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Pledge of honesty

On my honor as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Mahmoud Al Khaled

Abstract

This thesis explores the connection between soft power and major sports events. Why is it that countries are increasingly competing for the hosting of such major sports event, what is the connection with soft power and what should a host country take into account in order to positively impact its soft power? Such questions will be explored with a focus on the causal mechanisms of soft power namely, its three qualities: emotional, rational and social attraction as well as a soft power index. The three case studies that are analyzed are: the 2016 Rio Olympics, the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics and the 2018 Russia World Cup. The author argues that a host nation must take into account its soft power qualities before, during and after the event if it is to pull off a considerable impact on its soft power; simply relying on hosting a successful event won't alone increase the soft power of the host country.

Abstrakt

Diese Arbeit untersucht die Verbindung zwischen Soft Power und großen Sportereignissen. Warum konkurrieren die Länder zunehmend um die Durchführung eines solchen großen Sportereignisses, was ist der Zusammenhang mit Soft Power und was sollte ein Gastland berücksichtigen, um seine Soft Power positiv zu beeinflussen? Solche Fragen werden mit Fokus auf die kausalen Mechanismen von Soft Power untersucht, nämlich ihre drei Qualitäten: emotionale, rationale und soziale Attraktion sowie ein Soft Power Index. Die drei analysierten Fallstudien sind: die Olympischen Spiele 2016 in Rio, die Olympischen Winterspiele 2018 in PyeongChang und die Weltmeisterschaft 2018 in Russland. Der Autor argumentiert, dass eine Gastnation ihre Soft Power Qualitäten vor, während und nach der Veranstaltung berücksichtigen muss, wenn sie einen erheblichen Einfluss auf ihre Soft Power ausüben will; allein die Ausrichtung einer erfolgreichen Veranstaltung wird nicht die Soft Power des Gastlandes erhöhen.

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Introduction

Sport in the 21st century is a whole new ball game. Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa best described it when he said:

sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sports can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers (Bond 2013).

Countries today would find it difficult to operate without taking into consideration public diplomacy strategies in an effort to enhance one's national image, reputation, increase one's soft power and be considered an important player on the international stage. Every country seeks to project an image to the rest of the world. The image of a country doesn't just encompass a logo or a marketing campaign, it is an image that is made up of a variety of different aspects such as history, language, the political system, culture and more (Anholt 2007). Today, having a bad reputation or the absence of a strong image can be a major factor in the reduction in a country's ability to have its voice heard and be an active participant on the world stage, which tends to be competitive. A good country image is an asset to a country when competing for more political and economic power with other nations (Li 2016).

Similarly, 'soft power' is a concept that was coined by Joseph Nye (1990). He defined it as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion'. This attraction is then translated into outcomes when the receiving nation of that soft power strategy is attracted to the state producing that soft power and looks to imitate its behavior whether on domestic or international achievements. In this concept, the main idea is a state's ability to communicate universally shared values, ideals and norms (for example, values that can be rooted in a sporting competition). Therefore,

if soft power is to work, the targeted audience must perceive the exercise as legitimate and credible. For them to perceive it that way, a country has to “walk the talk”.

After the cold war period, there has been a decline in the number of wars, as players on the international scene turned their attention to the use of other means than military force when it comes to achieving foreign policy goals (Grix and Brannagan 2016). Today, the use of military strength has become a means of last resort as “cultural” and “economic” methods have become more dominant instead. That said, for the majority of states, using military strength hurts their economic goals and their position internationally. With the diminishing use of force came an increasing importance on the use of soft power (Nye 2002). “If I can get you to do what I want, then I do not have to use carrots and sticks to make you do it”, explained Nye in his book (2004). According to him, if a country wants to achieve its objectives on the international scene, one has to appeal and attract the populations of the other countries, it needs to somehow shape their views, influence their emotions and construct their preferences. One such “cultural” tool that is used by countries to impact their soft power and nation image, which this thesis will be exploring, is the hosting of a major sporting event like that of the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games. Such events are defined as “festivals that achieve sufficient size and scope to affect whole economies and receive sustained global media attention” (Gold and Gold 2008).

The objective of this paper is to look at how countries use major sporting events like the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games with the aim of increasing their attractiveness. In other words, **the author will be analyzing the impact of major sporting events (MSEs) on a host nation’s soft power.** Analyzing this subject is important because major sporting events are increasingly becoming a crucial soft power tool in enhancing a country’s reputation, attraction and image. It is important to note that the concept of soft power touches on different fields such as political and social sciences, business, and more, which is why more research is needed as it affects various areas of human life.

Because of the acceleration of globalization and the growing influence of mediated news, majors sporting events in the 21st century have turned into a platform of unparalleled popularity and visibility. John Arquilla, an American international relations academic, summed it up when he said that 'a victory, in this information age, sometimes depends not on whose army wins, but on whose story wins' (Nye 2014). The increasing influence of the information age and globalization means that states actions are under scrutiny like never before. With that, soft power has become essential, which is why countries have been increasingly competing with one another for the hosting rights of such majors sporting events as they are capable of attracting a large number of visitors, spectators and mass media making it an opportunity to attract (Nye 2004). Hosting nations aim to mobilize their soft power in order to positively change their nation image. They are motivated to use major sports events as a communications platform to persuade others that whatever negative stereotype or image that their country may be projecting, are false and instead project ideas, cultures, and policies that enhance their power of attraction. It is important to note here that the term attraction is used by the author interchangeably with soft power.

These MSEs are used as a way to bring together different stakeholders that otherwise would not coordinate and have them work together in an effort to enhance the image of a country and communicate to the rest of the world the host nation's identity. Hosting states aim to use the platform of a major sporting event not only to communicate their attractiveness through shared sporting values but also to promote their individuality and their distinctive cultural, political and social values. That attractiveness is very closely related to what one can call a nation's image. It can be conveyed through various means such as a nation's popular culture, its public diplomacy, how it does business abroad, the perceptions of its governmental policies internationally, its economic strength and other factors. Nye's definition focuses on the attraction of a country's image, its values, norms and ideals (Nye 2014).

In the following document, an overview will first be given of the literature surrounding the concepts of soft power, public diplomacy, strategic communication around the use of major sporting events. Then a theoretical foundation for the

research will follow and an overview of the forecasted methodology. Subsequently, the empirical section where the theory will be put to the test.

Chapter 1: Theory

1.1 Literature Review

The main advantage of hosting a major sporting event is the ability of the hosting state to communicate its attractiveness. This is, however, not new to the field of international relations as many examples before in history demonstrate this phenomenon. For example, France in the 18th and 19th centuries, through the creation of the Alliance Française, an international organization which today has over 850 centers in 137 countries, promoted its culture and language to the world with the goal of increasing its attractiveness, strengthening its influence and improving its image (Nye 2004). Other countries followed through with their own versions of international organizations like the British Council of the UK and China's Confucius institute.

The outbreak of World War 1 saw a big increase in the efforts of countries to deploy soft power strategies and resources to strengthen their propaganda (Nye 2004). For example, it was around that time that the United States mastered a form of soft power with the creation of Hollywood. Cinema and movies became so instrumental for the United States in promoting its culture, language, ideals, policies and more. No one can deny today the role of Hollywood in being one of the main resources the United States uses to continue to exert so much influence in the world and with that, the importance of soft power.

Therefore, soft power as a concept isn't new and many of its resources have been used by countries. What is relatively new, on the other hand, is the platform of major sports events in increasing a nation's soft power. One example would be the 1936 Summer Olympic Games in Germany, considered to be the first truly major sports event because it was the first time the event was broadcasted on television (Olympic 2019), when Hitler's aim was to influence the public opinion of other

countries and project the ideals of racial supremacy and anti-Semitism (Grix and Lee 2013). According to Grix and Lee (2013), it is not only countries with positive ideals, images, culture, and policies that go for soft power strategies, in fact, countries with unattractive social and political values seem to be even more motivated to use soft power in order to rebrand their image. That is a fact, because when one looks at Germany today, a country that was capable of an astonishing feat in terms of rebranding its image and reputation in a relatively short time span of only a few decades, they have successfully used soft power to influence people's perceptions and remake their image. For instance, Germany did extremely well in terms of improving its nation image between the years of 2005 and 2006 mainly to its hosting of a very successful World Cup, according to an annual survey, Anholt's nation brand index (Dinnie 2008).

If we accepted the notion that a country can change its reputation and successfully reshape its image in the space of only a few weeks using a major sporting event, then it would also be very plausible to assume that systematic and sustainable soft power programs and strategies could lead to an effective change of a nation's attractiveness. However, saying that a sports event alone, even if in the magnitude of a World Cup or Olympic games stage, is sufficient to dramatically have an impact on the host nation's soft power is perhaps a little bit of a stretch. As important as such major sports events can be as communication platforms, many more activities and programs need to also be undertaken for achieving a convincing and sustainable soft power impact. According to Dinnie (2008), the necessary way of going about increasing a nation's attractiveness and improving its reputation, a country should take into consideration both internal and external audiences and stakeholders. Focusing communications solely on the external audience without putting into place measures that would make the internal audience (the population of host country) also believe in the ideals, values, culture and policies of the country will not help improve the attractiveness of that country. There needs to be complimentary efforts of soft power on both internal and external perspectives. If the internal audience doesn't find its country's policies attractive for instance, that will cut short the efforts of communicating those policies as attractive to the external audience. According to Fan (2006), usually, soft power programs are aimed at the external audience, in order to improve a country's attractiveness in the eyes of the world.

However, it is just as necessary to establish programs that are aimed at the internal audience because a country is also perceived through its own people. Thus, what is needed to positively impact a nation's attractiveness, reputation and image, a country not only has to use soft power resources and communication platforms like major sports events, it also has to use other soft power initiatives to improve its own people's perceptions of their own country and increase its attractiveness in their eyes.

To better understand the impact of major sports events on a nation's soft power, public diplomacy and strategic communications literature is helpful to explore as they are elements of the soft power concept. Public diplomacy, in its classical definition, is one that is directed toward the populations of other nations as opposed to traditional diplomacy which aims at the countries' governments (Grix and Lee 2013). It aims to create an area of politics of attraction where a more receptive environment exists for the foreign policy goals and economics objectives of a state using the images and messages that the state wants to project to external audiences. In that way, the hosting of a major sports event is compatible with this public diplomacy concept as such global events in today's information age are capable of attracting the world's attention.

According to Nye (2004), public diplomacy isn't only about sending messages and projecting a positive image, it's also about building long-term relationships in order to create an environment that is suitable for governmental policies. For that, he identified three main dimensions of public diplomacy, that are all necessary and are in need of both the communication of messages and images as well as the building of long-term relationships. The first dimension according to him is the communication that is done on a day to day basis. This involves clarifying reasons behind domestic and foreign policy decisions. Explanations need to be given to the press over the context of policies taken by government officials. Again, it's important not to focus only on the domestic audience here but also make efforts to communicate the context clearly with the external audience as that has an effect on the international image of the nation. The second dimension of public diplomacy, says Nye (2004), is strategic communication. This revolves around certain themes that the campaign wants to project. The campaign then sets up communications and events that during

the course of a year are there to support the main themes, or to promote a government policy. To better illustrate his point, one good recent example of that is Saudi Arabia. With the Crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman coming to power, he generated a lot of excitement around him with promises of new policies that would pull his country into the 21st century. Such reforms included allowing women to drive as well as to start their own businesses without a male guardian, lifting bans on cinemas, cracking down on corruption, and the announcement of NEON, a new economic zone as part of his 2030 vision of moving away from oil dependence (Sanchez 2017). The crown prince then went on a tour of the US for publicity purposes (marketing/communications) and landed on the cover of Time Magazine as well as conducted the famous 60 minutes CBS interview which further worked in his favor in terms of image and got him a lot of good publicity. He's additionally spent billions more on marketing stunts to make his country turn into an "open" one for investors and others (Smith 2018). Although in the beginning it seemed like he was on the right track to altering the external audiences' perceptions of his country for his economic and social reforms, it was all in vain when it was discovered he was allegedly involved in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist. The case of Khashoggi brought the world media attention to him and it was all anybody talked about for months. So, although he has promised a number of substantial political and economic reforms as well as spent billions on marketing, one single act was enough to erase all the positivity he had generated and instead attracted more negative attention on his country than ever before as well as put his own position as ruler of Saudi Arabia into jeopardy (Aljeera 2018). A communication strategy cannot work if it goes against the policies of the country because actions speak louder than words. The last dimension of public diplomacy is the building of lasting relationships with people. Through strategies like academic exchange programs, scholarships, conferences, seminars, trainings, and having access to media channels, a country can affect the perceptions of others and shape their views (Nye 2004). The use of these three dimensions of public diplomacy is important if a nation is looking to create an attractive image of itself which can then help it improve its chances in getting the desired results. According to Nye, symbols and actions are far more impactful than merely communication, both have to work simultaneously if soft power is to work effectively.

However, although Nye's concept has led to a breakthrough in the area of soft power, his concept has also faced criticism. For instance, some disputed the idea that hard and soft power can be kept independent from each other as he had suggested (Patalakh 2018). Others, like researcher David Baldwin, argued in his book, *Power and International Relations*, that Nye failed to specify the parameters in his formulation of the concept which led scholars to being confused as to how his concept can be applied academically (Baldwin 2013) (Fan 2007). One such vagueness and lack of specificity that repeatedly comes up in literature has to do with the causes of soft power. That is, of course, necessary information that needs explication for this paper too. Most misunderstanding around the causes of soft power is due to the popular notion that power equals power resources. Soft power as identified by Nye is based on the behavior of attraction (Vuving 2009).

Power resources, on the other hand, are the vehicles or tools that generate soft power such as major sporting events. It is easy to see why there is confusion since it's not possible to generate attraction without using a resource. Some concrete activity is necessary to create attraction. Therefore, power is based on resources. Nye identified three general methods of going about soft power: through 'cultural' means and how culture can attract others, 'political values' in that if a country is true to what they say they represent whether at home or abroad, and finally 'foreign policy' in that a country may or may not demonstrate authority and legitimacy (Len and Hongtao 2017) (Khaled, *Use of Mega Sporting events as a soft power Tool- Russia Case Study* 2018) (Nye 2004). Nye terms these three general methods as "assets that generate attraction" in an effort to make his concept more specific and less general. The assets or resources he said can then be turned into soft power "generation" through strategies that are made up of "information agencies, public diplomacy, exchange programs, assistance programs, training programs" etc. (Nye 2011).

Although his attempt at being precise here remains rather vague, the operationalization of soft power through this resource-based method has become popular among scholars (Patalakh 2018). Some scholars, for example, like Heng (2010) and Gill and Huang (2006) have gone and based their research on exactly Nye's three general methods. Others like McClory (2015) and Ernst and Young

(2012) attempted to measure soft power through quantitative means in the shape of indexes. Although it is true that this resource-based approach can be helpful for policymakers, what is also necessary academically, is to explain how attraction exactly functions. Soft power resources do generate soft power, that's something that is difficult to contest, however, what is important to understand is the causal procedure behind soft power which is something that requires identifying what it is that consistently generates attraction (Patalakh 2018) (Roselle, Miskimmon and O'Loughlin 2014). In other words, identifying the very least conditions that have to be met for a country to produce attraction. In an attempt to provide these necessary conditions, Nye argues that two perspectives must be taken into account, that of country A (the agent) and country B (the target). The first condition says that country A has to have certain qualities of attraction. The second one revolves around how country B perceives them (Nye 2011). According to Nye without these qualities, the target country will either not react to this attempted attraction or it may even bring the opposite effect by causing revulsion towards the agent country. Here, Nye cites the work of Alexander Vuving (2009), another researcher who has identified these qualities. Vuving calls these qualities of soft power "currencies". He says there are at least three that cause attraction:

- 1) Beauty: If the target country views the ideas, and values of country A as similar to his as well as sees country A as promoting these ideas and values with credibility and devotion, they will see them as "beautiful" and hence be more attracted to country A and attempt to replicate their behavior.
- 2) Brilliance: If country B views country A as one that is accomplishing things successfully and with a high degree of performance/results, country A will be then viewed as "brilliant".
- 3) Benignity: If country B sees country A as one that treats others in a respectful and kind manner, country B will start feeling the same way to country A and thus be more "benign".

Therefore, methodologically, it would appear as though both the perspective of country A (as spreader of knowledge, values, visions etc.) and country B (how reacts and perceives these qualities) are necessary in the study of soft power. These bases of power or "power currencies", as termed by Vuving (2009), are what causes soft

power. These are closely related to Nye's three general methods of going about soft power in the sense that if, for example, country A has domestic policy that is deemed "brilliant", country B will look up to country A and will look to replicate the feat.

Another researcher, Patalakh (2018), also identified 3 similar power qualities to Vuving, which he based on the work of two psychologists that have looked into what constitutes power. The two psychologists identified the following three bases of power:

- Referent power: based on how country B identifies itself with country A
- Expert power: based on country B's belief that country A possesses a certain knowledge or skill.
- Legitimate power: based on country B's view that country A has a legitimate right to dictate a certain conduct from country B.

Based on these three bases of power, Patalakh (2018), then developed their work further, by identifying three soft power qualities that have their roots in those referent, expert and legitimate powers. These are:

- Emotional attraction: is based on referent power and is how country B would want to be associated with country A. Country B identifies with country A and therefore is attracted to it and wants to behave similarly.
- Rational attraction: Here country B's attraction grows depending on how much it perceives country A to be an expert in a particular area. It is therefore based on expert power. If country A has, for example, technological, economic and political policies that are deemed as the benchmark, the country B will be attracted.
- Social attraction: this type of attraction takes place when country B perceives country A as having a legitimate position to have influence in a particular area. Country A has a right to voice its opinion.

There are similarities between the work of Vuving and Patalakh in terms of the qualities they have identified as necessary causal mechanisms of soft power.

"Emotional" attraction is similar to "Beauty". "Rational" attraction is similar to

“brilliance”. Likewise, “Social” attraction is closely related to “benignity”. By making this distinction between soft power “resources” and soft power “bases” that are made up of qualities and traits, which have to be looked into from both the agent and receiver perspective, one can then see whether these qualities apply in different case studies. **In other words, if these essential characteristics considered as the minimum conditions to be met when producing soft power, are in fact met during the hosting of a major sporting event, whether hosting states (country A) do possess such characteristics and whether their target country (or countries) see those qualities positively.**

Three case studies will be focused on in this thesis of major sports events when examining a nation’s soft power. It is important therefore to give a short overview of the evolution of soft power in these selected case studies over time.

One case study is South Korea. This country hosted its first ever major sporting event in the shape of the Olympic Games of summer 1988. It used the stage to announce its transition from a developing country into a developed one. There were three main objectives to hosting the games for the South Korean government: firstly, they had seen the success of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and wanted to replicate that feat, secondly, they wanted to improve relations with North Korea, thirdly, they wanted to appear as an advanced nation in the eyes of the world (Ayhan 2017). To accomplish that, they initiated development programs and infrastructural projects which were helped by the rapid industrialization of the country at the time. The country appeared as developed toward its external audience due this transformation (Joo, Bae and Kassens-Noor 2017). However, the years leading up to the games, South Korea’s image was in difficulty due to its dictatorial regime which led to political unrest in the country and led other countries to offer themselves as hosts instead. Furthermore, the Summer Olympics of 1988 was seen as an opportunity for South Korea to establish diplomatic relations with countries like China and the Soviet Union (Ayhan 2017). Additionally, the games were seen as a huge success because it took place during the information revolution that was happening globally, and as a result South Korea was able to televise a huge spectacle watched by more viewers than ever before (Larson and Park 1993). In 2002, South Korea was awarded along with Japan the hosting of a joint World Cup. This was seen as

positively impacting the image of both countries for its role in creating basis for future cooperation and improvement of relations, as both countries have been known to being hostile to one another especially after the Second World War (Jarvie 2010). In this sense, success on the international sporting stage, whether by winning the most medals in a competition or by successfully hosting a major sports event, is the perfect tool for governments who are aiming to “attract” the external audience with their culture, ideals, values, norms and influence them to desiring what those national leaders desire by projecting specific messages, images, achievements and foreign policy goals (Grix and Lee 2013), communicating, in many instances, values like fairness and images of excellences, as well as, in the context of soft power, universal friendship, mutual cooperation and exchange (Manzenreiter 2010). However, according to other experts, although the nation has gone through incredible development in the past 30 years or so, its image continues to be considered weak and even perhaps negative to other countries (Anholt 2011). According to Anholt, an expert on nation images, the South Korean government needs to find a way to contribute to finding solutions to world problems if it aims to become relevant in the eyes of the world. This comes back to the discussion earlier of the need for a country to put measures in place which appeal to both internal and external audiences when aiming to improve soft power. Simply putting on a great spectacle as a communication tool would not leave a genuine impact on a nation’s attractiveness. Additionally, this thesis will explore whether the host nations chosen have the qualities discussed above that cause soft power.

In terms of major sports events in Brazil, studies have been conducted from a variety of different angles. Buarque (2015), for example, compares the two FIFA World Cups hosted by Brazil in 1950 and 2014 in terms of international image and concludes that through public diplomacy strategies, hosting the World Cup had a positive impact. He does, however, also concede that the country has been hit by economic, political and social crisis since 2013. This is an important detail because this thesis will explore how this domestic crisis affected its nation’s soft power during the hosting of its latest major sports event, namely the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games.

Finally, the last case study explored in this thesis is that of Russia's 2018 FIFA World Cup. The Soviet Union was the host of the 1980 Summer Olympics as well as the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, both events being overshadowed by external controversies. For example, the 1980 Olympic games were boycotted by the United States and 65 other countries for the 1979 Soviet Union invasion of Afghanistan. Jimmy Carter, the US president at the time believed the boycott would be damaging to the Soviet Union and that it would show the Russian citizens the mistakes its government was committing (Jackson 2018). That is important to mention in the soft power context and Margaret Thatcher best described it when she commented that not participating in the games would be "the most hurtful gesture to the Soviet Union" (Corthorn 2013). Fast forward a few decades later, president Putin recognized the immense opportunity that lies in hosting such MSEs (major sporting events) in terms of soft power and the reshaping of the image of Russia. He is central in reshaping Russia's soft power strategy in the years mid 2000 (Sergunin and Karabeshkin 2015). In fact, soft power only became officially recognized in 2013 by the Russian government as the main foreign policy tool in its arsenal (Sergunin and Karabeshkin 2015). In terms of soft power studies, some researchers have gone into the direction of explaining the policies that have shaped the rise of the strategy taken by Russia in terms of soft power and attempted to describe what features this strategy is made up of (Silayev 2014). Additionally, there are those who have taken the theoretical lens when looking at the Russian strategy of soft power. For instance, they analyze whether or not the current model of Russian soft power is comparable to the original idea put forward by Joseph Nye. To what extent is it similar to what he originally was referring to (Lukyanov 2009). Others have looked at Russian soft power and nation branding through the lens of public relations and communication concepts (Simons 2013, Makinen 2013) (Khaled 2018). However, there is a lack of research available on the connection between Russia's soft power strategy and its major sporting events. Only one researcher, Manurung (2018), has looked into the 2018 World Cup with a focus on Russia's soft power, which was written before the event actually took place and therefore an after event analysis would still be necessary.

From the above overview of literature review, the soft power of a nation is therefore the study of a growing academic field that draws its knowledge from a

variety of previous research areas that includes strategic communications, nation branding and public diplomacy.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The studies on soft power are quite extensive as many of its resources have been explored, however, unlike most research on soft power, here the focus will be on major sporting events which is a relatively new area of focus in the field. The author of this thesis agrees with Joseph Nye's definition of soft power, namely that it is the ability to get what you want by attracting rather than coercing and hence attraction being the base of soft power. The causal mechanisms that were identified above as "bases" of soft power which comprise soft power "qualities" will be analyzed throughout, and examples will be provided in an attempt to demonstrate either emotional, rational or social attraction in each of the three case studies. Major sporting events have been defined as "large scale cultural events (commercial or sporting) which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance" (Roche 2009). This thesis attempts to analyze the impact of major sporting events on the soft power of a nation with the following hypothesis in mind:

H: The impact on a nation's soft power during the hosting of a major sporting event depends on the host country's prior soft power "qualities".

Because of the evolution of the dynamics of the global system and the emergence of new important non-state actors, states feel pressured to portray a certain image, preferably a positive one, one that inspires others, but also one with a strong attraction to it and that is capable of conducting strong public diplomacy, for whatever objective, whether for political or economic ones. In an interview with the Guardian (Adams 2014), Simon Anholt, an expert in the image of countries, said "There is only one global superpower: public opinion". This thesis will argue that the hosting of a major sporting event cannot be the only tool used in order to attract others, and convincingly improve a nation's soft power, a parallel focus on internal and external audiences is also necessary along with demonstrating the perquisite soft power qualities.

1.3 Methodology

The literature review has to some extent went over what this thesis attempts to answer. More precisely, past studies have contributed to understanding how soft power of a country is analyzed through a variety of tools and concepts. However, in order to analyze the impact of major sporting events on a nation's attractiveness, the author decided to base his arguments on case studies which will be compared to one another, what is known as a comparative study.

When it comes to major sporting events, this thesis will focus on the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games due to their considerable similarities in terms of viewership. The three case studies that will be explored are the 2016 Brazil Summer Olympic Games, the 2018 South Korea Winter Olympic Games, and the 2018 Russia FIFA World Cup.

When making these choices the author followed the following criteria:

- The year of implementation: the soft power index began measuring in 2015, therefore, this thesis will focus on three campaigns that followed that year.
- The most recent major sporting event campaigns have been picked
- Similar sporting events (FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games)

The arguments will be based on empirical evidence using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Quantitatively, data from the soft power index developed and published annually since 2015 by Portland Communications, a political affairs consultancy, will be used. The index is a combination of six categories (Government, Culture, Education, Global Engagement, Enterprise and Digital) as well as an international survey with a sample size of 11000 participants and covering 25 countries (Communications 2018). Although the author recognizes the limitation of the time period, with the index not going back more than 4 years, all three major sporting events explored in this thesis happened in that time span. Following the data obtained from the soft power index, this thesis will look to explain reasons behind either the increase or decrease of a nation's soft power and what

impact the major sports event had, if any. The soft power index will additionally be reinforced qualitatively, as the author will also base his arguments on examining the soft power qualities in each case study, whether the host countries do possess any of the soft power qualities. The three soft power qualities that will be applied are the following three: emotional, rational and social attraction.

The research will rely on the analysis of secondary data comprising official press and media releases regarding each of the three case studies. The collection of this secondary data will be in a time frame of two years prior to the event and six months after the event. This time frame will be applied to all three case studies. The reason this thesis uses a time frame of six months after the event is because, during the writing of the thesis, one of the case studies, namely Russia's 2018 World Cup, had ended only six months ago, which put a constraint upon the time limit determination by the author, obliging him to apply the same time frame on the two other case studies. A before, during and after analysis of the major sports event will be the structure of each case study allowing for an overview of the impact of that major sport event on the soft power of a nation. The author decided to apply a chronological order to his case studies because one assumes the organizing countries attempt to learn from previous hosts and attempt a replication or improvement on the last games.

In order to ensure a theory-oriented comparison, the author has decided to go for the method that is known as the "structured focused comparison". This involves that the "researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case study to guide and standardize the data collection. Next, the researcher develops explanations for the outcome of each case. This is a matter of detective work and historical analysis rather than a matter of applying an orthodox quasi-experimental design" (George and Bennett 2005).

The following general questions have been chosen:

- What are the economic, cultural, political, sporting specificities before the hosting of the event?
- What sporting event took place?

- What strategy/program(s) was put forward by the host state to compliment the sporting event?
- Did the host state target both internal and external audiences?
- What soft power quality do the host state possess if any?
- If they do possess a soft power quality, how did they use it to their advantage? How did that manifest itself? What policies/actions, internal or external, manifest that soft power quality?
- What economic, political, cultural, sporting specificity was there after the hosting of the event?
- How did these specificities impact the soft power of host state?

Chapter 2: Case Studies

2.1 Brazil

When attempting to analyze the impact of the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games, it is important to start off with the soft power index-ranking Brazil occupied in the year prior to the Olympics to establish whether it has gone up or down. According to the index, Brazil occupied the 23rd rank in 2015, a year before the hosting of the games and then went down one rank to 24 in 2016. Therefore, there has been a downgrade of the country's soft power. With that as a quantitative base for the upcoming arguments, the author will attempt to analyze the reasons behind the drop by finding answers to the general questions chosen above as well as identifying the soft power qualities of Brazil.

Country Specificity (pre-event)

It seems as though the Austrian novelist Stefan Zweig's 1941 dubbing of Brazil as the "country of the future" was turning into a reality rather than merely fiction. After experiencing a severe debt crisis across Latin America from 1981 to 1992, which put a halt to Brazil's 20th century rapid economic growth, the country was once again

back on the right path thanks to the government's 1994 "Real Plan", which successfully ended the country's hyperinflation problem. The then president, Henrique Cardoso, introduced new policies that proved essential in the reform of things like the country's social security system (Buainain and Helfand 2016). As this thesis has as theoretical framework the focus on not only on external but also internal audiences as part of the effort to understand the impact of a major sports event on a host country's soft power, policies directed towards the internal audience are important to mention. Additionally, this allows for the identification of the soft power qualities the country had prior to the hosting of the event. At the turn of the century, Brazil transitioned from being a third world country to an "emerging nation", a term given to countries with characteristics such as having large populations, high economic growth, huge land area size, and high GDP growth. Henrique Cardoso was then replaced by president Lula da Silva, better known as "Lula", who was also very successful in his presidency and continued his predecessor's macroeconomic as well as social policies, adding some new ones with a focus on combatting poverty. That elevated Brazil considerably in the eyes of the international community. One can argue that this elevation of status due to rapid economic boom can be an instance of rational attraction. This rational attraction caused other countries to see Brazil more positively and more attractively due to the successful decisions and policies of the administration at the time.

Brazil from 2003 to 2009 enjoyed a 4 percent growth to its economy every year due to a boom in its commodity trade with countries like China and India who were in high demand for Brazil's raw materials. 29 million people got out poverty, inequality and public debt were significantly reduced (Rodriguez 2009). The 2008 economic crash was barely felt by Brazil as they bounced back a year later with 7.5 percent GDP growth according to World Bank data (2016), overtaking with that France and Britain as the 5th largest economy in the world and consequently attracting new international investments (Leahy 2011). All of this positivity was topped when in 2009 Brazil was selected as host of the 2016 Olympic games, 2 years after the 2014 World Cup, which Brazil was also going to host.

Being a country that is extremely well known for its sporting prowess, due to, for example, the Brazilian national football team being the most successful team in

world cup history winning the competition a record of 5 times and being the only team to have played in 18 world cups, getting picked as hosts can be seen as international recognition of the positive changes Brazil was able to go through in a very short space of time and an increase in its attractiveness.

Brazil has relied a lot on soft power considering it has no nuclear weapons and has limited military capabilities in comparison with the other members of the so called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) block (Chatin 2016). They project themselves as being advocates of diplomatic solutions and keeping hard power only as a means of last resort. It is because of their reliance on soft power as opposed to hard power that they have become a recognized agent in the world today (Grix, Brannagan and Houlihan 2015). Brazil has attempted to use a variety of soft power resources to increase its attraction on the international level. They have for instance won UNESCO's Human Rights and Culture of Peace Award for their government led efforts in battling AIDS, which earned the country a lot of recognition as a leader in that field. Here again, becoming a leader of a specific field such as a medical one is another example of rational attraction where country B is attracted to country A due to its success and "brilliance". This is further proof Brazil have worked on meeting those minimum conditions when wanting to produce soft power, namely, having at least one soft power quality and using it to increase its attractiveness toward others. They are also members of multiple international organizations such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as well as have hosted multiple international conferences such as the Rio +20, proof they are no amateurs at hosting big events and at being taken seriously on the international stage (Grix, Brannagan and Houlihan 2015).

However, things turned out a little different than expected. Mainly, the economy went into a slump in 2014 and growth came to a quick stop (Bank 2016). The country was suddenly facing difficulties on many fronts. For instance, from a sporting perspective, the FIFA 2014 World Cup didn't go as planned. Although the Brazilian team was tipped to win the competition having home and fan advantage, upon facing Germany, they were shockingly humiliated and kicked out of the competition. This was particularly difficult as that competition was seen as the only source of happiness Brazilians had left considering the internal economic, social and political issues they were in. This negative "internal audience" situation was best

described by Brazil's national team defender, David Luiz, when he said, following the loss, "I just wanted to give some happiness to my people. To my people, who suffer so much already," (Harrington 2015).

It is important to mention their performance in the 2014 World Cup for two reasons. Firstly, because the feelings, ideas and images of the internal audience of a country should be connected with what the country attempts to project to the external audience, in other words, soft power cannot work on a long term basis if the population itself does not relate, associate and believe with the ideas, values, norms and images projected to the rest of the world. As discussed previously, soft power according to Joseph Nye (2014), springs from the attractiveness of a nation's culture, political values and foreign policies, which are closely linked to image and reputation. The idea of "grandeur" of Brazil and its search for stronger visibility on the international stage through stronger soft power, according to Harold Trinkunas and David Mares (2016), is an essential cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. However, even that "grandeur" evaporated with that World Cup loss to Germany. The government had neglected the economic, social and political facets and placed all their bets on having a successful World Cup, believing that it was sufficient to console the Brazilian population while simultaneously pleasing the external audience and with that have a positive impact on their attractiveness, image and soft power, but then ultimately failing. Strategies should have been put in place by policymakers to complement the efforts of attraction of the world cup. Second reason why it is important to mention Brazil's performance in the 2014 World Cup is the fact that the World Cup was planned to take place almost back to back with the Olympic Games and therefore its memory was still fresh in people's minds as the next major sports event drew closer. Brazil was in need to reaffirm its sporting prowess during the Olympic games so that to gain back its "sporting brilliance", an element of rational attraction.

With two years to the staging of another major sporting event, all eyes were once again on Brazil's hosting of the 2016 Olympic Games. The government's plan was to stage yet another extravagant show with the aim of using that sporting platform as a tool of attraction. However, the country should have realized that in order not to have a repeat of the 2014 World Cup, they needed to show initiative in addressing the

political and economic issues their country was going through. To show that although they are going through crisis, that they cared and were willing to find solutions to the problems. That simply projecting the image of a great organizer of major shows wasn't all Brazil was about. Harold Trikunus and David Mares (2016) argue that in order to really benefit from soft power and be taken seriously on the international stage, political and economic stability must be addressed. They argue that soft power is often misunderstood by policymakers who believe it's only a matter of diplomacy, when in fact one it's the basis of a country's domestic model, which means soft power strategy will fail if things aren't working internally, making the staging of the Olympics only a tool of short term soft power rather than a sustainable one.

Leading up to the event, the country was in the news for all the wrong reasons. International coverage was doubting whether they'll successfully pull off the event. For instance, the economic crisis was still gripping the country. Government deficit reached 10 percent of GDP in 2015, an increase of 4 percent from 2014 (Buainain and Helfand 2016). As the Brazilian currency experienced a 23 percent drop against the dollar and unemployment soared, the games were projected to cost 4.6 billion dollars, not exactly the kind of sum a country in recession should be spending, let alone on an event (Haddon 2016).

On top of the recession came huge corruption scandals involving the president at the time, Dilma Rousseff, who allegedly had manipulated the state budget. The main scandal, which eventually lead to the impeachment of the president, involved a huge oil corporation, Petrobras, for which she was chairman before becoming president (Anderson 2016). Unfortunately, the Petrobras scandal didn't help change Brazil's reputation of one marred in corruption, as Olympic Games approached. This scandal was a huge blow to the country in terms of soft power, as it put forward the wrong political and economic ideals, images, reputation and attraction. Four months before the start of the games, about one million Brazilians came out to the streets to protest and show their discontent at the way the country was being handled economically and politically (Romero 2015). One can argue therefore that Brazil lacked both emotional and social attractions. Social attractions rests on being seen

as legitimate. When a country such as Brazil, demonstrates a lack of responsibility towards its own population, this may be a sign of weak social attraction.

From a sporting perspective, after almost 10 years of preparation time for the biggest show on earth, Brazil didn't appear ready as international news outlets covered what seemed to be a disaster of a preparation. When Rio bid for hosting the competition, the government promised a legacy, one involving substantial infrastructural improvements that will alleviate the population's struggle and improve people's living conditions. For example, Rio was promised new metro lines that would facilitate transportation of citizens, fans and athletes alike, in two areas that were previously only accessible through congested traffic, however, two weeks to kick off, there were still concerns construction wasn't going to be finished and that tourists would be first to test them out. Furthermore, one of the most exciting projects the 2009 Rio's bid promised the people, the "Morar Carioca" plan, was the urbanisation of the so-called "Favelas" (shanty towns), where hundreds of thousands of poor Brazilians live in seriously bad social conditions such as water shortages, lack of electricity, transport difficulties, security issues involving the many gangs that traffic drugs, and underfunded schools with poor quality education. The plan committed 4.5 billion in changing these people's conditions, however, it appears as though the opposite took place as the government authorized a newly created police unit to clear out thousands of people from their homes in order to make way for the construction of the Olympic game sites. Not only were people forcefully cleared out, but most of the social infrastructure that was promised regarding fixing the sewers and having better water quality, have gone unfulfilled (Jenkins 2015). Again, an integral part of a country's soft power comes from within the nation itself, from the perspective of the internal audience or population. A disregard to that aspect will result in a lack of a unified image and therefore weaker communication toward the external audience as a result of the internal population communicating contradictory/negative messages.

From a health perspective, an outbreak of the Zika Virus had hit the country in March of 2015, which according to the World Health Organization is transmitted through mosquitos and which causes neurological disorders among other things (WHO 2018). It was becoming another serious concern for the upcoming games. In

fact, 150 leading scientists and health experts sent an open letter to the World Health Organization (WHO), one hundred days leading up to the games, expressing their concern and asking the WHO to postpone the Rio games out of fear of the transmission of the virus to the roughly half a million Olympic visitors due to arrive. Some athletes decided to skip the games altogether, such as Olympic heptathlon champion Jessica Ennis-Hill and the world's number one golfer Jason Day, a great example of internal problems affecting the external perspective. Additionally, there were huge concerns over the quality of the water that is very contaminated with human waste, bacteria and pollution, prompting the United Nations to categorize it as very poor and advising athletes to spend as little time as possible in the water. Thousands of Brazilians only have access to this health-damaging water and the organization of the Olympic Games brought some benefit in that it highlighted these issues, however, also hurting the image and attractiveness of Brazil as an industrialized nation (Watts and Vidal 2016).

Rio Olympics 2016 (during-event)

Things weren't looking good for Brazil before the Olympics kicked off. If hosting the Olympics was an element of the soft power strategy of the government, it certainly didn't seem like they were doing a good job at making others admire them and want to emulate them as the buildup and excitement for the games were overshadowed by internal concerns and issues. During the games, however, the situation slightly changed. For starters, the government reassured visiting fans and athletes that as many as sixty thousand security forces would be deployed in an effort to run the games as smoothly as possible and tackle the violence and crime the city is known for (France24 2016).

Although the president of the country at the time, Michel Temer, was booed by the crowd as he declared the start of the games, reflecting with that the discontent of the Brazilians, the opening and closing ceremonies were nonetheless beautiful spectacles. They are important because that's where most messages are communicated to the world about what Brazil stands for. Therefore, the strategic communication strategies used here are crucial in the effort to be attractive and

improve chances of soft power. The main themes that ran through the opening ceremony, for example, included an environmental one. Trees were formed in the shape of rings to stress the importance of the environment in the world's current fight against global warming. Dubbed "the lungs of the planet", the majority of the Amazon rainforest is located in Brazil and makes up for more than half of the world's rainforests. The organizers wanted to put that environmental theme to the forefront of the show and remind the world of being more sustainable and that a lot more has to be done to protect the planet's environment, however, one wonders if that message was effective in its deliverance. For a message or image to be projected effectively, action must back it up. In order to influence the external audience and use soft power effectively, the hosts have to act as they preach. For example, when their message is "be more sustainable", it's hard to take them seriously and for that message to attract others into following suit if the hosts are far from being sustainable themselves. One only has to look at the state of Brazil to quickly see that they are not exactly the sustainable model other nations can look up to and be inspired by (Ronay 2016). Therefore, one can question their efforts to win the hearts and minds of those watching. Furthermore, it is an example that Brazil failed in terms of social attraction. By not "backing up" what they preach, the result is little to no legitimacy.

In terms of sports, Brazilians were gold medal winners in football, among other gold medals they received, with the final game played against none other than Germany. That was indeed important for the spirits of the Brazilian people as a sort of "revenge" and regaining of its sporting position in the eyes of the world after the humiliating defeat they suffered in the 2014 World Cup. The Rio games were also the first games to introduce the participation of an all-refugee team, one that doesn't play under any nation's flag, but under the Olympic one and which represents the global refugee community (Meagher 2016). This was indeed a nice touch and even if it was the idea of the Olympic committee rather than the host's, it still took place in Brazil which sends out a positive image to the world about the host nation's values as accepting and caring as well as for their stand with what the Olympic values represent, like the spreading of hope and the highlighting of human plight. Although such a stand by refugees is an element of emotional attraction whereby the other countries feel attraction to the host country for having "inspiring" values, the

precarious conditions thousands of Brazilians find themselves work against these values. The host country cannot rely on mere marketing tactics in hopes of improved soft power, they must first show the world they care about their own people before making such gestures to others if they are to be judged as genuine.

However, negative press continued during the running of the Olympic Games as reports on the state of the Olympic village emerged. The Australian Olympic Committee had described the village as “uninhabitable” as they arrived to their rooms. Water and gas were leaking from the ceiling, mold and holes in some parts, as well as exposed electrical wiring, are only some of the problems that athletes complained about. Some athletes thought of asking for compensation, others like the Australian athletes refused to move in and decided instead to relocate to hotels (Press 2016). This lack of preparation, especially to the Olympic village, which was supposed to house the foreign athletes competing in this competition, is hugely damaging to the image of the host towards the external audience especially since they had 7 years of preparation time. For a nation that is relying heavily on this major sporting event for projecting an image of an emerging superpower that should be taken seriously, being this badly prepared is frankly shameful especially considering the huge amount spent by the organizing committee. Again, the reputation of the country takes a hit when traveling athletes and the media scrutinize the living conditions that were provided.

The 2016 Legacy (after-event)

The legacy that was left by the hosting of the 2016 Rio Olympics is a decaying one. When in 2009, the International Olympic Committee declared Brazil the winners of the hosting rights, Brazilians were excited because hosting this prestigious competition would mean not only the signaling to the world its emergence as a world power on the international stage but also the improvement of the host city on many fronts. A lot was, indeed, promised, little was, unfortunately, delivered.

For starters, the initial expected cost of the Rio games was reported to be around 4.6 billion dollars, an arguably manageable sum when compared with the cost of the previously held Olympic Games in London, which was upwards the 9

billion dollars (BBC 2013). However, for the dismay of many Brazilians, the estimated final cost was 12 billion dollars, with some other estimates predicting an even higher cost at 20 billion (Settimi 2016). Whichever way one looks at it, it is an astronomical price tag for Brazil especially considering the economic difficulties they find themselves in.

The “Morar Carioca” infrastructural development plan, that was supposed to bring about much change to the slums of Brazil, had yet to take off. Out of the forty infrastructural projects included in that plan, only two were being worked on six months after the event. Additionally, the 3604 apartments that made up the Olympic village were supposed to be turned into new housing as a response to the growing housing crisis of the country, however, due to their expensive prices, only Brazilians who are well off are able to afford them. The sports facilities that cost billions to build, part of the promised legacy, were left after the games to decay. The most famous stadium in Brazil, for example, the “Maracanã”, which was the site for the opening and closing ceremonies, was not preserved and transformed as promised into the sporting arena where the next generation of Brazilian athletes could train, instead, the field turned brown, thousands of its seats stripped and its TVs looted. The main Olympic swimming pool that was supposed to be turned into one used by the public, was closed after the games and is yet to reopen (Kaiser 2017).

The failed Olympic Games legacy is due to the government focusing only on the hosting of successful major sports event, the minute it ended, so did the hopes of an improved city as the organizers turned their backs and cut their promises short. It is clear that the government had no type of coordination with the organizers over what the legacy should look like. The minute the Olympic flame was extinguished, all governmental efforts shifted elsewhere. Brazil is a clear example of a country that mistook increased soft power as something that can be achieved from the simple hosting of a successful running of an event, that suddenly the world would be enchanted. While the hosting of a major sports event does guarantee the attraction of the attention of the world, however, it also involves shedding a spot light on non-sport related topics. It was an opportunity for the country to highlight the best it had to offer. Unfortunately for Brazil, the sports event took place at a dark time in its history. International coverage shed light on the grave problems the country and the

people of Brazil were going through, politically, economically and socially, instead of attracting the kind of positive international attention the government of Brazil was hoping for. The lack of solutions on the domestic level lead to a backlash of hosting the event. It generated a kind of “bad news syndrome” which consequently lead to the worsening of the image, reputation and therefore soft power of the country, as provided by the soft power ranking. Had the government showed more initiative in genuinely proposing solutions by responding to the basic necessities their people were demanding and alleviating some of their suffering and not only focusing on having a successful major sports event, they would have had better chances at using the platform of the Olympics to communicate positive ideals, policies, visions, reputation and images that the world would have believed and have been inspired by. The lack of focus on soft power programs aimed at the internal audience meant that their strategic communication lacked the support of its own people. What was left instead is a nation with broken promises, reeling from its crippling recession, enveloped in corruption and suffering from a knock to its attractiveness. Furthermore, from the stand point of soft power qualities, they were unable to demonstrate any significant example of the three types of attraction: emotional, rational or social. They failed to display any meaningful policies and actions that would contribute to the highlighting of these three qualities and thus failed to meet the minimum conditions that cause soft power. Consequently, a real and sustainable positive impact on Brazil’s soft power wasn’t achieved during the hosting of the Olympics 2016.

2.2 South Korea

Like the previous section, the introduction will begin with the soft power index ranking South Korea occupied in the year prior to the games to establish whether or not it has gone up or down in attractiveness. According to the index, South Korea occupied the 20th position in 2018, an improvement on the years of 2016 and 2017 in which it held the 22nd and 21st position respectively. However, one must note that it held the 20th position back in 2015 already and, therefore, there has been a clear worsening of its soft power and then a successful rapid recovery (Communications 2018).

Country Specificity (pre-event)

Like Brazil, South Korea has suffered from the corruption of its highest governmental officials and business leaders. It has with that damaged the reputation and image of the country on several occasions in its history. Just like Brazil, with one year leading up to the games, the South Korean president, Park Geun-Hye, was engulfed in a scandal that eventually led to her impeachment. Ms. Park was being influenced by her long-time friend, Choi Soonsil, in accepting bribes from some of South Korea's biggest companies including Samsung in exchange for political favors. The president was found guilty and given a life sentence. Samsung's leader was also found guilty of bribery in that scandal and sentenced to five years in jail (McCurry 2017). That, too, was a knock to the country's reputation because the company in question is the biggest and most successful in the country and has global outreach. As "government" and "enterprise" are parts of the framework of the soft power index, these two categories have seen a weaker polling due to that scandal that was covered extensively by international media. The entire world watched as South Koreans went out in the streets in their hundreds of thousands demanding the stepping down of the president. Although it had weakened the reputation of the country, the impeachment also presented an opportunity. For starters, the anti-government protests were done in a peaceful and orderly manner (Haas 2018). Setting an example to the world, that the removal of a democratically elected government was achievable without the use of violence. It was since 1987 that South Korea began enjoying liberal democracy and with this successful impeachment, the country was able to take advantage of that to improve its reputation as a liberal democracy. The combination of mobilization of civil society in such a manner as well as the result achieved led to the strengthening of the country's credentials and the successful "damage control" of the crisis. The judicial system, too, didn't involve itself with politics, demonstrating to the world that the country's democratic values were not just for show (Ayhan 2017). This is a perfect example that demonstrates South Korea's emotional attraction because it is determined to be seen as a country that believes in its democratic values. Emerging countries, for example, that aim to lean more toward a democratic model, will take South Korea as a role model and will more attracted to them as a result. This will help South Korea getting stronger at a

different soft power quality, namely, social attraction, as these countries will see South Korea as a country with a legitimate say when it comes to running a democratic system and will thus be influenced by them.

As the organizations and institutions of South Korea recognized the need to listen to the demands of the citizens and stood by their side in that crisis instead of standing with the corrupt government, it was the right way of going about targeting the internal audience in terms of soft power because it is united the country behind shared values that not only they believed in but also acted upon. With that, South Korea was able to demonstrate to the world that although it faces corruption on the highest level, that it would not tolerate it even if that involved the president of the country. They demonstrated an understanding of their citizen rights and the need to stand by their values. The political values method was in this case especially relevant to South Korea as they were able to uphold these democratic values at home and with that signal their intent on being the benchmark in democracy.

To target the external audience, the South Korean government recognized the need for soft power strategies that would play the role of reinforcers to the planned winter Olympic games as the sports event on its own isn't enough to achieve sustainable, long-term improvement in the attraction of the country. For example, it was in 2016 that the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) decided to step up its pursuit of a better image and reputation for its country by passing the Public Diplomacy Act, which allowed for the creation of the public diplomacy committee in 2017, five months before the start of the games. This committee had as a goal to strengthen coordination between the different levels of governmental departments, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, in order to raise the public's "awareness and social consensus about public diplomacy". So, one notices the difference here with Brazil in terms of governmental efforts not just to conduct a one-way marketing campaign targeting the external audience to have a positive image of the host country, but also to take the internal audience into consideration and unite the public diplomacy efforts with its people for an enhanced soft power. The vision of the public diplomacy committee is to create an "attractive Korea communicating with the world together with Citizens" (K. J. Ayhan 2017, MOFA 2017).

That said, on the backdrop of the biggest political crisis the country has faced in decades, president Moon Jae-in took over the reins in May of 2017 with the aim of correcting his predecessor's mistakes and regain the image and reputation of South Korea to enhance its soft power. He was going to do that with the help of a common framework and joint efforts with civil society that includes soft power strategies, public diplomacy programs and governmental policy. For example, as South Korea, like Brazil, is unable to rely on hard power due to its lack of military resources, they have decided to position themselves as a "middle power", one that acts as a mediator between the developed and developing countries (Synder, et al. 2015). That involves hosting global events that raise the profile of the country on the international stage such the G20 in 2010. So like Brazil, they have experience and willingness to participate in global governance. However, to have a stronger say on the international scene as a middle power, South Korea has to find ways to strengthen its voice and hence why soft power is crucial. Consequently, as South Korea attempts to make itself heard, the country's political values, conduct and integrity will come under scrutiny and its credibility tested as more attention will be directed towards it, both on the domestic and international scene.

That said, as a middle power and as the games approached, the strategy of the organizers and the newly formed government under the leadership of president Moon Jae-in was to also use the platform as a sort of rapprochement with their neighbors, North Korea. The situation with North Korea has been a very difficult one for decades now. Ever since 1950, when North Korea decided to invade South Korea to then be pushed back by United States forces, both countries have yet to sign a peace treaty with only an armistice keeping them from war. Over the next decades, the relationship would see periods of low and high points. That relationship was, however, especially difficult one year leading up to the Olympic Games as North Korea continued its military drills, nuclear and ballistic missiles testing (McCurry 2017). As was the case with Brazil, security was one of the concerns that organizers had to worry about to ensure the protection of the traveling fans and foreign tourists that planned to attend the games. Nevertheless, President Moon, a left leaning liberal, decided to be unhinged by the scare tactics employed by his neighbors preferring instead to employ other methods, as he believed hardline policy wasn't the way to go about solving issues and achieving peace with North Korea. Right after taking up office, he wanted to usher in a new era of cooperation and

peace with North Korea by employing the so called “Sunshine Policy” in a fresh effort at détente. This policy revolves around persuasion and the engagement in dialogue, cultural and economic exchange, which is very fitting with the country’s goal of increasing soft power (Park 2017). For instance, against all expectations, president Moon went ahead with a humanitarian gesture by offering 8 million dollars worth of aid to North Korea, although other countries including Japan and the US saw it as undermining their pressure efforts (McCurry 2017). That is an example of soft power policy that runs in parallel with the organizing of a major sports event, which is necessary as a part of the image and reputation of the country, one that hopes to lead by example. By demonstrating foreign policy that reflects the values of South Koreans as peaceful, caring and willing to negotiate, when that is then communicated through a communication platform like the Olympic games, its effects are far more impactful, and emotional attractiveness is then enhanced which consequently means increased soft power.

Another soft power method that is worth mentioning and that South Korea has extensively used as part of its Olympic strategy to enhance the country’s attractiveness is what is known as “Hallyu” or the Korean wave. The South Korean government branded the games a “cultural festival” in an effort to expand the use of the Olympic event (Ayhan 2017). That involved promoting Korean culture through everything from food, language, technology and music, which were all planned to be celebrated and put on show during the upcoming 2018 Winter Olympic Games. For example, the Korean wave includes K-Pop music that has spread globally in recent years. For instance, the best manifestation of this Korean wave is BTS (Beyond The Scene), a boy band that formed in 2013 that became a cultural phenomenon and made worldwide headlines. In 2018 the boy band, that sings in Korean, became the most popular band in the world. They are estimated to generate as much as 3.6 billion dollars a year for South Korea (Suntikul 2019). It is an example of how successful South Korea has been in finding a variety of ways in enhancing its soft power by creating a powerful communication technique that resonates globally and spreads the culture of the country. In that way, positive ideas are associated with the country’s values and culture. At the height of the success of this phenomenon, BTS were invited to the United Nations in New York in 2018 as recognition of their global status. That same Olympic venue was then used for K-Pop concerts and other soft

power projects to promote the country in the run up to the actual start of the games. In this case, it is difficult to therefore argue that South Korea didn't have at that moment in time, a good amount of emotional and rational attractiveness. In fact, their brilliant "Korean wave" continues to be the envy of many countries like China, who are still in the process of replicating South Korea's success in attraction (Dubravčíková 2018).

From an economic perspective, South Korea has been excelling too. Technology and enterprise are both categories that make up the soft power index, both of which South Korea is extremely successful at. Although the heir of Samsung was directly involved in the most recent political crisis of the country, the company is a source of Korean pride with its state-of-the-art digital capabilities and impressive innovation. This technological "brilliance" is a good example of rational attractiveness. Samsung was ranked as the largest seller of smartphones company in the world, surpassing the likes of Apple (Kharpal 2018). The digital success of the company was recognized once again when in 2018 Samsung and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) renewed their partnership for another 10 years. This meant that Samsung would continue doing all of the IOC's digital work as well as be the sponsors of the Winter Olympic Games 2018 (IOC 2018). This allows South Korea to further showcase its digital excellence on the platform of the major sports event and improve its attractiveness as a hub for business and innovation. South Korea, like Brazil, developed extremely quickly and experienced a boom in its economy in a very short time period, however, unlike Brazil, the country was able to sustain its economic growth and is actually one of the few developed countries not to have gone through recession during the 2008 financial crisis (Bank 2018). Therefore, hosting the Winter Olympics wasn't much of a burden on the country because the economic and socio conditions had been dealt with properly. Not only was the internal audience not suffering like the Brazilian population, but the government was also conscious of what necessary steps should be undertaken to accompany the Olympic Games as well as improve soft power overall. As for the enterprise category of the soft power index, that involves the availability of an educated and highly skilled workforce. The love for education is not only part of South Korea's traditions but it is also complemented with a government that believes in the power of education as a long-term development strategy and therefore provides all means necessary

including the best teachers, technological equipment and the right studying conditions (Bermeo 2014). In comparison with Brazil, that is the exact opposite. While Brazilians lack even the most basic of school equipment, South Korea ranks as one of the best educated countries in the world (Advocate 2018).

Although international media coverage in the run up to the Olympic games mostly dealt with the geopolitics as well as the domestic political crisis the country was facing, the actual preparation of the games received very little negative reporting. South Korea were on time with the construction of the venues as well as the Olympic village where the athletes were staying, which is a stark contrast to the preparations of the Brazil's Summer Olympic Games (Carlson 2017). Being on time with everything ready to welcome the athletes and visitors allows for a positive memorable experience that helps the host country with its reputation and image, which has a hand itself in improved soft power.

[Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games 2018 \(during-event\)](#)

The opening and closing ceremonies played once again crucial parts in the strategy of improved soft power. The organizers and the government were going to put on a spectacle that showcased the best that Korea has to offer as well as communicate their values, culture and what they stand for. One way they used to communicate that was through the official logo of the Pyeongchang Olympics. According to the official Olympic website, the logo represents "the grand gathering of people from around the world in celebration of the winter Olympic games, which is taking place in the harmonious land of Pyeongchang". A logo that unites both the locals and visiting fans and communicates ideas of openness. The same color schemes found in the Olympic flag were incorporated in the logo with the addition of traditional Korean colors that reflect a variety of Korean aspects of life like clothing, food and art (Olympic 2013). The values here make up the overall emotional attractiveness quality that causes soft power.

The organizers also incorporated very popular K-pop music, a song called "Gangnam Style" which was the most watched music video of all time on Youtube

with 3.3 billion views, another phenomenon that promoted the country around the world. Additionally, another popular boy band, EXO, thrilled the audience with their performances during the closing ceremony (Belam 2018). The technological capabilities the country are famous for were also displayed with, for instance, the use of augmented reality technology to depict a spectacular dome above the spectators (Belam 2018). With this display combination of Korean Wave and technological brilliance, South Korea were truly taking advantage of their rational attractiveness.

However, the real highlight of the opening ceremony and perhaps of the games, was the diplomatic achievement the Moon administration was capable of pulling off through the medium of those Olympic stage. All eyes were on the North and South Korean athletes walking together, hand in hand, under a unified Korean peninsula flag, reflecting the opening ceremony's title "Peace in Motion" and the overall spirit of the competition. This had come after the two countries had agreed in the run up to the games to use the occasion to resume talks and cooperate. President Moon had used that sporting platform to restart dialogue between the two nations in an attempt to ease tensions in the region. This has also the effect of demonstrating that South Korea is a country that seeks to solve problems and is determined to make peace which are in line with the values of the Olympic movement, and the ones they seek to project to the external audience and with their attractiveness as a whole. This further strengthens the credibility of the host nation as a "middle power" that is capable of brokering peace through cultural sources of soft power and gives South Korea the stronger voice it aims to have on the international stage. President Moon was also seen shaking hands with the North Korean leader's sister, Kim Yo Jung, who had been invited with other high officials of North Korean on the occasion of the opening ceremony (News 2018). When the world sees the efforts South Korea has put as part of its foreign policy in reestablishing a peaceful relationship with its neighbor, it is exactly the kind of image and reputation that is necessary to positively shape the preferences and opinions of the external audience and appear more attractive. Additionally, with the participation of North Korea, this soothed fears over the security of the games and whether the traveling athletes and foreign fans will be safe to attend an event with a hostile environment around. Here we see a stark contrast between South Korea's soft power strategy and that of Brazil. On the one side, we have Brazil that decided to

respond to security fears by deploying thousands of police officers on the streets of Rio instead of actually going after the root of the problem and trying to solve the domestic socio and political issues and on the other hand, South Korea manages to not only respond to the country's domestic political crisis but also dealt with much bigger security fears since it wasn't domestic security that was in question but one that involved geopolitical threats.

All the examples mentioned above were efforts by the organizers and the government to mobilize their technological, political and cultural resources in order to shape preferences and international opinion, which all took place in the context of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics. Although South Korea wasn't as successful as Brazil from a sporting perspective, with the hosts coming in the 6th rank in the final medal count (Calfas 2018), they were nonetheless successful in pulling off a memorable major sporting event, one that strengthen South Korea's international aspirations. During the closing ceremony, which also featured flying drones and K-pop music, International Olympic Committee president, Thomas Bach, praised South Korea for the excellent running of the games when he said "You (South Korea) have shown how sports brings people together in our fragile world; you have shown how sports builds bridges; you have shared your faith in a peaceful future with all of us" (Bach 2018). Additionally, this section has explored multiple examples of all three qualities of soft power and demonstrated that South Korea does indeed have these qualities that are necessary next to the pulling off of a memorable major sporting event.

The 2018 Legacy (after-event)

The legacy of the 2018 Olympic games didn't involve any so called "white elephants", a term given to infrastructure built on the occasion of a global event which is then left to decay and represents a waste of money. The Olympic village for example, was built with the idea of turning it, after the event, into apartments to meet the growing demand in Gangneung city, all of which were sold before the start of the games, a stark contrast to Brazil's legacy where the prices of the apartments were too expensive for the locals and thus remained empty (Olympics 2018).

The six months that followed the end of the so called “peace Olympics” were truly remarkable. The Pyeongchang Olympic Games had paved the way for further improvement of relations between the adversaries of more than 70 years leading to a surge in positive sentiment. After projecting to the world values and images of peace and openness, South Korea was again now acting instead of simply communicating. The time had come for South Korea to channel the Olympic goodwill and the messages and images the hosts communicated and portrayed into a sustainable peace dialogue. The leaders of the two Koreas agreed to meet and hold talks, along with the U.S and China, to end the truce between them and finally achieve formal ending of the Korean War. Denuclearization of the Korean peninsula was also a topic to be discussed. Just two months after the end of the games, there it was the long awaited meeting between Kim Jon Un and president Moon, the image of them shaking hands and then each taking turns in crossing into the borders of the other’s nation was beamed around the world as international media hailed it as a “historic meeting” (Kuo 2018). The meeting took place as a direct result of the hosting of the games and is another example of credibility for South Korea on the international stage.

After making use of their position of legitimacy as social attraction as well as deploying strategic communications and public diplomacy programs, the hosts were capable of creating a legacy and proving to the world that they meant what they said and were now in the process of application of that peace. From a foreign policy perspective, they were successful in attracting North Korea into peace talks which also paved the way for renewed talks between the United States and North Korea in which South Korea played an instrumental role and further strengthens its “middle power” role that it aspires to be. By strengthening its position as a middle power, it creates this legitimacy in the eyes of others and as a result strengthens its social attraction, a direct cause of soft power.

South Korea is a successful example of a nation that used the platform of a major sporting event as a tool for improved soft power. Although they suffered an image damaging political crisis marred with corruption and fears over security due to geopolitical tensions with their neighbors in the run up to the games, which are problems comparable to Brazil’s Summer Olympic games, both the domestic political

unrest as well as the geopolitical issues were properly managed. Taking into consideration both the internal and external audiences and attempting to solve the issues was crucial for the host nation to do as part of the overall soft power strategy. That ran simultaneously with the excellent preparation and running of a global event where South Korea showcased its strengths, values and vision to the world. It was an impressive show of its cultural resources and technological advancement coupled with a message of peace that rang true before, during and after the games.

Economically speaking, although South Korea and Brazil do not find themselves in the same situation, one being an emerging power and the other a developed one, It is clear that South Korea is striving for long term soft power and not just a mere marketing campaign because they understood that in order to have sustained attraction and a real impact on the soft power of the nation, one needed more than just a global event, that the internal and external audiences have to also be taken into account. Finally, they have proved not only to possess one of the qualities of soft power but all three: the emotional, rational and social attraction, necessary causal mechanisms of soft power.

2.3 Russia

In the case of Russia's ranking in the 2018 soft power index edition, they came out in the 28th position, a drop of two position from 2017. That weakening in the soft power of the nation came despite the country organizing what international media dubbed the "greatest of all World Cups" (Smith 2018). Why was that the case?

Country Specificity (pre-event)

Russia cannot easily be compared to South Korea and Brazil, two countries who have relied heavily on soft power in their foreign policy due to a lack of military resources and hard power, the same of which cannot be said about Russia. Although Russia, under the leadership of Vladimir Putin has recognized the necessity of hosting major sporting events as tools for improved soft power of the country, and therefore fought hard to win hosting rights, they have failed to sustain the attraction generated by the major sports events into sustainable, long term

impacts. The country has a history of not following up in the same footsteps of its predecessors in terms of replicating the successful strategies previous hosts have followed, namely, not only attempting to pull off a successful and memorable sporting event, but also the effective targeting of internal and external audiences.

Russia, it would seem, follows a different strategy which relies on a mix of both hard power and soft power in conducting its foreign policy. From a soft power perspective, and along with hosting of major sports and non-sports events, the country has put substantial effort in increasing their soft power through a variety of other soft power resources, such as the creation of state controlled media channels, like Russia Today, an international television network, providing content to the world in many languages like French, English and Arabic. This is always with the aim of portraying a positive narrative of Russia, to shed a positive spot light and dissemination of information and consequently, restore Russia's great power status (Castro 2018). That is especially necessary for Russia whose image suffers on the international stage due to its use of hard power and other dubious practices. Although several ex-Soviet Union countries may still have affinities towards Russia due to historical, religious, cultural and lingual ties, giving Russia an advantage in terms of having soft power qualities like that of emotional attraction, it still wouldn't be considered "satisfactory" as their aim is to have increased soft power on other countries who don't have a specific connection to Russia, like the west, for example. As a result, it is logical to assume Russia looks to use major sporting events as a tool for increased soft power not only to attract those it already has a type of influence and attraction on but others with whom it is yet to impress.

That said, over the past 5 years, Russia has made headlines for many negative reasons that have worked against the country's efforts in truly impacting its soft power and have contributed to persisting negative stereotypes, reputation and images, all of which lead to weaker attraction. For example, from a sporting side, although the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic games were the country's first ever winter sports event, which is a positive in itself, it was, nevertheless, full of controversy and negative coverage. Although Russia at the time was still in the process of recovering from the 2008 financial crisis, they still spent a staggering 50 billion dollars, making the games the most expensive in history (Rick 2018). Additionally, right after the end

of the Sochi games, a German documentary exposed Russia's state sponsored doping program which was profoundly damaging on the sportive image of Russia internationally. They were accused of giving their athletes performance enhancing drugs to cheat and win most medals. After investigations by the World Anti-Doping Agency(WADA), the International Olympic Committee decided to ban Russian Athletes in the 2016 Rio Olympics as well as fined them 15 million dollars (Preece 2018). That was a big blow for Russia's attempts at portraying itself as a great power, one that is good enough on a sporting level that it doesn't require to seek such dishonorable methods to win. President Putin's hopes of impressing the world through sporting success evaporated and had instead the opposite effect, the world wasn't impressed, especially when it was Russia who had won most medals in the Sochi Olympics. Such actions certainly damage the country's reputation and image and totally go against Olympic values that hosts are expected to portray and be in line with. Values such as sportsmanship, transparency, fairness and respect all went out the window when the scandal became public. According to a report by Stronski and Sokolsky (2017), one of Russia's objectives was to solidify the legitimacy of Putin toward his domestic audience by "demonstrating Russia's status as a global superpower", however, the doping scandal affects that very legitimacy too. It doesn't portray Russia as a superpower but a super cheater! What took place around the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics is important to mention because it's a major sports platform that was organized not long before the World Cup 2018 and thus the image of it was still fresh in people's minds. That scandal was also the reason why Russians athletes weren't able to compete in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang, an event that took place right before the World Cup. A list of demands had been made by WADA to the Russian sports authorities, however, instead of correcting their mistakes and taking the necessary steps of responding to these demands to save whatever left of their prestige, they once more failed to meet the demands and therefore were not allowed to compete in South Korea, again projecting an image of dishonesty and no fair play (Kim 2017).

Therefore, leading up to the World Cup 2018, the sporting image of the nation was still suffering and making negative headlines. Additionally, in terms of soft power qualities, rational attraction here is negatively affected. The sporting "brilliance" Russian athletes have been renowned for, by always proving great competition to

others as well as often winning most medals, suffered a lot with that scandal and as a result their attraction diminishes. Furthermore, social attraction diminishes, too, as Russia's credibility and legitimacy in the sporting world are questioned.

Instead of attempting to sustain a legacy and the positivity generated from the Sochi Games, Russia was soon back to its old ways of hard power. The country was involved in two major incidents that are worth mentioning where foreign policy objectives were pursued using military means. Crimea, in Ukraine, was annexed in March of 2014 by Russian troops after a controversial referendum, which brought condemnation of Russia by the West and the US, leading to the most heightened relations between them since the end of the Cold War (Aljazeera 2019).

Internationally speaking, this had serious consequences. For starters, it united EU countries together as NATO forces began their military buildup in anticipation for possible confrontation. That created an atmosphere of fear which was further exacerbated through international media that reported on the topic extensively and portrayed Russia as an irresponsible partner. Naturally, that works against the enhancement of the country's soft power. Additionally, such actions weaken Russia's soft power qualities as countries are bound to be less socially and emotionally attracted. It is also a stark contrast to the actions taken by South Korea in its handling of the North Korean threat in the lead up to the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. South Korea too had a huge security issue on its hand, involving a military style power, that continuously threatened the region with missile tests, yet South Korea decided to take the diplomatic way to solve the issues and ease tensions. Although it didn't come to outright war between the EU and Russia, the latter was still hit by economic and diplomatic sanctions, hurting the nation on the international stage, worsening relations and countering the soft power generated by the Sochi Winter Olympics (Council 2019).

As the saying goes, "actions speak louder than words" and Russia's foreign policy actions were hurting its image on a different front, this time, that of Syria. Although Putin said Russia was there to protect its interests and help its longtime ally Syrian president Bashar Al Assad in his fight against "terrorists", internationally, this wasn't accepted as the correct narrative as reports came out of indiscriminate shelling of civilians and non-terroristic targets (UNHRC 2017). Even without the

direct military involvement by Russia, the fact that they were, supplying them with weapons and aircrafts, and were such staunch supporters of a Syrian regime that has used chemical weapons on its own population and has been responsible for what the UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres, has called “hell on earth”, is in itself damaging to Russia’s reputation (News 2018). The entire world heard of the atrocities that took place in Syria, which Russia had a direct role in. For a country that is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and therefore is expected to abide to a certain standard of international law and human rights, these actions were putting a dent in their aspirations for a more favorable spotlight. Therefore, clearly in terms of foreign policy, hard power wasn’t working in favor of their cause and the external audience wasn’t receiving the kind of coverage that would enhance Russia’s attractiveness and “win hearts and minds” as the World Cup approached.

However, it wasn’t only Russia’s hard power that brought negative international coverage. Other dubious practices and “malign activities” that Russia was exercising continued to reinforce the image of Russia as an evil state and an enemy to be wary of and not be trusted, which undercuts its soft power. For instance, they were accused of meddling in the 2016 US elections. This led the US to impose further sanctions on the country as a special council investigation led by US government official, Robert Mueller, began (Layne 2018). The alleged meddling in the US election made headlines for years causing the image of Russia to suffer let alone the economic strain and diplomatic isolation that followed. Additionally, Russia was also accused of the attempted poisoning of a Russian spy on UK soil which also made headlines around the world. The fact that a military grade nerve agent was used by two Russian nationals that were later identified as Russian intelligence officers, meant their orders “almost certainly” came from the ‘very top’, according to prime minister Theresa May (Dodd, et al. 2018). As expected, that soured relations even further as the EU and the US slapped more diplomatic and economic sanctions on Russia. The latter’s association with the use of chemical weapons continued with that incident, which was considered an attack on British soil as it put lives of innocent civilians at risk. The attempted poisoning had direct consequences on the World Cup itself! As the incident took place right before the start of the event, the UK government decided to lead a boycott of the games as retaliation. However, the boycott only applied to British government officials and not the actual British football

team with Theresa May announcing she will not attend the world cup even if the British team reached the finals (Bradfield 2018).

All the examples above demonstrate that Russia wasn't doing very well internationally before the start of the World Cup as its actions lead to an array of diplomatic and economic sanctions, worsening of relations and image. The main goal of increasing soft power is to be more attractive on the international stage by drawing on one of the soft power qualities such as acting as a role model and inspiring other nations to act similarly, not exactly what Russia was on its way to achieving. Although the Russian administration wasn't doing a great job at seducing the external audience with its foreign policy, these actions proved popular on the domestic audience as president Putin's approval ratings soared (Aljazeera 2019). Defending his ally and interests in Syria and regaining what Russians believe is theirs in Crimea, allowed president Putin to portray an image of a strong country, one willing to challenge other great powers for spheres it deems under its geopolitical influence and a message to the world that it isn't afraid of using force when that influence is under threat. It is precisely because of that image of muscular Russia that President Putin was able to win a decisive victory in the March 2018 elections, with 76 percent of the final vote, solidifying with that his position as leader of the Russian people. However, at a closer look, the only main challenger to Mr. Putin, opposition leader Mr. Navalny, was barred from participating in the elections, once again portraying a negative image of Russia as not leading by example amid reports of a rigged elections (Roth 2018).

Additionally, the Russian administration passed domestic policies that proved to be very unpopular abroad and brought international condemnation by governments and NGOs alike. Although one such policy, the "gay propaganda law", was passed in 2013, it received a lot of bad press as the World Cup drew closer because that is one of the effects of staging a major sporting event, it allows foreign press to shed light on domestic policies that otherwise wouldn't get much attention. In this case, it gave a stronger voice to the LGBT community that is being discriminated against and their rights violated. As Russia is a signatory of the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Court of Human rights ruled in June 2017 that the "gay propaganda law" was illegal as it was discriminatory and a

breach of free speech. This, of course, is another example of how the country isn't respecting international law and basic human rights they have agreed to be a part to, once again failing to own up to their words, *Pacta sunt servanda*. This doesn't help Russia on any of the soft power qualities. For example, emotional attraction where attractive values matter here are clearly unattractive for the many western countries who have strong LGBT communities and where gay rights are accepted and respected. For them seeing the kind of policies that the government puts forward as well as the violence that the Russian LGBT community goes through is a reason not to look up to Russia and even go against them and scrutinize them and apply pressure tactics that consequently hurts Russia's image and reputation.

Perhaps then one could argue that president Putin's main goal is therefore legitimacy towards his own people first regardless of the negative impact that has on the international stage. As long as his foreign policy actions are popular domestically, he will go for it. Regardless of whether that is the case or not, this nevertheless, still goes against the soft power formula as it overlooks the crucial targeting of the foreign audience if a country is to improve its attractiveness as well as hurts Russia's soft power qualities.

In terms of World Cup preparations, they were comparable to that of South Korea. All 12 venues were completed by the start of the competition as well as considerable infrastructure improvements were conducted on everything from airports to railways and roads with FIFA president, Gianni Infantino, praising the organizers when he said "Russia is absolutely ready to host the world" (Korsunskaya 2018). Although security was the biggest issue, including hooliganism and possible terroristic attacks, President Putin promised a smooth running event that doesn't include any acts of violence by clamping down on troublemakers and deploying the army, police and other security forces with the goal of insuring traveling fans and foreigners can experience the best possible time in Russia and see the country as open, friendly, inviting, to present a gentler face to those visiting and push back against international perceptions of Russia (Rosenberg 2018).

After a number of image damaging actions through foreign and domestic policies, use of hard power and other dubious practices, it was extremely important

for Russia now to pull off a major sports event that is worthy to be remembered so that they can reshape opinions, enhance their image and reputation, and ease tensions that have considerably escalated in the years prior to the game.

World Cup 2018 (during-event)

Against all expectations, especially considering the kind of controversial build up the 2018 World Cup was subjected to, and even before the end of the show, international media was already praising the huge success it turned out to be. All negativity prior to start of the competition was beaten by the beauty of the game that is football.

From a sporting perspective, the competition was full of surprises as small teams like Croatia and Iceland put on spectacular performances that kept fans on the grip. The Russian national team was also remarkably good, going as far as the quarter finals of the competition, only losing to Spain on penalties. That was especially important for the Russian administration as millions of Russian nationals tuned in to watch their team play excellent football. The Russian team's unexpected success was a victory for president Putin because it diffused an immense sense of pride in the Russian population. It played in his favor in terms of strengthening his legitimacy among his people. Although he was able to win the elections comfortably, he knew that it couldn't alone maintain the loyalty of his people, that he needs to continue delivering positive results and be the strong leader he portrays himself to be (Muraviev 2018).

Other positive images were spread around the world, including the picture of France's president, Emmanuel Macron, celebrating his team's success or the memorable moment the president of Croatia, whose team made the finals but lost to France, congratulating both sides in the pouring rain. There were feelings of respect, fair play, and unity by everyone involved in and off the pitch. The traveling fans were welcomed with open arms and experienced the warmth and kindness of the Russian people, changing with that the negative stereotypes often portrayed of them. All the pre-event talk about security issues and hooliganism never materialized, in a world cup that proved to be as successful as can be (Kelner and Walker 2018).

When the competition's curtains finally were brought down, more than 3.5 billion people had watched around the world making it a record breaking World Cup in terms of viewership (FIFA 2018). The world had images diffused to them of foreign fans celebrating and enjoying a wonderful time with the locals. Even English fans, who feared they would be attacked by Russian hooligans due to the frosty relationship between their two nations, experienced a different face to Russia. That was best captured by the English football manager, Gareth Southgate when he said: "The organization of the tournament has been brilliant, our welcome in Russia in every city has been outstanding. There is a lot talked about the relationship between our two countries, but on a personal level, and mixing with the people, we couldn't have been made more welcome" (France24 2018) (Khaled 2019).

The event was a successful soft power opportunity as it cemented Putin's legitimacy domestically through positive football results, infrastructure development and economic opportunities generated for his people, and internationally, as Russia's image was enhanced as an open, friendly and fun country. However, although a success, when one looks back at history, doubts creep up as whether Russia would have those positive feelings last very long. Additionally, how authentic were the images projected to the world? Was everyday life in Russia truly reflected? Or was it simply the country's best face that was put on during a month-long competition? A video posted online showing a Russian fan having an exchange with a Russian police officer sums it up best: "when the world cup is over will I be able to walk around here with a beer", asked the fan. "Are you Russian? Then no", was how the police officer responded. Although it was meant as a joke, one gets the feeling there is some truth to it too (Roth 2018).

World Cup Legacy (after-event)

The final cost at the end of the competition was reported to be around 12 billion dollars, a price tag comparable to that of South Korea's and a considerable decrease to the amount paid on the Sochi 2014 Olympics. The substantial constructions and renovations invested helped bring thousands of jobs to the host cities according to official FIFA website (FIFA 2018). However, all these improvements to the lives of

Russians were annulled when president Putin approved a new law that raised the retirement age by five years. A pension reform bill that proved to be very unpopular with his population and as result brought his popularity down to a 5 year low as street protests grew (Rainsford 2018).

From an international stand point, Russia was back to suffering negative media attention. For instance, it had failed to clear its name from the doping scandal. The World Anti-Doping Agency had given Russia a deadline until the 31st of December to hand over crucial data for its investigations, with Russia failing to meet the deadline or the handing over of the data. In response, Russia's ban has now been reinstated which includes banning Russia from hosting any more major sports events as well as banning Russian athletes from competing in future competitions (Ingle 2019). That is a huge blow to Russia because it once again reinforces the image and reputation of the country as being non transparent, dishonest, and not keeping its promises. It is also a blow in terms of national pride, something that is vital for the legitimacy of the Russian administration. Although the Mueller investigation ended after the hosting of the World Cup and cleared Russia's name from any meddling, the damage had already been done and it is doubtful whether that will improve relations as a result (Roth 2019).

The positivity and goodwill that Russia was able to generate was only temporary because the Russian administration wasn't going about soft power in the correct manner. They simply relied on hosting a successful major sports event to project an image of who they are and what they stand for whilst forgetting that it had to also be complemented by policies, actions, and values that are attractive on both domestic and international levels. A promotional activity, no matter how much effort and financial resources goes into it, cannot change on its own people's perceptions in the long term. In the long term, the images, values and positivity generated during a major sporting event have to also be demonstrated in other areas. Domestically speaking, economic, social and cultural policies have to be introduced that are popular with the country's population which can then also be attractive to other nation's populations. Russia is still suffering from censorship, violation of human rights, corruption and repression. Unless it addresses these domestic issues and the lives of the people is enhanced, the impact on soft power will be limited.

Internationally speaking, it is the actions of the state and its foreign policies that can positively impact a country's soft power. As things stand, it appears as though Russia is back to its old ways of disregarding the domestic and external audience and failing to understand what needs to be done to improve its soft power, something that is reflected in the downgrade of Russia's attractiveness in the soft power index for 2018.

Conclusion

All three case studies this thesis has explored had great similarities in the run up to their respective major sporting events in that their preparations to host were marred in scandals, political, economic and social difficulties that brought very intensive negative publicity and spotlight towards them, all of which were detrimental to their aims of an improved soft power. However, the ways they went about handling these crises were different and the results in terms of improving soft power have been varying too.

Although Brazil were not newcomers to using soft power, they didn't go about successfully implementing their policies and actions to ensure synchronization with increased attraction. They came short of achieving that goal because the government and the organizers were too busy pooling all resources available on ensuring the pulling off of a memorable showpiece and please the traveling visitors while making the mistake of ignoring the steps they had to undertake to solve the domestic issues as well as their image and reputation internationally. Additionally, the qualities that cause soft power, namely, emotional, rational and social attraction were also hugely overlooked and as a result Brazil failed in positively impacting their soft power via the 2016 Olympic games. It was clear by the end of it that Brazilian authorities were in it for the short term and not the long one as the problems the country faced in the run up to the games persisted after the games had ended.

Similarly, Russia's World Cup, although was judged perfect in execution, and dubbed the "best world cup in history", still failed to manage its soft power because of having overlooked the causal mechanisms of soft power. President Putin was

successful to unite his people behind him during the show, generating as a result the necessary positivity the country needed to counter the negativity that preceded the start of the tournament and take the first step into reshaping the thoughts, emotions and opinions of the external audience. However, this seemingly was quickly forgotten by the external audience because Russia's legacy was weak as it quickly went back to its old ways that. This thesis has acknowledged, however, that Russia is perhaps in a case of its own because its leader, president Putin, isn't afraid of using hard power if that means getting what he wants even if at the cost of soft power.

Finally, South Korea demonstrated a comparable negativity prior to the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, however, was able to use the event correctly by demonstrating its soft power qualities which were reflective of a truthful image: that the South Korean government was able to stand by its values and beliefs as well as make the necessary changes that had to be undertaken to solve the crises and showcase their many strengths. Only this way can they improve their soft power, which was reflected in the soft power index for that year.

This thesis has established along the three case studies that an improved soft power necessitates that the government and organizers must work on several fronts if they are to succeed. Simply attempting to lure the foreigners whilst disregarding domestic socio economic and political issues will hamper any type of effort towards stronger soft power. A host nation should use the hosting of a major sports event either:

- 1) With the aim of displaying the efforts it has achieved in acquiring and enhancing its three qualities of soft power.
- 2) As a "new slate" kind of tool whereby the major sports event is used to announce the host is making changes to its old negative habits and is prepared to stick by its word: "to walk the talk".

Simply focusing all efforts on the event itself will not dissuade the external audience into believing a certain favorable narrative. Actions, whether on a domestic or international level, must be in line with the qualities of soft power.

This paper has contributed to the existing literature on the connection between soft power and major sports events in two ways: Firstly, the case studies that have been chosen are very recent and have been explored very little. Secondly, the methodological use of soft power qualities on the three chosen case studies hasn't been attempted so far and can therefore act as a spring board from which other researchers can take a more in depth look into these case studies individually as this paper takes more of an overview approach. Additionally, the author also decided to add the soft power index in his methodology as a way to further strengthen his arguments. Finally, conducting a comparable study helped ensure more systematic responses and made it clearer where the countries differ in their soft power strategies.

Counter arguments to this thesis can certainly be made, for instance, critics may argue that other examples should have been chosen to illustrate whether or not the hosting of the major sports event has helped the host nation improve its soft power. However, that does not invalidate the conclusions made here, it only expands the research on the link between soft power and major sports events. The author would certainly encourage the analysis of the same case studies using other methods or the use of the same methods but with different case studies. In the end, the aim here was to understand what it is practitioners should adhere to in order to maximize the impact on their soft power through the medium of major sports events.

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