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Verena Langenbach

Abbreviation Index

IOC -- International Olympic Committee

COC -- Canadian Olympic Committee

UN/UNO -- United Nations

LGBT -- Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender

In this thesis, LGBT, without including LGBT-IQ is referred to, concerning rights and the law, solely due to the fact that the main interest of human rights protest in this thesis also only refers to, and is called, the anti-LGBT law.

HR -- Human Rights

OHCHR -- Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights

UNHRC -- Human Rights Council

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Introduction

The Olympic Games are seen as the largest sports event worldwide with a history of almost 120 years of existence. Split up into Summer and Winter Games, alternating every two years and each hosted in a different country, the Olympics cannot only be seen as a sport event but as a cultural phenomenon that brings together all levels of society. No other global sport event includes as many participants from different countries, as these Games do.

The founding idea of the Olympic Games is not solely about sports, moreover, their International Olympic Committee sees itself as an “Olympic movement”, that wants to spread education and intercultural spirit throughout the world.

When looking at the characteristics of the Games, it becomes clear that being the longest existing global sport event, involving as many participants and providing a stage for global interaction, also brings out conflicts in interests.

Governmental, as well as non-governmental interests such as those of activist groups collide and cause protest. The political interests embedded in the Games, on the governmental side, are mostly concerning the country’s image and economic goals, while the focal point on the activist’s side, in many cases, is human rights. The collision leads to a protest activism by groups that use the unusual power they can exercise on the transnational stage.

The awarding of the 2014 Games to Russia led to such global protest activism. While Vladimir Putin characterized the Winter Olympics as his country’s re-emergence as a great power, critics voice concerns over corruption, human rights abuse and environmental degradation.

A main cause for transnational activism surrounding the Sochi Games was the passing of the so-called anti-gay law.

The law signed by President Putin states the penalization of positive statements of LGBT as propaganda, which Putin explains to be for the protection of children, while human rights advocates see it as a discrimination towards LGBT, causing them to initiate campaigns and protest throughout the globe.

Reason for Thesis

Even though no other event has brought together so many people from various countries throughout the world and became the biggest sporting event providing global platform for protest, the Olympic Games have been under explored in study of the usage of the provided stage for transnational activism.

Since the Olympic Games are the biggest sport event series in the world, providing a global platform, the analysis of protest within the scope of the event is of great relevance for a communication scientific aspect as well as the political aspect due to its international interest and impact.

The analysis of protest at the Olympic Games in relation to the transnational theory allows not only a communication science- but also a political approach.

The decisive reason for this thesis is the main question how and to what effect the Olympic Games have provided a publicity platform for human rights activism on the case of Sochi 2014.

The case of Sochi is chosen as it enables a research on recent protest at the Olympic Games in various ways.

In the lead-up to the Olympic Games in Sochi criticism of the new law and the treatment of LGBT people in Russia dominated and calls for protest were made. The fact that the LGBT issues seen within the field of the Sochi 2014 Olympics, led to worldwide protest while other human rights issues like violations towards workers and citizens didn't receive the same amount of attention, makes the case of Sochi particularly interesting for research as it is protest on the Olympic stage with a transnational issue.

The personal motivation and interest for this thesis is the combination of the Olympic Games being the world's biggest international sporting event and its capacity of providing a global stage for communicative action. As well as the transnational characteristic it has as it enables transnational activism.

Protest staged on the platform the Olympic Games provide, has a communication-scientific relevance as the international platform of a major event is used for communicating concerns transnationally.

Therefore, as protest is voiced and awareness of issues is raised, a transnational communication takes place.

The aim of the thesis is to give an insight on how protest took place on the stage of the Olympic games with regards to the transnational theory and transnational activism. What kind of actors were involved, what their intentions were and how they protested for their cause. Another aspect is the analysis of how successful the protests were, measured in the impact they had on media coverage and how much it was reported on.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis is structured to first guide the reader through the topic of research, namely human rights protest on the stage of the Olympic Games, from where it then leads to the analysis of the thesis, answering the question of research and giving an outlook on future events related to this field of research.

Human rights makes up the first chapter as the object of research and main cause of the protests analyzed in this thesis. In this chapter, an explanation of what human rights are, is included, as well as an introduction of the two leading international human rights organizations: The United Nations and Amnesty International and their Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The chapter is concluded with an overview of their work and their criticism of the International Olympic Committee concerning human rights. In addition to that first connection of human rights to the Olympic Games, the IOC's Agenda 2020 is discussed.

This is followed by the Chapter 'Conjunction of Olympism and Human Rights' in which the principles of Olympism get discussed and critically analyzed. It connects the Olympic Games and the Olympic idea to human rights and shows an example of the issues of contradiction which lead to protests on the Olympic stage.

The connection of human rights to the Olympic Games has played a role throughout the Game's history. To understand the development of protest in the Olympic Games, a chronological overview of major protests in the history of the Olympic Games will be given. This will include the description of various cases, the reason for protest, and its actors.

This overview of historical cases is followed by a discussion on the study done by Cottrell and Nelson, who analyzed the development and transformation of protest on a transnational stage, which is offered by the Olympic Games.

Looking at the different cases in history and their transformation, it becomes clear that protest has changed its character into becoming more global and transnational.

Subsequently, Transnational Theory and Transnational activism, their issues and characteristics, as well as different opinions on them, will be shown and examined as they are used for research on the protest at the Olympic Games.

To answer the research question ‘In which ways and to what effect have the Olympics provided a publicity platform for human rights activism?’ in the case of Sochi 2014, the media coverage of protest cases surrounding the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games was chosen for analysis. This analysis of newspaper articles, that were found through a database-research including various international newspapers and a time frame of 3 years, gives an insight into what actors did, what their intentions were, their form of protest and their strategy. The analysis then leads to a conclusion and an outlook towards future research on the topic.

Human Rights

United Nations

In understanding what human rights are and where they originate from, the United Nations play an important role.

After having to experience the horrors of war and the holocaust, 51 countries founded The United Nations Organization, often referred to as ‘UNO’ or ‘UN’, following the second World War, with the ambition of not ever having to see history repeat itself. (cf. AmnestyInternational, 2016) The term ‘United Nations’ was suggested by the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

With the war still going on, representatives of 26 allied nations, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and China, decided to pledge their support and stand together against the Axis Powers¹ (EncyclopediaBritannica, 2016) and signed the ‘Declaration by United Nations’ on January 1st, 1942 in Washington, D.C. which became the foundation for today’s UN. (cf. UnitedNations, 2009)

¹ “Axis powers, the Coalition headed by Germany, Italy, and Japan that opposed the Allied powers in World War II.” <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Axis-Powers> (22.03.2016)

In the following years, the allied nations continued their work. Representatives of the Soviet Union, the UK, China and the U.S. worked on proposals, which the representatives of 50 countries deliberated on three years later in 1945, at the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco. This was to become the United Nations Charter.

All 50 represented countries signed the Charter on June 26th, 1945. Poland, signed it later, and thus they became the 51 founding nations. (cf. United Nations, 2016) Today, the number of members has grown to 193 and the United Nations Organization is “the world’s largest and most important international organization” (United Nations, 2016).

Its importance becomes clear when considering its unique position of being independent and “the only forum in the world where peace and security, human rights and development are debated by all countries in the world.” (Amnesty International, 2016) Consisting of various bodies dealing with different issues, the UN created the ‘Human Rights Council’ (UNHRC) in 2006, as the one to deal with human rights issues. The UNHRC includes 47 Member States, which meet three times a year, and work together to address various human rights topics. They also have the power to create new human rights standards. Another task, under the name of ‘Universal Periodic Review’, is to make sure the UN Member States fulfil their human rights obligations. (cf. Amnesty International, 2016)

To widen the United Nations work on human rights issues, the General Assembly created the position of the ‘UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’.

The High Commissioner leads the ‘Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights’ (OHCHR), which is part of the UN Secretariat and, as such, responsible for the implementation of the UN human rights program. Through its work, the OHCHR is able to support human rights institutions and governments with expertise through research, and by offering education about human rights.

It enables the United Nations to work together with cooperation partners, which provide consultations, allowing a discourse on various topics, such as human rights issues. By shaping the definition and working with various partners and groups, the United Nations offer a platform for debate where human rights and violations against them get called out and discussed. It also enables the work of various advocates, such as Amnesty International.

Amnesty International

There are various organizations that focus on fighting for and defending human rights and that act as advocacy groups for people, who are often unable to defend themselves.

A major global organization, and a partner to the UN with special consultative status, is Amnesty International.

“Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million people
in over 150 countries and territories who campaign
to end abuses of human rights.”

(AmnestyInternational, 2016)

Amnesty International is known and active around the world. It is an advocacy group that was founded upon the idea of a single man, the lawyer Peter Benenson, in London. When Benenson heard of two Portuguese students that were jailed for raising a toast to freedom, in 1961, he published the ‘Appeal for Amnesty’ in The Observer newspaper. The article was reprinted in various newspapers throughout the world, bringing forth multiple responses and sparking the idea for worldwide unity through solidarity in the battle for justice and freedom.

The movement experienced a steady growth from then on, with growing popularity and importance, leading the UN to voting on the ‘Convention against Torture’ in 1984 after Amnesty had started a first campaign against torture in 1972.

In 1977, Amnesty was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize on the grounds of their efforts to “securing the ground of freedom, for justice, and thereby also for peace in the world” (Amnesty, 2016).

Amnesty’s work includes various fields of human right issues. They state about themselves that they are “independent of any political ideology, economic interest or religion” and “are campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.” (Amnesty, 2016) Their work consists of investigating and using their influence to put pressure on powerful groups and lobby governments to obey international law and keep their promises. (cf. AmnestyInternational, 2016)

“Only when the last prisoner of conscience has been freed,
when the last torture chamber has been closed,
when the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
is a reality for the world’s people, will our work be done.”

-Peter Benenson, Amnesty International founder (Amnesty, 2016)

Amnesty seeks to create a world in which human rights, laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (un.org, 2016), are granted and assured for everyone. (cf. AmnestyInternational, 2016)

The United Nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Its purpose was -and still is- to formulate the principles of the human rights movement, which declare their protection and promotion. This concerns fighting against violations such as discrimination, torture, protecting rights of minorities and fighting against the death penalty.

The Declaration has influenced international law, which aims at designing a global system of rights and has also inspired many institutions fighting for human rights around the world. In cooperation with the UN, Amnesty International name their goal to be “(...) [creating] a world where every one of us enjoys every human right laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” (AmnestyInternational, 2016)

In order to achieve that goal, the cooperation aims for a worldwide implementation of human rights and -standards, as well as a stronger UN presence in cases of violations and crises, and a more efficient promotion and protection.

Amnesty International is known for global campaigns that raise awareness about human rights violations.

In 2014, for the Olympic Torch journey from Moscow to Sochi, Amnesty called for a campaign that had various issues on their agenda and involved hundreds of thousands of Amnesty International members to join in a series of events and protests throughout the world.

With their campaign, Amnesty wanted to raise awareness on Russia’s violation of human rights. John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director of Amnesty International, argued that “The Olympic flame can throw light on the human rights

violations that the authorities would prefer to hide behind the celebratory decorations. (...)” (Dalhuisen qtd. in Krivosheev, 2013).

Through flash mobs and other actions in public spaces and at locations, such as Russian embassies, Amnesty wanted to highlight Russia’s violations concerning freedom of expression, association and assemblies. Amongst the issues they had with Russia, were the release of imprisoned protesters for freedom of expression, various laws violating human rights, including the anti-LGBT law, and the failure of investigating cases of murder on journalists and activists.

As Dalhuisen continues to state: “The Olympic fanfare and spectacular ceremonies will not hide the fact that fundamental human rights are trampled over despite being explicitly guaranteed by the Russian Constitution and international human rights treaties to which Russia is party” (Dalhuisen qtd. in Krivosheev, 2013).

The ongoing debate on the issue of the relation between human rights and the Olympic Games can be seen in a quote by Francois Carrard, IOC Director General in July 2001 when speaking about Beijing’s 2008 Olympic bid:

“We are totally aware there is one issue on the table, and that is human rights. Either you say because of some serious human rights issues, we close the door, deliver a vote that is regarded as a sanction and hope things evolve better. The other way is to bet on openness. We are taking the bet that we will see many changes.” (Francois Carrard qtd. in tibetnetwork, 2015)

Agenda 2020 criticism

As a reaction to wide spread criticism towards the IOC concerning environmental and human rights issues, the International Olympic Committee, under President Bach, reacted in 2013 and called for the Olympic Agenda 2020. (cf. olympic.org, 2016) The Agenda consists of various proposals concerning the organization of the Olympic Games.

“When you put them together, a picture emerges that shows the IOC safeguarding the uniqueness of the Olympic Games and strengthening sport in society.” (BBC, 2014)

The proposals included organizational issues, such as the bidding process, which is

supposed to make it easier for host cities to apply for hosting the Games. The recommendation states that it should be made possible for future applicants to be able to better fit the hosting into their economic, social and environmental capabilities, allowing more sustainability- something which often comes to short at the Olympic Games. Sustainability also becomes a topic in the Agendas' recommendation 3 in which the IOC states that costs for the bidding should be reduced and sustainability should be a major factor in awarding the Games to a city.

Concerning human rights, recommendation 14 of the Olympic Agenda 2020 plays an important role. Here, the IOC states that the 6th Fundamental Principle of Olympism shall be strengthened by including non-discrimination on sexual orientation in the Olympic Charter.

Other proposals and recommendations include the launch of an Olympic TV channel, offering a platform for everyone involved in the Olympic Games, and strengthening the Basic Universal Principle of Good Governance and ethics in compliance with the IOC's financial statements. (cf. olympic.org, 2016)

But criticism of the Agenda 2020 soon followed. A coalition of human rights organizations called 'The Sports and Rights Alliance', which includes organizations such as Amnesty International, the International Trade Union Confederation and Transparency International, openly criticized the IOC for not living up to the expectations that were created by the passing of the Agenda 2020.

The Alliance criticism explicitly states that "the absence of any explicit reference to human rights in its newly redrafted host city contract is a "shocking omission"." (cf. Gibson, 2015)

In an article published on *theguardian.com* on September 25th, 2015, Amnesty International Netherlands director Eduard Nazarski expresses his opinion on how human rights abuses continue to happen in connection with the Olympic Games. He is quoted saying that "from the crackdown on protests and press freedom in Beijing 2008 and restrictions on gay rights and free speech around Sochi 2014, (...) and the thousands forcibly evicted in Rio, there is no denying that Olympic Games can and do lead to human rights abuses." (cf. Nazarski qtd. in Gibson, 2015)

His criticism goes against the IOC directly, stating that it is difficult to understand the

committees' failure of explicitly referring to human rights in their new host-city contracts following the Agenda 2020. In his view, it is a contradiction to consider sport a human right but at the same time to fail to protect human rights.

Even though there have been changes made, like strengthening the 6th fundamental principle in the Olympic charter adding non-discrimination on sexual orientation, as well as new rules forcing contractors hired for building the Olympic venues into a better treatment of workers, and the obligation to host-cities of guaranteeing freedom of the press, these still did not meet the claims made by The Sports and Rights Alliance.

The Alliance aims to push for a clear commitment to human rights by the IOC and an explicit focus on good governance, as Sylvia Schenk of Transparency International Germany states: "Good governance in sport as an overall concept is missing from the contract (...). The organising committee urgently needs a full compliance management system in place to meet international governance standards." (Sylvia Schenk qtd. in Gibson, 2015)

As a reaction to the criticism by The Sports and Rights Alliance, the IOC director of communications, Mark Adams states his astonishment saying that the changes made to the host city contracts had also been welcomed by the Alliance. (cf. Gibson, 2015)

He elaborates on the changes made concerning human rights issues and disagrees with the Alliances' criticism by saying that, the contract did include "all three areas highlighted by the Sport and Rights Alliance: LGBT rights, workers' rights and free reporting in the context of the Olympic Games." (Gibson, 2015) And therefore would meet and mirror the United Nations declaration of human rights. (cf. Gibson, 2015)

Rio 2016

An article published on December 8th, 2015 on theguardian.com reflects the widespread criticism concerning human rights issues such as violations of children's rights and evictions of thousands in connection to the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil. It discusses the outlook on the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio, containing criticism of violation to human rights reported by the 'Comité Popular', the leader of a coalition of activists.

It becomes clear that the outlook on the Games concerning human rights draws a rather negative picture of the 2016 Summer Games, as, according to their report, violations have already taken place during the preparation time for the Olympics.

In their report, the coalition of activists claims that there is a long list of problems, naming “evictions, police violence and poor labor conditions” amongst them. (cf. Watts, 2015)

Naming that report ‘Exclusion Games’ makes sense when looking at the numbers they provide of at least 4,120 families having lost their homes and 2,486 under the threat of being removed due to the need of space for infrastructure projects, which also excludes children from continuing their school and having access to other needs. They add that police violence against young people, especially in the poor parts of the city, has increased.

The coalition of activists, including different NGOs, refers to previous studies done on the topic of a rise in child exploitation during mega sport events. They add a second study done by Dundee University and the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, which analyzed the “disappearances of several street children who were removed from the streets in “social cleansing” operations ahead of major events.” (cf. Gibson, 2015)

While, according to the article, the City of Rio denies the accusations, stating that in total, over 80% of the actions taken were independent of the Olympic Games preparations and were more ~~se~~ due to natural catastrophes like floods, as well as improving the cities infrastructure. Adding that through investments on healthcare and education, an increase in the wellbeing of Rios children could be accomplished.

Despite the defense by Rio’s government official, the ‘Comité Popular’ criticizes that “(...) the social costs of mega-events outweigh the benefits, which are skewed towards the wealthier parts of the city.” (Watts, 2015)

The Alliance of activists also calls upon the International Olympic Committee to strengthen their ambitions towards human rights and their commitment to the Olympic Charter values, quoting Jules Boykoff, a professor of political science at Pacific University: “(...) The IOC absolutely needs to start taking human rights more seriously. This is a no-brainer. The IOC tendency to foist plausible deniability on us has become undeniably implausible.” (Boykoff qtd. In Watts, 2015)

The conjunction of Olympism & Human Rights

„Olympism... exalting and combining in a balanced whole
the qualities of body, mind and will. “

-Pierre de Coubertin (Inglis, 2008:463)

Pierre de Coubertin (cf. Cahill, 1999)², himself a highly enthusiastic sportsman, who “was convinced that sport was the springboard for renewed moral energy” (olympic.org, 2016), was the founder of the International Olympic Committee. It was also Coubertin who defined the principles, which build the foundation for today’s still valid definition of Olympism:

“To be a religion i.e. to “adhere to an ideal of a higher life, to strive for perfection”; to represent an elite “whose origins are completely egalitarian” and at the same time an “Aristocracy” with all its moral qualities; to create a truce with “a four-yearly celebration of the springtime of mankind”; and to glorify beauty by the “involvement of the arts and the mind in the Games”.” (cf. olympic.org, 2016)

Proposed in the late nineteenth century as an ideal for mankind in the upcoming twentieth century, Olympism was meant to educate through sport. Coubertin hoped for it to become a model, which would slowly lead to a better world, as he said. According to Janet Cahill: “Every four years, the restored Olympic Games ... [will] little by little dissipate the ignorance in which people live with respect to others, an ignorance which breeds hate, compounds misunderstanding and hastens events down the barbarous path towards merciless conflict”. (Cahill, 1999)

Commenting on what has become of Coubertin’s hope for the spread of Olympism, Janet Cahill quotes the journalist Damian Grace, “The Games have become less an expression of the ideals of Olympism than an opportunity to prove that winning is everything. Getting

² “Pierre Frédy, Baron de Coubertin was born in Paris, France in 1863. He strongly believed that sport and athleticism should be part of a young man’s education, and that the concept of Olympism would promote communication and understanding between nations. Therefore, in 1892, he announced his intention to the Sorbonne (the French Parliament) to revive the Olympic Games. Four years later, the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece. Today de Coubertin is known as the Founder of the modern Olympic Movement, and, the Olympic Humanist” -Janet Cahill: „The Ideals of Olympism“

a result for sponsors, national pride, the athletes and the IOC is what the Games are about.” (Cahill, 1999). The question, Cahill asks, is whether Coubertin’s goals have been achieved. She refers to the Fundamentals of Olympism (cf. Vidishcheva & Tskhakaya, 2010):

1. «...Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles».
2. «The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity».
3. «...It reaches its peak with the bringing together of the world’s athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games. Its symbol is five interlaced rings».
4. «...Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play».
5. «Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement».

In answering this question, Cahill agrees with the opinion of Tskhakaya and Vidishcheva, when she says that Coubertin’s ideal picture has fallen short of his Olympism, “in fact, it could be argued that the theory of Olympism in the modern era has never quite achieved its ideals as racism, politics or commercialism seem to get in the way.” (cf. (Cahill, 1999)

Tskhakaya and Vidishcheva write, “If we look upon the fundamental principles of the Olympic Games it may seem that no kind of violence is acceptable [...]. Peace, cooperation, respect and equality constitute the framework of the Olympic ideology long time ago. But does the reality always justify the concepts of the Games?” (cf. (Vidishcheva & Tskhakaya, 2010)

Both, Cahill, as well as Tskhakaya/Vidishcheva point towards the controversy of Olympism versus the reality of the environment surrounding the Olympic Games. While the idea of Olympism can be seen as a praise towards human rights such as human

equality, nation equality and fairness, cases in the past of Olympic history, as well as the on-going debates concerning Sochi, 2014 and Rio 2016, show a reality which contradicts the principles of Olympism and therefore leads to human rights protests and boycotts throughout the world.

As Dr. Andrew Foxall states: “The human-rights situation in Russia clearly contradicts the principles of equality and non-discrimination that are at the core of the Olympic movement, and which are enshrined in Principle six of the Olympic Charter.” (cf. (Foxall, 2014)

History of Olympic Protest / Cottrell and Nelson study

Throughout its history, the Olympic Games have been used as a stage for a variety of protests. When analyzing the different cases, it becomes clear that these protests did not only vary in their causes, but also in their protesting parties and the form of protest.

A study performed by M. Patrick Cottrell and Travis Nelson on protest in Olympic Games history, published in the European Journal of International Relations in 2010, reveals a development in protest. Cottrell and Nelson’s theoretical and empirical analysis ‘Not just the Games? Power, protest and politics at the Olympics’ comes to the conclusion that in the development of protests taking place at the modern Olympic Games, a sort of evolution can be detected. According to them, “not only has Olympic political contention grown substantially over time, but it also has evolved in interesting ways in terms of the particular actors engaged in contention, the tactics they use, and the resistance they face.” (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:729)

They say that ever since 1896, not only the Olympic Games have grown (5x as many athletes as in 1908 and 10x as many in 2008 (cf. Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:738) but therefore also protest activity has continuously grown and shifted from “a predominance of boycotts by states and bans of states to on-site demonstrations by transnational activities”. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:730)

Their analysis shows that protest has not only grown substantially over time, even though there has been resistance by the IOC and various host states throughout; the above mentioned evolution shows that protest also moved away from being mostly state-based boycotts and domestic demonstrations to a tendency toward protest becoming a

phenomenon of an increasing broad range of intensified issues, and protesting actors being transnational networks and social movements rather than states. (cf. Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:753)

Growing Games involving more states widens not only the sportive aspects but also leads to greater media coverage and distribution of the Games. All those aspects offer more potential for transnational and domestic allies and include a greater “watchdog presence” meaning that host-states and the IOC are limited in pursuing anti-protest actions. Through a growing number of transnational allies, claimants have the chance to reduce costs yet amplify benefits and support and reduce the risk of being suppressed. (cf. Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:738)

This evolution in protest, and the fact that the Olympics, as a high-profile event, offer a unique venue for international political contention which is continuously becoming more interesting for non-state actors, leads to the conclusion that an examination of protest at the Olympic Games could be very well done through the transnational theory.

M. Patrick Cottrell and Travis Nelson do not only analyze the phenomenon of an evolution in protest history of the Olympic Games. Their study, in addition, gives attention to -and examines the attractiveness of the Olympic Games as a venue of protest.

As mentioned before, the various protests and demonstrations at Olympic Games show an existing attractiveness of the venue.

The Olympic Games, even though based on the idea by Coubertin and the Olympic Charter, were originally not supposed to be political (as mentioned before in the previous chapter ‘Conjunction of Olympism and Human Rights) but have been a venue for protest throughout their history with the Berlin Games in 1936 as a starting point of using the Games for political purposes.

The reason for that can be found when taking a closer look at the Games’ nature and character.

The Olympics have always offered space for protest by being a platform with worldwide attention as the “largest regularly scheduled international gathering in the world”. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:730)

As a place where many different nations from all over the world get together and national

pride, as well as the wish to establish a positive image for their country, leads to a variety of interests, the Olympics offer opportunities for various actors with different intentions such as sportive and political ones.

In London 1908, said to be the first modern Games, the Irish boycotted the Games due to the refusal of independence by England. Another form of boycott protest took place when Ralph Rose, a U.S. athlete refused to dip the flag for King Edward VIII. The tradition at the Olympic Games ceremony is for the countries' athletes to dip their flag when passing the host countries dignitaries. But Ralph Rose denied that honor to King Edward VIII stating "This flag dips for no earthly king." And the U.S. athletes have kept that very own tradition. (cf. Garcia, 2014)

The following years, a time of bans and boycotts took place. Due to World War I, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, and Turkey were banned from the 1920 and 1924 Games. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:749)

The awarding of the 1936 Olympic Games to Berlin in 'Nazi-Germany', took place when Hitler was not yet in power which he then took two years later. The awarding lead to various debates whether to boycott the Games or not. In the end, the Games were boycotted by Jewish athletes, as well as Spain and France, due to Germany's politics and its discrimination against Jews. Other countries' boycotts were demanded and, in some, like Great Britain, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and the Netherlands, it did reach attention, but in the end, also the mass movements in other Western states and the US, did not change the total number of 49 countries attending the Games' competition. (cf. Scott, 2016)

The main reason for the Games to go down in history though, was the appearance of the African-American U.S. athlete Jesse Owens. Owens won four gold medals and through that took a swipe at Hitler's so called 'superior race theory' by defeating Hitler's 'Aryan supermen'. (cf. Garcia, 2014)

It has been seen as one of the greatest snubs in sports history, throughout media coverage, as Hitler is said to have stormed out of the stadium without congratulating Owens for his win. Yet, the general opinion differs on whether Owens himself said to object the general agreement of Hitler shaking his hand or not. (cf. Hall, 2009)

Another incisive example of Boycott concerning the Olympic Games took place in

Melbourne. The 1956 Games are referred to, by the International Olympic Committee, as the first modern Olympic Games being boycotted. (cf. Garcia, 2014)

After the Soviet Union had invaded Hungary, many countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain, felt provoked and therefore withdrew from the games. At the same time, Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq boycotted a participation due to Britain and France's invasion of the Suez. (cf. Benagh, n.d.) In addition to that, China also refused to take part as Taiwan was participating. (cf. theguardian, 2011)

In the 1964 Games in Tokyo the barring of South Africa from the Games started and continued until 1992 due to the countries Apartheid politics.

The International Olympic Committee stated that South Africa would only be allowed back in the Olympic Games if the country broke with racial discrimination and reversed the ban on its own national competitions.

Through that ultimatum given by the International Olympic Committee, South Africa accused the IOC of introducing politics into sport.

Since the country didn't manage to meet enough of the qualifications, the ban lasted until 1992.

In the same year of 1964, Indonesia and North Korea were also not allowed to participate due to athletes from both countries taking part in 1963s Games of the New Emerging Forces (EnzyklopediaBritannica, n.d.)³ which led to an IOC statement that those athletes would be disqualified. (cf. bbc, 2008)

Four years later, the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico, in many regards, became a sign of protest for an entire decade. Student and anti-war protests were taking place all over the world and probably the most famous award ceremony in sport history occurred at the 1968 Games.

In Mexico, the biggest Latin-American University was shut down due to protest against the continuous governing party PRI. With protest against the dictatorial government right before the start of the Olympic Games, students were hoping for concessions to be made

³ The GANEFO (Games of the New Emerging Forces) were formed in 1963 by the Asian communist countries. Games were held in 1963 in Jakarta, Indonesia, excluding Taiwan and Israel from the Games. Due to that exclusion, the IOC declared that, conversely, any athlete participating in the GANEFO would be banned from the Olympics. (<http://www.britannica.com/sports/Games-for-the-New-Emerging-Forces> 11.07.2015)

by the politicians, in order to assure peaceful Games. Not expecting the cruel and brutal fight back by the police and military, firing into a crowd of unarmed students, killing thousands fleeing as tanks rolled in on Tlatelolco Plaza just 10 days before the official start of the Games. (cf. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014)

The same Olympic Games, being only the second to be covered by electronic media (cf. bbc.com, 2014), became the setting for an award ceremony which should go down in history as one of the most famous silent protests.

Just a few weeks after the assassination of Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, on October 16th 1986, Tommie Smith and John Carlos took the winners podium after the Olympic 200m run. The two African-American athletes, competing for the USA and finishing the race first and third, both stood in black socks and a black-gloved fist raised during the medal ceremony, when they turned to face the flag for the national anthem. They later stated—it was a human rights salute rather than a ‘Black Power’ (Literacy, 2005)⁴ salute. (cf. Howell, 2016)

They protested against discrimination towards black citizens in the United States, criticizing that they were competing for-and therefore representing- a country that didn’t grant them equal rights at home. (cf. bbc, 2008)

As Barry Davies, an Olympic Games broadcaster, states in his article published on bbc.com: “For me, the Black Power salute was the moment at which the Olympic Games became a theatre open to anybody who wanted to make a point, whether it was to win a gold medal in a world-record time or draw attention to what was considered to be a problem at home.” (Davies, 2012)

In 1972 the Olympic Games made their way back to Germany for the first time after Berlin 1936.

Germany was given a chance of representing themselves and the Games in the sign of peace and establishing a new Olympic image.

But the 1972 Munich Games made their way into history through the terrorist attacks played out by “Black September” a Palestinian militant group.

⁴ A movement that grew out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. Black Power calls for independent development of political and social institutions for black people and emphasizes pride in black culture. <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/black-power> (10.02.2017)

The attacks took place five days before the ending of the Games when 8 terrorists broke into the Israeli compound in the Olympic village, killing 11 Israeli athletes after they had killed two and taken nine hostages. (cf. theguardian, 2011) The attack was said to be a protest against the imprisonment of 234 Palestinians being locked up in jail in Israel, for which the terrorist demanded their release. (cf. Scott, 2016)

The IOC president Avery Arundage's decision to continue the Games after just 34 hours, led to criticism but the Games continued.

A major boycott in the Olympic Games history took place at the 1976 Montreal Games.

With the ongoing apartheid policies in South Africa, a country itself banned since the 1964 Games, 33 African and Caribbean nations decided to boycott the Games after the IOC refused to put New Zealand on the ban list, which many nations called for due to the country's rugby teams attendance at games in South Africa. (cf. theguardian, 2011)

While the boycott at the Canadian Games went down in history as a major boycott, the most serious followed at the Games in 1980 and 1984.

In 1980, the U.S. Olympic Committee decided to boycott the Moscow Games and used it as a protest against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, which took a place a year prior to the Games.

The United States led boycott was joined by 40 nations, including China, Japan and West Germany, leading to a disruption of the Soviet aim of image boosting Olympic Games. Even though the Soviets denied that the following boycott at the 1984 Los Angeles Games performed by many eastern countries which joined the Soviet Union, was a reprisal to the 1980 boycott, and -instead- stated that it was due to 'openly hostile environment', most voices on the topic clearly saw a political intention behind the boycott. (cf. Benagh, n.d.) The USSR officials added that "it is known from the very first days of preparations for the present Olympics the American administration has sought to set course at using the Games for its political aims. Chauvinistic sentiments and anti-Soviet hysteria are being whipped up in this country." (Scott, 2016)

The 1988 Games in South-Korea went down in history as the first without an organized boycott and therefore set a milestone for South-Korean democracy. (cf. theguardian, 2011) An anti-government protest by South-Korean student groups took place. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:750)

The following 1996 Games in Atlanta marked a spot in history being the first ones to take place without governmental support, leading to the commercialization of the Games. Even though a bomb-explosion took place in the Olympic Park, which was seen as a terrorist attack, the group and its intention behind it were never identified. (cf. theguardian, 2011)

A demonstration was held at the 1998 Nagano Games by the 'Anti-Olympics People's Network' protesting against the environmental and economic impact of the Olympics. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:750)

The Australian Games of 2000 managed to turn into the largest there had been and presented themselves as well-organized games.

Despite the appearance of a great event, for the first time in Olympic history, various demonstrations took place on the platform of the games. The so-called 'S-I I Alliance' demonstrated against globalization, while Aboriginal groups protested for their right of recognition in Australia. Another Anti-Olympic group demonstrated against the negative impact of the Games. The rapidly growing amount of demonstrations continued when the Olympic Games came back to the United States taking place in Salt Lake City. No bans or boycotts dominated the protest stage but instead, activist groups, including Greenpeace, demonstrated and protested for various causes like environmentalism, human rights in China, animal rights and even a protest against condom availability for athletes took place by a group named 'Generation Life'. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:750)

When the Olympic Games returned to their roots in Athens, Greece in 2004, it faced demonstrations by Anti-American groups due to the U.S. invasion of Iraq a year prior to the games and the outlook of the 2008 Games taking place in Beijing, China, led to a protest by Tibetan groups demonstrating against the country's course towards Tibet's independence. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:750)

The environmental and anti-globalization, as well as the anti-Olympic protests continued at the 2006 Turin Games.

Leading to the 2008 Beijing Games that underwent a global wave of protest -yet not leading to a boycott- due to China's repressive regime and human rights abuses,

especially towards the Tibetan people. Protesting human rights groups included ‘Students for a free Tibet’ as well as various Chinese and Darfur groups. The rewarding of China with the Games led to criticism of the IOC, while supporters of the decision reasoned their positive view by stating that putting China on international attention could lead to social liberalization. (cf. theguardian, 2011)

Looking at the various cases in Olympic Games protest history, a transformation on the form of protest can be detected. It becomes clear that ever since the 1970’s, protest continuously grew and became a part of the games.

While in the beginning protest was mostly in the form of broad boycotts performed by states, as can be seen in 1980 and 1984, taking place at the Games, the protest later on developed towards a more individual form of protest.

As Cottrell and Nelson state in their study, a reason for the growing protest activity can be found in the logistical issues such as the IOC’s decision of staggering the summer and winter Games every two years which created more space and time for protest. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:738)

Another reason is the steady growth of the Olympic Games with more athletes and countries competing, leading to an “increased Olympic profile” bringing “more potential transnational and domestic allies”. (cf. (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:738)

The transnationalization led to a development in protest from state boycotts to activist groups which used the venue of the games and its transnational platform to transform protest into demonstrations for their respective issues.

As Cottrell and Nelson state: “These types of demonstrations are now by far the most dominant form of Olympic protest, and the actors using them include both transnational actors (...) and domestic actors within the host state using the Olympics to enter transnational space and to form new transnational connections.” (Nelson & Cottrell, 2010:739)

Transnational Theory and Activism

In this thesis, the example of protest movement on the stage of the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014 and the activism of the Olympic Games, as well as the development of protest

there, show how transnationalism affects protest and protest movements and what impact the transnational level has.

Protest movement is seen as an interesting field of research due to its nature of not only affecting a single case but, as can be seen in the analysis of protest history at the Olympic Games, how it appears throughout the Games' history in various cases, various actors and various countries, and can be expected to continue throughout future Olympic Games.

Whenever transnationalism is talked about, governance and global governance can never be avoided. In this thesis, with the Olympics being an international event, Global Governance is especially of interest in this research.

In her paper "Pathways of Transnational Activism A Conceptual Framework", Sabrina Zajak quotes Risse by stating Global Governance is "creating political order in the absence of a state with a legitimate monopoly over the use of force and the capacity to authoritatively enforce the law and other rules". (Risse qtd. in Zajak, 2013:3)

According to her, Global Governance creates that order through bodies of regulation of both international- and national law, that co-exist and overlap, and that work together with actors that unite interdependently in inter- and intra-organizational networks that use different sources of power and enforcement mechanisms. (cf. Zajak, 2013:3)

While Bernstein and Cashore differentiate between the four distinct paths of global markets, "international rules, international norms and domestic infiltration of transnational actors" (Zajak, 2013:6), they focus solely on transnational actors and institutions as a source of domestic change. Research writer Sabrina Zajak focuses on "interactions between transnational (...) activists, transnational institutions, and the domestic context in order to capture global and local change (two-way relationship)." (cf. Zajak, 2013:6)

Zajak criticizes that the governance concept sees civil society actors as part of the governance concept instead of them being independent actors able to take action outside of governance structures. (cf. Zajak, 2013:4) Through her analysis of the pathways of transnational activism, she states that "activism is shaped by, and shapes the current global governance architecture and at the same time uses those channels to produce domestic change." (cf. Zajak, 2013:4)

According to her, the overall transnational activism study mostly only handles how

change takes place, or considers global institutions as stable opportunities for activists wanting domestic change. Those activists wanting that domestic change, but not able to succeed due to being repressed or blocked, often connect with other activists in order to pursue their goals through transnational support.

The model used in those cases is the so-called ‘boomerang effect model’.

The boomerang effect model sees an advantage in closed domestic opportunities, as such lead to transnational activism.

For the model to work, certain facts have to be given: The domestic actors must be “willing and able to make claims, to forge alliances, and to activate international resources.” (Zajak, 2013:5) In addition, the state that they aim at with their claims, has to be “either materially, economically, or normatively vulnerable to external pressure from foreign governments or international organizations mobilized by advocacy coalitions.” (cf. (Zajak, 2013:5)

The boomerang-effect-model, as the name states, therefore leads to results by the domestic protesters reaching out transnationally and building coalitions which then return by changing local issues.

As in Sochi, the human rights violation in form of Russia’s anti-gay law, was criticized by people around the world and led activists to protest against the law on the global stage of the Olympic Games in order to put international pressure on the Russian government.

Criticism on Transnational Theory and Activism

To understand how transnational activism works, a closer look at world politics needs to be taken, as the structure of today’s world politics is a very diverse one. While up until the 20th century politics was mostly led by states and their governments, they today are an interaction of the states along with non-state actors. These do not only each interact with each other, but also with the states and other international organizations.

“Some involve economic actors and firms. Some are networks of scientists and experts whose professional ties and ideas underpin their efforts to influence policy.” (Haas qtd. in Sikkink & Keck, 1998:89).

The so-called non-state actors can be actors or networks from various fields with different

interests such as economical or scientific ones. Another form of non-state actors are transnational advocacy groups. These are networks of activists connected by principled ideas and similar values.

“Transnational activists are defined as people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that get them involved in transnational networks and contacts” (Tarrow qtd. in Zajak, 2013:2) Advocacy networks act on a transnational, regional and domestic level and aim for the goal of connecting social and cultural norms in order to help processing regional and international integration. (cf. Sikkink & Keck, 1998:90)

Transnational advocacy groups and other non-state actors lead to a diffusion of power, splitting up the power alignment of states. They do so by connecting and scattering power amongst civil society, the states and international organizations. This leads to a diverse dialogue between state governments and citizens, and to an influence on power and policy making. It empowers an exchange of resources and ideas amongst all actors. That exchange enables a transformation of national sovereignty. (cf. Sikkink & Keck, 1998:90)

“The term activism describes political activities which are based on a conflict of interests, challenge (or support) existing power structures and take place, at least part, outside formal political institutions” (Piper/Uhlin qtd. in (Zajak, 2013:2)

Non-state actors, especially advocacy groups, are known for taking action on issues involving human rights and the environment. These are often fields on which the government’s opinion and citizen’s opinion often strongly differ. This can be seen in the surroundings of the Games, and the use of the Olympic Games as a platform for protest by activists.

While states, especially the hosting country, use the Olympic Games for image purposes, advocacy groups often criticize the ignorance towards environmental and human rights issues.

Advocacy networks are especially important for human rights issues as these often ask for advocates coming from the outside, as those who suffer from violations of rights often are not able to reach any change by themselves.

As Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink state in their work *Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics*: “Yet more than other kinds of

transnational networks, advocacy networks often reach beyond policy change to advocate and instigate changes in the institutional and principled bases of international interactions.” (Sikkink & Keck, 1998:89)

It becomes clear that the activists’ goals are not solely on a policy level.

Much more, they aim for going beyond the change of policy, wanting a transformation of terms and in the nature of debates. This increases their domestic as well as international importance as advocates for policy debates.

Especially in terms of human rights, the characteristics of transnational advocacy groups being connected by the same values and the same goals and supporting each other through an exchange of information, play an important role.

As Keck and Sikkink formulate it: “When they succeed, they are an important part of an explanation for changes in world politics.” (Sikkink & Keck, 1998:89)

SOCHI 2014

With increasing critical voices on human rights issues in Russia concerning the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games, it becomes clear that the roles of transnational activism and transnational activist groups could play an important role within the human rights debate surrounding the Games.

“The human-rights situation in Russia clearly contradicts the principles of equality and non-discrimination that are at the core of the Olympic movement, and which are enshrined in Principle six of the Olympic Charter.”

(Foxall, 2014:24)

The awarding of the Olympic Games to Russia raised many concerns about the human rights situation surrounding ‘Sochi 2014’.

Observers criticize the situation for various groups of people and the lack of protection for their human rights. It started with local citizens and their forced eviction from their

homes, sometimes having to accept inadequate compensation, due to the need of space for infrastructural constructions for the Games.(cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:14) Those constructions added to the protests, not only due to often claimed environmental issues but also due to the treatment of the thousands of workers, 16,000 of them being migrant workers, who are said to have gotten cheated out of wages while having to work 12-hour shifts with only a few days off and having their passports and work permits taken from them, forcing them to continue their work despite exploitative working conditions. (cf. (Gibson, 2015) In addition, observers criticized that the living conditions for workers are said to not meet humane standards. (cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:14)

While the Russian government denies a violation of the rights of Sochi's citizens and those of the workers, a federal law program passed in 2006, as well as a 2007 law have not only limited local rights but also given president Putin unlimited control over public safety. (cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:14)

Other laws passed by the Russian government are said to aim for limiting critical voices of journalists and activists, and may further violate participants' human rights through restrictions like electronic surveillance.

Further criticism against human rights violations was voiced due to the treatment of protesters, the ones demonstrating against the construction works, as well as activists in general as they were limited in their rights of freedom of expression, which also occurred to journalists which suffered from restrictions on reports on the topic of problems in Sochi. (cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:14)

The right to demonstrate was fully abolished in August 2013 when Putin issued a decree prohibiting any form of protest or demonstrations in Sochi during the time of the Olympic Games. He later changed the ban to allowing demonstrations, but only if those did not concern the Olympics and only if the protest took place in a restricted area outside of the Games' sites. In addition, the demonstrations still had to be approved by local officials and the Interior Ministry which led to criticism concerning the actual approval of protests. (cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:14)

Despite the listed human rights abuses, the Russian anti-LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) law caused many critics to state their concerns.

Prior to Sochi 2014, different voices could be heard on discussing whether to boycott the

games or attend- in order to be able to have the possibility to protest on-site. This followed powerful examples like 1968 Tommie Smith and John Carlos' protest at the podium during the medal ceremony.

With awarding Russia with the Olympic Winter Games 2014, not only general concerns were voiced, but the International Olympic Committee also had to undergo a lot of criticism for their choice of Russia as the Olympic host. A main reason leading to protest against the decision was the new Russian anti-LGBT law passed by Vladimir Putin's government.

"Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, where homophobic legislation, suppression of dissent and unprecedented corruption threaten to make these perhaps the most politically contentious Olympic games since Berlin in 1936."

(Heuvel, 2014)

But the new law was not the only case advocacy groups went against.

They accused Putin of ignoring various human rights in order to host- what he was aiming for- an image-polishing Olympic Games.

"President Vladimir Putin has argued that Russia's hosting of the 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi is proof of the country's re-emergence as a 'great power'. Yet, issues surrounding the Games reveal many of the country's shortcomings." (Foxall, 2014:vii), John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director of Amnesty International, states in his foreword to the scientific publication by Dr. Andrew Foxall.

Despite corruption and security issues, human rights issues surrounded the Sochi Olympic Games 2014.

In his work 'Russia's Olympic Shame: Corruption, Human Rights and Security at 'Sochi 2014'' Dr. Andrew Foxall examines the political conditions in Russia, stating that ever since Putin became President again in 2012, "the Russian authorities' assault on basic freedoms and undermining of the rule of law has intensified". (cf. Foxall, 2014:24)

According to Foxall, actions like re-criminalizing libel and Putin signing a law that forces NGOs to register as 'foreign agents' when they receive overseas funding and are involved in undefined 'political activities', represent severe attacks on freedom of expression.

Furthermore, he states that the Putin legislation gives power to the government to blacklist and block websites when, according to the legislation, they publish “extremist” material as well as “anything considered harmful to public health, morals, or safety”. (cf. Foxall, 2014:24)

The issue with such unclear definitions is that they open themselves up to a wide range of interpretation. As it becomes clear the wide range of interpretation also plays an important role in the LGBT law.

The law signed by Putin at the end of June 2013 officially states that it is “a law on the protection of children from harmful information (...) that propagandize “non-traditional sexual relations”, which Russian policymakers said referred to homosexuality.” (cf. (Foxall, 2014:13)

The ‘propaganda’ it is referring to means a public display of “attractiveness of non-traditional sexual relations, a distorted picture of the social equivalence of traditional and non-traditional sexual relations, or [information] causing interest in such relationships....”. (cf. Foxall, 2014:13)

Previous to that law, earlier in June, President Putin had already signed another law concerning “homosexual propaganda” that would classify every positive statement about homosexuality as pornography. As Harvey Fierstein states in his article in the New York Times on July 21st, 2013 “The law is broad and vague, so that any teacher who tells students that homosexuality is not evil, any parents who tell their child that homosexuality is normal, or anyone who makes pro-gay statements deemed accessible to someone underage is now subject to arrest and fines. Even a judge, lawyer or lawmaker cannot publicly argue for tolerance without the threat of punishment.” (Fierstein, 2013)

In Russia, the advocacy for LGBT equality, to publicly state the equality of gay relationships to non-gay ones, to organize an LGBT pride parade, or even small gestures such as simply holding a rainbow flag, can now be prosecuted. (cf. Becker, 2013)

Concerning the Olympic Games, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) organizations fear that the law will make them a target for arrest and deportation since the law calls for fining foreign violators with such, while locals face jail time or a fine up to 1 million Rubles. (cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:13)⁵ Since the interpretation of the law is

⁵ According to the Washington Blade, individual violators of the law face fines of between 4,000-5,000

very vague, according to Fierstein, the law allows “police officers to arrest tourists and foreign nationals they suspect of being homosexual, lesbian or ‘pro-gay’ and detain them for up to 14 days.” (cf. Fierstein, 2013)

This means that the knowledge of an athlete or fan being gay, or even just the suspicion, or accusation of being gay could lead to arrest and jail time.

Even though the International Olympic Committee says the attendees of the games are in no danger, Putin states that those attending have to obey the country’s laws.

““Russia will strictly stick to the Olympic principles which forbid any kind of discrimination [against] people on any basis.” Putin claimed that the law only was aimed to block propaganda that might encourage minors to make choices that would result in fewer births in Russia. (cf. Nichol, et al., 2014:14)

Putin does not only defend the law but in addition justifies it by stating that criticism by western countries is only an effort to damage Russia’s image and its development. He also turns the criticism, that Russia’s new law would offend the Olympic principles, around, against the western states, saying that their actions “(...) violated the Olympic spirit of building new bridges of interstate relations.”. (Putin qtd. in Nichol, et al., 2014:14)

According to him, the criticism passed, shows a support for paedophilia and therefore suggests that everyone planning on attending the Games will face an application of the law on them.

Voices on Olympic Protest and Boycott

Putin’s stand on the anti-gay law and his legislature, as well as the various human rights violations, have led to a broad discussion whether the games in Sochi should be boycotted.

Many gay rights activists called for boycott that could become a global response to the human rights violations, and they turned to influential politicians like then British Prime

rubles (\$124-\$155), government officials would be charged between 40,000 and 50,000 rubles (\$1,241-\$1,551), and organizations would be fined up to 1 million rubles (\$31,000) or be shut down for 90 days. Foreigners face jail time and deportation. (cf. Becker, 2013)

minister David Cameron who himself received a letter of protest by gay rights advocate Stephen Fry (cf. Fry, 2013), an author and political critic. The gay rights activists were also supported by others, like famous singer and gay right advocate Lady Gaga, who, together with American author Dan Savage, launched an online campaign named “#DumpRussianVodka” promoting the boycott of Russian products. (cf. Scott, 2016)

While many ‘outsiders’, people not directly involved in the Olympic Games, call for a boycott, gay Olympic athletes like Johnny Weir, Blake Skjellerup, and Greg Louganis state the opposite saying that a boycott would help less than attending the Games and protesting on-site by expressing support for LGBT people. (cf. Becker, 2013)

John Becker states in his article for huffingtonpost.com, by referring to Jeré Longmans article for the New York Times, that the idea of showing empathy and protest on-site, even silently through wearing a pin or t-shirt, could cause problems for the athletes as the Olympic Charter states that athletes are prohibited “from making political gestures during the Winter and Summer Games,” (cf. Becker, 2013) and therefore they could get punished for taking political actions.

Longman points out a controversy of the Olympic Charter and the IOC’s decision to let Sochi host the games saying that while “the Olympic charter calls sport a human right that should be practiced “without discrimination of any kind””, the IOC’s reaction solely consisted of a statement saying the Olympic Committee “opposes in the strongest terms any move that would jeopardize this principle.”. (cf. Longman, 2013) Adding that the conflict continued due to assurances received by the IOC at the Games, the law would not be enforced while Russia’s sports minister later stated the law would be applied to everyone in the country.

While many National Olympic Committees did speak out against the law, they decided to participate instead of boycott, emphasizing the sportive aspect of the Games by agreeing with the United States Olympic Committee chief executive Scott Blackmun who stated: “While we strongly support equal rights for all, our mission is sustained competitive excellence and not political advocacy.”. (cf. Longman, 2013)

Analysis

Introduction

As can be seen, the issue of human rights violation, especially the passing of the anti-gay law by the Russian president Vladimir Putin caused global protest for which activists used the global stage provided by the Olympic Games.

In order to answer the question of ‘In which ways and to what effect the Olympics provide a publicity platform for human rights activism?’, a structured analysis of newspaper articles needs to get built including sub questions that further support and detail the main question. The statistical data combined with the content itself give information on how the Olympics offer that activists platform.

The newspaper articles were analyzed by looking at the presence of protest in the media which gives information on how influential the Olympics are as a platform for activism and protest, due to the fact that presence in the media news coverage can be seen as a sign of importance, and therefore possibly as a factor of ‘success’ of protest for campaigners. Further, the examination of protests themselves is of interest to deepen the understanding of how the platform is used and for what- which becomes clear by analyzing the content and strategies of protest that were implemented by campaigners. This is used to gather information about the variety in protest and that of campaigners taking place at the Olympic platform. In addition to the strategies, the political implications and actions are of interest as the thesis focuses on human rights which is a political issue. In this specific case, the protests dealing with the LGBT issues surrounding Sochi 2014 and that regarding the so-called anti LGBT law make it a political debate and issue.

Therefore, the analysis shows an examination of both, the newspaper facts offering statistical information, as well as the ‘protesters voices’ covered in the newspaper articles, offering a deeper insight on protests themselves.

Analysis Method

As said, the above mentioned data analysis is done through an analysis of newspaper articles that report on the topic of protest at the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014.

To gather the articles used in this thesis, the online database *lexisnexis* was used.

On *lexisnexis*, articles can be found through a variety of filters that can widen or reduce the amount of articles found on a topic. In order to find articles covering the Games, the following filters were used. The time frame was set from July 1st 2013 to July 1st 2016 due to the aim of covering both, a wide time frame before and after the Games. Due to the fact that the anti-gay law was signed in June 2013, the time started shortly after to capture the reactions in the media. Since the intention was to see possible impacts of the protest, the time frame was broadened towards two years after the Games in order to capture possible effects.

In addition to the time frame, the source chosen was ‘All English language news’ and further ‘important international daily newspapers’. Additionally, all duplicates were filtered out.

The search was done through three different keywords or keyword-combinations. The combinations were a connection of words with the word and which leads to results containing all listed words.

Due to the fact that the combination of the words ‘sochi and protest’ led to over 400 results, further filters were used to narrow the results down to essential articles.

Amongst the technical data-base filters, all results and articles were additionally manually filtered.

This was done through the keyword-connections of

1. “HEADLINE(sochi AND protest)” - which filters articles that include one or both words in the article's headline.
2. “HLEAD(sochi AND protest)” - which filters articles that include one or both words in either the article's headline and/or its teaser.
3. “sochi AND protest AND lgbt” - which filters articles covering all three listed words.

The first chosen keyword-filter led to the number of 644 of which 553 were duplicates leading to a total amount of 91 articles. This was, amongst regular duplicates, caused by the shown result of 531 articles by The Moscow News which all were the same article, yet not filtered out as duplicates.

The second chosen keyword connection led to 2,736 articles of which, again, The Moscow News included 2,664 that consisted of 6 different articles, the remaining being duplicates.

The technical filtering in combination with a manual filtering led to a total amount of 245 then 72 newspaper articles.

The third keyword filter resulted in 1,878 articles. These included 1,655 by The Moscow News that offered only 12 different articles, leading to the total amount of 200 articles, which can be seen in the following graph:

When analyzing the articles, it becomes clear that, prior to the Olympics, much protest at the Games was expected: “Global outrage over Russia's anti-gay and blasphemy law could make this the ‘most protested’ Games ever.” (Indian Express, 2014) but those expectations remained-in the volume expected- unfulfilled. The articles state different reasons for that, such as the rules on protest at site in Sochi which were issued by the Russian government after criticism had been voiced towards the IOC and therefore towards the Russian Organization Committee.

Protest Zone

The possibility of a space for protest was demanded, after Putin had first signed a decree banning all protest during the time of the Games that are not related to the topic of the Games, and Russia reacted by granting a protest zone, which was appreciated by the IOC and its President Thomas Bach, yet criticized for being outside of the Olympic sites.

The IOC clearly states their opinion on protest at the Games as it says that political statements of any kind would only be allowed at press conferences to prevent protest at the Competitions and celebrations themselves, similar to the 1968s protest by the two U.S. athletes at the Games in Mexico. (cf. Indian Express, 2014)

But even though the IOC spoke out on the issue, and the Russian Organizing Committee thought to have managed to circumvent the possibility of having to deal with protest at the Games by constructing a protest zone 8 miles outside of the Olympic Park, that protest zone caused criticism and protest at the Olympic sites still took place.

In an article in The Toronto Star 'Sochi 'protest zones' evoke bad memories from Beijing', the handling of protest zones through the IOC gets compared to the criticized situation at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, where, "In order to protest, you had to obtain a government permit. (...) Not one of the dozens of applications filed by Chinese citizens was accepted. Instead, applicants were detained, harassed and jailed." (The Toronto Star, 2013a) and China's policy on protest zones is seen as a way for authorities to "identify and persecute dissidents" (The Toronto Star, 2013a). The same is expected to be the function of the Sochi protest zones and those not to be "exactly an invitation to free expression." (The Toronto Star, 2013a)

The behavior of the IOC on the issue of Sochi 2014 gets criticized to not be sufficient: "(...) the IOC probably could have stopped Russia from introducing its anti-gay legislation with a single threatening phone call from president Thomas Bach to Putin. Of course, the IOC chose not to intervene, and has since done an unconvincing job of convincing the world that athletes and spectators would be exempt from Russia's law banning 'homosexual propaganda.'" (The Toronto Star, 2013a)

In addition, the boycott of the Games by state officials like German president Joachim Gauck emphasize, according to the article, the need of action taken by the IOC, as it gets accused of repeating its actions taken against protesters in Beijing 2008. (cf. The Toronto Star, 2013a)

A way around the protest zone and the protest ban itself, might be that, according to Human Rights Watch, the protest ban for Olympic sites and its heightened security zones in Sochi is not city-wide, which could make protest possible.

The heightened security zones in which protest is prohibited include the Olympic park, sports facilities, as well as transport hubs - all are secured by security checks which everyone wishing to access the areas has to undergo.

But the ban is still widely criticized by human rights activists as they claim the ban, which prohibits protest in the above mentioned areas from January 7th to March 21st 2014, is another addition to the unconstitutional restrictions on personal freedoms. Gay rights advocate Nikolai Alexeyev states: "Measures like these could be used in wartime or during natural disasters. We are now showing the whole world that for us to host the Olympic games is a natural disaster." (Alexeyev qtd. in RusData Dialine, 2013) He finds the ban to be specifically against LGBT people and their community in Russia as they

had planned a gay parade on the opening day of the Games, on February 7th 2014.

Human Rights Watch state that they see a possibility of protest despite the ban and dismiss comparisons with the strictly controlled 1980 Moscow Games, where people not desired to be seen in the city territory such as alcoholics and dissidents, have been moved out of the picture for the duration of the Games. Other speakers of non-governmental organizations such as Greenpeace Russia have said that they already had been ejected from Olympic sites as they were campaigning against environmental damage caused by the constructions for Olympic projects. (cf. RusData Dialine, 2013)

What is seen as another considerable problem for protest at the protest zone is the law, that people planning on protesting in the designated area need to give their personal data to the police in order to be allowed a permit to protest. Therefore, those people provide their personal information while intending on opposing the policies of the Russian lawmakers on issues such as gay rights and corruption. (cf. The Calgary Herald, 2014)

The, in various newspapers mentioned, protest zone, which is said to be a 'way out' for Russian officials to satisfy demands for protest possibilities, has not been used for protests, as can be seen in the analysis. One protest group expected to use the protest zone is the one around green activist Evgeny Vitishko. The group has used the years prior to the Games in Sochi to protest against environmental violations and injustices against Sochi residents taking place during the construction for the Olympic sites.

Even though it seems that protest has led to the meeting of Russian officials and the deputy environment minister, who agreed on helping people who had their homes ruined during the construction period in some cases, the activists fear that those actions only take place to settle down protest and might stop after the Olympics are over.

One of the protests performed by Evgeny Vitishko, for which he was sentenced with three years in jail, was the painting of a slogan onto a fence of a house that, according to him and other activists, was illegally built on land that belongs to a national park.

The IOC was asked about the case, due to the lock-up's seemingly purposely extension throughout the time of the Olympics, and an IOC spokesman responded that to them it was a non-Olympic case.

But the activists replied that their group members had been harassed and detained because of the Games and that they therefore feared that a protest staged at the Games directly

could be too dangerous. Furthermore, they claimed that they hope on international support on freeing Vitishko, as one of the activists says “Hopefully having it raised in those [political] meetings will help us more than standing in the park and protesting. They have made it very clear that they don't want any public protest at all.” (activists qtd in. The Guardian, 2014a)

That form of support is shown through the engagement of politicians like the Norwegian prime minister who met the environmentalists and raised concerns over the issue when she met the Russian prime minister.

Even though the podiums at the Games have been kept protest free, a protest took place in immediate connection to the Games as a famous Italian gay rights campaigner watched the Olympics holding up a banner reading ‘Gay Is OK’.

The openly transgender parliamentarian got arrested by Russian police as a member of the Di’Gay Project reported “she was arrested by the police at Sochi while she was watching the Olympics with a banner which read, in Russian, ‘Gay is OK’” (cf. The Guardian, 2014a) even though Italian government officials could not comment on reports of arrest but referred to the staff of the Italian consulate in Moscow who were looking into the matter. (cf. The Guardian, 2014a)

The case of the gay rights protest by the former Italian Member of Parliament, Vladimir Luxuria, in the Olympic Park in Sochi was also reported by other newspapers which included more details about the case.

According to Luxuria, she was arrested by uniformed men when protesting with the banner who held in detention overnight and told her that it was prohibited to display pro-gay slogans to which she stated in an interview: “I tell you, if... I don't have the opportunity to have a flag with 'It's OK to be gay' written on it I will shout it. I know how to say it in Russian.” (Luxuria qtd. in Independent.co.uk, 2014a)

Luxuria, reasons her protest against the anti-gay law by stating: “I think it is important (to have) the opportunity to talk internationally about these things because otherwise these things happen in Russia and nobody knows, nobody cares. They think: ‘Well, it's not in our country, it's far away, it's in Russia, who cares?’” (Luxuria qtd. in Independent.co.uk, 2014a)

The IOC’s opinion on such protest becomes clear in its spokesman’s stating that they

hope for the Games not to be used as a platform for protest. (cf. Independent.co.uk, 2014a)

Athlete Protest

Various protest cases can be found in the analyzed newspaper articles. Among them are protests that were done by activists, officials and also athletes, such as the one by Finnish athlete Ari-Pekka Liukkonen. The Irish Daily Mail reports about his case in its article on January 16th 2015 by referring to their national female athlete, nine-time All-Ireland winner Valerie Mulcahy. The article 'Spirited Val helps remove another obstacle' (Gallagher, 2015) reports of her coming-out publicly, naming her a role model for gay female athletes in the country; yet includes Liukkonen as his awarding as Finland's sporting model 2014 took place at the same time of her coming out.

He achieved the recognition not for his swimming talent but for his protest, as he chose the evening of the Sochi Games to come out publicly, still being an active athlete, protesting against the treatment of LGBT people in Russia. (Gallagher, 2015)

Concerning the situation for athlete protest at the Games, various views and opinions can be found in the news coverage. Among those sharing their views is Australian Olympic Committee media director Mike Tancred who states that "athletes were free to express their concerns over Russia's controversial anti-homosexual propaganda law, as long as it is not during competition or on the podium" (Tancred qtd. in The New York Post, 2014) as that would disrupt the Games.

Tancred adds that there is an agreement by gay athletes as they foremost want to be seen as professional, elite athletes at the Olympic Games and as such could best make a statement by being best at what they do, even if that means to "put gay rights at the back of their mind" (Tancred qtd. in The New York Post, 2014)

When referring to the situation for gay athletes, he says he was not expecting any problems for the athletes by Russian officials as those promised to not interfere at the Games.

His statements found support in openly-gay Austrian ski jumper Daniela Iraschko-Stolz who also distanced herself from protesting arguing that "to jump pretty good is also a statement." (Iraschko-Stolz qtd. in The New York Post, 2014)

In another article she is quoted saying that protests against Russia's anti-gay law banning homosexual propaganda are not worth it because "no one cares." Furthermore, that she is at the Games "as a sportswoman" that does not "have any problems, not in Russia or with the Austrian federation." (cf. Iraschko-Stolz qtd. in The New York Post, 2014)

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach alluded to the Russian law. "Yes, it is possible - even as competitors - to live together under one roof in harmony, with tolerance and without any form of discrimination for whatever reason," (Bach qtd. in Dayton Daily News, 2014) he said. But amid such calls for tolerance, Russian police arrested several gay rights activists protesting in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

Some world leaders showed up to cheer their country's teams, but others stayed away amid concerns over the anti-propaganda law. Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Putin's Group of Eight partners, were present, so were Chinese President Xi Jinping and Afghan President Hamid Karzai. However, President of the United States Barack Obama and a handful of European leaders skipped Sochi. "We wanted to make it very clear that we do not abide by discrimination in anything, including sexual orientation," (Obama qtd. in Dayton Daily News, 2014) Obama told NBC's Bob Costas. (cf. Dayton Daily News, 2014)

Another thought-to-be protest by an athlete was performed by Russian snowboarder Alexey Sobolev.

Sobolev went into slopestyle competition using a board which bottom was painted with a knife-wielding woman in a ski mask looking very similar to the members of the activist punk group Pussy Riot which also performed many protests themselves.

When he got asked whether his board was intended to send a message, he simply replied that it was not his design and did not comment on the question if he was a Pussy Riot supporter. (cf. The New Zealand Herald, 2014a)

In another article reporting about Sobolev and his board design, the athlete stated "Anything is possible." (Sobolev qtd. in Moscow News, 2014a) When asked if the design was an homage to Pussy Riot, he added: "I wasn't the designer." (Sobolev qtd. in Moscow News, 2014a) (cf. Moscow News, 2014a)

Athlete Protest Restriction

Another article covering the stance of the Australian Olympic Committee over athlete's protest at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games quotes AOC's boss John Coates who says that athletes would not be prohibited to speak out but urges athletes to "pick their time wisely" (Coates qtd. in The Age, 2014) and to protest after their events: "We respect the right of our athletes to express an opinion, the place to do it is at the press conference after the event. (...)" (Coates qtd. in The Age, 2014)

He adds that while "the one thing the IOC controls in another country is the field of play, we control the podium. And we say there will be no political demonstrations there, and that's the message we've given to our athletes - and none of the politicians from Russia will be handing out medals - that's our territory." (Coates qtd. in The Age, 2014)

Amongst Australian athletes is Belle Brockhoff, an openly gay snowboarder, who partnered up with other gay athletes such as New Zealand's speed skater Blake Skjellerup and tennis legend Martina Navratilova all joining the Athlete Ally program.

Explaining the Committees' stance on protest at the Games, Coates says "Why do it? Enjoy the medal, respect your fellow competitors. If you want to have a whack at the Russian government ... do it in your press conference. We're happy with that." (Coates qtd. in The Age, 2014) And adds: "We're asking them to respect the Olympic movement during those ceremonies, but it's not respecting the sovereign nation." (Coates qtd. in The Age, 2014) And even though he disagrees with the anti-gay laws states "(...) there's nothing we can do about it. These are matters that governments deal with." (Coates, qtd. in The Age, 2014) (cf. The Age, 2014)

A protest is reported to have taken place at the Sochi Winter Games opening evening when 52 current and former Olympians with 12 Sochi competitors among them, are said to have called on the Russian authorities to reconsider their new anti-gay law. They continued on to criticizing the IOC, as well as major Olympic sponsors, for not being more ambitious and active in opposing President Putin's law forcing him to scale back the law.

The activists are part of the so-called 'principle six campaign', the principle in the Olympic charter stating a guarantee of non-discrimination. The campaign, just like the 'Athlete Ally program', is backed by famous former athletes, like Martina Navratilova

and Andy Roddick as well as current, Sochi-bound athletes like Canadian biathlete Rosanna Crawford and the four-man bobsled team from Australia.

The former, London 2012 gold medalist Esther Lofgren says “As an athlete, as an American, and as a believer in equal rights and equal opportunity for everyone, I realised I needed to speak up, because that's not where we are today in sports. The mission is to support all athletes to be themselves and be free to be athletes.” (Lofgren qtd. in *The Age*, 2014) (cf. *The Age*, 2014)

Another athlete argues their actions being not about a political issue but a basic question of human rights by saying “I understand and respect that the Olympics are not the time nor place for political statements, but this is far beyond any kind of statement. People's lives and their wellbeing are in danger, and that goes far beyond anything the Olympics stand for. I think it is important to talk about it and have an ongoing conversation during these games, and not have this issue silenced.” (qtd. in *The Guardian*, 2014b)

One of the reasons for their campaign is that Russia and the IOC are said to not have done enough, as Andre Banks, the co-founder of All Out, a partner campaign of Athlete Ally, says: “They want this story to go away and have been totally unwilling to make any real concessions regarding the law. There are precedents.” (Banks qtd. in *The Guardian*, 2014b) Mentioning that former Olympic Games hosts and participating nations had to change their laws.

Various human rights organizations aim to increase pressure on the Russian officials, such as Amnesty International which staged a protest in London in front of the Russian embassy and had a petition signed by more than 10,000 people in Britain.

Other activist groups have called upon the sponsors like Coca-Cola and McDonalds to take action by renewing social media campaigns in order to put pressure on the IOC and Russian organizers arguing that the IOC's responsibility is not only successful Games but also Games that go “in line with the values of the Olympic movement” (Banks qtd. in *The Guardian* 2014b), Banks says. (cf. *The Guardian*, 2014b)

Another athlete speaking out on the issue of athlete protest at the Olympic Games in Sochi is openly gay Calgary speed skater Anastasia Bucsis. She, like Austrian Ski jumper Daniela Iraschko-Stolz, speaks out against protesting at the Games, stating that she is not intending to make political statements in Sochi: “I think the best statement is to represent

your country well and show that you're a normal person, because there's so many stereotypes in the gay community. Why don't we just break down those barriers and be the normal human beings that we are?" (Bucsis wtd. In Ottawa Citizen, 2013a) Bucsis joined a group of athlete that talked openly about their homosexuality in advance of competing at the Games in Sochi. (cf. Ottawa Citizen, 2013a)

Explanations for why there won't be as many meaningful protests at the Games themselves (like there was in 1968 when Smith and Carlos raised their gloved fist in the air protesting against discrimination who then got sent home), as could be expected due to the world wide reaction to the passing of the Russian anti-gay law, can be given through different reasons.

Due to the change of times, athletes today often are limited due to sponsorships they need to keep and protect. Furthermore, they need to be first and foremost competitors who had to work hard to qualify for the Games, making a good performance their priority.

Even though Rule 50 ('No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted at the games. The charter says violators can be expelled and even be stripped of medals.') of the Charter (Olympic Charter, 2016) still exists, it is not expected to be used against athletes protesting against gay rights abuses in Russia. IOC spokesman Mark Adams says the Rule "has seldom if ever been 'enforced' with a ban, expulsion or similar, so banning and sending home from the games are a little wide of the mark." (Adams qtd. in The Pioneer, 2013)

Even though small protests at competitions themselves have happened, such as painting their fingernails in gay-pride rainbow colors at track and field's world championship in Moscow and posting photos of a rainbow and her nails, which was done by two Swedish athletes, which said it was meant to be a "small and simple gesture" and that doing nothing "(...) would have felt very cowardly" and she "wouldn't have liked [herself] if [she] didn't paint the nails." (qtd. in The Pioneer, 2013), athlete protests are not expected to reach the extent the 1968 protest had, but rather them being a subtle message. (cf. The Pioneer, 2013)

Bucsis and Iraschko-Stolz statements concerning protesting at the Games are supported by Canadian skater Patrick Chan. Chan says that even though he disagrees with discrimination based on sexuality or race in life, but also when competing at the Olympic Games, he does not plan on protesting at the Games himself as his "job is to skate" as he

is “not a politician” but rather to “enjoy [himself] and skate on the ice with other great athletes (...)”. (cf. Chan qtd. in *The Toronto Star*, 2013b)

Whether athletes should use the Games to protest led to a discussion among the official sides. While National Olympic Committees like the Australian Committee did not prohibit protests but rather advised to protest not on the fields or podium but later at press conferences and such, the International Olympic Committee’s former president Jacques Rogge stated that “athletes would be warned about rules prohibiting demonstrations at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, Russia.” (Rogge qtd. in *The New York Times*, 2013a)

His statement followed a call up on the IOC by Russia’s chef organizer Dmitry Chernyshenko to stop activist’s campaigns against the law as he assured that “athletes and spectators at the Sochi Games would not be affected by the law” and that organizers were “absolutely confident that there will be no conflicts in that regards” (Chernyshenko qtd. in *The New York Times*, 2013a). Through his statement, Rogge also responded to a concern from the IOC marketing director regarding major sponsor’s worries about conflict and possible demonstrations.

Prior to the Games the already mentioned various different voices on the Games and on how to handle protest at these, could be heard.

Due to several issues, such as the anti-gay law, the IOC is said to face multiple challenges, one of them being how to handle protest, especially such performed by athletes, at the Games. As a member of the IOC executive board says “The I.O.C. has to really have very clear rules on what you can do and not do.” (qtd. in *The New York Times*, 2013a)

Even though officials have said that athletes and spectators would be at no risk of punishment if talking about homosexuality or gay rights, the question whether athletes would be punished if they demonstrated by wearing t-shirts or pins or other symbols of statements - like athletes did at the Moscow world championship - remains unanswered, which causes sponsors to worry about possible protests overshadowing the Games.

The Olympic Charter Rule 50, which states that ‘no kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted’, leads to various interpretations, calling on to IOC president Thomas Bach to work out a plan. Bach says athletes should have the right to express their opinion, they, at the same time, “have to be protected from political controversies.” (Bach qtd. in *The New York Times*, 2013b)

A member of the United States Olympic Committee states that to her, disqualifying an athlete for wearing a rainbow pin, “(...) sounds like it’s moving too far,” and that they “(...) have to be careful regarding what is or is not allowed.” (qtd. in The New York Times, 2013b)

In contrast, an IOC delegate from Montreal states that in his opinion rainbow pins should not be tolerated in Sochi and that athletes who do not comply should be sent home, as they are guests in Sochi. He adds “If there have been lots of warnings, there’s no excuse for it. Then it becomes a provocation.” (qtd. in The New York Times, 2013b)

Another delegate from Taiwan agrees with athletes needing to respect the rules against demonstrations but adds that to him, cities with laws contradicting athlete’s rights should not be allowed to apply for hosting the Games, referring to Russia’s anti-gay law: “Any city bidding for the Games should avoid to have this kind of legislation.” (qtd. in The New York Times, 2013b)

Monaco’s IOC delegate agrees with not sending athletes home for wearing pins but adds that there is a need for rules. (cf. The New York Times, 2013b)

Despite the expectation for Sochi to become the Protest Olympics, due to the LGBT legislation and the Games budget of US\$51 billion, as well as other various human rights violations towards activists, citizens and workers, most of the expected protest did not take place. Only few athletes did take advantage of the IOC’s granted right to speak out at press conferences concerning solidarity with LGBT people in Russia, while most of them are said to be discouraged. One amongst those few athletes was the Canadian snowboarder Michael Lambert. Lambert turned to an Olympic News Service reporter saying that while he supported the “purest form of sport”, he at the same time finds that “to act like there aren’t a lot of other controversial things at play [here], it’s ignorant. It’s not real, it’s not a reality. It’s not my reality.” He continues to criticize the Games and its high budget and it causing people to suffer, asking “How is that a perfect Games?”. (cf. Lambert qtd. in National Post, 2014)

Reactions to his criticism followed immediately as he was criticized by his coach but supported by his teammates. Yet, the Canadian Olympic Committee expressed its disapproval according to Lambert as he states “They said you’re going to be taking away from all the other athletes at these Games, and you’re now taking energy from the COC (...).” (Lambert qtd. in National Post, 2014)

After Canadian triathlete Simon Whitfield had spoken out over issues at the London Olympic Games 2012, it became clear to the athletes that The Canadian Olympic Committee only seeks high performance and a protection of their own and partners' interests, leading to a sort of trade-off leaving athletes not speaking-out. Lambert argues that being the reason of the COO trying to shut him down as he was endangering their interests. Despite the Committee's reaction, fellow snowboarders support Lambert who himself wonders whether his protest would have taken place if he was "a high-profile athlete with big contracts to protect" (cf. Lambert qtd. in National Post, 2014). He criticizes the athlete's function at the Games naming it to be "the fuel for their machines (...)." (cf. National Post, 2014)

Another case of athlete protest covered by an athlete's national newspaper is the case of Mike Janyk, a heterosexual Canadian alpine skier. The article in The Globe and Mail (Canada) starts out quoting the question he asked himself leading to him taking a stand for LGBT-rights: "If he could go to the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics and be himself and not worry, why couldn't others?" (Janyk qtd. in The Globe and Mail, 2013) Leading to his interest of speaking up, even though there are no plans of active protest during the Games, he wants to state his protest by using "the lead up to the Games to raise awareness for a cause that has garnered worldwide attention". (cf. The Globe and Mail, 2013)

The article additionally includes information on the situation in Russia that led to protest, such as the federal propaganda law causing the fear of discrimination and punishment of gay athletes and visitors, Putin's response of assurance of aiming to make everyone feel welcome, as well as the information of IOC President Thomas Bach talking to gay-rights protesters.

Mike Janyk's intentions derive from him being a member of the organization 'Athlete Ally', a non-profit organization focused on ending homophobia and transphobia in sport by educating allies in the athletic community and empowering them to take a stand.

Other athletes in that organization, also competing in Sochi, are Belle Brockhoff and Blake Skjellerup.

Openly gay speed skater Skjellerup is quoted stating "I would love for Putin to get to know me. I would tell him how much I disagree with his oppressive anti-gay propaganda laws, and that he has a responsibility as the president of Russia to represent all the people of his country." (Skjellerup qtd. in The Globe and Mail, 2013)

Him and Brockhoff take part in a protest led by Athlete Ally and its international counterpart 'All Out', which cooperated with 'American Apparel Inc.' to produce a clothing line making reference to the Olympic Charter Principle 6 Charter that states discrimination 'on the grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise' is 'incompatible with belonging to the Olympic movement.' (cf. The Globe and Mail, 2013)

While they hope to be able to spread the message and what Principle 6 stands for by selling clothing such as T-shirts and hoodies, they at the same time aim to make money to donate to LGBT advocacy groups in Russia.

The organization continues stating that it has planned on supplying their athletes clothing with Principle 6 logos but Janyk denies planning on doing that. He states: "I didn't join to fight against anyone at the Olympics. What I saw was a great opportunity to show what sports and the Olympics are about - the battle of human experience and going after success. I can't comment on what might happen over there," (Janyk qtd. in The Globe and Mail, 2013) he said. (cf. The Globe and Mail, 2013)

Officials vs. Activists

How transnational the provided public platform of the Olympic Games is for protest can be seen in the article "Spotlight on Russian homophobia on eve of Sochi Olympics; A new report says that authorities are condoning, or even encouraging, homophobic violence in Russia, a charge brushed aside by the IOC president and the Kremlin." (Weir, 2014) published by the *The Christian Science Monitor*- a self-proclaimed 'independent international news organization that delivers thoughtful, global coverage.'

The Russian authorities and the IOC join in complaint about global gay rights activists staging worldwide protests aiming at the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi just two days prior to the Games.

While the officials want the Games to be a successful, image polishing event without any disruption, the activists state that "they are targeting the Games to raise global awareness about what they allege is an atmosphere of official intolerance and growing social violence against Russia's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] citizens." (qtd. in Weir, 2014)

The protests are supported by human rights Watch, who published a report warning of growing violence towards LGBT people in Russia. According to them, the new anti-LGBT law encourages violence as it leads to demonization of LGBTs. With the police often ignoring these acts of violence, perpetrators feel supported by the state. "It does appear that police are disinterested in investigating these crimes. Worse, a lot of victims don't even report abuse to the police because they fear being further victimized. Russian police are part of Russian society, and society just now is being bombarded with anti-gay messaging and claims that they present some kind of threat to children," (qtd. in Weir, 2014) a human rights Watch member states.

As another member of human rights Watch sums up what many activists worldwide criticize: "We're not blaming the Sochi Olympics for this, but we do believe this is an issue the IOC should take a stand on, this is an issue of discrimination, and we are extremely disappointed with the response, although we have tried repeatedly to engage the IOC about it." (qtd. in Weir, 2014)

Opposite to global protest and its voices of support, the IOC president Thomas Bach speaks out against protest as he, as well as President Putin, considers it a political issue, which should not be taking place at the Games as Human Rights Watch member Cooper says and adds "But it's not political, it's about discrimination. And that falls squarely within the IOC's responsibility. They need to speak out about this." (Cooper qtd. in Weir, 2014)

Bach also criticizes the decision of various governmental leaders boycotting the invitation to the Games, due to the LGBT issues surrounding the 2014 Olympic Games, such as Barack Obama did, sending a chosen delegation including famous openly gay American athletes such as Billie Jean King and Brian Boitano instead of traveling to Russia himself. Obama openly criticizes Russia's new anti-LGBT law and is joined by German President Joachim Gauck "(...) who made the decision not to attend in protest against 'human rights violations' in December, 2013". (cf. Weir, 2014)

Also joining in on demonstrating their disapproval is the UK by sending its Culture Secretary Maria Miller to Sochi who played an important role in the passing of the UK's legalization of same-sex marriage.

President Putin joins Thomas Bach in his criticism of the decisions by stating that "the Olympics is not a competition of politicians. It is a competition of athletes." (Putin qtd. in Weir, 2014)

Bach criticizes “the fight for a good cause”, or protest, by politicians and activist groups to be misplaced, as it “(...) threatens to undermine Olympic unity and detract from the athletic excellence that the Games are supposed to showcase”, saying that their chosen form of protest would be carried out on the back of the athletes instead of being a peaceful political dialogue. He suggests that activist groups should not simply use the Olympic Games to make an “ostentatious gesture which allegedly costs nothing but produces international headlines.” (cf. Bach qtd. in Weir, 2014)

But gay rights activists respond to the IOC's statement and accusation, stating that protesting for their cause in the way that they do, using the Olympics, is the right thing to do, as one of them states: “The situation with LGBT people in Russia is very bad. This has been going on and getting worse for some time, without anyone even noticing, so, we're not sorry for having a public discussion about it. Open scrutiny and debate is the only way to change things. We are sure that publicity is our friend, and we can see that it's something our abusers are afraid of.” (qtd. in Weir, 2014)

The activists argue that the law does not only disable people to speak out publicly in a positive way about homosexuality and therefore to object the negative picture transported through the government, the church and the state-owned media, but also leads to filing charges on even minors, like a 9th grade student who “(...) was bullied and harassed by adult men after she posted about this, and now instead of being protected she finds herself facing charges. It's a new usage of that law, and it shows the way things are going”. (cf. Weir, 2014) They continue stating that criminal offences against LGBTs in Russia has grown substantially since the law was signed, as a member of the Sova Center, an organization that tracks extremist actions, states “Homophobia has always existed within Russian society, but because of this law and all the negative attention given to this issue, the number of serious homophobic attacks has grown dramatically.” (qtd. in Weir, 2014)

Calls for Boycott

As already mentioned above, the issue of boycott and whether or not government officials should and will attend the Games, formed an issue the newspapers discussed and covered.

Calls for boycott but also their dismissal is voiced by different actors of protest. One of them is the previously mentioned actor and TV personality Stephen Fry who sent an open

letter to Britain's Prime Minister, as well as the IOC asking them to join in on protesting the human rights violations towards LGBT people in Russia by backing a ban on the Sochi Winter Games.

And while many supported his views, the journalist Andrew Pierce takes a stand, dismissing Fry's approach stating that a boycott would not be effective as it would be more powerful to "confront your enemy and make their position look stupid." (Pierce qtd. in *The Independent*, 2013) Andrew Pierce is joined in his approach by David Cameron, who agrees on having a better chance making a change and influence by attending the Games, as he argues "I share your deep concern about the abuse of gay people in Russia. However, I believe we can better challenge prejudice as we attend, rather than boycotting the Winter Olympics" (Cameron qtd. in *The Independent*, 2013). (cf. *The Independent*, 2013)

Britain's Deputy Prime minister Nick Clegg is amongst those who call upon gay visitors planning a trip to Sochi to protest against the treatment of gay people in Russia as he himself banned fellow Democrats from attending the Olympic Games, stating that the anti-gay law is "the most regressive law imaginable" and that "[he is] not going to go and [he] certainly wouldn't want any Liberal Democrat ministers to go, given the strength of feeling in [his] party that what Russia has done on that legislation is just plain wrong." (Clegg qtd. in telegraph.co.uk, 2014)

Even though Nick Clegg urges visitors and fellow politicians to protest, he does not agree with the call for athletes to boycott the Games.

His call on visitor's boycott does not comply with Britain's governments Foreign Office's statement which warns people to not protest and demonstrate at the Games as it says: "Any involvement in unsanctioned demonstrations or protests could lead to arrest." (Britain's governments Foreign Office qtd. in telegraph.co.uk, 2014), as it has led to previous arrests of British campaigners protesting for gay rights in Moscow. Britain's Prime Minister adds that "the Government, including the PM, has and will continue to make clear [their] views about the importance of tolerance and respect for individual rights. The PM has and will continue to raise that with Vladimir Putin." (Britain's Prime Minister qtd. in telegraph.co.uk, 2014)

The boycott by David Cameron, among other world leaders such as Barack Obama and Angela Merkel, and instead sending a substitute like Britain's Culture Secretary who was

in charge of new gay marriage laws as a statement towards Russian gay rights, is a sign towards Russia, yet not an open boycott as Downing Street explained that Cameron's absence was due to his schedule and to the fact that no serving Prime Minister had attended a Winter Olympics. (cf. telegraph.co.uk, 2014)

But the idea of a boycott of the Games would not only affect Russia and the boycotters, but also the athletes. With regards to this, Greg Louganis writes in his article "America must dive head-first into Sochi Games" (Louganis, 2014) that in his opinion, a boycott would not make sense but instead engagement would be the best way to respond to Russia's repression. By attending the Games, an interaction with Russians is made possible and should be encouraged and-at the same time- one's own country's history should not be forgotten since, as he warns, LGBT rights have not always been granted to Americans either.

Instead of a boycott, Louganis, a former Olympic gold medalist welcomes Barack Obama's decision, as mentioned above, in not boycotting but protesting and taking a stand through sending a delegation including three openly gay athletes as a response to Russia's anti-gay law. Which, according to Louganis, at the same time can be seen as a progress made in the American sports world, as it "doesn't merely tolerate LGBT athletes; it celebrates them". (cf. Louganis, 2014)

Within the calls for boycott and various other protests, critical voices say that some of them were not thought through.

Chris Cannon, a writer for the Ottawa Citizen reports about the cases of protest performed by, as he states "three of the most prominent voices in the LGBT community" Stephen Fry, George Takei and Dan Savage in his article 'Queer Eye for the Sochi Guy'. (cf. Cannon, 2013)

As mentioned before, Fry had sent an open letter to the British Prime Minister and the IOC in which he calls for a new awarding of hosting the Games. Actions taken by Dan Savage were a call to boycott the vodka brand Stolichnaya with the hashtag #dumpstoli, which he mistakenly assumed to be a Russian brand, while George Takei supported a petition to move the Winter Games to Vancouver, Canada.

But, as Cannon writes "poorly planned solutions can do your cause far more harm than

good” as Stoli Vodka is a brand owned by Yuri Scheffler, who himself is a “public supporter of gay rights”, the boycott missed its aim to punish Putin and his government and instead worked in their favor as Scheffler is living in exile as a Putin enemy. (cf. Cannon, 2013) Cannon also sees Fry’s and Takei’s actions as a “squandering of resources” because, as he says, the IOC “will never put human rights above profit” and adds that if anyone in Sochi on site could make a difference for the LGBT people in Russia, that it would be the athletes and spectators. (cf. Cannon, 2013)

He criticizes the three advocates for missing an important fact about the LGBT protest movement, saying that it is “not about gay rights, it is about human rights” and therefore, their calls for boycott should have also taken place on various other occasions as violation to human rights happens not only in Russia, but also countries like the United States where minorities are targeted. (cf. Cannon, 2013)

Cannon claims, that Fry’s comparison of the Sochi 2014 Winter Games to those in Berlin 1936, of which Fry says, gave the Nazis credibility while they were persecuting millions of people, to be incomparable due to the fact that many people weren’t aware of the Nazi’s cruelty. While today, new possibilities of communicating and reaching out through global platforms like social media, enable raising awareness, on issues such as the LGBT rights violations in Russia.

Therefore, he speaks out against a boycott mentioning the protest cases of 1936 when Jesse Owens, an African-American athlete let his victory speak against Hitler’s superior-race ideology, as well as the protest in 1968 in Mexico, when Tommie Smith, who had actually considered a boycott, and John Carlos raised their gloved fist as a ‘human rights salute’, demonstrating against the discrimination in the United States. Cannon argues “what a tragedy it would have been (...)” if those protests had not taken place. (cf. Cannon, 2013)

He rather sees boycotting such an event as “a chance for the world to step inside the country” as a sign of presence and observation. And calls on the three activists to rather boycott state-owned brands and support the news coverage of gay issues in Russia. As it would be more effective to encourage participants to show pride and show presence rather than boycotting. (cf. Cannon, 2013)

Local Protest

Protests against the Russian anti-LGBT law spread throughout the world and through various groups of activists. Among them, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, were world leaders deciding not to attend the opening and closing ceremonies. Some politicians, as well as other activists, found another way of protesting and showing support to the LGBT community in Russia by protesting locally in their own cities and countries.

In the Independents article “Sochi protesters arrested over banner citing Olympic charter; Prominent LGBT activist among group censured for highlighting perceived conflict with Games’ rules” (Smith, 2014) the case of a protest taking place in St. Petersburg on the day of the opening of the Olympic Games in Sochi and it leading to the arrest of one of Russia’s leading gay activists, Anastasia Smirnova, is reported.

Along with her was a group of activists photographing a banner which cited the Olympic Charter’s Principle 6 words which led to their arrest. They had planned on hanging the banner from a bridge but were detained before they could pursue.

While in detention, famous activist Smirnova posted a statement on Facebook saying “Can’t write much as phones are not permitted, and they are now calling us to sign papers... Detention for a photo with a banner - isn’t it an amazing way to celebrate the opening of the Games?” (Smirnova qtc, in Smith, 2014) to which the Russian LGBT added a post stating “The activists were making photos with a banner: ‘Discrimination is incompatible with the Olympic Movement. Principle 6. Olympic Charter’.” (qtd. in Smith, 2014) Another case of arrest that took place later that day in Moscow is added.

The article additionally reports on a planned protest by athletes to hold up six fingers into the camera whenever pointed at them, as a symbol for Principle 6 of the Charter, as their calls for boycott were left unanswered.

Despite the reported arrests, President Putin is quoted saying “We aren’t banning anything, we aren’t rounding up anyone, we have no criminal punishment for such relations unlike many other countries. We have a ban on propaganda of homosexuality and paedophilia(sic), I want to underline that, on propaganda among minors.” (Putin qtd. in Smith, 2014)

Some of those local protests led to connected protest throughout the globe. One of those

global protests took place the night before the opening of the Winter Games, as a letter was signed by over 200 of the world's leading authors stating that they condemn Russia's stance on gay rights and the passing of the anti-gay law. Their protest followed demonstrations taking place around the world, as people were protesting against the Russian government in 19 different cities. (cf. Metro, 2014)

Those 217 authors from over 30 different countries, including Gunter Grass and Salman Rushdie, wrote and signed the letter to denounce the anti-gay law and the blasphemy law, which criminalizes religious insult and defamation, saying that those laws put writers at risk and they had to stand with their fellow colleagues in Russia who are now facing a risk of punishment and prosecution when "communicating their thoughts". (cf. Rushdie, 2014)

As author Salman Rushdie states: "The chokehold that the Russian Federation has placed on freedom of expression is deeply worrying and needs to be addressed in order to bring about a healthy democracy in Russia."

The then following, above mentioned, global protest was organized by the gay advocacy group 'All Out', which also published a list of athletes, 12 of them actively competing in the Sochi Games, speaking out against Russia's new law, despite being put under pressure by the IOC to not make any sort of political statement at the Games. (cf. Rushdie, 2014)

As mentioned, it was both, activists and politicians protesting locally. Among those politicians protesting was the Mayor of Alberta, Canada, Naheed Nenshi who decided to fly the gay pride flag in front of Alberta's City Hall for the duration of the Games. (cf. Finn, 2014)

What started out as a local protests took place in Canada, where it then moved from coast to coast, gaining more and more cities to join in on the protest against the treatment of LGBT people in Russia.

The silent protest, the hoisting of the rainbow flag in front of the cities city halls for the duration of the Games, started in St. John's, N.L. where gay rights activists asked the city council to display the flag to show support for LGBT people in Russia, which then voted unanimously in favor of doing so.

It moved from there to cities like Ottawa, Quebec City and Montreal, where the government announced to additionally illuminate the Olympic Stadium in Montreal in

the rainbow flag colors. Ottawa's mayor stated that even though "flying the flag isn't a particularly bold protest", it still is "a gesture to let the Russian authorities know that [their] community is really appalled by their anti-gay laws and attitudes." Adding his lack of understanding for various governments across the world to have a "disdain for members of their own society because they might be different based on gender or race or sexual orientation." (Ottawa mayor qtd. in Ottawa Citizen, 2014b)

After the cities protest reached Vancouver, more than 4,000 citizens in Toronto joined the protest wave, signing a petition to illuminate the CN Tower, a building lit up in rainbow flag colors for the annual Pride Week. (cf. Ottawa Citizen, 2014b)

Setting a record in Albertan protest history at legislature grounds, with a duration of 24 hours a day for 36 days, the rising of the rainbow flag as a symbol of support for LGBT people, in front of the Alberta city hall will also set a record for the smallest number of protesters as it is expected to count zero.

And even though it is not expected to make any difference in the Russian legislation, flying the flag is not only a sign of support for LGBTs in Russia but also an important sign of support for participants at their home, as Alberta laws on LGBT rights themselves had still been discriminatory in the mid-2000s.

This has lead Alberta's anti-bullying cabinet minister to call on athletes and fans to make a subtle protest when in Sochi at the Games, as she states: "If you believe in human rights, this isn't just gay rights, this is human rights, then put a rainbow somewhere visible, wear a pin, make a statement, get on Twitter, make sure that we let Russia know that we're not a country that tolerates that kind of behaviour." (cf. qtd, in Edmonton Journal, 2014)

Another protest involving various cities around the world, including London, New York, St. Petersburg, Rio de Janeiro, Melbourne and also Sochi itself, was held to demonstrate against the Russian government, as well as the IOC, demanding them to uphold Principle 6 of the Olympic Charter. The activists taking part in the Global Speak Out events were asked to wear red as a sign of solidarity.

In addition, at London's event, a delegation of the organizing human rights activists delivered a petition signed by 100,000 people to the local McDonalds as, they are one of the main Olympic sponsors. (cf. Future News, 2014a)

A protest in the rare form of beer was performed by the Scottish brewery 'BrewDog'.

Their limited-edition beer with the name 'Hello, My Name is Vladimir', featured a portrait of Vladimir Putin in 'Warhol-style', wearing make-up and a small print stating 'not for gays' on the bottom of its bottle, was also labelled with a description stating: 'Hello, my name is Vladimir. I am 100 per cent hetero and will pass laws to prove it. Drinking me gives you energy, ignorance and dogmatism required to shoot a deer (with your top off) and pass internationally denounced, discriminatory legislation (top optional) before you've even had your caviar breakfast.'

Co-founder of BrewDog James Watt states that their protest beer, which can be bought online and in 12 different pubs across the United Kingdom, went on sale shortly before the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games as a protest against the anti-gay law and adds that they "sent a case of beer to the Kremlin, as well as leaving beer at the Russian Consulate in Edinburgh and the Russian Embassy in London" (Watts qtd. in Independent.co.uk, 2014b) Their success can be measured in "tens of thousands of tweets about it", as Watt claims, and he adds that they would donate 50% of their beer sales to charitable organizations supporting oppressed minorities. (cf. Independent.co.uk, 2014b) In order to demonstrate against the draconian legislature and its consequences to the LGBT people of Russia, the Sochi based 'The Hope Theatre' started to perform a play in September 2013, a few months after the law had been passed, telling real-life stories of victims of the new law. The real-life stories were collected by playwright Tess Berry-Hart and her team and was later acted out on stage by 5 different actors who represent the stories of 75 characters.

According to Berry-Hart, the intentions of the play were to visualize the victims' stories of losing their jobs due their homosexuality, living in fear of losing their children and hiding and to give their stories a voice. She says, gathering the stories has not been easy as people broke the law by talking about homosexuality and feared they had been trapped by her.

To her, the stories needed to be given a stage. In times, in which people, such as the mayor of Sochi, make remarks that no gay people live in Sochi, and visitors are welcome but asked not to "impose their habits on others". "Essentially they are saying 'come but shut up' which is ridiculous. If you were black or female they wouldn't say you can come, but please don't act like a black person or female. They are basically saying gay is a choice rather than being something you are." (Berry-Hart qtd. in Enfield Independent, 2014)

Berry-Hart adds that their performance-profits will be donated to 'Spectrum Human Rights', an organization helping LGBT people who are being persecuted and emphasizes that their aim of protest is to "keep the issue in the public eye and let LGBT people in Russia know their voices are being heard" and to add pressure on Russia to overturn the law once the Olympics are over. (cf. Enfield Independent, 2014)

A call for an end to Russia's crackdown on human rights by nine European Amnesty International offices in the form of a petition which was signed by 200,000, took place following an artistic protest in Moscow, where a lone dancer had performed a ballet-protest meaning to symbolize the suppression of freedom of speech, expression and association. (cf. Future News, 2014b)

Prior to Moscow's ballet-performance, another artistic ballet protest took place in London where dancers performed a version of a scene from 'Swan Lake', a ballet said to be Russia's favorite, written by one of the country's most famous composer, Tchaikovsky, who was known to be gay himself.

The fully costumed performers, directed by a former Royal Ballet dancer and choreographer, danced in front of London's Russian Embassy in protest of Putin's anti-gay law. Their performance was also followed by Amnesty International UK handing in a petition signed by 10,000 supporters. (cf. Future News, 2014c)

A different form of an artist protest could be found in Tbilisi, Georgia, where a few thousand people attended a rock concert, that was organized to protest Georgia's participation at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. Among the performing artists were multiple famous Georgian rock bands and singers, with the statement of "We, the children of a free country and followers of different views, join the campaign of boycotting the Sochi Winter Olympics!" and collecting signatures against the participation. (cf. Azer News, 2013)

Protesting in a direct reference to the Olympic Games was the peaceful demonstration against the Russian law banning gay propaganda in Athens, Greece. There, activists sat on the steps of the Acropolis Museum, holding rainbow flags or banners reading 'Homophobia is not in the Olympic Spirit' and 'Love is not Propaganda', as the Olympic flame passed them on its way to be handed over to Russian organizers of the 2014 Sochi Winter Games. (cf. Taiwan News, 2013)

As it can be seen, the group of activists that have chosen local protest vary from politicians to artists to activist groups. Local protest is a form that is used to try to draw attention to an issue, even when it does not necessarily have an immediate influence on local politics but is, for example, more of a personal issue like in the case of Chris Fleming: “I have been deeply troubled by what has been happening to the LGBT community in Russia and wanted to show my support by creating this piece” (Fleming qtd. in Young, 2014). A Newcastle-based artist and himself openly gay, who drew a mural in the street in Newcastle’s gay village ‘Pink Triangle’ to raise awareness of the treatment of LGBTs in Russia: “I have chosen to paint this in the heart of the Newcastle gay scene as a reminder of what can happen when hate goes too far, and a reminder of how lucky we are to live here.” (Fleming qtd. in Young, 2014)

His painting is that of a gay man being restrained and pushed face-down to the ground by another man while both being intertwined with the Olympic Logo, the five rings and the quote from Principle 6 of the Olympic Charter, which reads ‘Sport does not discriminate on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise’.

Chris Fleming explains his painting on the ground of personal reasons of wanting to show support to fellow LGBT people “As a gay street artist living in the UK, I cannot imagine what the LGBT population of Russia and their supporters are going through. (...) If this piece lets one man or woman in Russia know that we are behind them and it's OK to be who you are, then it will do its purpose.” (Fleming qtd. in Young, 2014) He continues by explaining his fear of the situation to get worse for LGBT once the Sochi Games have ended and the global press has left: “I understand that things are only getting worse in Russia and people are going into hiding, I dread to think how much worse it will get once the media spotlight leaves Sochi and the Olympics. (...) I only hope that we do not forget what is happening after the games are over. The state-sanctioned persecution is a march back towards fascism, but I am hopeful that things will get better.” (Fleming qtd. in Young, 2014)

Various protests of support to LGBT people in Russia in form of local protest are mentioned and reported in short articles. One took place in Brighton, expecting more than 150 protesters to listen to Ksenia Zhivago, a Russian LGBT activist giving a speech. The organizer of the protest event, a Brighton and Hove Socialist Party member states: “The Sochi Olympics puts the world spotlight on Russia and international protests are showing

mass opposition to Putin's homophobic government.” (cf. Zhivago qtd. in *The Argus*, 2014)

Another planned demonstration against Russia's anti-gay laws prohibiting the promotion of homosexuality to minors is reported to take place in the form of a rally performed by LGBT campaigners on the day after the Olympic Games in Sochi have been opened at Media City in Salford, United Kingdom. According to an organizing member, the motivation is the “(...) hope that other LGBT societies across the UK will follow suit.” (cf. *Manchester Evening News*, 2014)

A global protest named ‘Speak out for Russia’, which took place in St. Petersburg two days prior to the G20 summit called out for finding a new host for the 2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games. The ‘global day of action’ protests against the new Russian legislation, banning the propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations. Different events by various activists were staged, such as the ‘Love Russia, Hate Homophobia’. Out of fear of gay athletes and spectators to be at danger of facing fines or getting arrested and to pressure then Prime Minister David Cameron into “publicly urging Putin to repeal the laws and prosecute 'violent homophobes terrorizing' LGBT people in Russia.” (cf. *Precise*, 2013a)

A different form of protest was chosen by the London's King's Head Theatre. It designed a beneficial play with its profits going to Russia's leading human rights organization through which they wanted opposed, just like the previous named protest cases, the Russian anti-gay laws and the country's hosting of the Winter Olympics. The play is set to use “verbatim voices of LGBT Russians and reacts to the debate's recent media coverage incl (sic!) calls for a boycott by TV personality Stephen Fry (...)” The producers of the play argue that the situation in Russia is “a humanitarian issue that needs to be publicly addressed, with Sochi 2014 regarded as the ideal opportunity for the world to show their opposition towards Russia's attitudes.” (cf. *Precise*, 2013b)

Similar views are demonstrated by the Equality Network in Edinburgh. The gay rights group organized a protest outside of the Russian Consulate against the new laws that, according to them, had led to numerous attacks against LGBT people in Russia and to the closing down of local human rights organizations. In addition to the network in Edinburgh, human rights activists in Glasgow call for an end in the cities partnership with the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don and Glasgow's Lord provost formulated a letter of concern to her Russian colleague. (cf. *Precise*, 2013c)

But local protest also took place in Russia itself, as mentioned above, specifically in St. Petersburg, and also in Moscow, where gay activists protested by unfurling a banner, which referred to the Principle 6 of the Olympic Charter, and got arrested on the day of the Olympic Games opening in Sochi. Just 4 days prior to the Games, an activist protesting against environmental violations had been arrested. Later that month, Pussy Riot members were detained while they visited Sochi to record a music video to protest against President Putin. After they were released, an attack by the local Cossack militia, an unofficial security force, followed when they tried to perform in downtown Sochi, which was justified by Russia's deputy prime minister stating that their performance could only be seen as a provocation. His official comment on the issue includes that no one would be punished that decided to "peacefully protest against the Games" due to Russia's constitution, but critics state that such statements, as well as the amnesty measure by Putin, that led to the release of various imprisoned protesters, are an attempt to soothe critical voices over human rights violations. That criticism concerning human rights violations, especially against protesters grows. Cases like the delay of a punishment of activists due to an anti-Putin protest in 2012 to the day after the Olympics end call for western states not to ignore human rights issues in Russia. (cf. USA Today, 2014)

Another artist protest took place when the band 'Blondie' denied an invitation by president Putin to perform at the Sochi Winter Games.

A band member argues that, due to the treatment of gay people in Russia, they see it as a "'moral duty' to stand up to President Putin" and boycott the Games, saying that "...it didn't feel proper, especially in light of the crazy new legislation banning 'homosexual propaganda'." (cf. Daily Mirror, 2014)

They say that even though they wanted to attend the Games as performers, they feel that they had a moral duty to represent the gay community, -due to their long relationship with it, adding that in general, to them, "Artists have a moral duty to boycott places with poor human rights records". (cf. mirror.co.uk, 2014)

The band used the social media platform Twitter to post a picture of their boycotted invitation on which they wrote 'Pass. Human Rights'. And stating in another tweet that: "With the Olympics it became very apparent that it was something we shouldn't do. It's a tragedy the regime is like this...there's just been such public denial from Putin that it's become an international issue. And rightly so." (Blondie qtd. in mirror.co.uk, 2014)

The band also points out the danger for LGBTs in Russia and for protesters as they support the protest band Pussy Riot with which they had performed with at an Amnesty International show stating that “You can't fail to be impressed by them. They're bright, clever, and - my God - brave. As long as there's people like them around to take a stand in the face of the powers that be, there will be hope.” (Blondie qtd. in mirror.co.uk, 2014)

“While it is not illegal to be gay in Russia, it is clearly very dangerous. I mean we've already seen it with Pussy Riot - jailed for speaking out and defending minorities.” (Harry qtd. in mirror.co.uk, 2014)

Pussy Riot Protest

Amongst the most prominent protesters is the band Pussy Riot. Pussy Riot is a punk collective known for its criticism on Russia's president Vladimir Putin and his government. The band first gained global fame through a protest at a Moscow cathedral in 2012 followed by an arrest of the band members Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina, who were given a two-year prison term.

The two women were amongst a third person when they got arrested and charged with theft, which is said to only being an attempt to forestall a protest.

As the three band members state, they had come to Sochi to perform their new protest song against President Putin called ‘Putin will teach you to love the motherland’ which they wanted to perform as a devotion to “(...) the victims of the Bolotnaya case, Yevgenny Vitishko, Olympic corruption, and the suppression of freedom in Russia”. (cf. The Daily Telegraph, 2014)

According to the Moscow News, the three anti-Kremlin feminist band members planned to record a music video and got arrested while walking around in Sochi as they posted a statement on Twitter saying “We're in Sochi to carry out a Pussy Riot protest. The song is called 'Putin Will Teach You to Love the Motherland'” (qtd. in Moscow News, 2014b) adding that even though they officially got arrested for theft, they were simply walking around town when the officers forcefully detained them.

Tolokonnikova and Alyokhina were amongst those prisoners that got released early under President Putin's granted amnesty in December 2013, just two months prior to their arrest

in Sochi. (cf. Moscow News, 2014b)

While the band states that protest in the usual Pussy Riot form, wearing colorful balaclavas and performing is not seen as appropriate concerning the Ukraine crisis with people dying, they view their form of protest concerning the Olympics in Sochi as a “(...) very appropriate way of protesting because the Olympics was an event that you had to laugh at. It was the most expensive Olympics, and a big part - according to numerous investigations - of the money ended up in officials' pockets, just at a time when things were not going so well with the Russian economy.” (cf. The New York Times, 2014c)

They add that their relationship with President Putin is paramount as they believe their arrest to be of personal interest by Putin because of having embarrassed him publicly and also his actions seeming to be personal as they state: “Probably no one would have noticed our protest if Putin himself hadn't highlighted it to the whole world, it seemed pretty stupid of him and that's why we think it was a personal reaction - no political adviser would ever have advised that response.” (Pussy Riot qtd. in The New York Times, 2014c)

So the Russian Punk Rock Group Pussy Riot, known for their protests against the Russian president Putin, did take a stand on the stage of the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014, as the government had feared and the The New York Times describes it as: “(...) the protest [in Sochi] had largely turned out to be a bust. And then Pussy Riot came to town.” (cf. The New York Times, 2014c)

Various newspapers reported about their protest taking place in Sochi, as members of the band staged a song protest in front of the Olympic sign, leading to the arrest of some of them, the attack by Cossacks previously mentioned and other various violent attacks by pro-government activists. As one member, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova states “The Olympics has created an environment of sweeping violations of human rights in Russia. We are banned from speaking out here.” (Tolokonnikova qtd. in The New York Times, 2014c)

Their protest song gained free publicity by the violent actions taken against them, as the later published music video to the song involves scenes from local protests, in which the women were shoved roughly into police cars and the attack by Cossacks of which reports in newspapers topped the Olympics media coverage the day after the incident, according to The New York Times.

The group's protest was endorsed by Russian opposition activist Aleksei A. Navalny, who had already protested against the Russian Olympics himself prior to the Games, and other activists who joined in on the protest.

But they also faced a counter-protest of pro-government activists protesting against the band's performance. The group of six men, a protest movement called the 'Moral way', shouted 'We like sex with chickens(sic!)!' at the band members, as a referral to a performance of a female activist performing a sexual act with a frozen chicken, Tolokonnikova's art group had done.

The violent attacks against Pussy Riot were not investigated by the IOC as Mark Adams, the IOC's spokesman said "We spoke to our colleagues at Sochi 2014, but this is really, if you like, a civil issue". (cf. Adams qtd. in The New York Times, 2014c)

To protest against the anti-gay laws and the crackdown on LGBT rights, Pussy Riot also performed a protest against the shutting-down of the independent television station Dozhd, as they performed their song 'Putin will teach you to love the motherland' pumping their fists in the air singing 'The air is closed for Dozhd' and 'The gay parade has been sent to the outhouse' as they stopped traffic in a small neighborhood while surrounded by journalists.

According to their Twitter account, the band members were detained three times during their three days of performance in and outside of Sochi. (cf. The New York Times, 2014d)

As a matter of human rights, Amnesty International got involved in the case of Pussy Riot protest in Sochi and their arrest, calling on the Russian authorities to release those arrested, as Amnesty International Director John Dalhuisen says: "The Russian authorities must end this downward spiral of human rights violations around the Olympic village." (Dalhuisen wtd. In MailOnline, 2014)

In his view, the Russian officials "have turned the Olympic rings - a worldwide symbol of hope and striving for the best of the human spirit - into handcuffs to shackle freedom of expression." And he calls on the IOC to condemn the arrests of activists near the Olympic site, as people who were using their right of freedom of expression were being attacked. (cf. MailOnline, 2014)

Another interpretation of 'local protest' is delivered by the protest Google did, using the Internet as their platform. In joining other U.S. companies on supporting Russia's LGBT

people, Google changed the logo on its website to a design consisting of rainbow colors and winter sport athletes skiing, sledding, curling and skating, completed with a quote from the Olympic Charter that reads: ‘The practice of Sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind.’ (cf. The Guardian, 2014c)

To make it a silent protest, Google did not comment on the logo, wanting it to speak for itself.

“Google has made a clear and unequivocal statement that Russia’s anti-LGBT discrimination is indefensible,” says human rights Campaign President, whose organization has been trying to get American corporations, especially those sponsoring the Games in Sochi, to help protest against the law signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, adding that “(...) it’s time for each and every remaining Olympic sponsor to follow their lead. The clock is ticking, and the world is watching.” (HRC President qtd, in The New Zealand Herald, 2014b)

Google joined U.S. Olympic Committee sponsors like AT&T and others in protesting against the law, timing their changing of logo in a way that it would be seen in Russia at the time the opening ceremonies were held. (cf. The New Zealand Herald, 2014b)

Sponsor Protest

Alongside calls for boycotts and their debate, athlete protests and activist’s actions, one form of protest among the cases was caused by the sponsorship of the Olympic Winter Games 2014.

The sponsors of an event as significant as the Olympics are not solely seen as a financial supporter but also as an opinion leader that has the chance of taking a stand.

Coca-Cola, as one of the major sponsors was accused of having failed to do so resulting in protests such as the ‘Anything but Coke’ campaign. The campaign organized by Jeffrey Kasanoff, aiming to “protest LGBT rights abuses in Russia by boycotting sponsors”, held its first protest at Carnegie Mellon University where demonstrations consisted of marching with signs and dumping Coca-Cola products. A form of protest which had transnationally caused attention as it had been done in London and New York’s Times

Square. (cf. Shelley-Reade, 2014) Kasanoff states that “the idea is just to show that we don't value their product at this point if they're not willing to speak up for people in need.” (Kasanoff qtd. in Shelley-Reade, 2014) Kasanoff considers LGBT Russians as people in need as the propaganda law banned public support for the LGBT community.

“I've been paying attention to what's been happening in Russia for a while now, and it's quite disturbing, there [have] been a lot of hate crimes over there. A lot of gay people have been...attacked when protesting...[and] a couple of people have actually been abducted from their homes.” (Kasanoff qtd. in Shelley-Reade, 2014)

He widens his concerns stating the fear of Putin passing another law which would take children away from same-sex couples.

The reason he chose to boycott and protest against Coca-Cola is, as he says, that he realized “pretty quickly that probably wouldn't accomplish much because obviously Putin wouldn't care, we decided instead we would protest Coca-Cola, because not only are they sponsoring the Olympics in Russia, but they are in the middle of this huge deal: a five-year, three billion-dollar investment in the Russian market.” (cf. Shelley-Reade, 2014)

Kasanoff and his campaign reached their goal as it did catch the Coca-Cola Company's attention which then sent a message to the campaigners and asked for a meeting.

Another important factor of their campaign as a protester states is the involvement of students in the campaign and Kasanoff adds “I think it would be upsetting if Wesleyan didn't do anything about [the situation] because our reputation is [that] of a school that cares [and] is really LGBT friendly and I think that this issue is more important than a lot of people realize.” (cf. Kasanoff qtd. in Shelley-Reade, 2014)

The protesters agree on the importance of a University boycott of Coca-Cola products, as they, on long term, aim for Coca-Cola withdrawing their investment or taking a stand in some form.

“We want to draw attention to Wesleyan's carrying of Coke and hopefully [move] to take it off the shelves so that people can't put money towards Coke until they say something or pull out of their investment in Russia” (Kasanoff qtd. In Shelley-Reade, 2014) According to the campaigners, the protest has drawn a lot of attention from both, students, as well as “people in roles of power” willing to support the cause.

But the protest has also led to a questioning of the form of protest as “pouring soda into the city storm drainage system seems an inefficient mode of protest and questioned the decision to single out Coca-Cola from all of the Olympics sponsors.” (cf. Shelley-Reade, 2014)

But Kasanoff emphasizes the importance of protesting which, as he says “is an issue which we can effect, and that we should effect. And right now is the time to do it; we can't wait until things get really bad”. (Kasanoff qtd. in Shelley-Reade, 2014)

Coca Cola as one of the most famous and worldwide known sponsors had to deal with criticism and boycott. Even though the company is known to be a supporter of gay rights, it sponsoring the Olympic Games put it in a position being of protested against. “Coca-Cola was one of the first U.S. companies to support the proposed Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would protect employees from discrimination due to sexual orientation, and its HR department has funded a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) employees (sic!) association since 2000.” (cf. Gunther, 2013)

Yet, in times prior to the upcoming Olympic Games in Sochi, protests against Coca Cola took place with banners reading ‘Coke: Don’t Sponsor Hate.’ and led to demonstrators pouring Coke products into a sewer beneath a Coca Cola advertisement billboard at the New York Times Square in September 2013.

The protests took place due to “ratcheting up expectations” as the article's author, Marc Gunther, formulates it. He states that the pressure against the Olympic sponsors, such as McDonald’s, General Electric, Procter & Gamble, Visa and Samsung, rises as it is not enough anymore “to promise not to discriminate against gays and lesbians” but to “(...) become advocates and allies of groups, such as the human rights Campaign, that fight for equal treatment for LGBT people globally”, especially in times of the Russian anti-gay law. (cf. Gunther 2013)

This is emphasized in a letter from August 29th 2013, written by Chad Griffin, president of the human rights Campaign, which addresses the sponsoring companies stating that they “have a duty to speak out clearly on LGBT equality in Russia and around the world - a duty not simply to your brands, your employees and your customers, but to LGBT people everywhere.” (Griffin qtd. in Gunther, 2013)

He adds that the brands should use their various marketing and creative advertising

resources “to build awareness and demonstrate support for LGBT equality in Russia and globally” and to “support the local LGBT community in Russia”.

Human rights Campaign additionally states that they do not recommend a boycott but would rather see a cooperation of their own organization with the sponsors. They also set up a website to report how sponsors deal with the issue in Sochi.

Even though various voices agree with putting a focus on Sochi and pointing out the violence through the anti-gay law, many add that the LGBT issue which can be seen in Russia, is more of a global problem that needs attention. Among them is Bob Witeck, an advisor in communications on LGBT issues to big companies who says: “Granted Russia is a giant power, and the Olympics are a global stage - so putting shame on both the Russian host and the Games organizers makes sense tactically, but the messaging itself should be globalized, and the Russian example aligned with others.” Adding that, due to more than 70 countries with laws criminalizing homosexual behavior, there should be a “universal voice and human rights commitment that is global, and doesn’t merely single out one nation like Russia.” (Witeck qtd in Gunther, 2013)

Comment on Protest

The protests taking place on the stage offered by the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014 attracted the media to cover the various protest cases, their forms, as well as their different actors. Despite the cases themselves, another topic the media paid attention to were different voices and comments on protest at the Olympic Games.

Ivan Savvine, a New York City-based Russian writer, compares in his article for the Russian Press Digest ‘A gay Russian-American examines Sochi protest’ (Savvine, 2014) -as the title says- the perception of protest from different views.

According to him, the attention to the situation of LGBT’s in Russia due to the signing of the law by President Putin in combination with the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014 led to “a few sharp voices” openly criticizing “that the ‘gay propaganda’ law is nothing but a public relations campaign by the Kremlin to distract and divert attention from Russia's many true crises: stagnant economy, corruption, unlawful imprisonment and torture in detention, prisoners of conscience, an epic demographic catastrophe unfolding outside of major urban areas, with rates of HIV infection and illegal drug abuse climbing the record

numbers.”

But Savvine says that the focusing of activists on the issue actually leads to making “the Kremlin’s strategy an ultimate success” and says that among the above stated socio-political issues, it is not the biggest issue for Russian society.

He gives voice to a gay Russian man by quoting him stating that he lives openly gay in Moscow and that he and his friends disagree with the behavior of gay Russians in the U.S. who try to disrupt the Games “that Russia waited so long to host”. And opposes the boycott of Russian products, like the protest in New York City where activists dumped Russian vodka in the streets.

According to Savvine, Russia is not the first state to invent strategic homophobia, as he says, former U.S. president George W. Bush has done so to distract the American people from the “disastrous” Iraq war and a “looming financial meltdown” by pushing for a ban on same-sex marriages. He points out that various African countries have “draconian anti-gay laws, which in comparison with Russia’s ‘gay propaganda’ law make Moscow and Saint Petersburg look like magic lands of rainbows and unicorns.” Yet those not leading to any form of protest in cities like New York.

Savvine calls that a “poisonous cocktail of ignorance and double standards” and states that a “profound statement about rights and liberties of those who remain in Russia, gay or straight” is missing. (cf. Savvine, 2014)

Kent Kirker, a U.S. citizen discusses Russia’s, in particular Sochi’s, homophobia as the country and city prepare themselves for the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games. He quotes the Mayor of Sochi who replied to the question of how he felt about gay people saying ‘We don’t have them in our town.’ To Kirker, the anti-gay law signed by Putin, is a form of “taking unnecessary, unprecedented, and discriminatory actions”. Therefore, he welcomes President Barack Obama’s decision of boycotting the Games himself and – instead - sending a delegation that includes openly gay athletes, to the Olympic ceremonies. As the Olympics are a worldwide exclusive sporting event, according to Kirker, he calls on the IOC to act as a “fully inclusive organization that doesn’t care about its participants’ sexual orientations” as it has always emphasized its aims in encouraging a diverse and multicultural community. (cf. Kirker, 2014)

In his article ‘Vladimir Putin is a homophobe’ (Rheingold, 2014), Curtis Rheingold is

very clear on his views of the Russians perception of LGBT people: “Vladimir Putin and the majority of the Russian population are blatantly homophobic” and criticizes the treatment of LGBT people which can no longer be openly gay in public with gay rights marches and rallies being forbidden.”

It is that homophobia that led to violent protest in Moscow which would not be intervened by the police not try intervene and further attacks on gay men, which were filmed and posted online, without causing any arrests by the police.

In addition, instead of dealing with the violence and taking actions against it, Putin has signed a decree that bans public demonstrations and any kind of protest that is “not related to the holding of the Olympic Games.”

While critics of Putin see his behavior as discriminatory against LGBTs, Putin himself is determined to assure the competing nations and the IOC that “[they] will do everything to make sure athletes, fans and guests feel comfortable at the Olympic Games regardless of their ethnicity, race or sexual orientation.” His critics state that he has associated homosexuality with pedophilia in previous statements, as well as through the anti-propaganda-law he signed. (cf. Rheingold, 2014)

An article with a different approach is written by Marc Bennetts. Bennetts’ views and compares different sides to the Russian treatment of LGBTs and compares it with other nations and their laws, in an attempt of showing the topic in a different light.

He states that “the ferocious row over the Kremlin's notorious anti-gay law in the run-up to the Sochi Olympics has sparked a bout of Russia-bashing that is not only often unfair, but also counter-productive (sic!).”

While he does criticize the law passed by President Putin as an “unnecessary, clumsy piece of legislation” that is “solely to boost support for Putin in Russia’s conservative heartland”, he at the same time criticizes western opponents whose criticism he calls “hysterical and hypocritical” and which he says has sometimes gone too far quoting statements by Stephen Fry and U.S. show host Jay Leno who has compared the Russian law to the Nazis treatment of Jews.

Bennetts analyzes the perception and consequences of western criticism which could, according to him, play into the Kremlin’s hands due to the fact that its media is known for putting an effort into finding ‘western inconsistencies’, which it could find in crime

statistics of the UK, as well as ‘sodomy laws’ still existing in 10 U.S. States. At the same time, he does point out the importance of supporting LGBT people in Russia by the international community, but that it should be done with a “sense of perspective”. He continues to neutralize the law and its effects on LGBTs by stating numbers of consequences the law had on people and how hate-crime committers did get punished contrary to various other news reports on the topic.

In addition, he criticizes the one-sided media coverage of Russia’s law stating that it has been named one of the most-draconian laws while other nations such as Nigeria and India have much stricter laws on LGBTs and Saudi Arabia still executing homosexuals, a country which U.S. President Obama was said to have a “long history of friendship” with while he used the political attention to join the opponents of Russia by stating he has “no patience for Russia’s gay propaganda law”.

Bennett ends his article by pointing out the importance of a “measured, accurate and, above all consistent” criticism if protesters want to achieve any kind of influence on Russia. (cf. Bennetts, 2014)

Resume on Protest

As a Resume on protest at the Games, The Guardian sums up the issues that raised concerns about the Sochi Winter Olympic Games 2014 and states that those are not expected to vanish entirely. As the costs of the Games, along with security fears and human rights concerns surrounded the Games and played a big role in the media coverage, they will be remembered just as images that filled newspaper articles of Pussy Riot band members being whipped by Cossacks in front of the Olympic logo.

The article recalls the protest by a coalition of 33 human rights groups that called on the IOC to be more critical in the choice of its host cities and concludes with stating that at these Olympic Games no podium protest took place, which, according to quoted IOC president Thomas Bach was due to the fact that “the Games are not about political disagreements. They are not about political confrontation.” (Bach qtd. in The Guardian, 2014d)

The Washington Post quotes the human rights Watch Organization as they state their opinion on the Sochi Winter Games. To them, the Games were “defined by sweeps:

arrests of peaceful critics that are wholly inconsistent with Olympic ideals of human dignity.” Arguing that not only human rights issues surrounded the Games but also corruption and crackdowns on environmentalists, as well as attacks against other activists leading to a broad coverage by western media and the general opinion of Russia being a “backward country”. Which the opposite voice made heard in the article, the one of Vladimir Pozner, a famous TV spokesman and author of books intending to explain the Soviet Union’s view on topics, clearly denies. Pozner criticizes the Western media for overstating security worries and setting up a stage of provocative images “rather than probing more deeply into what the 2014 Olympics represent in the context of Russian history” as, to him, the Western media failed to be objective. (cf. The Washington Post, 2014)

Conclusio

The analysis of the media coverage of protest within the field of the Olympic Games gives deep insights into how the Olympic Games provide a transnational publicity platform for human rights activism.

As the Olympic Games are the biggest international sport event that includes not only athletes but various actors with different interests, it provides a publicity platform like no other event does. Those different actors use that platform for activism in various forms and ways, which the analysis of the different protest cases and its forms, shows.

When analyzing the different newspaper articles concerning protest at the Olympic games in Sochi 2014, the answer to the question “In what ways and to what effect have the Olympics provided a publicity platform for human rights activism?” can be found and it becomes clear how the Olympics offer a wide spectrum of publicity platform for transnational human rights activism in the picture of the Transnational theory. The question whether the use of the Olympic Games as a stage of protest is successful, measured in its presence in the media, can be answered looking at the numerous worldwide published articles in the international news coverage as the aim of protesters and activists is to raise awareness on their protest issues. The various strategies implemented by campaigners and the form of protest, as well as political implications can be detected in the analysis.

As can be seen in the data, the reasons for protest at the Olympic Winter Games 2014 in Sochi differ, from some caused by environmental issues to others such as, in the case of Sochi the most protests causing, human rights.

But not only do the reasons of protest differ. A big variety can also be found in the forms of protest, like governmental protest and boycott, general boycott, sponsor protest, protest by athletes, as well as local protest by activist groups and artists.

Furthermore, the various ways of protest, like on-site protest by athletes, globally-impacted-protest by governments and activist groups protest, show how the Olympics platform is used for protest, its diversity of the ways it is used and its effectiveness, as the various protests lead to a worldwide media coverage by international newspapers.

The analysis of that media coverage presents the LGBT and Russian anti-gay law issue surrounding the 2014 Sochi Winter Games as the main protest issue as it is strongly connected to human rights protest and activism.

No other topic caused as many protests and therefore also reports in the international media as the LGBT issue. The articles included introductory characteristics about the issue of the Russian anti-gay law and how it leads to protest and human rights activism, as well as coverage of protests and actions taken by activists.

The results of the analysis presenting various reasons, forms and ways of protest, and their effectiveness measured through the presence in the media, amplify the role the Olympic Games play as a publicity platform for human rights activism.

Outlook

Due to Brazil being a country of corruption and poverty that has to deal with a huge gap between its rich and poor population, the Games that followed Sochi, in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, already had taken a spot in Olympic history even before the Games took place. Protests and public debate on failing human rights already caught the attention of media and activists throughout the world before the Games.

But not only the awarding of Rio with the Olympic Games, but also awarding Russia with the FIFA World Cup 2018 has already led to various newspaper reports of stated concern on issues such as the right to protest, as Mikhail Kreindlin, member of the Greenpeace

Sochi campaign states: “If the [anti-protest] measures are successful, it is possible that they will be used during the World Cup as well. (...) We need more security, but here we could be seeing the restriction of basic rights.” (“Presidential Order Bans Protests in Sochi during the Olympics.” (Kreindlin qtd. in RusData Dialine, 2013)

As the Olympic Games and other international sport events will continue to take place and bring the world together on a global stage, it can be expected that the use of the platform for protest will continue as well.

Therefore, a continuous study on protest and protest development, also with regards to the transnational theory and the development in transnational activism, is of interest. The method of this thesis offers a tool for future research and examination of the link of politics and sport and the phenomenon of the usage of the global platform for transnational activism.

Further would be a detailed long-term study of interest, in which the evolution of protest and rising numbers of transnational activist groups, in comparison to the evolution in the international political environment would be examined, alongside with a possible outcome of protest, measured in actual impact on laws and politics in general.

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Abstract - English

The Olympic Games can be seen as the biggest event in the world, not only in sports, but as a cultural phenomenon, bringing together the most states and nations in event history. Even though it is not a secret that the Olympics have been used as a stage of protest throughout history, the publicity platform it offers has barely ever been looked at from a transnational, political point of view.

The Olympics were founded on the idea of 'Humanity and Unity', to bring the world together in competition and peace. Yet throughout history it has become clear that Olympics are not solely about sports and competition but have been used for political intentions.

While the first half of the modern Olympic Games mostly dealt with protest on a state level, like boycotts and bans, throughout the later years, a transformation in protest towards a transnational activism can be seen, starting in the 1960s, when state bans and boycotts were joined by demonstrations and, more often, protest by non-governmental groups.

In the Olympic protest history, one cause of protest repeatedly appears: Human Rights. Since the Olympic Games bring the world together, they, at the same time give the opportunity for protesters to point out issues and raise awareness by providing a transnational base, which enables protest to grow from domestic to a global awareness. Through the Olympics, actors have a chance to reveal concerns that would otherwise possibly remain unseen by the rest of the world.

One of the most famous protest at the Olympic Games was in 1968 in Mexico when two African-American athletes raised their gloved fist to the sky wanting to raise awareness to race segregation in the United States. Despite the IOC's ambition and rule to keep politics out of the Olympic Games, the picture went around the world and remains -till today- one of the most remembered protests in Olympic history. Ever since, Human Rights protest by advocacy groups has grown using the Olympic Games' unique platform seen by the entire world.

Most recent, the Olympic Games in Sochi 2014 are another example of how important the Games are in the fight for Human Rights.

Prior to the Games, in 2013 President Putin and the Kremlin passed a law criminalizing the propaganda of LGBT: the 'anti-LGBT' law stating that any positive statement concerning LGBT is seen as propaganda and will be punished.

While Putin excused the law to be for the 'protection of children', world-wide LGBT and Human Rights advocates saw a clear discrimination act and an endangerment towards LGBT people, as it decriminalized so-called hate crimes.

Soon those advocacy groups started to raise awareness in the picture of the Olympic Games taking place in Sochi a year later. And throughout the world, protests took place and activists joined in to address their governments, as well as the International Olympic Committee, forcing them to take a stand on the issue.

Despite the fact that the law in Russia is not expected to change, the protest on the platform of the Olympic Games in Sochi raised worldwide awareness on the topic and led to inner-country discussions, domestic debates and global activism.

Abstract – German

Die Olympischen Spiele können nicht nur als das größte Event der Welt bezeichnet werden, sondern vielmehr als ein kulturelles Phänomen das weltweit Staaten und Nationen vereint.

Obwohl es bekannt ist, dass die Olympischen Spiele als Bühne für Proteste instrumentalisiert werden, ist die öffentliche Plattform die sie bieten, bisher kaum unter einem transnationalen, politischen Aspekt untersucht worden. Die Olympischen Spiele wurden auf der Idee der ‚Menschheit und Einheit‘ begründet, mit dem Ziel, die Welt in Wettkampf und Frieden zusammenzuführen. Jedoch wird bei näheren Betrachtens der Entwicklung der Spiele deutlich, dass es hierbei nicht nur um Sport und Wettkampf geht, sondern dass diese vielmehr für politische Zwecke genutzt wurden.

Während in der ersten Hälfte der modernen Olympischen Spiele meist Proteste auf staatlicher Ebene stattgefunden haben, wie beispielweise Boykotts und Sperren, kann in der zweiten Hälfte eine Entwicklung hin zu transnationalem Aktivismus festgestellt werden - angefangen in den 1960er Jahren als sich mehr und mehr Demonstrationen von nichtstaatlichen Gruppierungen zu den staatlichen Protesten anschlossen.

Hierbei wiederholte sich ein Auslöser für Proteste immer wieder: Human Rights.

Dadurch, dass sie die Welt zusammenbringen, und eine transnationale Basis bieten, ermöglichen die Spiele die Möglichkeit für Protestierende auf Angelegenheiten hinzuweisen, und eine Aufmerksamkeit auf diese zu lenken, welches ein Wachsen des Protests von inländischer hin zu einer globalen Aufmerksamkeit ermöglicht. Durch die Olympischen Spiele und ihre Bühne haben AktivistInnen die Möglichkeit auf Missstände hinzuweisen, die andernfalls eventuell vom Rest der Welt unbeachtet bleiben würden.

Einer der bekanntesten Proteste bei Olympischen Spiele war der in Mexiko im Jahr 1968, als zwei Afro-Amerikaner ihre behandschuhte Faust zum Himmel streckten mit der Absicht gegen die Rassentrennung in den USA zu demonstrieren. Obwohl das Internationale Komitee die Ambition und Regel verfolgte, keine Politik bei den Spielen zuzulassen, ging das Bild des Protests um die Welt und ist bis heute ein unvergessener Olympischer Moment.

Seitdem kann ein stetiger Anstieg der Nutzung der einzigartigen Plattform, welche die Spiele bieten, für Human Rights Proteste verzeichnet werden.

Die Winter Spiele in Sochi, Russland, 2014 sind ein weiteres Beispiel dafür, wie wichtig die Olympischen Spiele im Human Rights Kampf sind.

Den Spielen vorangegangen ist das Verabschieden eines Gesetzes von Präsident Putin und dem Kreml in 2013, welches die ‚Propaganda‘ von Homosexualität unter Strafe stellt: Dieses ‚anti-LGBT‘ Gesetz besagt, dass jede positive Äußerung hinsichtlich LGBT als Propaganda angesehen und bestraft wird.

Während Putin das Gesetz als ‚Schutz der Kinder‘ bezeichnet, sehen es weltweite LGBT und Human Rights Advokaten als eine klare Diskriminierung und Gefährdung von LGBT in Russland, da das Gesetz sogenannte Hass-Verbrechen de-kriminalisiert.

Die AktivistInnen warteten nicht lange und starteten Kampagnen im Hinblick auf die in Sochi stattfindenden Spiele. Es folgten weltweite Proteste und Menschenrechtler wandten sich an ihre jeweiligen Regierungen und an das Internationale Olympische Komitee, um sie zu einer Stellungnahme zu zwingen.

Obwohl keine Änderung des Gesetzes erwartet wird, schafften es die weltweiten Proteste auf der Plattform der Olympischen Spiele, globale Aufmerksamkeit auf die Lage in Russland zu lenken. Dies führte zu inländischen Diskussionen und globalem Aktivismus.

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