuentro Internacional del Mariachi y la Charrería," accessed November 30, 2016, <http://www.mariachi-jalisco.com.mx/index.php>.

48. An *Encuentro* slogan that appears on the official website and at some performance venues, Ibid.

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360 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115

PHONE (617) 373-6818  
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