

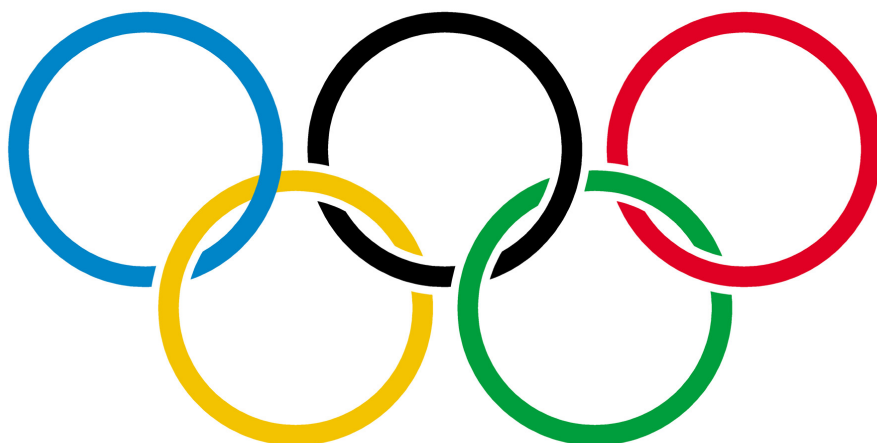


AALBORG UNIVERSITY
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Global Refugee Studies
Master Thesis

The Possibility of Refugee Participation Throughout Olympic History:

A Discourse Analysis of the International Olympic Committee's Discursive
Construction of the Olympic Games



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Abstract

The following research project investigates how the International Olympic Committee has articulated the Olympic Games throughout its history, and what those articulations have meant for the Olympic participation of refugees. Subsequently, it explores the emergence of the Refugee Olympic Team by tracing the discursive development of the Olympic Games over time.

Through the lens of Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory, this project examines the main discursive shifts within the Olympic Games in relation to the participation of refugees. The research project is based on a discourse analysis of documents and videos produced by the International Olympic Committee and its founder Pierre de Coubertin throughout the organization's history. The empirical data was analyzed using key concepts from Laclau & Mouffe's discourse theory. The discourse analysis consists of three parts each focused on a specific time period in Olympic history. The first part is focused on the time period surrounding the founding of the Olympic Games. The second part is dedicated to the time period after the end of the Second World War and the third part concentrates on the time period surrounding the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016.

The analysis revealed that while the nation-state discourse has been hegemonic within the Olympic Games throughout most of Olympic history, the signs that makes up its structure has shifted over time in an effort to dissolve antagonisms. At the time of its founding, the Olympic Games were articulated as a way to encourage international cooperation and communication between nation-states. From the outset, the nation-state was articulated as the foundation the Olympic Games. The prevalent nation-state discourse had significant effect on the structural articulations the Olympic Games which were based on nationality and the nation-state. At the time, it was inconceivable that a person could not belong to nation-state so the structures put in place inevitably made it impossible for refugee athletes to participate in the Olympic Games. When examining the discourses in the aftermath of the Second World War, it was evident that nation-state had only been consolidated as the norm both within the Olympic Games and society at large. The IOC's articulations of the Olympic Games portrayed the institution's functioning and

survival as being dependent on the nation-state. The refugee emerged from the field of discursivity to threaten the hegemony of the nation-state discourse. However, the IOC rearticulated the Olympic Games' relationship to the refugee so that the figure was no longer merely an excluded possibility but rearticulated as incompatible with the institution. Its intergovernmental nature meant that it existed outside the nation-state, and thus outside the structure of the Olympic Games. When studying the discourses surrounding the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016, it revealed that the IOC articulated itself and the Olympic Games as a temporary home for the refugee figure. The rising nationalism discourse and the re-emergence of the refugee figure were a threat to the internationalism and nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games. By creating the Refugee Olympic Team, the IOC was looking to extend its international influence while also dissolving the antagonism between the discourses. The IOC' articulation of the Refugee Olympic Team does not subvert the hegemonic nation-state discourse rather it rearticulates the refugee as a quasi citizen of the IOC, and thus refugee participation is articulated as a possibility when it reinforces the hegemonic nation-state discourse.

The research project concludes, that specifically the articulated nation-state discourse within the Olympic Games has governed the possibility of refugee participation throughout Olympic history. The IOC has adapted and rearticulated the nation-state discourse within Olympic Games throughout Olympic history, however it has never subverted or abandoned its foundational worldview. For a long time refugee participation was not viewed as a possibility because the Olympic Games was articulated as an event facilitating the meeting and communication between nation-states, which consequently excluded the refugee figure. The possibility of Olympic refugee participation was only viewed as possible because it benefits the IOC and because has been rearticulated to reinforce the hegemony of the nation-state discourse.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In his Gold Medal-winning poem “Ode to Sport” from the 1912 Olympic Arts Competition, the Modern Olympic Games’ founder Pierre de Coubertin wrote about the potential for change he saw in sports, and thus in his own creation:

“O Sport, you are Peace! You promote
happy relations between peoples,
bringing them together in their shared
devotion to a strength which is controlled,
organized and self-disciplined.
From you, the young world-
wide learn self-respect, and thus the
diversity of national qualities
becomes the source of a generous
and friendly rivalry.”

(International Olympic Committee 2000: 29).

Coubertin’s motivations for reviving the Olympic Games were closely bound to the international peace movement of the late 19th century. He believed that an international sports event such as the Olympic Games could foster cooperation and communication, which would contribute to a more peaceful world order (Toohey & Veal 2007:23-24). The Olympic Games have historically been a nation-state based event, where athletes compete not as individuals but as representatives of their nation. From early on athletes have marched behind their nation’s flag and sung its anthem upon winning (Guttman 1992:2). However, during the United Nations’ General Assembly in October 2015, the president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, announced plans with the UNHCR to create the Refugee Olympic Team, which would go on to compete in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro:

“Having no national team to belong to, having no flag to march behind, having no national anthem to be played, these refugee athletes will be welcomed to

the Olympic Games with the Olympic Flag and with the Olympic Anthem.”
(IOC 2015).

The formation of a Refugee Olympic Team appears to be a complete departure from the Olympic Games’ structure. Bach called the creation of the team ”a historic moment” (IOC Multimedia Library a2016: 00.01.36). While the Refugee Olympic Team is a new conception, the refugee figure has been a fixture in international society since the beginning of the twentieth century. People have been displaced throughout history, however the ’refugee’ as we know it is a modern creation. The refugee figure is bound up with the modern international system of sovereign states. It was in the twentieth century that the nation-state was consolidated as the modern way of sorting peoples and the refugee emerged as a central figure of the international society (Haddad 2008:63-65). Despite the permanence of the refugee figure in international society, they have not been included in the Olympic Games until now.

I want to investigate what made the Refugee Olympic Team possible at this particular point in time in Olympic history, and why the Olympic participation of refugees has not happened before. Therefore, it is interesting to examine what worldview the IOC has articulated throughout its history, and the significance it has had for the participation of refugees in the Olympic Games. Thus, this research project will explore the emergence of the Refugee Olympic Team by tracing the discursive development of the Olympic Games and the concurrent socio-political context over time.

To achieve this, the following research question will guide the research project:

How has the International Olympic Committee articulated the Olympic Games throughout its history, and what has it meant for the Olympic participation of refugees?

1.2. The structure of the research project

This section will describe the structure chosen for the research project.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the problem area of Olympic refugee participation and the Refugee Olympic Team as well the research question, which will guide the rest of the research project. Following this section there is also one on abbreviations and definitions of key concepts used in the research project.

Chapter 2 is a literature review of Olympic studies focused on the International Olympic Committee's and the Olympic Games' relationship to international society and the nation-state along with explanation of the research project's contribution to the field.

Chapter 3 is a presentation of the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe including how the theory and its concepts will be operationalized in the analysis. It is important to note that it is not an exhaustive account of the theory rather it is a presentation of a selection of their concepts relevant to the project.

Chapter 4 is a presentation the research project's methodology approach and any considerations made during the research process. Firstly, the fundamental ideas from social constructivism and poststructuralism will be explained as well as their influence on the research. Furthermore it describes the methods used for data collection as well a brief overview of the data used in the research project. Lastly, the validity of the research project is discussed.

Chapter 5 is the discourse analysis, which consists of three parts each focused on a specific time period in Olympic history. The first part is focused on the time period surrounding the founding of the Olympic Games. The second part is dedicated to the time period after the end of the Second World War. The third part focuses on the time period surrounding the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016.

Chapter 6 is a conclusion of the findings from the discourse analysis. It will also touch upon the limitation of research project along with recommendations for future research.

1.3. Abbreviations and clarification of key concepts

This section will provide an overview of abbreviations used in the research project along with a definition of any key concepts used.

1.3.2. Concepts

The nation-state: The assumed congruence between the nation, as cultural community, and the state as a political-territorial entity (Betts 2009:43).

Nationalism: A specific ideology, which both views the world as divided into distinct nations while also believing that loyalty to those nations should trump all other loyalties and that nations should be politically independent (Kostagiannis 2018: 3)

The refugee/the refugee figure: The 'refugee' is, of course, a forced migrant who has been granted an internationally recognized legal status, however the figure emerged in the international landscape long before an official legal status did. When referring to the 'refugee' or the 'refugee figure', the research project is citing the emergence of the refugee as particular sub-category within an international system of separate sovereign states. The creation of political borders between separate sovereign states and the attempt to assign all individuals to one such state procures the refugee as a concept, as she is a political construction posited outside the state–citizen–territory trinity (Haddad 2008: 23, 43, 65). The concepts are also further expanded on as they are introduced and used in the analysis.

The refugee crisis: Refers to the record-breaking number of people who were displaced worldwide in 2015 (UNHCR 2015: 2), as well as the specific international focus that was given to the increase in refugees in Europe (UNHCR 2015: 7, 14). I have chosen to use the term 'refugee crisis' because it is language that both IOC and the UNHCR used when describing the events and it conveys the international emergency discourse, which arose during this time period.

The Olympic Games: It refers to the Modern Olympic Games, which were first held in 1896. I will be sure to make the distinction if I am referring to the Ancient Olympic Games.

1.3.3. Abbreviations

COE = Council of Europe

The Special Committee/Special Committee of COE = The Special Committee to Watch Over the Interests of European Nations Not Represented in the Council of Europe

IOA = International Olympic Athletes

IOC = International Olympic Committee

NOC = National Olympic Committee

UN = United Nations

UNESCO = United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organization

UNOSDP = UN Office on Sport for Development and Peace

UNICEF = the United Nations Children's Fund

Chapter 2: Literature review

The Olympic Games is interdisciplinary and vast field of study. It covers everything from medicine, law, politics, history, media studies, social sciences, etc. However, as of writing this project there has been published no academic studies of the Refugee Olympic Team or the Olympic Games' relationship to the refugee figure. Since there exists no relevant research on this specific topic, my literature review will alternatively focus on the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Games' relationship to international society and the nation-state, and then I will account for my own research project's contribution. The literature review was done to find relevant previous research and literature that sheds light on the topic of the research project and to clarify its contribution of this particular field of study. I will first briefly describe the methods used in the research for and writing of this chapter.

I developed a search strategy consisting of keywords, selected databases and chain searches as well as criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the literature I found. The objective was to find literature that could illuminate the International Olympic Committee's and the Olympic Games' relationship to international society and the nation-state. To find relevant literature I decided that the search should be delimited by the following four inclusion and exclusion criteria; 1) Scientific articles, books, conference papers, dissertations or reports 2) Texts in danish or english 3) Search for hits in title, abstract and keywords in cases where thesauruses are not used. With the following criteria as my point of departure I chose to search the following databases and scientific journals: Primo, Olympika, The International Journal of the History of Sport, The International Symposium for Olympic Research, The International Society of Olympic Historians, SPORTDiscus and Sport in Society. They were chosen based on their ability to search a variety of journal or their focus on either the Olympic Games or sports in general. The keywords used to find literature were: olympic games, olympics, ioc, international olympic committee, refugee, nation-state, nation, politics. I did a relevance assessment of the hits from the searches. This was based on 1) title of the literature, 2) abstract 3) reading the texts. By using this method, it is ensured that only the relevant hits are included. Another crucial step in my search strategy was the chain search method, where I

looked through the found literature's list of sources which lead me to several other relevant books and articles.

The literature is divided and discussed into separate categories presented below. After reading through the literature, the following three themes emerged as essential discussions within Olympic studies. Of course not all research on this topic can be neatly categorized, since they often overlap on several topics, themes and/or fields of study, however it will give a sense of coherence to the reader.

2.2. The influence of the Olympic Games

From the start, the International Olympic Committee and the Olympic Games have been designed as vehicle for social change. Pierre de Coubertin believed that sport could provide a venue for personal and moral development of young people and that an international sporting festival could bring the world together in peace and celebration (Schneider 2000). It has been reiterated several times both by politicians and the IOC themselves that there is no place for politics in the Olympic Games, however politics have been a core part of the Olympic Games since their inception. Toohey and Veal (2007) identified six types of political intervention, which has dominated the Games throughout its history: 1) The domestic politics of the host nation have affected the Games. 2) The politics within the International Olympic Committee have impacted Olympic policy. 3) Competitors have used the Games as a forum for political demonstration against their national governments. 4) Nations with participating National Olympic Committees have attempted to equate Olympic success with their social, economic and political superiority. 5) International rivalries, based on either political or ideological disputes between nations have impinged on the Olympics. 6) Non-participant such as terrorist, have used the Games to further their political cause.

In an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, it is undeniable that the global spectacle, commodity and cultural phenomenon of modern sports and therein the Olympic Games influences, and is influenced by, politics and foreign policy, although its role is rarely explicitly recognized (Jackson & Haigh 2009).

2.3. The Olympic Games and international society

While the mutually influential relationship between the Olympic Games and international society is well established, Olympic studies have long been divided on the IOC's and the Olympic Games' achievements in international diplomacy. There are those that see a big potential in the IOC's capacity to influence the international society. The revival the ancient Olympic Truce has been essential to the IOC's efforts. The Olympic Truce has been invoked at every Olympic Games since 1992 and in 1993 the Truce was formally endorsed by the United Nations. Every 2 years before the Games, the UN General Assembly passes a resolution, which reaffirms its commitment to the ideal of the Olympic Truce and calls on member states to observe the truce (Spaaij 2012). While the Olympic Truce has not stopped any war and violent conflict, it has created "opening windows of opportunity for peace." Reid argues that a truce creates a time and a place where conflicts are set aside and the culture of peace has a chance to take root (Reid 2009). Parry argues that even if the Olympic Truce fails to bring any significant political change, we must always have in mind the educative value of its example (Parry 2009). Roche also discards any critique of the Olympic Truce. He argues that if the Truce has saved just one single life then it has been worth it. To Roche, it does not matter what motives may be behind the development of the Olympic Truce as long as it has made a small impact (Roche 2003).

Some practical examples of the small gains made by the IOC are; the ceasefire during the 1994 Lillehammer Olympic Games, which contributed to humanitarian relief getting into Bosnia, a similar ceasefire during the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games which allowed immunizations campaigns to reach Afghanistan and Iran and when the Olympic Truce inspired North and South Korea to parade under the same flag at the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Games (Spaaij 2012). Advocates of the Olympic Games use these achievements as evidence of its influence. In 2012, Tassell & Terry also wrote about how sport and in particular the Olympic Games has had a significant impact on the relationship between North and South Korea. The Olympics has provided a venue for joint cooperation and a demonstration of the ability of the two states to work together. They acknowledge that the promotion of sports does not fix the very real problems of states plagued by poverty, lack of infrastructure and public health, however sports can play a meaningful role in fostering a sense of community (Tassell & Terry 2012). It is also believed that the Olympic Games had a

significant effect on the process and timing of democratization in South Korea (Spaaij 2012). Guioti, Mauro & Toledo argued that the IOC has acquired hegemonic global power and institutional legitimacy, which renders it possible for it to interfere and to participate in political events external to it. This is often done in connection with trying to minimize or to resolve international conflicts related to its associate members that might interfere with the Olympics Games or the athletes participating in them. An example of this is the creation of the delegation of Independent Olympic Athletes in the 1990's (Guioti et.al. 2016). Houlihan cautions against critiques of the IOC for its lack of operational capacity, which do not acknowledge the complex international political environment within which the IOC operates. He highlights that few if any, international organizations can operate consistently in line with their founding values and mission. He argues that organizations, such as Greenpeace or the Red Cross, are more independent from governments than the IOC and have more opportunities to withdraw co-operation, which consequently makes them inappropriate comparators for the IOC. Houlihan states that more realistic comparators would be the United Nations and its agencies, since they are much more deeply embedded in a network of relationships with powerful governments. Thus the IOC should not be evaluated on whether it has been consistent and steadfast in its pursuit of Olympic values. The more fair and accurate assessment would be to examine whether the IOC has satisfactorily balanced its commitment to Olympic values with the pragmatism needed to operate effectively in a contemporary international political community (Houlihan 2005).

As mentioned not everyone is so sure of the Olympics' positive impact. In fact, several scholars have been very critical of IOC's diplomatic achievements. Seppänen (1984) maintains that the Olympics have failed to live up to its goal of creating mutual understanding and peace. While there has been plenty of examples of friendship between individual athletes, he maintains that it does not prove that mutual understanding and peace between the nations of the world has increased. Essentially, the IOC has been powerless in their efforts to realize their vision of global mutual understanding (Seppänen 1984). Critics argue that the Olympic Games have failed to live up to its promise. For example, while Toohey and Veal (2007) commend the idea that people should join together in sporting contests and that it perhaps has an educational value, they still arrive at the conclusion that "while

a number of minor concessions among hostile nations have been claimed in the name of the Olympic Truce, there is no evidence to suggest that, in reality, the Olympic Games have any significant or lasting effect on modern armed conflicts.”

The critique of the Olympic Games is often focused on the institution’s continued use of humanistic and internationalism rhetoric without putting actions behind it. Though today’s Olympic Charter echoes much of the language of human rights, the IOC has never previously used human rights as a monitored standard for admission into the Olympic Games, nor as a condition for hosting the Olympic Games. However, the growing international concern for human rights has made it increasingly difficult for the IOC to maintain its traditional culture of non-intervention (Kidd 2010). So far the idealistic rhetoric used by the IOC has rendered it immune to the critics that have attempted to appeal to their commitment to the moral principles embedded in the Olympic Charter. History has shown that the IOC and its affiliates have repeatedly ignored these moral principles (Lenskyj 2017). John Hoberman has also long been a harsh critic of the IOC. He argues that despite its universalist rhetoric the Olympic Games never possessed ethics in the first place. It has always been willing to make concessions as long as the Games continue on. While the Olympic Charter has an anti-discrimination rule, in practice the IOC has continuously turned a blind eye to preserve its own brand of universalism. The IOC wants to be associated with human rights but they are unwilling to actually take actions that would infringe on nations’ sovereignty (Hoberman 1984). Hoberman asserts that we must distinguish between “show business internationalism” of global sports and legitimate international humanitarian organizations. He argues that the Olympic Games is not a peace movement because there no substantial results and the IOC fails to live up to the minimum ethical and humanitarian standards required for international organization to have credible peace-promoting effects (Hoberman 2011). While there have been implemented reforms, such as the Agenda 2020, in recent years to address some of these concerns, any real progress has been stalled or reversed by the IOC’s continued selection of objectionable host nations. Its promise of progress on human rights, sustainability, intercultural relations and international education has remained unfulfilled. MacAloon believes that the IOC needs to implement real change for it to continue to attract future Olympic bids from liberal democratic countries, which would

mean committing to the true meaning of the Olympic Games, not just idle talk (MacAloon 2016).

2.4. The Olympic Games and the nation-state

Although the rhetoric of internationalism is pervasive in the IOC and the Olympic Games, the organisational structure and rituals of the Games themselves are centered on the nation-state. The Olympic medal ceremonies play the national anthem and raise the flag of the victor's nation, team sports are organized on national lines and during the Opening Ceremony athletes march into the stadium nation by nation. Just as at other international sport event that are organized along national lines, the Olympics are going to be influenced by the ideologies, rivalries and policies of competing nations, and become political currency. These practices are blatantly creating nationalistic tensions, rivalries and pride. Nations have used Olympic victories in an attempt to demonstrate the relative advantages of their social, political and economic ideologies. The pervasiveness of the Olympic Games as international sporting event has only increased the nationalistic tendencies at the event (Toohey & Veal 2007). While mega sporting events such as the Olympics are seen as some of the main contributors to the unifying process of globalization, sport is never detached from the concept of nation. The Olympic Games and Olympic diplomacy contribute to the heterogeneous side of globalization by bolstering national sentiment and identities, particularly in the case of emerging states (Luša 2007). The relationship between nationalism and international is the Olympics paradox. The Olympic competition intensifies patriotism while simultaneously endorsing internationalism. However, Hargreaves argues that in practice nationalism despite the official disclaimers has clearly overwhelmed internationalism in the Olympic Games, and that it may be more difficult to shift the balance back (Hargreaves 1992). In 1995, Morgan criticized the approach of the majority of Olympic scholars. A lot of both Olympics idealist and critics work from the presumption that nationalism and Olympism are polar opposites. That the particularist goals of nationalism are incompatible with the universalist aims of Olympism. He argued that the "sincere internationalism" that Coubertin articulated relied on the interconnection between the two. To support his claim, Morgan unfolds and builds on Coubertin's critique of cosmopolitanism and its distinction from the founders' vision of internationalism. Morgan asserts that a sincere internationalism is

premised on nationalism without being reduced to it. It does not ignore the existence or effects of culture and perspective; rather it accepts the existence of ethnocentricity and then works to minimize its power by enlarging the acquaintances of nations (Morgan 1995).

2.5. The contribution of the research project

There is a clear knowledge gap in the existing research as the topic of the Refugee Olympic Team and the IOC's relationship to the refugee figure has gone under-researched within the field of Olympic studies. Despite the Olympic Games' and international society's mutual influence on each other being well established within the field, and the refugee figure's central role in international society and foreign policy, its relationship to the Olympic Games has gone unexplored.

Based on the presented research within the field of Olympic studies, I believe that greater understanding of the IOC's relationship to the refugee figure can advance the field's knowledge of the mutually constitutive relationship between the Olympic Games and international society. The research project provides insight into the politics and power of the Olympic Games, which excludes certain possibilities, and thus makes certain forms of action inconceivable during specific time periods in its history.

While the relationship between the nation-state and the Olympic Games has been a topic of research, there has been no attention paid to its exclusionary and inclusionary mechanisms within the Games or what this structure has meant for the development of the Games over time. This research project aims to widen the understanding of nation-state's role and influence within the Olympic Games.

Chapter 3: Ernesto Laclau & Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory

This chapter outlines the theoretical approach I will be applying in the analysis. For this research project, I have chosen to use Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory, which is presented in their principal work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (2001). Going forward when referring to discourse theory, I am talking about Laclau & Mouffe's theory, however I am aware that it is not the only discourse theory out there.

In discourse theory, social phenomena are never fixed or total. Meaning can never be permanent, which opens up the way for constant social struggles over definitions of society and identity with resulting social effects. Discourse theory intends to create an understanding of the social as a discursive construction through which all social phenomena can be analyzed using discourse analysis. The purpose of discourse analysis is to examine the processes of how we struggle over how the meaning of signs is to be fixed, and how some fixations of meaning become so ingrained that we come to think of them as natural (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 24-26). The fundamental understanding that we comprehend and represent the world as historically and culturally specific and contingent is the main reason why I have chosen to apply Laclau & Mouffe's discourse theory. It is essential in order to examine the emergence of the Refugee Olympic Team as a new phenomenon in the context of Olympic history. Employing the theory's focus on the constant social struggles over knowledge and meaning and their resulting social effects, I will identify the discourse within the Olympic Games, which governed refugee participation throughout the event's history. Furthermore, I will illustrate how the nation-state discourse at selected points of time in Olympic history came to appear natural, and consequently excluded the possibility of refugee participation in the Olympic Games. I will also describe how hegemonic intervention within the nation-state discourse eventually led to the development of the Refugee Olympic Team.

Laclau & Mouffe understand discourse itself as fully constitutive of our world. They do not distinguish between discursive and non-discursive practices; rather all social practices are seen as discursive. This does not mean that Laclau & Mouffe reduce everything to language but that all social phenomena are organized according to the

same principle as language. To clarify, they acknowledge that both social and physical objects exist, however our access to them is always mediated through systems of meaning in the form of discourse: "Physical objects do not possess meaning in themselves; meaning is something we ascribe to them through discourse. Physical reality is totally superimposed by the social" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 35-36). So while this research project will be relying mostly on documents along with transcribed speeches and press statements as its empirical data, applying Laclau & Mouffe's understand of discourse allows me to include actions or the very institutions themselves, such as the IOC or the United Nations, in my discourse analysis. For example, the nation-state based organizational structure of the IOC is a material expression of a nation-state discourse. It exemplifies a discourse where the world and its people are organized and given meaning in accordance to the nation-state. It has arranged itself and its practices around the nation-state. The organization is both formed by the discourse as well as reproducing it in the articulation of its structures.

The chapter is not an exhaustive mapping of discourse theory as Laclau & Mouffe's theory is extensive and complex. I will only be presenting a selection of their concepts, which I plan to utilize.

3.2. Discourse and articulation

I will firstly explain Laclau & Mouffe's distinction between discourse and articulation. Articulation is a practice establishing a relation between signs such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 105). Which means that the signs in themselves are polysemic - they are capable of having several possible meaning, however their meaning is decided through their relation to other signs in an articulation (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 18). Articulations are continuous, contingent interventions in an unstable terrain. They constantly shape and intervene in the structures of meaning in unpredictable ways (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 29). It is important to note the relationship between articulation and discourse. Articulation creates discourse, while discourse makes certain articulations more likely (Andersen 2003: 50-51).

Discourse is: “... *the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice*” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 105). Meaning discourse is not a practice in itself but the result of articulation. We constantly strive to establish the meaning of signs by placing them in particular relations to other signs. Discourse is temporary closure, which institutes meaning within a particular domain. Discourse is “an attempt to stop the sliding of the signs in relation to one another and hence to create a unified system of meaning”. Discourse establishes meaning but it does not dictate that meaning is to be fixed exactly in that way forever (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 26-29). I count any statement written or spoken expression by an actor, be it the IOC or another, to be an articulation. As previously said this project does not distinguish between discursive and non-discursive practices so all social practices, such as relevant decisions, actions or institution, will be counted and analyzed as articulations. The concepts of articulation and discourse are relevant because it allows me to examine how certain articulations have reproduced or challenged the existing discourses during selected points of time in Olympic history.

3.3. Nodal points and floating signifiers

A nodal point is a privileged discursive sign, in the partial fixations, around which the other signs are ordered. The other signs obtain meaning from their relationship to the nodal point (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 26). Laclau and Mouffe describe it as such: “*Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre. We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, nodal points*” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 112). These discursive points are empty of meaning in themselves. They do not acquire meaning until they are inserted in a particular discourse (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 28). For instance, in a nation-state discourse within the Olympic Games, a nodal point would be ‘nation-state’ which fixes together pre-existing signs such as ‘athlete’, ‘flag’ and ‘medal’. The signs, such as ‘flag’, obtain their meaning from their relation to the nodal point of ‘nation-state’. The sign ‘flag’ is now given a specific meaning since it represents a national symbol.

However, some signs are particularly open to different ascriptions of meaning. They are called floating signifiers. Floating signifiers are the signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way. Nodal points are often

also floating signifiers (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 28). Floating signifiers are empty signs, which competing discourses struggle to fill with meaning in correlation with their views (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 113). An example of a floating signifier would be the sign 'peace' since competing discourses such as nationalism and internationalism would have very different views of what peace looks like. They will both struggle to fill it with meaning in accordance to their ideology. I will use the concept of nodal points to identify privileged signs such as 'nation-state' and to determine how these signs are defined in relation to the other signs in the discourse. I will also investigate how antagonistic discourses define the same signs (floating signifiers) in alternative ways, and thus I can begin to identify the struggles taking place over meaning within the Olympic Games.

3.4. Field of discursivity

Another essential concept is the 'field of discursivity', which is used to describe the exclusionary mechanisms and instability of discourse: "*All discourse is subverted by a field of discursivity which overflows it*" (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 113). When a discourse is established as a totality, it simultaneously excludes all other possible meanings that the signs could have had and all the other possible ways that the signs could have related to each other. The field of discursivity describes all the excluded possibilities. (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 28). For instance, when the IOC articulates a discourse of the nation-state through their policies and structures, they exclude any individuals who may be unable to represent a nation such as refugees or a stateless person. The discourse makes it impossible for them to compete as individuals as they are only given meaning as athletes representing a nation. Discourse aims to remove ambiguities through a closure of meaning, however this can never be completely successful as the possibilities of meaning that the discourse displaces to the field of discursivity always threaten to destabilize the fixity of meaning. The seemingly fixed meanings in the discourse can rearrange (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 29). Even though the nation-state discourse may be dominant in the Olympic Games, it is always threatened by the categories it has excluded. The instability and continuous change of nation-states have led to constant questions surrounding eligibility of athletes and nations at the event. The excluded possibilities keep coming back and threatening to destabilize the nation-state discourse in the Olympic Games. By applying the concept I will examine that which is excluded in the

articulations of the Olympic Games. It is a tool to identify and make visible what is not being expressed; what is outside the discourse, and in turn define what threatens to destabilize it.

3.5. Antagonism and hegemony

The struggle over the creation of meaning is constant. The basis of discourse theory is that no discourse can be fully established. It will inevitably be in conflict with other discourses that define reality differently and set other guidelines for social action:

“The limit of the social must be given within the social itself as something subverting it, destroying its ambition to constitute a full presence. Society never manages fully to be society, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 127).

Antagonism occurs when two discourses “*make contrasting demands in relation to the same actions within a common terrain, and inevitably one blocks the other*”. (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 47). The discourses are part of each other’s field of discursivity. When antagonism occurs all the excluded possibilities threaten to undermine the discourse’s existence and fixity of meaning (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 47-48). Laclau & Mouffe describe it as: “*Antagonism as the negation of a given order is, quite simply, the limit of that order*” (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 126). The concept of antagonism will be used to identify and explain the antagonistic relationship between discourses within the Olympic Games and in society throughout Olympic history.

Antagonisms can be dissolved through hegemonic interventions. In a hegemonic intervention, alternative understandings of the world are suppressed which leads to the naturalization of one single perspective (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 37). A hegemonic intervention is “*an articulation which by means of force reconstitutes unambiguity*” (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 48). It is a process that is triggered by antagonisms, which in turn produces a discourse. Consequently, hegemony is, similarly to discourse, a fixation of signs but the hegemonic intervention attains this fixation across discourses that collide antagonistically. One discourse is undermined from the discursive field from which another discourse overpowers it by rearticulating

its signs. The hegemonic intervention is successful if one discourse comes to dominate alone and the antagonism is dissolved (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 48). When discourses become hegemonic, the social practices they structure can appear so natural that we fail to see that they are in fact the result of political hegemonic practices (Rear & Jones 2013: 9). Discourse is intrinsically political as its formation is an act of radical institution and power. The constitution of discourse is political because it involves the exclusion of certain possibilities and a consequent structuring of relations and norms between different social agents (Howarth, Norval & Stavrakakis 2000: 4). An example of hegemonic intervention is the Olympic Games' implementation of nation-based structure in 1908, when they made it mandatory to have a National Olympic Committee to take part in the Olympic Games (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbot 2008:51). In the earlier Olympic Games, the IOC allowed for athletes in teams to be from different nations (Horne & Whannel 2016:179). Through a hegemonic intervention, the IOC also later retroactively awarded the medals from the 1896, 1900 and 1904 Olympic Games to the winning athletes' nations even though the distinction was not made at the time (aOlympic.org). Even early events in the Olympic Games are now viewed through the lens of the nation-state, even though that was not the case at the time. Since then a nation-state discourse has been hegemonic within the Olympic Games. The IOC's hegemonic invention was so successful that it is hard for us to comprehend the organization of sports around anything other than nations. I will utilize the concept of antagonism to identify the struggle over meaning between discourses. Furthermore, the concepts of hegemon and hegemonic intervention allow me analyze and describe how meaning is consolidated, and subsequently recognize which discourse have been challenged or cemented throughout Olympic history.

3.6. Operationalization of concepts

Laclau & Mouffe never operationalized their discourse theory or developed any analytical tools, so it is up to researchers themselves to develop an analytical strategy (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 24; Andersen 2003: 49). In my presentation of the selected concepts, I have described their relevance to and intended operationalization in my analysis. Laclau & Mouffe's discourse theory will operate as a filter through which I view and analyze the collected data. The concepts will provide the foundation for identifying the various discourses and examining how they

were constructed during different time periods in Olympic history. I will also apply the theory to examine how hegemonic and antagonistic discourses made refugee participation in the Olympic Games appear as impossible or possible during different points in history.

Chapter 4: Methodological approach and considerations

This chapter outlines the methodological approach chosen for this research project and any methodological considerations I have had during the process. My choice to use discourse theory filters into all part of the research. Because while discourse analysis can be versatile tool, it is not to be used as a method of analysis detached from its theoretical and methodological foundations. Theory and method are inherently intertwined by philosophical (ontological and epistemological) premises concerning the role of language in the social construction of the world (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 3-4). This chapter will explain how it has influenced the research. While this chapter is structured for practicality, the actual process of the project was less linear. I will start by presenting the ideas from social constructivism and poststructuralism. It is not an exhaustive overview of the theories, but an account of how they have shaped the research. Furthermore I will describe the methods used for data collection. Finally, I will discuss the research project's validity.

For the purpose of this research project, I have chosen to use discourse analysis as my approach to examining what the discourses have been articulated throughout different time periods of the Olympic Games, and how they prohibited or allowed for the participation of refugees in the Games. Discourse analytical approaches have their starting point in structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy, which views our access to reality as always being through language. Social constructionism is a broader category of theories on culture and society, which poststructuralism and discourse analysis are a subcategory of. These different theories have influenced and developed on each other, and thus I want to expand on how their different approaches have affected the research (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002:6, 15).

4.2. Social constructivism

It can be difficult to give a universal description of all social constructionist approaches since they are many and diverse. However there are a couple of general ideas shared by all social constructionist approaches, which have had an influence on this project's approach to research and knowledge. For one it contains a critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge, which means that our knowledge of the

world should never be treated as objective truth. We can only experience reality through categories, so our knowledge and representations of the world are always products of our own ways of categorizing the world rather than some objective reality. For instance, the state system is not an objective observation of how the world is organized. It is the product of our own knowledge and categories. This challenges us to review any phenomenon that might appear natural, such as the nation-state, as it is always a product of our own worldview. Different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions. With one particular worldview some forms of action become natural while others become unthinkable, and so the social construction of knowledge and truth has real social consequence (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002:4-6).

4.3. Poststructuralist approach

Poststructuralist thinking developed from structuralism, so it is important to briefly establish an understanding of structuralist theory and where poststructuralism diverges from it. Ferdinand de Saussure pioneered structuralism. He understood language as a system, which is not determined by the reality to which it refers. According to Saussure all signs are part of a type of structure and each sign in this structure gets its value by being different from the other signs. For example, the sign 'dog' gets its meaning through that which it is not. It is not a "cat", a "horse" or a "chair". However, there is no inherent connection between the sign and physical phenomena. Language is not a reflection of a pre-existing reality. The meaning attached to the signs is not a natural occurrence told to by the world; rather their meaning is a results of social conventions that connect certain signs to certain things. We have for example learned the convention that a "dog" is a four-legged animal that barks (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002:9-10). Poststructuralism takes from structuralism the notion that signs get their meaning from the internal relations within the structure of signs rather than their relations to reality, however poststructuralism rejects structuralism's view of language as a stable, unchangeable and totalizing structure. Structuralist theory views signs as locked in particular relationships with one another. Every sign has a particular location in the structure and therefore its meaning is fixed. In poststructuralism, signs still derive their meaning through their difference from other signs, but those signs from which they differ can change according to the context in which they are used. Structures do exist but they are

always in a temporary and not necessarily stable state. Language is structured in patterns or discourses but there is not one general system of meaning. There exist a number of discourses and meanings change from discourse to discourse. This difference in understanding makes it possible for poststructuralism to account for change, which structuralism cannot (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002:11-12). From a structuralist point of view, the formation of the Refugee Olympic Team would be inexplicable, as it cannot account for the changes occurring in the nation-state and internationalism discourses surrounding the Olympics and refugees. Therefore, the non-essentialist perspective of poststructuralism is crucial to the research as it is based on the assumption that the Refugee Olympic Team is a new phenomenon in Olympic history.

4.4. Data collection methods and empirical data

My approach to the research has been abductive in the sense that I made an observation (the Refugee Olympic Team), which I found surprising and that challenged my understanding of the Olympic Games, and thus I was intrigued with the dynamics behind the phenomenon (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard 2012: 84). Abductive research begins with a puzzle, and then the researchers seeks to explain it by identifying the conditions that would make that puzzle less perplexing and more of a “normal” event (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2012:27). Through my research, I wanted to understand what made the Refugee Olympic Team possible at this particular time in Olympic history, and why the Olympic participation of refugees had not happened before.

The empirical data used in the project was collected by firstly seeking out seminal scholarly and historical works on the subject, which gave me be a better understanding of Olympic history and helped me narrow down which time periods were crucial to my research (Beacom 2012, Guttmann 1992, Goldblatt 2016, Spaaij 2012, Hoberman 1986, Horne & Whannel 2016). Another crucial step in my process was an expert interview with Hans Bonde. He is a history professor who among other things specializes in the intersection of sports and politics at the Olympic Games. The expert interview was done to achieve better insight the history of the Olympic Games and to seek his advice on relevant sources. I used a semi-structured interview approach based on an interview guide. This was meant to guide the

conversation to certain pre-chosen topics, while still allowing the expert leeway to decide what might be interesting or relevant. The semi-structured interview is beneficial exactly because it emphasizes the interview subject's framing and understanding of events (Bryman 2012:471). The interview was not recorded but I took notes throughout. The interview is not used in my analysis; rather it was utilized as background material to inform my work. The expert interview with Bonde was useful because he contributed with relevant reflections on the connection between the Olympic Games and international society while also guiding me to certain sources (Toohey & Veal 2007, Roche 2003).

By allowing myself to be guided by some of the most referenced works and Bonde, there is a possibility that I am overlooking documents or statements since that might not be part of the dominant discourses within research on the Olympic Games. However, the aim of my research project is not to uncover any hidden truths but to examine which discourses have been prevalent in the Olympic Games and in society throughout the Games' history, and so I do not find it to have had any larger effect on the results. The preliminary research led me to limit my scope to three specific time periods in Olympic history, and so I started to search for primary sources within the timeline. Some of the documents were directly referenced in the secondary sources, which led me to them. Most of the empirical data is articles and historical or official documents from the IOC's own archive on their website (bOlympic.org). I have also included videos of official meetings or press conferences, which were found on the IOC's own official Youtube Channel (IOC Media 2016) or the IOC Multimedia Library (IOC Multimedia Library a2016, b2016, c2016). The IOC Multimedia Library is closed database, however any researcher can apply for access to it. I will transcribe any parts of the videos that I include in the analysis. The writings of Pierre de Coubertin are from a published collection of his work (Coubertin 2000). So the empirical foundation of the research project will be made up of primary sources such as official documents from the IOC, videos of official IOC meetings or press conferences as well as writings by its founder Pierre de Coubertin. My secondary sources are from scholars and historians, which proves societal context to my primary sources. Throughout my analysis, I will give an introduction to each new document or video that is presented and analyzed.

Both my collection of empirical data and the following discourse analysis are guided by a timeline, where I have chosen to focus on three specific time periods in Olympic history. When I refer to Olympic history I count any events between the founding of the IOC in 1894 and 2016. Due to the focus on the 2016 Refugee Olympics Team the project will not include any events after 2016 in its discourse analysis. I have chosen to focus on the founding of the Olympic Games, events after the end of the Second World War and finally the development of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016. Therefore the research project's empirical data is composed by primary and secondary sources pertaining to these time periods. A combination of two sets of criteria was used to select these three time periods. The time period chosen had to be a critical or groundbreaking moment in terms of either the IOC and/or the situation of refugees in international society.

The first time period is the founding of the Olympic Games and IOC, because it is important to understand and examine the thinking that originally shaped the Olympic Games and the IOC. By establishing which discourses were hegemonic or antagonistic in the IOC and in international society at large during this period, it can help me explain the organization's original mission, decisions and structure as well as make me able to examine whether these discourses recur or change throughout Olympic history.

I also chose to examine the time period after the end of the Second World War because it marks the emergence of the United Nations, the International Refugee Regime as well as the earliest documented discussion of special category for refugees at the Olympic Games (Beacon 2012: 156-127). After the Second World War, an estimated 60+ million people were displaced worldwide (UNHCR 2000:15) This time period is similar to the events surrounding 2016 in the sense that a record number of people were displaced worldwide (UNHCR 2015: 5), yet the IOC did not create a special category or a Refugee Olympic Team. Therefore, it is relevant to examine how discourse during this time period might have deviated from discourses surrounding the events in 2016.

The last time period was chosen because I was struck by the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016, as I viewed it as a divergence from the norm of the Olympic Games. In 2015, there were 65,3 million displaced people worldwide

(UNHCR 2015: 2), which made the IOC create the Refugee Olympic Team in reaction to the situation. This time period is important to include, as it enables me to compare hegemonic or antagonistic discourse to other time periods to examine how discourses during this time might have been different, and thus made the Olympic participation of refugees possible.

I will still reference some events or decisions made outside these specific time periods in my analysis when they provide important historical context. I also recognize that by narrowing my focus to these specific times I might overlook information, however this research project does not aim to give an exhaustive historical account of Olympic history rather it wants to examine the main discursive shifts seen in relation to the Olympic participation of refugees.

4.5. Validity of the research

As mentioned in poststructuralism, truths are regarded as partial as they consolidate their own basis. They are not false or invention but science answers the questions that the existing order wants asked (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard 2012: 291-292). Thus, social science is not a refuge from subjectivity or my own situational knowledge. The discourse analyst is always anchored in a discursive structure, and thus they are often fixed in the very same discourse, they seek to analyze. Although discourse analysis is about revealing discourses, there is no hope of escaping from the discourses and attaining some kind of pure truth, as truth in itself is a discursive construction (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 49). This research therefore does not claim to get closer to an objective account of reality as its representation of reality is formed by my methodological choices and interpretations. A poststructuralist approach allows the project to be critical of its own production of knowledge, as all questions are formed by discourse. No matter how openly or critically one asks, there are also questions that you have dismissed or have not even thought was an option. The academic world is not neutral or objective as it contributes to what is legitimate and correct knowledge about the world (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard 2012: 290). If the project was done by another researcher they might have asked different questions or made different decisions. However, they would not have done anything radically different, as they would be anchored in the very same discursive structures. The research project does not

produce any absolute truths of rather it looks at what possibilities the hegemonic discourses of the nation-state and internationalism allowed within the Olympic Games during different time periods in Olympic history, and what that meant for the Olympic participation of refugees.

Validity is the question of what standards the research must meet in order to count as qualified academic research. By measuring research in relation to certain criteria, it can be evaluated as good or bad. However, in discourse analysis and in social constructionism, this assumption is rejected but there is no universal agreement about which criteria to apply instead. The criteria are often based on what status one ascribes to scientific knowledge and what one thinks it should be used for.

Jørgensen & Phillips argue that transparency of methods and analysis is crucial since it is up to the reader, as far as possible, to test the claims made. This can be achieved by documenting the interpretations made and by giving the reader access to the empirical material or at least by reproducing longer extracts in the presentation of the analysis (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 171-173). While it is inevitable that my perspective forms the analysis, I will aim to describe the empirical material as well as my interpretations, so that the reader can judge the coherence and validity of my conclusions for themselves.

Chapter 5: Discourse analysis

The following discourse analysis is guided by a timeline, where I have chosen to focus on three specific time periods in Olympic history. It is therefore not a comprehensive account of the International Olympic Committee or the Olympic Games, rather its purpose is to examine the discursive shifts that have occurred within the Olympic Games in relation to the participation of refugees. I have chosen to focus on the founding of the International Olympic Committee, events after the end of the Second World War and finally the development of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016. Further reflections on the analysis design are found in chapter 4.

5.2.1894: The Founding of the Olympic Games

I elected to examine the time period surrounding the founding of the Olympic Games because it is important to understand and examine the discourses that originally shaped the Olympic Games and the IOC. By doing a discourse analysis of the Olympic Games' founder Pierre de Coubertin's writing around the time of the establishment of the Olympic Games, I intent to give insight into the worldview that was imbrued in the organization's initial mission, decisions and structures, and how it came to exclude the refugee from participation in the Olympic Games.

At a conference at the Sorbonne in 1892, Pierre de Coubertin first made public his idea of reviving the Olympic Games in his speech "Physical Exercises in the Modern World". It is an important milestone in Olympic history as it marks the earliest articulation of his vision for the event (Coubertin 2000:287). It is also shows how an internationalism discourse emerged from Coubertin's articulations of the Olympic Games. He described the peacemaking power that he believed athletics and the Olympic Games to posses:

"As for athletics in general, I do not know what its fate will be, but I wish to draw your attention to the important fact that it presents two new features, this time in the series of these secular transformations. It is democratic and international. The first of these characteristics will guarantee its future, it opens unexpected prospect to us. There are people whom you call utopians when they talk to you about the disappearance of war, and you are not altogether wrong; but there are

others who believe in the progressive reduction in the chances of war, and I see no utopia in this. It is clear that the telegraph, railways, the telephone and the passionate research in science, congresses and exhibitions have done more for the peace than any treaty or diplomatic convention. Well, I hope athletics will do even more.” (Coubertin 2000:297)

By categorically linking ‘athletics’ to ‘peace’, ‘democracy’ and ‘international’, each sign is given meaning through its similar denotations to the other signs. It emerges that in the internationalism discourse, athletics serves a higher purpose and it is a force for good in international society. Through his articulation, he temporarily establishes the meaning of these signs. The signs ‘peace’, ‘democratic’ and ‘international’ take up an essential part of the discourse’s formation, as the other signs in the texts obtain their meaning from these privileged signs, which means that these three signs are nodal points of the internationalism discourse.

5.2.2. The Olympic Games as expression of internationalism

Coubertin viewed athletics and the revival of the Olympic Games as important instrument for the creation of a more peaceful world. Coubertin was inspired by the ancient Olympic Games because he strongly believed that sport held positive values that were put into practice by the Greek athletes in the Ancient Olympics, and which he believed could be transferred to sport in the late nineteenth century (Toohey & Veal 2007:9). His reasons for reviving the Olympic Games were also closely bound to the international peace movement of the late 19th century. He believed that the Olympic Games could foster cooperation and communication, which could then contribute to a more peaceful world order (Toohey & Veal 2007:23-24). The agent-structure relationship between articulation and discourse becomes particular evident when examining how the IOC and the Olympic Games were founded. Coubertin’s articulation of the Olympic Games was shaped by prevalent discourses in society at the time. The last decades of the nineteenth century also saw a remarkable rise of trans-national movements and organizations, which dealt with anxieties surrounding war and peace. Some of the better-known organizations of this period include the International Committee of the Red Cross (1863), the Esperanto movement (1887) and the Scouting movement (1907) (Chatziefstathiou & Henry 2010:86). He was

particularly influenced by the internationalism discourse of the peace movement. Coubertin had close relations to the early peace movement. He had had contact with almost half of the Nobel Peace Prize winners between 1901-1913, who all came from this movement. Several of its members were his friends. He listed five of them as honorary members of the Founding Congress of the IOC in 1894 (Quanz 1994:11-12). Articulation creates discourse, and thus we always have the possibility to shape and intervene in current structures of meaning. However, discourse makes certain articulations more likely. So by being surrounded by certain discourses like the internationalism discourse, Coubertin was more likely to reproduce it than subvert it. And he was influenced by several of the movement's core ideas. The peace movement's principles are not founded on an idea of an "eternal" or "universal" peace, rather the only chance to pacify the world is through arbitration, and as a means to this end the pacifists developed international law. The peace movement also shapes Coubertin's approach to peace, as he does not believe in the "utopia" of the disappearance of war, but he sees athletics and the revival of the Olympic Games as a way to reduce the risk of war. Coubertin believed that international sport could indirectly contribute to this as international sport meetings were characterized by common rules and a peaceful atmosphere, which facilitated exchange (Quanz 1994:8,12). An example of this also appears in his speech from 1892:

"Let us export our oarsmen, our runners, our fencers into other lands. That is the true Free Trade of the future, and the day it is introduced into Europe the cause of Peace will have received a new and strong ally"
(Coubertin 2000:297).

Once again 'peace' emerges as a nodal point, which the signs of 'other lands', 'runners', 'fencers' and 'ally' are structured around. By relating these signs to 'peace', their possible meanings are narrowed, fixed. In the internationalism discourse, international sporting competitions are not merely competitions, rather the export and internationalization of sports is an important tool in the work for peace. 'Peace' is also an example of a floating signifier, which is a sign that is particularly open to different ascriptions of meaning. Different discourses struggle to invest floating signifiers with meaning in a way that correlates with their views. In Olympic internationalism discourse, peace is the interaction and mutual understanding

between athletes from different nation-states. Yet, in an isolationism discourse, peace would be characterized by not interacting with other nation-states. Previously mentioned nodal points 'democratic' and 'international' are also floating signifiers.

5.2.3. The influence of the nation-state

The internationalism discourse of the international peace movement has its basis in the nation-state, which also formed Coubertin's articulation of the Olympic Games. In the peace movement, the nation-state was regarded as the foundation of the international community. It was through the nation-state that international law received its recognition. The Olympic Games were never an expression of a revolutionary or cosmopolitan internationalism. Coubertin's and the Olympics' internationalism always used the nation-state as its point of departure (Quanz 1994:12-13). Coubertin did not view the discourses of internationalism and the nation-state as antagonistic, and thus mutually exclusive. The interlinked relationship between the two is apparent in a quote from his Official Report of 1896 Olympic Games:

“Should the institution prosper, - as I am persuaded, all civilized nations aiding, that it will, - it may be potent, if indirect, factor in securing universal peace. Wars break out because nations misunderstand each other. We shall not have peace until the prejudices that now separate the different races are outlived.” (Coubertin 2000:360)

In his articulation of the Olympic Games, he continuously links the concept of the nation-state (i.e. nation') to the 'institution' (i.e. 'Olympic Games'), 'peace' and 'war'. It illustrates that the nation-state is understood and given meaning as that which underlies all interaction in international society. Discourse aims to remove ambiguity, so the nation-state discourse aims to reduce the possibilities of meaning. It seeks to establish meaning by organizing the world and its people in accordance with the nation-state. The nation-state is viewed as the foundation for creating a more peaceful world. War, peace and interaction in general are something that occurs *between* nation-states. Hence, the sign 'nation-state' structures the nation-state discourse, as the other signs are ordered around it. The concept of the nation-state and the state system is based on an assumed congruence between the nation, as cultural community, and the state as a political-territorial entity (Betts 2009:43). The

nation-state claims sovereignty over a fixed territory. The recognition of its sovereignty and territory by other nation-states that are members of a globalized system of nation-states is the foundation of the system (Opello Jr. & Rosow 1999). The idea of the nation-state emerged as central feature of world politics in the seventeenth century, and over time the concept has expanded beyond its European origins to include an ever-growing number of states. Nationalism began to emerge as an ideological means to legitimate the modern nation-state. The emergence of inventions such as the flag and the printing press raised awareness of the nation-state, enabling people to develop a sense of shared national identity (Betts 2009:43, 46). Coubertin was influenced by and consequently reproduced a nation-state discourse in his articulation of the Olympic Games, as he treated the nation-state as a natural and a priori phenomenon. The nation-state is not treated as historically contingent or as a social construction, rather it is articulated as a precursor to society. Consequently, the Olympic Games outlined the mutual classification and recognition of different nations as its task, not the disregard of nationalities. The emphasis was on interaction and respect between nations, not on the disregard of nationality (Quanz 1994:9). Coubertin as well as his invention are a product of his historical and cultural context. This is particularly evident in institutional structure of the Olympic Games, as they are a material expression of the nation-state discourse. Coubertin and the IOC created an institutional structure based nationality, as no athlete can compete as an individual. Athletes must be selected by his or her country's National Olympic Committee. Athletes must wear a national uniform, and when a victor is honored, their national flag is raised and a national anthem is played (Guttmann 1992: 2).

5.2.4. The link between internationalism and the nation-state

Because the nation-state discourse was prevalent in the articulation of the Olympic Games and in the society at the time, it is also a nodal point in the internationalism discourse, that Coubertin articulates. In Coubertin articulations, there is no antagonism between the two discourses, as they do not make contrasting demands in relation to the same actions. They are able to co-exist and in some instances even reinforce each other. An example of this relationship is a quote from his article "Olympic Games of 1896", which was published in the American magazine *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* in 1896:

“When they come to meet every four years in these contents, further ennobled by the memories of the past, athletes all over the world will learn to know one another better, to make mutual concessions, and to seek no other in reward in competition than the honor of victory. One may be filled with desire to see the colors of one’s club or college triumph in a national meeting, but how much stronger is the feeling when the colors of one’s country are at stake! I am well assure that the winners in the Stadium at Athens wished for no other recompense when they heard the people cheer the flag of their country in honor of their achievement” (Coubertin 2000:360)

In this example, the signs “honor’ and ‘flag’ are organized around the nodal point of ‘country’ (i.e. ‘nation-state’). The sovereign territoriality of a nation-state is represented by a capital city, a flag, an anthem, a passport, a currency, armed forces, national museums and libraries, embassies in other sovereign states, and usually a seat in the United Nations (Opello Jr. & Rosow 1999). So through this relationship between the signs, a nation-state discourse of natural belonging, national pride and national identity is fixed. However, alongside it there is also a discourse of internationalism. The signs of “athletes”, ‘memories’ and “mutual concessions” are likewise organized around the nodal point of ‘nation-state’ (i.e. ‘country’), though the meaning it procures is different. In the internationalism discourse, the Olympic Games are an opportunity to create bonds between nation-states and their athletes. Through shared experiences and rules, sports can bring people closer together. In the internationalism discourse, peace is achieved through the nation-state.

Coubertin continuously stressed the congenial relationship between the nation-state and internationalism. For instance in his speech titled “The Neo-Olympism: Appeal to the People of Athens” he says:

“I might say the same regarding internationalism, understood of course as respect for, not destruction of, native countries. It is a trend that grew out of the deep need for peace and fraternity arising from the depths of the human heart.” (Coubertin 2000:535).

In his articulation, Coubertin makes sure to include 'native countries' (i.e. the nation-state) in his structuring of the internationalism discourse. By continuously including the nation-state as nodal point in the internationalism discourse, Coubertin aligns his vision of the Olympic Games and its internationalism with the rising concept of the nation-state and the state system. In his articulations of internationalism, the diversity of nations is acknowledged and encouraged in contrast to pure cosmopolitanism. National honor is given its place in the Olympic Games. Love of one's own country was brought into balance with general love of humanity (Quanz 1994:12). The hegemony of the nation-state discourse is particularly evident in one of Coubertin's speeches from 1901. It is essential to his understanding of the world and the Olympic Games:

"This nationalism is by no means detrimental. However, it would be easy to develop in that direction unless corrected by a sincere internationalism. There are two ways of looking at internationalism. One way is the way of the socialists, of the revolutionaries, and in general of the theorists and utopians. They think of a gigantic egalitarianism, which turns the civilized world into a state without borders or barriers, and transfers the organization of society into one of the dullest and most monotonous tyrannies. The other way is the way of those men who know how to observe objectively and who take reality into account instead of following their own favorite ideas. They have realized for quite some time that national peculiarities are indispensable prerequisites for the life of a people and that contact with other people will strengthen and enliven them . . . Just as little as individuals, people are predestined to a life of solitude. It serves them well to know of one another." (Quanz 1994:12-13).

The quote exemplifies the privileged status of the 'nation-state' in Coubertin's internationalism discourse. By linking 'reality', 'life', 'indispensable', 'strengthen' and 'enliven' to the sign of 'national' (i.e. the nation-state), the nation-state comes to appear as a prerequisite to human life. The nation-state is good for everyone. It is foolish to even question its necessity. This is also an example of 'internationalism' being a floating signifier. Different discourses are trying to fill the sign with different

meanings. Coubertin is trying to discredit the cosmopolitan discourse's use of the sign. In contrast to his own conceptualization of the term, he now links the cosmopolitan version of internationalism with other signs such as 'utopian', 'dullest', 'monotonous' and 'tyrannies'. In this articulation, internationalism seems idealistic, impracticable and boring. Once again, the rationality of the nation-state discourse is employed as it is assumed that all identity and culture is tied to nationality. The absence of nation-states means that everyone will be the same. It also shows the dominance of the nation-state discourse. The social practices it has structured (world politics, the Olympic Games) have come to appear so natural that we are unable to see that they are result of political hegemonic practices and not an essential part of reality.

5.2.5. The struggle of fixating the nation-state discourse

However, while the nation-state discourse was dominate within the Olympic Games, it had not quite become hegemonic, which becomes evident when examining the early execution of Coubertin's vision. In the early Olympic Games of 1896, 1900 and 1904, the IOC allowed for athletes in teams (such as rowing, football and swimming) to be from different nations (Horne & Whannel 2016:179). Their results are now grouped under the mixed team IOC code ZZX (cOlympic.org). The IOC later implemented a nation-based structure by making a National Olympic Committee mandatory to take part in the 1908 Olympic Games (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbot 2008:51). Through a hegemonic intervention, the IOC also later retroactively awarded the medals from the 1896, 1900 and 1904 Olympic Games to the winning athletes' nations even though the distinction was not made at the time (aOlympic.org). Even early events in the Olympic Games are now viewed through the lens of the nation-state, even though that was not the case at the time. The IOC did, however, not officially regulate sporting nationality before 1920, when the following rule was included in the Olympic Charter for the first time: "Only naturalized nationals are qualified to take part in the Games" (IOC 1920: 8). It was also from 1920 and on that the Central Empires were excluded from the Olympic Games, which also coincides with the first time that nation-state is written into the official Olympic Charter: "They assemble the amateurs of all nations on equal footing and under conditions as perfect as possible." (IOC 1920: 9).

The IOC did not always adhere to the meaning created by the nation-state discourse. During the early Olympic Games, Coubertin was so focused on the expansion of the event, that he found ways to rearrange the nation-state discourse so it fit his agenda. In 1907, the IOC was decided that nations, which were not politically independent such as Bohemia and Finland, were to be invited if they had a National Olympic Committee. (Lennartz 1998:70). Coubertin argued for this decision in a letter to the editor of the *Allgemeine Sportzeitung* (Coubertin 2000:589):

“The fundamental rule of the modern Olympiads is summarized in these terms: ‘All games, all nations’. It is not even within the power of the International Olympic Committee, the highest authority in this matter, to change this. I must add that a nation is not necessarily an independent State. There is an athletic geography that may differ at times political geography.” (Coubertin 2000:590)

In his articulation, Coubertin rearranges the signs within the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games so as the sign ‘state’ does not play a central role. In its early the days, the IOC heavily prioritized expanding its territorial coverage throughout the world (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbot 2008:49). So in his articulation, Coubertin deprioritizes the state part of the concept, so that he is able to include more nations in the Olympic Games.

5.2.6. The exclusionary power of the discourse

While Coubertin’s nation-state discourse was not always consistent in the early days of the Olympic Games, it had a significant effect on the articulation. Discourse is always exclusionary because when it established a structured meaning, it also leaves out all other possible meanings. Inevitably, both Coubertin’s internationalism and nation-state discourses are exclusionary. When Coubertin and the IOC articulate a nation-state discourse through their policies and structures, they exclude any individuals who are unable to represent a nation such as refugees or a stateless person. As a result of the discourse, structures have been put in place that makes it impossible for them to compete as individuals as athletes as the whole purpose of the Olympic Games is only given meaning in relation to nation-states. It was unimaginable that any person did not belong to a nation. Refugees and stateless persons are the excluded possibilities; they are in the field of discursivity. The

exclusion is also the result of an ignorance of refugees. The forced displacement of people is not new, however the refugee figure had yet to be invented at the time of Coubertin's creation of the Olympic Games (Haddad 2008: 65). It was only in the aftermath of the First World War, the wars in the Balkans of 1912–13 as well as the persecution of Jews in Russia in 1880, that the international society came to deal with a mass refugee "problem" (Betts 2009:99). The dominance of the nation-state discourse paired with refugees being unimaginable led to their exclusion from the articulation and structures of the Olympic Games.

5.2.7. Sub-conclusion

Pierre de Coubertin's articulations of the Olympic Games were a product of prevalent discourses in society at the time of the institution's conception. He believed the cooperation and communication between nationalities at the Olympic Games to be an important tool in reducing the risk of international conflict. While not always consistently articulated in the early days, the nation-state was a fundamental part of Coubertin's internationalism discourse as well as the Olympic Games. He articulated a nation-state discourse, where the nation-state came to appear as the foundation of all international interaction and human life. Coubertin's nation-state discourse had a significant effect on the articulation of the Olympic Games, which were ordered around nationality and the nation-state.

The construction of discourse is inevitably exclusionary, so when Coubertin articulated a nation-state discourse within the Olympic Games, it led to the exclusion of individuals who are unable to represent a nation such as refugees. The modern refugee figure as we know was also yet to be invented. It was inconceivable that a person did not belong to nation-state. As a result of the nation-state discourse, structures were put in place that made it impossible for refugee athletes to compete as they do not belong to a nation and they cannot compete as individuals.

5.3. 1950: The Possibility of Refugee Participation in the Olympic Games

I chose to examine the discourses during the time period after the end of the Second World War because it was a time of mass refugee flows, while it also marks the emergence of the International Refugee Regime, the United Nations as well as a discussion of the participation of refugees in the Olympic Games (Beacon 2012: 156-127). Through a discourse analysis of the correspondence between the Special Committee to Watch Over the Interests of European Nations Not Represented in the Council of Europe and the International Olympic Committee as well as the Olympic Charter of 1949, and relating it to other prominent discourses in society at the time. I aim to illuminate how the discourses of the Olympic Games were articulated along with which discourses have become hegemonic or have changed over time, and consequently what these discourses have meant for the participation of refugees in the Olympic Games.

5.3.2. The emergence of International Refugee Regime

In the aftermath of the First World War along with to the wars in the Balkans of 1912–13 and the persecution of Jews in Russia in 1880, international society saws its first mass refugee flows and the 'refugee' figure emerged (Betts 2009:99). Although the forced displacement of people was not a new occurrence, the refugee figure was not invented until the world became divided into political units (i.e. nation-states) (Haddad 2008: 65). The 'refugee' emerged as a particular sub-category due to the international system of separate sovereign states, since being forced out of one unit meant finding another to enter. But since entering another state meant obtaining the prior permission of that state, the refugee became a modern category of an individual found between such sovereigns (Haddad 2008: 65). And it was in the aftermath of the Second World War, that the establishment of the UN and the UN Charter made state sovereignty and the mutual recognition of states the constitutive norm of world politics (Betts 2009:46). It was also during this Interwar Period that a International Refugee Regime started to take shape and international legal instruments defining refugees first began to appear. The creation of the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugee after the First World War and its actions led to the establishment of the refugee as the focus of displacement, while affirming intergovernmental action as the norm for confronting the phenomenon. There is a chain with continuous links being added from the first forms of intergovernmental

action in the days of the League of Nations all the way to the 1951 Refugee Convention. The International Refugee Regime was then consolidated by the creation of the UNHCR in 1950 and the 1951 Convention. Each organization from the LNHCR to the UNHCR was designed to re-establish the refugee as someone with a space of particularity, a country of origin, represented and protected by a state, so as to restore the 'normal' order of life (Haddad 2008:30, 85, 133). In the time after the Second World War, an estimated 60+ million people were displaced worldwide (UNHCR 2000:15). The challenges that occurred in the Interwar Period paled in significance to the enormity of the global population displacement during and immediately after the Second World War (Gatrell 2013:85).

5.3.3. A threat to the nation-state discourse

Since eligibility was rooted in nationality, the participation of stateless persons and refugees were some of the excluded possibilities when Coubertin and the IOC articulated the Olympic Games. Hence, refugees are in the Olympic Games' field of discursivity, which continuously threaten to destabilize the nation-state discourse in the Olympic Games. Meaning is never fixed. While structures like the nation-state can come to appear natural, any closure of meaning is only temporary. It is always threatened by the possible meanings it has excluded. After the Second World War, the excluded possibility of the participation of refugees returned to threaten the nation-state discourse. A refugee discourse developed in international society, which then lead to the International Refugee Regime, and in 1952 the discourse also reached the domain of the IOC and the Olympic Games. In a meeting on May 25th 1952, the Assembly of the Council of Europe decided to include the participation of exiles (i.e. refugees) in the Olympics in its agenda and to ask its Special Committee to Watch Over the Interests of European Nations Not Represented in the Council of Europe to make a request to the International Olympic Committee to consider any suggestions which would enable political exiles (i.e. refugees) to take part in the Olympic Games in future years (Council of Europe a1953). The following resolution was drafted during the meeting:

“THE ASSEMBLY, [...] REGRETTING that since the International Olympic Committee recognizes only one governing body from each

member country, many individuals who are refugees from their own country are thus precluded from taking part in the Olympic Games. OBSERVING that this is contrary to the rule that no discrimination is allowed against any country or person on grounds of colour, religion or politics. EXPRESSES the hope that the International Olympic Committee will consider any suggestions which will enable political exiles to take part in the Games in future years” (Council of Europe 1952).

In its articulation, the Assembly of the COE links the signs of ‘precluded’, ‘discrimination’ and ‘refugee’ to fixate a meaning of the Olympic Games, where its current form is discriminatory and exclusionary. It articulates another version of the Olympic Games, where its nation-state structure is neither necessary nor a good thing.

5.3.4. The perceived temporary and intergovernmental nature of the refugee figure

In a report titled “Report on the Participation of Exiles in the Olympic Games”, which was written in March 1953 and presented to the COE in May 1953, the Special Committee describes the process and correspondence on the matter of refugee participation, which followed the resolution in 1952 (Council of Europe a1953). In the Special Committee’s articulations, the signs ‘exiles’, ‘refugees’ and ‘political exiles’ are used interchangeably. They are all equated to the same thing because in the domain of the Olympic Games, any heterogeneous traits within the group are irrelevant. In the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games, they are all outside the nation-state and they are all excluded possibilities. The Special Committee’s case pertains to them all. The Special Committee believed that if refugee sportsmen from Central and Eastern European countries were permitted to compete in the Olympic Games, it “*would contribute greatly to maintaining among them a feeling of attachment to their national traditions.*” (Council of Europe a1953). This thinking exemplifies the nation-state discourse that was not only pervasive in the Olympic Games but in society at large at the time. The newly established International Refugee Regime made intergovernmental action the norm for tackling the refugee phenomenon. It simultaneously crystalized the refugee as an international concept

(Haddad 2008:109) Intergovernmental action on behalf of refugees viewed the state–citizen relationship as the norm, which in turn cast the refugee as the unstable exception (Haddad 2008:130). Underlying the International Refugee Regime was the idea that the refugee figure was a temporary problem, a concept brought about by specific transformations in international society, which could be resolved as soon as international conditions were stabilized (Haddad 2008: 31). The consensus in international society was that refugees were a creation of war; therefore an end to the fighting would mean an end to the existence of such individuals (Haddad 2008: 129). The hegemony of the nation-state discourse in international society meant that it was unimaginable that any individual could and would not return to their native country once the war had ended. It was assumed that every individual had a natural place in the world determined by his or her nationality, and that they would instinctively return once the fighting ended. Even the disposition of the 1951 Convention itself is temporary, since the cessation clauses clearly states that refugee status should end when the conditions that forced an individual to flee have come to an end (Haddad 2008: 207). Therefore it seemed essential to the Special Committee that the national feelings of refugees should be maintained, as they would obviously be returning to their own nation. Discourse shapes articulations. The hegemony of the nation-state discourse is apparent in the rationality of both the Special Committee and the International Refugee Regime.

5.3.5. Contesting the exclusionary discourse of the Olympic Games

As mentioned, the Special Committee based their case on refugee participation in the Olympic Games on the first fundamental principle of the Olympic Charter (Council of Europe a1953):

“The Olympic Games are held every four years and assemble amateurs of all nations in fair and equal competition under conditions which are designed to be as perfect as possible. No discrimination is allowed against any country or person on grounds of colour, religion or politics.” (IOC 1949).

The Special Committee viewed the exclusion of certain sportsmen because they were refugees as not in accordance with Olympic principles (Council of Europe

a1953). It defines reality differently from the IOC. The Special Committee's articulation fixates a different meaning of the Olympic Games, where it is the nation-state structure that is cast as discriminatory and harmful. Based on these considerations, it was decided by the Special Committee, that the Secretary-General, F. Caraccilio, would approach the IOC about the subject. This led to a correspondence with the IOC's Chancellor, Otto Mayer (Council of Europe a1953). The Secretary General sent the first letter on July 11th in 1952, and it said the following:

“Sir, ... It has been brought to my notice that the question of the participation of exiles in the Olympic Games was recently placed on the Agenda of the International Olympic Committee. I was also informed that the question would be debated at a meeting of the International Olympic Committee to be held in Helsinki. I should now be obliged to you if you could let me know, first, if the question was indeed debated at a recent meeting, and, secondly, what decision, if any, was taken.” (Council of Europe a1953).

As it is made clear from the letter, the Special Committee did not raise the matter of refugee participation. The topic was already on the IOC's agenda. It was among others the organization known as the Free Eastern European Sportsmen, which asked certain Representatives to the Council of Europe to intervene on their behalf with the International Olympic Committee, which then lead to the passing of the resolution in the COE (Council of Europe b1953). It is clear from the minutes from the IOC's 47th Session in Helsinki in 1952, that the same organization had directly petitioned the IOC, which lead the IOC to raise the topic of refugee participation in the Olympic Games at their Session (IOC 1952). The extract of the minutes from the IOC's 47th Session in Helsinki on July 16th in 1952 reveals that a the inclusion of refugees in the Olympic Games was indeed discussed:

“Refugees and exiles. — Mr. Edström mentions that an organization for refugees and exiles originally coming from the East of Europe has been founded in New York. It applied to the I. O. C. to be recognized in order to enable its athletes to participate in the Games. Mr. Marffy, representing this organization, is introduced. He refers to the plight the athletes without national status and their children are in, when desirous

to participate to the Games. He appeals for the I.O.C.'s good-will, trusting that it will find a solution to grant their request. He suggests that the I.O.C. should authorize the I.Fs. to recognize the refugees athletes. They could be entered in the Games while competing under the colours of the International Red Cross, or under the colours of the five Olympic Rings or ultimately through the intermediary of countries such as Switzerland or Greece. He asks that this question should be studied with leniency, taking into account the fundamental principles of the Olympic Rules while excluding all political, religious or racial implications. (IOC 1952).

At the Session, Mr. Marffy and the Free Eastern European Sportsmen articulate a discourse, where contrary to the nation-state discourse, the sign of 'refugee' is linked to the sign of 'the Olympic Games'. By arranging other symbols such as 'participate', 'recognize', 'colours of the International Red Cross' and 'colours of the five Olympic Rings' around the nodal point of 'refugee', this refugee discourse includes the possibility of refugee participation in the Olympic Games.

5.3.6. The hegemony of the nation-state discourse

No meaning is ever permanent. Even seemingly fixed meanings of the nation-state discourse can be rearranged. However, discourse creates articulation, and the nation-state discourse was hegemonic in the Olympic Games as well as in society at the time. Articulation does make it possible to rearrange and shape current structures of meaning but the hegemony of the nation-state discourse makes it more likely for actors to reproduce it than subvert it. This is evident when the IOC made the decision to not allow refugees to participate in the Olympic Games: *"Mr. Edström informs the Assembly that the E.C. [Executive Council] has gone thoroughly into this problem and that it has failed to find a solution which could permit the I.O.C. to admit the refugees athletes to the Games"* (IOC 1952). In his reply to the Special Committee on August 8th, the Chancellor of the IOC wrote: *"After a long and sympathetic discussion, it was decided that the idea of exiled sportsmen participating could not be entertained owing to the complexity of this problem."* (Council of Europe 1953). The hegemonic nation-state discourse simply does not allow for them to

view and make sense of the Olympic Games as a space where the refugee presence is a possibility.

After the news of the decision, the new Secretary-General of the Special Committee, Major Tufton Beamish, wrote back to Otto Mayer September 30th seeking an elaboration of the IOC's decision and the referenced complexity. He once again argues that the exclusion of sportsmen because they are refugees is not in accordance with the non-discrimination principle of the Olympic Charter (Council of Europe a1953). In his articulation, he fixates the meaning of the Olympic Games as discriminatory. By once again articulating a discourse where the Olympic Games are connected to discrimination, the Special Committee and Beamish tries to force the IOC to rearrange its nation-discourse by intervening in the structures of meaning set by the organization. The IOC's nation-state discourse and the Special Committee's refugee discourse are antagonistic, as they are making contrasting demands in relation to the common domain of the Olympic Games. The discourses are part of each other's field of discursivity. We have already established that the refugee is in the discursive field of the nation-state discourse. The successful fixation of the Special Committee's refugee discourse would mean the participation of refugees in the Olympic Games, which would lead to the dissolution of the hegemony of the nation-state discourse that pervades the structures of the institution. One discourse is inevitable going to block the other. The antagonism between the two discourses is dissolved through a hegemonic intervention exemplified by Mayer's reply further explaining the IOC's decision on October 2nd:

“It is quite correct that the first fundamental principle of our Charter is that the Olympic Games are held every four years and shall assemble amateurs of all nations *etc.*, and that no discrimination is allowed against any country or person on grounds of colour, religion or politics. However, this principle has to be considered in relation to the rest of our rules, as I shall explain below. If you consider these rules, you will find that we speak about amateurs of a nation. By this we mean that an athlete, to be able to take part in the Games, must be a member of a National Sports Organisation, and that he must also be a citizen of the country concerned. This is, unfortunately, not so in the case of refugees and exiled athletes.” (Council of Europe a1953).

In his articulation, Mayer links the sign of 'no discrimination' to 'nation' and 'National Sports Organisation' and 'citizen'. It emerges, that the protection and relevance of the principles of the Olympic Charter are linked to nationality. Another example of the nation-state discourse that permeates the structures of the Olympic Games. Any rights the athlete has within the Olympic Games are based on his eligibility as national of a country. The athlete attains his or hers meaning within the Games through their connection to a native land. It is not possible for them to exist in the institution or benefit from its structures without this connection. Their rights are tied to nationality. Mayer then refers to a number of rules in the Olympic Charter as to further explain why the principles of the Olympic Charter are not applicable to refugees, and thus why they are unable to participate. The first is Article 6, which states: *"Only nationals of a country are qualified to compete for that country in the Olympic Games"* (IOC 1949). In this articulation, the signs of 'nationals', 'country' and 'qualified' are connected, which once again connects the eligibility of the athlete to the concept of nationality. Since refugees are conceptualized as intergovernmental, they are not eligible. As long as they exist outside the nation-state, they exist outside the structures of the Olympic Games. He goes on to quote part of Article 31 from the Olympic Charter:

"The invitations to take part in the Games are sent out by the Organising Committee on the instructions of the International Olympic Committee. They are addressed to the recognised National Olympic Committee of each country" (IOC 1949).

Mayer emphasizes the current structures of the IOC by configuring the meaning of signs such as 'invitation', 'addressed' and 'recognised' around the nodal point of 'national' (i.e. National Olympic Committee). He also quotes Article 39 and 45 from the Olympic Charter, which also has the nation as its nodal point (IOC 1949). Mayer continuously fixates a hegemonic nation-state discourse, which makes the organization of the Olympic Games appear to hinge on the nation-state.

5.3.7. Outside the nation-state, outside the Olympic Games

The articulated incompatibility of the refugee and the Olympic Games within nation-state discourse, makes it appear so that the inclusion of the refugee could possibly mean the undoing of the Olympic Games. Mayer ends his letter with the following statement exemplifying hegemony of the nation-state:

“As you will realise, the problem has been thoroughly studied. It has been considered that giving satisfaction to the exiles would mean changing the complete machinery of our whole world organisation, and this is impossible.” (Council of Europe 1953).

In this discourse the participation of refugee athletes is not a possibility. Not out of deliberate discrimination, but because the hegemony of the nation-state structure makes it unimaginable that the Olympic Games would endure without the nation-state. Any other structuring of the institution is articulated as impossible. The refugee discourse sees an alternative world, where the international society and the Olympic Games are not organized around the nation-state. Through the IOC's hegemonic intervention, this alternative understanding of reality is suppressed, which then leads to a further naturalization of the nation-state discourse.

The refugee discourse is undermined from the discursive field from which the nation-state discourse overpowers it by rearticulating its signs. Mayer's letters show how the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games is rearticulated so that the refugee is no longer a figure simply left out of its articulation, but a figure that is in opposition to its very structure and existence. Refugees are reiterated as that which exists between states, and thus they are incompatible with the Olympic Games. In the rearticulating of the nation-state discourse, the current nation-state based structures of the IOC and the Olympic Games come to appear immovable and natural. While the situation of athlete refugees is articulated as unfortunate and sad, it is not something the IOC can change.

The success of the IOC's hegemonic intervention is apparent from Beamish's reply on the 17th of January 1953, where he thanked the Chancellor for the information. The Special Committee expressed their deep regret, when they learned of the impossible situation of the refugee athletes, however they accept the IOC's

reasoning (Council of Europe a1953). And thus, the antagonism is dissolved and the nation-state discourse once more comes to dominate alone.

5.3.8. Sub-conclusion

The aftermath of the Second World War saw the founding of the UN, which established the state system and the nation-state the constitutive norm of world politics. The formation of the International Refugee Regime and its intergovernmental structure further conceptualized the refugee as someone who exists between nation-states. The refugee was perceived as a temporary problem, which would be resolved as soon as international conditions were stabilized. The International Refugee Regime's mission to re-establish the refugee as someone with a space of particularity was both a product of and reiteration of the perception of the state system as the 'normal' order of things.

These events lead to the re-emergence of the refugee figure, which threatened to undermine the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games. The Special Committee of the COE constructed a discourse, which contested the exclusionary practices of the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games. The antagonism between the IOC's nation-state discourse and the Special Committee's refugee discourse led to an hegemonic intervention, where the IOC rearticulated the Olympic Games' relationship to the refugee so that the figure is no longer merely unarticulated but positioned as incompatible with the institution. The structures and policies of the Olympic Games are not applicable to the refugee because of its intergovernmental nature. The hegemony of the nation-state discourse makes it appear as if the survival of the Olympic Games hinges on the nation-state, and thus it is impossible for the IOC to change the structure to include the refugee figure. The refugee is once again pushed to the Olympic Games' field of discursivity

5.4. 2016: The Formation of the Refugee Olympic Team

Lastly, I chose to analyze the discourses surrounding the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team in 2016, as it is the first time that refugees participated in the Olympic Games and I perceived it to be a deviation from the established nation-state structures of the Olympic Games. I aim to explore how the creation of Refugee Olympic Team and how refugee participation in the 2016 Olympic Games was made possible through a discourse analysis of speeches and press conferences concerning the Refugee Olympic Team as well as the Olympic Charter of 2015, while providing context from other prominent discourses in society at the time.

5.4.2. The refugee crisis and the rise of nationalism

In 2015, there were a record number of 65.3 million displaced people worldwide, which was a 5.8 million increase from the year before (UNHCR 2015: 2). Armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq contributed significantly to the rise in the global number of displaced people. By the end of 2015, there were close to 5 million Syrian refugees worldwide (UNHCR 2015: 7). A lot of the international attention was focused on Europe, since the region received 1.3 million refugees, which was an increase of 41% from the previous year (UNHCR 2015: 7, 14). The refugee crisis tested the asylum and reception systems, and existing frameworks were often unable to facilitate the management of the crisis. Several European countries responded to the crisis by individually imposing greater restrictions on access to their territories. Border control was increased and fences were erected along borders between several countries in an effort to stop the movement of refugees into their countries and across Europe. Numerous countries also passed legislation restricting access to asylum systems and placing limitations on family reunification (UNHCR 2015: 34). The crisis of the nation-state was widely discussed academically during the 1990's (Ohmae 1995, Guéhenno 1995, Fukayama 1992). The nation-state was to be gradually undermined by the ever more culturally diverse and assertive societies and simultaneous processes of globalization (Gerrits 2016: 129). However, 2015 saw a resurgence of nationalism discourse in international society. The "return" of the nation-state in crucial parts of the world is visible through the re-emergence of the norms of national sovereignty and non-intervention in global politics (Gerrits 2016: 129).

Nationalism has always had its place within the Olympic Games. As shown earlier, Pierre de Coubertin viewed the nation-state as the foundation for creating a more peaceful world. However, the Olympic Games' founder also emphasized the importance of balancing nationalism with internationalism. Without sincere internationalism to counter nationalism, it becomes detrimental to society (Quanz 1994:12-13). The current rise in nationalism and the correlating retreat from international agreements is in conflict with the internationalism discourse of the IOC. While the concept of 'internationalism' no longer appears in the Olympic Charter, the internationalism discourse is very much still present as the second fundamental principle in the 2015 Olympic Charter states: *"The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity."* (IOC 2015). It is also evident in the IOC growing international aspiration during the later part of the 20th century and early 21st century. The IOC is working to extend its influence in international society. These aspirations are demonstrated through the IOC's extensive collaborations with the United Nations. The IOC has worked on several projects with UNESCO, UNOSDP, UNHRCR and UNICEF among others. Other examples of the IOC's commitment to emerge as an international actor is the revival of the Olympic Truce and the organization achieving Observer status within the UN in 2009 (Beacom 2012:46, 61). The IOC also refers to UN recognition, when accepting new NOCs. According to the Olympic Charter, it only accepts independent states recognized by the "international community" within the Olympic system, i.e. in practice those recognized by the United Nations. A few exceptions, like Palestine, still exist (Chappelet & Kübler-Mabbot 2008:49-50). The IOC is increasingly trying to associate itself with the United Nations in an effort to add some diplomatic weight and international legitimacy to the aspirations and the rhetoric of its ideology (Roche 2003:214). In the IOC's internationalism discourse, the Olympic Games facilitate relations between nation-states, and thus it promotes a more peaceful society. It is crucial that nation-states do not retreat from the international community and its agreements. Continued interaction and respect between nation-states play a crucial part in this. Thus, the rising nationalism discourse in international society is antagonistic to the IOC's internationalism discourse. Consequently the refugee crisis became a crucial test for the organization as it strives to prove that it can execute its

founding principles and that it can serve as mediator on the international stage (Beacom 2012:46, 62).

As shown, the IOC has historically articulated the refugee as that which exists between nation-states and thus as incompatible with the nation-state structure of the Olympic Games. The refugee crisis in 2015 meant that once again the refugee was thrust to the forefront of international society, and as such the IOC was once again confronted with its existence. It is not the first time the IOC has been confronted with the instability of the nation-state. The collapse of the former Republic of Yugoslavia led to the creation of the delegation of Independent Olympic Athletes in the 1990's. It encompasses athletes who compete only in individual sports and who temporarily cannot represent their respective nationalities at the Olympic Games because their NOC has suffered punishments by the IOC due to political factors and/or armament conflicts. Athletes have competed for the IOA delegation in the Summer Olympic Games of 1992, 2000, 2012 and 2016 (Guioti et.al. 2016). Because of the instability of discourse, the seemingly fixed nation-state and internationalism discourses of the Olympic Games are always threatened by the possibilities of meaning they have displaced to the field of discursivity. However, the athletes of the IOA still belong to a nation-state, and thus they are not in the same situation as the ROT athletes. Both the refugee and nationalism are also examples of possible meanings that were excluded in the articulation of the Olympic Games. It is not new that the refugee is perceived to be outside the nation-state, and thus a threat to the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games, however the rising nationalism discourse in international society paired with the IOC's international ambitions created an incentive to rearticulate the Olympic Games' relationship to the refugee. The IOC had the opportunity to test its ability to draw the seemingly retreated nation-states back to the table on the subject of the refugee crisis.

5.4.3. The Refugee Olympic Team as a natural progression

So in October 2015, during the United Nations' General Assembly, the president of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach announced plans with the UNHCR to create a Refugee Olympic Team that would go on to compete in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro (IOC 2015). The team is made up of 10 athletes competing in judo, swimming and athletics. The refugee athletes are from Congo,

Ethiopia, South Soudan and Syria. The athletes were staying in five different host countries; Belgium, Brazil, Kenya, Germany and Luxemburg. (IOC Media: 04.19.12). During the first IOC press conference on the creation of a team of Refugee Olympic Athletes on November 18th 2015, the President of the IOC Thomas Bach acknowledged that it was the current refugee crisis that brought the IOC to action:

“I think we all touched and moved by the magnitude of the current worldwide refugee crisis. This is why we have started to identify refugee athletes who could potentially qualify for the Olympic Games.” (IOC Multimedia Library c2016: 00.02.05).

In his articulation, he connects the signs of ‘crisis’ and ‘magnitude’ to the sign of the ‘refugee’, which produces a discourse of emergency. The current situation is articulated as being at critical level, and it also works to make the IOC’s decision seem inevitable and justifiable. The IOC simply had to act. During the UN General Assembly on October 26th 2015, where Bach first announced the intent to create a Refugee Olympic Team, he linked the ROT initiative to the IOC’s current work with the UNHCR and refugees:

“The UN Secretary-General has appointed our Honorary President Jacques Rogge as Special Envoy on Youth Refugees and Sport in 2014. The IOC is happy to support these activities financially and has additionally created a fund of 2 million US dollars to bring hope through sport to refugees. At the same time, we are assisting high-level refugee athletes to continue their sports careers. We help them to make their dream of sporting excellence come true even when they have to flee from violence and hunger. I would like to appeal to all UN Member States to help us to identify such hopeful great athletes. At present, none of these athletes would have the chance to participate in the Olympic Games even if being qualified from the sports point of view, because with their refugee status they are left without a home country and National Olympic Committee to represent.” (IOC 2015).

Through his articulation of the IOC’s work he produces a discourse where the signs of ‘support’, ‘financially’, ‘bring hope’, ‘assisting’ and ‘help’ are structured around the nodal points of ‘IOC’ and ‘refugee’. These signs attain their meaning through their

relation to the nodal points. By relating these signs to 'IOC', the organization is rendered as humanitarian and generous, and thus the ROT becomes an extension of the IOC's work with refugees. In this articulation, the refugee is portrayed as traumatized, helpless and in need of hope, which further bolsters the IOC's arguments for creating a Refugee Olympic Team. This rearticulation of the IOC's relationship to the refugee makes the broadening of the organization's field seem to fit seamlessly with its internationalism discourse, while the IOC is also reframed as an international leader. They are an organization that helps and refugees are currently those in need of help. During the 129th IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro, the Director of IOC Olympic Solidarity, Pere Miro reiterated the same idea when presenting the Refugee Olympic Team:

“But for the IOC this situation, this concern about the refugees is not new because you should know that the IOC is supporting refugees throughout the world for more than 20 years [...] This is a logic way if we have been working on that for 20 years in refugee camps and if we pay attention to this particular situation, especially in Europe, the logical consequence is what the IOC President decided last year” (IOC Media: 04.11.19).

Through Bach and Miro's articulations, the Refugee Olympic Team comes to appear as a natural extension of the IOC's founding values and work. The IOC seem as a predecessor in the field and as an equal to the UNHCR. The IOC is rearticulating its own relationship to the refugee. By portraying the Refugee Olympic Team as a natural evolution, the IOC also excludes any possibly meaning, where the IOC has not always been helpful or inclusive of refugees. Their denial of refugee participation in the Olympics in 1952 is pushed to the field of discursivity. In the rearticulation of its internationalism discourse, the IOC has always been supportive and inclusive of the refugee. The prior exclusion of the refugee was merely an unfortunate circumstance.

5.4.4. The quasi nation-state of the IOC

Another statement from Bach during the IOC press conference announcing the composition of the Refugee Olympic Team on June 3rd 2016, exemplifies the IOC's rearticulation of its own relationship to the refugee:

“The intention of this Refugee Olympic Team is to give them a home in the Olympic village together with all the athletes from around the world. The Olympic Anthem will be played in their honor, the Olympic flag will lead them into the Olympic stadium, and in this way we are convinced that this Refugee Olympic Team can send a symbol of hope to all the refugees in the world, and it can send a signal to the international community that refugees are our fellow human beings and are an enrichment to society” (IOC Multimedia Library a2016: 00.01.51)

Once again ‘refugee’ emerges as a nodal point, which the signs of ‘Olympic team’, ‘Olympic village’, ‘Olympic anthem’ and ‘Olympic flag’ are structures around. By linking these signs to ‘refugee’, their meanings are fixed. These signs are no longer just symbols of the Olympic unity and internationalism; they also become symbols of the Refugee Olympic Team. The Olympic flag is now the flag of the refugee. The signs of ‘team’, ‘flag’ and ‘anthem’ indicate national belonging when ordered around the nodal point of ‘nation-state’, and so by substituting itself for a nation-state, the IOC seeks to emulate this connection. They produce the idea that refugees belong with the IOC. If no one else will welcome them, then the IOC will welcome them. The IOC simultaneously reinforces both the hegemony of nation-state discourse within the institution while furthering their goal of materializing as a leader on the international stage.

The IOC continuously used this articulation of ‘flag’, ‘team’ and ‘anthem’ each time they had an official event on the Refugee Olympic Team (IOC Multimedia Library a2016: 00.00.04), (IOC Media: 04.27.02). In the IOC’s rearticulation of its relationship to the refugee, they are still employing the rationality of the nation-state discourse and structure. It is not a subversion of the Olympic Games’ nation-state based structures. The refugee athletes cannot be without a team, a flag or an anthem. They cannot compete as individuals. For the refugee to participate in the Olympic Games, they are rearticulated as quasi-citizens of the IOC. The Refugee Olympic Team’s structures were also molded by the other NOCs. They were given their own entourage composed of coaches, officials, doctors, physical therapists, etc. The IOC continuously emphasized that the ROT had the exact same conditions as all the other NOCs (IOC Media: 04.18.27).

Their new “home” with the IOC is merely a replicate of a nation-state. The refugees are no longer articulated as being outside the nation-state structures of the Olympic Games, because they have been integrated into the temporary “nation-state” of the IOC. As touched upon, antagonism arose with the reemergence of the refugee on the international stage as the refugee figure in itself has historically been articulated as in opposition to the Olympic Games, which is shaped by a nation-state discourse. However, the IOC dissolves the antagonism through a hegemonic intervention where it rearticulates its relationship to the refugee. Through the IOC’s hegemonic intervention, the refugee discourse is undermined from the discursive field from which the nation-state discourse suppresses it by rearticulating its signs. By rearticulating its relationship to the refugee, the IOC makes it so that the refugee now has a sense of belonging with the IOC. The IOC is a champion of refugees. The IOC’s relationship to the refugee does not subvert or rearticulate the nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games, since the refugee is still only able to participate when reintegrating into and representing a quasi-nation. The refugee figure becomes part of the nation-state discourse because her articulation as an outsider or an abnormality reinforces the notion that the nation-state is the norm. The refugee figure ends up reinforcing the very discourse that defines them as an outlier (Haddad 2008:47). As this rearticulation of the nation-state becomes hegemonic, the creation of the Refugee Olympic Team appears as such natural part of the IOC’s work and mission, that we fail to see that they decision is in fact the result of political hegemonic practices. The construction of discourse is never natural or a given. It is a political act that involves the exclusion of certain possibilities and the consequent structuring of relations and norms. The IOC’s articulations have a real effect on social practices such as the opportunities and actions available to refugees.

5.4.5. The discursive struggle over the refugee figure

In his articulation, Bach also links the sign of ‘refugee’ to other signs such as ‘hope’, ‘fellow human beings’ and ‘enrichment to society’. Discourse aims to make signs unambiguous, and the IOC is seeking to fixate the association and meaning that the international community attaches to ‘refugee’. In the IOC’s refugee discourse, the refugee is someone we should admire. The IOC is appealing to our sense of responsibility to all human beings. The refugee is someone full of potential that only

needs the home and support that a nation-state in order to flourish. Once again, the hegemony of the nation-state discourse emerges, as it is assumed that individuals cannot reach their full potential without belonging to a nation-state. Any possibility of a life or accomplishments is tied to a nation-state. Another instance was during Bach's speech on the Refugee Olympic Team at the 129th IOC Session, where he said the following:

“The Refugee Olympic Team will make the world better aware of the magnitude of this crisis. These great athletes will show everyone that despite the unimaginable tragedies that they have faced, anyone can contribute to society through their talent and most important through the strength of the human spirit (IOC Media: 04.27.29).

When the signs of 'great athletes', 'contribute', 'talent', 'strength' and 'human spirit' are structured around the nodal point of 'refugee', the nodal point is filled with meaning through its similar connotations to the other signs. Once again, the IOC is trying to fixate the meaning of the refugee. Here the refugee is given a different meaning. The refugee is articulated as a resource to society. It is in the nation-states own interest to take them in, as both their talent and inner strength are valuable traits. The refugee athletes themselves are an embodiment of this, as their sporting results come to exemplify the possible contribution of the refugee. While discourse fixates meaning, it does dictate the permanence of that fixture. The 'refugee' sign is a floating signifier. Different discourses are trying to fill it with meaning in correlation with their own worldview. For example in nationalism discourse the 'refugee' would be articulated as being a stranger and a threat. Even the IOC invests the 'refugee' with several different meaning depending on their message. As shown, when the IOC wanted to validate their creation of the Refugee Olympic Team, the 'refugee' was in need of hope and help, however in this context, when the IOC wants to persuade the world to welcome refugees, the 'refugee' sign is filled with meaning through its relation to 'hope' and 'enrichment to society'. Depending on what discourses is articulated, the sign of 'refugee' changes meaning. The instability of the sign also makes it difficult for any discourse to temporarily close its meaning, as the discourse is constantly under threat.

5.4.6.The solution lies in the nation-state

The hegemony of the nation-state discourse and its co influence on the formation of the Refugee Olympic team is also apparent during Thomas Bach's speech on the Refugee Olympic Team at the 129th IOC Session in Rio de Janeiro:

“The ultimate goal of this Refugee Olympic Team is that we do not need one anymore. That one day, hopefully, we will have peace in the world and not having people flee from their homes. But it is also to send a signal to the new home countries and the new home NOCs to integrate these refugee athletes as soon as possible. And that the moment they enter the country to not only respect them, to accept them, to help them and to support them, so they can be part of their new society and that they can be part of their new NOC as soon as possible and then can take part in the Olympic Games under the banners of their new National Olympic Committee. That is the ultimate goal of the creation of this Refugee Olympic Team (IOC Media: 04.28.22).

The quote illustrates how the sign of 'home' (i.e. the nation-state) still has a privileged status of in the IOC's rearticulation of its relationship to the refugee. By ordering the signs of 'peace', 'countries', 'NOCs', 'integrate', 'respect', 'accept', 'help', 'support', 'be part of' and 'take part' around the nodal point of 'home', the nation-state is articulated as an essential part of the belonging and peace of humankind. People do not have a home until they are citizens of a nation-state. In the rationality of the nation-state discourse, it is through the refugee's integration into a new country that they are once more able to be a part of society and be a part of the Olympic Games. When individuals exist outside the nation-state, they exist outside of society. They are perceived as a roaming figure looking for a new place to belong. Because refugees are viewed as an exception to the normal state–citizen relationship, they are perceived to be source of instability. The International Refugee Regime was build around this idea, and thus it is in large part set up to restore normal state–citizen relations. Refugee protection is an attempt to correct the deviation from the normal model of international society in which all individuals belong to a nation- state (Haddid 2008:90). The hegemony of the nation-state discourse makes it so that the only perceivable solution to the refugee crisis is for the refugees to become naturalized citizens of their new home country. It is the only way to restore peace and order. The IOC has employed the same nation-state rationality in its formation of

the Refugee Olympic Team. The refugee athletes are now able to take part in the Olympic Games because they have gained a home, a new “nation-state” in the IOC. However, the Refugee Olympic Team is viewed as temporary solution. During press conference on June 3rd 2016, Bach highlighted the story of taekwondo athlete, Raheleh Asemani, as an example of successful integration and the ultimate goal of IOC. She is an Iranian refugee that was able to obtain citizenship and thus compete for the Belgium NOC at the 2016 Olympic Games (IOC Multimedia Library 2016b: 00.10.35). Bach emphasizes that the real goal of the initiative is to encourage the reintegration of refugees into existing nation-states and NOCs. In its rearticulating the IOC’s relationship to the refugee, the organization is still influenced by and reproducing the nation-state discourse. The nation-state is continuously articulated as the solution, rather than the very construction that produces the refugee. It is still unfathomable that the nation-state is not the key to a solution.

5.4.7. The hindrance of the nation-state

However, the hegemonic nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games is also an hindrance to the IOC’s ambitions, as the discourse is based on the National Olympic Committees’ (and the nation-states they represent) sovereignty. The legitimacy of the state system, and as such the nation-state, is based on the concept of state sovereignty, which describes the legitimate exercise of power of the state over a given area of territory or a people. The notion of state sovereignty is the foundational principle of international law and the basis of inter-state relations (Betts 2009:43). The influence of this rationality is apparent in Thomas Bach’s remarks during the 129th IOC Session, as he extends his gratitude to the refugee athletes’ NOCs of origin for agreeing with the nomination of the athletes to the Refugee Olympic Team (IOC Media: 04.24.49). For example, five South Sudanese refugees competed for the Refugee Olympic Team while the South Sudan NOC also participated with 3 athletes at the 2016 Olympic Games. The South Sudan NOC was asked for and gave their approval of the athletes’ application to the ROT. This suggests that sovereignty plays a significant part in organization of the Olympic Games as the IOC sought the former NOCs’ approval when forming the Refugee Olympic Team. If the IOC had taken action without the their approval, it could be perceived to be a breach of their sovereignty as the IOC would be exercising power over people who belong to a nation-state. With the nation-state as the basis of the IOC’s internationalism

discourse, state sovereignty is a cornerstone in any interaction between nation-states, as well as between the IOC and NOCs. Within the nation-state discourse, it is only natural that the IOC respects the authority of its members. It shows that the formation of the ROT is in no way meant to subvert the state system of the Olympic Games as the IOC are making an effort to uphold the nation-state discourse. It should, however, be noted that this example of state sovereignty is paradoxical as the refugee athletes are approved by their former NOCs despite those NOCs no longer being responsible for them because of their refugee status. It can only be assumed that IOC's nation-state rationality meant that the organization wanted to be careful and not overstep any boundaries. It also important to mention, that the IOC has no real leverage against the NOCs (and the nation-states they represent) as the Olympic Games are dependent on their continued goodwill and the participation of the world's nation-states. The IOC has to always balance its mission with its need to maintain positive relations to its members. The principle of state sovereignty means that they cannot force the NOCs without risking the withdrawal of members and thus a loss of influence.

Without any real leverage the IOC has to use alternative measure in order to encourage the nation-states to engage in international cooperation. The IOC has seemingly been inspired by the approach of its collaborator on the initiative, the UNHCR. The UNHCR has come to understand that in order make a positive impact in a world of sovereign nation-states, they have to convince the nation-states of the need to define and redefine national interests in line with the humanitarian requirements of international refugee protection. This has been done by exercising moral leverage on states or linking protection issues to the state's material interests (Haddad 2008:211-212). The formation of the Refugee Olympic Team is a way for the IOC to exercise moral leverage on its members. The articulation of the Refugee Olympic Team appears to be subversive and a possibly intervention into the current structures of meaning in the Olympic Games, however on close examination the refugee is merely rearticulated as temporarily belonging to the quasi-nation of the IOC, while the ultimate goal is still to reintegrate the refugee into the nation-state. The IOC is also trying to fixate a meaning of the refugee, which appeals to the material interests of the nation-states. The IOC hopes to lead by example by rearticulating its relationship with the refugee, which is meant to inspire and

encourage international society to also expand its nationalism discourse so their nation-state focused articulations also include the refugee.

5.4.8. Sub-conclusion

In 2015, the world experienced a record-breaking number of displaced people. The international focus on the refugee crisis in Europe, the subsequent individualistic responses by European nation-states and the rise in nationalism discourse in international society steered the IOC towards action. The IOC is looking to extend its influence in international society and emerge as mediator. The antagonism between the nationalism discourse and the internationalism discourse of the Olympic Games as well as the re-emergence of the refugee figure as a threat to the nation-state discourse, compelled the IOC to create the Refugee Olympic Team. The creation of the Refugee Olympic Team was articulated as a natural extension of the IOC's work and mission.

The continued hegemony of the nation-state discourse within the IOC becomes apparent when examining the articulations of the refugee figure as well as the Refugee Olympic Team. The refugee is articulated as a deviation and a roaming figure, who cannot flourish or be a part of society until they are reintegrating it into the nation-state. The nation-state is articulated as the foundation of society and human life, and thus the only imaginable solution to the refugee problem. The IOC's articulation of the Refugee Olympic Team is not subversion of its nation-state discourse rather it is a hegemonic intervention that rearticulates the refugee as a quasi citizen of the IOC. The refugee is no longer outside the nation-state structures of the Olympic Games since it has been integrated into the "nation-state" of the IOC. The Refugee Olympic Team is also articulated as being temporary solution, which is supposed to encourage a more permanent integration of refugee athletes into their new NOCs. Refugee participation only becomes possible through a temporary integration into the state system of the Olympic Games, however the IOC's plans and willingness to continuously include the refugee in its articulated of the Olympic Games is uncertain.

Due to the organization lack of substantive influence, the Refugee Olympic Team is an alternative a way for the IOC to exercise leverage on its members. While the

refugee is rearticulated as temporary quasi citizen of the IOC, the organization aim is still to reintegrate the refugee into the nation-state. By rearticulating its relationship with the refugee it hopes to persuade nation-states to rearticulate their national interests so they include the refugee figure.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research project has investigated how the International Olympic Committee has articulated the Olympic Games throughout its history, and what those articulations have meant for the Olympic participation of refugees.

At the time of the founding of the Olympic Games, the event was articulated as a way to encourage international cooperation and reduce the risk of international conflict. From the outset, the nation-state was articulated as a fundamental part of Pierre de Coubertin's internationalism discourse and the Olympic Games. The nation-state was viewed as the genesis of human life and all international interaction. The prevalent nation-state discourse had significant effect on the articulation the Olympic Games, which was structured around nationality and the nation-state. At the time, it was inconceivable that a person could not belong to nation-state, so the structures put in place as a result of the nation-state discourse made it impossible for refugee athletes to participate in the Olympic Games.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the state system and the nation-state became the constitutive norm of world politics. The nation-state discourse had become hegemonic in society and in the IOC's articulation of the Olympic Games. The Olympic Games were articulated as being dependent on the nation-state. However, discourse can always be undermined. In 1952, the Special Committee of the COE contested the exclusionary practices of the hegemonic nation-state discourse of the Olympic Games. The refugee emerged from the field of discursivity to threaten the hegemony of the nation-state discourse. The IOC dissolved the antagonism through a hegemonic intervention, where it rearticulated the Olympic Games' relationship to the refugee so that the figure was no longer merely an excluded possibility but rearticulated as incompatible with the institution. The meaning of the refugee is fixed as intergovernmental, which makes the refugee athlete incompatibly with the nation-state based structures and policies of the Olympic Games.

In the wake of the refugee crisis and the subsequent rise in nationalism discourse in international society, the IOC articulated itself and the Olympic Games as a

temporary home for the refugee figure. By creating the Refugee Olympic Team, the IOC was looking to extend its international influence while also dissolving the antagonism between the nation-state discourse and the refugee figure as well as the nationalism discourse and the internationalism discourse. The IOC's creation of the Refugee Olympic Team is not subversion of the hegemonic nation-state discourse rather it is a hegemonic intervention that rearticulates the refugee as a quasi citizen of the IOC. The refugee is no longer in the nation-state discourse's field of discursivity because it has been integrated into the temporary "nation-state" of the IOC. The refugee figure ends up reinforcing the very discourse that excludes it. Refugee participation is articulated as a possibility through the refugee figure's temporary reintegration into the state system of the Olympic Games. The Refugee Olympic Team is articulated as being temporary solution, which is supposed to urge forward a more permanent integration of refugee athletes into their new NOCs. By rearticulating its relationship with the refugee, the IOC hopes to urge nation-states to rearticulate their national interests to include the refugee. The Refugee Olympic Team is a way for the IOC to exercise moral leverage on its members. The Olympic participation of refugees simultaneously reinforces the hegemony of nation-state discourse within the Olympic Games while also furthering the IOC's goal of being viewed as a mediator and a leader on the international stage.

Articulations are often influenced by hegemonic discourses. The IOC's various articulations are a result of the historical and socio-political context. However, the discourse analysis has established that the nation-state discourse has consistently governed the IOC's articulation of the Olympic Games and consequently the possibility of refugee participation.

The nation-state discourse has been hegemonic throughout most of Olympic history, however the signs that make up its totality has shifted over time in an effort to dissolve any discursive threats. When it was first articulated, the Olympic Games excluded the possibility of refugee participation as anything existing outside the nation-state was pushed to the field of discursivity. Then when the hegemony of the nation-state discourse in the Olympic Games came under threat after the end of the Second World War, the IOC rearticulated the nation-state discourse as to re-establish the figure's incompatibly with the Games. Lastly in 2016, the Olympic

Games were rearticulated to include the refugee figure in the wake of the refugee crisis. Through this rearticulation the nation-state discourse is reinforced as refugee participation was articulated as possible through the refugee's temporary integration into the quasi nation-state of the IOC. The IOC has adapted and fixed the meaning of the Olympic Games in new ways when faced with antagonism, however it has never subverted or abandoned foundational worldview of the nation-state discourse. Olympic refugee participation has only been made possible because it is rearticulated as a part of the hegemonic nation-state discourse.

6.2. Limitations and future research

My perspective as researcher is constructed, never objective or complete. My choice of research question, theoretical framework and method inevitably excludes other possibilities and other relevant areas of research.

My sole focus has been on discursive construction of the Olympic Games by the International Olympic Committee, which means that the discourse analysis does not include or investigate articulations from other international actors. I have incorporated socio-political events into my analysis so as to contextualize and account for dominant discourses in society throughout history, however in my analysis I have only analyzed and accounted for the discourse of one actor. It would therefore be relevant to do a comparative discourse analysis of how the Refugee Olympic Team was discursively constructed by the media, the IOC and the NOCs. It would further explore how the IOC's hegemonic intervention was received and articulated by other international actors. I would also recommend further research on the Refugee Olympic Team and refugee participation in the Olympic Games. The IOC articulated the ROT as a temporary solution, and it is still undecided whether another team will be formed for the next Summer Olympic Games in 2020. It would be valuable to trace the discursive construction of the decision and how it fits with the IOC's future articulation of the Olympic Games.

The research does also not explore or account for other discursive changes that have occurred within the Olympic Games over the course of its history. It is essential to also investigate and compare the discursive changes that have happened within the economics, politics and staging of the Olympic Games. Recent years have seen

large shifts because of the increased commercialization, securitization, media coverage and elaborate hosting process of the Olympic Games. There are countless other areas of research as the event is constantly growing and changing. It also would be relevant to examine how the nation-state discourse has influenced these other discursive changes within the Olympic Games.

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