

Sport and Politics

■ I. Politics using sport –

- ▶ A. How does politics use sport? Parallel to religion in many ways
 - In support of conservative values
 - Politicians associate themselves with sports figures
 - Athletes running for office have a break – e.g. Nebraska football coach ran for House of Representatives in Nebraska two years ago and won easily.

- ▶ B. Sport and nationalism: e.g. the Olympics, Goodwill games, etc.
 - VIDEO: East German Sports (1988)
 - Discussion. Contrast with U.S. and other countries

- ▶ C. Biased mass media coverage – report of two studies
 - 1. Sabo et al., 1996 – U.S. media
 - a. sampling:
 - 340 hours of videotapes from 1990 Goodwill Games, 1991 PanAm, 1992 Olympics, 1993 World University Games, 1993 World Track & Field
 - quota sample of 30 personal interviews with athletes
 - opening and closing ceremonies

Sport and Politics

- b. results re nationalism:
 - focus on athletes from former Communist bloc countries as cheaters, machine-like, inhuman, without feelings; Americans as warm, fair, humane
 - stated or implied that some nations bring a political agenda; hidden assumption is that we don't
 - doubts raised re state funding of athletes from other countries; no problems of corporate sponsorship of US athletes are mentioned
 - drug use among Chinese or East German athletes is mentioned; not U.S. "Good us" vs. "bad them"
 - friendly approach to US athletes:
 - 61% first naming vs 41% for others; US athletes more likely to be interviewed
 - families of US athletes twice as likely to be referred to (31% vs. 15%)
- 2. Bernstein, 2000 – British, Israeli media
 - a. method:
 - samples two British and two Israeli newspapers from April 1 to September 1 1992 (Barcelona Olympics were July 25-August 9)
 - 2,405 Olympics-related items were analyzed. Mostly counts. Plus interviews with journalists.

Sport and Politics

- ▶
 - b. results: focus on one's own country is not a purely American thing
 - overwhelming preponderance of coverage of their own athletes, followed by Germany, US, Unified team (former USSR athletes).
 - Israelis give 21% of coverage to US, compared to 10% for Brits. Evidence from interviews that this is fan-driven. Why do Israelis like us?
 - Quote
- ▶ 3. Guillen. Another way of looking at the medal counts: an analysis of the 2000 Olympics.
 - a. Medal counts per se and per capita (text has this in abbreviated form)
 - b. Regression on per capita medals. Significant variables
 - per capita income
 - size of country
 - how democratic is country

1. Ranking according to total medals per 100 million population

Country Name	Medals per capita	Number of medals			
Bahamas, The	680.27	2	Ukraine	45.73	23
Barbados	376.46	1	Kazakhstan	44.89	7
Iceland	364.96	1	Croatia	44.43	2
Australia	309.32	58	Azerbaijan	37.93	3
Jamaica	271.74	7	Austria	37.14	3
Cuba	261.19	29	Poland	36.21	14
Norway	225.63	10	United States	35.89	97
Estonia	206.94	3	Uruguay	30.40	1
Hungary	168.08	17	Yugoslavia, FR(Serbia/Montenegro)	28.26	3
Belarus	166.03	17	Spain	27.94	11
Netherlands	159.26	25	Ireland	26.99	1
Bulgaria	157.44	13	Armenia	26.35	1
Trinidad and Tobago	155.63	2	Kenya	23.89	7
Sweden	135.57	12	Taiwan	22.73	5
Lithuania	135.03	5	Portugal	20.06	2
Qatar	134.71	1	Morocco	18.00	5
Switzerland	126.65	9	Korea, Dem. Rep.	17.26	4
Greece	123.63	13	Israel	16.77	1
Latvia	122.50	3	Algeria	16.71	5
Romania	115.54	26	Uzbekistan	16.63	4
Denmark	113.19	6	Japan	14.24	18
Georgia	110.25	6	Ethiopia	13.06	8
New Zealand	105.48	4	South Africa	12.08	5
Slovenia	100.91	2	Argentina	11.07	4
Slovak Republic	92.75	5	Saudi Arabia	9.64	2
Czech Republic	77.71	8	Brazil	7.23	12
Finland	77.62	4	Cameroon	6.99	1
Germany	69.47	57	Chile	6.75	1
France	64.57	38	Iran, Islamic Rep.	6.46	4
Korea, Rep.	60.31	28	Turkey	6.30	4
Russian Federation	59.90	88	Mexico	6.26	6
Italy	59.04	34	Mozambique	5.90	1
Costa Rica	56.72	2	Sri Lanka	5.33	1
Kuwait	53.59	1	Thailand	4.90	3
Macedonia, FYR	49.75	1	China	4.76	59
Belgium	49.00	5	Indonesia	2.95	6
United Kingdom	47.41	28	Nigeria	2.48	3
Moldova	46.53	2	Colombia	2.45	1
Canada	46.20	14	Vietnam	1.31	1
			India	0.10	1

Olympics 2000: Some Statistical Results

By Mauro F. Guillén

University of Pennsylvania

guillen@wharton.upenn.edu

2. Regression results

The results for 112 countries (with or without medals) show that the wealthier the country, the greater the size of the state, and the more democratic the country, the more medals per capita.

I am personally quite happy about these results. After all, we all know that the Olympics are about money, and government intervention. I am encouraged to see that controlling for money and government intervention, the more democratic a country, the more medals.

Regression with robust standard errors

Number of obs = 112
F(3, 108) = 6.07
Prob > F = 0.0007
R-squared = 0.1701
Root MSE = 45.683

medalpc	Coef.	Robust Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
GDP percapita	.0024763	.00143	1.732	0.086	-.0003582	.0053109
State size	1.349338	.7342177	1.838	0.069	-.1060092	2.804684
Democracy	3.204952	1.42328	2.252	0.026	.3837651	6.026139
Constant	-22.63615	10.76569	-2.103	0.038	-43.97561	-1.2967

Sport and Politics

- ▶ D. Sport as a weapon
 - 1. Of foreign policy, by governments: boycotts of international competitions – what are the motives?
 - 2. Of social change
 - a. Unofficial – protests by oppressed groups
 - first public use of games for demonstration against oppression at home: the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

VIDEO: 1968 Olympics

- 1992 Munich Olympics – "Black September". Palestinians tried to showcase their cause; wanted to have over 300 prisoners released. Kidnapped 11 Israeli athletes. Germans stormed airport; all Israelis, 5 terrorists died
 - setting up of "alternative" competitions- e.g. the Gay Games
- b. Official, by governments and sports associations -example of South Africa

History of the treatment of South Africa and its effect on apartheid.

Focus on South Africa and Rhodesia in terms of exclusion from sport came in 1950's and 1960's

Represented "flexing of muscles" of newly independent other African nations - these countries needed to create national unity, and sport provided a resource.

These states could take international lead, give them prestige, unite them together. Leadership here might lead to prestige in UN, etc.

Danin, "Upon achieving independence, African states found that they could compete more successfully in the Olympic Games than in the struggle for resources and power" (1981).

1960: International Table Tennis Federation banned an all-white South African team. South African government used law to ban interracial sport and outlined the implications of apartheid for sport.

IOC presents South Africa with an ultimatum: either conform to IOC rules or risk exclusion.

1962 South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee was formed; approached IOC with request that it be recognised as the representative for South Africa on the grounds that the existing NOC was organized along racial lines that contravened the Olympic Charter.

IOC bars S. Africa from 1964 Olympics, because they make no concessions.

1966 -- 32 African states set up Supreme Council for Sport in Africa. Express aim of using every means to obtain the expulsion of South African sports organisations from the Olympic movement and from International Federations should S. Africa fail to comply fully with IOC rules"

Decision revisited by IOC for 1968 games in Mexico. Tried everything to retain S. Africa, which was an original member way back. Decided to allow them, on grounds that they had made major concessions that would enable a multi-racial team to represent S. Africa. Became clear that government was going to override the NOC commitments to do this. SCSA threatened a 32 nation boycott.

Soviet Union was crucial here. Dilemma: is Olympic god more important than third world prestige? March, 1968, USSR backs boycott. IOC caves. Boycott lifted

1970. S. Africa expelled from IOC, based "less by sympathy with the critics of apartheid and more by a fear that the African states and the communist bloc might be persuaded to leave the Olympic movement and support some rival competition .." (Houlihan, Sport and International Politics, p. 118)

During this time, pressures increase for trade boycotts of S. Africa as well.

In the 1980's ANC in S. Africa starts pushing for non-racial controlling body for sport, which still does not exist in S. Africa.

Sports boycott became an issue in the 1987 political campaigns. Prominent sports personalities criticize government for damaging sport - e.g. former Springbok rugby captain. (Rugby is big; Springboks re all white).

Ad during S. African referendum campaign in 1992: "Without reform, South Africa hasn't got a sporting chance. Vote yes on March 17 and keep South Africa in the game."

Sport and Politics

■ II. Sport using politics –

- ▶ The IOC, national Olympic committees, and individual sports people benefit from
 - The attention international competitions bring
 - The money from TV contracts

- ▶ Possible solutions to excesses of nationalism in the Olympics. *Discussion.*
 - Establish two permanent *neutral* sites for the Games.
 - Restrict the events to competition among individuals
 - Athletes must represent only themselves
 - Revise the opening ceremonies so that athletes enter with others in their events.
 - Make all athletes eligible for competition
 - Amateur and professional
 - All nations, but countries not involved in selection
 - Subsidize the cost of the Olympics from revenues generated from spectators' admissions to regional competitions and the Games themselves, and from TV
 - Establish an Olympic Committee and a secretary-general to prepare for and oversee the Games. Selection would be a problem

Sport and Politics

- ▶ III. The “Nazi Olympics” of 1936. *Discuss*
- ▶ IV. The role of Jewish sport in contemporary Europe
 - Historical background: Interwar period
 - National teams in Europe routinely included Jewish athletes
 - There were Jewish sports associations, which fielded competitive teams
 - Outgrowth of fin-de-siecle “muscular Jewry” movement associated with Zionism – reaction to Anti-Semitism; couldn’t join other clubs
 - Attempt to “overcome centuries of debilitating ghetto existence”
 - e.g. Hakoah in Vienna, Austria
 - mission statement: “To unite the Jewish athletes who had been barred from other organizations, foster the physical prowess of the collective Jewish body, and advance a Jewish national consciousness.”
 - Won Austrian soccer championship in 1924-5

Sport and Politics

- Post-World War II: Hitler had almost succeeded in eliminating Jews from many of the countries of Europe
 - Bunzl (2000) discusses demographics of Vienna's Jewish community
 - 1960's: Heavily over 50
 - 1980's – influx from Soviet Union, but still only 10,000 Jews in city of 1 million
 - 65% < 50 years old
 - Now possibility of sports
 - 1990's --> present. Example of what sports can do for an “outgroup” (here Jews, but equally for gays, blacks)
 - Context: Austria is particularly non-repentant regarding the Holocaust. In 1986 elected an overtly anti-Semitic government.
 - 1995. SC Macobi Wien founded to offer “Jewish youth the opportunity to spend their leisure time by pursuing sports in a Jewish environment.”
 - 5 soccer teams at various levels, none very high
 - Gymnastics, squash, golf.
 - Hakoah also revitalized

Sport and Politics

- Findings of Bunzl’s ethnographic study
 - Why do individuals participate?
 - Enjoyment of athletic activities
 - Comfort “Here they don’t call it ‘a Jew’ when you kick with your toe”
 - Social club “Having fun together is more important than winning.”
 - Larger sociological functions
 - Community strengthening
 - “Everyone can participate, even those who have no talent at all.”
 - “There are 11 Jews on one field, that we win together and ... lose together.”
 - Combating the image of Jews as effeminate and weak; proclaiming a new, strong young Jewish identity
 - Asserting the Jewish presence in a country in which being a Jew has long been difficult and anti-Semitism has been strong
 - Asserting Jewish difference; breaking the enforced silence
 - Symbolism of the Star of David
 - Once forced to wear it, now proudly display it on their jerseys
 - “I am very proud to be part of a Jewish team, a team that is not only made up of Jews but a team that presents its Jewishness to everyone.”