

# The diffusion of the anti-Olympics

Recent movements against hosting the Olympic Games in Boston, Hamburg and  
Budapest

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this thesis, I would like to deepen the academic knowledge about the movements of “anti-Olympics” as potential subjects of social movement research. I assume that given the common, global subject of these movements (i.e. the Olympics), they are similar and the process of transnational diffusion can be observed between such movements. To analyze these assumptions, I develop three case studies of recent campaigns where local movements opposed the issue of hosting the Olympics. A case study is about campaigns in Boston in 2014-2015, another is a story of a platform in Hamburg in 2015 and the third case study is about a campaign of a movement in Budapest in early 2017. The sources of these case study analyses were mainly interviews that I have conducted with leading characters of these campaigns. As a result, I find many similarities concerning Political Opportunity Structures, mobilizing structures and framing. Moreover, some clear evidences of diffusion processes can be traced between the case studies and elsewhere. Diffusion may explain some similarities of these campaigns that were held in very different parts of the world.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### **Anti-Olympics across the globe**

There is a growing number of local movements that emerge and position themselves against hosting the Olympic games. As International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Thomas Bach commented this phenomenon at a press conference in December 2016:

*"You can see how in many countries, you have populist movements and anti-establishment movements getting stronger and stronger, asking different and new questions,[...]"<sup>1</sup>*

Since this press conference another candidate city, Budapest also withdrew its bid to the 2024 Olympic Games after a new local political movement successfully initiated a referendum by collecting more than 260,000 signatures. The "Nolimpia" campaign in Budapest was not the only one that targeted the bidding of a city in the 2024 selection process; previously initiatives in Boston and Hamburg also contested the bidding of their cities.

As we can see the issue of hosting the Olympics can be a matter of debate and contention. The games are the biggest and most important global sport events that have thousands of participants and visitors from all over the world. Hosting the Olympics is a prestigious project that requires many years of preparations and sacrifices from local communities, not to mention the billions of dollars that are spent for this reasons by the local municipalities and governments.

Under the current regime defined by the International Olympic Committee the hosting is a serious challenge for countries and local communities. Taking this into consideration it is not

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<sup>1</sup> T. Bach (2016) In: S. Wilson (2016). Bach: Olympic bid process needs to change; 'too many losers' <http://summergegames.ap.org/article/ioc-clears-3-bid-cities-advance-race-2024-olympics>

surprising that many of them are not willing to take up this challenge. In the recent decade, we can observe a significant number of withdrawals from the bidding process, also from cities that ambitioned to host the summer Olympic Games (i.g. Boston, Rome, Hamburg, Budapest) and also from cities that were thinking about to host the Winter Olympic Games (i.g. Krakow, Munich, Oslo, St. Moritz and Davos). These withdrawals are often the results of a public discourses in the local communities, in which several movements had important roles as taking the opposition sides. In this thesis, I would like to deepen the academic knowledge about these movements of “Anti-Olympics” as potential subjects of social movement research.

## **Research questions**

What is puzzling with these developments is that the mentioned movements and “no campaigns” were organized separately in time and space against the same issue, hosting a particular sporting mega-event. Given the international rules defined and enforced by the IOC and its affiliates, these issues share several similar aspects in those cities that ambition hosting the Games. Therefore, we may assume that those movements that oppose the Olympics are similar in several aspects – they arise under different circumstances, but they may frame, argue and mobilize similarly. According to this puzzle, my first research question address the similarities of these movements:

*RQ<sub>1</sub>: Are the recent anti-olympics movements similar concerning many aspects of social movements?*

In order to answer this first research question, I will compare the emergence and function of different local movements and campaigns that opposed the hosting of the Olympics in their respecting cities. I will introduce three anti-Olympics movements in different cities in the form of case studies. During the case studies, I will investigate the different aspects of the

emergence of movements that are broadly accepted tools of studying social movements. With the analyses of political opportunity structure (POS), framing and mobilization structure aspects, I will collect and outline similarities and the potential differences.

By studying the similarities, the question may emerge: how independent are these movements? Considering the fact that these movements share a common subject that is present globally, we can assume that they are somehow in contact, or at least they attempt to learn from each other's outcomes. Thus, my second research question addresses whether we can speak about a decentralized transnational movement where diffusion exist. Or - as the other case would suggest - these movements and campaigns are only local oppositions of a global mega-event series, with few or no links to each other.

Tarrow suggests that with the growth of globalization and global communication, transnational diffusion "*has both increased and accelerated*".<sup>2</sup> In agreement with Tarrow's statement, I assume that in these highly-globalized information societies it is likely that these movements were at least in indirect relation. Therefore, I ask whether there is any kind of transnational diffusion between the different movements.

*RQ<sub>2</sub>: Is there transnational diffusion between the recent anti-Olympics movements?*

To answer this question, I will search for the traces of the different kind of diffusion processes in the selected case studies.

With these two questions of my research my aim is to broaden the scope of transnational movement research. Global sporting mega-events can have their local oppositions that organize themselves locally, addressing similar issues of international event series that can be present at any potential location across the globe. In this way, these movements can be compared to those that oppose locally events of international organizations; moreover their

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<sup>2</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 435



activities may be conceptualized as specific forms of the domestication process. In the first chapter of this thesis I will conceptualize the phenomena of anti-Olympics movements to articulate my assumptions that led to my research questions.

## **The literature on social mobilization and on transnational diffusion**

Through my comparison of the cases I am generally interested in the functioning of these movements and the causes of their emergence. So in the analysis I will rely on theoretical accounts that consider the factors that encourages movement formation and contention. For this reason, the present work draws upon insights of three different theoretical approach: the political opportunity structure (POS), framing and mobilizing structure.

According to Herbert Kitschelt, POS includes *“specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization”* and is essential in explaining the emergence of social movements.<sup>3</sup> Sidney Tarrow defines the concept of POS as *set of clues for when contentious politics will emerge and will set in motion a chain of causation that may ultimately lead to sustained interaction with authorities and thence to social movements.*<sup>4</sup> According to Tarrow, common types of political opportunity open and close the prospects for collective action. He lists six types of such mechanisms that I will observe and analyze during the different case studies.<sup>5</sup>

Through applying the mobilization structure approach, it is possible to review how the specific movement could mobilize different individuals and groups, whose resources and energy was required in the efforts to change.<sup>6</sup> With this approach we can identify the different groups of individuals who take part in the collective actions of the movement,

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<sup>3</sup> H. Kitschelt (1986) Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Jan., 1986), 58

<sup>4</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 33

<sup>5</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*

<sup>6</sup> W. A. Gamson (1990). *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 15

Complementing POS and mobilizing structure, the concept of framing is useful to elaborate on how the different anti-olympics movements were appealing to different individuals, and how their goals and arguments were articulated in the media. According to Tarrow, the frame can be defined as “selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment”.<sup>7</sup>

If we assume that these new anti-olympics movements are not completely independent from each other, we also might assume that there is a kind of diffusion process from one movement to another. The literature on transnational movements lists three types of diffusion processes: direct (or relational) diffusion, indirect diffusion and mediated diffusion.<sup>8</sup> These processes are observable and they are useful tools for the analyses of the links and relations of the different movements.

## **The selection of cases**

Whilst I am searching for the similarities and differences throughout this thesis, it will be also investigated how far the different cases are comparable. For the highest chance of successful comparison, I decided to compare those anti-Olympics developments that share basic attributes. In this way, it is possible to filter out some variables, which may mislead the successful comparison.

The basic attributes are the following:

- 1) Anti-olympics campaign, where the goal of the campaign was to withdraw the bidding of the given city.
  - There were also anti-olympics campaigns (and contentious actions), that emerged after the decision of the bidding process - or they were

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<sup>7</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 246

<sup>8</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 436

unsuccessful throughout the bidding process - and were most active and contentious in the times when the games were held. Such opposition campaigns accompanied the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010 and the London summer Olympics in 2012. Although these campaigns share many attributes with those that were active during the bidding process, their fundamental goal was different as they had little option to prevent the holding of the games.

2) The campaign happened in the same candidature process (bidding period for the 2024 summer Olympics).

- This might be important, because it means that the movements were all active in a limited time period. For instance, the impacts of the global economic and financial crisis were likewise distant.
- Diffusion of information and knowledge happened more likely in the same process.
- Main issues like the costs of the bidding process and the hosting are also comparable.

3) The anti-olympics campaign was led by a movement.

- I was not interested in campaigns that were led by established parties and politicians

As a result of these filters, there are three cases that I can include my analysis:

- the campaigns in Boston in 2014-2015: No Boston Olympics and No Boston 2024
- the campaign in Hamburg in 2015 with the platform of NOlympia Hamburg
- the NOlimpia campaign in Budapest in early 2017 initiated by the Momentum Movement.

A priori these cases seem to be comparable, although they are different in many dimensions: Boston is in North-America, while Hamburg and Budapest are European cities. Their economic and social possibilities are different in many ways, as well as the quality of democratic and political institutions. They are similar in that they were campaigns before the hosting of the Olympics, and there was the possibility to prevent successfully these events. Analytically it helps us to discover closely how different/or similar opportunities emerge. They were also similar in that they were campaigns that followed each other. The analytical gain here is to trace the potential lines of diffusion between the cases. With the direct line and content of the diffusion between cases, I may get a closer picture on how similarities of movements can be explained with diffusion.

Apart from the selection of the cases, other examples of anti-olympics movement and collective action can be also important. Therefore, as the first part of the contextualization, I will briefly introduce the history of anti-olympics movements, focusing on the most important events and highlights of the past decades.

During the analysis of the cases I plan to rely on primary and secondary information. First, I will process the available secondary information about the cases, for instance the available analyses, books and media appearances. Then I will conduct interviews with the leaders and key figures of the different anti-olympics campaign, at least one in every case. With the interviews, I collect the missing information and I check the data gathered from the secondary source analysis. In order to receive background information and insights from personal experiences, I apply semi-structured interviews. This form of interview is flexible and it lets the interviewee to express her / his thoughts and insights in their original logic. Because of this flexible method, some interviews follow different structures, depending on the course of the discussion. Transcripts of the interviews will be included in the appendix of the thesis.

## **The structure of the thesis**

In this thesis, I will primarily explain in further details the theoretical background of the concepts of political opportunity structure, mobilizing structure and framing. After discussing these approaches, I will describe the different forms of transnational diffusion. At the end of the theoretical part, I will summarize my research questions and the factors with which I will analyze the chosen cases.

After the theoretical account, I will discuss the emergence of anti-olympics movement in general, focusing on the most important events and highlights of the past decades. After this general discussion of the anti-olympics, I will present the analyses of the cases among the main dimensions of the analysis. This study will rely upon primary information from interviews and on the collection of secondary information. At the end of the analysis I will summarize and compare the cases, drawing up the conclusions of the thesis.

## 2. CONCEPTUALIZING THE MOVEMENTS OF ANTI-OLYMPICS

As the Olympic Games are one of the most important and popular sport events in the world, it is interesting that issue of hosting them is a matter of contention and debate. It is a huge government project, from which they decide about and for what they spend the taxpayers' money. In that sense, it seems it seems natural to have a public debate about the issue. There are also some clearly unwanted consequences of hosting, and wrong policies, scandals and corruption cases of the hosting bodies does not help the game's public acceptance.

In the following chapter, first I present the Olympic Games as a global sport mega-event which is organized under the rules of an international non-profit Organization, the International Olympic Committee. After introducing this global phenomenon, I will discuss its several contentious dimensions, focusing at the end on the issue of hosting. Finally, I will discuss how it is interesting from the perspectives of social movement research.

### **Olympic games as global sport mega-events**

The modern Olympiad has a tradition of a more than a hundred years old history as a transnational event and sporting movement. Since the first Games held in 1896 in Athens, 31 Summer Olympic Games and 21 Winter Olympic Games were organized in every four years in very different countries and locations<sup>9</sup>. Today thousands of participants are coming from more than 200 countries: in the last summer Olympics held in Rio de Janeiro in 2016 more than 10000 athletes competed in 31 sports from 207 countries,<sup>10</sup> and around 500 thousand foreign tourist visited the event<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, the Games are one of the most popular television events since half the world's population watched the coverage of the event according to the

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<sup>9</sup> A. Guttmann (2002). *The Olympics: A history of the modern games*. University of Illinois Press.

<sup>10</sup> BBC.com (2016). Rio 2016: The greatest show on Earth in stats. <http://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/37148372>

<sup>11</sup> P. Prada (2016). Brazil says foreign tourism met half-million forecast for Games. Reuters. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-rio-tourism-idUSKCN10U23F>

official statistics of International Olympic Committee.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the costs of organizing the Olympics were also huge, according to the estimates, the final estimated cost are more than 11 billion dollars.<sup>13</sup> The Olympics are the most prestigious competition in many sports and the Olympic movement is the biggest international sporting movement.

The governing body of this global movement, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) that ensures the regular holding of the Olympic Games. The IOC defines rules and requirements of organizing the event, and it enforces their application throughout the selection process of the hosting venues. Also, the IOC handles the television broadcasting rights internationally that are the most important revenue sources of the Olympics, exceeding billions of dollars.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, holding the Olympics is a global project with strong international embeddedness and global aspects that are directly and indirectly present.

## **Different type of conflicts in the Olympics**

One of the most common type of formal disagreements embodied in the boycotts of countries' national teams. For example, several countries stayed away from the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics organized by national socialist regime of the German Reich, but the games were also often boycotted by nations during the cold war because of the various political reasons of the time. Although boycotts obviously are signs of conflict and contention, their high politics nature is very different from the bottom up character of recent anti-Olympics movements.

Another form of contention was present as terrorism that affected most directly the Olympic Games in 1972 in Munich, where eleven members of the Israeli Olympic Team was taken

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<sup>12</sup> IOC, D. Burnett (2016). How do we know that Rio was a success. <https://www.olympic.org/news/how-do-we-know-that-rio-2016-was-a-success>

<sup>13</sup> C. Settimi (2016). The 2016 Rio Summer Olympics: By The Numbers. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/christinasettimi/2016/08/05/the-2016-summer-olympics-in-rio-by-the-numbers/#1a7f42c3fa18>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

hostage and massacred by Palestinian terrorist group Black September.<sup>15</sup> Terrorism affected the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta as well, where a bomb was detonated in the Olympic Park by a domestic terrorist.<sup>16</sup> These actions cannot be compared with the anti-olympics movement not only because of their aggressive and radical nature, but also because their very different political motivation.

What is closer in nature to the disagreements of the recent times is for example the post-colonial critique of the Olympic Games. According to this criticism the games uphold the colonial practices of some host nations, either by associated parties in the name of the Olympics, or directly by official organizations, such as the IOC. Such practices have been observed since the third Summer Olympics in St. Louis in 1904 yet until the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, where this critique (besides many other types of critique) was articulated in the form of protest movements. In Vancouver, indigenous activists of 'First Nations' were joining other anti-Olympics movements as they realized that because of the Olympics, infrastructure projects (such as a new highway connection) are planned on indigenous land.<sup>17</sup> And the issue of indigenous land was only one issue out of several in Vancouver.

### **Anti-Olympics at the Vancouver Winter Olympics**

In Vancouver, activism emerged as early as in 2002, even before the city had won the bidding process.<sup>18</sup> These activists were arguing that the taxpayers' money should be spent better than a two-weeks-long sport event and they raised the attention to the fact that the Olympics were planned to taking place on an indigenous territory. Later groups like "No Games 2010" started

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<sup>15</sup> R. Sanchez (2015). Horrific new details emerge about the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre. The Telegraph. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/12028765/Horrific-new-details-emerge-about-the-1972-Munich-Olympics-massacre.html>

<sup>16</sup> CNN (2016). Olympic Park Bombing Fast Facts. CNN Library. <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/olympic-park-bombing-fast-facts/>

<sup>17</sup> J. Boykoff (1994). The Anti-olympics, *New Left Review* (January/February 2011): 41-59.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid



campaigns to highlight the possible dangers of the hosting of the olympics, and soon other existing movements and activist circles joined the campaign. These movements were often not closely related to the issue of Olympics, like the movement called *Streams of Justice*, the *Power of Women Group* or the *Native Youth Movement*, other movement get organized especially for opposing the games like the *No 2010 Olympics on Stolen Native Land*.<sup>19</sup>

What is interesting in the Vancouver anti-olympics movement is that it was more like a coalition of different social groups, NGOs and existing movements, rather than one centralized and issue specific movement fighting against the Olympic hosting. Eventually, this coalition was not able to convince the majority of the citizens in Vancouver and the city voted the hosting of the Olympics in a referendum held in 2003.

The coalition of groups opposing the Olympics remained active throughout the decade but the nature of the activities changed: they organized protests, several campaigns and opposed actively, also in the times of Olympics Games that was held in 2010. Similar anti-Olympic protests were held during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, where global social justice groups were organizing protests as the Olympics offered a valuable opportunity to mobilize.<sup>20</sup>

## **Opposing Olympics from the perspectives of transnational movements research**

The protests at the Olympic Games in Vancouver and in London are comparable to those well-researched events that accompanied the international summits of supranational institutions such as the WTO, IMF or the EU. As Felix Kolb put in in his analyses of ATTAC Germany's transnational activities: "*They* [i.g. the summits of institutions] *provide a forum around which social movements can organize transnational protest events and serve as*

<sup>19</sup> J. Boykoff (1994). The Anti-olympics, *New Left Review* (2011:1). 41-59.

<sup>20</sup> J. Timms (2012). The Olympics as a platform for protest: a case study of the London 2012 'ethical' Games and the Play Fair campaign for workers' rights. *Leisure studies*, 31(3), 355-372.

*visible proxies for supranational institutions, and for abstract concepts like neoliberal globalization or the global capitalist class.*"<sup>21</sup> But as these movement events are classic examples of transnational movement coalition and formation, those local movements that originally formed against the hosting of the Olympics are different in their nature, because they concentrate locally on the causes of a global *and* domestic phenomenon, the issue of hosting the Olympics, and their aim is to prevent the hosting with various type of activities.

As anti-Olympic movements target their national and local authorities to withdraw the bid, we may speak of the processes of domestication rather than externalization. According to Tarrow, the process of externalization happens when "*domestic actors [are] targeting external actors in attempts to defend their interests*"<sup>22</sup> while domestication is the process where *the use of internal protest tactics [is] to pressure national governments to defend people's interests from external threats*".<sup>23</sup> As in the cases of recent anti-Olympics movement we can see that the goal was to prevent the Olympics (that we can conceptualize as external threats) locally, we may accept that the process of domestication fit better on these events. On the contrary, it is also prevalent that the issue of the Olympics itself is an international phenomenon with an international organization and several forms of transnational cooperation. Thus it is not clear whether or not movements are against the domestic initiatives of an international organization (IOC and domestic bodies), and as such it is maybe not a proper example of domestication. Studying more the actions of these movements may help us to identify the processes of transnational contention.

But even though the difficulties of tracing a clear process of domestication, the nature of opposing the hosting of the Olympics is highly transnational, mainly because the issue itself

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<sup>21</sup> F. Kolb (2005). The Impact of Transnational Protest on Social Movement Organizations: Mass Media and the Making of ATTAC Germany, In: D. Della Porta, & S. Tarrow, (2005). Transnational protest and global activism. Rowman & Littlefield.

<sup>22</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). Power in Movement 235

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

(i.e. the hosting of the same global event) is the same to a high extent in every candidate cities. Because of this I assume, that these movements share similarities, which can be observed with the analyses of Political Opportunity Structures, Mobilizing Structures and Framing. Moreover, I assume that the same issue connects the movements and there is an observable line of diffusion. This diffusion may also explain some aspects of similarities, and during the analysis I will also try to trace these connections. In the next chapter, I will introduce these theoretical concepts in more details .

### 3. CONCEPTS OF MOVEMENT RESEARCH AND TRANSNATIONAL DIFFUSION

In the previous, introductory chapter I described how I will analyze and compare the appearance of this new wave of anti-olympics movements with the concepts contentious politics, such as the political opportunity structures, framing and mobilizing structures. As I stated, after my comparison, I also would like to trace the links between these movement campaigns by searching for the different types of transnational diffusion described by Tarrow and others.<sup>24</sup> In this chapter first I will argue why I choose these theoretical concepts and then I will introduce them in more details. At the end of the chapter I will summarize those factors that I will use throughout my analysis.

Different aspects of collective action and movement formation have long been the part of the study of contentious politics and elements like organization, opportunities, framing and contentious performance were present in the different narratives of studying social movements. The different approaches became united in the work of Doug McAdam, John McCarty and Mayer Zald. In their volume, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*<sup>25</sup>, they drew up the intersections of frames, political opportunities (and threats) and mobilizing structures in one framework, and introduced how through the analysis of these three topics we can know more about the emergence of contentious collective action. Although their framework offers a quite complete approach for analysis, as Sidney Tarrow pointed out in *Power in Movement*, the integration remained incomplete, because the subject of research remained seen as a single actor (for instance the movement itself) and the dynamics of a broader field of action remained theoretically unspecified. Moreover, as Tarrow pointed out, their framework is static in a sense that the processes and mechanism that connects the elements of the contentious episode are also not determined and theorized.<sup>26</sup> Despite these

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<sup>24</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*

<sup>25</sup> D. McAdam, J. McCarthy and M. Zald ed. (1996). *Comparative Perspectives on Social Moments*

<sup>26</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 184

criticisms seem to be legitim insights, the static nature of the framework helps to make comparisons more accurate when I search for the similarities and the differences of these movements. Additionally, as in the second part of the analysis I will search for the different forms of diffusion (in order to discover the transnational nature of this new wave of anti-Olympics) a dynamic, process oriented approach will be also included in the analyses. In this way, I do not only attempt to answer the questions of ‘why?’ but I also make an attempt to discover some answers for the questions of ‘how?’

## Political Opportunity Structure

The concept of political opportunity structure is appropriate for identifying threats and opportunities of contentious action in different environments and regimes. The concept that was first introduced by Peter Eisinger who formed it to describe the context and the political environment of protest behavior in US cities.<sup>27</sup> Later Herbert Kitschelt improved the concept by analyzing the anti-nuclear power movements in four democracies, showing that much of the effectiveness of the movements and their mobilization strategies can be explained by the differences of the domestic political opportunity structures. Kitschelt defined POS as *“specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization”*.<sup>28</sup>

Tarrow was also influential in the improvement of the concept. In his book, which he wrote with Charles Tilly, they define political opportunity structures as general features of a regime that *“[...] affect the opportunities and threats impinging on any potential makers of claim [...]”*<sup>29</sup>. They add that not only the static features of the regimes are important, but also the

<sup>27</sup> P. Eisinger (1979), The conditions of protest behavior in American cities. American political science review, 67(01), 11-28.

<sup>28</sup> H. Kitschelt (1986), Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies. British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Jan., 1986), 58

<sup>29</sup> C. Tilly, S. Tarrow (2015), Contentious Politics, 59.

changes in those features has to be included in the analyses. According to their description, political opportunity structures include six properties of a regime:

1. The multiplicity of independent centers of power within it
2. Its openness to new actors
3. The instability of current political alignments
4. The availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers
5. The extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making
6. Decisive changes in items 1 to 5

Threats and opportunities vary in different opportunity structures, and it is important to highlight that not only opportunities arise in a given political and social environment. By drawing up the six different properties in the cases of recent anti-olympics movement, I will search for the opportunities and threats in the given situation. According to the literature, these opportunities and threats are important explanatory variables of the emergence of such movements.

## **Mobilization structure**

The concept of mobilizing structure helps us to understand who and how participated in the given collective action.<sup>30</sup> These actions and initiatives are often led by organizations, “*but these are sometimes beneficiaries, sometimes initiators, and at other times inhibitors of popular politics.*”<sup>31</sup> Besides formal organizations, social networks at the base of society and the structures that connect them are also important. Inside the movement, the sensible balance of power and issues of authority and centralization are also important in sustaining its function.

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<sup>30</sup> W. A. Gamson (1990). *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 15

<sup>31</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 266

Moreover, with the study of the mobilizing structure we can also understand the process of how the original political opportunity is perceived and how the initiative became compelling to new groups and individuals in the process of creating a campaign or founding a real movement. Effective mobilizing structures not only rely on existing political opportunities but they also create and open new opportunities. According to Tarrow, these secondary effects happen in three different ways:<sup>32</sup>

- the expansion of a group's own opportunities and those of cognate groups;
- the dialectic between movements and countermovements;
- and the unintended creation of opportunities for elites and authorities.

Throughout the analysis, the concept of mobilizing structure will be helpful in identifying the different groups of individuals who take part in the collective actions of the movement. In addition to this, it will be also used to get a deeper understanding of their mobilization strategies.

## **Framing**

Complementing POS and mobilizing structure, the concept of framing is useful to elaborate on how the different anti-olympics movements were appealing to different individuals, and how for example their goals and arguments were articulated in the discursive space. While we study the emergence of movements it is important to notice that “*movements do not simply seek instrumental goods, they also make and manipulate meanings*”<sup>33</sup> and thus movement frame contentious politics.

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<sup>32</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). Power in Movement

<sup>33</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). Power in Movement, 142

The concept of framing was originally adapted from sociology to the study of collective action by David Snow and Robert Benford<sup>34</sup>, who defined framing as some “*interpretative schemata that simplifies and condenses the world out there*”. In social movements literature, framing concerns movements that constructs reality to support collective action, to create identity and to connect with participants, opponents and all kinds of other actors.

According to Tarrow, the frame can be defined as “*selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment*”.<sup>35</sup> In his book, *Power in Movement*, Sidney Tarrow describes two main strategies of framing: “the injustice framing” and “bricolage”. The former one refers to a strategy of creating a narrative by referring to existing injustice, the latter one pulls together existing and accepted frames with new meanings in order to legitimate contention. During the analysis of this thesis I will try to identify these strategies and study the tools of their creation.

## Studying diffusion

“*The process of diffusion results from people’s decisions to take advantage of opportunities that have been demonstrated by other groups’ actions.*”<sup>36</sup> Researchers Rebecca Givan, Kenneth Roberts and Sarah Soule have identified three main forms of diffusion process:

- *direct or relational diffusion* - information is transmitted through personal contact
- *indirect diffusion* - information flows in ordinary and indirect communication channels
- *and mediated diffusion* - when there is a mediator between the connected actors.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> D. A. Snow, R. D. Benford (1992). Master frames and cycles of protest. *Frontiers in social movement theory*, 133-155.

<sup>35</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 246

<sup>36</sup> R. K. Givan, K. M. Roberts, & S. A. Soule (Eds.). (2010). *The diffusion of social movements: Actors, mechanisms, and political effects*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>37</sup> S. Tarrow (2011). *Power in Movement*, 436



These different forms of diffusion are observable and they are useful concepts for the analyses of the links and relations of the different movements. With the assumption that these new anti-Olympics movements are somehow related to one another, we may also presume kinds of diffusion processes from one movement to another. To verify this supposition, I will search for the traces of the different diffusion processes in the selected case studies.

In this chapter I introduced those theoretical concepts that serve with the main factors of the analyses. First I discussed those static factors that serve as the basis of the comparisons: the factors of political opportunity structures, mobilizing structure and framing. In order to know more about the transnational nature of these movements, I will supplement this comparison with the study of the different diffusion processes, and I will connect these processes to the static factors.

#### **4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

My aim with this research is to study the different movements that oppose locally the hosting of the Olympic Games, and to explore their transnational ties. In the following chapter I will introduce the strategy of research that I will employ during this analysis. Firstly, presenting the movements in the form of different case studies is an adequate method of examination. Then I describe in more details those main principles of how I chose my three different cases, that I previously introduced in the introduction of the thesis. After the issues of case selection, I discuss the sources of analyses, which are mainly semi-structured interviews with leading characters of the different movements and different interpretative secondary sources. In the end of this chapter I summarize the factors of analyzes that are based on those concepts of social movement research that I briefly introduced in the last chapter.

##### **Case studies and the selection of cases**

I chose the comparison of case studies as the base of analysis given my interest in the relations and the similarities of movements that oppose the hosting of the Olympics. Thus, the units of analyses are these movements. These movements share an underlying attribute in opposing the same global sport-mega event (that is unique in its kind). Therefore, they allow the presumption of similarities and they are potentially related to each other.

The similarities and the process of diffusion *cannot* be easily expressed in quantitative instrumental variables. The emergence and the dynamic operation of such movements imply complex processes that are difficult to observe. These difficulties affect not only the type of the variants and sources, but also the potential sample size of the research, in which case study comparison is a viable option. And the small sample size within the analysis may not be a problem with the consideration of the fact that the size of the population - meaning all the recent movements against hosting the Olympics - is not so much larger than the sample size.

Analyzing in case studies, the main examples of rare and complex social phenomena seems viable approach. Moreover, the literature on applying case study methodology verifies the above outlined approach concerning political phenomena as social movements.<sup>38</sup>

As I outlined in the introduction of the thesis, I formed several principles that help the selection of case studies. As a first step, I decided to tighten the pool to those campaigns and movements whose main activity was to challenge the issue of hosting the Olympics during the bidding process. As mentioned before, there were also contentious movements that accompanied the different Olympics in time of the events, like in Vancouver 2010 or in London 2012. Although in Vancouver the opposition started as early as in time of the bidding process, in 2002, these events happened long ago and it is difficult now to gather information about such early opposition activities. Moreover, this observation would blend with the activism before and during the time of hosting the Olympics, when the main goal was not preventing the Olympics but to protest and draw attention to the negative externalities of the Games.

As a second step, I narrowed the list of possible cases to those campaigns that happened in the recent bidding process for the 2024 Summer Olympics. I choose to select this wave of campaigns because, (1) these developments were recent and, therefore, they can illustrate the current trends and (2) the available information seemed sufficient and comparable. Moreover, across different cases of a given bidding process (3) diffusion may be more traceable between campaigns and (4) the subject of movement opposition is the same, i.e. a *summer* Olympics in 2024. Finally, it was also needed (5) to have enough cases in that bidding process. With this step, I narrowed the list of possible cases to the campaigns in Hamburg, Budapest, Boston and Rome.

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<sup>38</sup> see for example in Gerring, J. (2007). The case study: what it is and what it does. In The Oxford handbook of comparative politics. Chicago

As a third step, I decided to filter out the case of Rome. The main actor that opposed the hosting of the Olympics was a party called the Five Stars Movement; and the final withdrawal was initiated by the newly elected Mayor of Rome, Virginia Raggi, a member of the Five Star Movement party. As a campaign of an established and functioning political party it would have been misleading to compare their campaign with the actions of grassroots movements in the other cases.

As a result of these 3 consecutive steps, there remained three main cases of opposition campaigns: the two parallel anti-Olympics movements in Boston - No Boston Olympics and No Boston 2024, the NOlympia platform in Hamburg, and the NOlimpia campaign of the Hungarian Momentum Movement in Budapest. At the beginning of the case study analyses I will introduce these campaigns in more details.

These cases are similar in that they were campaigns before the hosting of the Olympics, and there was the possibility to prevent successfully these events. Analytically it helps us to discover closely how different/or similar opportunities emerge. They were also similar in that sense that they followed each other. The analytical gain here is to trace the potential lines of diffusion between the cases. With the direct line and content of the diffusion between cases, I may get a closer picture on how similarities of movements can be explained with diffusion.

## **Interviews as the main sources of analyses**

The case studies in this research are mainly based on relevant interviews with central persons and leaders of the movements that opposed the hosting of the Olympics. The method of conducting interviews is satisfactory in gathering the needed hard information for the case studies. Furthermore, it was likely the most adequate source of information about the emergence and operation of these movements. The interviewees were present from the beginning of the opposition campaigns, and they played important roles in the decision

making of these processes. Their experiences and narrative insights made it possible to analyze the aspects outlined based on the literature of the social movement research.

Interviews were conducted in all case studies. In the case of Boston, an interview was conducted with the founders of No Boston 2024, Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks. In the case of Hamburg, I conducted an interview with Florian Kasiske, who was a founder of the local NOlympia campaign and was one of the main contact people for the media and press relations. In the case of Budapest, I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with András Fekete-Győr, the leader of Momentum Movement and with Barnabás Kádár, the chief organizer of the NOlimpia campaign within the movement.

With these interviewees I conducted semi-structured interviews. This type of interview is a technique of qualitative research; the aim of this technique is to interpret those phenomena that are discussed by the interviewee in the framework of the research agenda.<sup>39</sup> The interviews were conducted in person with interviewees of the Budapest case, whilst in the case of Boston and Hamburg the interviews were conducted via the internet.

In case of the Boston opposition movements, another type of relevant source of information was available. Two central characters of No Boston Olympics movement, founders Christopher Dempsey and Andrew Zimbalist wrote a book on the story of the opposition movements of the Boston bidding process. *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch*<sup>40</sup> is a more than 200 pages long report focusing mainly on the story of the local bidding process in Boston, with detailed information about the circumstances of the campaign, the actions of the different movements and the perceptions and decisions in the heart of the movement. Moreover, members of No Boston 2024 were also willing take part in

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<sup>39</sup> S. Kvale (1994). Ten standard objections to qualitative research interviews. *Journal of phenomenological psychology*, 25(2), 147-173.

<sup>40</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch*. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition

an interview, this is how I conducted an interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks. So in the case study of Boston, I will rely on the information of this book, and also on the answers provided by activists of No Boston 2024.

### **Factors of the analysis**

In the case studies I will structure the information gathered from the interviews and the NO Boston Olympics book according to the main theoretical concepts outlined in chapter 2 of the thesis. As I stated I will describe the different aspects of Political Opportunity Structures, Mobilizing structure and forms of Framing and then I will search for the different forms of diffusion of knowledge and information. In the following chapter, I will briefly introduce the cases and then I detail these outlined factors according to the gathered information of the sources. In chapter 6, I will present the comparison of the results derived from the case studies analysis.

## 5. CASES OF ANTI-OLYMPICS MOVEMENTS

Boston, Hamburg and Budapest are cities where various grassroots movements opposed the hosting of the Olympics during the candidature process of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games. In this chapter I present these movements in the form of case studies. In each of the case studies I will introduce the movements, then I present my finding from the interviews along the factors of analyses: POS, mobilizing structure and framing. Then as answering my second research quetsion, I will discover the potential processes of diffusion.

### Case 1: Movements in Boston: No Boston Olympics and No Boston 2024

The organized opposition of the Boston Olympic bidding process emerged at the end of 2013 initially with three enthusiastic activists - Christopher Dempsey, Liam Kerr and Connor Yunits - who called their initiative as No Boston Olympics. They created a webpage, a twitter account whilst forming and summarizing their main arguments against hosting the Olympics in Boston. Parallel to their campaign another grassroots initiative was founded in 2014 called No Boston 2024 by Robin Jacks and Jonathan Cohn, who were also residents of Boston and had backgrounds in anti-establishment political organizations.

Between 2013 and 2014, the idea of the bidding gained support among the political and economic elites of the city of Boston including the then freshly elected mayor of Boston, Marty Walsh. As a result of these processes, a delegation led by the city mayor presented a bid to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) that was to elect the United States bid from the different candidate cities in the country.<sup>41</sup> The USOC elected Boston as the official candidate city of the US in January 2015. Then, approximately 200 days later the USOC voted against the continuation of the Boston candidacy and the city of Los Angeles became

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<sup>41</sup> A. Vaccaro (2015) What Would the International Olympic Committee Require of Boston?," Boston.com, <https://www.boston.com/news/business/2015/02/05/what-would-the-international-olympic-committee-require-of-boston>.

the official candidate city of the country. The debate and the opposition was the most active in these 200 days between the two decisions of the USOC, and the two movements had most likely a relevant impact on coming to the second decision.<sup>42</sup>

The two groups operated simultaneously until the withdrawal of the bidding. While the activists of No Boston Olympics had more interest in contacting the media and press and in communicating their main arguments to the greater public, the relative strength of No Boston 2024 was in organizing public meetings and protests and pulling in activist and organization.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, the roles were not definite. Activists of No Boston Olympics were also organizing public events, and the leaders of No Boston 2024 took part in the media discussion as well. By the end of their campaigns, there were a couple hundred activist and supporters of the two movements.

The sources of information that are presented in this case study are the online interviews that I conducted with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks. Also, I rely on the information presented in the book titled *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch* by Christopher Dempsey and Andrew Zimbalist.

### **Political Opportunity Structures**

In the above mentioned book the authors lay down a detailed analysis of the political and institutional circumstances of the events. Considering the fact that these events happened in Boston in the United States, freedom to organize public initiatives was given to a large extent. As we know from our sources, the regime was repressive to a certain extent in the forms of existential career threats “ *I think the biggest issues of repression would go around like ‘you never going to be able to work in this city again’.* And for me, I do not really care, I am not

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<sup>42</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch*. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition

<sup>43</sup> Ibid



*going to work for government. But for people like those in No Boston Olympics, this was a real threat.*”<sup>44</sup>

Additionally, the existing political alignment was open to new actors, according to the words of Dempsey and Zimbalist, the side of opposition was empty and the “*Opposition to Boston 2024 would have to come from the grass roots*”.<sup>45</sup>

In Boston, there were multiple centers of power present although the organizers of No Boston 2024 told that balances of powers were not properly present, as the city council was depending on the will of the mayor and his office in Boston. On the contrary, some examples also present how the city council was not completely dependent: for example, city councilor Josh Zakim filed a legislative order, which would have placed Olympics related questions on the municipal ballot. The idea of a referendum was previously dismissed by the Mayor of Boston, Martin J. Walsh, stating that it was unnecessary. Following the filing of the legislative order, the Mayor supported the idea.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, judiciary institutions and rules were also working independently, as Jonathan Cohn was able to successfully request different public documents of to the bidding process.<sup>47</sup> Also, contrary to the fact that at the start, the most powerful persons in Boston were supporting the bidding, there were some independent centers of powers as well.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, political alignments were stable throughout the campaign; there were neither elections nor changes in important offices.<sup>49</sup> When the USOC voted Boston as the official candidate city of the United States, more people became interested in the sides and the

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<sup>44</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (22.05.2017). C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition

<sup>45</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition. Kindle Location 557

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (22.05.2017)

<sup>48</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition

<sup>49</sup> Ibid

opposition campaigns of the two movements as well. And as time went on, the public support of the idea of hosting the Olympic Games eroded and became minority.<sup>50</sup> However, these were not the results of changes in political alignments, but more like the result of a public debate and its possibility.

Although at the beginning of the campaigns it was not clear who would have been the allies of the movement, it was obvious that the movements would not have been alone in this debate. No Boston 2024 had important allies from the civil sphere; they partnered with - amongst many others – the American Civil Liberties Union, the Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee, Community Minority Neighbourhood, or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Moreover, they were also working close with journalists such as Dave Ziron from The Nation, who wrote a lot of articles about the Olympics.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the team of No Boston Olympics had also good relations with journalists at major local newspapers, with academics - as Andrew Zimbalist himself - and with actors in the public sphere. By time, many more actors were willing to listen to their arguments and handle them as partners.<sup>52</sup>

### **Mobilizing structure**

These movements of Anti-Olympics in Boston were centralized to some extent. For example, in the case of No Boston Olympics there were a few dominant activists, including Dempsey, who could devote enough time and effort to run the campaign, to live with the opportunities of several press requests or to prepare media content. These central figures also made most of the decisions during the campaign. Alongside with them, supporters and activists were given several opportunities to take part in the movement: attend their meetings or public meetings,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (22.05.2017)

<sup>52</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition

engage on social media, write their elected leaders. No Boston 2024 was also a bit centralized, and most of the main activities were decided by a some central figures.

The Movements were successful in relying on other kinds of resources. For instance, No Boston Olympics covered the cost of their operation from micro donations: they spent less than 15000 dollars while they raised 30000 dollars with an average contribution size of 100 dollars and with only one large contribution that was less than 10000 dollars.<sup>53</sup>

As I stated before, the dominant figures were in contact with different networks. Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks from No Boston 2024 had backgrounds in anti-establishment political organizing and they were connected to different opposition communities like Boston Occupy Wall Street efforts.<sup>54</sup> No Boston Olympics activist had public policy backgrounds, so they could reach out the administration and the press: *“Yunits had strong professional and personal relationships with many members of the press and Kerr knew others from his work in politics.”*<sup>55</sup>

During the campaigns, the movements were able to live with the expansion of its opportunities, mainly because they were aware of these opportunities. For example, when the so-called Feasibility Commission, that investigated the feasibility of hosting the summer Olympics, released its report, the activists were prepared and released their calculations a day before. As a consequence, the two reports were equally present in the media and they were comparable for the public. As the authors of No Olympic Boston book stated; *“The release of the report was No Boston Olympics’ first major opportunity to execute on its responsive strategy.”*<sup>56</sup> But throughout their operation this was not the only one example of such strategic

<sup>53</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 2841-2843.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (22.05.2017)

<sup>55</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 575-576.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Kindle Locations 613-614.

thinking of opportunities. The general attitude of the activists was to always search for opportunities and to embrace them every time.

## **Framing**

During their campaigns, movements framed differently the issue of opposing, rather than simply opposing the hosting. No Olympics Boston positioned itself as close they could get to the central; they were supportive to the idea of hosting the Olympics. Their critique mainly concerned with the conditions of hosting an Olympics under the current regime of the IOC. They aimed to be seen not as “small-minded naysayers” who did not believe in Boston’s ability to host such an event, but as genuine critiques.<sup>57</sup> They relied on their communication, on the existing arguments of economic research and analyses about the hosting of Olympics, and they framed their arguments in a fact-based practical style. On the contrary, No Boston 2024 built their communication more on arguments of existing social cleavages and injustice; they brought the corrupt scandals of the IOC and the issues of surveillance into the picture. Furthermore, they claimed that while big developers and businesses would make good money, others would pay the bills of the event.<sup>58</sup>

## **Processes of diffusion**

The organizers of No Boston 2024 reported contacts and relation to other campaigns. As Robin Jacks told me: *“[...] and we took something from every group that we have talked to. London people were really great talking to us about the urgency, people in Brazil were really good in presenting the challenges that before the Olympics actually happened, people from Vancouver were more like my people, the leftist, grass-roots activists. Chicago people were still useful in showing us how to just harass the USOC and IOC.”*<sup>59</sup> The Activist of No

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Kindle Location 642.

<sup>58</sup> See for example at: <https://www.noboston2024.org/why-oppose>

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (22.05.2017)

Boston 2024 were in contact with many of previous campaigns, and they were using these contacts in order to learn from them.

Dempsey and Zimbalist also wrote about transnational relations and knowledge transfer. These forms of diffusion were mostly direct as they were contacting members of other movements in person. Previously, at the beginning of their campaigns they were contacting members of other domestic movements. As Dempsey put it in his interview: *“Yes, we met with Olympic opponents in Chicago in 2014 (they had led a campaign against Chicago's 2016 bid). Later on, we also talked with opponents from the campaign against Denver's bid all the way back in the 1970s. The leader of that effort went on to become Governor of Colorado.”*<sup>60</sup>

In their book Dempsey and Zimbalist also discussed how they were invited after their campaign by members of different movements: *“Bid opponents in both Budapest and Rome sought advice from No Boston Olympics as they launched their efforts in their respective cities. In October, Dempsey and Gossett visited Hamburg at the invitation of bid opponents there. Similarly, Zimbalist met with members of Toronto's city council and was invited to deliver a lecture at Hamburg's HafenCity University on the economic impact of hosting the Olympics”*<sup>61</sup>

As the inward diffusion of information was mainly across domestic actors, as we can see in the case of outward diffusion there were direct invitations, lectures and consultations between opposing groups of different countries.

## Case 2: Hamburg's NOlympia platform

The leaders of the German city, Hamburg also decided to bid for the hosting of the 2024 summer Olympic Games. The city was competing with Berlin and the German Olympic

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Chrispher Dempsey (23.05.2017)

<sup>61</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 2850-2853.

Committee selected Hamburg in March 2015 as the official candidate city of the country.<sup>62</sup>

But not much later the selection of Hamburg, opposition groups met in April 2015 and formed a platform that was known as NOlympia Hamburg.

The platform created a website and official social media accounts, organized protests and meetings, wrote pamphlets and articles and hung out posters on the streets of Hamburg.<sup>63</sup> The platform itself was more like several groups with different tasks, and the groups were meeting at platform events to discuss the relevant tasks and to coordinate. The groups were all working under the name of NOlympia Hamburg and they were less independent than the two groups in Boston. During the summer of 2015, they were about to win over the majority of Hamburg citizens, and also citizens of other municipalities that were affected by the hosting.

In the meantime, the government of Hamburg initiated a referendum that was held in November 2015. At the referendum, a short of majority of 52 % voted against the hosting of the Olympics.<sup>64</sup> Such course of events ended the operation of NOlympia Hamburg that certainly had a role in convincing the majority. In March 2015M, polls showed that 64% of the population was supportive of the idea of hosting the Olympics.<sup>65</sup> Thus, in the approximately nine months, between the cited poll and the referendum, 16% of Hamburg's population changed their mind.

The case study presented here is based upon an interview with Florian Kasiske who was responsible for PR and communication tasks in the NOlympia Hamburg platform. Kasiske

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<sup>62</sup> D. Mackay (2015). Hamburg chosen ahead of Berlin as German candidate city for 2024 Olympics and Paralympic bid. Insidethegames.biz <http://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1026177/hamburg-chosen-ahead-of-berlin-as-german-candidate-city-for-2024-olympics-and-paralympic-bid>

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Florian Kasiske (24.05.2017)

<sup>64</sup> K. Grohmann (2015). Hamburg 2024 Games bid collapses in referendum defeat. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-hamburg-idUSKBN0TI0VC20151129>

<sup>65</sup> Foxsports (2015). Hamburg residents show more support than Berlin for 2024 bid. Foxsports.com <http://www.foxsports.com/olympics/story/hamburg-residents-show-more-support-than-berlin-for-2024-bid-031015>

was also an activist of the Right to the City movement in Hamburg. Through his networking, he also met other opponents of the Olympics.

### **Political Opportunity Structures**

The platform of NOlympia Hamburg emerged when different activist, students realized that they would like to oppose somehow the hosting of the Olympics, as there were no organized forms of opposition yet in the city. Previously, before the decision of the German Olympic Committee, a meeting took place with the participation of invited representatives from different civil organizations, parties and activist groups, discussing the plausible impacts of hosting the Olympics. Some participants organized the first open event in April after the decision was made, and it was clear that there is some kind of a demand for an organized opposition against the Olympics.<sup>66</sup>

Although the government and the Hamburg authorities were not repressive, they definitely hardened the campaign against the Olympics. For instance, they legalized governmental initiative to referendum on its own right in Hamburg, which was not feasible before. According to Kasiske, those, in power, were afraid of an oppositional initiative to a referendum and successful collection of the needed signatures. As he put in his own words: *“For them it was clear that euphoria about the Olympics is the thing that gets lost with time, when more and more details get to the public. It was a game on time. This was one central reason for why they said: okay, we want to make a referendum on our own, when we have more influence and we can make it as soon as possible.”*<sup>67</sup>

As Kasiske mentioned above, there was a seemingly unanimous support for the idea of hosting the Olympics. There were only a few journalists and persons in the media who were critical of the plans of hosting the games. Moreover, the city was flooded with the propaganda

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Florian Kasiske (24.05.2017)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

signs and posters of the bidding process.<sup>68</sup> But even if the public opinion seemed unified, there were some actors which were supportive to opposing the games. An environmental organization was very cooperative and the left-wing party called Die Linke was also oppositional, which was an important factor according to Kasiske. Furthermore, athletes from the sport club called St. Pauli organized a sport event dedicated to the platform's opposition campaign.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, the political alignments were certainly quite stable as there were no relevant changes in the local politics that was mentioned by Kasiske.

### **Mobilizing structure**

The NOlympia platform was a decentralized grass-roots organization where different groups were responsible for different tasks. For instance, there were small circles that organized public relations and distributed papers in the neighbourhoods. Especially at the beginnings they held meetings that were the basis of this loose cooperation. It happened that these groups were acting separately and disagreements between the different parts of the organization were prevalent. As a result of these disagreements and autonomous functioning of the groups, the participation in the platform declined. As Florian Kasiske told in the interview “[...] *we were a bit decentralised.*”<sup>70</sup>

Forms of mobilization were present in many forms: the platform was organizing public meetings, and demonstrations, they painted crosses on posters that belonged to the pro-Olympics campaign and they even organized an event with the leftist party called Die Linke. This event was far the most popular with a few thousand participants, “*but those people came because of this party.*” The event was also especially important because of raising money for the NOlympia campaign.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Ibid



But other events and protest were not that successful in mobilizing the masses, a maximum of few hundred participants were present at these events. Kasiske claims that this was because the presence of the many refugees in Hamburg: *“Many active citizens were in solidarity for refugees. This was the focus of the society in Hamburg. I think people felt happy that they don’t have to organize NOlympia because there are people who made it instead of them.”*<sup>71</sup>

## **Framing**

According to the official website of NOlympia Hamburg, the group framed the issue of hosting the Olympics through several different dimensions. They formulated five main arguments against the Olympics symbolizing the five circles of the logo of the games.

With the first argument they claimed that hosting the Olympics costs a lot, in most of the cases more than it was expected originally, and with the second they stated that the games lead to the gentrification of urban territories and thus it is not in the interest of inhabitants to organize the events. According to their third argument, the Olympic games are not sustainable because of various different reasons and as their fourth argument states, because of security issues, it may harm the freedom of rights of visitors and citizens. In their fifth argument, they claim contracts around the Olympics are not in order, and the International Olympic Committee is a corrupt organization full of scandals, without transparency.<sup>72</sup>

We can see how the organizers of NOlympia platform framed the issues both based on universal claims (Cost overruns, sustainability) and global critiques (scandals of the IOC), and both based on local issues like gentrification. Therefore, their framing was also built upon also existing narratives that are true everywhere, but with addressing the issues of

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> NOlympia Hamburg (2017). Fünf Ringe, Fünf Gründe. Nolympia-hamburg.de <http://www.nolympia-hamburg.de/fuenf-ringe-fuenf-gruende/>

gentrification, corruption and the scandals of the IOC they also build on existing concepts of social injustice.

In addition to this, Florian Kasiske told in the interview that it was also important to them to stay as sport friendly as they could: *“We didn’t want to show that we are against sports. Sport is important and our main message was the impact of the Olympics is nothing to do with sport life, I mean the sport of masses.”*<sup>73</sup>

### **Processes of diffusion**

As the activist mentioned the group had several ties with other movements of the past and the forthcoming period. He verified the good relationship with the organizers of the movements in Boston, he also mentioned the conference where they were inviting Cristopher Dempsey. But in addition to this he mentions several different anti-Olympics initiatives: they contacted Rio and Tokyo groups, and the opposition in the cities of Berlin and Munich.

These connections had an impact on their strategies and activities: *“From Boston we have learnt that mobilization is not everything: there were very few people and they did a lot of media works. This has influenced us. Munich gave us hope, because it’s a conservative city and yet, they had success. We saw, if it manages to have referendum, a result is no.”*<sup>74</sup> As there was personal connections between the movements and as it had an impact, we clearly can speak about the direct forms of diffusion of knowledge and information. What is interesting that the activists in Hamburg were also in need for human resources, and because of this, it was interesting for them to see how in Boston, a few people augmented effectively through the media. The external opportunities were not the same (i.g. the refugee crises), the mobilizing structure was also different (also as a consequence of the latter but not only because of that), and effective diffusion also happened because of these prevalent differences.

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Florian Kasiske (24.05.2017)

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

### **Case 3: The NOLimpia Campaign of the Momentum movement in Budapest**

The campaign against hosting the Olympics in Budapest was initiated by a new political movement called Momentum. The campaign was the latest in the row during the current bidding process of the 2024 summer Olympics. It was initiated in January 2017, more than ten months after the local organizing authorities presented the official application of the city to the IOC. With the campaign the goal was to initiate a local referendum in Budapest on the issue of hosting the games. To reach this, the movement had to collect approximately 138000 signatures in 30 days, from citizens who lived in the city.

They were successful regarding this task: the movement collected more than 266000 signatures in that 30 days. Shortly after that the leaders of Momentum handed over the signatures, the Budapest City Council voted to annul the bid in the end of February 2017.<sup>75</sup> Thus this campaign was not only the latest, but also the shortest among the recent anti-olympics campaigns.

This case study is based on the interviews I conducted in person with two leaders of the movement. András Fekete-Győr was the chairman of the board of Momentum and therefore one of the most important spokespersons of the campaign, while Barnabás Kádár was the chief of organizing the campaign. I completed the information gathered during the interviews with news and press articles that are available. Moreover, I've also collected notes of the time from different members of the movement.

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<sup>75</sup> M. Dunai (2017). Budapest withdraws bid to host 2024 Olympic Games. Reuters.com. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-olympics-2024-budapest-idUSKBN16842G>

## Political Opportunity Structure

Although Hungary is less free in terms of political rights and civil as Germany and the United States according to the 2017 report of Freedom House,<sup>76</sup> the interviewees stated that there were no major constraints during the campaign of collecting the signatures. As they said the only repressive factor was that those media that were in close relationship with the government initiated a “smear campaign” against the movement not much after they started to collect the signatures. But this seemed not a directly constraining factor.<sup>77</sup> As András Fekete-Győr explained it in the interview: *“We were very much surprised that the power was ignorant and phlegmatic [...] I think they knew nothing about the Momentum and they were astonished by the fact that on the first day we collected 10000 signatures.”*<sup>78</sup>

And the field was open for new actors because before the arriving of momentum there were no organized opposition against the Olympics besides some private initiatives for collecting signatures. As Fekete-Győr noted during the interview, the political alignments seemed stable at the time: the governing party (FIDESZ) had a stable majority support, and there were no changes in the government, in the city council or in the opposition.<sup>79</sup> At the time of starting the campaign, the members of Momentum were unsure about the public perception of their initiative: although they counted on the help of some civil actors, parties and the media, the majority supported the idea of Olympics according to statistics. Moreover many friends and professionals underestimated the chance of a successful campaign.<sup>80</sup>

So what is interesting about the campaign against the hosting of the Olympics is that it came to life also because opening different opportunities for collective action. According to Barnabás Kádár, the idea of collecting the signatures emerged as early as around the fall of

<sup>76</sup> Freedom House (2017). Freedom in the World 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/fiw-2017-table-country-scores>

<sup>77</sup> Interview with András Fekete-Győr (17.05.2017)

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>79</sup> Ibid

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Barnabás Kádár (18.05.2017) and with András Fekete-Győr (17.05.2017)

2016: one of the members induced the idea as an important issue of domestic politics. Then the idea became a possible action when a journalist of Atlatzszó.hu initiated local and nationwide referenda concerning the issue of Olympics, and the local one was accepted by the Election Office of Budapest. After this initiative turn out to be forgotten, the members of the movement were considering the campaign again in late November 2016 as it seemed a possible political action in which the Momentum could step up for its own opinion. After the majority decided to support the idea, the leader of the movement initiated the local referenda at the end of 2016.<sup>81</sup> In this story we can see that the window of opportunity played an important part in selecting this issue as the movement's first important action in the Hungarian political life. They were a functioning organization with clear political ambition and will, but until the time of the campaign they were under radar, not many people knew about the movement. They were interested in the issue of the Olympics and they were searching for a possibility to step out to the light.<sup>82</sup>

As I mentioned before it was not clear how the possible allies will react to the initiative: for example the civil organizations that were asked by the representatives of Momentum turned down their requests, while before the campaign parties remained in silent even though they knew about the initiative<sup>83</sup>. But not much after starting the campaign, some opposition parties supported the idea and helped to collect the signatures.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, as the campaign went on, the free channels of media (not connected strongly to government and FIDESZ activities) broadcasted with increasing attention, mostly with a supportive tone, playing an important part in the success of the campaign. As Fekete-Győr told in the interview: “[...] a broad spectrum of media was supportive with our initiative. There was a debate, something

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> Interview with Barnabás Kádár (18.05.2017)

<sup>84</sup> K. Than (2017). After surprise victory over Olympic bid, young Hungarian group aims for parliament.  
<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-politics-momentum-idUSKBN16113F>

*democratic, and they absolutely liked this situation. Of course, the media connected with the government was only about to undermine and criticise us.*”<sup>85</sup>

### **Mobilizing structure**

The Momentum is also a grass-roots movement, which at the time of the campaign consisted around 150 members, who were in their 20's and early 30's.<sup>86</sup> It was founded in the spring of 2015 by a handful of students who wanted to do something about the problems of Hungary.<sup>87</sup> The movement had a board and tasks of operation was divided between different workgroups. The NOlympia campaign had its own team who were responsible for the organizational tasks but most of the members took part in the work during the campaign.<sup>88</sup>

The movement called for support of activist for collecting the signatures, and around 2000 activist joined them until the end of the campaign. Many of these activists were students and youngsters like the members of the movement but people from other ages also joined them. The majority of these activists were well educated inhabitants of Budapest, and the personal networks of the members were important in addressing these people<sup>89</sup>. The activist could apply for time slots and spots in the city through a webpage that was developed by members of the movement. Thus, the cost of coordination was minimized during the campaign.

The movement had little of resources at the start of the campaign, they only had the sum of money that the members payed as membership fees. Therefore, the movement started a crowd founding campaign in which they collected more than 18 million forints (approximately 65000 US dollars). For the NOlympia campaign they spent around 14 million forints

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with András Fekete-Győr (17.05.2017)

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> Momentum (2017). A Momentumról. <https://momentum.hu/a-momentumrol/>

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Barnabás Kádár (18.05.2017)

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

(approximately 50000 US dollars) so they have ended up with surplus.<sup>90</sup> But as Kádár stated in the interview, the most important resources were the activists who collected the signatures all around the public spaces of Budapest in the extreme cold weather of January 2017.

## **Framing**

The Movement framed the issue of hosting the Olympics also around the lines of the rising opportunity costs. They stated that they are not against the Olympics and against sports in general, but the amount of tax payer's money could be spent better in more important areas like the healthcare or the education systems or on solving several systematic problems of Hungary.<sup>91</sup> Another type of argumentation was that the hosting raises the possibility of financial risks as the government has to undertake guarantees for the costs that are clearly underestimated and unrealistic in the official estimates.<sup>92</sup> Moreover they also articulated the risks of environmental damage and the rise in regional inequalities.

Besides the last, mentioned argument, the movement was not building on frames of existing injustice, for example the risks of high level corruption was also not among their main arguments.<sup>93</sup> Their local claims were somewhat present in the rising opportunity costs type of arguments (i.e. the state of education and health care systems) but this type of framing is also applicable in many societal circumstances. Therefore, it can be stated that the movement built upon existing and accepted frames in order to legitimate contention. As I introduced before in Chapter 3 this close to what is conceptualized as bricolage framing.

<sup>90</sup> 24.hu (2017) Ennyit költött a Momentum a NOLimpia kampányra. <http://24.hu/belfold/2017/03/01/ennyit-koltott-a-momentum-a-nolimpia-kampanyra/>

<sup>91</sup> Nolimpia.com (2017) Arguments. <https://nolimpia.com/ervek-a-2024-es-budapesti-olimpia-ellen/?lang=en>

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Barnabás Kádár (18.05.2017) and NOLimpia (2017) Arguments. Nolimpia.com <https://nolimpia.com/ervek-a-2024-es-budapesti-olimpia-ellen/?lang=en>

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Barnabás Kádár (18.05.2017)

## Processes of diffusion

According to the findings in relation with framing it is not surprising that the members of Momentum movement were in contact with the organizers of the recent movements elsewhere, namely in Boston and Hamburg. As Barnabás Kádár put it the interview: *“We contacted them. [...] Previously we knew only what was on their website, the arguments, the design and so forth. What we did not know, and these were more important, is the logistics of how to organize, how to call for activist. [...] Yes we were searching for techniques.”*<sup>94</sup> So as we can see, the members of Momentum prepared from the available information on the internet (and even the design) and then they asked that practical information they needed.

I also had a possibility to take a look on the notes of this skype discussions of Momentum with Christopher Dempsey from Boston and Niklas Rübken from Hamburg. According to these notes, these were general discussions about the story of their campaigns with practical advices concerning mobilization and framing. Kádár commented on these advices as they were useful although it was also obvious that the situations were quite different in the other campaigns so these advices were far from enough and comfortable.

There were also other channels of diffusion between the movement. András Fekete-Győr told the story of how a board member of Momentum was preparing for a televised debate based on the similar debates of Christopher Dempsey in Boston: *“Also, I remember that Miklós Hajnal was preparing for his debate by analysing the debates of the leading character in the Boston campaign: the arguments, the style..”*<sup>95</sup> Therefore this indirect form of diffusion influenced significantly the framing of the issue in that televised debate.

As we can see, members of Momentum movement were searching for, and asking for the experiences and know-hows of other movements of anti-Olympics. As they processed the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Interview with András Fekete-Győr (17.05.2017)



information that was available on the internet, we can state that indirect diffusion happened. Moreover, by initiating the personal contact with organizers of other movements, direct diffusion also occurred between the cases.

## 6. THE COMPARISON OF THE CASES

In last chapter I presented the different case study analyses that are primarily based on the interviews I have conducted with members and activists of the different initiatives. As the next step, I compare the findings of these case studies. In the first part of the chapter, I will answer the question of how similar were these anti-Olympics campaigns in terms of Political Opportunity Structures, mobilizing structure and framing. After summarizing the main conclusions of the comparison, I will discuss the processes of diffusion throughout the case studies.

### **The similarities shared by the recent movements of anti-Olympics**

With the comparison of the case study analyses I will answer my first research question outlined in the introduction:

*RQ<sub>1</sub>: The recent anti-olympics movements share many aspects under different political and societal circumstances.*

This question suggests that although the movements differed in some aspects of Political Opportunity Structure, they may share other aspects of POS, mobilizing structure and forms of framing. Therefore, I will compare the results of the case study analyses along the lines of different factors of social movements.

### **Political Opportunity Structure**

Though the analyzed campaigns were initiated in different political environments, there were also similarities in the POS factors. In all of the cases there were stable political alignments. This observation may suggest that the opportunities of the movements were not depending on this factor.

Also, the political field was open in all cases, mainly because under the regimes it was possible to organize freely and because there were no major actors and organizations opposing the issue of hosting the Olympics. At this point it is important to note, that in the case studies, the newly emerged grassroots movements could position themselves as the main actors of opposition, while existing political actors were only following their initiatives. POS was opening in every cases, but they opened otherwise and they opened because of different reasons.

For instance, some political parties supported the idea of anti-Olympics everywhere: in Boston the United Independent Party announced that they are committed to fight for a public referendum. In Hamburg die Linke was also arguing against the Olympics and organized an important event together with the NOlympia platform, and in Budapest different opposition parties were also collecting signatures for the referendum that was initiated by Momentum. Although the importance of these supporting activities differ from case to case, we can see that some existing parties were available allies and the movements were able to remain the dominant actors of their issue. We can also observe, that the parties that supported the issue were not the major parties in the case of Hamburg and Boston, and the issue was not compelling to mainstream parties, even in opposition. Besides parties as available allies, the movements were in touch with some civil organizations in the cases of Hamburg and Boston, while in Budapest civil actors stayed away from the campaign assessing it as “too political”.<sup>96</sup>

Moreover, it is interesting that even if the regimes were not repressive or definitely constraining, little difficulties created by actors in power occurred in every case studies. In Boston, it was dangerous to be an activist if someone was interested in a career in the public sphere (and similar issues emerged in Hungary as well).<sup>97</sup> In Hungary the government media

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<sup>96</sup> Interview with Barnabás Kádár (18.05.2017)

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (22.05.2017)

started to undermine of the credibility of members of Momentum by initiating fake smear campaigns. In Hamburg the government changed the law concerning the rules of initiating a referendum, and then, as it became possible the government initiated itself a referendum.

In what the case studies were different are the type of political opportunity that emerged. The Boston and Hamburg cases were similar in that respect that after a while, referenda concerning the issues of hosting the games were initiated by official authorities. In the case of Momentum, the political opportunity was the initiating of the referendum itself. This difference had an effect on the way of how movements could mobilize supporters, and it also had an effect on the dynamics of the campaigns. In addition, the case of NOlympia in Hamburg was otherwise different because of the emergence of the refugee crises in Germany. The crises had an effect on the amount of people who could be mobilized against the issue of hosting the Olympics, because many of the politically active citizens were in active solidarity for the refugees.

As a conclusion of this comparison it has to be noted that concerning Political Opportunity Structures there were also basic similarities and some important differences. Similar factors were the stability of political alignments, the structure's openness to new actors, the availability of allies (with minor differences) and the not repressive nature of the regimes. I detected minor differences concerning the availability of allies (for example Momentum was not able to reach out to the civil sphere) and a major difference in the type of political opportunity that defined for example the ways of mobilizing supporters.

### **Mobilizing structure**

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Meanwhile in Budapest (2017). If You Don't Support the Olympics – You Can Find Another Job. Meanwhileinbudapest.com. <https://meanwhileinbudapest.com/2017/01/18/if-you-dont-support-the-olympics-you-can-find-another-job/>

The different anti-Olympic movements shared many aspects of mobilization. While as in Boston and Hamburg the main goal of the campaigns was to convince the majority, the repertoires of mobilization were similar. These movements were organizing public meetings and protests and they were especially active in media representation and in influencing the public opinion with articles and detailed argumentation.

Although media representation was also especially important in the case of the NOlimpia campaign in Budapest, their main form of mobilization was the collection of signatures for their initiative on holding a referendum.

The movements differed in their organizational structures as well. In the case of Boston there were two organizations with strong leadership and loose networks of activists. In Hamburg, the form of the organization was a platform where different working groups were responsible for different tasks, but there was no definite leadership and organizational structure (and mainly because of this they were losing membership). And the Momentum movement was a highly structured and centralized organization with clear rules and responsibilities, with an active membership consisting more than a hundred people, which was complemented with a large network of engaged activists. It is important to note that none of the movements engaged in illegal and seriously contentious activities.

## **Framing**

Influencing the public opinion about the issue of Olympics was especially important for all of the movements. So it is not surprising that framing was present and strong in all cases. And the arguments and the messages of the movements were quite similar, even if they were not completely the same. The movements shared some basic argumentations of cost overruns, rising opportunity costs of tax payer's money and financial risks.

They were also building on arguments of existing injustice such as the scandals of the IOC or the negative effects of gentrification, which was present mostly in the case of NOlympia Hamburg. And as the analysis show, the campaign in Hamburg put more emphasis on local messages and argumentations, although these locally tailored messages were present also by the two other initiatives.

One of the interesting aspects of framing was that the movements were positioning themselves following the same kind of principles: they shared strong civic values, their issue was not strongly connected to any set of political values, they tried to prove that they like sports even if they oppose the Olympics and they were using mostly factual argumentation. Moreover, it is also important to note that their designs, branding and name was also similar such as the visual representation of their (similar) arguments. But these similarities were not results of cooperation or communication as it would have been in cases of transnational NGO's, they are more likely only indirect effects of each other's existence.

### **Conclusions on the similarities of the movements**

In the sections above I outlined those similarities and differences that I could observe through the analysis of the case studies. Naturally the picture is not completely clear and there are basic similarities among all factors. The cases share many common aspects of Political Opportunity Structure even though these movements happened to emerge in very different countries and societies. Besides these similarities, we can also see that the type of political opportunity was different in the case of Momentum movement in Budapest, where collecting enough signatures to hold a referendum implied different organization and mobilizing structures.

Also, we can see that the repertoires of mobilization were highly similar (especially in the cases of Boston and Hamburg) even if the organizational structures of the movements were

different. Extensive media representation was one of the most important activities during the campaigns, and this fact was acknowledged by all the interviewees. Although the freedom of press was at very different levels according to the World Press Freedom index<sup>98</sup>, the issue was broadcasted everywhere with significant interest of the free parts of the press and media.

Considering the aspects of framing I also found many similarities in basic, universal arguments that can be used against the issue of hosting the Olympics in most circumstances. And there were some differences in other arguments that were more reflecting local issues and needs. And as I noted in the previous section, the positioning of the whole movement was quite similar in all cases, not to mention the similarities of their visual representations.

In answering my RQ<sub>1</sub>. research question, I found several similarities of mobilizing structures and framing during the comparison of the case studies.

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<sup>98</sup> World Press Freedom Index (2017). Rankings 2017. <https://rsf.org/en/ranking>

## Diffusion processes

Because of the transnational nature of hosting the Olympic games I assumed that there is a kind of connection between the movements. This phenomenon can be described with the concept of diffusion process that can be direct, indirect or mediated. Therefore, I asked whether there is a kind of transnational diffusion between the different movements.

*RQ<sub>2</sub>: Is there transnational diffusion between the recent anti-Olympics movements?*

In all of the case studies I presented in the last chapter, I was able to trace diffusion processes. There was direct, personal diffusion present in all the analyzed cases of recent anti-Olympics movement. The members and activists of the movements were actively seeking each other's experiences and advices, or in other cases they were willing to hand out these experiences and information. The book that served as one of the main sources of analyses in the case of Boston opposition, is one of the most relevant examples of this willingness of sharing the experiences. As Zimbalist and Dempsey wrote in *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch*: "*Defeating the bid became a matter of forcing the conversation out of the closed-door meetings favored by the boosters and the USOC, and into the public square, where citizens could make up their own minds about the bid's pros and cons. Citizens in democratic societies anywhere in the world can follow this model.*"<sup>99</sup>

Concerning the specific diffusion processes in the case studies, we can see that members of NOlympia Hamburg were seeking the most connections, as they were contacting opposition groups in Boston, Berlin, Munich and Tokyo and Rio de Janeiro. On the contrary, members of No Boston Olympics contacted previously only domestic opposition groups in Denver and Chicago. Members of Momentum contacted the Boston and Hamburg opposition groups, moreover in this case there is a clear evidence of indirect diffusion as well. And what is more

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<sup>99</sup> C. Dempsey, A. Zimbalist (2017). *No Boston Olympics: How and Why Smart Cities Are Passing on the Torch*. ForeEdge. Kindle Edition. Kindle Locations 3349-3352



interesting is that all the analyzed movements here were in direct relationship, and according to this, we may assume that there is a high chance of diffusion throughout the same bidding process. Interestingly I found no signs of mediated diffusion throughout the analysis of the cases.

Diffusion may unfold the reasons of similarities discovered during the comparison of the case studies. Mobilizing practices and elements of framing, argumentation, positioning, design were subjects of diffusion as it turned out during the interviews with the activists of Momentum movement and No Boston 2024. But given the similarities in the issue of hosting the Olympics and those that were discovered in the analyses of Political Opportunity Structures, I cannot state that diffusion explains fully those similarities. A further research with more evidence on the topic may clear their causal relationship.

In answering my RQ<sub>2</sub> research question I found clear signs of diffusion processes during the analysis in the case studies.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

I became interested in the movements of anti-Olympics, when I witnessed the recent NOlympia campaign of Momentum movement in Budapest. The issue of hosting the Olympics in my home city was filled with rational and emotional opinions, and many of the citizens in Budapest engaged in the debate of whether or not the city should prepare to host this global event. And those who initiated the campaign stated that we were not alone with this debate: previously many cities went through this process and decided about the issue of hosting the games.

This is when I understood, that the issue of hosting a global sport mega-event like the Olympics is not only a local but also a global issue in many aspects. And meanwhile local societies start this debate from time to time, the Olympics as a global phenomenon change little and slowly.

Several local movement emerged in the recent bidding process of hosting the 2024 summer Olympics in the cities that ambitioned to host the games. These movements initiated a debate and they had an obvious part in an important decision of a city and of a country. In this research, I was interested in the similarities of these movements, because their main topic and goal was the same while their members were living in different societies. I assumed that the movements recognize each other and if it is possible they share advices, experiences and know-how.

According to these assumptions, first I asked (RQ<sub>1</sub>) that these recent anti-olympics movements share many aspects under different political and societal circumstances, then I also assumed that there is some kind transnational diffusion between the movements, that would consist all the indirect impacts on each other's functioning and the direct relationships between their members. To understand more their differences and similarities, I used the

concepts of political opportunity structure, mobilizing structure and framing. These analytical tools of social movement research seemed useful in understanding the emergence and the operation of these movements.

But for testing my assumptions I had to get a closer look at their stories. I ambitioned to analyze recent, comparable cases that would include also the NOlympia campaign of Momentum movement. As a result of reviewing the possibilities I chose the case of NOlympia Hamburg and the case of the Boston opposition groups, No Boston Olympics and No Boston 2024. To get more information about their emergence and functioning, I've conducted semi-structured interviews with central characters of these campaigns. I supplemented this information with different secondary sources. As these sources and information became available they could serve as the basis of my analysis of POS, mobilizing structure, forms of framing and transnational diffusion in the different movements.

During the analysis, I also find similarities and differences among the movements. There were basic similarities among all analyzed factors. The cases share common aspects of Political Opportunity Structure even though these movement were operating under different circumstances. Besides these similarities, it was visible that the different political opportunities of the Momentum made their case slightly distinct from the two other cases. 7

Although these movements were different in the basis of how they operate the repertoires of mobilization were highly similar. For example as convincing the majority was a main priority for these movements, media representation was one of the most important activities during the campaigns. Moreover, many times their main arguments were the same, and their political positioning shared also common aspects.

But what was more interesting is to trace the signs of their cooperation and their relation to each other. The members and activists of the movements were actively seeking each other's

experiences and advices, or in other cases they were willing to hand out these experiences and information. They were also studying how others mobilized supportive activists and how they framed the issue of hosting the Olympics.

As a conclusion, I state that not only the events of the Olympics are global in their nature, but also those local movements that emerge to oppose the hosting of the games. These movements are similar to a significant extent and they are in contact with each other. Moreover they are comparable to those movements that are opposing domestically the function of transnational and international regimes, pushing their or local or national governments to take an action.

Therefore, those movements that are opposing the hosting of any sport mega-event like the Olympics, deserves the attention of those researchers who study transnational social movements. In the meantime the International Olympic Committee may understand the arguments of the many successful grass-roots initiatives whose aim is to prevent the games locally, and change the regime of hosting the Olympic Games.

## **APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE**

The interview questionnaire serves as the basis for the questions that emerged during the interviews and thus they show the general areas of the discussion. Because I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews some interviews follow different directions also because the different circumstances of the discussions.

### **1. Would you first introduce yourself and your role in the campaign?**

### **2. Can you tell me about the beginnings?**

- What was your main motivation?
- How did you started the campaign?
- With whom did you started it?

### **3. How supportive was the political climate for a campaign like this?**

- Were there any changes in the political set-up at the beginning?

### **4. What did the activists do during the campaign?**

- Media representation? TV, radio?
- Were there any protest or demonstration?
- Have you been collecting signatures?

### **5. Who were helping you during the campaign?**

- How many activists took part?
- Were there any other opposition groups like you? Who were them and what exactly they did during the campaign?
- What about other resources?

### **6. How do you positioned/framed your main argument and goals (as a movement)?**

**7. Have you been in contact with actors any other anti-Olympics movements?**

- If not: have you heard about campaigns in other cities?
- If yes: How does it happened? Have you learned something from these persons/or from their activities?

## **APPENDIX B: ABRIDGED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

These interview transcripts are not full transcripts, but they contain all the answers that are relevant for our case studies. The interviews with the German and American interviewees were conducted via Skype or Google Hangouts in English, and the interviews with the Hungarian members of Momentum Movement were conducted in person in Hungarian.

### **Jonathan Cohn and Robin Jacks (No Boston 2024)**

(22.05.2017 via Google Hangouts)

Zs.F.: Could you please introduce yourselves and tell me a bit about how the idea of starting No Boston Olympics came?

Jonathan Cohn (J.C.): So I am an editor of a newspaper here and I am also active in different public issues. And about the beginnings: some of the best immediate coverage on the Olympic bid was come from a local news organ, Jamaica Plains Gazette, a newspaper of a historically activisty neighbourhood. They had an article talking about how Franklin Park was going to be used for the pentathlon and for other events, basically blocking the off this area, basically the main green area that the citizens have access to. And after that the three of us started to discuss the complete lack of public process around this, and that what we knew about Olympics tended to be horrible for cities to host them, and then we continued our discussion on the following thanksgiving Monday as well. And out of that is what happened with No Boston 2024.

Robin Jacks (R.J.): What John said is about the origins of everything was accurate. So my name is Robin Jacks, my activist history is has protest, left movements and I have been an activist for more than 20 years, I use to do pro-choice abortion organizing in the south, which was very interesting to do. And I was also a member of anti-globalization movements, and

then I was an Occupy person, I was one of the persons who started occupy in Boston. So Jonathan was more so the legal root of doing things, definitely a different approach. But the both together was doing well.

J.C.: Although the Olympic bid was started earlier, and also No Boston Olympics had started before we did, a lot of the Olympic discussion was overshadowed by the gubernatorial race. The fact that there was a bid fully entered my radar on that October and I was currently working close to the Democratic Work Committee from that part of the city, and I had been brought up by a member there about the complete lack of public process around the bid. So that brought me like start paying more attention to that.

R.J.: So and it really did start as three people were planning a public meeting on that Monday. And I think we did it in a day or two. And we did not have any many, and we were searching for a cheap public space and then we found a church as a place. And we said that they are not having a public meeting, but we will, so anyone who want to come can come. And then the people for No Boston 2024 showed up.

Zs.F.: And from then what were your main activities as No Boston 2024?

R.J.: Our strategy from this point was to do anything we can to make the USOC and the IOC hate the idea of putting the Olympics in Boston until the January deadline. It was though because it was the holiday with Christmas, with no college students in the city. And a lot of people who had been helping us up until then were like no, I am not getting involved now until they have the bid. So at the points it was again me and Jonathan and scrambling to build something, just the two of us and a couple of other people. We set up a webpage, with design and a Facebook and Twitter account.

J.C.: And then the main thing we did in that December, that the Boston Globe was held a debate between Chris Dempsey and Juliette Kayyem, a formal gubernatorial candidate, how



was also on the Olympic bid committee. And we had rally and protest outside a bit in the extreme cold weather and there were people who showed up.

R.J.: The city had a public meeting every month in a different neighbourhood. We prepared all month for that, make sure people knew that there will be a meeting, and we will do some kind of something. And we were present at every meeting to make sure that every meeting was full of people who oppose the Olympics. And that was not a difficult task. In January, we had problems with organizing protests because there were record snow in Boston, it was horrible. It ended up working in our favour because people saw what a shutdown city looks like. And then there were other meetings that popped up like the ones in the park we mentioned before, and it was not organized by us nor, Boston 2025, But we still went and participated in these events. And later on, we had been organizing several protests and public meetings like the ones we mentioned so far, you can find them on our website of No Boston Olympics 2024.

J.C.: On thing that also ended up useful as public record requests. Concerning that so much of the decision making was happening behind closed doors, we did not have the opportunity to know what is being said. And we initiated several requests, and it did not always work out smoothly, it took me a while to get for example the first request, and they were also quite expensive. But they finally arrived, and they were pretty useful. People could see that the city resources were spent on bidding the Olympics. And one member in our group got the official economic assessment documents, and it showed that the analysis is biased, of course it was biased. And it was journalism, we were building cases and investigating. And we were basically trying to prove that the city was in this, and this was their responsibility and their job to get us out of it.

Zs.F.: How supportive was the political climate for a campaign like this? Or – were there any problems?

J.C.: On average we can say that many people on stage on the public meetings had no respect for the audience or the community at large.

R.J.: I think it could have happened, but a lot of our strategy was that we were transparent, showing that you do not have to do it in shadow like these people are doing. And we had a media as well, and there would have been a scandal about that, so I think that they knew that it was a bad idea. It was more like that they tried to undermine us, like telling that we are only trolls on the internet and the like. But that was not true: we were working on this probably 60-80 hours a week, and besides we had our jobs or this instead of our jobs and sleep. We had no life other than that. It was obviously not true. And many people jumped out, and jumped in, and came later and left. And as far as the point of repression goes, I think the biggest issues of repression would go around like “you never going to be able to work in this city again”. And for me, I do not really care, I am not going to work for government. But for people like those in No Boston Olympics, this was a real threat. One of their people left, Connor Yunits, because of this. And another thing too: most city of the United States have a very balanced city administration, where the city council is a balance to the mayor. In Boston, this is not the case, the city council is pretty much just a formality, the mayor had a lot of power. The mayor had the power to ruin a city councillor’s career. And for NGO’s and local foundations there was also the threat of losing founding and support, so for them it was an existential threat too.

Zs. F.: Were you counting on parties and civil organizations? Who were your allies?

R.J.: Towards the end we started to build a coalition with a lot of more lefty, long standing community organizations, like Community Minority Neighbourhood and we had a meeting with someone from the local chapter of NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), and there we have been in contact with one of the legendary African-American activists here in Boston, and although it was at the end, for me it was important, they were about to help us.

J.C.: And of course, No Boston Olympics was our most important ally, and it was crucial that we had two different groups with different possibilities. Having separate groups allowed us to have different arguments and strategies (our was more confrontational), while sharing and cooperating with the other group. And we could do those activities that they could have not do. And our topics were also different: social issues, the situation of homeless people, minorities and many similar. Their topics were different: impact on transportation, costs and overruns.

R.J.: And also, Black Lives Matter were also opposing, they were allies as well, and around the times, Black Lives Matter was everywhere in the news. And there were many individuals from different organizations, many activist and helpers were from other organizations. Like Dave Ziron from The Nation, he writes about sports issues, and he wrote a book about Olympics and a lot of article about that, and he let us write two articles in The Nation, and he visited us and he was really popular. And really towards the end there were a lot of groups against the bid throughout the city.

Zs. F.: Were there any contact with activists of other anti-olympics movement from other cities?

R.J.: Absolutely, there were Google hangout meetings with Organizers from Chicago, who found us on Twitter, and we hang with some organizers from Vancouver, obviously we had worked with people from Brazil, people form London were very helpful, one of our people went to London and there they met, and one of their people also visited us here in Boston. And there definitely is a network of this people, and someone know someone who know someone, and we were in this network easily. And now people in Los Angeles kind of fight the Olympics and we are helping them to the best of our abilities.

Zs.F.: And what were you learning from them? Do they had useful advices?

R.J.: A lot of it was just kind of a lesson of how movements are global, I think it may seem obvious in the age of social media, but you know, look at me and Occupy, it was so global. And look at Los Angeles, they cannot replicate exactly what we did even if they are in the same country, because we have very different community issues. But there are tools, and we took something from every group that we have talked to. London people were really great talking to us about the urgency, people in Brazil were really good in presenting the challenges that before the Olympics actually happened, people from Vancouver were more like my people, the leftist, grass-roots activists. Chicago people were still useful in showing us how to just harass the USOC and IOC.

J.C.: And social media was very important: we were in daily contact in twitter with the London activists. And they helped us with articles and stories and data and they gave us ideas where to research.

R.J.: I think No Boston Olympics with Chris and Kerr was more an anomaly, they were very different from most of the Anti-Olympics movement in the world. I mean they are obviously not right wing, but they don't come from the left perspectives as everyone else has come from. And I think that worked for the larger movement advantage, they had a different style, appearance... I think the Olympics are so bad, that everyone from anywhere from the political spectrum can have an argument to why it is bad.

### **Florian Kasiske (NOlympia Hamburg)**

(24.05.2017 via Skype)

Zsolt Főző (Zs.F.): I'm Zsolt, I'm doing my thesis in the Central-European University about anti Olympics movement. The focus is on the relationship between different movements and

campaign. I would like to do a case study about Hamburg as well. First, please introduce yourself and movement – how did it start?

Florian Kasiske (F.K.): I work for the Right of the city movement in Hamburg. It exists since 2009. It's about struggles against rising rents. When we heard of the Olympic bid, it was clear for some of us that it'll be a big problem for the city. I was in Barcelona to talk to people about impacts of the Olympics. We also had 2002, Hamburg wanted to bid for the Olympic Games. I think it was the Olympic Games in 2012. Fortunately, they lost against Leipzig, a German concurrence. We thought, we are very few people and this time society of Hamburg was in big euphoria about Olympics coming to Hamburg. There was, for example, a demonstration with torches with many thousand people. At that time, position to be against Olympics in the city was not visible. There was a first step: some organizations and groups came together to form a meeting and talking about the impacts of Olympics. We were open, we didn't start with a clear no. From the beginning I was against it, but this alliance didn't come any practice. Then we talked some of the people who were there, who know each other from the right of the city movement. We need to start something that formulates a clear no to the Olympics. Because of the time, we said we wait for the German Olympic Committee, if they choose Hamburg or Berlin. When the decision is Hamburg, we'll invent a platform. And that was what we did. We invented the first platform against the Olympic Games in Hamburg in April 2015. There came 150 people and we made workshops. This was how it started.

Zs.F.: You were speaking about meeting that was originally held. Who were there invited or who were interested in it?

F.K.: Organizations like the BOND, it's a non-governmental organization for environmental issues. Also at least one member of Social Democratic Party.

Zs.F.: You said, you invited a lot of people for your first meeting and you created a platform. Who were the supporter? Just people interested in anticampaign?

F.K.: Yes, it was like that. We wanted to make an open meeting and we didn't want to invite only representatives. There were many people from the left-wing party who were at the meeting, like the Linke. Some people from the rights of the city movement, lot of people who we haven't seen before, just people from the city against the Olympics.

Zs. F.: How did it continue? What were the activities that you did through the campaign?

F.K.: Our aim was the meeting. We are a very small group, so we must get more engaged people. What we did is forming working groups, for example, a working group on public relations or on actions. We had an organization group. This was the first step we did. Before the meeting, we've already had formulated a revolution. As the result of this meeting, we say, people from the city have a platform against the Olympics. Then these working groups met. We prepared a second platform where we invited a wider circle. Working groups presented their results. And we talked about how we could continue our work. We presented who are we, the impacts of the Olympics, what are we going to do. What is important to know, is that, in the beginning, it was not clear that it'll be a referendum.

Zs.F.: Isn't it compulsory? I thought every German city that plans to host there are a referendum about Olympics.

F.K.: No, there is no law. The situation is, that in Hamburg there is a legislation for initiatives. it makes it possible to demand a referendum if you collect enough signatures.

Zs.F.: The same as what we had in Budapest.

F.K.: Up to the summer of 2015, there was no law in Hamburg via the government can initiate a referendum. This method of political was just introducing, because they were afraid, that we

would organize a referendum and collect enough signatures. It's my interpretation because it was announced that they'll make a referendum as soon as possible to get the "okay" from the people of Hamburg to continue the campaign. My interpretation is that they were afraid we organize a referendum and collect enough signatures. For them it was clear that euphoria about the Olympics is the thing that gets lost with time, when more and more details get to the public. It was a game on time. This was one central reason for why they said: okay, we want to make a referendum on our own, when we have more influence and we can make it as soon as possible. They changed the law to make it possible for government to ask the citizens.

Zs.F.: Were you preferring to collect signatures or referendum?

F.K.: We had a debate on it. People said it doesn't matter if they have a referendum on autumn, we are going to collect signatures for our own referendum. Then they phoned the referendum group. They were collecting signatures. It was about gaining their own referendum which would have taken place at least the earliest moment I think one year later. Collecting signatures is a method of getting contact of many people. Also, about having the possibility to have a legal way to getting posters on the street. They accepted official initiative. Nolympia were like any illegal activity.

Zs.F.: What did you do next after the second meeting?

F.K.: We made press conference and a very big presence in the media. We painted crosses to the posters belonged to the campaign of government and produced some pictures. We organized a small neighbourhood demonstration in June and about 300 people came there. We realized we couldn't mobilize a lot of people to the street.

Zs.F.: What was the reason for that?

F.K.: In 2015, many immigrants came to Hamburg. Many active citizens were in solidarity for refugees. This was the focus of the society in Hamburg. I think people felt happy that they

don't have to organize Nolympia because there are people who made it instead of them. In late summer, we organized an event with a left-wing party. For that time, it was a central issue. We collected money for the campaign. For this event a few thousand people came, but the people came because of this party. It was one of the most important mobilization during that time. It wasn't like a demonstration, but like a neighbourhood festival which is held every year with the presence of this party. We did another neighbourhood demonstration in another neighbourhood, into a gentrified area. There were around 200 people. The mobilization was a mess. We wanted to produce pictures of thousands of people going to the street against the Olympics, but it didn't work.

Zs.F.: What else did you do beside mobilization events? Were you in television or anything else?

F.K.: I think this was the most important power of our work. In Hamburg the local media was strongly in favour of the Olympics. They also had contract with the Olympic organizing committee. It was not a state funded media, but private media. The propaganda for the Olympics was very relevant. The left-wing liberal media was in favour of the Olympics. We had very few critical journalists. We read all the documents, we got all the information. We could show, there are risky contracts. The Olympic Committee gets the rights and the city gets all the duties. Also, we were commenting about the cost of the Olympics. There was some journalist we knew and had a good relationship and we informed each other about everything.

Zs.F.: Did you manage to get into more articles or television shows by the end of the summer?

F.K.: Yes. Also, because the time of the referendum, it has been more visible in the media. There was a change on the profile of the Olympics. When the Olympic Committee of Germany has decided they wanted to bid with Hamburg or Berlin, they made polls. About 64% of population favoured the Olympics in Hamburg. It has fallen by 2015 by 57%. We



know it is less supported. One of the biggest help was an institution controlling the cost of the city, the Audit Generous Department. They made a report, but before official publication they have sent for us a version, which showed how risky the project and the contracts are. Then the final version was more softened, but we were very happy for the results. We had tool to step with against the propaganda of government. The government should be neutral, but all around you in the city, you could see the logo of the Olympic Campaign. For many people, it was an emotional campaign, this is a one-time-in-you-life event. Then people have been sceptical. It is good for us if the whole world come to our city? I organized debates in schools. There was a representative from each party. The only one against the Olympics was from the left-wing party. In poor neighbourhoods, people are more critical and don't believe to politicians. They felt that rich people can profit from the Olympics and the working class cannot. I think many people got more and more critical attitude. Also, because of the pro Olympic campaign – it was so obvious.

Zs.F.: Were there any further organization you could cooperate with?

F.K.: Linke, the party, was an important factor. The other was an NGO, not part of the platform, but supported us and was very critical. It is an environmental organization. Some neighbourhood organizations supported us as well. There was an interesting issue with St. Pauli sport club. They had a pression from the city to be pro Olympics. If they do anything related to anti campaign, the government cut back the budget. We made an action next to the stadium and put anti Olympic posters. The marathon department of St. Pauli organized a sport event dedicated to NOlympics. We didn't want to show that we are against sports. Sport is important and our main message was the impact of the Olympics is nothing to do with sport life, I mean the sport of masses.

Zs.F.: Did the number of activists in the organization has grown?

F.K.: No, the number was declining. We were very unproductive. There were a lot of intern with hard discussions and people left the platforms. We had only small circles organizing public relation and distributed papers in neighbourhoods. There was a cool action: someone has written anti Olympics messages at frequented places, calling the attention to economical disadvantages. We didn't know who did it, but it was perfect, wasn't radical. It was popular in the media as well. Finally, we were a bit decentralised.

Zs.F.: Did you have any kind of relationship with other campaign of other countries?

F.K.: Yes. We had good connection with No Boston. We organized a conference at a university, which they have participated. We had also a connection with Rio and Tokyo. The Tokyo group made a movie about the impacts of London Olympics. We had good relationship with Munich and we collected a lot of information from their website. We had good connection with Berlin, where the anti-Olympics campaign was successful and we learnt a lot from them. Furthermore, Hamburg and Berlin was competing for Olympic Game. We didn't have any contact with Krakow.

Zs.F.: What have you learnt from this movement?

F.K.: From Boston, we have learnt that mobilization is not everything: there were very few people and they did a lot of media works. This has influenced us. Munich gave us hope, because it's a conservative city and yet, they had success. We saw, if it manages to have referendum, a result is no. It could have been good to organize a big mutual meeting or Skype conference with other anti-Olympics groups, but had to focus on our campaign. It was more about social media.

### **András Fekete-Győr (Momentum)**

(17.05.2017. interview in person)

Zsolt Főző (Zs. F.): Could you introduce yourself and your role in the NOLimpia campaign in Budapest?

András Fekete-Győr (A. F.): I am one of the founders of Momentum, and since August 2016 I am the chairman of the board in the organization.

Zs. F.: How came the idea of the NOLimpia campaign?

A. F.: In momentum, the issue emerged in Autumn 2016 in the time of the nationwide referendums on refugee quotas. We decided to think about it later, it was not the time for another referendum. Then at the end of November, a member posted again about the idea, and people started to support it, many members of the leadership became enthusiastic. Then we decided about that in the board, I was convinced too. And we discussed it again with the membership and there was also a poll on how the people can take part in the initiative. And we discussed that officially I handed in the initiative. It was not an easy decision. Not all of the members supported wholeheartedly, and many of our friends said that it is not possible to collect the signatures, and the issue is also divisive.

Zs. F.: How supportive was the political climate for a campaign like this? Or – were there any problems?

A. F.: We were very much surprised that the power was ignorant and phlegmatic. I don't know how they monitored the other process with Átlátszó. but I think they knew nothing about the Momentum and they were astonished by the fact that on the first day we collected 10000 signature. Then all the government media was firing on us. But these attacks were not important and constraining. At the board, we knew that the petitioning will last a month, we knew our organization, the members and their skills, we knew where to allocate them. The community spirit strengthened and we trusted each other. These were the important things. And yes it was, in a way, a historic moment, there is a need for such possibilities, but the most

important was that we were together doing something. The political environment was not supporting this, but there were also no major constraints.

Zs. F.: Were there any changes in the political set-up? Anything that was changing or new?

A. F.: I don't think so. We do not know about conflicts in Fidesz around that time. It was more like because they thought that we are not serious, that we cannot do it in January, in minus degrees.

Zs. F.: Were you counting on potential allies?

A. F.: We were contacting civil organizations maybe weeks before the campaign. I am not sure about parties, maybe we sent them something, and we were counting on their potential support.

Zs. F.: And how did it go with the activists?

A. F.: Around the beginning it was bad, in the first couple of days there were only a few couple of people coming to our briefings. And as the D day was coming, and as the press was giving us more and more space, the numbers of activists were growing.

Zs.F.: You mentioned the press? Were they allies?

A.F.: Absolutely, a broad spectrum of media was supportive with our initiative. There was a debate, something democratic, and they absolutely liked this situation. Of course, the media connected with the government was only about to undermine and criticise us.

Zs. F.: And how were you planning with other resources?

A.F.: We started a crowdfunding campaign at the first week, but we put more emphasis recruiting activists. And it was not easy with the money at the beginning, but then the

crowdfunding was successful. Members also developed IT systems and a webpage, and we spent some money on design, and members wrote articles with our main arguments.

Zs.F.: Were you asking for best practices? Was some helping with advices?

A.F.: We contacted the people from Boston and from Hamburg. The guys in Hamburg were young, a bit less organized but enthusiastic. There were some advices. Also, I remember that Miklós Hajnal was preparing for his debate by analysing the debates of the leading character in the Boston campaign: the arguments, the style.. I remember that Miklós was watching those debates. And we also met with other activists in Budapest who had some experiences in collecting signatures for a referendum. We were speaking about the strategy of collecting signatures, about the role of briefings and about other mainly operative aspects of the campaign.

Zs. F.: What were the main arguments in the public discussion?

A. F.: The first aspect is that we were calling for a public debate. And because we were a new, fresh political organization, we had to take a stand in that debate. One of our main arguments was rationality: be a bit more rational and less emotional. The issue of Olympics was not rational, because we had other, urgent issues in other areas of public policies. We formulated these other priorities in the forms of simple examples, thus bringing back the emotional aspects. And the issue of corruption was not our main argument, it was there, but it was far less important and frequent than the arguments of other priorities. As a movement, we broadcasted the messages of self-responsibility and the importance of standing up for your rights and public interests. It was a call for activism. And the people liked these kind of messages: both those that were based on rationality, and those that inspired people with examples of activism.

Zs. F.: Were you building alone these arguments?

A. F.: Sure we were doing this task alone. There was a 1 or 2 week long preparing phase, we wrote a 40 pages long paper about main messages. A group of arguments was created for Momentum, and a group of arguments was prepared for the NOLimpia campaign. And the media was interested heavily in our ideological and moral stands, and they were asking questions about different public policy issues, like taxes or the environment.

Zs. F.: Were you framing internationally?

A. F.: The international press was interested, but we were framing the Olympics only as one of our important domestic issues.

### **Barnabás Kádár (Momentum)**

(18.05.2017. interview in person)

Zsolt Főző (Zs.F.): Could you introduce yourself and your role in the Nolimpia campaign in Budapest?

Barnabás Kádár (B.K.): I am Barnabás Kádár, currently I am a member of the board of Momentum. Before that, I was the general manager of Momentum, I was responsible for all the operative activities in the organization. And at the time of the campaign I was the chief manager of the campaign.

Zs.F.: How came the idea of the Nolimpia campaign?

B.K.: A journalist at Átlátszó.hu, Katalin Erdélyi initiated a local and a nationwide referendum on the issue of hosting the Olympics. The initiative became accepted by the Election Office of Budapest, but later on, those people at Atlatszo were not continuing the process by collecting signatures. We did not understand why, but they wanted a nationwide referendum, which was not accepted later on, and then they also ran out of time concerning the local referendum. But we saw that the question can be accepted by the local authorities.

Then a member of Momentum presented the idea that we should also try, because it is a relevant issue that we have spoken about before, and now it seems that there is a possibility to do something. Then we talked over the idea first with the leadership, and we decided to support the initiative. We wanted the decision to be more legitimate, so we also asked about it within the membership, and there, the majority supported the idea, although it was not an overwhelming majority. It was an important decision, because this campaign was the first public activity of Momentum and we had political goals from the beginnings. With this decision, we were in for it, we undertook a political role with all of its consequences.

Zs.F.: How supportive was the political climate for a campaign like this? Or – were there any problems?

B.K.: The difficulty is with the present situation that it is not a repressive dictatorship – but the objective of the regime is to make people apolitical. And this is not only because of this government – this is a long process with a lot historical precedents. And as a consequence many people are apolitical – or they are afraid of. They are afraid of taking part in different initiatives, because of existential causes. One of the most frequent comment on denying the signature of the referendum initiative was that they are afraid of the consequences. But besides these, there were no direct constraints: if you want to do something, you can: you can collect signatures, you can found a party. And yes, if you are for example a party, then there are some administrative barriers, and it is not easy get into the parliament because of the rules of the elections. So yes, there are some difficulties, but most of them are indirect barriers.

Zs.F.: Were there any changes in the political set-up? Anything that was changing or new?

B.K.: The campaign itself was new, causing some unrest and excitement. But before that, there were no significant changes, there were no important political news in the media. After

we started the campaign, the existing, real media started to get involved more and more with the topic. They were supportive, they gave us space to represent our views and actions and our story.

Zs.F.: At the beginnings, who were you counting on in terms of activists?

B. K.: The people of momentum are mostly students and young workers in Budapest, with an average age of 25 years. Many of them are from different Hungarian colleges or they come back from abroad after studying universities. This means that for the first calls, those will come who are in their networks, similar people. young, highly educated people from Budapest who are interested in politics. But these circles were extending very fast: at the end of the campaign there were many kinds of people who wanted to help us. As we are speaking after the campaign we can say that on average, people under 30 and above 50 were those who could help us the most. Before the campaign, we calculated with a needed amount of 1500 activist, at the end of the campaign, we had more, approximately 2000.

Zs. F. Were you counting on parties and civil organizations? Have you been in contact with them?

B. K.: Previously we were contacting civil actors and they were not very supportive, at the beginning they thought that we are not enough serious players, and then they said we are too political. We were counting on the reactions of parties, and since those times we have that policy that we cooperate with parties among the lines of specific issues, if we agree with the issue. And after we started, they contacted us, and they wanted shared press conferences and their logo on our counters and so forth, and we always said “no you cannot do this, but we are happy if you can help us in collecting the signatures”. And it was important that we were strong enough, not in crucial need of their support and resources.

Zs.F.: And how was it with the other resources?



B.K.: We had 142 members in Momentum, and we had a Facebook group of a thousand people who were interested in Momentum. So we were counting on their networks. We had an office that we were paying from membership fees, and some money also collected from membership fees, but it was barely enough to start. And we had the skills of our members, IT skills, organizational skills, design skills. But these were not the most important: the most important resources were the activist. Concerning the money we started a crowdfunding campaign, we were once calling for financial support, and then people were sending money continuously during the campaign, through our webpage. These were microdonations. The biggest donation was 250000 forints, but it was also a private person who we did not know. And then we were not calling for financial support anymore, we were only calling for activists. And the story was successful only because there were enough people who were collecting signatures in minus 10 degrees in different public spaces in Budapest.

Zs.F.: What were your main arguments during the campaign?

B. K.: We knew that we do not want it to be a negative campaign. We knew that they will see us as people who are not patriotic enough, who do not like sports, and Olympics and so forth. So we wanted to emphasize that the Olympics is ok, but we have to spend the money otherwise, there are more important issues here in Hungary. Other arguments were that few Olympics were profitable, and that we do not trust in the government that it will be profitable. And we also emphasized that even if some people do not agree with us, they can support our initiative, because it is only about a referendum where people can decide. We wanted a referendum on the issue of hosting the Olympics, and we had an opinion about hosting the Olympics. This was clear for everyone.

Zs. F.: Were you building on existing arguments, narratives?

B.K.: We were reading a lot of materials, also from other anti-Olympics initiatives, but the thing is, that if you think about it, you will have the same arguments. And there were those arguments that were specific to Hungary, for example we read the documents of the official impact assessments made by PWC, and it was not too scientific and credible in many aspects. And yes, the Swimming World Championship which will be held in a month or so was also a good example of overspending.

Zs. F.: Were there any contact with activists of other anti\_olympics movement from other cities?

B.K.: Yes, we contacted them. The goal was to get a closer look. Previously we knew only what was on their website, the arguments, the design and so forth. What we did not know, and these were more important, is the logistics of how to organize, how to call for activist.

Zs.F.: We you searching for techniques?

B.K.: Yes we were searching for techniques. But then we realized, that for example in the case of the Hamburg campaign, the basis of how they organized themselves was very different from our approach, and it was visible that they could do a successful campaign with less resources and with more mistakes. And the situation was also very different. Their main task was to convince the people because the referendum was set by city. We had to collect the signatures, ours was a different task. It was interesting to talk with them, and yes, we had set up a similar website with a similar design. But it is also true that many arguments are universal, and we would have said the same without those inputs. Anyway we contacted activists from Hamburg and Boston, and there were skype discussions.

Zs.F.: And were someone contacting you from abroad?

B.K.: The press was interested, we had media requests from many different channels. They were interested because of Orbán, and they were also interested because of the issue of

Olympics. For example there were media from France and the United States, I guess because of the bids of Paris and Los Angeles

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