The political and cultural dimensions of sport are widely recognised and international sport is generally accepted as contributing to the dynamics of international relations. It follows that the changing characteristics of sport will reflect something of the general developments in international relations. Ongoing debates concerning the implications of globalisation, the significance of international non-governmental organisations on policy making, the effect of transnational movements on sovereignty and the changing relationship between identity and place, are some of the issues which can indeed be considered through the prism of the international sports environment. The paper suggests that since these debates are central to the investigations of International Relations writers, their work should attract more attention from those seeking to understand the place of sport and sports organisations in international society. It also suggests that there are reciprocal benefits for the discipline of International Relations, since a focus on the organisation of sport provides a rich seam of empirical evidence which may provide support for—or indeed a challenge to—arguments concerning recent developments in international relations.

Of the more recent British foreign policy documentation released into the public domain, material relating to the period leading up to the 1968 Mexico Olympics reinforces the argument that general developments in international relations are reflected in political activity surrounding international sports events. In this period, the management of retreat from Empire dominated much of the British foreign policy scene. Develop-
ments in Rhodesia where the white dominated government was moving toward a unilateral declaration of independence from the UK, were reflected in grave concerns expressed in the Commonwealth Office regarding a premature invitation for Rhodesia to compete in the 1968 Games. ‘Great importance’ was attached to ensuring that this invitation was withdrawn. During the same period, developments in British Honduras, which was moving toward independence, were reflected in Foreign Office concerns regarding a suggestion that the Duke of Edinburgh’s visit to the Mexico Games could be extended to visit the area.

Such incidents are potentially of interest to historians of sport, to diplomatic historians and to International Relations theorists. Whether or not this interest evolves into cross-disciplinary investigation depends upon where those engaged in research perceive the boundaries of their disciplines to be. It will also depend upon their readiness to recognise the validity of other fields of inquiry.

**The value and limitations of cross-disciplinary investigation**

Investigations requiring collaboration between academic disciplines are commonly presented as necessary given the increasing complexity of contemporary society and the evolution of discreet fields of inquiry. Kuhn, noting the increasing specialisation that has taken place within academia over the past 150 years, comments ‘a man today often seems quite accomplished if he masters one division of a sub-division of a field, with perhaps a working knowledge of several related subdivisions and a general idea of what the whole field is about’. As a result, it was inevitable that many kinds of social problems could not be satisfactorily addressed through one academic specialism.

Multi-disciplinary investigations appear in many guises, from passing reference to related areas of research to fully integrated investigative frameworks. Typical of the former is the passing reference made by Guibernau—a political analyst working in the area of ethnic relations and nationalism—to the work of Durkheim on contrasting perceptions of the ‘individual’ and ‘individuality’ in different societies, as well as an acknowledgement of the important psychological factors relating to an understanding of identity. At a more formal level, separate disciplines have been brought together in multidisciplinary analyses of health related
issues, where the relationship between psychological, physiological and social factors in determining the health of an individual become the basis of community health and education programmes. Investigations relating to environmental and climatic change frequently work on the same rationale. The work of Roberts on environmental changes during the ‘Holocene’ period clearly illustrates that only through combining the work of a range of disciplines including archaeology, geology and the environmental sciences, can the complex relationship between human activity and environmental change be appreciated. No effective investigation of such subject matter can then, be confined within the parameters of one academic discipline. It is from such a perspective that the paper argues an understanding of sport in international relations is enhanced through the adoption of a cross-disciplinary approach.

**What constitutes the discipline of International Relations?**

Writers in the discipline of International Relations concern themselves with relations between collectives: nations, states, regions or other transnational or international groups and organisations. They differ across a range of issues, in particular their interpretation as to who are the key actors in international relations, the characteristics of power relations, the role of the state and the relationship between domestic and international spheres of politics.

Concerning the formal recognition of International Relations as a separate discipline, writers on the subject relate this to the political climate in Europe in the period immediately following the First World War. A Chair of International Relations was established in the University of Wales in Aberystwyth in 1919. In the wake of the experiences of the War, there existed a commitment to develop an approach to international relations, which would ensure an avoidance of a recurrence of war on such a scale. The belief that such an outcome was possible formed the basis for ‘idealistic’ thinking which was to characterise this period. The ongoing debate between those writers who rejected such an idealistic stance was articulated first in Carr’s *The Twenty Year Crisis*. Since then, a succession of interpretations and re-interpretations of the essence of international relations have emerged. Broadly speaking, these can be categorised along two separate planes. On one plane, theories differ in terms of whether they perceive the state system as continuing to dominate international relations
or whether they consider world politics as driven by the activities of interest groups interacting at different levels, or indeed by other structural interests which override national or ethnic allegiance. On another plane, contrasting methodological perspectives are adopted, ranging from those writing in the classical tradition of the humanities, through those behaviourist perspectives focusing on the utilisation of ‘scientific’ frameworks, to ‘Critical’ and ‘Post-modernist’ writers who question certain epistemological and ontological assumptions which underlie the behaviourist tradition.

International relations and the study of sport.

Studies of sport and politics have traditionally presented a number of developing functions of sport as vehicles through which political objectives might be realised. This has consistently been the theme throughout writing on the subject. More dated work such as that of Hoberman, Kanin, and Espy focuses on both the argument of ‘sport as a political tool’ and on the argument that the modern sports movement may, in itself, be ideologically loaded. The same themes are apparent in contemporary writing. Hill notes that ‘international sport needs the interest and support of politicians, but not their interference. Politicians on the other hand, appreciate that sport has a political dimension and exploit this when they can’. In offering a critique of Neil MacFarlane’s assertion that until relatively recently, sport and politics were indeed separate, Polley argues that ‘what this view ignores is the long-term, structural relationship that exists between sport and political agencies at the local, regional and international levels’. Houlihan (1994, p.p.1-25) refers to the intertwining of politics and sport at different levels. He identifies as ‘themes for discussion’ sport as a vehicle for diplomacy, ideology, nation building, access into the international arena and commercial gain. There is then, a case for considering an implicit link between developments in international relations and sport. It would follow that writing relating to these two areas should also inter-relate.

While the development of a theoretical framework through which to understand sport in the international arena has only recently been tentatively explored, the initial question arises: is such a framework necessary at all? Allison, in discussing the ‘changing context of sporting life’, notes that ‘it would have been justifiable to publish [his] volume as a set of
stories, interesting and important in themselves, about Ireland, South Africa, the Soviet Union and so on…the politics of sport does not require any overarching theory to justify its interest to readers’ 21 He goes on to note, however, that underlying themes have emerged, which do assist in providing a framework, namely ‘the inherent politics of sport, the myth of autonomy, the impact of commercialism and the impact of post-modernism’. 22 The general question of the validity of theory as a method of understanding any social phenomenon is one which arises in a number of disciplines, not least amongst International Relations writers. Burchill asks the question, why develop theories at all? Could it be that the presentation of the facts are sufficient? 23 In response to this question, he notes the role of theory as providing a context for facts; a framework for interpreting and understanding ‘real’ developments. 24

Houlihan is one of the few writers on international sport who seeks explicitly to enhance his analytical framework by presenting International Relations theories as a means of considering the relationship between sport and international politics. He provides a general overview of international relations perspectives and considers, in principle, key issues relating to international sport within each. He groups International Relations theories under the three familiar headings, the first being ‘Realism’ with its well documented focus on power relations. It may be argued that explanations of international sport on cold war (bi-polar) relations are-implicitly at least-presented from this perspective. Within the ‘Pluralist’ tradition he develops the familiar argument that power is not necessarily held or wielded by a monolithic elite but is dispersed among a politically active citizenry and a multiplicity of elite groups, institutions and organisations. Policy is therefore the outcome of a process of bargaining between interest groups. Houlihan is-at least implicitly-developing this perspective through a focus on the role of international sports organisations as actors in their own right in the international arena. In a broad range of theories, which he places under the general heading of ‘Globalism’, the focus is on the ‘international system’ to which individual states or transnational actors are constrained. Houlihan notes that the exploitative nature of multinational companies and their impact on third world development is a common theme within this range of theories. In this context, he acknowledges the influence of business interest groups in the international sports environment, 25 going so far as to hypothesise that
'the long-term involvement of business in sport will weaken the ability of governments to manipulate and exploit sport for diplomatic purposes'.

As with any academic work however, Houlihan’s 1994 investigation of sport in international politics, should be viewed in the context of the period within which it was written. Since 1994, there has been another major-still ongoing-crisis within the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which, arguably, has had a negative impact on the influence of International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) administering sport in the international arena. It also challenges the argument that the commercial development of sport has assisted in increasing the independence of sports organisations from government. Despite the continued process of commercialisation of sport, it has moved up the political agenda with politicians taking an increasing interest in sports provision and development. In this respect in the UK, the creation of the Department of National Heritage-latterly Culture, Media and Sport-and the recent pro-active stance of ministers for sport Banks and Hoey, is significant. Also, implicit in Houlihan’s work is the assumption of the continued ascendancy of the key international forms of sport. Though reference is made to the development of alternative forms of body culture, this is not presented as a major element within the evolution of sport. Since 1994, this aspect of the evolution of sport has received much more attention. Finally, the increasing challenges to the ‘Three Paradigm’ approach within International Relations, are noteworthy. The boundaries between the so-called ‘Realist’, ‘Pluralist’ and ‘Globalist’ perspectives referred to by Houlihan have blurred and a new agenda is emerging amongst IR writers. Nevertheless, the Pluralist, Realist and Structuralist (Globalist) paradigms do provide a useful starting point for the investigation of sport in international relations.

**Traditional IR perspectives and international sport.**

The Pluralist perspective, presenting international relations as driven by the complex web of relationships between diverse interest groupings, is reflected in arguments concerning influence of the sports organisations in the international arena. Sports organisations as INGOs have in some cases demonstrated the capacity to influence governmental decision-making. Houlihan notes that few apart from the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) and the Olympic movement-and arguably the Federa-
tion Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)-have the material resources to lobby and influence governments. This may be partially overcome by the banding together of individual governing bodies into collectives, which subsequently have the capacity to be influential. Note-worthy in this respect is the General Association of International Sports federations (GAISF), the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), and the Association of Winter Sports Federations (AIWF). Set against arguments relating to their potential to exert influence on policy making is their lack of visibility in crucial debates in 1999-2000 which related to the future of the Olympic movement.

The movement of sport up the domestic and international political agenda has created the conditions whereby national sports organisations can potentially play a more pro-active role in policy making and implementation. Yet examples of this actually happening appear limited. If the Pluralist perspective is an accurate interpretation of the international environment, the sports historian should be able to trace an increasing number of instances where such organisations are actively engaged in international politics. Certainly sports organisations are consulted on a range of politically sensitive issues, such as drug misuse and most recently liaison with the Football Association on the issue of soccer violence. Their influence outside a narrow range of issues is, however, at best marginal.

Arguably, the recent revelations concerning corruption in the Olympic movement has been to the detriment of the capacity of sports organisations to influence decision making. This has led to both an increasing political involvement in sports issues and the real and threatened loss of valuable commercial support. Nevertheless, the Movement has survived and is taking the initiative in re-constituting itself to ensure legitimacy in the future. Perhaps the legacy of the crisis of 1999 will be the shifting of influence between rather than away from sports organisations. In this context, a January 1999 Financial Times leader article argued that the responsibility for reform of the Olympic Movement lay within the Movement itself.

While accepting that the increasing influence of international sports organisations may, in certain limited contexts, be a reality, and that business interests allied to sport may also exert significant influence in the international environment, the primacy of the state centred political
The Sports Historian No. 20 (2)

interests has recently been illustrated through the controversy surrounding the awarding of the 2002 Winter Games to Salt Lake City. In this context, Realist interpretations of Olympic politics provide a basis for an alternative interpretation. The scandal surrounding the alleged corruption had implications not only for the IOC membership but also for the Organising Committee for the Games. *The Independent* reported on the first resignations from the Salt Lake City Organising Committee as evidence of corruption continued to emerge concerning the choice of the site. On 2 March 1999, Senator George Mitchell, head of the US Olympic Committee’s (USOC) Special Commission into the Salt Lake City scandal, called for an independent audit of the IOC’s finances and a ban on gifts and other expenses for IOC and USOC officials. In June, since the IOC 2000 Commission was still considering proposals for the re-constitution of the IOC, interim rules were agreed and utilised in order to reach a decision for the hosting of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. These rules limited the amount of contact which IOC members could have with the organising committees of the proposed sites. The 109th session of the IOC, which took place in Seoul in June and was the first session to be televised, reflected the tensions which were building up in the movement at that time. A report in *The Independent* in June referred to the conflict between the IOC and the Sydney Games Organising Committee concerning their decision to cut perks normally expected by the IOC members. Michael Knight, the Chief Executive of the Committee, reportedly upset some of the IOC membership by lecturing them on the need for reform and on the reasoning behind the decision to reduce the budget for IOC expenses. Political pressure was building on the IOC from all sides. There were, indeed, fears that a number of IOC members may be arrested as a result of evidence from the Salt Lake City inquiry and subsequent inquiries by the police and the FBI into bribery allegations. Allegations were also being made concerning corruption relating to the selection of Nagano for the 1998 Games and of Sydney for the 2000 Games, although they were not of the same magnitude as in the case of Salt Lake City.

Considering such experiences from a Realist perspective would not necessarily deny the influence of sports organisations in certain limited contexts. However, in terms of the so-called ‘international system’, the state as a unitary actor and the interests of the state remain dominant. Arguably here was an opportunity for the state to impose parameters on the
activities of a sports INGO. The Realist critique of the authority of international non-state actors is that they do not, in practice, have an independent standing because they are composed of representatives of states which will ultimately determine the agenda of these organisations. Considered in the context of the IOC, there is an interesting anomaly in that members, whilst drawn from member states, are required to represent the interests of the IOC in those member states rather than representing the interest of the member states in the IOC. Yet it could be argued that this classic model of nineteenth century liberal internationalism demonstrably falls at the first hurdle as the reality of national interests have again and again been reflected in decision-making within the IOC. Indeed, it could be argued that the gulf between the theory and the practice of the Olympic Movement is a reflection of the ongoing tension between realist theories of the balance of power and contrasting internationalist theories. Whilst this was manifestly so in the bi-polar Cold-War era, it is arguably still the ‘reality’.

Globalisation, international relations and international sport

The somewhat over-exposed concept of ‘globalisation’ has recently emerged in literature relating to a number of academic disciplines—including, unsurprisingly, International Relations—and in the popular press where it is frequently portrayed as referring to an essentially destructive modernisation process. The term has attracted the attention of sports theorists, most recently in Maguire’s Global Sport of 1999. Maguire explores the notion of globalisation in terms of the tensions between homogenisation and differentiation, which it is argued, characterise the ‘global process’. Maguire utilises Eichberg’s argument concerning the significance of localised reactions to globalisation and their manifestation in the resurgence of traditional sports and alternative forms of body culture. In this, he challenges not only the stock ‘modernization theory’ approach which presents what appears to be an inevitable ‘westernization’ of developing nations. Cultural imperialism is also challenged on that basis, in the sense that it also treats as inevitable the homogenising influence of the western—in particular, American—systems of values as they are transmitted through sport. He suggests a more interpretive approach to the study of such phenomenon, reflecting on such issues as the level of intention in the transfer of culture, the extent of cultural domination and
The potential for elements of Eastern body culture to influence Western patterns of consumption. In this respect, the ‘purity’ of indigenous or ‘authentic’ cultures is also raised.

International Relations writers, contributing to an understanding of the phenomenon, have vigorously debated the impact of global business enterprises and financial interests and the localised reactions to such influences. Scholte, noting the difference between the global and the international, points to the intensifying of connections between discreet ‘national domains’ which results from internationalisation, as opposed to globalisation which in effect challenges the discreet nature of these domains through a ‘web of transborder networks’. The ‘distanceless and instantaneous’ nature of the global environment thus transcends traditional notions of territory and, in so doing, challenges traditional notions of the sovereign nation-state. At the same time, Scholte questions the assumption that just because traditional notions of sovereignty have been superseded, this does not indicate an automatic decline in the role and significance of the state. He notes the resilience of the ‘post-sovereign’ state, which, whilst still territorial in nature, increasingly engages in the promotion of global as well as national causes. In this respect, attention can be drawn to Islamic states in terms of their promotion of Islam on a global scale.

The relationship between globalisation and Huntington’s controversial argument concerning the interaction of civilisations is noteworthy in that he is one of the few writers on international relations who refers directly to the implications on international sport. Huntington argued that cultural distinctions have become the dominant element of differentiation in the post Cold-War era, transcending, as they do, ideological, economic and political distinctions. In this respect he draws attention to Kissinger’s argument that the new, twenty-first century order will be ‘more like the European state system of the 18th and 19th centuries than the rigid patterns of the Cold War. It will contain at least six major powers—the United States, Europe, China, Japan, Russia and probably India—as well a multiplicity of medium sized countries’. Huntington observes, however, that ‘Kissinger’s six major powers belong to five very different civilizations, and in addition there are important Islamic states whose strategic locations, large populations and/or oil resources make them influential affairs…The rivalry of the
superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilizations’.40

Controversially, he presents as evidence to support his ‘civilizational paradigm’41 a series of events which he sees as fitting that paradigm in a six month period in 1993. Within the list is reference to ‘the voting, apparently almost entirely along civilizational lines, that gave the 2000 Olympics to Sydney rather than Beijing’. Later, he presents that decision in the context of the aftermath of the 1993 UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. Presenting that conference as a showcase for civilizational clashes, he cites an Asian critic of the West as noting that, for the first time since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, ‘countries not thoroughly steeped in the Judeo-Christian and natural law traditions are in the first rank. That unprecedented situation will define the new international politics of human rights. It will also multiply the occasions for conflict’.42 The general consensus was that China had been successful through a co-ordination of non-Western interests, in blocking decisions on human rights likely to be contrary to its own interests. Similarly, the Sydney decision is generally presented as the ‘revenge of the West’. Huntington’s interpretation of the decision, is noteworthy:

Outvoted and outmanoeuvred at Vienna, the West was nonetheless able a few months later, to score a not-insignificant victory against China. Securing the 2000 Summer Olympics for Beijing was a major goal of the Chinese government, which invested tremendous resources in trying to achieve it. In China there was immense publicity about the Olympic bid and public expectations were high; the government lobbied other governments to pressure their Olympic associations; Taiwan and Hong Kong joined in the campaign. On the other side, The US Congress, the European Parliament and human rights organizations all vigorously opposed selecting Beijing. Although voting in the IOC is by secret ballot, it clearly was along civilizational lines. On the first ballot, Beijing, with reportedly widespread African support, was in first place with Sydney in second. On subsequent ballots, when Istanbul was eliminated, the Confucian-Islamic connection brought its votes overwhelmingly to Beijing.; when Berlin and Manchester were eliminated, their votes went overwhelmingly to Sydney, giving it victory on the 4th ballot.
While accepting that Huntington’s thesis is far from universally accepted within the IR academic community, it does serve to illustrate the value of opening up the investigation of sport to an alternative ‘universe of discourse’, providing a different perspective on those sources which influence the ongoing evolution of international sport.

**The investigation of international sport: contributing to an understanding of international relations**

Just as a consideration of international theories can assist in an understanding of the significance of sport in contemporary society, so too an investigation of developments in international sport can provide valuable insights into the nature of international society. The activities of politicians and diplomats in relation to international sport reflect the general characteristics of diplomacy and international politics in the post-Cold War era. A consideration of the evolution of international sports institutions can provide insights for IR theorists concerned with understanding a political environment, which can no longer be comprehended in terms of the traditional state-centric paradigms.

As a reflection of cultural development generally, the values and beliefs of key sports administrators and the organisations they represent can reflect wider historical developments in political thinking. Concerning the history of the Olympic movement, this is clearly the case when considering early developments of the movement in the context of inter-war internationalist thought. The spirit of the times—the search for a formula to avoid the total conflict of the war—had been the basis for the emergence of the discipline referred to as IR. Whether or not for purely opportunistical reasons, de Coubertin acknowledged and related to the aspirations of the League of Nations. Kanin notes how Coubertin ‘jumped on the bandwagon of Wilsonian (neo-Kantian) ideology’. He quotes from a letter written by Coubertin to the President of the League shortly after the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, outlining the similarity in the aspirations of the League and those of the IOC:

Twenty six years ago our committee introduced and applied, as regards sporting activities, the very principles upon which the League was organized and by means of their Olympiads they brought into existence an international collaboration which is
getting closer and more effective. After the triumphal celebration of the 7th Olympiad held in Antwerp, you must be personally aware Mr. President, of the power attained by the Olympic movement and you know how much it is bringing together the youth of every country.

Kanin went on to note that the decline of the League system brought to an end the efforts to develop a role for the Olympic movement in the wider political arena. It encouraged re-focusing on the original aspiration of sport as functional in the moral development of youth internationally. Yet there continued an inherent tension in the activities of the Olympic movement—as indeed there were in the aspirations of Coubertin himself—between a celebration of national prowess and a nurturing of a belief in internationalism. This is poignantly expressed in part of a speech written by Coubertin for the closing of the 1936 Berlin Games, but which he was not asked to deliver: ‘The swaying and struggles of history will continue but little by little knowledge will replace dangerous ignorance, mutual understanding will soften unthinking hatreds…. May the German people and their head be thanked for what they have just accomplished’. 47

The struggle between Kantian idealism and Machiavellian realism—which in the case of the 1936 Games, the Machiavellian position won such a conclusive victory—was brought into sharp relief. Indeed it may be argued that the journey of Olympism during the inter-war years reflects the journey of internationalist thought: from hopefulness, through disillusionment to eventual defeat.

Notwithstanding these early difficulties encountered, internationalist aspirations have re-emerged as integral to the philosophy of the Olympic Movement. These have been reflected recently in collaboration between the IOC and the United Nations (UN). The UN sponsored International Year for a Culture of Peace to be celebrated throughout 200048 included collaboration between the IOC and the United National Educational Social and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in the setting up of a World Conference on Education and Sport for a Culture of Peace (held in Paris in July 1999). Such activity could indeed form an important dimension of the rehabilitation of the Movement.
Sports diplomacy: reflecting general developments in diplomatic practice.

Theorists focusing on diplomacy argue that a transformation of diplomatic practice has taken place, which has seen the dissipation of diplomatic activity across a much wider range of activities. Hamilton and Langhorne point to the increasing number of ‘functions’ ascribed to government. They note the acceptance among governments of the lack of distinction between international politics and economics, recognition reinforced by the experiences of post-war reconstruction. Thus ‘an ever-increasing number of industrial, social and technological matters were perceived as having an international and therefore a diplomatic dimension’. In a sense, the development of sport as an aspect of the diplomatic agenda can be considered in this context.

Yet, as has been clearly documented by a number of writers, it is not just in the inter-war period when so-called ‘new’ diplomacy is reputed to have emerged, that diplomats viewed sport as significant. A consideration of Foreign Office correspondence relating to the 1908 Olympic Games in London shows that whilst attitudes toward any sort of political involvement in the Games were ambiguous to say the least, there was recognition of the diplomatic significance of the Games and a willingness to cooperate with its organisation. Correspondence concerning the Franco-British exhibition of 1908, of which the Olympics formed a part, illustrates clearly the diplomatic value attributed to trading relations with mainland Europe. Reference to the range of colonial displays at the exhibition highlights the significance attached to imperial trade both in political and economic terms. A series of correspondence between the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade concerning an invitation-forwarded by the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to London-to take part in the ‘First International Shooting and Field Sports Exhibition to be Held in Vienna’ in 1910, serves further to underline the links between diplomacy and economic activity. Such developments illustrate the diversity of diplomatic activity in a period generally characterised by the continued practice of so-called ‘old’ diplomacy.

The changing nature of diplomacy has, it is argued, presented a challenge to the traditional role of the diplomat and his/her relationship with domestic political interests. In this respect, reference is frequently made...
to the impact of rapid developments in transport and, more recently, the revolution in communications, which has enabled politicians to become much more directly involved in diplomacy than was the case a century ago. Also, as the range and characteristics of links between and across states has evolved, this has increased the scope and complexity of the diplomatic role. Watson refers to the general acceptance that diplomacy is increasingly not just about dialogue between states and their representatives, but also with non-state actors.\textsuperscript{56} These actors he sees as either political movements-for instance, those representing the aspirations of citizens to gain political autonomy-or organisations whose primary functions were not political, such as the Vatican or multi-national organisations. In this sense consideration can be given to international sports organisations, in particular the IOC, which has taken upon itself semi-diplomatic status and which-with varying degrees of success-has become engaged in the diplomatic arena. A consideration of the language of the IOC provides an indication of its diplomatic aspirations. The provision of identity cards and the flying of the Olympic flag are indications of the territorial sovereignty exercised in relation to the chosen site for the duration of the Games. The recent proposals concerning the re-structuring of the Games contained the plan to nominate Olympic ‘attaches’ from the individual National Olympic Committees (NOC) to provide a link between these NOCs and the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games.

The revival of the notion of the ‘Olympic truce’ is of particular significance in relation to the language of the Olympic Movement. The first project was launched in 1992 following the break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{57} The stated objective was to ‘defend the interests of the athletes, protect the Olympic Games and consolidate the unity of the Olympic movement’. The potential conflict with UN Security Council Resolution 757 of 1992, in which sport was included for the first time as a recognised element within sanctions policy, became apparent: ‘a compromise was finally reached and the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee accepted the IOC’s proposal that the athletes of Yugoslavia be allowed to participate in the Barcelona Games as individuals’.\textsuperscript{58} The subsequent support for the concept of the revived Olympic Truce first from the OAU (June 1993) and then from the UN General Assembly (October 1993) is noteworthy in terms of argument concerning collaboration between INGOs in order to influence international relations. The symbolic
launch of the Olympic Truce on 24 January 1994 to cover the period of the Lillehammer Winter Games involved a still more impressive line-up of INGOs, including the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF and the Red Cross. Of particular significance was the continuing conflict in Yugoslavia. Somewhat ironically, the IOC was assisted by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and by the Norwegian Government in facilitating the evacuation of the NOCs leaders and athletes from Sarajevo so that they could go to Lillehammer and take part in the Games. Thereafter, an item on the Olympic Truce is permanently on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in the year prior to the Olympic Games. Concerning the 2000 Olympic Games, the 54th session of the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled ‘building a better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal’ on 24 November 1999. On a symbolic note, the UN flag now flies at all competition sites of the Olympic Games.

The co-ordination between the IOC and other powerful INGOs, in particular the UN and UNESCO, has recently manifested itself in other ways. The staging of a ‘World Conference on Education and Sport for a Culture of Peace’, jointly organised by UNESCO and the IOC as part of the build-up to the UN International Year for A Culture of Peace, is noteworthy in this respect. Against these images of influence in the international arena must, however, be set the damage which the recent corruption accusations have had on the Olympic movement, and the involvement of politicians in the re-constitution of the organisation. This, allied to the fact that sport has been elevated in terms of the domestic political agenda and as such sports ministers are increasingly visible in decision-making concerning sport both domestically and internationally-witness Tony Banks’ statement that he would not support any future Olympic bids until he was satisfied that the IOC appropriately re-constituted-suggests the re-assertion of political influence on international sport. It may be argued, then, that the Olympic Movement after managing to assert itself as above the sphere of politics and capable of influencing it, is increasingly vulnerable to political influence while the influence of the IOC has been reduced. In general, it would appear that international sports events are increasingly tripartite in nature, with business interests, governmental interests and sports interests, interacting and influencing the nature of the event. The argument that governmental influence is on the decline is, it would appear, premature.
Concluding thoughts

In discussing what he viewed as a knowledge gap in the understanding of the evolution of the Olympic Games from a social perspective, MacAloon notes that the discovery surprised him as he had expected that social scientists would have appreciated its relevance. It also saddened him ‘because I took this scholarly vacancy as further evidence of the contempt of “serious culture” for the ludic side of life, a contempt from which those of us who were having our most important experiences in sport, felt ourselves daily to suffer’.\(^6\) Therein lies a fundamental difficulty facing anyone wishing to engage in cross-disciplinary investigation: the need for mutual recognition of value. Outside the relatively small body of scholars involved in the study of sport, there continues to be an unwillingness to accept the notion of sport-as a core human activity-as integral to political, economic and social evolution and therefore worthy of study as such. In terms of the discipline of International Relations, the problem is accentuated through a continued focus only on forms of ‘high politics’ as relevant to change in the international political environment. Nevertheless, this paper has attempted to demonstrate that there is real value for IR scholars in considering the development of international forms of sport, just as different IR paradigms can assist in an understanding of the history and development of international sport.

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Notes

1 This has been evidenced in a wide variety of ways, including reference by sports historians to the manipulation of sport by regimes seeking support for foreign and domestic policy objectives. Recent examples include Beck (1999) Polley (1998) and Riordan & Kruger (eds) (1999).

2 Good (1973, p.283) notes that a referendum on the issue of Rhodesian independence and on a draft constitution for an independent Rhodesia, was held on 20 June 1969. Rhodesia was declared a Republic at midnight on 1 / 2 March 1970, after being ‘tied to Britain by Royal Charter for eighty years’.

3 FCO 7/664 (5 December 1967) notes the concern of the Commonwealth Office regarding an invitation to compete in the 1968 Olympic Games, which had been forwarded to Rhodesia on 20 November. It notes the ‘great importance’ it attached
to the cancellation of this invitation, pointing out that ‘although the official position is that the Games are a contest between individuals and not between nations, it would nevertheless clearly be a great success for the regime in gaining international recognition, if a Rhodesian team were accepted at the Games in Mexico City, particularly if by that time, the regime had declared a Republic and adopted a new flag and national anthem and these were used at the Games.’

FCO 7/664, 68573 (12 June 1968) A Foreign Office official notes ‘I need hardly say that, in the present circumstances, a visit to British Honduras by the Duke would probably be interpreted in Guatemala as a move to influence events in the present delicate balance over timing of British Honduras’ progress toward independence’.

It is interesting to note a sport in international politics panel for the first time formed part of the British International Studies Association (BISA) conference in December 1999.

Kuhn, 1966, p.4.

Guibernau, 1996.

Roberts, 1989. The holocene refers to the post-glacial epoch – roughly the last 10,000 years – during which time there has been an increasing interaction between the natural environment and human activity.

In this context, the title ‘International Relations’ is misleading in the sense that the concern with relationships between collectives other than nations or states is central to such investigation.

Keohane, 1989, p.2, notes that ‘each perspective incorporates a set of distinctive questions and assumptions about the basic units and forces in world politics’.

Groom, 1994, p.1, notes that International Relations was ‘one of the last elements of social science to achieve disciplinary status with the establishment of a Chair in … 1919’.

Burchill, 1996, p.4, argues that ‘until this time, the province of international politics was shared by a number of older disciplines including law, philosophy, economics, politics and diplomatic history’. Clearly then there is a connection between International Relations writing and the traditions of diplomatic history.

It is noteworthy that Carr is recognised both as a historian and as an IR theorist. His publication What is History? (1961) contains his reflections on ‘the theory of history and the role of the historian’.

Viotti & Kauppi (1994) provide a clear overview of these differences. More recently Brown (1997) provides an effective analysis of the contrasting traditions. Variations of this argument can be found throughout writing on the history and politics of sport. Espy, 1979, p.3, comments specifically that ‘sport is frequently a tool of diplomacy. By sending delegations of athletes abroad, states can establish a first basis for diplomatic relations or can more effectively maintain such relations. Correspondingly, the cancellation of a proposed sport visit to another nation can be used by a state as a means of voicing displeasure with that specific government or with its policies’.

Kanin, 1981, preface, notes for instance that ‘the modern Olympic Games were founded with expressly political goals in mind and continue to thrive on ties in global affairs’.
These, however, may be viewed as themes which provide an order through which organisation of sport can be explained. They cannot be considered in the context of theories.


Burchill, 1996, p.13, cites Halliday’s comment: ‘First, there needs to be some preconception of which facts are significant and which are not. The facts are myriad and do not speak for themselves. For anyone, academic or not, there need to be criteria of significance. Secondly, any one set of facts, even if accepted as true and as significant, can yield different interpretations …Thirdly, no human agent, again whether academic or not, can rest content with the facts alone. All social activity involves moral questions of right or wrong, and these can, by definition, not be decided by facts.’


Sports theorists who adopted an implicitly ‘globalist’ approach to their account of international sport include the French writer Brohm and more recently Gruneau.

Eichberg is noteworthy in setting the agenda for this debate.

Murray, 1999, p.29, argues that FIFA ‘has an influence in the sports world that can only be matched by the IOC’. He notes that since its inauguration in 1904, its membership has grown to nearly 200, ‘more than the member states of the United Nations’.

The loss of major sponsors from forthcoming Olympic Games–Johnson & Johnson from the 2002 Games and Reebok from the 2000 Games–can been viewed in this context.

Financial Times (25 January 1999): ‘the Olympics depend upon powerful commercial interests: the sponsors, the host cities and the TV networks. The Games exist to serve more than these, but rather the world’s population. It is therefore no use looking to the sponsors to reform the system, nor to the cities to renounce bribery. The world’s only representative, for better or for worse, is the IOC. It must reform itself’.

The sentiment expressed in this leader was markedly different from that expressed in an article two days previous. In the Financial Times (23rd January 1999) Patrick Harverson argued that; ‘…a multi-national paying 50M dollars for the right to sponsor the Olympics and at least as much again in advertising, as a powerful voice within the IOC. Even Samaranch, the movement’s president and one of sports last great autocrats, must listen to what it says. …Although Samaranch has said he will resist attempts to remove him, the final word on whether he stays or goes may well rest with the Olympic movement’s new masters in the corporate world’.

Of the 115 IOC members, 24 were implicated in the scandal and of these, 10 were eventually to resign.
The Independent (9 January 1999) reported the latest evidence concerning $400,000 of educational sponsorship for young people associated with IOC members.

IOC website, article dated 2 March 1999.

This commission included a number of ‘external’ members, most notably being Henry Kissinger.

The increasing cost of supporting IOC members which has been incurred by organising committees is noteworthy. Killanin remarks in his autobiography: ‘I recall from those early years how light were the demands which the IOC made on the Organising Committee as regards its own comfort. In 1952 Helsinki was a small city. IOC members had free passes on buses and all of us, except the president, travelled in this manner to sporting events. Today, all IOC members insist on having their own individual cars during the Games. For some eighty members to have cars places an added burden on the resources of the hosts, who also have to provide transport for the numerous teams, competitors and officials. More recently International Federation heads and NOC heads have also had cars. All these are provided by a national car manufacturer, or agent, which that the officials of the Olympic Movement are subsidised by commercial advertising’. Killanin, 1983, p. 32.


Scholte, 1997, p.15.

Huntington, 1996, p.68, cites Robertson’s argument that ‘in an increasingly globalized world - characterised by historically exceptional degrees of civilizational, societal and other modes of interdependence and widespread consciousness thereof - there is an exacerbation of civilizational, societal and ethnic self-consciousness’.

Kissinger (1994, pp.23-4). He also discusses the notion of international relations becoming ‘global’. He draws particular attention to the fact that the world economy operates on all continents simultaneously, and that a number of issues-in particular nuclear proliferation and the environment-can be dealt with only on a ‘world-wide’ basis.

Huntington, 1996, p.28.


One area of criticism relates to the level of generality of the theory. Another is the implicit bias toward the needs and aspirations of so-called ‘Western’ civilisation. MacAlloon’s comment that the ‘Olympic festival is a global representation of human social process’, has been echoed by a number of commentators. MacAlloon, 1981, preface.

The connection between De Coubertin’s thinking and French nationalism has been widely documented. Perhaps the tension between on the on hand nationalistic motives, and on the other the emotional draw towards internationalism, is indeed a reflection of the difficulties in realising the aspirations of the internationalists in the early inter-war years.


Quoted in MacAlloon, 1981.
The UN General Assembly’s resolution 52/15 of 20 November 1997 established the principle of The International Year for a Culture of Peace.


Watson, 1982, p.121, has drawn attention to the increasing complexity and wider range of issues being dealt with by diplomats and the need for greater flexibility in diplomatic responses. At the same time he argues, that the mechanisms and forms of contemporary diplomacy ‘continue to be those inherited from the European states system’. Consequently the inherited European forms, which had been subject to continual evolution and change even in the European system, are today fairly bursting at the seams, and visibly in transition. But as often happens with conventions, it matters less what exactly the rules are than that everyone observes them so that behaviour is predictable; and it is impressive how much of the machinery of European diplomacy is still in active use.’


See FO 368/18, 229112 and FO 368’181, 23592

Over the course of the exhibition, The Times printed a number of articles specifically focusing on Dominion and colonial exhibits. A report on 1 July highlights the characteristics of the New Zealand exhibit with its portrayal of the produce and the way of life of New Zealand. An article on 4 July reports on the Queen’s visit to the exhibition and on the nature of the ‘Southern Nigeria and Gambia exhibits’.

FO 368/167, 23475, 40690. Documents dated between July and November 1908.

See Hamilton and Langhorne (1995)

Watson, 1982, p.120.

IOC website.

It is noteworthy that the IOC also granted provisional recognition to the NOCs of Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia and invited them to take part in the Games.

Finnemore (1996, pp.34-68) identifies UNESCO as a ‘science policy bureaucracy’, controversially arguing that rather than encouraging the development of scientific learning as a transnational enterprise, has evolved into an organisation which has increasingly served national science policy objectives. This she argues is reflected in structural and constitutional changes within the organisation which has led to educationalists, artists and scientists gradually losing control of the organisation.

IOC Website: The International Year for a Culture of Peace will be celebrated in 2000. The World Conference on Education and Sport for a Culture of Peace was held in Paris from 5-9 July 1999.