A Game for the Global North: 
The 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang 
and South Korean Diplomacy

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Jung Woo Lee

The University of Edinburgh
OUTLINE

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1. The Winter Olympics: The White Games?

The winter Olympic Games is almost exclusively the preserve of a narrow, generally wealthy, predominantly white athletes and nations (Farhi, 2006).

“The European and North American Expensive Sports Festival.”

The Winter Olympic Games is a cultural and political event through which Western hegemony and a discourse of white supremacy are continually represented and reproduced (King, 2007).
1. The Winter Olympics:
The White Games?

* The Games for the Global North

The Dominant (Western) Cultural and Economic Ideology

Culture Industry for the global sporting haves
Economically, South Korea has undergone a transformation from a semi periphery in 1980s to semi-core country in 2010s, and it continuously aspires to join a group of the global core.

* Post colonial nation
* Divided nation
* American Influence
2. The Structure of Global Economy and Cultural Politics

* Zones of Prestige and Emulation (Collins, 2001; Maguire, 2011)

**Zones of Prestige:**
Multiple or singular centres where **culturally impressive activities** are produced, displayed and consumed (Maguire, 2011: 1021)

**Zones of Emulation:**
- Emerging States
- New Economic Power
- Relativity weak culture/sport industry

**Zones of Sporting Prestige:**
- Western Cultural Hegemony
- Sport related Soft Power (i.e. NBA, MLB, EPL)
3. Mega Sporting Events in South Korea

* Typology of sport mega events (Lee, in press)

**A Neo Liberal Model:**
Highly commercialised and profit oriented events
[Corporations and Trans-national Capitalist Class]

**A Sport Development (Soft Power) Model:**
Events that focus on feasible pre and post event legacies
[Public organisations, NGOs, Central and Local Government]

**A Emerging State (Coming Out Party) Model:**
Events that are organised to fulfil the needs of power elites
[Political Elites, Trans-national Capitalist Class]
3. Mega Sporting Events in South Korea

The three historical periods of the mega sporting events held or to be held in South Korea (Lee, in press)

The Cold War Period
- Ideological Conflict
- Economic Development
- Nordpolitik

The Globalisation Period
- Reconciliation
- Economic Competence
- Multiculturalism

The “Korean Wave” Period
- Neo-liberalism
- Economic Powerhouse
- Korean Soft Power (?)
4. The 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang

The narrative of Yuna Kim, the Olympic figure skating champion

From Vancouver to Durban

Figure skating as European and American dominant sport (body politics)

Korea- Japan rivalry: Postcolonial Cultural Politics

A Cathartic experience for Korean people to overcome orientalism and dependency on the West (the U.S.) symbolically
4. The 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang

The Winter Olympic Games:
the mega events for the Global North

* South Korean government's desire to be recognised as a global core in the world politics

* Dream Program: International Winter Sport Development

* North and South Korean Relations (?)
5. Critique: Winter Olympic Sceptics

- Cultural Imperialism (Tomlinson, 2001)
- The Winter Olympic Games in Decline (Agenda 2020)
- The Myth of Hosting Sports Mega Event as a Source of Soft Power (Lee, in press)