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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Institute of Political Studies
Department of International Relations

Master's Thesis

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Media's Role in Constructing Representations of Marginalized Groups Identities and Experiences in Post-Olympic Los Angeles

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

The thesis seeks to analyze the media discourse of two print media outlets in the United States between August 1984 and August 1985 to determine the role of media in constructing and representing marginalized groups' identities and experiences in the year following a successful and corporate-backed international mega-sporting event. The study, therefore, explores the American media's role in constructing and representing vulnerable identities in Los Angeles the year after the profitable 1984 Olympic Games. This thesis draws on the theories of post-structuralism, post-neoliberalism, post-colonialism, critical race theory, and feminist theory to critically examine power, discourse, and language in an international context. The thesis uses critical discourse analysis to systematically analyze texts and examine linguistic features to uncover the connections between hidden power dynamics, ideological biases, and social practice. The discourse analysis examines how language and linguistic tools within print media sources construct and reflect identities and representations within a social context. The topic touches on themes of globalization, national identity, cultural diplomacy, human rights, and norm setting. The selected analyzed sources consist of articles drawn from online databases of one mainstream American newspaper (The Los Angeles Times) and one alternative American newspaper (The Citrus College Clarion) to enable a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the role and impact of US media's constructions of various marginalized groups and identities.

Abstrakt

Práce se snaží analyzovat mediální diskurs dvou tištěných médií ve Spojených státech mezi srpnem 1984 a srpnem 1985, aby určila roli médií při vytváření a reprezentaci identit a zkušeností marginalizovaných skupin v roce následujícím po úspěšném a korporátně podporovaném mezinárodním megasportovní akce. Studie proto zkoumá roli amerických médií při vytváření a reprezentaci zranitelných identit v Los Angeles rok po ziskových olympijských hrách v roce 1984. Tato práce čerpá z teorií poststrukturalismu, postneoliberalismu, postkolonialismu, teorie kritické rasy a feministické teorie, aby kriticky prozkoumala moc, diskurz a jazyk v mezinárodním kontextu. Práce využívá kritickou diskurzivní analýzu k systematické analýze textů a zkoumání lingvistických rysů, aby odhalila souvislosti mezi skrytou dynamikou moci, ideologickými předsudky a společenskou praxí. Analýza diskurzu zkoumá, jak jazyk a jazykové nástroje v rámci zdrojů tištěných médií konstruují a odrážejí identity a reprezentace v rámci sociálního kontextu. Téma se dotýká témat globalizace, národní identity, kulturní diplomacie, lidských práv a normotvorby. Vybrané analyzované zdroje se skládají z článků čerpaných z online databází jednoho hlavního proudu amerických novin (The Los Angeles Times) a jednoho alternativního amerického deníku (The Citrus College Clarion), aby umožnily komplexní a ucelenou analýzu role a dopadu konstrukcí amerických médií, různé marginalizované skupiny a identity.

Keywords:

Media, representation, international events, power, marginalized groups, critical discourse analysis

Klíčová slova:

Média, reprezentace, mezinárodní události, moc, marginalizované skupiny, kritická diskurzivní analýza

Title:

Media's Role in Constructing Representations of Marginalized Groups Identities and Experiences in Post-Olympic Los Angeles

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Role médií při vytváření reprezentace identit a zkušeností marginalizovaných skupin v poolympijském Los Angeles

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Introduction to the Topic

The Olympic Games is a spectacular and universally recognized event highlighting national commitments to international and democratic kinship wrapped in sports media's electric and entertaining ambiance. The Games showcase the strength of individual nations and the collective sportsmanship intertwined in a complex intersection of local and international dynamics. For several reasons, the 1984 Olympics hosted in Los Angeles, California, were pivotal in modern Olympic history. These Games changed how the world views modern-day sports and athletic achievements, but perhaps more importantly, they also altered how states viewed the capital advantages and global prestige earned by hosting the Games (Llewellyn, 2015). Cities were reluctant to host because of a history of troubling outcomes at past Games, including the deadly terrorist attacks at the Munich Games of 1972, the financial failure of the 1976 Montreal Games, and the political contention of the 1980 Moscow Games. Despite the declining appeal of the Olympic Games, Los Angeles applied to host the Olympic Games five times before being selected as the first alternate to Tehran, Iran, the intended 1984 host. The 1979 Shah overthrow triggered a tumultuous period in Iran, and so, given that no other states applied to be a host for the 1984 Games, hosting privileges were granted to Los Angeles.

The 1984 Games are considered a commercial and profitable success despite the issues regarding the upkeep of the city's infrastructure and the impact on vulnerable populations, particularly LA's homeless population and African American male population (McDougall & Ross, 2021). These concerns are abundantly discussed in the media's coverage of the Games, with one article stating "*that authorities viewed the city's sizable, unhoused community as a nuisance and public eyesore,*" and that the Games "*helped militarize the Los Angeles Police Department and accelerated the arrests and incarceration of African American men*" (McDougall & Ross, 2021). Through Olympic 'gang sweeps,' LAPD infiltrated low-income communities in South Central LA to prevent the global media from seeing (and sharing with the world) anything that the general public might perceive as unattractive or problematic (Boykoff, 2020). LA's efforts to mask internal municipal struggles paid off, as the 1984 Olympic Games changed the world's perceptions of what it means to be an Olympic host city. It helped to situate

Los Angeles as a major world metropolis and cultural capital (Sanders, 2013). Ultimately, the 1984 Games produced an estimated total profit of \$223 million (USD), which comfortably trumped profits realized in prior Games, thanks mainly to LA's pre-existing sporting facilities and the county's strong sponsor connections (About the Games, no date). The Games became a marketing event funded by many influential companies that reached billions of viewers worldwide. This lucrative structure forever changed the Olympics by creating an internal bond between media, industry, and the Olympic movement (Feizabadi et al., 2013). Gruneau and Cantelon argue that the 1984 Games' relationship with 'international capitalism' is more fully developed than ever in Olympic history (Gruneau & Cantelon, 1988). The International Olympic Committee's commitment to securing corporate partners as reliable sponsors was first prioritized in the 1980s through what is now known as the Worldwide Olympic Partner Program (Boykoff, 2020). Despite criticism from various advocacy groups, the media framed the 1984 Games as an international and local economic, social, and institutional success and an event that would forever change the modern-day Olympic Games.

The 1984 Olympic Games came to me due to my interest in American Cold War policy, media as a national and ideological power tool, my passion for studying human rights, and my interest in the economics of international events. Studying this topic has shed light on the subject's connection to globalization, national identity, international and local norms, global governance, human rights, and cultural diplomacy, and how the media is responsible for the dissemination of these norms and values via the use of linguistics, discursive, and socio-cultural tools and contexts. The 1984 Games are considered the first commercially successful and profitable Games that changed the structure and organizational model of all Games to follow. Being such a great success, the Games caused global business practices to change through a single event because it was the first Olympics to be primarily funded through private investments and corporate sponsorship. It was interesting to learn of the profitable successes of the Games after previous years of studying the severe economic recession, social and racial tensions, and political turmoil in 1980s Los Angeles. I was interested in the intersection between the Cold War and American media, aware that studying this period's newspaper publications would likely entail finding mass amounts of Cold War propoganda. I wanted to explore how much news coverage following such a massive global event as the Olympic Games would be dedicated to the Cold War or how much of the sporting event coverage would use the games as a symbol of

Western values and freedoms of capitalism. I was interested to see how much coverage would strictly go towards covering actual serious local structural and systemic issues rather than the Cold War. As for the human rights area of interest, I was captivated by the Rio Olympic Games' impacts on marginalized communities via displacement, social and economic disruption, and gentrification. As Los Angeles was the media powerhouse then, I was curious about how they represented their marginalized communities during an international event notorious for its adverse impacts on vulnerable communities. Los Angeles (Hollywood) had the opportunity to bring to light various diverse experiences due to its state-of-the-art developments in media and diverse population; I was curious to see how and if they did this. I wanted to explore how media, in the time of a profitable international event, intersects with economic, political, and social power structures and ideologies to represent those considered most vulnerable during a period of geopolitical tension.

Media is a highly effective tool for spreading relevant narratives, altering public opinion, shaping public perceptions, and shaping social consciousness (Solik et al., 2013). Regardless of the type of media source or the biases associated with a particular outlet, the language and narratives pushed by publications can accurately, inaccurately, not entirely, or fail to represent the experiences and identities of various groups. Media is a potent tool for defining social realities; viewers and readers turn to media to form their public opinions and embrace the opinions expressed within the media (Moy & Hussain, 2014). In the United States specifically, the media is tightly interconnected with various institutional power structures; Blanchard argues that the US mass media is a collection of omnipresent institutions that exercise their influence through production. Historically, American media virtually ignored ethnic and racial minorities while producing media and advertisements targeting the white imaginary and white audiences (Blanchard & Burwash, 2013). Media constructions tend to sensationalize or trivialize, most commonly when disaster or 'moral panic' occurs; these warped narratives typically include poor and racially distinctive young men (Moore, 1976). The media's power and tendency to influence the truth is essential to remember when studying American media representations of mainly non-white and other marginalized groups during events sponsored and supported by primarily white, wealthy, and Western institutions, organizations, and individuals.

The international sporting events that attract the world's media are intrinsically connected to society's global political and economic organizations (Kennedy & Hills, 2009). Mainstream

media representation of these grand international sporting events tends to glamorize the existence and hosting of mega-sports while ignoring or highlighting, depending on their particular motives, the political and social implications, and the voices who critique these events (Billings & Wenner, 2017). While the mainstream cultural and symbolic understanding of the Olympic Games paints them as a universally joyous and exhilarating affair, those living at the margins of host cities may have different experiences and perceptions. The media utilizes concepts like ‘sports evangelism,’ which describes the belief that sport can be a kind of ‘vaccination’ against gang formation, crime, and substance abuse, as an instrument for glamorizing international sporting events while simultaneously villainizing subordinated groups, such beliefs are commonly highlighted in discussions where sports and welfare are both mentioned (Ekholm, 2016). In the 1980s, the American media shifted from glamorizing sporting events and universal cooperation to scrutinizing local issues, for better or worse, and various implications followed greater visibility of regional social and economic problems. The existing literature argues that media representation of diversity has positive and negative sides and aspects. Media can give platforms to those with biased, generalized, and harmful views of marginalized groups; for example, the Los Angeles Times published LAPD captain Billy Wedgeworth’s statement that “*We’re trying to sanitize the area*” in low-income communities in an article describing the massive police sweep which took place in downtown LA areas before and during the 1984 Games (Daniel, 1984). On the other hand, there are examples of media granting platforms to organizations and individuals tasked with defending or protecting the rights of marginalized groups, often critiquing those with the power; for example, the LA Times also published an article posing the question, “*Is ‘weed out poverty’ some sort of sloppy code for ramping up gentrification?*” (Boykoff, 2017).

The data analysis portion of this thesis focuses on newspapers as a form of mass media. American newspaper is a highly complex institution and an essential area of media to study because of its historical and societal significance, “*The American newspaper is a remarkable institution, an intriguing and important historical achievement, [and is] today the most representative carrier and construer and creator of modern public consciousness*” (Schudson, 1991, p.1). Newspaper is considered the cornerstone of modern societies, politically significant in its ability to enhance or deny democracy, and socially as a profit-making scheme in contemporary capitalist societies (McChesney & Schiller, 2003). The national media system

underwent a significant shift in the 1980s when what was once a domestically owned media system concerned with local commercial interests moved to focus on global media and business flows (McChesney & Schiller, 2003). This change was driven by the United States media system's commitment to neoliberal globalization-oriented policies, such as the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act, a piece of legislation that was supported by several powerful ideological institutions and organizations whose ideas were heavily platformed at the time by the mainstream news media (Guardino, 2019). Neoliberalization has been critical in shaping American media, mainly because "*Neoliberalization has reinforced media political-economic imperatives in ways that encourage journalists to produce standardized, superficial and narrow coverage favoring conventional policy perspectives*" (Guardino, 2019, p. 43). Specifically for major mainstream newspaper outlets, the views of national Republican and Democratic Party elites, expressing a neoliberal reform consensus, were platformed to combat any 'radical' or independent critiques (Guardino, 2019). It is also evident that these primary newspaper sources and outlets selectively decide which issues to cover and select which powerful actors they are gaining 'reliable' information from (Guardino, 2019). Various power structures at the center of American newspaper organizations have become even more complex to analyze when attempting to understand their impact on the audience.

Sociological research recognizes the often detrimental effects these mega-sporting events have on the marginalized populations of host countries, significantly when marginalized people are displaced (Rocha & Xiao, 2022). How the media represents displacement events and which voices they choose to platform can create and influence stereotypes within the public, especially those built around race and ethnicity (Mastro, 2009). Acknowledging the economic and social implications of the Games is a relatively new phenomenon. This thesis investigates a period where the Games' financial, athletic, and infrastructural successes overshadowed the individual experiences of marginalized groups living in the city. The various historical contexts covered in the upcoming paragraphs will provide background on how and why media coverage of marginalized experiences was either inaccurate, overshadowed, or, in some cases, glaringly absent. The way American media covered these socially significant topics in the year following the 1984 Olympics can demonstrate how it influenced the construction and representation of minorities' identities and experiences.

Thesis Outline

This thesis questions how the American media institution influenced the construction and representation of minorities' experiences and identity in LA the year after the end of the 1984 Games. It argues that truthful and authentic media representations and language surrounding these vulnerable populations are essential as language guides mainstream thought. It is guided by the idea that media language and framing reveal their iconicity to us once the images, words, sounds, and symbols are unwoven and the intended narratives are deconstructed (Kennedy & Hills, 2009).

This thesis aims to understand how the media narratives following the 1984 Olympic Games represent and construct the identities and experiences of marginalized groups during a fiscally and diplomatically profitable period. The research question the thesis seeks to explore is: 'How did the American media influence the construction and representation of marginalized identities and experiences in the year following the 1984 Olympic Games?' A subquestion supplements the research question: 'How do these representations differ between mainstream and independent news sources?' This thesis argues for the need to understand the news institution as a foundational and perspective-shaping mechanism that impacts the local, national, and international levels. The research gap this thesis seeks to fill is significant: rather than looking at media representations *during* the events of the Olympics (a highly published thematic area in media and global studies), it seeks to understand how representation of these vulnerable groups is formed *following* the Games. Despite there being little to no literature or research on the marginalized representations in the media following the Games, it is clear through research that the narratives depicting these groups are still prone to have harmful effects on vulnerable populations. Los Angeles is a compelling example of a major international city with a complex local atmosphere and the added value of one of the most influential media-producing capitals in the world. The complex domestic history, global influence, and intersections of local and international actors and dynamics made the Los Angeles Olympics a worthy case study for a thesis seeking to understand the impacts of media discourse surrounding international and economically profitable events and the constructions of marginalized identities on the local and national scale.

With the Olympics returning to Los Angeles in 2028 during a period of new levels of unhoused folks, racially charged police brutality, and political polarization, vulnerable

populations are growing. Representations of these marginalized populations have the potential to advocate for their cause or have the potential to paint them in a light that can cause local, national, and international interests to suffer. It investigates how these media constructions and representations are possible, deconstructs the ideological and power influences in media institutions, and explores techniques used to magnify specific voices while silencing others. The year following the Olympic Games was an exciting period to research as it could demonstrate how the media and society reacted and constructed narratives following the decline of the sport, media, and profit frenzy. It also illustrates how media outlets and those invested in these outlets wish to create realities, alter perceptions, and shape societal attitudes. The thesis investigates the relationship between media influence and complex social dynamics within an urban space. Beyond that, it explores IR themes such as soft power, national identity, global human rights, global governance, globalization, and international capitalism. Researching and applying post-structuralist, post-neoliberalist, post-colonialist, critical race, and feminist theories uncovers the power dynamics and social constructions of reality and reveals the potential for global social change in the future. These theories guide the research that went into this thesis' research aims, literature review, data selection, and data analysis. Through a critical discourse analysis of 30 newspaper media sources, this thesis researches how American news media's language and narratives shape and construct the representation of those living on the margins of Los Angeles society during the Games.

Thesis Roadmap

To provide a clear and comprehensive exploration of media's influence on the representation of marginalized experiences and identities, this thesis is organized as follows: The introduction chapter provides relevant background to introduce the selected topic. The outline and roadmap chapter provide the thesis' aim and research design and introduce the theoretical foundation and methodology. The following chapter highlights why the research is relevant to the field of IR. Next, the contextual background chapter provides relevant case and historical background that is significant in understanding the depth of the research at hand. The subsequent chapter reviews existing literature outlining various IR, critical IR, and media representation theories that engage or relate to the role of media representation of marginalized groups following the 1984 Olympic Games. The next chapter goes into depth on the theoretical and

scholarly relevance outlined in the introductory section, elaborating further on the theorist and academic theories applied to this thesis and how they apply to the thesis research question. Next, the methodology chapter details critical discourse analysis, which perspectives are used in this research, why it is the most beneficial selection for this specific study, and a subsection detailing what data and themes are included in the research and why. The data analysis chapter explores what was found within the source research and how this data can be used to critically interpret American media's role in influencing the construction and representation of minorities' experience in Los Angeles in the year following the 1984 Olympics. The findings and discussion chapter approach the conclusions of the data analysis section holistically, combining the themes intersectionally to understand media impact on marginalized groups as a whole, also responding to the subquestion. Finally, the conclusion chapter ties all of the findings together to understand why this is significant to the greater field of IR and future international media and events, emphasizing the potential impact of the research on shaping future media representations and events.

IR Relevance

Studying how media complicity regarding marginalized individuals' treatment critically impacts vulnerable populations globally is relevant to international relations research. This topic can provide valuable insights into globalization, national identity, global governance, global human rights, and cultural diplomacy. Studying inclusive representation and acknowledging power structures in media production is crucial to understanding the intersections of international politics, media, and sports.

In 1984, America was a media powerhouse that saw a massive expansion of media reach, particularly during the Olympic Games. This reach expansion is an example of globalization, where wider international audiences could reach what was once only available to local citizens. This access to wider audiences permitted certain narratives to reach international viewers and readers. This dissemination of cultural norms and values is an example of the globalization of identity and culture. American media during and after the times of the Olympic Games were reaching foreign audiences, which allowed them to distribute depictions of marginalized experiences and identities however they wanted to vast amounts of people all across the globe. This played a role in global identity formation and how marginalized groups are perceived in the

United States, which may have impacted global communities and how they view their marginalized communities. It is argued that global media are central to the production of cultural identity due to the public-private interests involved in media and media's creations of world image (Chopra, 2010). The global political economy also faced a shift during this period regarding media ownership, distribution, and production expansions. These media expansions are examples of globalization's economic factors that can influence how vulnerable groups are portrayed and how the world digests and interprets this information. Media funding significantly impacts how global and local dynamics are presented to the world. Western media tends to shape global perceptions in a way that values Global North and Western values and institutions as the norm while villainizing or othering opinions, values, and standards that fall outside of those Western norms.

This topic touches on the concept of multiple forms of identity, including global and national identity. Media is responsible for the construction and representation of identity and nationalism. Newspapers, particularly mainstream media, are funded and backed by large corporations likely to have political and national ties and affiliations. When traffic is heightened on their specific media platforms during and after international events, they allow them to construct narratives and norms associated with identity to impact public perceptions. I find any form of American media during the Cold War interesting, as you can often see the villainization of one type of nationality while praising their own. Cold War aside, media often villainizes those who do not look or act like the 'typical' citizen of their organization's nation. Media texts tend to use normative identity categories and descriptions to distinguish the 'good' from the 'bad'; this is done through (but not limited to) racial, class, gender, and religious distinctions (Moskala, 2022). Representations of marginalized groups following international events such as the Olympic Games demonstrate the intersections between global and national identity and where those who either do not belong to the primary nationality or do not align with its most popular distinguishers fall within the media. Media in the year following the 1984 Games demonstrates how the American identity and values were projected on the global stage, arguably, given global contexts, for reasons more complex than national pride.

The Olympics as an institution is an excellent example of global governance, and the flaw of Olympic media regards governmentality. The Olympic Games are an example of global governance because they promote global norms, political and economic impacts, and

institutional framework. The responsibilities of the IOC as a transnational organization have led *“the Olympic Games [to] become a significant soft power instrument for states’ foreign policy, rather than being an arena of boycotts or chauvinism”* (Herguner, 2012). The power of the Olympic Games for state foreign policy, combined with the media’s power of influence, allowed for the promotion and regulation of global and national norms while also shaping subjectivities on both local and global levels. The media normalizes particular views, behaviors, and attitudes while villainizing others that do not align with state or global norms, which are often affiliated with Western or Global North value systems. Discourses constructed with Olympism, the philosophy of the Games, *“promote a world view which both enables/constrains our ability to see the world in particular ways and which promotes the internalization of behaviors which legitimate and foster this world view”* (Chatziefstathiou, 2008). The media benefits from this ability to shape global and local norms even after the Olympic Games through acknowledgment or connection to the Games in the media productions themselves.

Studying this topic raises questions about human rights and how to handle domestic cases of human rights injustices within an international institutionally hosted event. This research questions the role of media in advocating for justice via representation and constructions of those considered vulnerable to injustice. Media plays a vital role in disseminating information to global and local communities, so how those without a voice or platform are portrayed is significant to their acceptance and societal experiences. The media can bring awareness to marginalized issues occurring locally and globally. How the media represents, misrepresents, or underrepresents these issues has the potential to shape human rights norms and standards. When a human rights issue is covered nonchalantly, it can breed this nonchalant attitude within the global and local communities.

The absence or inadequate media representation of marginalized people is also significant due to its impact on a nation’s soft power. Soft power is a state’s ability to shape the preferences of others through attraction or persuasion, the ability to get what you want without using force or coercion (Nye, 1990). The ability to appeal to other nations is crucial as it grants the ability to debate and shape the international stage, *“Olympic Games are not only sporting competitions; they are also exercises in the management of relations between states and publics, at home and overseas, in order to augment the attractiveness and influence or the soft power of the states*

involved” (Burchell et al., 2015, p. 413). Joseph Nye argues that soft power is most successful when it goes unnoticed, making it complicated to track how it works (Nye, 2004). In an institution like the Olympics, liberal, friendly, and democratic values are fundamental to uphold. When a nation’s news source simplifies the reality of the treatment of marginalized communities through exceptional language or the absence of truthful narratives, it impacts a nation’s perceived inclusivity and respect, potentially threatening the soft power potential and influence. Media as a tool for soft power goes hand in hand with governmentality and cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is directly linked to soft power as it is the instrumentalization of culture under the soft power theory, “*the capacity of persuasion and attraction that allows the state to construct hegemony without using coercive methods*” (Zamorano, 2016). How a nation is perceived to handle domestic issues about marginalized groups impacts its soft power, particularly the United States, which frames itself as the pinnacle of freedom, liberty, and democracy. Media is one of the tools states use to demonstrate their cultural diplomacy, and this can be done through misrepresentations or the absence of truth. Practicing inclusive media representation and understanding misconceptions are essential to amplifying marginalized voices and acknowledging power structures in media production.

A common theme among these topics is the media’s use of linguistic, discursive, and socio-cultural tools and contexts to shape local and global norms and public perceptions. It is important to dissect media from these three levels to understand how knowledge, power, and discourse function and are shaped in the media.

Contextual Background

Los Angeles faced a variety of complex and transformative social, economic, and political shifts and challenges during the 1980s. Socially, the United State’s ongoing War on Drugs had detrimental direct impacts on low-income communities and tainted the public perception and media representation of the populations in those communities. In Los Angeles, the police often took militaristic approaches to manage the rapidly growing crack epidemic on the streets (Murch, 2015). With the government crackdown on drugs in the city, jail populations tripled between the years 1980 and 1993 (Tonry, 1995). Los Angeles saw a rise in gang violence in the 1980s as a symptom of increasing poverty and income inequality and the defunding of

social initiatives (Gmelch & Kuppinger, 2018). With the rise in gang violence, policing efforts increased even further, fostering distrust in the government among marginalized populations and generating social friction across racial, socioeconomic, and cultural lines.

Economically, the impacts of Reaganomics resulted in a general increase in the standard of living; however, income inequality increased, and the poverty rate remained constant, which had an outsized negative impact on low-income communities and individuals (Plotnick, 1993). The Reagan administration aimed to conceal the benefits of the welfare state, which challenged the agenda and ideological foundations of Reaganomics; as welfare programs were removed from the budget, homeless rates multiplied (Midgley, 1992). In 1984, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development estimated 30,000 unhoused individuals lived in Los Angeles County; however, this number increased to an estimated 100,000-160,000 by 1989 (Goetz, 1992). The turbulent economic changes Los Angeles faced negatively impacted the most vulnerable populations' living standards. Los Angeles experienced a rapid rise in real estate prices, which created significant challenges for low-income renters who now face imminent gentrification and rising, often unaffordable housing costs (Davis, 2006).

Politically, the mid-1980s were rife with fluctuations in the United State's immigration reform policies, and the country's ever-changing stance on immigration most significantly impacted communities and cities like Los Angeles with large immigrant populations (Simcox, 1988). Between 1980 and 1985, the United States' Hispanic population increased by nearly 17 million, resulting in an overall increase of 17% (Denavas, 1988). Initiatives run by the Immigration and Naturalization Services ramped up in 1979 and onwards in cities with significant immigrant populations. In Los Angeles, the 'Reagan Recession' led to high levels of unemployment and inflation, which, when combined with employers' preference for easily exploitable labor, made it convenient for many Americans to blame undocumented workers for the economic crisis (Toral, 2021). Public sentiments during a time of heightened economic and social anxiety made scapegoats out of undocumented immigrants for a variety of other issues. The Cold War era and the economic, political, and social propaganda surrounding it also politically impacted American cities. A heightened fear of communism bred prominent anti-social sentiments, a phenomenon that is readily apparent in the Reagan administration's oft-stated disdain toward 'vicious' socialism (Hayward, 2009). The Americans were dedicated to abolishing all forms of Soviet power and influence. This dedication to abolishment led to the

Reagan administration minimizing and cutting many social welfare programs and initiatives. For example, the administration performed a series of budget cuts through the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, which slashed funding to Medicare and Medicaid, education, food stamps, and other social programs and services (O'Connor, 1998). Los Angeles faced social, economic, and political crises that usually negatively impacted the public and media's perceptions and representations of marginalized groups. This contextual background is vital in understanding how the media framed these groups' identities and experiences in specific ways following economically and politically profitable events such as the 1984 Olympic Games.

The 1984 Los Angeles Olympics poses an intriguing case study demonstrating the impact of Western media and the power of language in shaping representations of the disadvantaged populations most harmed by the presence of the Olympic Games in their city. Analyzing Western media's role in conveying marginalized experiences and representing identity brings various power structures and economic motives to the surface. Researching media representations shortly after the 1984 Olympic Games yields significant and vital insight because it elucidates the political and social implications following the appeal of glamorized mega-sporting event publicity, especially in the context of the LA84 Olympics, where corporations significantly influenced advertisements and media publications. These Games generated great profit for a select few, yet poverty, unemployment, and income inequality levels continued to increase for most. Media covering sports and mega-events are deeply ideologically influenced by class, gender, race, and other socially constructed components, and understanding this discourse construction is critical in examining and understanding marginalized representations (Kennedy & Hill, 2009). This thesis seeks to understand how the media chose to amplify these dominant narratives and how the media represents those vulnerable groups excluded from the discourse.

During the heightened tension between the Soviet Union and the United States, economic success and soft power were highly significant to the nation's desire to be perceived in a certain way. The 1984 Olympic Games allowed the United States to manufacture international influence and leadership and promote US nationalism and exceptionalism (Allison, 2005). This research seeks to understand and provide insight into the intersections of media, economics, urban policy, race, gender, sports journalism, culture, and politics, around which the existing literature is sparse. The thesis investigates how these themes intersect to influence how the media represents groups outside the margins and will show how media representation can promote

more inclusive and authentic representations of vulnerable, defenseless groups after a period of heightened international notoriety. Ideally, this study will allow interpreters and readers digesting the US media to recognize how representations are written, guided, and socially constructed by various institutions, ideologies, and historical and personal experiences. The thesis also emphasizes the importance of including marginalized communities and individuals in the discourse surrounding their identities and experiences. US media's generalizations and exclusive nature are researched topics; however, studying the representation of contextually complex marginalized groups following profitable and highly represented international events such as the Olympic Games is a significant and novel addition to the literature surrounding US media.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

Media's influence on the representation of marginalized identities and experiences is a significant topic within international relations literature as it demonstrates the significance of media in shaping global narratives and perceptions of marginalized groups' issues and experiences. The primary objective of the following literature review is to understand and review various scholarly literature on the effects of economic, social, political, institutional, cultural, and global power structures. The literature review aligns with the research question of this thesis: How did the American media institution influence the construction and representation of minorities' experiences and identity in LA the year after the end of the 1984 Games? The literature investigates the control mechanisms that influence media systems and their productions. It also highlights the power media has in creating and maintaining soft power, economic ideology, cultural diplomacy, and overall global governance. Specifically when discussing the Olympic Games, a culturally diplomatic event requiring years of local preparations and summoning a fierce level of media attention. The heightened media exposure surrounding the Olympic Games garners international relations scholars' attention as the media shapes global narratives and perceptions, highlights the various power structures in most international states and impacts international law and human rights. The Olympic Games, a

global mega event, affects many individuals and groups, particularly those living within the host city. By deconstructing the various texts discussing influences such as neoliberalism, colonialism, racism, nationalism, and patriarchy on media and Olympic events, this literature seeks to make sense of the significance of media representations even after an event is completed, as these systems and structures maintaining these dynamics do not disappear even after Olympic-centered media lessens. The review covers 21 texts published between 1967 and 2021 to contextualize the research, generate new insights, and identify gaps demonstrating the value of my research objectives and questions.

1.2 Critical Analysis of Communication Studies

Stuart Hall's work, "Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices," targets understanding how representations in media can construct various racial and cultural identities. Hall emphasizes how the reflectionist approach is flawed as representation and media are not as simple as a mirror reflecting the world. Instead, the media is a tool to help construct societal representations of subordinate cultures, races, and identities (Hall, 2013). He acknowledges that the media is a significant tool used to build various norms and values that have the extraordinary power to influence public perceptions. One of the major themes is the emphasis on language as a tool of meaning-making, and that representation achieves its power through language. Hall focuses on signifying practices, including vocabulary, images, and text structures, and how they produce meaning that contributes to constructing identities. This work explains how representations in media can build and reinforce racial, social, and cultural identities.

Armand Mattelart and Michele Mattelart's text, "Theories of Communication: A Short Introduction," analyzes communication and media theories through a postcolonial lens. They seek to understand how media has evolved throughout various political and social shifts. The authors emphasize the media's connection with culture and how it has the potential to protect and uphold the different power structures found in society. The text examines how understanding media representations goes beyond the Euro-centric and Western-centric views typically associated with communications and media studies. Their text includes various critical theories, including critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and feminist theory, and comprehensively and

foundationally dissects media studies while applying them to complex cultural and societal contexts. Regarding media representation of marginalized groups, Mattelart and Mattelart understand how Euro and Western-centric norms and values guide these mainstream media representations. Their exploration of how communication networks function within society examines the political, social, and economic influences that impact media communication systems (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1998).

Mary Talbot's "Language and Power in the Modern World" focuses on the relationship between language and power, often citing Foucault's work. Talbot engages more directly with language and how it is a tool used to maintain relations of power in society, "*Language is crucial in articulating, maintaining and subverting existing relations of power in society, both on global, national and institutional levels and on the local level of interpersonal communication. Power, then, has multiple locations and valances*" (Talbot et al., 2008, p. 1-2). She also acknowledges the power of language within the media and the power of rhetorical devices, which can alter the take-home message for audiences or even construct a reader's negative views on an event, a group, or an individual. Language is a potent tool that goes hand in hand with the media to push specific agendas. Talbot conducts a discourse analysis to uncover the hidden power relations and power structures within language and language use. Her understanding of language as a political manipulation tool that influences public perceptions, enhances the power of stereotypes and strengthens dominant discourses is significant in applying to the thesis' questioning of media's role in constructing and representing marginalized identities and experiences.

In Jutta Weldes' "Constructing National Interests: The United States and the Cuban Missile Crisis," she explores how national identities and interests are constructed through discourse less abstractly than previously mentioned scholars. The subject of her publication is the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, an event that epitomizes the critical geopolitical tension of the notorious Soviet-US rivalry. In her book, Weldes draws on various social theories to expose the false realities created by the United States to represent the insecure US identity as the mighty nation they wanted the world to believe they were. Weldes used the term 'security imaginary' to explain the US technique of using media and discourse to construct both US and Soviet national identities. Weldes takes a constructivist approach that explores how these national interests and identities are socially constructed instead of pre-given. She acknowledges that constructions of identity and interests consider broader geopolitical contexts and twist these contexts to frame

narratives to align with one's interests. Weldes also acknowledges the influence of the Cold War on American interests and, thus, on the construction of American interests and the need for public support. Weldes argues that social and discursive processes constrain national interests, highlighting the central role of ideology and political solid actors in this construction, where media is an agent (Weldes, 1996).

In “Cinematic Geopolitics,” Michael Shapiro investigates how media reflects and shapes geopolitical narratives and understandings. Although his focus is primarily on film, his focus on how media practices and representations shape IR and geopolitical understandings is relevant to this thesis. In his work, Shapiro investigates two significant themes: constructions of reality and representations of power. This means that he believes media is not only a reflection of ongoing power dynamics and relationships but also perpetuates power dynamics and narratives. He explains how media, such as film, functions as a ‘counter-space’ to contemporary media inspired and distributed by government policy (Shapiro, 2008). This clear intersection between media and international politics encourages readers to investigate spatial and temporal dimensions of geopolitics in the press and film. Shapiro critiques mainstream representations in that they are responsible for reinforcing harmful and biased stereotypes, providing an alternative that calls for engaging with independent or alternative forms of media as they are less likely to push those dominant narratives. This is relevant to my study of media and how it impacts those less likely to be represented by dominant narratives. It also connects to the Cold War era and how much of the media during that era was prioritizing pushing US political and economic interests rather than covering ‘truths.’

1.3 Implications of the Neoliberal and Capitalist Agenda on Media

Jean Baudrillard frequently includes discussions of neoliberalism in his work, particularly during his reviews of the hyperrealistic nature of society (Baudrillard, 1994). Other authors acknowledge the power of the neoliberal agenda on representation within society and, more specifically, in the media. In “Manufacturing Consent,” a 1988 book written by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, the two authors' central argument is that mass media within capitalist societies aids in social control and is used to spread capitalist ideology to the masses further. The authors present the ‘Propaganda model’ to describe how media avoids offering a selection of

viewpoints as it goes against the interests of elites and institutions that support the outlets (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The outcome is a media system lacking diverse perspectives. Its productions must go through a literal or figurative censoring process to appeal to those who directly or indirectly fund the media. The authors describe another control mechanism they refer to as ‘flak,’ if a media source produces and publishes an article or story deemed ‘negative,’ the outlet is held accountable through various disciplinary measures (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The authors emphasize how this is all a threat to the democratic values built by the elites of the neoliberal system propelled by the media as a social institution. The experiences of marginalized groups are not shared, and those who wish to cover society’s realities or ‘negative’ truths are encouraged not to do so. The authors emphasize how the complex media system is a product of corporate funding, control, and narrow viewpoints and how this has a detrimental effect on democracy in the United States. The authors emphasize the ‘anti-communism’ filter used by mass media of the neoliberal capitalist state, an essential application to this thesis’ concern with media during the Cold War era and the neoliberal agenda of the Ronald Reagan administration, *“The force of anti-communist ideology has possibly weakened with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the virtual disappearance of socialist movements across the globe, but this is easily offset by the greater ideological force of the belief in the ‘miracle of the market’ (Reagan)”* (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, p. 19). The Propaganda Model and the theories supplied by Herman and Chomsky are especially relevant when applied to the 1984 Olympic Games when American media was attempting to balance advertising the grandeur of the Olympic Games while also ensuring ‘flak’ or dissent did not reach the masses.

Robert W. McChesney emphasizes neoliberalism's influence on media policy in his book *“The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas.”* In his book, McChesney acknowledges how the US media tends to reinforce the state's economic and social contours while ensuring that public discussion on media policy is obsolete. He explains how this limits democratic values and freedom of expression, emphasizing how neoliberalism works best in a system with a formal electoral democratic process; unfortunately, when information and intentions are hidden from the public, it highlights how equating capitalism with democracy is ludicrous. By ensuring the public is not involved in media, the state’s vessel for market-first ideology and beneficiary of subsidies, it provides the survival of neoliberalism, *“Demoralization and depoliticization are the necessary conditions for a “healthy” neoliberal society. That is why*

just to stand for elementary democratic practices and principles marks one as radical”

(McChesney, 2008, p. 17). Finally, according to McChesney, the book's greatest takeaway is the understanding that media is central to communicating the world's broader economic and political system. He uses the Cold War era to demonstrate how American media embraced this ‘closed-minded’ narrative, framing Soviets as brutal, murderous, intolerant individuals and suggesting that an alternative to capitalism is incomprehensible and a ‘nightmare’ even to acknowledge. In connection to the Olympic Games, McChesney also suggests that media’s framing and management of sports media fit perfectly with this neoliberal rubric, *“By the 1970s, it had become axiomatic that successful management of professional sports leagues and franchises is based on the capacity to best exploit rights... sports has been colonized”* (McChesney, 2008, p. 230).

Jules Boykoff, a political scientist who has written considerable literature on the connections between the Olympic Games and capitalism, also emphasizes the Olympic Games as a corporate event prioritizing, entertaining, and protecting the wealthy, with media giving little room to issues about the poor and marginalized. In “Celebration Capitalism and the Olympic Games,” Boykoff introduces ‘celebration capitalism’ to demonstrate the intersections between mega-sports, capitalism, and the mass media. He cites the International Olympic Committee at the heart of this ‘Olympic image,’ *“Somewhere between a multinational corporation and global institution, the International Olympic Committee sits at the heart of a vast interlocking structure of national and international bodies, sporting associations, and sponsoring firms”* (Boykoff, 2014, p. 2). Although he touches on the liberalization of the modern Olympic Games, Boykoff emphasizes that the Olympics are more about the dynamics of capitalism, similar to the royal weddings and the building of sports stadiums in the US. Like Naomi Klein’s explanation of disaster capitalism in “The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism,” Boykoff claims celebration capitalism is like disaster capitalism’s affable cousin, *“...while disaster capitalism exploits social trauma to eviscerate the state and force-march us toward free-market capitalism, celebration capitalism manipulates state actors as partners, pushing us toward economics rooted in so-called public-private partnerships”* (Boykoff, 2014, p. 3).

Helen Jefferson Lenskyj’s 2008 book “Olympic Industry Resistance: Challenging Olympic Power and Propaganda” seeks to understand how the Olympic industry’s neoliberal ideology and agenda shape the Olympic industry and the way its media silences the voices of

marginalized communities and individuals. She focuses specifically on the heteronormative, patriarchal, and neoliberal foundations of the International Olympic Committee, citing the 1980s decisions to add more events for women after feminist lobbyists advocated for it, “*The fact that synchronized swimming and rhythmic gymnastics, stereotypically ‘feminine’ (heterosexual) sports-were among the new sports added to the Olympic lineup around that time demonstrated some of well-intentioned liberal initiatives*” (Lenskyj, 2008, p. 6). She also emphasizes the impact of globalization the Olympic Games promoted, particularly as a consumption-oriented form of capital, “*One impact of globalization on Canadian and US cities has been the replacement of ‘heavy capitalism’ in the form of industrial production with the more profitable ‘light capitalism’ that allowed businesses to move to areas where conditions were most profitable*” (Lenskyj, 2008, p. 71). Another impactful chapter in Lenskyj’s book is where she discusses the media’s impact on policies and language surrounding homeless people. She suggests that the Olympic industry increases civil rights injustices specifically for those with no private space, particularly in the aftermath of the Games (Lenskyj, 2008). Terms such as ‘health hazard,’ ‘indigent,’ and calling for city employees to ‘better work with our police to identify and report criminal activity’ were standard and prominent within city meeting discussions, media, and policy work. The impacts of the Olympic industry and media on the representation of marginalized identities and experiences are heavily influenced by neoliberal and capitalist values, which prioritize profit over truth and fair representation.

1.4 Marginalized Communities in Olympic Host Cities Media

Although few pieces of international relations literature veer from dominant narratives and research on state power, which lack a focus on normative understandings of global events, issues, and contexts, this literature does exist. This section focuses on the historical contexts of power politics, neoliberalism, colonialism, racism, and patriarchy and how this shaped the media representations of marginalized identities and experiences in the Olympic Host City. This section emphasizes the Olympics' impact on exacerbating inequalities and negative or unrealistic representations of marginalized groups impacted or dealing with those inequities.

In her chapter “Marginalized Identity: New Frontiers of Research for IR,” Bina D’Costa explores the significance and methodological implications of putting these marginalized research

subjects at the forefront of IR research. Her chapter focuses mainly on gender-based violence in the context of the period after the Independence War of Bangladesh, and her chapter emphasizes the shortcomings of traditional IR literature in centering these vulnerable voices. D'Costa suggests, "*Action-oriented research in marginalized areas has the potential to demonstrate, with empirical evidence, how gender exclusion creates some fundamental flaws in IR academic work, and therefore shapes inadequate policy and governance measures*" (D'Costa, 2006, p. 129). She defines marginalization as social status, emphasizing lack of knowledge and social, political, and economic contribution potentials as critical indicators of marginalization. D'Costa mainly links marginalization to exclusion and discrimination, manifesting in various forms. Her understanding of marginalized groups research and its potential contributions to understanding the 'dark realities of IR' guides the remainder of this literature review and thesis.

Jacqueline Kennelly and Paul Watts' article "Sanitizing Public Space in Olympic Host Cities: The Spatial Experiences of Marginalized Youth in 2010 Vancouver and 2012 London" is a cross-national qualitative study investigating homeless and street-involved youth living within the two Olympic host cities. The publication examines their encounters with police, gentrification, Olympic infrastructures, and experiences living in these cities during the Games. Kennelly and Watts question the Olympics's positive imageries and associations with benefitting and inspiring all the young of the world. The scholars suggest that the Olympics do not benefit *all* youth; they decide this by examining which boroughs and neighborhoods the central Olympic infrastructure runs through. During the 2012 London Games, "*more than 50 percent of the resident populations of Hackney, Newham, and Tower Hamlets have either low or no formally recognized qualifications*" and "*The five host boroughs also have a higher percentage of young people not in employment*" (Kennelly & Watt, 2011, p. 767). The article also noticed that the eastern wealthier zones of these boroughs are sites of 'well-documented moral panic' about the youth and criminal activity occurring in the western regions. This study of urban spaces as spectacles of political, social, and cultural processes is significant to this thesis. The study also looks at media reporting and how, in Vancouver, it appeared to have a positive effect on homeless populations in that they were being left alone, "*... the Olympic spectacle had transferred this central urban space from a site of intense surveillance and policing into a space of consumption*" (Kennelly & Watts, 2011, p. 774). They also noted that marginalized youth, specifically, faced pressure from the police in the year preceding the Games.

In “Human Rights Abuses at the Rio 2016 Olympics: activism and the Media”, Adam Talbot and Thomas F. Carter examine the impacts of the Rio Olympic Games expressly how mainstream international media outlets framed instances of forced evictions and police brutality on marginalized Olympic city populations. The authors recognize that activists struggle to fight these abuses and advocate for the vulnerable population's rights to be recognized and respected within the media. Talbot and Carter approach the topic from a human rights and international law perspective, acknowledging the complicated position these groups are in, “*The vulnerable, such as those who lack adequate housing, the marginalized and the impoverished, depends on rights more than ever yet their very marginality transforms them into easily exploitable subjects not due full consideration under the ‘human’ part of human rights*” (Talbot & Carter, 2019, p. 3). The chapter discusses the media coverage of police brutality and housing issues. However, the police brutality issues of pacification, security, and policing were mentioned between 20-60 percent more than housing issues; they were related to security measures for athletes and tourists rather than their impact on residents (Talbot & Carter, 2019). The authors also emphasize the comparative fewer mentions of ‘housing issues’ such as evictions and gentrification, suggesting that topics directly related to resident impacts generally draw less attention.

Richard Giulianotti’s chapter “The Beijing 2008 Olympics: Examining the Interrelations of China, Globalization, and Soft Power” explores the national and international significance of Beijing's hosting of the 2008 Games. He introduces the term “*glocalized*” to explain the duality in China’s representations of the Olympic events experienced by those digesting the media (Giulianotti, 2015, p. 286). He emphasizes the role of contemporary globalization in China’s construction of cultural convergence and cultural divergence on the local and international levels to appeal to a broader range of global societies. Arguably, the most significant takeaway from Giulianotti’s literature is his analysis of the Beijing Olympics as both a soft power and disempowerment opportunity for the host city. Giulianotti claims, “*..the Olympics were intended inter alia to boost China’s soft power in terms of image and appeal as a highly modern, efficient and increasingly prosperous nation; as the home to a sophisticated ancient culture and civilization; and, as an attractive destination for international tourists, professionals, and student*” (Giulianotti, 2015, p. 289). He goes on to critically apply this concept of soft power to the treatment of minority nationals to demonstrate the Games' potential to disempower a nation. In China, their reaction to international cries critiquing political freedoms, the treatment of

minority groups, and China's role in Tibet called for the Chinese media and politicians not to take accountability but instead proclaim the West as abusers of human rights. On the soft power/disempowerment issue, Guilianotti claims, "...for the hosts of sport mega-events, levels of 'soft disempowerment tend to be at their highest before and, at times, during the event; 'soft power' tends to be realized more effectively during and after the event" (Giulianotti, 2015, p. 291). This chapter raises important questions regarding the impacts of globalization and soft power opportunities on media and its representations of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

1.5 Treatment of Marginalized Communities in 1984 Los Angeles

The following literature covers the treatment and representation of marginalized communities in Los Angeles during and around the 1984 Olympic Games. This section explores the impacts of media representations on gentrification, community relations, and urban development. It uses case studies and data to understand the influence of media narratives on public opinion, policy, and societal treatment of marginalized groups living in Olympic and post-Olympic Los Angeles communities.

Arguably, the most significant and comprehensive analysis of Los Angeles' modern history is Mike Davis' "City of Quartz, Excavating the Future in Los Angeles." Davis' book critically examines the city's political, social, and economic history, focusing primarily on issues related to prominent power structures' impacts on marginalized groups living in Los Angeles. Davis touches on the youth violence epidemic that took place in the 1980s, particularly after the (curiously synchronized) 1984 booming emergence of crack cocaine on the streets of low-income communities. He acknowledges how the media, together with city police, inflated the issue to distinguish those involved as 'killers,' 'wannabees,' and 'rotten little cowards.' Although the number of gang members at the time has been studied to be around 10,000-50,000, local media was said to amplify this to 70,000-80,000, while the Sheriff's Department claimed over 100,000 (Davis, 2006). Davis also suggests that the media at the time was guilty of having the 'white middle-class imagination,' "...absent from any first-hand knowledge of inner-city conditions, magnifies the perceived threat through a demonological lens" (Davis, 2006, p. 224). He emphasizes the significance of language choice in getting points across. On the stagnant nature of home-owning in the Valley (notoriously low-income and racially diverse), "... 'slow-

growth movement' also had ugly racial and ethnic overtones of an Anglo gerontocracy selfishly defending its privileges against the job and housing needs of young Latino and Adian populations" (Davis, 2006, p. viii). He also emphasizes the weight of anti-communist agendas, noting that American media suggests they sped the moral degeneration of America, whether through drugs, radical economic decision-making, or against the overall common interest.

In "Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles," Eric Avila investigates the economic vitality and demographic growth of Los Angeles in the decades following the end of World War II. He suggests that race and space are the two primary categories of analysis in his study of popular culture and social relations, "*Space, like time, is an arbiter of social relations, and the identities that we inhabit- race, class, gender, sexuality- are codified within a set of spaces that we describe as neighborhoods, homes, cities...*" (Avila, 2006, p. xiv). He suggests that the end of WW2 called for a change in cultural experiences and understanding, the media and pop culture as a product of that, "*An emergent sociospatial order that promised a respite from the well-known dangers and inconveniences of the modern city*" (Avila, 2006, p. xv). This spatial and racial polarization that defined urban life was especially present during Reagan's pushing of New Deal liberalism. Avila also mentions the impact of the Reagan-era rise of the Christian right, "*Its arousal of racial opposition and its racialized representational fare upheld material and symbolic divisions among racial groups and provided a symbolic foundation upon which to oppose subsequent forms of civil rights legislation and policy toward immigrants*" (Avila, 2006, p. 229). Although not explicitly concerned with marginalized groups' treatment during the times of the 1984 Olympics, Avila's book provides significant insight into various forms of domination of media representations of Los Angeles spaces and places, highlighting the white and ruling-class structures which uphold not only the mass media culture but the city as well.

"La migra in 1980s Los Angeles: Exploitation, unemployment, and the legality of the INS raids" by Arnoldo Toral covers the 1980s treatment of Latino/a individuals and workers living in Los Angeles. Toral suggests that mass media coverage of these raids had both positive effects on Los Angeles immigrant workers, implying that media reports could warn Latina/o communities which areas they should avoid throughout the city. However, he also suggests that the adverse effects of heightened media attention harmed immigrant employees as their fear of deportation was heightened by employers who sought to strengthen their control over their

production capabilities. Toral says, “*Equally consequentially, these raids also diverted attention from more plausible causes of the nation’s economic decline*” (Toral, 2021, p. 23). Notions suggesting that undocumented immigrants minimize the amount of available work for Americans is a claim that has been deeply contested in the US. Toral emphasizes how the INS worked with the media to convince Los Angeles residents of the benefits of these raids on the local economy. INS Deputy Directory Jerry Sewell argued, “*132 jobs paying 4 to 5 hourly were made available by the raids*”. He also applied it to the influence of Ronald Reagan’s economy, referring to the raids and the media interpretations of them as a “*publicity stunt to improve [Reagan’s] standing with the public*” (Toral, 2021, p. 26). This literature emphasizes the treatment of these vulnerable working-class people is a story of fear and exploitation and the ideological agendas behind these treatments.

Jenna Chandler’s “LA ‘sterilized’ its streets for the ‘84 Olympics- how will it treat the homeless in 2028?” poses an interesting question that she analyzes through understanding how the city and media treated the homeless population in 1984 and what this means for the upcoming Games. Chandler details the pristine venues, streets, and Los Angeles during the 1984 Olympic Games with freshly covered graffiti murals and fresh flowers. She questions what this all means for the poor or homeless residents of the city. She suggests that this ‘beautification campaign’ explicitly targets the homeless population, “*enforcing laws that made it a crime to be homeless rather than finding permanent solutions to the crisis*” (Chandler, 2018). She provides a handful of examples of the media and police teaming up to handle the “*drunk farm*” and justify the legal and punitive actions taken on those inhabiting the streets (Chandler, 2018). Chandler also describes the advanced military technology acquired in response to the 1972 Munich Olympic terrorist attack; however, she mentions how the armored vehicles were used to raid low-income homes. Her article focuses primarily on treating and representing the homeless in 1980s Los Angeles. Still, she also mentions prostitutes and drug dealers, highlighting the importance of providing adequate housing for vulnerable groups as well as jobs and psychological help services.

1.6 Independent News, Local Solutions, and Intersectionality Section

The following section investigates literature discussing the role of advocacy groups, independent news sources, and community organizations that challenge mainstream representations and narratives surrounding marginalized groups in Olympic host cities. The literature demonstrates how these alternative and independent media sources challenge those structures and institutions with power and control and attempt to hold them accountable or prevent them from continuing their harmful actions and policies.

Andy Miah and Dr. Beatriz Garcia's research on the role of alternative media coverage helped to explain the significance of non-accredited media for Britain before the 2012 London Olympics. In "The Olympic Games: Imagining a New Media Legacy," the two authors emphasize the grand nature of the Olympic Games as a global media spectacle, bringing together the world's largest transnational corporations and media companies. They elaborate on the media's role in pushing the Olympic ideals of inspiring youth, building social cohesion, and promoting mutual understanding across cultural and state lines (Miah & Garcia, 2012). They highlight the explicit intersections between cultural, political, and media, particularly for the host nations who, despite the Games aiming to be an apolitical organization, provide a platform for each city to highlight their unique political concerns. They argue that non-accredited media allows narratives outside of those pushed by local stakeholders to be seen, "*It is also the primary route towards telling and publicizing cultural stories*" (Miah & Garcia, 2012, p. 38). The article suggests that traditional and non-accredited media can coexist, "*The focal point for these discussions is about how the rise of new media will interface with traditional media organizations, not as a means towards the former's appropriation, but as a mechanism towards redistributing media power and building a more critical media community within our society*" (Miah & Garcia, 2012, p. 39).

"Mediating the Olympics" by P. David Marshall, Becky Walker, and Nicholas Russo explore the elaborate media spectacle, the Olympic Games, and identify the power shifts between traditional and newer media forms. Although not explicitly focused on independent or community-based media coverage, this literature provides insight into conventional media's aversion to newer media formats as it challenges mainstream media institutions' profits and heavily mediated coverage (Marshall et al., 2010). The literature focuses mainly on the 2008 Beijing Games; however, the Los Angeles Games are frequently mentioned. The 1984 Games

changed the way that media maintained control over the event and the way that television constructs a unified media experience, “*For a moment, the centralized systems of communication, television, and newspapers in particular, that have helped to organize the contemporary world and legitimize its structures, were working with full-perhaps nostalgic-force and power*” (Marshall et al., 2010, p. 263). New media challenges the tightly corporately controlled global mediascape, which, according to the authors, is an act of resisting traditional media’s non-democratic censorship, mediation, and control of information.

Helton Levy and Claudia Samento’s “Watching the 2016 Olympics on Brazil’s Alternative Media: From the Platform Hijack to Discourse Autonomy” analyzes alternative media coverage and its effects on the Olympic media agenda. The literature challenges the mainstream understandings of alternative media, which suggest that it intends to ‘hijack’ mainstream Olympic media platforms. Instead, the authors discover that these alternative media sources are emphasizing the damaging effects of the Olympic Games on their local communities—an emphasis that the authors refer to as ‘discourse autonomy.’ The article questions ‘coverage’ as factual narration as presented by the mass media, “*Mass media coverage would be involved ‘disputing areas as producers and disseminators of meaning about the events and contexts of social life’*” (Levy & Sarmiento, 2018). Whereas alternative media truly comes at reporting from a ‘periphery perspective,’ “*Alternative journalists ‘have little interest in balancing reporting,’ as they do not hide their bias*” (Levy & Sarmiento, 2018). The authors use the 2013 Brazil protests to demonstrate how alternative media producers covered the events beyond the police and violence narratives that appeared on mainstream media outlets. The authors suggest that alternative media provides complementary narratives from the Olympics; however, they were not hijacking the platform; this is what the authors suggest is an act of discursive autonomy.

“NOlympians: Inside the Fight Against Capitalist Mega-Sports in Los Angeles, Tokyo and Beyond ” by Jules Boykoff is a book that explores the negative impacts of hosting mega-sporting events on local communities and cities. Boykoff emphasizes the local communities, activists, and organizers who use their independent platforms to shed light on the implications of such hosting responsibilities. Boykoff’s perspective is highly insightful as he was a former US Olympic soccer team member, and his work focuses on the various myths of the Olympic Games. His work in the following book is based on over 100 interviews with anti-Olympic activists focusing on alternative-media courage. He suggests that mainstream media’s ‘sports

washing' is primarily a distraction, "In democratic societies, sports washing distracts us from unjust processes like gentrification and over-policing" (Boykoff, 2020, p. 4). As a local Los Angeles case study, Boykoff investigates the role of the Democratic Socialists of America campaign to arrange an anti-capitalist stance in a country that is hyper-capitalist (Boykoff, 2020). NOlympics LA is an advocacy group that surfaced in 2017 from the city's Democratic Socialist of America chapter. This movement pushes the idea that these mega-sporting events are notorious for pushing sportswashing, a term used to describe when cities use sporting events to repair their tainted reputations and distract the domestic public from their domestic issues (Boykoff, 2020). He explains again that mainstream media covering the time before the Olympics is more concerned with building infrastructure and budgeting. As far as post-Olympics goes, Boykoff suggest journalists are far more included to focus in on future Olympic Games than to cover whether past-Olympic 'legacies' are fulfilled (Boykoff, 2020). He suggests this is why it is so tricky for alternative or activist media to gain traction, as their narratives either face the "radical flank effect" or are irrelevant to the masses (Boykoff, 2020). Boykoff suggests a potential solution for activism and alternative media is to use comedy to make news more desirable and recognizable.

1.7 Gaps in Literature Section

The following section will highlight the limitations of existing research on the representation of marginalized groups in Olympic host cities. There is a significant amount of literature concerning the political economy of communications, tying together the intersection of the neoliberal agenda and media production outcomes. There is literature surrounding marginalized experiences and treatment before and during mega-sporting events, mainly regarding the Olympic Games. Unfortunately, outside of Jules Boykoff, it was nearly impossible to find literature and scholars that focused on media representation's significance in the years following the Olympic Games. There also needs to be more literature covering how activist media approaches the Olympic media machine and how they are to take space in the media institution.

Literature covering the media of the 1984 Olympic Games was also challenging to find, which is surprising as this case involves an interdisciplinary intersection of studies. Further

research highlighting the techniques used by the mass media to alter or misrepresent the identities and experiences of marginalized groups in the years following a mega-sporting event is necessary. Research on globalization can investigate the expansion of media in the late 1900s and what effect this had on marginalized groups worldwide. The research focused on national identity can explore the role of Olympic-inspired nationalism on countries that were formerly colonized or actively colonized by great world powers. Studying global governance and the role of the IOC media in maintaining and reinforcing Westphalian governance models is another topic that could fill research gaps. Understanding the role of media in soft power and cultural diplomacy during the Cold War is another interesting topic that could provide insight into foreign affairs and global power dynamics. Finally, research comparing coverage of athletes versus marginalized athletes during the 1984 Olympics and their experiences in the media could provide a deeper look into misrepresentation and the role of social norms in representation and constructions of truth. The absence of literature on the 1984 Los Angeles Games' media leaving an impact on the representation of marginalized experiences and identities leaves room for further research on mega-sport events implications, globalization, media studies, national identity, and social justice.

2. Theoretical Framework

This section engages with academics who go against mainstream theories of thought, particularly those who critique and dissect norms and power structures associated with neoliberal, racist, colonial, heteronormative, eurocentric, and classist values. The thesis and research use various foundational theories and critiques to understand the effects of the lack of or distorted representations of marginalized groups' experiences and identities and touch on the implications of these representations. This section aims to make sense of and bring awareness to the various interpretations of the media's existence as a powerful tool that can impact thought due to its connections to influential power structures. This section supplements later discussions connecting the theories that help explain how general media, global sporting media, and the commercialization surrounding global sporting events can have profound political, cultural, or ideological implications for marginalized groups, specifically through the representation (or misrepresentation) of their identities and experiences in media.

2.1 Poststructuralist Theory

Although a highly criticized and debated international relations theory due to its rejection of objective truth and understanding of key IR concepts as socially constructed, poststructuralism has provided great insight into the relationship between power and knowledge, particularly in studying international relations. Although international relations seeks to understand objective knowledge free from applying values, interests, and power relations, post-structuralism treats knowledge production as an aesthetic and political matter (Devetak, 2009). It differs from mainstream IR theories, such as realism, in that it is more concerned with a broader view of power that extends beyond a state driven by self-interest (Hansen, 2016). It is a theory that draws attention to the power of language through linguistic systems where meaning is created, also known as discourse (Foucault, 1974). Poststructuralism arose in response to structuralism's inability to account for deeper social meanings within linguistic signs: *“Thus while structuralists conceive of signs as having arbitrary meanings and linguistic communities as being relatively homogenous and consensual, poststructuralists take the position that the signifying practices of society are sites of struggle and that linguistic communities are heterogeneous arenas characterized by conflicting claims to truth and power”* (Norton & Morgan, 2012, p. 2). Post-structuralists suggest that language has ‘political power’ due to its existence as a ‘medium of both communication and mystification’ (Walker, 1988). They suggest that ‘investing’ in a specific language will open doors to a broader range of symbolic and material resources, thus increasing value, social power, and cultural capital (Peirce, 1995). Below are scholarly interpretations of poststructuralism and what it means for studying the world and contemporary global issues and events.

Poststructuralism often emphasizes the instability of language and reality while challenging notions of universal meaning. The theory provides the concept of ‘deconstruction,’ a method of analysis that assumes discourses and thoughts are fluid and unstable, leading to the poststructural desire to interpret and break down the texts (Derrida, 1967). Poststructuralism suggests that subjects maintain power by manipulating the masses or through unbalancing reality. It is suggested that power doesn’t simply assert control over reality, rather through manipulation and distortion, power maintains its dominance and control without the masses

being aware of it (Baudrillard, 1994). This acknowledgment of the instability of language leads scholars and researchers to explore the relationship between speech and writing, described as binary oppositions, which is particularly evident in Western philosophy and thought. Poststructuralism suggests that this binary opposition system is hierarchical and constantly shifting, making deconstruction more complex and marginalizing certain voices and perspectives (Derrida & Bass, 1967). Binary oppositions demonstrate a hierarchically constructed relationship, which is highly influential in constructing human consciousness and interpretations. Hence, a poststructuralist would suggest that in modern society's media, the objects represented are more accurate than the actual objects they represent; the boundaries between truth and fiction have become blurred by the manipulative truth itself (Baudrillard, 1994). This emphasis on the instability of language led poststructuralists to challenge universal truth and meaning. Binary oppositions and universal truths and meanings are evident in the mainstream media, particularly in publications concerned with universal institutions such as the Olympic Games. The Olympic-era media is more concerned with upholding universal values than amplifying marginalized perspectives, further upholding hierarchical stability and blurring lines between truth and fiction. The binary opposition can be analyzed to understand how Western media narratives attempt to simplify narratives that are actually highly complex, such as the Us/Them narrative frequently present in mainstream media. Poststructuralists would suggest that our understanding of the 'us' identities is tied with the understanding of 'them,' in that the concept of the 'Other' is an important category in the theory of human consciousness. They suggest that the 'Other' category is a structural category belonging to the constructed system of understanding and consciousness (Spivak & Derrida, 1998). This stance emphasizes how 'Otherness' shapes one's understanding of where one belongs in the world.

The concern with discourse and the regularity of language led poststructuralists to challenge notions of universal meanings and to suggest that "*there is nothing outside the text because meanings can only be constructed within the context of language and interpretation, and there is no fixed or universal reference point beyond language*" (Spivak & Derrida, 1998, Introduction). The poststructural theory demonstrates why looking at language as a shaper and constructor of meaning is so important. Rather than taking a word at face value, how can we deconstruct and interpret the underlying assumptions and meanings in a seemingly fixed and universal language? The deconstruction of meaning is closely related to the research question as

it emphasizes that meaning is not fixed but instead is dynamically impacted by power structures, discourse, and language; the focus on media's influence on the construction and representation of vulnerable identities acknowledges that discourse and power relations play a significant role in shaping perceptions of marginalized groups. This thesis' research question and objectives aim to understand the role of language and discursive strategies in shaping truths and representations; deconstruction maintains that language has more profound meanings, especially when dominant discourses are involved. The poststructuralists' understanding of the complexity of language and the dominance of universalism in society and discourse is essential in understanding the media's role in constructing and representing marginalized identities and experiences.

Poststructuralism also focuses on the continuities and discontinuities between epistemic and social contexts in which forms of knowledge are produced, primarily on power, discourse, knowledge, exclusion, and governmentality. Theoretical perspectives on discourse, knowledge, and power structures are vital in studying representation as they demonstrate how everything produced represents something while representing something else. Fixed meanings are a 'play of differences and deferrals', suggesting that words derive meaning from relations with other words or meanings (Derrida, 1967). The information we digest is already the product of different levels of interpretation and construction. Power dynamics guide these constructions and fixed meanings: "*Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society*" (Foucault, 1976, p. 93). Understanding the impact of these power dynamics on the meanings and constructions of words is essential because words exist all around us, especially in the media, where word productions guide the thoughts and opinions of billions worldwide. The power structures that influence the media are responsible for guiding mainstream thought and defining terms of exclusion. For example, the unhoused and low-income people of color living in Downtown Los Angeles were rarely covered by the media after the 1984 Games, and their individual experiences were therefore repressed in the public eye. In contrast, frequently platformed institutions like the International Olympic Committee, the Los Angeles Police Department, and local politicians received plenty of media coverage, upholding the power structure status quo.

Foucault uses the anecdote of the madman to demonstrate the principle of exclusion. He explains, "*...the madman has been the one whose discourse cannot have the same currency as*

others. His word may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance..." (Foucault, 1981, p. 53). The madman lacks the power of truth until supported by an institution that permits him platform and support to obtain the knowledge, power, and truth. His anecdote highlights how institutions and institutional power shape norms while actively marginalizing perspectives that do not align with those understandings of knowledge and power. This suggestion that knowledge and power have been constructed over time emphasizes the significance of tracing institutions and concepts' genealogical origins to unveil the power structures and historical foundations hidden within them (Foucault, 1971). Other traditional mainstream IR theories fail to understand the value of deconstruction, including the genealogy of institutions, history, and politics. Studying knowledge is an essential aspect of political theory, as its symbols and more profound meanings indicate the truth of the international system (Ashley, 1987). For example, "*Neorealism's image of international politics is profoundly ahistorical and therefore depoliticized... By leaving the identities of the units it studies untouched by the interaction process, neorealism makes all of its propositions seem like statements about the natural, or at least the normal order of things*" (Ashley, 1987, p. 424). Genealogy is a crucial concept for modern poststructuralist IR thinkers to grasp and apply. Origin tracing is vital in making sense of what may not be seen, as it is believed that all history is comprehended in terms of the world's endless power-political clashes (Ashley, 1987). Poststructuralism emphasizes the importance of discourse and language in shaping international relations topics and highlights the significance of deconstructing traditional approaches, frameworks, and methodologies to understand these roles.

Poststructuralists, especially Foucault, explore contemporary expressions of governmentality, with a particular focus on how its power operates through knowledge and surveillance. They maintain that "*governmentality is the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security*" (Foucault, 2009, p. 108). Poststructuralists' emphasis on governmentality provides a concrete example of power operating outside of state-focused power exercise. It also demonstrates how power is dispersed through acts of regulation and control, how power can be understood outside of the nation-state, and how it is present in everyday social and institutional

contexts. Biopower is a concept that explores how power controls and regulates life on the human level. Two forms of biopower exist, sovereign and disciplinary power, which combine to control actions, guide them in a particular direction, and develop them to shape behavior and social organization (Foucault, 2007). The concepts of biopower and governmentality relate to the thesis in that they recognize the power media has as an institution to normalize certain discourses and control what information is distributed to the world. When specific media sources challenge these dominant discourses, they mobilize against various intersecting power dynamics and structures to promote social justice and resistance initiatives.

Most poststructuralists reject reflections because their work demonstrates the complexity of truth and knowledge, unlike mainstream media portrayal, which provides a surface-level reflectionist understanding of truth and news. This view of power and power structures is vital to fully understanding media representation because it demonstrates how everything produced represents something while representing something else. The media we digest is already the product of various other levels of interpretation and construction. Understanding how knowledge is power, obtained by power, which produces knowledge as a form of truth, applies to this research.

2.1.1 Poststructuralist Applications to Media

Poststructuralism bridges the gap between social theory and language, hence its significance in understanding media influence on the representation of marginalized social identities and experiences. It enables one to accurately understand the media environment, objects, and subjects interacting within it, concepts that traditional approaches cannot encapsulate (Özdoyran, 2019). These specific poststructuralist theories relate to this thesis as they demonstrate which media outlets and representations of the truth are considered the mainstream or, more broadly, which representations can be shared and accessed. The post-structuralist theory also explains the various ‘governmentality’ strategies that states and other institutions use to maintain control and influence over their citizens. Moreover, it emphasizes how language is a powerful tool for impacting politics, security, and policy outcomes. For example, security studies and poststructuralist scholars shared concern over Cold War-era politics dealing with nuclear deterrence. Discursive representations, as demonstrated through

Ronald Reagan's reference to the Soviet Union as an 'evil empire,' demonstrated linguistic power (Hansen, 2016). Understanding representation within post-structuralist theory is a divisive act; however, what can be agreed upon is that representation cannot be seen as the reflection of a presence (Thomassen, 2017). For example, the discourse of non-dominant narratives including advocacy media and the voice of the marginalized are fleeting, once they are spoken, they vanish. (Foucault, 1969). The media rarely covered the individual experiences of unhoused or low-income people of color living in Downtown Los Angeles after the 1984 Games. In contrast, the frequently platformed institutions, such as the International Olympic Committee, the Los Angeles Police Department, and politicians, uphold the status quo and power structures, clearly demonstrating how power is exercised in society.

2.2 Anti-Neoliberal Ideology

Post-neoliberalism is a critique highlighting the detrimental consequences neoliberalism has on democratic values and principles that extend beyond the economic and political contexts of policy and principles of neoliberalism (Brown, 2015). Neoliberalism refers to the doctrine that profits are at the center of social life, where profit is of the utmost importance and taxes on the rich are bad and business is good, to the extent that "*there is so such thing as 'society,' only individuals in fierce competition with one another, and their immediate families, the only permissible freeloaders*" (McChesney, 2008, p. 15). Less crudely, neoliberalism is a political-economic philosophy set into four primary referents: economic reform policies that focus on privatization, liberalization of trade, and economic deregulation; a prescriptive development model; a value market ideology that acts as a human action reference guide; and a mode of self-regulating free market governance (Ganti, 2014). Post-neoliberalist IR scholars critique neoliberalism for its failure to regard social and historical contexts and for its questionable prescription for global governance, hegemony, imperialism, and corporate power.

Some post-neoliberalism scholars question neoliberalism's primary emphasis on the free market ideology as it lacks social and historical understandings of the global political economy. Neoliberal theory serves the most potent individuals while actively marginalizing others, in that it reconstitutes the role of the state in accordance with the interests of transnational capital (Harvery, 2019). An alternate theory to neoliberal theory would require a critical and historical

understanding of the world and global politics, hence anti-neoliberalism's investigation of the relationship between power, ideology, and economics, where political and economic power are seen as tools used to maintain the hegemony of the ruling class. (Harvey, 2019). Anti-neoliberalists uphold values and principles of human rights, economic fairness, and democratic governance, so the emphasis is on understanding the social and historical background of existing mainstream theories.

Some scholars argue that neoliberal principles and policies are silently 'undoing basic elements of democracy' and that "*these elements include vocabularies, principles of justice, political cultures, habits of citizenship, the practice of rule, and above all, democratic imaginaries*" (Brown, 2009, p. 17). Questioning neoliberalism's attempts to solve political, social, and cultural problems with economic-based solutions is a common critique amongst anti-neoliberal scholars. Neoliberalism's expansion beyond economic life is concerning, "*In the neoliberal ethos, everything that exists- persons, things, and social relations- can be translated into and understood as a market exchange between rational, maximizing individuals, and accordingly, all can and should be governed by market logic and market reasoning*" (Brown, 2009, p. 18). Anti-neoliberalists argue that neoliberalism's emphasis on privatization, among other pitfalls, is weakening the democratic institutions and emphasize that giving energy to democratic values, practices, and institutions will reassert the importance of collective action and solidarity (Brown, 2009). Wendy Brown frames anti-neo-liberalization as an economic critique and a theory that advocates for the protection and/or revival of democratic principles and values.

Understanding neoliberal capitalism's shortcomings and consequences is essential, as is understanding its dramatic impacts on media representation and marginalized communities. The 1980s saw a significant evolution of privatization, taking a more nuanced account of marketization and neo-liberalization. Thus, various new ideological and governmental approaches impacted media broadcasting dramatically (Dawes, 2017). Neoliberalism's maintenance of hegemonic positioning is achieved through cultural, political, and institutional processes, practices, and discourse, all represented within mainstream media.

A poststructural neoliberal critique would call for authors, scholars, and readers to challenge the power relations present in neoliberal ideology. The various power structures supporting the neoliberal agenda range across political, cultural, social, and economic entities. A poststructuralist would deconstruct these various engagements and their modes of influence in

society to understand how they further marginalize vulnerable communities. An intersectional feminist critique of neoliberalism would dissect how the neoliberal agenda and applied practices actively harm or exclude various identities. For example, intersectional feminism would point out neoliberalism's lack of advocacy for social safety nets, indicating that it is not concerned with marginalized groups but rather only the elites. It would also suggest that simplifying persons, things, and social relations into market exchanges reduces the fluidity and complexity of identity, actively marginalizing and misrepresenting the rights and well-being of vulnerable groups.

A post-neoliberalism perspective is practical in the study of media representation and construction of marginalized groups and identities in a post-Olympic setting because it highlights the influence of neoliberalism on the media, on who is selected to have their voice amplified in the media, and how leaving people out of the media aligns with neoliberalism erosion of democracy and social justice.

2.2.1 Anti-Neoliberal Applications to Media

The mass media is one of the most critical social institutions impacted and allows for the persistence of neoliberal market logic (Hallin, 2008). It is argued that the media system and the changes within it are central to the rise of neoliberalism, specifically the mainstream outlets, “*A few media magnates control most of the flow of news, much of which then becomes pure propaganda*” (Harvey, 2019, p. 80). That said, it is essential to investigate these symbols and interpretations of capital to make sense of their impact on marginalized groups or, more broadly, those not thought of during the neoliberal development, maintenance, and strengthening processes. The absence of individual realities and narratives in mainstream media is a frequent occurrence, as combatting the universally accepted standards and principles of the Olympic Games diminishes the event’s grandeur. Sporting mega-events are bound by neoliberalism's political and economic rationalities, creating gentrification and overconsumption of urban spaces (Silk, 2014). With so many committed sponsors, broadcasters, and investors involved in the commercialization process, there is a specific way the media must continually and strategically portray the event to make it a profitable success. Those systems, businesses, and individuals devoted to properly framing the Olympic narrative are less likely to care about the downfall of the average civilians of the host countries as the economic goals trump social survival. The

Soviet Union and fourteen of its Communist allies stayed away primarily from the United States' 1980 Games boycott but also because of various political and ideological differences stemming from the Cold War and capitalist values (Llewellyn et al., 2015). The Soviet Union criticized the United States for its LA84 commercialization tactics, claiming that the exploitation of the Games takes away from the universal spirit associated with the Olympics (Llewellyn et al., 2015). The implementation of Reagonomics in the 1980s was aligned with neoliberal ideology, and due to Ronald Reagan's run for reelection and election, it impacted the United States, the media, and, by default, those most vulnerable. The Olympic Games as an institution has a universally understood face of success, excitement, and profit. The capitalist system promotes this institution as it creates profit. These institutions are intentionally disindividualized unless they can profit; even then, those who are promoted are not the vulnerable populations living at the margins, for example, the individual praise of star athletes such as Michael Phelps and Simone Biles for their hard work and commitment to sports. These individuals, however, have capitalist value and are crucial in validating the importance and grandeur of these sporting events (Boykoff, 2014). When dealing with vulnerable populations, neoliberalism has the tendency to categorize marginalized populations into the 'other,' giving discursive coherence to one's political-intellectual identity (Grossberg, 2012). Anti-neoliberalism is an effective way of understanding how economics runs more than the economy and demonstrates how neoliberal ideology impacts the media and influences marginalized representations during a mega-sporting event period.

2.3 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory offers a critical theoretical perspective concerned with the genesis of norms and the power dynamics formed by those norms, focusing on Eurocentric practices and colonization (Epstein, 2014). Postcolonialism's aim is "*the need, in nations or groups which have been victims of imperialism, to achieve an identity uncontaminated by universalist or Eurocentric concepts and images*" (During, 1993). The 'post' in postcolonial theory doesn't signify the timeframe after colonialism; rather, it is the never-ending history after the beginnings of colonialism. Acknowledging historical contexts is exceptionally significant in global politics as it allows us to understand who made certain divisions and for what reason. Post-colonial theory seeks to understand the ongoing historical effects of colonization on the concepts of state,

hood, national interest, sovereignty, the people, legacies, and culture. It is critical of all ‘essentialism,’ understanding that because of the coercive and violent linkages of different histories with the same temporality, no ‘pure’ identities exist (Hall, 1990). All of this to say, postcolonial theory is not an attempt to foster a ‘non-Western IR’; rather, it questions the epistemological foundations of traditional IR, questioning its universality of the categories of social scientific thought, a theory which still mobilizes the concepts and categories of IR (Seth, 2013). Postcolonial theory focuses on power dynamics, representation, the power of language, identity constructions, and the power of deconstructing history, a focus that is highly beneficial in media deconstruction and the study of international ‘unifying’ events.

Postcolonial theorists are known for critiquing Western and colonial/postcolonial societies for their role in marginalizing individuals and inaccurately representing them. The superstructures traced back from colonialism guide modern political, public, and academic discourse. Postcolonial theory critiques these structures and global development paradigms that replicate colonial structures and prioritize Western perspectives and voices. Postcolonial theory questions the globalization model and whether or not it is catered only towards Western and Global North states. Many development initiatives and organizations fail to acknowledge agency, diversity, locality, and culture issues to meet international development goals (Darnell, 2011). These initiatives and organizations only represent cultures and norms affiliated with the dominant perspectives, further exaggerating Global North's ideas and values. Although not considered a development initiative, the Olympic Games are often presented as having developmental benefits for host cities. The Games demonstrate how the mobilization of sports events aligns differently with international development goals as economic disparities and social inequities increase in the host cities of the Olympic Games, ensuring short-term financial gains and long-term debts (Zimbalist, 2020). Not only do these global structures and developments marginalize specific demographics, but it also prohibit them from sharing their individual experiences, “*The subaltern cannot speak, and if she does, she is not heard; and when she is heard, she is not understood*” (Spivak, 2023, Chapter 48). This highlights postcolonial’s emphasis on actively platforming subordinate voices, reclaiming agency, and critiquing mainstream discourse. In mainstream media, especially during socially and politically turbulent times, not only are the vulnerable groups excluded from adding input, but they are typically framed as the issues. One technique used to exclude and oppress non-western voices and

identities is through ‘Othering,’ a process in which dominant groups, through language, representations, and other discursive practices, essentialize, stereotype, racialize, and differentiate those who are or have been colonized (Thomas-Olalde, 2011). Concerning the thesis, the othering process is frequently used to blame marginalized groups simultaneously while excluding them from amplifying their perspectives and voices. Mainstream media appears to use the notions of othering and us versus them to maintain dominance and silence ‘radical’ critiques. Like in Los Angeles, when gang violence and homelessness were at an all-time high, manifestations of us versus them or ‘othering’ were common in the news to shift the blame from local, national, and global infrastructure failures to subordinated communities with no platform to advocate for themselves.

Postcolonial scholarship also focuses on Western constructions, identity representation, and resistance. It examines how imperial designs influence Western representations of ‘others’: *"To have knowledge of a part of the world was to dominate it. European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self"* (Said, 1977, p. 3). He explores the relationship between culture and imperialism, suggesting that literature is one of the forms of expression that colonial and mainstream discourse is spread throughout history (Said, 1993). Cultural expressions are not apolitical, as the robust systems within society make them political. Postcolonial theorists suggest that colonialism and identity go hand in hand, *"colonialism has transformed the identities of the colonized so that even claims to precolonial national identities are products of colonialism"* (Dirlik, 2002, Abstract). This understanding of colonialism as a strict identity of colonized individuals differs completely from post-colonial theorists in the 1960s who prioritized the search for national identity in the colonized (Dirlik, 2002).

Globalization and the Olympics can be critiqued by postcolonialism as both emphasize the Westphalian model of the nation-state. Postcolonialism’s interpretations of nationalism and sovereignty are significant in understanding how marginalized groups remain excluded and oppressed in the global system and society. Although some may argue that *"globalization is compromising the authority, the autonomy, the nature and the competence of the modern nation-state,"* theorists acknowledge that *"culturally and psychologically it remains of critical significance in structuring the political and social organization of humankind"* (McGrew, 1992, p. 92-93). Postcolonial theorists would question where non-Western voices would fit into this

nation-state identity. A form of governmentality referred to as postcolonial neoliberal nationalism, an understanding that neoliberalism and nationalism are not contradictory to one another, rather they are projects working together to reform imaginaries (Kaul, 2019). This *“makes visible the ambivalent status of ‘the West,’ since it is imbued with the historical legacy of colonial memory re-called into the present as a revanchist pride, and combined with the conflicting aspirational/actual consumption desires to emulate the capitalist imperial metropolitan fantasies”* (Kaul, 2019, Abstract). During the Olympic Games, non-Western or colonized states such as Puerto Rico, used this ambivalent status to their advantage, which demonstrates how subordinate states explore new forms of sovereignty due to the current system being exclusionary and oppressive. A postcolonial critique of the Olympics demonstrates how, *“sports play in the political and cultural processes of an identity that evolved within a political tradition of autonomy rather than traditional political independence”* (Sotomayor, 2016, Abstract). The Games provide a window into exploring how nationalism, sovereignty, sports, international diplomacy, and international institutions play a role in maintaining global superstructures associated with Western hegemony and power.

The decolonization of knowledge is a key component of postcolonial theory as recognizing and valuing non-Western perspective and narratives is a reclaiming of those perspectives and narratives. Media sources that actively seek out non-Western voices and narratives are advocating for, valuing, and recognizing subordinate voices. Whereas, media that generalizes, stereotypes, and underrepresents non-western, non-white voices are further colonizing knowledge which has severely negative effects on identity, public opinion, and more.

2.4 Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory demonstrates how specific structures of society limit or make the implementation of this radical change extremely difficult, as questioning the status quo and white power structures further the dismissal or misrepresentation of POC experiences (Bell, 2018). Critical race theory is a framework that has been applied to International Relations on many occasions. It highlights the role of racism and hierarchies of race, which shape events, outcomes, narratives, history, and more. The critical race movement *“...considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up but places them in a broader*

perspective that includes economics, history, setting, ground and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious” (Delgado, 2023, p.1). It goes beyond ‘getting rid of racism’; it acknowledges race as central to law, policy, and society in general (Deldago, 2023). CRT has ties to poststructural thinking in that it questions the origins and current applications of power structures, what that means for the fluidity of identities and an emphasis on discourse. In the context of IR, critical race theory interrogates global racial hierarchies, global capitalism, and social justice in general. For example, CRT recognizes that race is constructed, and this construction also shapes hierarchies locally and globally. A significant part of the hierarchical nature of race is the use of stereotypes and generalizations to push dominant narratives, *“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make the one story become the only story”* (Adichie, 2009, Video).

Critical race theory acknowledges the expansive nature of global capitalism and the detrimental impacts ideologies associated with it can have on marginalized groups in the context of global capitalism. Notably, global capitalism plays a role mainly in structural inequality. Structural inequality refers to unequal access to various resources and opportunities. It does not arise naturally or inevitably; it is produced and maintained by social, economic, and political institutions (Collins, 1990). Social justice is a significant focus in critical race theory, with many theorists acknowledging the negative impacts dominant cultures' unconscious behavior and thinking can have on marginalized groups. A common theme highlighted in CRT is the concept of white saviorism, a product of counter-storytelling by the dominant source suggesting that marginalized groups need saving (Abrams et al., 2023). There are many instances of white saviorism occurring throughout history; however, the media is responsible for solidifying the unconscious behavior and thinking of white saviorism to the masses. In Los Angeles, following the Olympic Games, many mainstream news sources detailed stories of wealthy white people leaving their ‘cozy homes’ to go assist the unhoused who were displaced during the Games. Rather than using the platform to amplify the experiences of these groups or bring awareness to the power structures that put them in that position in the first place, the media acts as a way for dominant identities to feel better about themselves and what they’ve done for humanity.

Critical race theory works with intersectionality to highlight how various forms of oppression can combine to create even more significant and unique challenges than can be understood by dominant and mainstream discourse and power structures.

2.4.1 Post-Colonial & CRT Applications to Media

From a post-colonial perspective, media representation of marginalized groups is tied to the various historical contexts and foundations of dominance and influence present in our global system. Human dignity is not a norm of the white, heteronormative, wealthy world that media appeals to; human dignity as a norm would call for the media to give voices to the poor and marginalized who continue to bear the burden of colonial legacies (Ward & Wasserman, 2010). Various institutions and colonial narratives undermine this implication that human dignity presents a human having intrinsic value. In connection to agenda-setting, mainstream media's tactics are universal and benefit those at the top. Globalization's desire to form universal standards, values, and norms is exclusive and harmful. This desired spread of this philosophical and theological concept is similar to the rise of Disney, as a mission to spread the virtues of the clean, white, cheery, American way (Friedman, 1999). Acknowledging the Eurocentric origins and actions of the modern Olympic Games is also significant. The universal principles of the Olympic Games are presented as moral and good; however, Olympianism's goal of promoting a peaceful society concerned with preserving human harmony is problematic (McNamee, 2017). Those who are in power wish to maintain power and influence. The government is the mechanism that manages the collection and distribution of ideas of dominant groups to maintain power (Price, 2004). Governments of colonial states have colonial structures ingrained in their system, whether actively or passively colonizing a state, and the media reflects that. Although influenced by Western and Euro-centric notions of power, the media has also evolved throughout various political and social shifts (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1998). Despite these shifts, the media continues to influence public opinion, further endangering the reputation of the marginalized experiences and identities.

In the mid-1980s, media companies such as the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times were funded by influential families and investment corporations, reinforcing and reflecting dominant narratives. The Cold War era also highlights the influence of the US military

complex, where the insularity of US Olympic advertisements and news coverage represents the same righteousness and superiority of the American view of their military operations, an act of ‘America’s Athletic Imperialism’ (Gustafson, 1984). American mass media, specifically, plays a significant role in the public diplomacy of the United States and is the product of the realization that twenty-first-century imperialism relies on persuasion rather than coercion (Al-Dabbagh, 2010). The mass media plays a vital role in proving that imperialism and state power are essential in ensuring global peace, particularly from those ‘others’ who are at the hands of terror and global disarray (Al-Dabbagh, 2010). Just as Jaques Derrida’s deconstruction strategy reveals the discrepancies between colonial and postcolonial texts, it is also significant in understanding the implications of Western culture on language, culture, and history (Benjamin, 2010).

Postcolonialism also engages with identity, particularly national identity and nationalism, examining how colonial histories and power structures burden cultural identity and self-perception. Those born outside of the dominant identity and culture are left torn by contradiction, and the only way to make sense of one's identity and culture is through shared stories; those are said to extend farther than borders and flags (Rushdie, 2023). Postcolonialism also addresses nationalism during the colonial era, suggesting that the colonizers’ occupation of the colonial state supported their elite bourgeois (re)attainment of nationhood and identity (Lazarus, 1999). When mainstream media censors or does not amplify the stories and voices of these marginalized identities, it would be considered, by postcolonial theory standards, a technique to limit the ability of one to have one's own cultural identity. Instead, it allows dominant identities, norms, and values to be shared and platformed while simultaneously subordinating marginalized ones.

By analyzing how universalism, globalization, and colonialization prioritize the interests of dominant groups while subordinating and villainizing others, this thesis aligns with the postcolonial critique of mainstream media’s failure to represent the marginalized and vulnerable populations of Los Angeles fairly and truthfully. It also examines the various global and local power structures within society, specifically how colonial norms and structures associated with globalization, military power, white power, and universalism negatively impact the representation of marginalized groups within the media. Postcolonial structures and narratives continue to dominate society and the media as the institutions and structures that fund and invest in the mainstream media are typically those who directly or indirectly benefit or actively benefit from colonialism. Understanding the presence of colonial legacies and histories within society is

essential when deconstructing media text as it demonstrates power dynamics and institutional norms, which may not directly appear due to colonialism as an ‘event of the past.’

2.5 Feminist Theory

Feminist theory tackles the challenge of making sense of the complex challenges of demonstrating how various social identities intersect to create unique instances of privilege and disadvantages. Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term ‘intersectionality’ to emphasize how these multiple social differences link together to create unique disadvantages, particularly for those with marginalized identities. Although her work focuses specifically on excluding women of color in discussions on social justice and identity politics, it is an applicable work investigating how leaving certain groups out of the debate and discourse can harm all marginalized groups and identities (Crenshaw, 2022). Intersectionality highlights the complexity of the intersections of identities in shaping individual experiences of privilege and oppression. Crenshaw applies a critical race theory and a new feminist approach to demonstrate the complexities of marginalized identities.

Feminist theory details the theoretical and epistemological belief that gender matters in global politics, allowing for a study of power relations and the impact it has not only on the world but on individual bodies and how responses and perceptions of global politics will constitutively affect the political and social reality of the world (Shepard, 2010). Feminist IR suggests feminist theory was introduced in the late 1980s with what was considered both radical and critical; however, Robert Keohane (Ann Tickner’s Ph.D. supervisor) sought to incorporate feminist IR work into neoliberal institutionalism. Feminist understandings of international relations processes are more ethnographic in methodology and focused on social relations rather than measurable units (Sylvester, 2002).

Feminist scholars emphasize mainstream understandings of international politics, disparaging certain kinds of femininities in the ‘complex politics of masculinities’ (Enloe, 2000). They suggest that feminist curiosity about international relations uncovers hidden dynamics that wouldn't have been found with mainstream and traditional approaches, “*All the women and men who have tried to make us genuinely smarter about international politics have revealed that what is ‘international’ is far broader than mainstream experts assume, and that what is ‘political’*

reaches well beyond the public square” (Enloe, 2000, p. xv). A gendered analysis of IR would challenge traditional ways of understanding power, diplomacy, and gender dynamics. Hence why, gender studies and the understanding of the role gender norms play in global politics are so insightful. Feminist theory argues that gender studies allow for a study of power relations and the impact it has not only on the world but on individual bodies. Our responses and perceptions of global politics will constitutively affect the political and social reality of the world. Gender informs and affects global politics, “*Gender is, on this view, not only a noun (i.e., an identity) and a verb (i.e., a way to look at the world, as in the phrase ‘gendering global politics’) but also a logic, which is produced by and productive of how we understand and perform global politics*” (Shepard, 2010, p. 5). Feminist theory explains how contemporary International Relations do not exclusively discuss individual bodies; instead, the field study focuses on the central understanding of the nation-state. As mentioned previously, poststructuralism critiques subjectivity as a process that preserves the status quo and is central to political change processes. This suggests that states lead by what is considered ‘natural’; this understanding of the status quo guides common-sense thinking of the state (Shepard, 2010). The central understanding of the body as a vessel for the nation-state has caught the attention of thinkers such as Foucault, who argues that the body is directly involved in politics as a body that carries out tasks and emits signs of intervention and regulation (Foucault, 1995). Hence, the significance of feminist theory is in its commitment to understanding the body and social norms and relations in relation to international relations. Gendered language, gender norms, and intersectional and feminist studies, in general, are significant in analyzing the impact of power relations on individuals and a global scale. Hence, the importance of counter-narratives and providing a platform for marginalized people to share their unique experiences and identities is one of the approaches to addressing systematic racism in the United States, “*The presentation of truth in new forms provokes resistance...*” (Bell, 2018, p. 131). Providing and including diverse perspectives allows society to grasp other perspectives, but it also serves to overcome feelings and acts of dehumanization (Sjoberg, 2010). Media organizations that highlight and amplify the voices of marginalized individuals, particularly during profitable or highly corporately funded campaigns, indirectly tackle systemic oppression and the status quo.

Poststructural feminism assumes that women are in their positions due to their gender, hence why, ontologically, a poststructural feminist would look at why women are in their current

positions and what power structures are impacted by gender. It investigates the interplay between power, gender, and language. It provides excellent insight into social reality and challenges poststructuralism's lack of attention to patriarchy and the structural exclusion of women in society, "*Feminist poststructuralism helps us move beyond binaries of male and female and 'essentializing practices', and while admittedly poststructuralism's nonunitary subjectivity makes the identification of the 'enemy' much more difficult, rather than disempowering the feminist project, poststructuralism must be viewed as critically important in unmasking layers of power previously unrecognized 'in order to reconstitute the world in less oppressive ways'*" (Wooldridge, 2015, p. 2). The poststructural feminist stance on gender and sex is critical as they acknowledge the unfixed nature and fluidity of the socially constructed categories; because they are socially constructed, they are also prone to domination and discursive practices. Poststructural feminists deconstruct these constructed understandings of identity to reveal how language, media, and practices shape these norms. The concept of 'gender performativity', developed by Judith Butler, encapsulates the way power dynamics and discourse shape gender and sex, "*Gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all*" (Butler, 2015, p. 178). This understanding of power, language, and discourse relates to this thesis as it demonstrates the role of power relations in perpetuating hierarchies. Media representation of marginalized individuals is altered to fit the norms and values of sexist, fixed, and heteronormative power structures, thus leaving many identities and experiences out of media narratives.

2.5.1 Feminist Applications to Media

A concrete understanding of race, gender, and various identity intersections can provide more profound information on the various power structures and media techniques at play within media and communications discourse. It is argued that the most significant challenge to liberal mainstream understandings of racial inequality is that it highlights racism's permanent fixture in American society and how various economic, social, political, and justice-based institutions and values uphold it (Bell, 2018). The valorization of whiteness as a structural ideology is what permits the mainstream media to be an institution that maintains structural inequalities and allows marginalized stereotypes to persist (Bell, 2021). Along with race, there is also

discrimination based on gender, sexuality, class, and ethnicity. An example of discrimination based on gender is the “*beauty and grace*” expectations for female athletes, furthering the Olympic and media’s exclusivity of representations of diverse groups (Lenskyj, 2013, p. 63)

Marginalized group's misrepresentation within the media is dictated by the media's role in shaping racial stereotypes and perpetuating racist narratives and biases, highlighting corporations' and elected representatives' exploitation (Bell, 2018). Particularly for the political elites, there is argued to be a ‘dual function’ of media as an outlet for structural advantages amongst each other and within society (Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016). Hence, the status quo is upheld in popular media; the interests of these elites align with the status quo, and thus, the dominant persistence of white power structures and norms is displayed to an entire society through the news (Mason, 2007). In alignment with the dominance of power structures and norms on the side of mainstream media, newspaper agencies and elites have the power of tradition on their side; media is viewed as a historically reliable source of information, so critically questioning it goes against journalistic and social order (Halberstam, 2000). Looking at public opinion outside of the power structure of elitehood, Bell argues that white people will support initiatives if they benefit them somehow, making achieving justice much more complicated. They will ensure surface-level representations of diversity in an attempt to mask oppression (Bell, 2018). Even if these mainstream media sources represent the matters of marginalized people, research suggests that members of high-status groups (white, straight, men) are those leading representation and social justice efforts in general (Iyer & Achia, 2021). Without supporting and representing other marginalized groups and identities, activists and social justice movements can strengthen the systems that oppress all marginalized groups (Crenshaw, 2022).

The simplification of individual or group experiences, partially those of marginalized groups and individuals, demonstrate the power dynamics feminist, critical race, and intersectional theorists discuss at play. Mainstream media outlets tend to platform dominant groups who maintain control over narratives that generalize situations and reinforce power structures (Crenshaw, 2022). For example, the mainstream news outlet, the LA Times, granted many opportunities for members of the Los Angeles Police Department to comment on the housing and drug problems in the city following the 1984 Games. Publications detailing police as a solution to the ‘dangers’ of Los Angeles simplify a narrative, promote patriarchal

understandings of dangers and safety, and leave out intersectional understandings of the implications of media sponsorships and platforming. In connection to this thesis, looking at how the themes of body politics, media ownership, and counter-narratives played out in the post-1984 Olympic media demonstrates the significance of a feminist analysis. Body politics and the way women, especially those who were low-income or of color, were framed in the press during the time is essential. For example, how homeless women seeking space in a shelter were depicted as inferior and more welcome to securing shelter than ‘bum’ homeless men purely because they were women and had children. This notion and publication are problematic in that it implies women are deserving of housing purely because of traditional gender norms where women are passive and weak caregivers, as well as limiting men from fulfilling their need for shelter because they are protectors and can handle being apart from family. The media’s language can overlook women’s agency and perpetuate patriarchal power dynamics in society. Media ownership and the narratives perpetuated by the media connect to feminist theory, demonstrating the active power dynamics in society (Shepard, 2010). Ben Wattenberg, an influential author and commentator, had an article where he claimed “*poverty is not as bad here [in Los Angeles],*” where he compares the US to other nations (including the USSR) to demonstrate American superiority and wealth (Los Angeles Times Archive (1985). Another article details “*1984 Was Year of Coming and Goings for Chief Executives,*” detailing their “*lavish*” meetings and accomplishments discussing housing construction and business opportunities in Los Angeles; all eleven individuals discussed were male, and nowhere was their impacts on the housing crisis mentioned (County’s Newsmakers Past and Future, 1985). This publication and representation relate to feminist theory, critical race theory, and intersectionality theory’s argument of the power dynamics and patriarchal structure of media ownership and how a media outlet’s decision to platform selected individuals is a gendered, feminist, racial, and intersectional political and social issue. These theories critically examine how surface-level representation, misrepresentation, or lack of representation of marginalized groups in the United States is a systematical rooted and problematic issue and calls for more diverse representation and platforming of marginalized identities and experiences in the mainstream media.

2.6 Media Representation Theories

2.6.1 Mainstream media

Mainstream media refers to media produced to direct the mass audience, often linked to other major power centers such as the government, corporations, or doctrinal institutions (Chomsky, 1997). This could be hazardous as the general public may not be aware of the allegiances of the media producers. Meta-ignorance and meta-insensitivity describe how 'incorrect' epistemic attitudes render readers ignorant or insensitive to social issues' emotional, historical, and political contexts (Chowdhury, 2022). For example, that which is known about gangs and those dealing with drugs comes from the media and police's sensationalized representations, "...the owners of media always endeavor to give the public what it wants, because they sense that their power in the in medium and not in the message or the program" (Schissel, 1997, p. 173). What is understood of these socially ostracized groups is demonstrated by the institutions and values pushed by mainstream dialogue and understandings (Carilli, 2021). In the previous example, the police have influence and relations with the media, influencing the media's outputs. Media is used to translate the unknown into the more digestible know and the unnatural into the familiar (Mander, 1999). With this comes the issue of stereotyping and generalizing, a product of socialization processes that tie a group or a community to a linked set of features, values, behaviors, emotions, and traits (Mastro, 2009). Although often used as a sound and informative journalism tool, identifying racial groups using categorical linguistic devices often creates unfounded and generalized criminogenic referents to people of color (Schissel, 1997). Media is a simple way for populations to gain 'correct' information in a digestible and straightforward way; it reflects what is happening worldwide in a generalized and quick way.

This form of media takes on a reflectionist approach. Reflectionism refers to the idea that a representation reflects the 'way things are' in everyday reality (Chandler & Munday, 2016). It understands that language and other forms of representation act as a mirror to what is already going on in the world. This somewhat simplified and objective take on media is part of its shortcomings in a dissection of sensitive political and socio-economic contexts. Various agendas that guide these epistemic attitudes can alter the outcomes of the interpretations of the media. Concerning the Olympic Games, mainstream media depicting the Olympic Games applies to the

'global imagination,' the collective way of understanding and seeing the world as a unified entity (Orgad, 2012). Foucault's work on truth and knowledge suggests no straightforward approach to knowledge through reflection. Foucault says, "*Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power*" (Foucault, 2015, p. 131). Foucault suggests that truth and accurate reflections of the world can only be discovered by exploring institutional and power foundations and actively shaping our brains' subconscious reality. The foundations of the Olympic Games media will be dissected later to demonstrate how significant it is to understand institutional origins and foundations to make sense of their media outputs.

2.6.2 Advocacy and Independent Media

Advocacy media, alternatively referred to as alternative or independent media, is a type of media format that is fact-based. However, it takes on specific viewpoints that typically challenge normative values (Berney & Robie, 2008). Advocacy media tends to take a constructivist approach; media and representations are a construction of complex elements and systems whose representations are subjective and seek something specific (Schmidt, 1992). Like any media entity, publications, and funding can be shaped by the interests of powerful elites and corporations. Internal ideologies of individuals who work for advocacy media outlets have the potential to have interests similar to those of the elites; this will impact the output of the media source. Externally, there is pressure from various forces and regulations that act as disciplinary measures. Promoting and protecting advocacy media outlets is a simple solution to resisting the altered truths of mainstream liberal media in the United States; unfortunately, these media outlets are unlikely to gain significant traction as they do not align with the interests of corporations and elites who give these outlets traction. On a more positive note, the social media advocacy networks that have come to gain traction and popularity in the recent decade are influential in spreading diverse viewpoints, experiences, and opinions. Research shows that through public listening and civic mapping, journalists can frame issues to benefit public interests; unfortunately, mainstream media employs superficial and close-ended questions to prevent this from happening (Kendall, 2011). The shift from a one-way transmission of information has shifted into a collaborative and open-ended conversation on social media platforms (Seeling et

al., 2018). It is argued that alternative media is all about offering fair democratic communication to individuals and communities that are typically excluded from the processes of media production (Atton, 2002). Despite having inherent pragmatic and conceptual limits, granting platforms and opportunities for advocacy media would promote democratic values and positively impact local social change and public opinion (Gibson, 2010). The rise of digital technologies also challenges mainstream media's narratives by creating counter-narratives and alternative images of racial and ethnic minorities (Castañeda, 2018). Independent media sources are known to increase awareness or are more likely to criticize mainstream media as they tend to claim a subjective point of view at the outset (McChesney, 2004). They provide opportunities to amplify marginalized voices, as poststructural, postcolonial, and feminist theory emphasizes the importance of. Independent news sources are highly effective and vital in challenging dominant discourses, providing platforms for marginalized identities and experiences, and challenging ideological and institutional norms pushed by mainstream media.

2.6.3 Media's Minority Representation

Although America continues to emphasize its commitment to democracy, fairness, and freedom, its media outlets and relationship with representing the status quo are nothing but that. The relationship between the media and the racial status quo is a topic of study in sociology, psychology, and politics. America's aberration with evidence of inherently racist political, social, and economic structures leads to mainstream media not representing it, as it is not the narrative Americans, specifically white Americans, want to hear (Larson, 2006). This drastically contrasts with techniques and foundations of non-Western media outlets where Indigenous values and acknowledgment of post-coloniality positively affect media ethics (Rao & Wasserman, 2007). Mainstream media tends to underrepresent marginalized people, experiences, and narratives; however, they also alter their truths. This underrepresentation, referred to as media invisibility, results from marginalization, and when those groups are represented, it is often through a marketable and stereotypical narrative (Sherril, 1993). In the context of sports media, when marginalized groups or individuals are represented, the stakes are usually lower. Because sports and entertainment news are considered 'soft news' rather than 'hard news,' marginalized people are more likely to appear; however, when marginalized individuals appear in 'hard news,' the

narrative tends to represent them as a threat to social structure and in opposition to whites (Larson, 2006). This portrayal of ‘us versus them’ relates to the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, where she emphasizes the West’s incapability to accurately represent the experiences of those known as the subaltern, or the ‘them’ (Spivak, 2023). Even outside of America, mainstream representations of poverty by the British media demonstrate another example of Western media ‘othering’ those vulnerable populations. Poverty within the United Kingdom was found to be represented as an ‘orphan phenomenon’; the contexts and factors that led to this level of poverty are left out, leaving the media to represent it as a phenomenon with no known cause (Chauhan & Foster, 2013). Chauhan and Foster’s 2013 text connects this phenomenon to what happened in the United States after September 11, 2001: media representations distancing the public from the marginalized, citing it as a problem of the Other. This connects to the insights of Edward Said’s Orientalism, which depicts the “*Orient*,” the Other, as an exotic and inevitably misunderstood group of people. The reality of the ‘Other’ is represented by European constructions of their truth and desire for control, “*Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient- dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient*” (Said, 1977, p. 3). This constructed system of domination and agenda-setting is reflected in the Western mainstream media. The theory surrounding media framing is also purely to advance the interests of the media companies, not to portray the complete and total truth. The framing of these news sources can be attributed to the media’s desire to ‘advance the story,’ not the underlying condition behind that story (Larson, 2006). Among being underrepresented, minorities find themselves stereotyped or generalized by the previously mentioned themes conveyed by mainstream media and the agenda-setting initiatives of many different institutions. This is especially applicable to those marginalized individuals with intersecting identities. For example, individuals or groups with intersecting identities may experience superficial depictions, stereotyping, erasure, or homogenous representations as their identities are simplified. This homogenization and simplification further reinforce dominant narratives and power structures that highlight and value specific experiences and identities over others. Gender and race are two intersections that can demonstrate this occurrence. Black homeless women's experiences are shaped by the unique combination of being female and Black and homeless rather than one

single social identity. It demonstrates the power dynamics and social hierarchies present in the world, which would not necessarily be understood from a traditional understanding of identity.

2.6.4 Agenda-Setting

In the context of international events, agenda-setting occurs as a way for power systems, including various institutions, corporations, and individuals, to maintain power. Media output and agenda-setting are truisms; in other words, if the media tells you nothing, it will not exist in the individual's agenda (McCombs, 1977). Agenda-setting is essential to acknowledge as it is how the media's agenda sets the political reality of a given place and determines what media deems necessary to cover (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The following section includes critical critiques of the agenda-setting process, ranging from anti-capitalist and post-colonial critiques of agenda-setting and media representations.

As mentioned, media outlets choose which topics to cover and how to cover them based on their economic and political interests. Cultural entities, such as the media, are products of the more significant 'culture industry' that produces cultural goods that push and maintain the capitalist system (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2019). These products are distributed to influence and prevent certain narratives from reaching the masses, hence why advocacy media is not considered or treated as mainstream. The Propoganda Model argues that corporate elites are responsible and successful in 'manufacturing consent' in the media, explicitly targeting impressionable populations (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Another critical argument in the literature was related to the anti-communist propaganda of the Cold War era, which dismissed 'radical' ideas as 'un-American' and, thus, was actively filtered out of media (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). In the context of international events, corporate and media-funded events are profoundly marked by relations of power; the relationship between media and reality has "*in ways... placed the fetishized commodity, the consuming individual and the promotional culture at the center of human experience*" (Carrington & McDonald, 2009, p. 8). The views, ideological influence, and corporate responsibilities trump the media's assumed responsibility of truth and news distribution. This ties into postcolonialism's exploration of national identity and nationalism and how colonial powers continue to impose their cultural and social norms on colonized or formally colonized people. Not only does this highlight colonial notions of identity,

but it also demonstrates the exclusivity that comes from power dynamics and how marginalized groups are further left out of narratives due to their own identity not being represented.

2.6.5 Media's Influence on Public Opinion

The media plays a highly profound role in forming the public's perceptions and opinions of marginalized individuals and groups. The power of media is demonstrated through its central position as the organizer of society, capable of promoting or undermining one's integration into political systems, fostering national identities, and supporting or slowing social change (Liebes & Curran, 2008). Various tools and techniques make the media outputs so impactful; language is the root of the influence.

Language is a tool used to maintain relations of power in society, "*...language is centrally involved in power, and struggles for power, and that it is so involved through its ideological properties*" (Fairclough, 1989). There is power in language and rhetorical devices within the media, which can alter the take-home message for audiences or even construct a reader's negative views on an event, a group, or an individual. Language is a potent tool that goes hand in hand with the media and power structures to push specific agendas and narratives and influence public opinion, "*Truth is more than a collection of facts, and journalists are more than underpaid, underappreciated conveyors of facts. They are underpaid, underappreciated conveyors of truth, or at least small truths which, together, make up the larger whole that drives public policy and shapes our lives.*" (Weiner, 2022, Introduction). This calls for media to expand beyond the mainstream, as ideologically constructed systems of power will use the media as a vessel to publish built versions of the truth. The poststructural theory emphasizes this critical analysis of media discourse and the construction of truth, highlighting the influence of dominant discourse and power relations on the constructions of truth and knowledge. Thus, media sources that amplify the voices of marginalized individuals or those who are not represented or benefiting from those power dynamics would bring value to the media system as a whole.

The social construction of reality presented in the media dramatically impacts the opinions of those represented. Stereotyping, promoting biases, and framing are techniques used across media platforms to construct this reality. The ruling class's interest is to preserve the status quo; their understanding of reality comes naturally to them, and thus, due to their ownership of

mass media outlets, they do not need to conspire to manipulate public opinion; it comes naturally (Kendall, 2011). There are various distinctive factors between the upper class and owners of media companies, and the majority of those who digest the media are presented accordingly. When readers digest this status quo, they tend to believe what they read, especially given the media's perceived role as a democratic institution. Entman and Rojecki investigate how white Americans perceive African Americans through the various biases and stereotypes found in the media. They argue that through headlines, visuals, highlighted quotes, and emphasized narratives, media frames a conflict to create a zero-sum conflict, where only one group can win, and the other must lose (Entman & Rojecki, 2007). Their research found that in the matter of principle, white people have a greater tolerance for Black issues; unfortunately, the data does not prove they have a greater intent to implement practice; denial is a more frequently felt emotion than guilt (Entman & Rojecki, 2007). This public opinion extends beyond race; Judith Butler discusses how media representations of gender also impact attitudes and views towards women, transgender, and non-binary individuals. Butler argues that the inevitability of the patriarchy's influence in the world produces a 'heterosexual matrix' that overrides and reduces the Other, further subjecting it to domination (Butler, 2015). The patriarchy's construction of various identities subjects those who are dominated to particular normative violence as they fail to conform to the norms it establishes in society (Butler, 2015). These institutions are intentionally disindividualized unless they can profit; even then, those promoted are not the vulnerable populations living at the margins. This is evident in most media outlets, especially those primary mainstream liberal media sources. Foucault points out that institutions disindividualize power and lead to a faceless bureaucracy, leading to a system where power is everywhere and nowhere in particular (Foucault, 1978). This 'facelessness' and absence of individual levels of discourse within media have become embedded in everyday life, making it difficult to track who is responsible and whom to hold accountable. Media's representation of marginalized groups and identities determines how the public interprets and forms opinions. Because these representations are rooted in the patriarchal, racist, colonial, and wealthy foundations of the upper class and the media that they fund, the public opinion surrounding those outside of the norm is typically negatively impacted. In a vacuum, this reality is problematic; it becomes even more complex once other historical, social, economic, and political contexts are applied.

2.6.6 Role of Media During the 1984 Olympics and Beyond

The 1984 Olympic Games demonstrated the groundbreakingly profitable effects of media and marketing technology. The global reach of the Los Angeles Games forever changed the media and mega-sports relationship. Although athletic excellence was powerfully represented, the marginalized groups who were deeply impacted by the Games' hosting responsibilities faced misrepresentation and serious stereotyping.

Media is a precious tool initially intended to promote democracy and break free from state political control (Curran, 2002). It was a tool used at the international and regional levels to exhibit the excellence and grandeur of the Olympic Games. However, the selectivity of topics and the language used to cover these subjects are easily manipulated and altered based on corporate and sponsor interests. Media substantially affects knowledge and experience; acknowledging these events' political, social, and economic contexts is necessary for them to be remarkably misconstrued. The legacy of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games was less about bringing attention to the city of Los Angeles and more about constructing the city's urban imaginary (Salazar & Andranovich, 2017). Los Angeles is a highly complex and unique demonstration of the capitalist urban restructuring process: "*There may be no other comparable urban region which presents so vividly such a composite assemblage and articulation of urban restructuring processes. Los Angeles seems to conjugate the recent history of capitalist urbanization in virtually all its inflectional forms*" (Davis, 2006, p. 84). Representations of this urban imaginary were designed to create a stage for what this city is capable of. In the media, the city is represented in a way that is interpreted as a passage for capital rather than a place where the quality of life is determined (Salazar & Andranovich, 2017). Mainstream media's flashy and picture-perfect representation of Los Angeles following the Olympic Games is harmful to marginalized communities as untruthful representations or misrepresentations both subject these groups to harmful and false narratives. These narratives may not impact the messengers; however, marginalized groups with no power structures to hide behind are always impacted.

The commodification of the Olympic movement indicates the indifference surrounding individuals within those regions. Anti-globalization movements critique the Olympic industry and global capitalism for actively displacing low-income communities, gentrifying inner-city neighborhoods, and drastically increasing rent prices (Lenskyj, 2008). The strategic move to present the Olympic Games as a collaborative and mutual success ignores the individual

experiences of groups and individuals impacted by the host city's responsibilities and actions. With this being said, marginalized individuals and those most vulnerable to these socioeconomic decisions related to neoliberal urban planning and mega events were either framed as burdens or victims or as success stories.

Famous and influential corporations work with the Games to achieve what is referred to as 'celebration capitalism.' Celebration capitalism refers to the feel-good advertisement staged when the norms of politics are not applicable, such as the Olympic Games (Boykoff, 2014). These distorted representations go beyond international corporations; they also come from within regional and local non-profit organizations. LA84 Youth Sports Summit, a panel and philanthropic movement advocating for equal access to sports for children, founded the 'Play Equity Movement' in 1984. Advertisements surrounding the event acknowledge the socio-economic challenges prohibiting equal access to sports for children. What should be included in these advertisements is that LA84 is a foundation established with the \$93 million surplus left over by the 1984 Games budget (Ghaffari & DeFrantz, 2011). The irony is that much of the lack of equal opportunity is residual damage from the Olympic industry and the cities' decisions to host. "*Studies of mega-events like the Olympics Games cite place-based challenges such as displacement, gentrification, environmental damage, and lost opportunities to advance equitable development that outlasts the Olympics' duration*" (Velasquez-Soto, 2022, p. 3). The LA84 Youth Sports Summit uses empowering phrases such as 'fighting,' 'protecting,' and 'legacy' as a marketing mechanism to assist the youth whose partner industry actively puts them in disadvantaged situations. While these unifying organizations may attempt to promote unity, they have also systematically put these youth in these positions.

The mega-event strategy, the high-risk economic decision calling for hosting a high-profile event to stimulate local development, is dangerous (Andranovich et al., 2002). This strategy further demonstrates the self-interested notions of the state through the bidding of the Olympic Games. This strategy goes hand in hand with advertisement and media representation of the Olympics. The mega-event strategy has played out in the favor of Los Angeles; the 1984 Summer Olympics brought in a profit of nearly \$233 million, unheard of at the time (Baade & Matheson, 2016). The 1984 Olympics triggered a frenzy of bid applications for future games following the financial success in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, the social implications of the mega-event strategy are less frequently discussed.

Socioeconomic contexts are critical to understand when dissecting cases such as the 1984 Olympics. Los Angeles, in the 1980s, was struck with a series of socioeconomic and political hardships that are impossible to ignore when questioning media representation of marginalized groups. The War on Drugs, police riots, Cold War propaganda, LGBTQIA+ violence, Reaganomics, and more had an impact. For example, in the media, Reagan's America depicts a time when terrorism and communism fade into images of people of color, rebels, and radical fanatics (Moore-Gilbert et al., 2014). The War on Drugs was an instrumental narrative driver for those who intentionally or unintentionally further marginalized populations in the media and society in general—giving various public and civil servants, specifically police, a platform to strategically portray their industry's institution and motives, which in turn has the opportunity to alter public opinion and maintain police authority and culture (Succar et al., 2024). An example of mainstream media promoting the voices of police and bureaucratic authorities occurred in the winter of 1985 when Los Angeles Police Chief Daryl F. Gates used militarized police tactics to unjustly use a tank with a battering ram attached to it into a suspected African American drug dealer's home (Murch, 2015). To his surprise, the destruction only revealed a group of women and children eating ice cream together. LA City Councilman David Cunningham said, "*Go right ahead, Chief. You do whatever you can to get rid of these rock houses. They're going to destroy the black community if you don't*" (Murch, 2015, Extract). This weaponization of one marginalized group's identity to support the well-being of another marginalized group is selfishly presented to enhance the political and ideological interests of a powerful institution, that is, the police.

Media is a powerful tool that uses various strategies such as framing, stereotyping, and misrepresenting to shape perceptions that align with the status quo and those profiting from these norms' upkeep. Media publications' linguistic tools, discursive strategies, and use of sociocultural contexts can strengthen the norms and values of dominant voices and norms while simultaneously harming or further subordinating marginalized voices. The 1984 Olympics provides a powerful case study to understand the intersections between power structures, media, marginalized groups, and the representations of these groups' identities and experiences during heightened global reach, profitable success, and tumultuous social, political, and historical contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1 CDA Origins and Theory

Critical Discourse Analysis came as a response to the limitations of traditional discourse analysis. It is a movement of multidisciplinary discourse studies focusing on the reproduction and manifestations of power abuse, including racism, sexism, and resistance against such dominations (Van Dijk, 2015). It originated as a form of problem-oriented social research with philosophical and linguistic bases of social theory and earlier forms of discourse analysis. CDA recognizes that power is exercised through language and seeks to understand how dominance, inequality, and social control are reproduced through text and talk in political, cultural, and social contexts. Norman Fairclough, often considered the most influential practitioner in CDA, suggests that the main objective of his approach to CDA is “*to help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others because consciousness is the first step for emancipation*” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 1). CDA aims to investigate how texts and events are ideologically shaped and generated by power (Fairclough, 1995). Its basic premise is that discourses reflect and constitute ideologies, gender models, social relationships, and power differentials. It understands discourse as a product of those factors and how it is created. CDA connects the social practice analysis and the textual analysis of language, stressing the cause of discourse and the constraints of institutions to discourse (Van Dijk, 1998).

CDA authors frequently cite Michel Foucault because he claims that consciousness is what produces and determines the social production process (Foucault, 1969). Foucault’s notions of discourse, subjectivity, and power allow social theory investigations to intersect with politics, economics, institutions, and statehood, making his theory popular with the CDA approach. Foucault acknowledges that “*Power is not an institution and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society*” (Foucault, 1976, p. 93). Foucault was notoriously against setting research methods and was reluctant to outline methodological processes (Graham, 2012). However, those who would like to formally decompose these power structures outside the abstract realm of theory may seek to apply a critical discourse analysis. Foucault’s theories resonate with CDA in that he recognizes the relationship between knowledge and power and emphasizes the importance of examining discourse to understand how power is reinforced and

can be challenged. The CDA's alignment with Foucault's perspectives and theories on discourse, power, and truth makes the CDA a vital bridge between this thesis's theoretical and analytical components.

3.1.1 Why CDA for this study?

Critical Discourse Analysis is a tool for deconstructing language, revealing how language builds and reinforces societal power dynamics and ideologies. Applying this analysis to textual media content can reveal how media production influences narratives around marginalized groups and reinforces key power dynamics. CDA highlights that language is not a neutral source of communication but is highly influenced by various structures, societal standards, and values. When seeking to understand how media construes and presents marginalized groups whose interests are not represented by said foundational structures, it is necessary to drill down into how linguistic tools, discursive strategies, and sociocultural contexts used by the media can contribute to interpretations, agenda-setting, and constructions of social reality. CDA provides the framework for analysis necessary to uncover these latent insights buried in media content. The following methodology will employ CDA as a form of analysis for quantitatively studying mainstream and independent media publications and will demonstrate how the two sources vary in their coverage. Specifically, the analysis will quantitatively illuminate how publications with greater outreach, more significant resources, and greater adherence to institutional norms impact the constructions and representations of marginalized groups.

The discourse analysis will be guided by the themes highlighted in the theoretical framework section. These themes include poststructuralism, post-neoliberalism, post-colonialism, critical race theory, and feminist theory. Applying these various theoretical lenses will guide the search for significant socio-linguistic concepts from the source analysis process. This research focuses on othering, abstractions, stereotyping, simplifications, exclusion, identity, experience, representation, and intersectionality. This methodological framework was developed with these theoretical perspectives and critical concepts to research how these marginalized groups' identities and experiences were represented. This thesis applies Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Richard Ashley's post-structuralist approach and theory as a theoretical guide. At the same time, Norman Fairclough's post-structural CDA conceptualization,

specifically his 3D discourse analysis model, supports the methodological framework and data analysis procedure.

3.2 Fairclough's Approach

Critical discourse analysis is a post-structural and qualitative approach using linguistic tools to analyze various contexts to uncover how power dynamics, structures, and ideologies are exercised in language, "*CDA is... as much a theory as a method-or rather, a theoretical perspective on language and more generally semiosis as one element or 'moment' of the material, social process, which gives rise to ways of analyzing language or semiosis within broader analyses of the social process*" (Fairclough, 2016, p. 121). The branch of CDA which Fairclough aligns himself with is known as the 'dialectical-relational approach,' a branch of CDA which centers the textual features of a text at the center of the analysis while still acknowledging the importance of the discursive and socio-cultural levels and changes (Fairclough, 2009). Critical discourse analysis takes an explicit position and thus is centrally concerned with understanding and exposing power, ultimately fighting social inequality.

To analyze such a diverse representation of 'marginalized groups and identities,' it is essential to consider the various levels of discourse present in the selected sources. Applying Fairclough's framework, which examines the linguistic and textual level of discourse and the intertextual and socio-cultural levels, is valuable. CDA addresses social problems through ideological, historical, and interpretive work. This section implements Norman Fairclough's CDA framework to clearly distinguish the three main elements of the 'communicative event.' Fairclough considered language an internal element of society, a social practice conditioned by non-linguistic features in society (Fairclough, 1995). Within his 3D CDA analytical framework, he categorizes these three dimensions as Texts, Discourse practices, and Sociocultural practices.

I. Texts (Description): The text dimension covers written, spoken, or typed discourse. To Fairclough, text may be written or oral, and oral texts may be read, spoken, or visual (Fairclough, 2015). This is an instance of one person using language to one particular audience at one specific time. This text level gets embedded into a greater community's more extensive discourse practices. This text is analyzed by studying language structure, specifically vocabulary,

cohesion, grammar, etc. However, it also requires the analysis of text production and general perceptions of the words.

II. Discourse practices (Interpretation): Refer to how people speak and structure their text, specifically what beliefs and ideologies influence this production, speaking, and structuring. This dimension holistically analyzes *textual production* and *interpretation/consumption* (Fairclough, 1995). The text production process investigates whether the author encodes certain ideologies, affiliations, or biases into the text. Meanwhile, text interpretation/consumption decodes the meaning of texts according to the audience's preconceived ideologies, beliefs, and experiences. This dimension aims to understand how the text may shape the preconceived beliefs of the audience.

III. Sociocultural Practice (Explanation): Refers to the social and cultural events and going-ons which the communications are occurring in (Fairclough, 1989). This dimension deals with the relationship between production, interpretation, and social conditioning. It investigates how discourses operate in various societal domains (a primary focus on power) and how this influences our society. Fairclough says, “[sociocultural practice] is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26)

Fairclough identifies the three components of discourse as description, interaction, and explanation (Fairclough, 1989). *Description* analyzes text's formal properties, including grammar, lexicon, literary devices, etc. *Interpretation* analyzes how discourse is produced and distributed (the end product of text production) and how discourse is consumed (where the reader interaction occurs). *Explanation* concerns the relationship between discourse and social contexts (processes of production and interpretations AND their social effects). He argues that the three components are analyzed in different ways. The interpretation and description element is analyzed from a macro-analysis lens, whereas the explanation element is analyzed from a micro-analysis lens. A macro-analysis means analyzing the text and discursive strategies as discourse's social, cultural, and political dimensions. A macro-analysis focuses on societal dynamics, such as institutional practices, beliefs, and ideologies, and how those dynamics maintain and produce social inequalities. A micro-analysis examines linguistic choices and how language shapes discourse and contributes to social constructions (Fairclough, 2018).

The textual dimension of Fairclough's 3D analysis model is essential in deconstructing the vocabulary, grammar, and text structure to demonstrate these features' close relationship with discourse structuring. The discursive practice dimension is significant because the analysis links the linguistic features to the texts' contexts and relates to how people produce and interpret news discourse. The sociocultural practice dimension emphasizes discourse as a kind of social practice; when deconstructing from this dimension allows an investigation into hidden power ideologies through institutional and social contexts (Fairclough, 1995).

3.3 Source Selection

Focusing on critical factors of language use, production, interpretation, representation, and contextual factors, I perform a textual and contextual analysis of 30 print media sources, 15 of which are from the mainstream Los Angeles Times and 15 from the independent news source Citrus College Clarion. In alignment with the research objective, the selection of 15 mainstream and 15 independent news sources is intended to demonstrate how media that has corporate ownership and more significant funding sources is more prone to exhibiting biases and affiliations, and a broader audience outreach can have a different construction and representation than those less mainstream. An additional benefit to including both mainstream and independent media is understanding how the power dynamics and ideological agendas of those funding the larger mainstream media publications can use various linguistic tools and discursive strategies to represent marginalized identities differently than less funded independent news sources. The data analysis will focus on specific media outlets active in the United States between August 13, 1984, and August 12, 1985, the day after the last day of the 1984 Olympics and one year into the future. Studying this specific time frame is beneficial because reflection and analysis of the long-term effects, impacts on discourse, and community response potentially have time to gain traction. The sources included are newspaper publications (mainstream and independent) published during the set timeframe. The selected sources highlight the intersections between media, power dynamics, ideologies, neoliberal techniques, dominant discourses, and constructions and representations of marginalized groups. The selection of 30 sources, 15 from The Los Angeles Times and 15 from Citrus College Clarion, contains one or more of these identities, events, or references to the Olympic Games to understand representation,

misrepresentation, and lack of representations of marginalized identities and experiences. The Mainstream sources were found on the Los Angeles Times Archives website. The Independent sources were found on the UCR Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research website, a database of various California digital newspaper collections. Although not explicitly advocacy journalism, the selected sources' mission statement emphasizes editorial autonomy and journalistic integrity without significant control from external entities such as the government or corporations. The selected independent source is the Citrus College Clarion, the newspaper representing Citrus Community College in Glendora, California. See the '*Source Keyword Search*' section for more information on the selection of articles.

Fairclough's 3D discourse analysis model implicitly inspired the selected coding scheme and the code factors, providing a comprehensive analysis approach demonstrating language's impact on shaping discourse, power relations, and social practices. His 3D framework is separated into texts, discourse practice, and sociocultural practices. With this being said, my code scheme is divided into language use (which covers the text description dimension), production and interpretation (which covers the discourse practice dimension), and representation and contextual factors (which covers the sociocultural practice dimension). The coding scheme provides a holistic code framework for understanding the relationship between language, power dynamics, and societal contexts. This framework relates directly to understanding media's complex role in representing marginalized identities and experiences. It also demonstrates a process of uncovering hidden structures of power and dominance to know how they impact and influence media productions and representations.

3.4 Setting Context for Research Objectives

Given its broader audience reach, corporate ownership and funding, and stricter journalistic norms, mainstream media is more prone to aligning with the dominant narratives. With these incentivized publication standards, diversity in perspective and representations is less likely to arise, given the interest in catering to more extensive and, therefore, generalized demographics. Considering these deeply-rooted systemic foundations of prominent mainstream media publications, it can be assumed that mainstream media is more prone to political and ideological influences, leading to a greater likelihood of negative portrayal of marginalized

groups. Less-funded independent media publications are more likely to attract authors and journalists who value freedom from corporate ownership and expectation, amplify diverse perspectives, and prioritize individual and community engagement. These independent media publications' are less rigid in their emphasis on ideological and institutional norms and values, as dominant powers do not usually directly fund them. The place of media institutions within power structures can impact how they represent and construct marginalized identities and experiences. The conditions around these media publications differ due to inconsistencies in the forces acting upon them and the structural conditions that influence their writing. These differences are likely to have an impact on the publication's outputs.

This study aims to understand how media influences the construction and representation of marginalized identities and experiences, what tools and strategies enable such representations, and how distinct types of media construct and represent marginalized groups differently. Specifically, the study should show that mainstream and independent media institutions in Los Angeles did not similarly represent marginalized identities and experiences following the 1984 Games.

3.5 Challenges and considerations:

While Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to studying discourse, it is not a foolproof methodology. Acknowledging its inherent subjectivity is essential. Despite valiant efforts to remain unbiased, the selected theoretical framework, my personal beliefs, knowledge, and experience inevitably influenced the selection of sources, the ranking of sources during the coding process, and the interpretation of data. These limitations are crucial to understanding and maintaining the integrity of the study. Regarding source selection, it is essential to note that 30 selected newspaper sources do not indicate all Western media sources. American media is exceptionally diverse; the selected sources do not represent all mainstream and independent media forms in the United States. It is also important to note that much of the mainstream media focuses on the unhoused populations as the subject of marginalized groups. This generally contrasted with the independent sources, whose marginalized subjects were more of a mixed selection. This is essential as it impacts the data, especially when comparing mainstream and independent news sources. The independent media's tendency to cover a greater

variety of marginalized and intersectional identities also correlates to generally more positive and personal representations and publications.

3.6 Research Question and Objectives

RQ: How did the American media influence the construction and representation of marginalized identities and experiences in the year following the 1984 Olympic Games?

Sub-Questions:

- How do media coverage's linguistic tools and discursive strategies construct and represent marginalized identities?
- How do these representations differ between mainstream and independent news sources?

3.7 Selected Texts and Sampling Strategy

This thesis analyzes 30 newspaper media sources' language, discourse, and sociocultural contexts related to marginalized groups to investigate how the media portrays their experiences and identities. This study focused on newspaper publication as opposed to campaigns, TV advertisements, films, or other forms of media because newspapers are primary source material, with major global coverage of local contexts. Newspaper publications are easier to access, and there is more archived data than in other media forms during the selected time frame. The analysis of publication decisions can expose the various power structures and dynamics that influenced media representation and the construction of identities during the given timeframe. The source analysis began with an articulate selection of keywords to look for when choosing newspaper publications to include in the qualitative data set. These keywords guided the search and selection of relevant sources for this study. The range of key concepts is purposefully broad to incorporate the wide variety of forces acting on the media and subjects covered by the media. Pertinent groups to concentrate on in mid-1980s Los Angeles are African American individuals, Latinx individuals, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, indigenous individuals, individuals of Asian descent, immigrants, unhoused populations, those abiding in low-income communities, current or former convicts, those living with substance use disorders and addictions, and those

living with or at high-risk of sexually-transmitted infections. Some historical, social, political, and cultural events selected in the sources are the Cold War, the Reagan presidency, Reaganomics, the Olympic Games, Daryl F. Gates police chief tenure, the 1984 Crack Cocaine epidemic, and the 1980 Olympic boycott. Initially, the research intended to study two mainstream, heavily-funded newspaper companies' publications and two popular advocacy newspapers in Los Angeles. The final selection of sources was made by ensuring each selected article covered at least one of these marginalized identities and one historically, socially, politically, or economically relevant event to the period.

3.8 Source Keyword Search

When selecting relevant sources, I search for keywords that cover a range of meaningful themes guiding my research. Before beginning this research, I researched typical 1980s American lingo frequently used instead of modern and politically correct academic and media phrases and terms used today. For example, the sources provided a commonly used term for an unhoused individual: 'panhandler.' Another example of words used to describe unhoused or various vulnerable communities is 'tweaker' or 'hobo.' Instead of searching solely for 'African American' or 'person of color,' I would search for 'brown' or 'black.' Another critical preface for this research was the social, geographic, and historical contexts of the city of Los Angeles and its population. One example is that along with the phrase, 'the media,' it would be 'the industry.' To cover the theme of researching marginalized groups, I searched for words such as 'minorities,' 'vulnerable,' 'disadvantaged,' 'poor,' 'they,' and 'others.' More specifically, this research seeks to understand the representations of marginalized groups in Los Angeles; the most occurring mentions of marginalized groups found during the source search were women, people of color, unhoused populations, immigrants, and LGBTQIA+ populations. With this said, I selected sources by searching for articles and publications using the terms 'immigrants,' 'homeless,' 'African American,' 'Hispanic,' 'black,' 'brown,' 'Latin American,' 'women,' 'disabled,' 'convicts,' 'low-income,' 'poor,' 'gay,' 'lesbian,' and 'queer.' To cover the broad theme of media representations and how people and their experiences are represented, I look for keywords such as 'narrative,' 'portrayal,' 'representations,' 'reality,' 'visible,' and 'truth.' Another theme of this thesis is a focus on social issues that potentially impact media

representations of specific groups; with this being said, I searched for words such as ‘poverty,’ ‘inequality,’ ‘homeless,’ ‘activism,’ ‘abuse,’ and ‘power.’ This thesis focuses on the prevalence of power structures and neoliberal structures and their impact on media representations; for this reason, keywords including ‘powerful,’ ‘lavish,’ ‘extravagant,’ ‘wealthy,’ ‘rich,’ ‘white,’ ‘capitalism,’ ‘corporations,’ and ‘sponsorships’ were applied to the search. Another critical research theme was identity; I searched for words such as ‘ethnic identity’ and ‘national identity,’ ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity.’ The media critique theme prompted me to search keywords such as ‘stereotypes’ and ‘bias.’ Finally, focusing on discrimination and exclusion within media representation, I searched for keywords including ‘racism,’ ‘discrimination,’ ‘sexism,’ ‘equality,’ and ‘gender.’ When applied to discourse analysis, language representing marginalized groups may uncover social inequalities and stereotypes otherwise hidden in language, norms, misrepresentation, or ideology.

3.9 Thematic Scheme

The selected 30 sources comprise 15 articles from the mainstream Los Angeles Times and 15 from the independent Citrus College Clarion. Based on discovered discourses or narratives about various marginalized groups or identities, the sources have been divided into five themes: Women, People of Color, Unhoused, Immigrants, and LGBTQIA+. The marginalized groups must be dissected into separate themes to effectively analyze the various discourses and practices in the sources. Although the majority of these themes are intersectional issues, separating them explicitly into one identity before later connecting them as complex identities is valuable.

Women were selected as one of the marginalized groups for several reasons. The 1984 Games were significant for women in sports, as the addition of new sports opportunities and overall increased visibility in the media came from these Games. In the 1980s, America faced a significant shift in gender equality and women's rights; however, some outdated cultural and societal views and norms persisted. I wanted to understand how famous American female athletes were represented in the media instead of ‘average’ women worldwide. Media can play an essential role in promoting gender equality and overall positive social change while also promoting and maintaining negative stereotypes about women and their roles in society. I wanted to understand how the media represented women throughout the world and what, if any, gender

stereotypes were portrayed in the post-Olympic media. This theme is vital for studying the connection between soft power, national image, and gender equality. It also provides insight into the connection between globalization, social change, and economic profits, as although women may be more visible in the media, it is essential to question what amplifying the experiences of 'successful' women does for 'average' women as a whole.

People of Color is the second theme selected primarily due to my previous knowledge of tumultuous racial dynamics and social tensions between people of color and the LAPD. Beyond that, however, I was interested in applying my research to post-colonial and CRT concepts associated with race to an international non-governmental organization (IOC) dedicated to equity and respect. Considering the International Olympic Committee's commitment to respect, unity, and opposition to discrimination, I was interested to see whether this had any traction in the media's representation of POC athletes. I was curious to see how POC representation of profitable athletes for global businesses and investors differed from POC representation of non-athletes. I wanted to study how media after the Olympic Games could impact international audiences' perceptions of the United States' identity, image, and racial diversity. What role does media play as a tool of ideological influence, soft power, and discrimination against POC? This theme also contributes to understanding how global governance frameworks handle transnational and human rights issues related to race.

Unhoused populations were selected as a theme for this research due to my knowledge of the mass displacement and gentrification that host city residents face before and after the Olympic Games. Los Angeles was notorious for its high levels of unhoused populations, and I wanted to explore how the LA media justified this after such a successful and profitable Olympics. This theme was inspired by my interest in global human rights and social justice, where I attempt to understand the media's role in shaping certain narratives while silencing others. I was curious how the media covered their 'cleaning-up' efforts before the Games began and how they represented and explained the unhoused populations who moved back into the city following the conclusion of the 1984 Games. This is significant because it demonstrates how globalization can positively impact globally connected and developed cities while negatively impacting marginalized groups. The way the media portrays efforts to address unhoused populations can either enhance or damage a country's image, which is a concern of soft power

initiatives. This theme highlights the flaws in neoliberal policies and their subsequent impact on social inequality, particularly those related to unhoused populations in major international cities.

Immigrants as a theme were selected due to the 1980s being a period of increasing globalization and global interconnectedness and to understand how the United States interpreted 'outsiders' during the Cold War period. I was curious to research how American media represented issues and policies associated with immigrants to understand the interplay between policy, media, and public opinion. The Cold War period was an era of mass US vs. Soviet propaganda, and I wanted to see how the US media portrayed immigrants coming from Eastern Europe. I was interested to see what immigrants the American media met with sympathy and who the media deemed a villain. This theme brings into question the influence media has on policy and public opinion during a heightened period of nationalism and patriotism. It also highlights global human rights and governance by investigating how media represents immigrant challenges and lifestyles and whether or not it advocates for immigrant rights. This theme brings national identity to the forefront as this specific theme can provide insight into how media constructs national identity and who rightfully belongs in the country.

LGBTQIA+ populations are the final theme primarily due to my interest in media representation during the AIDS epidemic and the global human rights themes associated with this representation. I also sought to understand how the media deals with representing diversity and real experience during a time of heightened controversy. The AIDS epidemic was a global issue that various international and domestic institutions and organizations were attempting to alleviate. Media's representation of those living with or associated with those living with AIDS leaves a lasting impact on the LGBTQIA+ legacy. Media can have a substantial effect on public opinion and attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ populations and can either be a tool that supports or harms their living standards. I was primarily interested in seeing if LGBTQIA+ individuals would be generalized in the media or if individual experiences would be amplified. Media could influence advocacy and awareness campaigns about LGBTQIA+ issues; however, global and local norms may have impacted their representation. After a popular international event, I sought to understand how the media handled human rights, inclusivity, and diversity.

The following analysis structure will be followed for each theme and source:

Textual Level

- a. Vocabulary
 - i. Lexical choices (analysis of specific words used, connotations, meanings)
 - ii. Figurative language
- b. Grammar
 - i. Modal verbs
 - ii. Active or passive voice
- c. Text structure
 - i. Narrative structure
 - ii. Tone

Discourse Level

- a. Production
 - i. Authors/Institutions mentioned or involved
 - ii. Processes and practices
 - iii. Motivations and intentions
- b. Distribution
 - i. Distribution networks
 - ii. Gatekeeping and access
- c. Consumption
 - i. Audience
 - ii. Interpretations

Social Level

- a. Social context
 - i. Historical context
 - ii. Cultural norms and values
 - iii. Economic and political contexts and conditions
- b. Power and ideology
 - i. Power relations
 - ii. Ideological constructs
- c. Social Institutions and Practices
 - i. Institutions
 - ii. Social practices

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Thematic Reports

4.1.1 Women

It is essential to note the history of modern American media, founded in the 19th century, to provide brief and significant updates on public happenings occurring in increasingly urbanized American neighborhoods. During this period, those in dire need of this information were the men who used the media to help them negotiate and make money for their families in such a rapidly changing society. As time has passed, it is vital to note that the foundations of that institution have not changed; they have just been built upon and expanded by heteronormative and capitalist norms and values which profit off of brief and surface representations of truth and knowledge. According to post-structuralist thinkers, the media as an institution is guided by the reflectionist approach, supposedly reflecting how things are in everyday reality. Poststructuralists reject reflectionism for its surface-level and ambiguous reflection of the truth, knowledge, and society. In connection to representations of women, this reflectionist approach is demonstrated by selecting who is covered and how their identities and experiences are constructed in the media.

Post-1984 Los Angeles posed a transformative period for women gaining more autonomy in post-Olympic California's rapidly changing and progressive political, societal, and cultural atmosphere. Not only were female athletes granted new athletic disciplines and opportunities to engage in, but they were also frequently represented in the news due to these achievements, "*Her score is an incredible score*" and "*America's sweetheart*" are phrases used to describe female athletes in the year after the 1984 Olympic Games. In the years before 1984, Olympic media almost exclusively focused on male athletics, "*That sort of interest in women's volleyball is a spectacular contrast to the times.*" It brings into question what changed between 1980 and 1984 for such a significant shift in the representation of female athletics. For one, a newfound profit was discovered in highlighting superior athletes regardless of gender. 'America's sweetheart,' Mary Lou Retton, blew her competition out of the water, collecting five Olympic medals, the most of any athlete at the '84 Games. Neoliberal capitalism's prioritization of maximizing profits and upholding political and economic power is demonstrated through the amplification of American athletes in the media. Vocabulary and sociopolitical rhetorics, such as "*Soviet kids and*

ours can play together in the world's sandbox again,” combine to represent female athletes as American saviors of the average childhood. This representation is not to benefit the female athletes; instead, it supports the capitalist and nationalist systems of the American media and the United States. Notably, this niche identity of ‘star female athletes’ was praised for emphasizing the ‘star athlete’ rather than the ‘female.’ While women such as Mary Lou Retton were becoming household names, the vast majority of women, particularly those with intersecting identities, were either left unrepresented in the media or represented in a way that aligned with the outdated social norms of the mid-1900s.

The societal norms associated with femininity and what it means to be a decent woman are constructed by centuries of patriarchal societies using history, religion, culture, economics, political frameworks, and globalization to spread and affirm specific gender norms and stereotypes. Media is used as a vessel for further shaping these societal expectations and values as it is controlled by those invested in maintaining these patriarchal structures and institutions. The year following the 1984 Games, sports discourse ran rampant as it was relevant and profitable. In many sources, mentions of women were sprinkled in the texts to add value and anecdotal entertainment to men’s experiences with sports. Women were used to “*sell Hawaii*” to prospective college athletes, where recruiters would “*take them out for canoeing and surfing and a lot of wild women.*” Using physical descriptions of women appeared to be a productive way of alluding to the role of women in sports and society. Often, these articles either mention or are endorsed by reputable organizations such as the National Collegiate Athletics Association, the People For Peace Committee of the Cosmopolitan Club, or the International Olympic Committee. This endorsement not only strengthens the author's message about women, but it also has the potential to make it a norm in the mind of the average reader because of the credibility of these institutions. Along with this norm of women as promiscuous creatures, there lies the narrative that women are expected to be ‘perfect, submissive, and ideal women.’ For example, how the lack of background checks on Miss America pageant contestants “*Have allowed the image of American womanhood to be tarnished.*”

The power dynamics between men and women can be constructed and conveyed in the media in various ways. Using titles and honorifics can demonstrate various power dynamics within the media. For example, referring to Monique Berlioux simply by her name versus introducing Juan Antonio, ‘IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch of Spain’ turns the narrative

from her experience to make it about his leadership and expertise. Not only is it a negative representation of a “*biased*” woman “*breaking her contract*,” but the positive representation of a man during an article depicting the baseless layoff of a woman is problematic. Emphasizing the unifying nature of the IOC and Olympic Games, providing quotes from key notable figures, and doing so with a formal and objective tone further ensures the cryptic comments about why she was fired are left unquestioned. Representation and visibility concerns lead to the question of who is being quoted in the media and what institutional and societal causes they support to be given a platform.

Overall, there is a general lack of representation of average women living in America. This lack of representation is also accompanied by representations of constructed stereotypes and norms the heteronormative, patriarchal, and capitalist society are portraying. Various social practices, such as the objectification and commodification of women, questioning of female integrity and commitment, and the infantilization of patriotic female athletes, are influenced by and reflected in the discourse surrounding women. This research on media’s representation and constructions of women’s experiences and identities demonstrates how women are used to shape public opinions on various subjects. The 1984 period was guided by Cold War rhetorics determined to amplify the power and greatness of America and capitalism. Celebrating sports inclusivity and diplomacy were typically fronts to further platform American power. If the media truly wanted to amplify the narratives of average women living in America, it would not be profitable as it is not a relatable story, and it is not pushing the narrative of the powerful and great America that the US media institution so desperately wants to produce. The ideological construct of patriarchy is behind the simplified, derogatory, and sensationalized representation of women found within media publications. Questioning who is being given a voice, what institutions are involved in producing the media source, and understanding relevant historical and political events allow for analyzing various constructions and representations of women’s identities and experiences.

4.1.2 People of Color

Just as the media institution was created and adjusted for men, it was also designed for and catered predominantly to white people. Thus, even today, it is common for media to

underrepresent or stereotypically represent people of color, as those who predominantly controlled and published news were white men. In the year after the 1984 Games in Los Angeles, these ownership disparities and foundational hints of racism and segregation continue to peek through despite newfound claims of diversity and inclusion. The concept of media as a predominantly white institution suggests that media, particularly mainstream media, is influenced, shaped, and controlled by white norms and values. This power over the media ensures Western and white norms and values dictate what is right and normal, influencing public opinion and justifying unjust treatment of non-white individuals. The analysis of the media sources demonstrates the interplay between language, power, and identity and how it impacts the construction and representation of POC identities and experiences in post-Olympic Los Angeles.

The poststructural notions of ‘Otherness’ and ‘Us versus Them’ are visible in much media discourse. When race is involved in the narrative, it becomes even more apparent—using terms such as “subversive or un-American activities” and “*Communist Party newspaper affiliations*” to come after the late Olympic athlete Jesse Owens demonstrates how political and economic rhetorics of the time are used to justify and validate the unjust and unnecessary FBI probes against him. It brings into question why they are launching an investigation against a black man who had passed five years prior. Other examples of ‘Us versus Them’ include using detailed imagery to describe the living conditions of people of color. Terms such as “*shack towns*,” “*inner-city*,” and comparing living standards in Laguna Hills versus Skid Row bridge that gap further, especially when the contrasts are added to articles discussing unlawful activities or legal issues. According to poststructuralism, creating the binary oppositions of ‘us vs. them’ further reinforces and defines power structures, emphasizing the contrast between stand-up citizens and the local marginalized group. This distinction is made further through the article’s tones, where they use resentful and objective tones to describe what could be a sympathetic and reflective voice. Post-structuralists’ concept of otherness demonstrates the American media’s incapability to accurately represent the experiences of those known as the subaltern.

The post-Olympic media also focused on the stories of POC athletes during and after the Olympic Games. Post-colonialism's concept of nationhood burdening cultural identity and self-perceptions is reflected in the media and how they represent past and current POC athletes. Adjectives and descriptive phrases such as “*loyal to America*” and “*American hero*” are followed by “*to this day, I don't know what he won gold medals in.*” According to post-colonialist authors,

the ‘American Athletic Imperialism’ is shaping public opinion on Cold War relations by celebrating sports inclusivity and diplomacy despite showing interest in an individual’s culture or contributions. There is also a market advantage to publishing these athletes' stories; the year following the Games, sports discourse is exceptionally profitable. When the media can discuss stories of past POC Olympians’ legal troubles or supposed dishonor to the United States, it strengthens those societal power structures that villainize the Other while also making a profit and catching the reader’s attention using the Olympic name.

The generalizations and stereotypes that people of color face in society and the media have a series of implications for social structure and power relations. From a critical race theory perspective, questioning the status quo and white power structures, such as the mainstream media, furthers the dismissal or misrepresentation of POC experiences. A common theme within the media is generalizing and grouping people of color as a unified group of individuals. This is particularly harmful when the public perceives negative stereotypes, scapegoating, and generalizations as the truth about all people of color. It also leads to simplifications of the reality of the situation, where people of color are blamed for their existing conditions without the acknowledgment of the systematic structures and issues in place that led them to this place. For example, terms and phrases such as “*Southside versus Eastside*” and “*poor people are non-white*” are perpetuating stereotypes and generalizations about specific neighborhoods and groups of people living within them. The stereotypes are incomplete and misguided, an issue CRT blames the media for only pushing the dominant narratives. These stereotypes gain their traction and validity from article endorsements from big-name organizations such as the FBI, LAPD, a variety of notable LA defense lawyers, and more. It is essential to note the context in which these publications were made, as although non-white individuals continued to face various challenges, it was also a period of mass political and social movements. Civil rights activism, the anti-apartheid movement, and immigration reform demonstrated a time of resilience for non-white populations in the United States. Given the beginning of the Reagan presidency and its commitment to cutting funding for social welfare programs, this rhetoric may have been reflected in the mainstream media as critical stakeholders at the time tended to lean conservative.

Overall, people of color face a representation issue in the media. Whether it be the generalization of all people of color, perpetuating negative stereotypes, or underrepresentation of people of color in the media, this silencing of real POC experience is problematic. Capitalism’s

influence on the media's representation of Olympic POC athletes demonstrates how even though the subjects are professional, highly trained athletes, the stories are frequently about their wrongdoings or are accompanied by the author's apparent uninterested tone. Outside of athletics, the blatant 'othering' of people of color is demonstrated through the media articles' tone, word choice, mentioned and affiliated authors and institutions, and more. Considering the tumultuous period for civil and human rights movements and taking into account the 1992 LA police riots, which took place a few years later, this representation may be an accurate reflection of public opinion and attitudes towards people of color in the city and nation.

4.1.3 Unhoused

A serious issue that persists to this day in Los Angeles is the level of unhoused individuals living within the city. Neighborhoods such as Skid Row are growing in vast numbers, and how the media represents the issue continues to be problematic. The 1984 Olympic Games were an incredibly insightful time to understand how the media represents the unhoused population during intense local economic growth, controversial street 'clean-ups' before the Games and growing levels of economic inequality. This particular theme touches on issues related to race, class, and gender, among other things.

As mentioned, the representation of unhoused groups and individuals is lacking while simultaneously being a massive coverage point for significant newspapers. The media appeared to use the Olympics as justification for anti-homeless policies and media coverage. The city's pre-Olympic policies included removing signs and evidence of unhoused populations for the city's representation; the media continued this narrative. Post-Olympics, the unhoused returned, and the media represented the issue one-sidedly. Describing 'beautiful LA parks' as again overrun by "*derelicts and drug dealers again dominate the historic downtown park.*" The media manages the visibility and image management of the issue in a way that aligns with problematic efforts such as city sweeps and cleanups meant to displace the unhoused further. As poststructuralism notes, this control of the narrative and public attitudes through dispelling what they consider 'truth' and 'knowledge' further strengthens dominant discourse while considering those with less currency to be considered null. Foucault writes about biopower and governmentality, which recognizes that media has the power as an institution to normalize certain discourses and control what information is distributed to the world. When specific media

sources challenge these dominant discourses, they mobilize against various intersecting power dynamics and structures to promote social justice and resistance initiatives. This voiding of marginalized narratives is created through a variety of strategies. One of which is the ‘Us versus Them’ narrative, which postcolonial theorists suggest both marginalizes and incorrectly represents marginalized groups. Using language such as “*nomadic*,” “*ungroomed*,” and “*derelect*” breeds negative perspectives of these populations in the minds of readers while also ensuring relatability to these individuals is impossible. Combining strong negative language with comparisons to “*hard-working people*” and ‘formerly flower-filled parks’ creates a specific image for the unhoused as a general population. The scapegoating and sensationalism of the unhoused population as the rationale for degrading the state of LA construct a narrative that all homeless people are inherently flawed. This narrative further justifies past and future policies related to homelessness, further marginalizes these groups, and influences public options, another example of the interplay between identity, language, and power.

In 1980, America faced a recession and the impact of Reagan’s new economic plans. These plans included dismantling the welfare system, a plan which, of course, failed to be acknowledged in the media. The media is a tool to support the neoliberal ethos, which turns everything into a market exchange between maximizing individuals. The erosion of the US democratic values via the neoliberal ethos is created through neoliberalism claiming the public sphere as simply an aspect of the market. The new period of Reaganomics introduced new evolutions of privatization, and thus, the media was introduced as a maintenance mechanism for hegemonic positioning. When exploring unhoused populations, it was necessary to remember the media’s role as a neoliberal propaganda mechanism. Understanding how unhoused populations are one of the targets of neoliberal development, maintenance, and strengthening is critical. Using phrases such as “*unwilling to work*” and “*do not speak English*” connects to neoliberal capitalism's emphasis on obtaining live fulfillment and value from catering to the production machine. Acknowledging that unhoused groups either don’t want to or are unable to work due to their lack of skills ensures readers turn hostile towards these groups while feeling pride in participating in their economic system. The Olympic Games generated significant revenue for the city of Los Angeles. It also allowed the United States to demonstrate its capabilities as a state-of-the-art international powerhouse. Combined with neoliberalism deindividualization tendencies, this illustrates why the unhoused would be generalized as an opposing group and

why quotes from the unhoused were rarely used in publications. Including personal stories does not generate profits; instead, providing quick, surface-level news coverage on an issue most readers are generally aware of is the route taken. Using terms such as “*street people*” and “*derelict*” simplifies and makes the state of an unhoused person digestible while also providing no context into their individual stories or experiences, taking the voices of marginalized individuals and groups away from their impacts their agency while also influencing public opinion in a way that caters to power structures and systems which aim to remove them entirely.

The media's generalizations and negative representations of unhoused groups and individuals fail to acknowledge the varying forms of oppression stacked against those who find themselves unhoused. These multiple forms of oppression intersect to create unique and complex situations. The complex and problematic interplay between power, language, and discourse is demonstrated through the media's representation of unhoused individuals' and groups' experiences and identities. The failure to acknowledge individuals' complex struggles of the unhoused, the shame of remaining in the situation, and the representation of these people as less than are a product of the 1980s economic system. This representation is also a product of mainstream media's simple presentation of intersectional issues, the media's connection to power structures and institutions, and the media's normalization of exclusion.

4.1.4 Immigrants

A fascinating finding from this theme was that the media primarily defined and categorized ‘immigrants’ as Western or Eastern Europeans. This could be for various reasons, such as other polarizing domestic issues, including the Cold War or the aftermath of the Vietnam War. In the 1980s, immigration and border concerns did not dominate political discourse until years later. The United States, specifically California, faced a period of economic growth and recovery after the 1980s recession, which also could affect reducing tensions around immigration and immigrants. However, the representation of European immigrants still presents various interesting findings, allowing for a valuable and informative discussion surrounding US media and its representation of non-Americans.

Post-structuralism's idea that identity is not fixed but constructed through discourse is relevant here. It demonstrates how media is a tool of power to produce discourse, construct

reality, and reinforce power structures. This includes defining norms and regulating population behavior and self-perception, Foucault's concept of biopower. Mainstream media specifically does not allow for counter-narratives that have the potential to disarm the dominant power structures and narratives present. Where mainstream media tends to use terminology such as "deserter," "assimilation," and "freedom" to describe immigrants in the US, alternative media uses terminology such as "personal and emotional relationships," "share their culture," and "cultural barriers" to demonstrate the difficulties and real-life experiences of immigrants in the United States. The tone of these two media types tends to differ as well, with mainstream media tending to be more inspirational and objective, whereas alternative media is more respectful and informative. Finally, it is essential to note that the media sources that frequently name-dropped powerful institutions and authors within the text were the mainstream. It provides the text and the construction of identity within the text to be considered credible and to reinforce the existing power structures and hierarchies in society.

Regarding immigrants of 1984 and 1985, the narratives surrounding them tended to project a sense of awe surrounding their unique ways or as a mechanism for controlling perceptions of the Cold War and communist countries. The process of 'othering' describes the immigrants as either "snobbish people," "more interesting than Americans," or "foreign" people. Although not inherently negative descriptions of these individuals, it homogenize and depicts them stereotypically. The media was heavily influenced by the Cold War and anti-Communist sentiments; immigrants, primarily Eastern Europeans, were generally described as "anti-communist activists" and "political asylum seekers" looking for a new life. Those stories that labeled the Eastern European immigrants as refugees or defectors" were typically highly sympathetic to their stories, using words such as "reprieve" to describe their experiences. These stories of European defectors are typically personalized and emotional narratives detailing their journey and experience in America and how fearful they are of being deported or sent back. The media's immigrant success stories and narratives of assimilation demonstrate how they thrived and survived living in the US capitalist economy. Positive terminology such as "the heart of an alternative cultural movement" and "authentic" to describe immigrant-owned businesses demonstrates how neoliberal policies and the dismantling of welfare programs still present immigrants with the opportunity to succeed in the US.

Although I was expecting to find more media coverage depicting Mexican immigrants considering America's current political discourse, the insight into the media's depiction of European immigrants was eye-opening. These immigrants' representations were generally depicted positively; however, they were still exoticized, demonstrating a societal hierarchy. The distinction between legal versus illegal immigration may be why European immigrants are cast in a more favorable light in the media, or perhaps it is simply a race issue.

4.1.5 LGBTQIA+

Political, cultural, and social factors shaped the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups in the LA post-Olympic period. The group experienced severe stigma and violence as a product of societally engrained norms regarding heteronormativity and the AID epidemic. Although various activist organizations and protests demanding equal rights were frequent in Los Angeles, the discrimination persisted. There were a variety of legal tensions aimed at the LGBTQIA+ community, which led to harassment and discriminatory treatment by both the citizens and the government. Media played a massive role in dispersing narratives valuing heteronormativity, mainly through negative stereotypes portraying LGBTQIA+ groups and individuals and through a lack of positive representation of the group. Media impacts societal attitudes and policy and is paramount in constructing LGBTQIA+ representation and identity.

According to post-structuralists, the media is a tool that aids in producing and disseminating knowledge. The media is a white, heteronormative power structure that tends to represent heterosexual families and individuals as the norm, consequently shaping attitudes and beliefs about couples and individuals that fall outside of that identity. The production and dissemination of knowledge about the identities and experiences of LGBTQIA+ frame them within heteronormative discourse. Phrases describing same-sex relations, such as "*that queer stuff*" and "*perversion,*" imply that the sex lives and overall way of living is unnatural. Articles describing the injustices trans and homosexual youth are facing describe them as having psychiatric issues and being "*morally corrupt.*" The majority of articles use a neutral, factual, or objective tone despite detailing intensely discriminatory issues. Deconstructing neutrality and objectivity would allow us to see how a neutral tone is ideological and masks underlying power relations. It continues to perpetuate these dominant discourses and power structures by ensuring the articles continue to align with heteronormative norms and values. By underplaying the

struggles of LGBTQIA+ individuals, it is less likely to ignite a desire for action amongst readers, further deepening the divide between the majority of society and marginalized groups such as the LGBTQIA+ community.

This connects to the post-structuralism understanding of binary oppositions, an Us versus Them mentality that maintains the social hierarchy. Binary opposition explores the relationship between speech and writing; the 'Us' represents what is believed to be universal truths, whereas the 'Them' is inferior or deviant. Terms and phrases such as "*act like you have some kind of disease*," "*general population versus the homosexual community*," and "*different lifestyle*" imply that those in the LGBTQIA+ community are living their lives differently than those who are straight. Articles tend to include notable authors and institutions that impact the production and the context of how these marginalized experiences and identities are represented. For example, articles that contain historical and cultural contexts, such as the AIDS epidemic, would use social institutions such as the Red Cross, Dr. Benjamin Spindler (including all of his titles), and the LA city chairman to prove the article's points. Another example of this division between the two groups is demonstrated when a "*lesbian-sponsored*" blood drive was intended to be held; however, it was canceled due to AIDS concerns, "*he valued the 'goodwill and understanding' of the thousands of regular Red Cross donors 'more than I value the 30 or 40 units of blood we would have collected.'*" The exclusion and control depicted by binary oppositions and others allow for the maintenance and production of dominant and mainstream heteronormative narratives to persist.

The representation of LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups can also be explained by feminist theorists who focus on the reinforcement of heteronormativity. They may suggest that the mainstream media's showcasing of exclusively heterosexual relationships and idealized gender roles excludes a vast group of people whose identities do not align with these values. The feminist theory would suggest that this is an example of the complex politics of masculinities, a process where power relations and understandings of the ordinary align with the heteronormative and patriarchal understandings of normalcy and dominance. Gendered language such as "*irate women*" and "*sweetie*" solidify traditional gender expectations, placing all LGBTQIA+ members on a lower hierarchical level. This representation and dominance of heteronormative ideals is an example of cultural hegemony and also impacts public perception and attitudes related to LGBTQIA+ equality and acceptance. Intersectionality also plays an influential role in this

misrepresentation or underrepresentation of marginalized groups. The media's tendency to primarily focus on cis-gender white gay men not only excludes over half of the LGBTQIA+ community, but it also simplifies and homogenizes uniquely complex experiences, including those associated with race, sexual orientation, and gender. The selected articles primarily focused on the AIDS epidemic and covered these issues objectively and formally. When articles did include personal accounts of LGBTQIA+ experiences, they tended only to be small sections of the publications and were primarily the testimonies of gay white men. This underrepresentation only further makes the LGBTQIA+ community feel invisible, uses white men as a way of making the news more digestible for general audiences, and profits off of mentions of the AIDS epidemic.

4.2 Findings and Discussions

These findings relate to international relations' connection to globalization, national identity, global governance, human rights, and cultural diplomacy. How these groups were represented in the media demonstrates the vast expansion of 1984 media, the globalization of identity and culture, and the expansion of media ownership, production, and distribution. The Olympic Games provided a network for local media to reach the global audience. Thanks to this expansion of reach and new media business practices, this global flow of content can now shape the perceptions of various countries and groups living within those countries. The United States used its heightened media fame to push narratives of US freedom and commitments to democracy to control narratives about the Soviets. They also used this power to control groups they considered to be vicious or unnatural within their state to control them and their narratives further. The media implies a moral divide between most marginalized groups and the 'majority,' which is done through, but not limited to, othering, binary oppositions, and us versus them narratives. The media and its globalization of identity and culture play a massive role in global and domestic identity formation, shaping how the world and the United States people few Americans and marginalized groups living in America.

As mentioned, this global identity extends into the complexities of national identities. A common theme amongst the sources was that those marginalized people covered on a personal level were

typically profitable individuals, such as Olympic figures, famous people facing legal issues, or those representing a greater organization or institution. Interestingly, those who did not fall into these categories were less likely to be interviewed or covered personally; instead, they were represented in a generalized or stereotypical way. The media controls who is included and excluded from their articles, which is especially important to note when a marginalized individual is given a platform. Examples in the selected sources demonstrate how Eastern European immigrants were often granted articles with sympathetic tones accompanied by supportive and urgent words and terminology. When considering the socio-cultural and political contexts, such as the Cold War, white European immigrants were met with support in the name of American acceptance, freedom, and democracy. The Olympic blanket sprinkled across many sources demonstrates the connection between global governance and media and how the two work together to shape subjectivities, promote and regulate norms on the international and local levels, and reinforce global power dynamics. Sources that depict marginalized groups in a negative or untrue way bring in human rights and how this representation of marginalized identities and experiences impacts those vulnerable groups. Media can shape public opinion and policy on marginalized experiences and issues, directly affecting how marginalized groups are viewed and treated by society. Issues regarding homelessness and police violence against people of color can be framed in ways to bring awareness to the systemic problems that impact these groups of people. Unfortunately, the generalizations and stereotyping found within the selected sources frame these individuals facing oppression and discrimination as the problem.

Because the Los Angeles Games were so successful in their global reach, these representations of marginalized groups extended beyond Los Angeles, most likely impacting and shaping human rights norms globally. Soft power and cultural diplomacy were arguably where the United States profited most from the Olympic Games. The Games allowed the US to influence global narratives during the ongoing Cold War. Even after the completion of the Games, the United States capitalized on its momentum. It framed itself as a powerful, democratic, and free state that had the democratic world's best interests. In cultural diplomacy and soft power, the underrepresentation of marginalized groups was potentially a way for the United States to demonstrate how free and happy its citizens indeed were. If there are few individual and personal examples of the flaws of the capitalist system, they do not exist. Portraying these populations as the problem through generalizing and stereotyping was an

effective way to shrug off critiques against the United States' policy, economic system, and human rights issues.

4.2.1 Subquestion: Independent versus mainstream media

The media reinforces and reflects Global power structures, particularly when understanding mainstream media connections to powerful economic and political entities. These relationships influence who and how the media represents someone. Independent sources that are less funded are less likely to describe groups and people in a certain way because they are paid to or are counting on funding from a particular group with strict beliefs. This research demonstrated that independent sources are more likely to advocate for people of color and call out racial oppression locally and globally. They are also more likely to include storytelling and a broader range of expert opinions, whereas mainstream sources depictions of marginalized groups were generalized and often included stereotypes. The experts in mainstream sources were typically high-ranking professionals affiliated with massive organizations or institutions and/or government or city employees involved in cases. In the sources, independent media terminology used to describe marginalized groups tended to be less harmful than the mainstream sources. For example, they are using the term 'nomadic' rather than 'raggedy alcoholic bum' to describe unhoused groups displaced in Los Angeles. Finally, on a lexical and grammatical level, both mainstream and independent sources were typically in the active voice; however, independent sources were less likely to use modal verbs than their mainstream counterpart. This is significant because words such as 'must' and 'should' in mainstream sources indicate a commitment to power and authority. Independent media's more exploratory tone and word choices, such as 'could' and 'may,' demonstrate the source's lack of authority, hence the more critical stance on global and local issues in independent sources. Mainstream media depends on its authority and power to remain a respected and profitable news source. I question when this desire to stay relevant and rich harms the credibility and ethical appeal of these mainstream media sources.

Conclusion

Media representation of marginalized experiences and identities falls along a spectrum of negative and positive portrayals on the construction of these experiences and identities. Very negative portrayals and representations of marginalized groups' experiences and identities within the media typically manifest as simplifications or alternations of truths, representations synonymous with criminal and social turbulence. Stereotyping, name-calling, and marginalizing voices are among some of the themes researched in this thesis. On a more positive note, this thesis concludes that the regression of sport and Olympic discourse in local and national media potentially leaves room for advocacy groups and independent stories of individual resilience and resistance to flourish. Media highlighting personal achievements, amplifying marginalized voices, and advocacy efforts exist following the Olympic Games, particularly in Independent media publications. The foundational theory going into this research is that simplifying realities and experiences mostly negatively impacts marginalized groups while highlighting individual experiences and voices has a positive effect. This theory stands true and is supported by research as mainstream media, which tends to have less amplification of marginalized and intersecting identities and experiences, also tends to have a more negative overall tone. These simplifications may not necessarily be intentional and malicious attempts by mainstream media journalists to silence voices; however, these more prominent media outlets typically have stricter requirements and expectations from those at the top. This is not necessarily people but institutional and societal norms and values created by various historical, social, political, and economic structures. Applying this thesis' theoretical framework covering post-structuralism, post-neoliberalism, post-colonialism, critical race theory, and feminist theory not only demonstrates the power of language in shaping attitudes, tones, and dynamics but also in how many of these dynamics exist because of generations of robust structures and institutions pushing these norms. The period following the 1984 Los Angeles Games was selected for its diverse and tumultuous social, economic, and political history and because it was a fiscally profitable period for the city. Despite the financial success, the unhoused population and adverse treatment of immigrants, people of color, and those with various other intersecting identities appeared to continue or get worse. Understanding how powerful media is and its effects on public opinion and policy-making makes it essential for human rights and social justice movements to consider. Media representation of marginalized groups following international mega-events is extraordinarily

complex. Studying the media now demonstrates its connections to globalization, national identity, global governance, human rights, and cultural diplomacy. Mainly how power, knowledge, and discourse play a role in how certain groups and states can reflect and regulate global and local norms and values during an international event.

With the upcoming 2024 Paris Games and the 2028 Los Angeles Games, issues regarding marginalized communities and how they are represented in the media should be of utmost importance. The evidence of displacement, systemic racism, homophobia, xenophobia, and sexism are present, and the need for media to address these issues is becoming more and more dire. The institutional framework of the IOC and the Olympic Games should consider these topics to ensure a sustainable environment and future for all. This research aimed to understand what techniques, ideological, and structural factors guide the media in representing marginalized identities and experiences. Understanding media's influence on soft power, national identity, international politics, global human rights, globalization, and global governance is effective in understanding media's impacts on the representation and construction of marginalized experiences and identities. A domestic issue on the surface, studying the 1984 Olympic Games media a year after the Game provides excellent insight into *global* events and national soft power, global human rights and international standards, globalization and urban challenges, national identity, and understanding media as a powerful actor of international affairs.

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