Raising the American Flag Via Olympic Media Consumption: Quantitatively Exploring the Ethics of U.S. Nationalism and Sport Spectatorship

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Abstract

While the 2016 Summer Olympics was still the most watched program all 17 nights during NBC's coverage, the decline in overall television viewership could be a sign of audience migration to other platforms to consume Olympic content. Because understanding if motives for displaying national identity and motives for spectating sport could play a role in the consumption of Olympic media across televisual, print and digital platforms, a survey of 257 respondents was conducted, and structural equation modeling was used to determine the relationships among national identity motives, sport spectatorship motives and Olympic media consumption. The analysis revealed the strongest relationships in a three-step approach, where national identity motives directly influence sport spectatorship motives, which in turn directly influences media consumption. Specific relationships are discussed, along with their implications.

As typically is the case, consumption of NBC's Olympic broadcasts was high for the 2016 Rio Summer Games—yet in a different way. Overall, television ratings still won every hour for each of the 17 nights of primetime Olympic coverage, garnering an average of 25.4 million viewers each night (Deggans, 2016), yet were down in comparison to the 2012 London Olympic broadcasts (Holloway, 2016). Meanwhile, digital streaming of the Games increased substantially, with 2.71 billion minutes streamed via NBC's various online platforms (Holloway, 2016), more than the previous two Olympics combined. Thus, NBC's Olympic telecasts still represent the juggernaut of all media offerings but not a static one, as viewers migrate to new ways of watching, talking about, and reading about Olympic content.

One element of Olympic consumption that is seemingly intractable regards the role nationalism plays within the motivations people have to watch. Neil Pilson, former CBS Sports President, argues that the Olympics are "not being watched because they're sports, they're being watched because they're for flag, for country" (in Paskin, 2016, para. 6). Researchers examining the relationships between the Olympics and nationalism uncover linkages that cross national boundaries; Chen (2012) found that favorability of a nation increases in a variety of measures commensurate with the number of medals won. Billings, Brown, Brown, Guo, Leeman, Licen, Novak, and Rowe (2013) examined six nations on four measures of nationalistic qualities (patriotism, nationalism, smugness, and internationalism), finding that the United States was the only nation of the six to have Olympic media consumption of the 2012 Summer Games predict higher scores on all four factors.

Given the shifting nature of Olympic media consumption, the unique role the Olympics plays within the sports media landscape (prioritizing love of nation over love of sport), and the all-consuming options available to Americans via NBC's 2016 media platforms (9 channels plus websites and mobile options offering over 6,000 hours of content), it is imperative to quantitatively examine how one's motives for participating in acts of nationalism to gain an association with one's nation could potentially relate to one's motives for being a spectator (through the lens of fan identification) and media consumption during international sporting events. This study does so, incorporating 257 respondents from a national sample both before and after the 2016 Rio

Olympics, in order to determine how such variables relate to one another in a complex media landscape. By employing a quantitative analysis within the communicative domain, integral insights can be attained regarding how the Olympics potentially becomes a vehicle for one to bolster their love and connection to his or her home country.

Related Literature

Social Identification Theory

Tajfel and Turner (1986) define social identity as "aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging" (p. 16). Social classifications with which one identifies can be related to familial structures (e.g., mother, father, brother), career positions (e.g., plumber, doctor, teacher), organizational affiliations (e.g., PTA member, Susan G. Komen fundraiser), or even interests and hobbies (e.g., sports fan, marathon runner). Such social classifications primarily serve two purposes, allowing people to "cognitively segment and order the social environment" while also helping individuals "locate him- or herself in the social environment" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 21). To better define the cognitive process of how individuals order their social groupings, self-categorization theory explores how people structure their social environments in such a way that makes the most sense to them (Tajfel, 1978).

Furthermore, Tajfel and Turner (1986) noted that intergroup categorization "leads to in-group favoritism and discrimination against the out-group". Therefore, one's social identity is inherently relational and analogous—it is defined as much by the "other" group's characteristics as the principles that bind the "in-group". Thus, the social label of being a sports fan is only relevant and purposeful when contrasted with non-sports fans.

When examining the plethora of social labels with which one identifies, the degree of prominence a person associates with a particular social grouping or label is of particular importance, as often the "proximity and situational salience are among the variables that determine out-group comparability" (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 17). The Olympic Games feature intergroup competition in which in-groups (home nation) and out-groups (all other nations) are established on the basis of citizenship, with flags and labels to clearly delineate groupings (Billings, Brown,

Brown, Guo, Leeman, Licen, Novak, & Rowe, 2013). Thus, the Olympics provide a unique opportunity to examine in-group favoritism and out-group derogation.

Fan Identification

As scholars extended social identity and self-categorization literature to examine the unique connection between sports fans and their teams, a concept of fan identification emerged (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Fan identification is defined as the "extent to which a fan feels a psychological connection to a team and the team's performances are viewed as self-relevant" (Wann, 2006, p. 332). Embodied within classic examples such as the kinship one feels when "we won", fan identification has persisted as one of the largest predictors of game viewership (Hu & Tang, 2010; Wann, 2006), including viewership of Olympic content (Cooper & Tang, 2012).

To quantify an individual's fan identification, Wann and Branscombe (1993) developed their Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS), featuring seven Likert-scale items that collectively measure the extent of one's identification with a particular sports team. Funk and James (2001) later extended this area of research through the advancement of their Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), providing a "cognitive approach that places existing fan theory and research under one conceptual umbrella" (p. 121). PCM established a vertical continuum operationally defining different levels of fandom one can experience, ranging from awareness to allegiance (Funk & James, 2001).

In addition to defining and measuring the extent of individuals' fandom, scholars sought to determine the factors that motivate individuals to become identified with a certain sport. The Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) includes 23 Likert-scale items to measure a variety of motivations for sport fandom, including eustress, self-esteem, escape from everyday life, entertainment, economic factors, aesthetics, group affiliation, and family needs (Wann, 1995; Wann, 1999). Raney (2006) notes that scholarship continues to identify additional emotional (self-esteem, escape, eustress, and entertainment), cognitive (learning and aesthetics), and behavioral (release, group affiliation, companionship, family, and economics) fan motivations for sport consumption.

While relatively new, the Sports Spectator Motivations Scale (SSMS) combines the various motivations found in previous sports scholarship to create a measure with enhanced reliability (Keaton,

Watanabe, & Gearhart, 2015; Keaton, Watanabe, & Ruihley, 2015), dividing such motivations into the four dimensions, defined as: (a) *recreational value*: feelings of entertainment, excitement, and connection sports fandom provides fans; (b) *fan self-concept*: feelings of social status and pride that possessing a "sports fan" label provides; (c) *aesthetics*: includes an appreciation of the beauty, grace, and art of sport; and (d) *casual spectatorship*: includes motivations of consuming sports to pass the time.

Fan identification literature has shown that one's level of identification is a significant predictor of game attendance and sports media consumption (Wann, 2006). As previously noted, the 2016 Rio Olympic Games dominated the television ratings in the United States. Beyond traditional media consumption, and billion of minutes streamed online, 190 million minutes of content were consumed via Snapchat alone. Scholars have previously examined the factors that motivate fans to consume sporting events (Trail & James, 2001; James & Ross, 2004; Wild & Cant, 2015); however, additional investigation into individuals' motivations to watch the Olympic Games is warranted.

International Sport and Nationalism in the United States

Potential competing identities are increasingly important to acknowledge during international sporting events when one or more points of identification can be either bolstered or threatened. In addition to the satisfaction of sports consumption, seventeen days of mediated coverage of international competition also increases the prominence of one's citizenship categorization. Thus, in the Olympics, one's home "team" is defined through what Anderson (1983) referred to as an "imagined political community— and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). Anderson (1983) notes that nationalistic labels are *imagined*, as citizens will not remotely meet all other citizens of their county; they are *limited*, as their home nation will not encompass all people; they are *sovereign*, as they are autonomous; and above all, they are a *community*, as they are defined by shared belief systems and ideals.

The connection Olympic viewers feel with their "imagined political community" combined with the international Olympic competitions foster create us vs. them dichotomies, which has led to the Games being referred to as an "unambiguously 'athletic-political event'" (Billings, 2008, p. 151). In order to foster this sense of connection, Hobsbawm (1990) noted, "the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named

people" (p. 143). Billings (2008) characterizes how the Olympic Games transforms athletes into more than just competitors; rather, they can become "banner bearers for socialism, democracy, communism, and myriad other social policies" (p. 152). This hyper-politicization of international sporting events even led George Orwell to assert that such events resembled "war minus the shooting" (Orwell, 1945). The idea that the Olympic Games prominently highlight such nationalistic feelings makes the effects of Olympic broadcasts ripe for scholarly inquiry (Ho & Bairner, 2012; Rider & Llewellyn, 2015).

Previous scholarship has examined the U.S. Olympic media broadcast coverage to determine the amount of coverage U.S. athletes received relative to their success. Billings, Angelini, MacArthur, Smith, and Vincent (2014) analyzed the NBC prime-time broadcast of the 2012 London Olympics and found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that athletes from the United States, the network's home nation, received 55.8% of all mentions. In addition to receiving a larger amount of media coverage, studies have also uncovered differences in how commentators discuss U.S. athletes as compared to competitors from other nations (Billings, 2008). Billings (2008) noted that when compared to athletes from other countries, U.S. athletes were described as possessing a superior level of concentration, showing more courage, harboring a higher level of athletic commitment, and showcasing more composure during competition.

Scholars, then, inquired how previous findings regarding the coverage and commentary of international sport impacted viewers' sense of nationalism and patriotism (Helal & Soares, 2014; Billings, Brown, & Brown, 2015; Devlin & Billings, 2016). As China served as the host country for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, the fact that China, Hong Kong, and Macao operated as separate sporting entities under a "one country, two systems" doctrine gained prominence (Ho & Bairner, 2012). Highlighting the prominence of Chinese culture in the media during the Beijing Olympics contributed to the study's respondents appreciating their Chinese identity, Ho and Bairner (2012) found that "regardless of three different flags under one country, Hong Kong and Macao shared the Olympic spirit and nationalist sentiment with the rest of the Chinese motherland" (p. 349). Billings, Brown, Brown, Guo, Leeman, Licen, Novak, & Rowe (2013) surveyed six nations (Australia, Bulgaria, China, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the

United States) during the 2012 London Olympics to determine how members of each nation rated four measures of nationalism, finding the amount of Olympic media consumed directly contributed to significantly higher scores for three of the measures: *patriotism* (a feeling that "my country is good"), *nationalism* (a feeling that "my country is better than your country") and *smugness* (a heighten sense of nationalism where one feels that "my country is best").

Scholarship has previously evaluated the effect of Olympic media consumption on measures of nationalistic feelings (Billings, Brown, & Brown, 2015); however, scholars have yet to determine whether the desire to participate in acts that display nationalistic feelings motivate viewers to consume Olympic content. While scholars have previously established that "feelings of national pride and national identity" do motivate fans of the Olympic Games to purchase sports memorabilia (Apostolopoulou, Papadimitriou, & Damtsiou, 2010, p.499), scholarship has yet to evaluate nationalism as a motivation for sports media consumption. Devlin and Billings (2016) examined nationalistic attitudes and media consumption in the context of the World Cup. Findings revealed that those who were high consumers of World Cup games reported significantly higher nationalistic feelings than those who were low consumers of World Cup games. However, they also found that nationalistic attitudes did not change over time, causing them to call for future research to explore "whether qualities are formed *before* individuals decide whether to consume this international sports media product, rather than the attitudes arising from heightened media consumption" (Devlin & Billings, p.56). Based on this inquiry, Brown, Billings, Schallhorn, Schramm and Devlin (2016) investigated if nationalistic qualities motivated one's desire to consume Winter Olympic media. Results showed that only two of the qualities were strong predictors of media consumption: nationalism and smugness. Thus, this study seeks to build upon these prior findings to determine whether nationalistic feelings motivate a consumption of international sporting content.

Measuring and Assessing National Affinity

While previous scholarship has examined the effects of Olympic media on individuals' sense of nationalism, scholarship primarily focused on nationalistic measures that are derived from comparisons of one's home nation to all other nations (Billings et al., 2013; Devlin & Billings, 2016). Scholarship has yet to examine

how the abundance of Olympic content impacts nationalistic measures focused solely on the shared belief systems that unite their home country. Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) published a scale that measures the degree to which a person identifies with their home nation through the inclusion of 120 Likert-scale items. The resulting measures produced four dimensions previously adapted and utilized in scholarship to examine nationalistic attitudes in the context of international sport (Billings, Brown, & Brown, 2013). The dimensions included measures of nationalism, which compare the superiority of one's home nation to the presumed inferiority of all other nations, to measures of smugness, a belief that one's nation is vastly superior to all other nations. However, collectively, these measures focus primarily on the comparative *love* and *pride* one feels for their home country rather than the shared belief systems and ideals binding a nation's citizens. Because nationalism and smugness were key drivers in Olympic media consumption in previous studies (Billings et al., 2013; Billings, Brown & Brown, 2013; Billings, Brown & Brown-Devlin, 2015), and were predictors of Olympic media consumption in previous studies (Brown et al., 2016), Brown and Billings (2017, in press) utilized scale construction psychometrics to establish four motives that collectively measure that commonality one seeks with their home country and its shared ideals. The four motives for the National Connection Motives Scale are as follows, with specific items articulated in Appendix A:

1) *Identification:* one demonstrates feelings of nationalism because of his/her feelings of cohesiveness/unity about one's home country (e.g., "I am proud to be from my country.")

2) *Emulation*: one demonstrates feelings of nationalism because he/she believes other nations should emulate his/her home nation (e.g., "Other countries should try to be more like my country.")

3) *Aspiration*: one demonstrates feelings of nationalism because one believes his/her home country should work to advance other nations in the world. (e.g., "The alleviation of crisis in other countries should be a concern for us")

4) *Protection*: one demonstrates feelings of nationalism because one feels a need to defend his/her home country in light of dissenting opinions asserted by others. (e.g., "I will defend my country's political decisions to anyone that disagrees.")
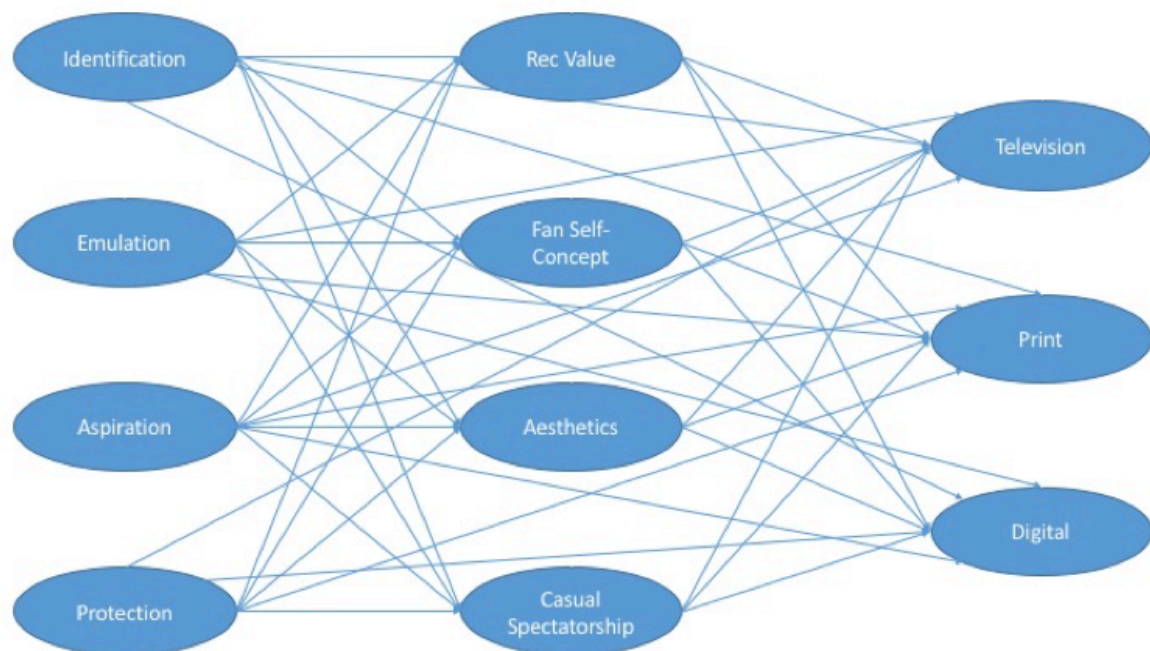
Research Questions

Scholarship has previously examined the factors motivating fans to consume sporting events (Trail & James, 2001; James & Ross, 2004; Wild & Cant, 2015); however, additional investigation into individual's motivations to watch the Olympic Games is warranted. First, given that Devlin and Billings (2016) found that the amount of international sport media consumption one planned to consume was equivalent to the amount actually consumed, a research question is offered to test if this assumption, grounded in the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), holds in the case of the Summer Olympic telecast:

> RQ1: Will differences emerge between anticipated and actual Olympic media consumption?

Since the Olympic Games features international competition, it is important to examine not only how respondents were motivated to consume Olympic content as fans of the Olympics, but also how respondents were motivated by a love of country. Figure 1 offers the proposed theoretical model.

Figure 1. Proposed Theoretical Model.

First, the following research question is proposed to investigate if Olympic viewers are motivated to consume Olympic content based on specific reasons for being an Olympic spectator:

RQ2: Will respondents' motives for watching the Olympics (recreational value, fan self-concept, aesthetics and casual spectatorship) influence the amount of media consumption of Summer Olympic media?

Next, the following research question is proposed to investigate if motives for demonstrating national identity will influence Olympic viewers' reasons for being an Olympic spectator:

RQ3: Will respondents' motives for participating in acts of nationalism (identification, emulation, aspiration and protection) influence their motives for watching the Olympic Games (recreational value, fan self-concept, aesthetics and casual spectatorship)?

Finally, the following research question is postulated to determine the extent to which Olympic viewers are motivated to consume Olympic content based on their motives for demonstrating national identity:

RQ4: Will respondents' motives for participating in acts of nationalism (identification, emulation, aspiration and protection) influence their consumption of (a) televisual, (b) print and (c) digital Summer Olympic media?

Method

To measure the impact of nationalism-related and fan identification-related motives for watching the Olympic Games towards media consumption of the 2016 Summer Olympics, survey methodology was determined to be the best avenue for advancing academic understanding, as it allows for the correlation and connection of many complex variables in a concurrent manner. An online survey was distributed, and data were collected at two different points in time: (a) the week before the 2016 Summer Olympics Opening Ceremonies [Point 1: August 1-5. 2016] and (b) the week after the Closing Ceremonies [Point 2: August 22-26, 2016]. All data collections were through the use of Qualtrics Panels (a division of Qualtrics, a web-based, survey research company). Qualtrics Panels provided panel participants that ensured a representative national sample for each data collection point. According to Cameron Young (personal communication, January 16, 2017), a member of Qualtrics Panels Department, Qualtrics recruits its panel participants using two methods: self-registration through their website, and proactive recruitment by the company using

third-party lists. Participants receive cash-equivalent points that can be exchanged for various rewards, including airline miles, gift cards, and magazine subscriptions (Cameron Young, personal communication, January 16, 2017).

Participants

After attaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), data were collected from 257 participants during both points: 105 during Point 1, and 152 during Point 2. Data were collected from 129 males (50.2 percent) and 128 females (49.8 percent). The majority of the sample was Caucasian (152 participants, 59.1 percent), with Hispanics (49 participants, 19.1 percent) and African-Americans (35 participants, 13.6 percent) being the two highest minority groups.

Variables

As established in the work of Devlin and Billings (2016), there appears to be a strong warrant to connect and examine the three variables of media consumption, nationalism, and fandom as they relate to megasporting events as these function only partly as sporting events, often even in secondary roles to the enactment of national identity and the ensuing pride it brings to the equation.

Media consumption was measured using five open-ended questions asking how many hours (on average) each participant spent (1) watching the Olympics on television, (2) reading about the Olympics on websites and blogs (including online newspapers and magazines), (3) reading about the Olympics in print media (newspapers and magazines), (4) following and discussing the Olympics on social media and message boards, and (5) streaming Olympic content from a computer or mobile device. The responses for 2, 4 and 5 were combined to determine a total amount of Olympic digital media consumption hours per day for each participant. Responses for television (1) and print media (3) were analyzed as standalone variables. Respondents consumed (or planned to consume) an average of 3.42 hours of televisual Olympic media (SD = 5.07), 3.45 hours of digital Olympic media (SD = 4.95), and 1.07 hours of print Olympic media (SD = 2.01).

Nationalism-related motives for watching the Olympic Games were measured using the National Connection Motives Scale, a 19-item, seven-point Likert scale created by Brown and Billings (2017, in press). The multidimensional scale measures the

four nationalism motives: identification ($M = 5.96$, $SD = 1.25$), emulation ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.51$), aspiration ($M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.48$) and protection ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.42$). The scale items measure the degree to which the participant agreed with each statement, and scale items were used to calculate a mean score for each of the qualities—the higher the score for a specific quality, the stronger the participant's attitude. Cronbach's (1951) alpha was used to measure the reliability of the scale, and the full scale ($\alpha = 0.943$) and all four dimensions were reliable: (identification $\alpha = 0.926$, emulation $\alpha = 0.905$, aspiration $\alpha = 0.889$, protection $\alpha = 0.9$). To ensure that such motives are constant and not subject to fluctuation across data collection points, independent samples t-test were conducted, revealing no significant differences.

Fan-related motives for watching the Olympic Games were measured using Keaton, Watanabe and Ruihley (2015) Scale of Sport Spectatorship Motives, a 17-item, seven point Likert scale that measures four motives: recreational value ($M = 5.21$, $SD = 1.33$), fan self-concept ($M = 4.61$, $SD = 1.6$), aesthetics ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.47$) and casual spectatorship ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.59$). The scale items measure the degree to which the participant agreed with each statement, and scale items were used to calculate a mean score for each of the qualities—the higher the score for a specific quality, the stronger the participant's attitude. Cronbach's (1951) alpha was used to measure the reliability of the scales, and the full scale ($\alpha = 0.965$) and all four dimensions were reliable: (recreational value $\alpha = 0.916$, fan self-concept $\alpha = 0.956$, aesthetics $\alpha = 0.954$, casual spectatorship $\alpha = 0.915$). Similar to the National Association Motives Scale, ensuring that such motives are constant and not subject to fluctuation was achieved via non-significant independent samples t-tests. Appendix B provides the scale items for each sport spectator motive.

Questionnaire and Procedure

Once Qualtrics recruited participants for the study, they were prompted to visit a distinct web address that directed the participant to a questionnaire consisting of five parts. Section A consisted of the informed consent form, which provided a description of the study, stressed that participation was voluntary, and guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. If the participant agreed to the statement, they were asked to continue to Section B, which provided the items used to measure the four nationalism motives. Section C provided the spectatorship motive items and

media consumption questions, and Section D provided a thank-you statement and demographic questions.

Once the questionnaire was designed, the survey was pretested among 22 students using the rough draft of the questionnaire. The pretest data were used to review the individual questions, to edit question order and language, and to determine whether any functional adaptations that were needed.

Statistical Analysis and Measurement Model Validation

Statistical analyses of the data collected were computed using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 21 and SPSS Amos, version 18. Amos was used to evaluate the measurement models for the nationalism motives scale and the sport spectatorship scale. It was also used to determine if the structural model for the relationships among variables adequately described those relationships. Several common fit indexes were used to indicate how well the proposed model explains the data, underscoring that statistical measures can provide optimal glimpses for understanding sports media in large international contexts. For the ratio of relative chi-square goodness-of-fit to degrees of freedom ($\chi2/df$), ratios of 5 or less are considered to be a good fit (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985). For the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), values less than 0.06 are considered to be a good fit (Ki & Hon, 2007). For the Bentler-Bonett normed fit index (NFI), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI), the values are between 0 and 1, with values greater than 0.9 indicating a better fit (Bentler, 1990). For the nationalism motives scale, the measurement model was considered a good fit without dropping any of the scale items ($\chi2/df$ = 1.760, RMSEA = 0.054, NFI = 0.946, TLI = 0.967, CFI = 0.976). For the sport spectatorship motives scale, the measurement model was considered a good fit without dropping any of the scale items ($\chi2/df$ = 2.568, RMSEA = 0.078, NFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.962, CFI = 0.962).

Results

Research Question 1 queried whether significant differences emerged between the amount of Olympic media respondents anticipated consuming and the amount actually consumed over the 17 days of the Rio Games. Independent samples t-tests were conducted and revealed no significant differences for televisual (t (255) = -0.358, p = 0.721), print (t (255) = 1.122, p = 0.26) and digital

media (t (255) = 1.709, p = 0.089), providing an answer for RQ1 in the negative, while also warranting the combining of planned and actual Olympic consumption into one media consumption variable for further testing. Table 1 provides the mean hours consumed of all three types of media: planned, actual and overall.

Table 1. Mean Hours Consumed of Olympic Media.

	Planned (Phase I) M (*SD*)	Actual (Phase II) M (*SD*)	Total M (*SD*)
Television	3.29 (*2.67*)	3.52 (*6.22*)	3.42 (*5.07*)
Print	1.25 (*1.66*)	0.96 (*2.22*)	1.08 (*2.01*)
Digital	4.09 (*5.18*)	3.02 (*4.75*)	3.45 (*4.95*)

Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the pair of remaining research questions. The final structural model illustrating the motives for consuming televisual, print and digital Olympic media was considered a good fit ($\chi2/df$ = 1.111, RMSEA = 0.021, NFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.996, CFI = 0.998). Figure 2 conceptualizes the revised structural model.

Figure 2. Revised Structural Model.
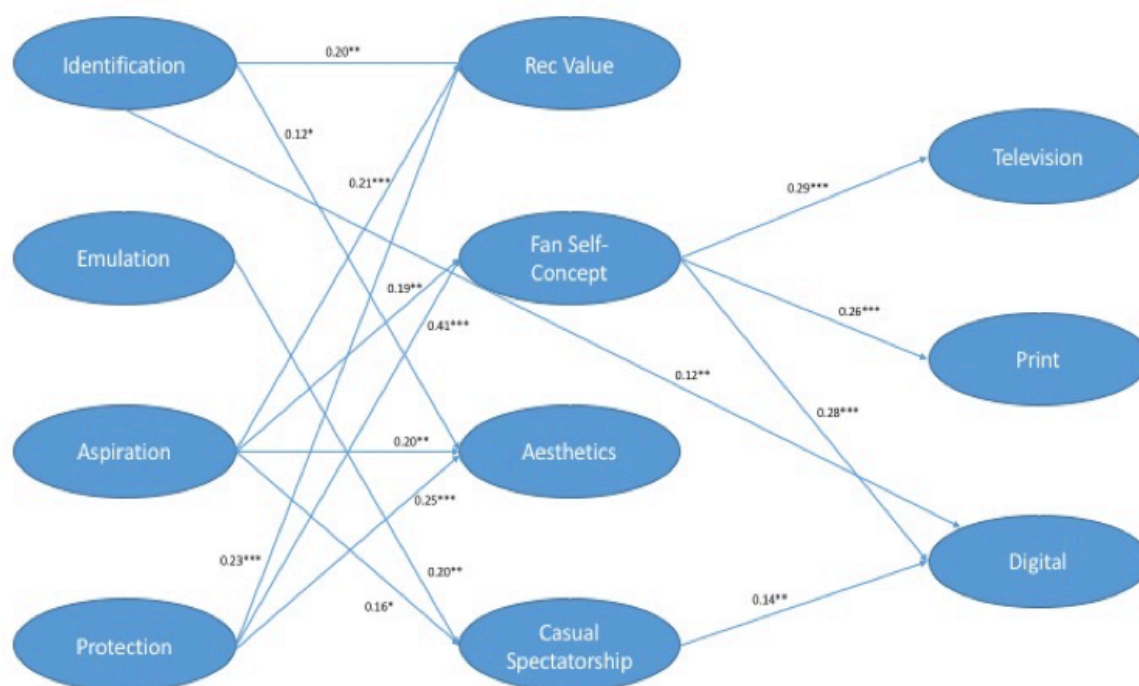
***p < 0.001
**p < 0.01
*p < 0.05

The second research question was designed to determine which motives for being a spectator during the Summer Olympics would influence Olympic media consumption. Fan self-concept had a

significant direct effect on the consumption of televisual Olympic media ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$), print Olympic media ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$) and digital Olympic media ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$). Casual spectatorship had a significant direct effect on the consumption of digital Olympic media ($\beta = 0.14$, $p = 0.001$). Neither recreational value nor aesthetics had a significant effect on Olympic media consumption.

The third research question was designed to determine which motives for participating in acts of nationalism would influence motives for being a spectator during the Summer Olympics. Identification had a significant direct effect on recreational value ($\beta = 0.2$, $p = 0.002$) and aesthetics ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.015$). Emulation had a significant direct effect on casual spectatorship ($\beta = 0.2$, $p = 0.003$). Aspiration had a significant direct effect on recreational value ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$), fan self-concept ($\beta = 0.19$, $p = 0.005$), aesthetics ($\beta = 0.2$, $p = 0.004$) and casual spectatorship ($\beta = 0.16$, $p = 0.027$). Protection had a significant direct effect on recreational value ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$), fan self-concept ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) and aesthetics ($\beta = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$).

The remaining research question concerned whether motives for participating in acts of nationalism would influence Olympic media consumption. Identification had a significant direct effect on the consumption of digital Olympic media ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.002$), yet no other significant effects were found. Therefore, meager predictive relationships appear to occur between one's level of national identity and the likelihood to seek out Olympic media.

Discussion

The present study highlights the relationships between nationalism, Olympic media consumption, and fan identification by showing that positive relationships exist among the variables. Robust findings are detected, yet one core premise with which one must start is the finding offered in Research Question 1, offering consistency between planned and actual Olympic media consumption. Such results underscore the commitment embodied in the Olympic audience: for those cognitively labeling themselves as Olympic fans, other life commitments seemingly do not deter one from consuming the amount of Olympic media they seek. From the perspective of motives for participating in acts of nationalism, such consistent findings of hard-wired Olympic

media choices could be seen as a surrogate for emphasizing the hard-wired nature of one's feelings of nationalism as well.

Within the model, key findings abound. All four national connection motives had direct effects on at least one element of sport spectatorship; however, each of the four nationalism motives had uniquely different direct effects. As such, it appears motives for participating in acts of nationalism are, indeed, not monolithic and each offers unique insight into the profile of the person more apt to respond to a given form of nationalism. Future research should endeavor to explicate each of the four profiles more specifically within a variety of sporting contexts, particularly within mediated international competitions.

Looking deeper at the paths, all four national connection motives have connections to fan spectator motivations, yet the paths are different for each motive. Interestingly, emulation only yielded one path to fan spectator motivations (casual spectatorship) while the other three motives had three different paths to this same set of factors. Given that casual spectatorship is the least manner in which one could identify, it appears emulation may best connect to such desires; the diverse type of viewers of the Olympics—as opposed to more traditional sports demographics—may be a factor in this finding. For instance, given that women constitute roughly 40 percent of most non-Olympic sports media viewership in the United States but represent the majority of NBC's Olympic viewers (Jenkins, 2016), a demonstrable difference is offered between being a "sports fan" and an "Olympic fan". The fan of the Olympics is, hence, more likely to be labeled casual—as the Games are only contested every other year. Moreover, gender is not the only aspect that makes Olympic viewership more casual; for instance, the content prioritizes events such as gymnastics, swimming, and track and field—sports receiving meager (if any) coverage outside of the Olympic Games. Thus, "the Olympics are the unicorn of sports TV" (Paskin, 2016, para. 1), and the path offered to the casual sports fan ultimately could represent the person who does not watch sports on a regular basis, but who also does not formally consider the Olympics to be a sport as much as a global festival, an event superseding any formal notion of sports-based wins and losses.

Regarding the path in which identification leads to fan self-concept which leads to heightened digital media consumption, it appears Keaton, Watanabe, and Ruihley's (2015) conception of

advancing oneself as a "sports fan" may encompass broader circles, including, seemingly being a "fan" of one's country. Using self-categorization theory as a lens, people appear to simultaneously meld two conceptions of identification (being a "sports fan" and an "America fan" in the process of locating oneself within the societal context (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The fact that this path was directly through digital (as opposed to the televised) consumption highlights the type of person with heightened fan self-concept—one more apt to prioritize live Olympic events over the often delayed primetime telecasts as well as one more willing to sacrifice more optimal media experiences available on television for the immediacy Internet options provide.

Moreover, it is intriguing to note that aspiration and protection had stronger and multiple direct effects towards spectator motive than did identification and emulation, seemingly offering the potential to bifurcate strong and weak identity profiles along these same lines. To wit, merely identifying with and wishing one's national policies and cultural standards echoed or mimicked other nations did not appear to make one a strong Olympic fan. However, the belief that one's home nation should be a global leader and the desire to defend it in the face of opposition did have a stronger impact on Olympic consumption, potentially underscoring the desire of the hard-core Olympic fan to witness items like medals tables and ceremonies that could reinforce a dominant ideology. In a similar vein, while the highly-identified fan had paths with protection, the casual spectator did not. As such, future research should seek to postulate questions as to whether protecting a given entity (whether a local team or a nationally-based team) is considered essential to being a "true" sports fan. Given that the major driver of media consumption is fan-self concept (with the largest effects within the model), such questions become even more pertinent for subsequent investigation.

Limitations to the study remain, but also direct future research. For instance, the study only incorporated two data collection points, which could potentially be limiting as surveying people immediately before the Olympics is still after Olympic media priming, including countless previews, U.S. Olympic trials, and social media discussions. Moreover, the utilization of a new scale for measuring motives for participating in acts of nationalism represents a noteworthy advancement warranting future use and validation, yet also offers no other direct comparisons with

past research regarding the four new factors of identification, emulation, aspiration and protection. Thus, future research would supply more data points for determining longitudinal trends.

Conclusion

In determining cause/effect relationships between Olympic media and nationalized connections, Billings et. al (2013) used Olympic media as a predictor of patriotism, nationalism, internationalism, and smugness. This study used Olympic media from the next Summer Games to offer the inverse: that nationalized connections are the best way to explain Olympic media consumption. However, what this study identifies is more nuanced than that—showing that the relationships between the two core elements are rarely found--unless mitigated by the indirect effects of sport spectatorship. Akin to the findings of Devlin and Billings (2016)—who found that World Cup media consumption was altered by national connections inculcated through being a fan of the World Cup and the national team—this study uncovers similar trendlines. Sport spectatorship motives cannot be understated within this equation, as it appears national identification and consumption of international sporting contests such as the Olympics are funneled indirectly through issues such as fan self-concept, and aesthetics.

Overall, this study highlights the paths that connect nationalism, Olympic media consumption, and fan identification. The finding that digital media consumption offered the direct path to both fan self-concept and casual spectatorship will likely only be bolstered in the future, as convergence likely makes television and digital consumption much more synchronous—and, hence, synonymous—in the future. Each of the three core variables of this study are inherently layered and intricate; nevertheless, seeking to untangle their relationship amongst one another can continue to advance knowledge regarding core elements of self-concept and potential resulting behaviors based on kinship (or lack thereof) with one's home country.

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Appendix A

Dimension A: Identification

- I love my country. (Ident1)

- I am proud to be from my country. (Ident2)

- In a sense, I am emotionally attached to my country. (Ident3)

- No matter who is leading my country, I am committed to showing my national pride. (Ident4)

- It is the duty of every young person from my country to honor our national history and heritage. (Ident5)

Dimension B: Emulation

- Other countries should try to make their governments much like ours as possible. (Emul1)

- Other countries should try to be more like my country. (Emul2)

- My county should try to influence the policy of other countries. (Emul3)

- My country should be more forceful in influencing other counties when it believes it is right. (Emul4)

- My country should always take the lead with forming international policies. (Emul5)

Dimension C: Aspiration

- The alleviation of crisis in other countries should be a concern of ours. (Aspir1)

- We should join the fight to help other countries survive. (Aspir2)

- My country should make efforts to help other countries. (Aspir3)

- My country should be more willing to share its wealth with other suffering nations, even if it doesn't necessarily coincide with our political interests. (Aspir4)

Dimension D: Protection

- My country represents all that is right with the world. (Protect1)

- I like to defend my government against people who disagree with its policies and structures. (Protect2)

- I will defend my country's political decisions to anyone that disagrees. (Protect3)

- I won't allow anyone to speak negatively about my country. (Protect4)

- Other countries look to my country for moral clarity. (Protect5)

Appendix B

Scale of Sport Spectatorship Motives (Keaton, Watanabe & Ruihley, 2015)

Dimension A: Recreational Value

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is to seek excitement and stimulation. (Rec1)

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is to use it as a form of recreation. (Rec2)

- I like the stimulation I get from following the Olympics. (Rec3)

- I like to follow the Olympics because doing so gives me an opportunity to be with my family. (Rec4)

Dimension B: Fan Self-Concept

- Being a fan of the Olympics is very important to me. (FanSC1)

- I believe that following the Olympics is the most enjoyable form of entertainment. (FanSC2)

- My friends see me as an Olympics fan. (FanSC3)

- My life would be less enjoyable if I were allowed to follow the Olympics. (FanSC4)

- I am a committed fan of the Olympics. (FanSC5)

Dimension C: Aesthetics

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is the beauty and grace of the games. (Aest1)

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is the artistic value of the games. (Aest2)

- I enjoy watching the artistry of the Olympics. (Aest3)

- The Olympics should be considered an art form. (Aest4)

- One of the main reasons that I follow the Olympics is for the artistic value. (Aest5)

Dimension D: Casual Spectatorship

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is to occupy my free time. (Casual1)

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is to kill time. (Casual2)

- One of my reasons to follow the Olympics is just to keep me busy or occupied. (Casual3)

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