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Black, White, and Red All Over: A Thematic Analysis of Selected Canadian and American Newspapers Coverage of the 1968 Mexico City Massacre

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Kinesiology

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BLACK, WHITE, AND RED ALL OVER: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED
CANADIAN AND AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS COVERAGE OF THE 1968 MEXICO
CITY MASSACRE

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

John Andrew Mitchell Petrella

Graduate Program in Kinesiology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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The University of Western Ontario
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Abstract

This thesis investigated the politically-charged responses of American and Canadian newspapers, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Ottawa Citizen*, during October 1968 to the Mexico City massacre. Through a qualitative thematic analysis of these newspapers, dominant themes of the massacre were identified and analyzed using Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding paradigm. In this examination it was found that U.S. newspapers provided knowledgeable and comprehensive reporting of the massacre while Canadian newspapers presented only a cursory examination. The limited coverage of Canadian newspapers was examined against other Canadian media sources and official government and Olympic authority reports including: Canadian magazines *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, federal government speeches, debates in the House of Commons, and Canadian Olympic Association personal documents and official reports. These divergent presentations of the massacre in their newspapers reflected the historically unique relationships each country had with Mexico, and prominence of the Olympics in world politics.

Keywords

Mexico City massacre, Tlatelolco, 1968 Mexico City Olympics, Olympics, Thematic Analysis

Acknowledgments

A wiser man than I once wrote that this section is the most difficult to write. He was right.

This past year has been an extremely rewarding one with many important lessons learned and experiences gained. While the research and writing that has gone into this thesis was a rather solitary experience, a platform of support has enabled me to create a product of which I am proud.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Chaos, loud explosions, gunfire, and uncertainty: These amongst other descriptors have been used to describe the Mexico City massacre (also known, and interchangeably referred to in this thesis, as the Tlatelolco massacre). The Mexico City massacre of 2 October 1968 occurred in the Tlatelolco section of Mexico City in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, when government troops fired upon a student demonstration which was taking place in the square. The massacre ended with unconfirmed numbers of Mexican citizens left killed, injured, and in prison for involvement in the Mexican student movement of which the violence at Tlatelolco was a part. The Mexico City massacre has come to be associated with the 1968 Mexico City Olympics because of the close proximity of the two events, as the massacre occurred 10 days before the start of the Games.¹

The massacre's potential ramifications on the upcoming Olympics were evident. If violence spilled over during the Olympics, the athletes, spectators, and facilities could be put at risk. Those travelling to the Olympics from other countries were therefore vulnerable if violence continued, putting citizens of many foreign nations into a situation of uncertainty. The international response to the Mexico City massacre was varied; countries broached the subject in divergent manners from supporting the continued Mexican hosting of the Games, to calls for the Games to be moved. The non-uniform responses to the massacre were potentially mediated by the fact that many citizens were travelling into the maelstrom of political unrest soon after the massacre. What effect did the impending entrance of citizens from countries around the world have on the international responses to the massacre? Canada and the United States both sent large

delegations to the Olympic Games, meaning the aftereffects of the massacre might well impact on a significant number of citizens from each of these countries. Equally, both countries had important political relationships with Mexico which brings into question the possibility of these political relationships influencing the responses of each country to the Mexico City massacre.

The relationships of Canada and the United States to Mexico were vastly different in 1968. Canada and Mexico had only begun a diplomatic relationship in 1944, and though their political relationships strengthened throughout the 1960s, the countries remained relatively separate from one another politically and economically.² The Canadian-Mexican relationship could be characterized as one of burgeoning interest for both parties, but one which ultimately was new and untested.³ Both countries appeared eager to appeal to the other for mutual political and economic benefits. In 1965, Canada sent 51 million dollars worth of exports to Mexico, third largest amongst Latin American countries behind Venezuela and Cuba.⁴ The Canadian government seemed eager to strengthen and enhance the flourishing Canadian-Mexican relationship as seen in the example of the Pierre Trudeau's government-sponsored, large mining mission to Latin America wherein Mexico was featured prominently.⁵

While the Canadian-Mexican relationship was blossoming anew, the United States and Mexico held a long-standing, complicated and, at times, fractious though close, relationship. Since the 19th century, conflict has been a pervasive feature of American-Mexican relations. During these times of discord, America, as the larger and more powerful country, imposed its will on Mexico.⁶ In 1845 War broke out between the two countries over territorial disputes in Texas which culminated in American troops

conquering Mexico City.⁷ Conflict continued as the United States intervened during the Mexican Revolution, which began in 1910, by backing certain Mexican factions and also by threatening to send its own troops into Mexico.⁸ Economically, the trade relationship between the two nations was well-established by 1968 and, though the nations had a trying past, the countries were inseparable. Trade agreements were struck in the 1880s and continued to be enacted through the 1960s creating an extensive economic relationship which benefitted both countries.⁹

The arduous relationship between America and Mexico historically bred a level of fraternal pestering which took the form of each country ridiculing one another when the opportunity presented itself. The 1968 Mexico City Olympics provided an ample opportunity for both the United States and Mexico to antagonize the other with vindictive reporting while knowing that their symbiotic relationship was already well established. Segments of the American press began to lament the awarding of the Olympic Games to Mexico City because they believed Mexicans incapable of hosting such an important international event.¹⁰ Specifically irksome was the fact that Mexico City had been chosen over Detroit. General feelings from the American press indicated a level of a superiority complex Americans felt over the perceived inferior Mexicans. A number of verbal jabs were directed towards the ineptitude and unreliability of Mexicans which would serve to jeopardize the Olympic Games.¹¹

The Mexican press, in turn, often volleyed criticism towards the Americans. In the aftermath of the Mexico City massacre, for example, reports from the Mexican press, and from government officials, implied that a meddling American Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.) provoked Mexican students to demonstrate against the government.¹²

Internal strife within American society was a relished opportunity for the Mexican press and government to point out the inequities and problems within the United States. One such instance occurred when student protests and demonstrations advocating for social reforms were held in Chicago in 1968. Mexicans were eager to point this out in the press as an example of America not being a utopian land where social inequality did not exist.¹³

The Mexico City massacre occurred during the Cold War era, which spanned from 1946 until 1990. The Cold War had a profound influence on many global processes. International relations, trade, commerce, travel, and cultural exchanges, among other things, were all affected to some extent by the political tensions which characterized the Cold War era.¹⁴ Examples of the effects of the political tensions of the Cold War influencing global processes are numerous and include: the United States trade embargo of Cuba and the restriction of travel for citizens of the Soviet Union on the basis of nomenklatura, where only the privileged were afforded the ability to travel freely.¹⁵

Tension during the Cold War was largely derived from political differences between the western and the eastern blocs. The political blocs were comprised of nations that aligned themselves with either of the two world superpowers, the United States or Soviet Union. The political tensions experienced between western and eastern bloc nations were the product of ideological differences (different systems of political ideas and beliefs) between the capitalist west and the communist east which led to ideological battles between both sides. These struggles of different political philosophies between the west and the east took many different forms, such as proxy wars fought in satellite states such as Vietnam, technological advancement in the race to the moon and the nuclear arms race, and struggles through sport, to name a few. No matter the forum in which

political battles were waged, the goal of these struggles remained the same: both the western and eastern bloc nations intended to show the rest of the world, especially those nations not aligned with either world power, that their ideologies and political structure were superior to that of their rivals.¹⁶ Mexico, as an unaligned nation, was coveted by both political blocs owing to its strategic location as a neighbor to the U.S.A. and its large population and land area.

Sport provided a fertile stage on which these Cold War ideological struggles took place. Essentially, sport was a venue where ideological battles were waged without the fear of mutually assured military destruction occurring.¹⁷ Sport, as a product of the political nature it took on during this time, became a symbolic form of political posturing. The 1968 Mexico City Olympics fell within the politically-charged atmosphere of the Cold War and, as a result, the Games were shaped by political considerations to a large degree. While Cold War tensions escalated and dissipated sporadically throughout the years, 1968 was a year in which tensions were unmistakably high.¹⁸ In 1968 the famous student protests across France and the United States occurred, where many educated youths voiced their concerns and displeasure with government policies, often in the form of protest demonstrations. Western nations such as the United States feared the left-leaning nature of the worldwide student movement which was of great concern to the governments that feared communism would envelop and distort these student movements.¹⁹ The paranoia of western governments was reflected by the demonization of all things thought to be associated with left-wing politics by connecting the political and ideological left to communism and totalitarianism.

The significant infusion of other politically-sensitive issues in 1968 brought Cold War tensions into further focus beyond the 1968 student movement. One such event was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. In post-Second World War Europe, Czechoslovakia fell within the Soviet sphere of influence and, as a result, it was forced, under Soviet pressure, to take on the Soviet communist governance structure. The Czechoslovaks, who had been part of a democratic nation before the war, began to protest communist rule in the 1960s. The anti-communist demonstrations of the Czechoslovaks against their communist government, and their Soviet puppeteers, hit a high water mark in 1968 and, consequently, the Soviets invaded in 1968 to suppress the protest movement. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia crushed the anti-establishment protest movement and returned Czechoslovakia to the pre-1968 status of a Soviet satellite state.²⁰ As a reaction to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, many western nations expressed their dismay by criticizing the Soviet invasion as an example of Soviet imperialism and the disregard with which the Soviets viewed the sovereignty of other nations. Given the proximity of Czechoslovakia to the western bloc, especially places such as Austria and other European nations, the concern of western nations was that this invasion put other western bloc countries at risk. The condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia was clearly voiced in the many media articles published in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen* and in the United States, in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, during October 1968, shortly after the invasion occurred. Coverage of the plight of Czechoslovak citizens was prominent within these popular newspapers, creating a discourse in the popular media which demonized the Soviet's flagrant violation of sovereignty and human rights.

The 1968 Mexico City Olympics were another event marked by a politically-charged character. The 1968 Mexico City Olympics were fraught with political influences and overtones from their outset. Mexico City officials, like those from many other nations, desired to host the Olympics long before 1968, as they unsuccessfully bid for the 1956 and 1960 Olympics.²¹ The Mexican government sought to exploit the international attention given to the Olympics to provide the world with a positive glimpse of Mexico and, thus, a positive view of the Mexican government itself and, in turn, the nation.²² While many nations use the Olympics to ‘show off’ their countries to a global audience, the Mexicans did so specifically to gain credibility in the eyes of industrialized nations. According to Keith Brewster, the desire for acceptance among nations stemmed from an inferiority complex held by many Mexicans, including their government, from their history as a Spanish colony.²³ Mexico had only become an independent nation from Spain in 1810 which made Mexico a relatively young nation at the time of the 1968 Games. Additionally, the Mexican Revolution - a civil war- occurred from 1910 until at least 1917.²⁴ Such instability in combination with the youthfulness of the country provided a potent mixture of reasons for the Mexican government to attempt to shine a positive light on its country. The 1968 Games were positioned by Mexican officials as an event which would lead to international confirmation of the development of the country. The Olympics, the Mexican government felt, was an event which would show that Mexico was a fully-transitioned first world nation.²⁵

While the motivations for Mexico to host the Olympics were political, as most Olympics were and are, the IOC’s decision to award Mexico the 1968 Olympic Games was also politically motivated. The Olympic Games had become increasingly politicized

with the introduction of the Soviet Union into the Olympic movement in 1952. The Soviets, along with other eastern bloc nations, dominated the Olympic sport competitions during the Cold War period in large part due to the state-sponsorship model these nations employed. The state-sponsorship model allowed athletes to focus more intently on sport as the state looked after trivial matters such as accommodation and food.²⁶ The dominance of eastern bloc athletes brought about a quasi-arms race towards the top of the Olympic podium as both eastern and western bloc nations alike began to treat the Olympics as a de-facto political arena. The IOC, with rhetoric which stated the Olympic Games were free from political interference, became enveloped in the Cold War tensions upon Soviet re-entry to the Olympics in 1952.

The Olympics, during the Cold War, especially post-1952, took on more symbolic political importance. The 1956 Melbourne Olympics provided an early example. The water-polo match at the Melbourne Games between the Soviets and Hungary turned violent. This violence mimicked the significant political friction between the two nations at the time, in light of the Soviet quashing of Hungarian protests against communist rule.²⁷ Another example of the political nature of the Olympics during the Cold War was the doping culture which resulted from a win-at-all-costs mentality which was prevalent because of the desire of nations to win as many medals as possible. By winning medals, many nations believed they appeared superior to rival bloc nations. A culture of suspicion developed, and western nations often accused the Soviets and other eastern bloc nations of doping and cheating. For example, American gold medalist, Rob Strachan, stated, “If you look at the East Germans, they don’t look exactly like they’re girls. They’re quite a bit bigger than most of the men on the American team. They could go out for football at

USC. They've got some big guys there."²⁸ The IOC, as a result, was keen to avoid further antagonizing the western nations by granting the Olympic Games to cities within the eastern bloc. Likewise, the IOC, to maintain the image of political neutrality, did not want to further isolate eastern bloc nations by awarding the Olympic Games to western bloc nations.²⁹

The 1963 IOC meeting in Baden Baden West Germany to vote for the right to host the 1968 Olympics brought the political orientation of the 1968 Olympic Games into greater clarity. The candidate cities to host the 1968 Olympic Games were: Buenos Aires, Detroit, Lyon, and Mexico City. Detroit and Lyon were cities of leading western bloc nations, the U.S.A. and France respectively, and the IOC counted this fact against those two cities for fear of antagonizing eastern bloc nations.³⁰ Buenos Aires was a city in turmoil, given a recent military coup which occurred in Argentina in 1962-1963.³¹ The final vote count reflected these tensions as Mexico City won by virtue of simply not being firmly within either bloc and it appeared stable when juxtaposed with the tumultuous nature of Buenos Aires at the time. The IOC viewed Mexico as both outside of Cold War considerations and as a nation which was booming economically with annual growth rates between five and six percent throughout the 1960s and up to seven percent in 1967.³² These criteria gave the IOC confidence that the political overtones of the 1968 Games may have been lessened and that the Games were to be hosted in a stable and peaceful nation which assured the safety of those attending.

While Mexico City, and Mexico as a whole, was viewed globally as a beacon of hope and progress in Latin America in terms of social and political stability, the country was fraught with tensions throughout the lead-up to the Olympic Games.³³ The civil

unease in the months before the Games in the summer months of 1968 were not, however, an unprecedented aspect of Mexican society. Social unrest had long been a hallmark of Mexican society and the accompaniment of demonstrations to add to the unrest was not uncommon. Demonstrations generally occurred in Mexico because groups of citizens were dissatisfied by social inequity and ineffective economic policies. Following the history of social demonstrations by Mexican citizens, such as the doctors, rail workers, or teachers' strikes of the 1950s, Mexican students began to publically display their disenchantment with both Mexican society and the government.³⁴

The Mexican student movement developed in late July 1968 initially as a reaction to the heavy handedness of riot police who were responding to clashes between rival Mexican student groups.³⁵ The effect of the gruff handling of the situation between student groups by police had the consequence of uniting student groups within Mexico against a common enemy: the state. Throughout August and September 1968, the student movement in Mexico swelled in popularity. Some 200,000 people protested against the government on 13 August and 300,000 marched in anger on 27 August.³⁶ As the Mexican student movement grew in both sheer numbers and visibility given the public nature of the protests, so grew the concern of the Mexican government over the character of the student movement. The Mexican government feared outside influences, like Cuban communists, who posed the risk of distorting the student movement.³⁷ The combination of an increasingly sophisticated and prominent student movement and a worried government came to loggerheads in September 1968. On 18 September, the military invaded Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico, UNAM, after a battle between students and the army which left unconfirmed numbers of students dead.³⁸ The rest of

September went by with relative calm as student demonstrations did not reach the size and scale of those previously described, perhaps for fear of renewed brutal government suppression. On 1 October the American ambassador in Mexico City, Covey T. Oliver, contently wired home, "Tensions seem to be easing in Mexico City."³⁹

The relative tranquility of the later part of September and early October 1968 was shattered by the Mexico City massacre on 2 October 1968. At the time of the massacre, those who were present in Mexico City described a hectic event which led to various stories of what happened in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas. While the accounts of the Mexico City massacre vary, certain features of the various accounts appear consistent. At about 6:00 PM on 2 October Mexican government helicopters flew above the square in Tlatelolco, an area of Mexico City, where student demonstrators, numbering roughly 5,000, were holding a protest.⁴⁰ The demonstrations of the students on this fateful day were described as having a "picniclike" atmosphere.⁴¹ Shortly after the government helicopters flew over the square, possibly only minutes after, the Olimpia Battalion- a secret Mexican security force trained for the Olympics- and army troops sealed all exits from the square. The Mexican government forces proceeded to fire on the crowd from the balconies that lined the square, which caused many fatalities. The killing lasted for over an hour before briefly subsiding and then resuming until about 11:00 PM.⁴² In all it has been estimated, though not confirmed, between 300 and 400 were killed, while roughly 2,000 are thought to have been jailed as punishment for their involvement in the demonstration.⁴³ Wild stories proliferated in the aftermath of the massacre as to what had happened. British journalist John Rodda of the *Guardian* went so far as to describe that

he heard that the bodies of student protestors were being dropped into the Gulf of Mexico.⁴⁴

The international response to Tlatelolco was varied. Generally accounts of the international response to the massacre showed that the international community maintained support of the continued hosting of the Olympic Games in Mexico City and rarely was criticism directed at the Mexican government.⁴⁵ The U.S. government was concerned about the safety of American athletes and tourists attending the Olympics; however, it supported the Mexican government and the continued hosting of the Olympics in Mexico. Japan, hosts of the preceding Olympic Games of Tokyo 1964, showed its support for the Games to go ahead through a telegram of encouragement sent to Mexico. Giulio Onesti, an Italian Olympic Committee member, and Berge Phillips, an Australian, differed in that they responded to the massacre with trepidation and concern as evidenced by their co-signed letter which stated they had a “serious preoccupation due to the events which prejudice the Olympic atmosphere and serenity.”⁴⁶

Determining the responses of various Canadian institutions to Tlatelolco sheds light upon the political climate of Canadian society in 1968 and also illuminates the manner in which Canadians regarded the importance of the safety of their athletes in Mexico City. Mere days after the events of 2 October at Tlatelolco, Canada sent its athletic delegation, comprised of 144 competitors, 34 officials, 21 journalists and “many more” TV personnel to cover the 1968 Mexico City Olympics.⁴⁷ Canada, in 1968, positioned itself as a highly moral country which stood up for human rights throughout the world. Examples of the moral posturing of Canada are abundant and Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp’s speech on October 9, 1968 to the United

Nations General Assembly provides an illustration of Canada's moral stance. In the speech Sharp explained that Canada, "cannot accept that a community of interest, real or alleged, political, cultural, or economic, entitles one country to take upon itself the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another." Sharp went on to describe the immorality of the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia and the need for the international community to uphold human rights in worn-torn Nigeria.⁴⁸ Furthermore, by 1968 Canada had started developing stronger political and economic ties to Latin American countries; in fact diplomatic relations with the Mexicans were established in 1944.⁴⁹

The preparation of the United States Olympic team for the 1968 Olympic Games was dominated by issues of race relations. The civil rights movement in the United States which called for equal opportunities for African-Americans penetrated the American sport movement in the late 1960s.⁵⁰ Many black athletes called for equality in a sport system where many felt themselves pawns being abused by the white-dominated American sport system.⁵¹ This awakening of African American athlete calls for equality was augmented by an Olympic boycott movement initiated by many countries to protest the IOC's reluctance to disqualify South Africa, site of Apartheid racist policies towards blacks, provided another reason besides the racial inequality in American sport for African-American athlete discontent entering the 1968 Games.⁵² The boycott movement provided a divisive feature of American preparations for the Olympics, as some, most notably UCLA's basketball superstar Lew Alcindor (later Kareem Abdul-Jabbar) boycotted the Olympics. Sentiments were expressed by many of the virtues or downfall a boycott would bring.⁵³ Former African-American athletes such as Jesse Owens and Jackie Robinson refused to support the growing calls for African-American athletes to

boycott the Games, while equally certain members of the U.S. Olympic team, notably the track athletes Tommie Smith and Lee Evans, felt a boycott was an effective way to protest the racial inequalities in America.⁵⁴ The boycott movement amongst American athletes eventually dwindled to the point where only a few, though notable in Alcindor's case, refused to participate in the Olympics. The disaffected athletes refused, however, to rule out the possibility of demonstrating their unhappiness with the racial environment of the United States.

Review of Literature

The copious amount and depth of the general Cold War literature provides strong foundations for study of particular events which occurred during the Cold War, such as, in this case, the Mexico City massacre. Extensive bodies of knowledge of the Cold War are available and these include: Peter Kenez's *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*, and the academic journal *Cold War History*. A multitude of other sources provide excellent overviews of the events and the associated political tensions which characterized the Cold War period. For the purposes of this thesis, certain works which focused explicitly on 1968-a particularly volatile year- provide important and meaningful insights into the many significant events which occurred during the year. Mark Kurlansky's *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* and Sheman, Van Dijk, Alinder, and Aneesh, eds., *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives* both portray, in vivid detail, the student demonstration movement of 1968 amongst other formative events such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The accessibility of numerous Cold War works allowed me to taper my review of literature further therefore enabling me to determine the viability of my research topic. The result of the narrowing of my review of literature was achieved by reviewing sources which placed the Olympic Games in political contexts. Upon a review of literature there appears to be a wealth of sources describing the political nature of the Olympic Games. Many of these sources communicate the precise ways in which the Olympic Games have been subjugated to political influences throughout the event's history.⁵⁵ The Soviet Union's political uses of Olympic sport were documented by historian James Riordan in *Sport in the Soviet Union*. Riordan explained that the Soviet sport system aimed at gaining international recognition through sport. John Hoberman documented the political uses of the Olympic Games during the Cold War era in *Olympic Crisis: Sport Politics and the Moral Order*. He explained why certain actions such as the boycotts of the 1980 and 1984 Olympics occurred due to political considerations. Other works, such as *Olympic Politics* by Christopher Hill, Alfred Senn's *Power, Politics and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that shaped the Games*, and Kevin Wamsley's *The Global Sport Monopoly* provide overviews of the politics of the Olympic Games throughout their history. Examples used in these works include the 1936 Nazi Olympics, the boycotted 1980 and 1984 Olympics, and the political uses of the Olympics by countries to project a positive reflection of their countries to a worldwide audience.

Upon reviewing the literature regarding the political uses of the Olympic Games, the scope of my literature review was again narrowed to the Olympic Games and politics during the Cold War era. The majority of the literature regarding the Olympics and

politics placed a great amount of focus upon the effects of politics on the Olympics during the Cold War, but other examples like the 1936 Nazi Olympics were discussed. The existing literature of the Olympic Games and politics during the Cold War was abundant and the effects of external world political conditions upon the Olympics became extenuated and more noticeable as the Cold War progressed between 1946 and 1991. Essentially, the Olympics, during the Cold War became a venue for eastern and western bloc nations to wage proxy-political warfare, and the Games, as a result, became increasingly political.⁵⁶ A large quantity of the Cold War literature in this respect examines the Cold War Games of 1980 and 1984 and, thereby, the tensions between the two most prominent actors in the Cold War, the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. Additionally, significant research has focused upon the rivalry between eastern and western bloc nations in Olympic competition. Examples of the study between Soviet and American rivalry to achieve the best possible results at the Games include Thomas Hunt's *Sports, Drugs, and the Cold War: The Conundrum of Olympic Doping Policy, 1970-1979* which documents how drug use was utilized by these rivals as a way to gain advantage over one another. This Cold War Olympic literature provides an excellent framework and foundation which grounds this study of the 1968 Olympics to the political contexts which occurred during the lead-up to and hosting of the Mexico City Games. Due to the political nature of the Olympic Games, an historical-political lens is best suited for this study.⁵⁷

The 1968 Mexico City Olympic literature, upon review, has not predominantly focused upon Tlatelolco. The existing 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games English language literature largely revolves around the Black Power protest of Tommy Smith and

John Carlos. The Black Power protest occurred on the podium after the 200m final at the 1968 Games when Smith and Carlos, African-American Olympic athletes, raised their fists as a symbolic demonstration against the racial policies of the United States.

Excellent research has been conducted on this event, and Amy Bass's work *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, Douglas Hartmann's *Race, Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*, and Simon Henderson's book chapter '*Nasty Demonstrations by Negroes*': *The place of the Smith-Carlos Podium Salute in the Civil Rights Movement* are amongst the examples of scholarly literature regarding the Black Power salute.⁵⁸ These works effectively plot the course of events which precipitated the Black Power protest and also successfully investigate the effects of the protest thereafter. The predominance of 1968 Olympic research studying the Black Power salute has likely resulted from the interest the event garnered by North American researchers because of the involvement of American athletes.

In addition to the large body of literature regarding Tommy Smith and John Carlos, 1968 Olympic literature has also focused upon the effects and concerns of hosting the Olympics at altitude. The Mexico City Games represented the first time in Olympic history that the Olympic Games were hosted at altitude, which raised concerns of many nations about its effects on athletic performance.⁵⁹ Like the altitude literature, research has also been conducted on the introduction of drug and gender testing of athletes for the 1968 Olympics.⁶⁰ Neither the altitude nor the doping literature is as abundant as the Black Power literature, though a significant amount of research has been conducted to address both issues.

In comparison to the abundance of literature examining the Black Power protest, research examining the 1968 Mexico City massacre appears to be much more limited. Some excellent research on Tlatelolco has been conducted, notably by Kevin Witherspoon and Keith and Claire Brewster. The Mexico City massacre literature has largely revolved around the precipitating factors which caused the massacre to take place.⁶¹ These causal factors were, namely, the social and political situation of Mexico in 1968 which caused disaffected Mexican students to demonstrate against government rule. Income inequality and an authoritarian government structure were major factors which inspired the Mexican student movement.⁶² Kevin Witherspoon concluded that the United States was acutely aware of the happenings in the Mexican student movement, including the massacre. The high level of American interest in the student movement was precipitated by their concern that the student movement was directed by communists. Equally, this paranoia that communism had grasped the Mexican student movement also explains the American placating of the Mexican government's murderous suppression of the massacre.⁶³ Keith and Claire Brewster's research has focused on the intersection of the Olympics and the student movement and is generally descriptive in nature, not offering specific arguments but rather describing the student movement and the massacre as it happened according to archival sources and first-hand recollections.⁶⁴

A specific analysis of newspaper representations of the Mexico City massacre has not been conducted. In *Before the Eyes of the World*, Witherspoon examined the *New York Times* and selected other newspapers. However, this was done as a part of his much larger project which inspected the 1968 Games in a much broader sense. As a result, Witherspoon was not solely focused on the newspaper representations of the massacre,

and the meaning structures implicit within these representations. Upon reviewing the literature, it is evident that no research has been conducted to examine the Canadian response to Tlatelolco, and no study has been devoted solely to examining the responses of American newspapers to the massacre. The lack of research on the Canadian and American newspaper responses to the Mexico City massacre therefore highlights a gap in the Olympic studies literature which my research addresses. The significance of my research lies in the development of an understanding of how the external historical-political factors of 1968 and the Cold War impacted upon two nations differently. Specifically, significance is gained from considering how a western bloc middle power nation, Canada, and the leader of the western bloc, the United States, confronted the historical-political context of 1968 and the Cold War, and how their confrontations manifested themselves in the newspaper reporting on Tlatelolco. The existing literature falls short in assessing international reactions to the Mexico City massacre.

Purpose

The goal of this research is to analyze the immediate reactions of major Canadian and American newspapers to the Mexico City massacre. Immediacy in this thesis will refer to the Canadian and American press reaction from 2 October- 31 October.

Rationale

The Mexico City massacre represented a level of violence and brutality previously unmatched in Olympic history. As mentioned, Canada, at the time of the massacre in 1968, positioned itself as a highly moral nation. Research into the Canadian response to Tlatelolco will provide insights into external factors that molded the

Canadian response, and the context of its response given its publically-stated moral posture on human rights.

By contrast, the United States during 1968 found itself at the head of the western political bloc and as one of the world's two superpowers. The Americans eagerly extolled the virtues of the capitalist, democratic west and derided what they saw as the dictatorial, communist east. A significant degree of 'moralizing' was done by the Americans to clearly show how their system was democratic and just, and how communism was authoritarian and unjust. By analyzing the newspaper treatments of the Mexico City massacre, insights into how the newspapers handled events where leftist political aims were central were made through careful examination of these newspaper reports of Tlatelolco.

The rationale for analyzing newspapers relies upon John E. Richardson's *Analysing Newspapers: An approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. In this book Richardson states, "The sourcing and construct of the news is intimately linked with the actions and opinions of (usually powerful) social groups."⁶⁵ Richardson also claims that the power and significance of news journalism to contemporary society warrants examination and scrutiny because of the power effects journalism has in informing the general population of news events.⁶⁶ The language used in newspaper discourse is social, enacts identity, is active, has power, and is political according to Richardson's view of language.⁶⁷ Richardson's assumptions align with Stuart Hall's theoretical approaches to the examination of media discourse which were used to analyze data in this thesis. Hall argued that news is encoded with implicit meaning structures which are politically oriented and that news is decoded by audiences with meaning structures which are

likewise political in nature.⁶⁸ Additionally, journalism according to Richardson is undeniably interconnected to the social, political, and cultural context in which it is written and consumed, which again makes Richardson's rationale for studying newspapers compatible with Hall's encoding/decoding paradigm. As a result, these contextual considerations must be recognized and accounted for when analyzing newspaper discourse.⁶⁹

Method

This research will take the form of a qualitative analysis and will be conducted from a traditional historiographical perspective. This historiography is based upon the Report of the Committee on Historiography of the Social Science Research Council (1954) which states that historiography is the study and criticism of the sources inherent in the development of history. Critically analyzing the historical sources upon which my thesis was constructed aligns with my critical theorist underpinnings which dictate that I do not simply accept these sources as truth. I used a thematic analysis to interpret and analyze the data that I collected and I relied on Judith Lapadat's method of thematic analysis.⁷⁰ I employed a thematic analysis because of its flexibility and potential to cluster collected data into themes which can be easily analyzed for inherent meanings.

This thesis was informed by the writings of Stuart Hall on representation and ideology, and Chris Rojek's interpretation and appropriation of Hall's writings. Hall argues that discourse within the media is shaped by ideology and many of his projects focused on exposing and unpacking the ways in which ideology shaped media messages.⁷¹ Hall sought to draw out the media's role in advancing some narratives and

meanings, while silencing or marginalizing other points of view and thereby constructing reality.⁷² Through certain ways of understanding media messages, Hall describes these ways of knowing as ‘codes;’ media messages serve different purposes. The particular effects of media messages range from tacit acceptance by the audience, to a negotiated acceptance of media messages, to rejection of the media messages by the audience. Following Hall, popular media constitutes a contested terrain or battlefield where resistance and opposition occur to varying degrees.⁷³

My examination of various Canadian and American newspaper responses to the Mexico City massacre is situated within the political, historical, and social context in which the massacre occurred. This analysis examines the ways in which the reactions of major newspapers in Canada and the United States to Tlatelolco were shaped by the political atmosphere of the Cold War and the Olympic Games. The discourses created in the popular media and by the government were foundations which ordered reality in certain ways by both enabling and constraining the production of knowledge on these events.⁷⁴ The analysis also sheds light on why these discourses were created in light of the historical-political context of 1968.

My research was conducted from a critical theorist epistemological and ontological position. My worldviews constitute that I interpret reality not as a concrete, universal concept but something which is socially constructed through discourse. My personal beliefs, given my epistemological position, mean that I view reactions and responses to events, in this case the 1968 Mexico City massacre, to be socially constructed within the framework of socio-cultural and historical-political conditions. Since this thesis is a critical examination, I believe that power relations influence the

construction of discourses surrounding events, as I believe the newspaper response to Tlatelolco was influenced by the economic and political relations pursued by Canada and the United States with Mexico and by Cold War context. These paradigmatic underpinnings are reflected in my interpretations and explanations of why the responses to Tlatelolco occurred as they did. My thematic analysis represents my paradigmatic viewpoints which inform my interpretive analysis of the various Canadian and American newspaper responses to the massacre. In concert with a thematic analysis, the encoding/decoding of information provided a foundation from which I analyzed the meaning structures contained within these newspaper reports.

The primary source data which was collected for this research was largely in the form of periodicals. The periodicals examined were Canada's *Globe and Mail* and *Ottawa Citizen* and the United States' *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. Each day, every page from 2 October to 31 October was examined in all periodicals. Other primary sources analyzed to provide context to this study included government of Canada speeches and statements from October 1968, the October 1968 House of Commons Debates, Canadian magazines *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* from October 1968, and the James Worrall papers, the personal correspondences of the former C.O.A. President and Canada's IOC member during 1968, located at Western University in the International Centre for Olympic Studies (ICOS). Documents in this collection include material pertinent to the 1968 Olympics, including letters, personal correspondences, and press releases.

The responses of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* to Tlatelolco lend to an understanding of how certain major American newspapers reported on an event which

United States intelligence in Mexico was closely monitoring.⁷⁵ The reporting of these two major American newspapers also reflects how the fractious and often tense relationship between the United States and Mexico exhibited itself in the reporting of this seminal event in Mexican history. Taken together, this analysis of both Canadian and American newspapers will elucidate the differences between the two countries reporting of the massacre, and provide reasons as to why these differences presented themselves as they did.

The items which were reviewed were strategically selected because they were determined to be the sources most likely to contain significant coverage of the Mexico City massacre. The Canadian newspapers selected were *the Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen*. The *Globe* was examined because it was Canada's only national newspaper at the time, and thus more likely to report on issues of national and international significance as opposed to local newspapers. The *Citizen* was selected because of its popularity as the newspaper of note in the nation's capital, and, as well, in a major Canadian city where stories of national and international significance were more likely to be published. Owing to the factors described, both newspapers were deemed to be among the most likely newspapers in Canada to devote significant attention to the Mexico City massacre. The American newspapers selected were the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The selection of these papers mirrored the rationale for selecting the *Globe and Mail* and *Ottawa Citizen* in Canada. The *New York Times* is the major newspaper of the largest city in the United States and doubled as the *de-facto* national newspaper for America. As a result, the international flavour of the *New York Times* news coverage was distinctive and abundant. The *Washington Post* is the main newspaper of

the United States capital city, and is a politically attuned newspaper reporting extensively on national and international political events.

Other sources utilized were the Canadian House of Commons debates, along with speeches and statements made by the Minister of External Affairs, which were determined to be the most likely sources to locate the Canadian national government responses to Tlatelolco. Canadian popular magazines were also studied and those selected for inspection were *Maclean's* magazine and *Saturday Night*. These popular Canadian magazines were amongst the dominant print media outlets informing the Canadian public of current events and therefore likely to feature coverage of the Mexico City massacre. To understand the Canadian Olympic Association (C.O.A.) response to the massacre the official C.O.A. report was reviewed in addition to the James Worrall papers.

Secondary sources were selected to provide insights into the Mexico City Olympics, the student movement of 1968, the Cold War during 1968, and Canadian-Mexican relations. The databases SPORTDiscus and LA84 were used to search for scholarly articles regarding the Mexico City Olympics. Search terms used included: Tlatelolco, Mexico City massacre, 1968 Mexico City Olympics, and combinations of those three. Through the articles retrieved, cross-referencing was undertaken to ensure a representative and substantive literature review was completed.

The data collected was analyzed qualitatively by placing the newspaper coverage of the massacre into themes. This was accomplished through the use of axial coding, whereby articles which exhibited similar characteristics were placed into categories from which the themes were generated. Examples of themes included the conflation of the

massacre with the Olympics. If reports of the massacre made reference to the Olympics Games, such as the impact the massacre may have had on the Games or the students protesting was in response to the Olympics, these reports were placed into the same category. From these categories, of which there were many, themes were expanded upon. Once themes were delineated, data analysis was driven by Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding paradigm. This qualitative cultural studies tool allowed my excavation of the meaning structures encoded and decoded from the newspaper reports of the Mexico City massacre.

After the examination of the encoded and decoded meaning structures contained within the newspaper reports was carried out, explanations for these meaning structures were provided. Focus on the historical-political conditions of 1968, specifically the Canadian and American relationships to Mexico, allowed for interpretations of the meaning structures.

Limitations

The major limitation of my research resulted from my inability to read Spanish. This served to make this research a study of only English language sources pertinent to the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. Another limitation was that no interviews were conducted in this study which makes my research reliant on interpretations by others, be they researchers, journalists, or eye-witnesses.

Delimitations

This thesis explored the immediate, October 1968, selected Canadian and American major newspaper responses to the 1968 Mexico City Massacre. Further, my research of the national government response to the event was restricted to only those responses which were made in public, such as in the House of Commons debates, and does not examine personal correspondences of government officials. The Canadian and American media response in my research only focuses upon print sources and does not consider television and radio interpretations of the massacre. Other Canadian primary sources examined in conjunction with the newspapers also provide limitations. The C.O.A.'s response to the massacre will be restricted to those documents found in the James Worrall papers from October to November 1968. Owing to previous scholarship which examined declassified CIA and other American primary sources pertinent to the massacre, this thesis relied upon secondary sources in concert with my examination of two American newspapers.

Chapter Outline

Chapter two describes the political-historical context in which the Tlatelolco massacre occurred. This chapter examines the many factors leading to the emergence of the Mexican student movement, in addition to determining why Mexico City was awarded the Olympic Games. Chapter two also scrutinizes the Olympic Games leading up to Mexico City 1968. Additionally, attention will be given to the many other political events which occurred during 1968, as they may have influenced the Canadian and American newspaper responses to Tlatelolco.

Chapter three describes the American newspaper response to Tlatelolco. This chapter explores the Americans newspaper response to the massacre grounded in the historical-political context in which the massacre occurred.

Chapter four examines the Canadian response to the Mexico City massacre. The reactions of different entities, such as the Canadian media and the Canadian Olympic Association, are examined, compared, and contrasted to delineate consensus reactions and responses to the massacre. These explanations are grounded in the historical-political factors of 1968 which mediated the Canadian response to Tlatelolco. Chapter five will provide conclusions to my thesis and also will provide future directions for research regarding the 1968 Mexico City massacre.

Notes

¹ John Rodda, “‘Prensa, Prensa’: A Journalist’s Reflections on Mexico ’68,” in *Reflections on Mexico ’68*, ed. Keith Brewster (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 19.

² Stephen J. Randall, “Sharing a Continent: Canadian-Mexican Relations since 1945,” in *Beyond Mexico: Changing Americas Vol. 1*, eds. Jean Daudelin and Edgar J. Dosman (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995), 16-17.

³ *Ibid*, 19.

⁴ *Ibid*, 20. Although located on the North American continent, Mexico shares a common language, religion, and is very culturally similar to other Latin American nations. In this thesis, I will classify Mexico as both a Latin American and North American country as I do not believe these classifications to be mutually exclusive.

⁵ *Ibid*, 23.

⁶ Jorge I. Domínguez and Rafael Fernández De Castro, *The United States and Mexico: Between Partnership and Conflict Second Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 8.

⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

⁸ W. Dirk Raat and Michael M. Brescia, *Mexico and the United States Ambivalent Vistas Fourth Edition* (Athens and Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 121.

⁹ Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 8-13.

¹⁰ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “Pride and Prejudice: Foreign Perceptions of Mexico as an Olympic Host,” in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 6 (2009): 766-767.

¹¹ Ibid, 767.

¹² Henry Giniger, "Mexicans' Theories on Unrest Blame Both C.I.A. and Reds," *New York Times*, 14 Oct. 1968, 12. See also Lewis H. Diuguid, "Foreigners Cited in Mexico Violence," *Washington Post*, 7 October 1968, A12.

¹³ Morris Rosenberg, "At Olympic Times, Mexicans Worry About Manana," *Washington Post*, 13 October 1968, H1.

¹⁴ Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End: Second Edition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 160-164.

¹⁵ Ibid. Nomenklatura was a special class within the Soviet Union which consisted of those in key administrative roles in the country. Those in this class were afforded opportunities not enjoyed by the rest of society including the ability to travel abroad, access to goods and services, and employment in administrative areas.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews, "Introduction: War Minus the Shooting," in *East Plays West: Sport and the Cold War*, eds. Stephen Wagg and David L. Andrews (New York: Routledge, 2007), 2, 4. See also Christopher Hill, *Olympic Politics* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 1-15.

¹⁸ Claire Brewster, "Changing impressions of Mexico for the 1968 Games," in *Reflections on Mexico '68*, ed. Keith Brewster (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 26.

¹⁹ Kevin B. Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World: Mexico and the 1968 Olympic Games* (DeKalb, ILL: Illinois University Press, 2008), 114-115.

²⁰ Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*, 238-240.

²¹ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "The Rank Outsider: Mexico City's Bid for the 1968 Olympic Games," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 6 (2009): 749.

²² Christopher Brasher, *Mexico 1968: A Diary of the XIXth Olympiad* (London: Stanley Paul, 1968), 30.

²³ Keith Brewster, "Teaching Mexicans how to Behave: Public Education on the eve of the Olympics," in *Reflections on Mexico '68*, ed. Keith Brewster (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 48.

²⁴ The Mexican Revolution has no universally accepted end date. Various sources use different dates to demarcate the end of this series of conflicts. The Mexican Revolution ended in 1917 according to Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster in, "Sport and Society in Post-revolutionary Mexico," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 6 (2009): 723-727. Amongst the other dates used to denote the end of the conflict include 1920, according to: Lynn V. Foster, *A brief history of Mexico* (New York: Facts on File, 2007), 165. Additionally, another end date to the Mexican Revolution is after the Second World War, as stated by Octavio Paz in, *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid*, trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1972). My sense, after consulting numerous sources, is that armed conflict subsided during the 1920s while social aspects of the Revolution continued until after the Second World War in the form of protests and demonstrations.

²⁵ Keith Brewster, "Teaching Mexicans how to Behave," 46.

²⁶ Baruch Hazan, *Olympic Sports and Propaganda Games: Moscow 1980* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1982), 42.

²⁷ Alfred E. Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games: A history of the power brokers, events, and controversies that shaped the Games* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1999), 98-109.

²⁸ Thomas Hunt, "Sports, Drugs, and the Cold War: The Conundrum of Olympic Doping Policy, 1970-1979," in *Rethinking the Olympics, Cultural Histories of the Modern Games*, ed. Robert K. Barney (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2010), 203.

²⁹ Claire Brewster, "Changing impressions of Mexico for the 1968 Games," 26-29.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 26.

³¹ *Ibid*, 28.

³² *Ibid*, 28. See also Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2004), 326.

³³ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 11-13. For first-hand accounts of those within Mexico during this unrest see Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: The Viking Press, 1975).

³⁴ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 106-109.

³⁵ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26, no. 6 (2009): 820-823.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ Paz, *Critique of the Pyramid*, 4-5. See also Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*, 330-331.

³⁸ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 822.

³⁹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 115.

⁴⁰ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 105. See also Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 815.

⁴¹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 104.

⁴² *Ibid*, 105.

⁴³ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 815.

⁴⁴ Rodda, “‘Prensa, Prensa’: A Journalist’s Reflections on Mexico ‘68,” 19.

⁴⁵ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 829-831.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 829-831.

⁴⁷ E.H. Radford and F.J. Shaughnessy Jr, Eds. *Canada Competes at the Olympic Games, 1968. Official Report of the Canadian Olympic Association 1965 to 1968* (Committee to the C.O.A., 1968), 69.

⁴⁸ Information Division: Department of External Affairs, Canada and the United Nations, 1968, Text of a Speech by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Twenty-third Session of the United Nations General Assembly, October 9, 1968.

⁴⁹ Stephen J. Randall, "Sharing a Continent: Canadian-Mexican Relations since 1945," 16-19.

⁵⁰ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 88-90.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 89.

⁵² *Ibid*, 95-102.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 90-100.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 96-100

⁵⁵ Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 1-15. See also Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*, 186. And Kevin B. Wamsley, "The Global Sport Monopoly," *The International Journal*, 57, no.3 (2002): 395-410.

⁵⁶ Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*, 98-109. See also John Hoberman, *Olympic Crisis: Sport Politics and the Moral Order* (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Carazas, 1986).

⁵⁷ Chad Seifried, "An Exploration into Melodrama and Sport: The 'Miracle on Ice' and the Cold War Lens," *Olympika*, XIX, (2010): 111-115.

⁵⁸ Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: the 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002). See also Douglas Hartmann, *Race, Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: the 1968 Olympic Protests and their Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also Simon Henderson, "Nasty demonstrations by Negroes: The place of the Smith-Carlos Podium Salute in the Civil Rights Movement," in *Reflections on Mexico '68*, 78-92, Keith Brewster, ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Numerous other sources pertaining

to the Black Power salute offer an in-depth view of the event. These sources include: John Carlos with C.D. Jackson, *Why?: The Biography of John Carlos* (Los Angeles: Mulligan Books, 2000); Tommie Smith with David Steele, *Silent Gesture: The Autobiography of Tommie Smith* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007); Richard Hoffer, *Something in The Air, American Passion and Defiance in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics* (Toronto: Free Press, 2010); Christopher Hrynkow, *Players of Pawns?: Student-Athletes, Human Rights Activism, Nonviolent Protest and Cultures of Peace at the 1968 Summer Olympics*. PhD dissertation, The University of Manitoba, 2013.

⁵⁹ Alison M. Wrynn, "A Debt was Paid off in Tears: Science, IOC Politics and the Debate about high Altitude in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 23, no. 7 (2006): 1152-1172.

⁶⁰ Thomas Hunt, *Drug Games: The International Olympic Committee and the Politics of Doping, 1960-2008* (Austin, TEX: University of Texas Press, 2011).

⁶¹ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective."

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 152-154.

⁶⁴ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective," 834.

⁶⁵ John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: An approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁸ Chris Rojek, “Stuart Hall on Representation and Ideology” in *Media/Cultural Studies. Critical Approaches*, eds. Rhonda Hammer and Douglas Kellner (New York: Lang, 2009), 53.

⁶⁹ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 221. See also Chris Rojek, “Stuart Hall on Representation and Ideology”; and Stuart Hall, “Encoding/decoding,” in *Culture, media, language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-1979*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128-138.

⁷⁰ Judith C. Lapadat, “Thematic Analysis,” in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, eds. Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe (Thousand Oaks, CAL: Sage Publications, 2010), 926-928.

⁷¹ Rojek, “Stuart Hall on Representation and Ideology,” 53.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Hall, “Encoding/decoding,” 128-133.

⁷⁴ Julianne Cheek, “At the Margins? Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Health Research*, 14, No.8, (2004): 1142-1143.

⁷⁵ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 114-115.

Chapter 2: Context

The Mexico City massacre was an unprecedented event in both Mexican and Olympic history. The historical development of both the Mexican state and the Olympic Games provide some understanding as to why the massacre occurred in the manner it did. Mexican society, from its days as the Spanish colony New Spain, up to 1968 was characterized by societal inequality. Inequalities stemmed from racial stratification in New Spain, where equal opportunities were not afforded to all, and power was consolidated in the hands of very few. A large gap between the privileged few and the rest of the citizenry continued through the 19th and 20th centuries. Coupled with societal inequalities which had long existed in Mexico were displays of unrest because of the gross differences in quality of life. Protests occurred on a consistent basis, and these protests often turned into armed struggles which led to political upheaval. Wars of Independence against the Spanish, conflicts with foreign powers, notably France and the United States, and the Mexican Revolution are examples of societal unrest boiling over into battles which left Mexico a country in fairly consistent turmoil. The 1968 Mexican student movement, too, attempted to confront inequality through protests and demonstrations.

The 1968 Olympic Games were in many ways an attempt by the Mexican government to re-orient the reputation of Mexico to the world. The Mexican government hoped that the Olympic Games would provide an opportunity to showcase Mexico internationally as a stable, prosperous, and developed country which had left its combustible image in the past. The Olympic Games had become an increasingly common

site for political gesticulations, as numerous host countries attempted to portray positive images internationally.

The Mexican student movement in 1968 gained momentum as the Olympics loomed on the horizon, placing in jeopardy the positive image of the country as Olympic host. Social unrest during 1968 conflating the Mexican student movement and the Olympic Games combined to create a cauldron of turmoil. The massacre was the exclamation mark on the rising tensions in Mexico, and provided a gruesome end to the student protests.

The Beginnings

The history of Mexico is one punctuated by inequality and regime change. From the origins of the area Mexico currently inhabits, Mesoamerican groups replaced one another through armed conflict.¹ The most famous amongst the Mesoamerican ancestors of the Mexican state were the Aztecs. An advanced and civilized people who built innovative cities with canals and causeways, the Aztecs nonetheless produced a greatly stratified civilization. These cities were ruled by systems of laws and courts of justice which provided the bedrock of Aztec society. Aztec civilization, however, had class divisions and the judiciary was likewise divided along class lines. For example, the nobility were tried by special courts, while other members of society were tried in different courts of law signifying the inequality inherent within Aztec society.² The Aztecs, however, were supplanted in present day Mexico by Spanish colonizers-also known as conquistadors- in the 1500s. Famously, Hernán Cortés, a Spaniard, commanded a Spanish expedition, commissioned by Diego Velázquez, onto the Mexican peninsula.

Cortes and his men conquered the Aztecs by both peaceful and, more famously, through violent means as exemplified in the battles waged from 1519-1521. Conquest continued by expanding the newly conquered Spanish territory and, by 1550, the conquistadors had subdued the Aztecs to such an extent that the foundations for a 'New Spain' were firmly in place.³

New Spain and Growing Pains

New Spain, like other Spanish colonial possessions, was a territory of the Spanish monarchy whose rule was centralized and absolute. New Spain featured a segregated society, where Spanish settlers were held to certain standards and 'natives' to others. The differentiation was reflected in many ways, for example, in religious differences, such as Indian Catholicism and traditional Catholicism, and also in social stratification where 'natives' were positioned below Spaniards.⁴ The physical distance of New Spain from the Spanish monarchy dictated that viceroys and governors in New Spain took on more decision-making power and influence.⁵

In the 17th and early 18th centuries, New Spain entrenched the differences between it and mother Spain, and distinct political, social, economic, and cultural orders were established. These aspects of New Spanish society were underscored by ethnic and social categories which stemmed from the intercultural mixing of Spaniards, natives, and slaves which they brought with them. As a result, a heterogeneous population was stratified by the ruling governance structure into distinctions based on 'race.' These distinctions were: *mulattos* ('black' and 'white'), *mestizos* ('Indian' and 'white'), *zambos* ('Indian' and 'black'), *indios* ('Indians'), *negros* ('blacks'), *criollos* (Spaniards born in the New

World), and *peninsulares* (Spaniards born in Spain).⁶ Through these different racial classifications, marginalization or opportunity could be offered or denied from birth. *Peninsulares* had the most privileged position in New Spanish society, as they made up the elite portion of society and acted as land owners, merchants, royal or government officials, and professionals, like doctors and lawyers. On the other hand, *criollos*, and those of mixed racial heritage to an even greater extent, were marginalized and not allowed to enter the clergy or universities and thereby deprived of the chance to serve as royal or provincial administrators. Those of mixed heritage, be they *mulatto* or *mestizo*, were classified as *castas*-‘half-breeds’- finding work in labour venues such as transport, livestock, and mining centers.⁷ The inequities and stratification found in New Spain were profound and rigid.

Independence

Change within New Spain occurred in some part due to the social stratification of different ethnic groups. The Seven Years War of 1756-1763 in Europe had the destabilizing effect of ushering in changes, with respect to the governance of Spanish colonies. Known as the Bourbon reforms, taxes were increased, different authorities were put in charge of Spanish colonial territory, and laws were amended.⁸ This constant flux led to discontent within New Spain. New World-born Spaniards were angered by the European-born Spaniards who replaced them in administrative duties. The *criollos* and *castas* began to express discontent at their limited opportunities within society. After the Napoleonic invasion of Spain in 1804, further changes were felt in New Spain, and the bubbling discontent of the various segments of Mexican society began to express itself in a national awakening.⁹ Conflicts raged between those who wanted independence from

Spain and those who wished to remain a Spanish colony. In 1810, independence was declared and, after bloody conflicts resulted, eventually in 1821 Mexico was recognized as independent.¹⁰

The newly independent Mexico was characterized by chaos. Violence was commonplace as seen during the Caste War (1847-1854); war with the United States in 1846; the Pastry War of the 1830s (a conflict between the French and Mexico); and the Second Franco-Mexican war from 1861-1867, amongst other conflicts.¹¹ Mexico, in the mid-1800s had made little progress in creating a sustainable system of governance and a social contract to hold its heterogeneous peoples and regions together.¹²

The wars brought indelible chaos during the conflicts, but in their aftermath stability was gradually gained. The Second Franco-Mexican war, most notably, brought a military hero to the fore, setting his path to become a stabilizing and influential figure in Mexican history. Porfirio Díaz was a General in the Mexican army who enjoyed military successes against the French. During the latter stages of the French-Mexican conflict, Diaz rose rapidly in the Mexican political hierarchy.¹³ When Benito Juárez, the elected President, died of a heart attack in 1872, Porfirio Díaz surfaced as his successor.¹⁴ In the wake of the numerous conflicts Mexico had been involved in since its War of Independence, the country was unstable and underdeveloped which lent to the perception amongst industrialized nations that Mexico was an uncivilized mess.¹⁵ Porfirio Díaz, President of Mexico after a *coup d'état* in 1876, charted a course towards transforming the country into a modern nation. Political stability was secured under his iron-fisted rule.

Porfirian modernization began with the political stability his rule brought. It followed that economic development by way of industrialization and foreign investment flourished in the peaceful environment that characterized Diaz's rule.¹⁶ Foreign investment was significantly greater than it had been previously and Mexico's gross national product (GNP) grew an astounding eight percent between 1884 and 1900.¹⁷ The benefits of the increased GNP brought about prosperity for the elite, who spent lavishly on Parisian-style mansions equipped with indoor plumbing, and electric lights. Ninety percent of Mexico's population, however, did not reap the rewards of the booming national economy.¹⁸ The inequities of the modernizing Mexican society were also reflected in regional disparities of development. The northern economies of Mexico flourished with modern technology and factories which supported a thriving export market of textiles, steel, mining, coffee, sugar, and henequen. The successful north contrasted starkly against the agrarian regions of central Mexico which did not feature significant mechanization.¹⁹ Similarly, inequities of gender were noticeable as women were not afforded the same opportunities as men with respect to work, leisure activities, and personal freedoms.²⁰

Modernization was also evident in the sophisticated equipment afforded to the military, railroads construction, and communications such as the telegraph.²¹ Public education became a top priority of the ruling government as schools had the possibility of inculcating the virtues of the Mexican nation and government to impressionable children. Namely, schools could instill a love for work, the nation, and respect for the law and Mexican authorities.²² Of course, there were also racial reasons for the educational reforms. Public schools open to all children, sought to transform 'Indians,' believed less

loyal to Mexico than those who were white, into 'social assets.'²³ The emphasis of schooling can be seen as another feature of the modernization of Mexico during the Díaz years.

In Díaz's time, he removed shackles on trade, privatized rural community landholding, brought unions under government control, and recruited foreign investment to nourish industry and technology.²⁴ The increased relative wealth of Mexicans during Díaz's reign brought about increased pluralism, sentiments of nationalism, and dissatisfaction that so much power and wealth resided in the hands of so few.²⁵ The dictatorial nature of Díaz's rule, and the associated societal inequities, eventually ran its course.

Mexican Revolution

The bubble of the Díaz era burst spectacularly as the Mexican Revolution, a series of conflicts which began in 1910 and have no universally accepted end date with estimates ranging from 1917 to after the Second World War, changed the face of Mexico. The revolt against the iron-fisted Porfirio Díaz emerged from many corners of Mexico as the diverse population of Mexico began to grow restless. The series of conflicts which made up the Mexican Revolution between rival groups within Mexico left the dynamics of the Revolution in constant flux as various factions gained the upper hand on one another and leaders began to emerge from the rubble. Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa were two leading figures who became synonymous with the Mexican Revolution. Zapata was a small landowner and a horse trainer who was angered by his repeated disputes with Mexican courts concerning the inequities of Díaz's land reforms.²⁶ Pancho Villa, another

of the revolutionaries made famous through his actions in the Revolution, also fought for land reform.²⁷ These noteworthy revolutionaries fought against government troops for social reform; however, it was only when the power vacuum was filled when a new President took control of Mexico that the Mexican Revolution finally began to abate. Zapata and Villa, though legendary, were not the ones to assume the position of power after the bloody Revolution subsided.

The Revolution and the associated political chaos was steadied to a large extent when Plutarck Elías Calles became President in 1924.²⁸ Calles ruled until 1928, and in his time as President created the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) which initiated the contemporary Mexican political system. The PRM provided a stable national party, eventually renamed the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), as it remains known today.²⁹ Despite the relative calm reached when Calles became President at the end of the Mexican Revolution, deep divisions remained evident in Mexican society, reflecting a still, though less than before, volatile state.

PRI

The PRI, especially during Lazaro Cárdenas reign as President from 1934-1940, began a remodeling of the Mexican state similar to the Porifrio Díaz years. Land reform in the countryside, along with paved roads and farm mechanization, meant increased productivity in agriculture and also higher quality of life for peasants.³⁰ Schools and medical facilities were improved which combined to bring longer life expectancies.³¹ Labour gradually became organized, and salaries and working conditions improved to a modest degree.³² The Mexican economy was also buoyed by the discovery and

production of oil and minerals. Each became Mexican export staples. From 1940-1970 Mexico's GNP increased six percent annually, one of the highest rates in the world.³³ The economic boom Mexico was experiencing supported the improvement of roads and other infrastructure, including tourism, which lent to the foreign perceptions of Mexico as a happy, stable, and prosperous country.³⁴ This façade of happiness and opportunity shielded the outside world from the less savory realities of Mexico during this era of social and economic reform.

Stark disparities in wealth saw the majority of wealth go to elites, while most Mexicans languished in extreme poverty. The privileged members of Mexico's wealthiest 20 percent earned 60 percent of the national income in 1950 and, by 1969, that number increased to 64 percent. On the other hand, the poorest half of Mexico earned a mere 19 percent of the national income in 1950, which spoke to the severe discrepancies within Mexican society.³⁵ The inequities of Mexican society during the post revolution era also manifested themselves in the lack of democratic principles in Mexico. The electoral system was corrupted to such an extent that PRI candidates were assured victory, no matter the candidates put forth by rival parties.³⁶ The PRI guaranteed its power by suppressing strikes and civil movements to maintain the status quo.³⁷ Strike movements and civil unrest were commonplace as varied groups, such as doctors, rail workers, and teachers, rose up to protest the inequities inherent within Mexican society and the government.³⁸ The processes of civil unrest, inequality and flux have characterized Mexican society from its Mesoamerican origins up until the Mexico City massacre. This overview, while not extensive, provides context for the emergence of the student movement and the social unrest leading up to the 1968 Olympic Games.

The Mexican Student Movement

The Mexican student movement blossomed from an innocuous clash between rival student groups in late July 1968.³⁹ Seemingly to highlight the politically-charged environment present during 1968 around the globe, Mexican students from many universities marched to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Cuba's revolution which had installed a communist regime. Students from Vocational School Number Two of the National Polytechnical Institute and those of the Preparatory School Isaac Ochoterena clashed in the streets.⁴⁰ The Mexican riot police who responded to the small scuffles between the two student groups used grossly excessive force to suppress the students involved. Students were cleared by police clubs which battered and bloodied many of them. The police continued to pursue the students back to their schools and, in one circumstance, a door was torn off its hinges by a bazooka.⁴¹ The use of extreme force by the Mexican police in this instance was alarming and had severe consequences.

The police brutality seemed to instill a sense of solidarity amongst Mexican students in general. In the days and weeks following the police heavy-handedness, students began to organize into groups which marched in the streets voicing displeasure at not only the violent and oppressive police force, but also against the inequities of Mexican society, namely an unjust legal system and government.⁴² Historians Keith and Claire Brewster have posited that the student movement, though catalyzed by this police brutality, was not the sole reason for the Mexican student movement's organization. Rather, the Mexican student movement was merely a reaction to societal inequities through protest movements over the years, though police brutality served as its flash point.⁴³ These prior protest movements in Mexico included the teachers' strike of April

1958 which was supported by other groups, such as students from the UNAM and the Poli, electrical, oil, and railway workers.⁴⁴ During 1958 and 1959, railway workers went on strike, and were in turn supported by electricians and oil workers.⁴⁵ In both instances, the protest movements were based upon income inequities and lack of workers' rights. In each instance, the movements gained support from other segments of society. In any case, it is fair to conclude that societal unrest was the product of an unequal society where wealth was enjoyed by few and the majority suffered in poverty. This inequity was the underlying reason that the Mexican student movement began. It also seems that the police brutality in handling the skirmish between rival student groups in late July 1968 served as the impetus for simmering civil unrest to boil over and, thereby, inspiring a consolidated protest movement.

Angered by the injustice served upon them by the police, Mexican students quickly organized into a protest movement a few short days after the initial police brutality. The student movement ran the gamut of Mexican society. It included students with radical political beliefs, those with moderate political leanings, and those who did not want to miss out on the opportunity to be with friends and avoid school.⁴⁶ Four days after the incendiary incident, on 26 July, a large student march was met with more police clubs and guns. Many students were injured during these clashes and four were killed in the police assault on the students.⁴⁷ The rough handling of this student march further entrenched the desire of students to protest against the police and the government. In response to this second example of police brutality in quick succession the students issued six demands to the Mexican government:

1. Repeal of Articles 145 and 145b of the Penal Code. (These sanctioned the imprisonment of anyone who attended meetings of three or more people, who were deemed to threaten public order.)
2. The abolition of the riot police.
3. Freedom of political prisoners.
4. Compensation given to those injured during disturbances.
5. The identification of officials responsible for bloodshed.
6. The dismissal of the chief of police, Luis Cueto; his deputy, Raul Mendiola; and General A. Frias, commander of the riot police.⁴⁸

The government, aware of the threat a student movement might pose to its power and to the upcoming Olympic Games they had invested in so heavily, began to strategize its response to the movement. The Mexican government's early strategy to deal with the student movement was to allow it to continue largely unchecked while actively trying to plant dissidents within the movement to weaken it. This plan to weaken the students by subterfuge reflected the government's hope that by letting the students go relatively unchecked, the enthusiasm for the movement would decrease and it would organically decompose.⁴⁹ The government did, however, utilize the state-sponsored media to undermine and ostracize the student movement. Full page advertisements in newspapers appeared which linked the student movement to communism in an attempt to make the movement seem radical and dangerous.⁵⁰ The police strategically arrested some student leaders, owing to the fact most of those arrested were foreigners and much older than student age. This added weight to the allegations of the peripheral nature of the student movement within Mexican society.⁵¹

The student movement continued to gain momentum and, in response to the government's attack campaign, fully-fledged ideas about the expansion of democracy, university reform, and poverty reduction were advanced by the students.⁵² In fact, for the first time the Olympic Games were drawn into the Mexican student movement as a 30 July demonstration featured a banner which proclaimed, "We don't want the Olympics."⁵³

The student movement remained prominent within Mexican society because of the large rallies and demonstrations regularly held. Some 200,000 students protested against the government on 13 August, and, 14 days later, on 27 August, another 300,000 marched to show their displeasure with Mexican society and the ruling government.⁵⁴ In the latter instance, a consequential precedent was set when the police and army were dispatched by the government to remove the student demonstrators.⁵⁵ The students' discontent continued into September. On the 13th of September a march of thousands of students congested Mexico City's streets. Though a notable continuation of the student's prominent displays of unhappiness with the government, more disturbing altercations between the students and the government followed shortly thereafter. On 18 September, unconfirmed numbers of students were killed after a ferocious altercation with the military at the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM). The military subsequently invaded and occupied part of the UNAM campus. The striking aggressiveness of the military response to the students seemed to create a lull in the student movement's proceedings as the rest of September passed by without major incidents.⁵⁶ The calm of late September was thrown into disarray on 2 October in Tlatelolco.

The Mexican student movement, though diverse and fluid, remained grounded in discontent towards the Mexican authorities whose gruff handling of a minor altercation was a precipitating factor among once loosely organized groups that became a solidified student movement. Though never clearly articulated, the student movement remained, from start to finish, incensed by police brutality, social inequality, and a lack of democracy in Mexico. These students strove, by way of public demonstrations, to bring about progressive changes to Mexican society.

The Political History of the Olympics

Since the first third of the 20th century, the modern Olympic Games represent the pinnacle of athletic performance in international sport.⁵⁷ Despite this lofty current status of the Olympic Games as the pre-eminent site for athletic excellence, the Olympic Games have faced numerous controversies and conundrums from its origin in 1896. Beset by financial difficulties, the early Olympic festivals struggled for survival owing to lack of financial support and public interest.⁵⁸ In fact, the early Olympic Games, until the 1920s, were affixed onto the much more well-established and celebrated World Fairs and Expositions which had a long history of popularity.⁵⁹ The Olympic Games, still shackled with financial insecurity, consolidated itself as the highest form of sporting excellence through shrewd use of ancient Greek imagery, altruistic aims and ideals, an organized and hierarchical decision-making body (the IOC), and the technological advances which helped to popularize the Games.⁶⁰

Once established as the pre-eminent venue for international sport, the Olympics became increasingly a site of political and ideological contestation. Historian Richard

Espy aptly noted, “The Olympic Games system is both actor and stage... a stage upon which world political forces are displayed in competition.”⁶¹ Countries around the world began to utilize the stage the Olympics provided to portray positive images of their nations to global audiences.⁶² The examples of countries using the Games in a political manner are numerous. The 1936 Olympics in Berlin, for example, were utilized by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis to broadcast an image of Germany as an efficient, friendly, and non-oppressive society to the international community.⁶³ The propaganda sanitized the less savory aspects of National Socialism in favour of projecting a fabricated and positive image to the world.

Political manifestations of the Olympic Games reached higher levels in the years after the Soviet Union entered the Olympic movement in 1952. The Soviets, since the Russian revolution, had stayed on the sidelines with respect to the Olympic Games. The Soviet hierarchy derided the IOC and the Games as a bourgeois sports phenomena. Owing to the western dominance of the Olympic Games, the Soviets feared the Games had the potential to lead Soviet citizens away from their state-sponsored class struggles and workers ideals.⁶⁴ After careful examination of the international sports landscape, which included sending Soviet athletes to watch the 1948 London Olympics, the Soviets decided the time was ripe for their first foray into the Olympic Games as the Soviet Union.⁶⁵

Soviet re-entry into the Olympic Games coincided with the beginning of the Cold War. Owing to the symbolic importance of the Olympics in international sport, the two main adversaries during the Cold War, the Americans and Soviets, both followed by their western and eastern bloc allies, used sport as a way to demonstrate the superiority of their

societies. Cold War tensions played out in dramatic fashion at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. The water-polo match at the Melbourne Games between the Soviets and Hungarian men's teams featured highly physical and violent play. The violence of the match mirrored the political dissension between the two countries in the wake of the October 1956 Soviet crushing of the Hungarian revolution against communist governance.⁶⁶ While the water-polo match was a tangible and prominent example of the symbolic political importance the Olympics, it was more common that political uses of the Olympics were less overt in character. Amongst other ways to achieve success in the Games, winning medals was seen as exerting superiority over rival nations, and the stakes were raised to realize this via doping practices and state-sponsored athletes.

Both the Soviets and Americans wanted to outdo one another to show strength and social superiority. Upon the Soviets joining the Olympic movement in 1952, Avery Brundage identified the importance of American athletes performing well against their Soviet counterparts, "Since for the first time these games will provide a direct comparison between our boys and girls and those from the Communist world, it is essential that we send our best and strongest team."⁶⁷ Likewise, the Soviets were eager to show up the west in the highest level of sport competition in the world. Nikolai Romanov, Chairman of the government Committee on Physical Culture and Sport recalled in his memoir, "Once we decided to take part in foreign competitions, we were forced to guarantee victory, otherwise the "free" bourgeois press would fling mud at the whole nation as well as our athletes."⁶⁸ The table was set, and the political ramifications were laid in plain sight.

Sport in Post-Revolutionary Mexico

Hosting the Olympic Games had been coveted by the Mexican government for quite some time. The ability of the Olympic Games to provide a stage from which to project a controlled and positive image of their country to the world piqued the interest of the government.⁶⁹ The Mexican government had bid unsuccessfully to host the 1956 and 1960 editions of the Games.⁷⁰ The bidding to host the Olympic Games was the culmination of a process in the post-revolutionary years where Mexico was attracted to sport much more than previously.

The Mexican government interest in sport was a long established facet of Mexican society. The 1926 Central American Games were hosted by Mexico as a way to show the international community that the country had successfully emerged from the Mexican revolution stronger than ever.⁷¹ Additionally, sporting policies were put in place by the post-revolutionary Mexican governments which included physical education in schools, the building of sport-specific facilities, and the organization of sporting bodies.⁷² However, in keeping with their history of inequity, sport in post-revolutionary Mexico was the domain of the privileged few and was not enjoyed equally by the poor who did not have the leisure time needed to participate in and watch sport.⁷³ In addition to the different experiences of sport between the elite and the poor, sporting inequities also presented themselves on a racial basis. Sports in schools were positioned as an opportunity to 'civilize' Indians and assimilate them into more acceptable 'white' behavior patterns.⁷⁴

The implementation of sporting programs, no matter how unequal these programs were, led to increased participation and success among Mexican athletes in international sporting events. In the 1932 Olympics, Mexico won its first Olympic medals.⁷⁵ With its increasing success and establishment within international sport, Mexico began to assume a more prominent role. The Mexicans played a significant role in organizing the creation of the Pan-American Games, hosting them in 1955.⁷⁶ In post-revolution Mexico, the government began to utilize sport strategically as a way of uniting or assimilating its citizens while also trying to give the international community a positive impression of the country. These uses of sport were punctuated by the crescendo of sport in post-revolutionary Mexico, the 1968 Olympic Games.

Mexico's bid for the 1968 Olympics

Mexico City's successful 1968 Olympic bid was largely due to the efforts of three men who had political influence and equally yearned for an opportunity for Mexico to have a chance to express itself on the global sporting stage. One of these men, President Adolfo López Mateos, was an avid sportsman whose propensity towards sport was evident through his involvement in his youth, as well as his physical education teaching duties in a college in Toluca, near Mexico City.⁷⁷ Adolfo López Mateos' support for the Olympic bid was a critical boost to its chances; in fact, it was essential to get the bid off the ground. The other two men who were most instrumental to bringing the Olympics to Mexico were both politically connected sportsmen, José de Jesús Clark Flores and Marte R. Gómez. Gómez was elected to the IOC in 1934, while Flores became an IOC member in 1952 and led the Mexican Olympic Committee from 1952-1965.⁷⁸ Flores had connections with high-ranking government officials that spanned decades and equally

was seen to be one of IOC President Avery Brundage's most loyal supporters, no doubt a useful relationship when bidding for the Olympic Games.⁷⁹ Gómez had a well-established and successful personal history serving as a bridge between the national government and Mexico's sporting authorities.⁸⁰ To have powerful political figures supporting the drive to host the Olympics was by no means unique to Mexico; however, the support from these politically-connected individuals was a driving factor in getting the Mexico City bid to a level where it had a chance to be successful. IOC President Avery Brundage's personal affinity for Mexico City was another stroke of good fortune which lent to the increased likelihood of Mexico City hosting an Olympics. As the head of the Mexico City headquartered Pan-American Games Association, Brundage spent a great deal of time in Mexico City, establishing personal connections and affinity towards the city.⁸¹

However despite these beneficial factors, equally influential in Mexico City's successful bid was the international political climate of the Cold War, a climate that afflicted the chances of its bid city opponents in being awarded the Games. Buenos Aires, Detroit, Lyon, and Mexico City's hopes to host the 1968 Olympic Games descended upon the 1963 IOC meeting in Baden-Baden, West Germany where a vote for the right to host these Games was to be undertaken.⁸² The Detroit bid was hampered by infighting amongst the USOC, whose members were not in complete agreement that Detroit was the best American candidate city. In fact, Los Angeles was put forth as an alternative which gained traction amongst some factions of the USOC.⁸³ Apart from the internal bickering amongst USOC members, another factor hurt the Detroit bid's chances significantly. As a city of the United States, the leading western bloc nation, awarding the Games to an American city would displease eastern bloc nations. Lyon's Olympic bid was also hurt by

the western bloc association and the IOC's concern of antagonizing eastern bloc nations.⁸⁴ Buenos Aires, though seen as a site external to Cold War concerns, was discounted as a viable Olympic host owing to the recent military coup Argentina experienced in 1962-1963. The IOC's uncertainty as to the stability of Argentina's political situation, and associated security concerns effectively ruled Buenos Aires out of the running to host the 1968 Games.⁸⁵

Mexico City, in contrast to the other candidate cities, was looked upon internationally as a Latin American success story, with economic prosperity and political stability, and as an unaligned country during the Cold War.⁸⁶ Though being seen as having the qualities which rival bidders did not possess, political neutrality and political stability, gave the Mexico City bid an advantage, the Mexico City bid team worked hard to maximize its chances of hosting the Games. No opportunity to impress the IOC was overlooked. The Mexicans went the extra mile to talk to anyone and everyone to extol the virtues of their bid. No matter what political persuasion, the Mexicans were eager to gain the support of everyone.⁸⁷ The ways in which the Mexico City Olympics would benefit the people of Mexico, particularly the youth, resonated with Soviet bloc nations that viewed sport as a vehicle of the people and helped to guarantee eastern bloc support of the Mexican bid.⁸⁸ Even simple strategic decisions by the Mexican delegation benefitted the chances of their bid being selected. The Mexicans put up their display in the Baden-Baden convention center nearest the entrance, so that as each delegate entered the room, the Mexican display would greet them first. Additionally, Mexican artifacts were placed around the convention center, including a statue of the Aztec god Quetzlcoatl, which pointed the way to the convention hall where the Mexican display greeted them.⁸⁹ Both

the international political climate and some shrewd proselytizing of the Mexican bid combined to ensure victory.

The Mexico City Massacre

The hope of the Mexican government to utilize the Olympics as an opportunity to show off their country as peaceful and prosperous took an enormous blow on 2 October 1968. The lead-up to the Olympics had already presented significant problems for the Mexican leadership as concerns were raised over the inclusion of South Africa by the IOC and the associated boycott movement of many countries and, notably, black American athletes; the effects of the Mexico City altitude on the participating athletes; and, the questionable ability of Mexico to host the Games given its status as a developing nation.⁹⁰ These possible pitfalls were, for the most part, overcome though some athletes did boycott, such as Lew Alcindor. Further concerns lingered about the negative consequences of hosting athletic contests at altitude. Nevertheless, preparations lunged forward.⁹¹ With these threats mostly negated, the internal situation in Mexico, which had been unstable for the summer and fall months owing to student demonstrations, burst into flame under the watchful eye of Aztec, Spanish colonial, and modern Mexican buildings in the Plaza of the Three Cultures.

Much is still unknown about the Tlatelolco massacre of 2 October 1968. The numbers of those murdered and jailed are still unconfirmed, with figures ranging widely from a few murdered to over 100. Many believe that thousands were thrown into jail by Mexican authorities as a result of their involvement in the Mexican student movement. However, these estimates remain debatable and unconfirmed. The generally accepted

facts of the massacre, as described by sports historian Kevin Witherspoon, indicate that government helicopters flew over the student demonstration in the Plaza de la Tres Culturas at roughly 6:00 PM.⁹² The estimated 5,000 student protestors in the square had held a carnival-like demonstration throughout that day.⁹³ Minutes after the helicopters flew over the square white-gloved security agents trained specifically for the Olympics, the Olimpia Battalion, and regular police and army forces stormed the square and opened fire on the crowd assembled. The shooting lasted for an hour before ceasing briefly and then resuming until 11:00 PM.⁹⁴

Apart from these facts presented by Kevin Witherspoon, numerous eye-witness accounts of the massacre paint the event in a poignant manner. The widely disparate recollections of the massacre highlight the frenetic mania which engulfed those witnessing the event. Though the specifics of these recollections are very different, there is commonality in the narratives. In the accounts given by eye-witnesses to the massacre, the brutally repressive violence perpetrated by government forces is consistently mentioned. The narrative of the massacre presented by the Mexican government, however, bore the details out in a contradictory fashion to the accounts of eye-witnesses.

The Mexican government put forth a carefully manicured and self-serving narrative explaining the events at Tlatelolco. In the weeks leading up to the massacre, international journalists descended on Mexico City to begin their Olympic coverage in earnest. The Mexican government confronted journalists and, as Jack Zenger, a *New York Times* reporter, recollected, “an official told us: ‘There are no riots. If anyone asks you about riots, say it’s not your department.’”⁹⁵ The precedent was set for the government’s eagerness to make the student problem disappear.

In the aftermath of the massacre, however, the government was forced to confront the issue given the attention the event garnered. The government was quick to attempt to absolve itself from blame for starting the massacre and placed the blame for precipitating the massacre onto the student movement. The government stated that the fighting started when one group of students began firing at another, but then changed its story to plead that students opened fire from a balcony lining the square.⁹⁶ The narrative the government put forward proved to be exceedingly malleable as it quickly began to implicate foreign communists and the C.I.A. as ring-leaders in starting the violence and inculcating innocent Mexicans with their dangerous ideologies.⁹⁷ Additionally, the government, following the example it set in the weeks preceding the massacre, downplayed the significance of the massacre and claimed that very few were killed, ranging from four to roughly a dozen. The government-controlled newspapers furthered the narrative that few were killed in the violence, and television stations referred to the event as a police incident.⁹⁸

A sample of the front page headlines of major newspapers in Mexico City from 3 October was presented in Elena Poniatowska's *Massacre in Mexico* to highlight the reactions of the newspapers to the massacre. *Excelsior's* headline was, "Serious fighting as army breaks up meeting of strikers. 20 dead, 75 wounded, 400 jailed"; *Novedades*, "Shots exchanged by sharpshooters and the army in Ciudad Tlatelolco. Figures thus far: 25 dead and 87 wounded"; *El Universal*, "Tlatelolco a battlefield. Serious fighting for hours between terrorists and soldiers"; *La Prensa*, "Many killed and wounded according to Garcia Barragan. Army and students exchange gunfire"; *El Dia*, "Criminal provocation at Tlatelolco meeting causes terrible bloodshed. Fight with army at Tlatelolco results in

many dead and wounded: General Hernandez Toledo and 12 other soldiers wounded. One soldier dead. Number of civilians killed or wounded still not known”; *El Heraldo*, “Bloody encounter in Tlatelolco. 26 dead and 71 wounded; sharpshooters fire on army troops. General Toledo wounded”; *El Sol de Mexico*, “Foreign interlopers attempt to damage Mexico’s national image. The objective: Preventing the nineteenth Olympic Games from being held. Sharpshooters fire on army troops in Tlatelolco. On general and 11 soldiers wounded; 2 soldiers and more than 20 civilians killed in a terrible gun battle”; *El Nacional*, “Army forced to rout sharpshooters: Garcia Barragan”; *Ovaciones*, “Bloody gun battle in the Plaza de las Culturas. Dozens of sharpshooters fire on troops. 23 dead, 52 wounded, 1000 arrested, and more vehicles burned”; *La Aficion*, “Student meeting in Tlatelolco results in heavy gunfire.”⁹⁹ The pervasiveness of the government version of events within these newspapers is evident. This narrative implicates the students as the agitators who caused the violence, thereby absolving the government from blame for starting the violence.

In contrast with the government narrative, eye-witness accounts of the massacre indicate government culpability in causing the violence. British journalist John Rodda of the *Guardian* provided a first-hand account of the violence cited in Keith Brewster’s edited volume titled, *Reflections on Mexico ’68*. Rodda arrived at the Plaza de las Culturas shortly before 5:00 PM on 2 October. He subsequently entered the main balcony where the student leaders were speaking to the excitable and enthusiastic crowd. Rodda recalled, “By the time the first speaker began it was estimated that nearly 10,000 people were packed into the square, which gave the operation a huge lift. One of the speakers had just started delivering his message when a green Very light soared up behind the

Foreign Office block; it caused immediate agitation in the square below and tension on my balcony. My interpreter went white and said, ‘we must leave, it’s the military.’”¹⁰⁰

With that, those on the balcony dropped to the floor in order to take cover from what they assumed was an impending barrage of army fire. As Rodda began to ready himself to take cover as well, he remarked, “As I turned there was a man in an open-neck shirt and slacks with a white glove on his left hand and a gun in the other that was pointing at me.”¹⁰¹ At the sight of the gun Rodda dropped to the floor, joining those others on the balcony who had already done so and he,

Had only been on the ground a few seconds it seemed, when the firing began. It was so deafening that I could not immediately make out from where it came. But from the cries and screams it was clearly having an effect in the crowded square below. It lasted it seemed for minutes; then came a relative quiet before another lead onslaught was unleashed.¹⁰²

It was unclear to Rodda who the white-gloved man was. He originally assumed that he must have been a student supporter and that they were under siege by the army.

As time passed, with Rodda still lying prone on the balcony, he,

Heard vehicles apparently trundling into the square; they seemed to have wheels and tracks. They halted; someone started shooting and then came the crump of bazooka or mortar fire, an explosion and several times the sound of fire burning. They seemed to be picking off flats and open balconies, I surmised, and this confirmed there were two parties involved in combat.¹⁰³

After approximately an hour and a half since the shooting began, a brief respite of silence prevailed. Rodda eventually made his way from the balcony and as he did so, “I now realised [the men around me] were not students.”¹⁰⁴ After starting to comprehend the events which he had been involved in, Rodda stated he, “now realised that these men were military.” As to the white-gloved men Rodda had come to realize that these men were, “plain clothed militia.”¹⁰⁵

John Rodda's harrowing experience in Tlatelolco corroborates with Witherspoon's account of the massacre. Elena Poniatowska conducted numerous interviews with eye-witnesses and relatives of those murdered in the massacre. The result of her investigation is an in-depth account of those Mexican students and civilians who bore the brunt of an angry government.¹⁰⁶ Poniatowska states that, "all witnesses agree" that flares and a helicopter over the square signaled the start of the shooting by Mexican government forces after a day of peaceful demonstrations by the students.¹⁰⁷ The white gloved identification worn by special police forces was also confirmed by the majority of Poniatowska's witnesses.¹⁰⁸ Estrella Sámano, a student, recounted, "They started firing from the helicopter, and I began to hear rifle reports overhead."¹⁰⁹ As the violence escalated, the sensationalism of the event was evident to those in the square. Elvira B. de Concheiro, described by Poniatowska as a mother of a family, recalled, "I was so dumfounded I said to myself, I can't believe it- it's like in a movie! I've never seen anything like this except in the movies. Those just can't be real bullets!"¹¹⁰

Chaos was palpable as the government forces infiltrated the square from two sides and opened fire which led Margarita Nolasco, an anthropologist who was hiding behind a pillar in the square, to state, "A whole great crowd was running first in one direction and then another: they'd run away and then head back our way again, and more of them would fall on the ground. I thought they should all have sense enough to keep away from the men who were shooting at them, but they kept coming back. I found out later that they were also being shot at from the other side of the Plaza."¹¹¹ The plaza was becoming ever more a site of casualties, as Francisco Correa, a professor remembered, "There was lots of blood underfoot, lots of blood smeared on the walls."¹¹² María Alicia Martínez

Medrano, a nursery-school director explained, “We all started running again and just then I spied a red Datsun with a young girl at the wheel. She’d been shot, and I saw her collapse on top of the steering wheel; the horn kept blowing and blowing...”¹¹³ Diana Salmerón de Contreras recalled that her little brother was hurt and she tried to get him help in the square, “Please, somebody get him a stretcher! I’m right here, Julio.... a stretcher! Soldier, a stretcher for somebody who’s been wounded... What’s the matter, little brother?... Answer me, little brother.... A stretcher!” As Diana began to comprehend what was happening in the square now that she had her little brother with her, she explained, “The very first thing I noticed was all the people lying on the ground; the entire Plaza was covered with the bodies of the living and the dead, all lying side by side. The second thing I noticed was that my kid brother had been riddled with bullets.”¹¹⁴ Diana continued her pursuit of a stretcher for her brother when she asked, “Soldier, please have somebody bring a stretcher!” The soldier replied, “Shut up and stop pestering me or you’ll be needing two of them.”¹¹⁵

The frenzied atmosphere in Tlatelolco seemed evident to all those in the square. Mary McCallen, a press photographer, recounted, “Everything was a blur- I don’t know if it was because I was crying or because it had started to rain. I watched the massacre through this curtain of rain, but everything was fuzzy and blurred.”¹¹⁶ Brutality on behalf of the army and police, however, seemed to shine through the blurred and manic recollections of those present. Ignacio Galván, a student at the San Carlos Academy and the Ciudadela Ceramics Workshop, called to mind his experiences in Tlatelolco. He recalled his encounter with a soldier, “Why are you beating me, since I’ve already showed you my student-body card?” “That’s exactly the reason I’m beating you, you

little bastard” was the answer. I admit I was scared, because I’d never been beaten like that in my life.” Ignacio Galván then remembered soldiers remarking to one another, “If any of these kids gives you any trouble, mow him down.”¹¹⁷ Ignacio’s brother, Carlos Galván, a student at UNAM’s School of Library Sciences, confirmed the brutality of which his brother spoke. Carlos Galván stated, “They made us line up with our hands up, and took the ones with long hair aside. They made one kid kneel down and lopped his hair off with a bayonet. I thought they were going to cut my brother Ignacio’s hair off—he’s an artist and wears it very long. Then they told us to line up with the rest of the kids. ‘Here’s a little farewell present for you.’ And they started hitting us as though they were breaking piñatas.”¹¹⁸

Taken together, the accounts presented by John Rodda, the interviews highlighted by Elena Poniatowska, and Kevin Witherspoon’s analysis in *Before the Eyes of the World* contradict the reports of the massacre which emanated from the Mexican government. The eye-witness accounts presented agree on the chaos and brutality that came with the government forces incursion into the Plaza de la Tres Culturas. These two competing narratives of the massacre were presented in the Canadian and American media.

The course of Mexican history, riddled with inequities and civil unrest, provided an atmosphere ripe for demonstrations and protest movements against the often discriminatory Mexican governments. The 1968 Olympic Games provided a venue for the inequities of Mexican society to be on prominent display as resources were funneled into Olympic infrastructure to project images of a sophisticated, developed country while the majority of the population wallowed in extreme poverty. Sport in post-revolutionary Mexico, also unequally distributed and enjoyed across different segments of Mexican

society, was wielded as an exploitive tool by the Mexican government to satisfy numerous needs. The government used sport to both appear advanced and civilized to the international community, and also to help normalize marginalized portions of Mexican society into behavior patterns deemed acceptable by the government.

The Olympic Games, as the supreme site for political machinations in international sport, became the venue desired for the Mexican government to show the global community, and its citizens, just how great Mexico was. The convergence of inequities in Mexican society, and the discontent at these inequities expressed by the student movement, together with the government's desire to host a perfect Olympic Games brought disastrous consequences. Undoubtedly, the devastation of the Mexico City massacre was influenced by the impending Olympic Games which the Mexican government had placed great importance on.

Notes

¹ Alan Knight, *Mexico: From the beginning to the Spanish conquest* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1-18.

² Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *Triumphs and Tragedy: a history of the Mexican people* (New York: Norton & Company, 1992), 24.

³ Foster, *A brief history of Mexico*, 40-55. See also Alicia Hernández Chavez, *Mexico: a brief history* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006), 32-36.

⁴ Chavez, *Mexico: a brief history*, 46.

⁵ *Ibid*, 50.

⁶ *Ibid*, 51.

⁷ *Ibid*, 58-62.

⁸ *Ibid*, 99.

⁹ *Ibid*, 100-102.

¹⁰ Virginia Guedea, "Old Colonialism Ends, the New Colonialism Begins," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 277-285.

¹¹ Christon I. Archer, "Fashioning a New Nation," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 332-333.

¹² *Ibid*.

¹³ Paul Vanderwood, "Betterment for Whom? The Reform Period: 1855-1875," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 390-395.

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¹⁵ Robert M. Buffington and William E. French, "The Culture of Modernity," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 397.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 399-400.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 400.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 401.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 401-420.

²¹ *Ibid*, 406.

²² *Ibid*, 407.

²³ *Ibid*, 409.

²⁴ John Mason Hart, "The Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, eds. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 436.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 435-436.

²⁶ Foster, *A brief history of Mexico*, 165.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 13-14.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ W. Dirk Raat, *Mexico and the United States: Ambivalent Vistas* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 152-155.

³⁴ Eric Zolov, "Discovering a Land 'Mysterious and Obvious': The Renarrativizing of Postrevolutionary Mexico," in *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940*, eds. Joseph et al (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 234-272.

³⁵ Colin M. Maclachlan and William H. Beezley. *El Gran Pueblo: A History of Greater Mexico* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), 387-389.

³⁶ Jorge Castañeda, *Perpetuating Power: How Mexican Presidents Were Chosen* (New York: The New Press, 2000), x-xiv.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Elaine Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices: Gender, Power, and Terror in 1968 Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2005), 22-32. See also Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 106-107.

³⁹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 106-109. See also Foster, *A brief history of Mexico*.

⁴⁰ Carey, *Plaza of Sacrifices*, 39. See also Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 108-109.

⁴¹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 109.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective," 817.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 110.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 109.

⁴⁸ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, "The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective," 821. See also Paz, *Critique of the Pyramid*, 14-16.

⁴⁹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 110.

⁵⁰ Paz, *Critique of the Pyramid*, 3-4, 13. See also Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 110.

⁵¹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 111.

⁵² Paz, *Critique of the Pyramid*, 13-16. See also Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 111.

⁵³ Henry Giniger, “50,000 Mexico City Students March in New Protest against Police and Army,” *New York Times*, 2 August 1968, 11.

⁵⁴ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 820-823.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 822.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 822-823.

⁵⁷ David Whitson, “Olympic Hosting in Canada: Promotional Ambitions, Political Challenges,” in *Rethinking the Olympics: Cultural Histories of the Modern Games*, ed. Robert K. Barney (Morgantown, WV: Sport & Global Cultures Series 2010), 357-358. See also Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 1.

⁵⁸ For a detailed and exhaustive history of the commercial aspects of the Olympic Games see Robert K. Barney, Stephen R. Wenn, and Scott G. Martyn, *Selling the Five Rings: The IOC and the Rise of the Olympic Commercialism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004).

⁵⁹ Wamsley, “The Global Sport Monopoly,” 390-392.

⁶⁰ See the collection of essays in *Rethinking the Olympics: Cultural Histories of the Modern Games*, ed. Robert K. Barney (Morgantown, WV: Sport & Global Cultures Series, 2009).

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⁶² Hill, *Olympic Politics*, 1-4.

⁶³ For an extensive overview of the 1936 Olympic Games see Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

⁶⁴ Jim Riordan, “The Rise and Fall of Soviet Olympic Champions,” in *Rethinking the Olympics: Cultural Histories of the Modern Games*, ed. Robert K. Barney (Morgantown, WV: Sport & Global Cultures Series, 2009), 285-286.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁶⁶ Senn, *Power, Politics, and the Olympic Games*, 98-109.

⁶⁷ Riordan, *The Rise and Fall of Soviet Olympic Champions*, 291.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 286.

⁶⁹ Brasher, *Mexico 1968: A Diary of the XIXth Olympiad*, 30.

⁷⁰ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Rank Outsider: Mexico City’s Bid for the 1968 Olympic Games,” 749.

⁷¹ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “Sport and Society in Post-revolutionary Mexico,” 723.

⁷² Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 17-20.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 732.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 736-739.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Rank Outsider: Mexico City’s Bid for the 1968 Olympic Games,” 750-751.

⁷⁸ Claire Brewster, “Changing Impressions of Mexico for the 1968 Games,” 24.

⁷⁹ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Rank Outsider: Mexico City’s Bid for the 1968 Olympic Games,” 751.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Claire Brewster, “Changing Impressions of Mexico for the 1968 Games,” 24-25.

⁸² Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 34.

⁸³ Ibid, 34-36.

⁸⁴ Claire Brewster, “Changing impressions of Mexico for the 1968 Games,” 26-28.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 28.

⁸⁶ Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*, 326. See also Claire Brewster, “Changing impressions of Mexico for the 1968 Games,” 26-28.

⁸⁷ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 37-41.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 43.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 37-39.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁹¹ For information regarding the question of altitude see Wrynn, “A debt was paid off in tears: science, IOC politics and the debate about high altitude in the 1968 Mexico City

Olympics,” 1152-1172. See also Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 50-55. A number of studies have been conducted concerning the Olympic boycott movement of 1968. For a succinct and detailed account of the events see Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 94-103. For an example of how these factors were perceived during 1968 see James Coote, *Olympic Report 1968* (London: Robert Hale, 1968), 13-15.

⁹² Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 105. See also Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 815.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 104.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 105.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 121.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 116.

⁹⁷ Lewis H. Diuguid, “Foreigners cited in Mexico violence,” *Washington Post*, 7 October 1968, A12

⁹⁸ Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*, 342.

⁹⁹ Elena Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: The Viking Press, 1975), 200-202.

¹⁰⁰ Rodda, ‘*Prensa Prensa*’: *A journalists reflections on Mexico* ‘68, 13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰² *Ibid*.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 15.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Poniatowska, *Massacre in Mexico*, 199.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 202-203.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 204.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 211.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 212.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 213.

¹¹² Ibid, 218.

¹¹³ Ibid, 221.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 225.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 226.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 227.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 269.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 270.

Chapter 3: American Newspapers and Tlatelolco

The newspaper accounts of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* regarding the Mexico City massacre during October 1968 were numerous, diverse, and eclectic. The coverage of both newspapers was laced with meaning structures revealing the political tendencies of the authors. Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding paradigm for analyzing these newspaper reports provided an in-depth method of analysis of the meaning structures within the massacre coverage and the power effects that these meaning structures had on furthering certain narratives while marginalizing others.¹ These political tendencies were decoded by readers in the form of "letters to the editor" which often opposed the viewpoints published. This factor indicates that the newspaper reporting was critically analyzed by the audience. The reporting of Tlatelolco in these newspapers interestingly mirrored the diverse and complicated American relationship with Mexico and America's political positioning in the Cold War, whereby the threat of communism was vilified. The *Times* and the *Post* both provided their readers with in-depth reporting which spoke to the long-standing relationship between America and Mexico. Additionally, balanced coverage was a characteristic of reporting, as was a degree of awareness of the danger the massacre presented to those attending the Games.

Context

The United States and Mexico have experienced a close, troubled, and undeniably intertwined historical relationship. A state of conflict prevailed between the two countries for the majority of the nineteenth century and during the Mexican revolution which

started in 1910.² Tempestuous relations between America and Mexico since Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 to the end of the French military intervention in Mexico in 1867 were the product of a multitude of factors.³ Chief amongst these factors was American ambition to expand its physical boundaries as well as its political influence and the consistent political upheaval in Mexican society. Designs of expansionism on the part of the United States led to meddling in Mexican society. The goal of this intervention into Mexican society was to make Mexico more American-friendly. The instability within Mexican society manifested itself in the many wars, government changes, and civil unrest during the 19th century, making stable and consistent relations with America nearly impossible. Both the American expansionism and the instability of Mexico naturally led to discord in relations between the two nations.

Relations were strained when United States expansionism reared its head toward Mexico during the secession of Texas from Mexico in 1836. Mexico had permitted American homesteaders to settle in its sparsely populated northern territory of Texas. The settlers accepted the Mexican citizenship which came with this settlement opportunity, but soon became dissatisfied with Mexican governance. In 1836, the settlers unilaterally declared their independence.⁴ The United States opportunistically capitalized on the settlers' revolt by sending in American armed forces to aid the separatist's struggle with Mexico. What began as a movement for independence on the part of the settlers eventually became an annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845. America declared war on Mexico in 1846 stating that it was defending its national territory, newly acquired Texas. In a matter of months, the U.S. army conquered Mexico City.⁵ In 1848, the war between the two countries was formally concluded with the Treaty of Guadalupe-

Hidalgo. In the Treaty, Mexico was coerced into ceding half its territory to the Americans.⁶ American expansion westward was assured with its amalgamation of territory from Mexico. The seeds of Mexican distrust and suspicion towards the United States were sewn in the aftermath of this conflict and also sentiments of Mexican nationalism were ignited.⁷

Vastly improved relations between the two countries occurred when the Mexican government was overhauled and Porfirio Díaz became President. During Porfirio Díaz's presidency from 1877-1911, U.S.-Mexican relations became focused on bilateral agreements which were mutually beneficial. U.S. companies invested heavily in Mexican railroads and mining which in turn improved Mexican infrastructure while helping to stimulate the American economy. In 1883, a trade reciprocity treaty was signed, which decreased tariffs and legal barriers and invigorated trade between the two countries.⁸ Total trade between Mexico and the United States increased steadily from nine million pesos in 1870 to 117 million pesos in 1910, indicating the impact of the signed agreements. Further exemplifying the growing relationship between the two countries, 1911 became the year American foreign investment in Mexico exceeded that of Great Britain. In 1911 the British still enjoyed a seafaring empire where the sun never set, and as a result their global presence was still unrivaled in 1911. Mexico thus became the first nation in Latin America to hold the distinction of having more American than British investment in Mexico, indicating the strengthening of the American-Mexican relationship.⁹ Despite the increased trade relationship of the Americophile Díaz government, the American infiltration of Mexican life became more obtuse once Díaz was overthrown and revolution occurred.

American interference and intervention in Mexico continued in a more subversive manner after the Díaz's departure during the Mexican Revolution which began in 1910. The intrusion of the U.S. in internal Mexican politics was evident when President Woodrow Wilson ordered American troops to invade Mexico's principal port of Veracruz in 1914 to prevent a large arms convoy from reaching the army of General Victoriano Huerta. This intervention enabled the American-backed army of Huerta's rival, Venustiano Carranza, to seize Veracruz, tipping the balance of the Revolution to suit American interests.¹⁰ With their expansionist dreams for Central America, it followed that the United States would try to shape the Mexican Revolution.¹¹ Francisco Madero, who was President of Mexico during the Revolution from 1911-1913, enjoyed American support because of his pro-U.S. policies.¹² When Madero was overthrown and Victoriano Huerta became President, Woodrow Wilson did not readily recognize the Huerta government owing to its military and authoritarian overtones.¹³ Huerta's unfavourable policies towards the U.S. led the Wilson administration to advance money to his rival, Carranza. Wilson inserted 12,000 American soldiers and marines into Veracruz, which the Americans had helped Carranza control, and threatened to move them by rail into Mexico City if Huerta refused to resign.¹⁴ Huerta, after some consternation, conceded to the American request and resigned on 15 July 1914. The United States claimed victory.¹⁵ The impacts of American interference into Mexico were substantial, bringing about regime change and altering the course of the Mexican Revolution. With this involvement came resentment from factions of Mexican society who opposed American intervention. The American-Mexican relationship, however, was due for another orientation shift.

The Second World War had a profound impact on the American-Mexican relationship and went some way towards changing its dynamics. The United States and Mexico embarked on mutually beneficial endeavors to aid the Allied war effort. Mexico joined the Allied cause and provided migratory workers to the United States during the war years.¹⁶ Additionally, during the Second World War Mexico began to expropriate its oil to America, which stimulated the Mexican economy.¹⁷ The United States also granted Mexico more license to enact sovereign policies even if they were unfavourable to the U.S., as exemplified by their refusal to allow American troops to build a U.S. military base in Mexico.¹⁸ During the war years, increasing bilateral cooperation in military and economic matters emerged. In 1942, an agreement to lower trade barriers between the countries was put into effect, which helped Mexico gain from the new American market for its oil.¹⁹ Further mutually beneficial agreements between the two nations allowed: U.S. loans to steady Mexican public finances; development of Mexico's communications; and the easing immigration between the countries. In fact, the series of immigration agreements, known as the Bracero Agreements enacted from 1942-1964, facilitated the employment of approximately 300,000 Mexican workers during the war years in the agricultural and rail industries of the United States. When these immigration agreements were ended in 1964, roughly 4.5 million Mexicans had worked in America under the Bracero Agreements.²⁰

From the 1940s onward, the U.S. became the chief export market and primary source of financing for Mexico. America benefitted in kind as Mexico became a major destination for economic expansion as well as an investment haven and a primary nation to export goods and services. Cheap Mexican labour and Mexico's raw materials also

stoked the American economy.²¹ Illustrating the close linkages built between the two countries, in 1970 Mexican exports to the United States totaled 880 million dollars, accounting for 68.2 percent of all Mexican exports. In 1970, Mexican imports from the U.S. were 1,567 million dollars worth and 63.6 percent of Mexico's total imports.²²

Underscoring the close economic relationship between the two neighbours was United States foreign policy. Since the Second World War, American foreign policy focused upon the containment of communism which the U.S. believed was a threat to peace and security.²³ Owing to this preoccupation of containing communism, American interests in Latin America were to ensure their southern flank was non-communist, peaceful, and secure.²⁴ In spite of the U.S. hopes for a secure Latin America and growing economic linkages to the region, high levels of American engagement in Latin American issues were not as prevalent as with other regions, namely Asia and Europe. In the late 1940s, U.S. policy regarding Latin America was enacted by a select handful of officials and influential outsiders.²⁵ Public polling in America contained few questions regarding Latin America, making the public opinion of Americans concerning Latin America difficult to assess. Additionally, in the 1940s and 1950s, few U.S. universities offered Latin American studies, and even fewer students studied this subject. In the middle of the 20th century only the *New York Times* had a full-time staff correspondent in Latin America, which resulted in few stories about the region.²⁶ While the relationship was vital and dynamic, room for growth existed.

The relationship between the United States and Mexico has endured many twists and turns throughout the duration of its history. Friction was commonplace, with agitation often arising from American intervention into Mexican life and the seeming

instability in Mexican society. Though problems have arisen, opportunity and benefits have been garnered by both countries, economically and politically. The influence of Mexico's proximity to the United States has been the major factor in the relationship between the two countries.²⁷ To exemplify the unusual relationship, liberal Mexican politicians admired American institutions as examples of modernity which they wished to employ in Mexico on one hand but, on the other, direct and indirect American participation in Mexico's political struggles created a sense of distrust amongst many Mexicans.²⁸

American meddling and concern over Mexico's instability was evident during the Mexican student movement of 1968. The American obsession to abolish communism as a threat to the country exhibited itself through the U.S. State Department's surveillance of communism in Mexico.²⁹ Given the leftist tendencies of other student movements of 1968, notably in France, the State Department became apoplectic with fear that communism was central to the growing Mexican student movement.³⁰ These concerns, unfounded given the peripheral communist influence to this student movement, correlated with Mexican government fear that communism ran rampant within the student movement. To exemplify how entrenched and knowledgeable the U.S. State Department was about the student movement, and the culminating massacre, a state official report stated, "Students did not start [the] violence at Tlatelolco, but rather [a] well-armed group identifying [them]selves by gloved left hand[s] started firing and provided pretext for army firing."³¹ Such was the understanding of the internal dynamics of Mexico by their concerned American neighbours.

The Mexican government frequently blamed communists for the growing student movement and eventually U.S. officials came to realize the negligible communist tint to the Mexican student movement. American worries then shifted towards the possibility that the student movement might move the Mexican government towards the left of the political spectrum as an appeasement tactic to remedy the student agitation.³² As Mexico's student movement persisted into the fall of 1968, U.S. officials began to express their dismay at the potentially detrimental effects of the student unrest on the Mexico City Olympic Games. These officials worried that Díaz Ordaz and the Mexican hierarchy were ill-suited to subdue the student movement and respond to potential flare-ups given its inability to contain the earlier unrest in addition to their misjudgment of the communist influence within the movement.³³ In September 1968, President Díaz Ordaz began preparing for what he viewed as inevitable armed conflict between the government and the disaffected students. Mexico appealed for radios, riot gear, and heavy weapons from the U.S.. This request was duly granted.³⁴ This episode epitomized the close but uneasy relations between the U.S. and Mexico. On one hand, the Americans did not trust the Mexican government's ability to handle the student unrest, while on the other the U.S. exported goods to Mexico thereby mutually benefitting each country.

Findings

The Mexico City massacre stimulated substantial consideration by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* in October 1968. Coverage of the massacre and its possible ramifications were especially prevalent in the days immediately succeeding the massacre. The massacre maintained a fairly prominent position in both newspapers throughout the latter stages of the month of October, indicated by a number of front page

articles and multiple articles within the same day's paper. The reporting on Tlatelolco by both the *Times* and the *Post* was characterized by numerous themes which punctuated their coverage of the massacre. First, the massacre was reported in a manner which supported each side. The representation of both the government narrative: that the students instigated and were responsible for the violence, and the student narrative: that the government brutally repressed their peaceful demonstration, were afforded balanced depiction. Second, the massacre was not treated in isolation, but rather knowledgeable and in-depth analysis of the precipitating causes of the massacre and the wider social unrest in Mexico was engrained in the reports. Third, and finally, the coverage of the massacre showed concern for, and highlighted, the perils for those attending the Olympics in the wake of the violence.

*Balanced Reporting*³⁵

The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* displayed a level of neutrality in their reporting of the massacre. This was especially so concerning the assessment of blame for starting the violence. Opinions were put forth, to be sure, but these opinions were balanced by opposing beliefs presented in other articles leading to an overall body of nonpartisan reporting. The government narrative, that the students were to blame for causing the massacre, and the student narrative, that the government was blameworthy were both afforded significant representation in both newspapers in October 1968. Newspaper reports on where the blame rested for the massacre were contradictory. Furthermore, "letters to the editors" from readers of the *Times* and *Post* often disputed the coverage or interpretation put forth. The reporting style of these newspapers, providing an even-keeled assessment while carefully not accepting either as factually certain, in

many ways reflected the American-Mexican political relationship. Considerable American business and economic interests in Mexico dictated that internal unrest in Mexican society had implications for some Americans, thereby making a connection between the massacre and content which impacted American citizens. Also, the political relations between the two countries had a sordid past, and American skepticism towards Mexico's government was likely founded on past American dealings with Mexico.

The *New York Times*, on 3 October, was adorned with the front page headline, "At Least 20 Dead as Mexico Strife Reaches a Peak. Troops Fire Machine Guns and Rifles at Students- More than 100 Hurt." The article, written by the *Times* columnist Paul L. Montgomery, stated that, "Federal troops fired on a student rally with rifles and machine guns tonight."³⁶ The article's headline, and some of the content, endorsed the student version that the government began firing on their demonstration and was thereby responsible for the bloodshed. The thrust of the article's beginning assessed fault towards the Mexican government and Montgomery supported the student position in the article: "In a statement tonight, the Defense Minister, Gen. Marcelino García Barragán, said that the troops had moved on the rally after snipers fired on the Federal District riot police guarding the nearby Foreign Ministry and a vocational school. The general's statement was disputed by many witnesses."³⁷ One witness was quoted as further indicting the government by saying, "They came without warning. There was no tear gas. They just shot at everyone." Though the government was afforded representation in this article, Montgomery's stipulation that Barragán's statements were disputed by many witnesses served to undermine the credibility of the government. Implicit within the report was that

the students were the victims in Tlatelolco, attacked by government troops and, even though the government said otherwise, its views likely did not constitute reality.

The *Washington Post*, on 4 October, also featured a relatively equitable assessment of the massacre. One of that day's articles about the massacre was titled, "Olympics Chief Says Games Will Be Held, Olympics are going ahead despite Mexican violence." The story provided its readers with the recap of the massacre as, "last night's battle between army troops and students" and that "rioting has shaken Mexico City since mid-July when students struck in protest against government police."³⁸ The story continued by stating, "Fire (was) laid down by the army against the snipers in the crowded Plaza of three Cultures" and that "The army says that some 2000 troops rushed into the Plaza after the riot police called for help. The police said snipers were shooting at them."³⁹ These statements provided the government view of the events at Tlatelolco.

Despite the pervasiveness of the government narrative in the *Post* article, voice was given to the students and a counter narrative to the dominant discourse was provided. The story stated, "Gen. Marcelino García Barragán, the Defense Minister, blamed the students for causing the tragedy. But some observers wondered if perhaps the military had not overreacted with excessive force."⁴⁰ Raising the possibility that the military had overreacted served to inform readers that the government was not completely absolved from criticism, though the government's version of the events was dominant in the article. In fact, the *Washington Post's* coverage of the massacre throughout October was highlighted by its general endorsement of the government position; however, there was a significant minority representation of the student version of events, demonstrating some balance.

The *Washington Post* on 4 October featured another article which directed fault for the massacre toward the students. The story quoted Per Stroemboeck, chief of the Swedish delegation, as stating, “When the students start demonstrations during the opening ceremonies it could be extremely dangerous for our athletes.”⁴¹ Stroemboeck presupposed that the students would cause trouble in the Olympic opening ceremonies which implied that the students were the agitators responsible for the violence which had just occurred. The title of the article, “Riots by Students Worry Olympians,” further confirmed the article’s stance that the students caused the outbreak of violence at Tlatelolco by labelling the violence as a student riot. The condemnation of the students was continued on 5 October when the *Post* published an article about a Mexican sniper titled, “Sniper Fire Breaks Mexico City Calm: Mexico City Sniper Fire Wounds Two.” The story described a sniper who reignited violence in Mexico City after two days of quiet since Tlatelolco, “Today’s sniping ended a period of quiet after two days of shooting, burning, and fighting between troops and police and students protesting alleged government repression.”⁴² Implicitly, the article questioned the validity of the students’ protests, by describing their concerns as “alleged” and therefore not necessarily true. The battle narrative which emanated from the government, to make their use of force seem justified, was also evident in this article. However, seemingly to counterbalance this report, and the growing endorsement of the Mexican government narrative, was an editorial titled “Night of Sorrow,” which provided a contrasting view of the massacre. The *Post* stated, “It is reported that more than 500 civilians were wounded and more than two score were killed in an outburst of rifle and machine gun fire at what seemed a peaceful student rally.”⁴³ This characterization called into question some of the

previously published reports in the *Post* which derided the student snipers who necessitated the outbreak of violence. This editorial continued by claiming, “As to the origins and responsibility for this tragedy, we do not yet know enough to comment,” raising the question of why the newspaper had already featured so many articles which laid the blame towards the students.⁴⁴

“Whatever the long-term effects on Mexico of this week’s violence, it superficially has set back the students who started the agitation two months ago,” stated Lewis H. Diguid of the *Washington Post* on 6 October. Diguid’s column stigmatized the students as agitators who disturbed the peace and also created the battle at Tlatelolco.⁴⁵ The *Post* continued on 6 October, as another story claimed, “A relative calm settled over downtown Mexico City, in what the Army believes is the end of the current round of student unrest.”⁴⁶ The violence was portrayed as a student problem because it was “student unrest,” thereby reinforcing the entrenchment of the narrative favouring the Mexican government.

The *Post*’s endorsement of the Mexican government continued even as the story changed and evolved. The implication, not only that students started the massacre, but that the student movement had communist and foreign elements rose to prominence in the days after the initial reporting of the massacre. On 7 October, coverage began with the article titled, “Foreigners Cited in Mexico Violence,” by Lewis H. Diuguid. The government’s insistence that foreigners and communists were influencing the Mexican student movement was backed up by the *Post*: “widely respected former President Lazaro Cárdenas,” went on to claim that, “foreign elements” were involved with the latest violence in Tlatelolco.⁴⁷ The *Post* gave authority and legitimacy to the sentiments in the

article by remarking on Cárdenas's respectability, giving credence to his opinion on the matter.

On 11 October another example of the *Post's* support of the government was provided in Shirley Povich's article, "This Morning." The article described the violence as "student rioting" and expressed the desire of Mexico to showcase itself internationally in spite of the "recent student rioting."⁴⁸ The journalist explicitly accepted the government's version of the initiation of violence. The government-favoured reporting however was counter-balanced by articles which questioned the government's involvement in the massacre and implied that it had perhaps over-reacted to the student unrest.

The 13 October issue of the *Post* featured Lewis Diuguid's "Mexico Opens the Olympics without incident" article, suggesting that within Mexico it was uncertain as to the nature of future protests. He stated, "Many here believe that divisive issues will rise again after the Games. Opinion is split on whether the source of disquiet will be the students or the factions within the government that have used the student movement for their own political ends."⁴⁹ Evidently some had suggested that the government manipulated the student unrest to achieve its own ends.

Morris Rosenberg of the *Washington Post* restated Diuguid's presentation of two narratives to explain what occurred at Tlatelolco and the potential future direction of the student movement in Mexico. Rosenberg acknowledged the government's uncompromising desire to quell the student movement at almost any cost and stated, "The Mexican government has clearly indicated that it will go to almost any length to suppress

the disorders.”⁵⁰ After providing this claim, Rosenberg went on to endorse the narrative emanating from the very government whose methods he had criticized. He stated, “There is no doubt that some Communists and anarchists are involved” in the Mexican student movement. Rosenberg turned his endorsement of the government into a critique soon after and showed sympathy to the student cries of brutal repression. Rosenberg claimed, “the degree of armed force and its use has seemed to many observers out of all proportion to the provocations.”⁵¹ Rosenberg presented both sides of the debate as to who was responsible for the massacre. In doing so, he created a narrative which nestled somewhere in between blaming the government or the students for the outbreak of violence.

Questioning the Government, Endorsing the Students

The *New York Times* maintained a nonpartisan assessment of the massacre presented in its cover story on 3 October more so than did the *Post*. The *Post* appeared to largely align with the government version of events for the majority of its coverage. The *Times* alternated the viewpoints given and, if anything, the student position was the one endorsed to a greater extent by the newspaper. The front page of the 4 October *New York Times* featured another Paul L. Montgomery article which blamed the government for escalating the violence needlessly. Montgomery remarked, “A thousand federal soldiers fired rifles and machine guns at what had been a peaceful student rally in the plaza of a housing project last night.”⁵² In fact, the first mention of the violence as a massacre was in this article when a student leader was quoted as proclaiming, “We have not given up. I was in that massacre last night, and after that I would never give up.”⁵³ The condemnation of the government continued on 4 October. John Coker, a heavyweight

boxer at the Olympics representing Sierra Leone, and an Oxford graduate, stated, “Seeing what’s going on leaves you appalled. I don’t understand how the Mexican Government can present one face to the athletes in the outside world, and a different face to their own youth.”⁵⁴

The *New York Times* returned to a more neutral characterization of the massacre on 5 October. Henry Giniger in his article titled, “Mexican student protest appears to be crushed,” provided both the Mexican government and the students with fault for beginning the massacre. Giniger reinforced the government narrative by stating, “The long and occasionally violent student protest here appeared today to be smashed as a mass movement following the gun battle in which at least 29 persons lost their lives Wednesday night.” The story went on to make numerous references to the “clashes” between students and the government.⁵⁵ The Mexican government was supported by the article’s discussion of government supporters, “talk of an outside foreign plot against Mexico by agitators who provoked the army, by sniper fire into shooting during a student meeting Wednesday.” The government point of view was immediately followed by the student view whereby, “Eyewitness accounts of soldiers indiscriminately firing into the crowd and circumstances surrounding the clash, suggest to some observers a deliberate Government effort to terrorize the students into quiescence at least for the period of the Olympic Games.” The depiction of the event as a “massacre” was continued in this article: “Those students who could be reached on the university campus called the clash with army troops “a massacre.” Both viewpoints were afforded consideration in Giniger’s article, although it seems he favoured the student narrative given that the student point of view was provided to rebuke the government’s assessment of blame.

The 6 October *Times* sport section featured two articles which appraised the massacre. Henry Giniger's column, unlike his one the previous day, did not go into detail in providing viewpoints as to who was responsible for the violence.⁵⁶ The "Sports of the Times" column, written by Arthur Daley with the subheading, "The Rebels" assigned blame to the students for causing the violence. Daley wrote, "Having survived the threats to their previous Olympics from the outside (boycott movements), the dedicated Mexicans almost choked over their sighs of relief. Hardly had these sighs been released when new trouble began at home."⁵⁷ Daley went on to state,

College and secondary school students, as restless and as rebellious as students all over the world, began disruptive tactics and riots. Under ordinary circumstances, the reaction of the Government might not have been so severe. But the nation had become so obsessed by the Olympics and so fearful of anything endangering their success that the crackdown was swift and violent. Many were killed in the suppression of the rioting.⁵⁸

The political agenda, and underlying assumptions, which informed Daley's article, were clear. Though some balance was present in the article, the description of the Mexican students as restless and rebellious and utilizers of disruptive tactics and riots to achieve their goals made the endorsement of the Mexican government narrative evident.

Given Daley's condemnation of disaffected students around the world, his stance towards Mexico's students was perhaps inevitable. In addition to Daley laying the blame for the violence on the students, he was unsympathetic towards their losses of life: "Many were killed in the suppression of the rioting."⁵⁹ His flippant disregard for the loss of life aligns with the overall tone of the article, which demonizes the students, while appearing unalarmed with the government's actions.

Seemingly deaf to the report filed by Daley two days earlier, Henry Giniger on 8 October wrote an article titled, “Dissident accuses Mexican regime. Ex-party leader criticizes ‘Witch-Hunt’ on protests,” which questioned the government’s actions at Tlatelolco. In the article, Carlos A. Madrazo was called “Mexico’s best-known political dissident” and the article continued by stating “the Government was carrying on a witch-hunt instead of solving the country’s problems.”⁶⁰ Madrazo, formerly the head of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), claimed that solutions were needed to Mexico’s many societal issues that did not involve the use of guns, but rather through social, economic, and political measures.⁶¹ The article continued its inquisition of the government’s actions by proclaiming, “The Government is now attempting to build up a case against the students and some of its political opponents as instigators of a subversive effort to overthrow the Government and install a Communist regime.”⁶² Giniger provided significant representation to the peril of the students in this article, in addition to his questioning of the Mexican government. Implicit within the article was the assumption that the government needed to be questioned and the students were not the perpetrators of the massacre. Giniger made his skepticism of the government’s actions clear by claiming they were building or creating a case not based on reality.

On 10 October, the *Times* perspective on the massacre raised questions over the legitimacy of the Mexican students. A page 10 Reuters article titled, “Students demand voice” stigmatized the students by remarking, “Student leaders announced at a clandestine news conference tonight that there would be no talks with the Mexican government until more political prisoners were released from jail.”⁶³ The clandestine reference suggests the students were a subversive, secretive, and illegitimate group,

thereby questioning their motives. The article also portrayed the students as rash and petty, given that if their demands were not met dialogue with the government would cease.

Again the representation of the massacre in the *Times* was altered and reports treating the Mexico City massacre were harsh towards the government, and sympathetic towards the students. In a 12 October editorial titled “Ferment in Mexico” the government was criticized as undemocratic and suspicious. The *Times* stated, “For most of this century Mexico has been governed by Latin America’s strongest, most durable political party- The Institutional Revolutionary Party. It is a peculiar organization. The party chiefs claim to be the sole legitimate interpreters of the Mexican revolution.”⁶⁴ Encoded within this article was the assumption that the power-thirsty Mexican government was an unyielding entity which did not take kindly to other points of view. The editorial, therefore, questioned the Mexican government’s ideals, easily leading readers into questioning its role in the massacre.

Meanwhile, on page 45 of the same day’s *Times* issue, Robert Lipsyte described Tlatelolco as, “the murderous snuffing out of Mexican student rioting.”⁶⁵ Even on 14 October, in an article regarding the Mexican government theory that foreign elements had infiltrated the Mexican student movement and caused the massacre, the author of the piece questioned this narrative. Henry Giniger, a staunchly pro-student, anti-government proponent for the assessment of who started the massacre, claimed, “A complicated picture of plotting, involving the United States and other outside interests, is being presented to the Mexican people as an explanation of the prolonged student unrest and the serious violence that has accompanied it.”⁶⁶ Giniger’s skepticism of the government

continued when he wrote, “Strong overtones of xenophobia pervade the various accusations, which tend to make Mexicans look outside their borders for the source of their recent troubles rather than to seek it in the internal political, economic, and social situations and whatever defects they may have.”⁶⁷

On 21 October, however, questions were raised over the pro-student stance to some of this coverage in the *Times* in a “letter to the editor” by Jorge Castañeda, Ambassador Chief Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mexico. Castañeda contested the assessment of the massacre given by Paul Montgomery on 4 October and presented the opposing viewpoint. Issue was taken with Montgomery’s appraisal that the government instigated the violence. Illustrating his outrage with Montgomery’s article he stated, “in my view gives a false impression of the events.” Castañeda provided an alternative which charged that, “the firing started from a fourth floor balcony of the Chihuahua Building, on the eastern end of the Plaza.”⁶⁸ This letter claimed that the government was not to blame for the outbreak of violence, unsurprising given Castañeda’s government affiliation.

The reporting of both newspapers displayed a level of fairness in providing the viewpoints of both the Mexican government and the students. The *Washington Post*, while allowing for stories centered on the student narrative that the government started the violence, appeared to generally endorse and publicize the government narrative. Owing to the *Post*’s relative reliance, in comparison to the *Times*, on major news agencies, like AP and Reuters, to provide their Mexico City massacre coverage, it seems that these reports favoured the government. One could only speculate as to why these major news agencies, in sum, endorsed the government’s side of the story and not the

students. On the other hand, the *New York Times* on balance favoured the students' view of events and was very skeptical of the Mexican government and the stories it was putting forth in the assessment of blame for causing the massacre. The *Times* largely used its own staff reporters to provide the paper's coverage of Tlatelolco allowing for much more individualized and opinionated columns versus the rather stock and standard reports which emanated from the major news agencies. Additionally, *Times* reporters who covered the massacre had in-depth knowledge of the political atmosphere in Mexico at the time, which led Paul L. Montgomery and Henry Giniger- both Latin American correspondents, with Giniger based in Mexico City- to criticize the government reports which they regarded as untrustworthy.⁶⁹ Another *Times* reporter, sports columnist Arthur Daley, however, reprimanded the students for instigating the violence. The difference of opinion between Daley and the other two columnists was stark, and given that Daley was a sports columnist and not a Latin American correspondent, this opinion divergence could be explained by a difference in knowledge about Mexico.⁷⁰

Though both newspapers appeared, by sheer volume of coverage, to favour one version of the events over the other, both provided ample representation of both viewpoints. The decision to do so afforded the readership an even-handed and comprehensive overview of the massacre. The second theme which characterized the reporting of the *Washington Post* and especially the *New York Times* was knowledgeable and in-depth reporting in the articles regarding the massacre. Though the *Post* placed some reliance on news agency reports of the massacre, a significant amount of its coverage was written by its own columnists. The context of the student movement as a

whole that was presented provided readers a deeper understanding of how the massacre occurred.

The Massacre Does Not Paint the Whole Picture

The Mexico City massacre on 2 October 1968, provided a final punctuation mark to the Mexican student unrest which had been occurring since July 1968. Instead of superficially providing their readers with stories regarding the 2 October event in isolation, both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* presented deeper context to help enhance the understanding of why the violence occurred. Implicit within this broader and more in-depth coverage of the massacre was that the readers of the two newspapers were interested in and were knowledgeable of Mexican issues. Readers exhibited these traits which were encoded within many of the newspaper reports through “letters to the editor” which showed the active engagement segments of the readership had with the Mexican student movement and the massacre.

The *New York Times*’ first story about the massacre on 3 October 1968 considered the wider context of Mexican student unrest. The article stated, “Until the troops moved in, it seemed that both the Government and this city’s rebellious students were working to establish an atmosphere of calm after some 10 weeks of struggling.”⁷¹ Likewise, the *Washington Post*’s 4 October story stated that, “Rioting has shaken Mexico City since mid-July when students struck in protest against government police.”⁷² These initial confrontations with the massacre illustrate the immediate connections both newspapers made between the massacre and the Mexican student movement which had been ongoing throughout the summer months. These reports set the precedent of acknowledging the

wider Mexican student movement which was continued in subsequent coverage of the massacre.

Henry Giniger of the *Times* provided contextual information about the Mexican student movement in his column about the aftermath of the Tlatelolco violence. On 5 October, Giniger stated, “The protest movement began at the end of July after clashes with policemen and soldiers which led to student charges of government brutality and violations of the constitutional right of assembly.”⁷³ Lewis H. Diuguid, of the *Post*, also provided such background insight on 6 October in his column that stated, “During the campus strikes, rallies, troop occupations and occasional clashes since late July, the student leadership has settled on a half dozen demands as the price for restored order.”⁷⁴

Demand for more extensive coverage of Mexican stories was evident in the 4 October “letter to the editor” in the *New York Times* written by Ramón Eduardo Ruiz of Smith College Northampton Massachusetts. The letter, under the title “Mexico City unrest” was written on 1 October and finally published in the wake of the events on 2 October. Ruiz lamented the lack of significant coverage of the student unrest in Mexico. He wrote,

Judging by the content of letters to The *Times*, recent events in Mexico have made no impression on the American public. Yet the student demonstrations in Mexico City and their harsh repression by President Diaz Ordaz and his underlings may create a situation that would dwarf by comparison our “Cuban problem.” Far from being the model for other Latin American nations to imitate, Mexico still embodies most of the general ills common to the southern republics.⁷⁵

Though Ruiz was exacerbated over the lack of engagement with the issues of Mexico City- which, as shown by Kevin Witherspoon in *Before the Eyes of the World*, were

highlighted in the *Times* throughout the summer of 1968- the inclusion of his letter served as notice that segments of the readership were engaged with this Mexican issue.

Giniger continued to write columns attending to the broader student movement in his 6 October article. Giniger commented, “For more than two months, students here have been staging a strike and accompanying it with street agitation.”⁷⁶ Lewis Diuguid followed in kind with a well-informed appraisal of the massacre when he, on 7 October, wrote, “Conversations with politically aware Mexicans at all levels in the capital reveal a general unrest based on this realization: there was much more involved in the Plaza of the Three Cultures battle Wednesday night than just a conflict between student and law enforcement officers.”⁷⁷ Diuguid’s assertions reflected the divisive elements within the Mexico City and spoke directly to politically-aware individuals in Mexico City who understood, more clearly, the implications of the massacre.

Henry Giniger persisted in highlighting the drawn out conflict between the students and the government in Mexico. Giniger signified that the student movement was “long-standing” within Mexico and was aimed at changing Mexico to reflect a more egalitarian society.⁷⁸ Giniger echoed his sentiments on 10 October by referencing the protracted conflict between the students and the Mexican government. Giniger wrote, “Representatives of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz and leaders of the student protest movement have begun to explore ways of organizing negotiations to end almost 10 weeks of conflict.”⁷⁹ The *New York Times* editorial of 12 October described Tlatelolco as the crescendo of “three months of student disorders.”⁸⁰ The next day, Giniger commented that Tlatelolco had experienced the culmination of, “two months of student unrest and agitation” featuring the “bloody gun battle” which capped off the student movement.⁸¹

Shirley Povich sustained the representation of the larger Mexican student movement on 11 October in the *Post*. After discussing the massacre and the possible impacts it would have on the Games, Povich argued that Tlatelolco was not a one-off event. He remarked, “The student police battles have claimed 50 lives since July” before claiming, incorrectly, that, like the ancient warring tribes of Greece, truce between the combatants needed to be reached for the sake of the Olympic Games.⁸² The continual context given in these reports provided readers with an understanding of what had occurred in Tlatelolco on a deeper level.

Three distinct instances of reader engagement with the reporting of the massacre exemplified reader knowledge and insight into the story. On 13 October, the *Washington Post* featured a lengthy article by travel editor Morris Rosenberg highlighting the potential ramifications the massacre would have on Americans travelling to the Olympics.⁸³ In the article, Rosenberg revealed that Charles H. Guptill, director of the Mexican Foreign Press Office, Department of Tourism, wrote to Rosenberg outlining the issues he had with Rosenberg’s characterization of the Mexican government-student violence in the summer. Guptill explained, “It was felt that such a reassuring note was needed exactly to offset such hysterical reports as you quote about ‘an orgy of blood, teenagers faces slashed by bayonets’ and the relative beneficence of the ‘police shenanigans in Chicago.’”⁸⁴ Guptill was attempting to re-orient the descriptions of Rosenberg’s last column which described the Mexican violence in terms unfavourable to the government. Guptill also shot back at the apparent hypocrisy inherent in Rosenberg’s article, and the *Post*’s accounts of the Mexican government violence versus American

civil unrest- which Guptill felt was handled delicately whereas Mexican disorder was criticized heavily.

Reader engagement with the massacre and Mexico in general was shown further on 15 October in a “letter to the editor” in the *Washington Post*. Frank J. Bonora, who, through his observations, displayed thorough knowledge of the internal situation of Mexico’s student unrest, realized the opportunity to turn the massacre and student unrest into song, channeling his best Rodgers and Hammerstein impression. Bonora wrote:

The Hills of Latin are alive with the Sounds of Guerrilla Warfare. And a tone deaf Congress conducts the Alliance for Progress with the professionalism of a high school glee club and the budget of a barbershop quartet. But the beat goes on, from the Halls of Montezuma to the very tip of Tierra del Guego. It’s up, up, and away with the Concerto of Campesinos, the Bolero of Barrios, overtures to tomorrow’s Vietnams. And the greatest spectacle of them all, from the Plaza of Three Cultures, a Mayan mazurka, a fiery flamenco of freedom, dance by students to the accompaniment of the gunned-guitars of the granaderos. But the beat goes on.⁸⁵

Bonora’s letter, original and unique, displayed an acute awareness of the internal situation in Mexico and represented reader engagement with the Mexico City massacre. Also highlighted in his ode to Mexico was an understanding and confrontation with the potential implications of the massacre and Mexican student unrest on America.

Finally, on 21 October, the *New York Times* featured a “letter to the editor” which took issue with Paul L. Montgomery’s article concerning the Mexico City massacre. Jorge Castañeda, Ambassador Chief Director Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico wrote a letter on 11 October which vehemently disagreed with Montgomery’s criticism of the Mexican government’s handling of the situation on 2 October. In no uncertain terms, Castañeda lambasted Montgomery’s account of the events, writing, “The story by Paul L.

Montgomery in the *Times* of 4 October regarding the violent clashes between Mexican students and the army on the night of 2 October in my view gives a false impression of events.”⁸⁶ Castañeda, claimed he would, “not attempt to explain or interpret what happened, but merely to rectify one question of fact regarding the moment and circumstances in which the army opened fire.” Evidently Castañeda was not comfortable with Montgomery’s version which implicated blame for starting the violence toward the government of which he was a part. Castañeda particularly disagreed with Montgomery’s claim, “a thousand federal soldiers fired rifles and machine guns at what had been a peaceful student rally in the plaza of a housing project.”⁸⁷

Castañeda explained his vantage point: “from my office in the sixteenth floor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the southern edge of the Plaza of Three Cultures and overlooking the whole area” and recollected his version of the events which precipitated the violence. Castañeda remarked, “From my clear and vivid recollection, shared by several colleagues and assistants, the firing started from a fourth floor balcony of the Chihuahua Building, on the eastern end of the Plaza.” Castañeda’s sentiments reiterated the government narrative that snipers initiated the violence. His, “vivid recollection” was shared amongst his colleagues, presumably also government workers, suggesting that their version was the correct one. Castañeda then dismissed Montgomery’s account, stating that given his own recollections of the events, “It is therefore patently false that the army charged and fired at a given signal against the students assembled in the Plaza. Unfortunately this story has only served to add fuel to the fire.” After forwarding the government narrative, working hard to make it seem legitimate in the process, and marginalizing the student narrative put forth by Paul Montgomery, Castañeda tried to

position himself and his letter as open-minded by concluding, “It is not advanced to justify or to blame anyone.”⁸⁸ The reader engagement evidenced by the numerous letters to the editor elucidated the depth of knowledge of some readers concerning the unrest in Mexico. Readers knew that civil unrest had been occurring for months.

‘Wild bullets are notoriously unconcerned about nationality:’ Visitor Safety

The assessment of the massacre by the *Times* and the *Post* displayed a level of awareness over the issues of safety facing those travelling to Mexico City to compete in, or watch, the Olympics. Numerous articles featured questions over issues of security to not only the Olympic competitions but the athletes and spectators. This awareness played into the wider theme of the knowledgeable and in-depth reporting on the massacre, but also served to highlight the perils facing those travelling to the Games as a warning.

The *Washington Post*, on 4 October, set the precedent for its focus on potential impacts on those travelling to Mexico with its column, “Riots by students worry Olympians.” The article explained, “Athletes at the Olympic Village knew little or nothing about Wednesday night’s student riots, but some team delegations were worried about their safety and recommended a meeting of all chef de missions to discuss the matter.” Per Stroemboeck, chief of the Swedish delegation, encapsulated the concern alluded to by the article when he was quoted as opining, “When the students start demonstrations during the opening ceremonies it could be extremely dangerous for our athletes. We should discuss the matter and ask the Olympic organizing Committee for a full guarantee of all our athletes. I do not want to take any risks for my girls and boys.”⁸⁹ The inclusion of Stroemboeck’s parental concern for his, “girls and boys” underlined the

Post's recognition of the gravity of the danger the massacre presented to those in Mexico City.

Perhaps the level of concern held by these newspaper writers was a reflection of general American worry of the potential for similar unrest in the United States. The *Post's* 5 October editorial titled, "Night of Sorrow," bespoke the *Post's* editors' recognition of possible parallels between Mexico and America. The editorial stated the Mexico City massacre, "carries an ominous warning for the United States. This country has already had examples of its own in which National Guard troops, panicked by what they took to be sniping, fired recklessly into inhabited dwellings and killed innocent observers."⁹⁰ The analogous handling of the massacre's aftermath by President Díaz Ordaz to Lyndon Johnson's handling of student rioting further accentuated the connections of the massacre to the United States, directly or indirectly. The editorial continued by claiming, "The failure of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz to go on record, personally, in the matter of the rioting, has evoked the defense that LBJ said nothing when the students rioted at Columbia."⁹¹ The similarities drawn between the two countries in the article served as notice for the possible ramifications of the massacre to the U.S.

Morris Rosenberg personified the *Post's* writers' concern for the safety of those travelling to the Olympics in his 13 October article, "At Olympic time, Mexicans worry about mañana."⁹² This column clearly articulated the potential safety issues Americans were to face in light of Tlatelolco. Rosenberg wrote, "What is happening in Mexico City should be of concern to every tourist who is contemplating a visit to the ancient realm of Montezuma." He continued, "As this is written, the Olympic Games were still scheduled

to begin Saturday. The Mexican government has clearly indicated that it will go to almost any length to suppress the disorders to make the city safe for an Olympiad.”⁹³ Rosenberg concluded by remarking, “This travel editor herewith warns the American tourist to keep his curious nose far away from any disturbance” because, “wild bullets are notoriously unconcerned about nationality.”⁹⁴ The implication here was that though those travelling to the Games were not causes of the violence, if care was not taken danger could befall them. Rosenberg also highlighted the Mexican government’s brutality, and implied that tourists should steer clear of agitating a government which appeared willing to suppress dissidence at any cost.

The concern for those attending the Games was fortified with American fears that a spill-over effect from the Mexican student movement could present problems for the U.S. The allusion of Mexico becoming an unstable civil war state was a concern punctuated by American intervention into Vietnam, an unstable civil war state. Frank J. Bonora of Washington emphasized the precariousness of the Mexican situation in his peculiar “letter to the editor” where he described the Mexican violence as, “overtures to tomorrow’s Vietnams.”⁹⁵ The concern levied towards those travelling to the Olympics was infused to some extent by American worries of potential ramifications of the violence on the United States. Bonora drew out the parallels between societal issues in the U.S., as he did the danger of Mexico devolving into a cauldron of communism and violence, like Vietnam.

The *New York Times* did not replicate the breadth of the *Post*’s concerns of the impacts of the massacre on those at the Games. One column, however, did overtly display a level of consternation regarding the massacre’s possible consequences to those

in Mexico City. Steve Cady's article on 4 October titled, "All is peaceful at Games Village. Brundage says there is no connection between riots and athletes' presence" crystallized the concern over those in Mexico City. The author commented on the, "strange contrast between crisis and normalcy" given the enclave of stability found in the village versus the combustible atmosphere elsewhere in the city.⁹⁶ Cady went on to describe the almost comedic, "Walkers moving with a hip-swinging gait that would get them arrested in Times Square" amongst other athletes honing their skills in blood-stained Mexico City.⁹⁷ Cady proceeded to interview athletes, one of whom was John Pickett a 17 year old canoeist from Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania who stated that he wasn't aware that anyone was killed in the rioting because, "They don't tell us much out here, we don't get the papers, so we don't know."⁹⁸ When Cady asked an "attractive 'edecánes'" -the female Mexican hostesses who provided information to international guests during the Games- the distance from the Village to Tlatelolco she remarked, "Oh, that's very far away. Twenty miles."⁹⁹ That quote, like much of the article, made the Olympic Games appear laughable in comparison to what had just occurred at Tlatelolco. The safety issues to those entering Mexico City were expressed through the discussion of the proximity of the violence to the Olympic facilities.

Other *New York Times* articles showed concern for those travelling to the Olympics through a consistent questioning and criticism of the Mexican government which raised the alarm that safety was not their foremost strength. Henry Giniger, on 6 October, wrote an article titled, "Olympics 1968: Mexico City is Ready." In the story he described that the violence in Mexico had abated and that those travelling to Mexico City likely would be safe and warmly greeted when he claimed, "despite the tension, the

Olympics still seem to have the wholehearted support of most people, and visitors will find them friendly and eager to please.”¹⁰⁰ On 10 October Giniger again remarked, “The reduction of tension made most people here breathe a little easier about the Olympic Games opening Saturday, for which thousands of foreign athletes, officials and spectators are now in the city.”¹⁰¹ This article inferred that decreased combustibility of tension in Mexico City was a positive sign because of the lessened danger for those present at the Games. These obtuse displays of concern for the safety of those in Mexico were fortified by the *Times*’ incredibly in-depth coverage which allowed readers to understand the gravity of the situation in Mexico City and, thereby, gave an awareness to the danger one would be in if one attended the Games.

Final Thoughts

The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* both afforded the Mexico City massacre significant representation during October 1968. While the *Times* almost exclusively utilized its own staff to report on the massacre and the *Post*’s coverage consisted of combination of the use of news agency reports and its own staff, certain themes pervaded the content of both newspapers. This coverage was highlighted by knowledgeable, in-depth, balanced, and non-partisan reporting, and acknowledged the potential dangers for visitors. The reporting of each newspaper provided readers a nuanced account of the massacre and did not embrace either the government or student versions of the event completely. The inclusion of multiple viewpoints of the violence allowed readers the opportunity to reach their own conclusions as to why, and how, the massacre came to be. With the knowledge base provided in the coverage, the inferences made by the newspaper reports appeared reasoned and well thought out. The

characteristics of both newspapers' coverage of the massacre provided readers rich descriptions balanced with contextual information and impending consequences. The competing narratives presented in these newspapers highlighted the divisiveness of the massacre, even in its aftermath.

Notes

¹ Chris Rojek, “Stuart Hall on Representation and Ideology,” 53.

See also Stuart Hall, “Encoding/decoding.” 128-133.

² Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Report of the Bilateral Commission on the Future of United States-Mexican Relations, *The Challenge of Interdependence: Mexico and the United States* (New York: University Press of America, 1989), 21.

⁵ Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 8-9.

⁶ Guadalupe González, “The Foundations of Mexico’s Foreign Policy: Old Attitudes and New Realities,” in *Foreign Policy in U.S.-Mexican Relations*, eds. Rosario Green and Peter H. Smith (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies University of California San Diego, 1989), 29. See also Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 8-9.

⁷ Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 8-9.

⁸ Ibid, 12.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, 9.

¹¹ Raat and Brescia, *Mexico and the United States Ambivalent Vistas*, 117.

¹² Ibid, 119.

¹³ Ibid, 120.

¹⁴ Ibid, 121.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ González, “The Foundations of Mexico’s Foreign Policy,” 31.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 13.

²⁰ Ibid, 13.

²¹ González, “The Foundations of Mexico’s Foreign Policy,” 32.

²² Domínguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*, 68.

²³ Lars Schoultz, “Foundations and Premises of United States Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy in U.S.-Mexican Relations*, eds. Rosario Green and Peter H. Smith (San Diego: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies University of California San Diego, 1989), 44.

²⁴ Ibid, 46.

²⁵ Ibid, 65.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ González, “The Foundations of Mexico’s Foreign Policy,” 31.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 114.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 120.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 114-115.

³⁴ Ibid, 113.

³⁵ Though the position of the Mexican government has been shown to be false in the years since the massacre, during October 1968 its version of events seemed plausible. Balanced reporting in this chapter refers to the representation afforded to two substantive sides of the argument.

³⁶ Paul L. Montgomery, "At Least 20 Dead as Mexico Strife Reaches a Peak. Troops Fire Machine Guns and Rifles at Students- More than 100 Hurt," *New York Times*, 3 October 1968, 1.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ News Dispatches, "Olympics chief says games will be held, Olympics going ahead despite Mexican violence," *Washington Post*, 4 October 1968, A1.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ UPI, "Riots by Students Worry Olympians," *Washington Post*, 4 October 1968, D2.

⁴² AP, "Sniper Fire Breaks Mexico City Calm: Mexico City Sniper Fire Wounds Two," *Washington Post*, 5 October 1968, A1.

⁴³ Editorial, "Night of Sorrow," *Washington Post*, 5 October 1968, A12.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Lewis H. Diuguid, "Mexico students have met a surface setback: News Analysis," *Washington Post*, 6 October 1968, A23.

⁴⁶ AP, "Cubans set world mark in relay," *Washington Post*, 6 October 1968, C6.

⁴⁷ Lewis H. Diuguid, "Foreigners cited in Mexico violence," *Washington Post*, 7 October 1968, A12.

⁴⁸ Shirley Povich, "This Morning," *Washington Post*, 11 October 1968, E9.

⁴⁹ Lewis H. Duiguid, "Mexico opens the Olympics without incident," *Washington Post*, 13 October 1968, A3.

⁵⁰ Morris Rosenberg, "At Olympic time, Mexicans worry about mañana," *Washington Post*, 13 October 1968, H1.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Paul L. Montgomery, "Deaths put at 48 in Mexican clash. 500 wounded after troops fire on students at rally- 1,500 taken prisoner," *New York Times*, 4 October 1968, 1, 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁴ Steve Cady, "All is peaceful at Games Village. Brundage says there is no connection between riots and athletes' presence," *New York Times*, 4 October 1968, 60.

⁵⁵ Henry Giniger, "Mexican student protest appears to be crushed," *New York Times*, 5 October 1968, 14.

⁵⁶ Henry Giniger, "Olympics 1968: Mexico City is ready," *New York Times*, 6 October 1968, 15.

⁵⁷ Arthur Daley, "Sports of the Times," *New York Times*, 6 October 1968, 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Henry Giniger, "Dissident accuses Mexican regime. Ex-party leader criticizes 'Witch-Hunt' on protests," *New York Times*, 8 October 1968, 17.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Reuters, "Students voice demands," *New York Times*, 10 October 1968, 10.

⁶⁴ Editorial, "Ferment in Mexico," *New York Times*, 12 October 1968, 27.

⁶⁵ Robert Lipsyte, "Sports of the Times. Here we go again," *New York Times*, 12 October 1968, 45.

⁶⁶ Henry Giniger, "Mexicans' theories on unrest blame both C.I.A. and Reds," *New York Times*, 14 October 1968, 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Jorge Castañeda, "Letters to the Editor: Clashes in Mexico," *New York Times*, 21 October 1968, 46.

⁶⁹ Clifford J. Levy, “Henry Giniger, 71, correspondent who chronicled postwar Europe,” *New York Times*, 8 March 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/08/world/henry-giniger-71-correspondent-who-chronicled-postwar-europe.html> and Dennis Hevesi, “Paul Montgomery, former New York Times reporter is dead at 72,” *New York Times*, 17 October 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/18/nyregion/18montgomery.html?_r=0

⁷⁰ “1976 Arthur Daley,” *The National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association* (NSSA), 11 April 2011, <http://nssafame.com/2011/04/11/1976-arthur-daley/>

⁷¹ Paul L. Montgomery, “At least 20 dead as Mexico strife reaches a peak. Troops fire machine guns and rifles at students- more than 100 hurt,” *New York Times*, 3 October 1968, 1.

⁷² News Dispatches, “Olympics chief says games will be held, Olympics are going ahead despite Mexican violence,” *Washington Post*, 4 October 1968, A1.

⁷³ Henry Giniger, “Mexican student protest appears to be crushed,” *New York Times*, 5 October 1968, 14.

⁷⁴ Lewis H. Diuguid, “Mexico students have met a surface setback: news analysis,” *Washington Post*, 6 October 1968, A23.

⁷⁵ Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, “Letters to the editor. Mexico City unrest,” *New York Times*, 4 October 1968, 46.

⁷⁶ Henry Giniger, “Olympics 1968: Mexico City is ready,” *New York Times*, 6 October 1968, 15.

⁷⁷ Lewis H. Diuguid, “Foreigners cited in Mexico violence,” *Washington Post*, 7 October 1968, A12.

⁷⁸ Henry Giniger, "Dissident accuses Mexican regime. Ex-party leader criticizes 'With-Hunt' on protests," *New York Times*, 8 October 1968, 17.

⁷⁹ Henry Giniger, "Mexican President's aides and students confer," *New York Times*, 10 October 1968, 10.

⁸⁰ Editorial, "Ferment in Mexico," *New York Times*, 12 October 1968, 36.

⁸¹ Henry Giniger, "Student uprising may be a factor. There are still enough people, however, for the busy police, clerks," *New York Times*, 13 October 1968, Section 5, 2.

⁸² Shirley Povich, "This morning," *Washington Post*, 11 October 1968, E9.

⁸³ Morris Rosenberg, "At Olympic time, Mexicans worry about mañana," *Washington Post*, 13 October 1968, H1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Frank J. Bonora, "Letters to the Editor: The unfinished symphony?," *Washington Post*, 15 October 1968, A18.

⁸⁶ Jorge Castañeda, "Letters to the Editor: Clashes in Mexico," *New York Times*, 21 October 1968, 46.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ UPI, "Riots by students worry Olympians," *Washington Post*, 4 October 1968, D2.

⁹⁰ Editorial, "Night of Sorrow," *Washington Post*, 5 October 1968, A12.

⁹¹ Shirley Povich, "This morning," *Washington Post*, 11 October 1968, E9.

⁹² Mañana is a Spanish word meaning indefinite future.

⁹³ Morris Rosenberg, “At Olympic time, Mexicans worry about mañana,” *Washington Post*, 13 October 1968, H1.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Frank J. Bonora, “Letters to the editor: The unfinished symphony,” *Washington Post*, 15 October 1968, A18.

⁹⁶ Steve Cady, “All is peaceful at Games village. Brundage says there is no connection between riots and athletes’ presence,” *New York Times*, 4 October 1968, 60.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Henry Giniger, “Olympics 1968: Mexico City is ready,” *New York Times*, 6 October 1968, 15.

¹⁰¹ Henry Giniger, “Mexican President’s aides and students confer,” *New York Times*, 10 October 1968, 10.

Chapter 4: The Canadian Newspapers Response to Tlatelolco

“It is one of the strange phenomena of Mexico City that a battle can be taking place in one part of the City, while the plush ‘Pink Zone’ of the city dances and drinks the night away” described Christopher Brasher, author of *Mexico 1968: A Diary of the XIXth Olympiad*.¹

By 1968 Canada had positioned itself as a highly moral nation, one which stood up for the protection and recognition of human rights throughout the world.² A strengthening Canadian political and economic relationship towards Latin American nations was built in the 1960s, making major events which occurred in the region more likely than before to warrant significant media coverage.³ Investigation into the responses by two major Canadian newspapers, the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Globe and Mail*, presents insights on the Mexico City massacre and the dominant discourses presented to readers of these newspapers. Additionally, government debates and speeches, popular Canadian magazines, and personal correspondence from Canadian IOC member James Worrall were examined to further situate these newspaper responses within a broader Canadian framework. The newspaper coverage was analyzed by utilizing Stuart Hall’s encoding/decoding, as was done in the previous chapter.⁴ Themes emerged from these two major Canadian newspapers which show a glimpse into how the Canadian media covered this event in the month of October 1968. The themes which characterized the reporting of the massacre by these Canadian newspapers, as well as the other sources examined, reflects the political tightrope Canada was walking in its emerging political

relationship with Mexico during the Cold War era and the limits to information presented by the almost exclusive use of news agencies data for source material.

Context

Though Canada and Mexico are both situated on the North American continent, political and economic ties between the two countries were relatively limited in 1968. Although Canada and Mexico eventually grew to be among one another's largest trading partners, and members of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), diplomatic relations between the two were only struck in 1944.⁵ During the Second World War, during Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's administration, the government and Canadian business community began to view Latin America as an untapped resource for investment and creation of positive political relations.⁶ To ensure Latin America was ripe for courtship as a political and economic ally and resource, Canada carried out due diligence by sending a trade commissioner to Mexico City.⁷ Pragmatically, another important consideration for Canada to enter political and economic relationships with Latin American nations stemmed from American and Canadian concerns that Latin American countries may gravitate towards supporting the Axis, Nazi Germany and Japan most notably, in the Second World War.⁸ The cultivation of relations with Mexico proved both opportunistic and practical for Canada.

Once diplomatic relations were formalized by Canada and Mexico, the countries quickly began to develop robust political and trade relationships. Though contact and linkages between the two North American nations were limited prior to the opening of

diplomatic relations, by 1945 Mexico was the second largest Latin American importer of Canadian goods, valued at 8.2 million Canadian dollars.⁹ By 1965, the economic relationship rose to 51 million Canadian dollars of exports to Mexico. Despite this substantial increase, it must be noted that Canadian exports to Latin America accounted for less than 2% of total Canadian exports in 1945 and by 1965 this figure had only reached 3.7%.¹⁰ Mexico reciprocated, sending many products to Canada. Among Latin American countries in 1965 Mexico was the third largest exporter to Canada sending 27.2 million Canadian dollars worth of products.¹¹ Canadian-Mexican relations in the mid-1960s might best be characterized as relatively new, improving, and expanding, with significant room for growth.

Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada in the latter part of 1968, increased official Canadian government interest in Mexico owing to that country's potential opportunities for trade and investment for Canadians.¹² Trudeau sent a ministerial mission to Latin America to seek out trade and investment opportunities.¹³ The increased inter-dependence of the two countries manifested itself in Canadian exports to Mexico rising to 54.6 million in 1968 from 51 million 3 years earlier.¹⁴

Under Trudeau, Canada developed an ever growing presence in Mexico. New economic opportunities were realized rapidly. However, these new trade agreements represented a very small part of Canada's overall economic picture. Nevertheless, Canada and Mexico each recognized the importance of valuable political relations. Unlike the major newspapers of Mexico, the newspapers of Canada were not controlled by the government. Yet newspapers in Canada were subject to the dominant political and social values of the era, including government political interests.¹⁵ Neither the *Globe* nor the

Citizen employed direct contacts with Mexico in the form of correspondents or bureau chiefs. Consequently, news received from Mexico was not first-hand which had a direct influence on Canadian coverage of the massacre.

Thematic Analysis

The *Ottawa Citizen* and *Globe and Mail*'s coverage of the Mexico City massacre was prominent and abundant on the days immediately succeeding the massacre, 3 and 4 of October. After those two days, which featured front-page articles in both newspapers reporting on the massacre and multiple articles about the massacre in each day's paper, the coverage of Tlatelolco decreased precipitously. Throughout both the voluminous amount of coverage on the 3rd and 4th and the significantly less coverage in the days after, certain themes were evident in the *Citizen* and *Globe and Mail* during October 1968.

Dominant discourses informed segments of the Canadian public on the details of the Mexico City massacre. Themes emerging from these dominant discourses were encoded with specific structures of meaning which shaped the reporting of the massacre. In effect, the reporting on the massacre reflected the political relationship between Canada and Mexico in 1968. These Canadian newspapers supported the Mexican government, a contrast to the more multi-dimensional reporting in the United States. More specifically, the reports reflected the narrative of the massacre put forth by the Mexican government wherein the massacre was described as a battle caused by rebellious students. The newspapers also treated the Olympic Games with paramount importance, as political events, such as the massacre, were constructed as unseemly intrusions onto the altruistic Olympics. Additionally *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night*, the Canadian

government, and the C.O.A. remained silent on the massacre apart from an off-hand remark by one Canadian Member of Parliament (MP).

Endorsement of the Mexican Government Narrative: The Massacre as a Battle

The *Citizen* and the *Globe* both reflected the narrative of the massacre put forward by the Mexican government. The view of the massacre the government utilized was one which considered the massacre to be a battle necessitated by unruly students who were disturbing the otherwise peaceful and prosperous Mexican nation. This narrative served many purposes for the government. It absolved them of blame for starting the massacre and served to legitimize their use of force to restore peace. Equally, the government was eager to assure the world that the unrest had been dealt with, and therefore the Olympic Games would run smoothly and uninterrupted.

The Mexican government portrayed the massacre as a battle between two combatants. Doing so legitimized the use of force to suppress the students, given that the students were engaging them in armed conflict. The “battle” theme put forth by the Mexican government was dominant in the *Citizen* and *Globe*’s coverage of the massacre. Both newspapers continually referred to the massacre in militant terms and, in general, situated the event as a conflict between two willing, and relatively equal combatants. The positioning of the massacre in such a manner suggests that these newspapers were accepting the narrative emanating from the Mexican government at face value. The Mexican press, which was government-controlled, labelled the massacre as a conflict between two relatively even sides, shown by reference to student snipers, on whom the

blame for initiating the conflict was placed. Both the *Globe* and *Citizen* depicted the students as combatants in this battle for Tlatelolco.

The battle characterization began immediately after the massacre on the front page of the 3 October edition of the *Citizen*. The front page article stated the massacre was,

The bloodiest battle yet of Mexico City's student rebellion rages through the night after a rifle shot touched off a thunderous crossfire between snipers and army troops at the crowded site of an anti-government rally Wednesday. Students roamed the streets with .22 calibre automatic pistols and Molotov cocktails setting dozens of buses and cars afire.¹⁶

The allusion to a thunderous crossfire connotes a battle image of two sides attacking one another. Additionally, describing the students as violently roaming the streets further entrenches the narrative that both sides, the government and students, engaged in armed conflict.

This representation of the massacre positioned the newspaper's underlying assumption that the massacre was started by the unruly and rebellious students and that a battle was the government's attempt to contain the situation. The image invoked by describing students trekking the streets of Mexico City, weapons in hand, and bent on destruction, directly implicated the students as the party responsible for causing the violence. This related theme will be revisited later. The *Citizen* designated the violence as a student "riot." Characterizing the massacre as such served to condone the government's use of force and, therefore, absolved it of wrongdoing. Page 21 on 4 October in the *Citizen* continued describing the massacre as a battle with the headline: "Olympic Games going ahead despite Mexican student riots." The article framed Mexico City as "a tale of

two cities- one of athletic youth of the world and the other of riot-blooded Mexican college students.”¹⁷ The stark contrast established through this representation created a dichotomy between the supposedly violent student movement and the innocent athletes about to descend upon the city.

The *Globe and Mail*, too, constructed a similar battle narrative. The *Globe's* 3 October front page coverage of the massacre stated, “Students battled troops and police in Mexico City last night... An Associated Press photographer reported seeing many bodies of persons shot down in a square in an exchange of automatic gunfire.”¹⁸ The use of the word “exchange” indicates an understanding that the battle was between two sides fighting one another. The *Globe and Mail* aligned with the *Citizen* leading Canadians to believe that a battle occurred. The “battle” narrative continued in the *Globe* on 4 October. A front page article title declared, “Olympics to go on despite rioting.” The article went on to claim that “Savage clashes between student rebels and army troops Wednesday night left a death toll variously estimated at 20 to 40.”¹⁹ The use of such language absolved the Mexican government of any responsibility.

The labelling of the massacre as a battle served multiple purposes. The battle narrative created more compelling storylines by allowing articles to invoke an the impression of an evenly matched struggle rather than an unarmed student group being murdered by government forces. Such interpretations empathized with the Mexican government. Reports were taken at face value while, at the same time, questions concerning the violent actions of a trade neighbour went unexplored. The question remains as to why these Canadian newspapers presented the massacre in this manner. Alternative reports were available as American newspapers provided significant attention

to the plight of the students in this situation. Many of these alternative reports contradicted the sentiments expressed by the Mexican government and the reports which emanated from the major news agencies. Why then, were these alternative reports available from American newspapers not included within the Canadian newspapers? Simply stated, there were no Canadian journalists on site and the Canadian media supported the government of a favoured trading partner, one that was about to welcome the world at the Olympic Games.

Student Rebels and Army Troops

Related to the theme of the massacre as a battle, was the insistence on the newspaper reporting of Tlatelolco that the students were antagonists and the instigators, of the massacre. The Mexican government was quick to blame the violence on the students, and continually referenced them as a militant group bent on destruction. Some examples of this theme were provided in the section above, notably that the *Citizen* on 3 October stated, “Students roamed the streets with .22 calibre automatic pistols and Molotov cocktails, setting dozens of buses and cars afire.” The same report claimed that “snipers were shooting at ambulance drivers.”²⁰ The descriptions of the students as an uncontrollable mob were also evident in the *Globe and Mail* which, on 3 October, stated that, “After being shot at, the students went on a rampage.”²¹ The *Globe and Mail* also mirrored the *Citizen*’s insistence on demonizing the students as it described the two sides of the conflict in a dichotomous manner. The *Globe* stated the battle was a savage one between, “student rebels and army troops.”²² The theme of characterizing the students as trouble-makers and implicating them as culpable for starting the massacre readily lent itself to the descriptions of students as rebels. To enhance the narrative that the students

were the ones causing the violence, the portrayal of the army and police as orderly peacekeepers further accentuates the Canadian newspaper endorsement of the government narrative. The *Citizen* published a headline which exemplified its demonization of the students: “Olympic Games going ahead despite Mexican student riots.”²³

The *Globe* continued on 8 October, stating that, “Decision by the rebel student governing body, the Committee 210, to not protest during the Olympic Games.”²⁴ Dick Beddoes of the *Globe and Mail* concurred. In an 11 October article Beddoes advanced the sentiment that the students were at fault. He remarked, “shots from rebellious students will not be heard, apparently because revolution has been scrubbed from the Olympic program.”²⁵ Beddoes, the only sports reporter covering the Olympics from Mexico City from the *Globe* or the *Citizen*, after witnessing the opening ceremonies, wrote, “The stadium was surrounded by troops, alert to any rebellious students.” Further, he stated, “The students have either gone sulking underground or have been gun-whipped into submission.”²⁶

The *Citizen*'s one article which provided a measure of balance in reporting the situation in Mexico even contained this government narrative that the massacre as a student problem. After describing the Mexican student movement, which included some insightful comments about Mexican society, blame was still placed at the student's feet. In the article, titled, “Olympic Games facing uncertainty as violence continues in Mexico,” author Jamie Plenn stated, “For nearly 50 years, Mexico has glittered as a rarity in Latin America- a land at peace with itself. Now the world-wide flame of student revolution has descended upon her and the fire is being fanned by political

malcontents.”²⁷ Explicit within Plenn’s story was that Mexico was a safe and peaceful country until students began misbehaving and causing trouble. This, of course, advanced the newspaper’s narrative that the massacre was driven by the students. This report, while demonizing the students, also exonerated the government by making it seem as a force for positive change given the positive work completed to transform Mexico for the better.

Students were referred to continually as rebels or rebellious Mexicans who posed the risk of causing further trouble to the Olympic Games, as if causing the Mexico City massacre was not enough. Though dominant, there were a few stories which presented the massacre from the Mexican students’ point of view.

On 7 October, on page 18, the *Citizen* provided a report which featured the students’ voice. The article’s title reflected the counter-narrative, “Mexican violence: Students blame police.” The story went on to describe that, “Student leaders blamed secret policemen, who wore white gloves as a means of identification, for starting Wednesday’s gun battle that killed at least 35 persons.”²⁸ The article, however, also claimed that, “The government said anti-nationalist and communist elements were behind the trouble.”²⁹ By providing the government’s view in the article, the perspective of the students was challenged and marginalized in one of the few articles to devote attention to the students’ depiction of the massacre.

Another article to present the students’ version of Tlatelolco was Ronald Grantham’s “Summary of World News” in the *Citizen* of 12 October. The news briefs in Grantham’s column were short; however, he did state: “Student leaders blame secret policemen for starting a gun battle by firing into a crowd of 6,000 students at a rally.

They said 150 civilians and 40 soldiers were killed.”³⁰ However, as with the previous report which gave the student viewpoint, Grantham also included a caveat which called the student narrative into question. Grantham stated, “The government says at least 35 were killed. It blames anti-nationalist and Communist elements.”³¹ In both cases, the qualification of presenting the government narrative after the student narrative undermined the credibility of the students’ version of the events. Reports featuring the dominant discourse that students caused the massacre were not tempered with the inclusion of student opinions.

The *Globe and Mail*, on the other hand, did provide slightly more voice to the student’s version and did not augment these reports with the government narrative to the same extent as did the *Citizen*. On 7 October, the *Globe* published an article titled, “White-gloved police blamed for violence.” This article explained that the students blamed Mexican secret policemen, who wore white-gloves to identify one another, for starting the gun battle. The story, however, did portray the government narrative, namely that communist students were at fault for starting the massacre. However, unlike the previously mentioned reports which gave legitimacy to the government narrative as opposed to the students’, the *Globe* undermined the government position. The story stated, “The newspaper *El Nacional* which speaks for the Mexican Government said that the students’ goal was ‘the abolition of existing institutions in order to pave the way for arriving at a workers’ and peasants’ Communist state.”³² An underlying assumption to this representation was that since *El Nacional* was a mouthpiece of the government, its views should be taken with a grain of salt.

Despite the *Globe's* piece on 7 October, the dominant discourse was that the outbreak of violence was caused by the students. To construct this view, newspapers used degrading language, such as depicting students as rebels, in order to undermine their credibility. As a result, acts of violence taken by the government forces appeared to be necessitated by the creation of armed conflict by the students. Further effects of such representations obfuscated the longstanding internal problems in Mexico, about which the students were protesting. At the same time, the Mexican government ensured its reputation by successfully addressing its internal unrest ensuring a safe and secure location for the Olympic Games.

Conflating the Massacre and the Olympics

Perhaps reflecting what the world press perceived to be a more important concern, the Olympics, the *Globe* and the *Citizen's* made a persistent connection between the massacre and the Games. The conflation of the Mexico City massacre and in some cases the broader Mexican student movement with the 1968 Olympic Games occurred consistently during the reporting of the massacre. While scholarship has debunked the causal relationship between Mexico's hosting of the Olympics and the student movement, Mexican students opposed government spending on the Olympics.³³ So, while the student movement broadly was initiated by, and concerned with, more pressing issues in Mexican society such as income inequality and lack of democratic processes, the Olympics were an ancillary concern to the students. The massacre itself likely was motivated by the Olympic Games, but not on the part of the students. The Mexican government, worried that student demonstrations threatened the upcoming Olympics, was keen to suppress the student uprising. One only needs to take note of the government forces military unit, in

conjunction with regular police and army forces, which carried out the massacre: the Olimpia Battalion. The Olimpia Battalion was a secret Mexican security force trained specifically for the Olympic Games.³⁴ It was evident in the *Globe* and the *Citizen* the potential ramifications of the massacre on the Games were a significant concern for the Mexican government.

The *Citizen's* 3 October front page headline, "Battle in plaza: 25 Mexicans die- Games will go on," underscored the central focus on the Olympics. The story quoted Javier Oftos, Vice-President of the Mexican Olympic Committee, who remarked, "Top Olympic officials today expressed determination to go ahead with the Games. We have gone to tremendous effort and expenses to set the stage for what will be a perfectly run Games."³⁵ Oftos continued, "The government will take every precaution to see that the Games are run off without incident."³⁶ Implicit within these remarks was the notion that the massacre should be understood through its impacts on the Olympic Games. In spite of the blood spilled in the Plaza of the Three Cultures, the Olympic Games would continue unscathed because of the Mexican government's determination to use any means necessary to ensure it. The coupling of the Games and the massacre did not subside after this initial interpretation.

The 4 October headline in the *Citizen* similarly created a direct association between the Olympics and the massacre: "Olympic Games facing uncertainty as violence continues in Mexico." This article, written by American journalist Jamie Plenn, was one of the few to provide a detailed study of the Mexican student movement; however the article was underscored by concern that the Olympics may be harmed by the violence.³⁷ The 4 October *Citizen* continued, on page 21, to describe the massacre in relation to the

Olympics, “Olympic Games going ahead despite Mexican student riots.” In the column, IOC President Avery Brundage was quoted as saying that the IOC had “conferred with the Mexican authorities and we have been assured that nothing will interfere with the peaceful entrance of the Olympic flame into the stadium on October 12, nor with the competitions which follow.”³⁸ The IOC had put its faith in the Mexican government to ensure the Games would proceed with safety guaranteed. The *Globe* and the *Citizen* appeared to equally accept the assurances of the Mexican government at face value.

In a similar view, the 4 October *Globe* featured the front page headline, “Olympics to go on despite rioting.” This article used the same Brundage quotes as page 21 of the *Citizen* did. This article stated that the Games were, “A veritable oasis in a troubled world.”³⁹ Implicit here was Brundage’s assumption that a troubled world was one inflicted by politics, whereas the Olympic Games were or should be free from such concerns. Without question, the dominant theme expressed in these Canadian newspapers, immediately following the massacre, focused on the massacre’s impacts on the Olympic Games.

The *Globe* continued its focus on the relationship between the massacre and the Olympics on 7 October with the story titled, “Flame fizzles: Olympic Problems Continue.” Here the *Globe* presented another suggestion that the massacre was an Olympic “problem” to be considered alongside the technical failure of the flame. Encoded within the report was the assumption that the massacre was comprehensible as an obstacle to the success of the Olympic Games, not as a tragic loss of life. A similar article was published in the 7 October *Citizen* titled: “Olympic torch snuffed in rioting at arrival.” The article expressed a point of view that the Olympics might be negatively

impacted by the recent violence: “The Olympic torch started the final leg of its journey to Mexico City today as fears continued that its flame and the games it represents may be snuffed out by rebellious students.”⁴⁰ In these articles, the torch malfunction was used as a metaphor for the damage that the Mexican students, and the violence they had caused, could bring to the Olympic Games.

On 8 October, a *Globe* headline read: “Students offer peace at Games, will halt rallies,” which associated the massacre and the broader student movement with the Olympics.⁴¹ In the same article, Brundage was quoted as saying, “If our games are to be stopped every time politicians violate the laws of humanity, there would never be any international competitions.”⁴² For Brundage, the Games had to be elevated beyond local or national politics regardless of violence or loss of life.⁴³ Also on 8 October, an article titled: “No more mass displays,” appeared in the *Citizen*. The column stated that the students had given assurances that they would not interrupt the Olympic Games. The article remarked, “One storm seemed to abate for the moment, giving organizers a feeling of reassurance the Olympic Games will have a peaceful opening Saturday.”⁴⁴

Even fleeting mentions of the massacre in subsequent days referred to the massacre as part and parcel with the Olympic Games. On 12 October the *Citizen's* front page headline read, “Well-guarded: massive security as Games open.” The article described the significant security presence at the opening ceremonies and stated that it was necessitated by “recent clashes between students and followers and the military and police (which) have killed a reported 50 persons.”⁴⁵ The story continued by stating, “More than 6,000 armed troops and police- one for almost every 14 spectators- will be in the 80,000 seat Olympic Stadium to guard against any outbreak of violence.”⁴⁶ The 26

October *Globe* featured an article which described the massacre as an “acrimonious” start for the Olympics.⁴⁷ These reports signified, once again, the influence of the massacre on the Olympics. The impacts of the massacre on the victims of the violence or the Canadians about to enter Mexico were not mentioned.

It is possible that the conflation of the massacre with the Olympics served to give the story more traction and staying power in these newspapers. On 3 October, the front page of the *Citizen* featured another Latin American nation experiencing political turmoil, Peru.⁴⁸ The Peru story, describing a coup which featured many fatalities, did not gain the same coverage in the Canadian media. The connection to the Olympic Games may help explain the increased coverage devoted to Tlatelolco relative to the Peruvian military coup. Another explanation for the conflation of the massacre and the Olympic Games was because neither of the newspapers had reporters on the scene and this interpretation that the massacre and the Olympics were intertwined was uncomplicated.

To encapsulate the concern for the Olympic Games and the insistence that they not be inflicted with political overtures prompted the *Citizen's* 19 October editorial titled: “Sport vs. Politics.” This editorial was written in the aftermath of another political intrusion into the Olympics akin to the massacre: the Black Power salute. The editorial condemned this political act by stating,

Negro sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos have been suspended from the U.S. Olympic team by that country's Olympic committee. The action is necessary if the character of the Olympic games is to be maintained. The ideology behind the games is to promote sports competition and understanding among nations. The purpose is not to enable various participating individuals, or nations, to acquire a convenient arena for the display of their political beefs, however justified they may be. No fair person would deny that the American Negro has legitimate

grievances. But it is in poor taste, and indeed a travesty of the Olympic spirit, to use the facilities offered by the international games as a political platform.⁴⁹

The Olympics and politics, according to these newspapers, should not mix.

Neither the *Citizen* nor the *Globe* assigned its own staff to write the coverage of the massacre. Instead, editors turned to major news agency reporting, like the Associated Press (AP), Reuters, Canadian Press (CP), and United Press International (UPI). Utilizing news agency reports almost exclusively spoke to the relative lack of “first hand” coverage of Mexico in these Canadian newspapers, as there were no designated Mexican correspondents. Using agency news reports also simplified the story of the massacre as these reports indicated that the violence was caused by the students but, once the student movement had been crushed, there was no longer need to worry about violence breaking out in Mexico City.

The discourse created by the *Citizen* and the *Globe* empowered a narrative that the massacre and the Olympic Games were inextricably intertwined. Furthermore, the attention given to the effects the massacre posed to the Olympics was far more dominant than the massacre’s impact on either the safety of Canadians entering Mexico or on Mexican society in general.

Newspaper reports in the *Globe* and the *Citizen* containing concern over the potential danger facing Canadian citizens entering Mexico City for the Games were limited to one article during October 1968. The reliance on major news agency stories concerning Tlatelolco served to give a broader, more international viewpoint on the massacre, a viewpoint with fewer implications for Canadians. The effect of the massacre on the upcoming Olympics was scrutinized heavily, as was the assignment of blame on

the students. The impact of the massacre on Canadians entering the country was only assessed once in the *Globe* and the *Citizen* during October 1968.

The *Globe* on 9 October published a headline titled: “Canadian athletes not concerned about violence in Mexico: Elder” which touched on the potential impacts of the massacre on Canadian athletes. The author of the article, Ed Waring, interviewed one Canadian athlete for the story. The Canadian subject of the story was Norman Elder, an honors graduate in Philosophy at the University of Western Ontario ('62), who was a member of the equestrian team. Elder claimed news of the massacre was difficult to come by: “down there the papers rarely mention the fighting, and only a few of us who frequent bars and meet members of the student uprising actually know what is going on.”⁵⁰ Elder also remarked that he had met many of the Mexican student leaders and had, “got to like and understand them.”⁵¹ The story highlighted the lack of communication to Canadian athletes about the potentially unstable situation they were stepping into in Mexico City. If one wanted to access information about the events at Tlatelolco it was incumbent on them to seek out the information. It could be surmised that because of the general placating of the Mexican government by the *Globe* and the *Citizen*, the extent to which Canadian athletes were told about the happenings in Mexico City was minimized. This was possibly because of the Mexican government’s desire to make the story disappear, evidenced by their narrative of the event. Additionally, as this was the only report which contained any concern for their well-being or discussion of the feelings of Canadian athletes towards their security in the wake of the massacre, it was striking that the journalist only interviewed one athlete. Elder described himself as one who was not representative as well given that he was one of the “few” who went to bars and mixed

with Mexican students. As a result, the article's title which claimed Canadian athletes were not concerned about the violence in Mexico was exaggerated and unfounded.

Rather, one Canadian athlete was not concerned about the violence in Mexico, and that one student proved to be the only Canadian Olympic delegation member who represented his views on the massacre during October 1968.

So pervasive was this theme in the reporting of the massacre that one could infer that if the Olympics were not being held in Mexico City, the massacre may have in fact never happened because the students would have had nothing about which to protest. This fact was presented by the Mexican government, it can be assumed, to mask the social instability in Mexico due to its economic problems. By conflating the Olympics with the massacre, attention was drawn away from the massacre and focus was placed on the Olympic Games, thereby helping the Mexican government to put the whole affair behind it from a public relations point of view. The Canadian newspapers' acceptance of this government narrative helps explain their lack of coverage regarding the possible issues of safety to Canadians travelling to the Games. In contrast, the American newspapers, which in general did not accept the government version of events, displayed concern towards the safety of those travelling to the Olympics. The *Globe* and the *Citizen's* endorsement of the government story, therefore, signified the Canadian press accepting the Mexican government's self-serving assertion that the situation was under control and that there was no need for concerns over the safety of those attending the Olympics.

The effects of the articulation of the massacre and the Olympics may have also served to give coverage of the massacre traction within the Canadian media. The

Olympics gave the story of the massacre greater recognition within the Canadian media, likely because the Olympics were a high profile event of international importance. The fact Canadian athletes were to arrive in Mexico City in a few days was of interest to the Canadian public, making the issue, in all likelihood, more important to many Canadians.

Dick Beddoes: A Man of Many Hats

Dick Beddoes was the *Globe and Mail's* on-site sports reporter in Mexico City during the 1968 Olympic Games. With this distinction, Beddoes had the opportunity to report on the Games with personal access in comparison to other *Globe* or *Citizen* writers. Beddoes was a flamboyant character, known by his distinctive attire in his later years as a sports television personality, which exuded itself in his columns.⁵² Despite his chance to provide the Canadian public with knowledge and insight into the major controversies which occurred during the Games, namely the massacre and the Black Power protest, his columns did not serve such a function. Rather curiously, Beddoes's columns, almost always succinctly titled "By Dick Beddoes," accompanied by a cartoon of his likeness, were extraordinarily light and jocular characterized by a peculiar lexicon. His articles also displayed a level of distaste for the intrusion of politics in the Olympic Games. Beddoes's odd treatment of these solemn events was a distinctive theme, given that his column appeared on almost every day of the Olympics.

On 11 October, Beddoes began his coverage of the Olympic Games. Given the recent events of Tlatelolco, and given the athletic competitions had yet to begin, Beddoes took aim at the massacre. His column that day began by providing minor, often trivial examples of people getting into trouble in preceding Olympics. Beddoes cited the 1936

Olympics: “Avery Brundage threw a lady named Eleanor Holm off the US Olympic team for drinking champagne with sports writers, a notorious lot.”⁵³ With the light-hearted backdrop of instances of trouble being caused at the Olympics, Beddoes proceeded to provide some comments on the upcoming Olympic Games and some of the problems associated with them. He stated, “Mexicans are proving that, if nothing else, they’ve got a very good team in the shooting and revolutionary events. There are- how’s that stewardess? We’re about to land in the country of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata? Splendid. Hand me that bullet-proof vest, will you?”⁵⁴ The flippant disregard for the event in his reports is striking, as was his use of black humour to downplay the seriousness of the fiery events. For Beddoes, as with Brundage, the success of the Olympics came first at the expense of ignoring human suffering. Beddoes continued his comedic take on the massacre by concluding, “Unofficial statistics reveal that goodwill prevails over bad will in the Olympic Games by a ratio of about five to one, a thought to cherish as one rides a plane toward the Mexican shooting gallery.”⁵⁵

The Mexico City massacre was not again treated in such a lengthy manner by Beddoes in the remainder of his columns. However, a few columns addressed the event in passing. On 11 October, Beddoes’s article titled, “French count beaten in bid to govern IOC” contained discussion on the IOC presidential election, won by Avery Brundage who Beddoes characterized as, “the old stuffed sports shirt from Chicago.” At the end of the report, Beddoes could not resist another tongue-in-cheek remark about the massacre, “shots from rebellious students will not be heard, apparently because revolution has been scrubbed from the Olympic program.”⁵⁶ This article contained the aforementioned theme that the students were rebels and responsible for starting the massacre. In addition, the

story contained his trademark frivolous handling of serious issues surrounding the Olympics. Beddoes, continuing on the same trajectory as his 14 October column regarding the opening ceremonies, stated, “The stadium was surrounded by troops, alert to any rebellious students who might protest the presence of Mexican President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.” He followed by claiming, “The students have either gone sulking underground or have been gun-whipped into submission.”⁵⁷ The dismissal of the plight of Mexican students, while also implicating them as the agitators, was consistent with the rest of the *Globe* and *Citizen’s* reporting on the massacre. Beddoes’s offhand remarks about the suppression of the Mexican students, however, are unique. While insensitive, it appears odd how little Beddoes seemed to regard the ramifications of the massacre to those involved and focused his coverage so heavily on the Olympics.

No further direct reference to the massacre appeared in Beddoes’s articles again but his reporting of the massacre was consistent with the rest of his columns during the Olympics. Specifically, important issues were dismissed, made light of, and treated irreverently by Beddoes. This was done likely because of his underlying assumption that the Olympics and politics should be separate from one another. Beddoes, who did not approve of the Black Power salute, disregarded the event as, “One of the most disgraceful hangings of dirty linen in the history of the Olympic Games.”⁵⁸ The next day, Beddoes continued his assault. His 18 October article lamented the political use of the Olympic Games. Beddoes cited numerous examples, including, “The late unlamented Mr. Hitler, a tin-can dictator, refused to shake hands with black US athletes at the Berlin Olympic in 1936” and, “In recent times, the Russians seldom missed an Olympic opportunity to advertise the cranberry-tinted doctrines of communism.”⁵⁹ Beddoes, after laying out the

negative political uses of the Olympic Games, remarked, “These are background strokes to the disgraceful performance of two US sprinters after the final of the 200 metre dash.” The article continued, claiming, “There was something ironic seeing them stand on the victory crackerboxes holding clenched fists aloft in a fascist salute during the playing of the US national anthem. The late unlamented Mr. Mussolini would have been pleased.”⁶⁰ He went on to write, “It is presumptuous for an outsider to comment on another country’s racial turmoil, of course. This is especially true if the outsider is from Canada where our abuses of Indians and Eskimos have not yet been eradicated for all eternity.” However, despite this statement, Beddoes went on to make a judgmental statement by remarking, “It is tasteless, it seems to me, for athletes to shout their country’s woes in an Olympic forum.”⁶¹ The purity and success of the Olympics was paramount according to Beddoes.

The association made between acts committed by Hitler and the Black Power protest appears far-fetched. The vocabulary used, like “tin-can dictator,” and “victory crackerboxes,” are examples of Beddoes’ infatuation with humorous language. Beddoes was not finished in commenting on the Black Power protest and its aftermath, however. On 22 October, Beddoes wrote a column which described Stokely Carmichael, a Black Power leader to whom Cuban relay medalists were sending their silver medals as a sign of solidarity. In a flippant manner, Carmichael was characterized by Beddoes as, “A rabble rouser of the highest order, chattier than an outraged magpie as he hollers for revolt in the U.S. streets. Just what he will do with eight silver medals is uncertain, although I suppose he could boil them down into silver bullets and become the Lone Ranger.”⁶² Beddoes seemed to demean factions of the Black Power movement by

drawing the metaphor of the Lone Ranger into his column, again displaying the light-hearted tint of his reporting in Mexico City.

Overall, the uniquely-positioned Beddoes did not use his temporary residence in Mexico City to deliver the readers of the *Globe* a detailed, serious, or insightful account of the Tlatelolco massacre. Beddoes' reporting, instead, likely served the function of helping the *Globe* sell newspapers by his colourful descriptions of various events. The idiosyncratic reporting and writing style of Beddoes concerning the massacre and the Black Power protest, showed his dismissal of the seriousness of these events. Especially noticeable, amongst his other one-liners, was the irreverent treatment of the massacre by referring to the students as experts in revolution, and jokingly asking a stewardess for a bullet proof vest.

All Quiet on the Mexican Front: Popular Magazines and Tlatelolco

While numerous accounts of the Mexico City massacre were provided by the *Globe* and the *Citizen*, silence towards the massacre was the pervading sentiment in other Canadian print media outlets. The popular Canadian magazines *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* did not mention the massacre during October and November 1968. The silence on the part of these magazines is perhaps unsurprising given the selectiveness of the Canadian press. The Canadian government has, at times, censored the news, particularly certain stories which are seen to jeopardize important political relationships with other countries.⁶³ The Canadian government, eagerly seeking out the Mexicans as a trade partner may have acted to censor possible news stories regarding the massacre which may have negatively portrayed the government Canada was courting. Given that news is a manufactured product, one which is selected and then constructed for an audience, it is

unsurprising that some news stories are featured over others.⁶⁴ Additionally, newspapers and magazines are created in a way to sell as many as possible, making certain stories more favourable to achieve this goal. Robert Hackett and Richard Gruneau in their study on Canadian news titled the *Missing News: Filters and Blind Spots in Canada's Press*, found that among the apparent blind spots in the Canadian media were stories regarding human rights abuses by Canada's "Friends."⁶⁵ The lack of news stories in these popular Canadian magazines, therefore, becomes less surprising given the tendency of the Canadian media to avoid such stories, of which the Mexican government murdering its own citizens was definitely one. When the reluctance of the Canadian media to criticize countries which are friendly to Canada is coupled with the blind spot of the Canadian media concerning the consequences of social inequality, the failure of these magazines to comment on the massacre becomes understandable. Raising the issues of social and economic equality in Mexico may have been complex and a difficult political posture for the Canadian government and the Canadian media to comment on.⁶⁶

The student movement within Canada was afforded the coverage that the student-led Mexico City massacre was not. On page 4 of the *Maclean's* October edition, a long and detailed editorial titled, "Give students a voice- but let's not let Student Power spell destruction" provided an exhaustive overview of the issues facing Canadian society as Canadian students became more autonomous and vociferous. The editorial provided numerous statements warning of the perils of student power, and ways to remedy its growth, such as, "The teacher-student relationship is not master-servant, but master-apprentice" and "No false equality please; professors are professors' because they know more than students do."⁶⁷ The story went on to state that Universities which yielded too

much power to students would, “invite their own destruction” and claimed that to yield too much power to students was not reasonable given, “The militants can be quite easily replaced by qualified students who will accept rational authority and structuring in university education.”⁶⁸ The article continued over five pages to describe why Canadian students are protesting and implementing strike movements against the Universities at which they study.

It is striking that the *Maclean's* October magazine issue, appearing immediately after a major student movement was crushed by its own government, did not mention the Mexico City massacre within an article which addressed the Canadian student movement. The article treated the Canadian student power movement of 1968 as something to be reckoned with. Yet, treating the Canadian student power movement in isolation served to imply that student movements across borders were dissimilar and isolated from one another. Failing to mention other student movements around the world, especially the suppression of the one in Tlatelolco, the article missed an opportunity to provide context to its readership. Including an example of how not to respond to student unrest may have served to show the importance of student movements internationally and the need to take student demands seriously. Also, the violent response of the Mexican government could have provided a moment of reflection. *Maclean's* did not provide a single story regarding the Olympics in its October and November 1968 issues, much less a mention of the Tlatelolco affair.

The content of both magazines focused heavily on Canadian issues. *Maclean's* did not provide content on many of the major international events occurring at the time, such as the Czechoslovak invasion by the Soviets, Biafra, or the Olympic Games.

Saturday Night, while still centred largely on Canadian affairs, provided more international content than its counterpart. The October 1968 issue of *Saturday Night* included an article about the Olympic Games. The article titled, “After the Olympics, carry some Mexican culture home with you: Buy a bullfight half an inch high, or a miniature madonna” described the many types of souvenirs that were available for purchase in Mexico.⁶⁹ This article, while jovial and lighthearted, displayed some level of engagement with the upcoming Olympic Games and with superficial aspects of Mexican culture, like the authentic-looking tourist souvenirs available to those travelling to the Games.⁷⁰ Further *Saturday Night* attention was paid to the struggles caused by Apartheid in South Africa and the plight of the Czechs in the wake of the Soviet invasion of their country in the magazine’s November issue.⁷¹

In these international stories, Mexico was positioned as an exotic, far-away place which had little impact on Canada but the international troubles in South Africa and Czechoslovakia were judged serious concerns which warranted examination. Importantly, unlike Mexico, South Africa and the Soviet Union were not Canadian allies. Therefore, highlighting the struggles of the people in those nations was less likely to be filtered by the Canadian media, making representation more likely than that of the Mexican situation. The Czechoslovak and South African violations of human rights were deemed legitimate and worthy of consideration in *Saturday Night*, whereas the Mexican student movement was brushed aside to focus on kitschy trinkets available for purchase in Mexico. The flamboyant novelty of Mexico was accentuated in the article, indicating little comparison between the student situations in Canada and Mexico because Mexico was so distant and inconsequential to the Canadian situation. The silence regarding the

massacre in both *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* was consistent with the Canadian federal government's reaction to the massacre.

Federal Government and C.O.A. Silence

The Canadian federal government in October 1968, under the leadership of Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, was eager to show Canada as a country concerned with the rights and freedoms of people around the world. Evidence of this desire was prominently displayed in the House of Commons debates and in speeches made by the Minister of External Affairs, Mitchell Sharp. In a speech to the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly on 9 October 1968, one week after Tlatelolco, Sharp decried the immoral actions of numerous countries. Sharp lambasted the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia by stating, "The invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union and some of its allies, was nothing less than the assertion of a proprietary right of a great power to exercise domination of Eastern Europe under the guise of a "fraternal" ideological relation. It was naked power politics without regard to the Charter of the United Nations."⁷² Sharp continued by expressing Canada's, "sympathy and concern for the Nigerian people" who were engaged in a brutal civil war. The speech also commented on the plight of South Africans under Apartheid, as well as violations of human rights in Vietnam and the Middle East.⁷³

The House of Commons Debates during October 1968 reflected similar concerns as those mentioned by Sharp in his speech to the U.N. On 17 October, Sharp commented to his fellow Members of Parliament (MPs) that "When the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany took place, Canada

condemned it unequivocally.”⁷⁴ The highlighting of these flagrant violations of human rights provided an opportunity for Canada to express its indignation.

The federal government narrative on human rights was, of course, limited to specific political events and did not target allied nations and trade partners. Countries which were neither allies nor coveted trade partners were targeted and countries like the Soviets, Nigeria, and South Africa were targeted since they were safe political battles to wage given Canada’s position in the western bloc. The fact that little relations existed between Canada and Nigeria or South Africa made for energetic criticism. The failure to address the Mexican situation in Sharp’s speech to the U.N. or in the House of Commons demonstrated the government’s reluctance to “weigh in.” Political allegiances dictated a political response or non-response. Canada, therefore, can be best characterized at this time to be selectively indignant about human rights abuses.

The national government and MPs were almost certainly aware of the events at Tlatelolco given its front page newspaper media coverage. However, this awareness did not translate into discourse around the event, Canada’s response to the massacre, and the potential impacts on Canadian citizens travelling to Mexico. Mr. Arnold Peters, an MP from Timiskaming Ontario, in the middle of a long statement regarding the Farm Improvement Loans Act, was the only MP to refer to the massacre in the House of Commons. Peters remarked:

I am not one to participate very much in the question period, but I was surprised nobody asked about the revolution of students in Peru and their participation in the military coup there. I am also surprised that nobody asked about what may become a serious problem for the Olympic Games because of the student riots in Mexico City.⁷⁵

No other MPs addressed Peters' remarks, or raised the issue of the massacre again.

This silence was unsurprising given the 10 October *Globe* story highlighting the growing ties between the two countries. Titled "MPs' free trip to Games in Mexico cancelled," the article detailed that five members of Parliament and 12 travelling companions were going to spend eight days in Mexico. Though the trip was cancelled, for reasons not given, the nature of the planned trip was indicative of the favourable relationship that Canada was hopeful of further cultivating with Mexico. Many of the members scheduled for the trip were of high political clout. They included Health and Welfare Minister John Munro, MP Lincoln Alexander, and Harold Rae (father of future MP and Premier of Ontario Bob Rae) the chairman of the Government's task force on sports. The group was scheduled to deliver a recorded message, in Spanish, by Prime Minister Trudeau intended for Mexican radio use.⁷⁶ The magnified interest of the Canadian government in forging a stronger relationship with Mexico was further illustrated in a *Citizen* article on 26 October headlined, "Latin America Tour will be 'no joy ride.'" The article explained that five ministers and 20 government officials were set to tour various Latin American countries, including Mexico, for one month to promote political, trade, economic, cultural and other ties with Canada.⁷⁷

Discourse surrounding the Olympic Games in the House was made in the latter stages of October, though it was not centered on the massacre. The statements pertaining to the Games were centered on congratulating Canadian athletes, lamenting the lack of physical fitness amongst the Canadian population, and the lack of funding devoted to sport. On 18 October, Mr. J.M. Forrestall, MP from Dartmouth-Halifax east, after a long debate in the House concerning National Health and Welfare proclaimed, "Many of us

are disappointed that our athletes have not performed as well as might be hoped. The games are not over yet however, and we still hope that some medals will be brought back to this country.” Forrestall continued by saying, “I wonder about the true depth of our participation as a nation in what led up to this tremendous event. We are capable of doing better. One of the reasons for our failure to do as well as we might have done is that as a nation we have neglected to do enough to help our athletes.”⁷⁸

Also on 18 October, Mr. Ray Perrault, MP from Burnaby-Seymour, echoed Forrestall’s sentiments regarding the plight of Canadian athletes. Perrault explained,

Every time Canada fails at the Olympics, Mr. Chairman, there are people who say that the game is the thing, that it really does not matter who wins. This is nonsense” and “We have sent our valiant athletes to Mexico City- and they are valiant, Mr. Chairman, because in order to get them there we had to have a tin can collection in Vancouver. We had to beg people for their assistance in getting our athletes to Mexico City.”⁷⁹

The concern over the relatively poor performances of Canadian athletes at the 1968 Olympics, and the lack of funding for these athletes, comprised the discourse surrounding the Mexico City Games. The prominence with which these concerns were aired in the House of Commons underscored the noteworthy place the 1968 Olympics held within the Canadian government.

The federal government silence regarding the Mexico City massacre was deafening. Even when the subject was broached in the House of Commons, it was ignored. In all likelihood, this silence reflected Canada’s recently enhanced political and trade relationships with Mexico. This silence illustrated the Canadian government’s unwillingness to address an issue which could have called its relations with Mexico into

question. At the same time it demonstrated that Canada's opposition to human rights violations was politically selective.

There was no mention of Tlatelolco in the personal correspondences of Canada's IOC member James Worrall.⁸⁰ The official C.O.A. report of the 1968 Olympics also remained silent on the massacre. Instead, the official report contained information regarding the results of Canadian athletes in sporting events and commended Mexico on its: "Mexican hospitality, generosity, and most of all in an exquisite and charming city."⁸¹ The C.O.A. official report included statements by Prime Minister Trudeau, who in light of the poor results of Canadian athletes at the Games lamented: "More Canadians should be actively concerned about physical fitness."⁸² No mention was made of the bloodshed in Tlatelolco. Perhaps this silence is unsurprising given the C.O.A.'s complete alignment with the success of the Olympics and therefore would be supportive of the Mexican government's quashing of the student unrest. Equally explanatory of the silence of James Worrall owed to his career status during 1968. Worrall was a newly elected IOC member, and therefore unlikely to stray from the Olympic acceptance of the Mexican government assurances of safety at the Games. His memoir, *My Olympic Journey: Sixty Years with Canadian sport and the Olympic Games*, reflects as much in his short section regarding the massacre. In his description of the 1968 Olympics, Worrall stated,

The year 1968 was one of unrest and demonstrations in Mexico against President Ordaz and his government and, while we had all read the news, we in the C.O.A. had been assured that all was under control and the Olympic Games would not be affected. Consequently, it came as a nasty shock one morning prior to the opening of the Games to be told that bloody riots had broken out in the centre of the city.⁸³

This memoir exemplifies the C.O.A.'s acceptance of the narrative of the Mexican government and makes its silence unsurprising. The ambivalence of the C.O.A. towards

the unrest in Mexico was summed up by Worrall who claimed, “Apart from this [the massacre], the atmosphere seemed to be cheerful.”⁸⁴ While the Canadian newspapers naively accepted the Mexican government story that the massacre and Olympics were inextricably connected, the silence of the C.O.A. towards the massacre which had the potential to negatively affect the athletes was surprising.

Final Thoughts

The silence concerning the massacre was a consistent theme in popular magazines, the federal government, and the C.O.A. The silence regarding Tlatelolco signifies the separation of sport from the more serious issues of violence and murders and also shows that the Olympic Games were viewed as being disconnected from politics. The omission of content regarding the massacre is made plausible given the political relationship between Canada and Mexico. Consequently, the newspapers, magazines, and C.O.A. were all on the same page as the Canadian federal government.

Prior to the Mexico City massacre, no event commonly associated with the Olympic Games had ever resulted in the number of fatalities and imprisonments. Canada sent an athletic delegation into this maelstrom of political unrest and government brutality mere days after the blood was washed from the Plaza de la Tres Culturas. The newspaper reporting in the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Globe and Mail* focused upon two broad themes which dominated their coverage of the Tlatelolco massacre. First, both newspapers provided a ringing endorsement of the Mexican government’s narrative of the massacre. Namely, that a “battle” was contested in the Plaza de la Tres Culturas between two willing combatants, and that this “battle” was made necessary because of

the Mexican students who caused the violence. Underlying both sub-themes was the Mexican government's desire to assure the international community that the Olympics were in safe hands and that they were a force for good. The acceptance of the government narrative by these Canadian newspapers may have been precipitated by the second theme identified in the newspaper coverage of the massacre. This second theme was that both newspapers treated the massacre in direct relation to its potential impacts on the Olympic Games. The reporting treated the Olympic Games with the utmost importance and appeared concerned about the possible intrusion of political events onto the Olympics, something which neither paper condoned.

Finally, the theme of silence was evident through the examination of various popular Canadian magazines, federal government debates, statements, and speeches, and C.O.A. correspondences and its official report. The silence of these entities regarding Tlatelolco can be understood as a way of shying away from reporting on human rights violations perpetrated by Canada's "friend."

Taken together, these themes which have been identified in the *Globe* and *Citizen* alongside the theme of silence of other Canadian institutions mirrored the political relationship between Canada and Mexico. The tepid reporting of these two newspapers concerning the massacre appears similar to the improving, yet still unsolidified relationship between Canada and Mexico. It is a fair conclusion that the Canadian media turned a blind eye to the massacre as the Canadian government sought political cordiality with Mexico.

Notes

¹ Brasher, *Mexico 1968: A Diary of the XIXth Olympiad*, 29.

² Information Division: Department of External Affairs, Canada and the United Nations, 1968, Text of a Speech by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Twenty-third Session of the United Nations General Assembly, October 9, 1968.

³ Randall, "Sharing a Continent: Canadian-Mexican Relations since 1945," 16-19.

⁴ Rojek, "Stuart Hall on Representation and Ideology," 53. See also Hall, "Encoding/decoding," 128-133.

⁵ "Canada-Mexico Relations," *Government of Canada*, August 2012, <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/mexico-mexique/canmex.aspx>

⁶ Randall, "Sharing a Continent," 18.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid, 19.

⁹ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, 21.

¹² Ibid, 24.

¹³ Ibid, 25.

¹⁴ Ibid, 27.

¹⁵ Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 221. See also Stuart Hall, "Encoding/decoding," 129.

¹⁶ AP-Reuters, "Battle in plaza: 25 Mexicans die- Games will go on," *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 October 1968, 1.

¹⁷ AP, "Olympic Games going ahead despite Mexican student riots," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 October 1968.

¹⁸ AP-Reuters, "Troops fire on crowd; 20 killed in Mexico," *Globe and Mail*, 3 October 1968.

¹⁹ AP, "Olympics to go on despite rioting," *Globe and Mail*, 4 October 1968, 1.

²⁰ AP-Reuters, "Battle in plaza: 25 Mexicans die- Games will go on," *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 October 1968, 1.

²¹ AP-Reuters, "Troops fire on crowd; 20 Killed in Mexico," *Globe and Mail*, 3 October 1968, 1.

²² AP, "Olympics to go on despite rioting," *Globe and Mail*. 4 October 1968, 1.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ AP, "Students offer peace at Games, will halt rallies," *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 1968, 1.

²⁵ Dick Beddoes, "By Dick Beddoes," *Globe and Mail*, 11 October 1968, 27.

²⁶ Dick Beddoes, "By Dick Beddoes," *Globe and Mail*, 14 October 1968, 26.

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- ²⁷ Jamie Plenn, "Olympic Games facing uncertainty as violence continues in Mexico," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 October 1968, 7.
- ²⁸ AP, "Mexican violence: Students blame police," *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 October 1968, 18.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Ronald Grantham, "Summary of World News," *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 October 1968, 25.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*
- ³² AP, "White-gloved police blamed for violence," *Globe and Mail*, 7 October 1968, 11.
- ³³ Kevin B. Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 110-111.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.
- ³⁵ AP-Reuters, "Battle in plaza: 25 Mexicans die- Games will go on," *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 October 1968, 1.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ Jamie Plenn, "Olympic Games facing uncertainty as violence continue in Mexico," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 October 1968, 7.
- ³⁸ AP, "Olympic Games going ahead despite Mexican student riots," *Ottawa Citizen*, 4 October 1968, 21.
- ³⁹ AP, "Olympics to go on despite rioting," *Globe and Mail*, 4 October 1968, 1.
- ⁴⁰ Reuters, "Olympic torch snuffed in rioting at arrival," *Ottawa Citizen*, 7 October 1968, 3.

⁴¹ AP, “Students offer peace at Games, will halt rallies,” *Globe and Mail*, 8 October 1968, 1.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). This point was once again reaffirmed by Brundage’s response to the Munich massacre four years later.

⁴⁴ CP, “No more mass displays,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 8 October 1968, 19.

⁴⁵ CP, “Well-guarded: massive security as Games open,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 12 October 1968, 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Staff, “IOC restricts closing ceremony contingents fearing belligerent political posturing,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 October 1968, 35.

⁴⁸ AP, “Peruvian President ousted in army coup,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 3 October 1968, 1.

⁴⁹ Editorial, “Sport vs. Politics,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 19 October 1968, 6.

⁵⁰ Ed Waring, “Canadian athletes not concerned about violence in Mexico: Elder,” *Globe and Mail*, 9 October 1968, 32.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² “Dick Beddoes,” *Sports Media Canada* <http://www.sportsmediacanada.ca/?p=682>

⁵³ Dick Beddoes, “By Dick Beddoes,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 October 1968, 26.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Dick Beddoes, “French count beaten in bid to govern IOC,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 October 1968, 27.

⁵⁷ Dick Beddoes, “By Dick Beddoes,” *Globe and Mail*, 14 October 1968, 26.

⁵⁸ Dick Beddoes, “Smith, Carlos win 200-metre medals, level racial blast on victory podium,” *Globe and Mail*, 17 October 1968, 26.

⁵⁹ Dick Beddoes, “By Dick Beddoes,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 October 1968, 26.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Dick Beddoes, “By Dick Beddoes,” *Globe and Mail*, 22 October 1968, 32.

⁶³ Robert A. Hackett and Richard Gruneau with Donald Gutstein, Timothy A. Gibson and NewsWatch Canada, *The Missing News: Filters and Blind Spots in Canada’s Press* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives/Garamond Press, 2000), 22.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 26.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 166.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 193.

⁶⁷ Editorial, “Give students a voice- but let’s not let Student Power spell destruction,” *Maclean’s*, Volume 81, Number 11, November 1968, 4.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Kildare Dobbs, “After the Olympics, carry some Mexican culture home with you, Buy a bullfight half an inch high, or a miniature madonna,” *Saturday Night*, Vol. 83, No. 10, Whole No. 3485, October 1968, 61.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Peggy Butler, “The agony of exile. On being an ex-South African,” *Saturday Night*, Vol. 83, No. 11, Whole No. 3486, November 1968, 21.

⁷² Information Division: Department of External Affairs, Canada and the United Nations, 1968, Text of a Speech by the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs to the Twenty-third Session of the United Nations General Assembly, October 9, 1968, 2.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3-5.

⁷⁴ House of Commons Debates Official Report, First Session-Twenty Eighth Parliament 17 Elizabeth II Volume 2, 1968 (Ottawa: Roger Duhamel Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1968), 17 October, 1968, 1467.

⁷⁵ House of Commons Debates Official Report, First Session-Twenty Eighth Parliament 17 Elizabeth II Volume 1, 1968 (Ottawa: Roger Duhamel Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationery, 1968), 17 October, 1968, 749.

⁷⁶ Geoffrey Stevens, “MPs’ free trip to Games in Mexico cancelled,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 October 1968, 9.

⁷⁷ CP, “Latin America Tour will be ‘no joy ride’,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 26 October 1968, 16.

⁷⁸ House of Commons Volume 2, 1554.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1563.

⁸⁰ James Worrall Collection, Western University.

⁸¹ Radford and Shaughnessy Jr, *Canada Competes at the Olympic Games, 1968. Official Report of the Canadian Olympic Association 1965 to 1968*, 69-73.

⁸² Ibid, 1.

⁸³ James Worrall, *My Olympic Journey: Sixty Years with Canadian sport and the Olympic Games* (Canadian Olympic Association: Canada, 2000), 102.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 103.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

“The world press, in spite of the daily ration of horrors it dispenses, was shocked,” wrote Octavio Paz in *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid*.¹

The Mexico City massacre was an event unlike any previously associated with the Olympic Games. The brutality displayed by the Mexican government in the suppression of student unrest resulted in hundreds of estimated deaths, with thousands more thought to be sent to prison. Those present at the massacre were united by their horror at the incomprehensible violence perpetrated by the Mexican government towards its own citizens. In the massacre’s aftermath, the international press was faced with competing narratives which explained the violence at Tlatelolco. The Mexican government forwarded one version of the massacre which portrayed the students as agitators and anarchists bent on causing destruction, thereby necessitating their use of force to restore peace. The students claimed their protest was peaceful and the army, police, and specially trained forces for the Olympic Games conducted a murderous campaign of violence without any provocation. With two competing narratives existing, an endorsement of one version over another in the international press can be seen as a signifier of underlying political agendas.

American Newspapers and Tlatelolco

Two U.S. newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, provided significant coverage to the massacre during October 1968. Their reporting of the massacre was in-depth and knowledgeable and included insights into the precipitating

factors which led to it. The thorough reporting on the massacre was achieved through the use of their own staff writing these reports, and also the use of Latin American correspondents. Connected to the in-depth reporting, these newspapers reported both the government and the student version of the massacre. This relatively balanced coverage allowed readers to decipher for themselves what happened in the Plaza de la Tres Culturas given they had both competing narratives at their disposal. Finally, the newspapers displayed a level of appreciation for the possible danger that those travelling to the Olympics would face in the wake of the violence. Doing so acknowledged that though the Mexican government was making assurances that all would be safe at the Games now that they had restored peace, these sentiments should not be accepted at face value. Rather, the newspapers preached caution and the use of common sense to those descending upon the Games to ensure their well-being.

The reporting of the *Times* and the *Post* can be seen as a reflection of American-Mexican political relations. The well-established links between the two nations led to a sense of interest and knowledge of Mexican affairs, given their ramifications on the United States.² The political friction between the two countries was evidenced clearly during the lead-up to the 1968 Olympic Games as C.I.A. agents in Mexico regularly reported their concern over the Mexican student movement and the government's inability to adequately resolve the discord.³ Furthermore, the friction which has highlighted this political relationship bred a sense of suspicion towards one another, which was reflected in the newspapers questioning of the Mexican government's version of the massacre.

Canadian Newspapers and Tlatelolco

Coverage of the massacre was noticeably different from the representations of the *Times* and *Post* in Canadian newspapers. The *Globe* and the *Citizen* reported on the massacre abundantly during the days immediately after 2 October. After this initial prominence of coverage regarding Tlatelolco, published articles pertaining to the massacre were scarce. The relative scarcity of coverage of the massacre after these initial days of coverage was emblematic of the political relationship between Canada and Mexico. Specifically, the Canadian-Mexican relationship was new, improving, but not yet well established. The newspapers' diminished coverage of the massacre fit with the friendly, non-confrontational relations between the two countries as each looked to strengthen their ties to one another.

The newspapers' coverage of Tlatelolco was highlighted by their endorsement of the position of the Mexican government relative to the massacre. Namely, these newspapers described the massacre as a battle between two combatants, with fault directed towards the students for starting the violence. This point of view was readily served up by the Mexican government. Another feature of these newspapers' coverage was that the Olympic Games were held in the highest regard, as the newspapers put the impacts of the massacre on the Olympics as paramount in importance and believed the impacts of societal problems should be kept apart from the politically-free Olympic Games. This was evident through the consistent connection the *Globe* and *Citizen* made between the massacre and the Olympic Games, including the potential ramifications the massacre would have on the Games. Additionally, Dick Beddoes, who alone amongst reporters at the *Globe* and the *Citizen*, had the unique opportunity to be in Mexico City to

cover the Olympics and championed this reverence for the Games through his assertions that the Olympics and politics should not mix. Beddoes' coverage of the Olympics also was characterized through the levity of his reporting on the massacre and other events, such as the Black Power salute, which was another distinctive theme apparent in the *Globe's* reporting on the massacre and the Games more generally.

These Canadian newspapers' coverage of Tlatelolco, therefore, was rather superficial and did not delve deeply into the wider context of civil unrest in Mexico. The massacre was treated as an event which could be understood simply in relation to the Olympic Games and owing to the acceptance of the government version of events, peace had been restored. This connection to the Olympics becomes understandable given the reverent treatment of the Games by these newspapers and the paramount importance of politics not impinging on them. The endorsement of the Mexican government narrative by these newspapers was a reflection of Canadian-Mexican political relations, which at this time was flourishing. Rather than put this improving relationship at risk, by including stories providing the counter-narrative, namely that the government brutally repressed a peaceful demonstration, the newspapers published the government narrative almost exclusively. Newspapers included stories which portrayed the students as blood lusting rebels and the government as restorers of peace. Akin to the representations provided in these newspapers, popular Canadian magazines and the C.O.A. both took non-critical stances towards Mexican government's actions in the massacre. In fact, the popular magazines *Maclean's* and *Saturday Night* along with the C.O.A. were silent on the issue of the massacre.

The silence of the popular news magazines, and indeed the posture of the newspapers' reporting, can be understood when the filters and blind spots of the Canadian press are analyzed. Stories are often stifled when they implicate human rights violations to Canada's "friends" and when these articles deal with social inequality. Equally, the silence of these magazines and the C.O.A. fell in line with the federal Canadian government's silence regarding Tlatelolco. The federal government's role in suppressing these news stories is unknown; however, given its silence on Tlatelolco it stands to reason that the government may have played a role in marginalizing counter-narrative coverage which would bring up unwanted questions for their Mexican allies. The C.O.A.'s silence is readily understandable given the organization's absolute alignment with the IOC, which proclaimed that the massacre was not connected to the Olympics and readily accepted the Mexican government's assurances that safety would be guaranteed.

The effect of this blind acceptance of the government version of events served to portray the massacre in, largely, one light. Readers of these newspapers were offered very little contextual information and their access to competing narratives was restricted to few published stories. Whether through direct or indirect interference the political relations between Canada and Mexico were reflected in the narrow and one-sided portrayals of the massacre in these newspapers. These characterizations of the massacre can be seen as a reflection of the budding political relationship between Canada and Mexico.

Differences between American and Canadian Newspapers Coverage

The differences in American and Canadian newspaper coverage of Tlatelolco were stark. On one hand, American newspapers presented a comprehensive, balanced, and critical analysis of the issues. Canadian newspapers, on the other hand, tacitly accepted the Mexican government's version of events which resulted in superficial and simplistic reporting of the issue. These differences were likely born from the different political relationships each nation had with Mexico. The U.S.-Mexican relationship has been characterized by William H. Leurs as: "like none other in the world. It is intense, extremely important, and yet peculiar."⁴ The Canadian-Mexican relationship in 1968 was a relatively new one where both parties were eager to entice the other to create a stronger relationship. Whereas the United States and Mexico had such an interconnected and long fortified relationship, Canada and Mexico had nothing of the sort. The long-standing working relationship with one another was reflected in the American newspapers, producing, at times, scathing critiques of the Mexican government. Canadian newspapers effectively offered a conclusive endorsement of the Mexican government's version of the massacre, likely owing to the reluctance of Canadian institutions to jeopardize the improving relations between the two countries.

Future Research

Research regarding the Mexico City massacre has many potential avenues for examination. The relative scarcity of English language literature regarding Tlatelolco dictates the plethora of possibilities for future research to make meaningful contributions. The insights gleaned from this study provide a basis on which further investigation of

international press reactions to the massacre would be valuable in order to gain a more holistic portrayal of the various responses to Tlatelolco. Additionally, a comprehensive study of more Canadian and American newspapers could generate findings which were not present in the newspapers examined in this thesis. By elongating the time period for examination, investigation into if the reporting of the massacre changed in later months and years could be made in addition to how the event was remembered.

Examining other popular media sources, such as television and radio coverage of the massacre could add important insights into whether popular media was consistent in its message or whether different forms of media created divergent messages regarding the massacre.

The Mexico City Massacre, the Olympics, and its Place in History

The immediate connection many make between the massacre and the 1968 Olympic Games has been shown to be a non-causal connection and relationship.⁵ Perhaps the tenuous connection between the massacre and the Olympic Games was best summed up by Octavio Paz's work, *The Other Mexico: Critique of the Pyramid*. When discussing the student unrest in Mexico and what it meant within Mexican society, Paz stated:

Although student uprisings are a world-wide phenomenon, they break out with the greatest virulence in the most advanced societies. It could be said, therefore, that the student movement and the Olympic Games in Mexico were complementary events: both of them were signs that the country was relatively developed. What was discordant, and anomalous, and unforeseen, was the attitude of the government.⁶

Nevertheless, the government's desire to host an Olympics free from student protests can be fairly concluded as a precipitating factor to the level of force used against the students.

In spite of Paz's eloquence and undeniably exhaustive knowledge of Mexico, the people, culture, and society, his view of the world press reacting in shock to the massacre should not be categorically accepted. As shown in this thesis, the international media response was highly nuanced and not generalizable given the striking differences in the way the massacre was covered. Some outlets, such as the *Times* and the *Post*, did react with shock and horror to the savage repression of the students. Other media outlets, such as the *Globe* and the *Citizen*, described the event in a matter of fact manner, which did not reflect shock but rather support for the government in its restoration of peace and order before the Olympic Games.

On the 25th anniversary of the massacre, in 1993, the Mexican government permitted a monument to be erected in commemoration of the massacre in the Plaza de la Tres Culturas.⁷ Though a remembrance statue may stand in the Plaza, much remains unresolved in the aftermath of the Mexico City massacre.

Notes

¹ Paz, *Critique of the Pyramid*, 17.

² See Dominguez and De Castro, *Between Partnership and Conflict*; Gonzalez, “The Foundations of Mexico’s Foreign Policy”; and *Foreign Policy in U.S.-Mexican Relations*, eds. Rosario Green and Peter H. Smith.

³ Witherspoon, *Before the Eyes of the World*, 114.

⁴ William H. Leurs, “Mexico and the Soviet Union: Tangled Metaphors for U.S. Foreign Policy,” in *Foreign Policy in U.S.-Mexican Relations*, eds. Rosario Green and Peter H. Smith (San Diego: Center for U.S. Mexican Studies University of California San Diego, 1989), 215.

⁵ Keith Brewster and Claire Brewster, “The Mexican Student Movement of 1968: An Olympic Perspective,” 820-822.

⁶ Paz, *Critique of the Pyramid*, 17.

⁷ Kurlansky, *1968: The Year that Rocked the World*, 343. To signify the difficulty in assessing the massacre retrospectively, in 1993 survivors, historians, and journalists only yielded 20 names after thorough investigation to find out how many were killed.

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