Title

Torched Earth: Dimensions of Extraterritorial Nationalism in the Chinese and Russian Olympic Torch Relays

Author name, affiliation, and permanent address

Mia M. Bennett^a

^aPhD Student, Department of Geography, University of California, Los Angeles
1255 Bunche Hall, Box 951524, Los Angeles, CA 90095, United States of America
mbennett7@ucla.edu

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1. Introduction

Every two years, billions around the world watch as the Olympic flame is lit in a televised opening ceremony marking the end of a highly choreographed torch relay. The flame's journey, spanning tens of thousands of kilometers, represents a carefully orchestrated state performance watched by national publics and global audiences alike. China, as 2008 Summer Olympics host, and Russia, as 2014 Winter Olympics host, oversaw two of the longest, most complex, and arguably provocative relays in recent memory, which travelled far past the two countries' state borders. The lengthy and deliberate domestic legs of the torch relays in Russia and China, respectively the world's first and third largest countries, underscore the importance to each state of visually signifying the relationship between nation and territory, particularly in peripheral regions. At the same time, the relays' extensions beyond state borders – routes condoned by the International Olympics Committee (IOC) – suggest a more deterritorialized form of nationalism that transcends the space of the bordered and contained Westphalian state.

Typically, most Olympic relays, as with Atlanta 1996, Vancouver 2010, and London 2012, wend their way from Olympia through Greece and then around the host country before arriving in the host city. Unusually, the Sydney 2000 relay hopscotched across the South Pacific, while the Athens 2004 relay was the first to tour the world. The Beijing 2008 relay, then, was not unique in surpassing state borders, but it was the longest in history at 137,000 kilometers. The relay's international legs were also significantly marred by protests over China's human rights abuses. IOC President Jacques Rogge declared the protests a "crisis" (Jacobs, 2008), while another IOC representative critiqued, "I'm a firm believer that we had the right template in the first place, that the torch simply should go from Olympia, Greece, to the host country" (CNN, 2008). The controversy spurred the IOC to adopt a rule prohibiting international relay legs beginning in 2014 with the Sochi Olympics. Russian relay organizers circumvented this regulation by having their route pass through places within the global commons, which lay outside other countries' sovereign territory.

Several publications have analyzed Olympic torch relays (Cahill, 1998; Horne and Whannel, 2010; MacAloon, 2013; Grant, 2014) and a rich literature exists on the role of sporting mega-events like the Olympics and World Cup in nation-building (Steenveld and Strelitz, 1998; Adams, 2010). Little geographic research, however, has interrogated the distinctly spatial practices of nationalism inherent within Olympic torch relays despite their embodiment of a “recognizable national-territorial journey” (Stephens, 2016, p. 188). Koch (2013) determines, “Large-scale sporting events like the Olympics or the World Cup have long been ascribed the symbolic power to put a place ‘on the map’” (p. 43). This paper reverses that statement to ask how Olympics organizing committees in two states, China and Russia, used the relay to create a map that symbolically expanded the nation beyond sovereign territory.

Various studies have interrogated nationalism beyond borders, from examinations of how traveling athletes can embody national identity (Taylor, 2006) to explorations of the transatlantic development of Irish nationalism in the era of globalization (Mulligan, 2002). A great deal of research has also considered the state beyond borders from the point of departure that sovereignty is not necessarily territorial (Agnew 1994; Brenner, 1999; Taylor, 2003; Agnew, 2005). State sovereignty can operate in exceptional spaces that lie, for instance, in other countries’ sovereign territory (Vandergeest and Unno, 2012) or in the global commons of outer space (Hassanpour, 1998). However, the process of how states inscribe extraterritorial spaces, whether in other countries or the global commons, into the nation without an *a priori* interest in exerting sovereignty over those spaces merits further reflection. Comparison of two recent Olympic torch relays provides an opportunity to examine the diverse motivations and manifestations of less territorially contained nationalism. As Guthman (2008) avers, “The Olympics, it is patently clear, is first and foremost a celebration and reinscription of nationalism, of the very simplest kind (p. 1799). In this paper, I draw from Winichakul’s notion of the geo-body (1994) and Paasi’s concept of socio-spatial consciousness (1996, 2009) to demonstrate how the state performs and visualizes the nation’s extraterritorial dimensions. Although both geographic concepts involve the nation’s shape and

extent, I use the term “geo-body” when emphasizing the nation’s spatial form and “socio-spatial consciousness” when underscoring the nation’s values and identity.

Little work has contrasted the extraterritorial dimensions of nationalism in China and Russia, two countries whose contemporary expansionism, at least as perceived by commentators and politicians in the West, is often ascribed to *realpolitik* (Christensen, 1996; Kubicek; 1997). Such logic could partially explain territorial expansionism. But one reason for the more symbolic expansion of the nation’s spatial extent, I argue, may emerge from a long-held belief among members of both the Chinese and Russian political elite and public sphere in their respective nations’ embrace of civilizational and possibly even universal values. Such civilizational nationalism may also be finding new footing in a globalizing world, and where new configurations of territoriality are occurring on both sub- and supra-national geographical scales (Brenner, 1999). In the current era, states are not only projecting economic power above and outside their territorial container. They can mobilize nationalism outside of it as well.

The close ties of the Beijing Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) and the Sochi Olympic Games Organizing Committee (SOCOG) to the state suggest the political importance of the two relays in visualizing specific portrayals of the nation. Whereas the Beijing relay mainly visited cities within China’s past and present sphere of influence, the Sochi relay traveled through distant reaches of Russia, planet Earth, and beyond, demonstrating the renewed ability of the Russian military-industrial complex to access remote frontiers. The Beijing relay retraced historical Chinese trade routes and included cities with ethnic Chinese populations like Kuala Lumpur and San Francisco. In many of these cities and others with populations of Chinese nationals, expatriates stridently defended the relay against protests it encountered. In contrast, the 65,000-kilometer long Sochi Olympic relay traveled to hard-to-reach spaces in the global commons where no protestors could be encountered: the North Pole and outer space. These legs, which required the use of state-owned industrial technology, constituted two of the “four special and extremely complex projects that form part of the Olympic Torch Relay,” as an official press release described (Russian Embassy in China, 2014). Whereas BOCOG’s relay design attempted to

portray a global Chinese nation drawing strength from its people, SOCOG's design visualized a Russian nation empowered and enlarged by the state's unique powers of access.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, I first theorize how the state performs the nation's existence in spaces outside of sovereign territory, generating extraterritorial dimensions of nationalism. Here, I attempt to fill a gap between what I perceive as a methodological territorialism in studies of nationalism at one end of the spectrum and, at the other end, an insufficient concern for space in much of the work on transnationalism. Throughout this section, I draw on historical and geographical examples of the relationships between the state, space, and nationalism in Russia and China. I pay specific attention to narratives of universal and civilizational nationalism in each country along with the risks to which extraterritorial performances of such imaginings expose the state. In Sections 3 and 4, I compare the Chinese and Russian Olympic torch relays after careful review of secondary literature, namely publicly available reports, Olympic handbooks, and state media, to examine how these internationally-sanctioned spectacles provided opportunities for the state to construct a more expansive space for the nation. These documents provide a lens into how state-affiliated agencies wished the Olympics torch relay to be perceived by domestic spectators, which was at least BOGOC's intended audience more so than a global audience (Brownell, 2008). As a caveat, since I have not conducted interviews with members of Olympics organizing committees, analysis focuses on the public representations of and reactions to the torch relays without fully interrogating what the relays meant to the state officials behind the scenes, such as with Adams' (2010) research into the roles of cultural elites in organizing holiday spectacles in Uzbekistan. To conclude, I argue that just as important as investigating how states narrate and perform their own stories of national territorial formation (Murphy, 2002) is examining how those performances relate to and incorporate certain extraterritorial spaces, even if only temporarily and imaginarily, into a more transcendent national imagining. Drawing a parallel with critiques of state spatiality as territorial (Macleavy and Harrison, 2010), this paper attempts to offer an understanding of national spatiality as more-than-territorial, too.

2. The state's extraterritorial performances of nationalism

Since the end of the Middle Ages, the archetypal state has claimed sovereignty over a specific territory and legitimacy based on the people, or nation, inhabiting that space. The “mobilization of mass citizen nationalism,” however, did not emerge until the twentieth century (Mann, 1997). Particularly during the Second World War, the mobilization of nationalism on a citizen-wide scale was closely tied to supporting the state's territorial imperatives. Today, in a world that is both deterritorializing and reterritorializing (Tuathail, 1998) and where capital, people, knowledge, and power travel across international borders, certain states may be encouraging a form of nationalism that also transcends these borders. In other words, although the state may be becoming deterritorialized, it is not becoming denationalized.

Research within the field of transnationalism, much of which falls within cultural and literary studies, demonstrates that expatriates living far from their home country can maintain affinities for the nation-state (Schiller et al., 1992; Moskal, 2015). Given the peripatetic nature of their subject, studies of transnationalism often evade the territorial trap – that is, “seeing the territorial state as the container of society when the state is sovereign” (Agnew, 1994, p. 71) – and focus on the sociocultural phenomenon of peoples and bodies circulating outside of the nation-state such as migrant workers or the Chinese overseas (Ong and Nonini 2003; Lin, 2012). This privileging of cultural and socio-economic networks can occur at the expense of analyzing the spatial and geometric dimensions of nationalism beyond borders, or how the state can enroll spaces outside its territorial container directly into narratives and constructions of national identity without requiring visions of sovereignty. For instance, the particular coherence of the far-flung Chinese diaspora has led to mention of a “transnational China” (Sun, 2002, p. 211) without a great deal of attention paid to the roles of these overseas spaces in a more expansive imagining of the Chinese nation. The role of the state in encouraging such imaginings, too, is often de-emphasized relative to transnational social networks (cf Basch et al., 2005). Thus, alongside the widely

recognized people-based notion of the “Chinese overseas” (Wang, 2003), the more nationally-oriented idea of a “China” or “Russia Overseas” also warrants examination. Compared to work on China, the influence of extraterritorial spaces in Russian nationalism has attracted more attention due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the residual Russian populations in the former Soviet republics that border present-day Russia (Berg, 2000; Kaiser and Nikiforova, 2006), but still remains undertheorized in a wider context.

Trending in the opposite direction of transnationalism, social scientists studying nationalism typically grapple more directly with questions of space and territory. For this reason, however, social science research on nationalism can be limited by a type of methodological territorialism, which Scholte claims “has exercised a pervasive and deep hold on the conventions of social enquiry” (2008, p. 1484). The association between nationalism and a distinctly bounded spatial territory is rooted in the emergence of the Westphalian system, in which the modern state and nationalism hold a close relationship (Breuilly, 1993). The modern nation-state also strives for the “teleological bonding of sovereignty and territory” (Diener and Hagen, 2009, p. 1207). Groups of elites in national capitals and diasporas scattered abroad engage in what Agnew calls “the task of defining and defending what they understand as the nation-state’s borders, the better to imagine the shape of geo-body of their nation,” (2007, p. 401), borrowing a concept developed by Winichakul. In his study of Thailand, Winichakul articulates how the imagining of the state’s territory – its geo-body – emerged from nineteenth-century state discourses and mapping practices (1994). The geo-body bears strong parallels to Paasi’s concept of a socio-spatial consciousness, an idea linked to a bounded national identity and bounded space (1996, 2009). A state’s borders and the ensemble of material and symbolic practices surrounding their production play an important role in shaping this socio-spatial consciousness and fusing a nation to a defined, contained space. But while state actions along borders or in frontiers help propagate myths about the unity of both a people and a territory (Anderson, 1998), extraterritorial nationalist displays allow the state to make these myths transcend the

ecumene of its citizens and territory. The state's goal in these displays may not be so much sovereignty as the mobilization of extraterritorial nationalism.

There is an unsurprising preponderance of methodological territorialism in research on nationalism within Russia and China, two former empires still contending with shifting and contested borders and borderlands (cf for Russia: Brower and Lazzerini, 1997; Seegel, 2012; cf for China: Shin, 2006; Leibold, 2007). Lingering questions of sovereignty and national identity in areas proximate to the Chinese and Russian mainlands like Taiwan, Hong Kong, and North Ossetia, combined with the recent territorial expansion of China into the South China Sea and Russia into Crimea, have further obscured the potential development of a deterritorialized conception of Russian and Chinese nationalism. A significant amount of research examines Beijing or Moscow's mobilization of nationalism in areas more or less contiguous to the two countries, such as with the Chinese state's ongoing attempt to incorporate Hong Kong and Taiwan into "Greater China" (Gungwu, 1993) or the Russian state's protection of Russophones in its near-abroad (Laitin, 1998). Yet the two states also foster more expansive national geo-bodies beyond proximate areas where their nationals or co-ethnics reside through practices like the Olympic torch relay. In contradistinction with state and military mapping practices that draw hard borders on state territory, the cartographic spectacle of the relay creates a less territorially rigid space for the nation. These expressions of a nation's socio-spatial consciousness rather than extensions of its territory symbolically differ from a state's claims to sovereignty in an area outside its recognized borders backed up by military power, like with the nine-dash line China has drawn around islands in the South China Sea and the naval vessels it has sent to defend it.

For Russia and China in particular, territorially restricted studies of national identity seem misguided in light of past instances of universalism in China and Russia. In imperial China, for instance, while the idea of a nation had yet to arise (Townsend, 1992), the Chinese believed their country to be the only civilization in the entire world – a view characterized by *tianxia zhuyi* (universalism) instead of *minzu zhuyi* (nationalism) (Zhao, 2004: 16). Although China came together through the confederation of

“several equally developed cultural areas rather than growing out of an ever expanding core” (Wei-ming, 1991, p. 3), ideas about Chinese expansion have tended to focus on a history of settlement radiating outward from the center (Oakes, 2012), a narrative which fits well with universalism. Chinese narratives about ceaseless outward growth and universalism were undermined by the loss of territories following the height of expansion under the Qing dynasty, events which the contemporary Chinese state instrumentalizes to generate feelings of national humiliation and anger towards foreign powers (Callahan, 2010). Drawing a contrast with national humiliation, however, the torch relay and other symbols and slogans associated with the Beijing Olympics constituted, at least in their initial conception, a state endeavor to rekindle a sense of outward-oriented universalism. The Beijing Olympics slogan, “One World, One Dream,” for instance, while it did not attempt to claim the entire world “for” China, evoked an aspiration of China “being” the whole world. This strategy possibly followed from the Chinese state’s attempt to spread soft power internationally (Li, 2009; Manzenreiter, 2010) – its norms, culture, and values (Nye, 2004) – through the proliferation of Chinese cultural institutions around the world such as the Confucius Institute (Paradise, 2009). Chinese foreign policy also stresses “solidarity politics” (Alden and Alves, 2008) and underscores the nation’s benevolence, friendship, and harmonious rise in order to fashion a “regime of authenticity,” which “derives its authority from ‘being good for all times’” (Duara, 1996, p. 294). As the Olympics promote values like excellence and universal friendship, this makes the Games a useful opportunity for a host country like China. Moreover, such globe-encompassing perspectives of Chinese civilization might bring into question Benedict Anderson’s assertion that “no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet” (1991: 2).

At times, tsarist Russia displayed similar strands of imperialism, though colored by the prominent role of the Orthodox Church. In the post-Soviet world, these imperialist tendencies have found renewed expressions in Eurasianism, a spatial imagining with heterogenous forms including expansionism and

civilizationalism (Tsygankov, 2003). Although Eurasianism has arguably declined in popularity following Putin's ascendancy, a recent shift towards civilizationalism recalls similar impulses as Eurasianism in portraying Russia as having globally metaphysical significance and being a "universal Heartland" (Morozova, 2009: 681). At the heart of debates within Russia on Eurasianism and national identity is the unresolved issue of whether Eurasia is a place or an idea, to paraphrase Schmidt (2005). This question could be rephrased to ask whether China or Russia, too, are places or ideas due to their respective internal debates over whether their national identity adheres to a fixed territory or constitutes a broader civilization. In the post-Soviet era Eurasianism has often been expressed as an economic ideal as exemplified by the institutionalization of the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union, which now counts Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan as its members. In one more cultural variant, Eurasianism attempts to build a new civilizational model that "supports the idea of an organic unity of cultures born in this zone of symbiosis between Russian, Turkic, Muslim and even Chinese worlds" (Laruelle, 2004: 115). A more nationalist-oriented variant of Russian universalism eschewing other cultures or civilizations could be heard at a Moscow celebration in 2005 for the new national holiday, People's Unity Day. Here, an Orthodox publicist and member of the emerging political right exclaimed, "Russia is everything, the rest is nothing" (Sidorov, 2006: 341). Although Berg and Oras (2000) argue that a state's basic aim is to "delimit its territory and separate 'ours' from 'the others,'" expansive geopolitical imaginings by Chinese and Russian public figures and state officials elide the distinction between "us" and "them" and instead proffer a more universalist socio-spatial consciousness or even negate the "them" altogether. The state appears to blend historical universalist impulses with modern nationalist ones, which manifests itself in globe-spanning extraterritorial displays of nationalism like the torch relays. Thus, the superlative size of China and Russia's respective territories may not have been as important a motivation in their design of the longest Olympic torch relays in history as what Voskressenski (2012) sees as the rise of civilizational nationalism in both countries.

While borders are still erected and national identity strengthened within territorial containers, modern states can perform themselves in spaces that are not within or even juxtaposing their national territory through spectacles and performances that constitute “hot nationalism” – the opposite of “banal nationalism” (Billig, 1995). Importantly, states undertake such performances in order to foster a broader socio-spatial consciousness rather than to make explicit territorial claims. Rather than cartographers taking pen to paper, during the Olympic relays, actual torchbearers walked, jogged, swam, and even spacewalked along lines that symbolized a greater Chinese and Russian geo-body as imagined by the BOCOG and SOCOG. The Olympic torch relay thus constitutes a performative act, which involves “narration, visualization, and imagination” (Strüver, 2004, p. 75). State performativity has been significantly explored in relation to borders, from the performance of the airport guard determining the veracity of a traveler’s claims (Johnson et al. 2011) to government procedures of examination and policing along its borders (Salter, 2008). Yet whereas border performativity often confirms the alignment of nationality and territory (Green, 2010), the state-sanctioned Olympic torch relays were not attached to the idea of delineating a specific national territory. Indeed, the Beijing and Sochi relays appeared to symbolically break down the official Chinese and Russian borders. These extraterritorial cartographic performances assisted in, as cartography typically does, “thinking, imagining, and projecting the desired realm” (Winichakul, 1994, p. 130) and in helping to demarcate the nation’s geo-body. But whereas Billig determines that “the imagining of a ‘country’ involves the imagining of a bounded totality beyond immediate experience of place” (1995, p. 74), the Chinese and Russian Olympic torch relays encouraged the perception of a more “unbounded” totality that did not necessarily map to the nation’s sovereign territory. Olympics committees in each country designed the torch relays to traverse locations abroad in a manner that helped symbolically enhance and expand the nation’s geo-body under the innocuous, cosmopolitan veil of the Olympic flame.

These extraterritorial performances of nationalism are taking place at present due to a number of processes and phenomena that have opened up spaces and opportunities for such acts. First, as David

Newman suggests, globalization is affecting the “Westphalian territorial compartmentalization of the world into sovereign states” (1998: 2). Territory “is no longer bound within a single state” (Elden, 2005) due to the impact of late capitalism in transforming the planet into a calculative, mathematical space. As states deterritorialize, borders, boundaries, and territorial integrity decline in importance vis-à-vis forces such as footloose global capital and sub-national identity politics. At a sub-state scale, one response to deterritorialization is the rise of regional separatism in places like Catalonia or Scotland. At a supra-state scale, a perceived weakening of borders may actually drive the state’s creation of an extraterritorial socio-spatial consciousness. Thus, some states are capable of acting in a deterritorialized manner to promote and perform nationalism just as they might behave in the economic sphere in order to support their interests.

Second, while states in general contend with increasing pressures from deterritorialization, Russian and Chinese state officials also have to contend with the ideological vacuum that arose following the collapse of communism by the early 1990s. In China, nationalism has risen in popularity among state officials as devotion to communist ideology has waned (Zhao, 2004). The political elite use nationalism to mobilize the population, with it serving as “a kind of thought, a kind of faith, and a kind of power” (Sun 1969: 1, in Hughes, 1965). In Russia, political elites have similarly rejected communism in favor of nationalism, which became increasingly popular beginning in the 2000s as a means of holding together a country with fragile democratic institutions (Billington, 2004). The Russian state popularizes ideas about civilizational nationalism through the media, which then feed back into national policy-making (Laruelle, 2014). Occasionally, the Kremlin has mobilized extreme nationalism for state aims even when it must clamp down when it gets out of hand (March, 2012). This is not to say that state officials in each country uniformly agree upon using nationalism, civilizational or otherwise, to mobilize the public. But despite internal tensions, over the past three decades, Chinese and Russian officials have leveraged nationalism as a political instrument and mass mobilization tool to achieve internal and external state aims.

Extraterritorial displays of nationalism, even when offered in concert with the supposedly benign and cosmopolitan Olympics, can pose a danger to the state's external legitimacy although they may strengthen it internally. Particularly since the modern system of international relations views sovereignty as "the institutionalization of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains" (Ruggie, 1986), a state's active encouragement of nationalism beyond its borders can render it vulnerable to external criticism and delegitimization. Breuilly (1993) distinguishes between the internal and external functions of nationalism: whereas the internal functions of nationalism are coordination and mobilization, the external functions of nationalism are legitimacy. As China and Russia struggle with internal fractionalization, the Olympic torch relays create a moment to put forward a seemingly unified national performance on a global scale. This extraterritorial display of national unity may serve to potentially increase the state's internal legitimacy by demonstrating to its citizens its power to visibly perform itself outside of its borders *without* the use of force. But in contrast, these extraterritorial performances of nationalism, as I describe in the next section with regard to the international outcry that surrounded the international legs of China's Olympics relay, may undermine a state's external legitimacy – in other words, its legitimacy in the eyes of other states. They may challenge such performances of nationalism beyond borders, particularly if the state behind them makes claims to espousing civilizational or universal values.

3. Beijing 2008: The relay around the world

The Olympics committees in Beijing and Moscow brought together numerous cultural elites whose work on the torch relay helped serve to imagine a geo-body that transcended the concrete borders of the state. BOCOG's Executive Board, the group charged with decision-making, was composed of many cultural and sports elites including "senior officials from the Beijing Municipal Government, the General Administration of Sport of China and relevant departments of the Chinese Central Government. Also members were Olympic scholars, experts from fields of education, culture, and science and

technology, prominent entrepreneurs and public figures” (BOCOG, 2010, p. 3), all individuals who may have held an interest in positively enhancing China’s image and influence abroad. BOCOG designed a peripatetic relay route fitting the cosmopolitan theme of the Beijing Olympics (Figure 1). The 2008 Games’ slogan, “One World, One Dream,” incarnated a universalizing narrative that made Chinese desires synonymous with global ones. As the manual for Olympic volunteers informed, the “One World, One Dream” slogan exemplified that China, “the great nation with five thousand years of civilization and further modernization...dedicates herself to promote peace and development, to build a society of harmony and to bring more happiness to her people” (BOCOG, 2008, p. 83). Whether “her people” means the Chinese nation or the entire global population reflects the long-standing conflation in certain Chinese narratives of Chinese civilization with world civilization. An official handbook noted that the slogan highlights how “all the people belong to the same world; All the people seek the same dream” (BOCOG, 2008, p. 83).

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE.]

In contrast to defensive narratives of history popular with both the Chinese public and elites, BOCOG attempted to provide a more triumphant account that relied on the physical spaces and people within China’s sphere of influence. The relay’s phoenix-shaped torch made its way through several countries once part of or tributary to the Qing dynasty, including Korea, Vietnam, and Kazakhstan. This path cartographically reflected the Chinese state’s promotion of an “essentialized primordial view of Chinese civilization, identity, and territory” (Callahan, 2010, p. 33). In retracing imperial China’s sphere of influence, the relay visually demarcated the past and present reach of Chinese civilization, which stretches beyond the country’s recognized political borders. During the relay’s international legs, Chinese torchbearers carried the torch along a path retracing historical and contemporary areas of Chinese economic and political influence including the maritime and terrestrial silk roads. The relay also passed through metropolises in Southeast Asia with large Chinese populations and cities in which Chinese capital is increasingly circulating, such as London and St. Petersburg. This path, which ultimately

centered on China, represented a scaled-up version of the domestic relay, which passed through 114 cities in China but “gravitated heavily toward Beijing” (De Kloet et al., 2011, p. 119).

In contrast with the veneer of cosmopolitan, universalist branding, the relay traveled to specific sites around the world that more narrowly delineated China’s extraterritorial geo-body. First, in terms of the limits to the geo-body, the relay visited Asian metropolises while excluding many places in Europe, Australia, and the Americas. These omissions corroborate that geo-bodies, as Wainwright and Bryan (2009) find with communities, are spatially and ontologically defined through negation. Within Asia, the relay passed through cities located in authoritarian countries like Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Oman, North Korea, and Vietnam, all of which maintain friendly ties with China. The relay also retraced past trade routes from China to select cities in Africa and the Middle East, highlighting China’s past and present influence in these regions. The Olympic relay passed through just one key African city where China has long had a presence: Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. The leg began at the terminal of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, which the Chinese state helped construct in the 1970s (Gleave, 1992). Chinese mariner Zheng He, whose voyages have been touted by Chinese officials as an allegory for China’s “peaceful rising” (*heping jeuqi*) (Callahan, 2010, p. 33), also allegedly visited Tanzania in 1415 after sailing across the Indian Ocean (Guangqi, 1992). In Africa, Chinese officials have situated the country’s activities in historical terms in order to reconcile its past as a developing country with its new status as a global power (Alden and Alves, 2008). Thus, just as modern nation-states project a “territorial entity (the nation) backwards in time as its subject (or actor or agent) which evolves or progresses to the present and future” (Duara, 1996, p. 288), the relay projected a primordialized view of the Chinese nation.

Despite the seeming importance of specific territories to China’s socio-spatial identity, territory only constitutes one of its components since the “meaning of being Chinese is intertwined with China as a geopolitical concept and Chinese culture as a living reality” (Wei-ming, 1991, p. 1). During the Chinese relay’s leg in Canberra, Australia, one Chinese-Australian citizen called out in an internet post to “Grandchildren of the Yellow Emperor and the Emperor Yan with a Chinese heart sojourning in

Australia” (Nyiri et al., 2010, p. 39, in Grant, 2014, p. 198). This idea of a sojourn being only temporary despite residence and citizenship in a distant country underscores the continued sense of belonging to the Chinese geo-body regardless of legal nationality.

While the relay may have been meant to reflect the peaceful international expansion of Chinese people, capital, and influence, it also reflected the vulnerabilities of the Chinese state and nation in these foreign spaces. The unexpected amount and severity of protests that the relay encountered abroad caused state officials and Chinese expatriates to defensively revert to narratives of national humiliation as a rallying cause. This defense is perhaps unsurprising given that overseas, nationalism has become a feature of “a cosmopolitan Chinese youth identity” (Nyiri et al., 2010, p. 25). In Seoul, thousands of Chinese nationals managed to attack Tibetan and South Korean protestors despite the 8,300 police officers on duty to guard the relay (Sang-hun, 2008). In London, Chinese nationals also rushed to the relay’s defense after it encountered Tibetan protestors. An article from the state-owned newspaper *Xinhua* (2008) described a Chinese student “enraged” by Tibetan separatists who had “pulled publicity stunts by standing on Trafalgar Square fountain.” The article continued, “Although the temperature was below zero and it was sleeting,¹ this student jumped into the pool and held high the Five-Starred Red Flag [the national flag of China], showing Western journalists his strong determination to safeguard national unity and dignity.” In essence, *Xinhua* portrayed national unity as being at stake even though the conflagration was occurring in London, thousands of miles away from the Chinese homeland, suggesting a more expansive – but also more exposed – Chinese geo-body. In reaction to the London protests, BOCOG spokesman Sun Weide criticized, “We strongly denounce their disgusting behavior” (Der Spiegel, 2008). While Chinese feelings of humiliation generally concern past territories that many feel have been wrongfully taken (Callahan, 2010), these sentiments also appear to extend to temporary extensions of the Chinese geo-body in places where the state has never even held territory. Just as representations and myths of frontiers and peripheries can reveal a “group’s central hidden values, hopes, fears, and feelings of pride and injury”

¹ In Chinese, descriptions about the weather are used to emphasize the mood of the persons being described. In this case the description of the cold weather underscores the student’s resilience.

(Hasson, 1996, p. 2), representations in extraterritorial spaces can perhaps reveal a group's worries about the risks of national overexpansion. Ultimately, the strident defense of the international relay legs by Chinese state officials and ex-pats alike suggests a more limited and reactionary Chinese geo-body than purported by the Beijing Olympics' universalist slogan.

Before returning to Mainland China, the torch passed through Hong Kong and Macau, noticeably skipping Taiwan. While the still-contested island's government would have permitted the relay during the international route, China planned for the leg in Taiwan to occur after the torch passed through Ho Chi Minh City and right before entering Hong Kong and Macau, which, as the last two legs of the international relay, also in a way marked the beginning of the domestic relay (Figure 2). This ordering would have suggested Taiwan's integration not just into China's sphere of influence or fuzzy geo-body, but actually into what Beijing increasingly calls "One China" (一个中国原则) or "Greater China" (大中華). While this term was once used in a more apolitical and economic sense and also included Singapore, it is now being deployed for the more political aim of uniting China, Hong Kong-Macau, and Taiwan (Yuen, 2014). Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party balked, announcing that it would not allow the route to enter or leave the island through either Hong Kong or Macau. Tsai Chen-wei, head of Taiwan's Olympic Committee, which is notably separate from its Chinese counterpart, declared that the route is "something that the government and people cannot accept... This route is a domestic route that constitutes an attempt to downgrade our sovereignty" (The Guardian, 2007). Taiwan openly and verbally rejected the Olympics route, which its government perceived as an unwelcome Chinese practice of drawing sovereign borders rather than vaguely extending China's geo-body.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE.]

Through the relay spectacle, BOCOG attempted to announce China's arrival as a great power simultaneously historic and modern, conveying the spatial and temporal continuity of the Chinese geo-body's expansion from a central origin outwards. China's relay focused on bolstering soft power along

the maritime and terrestrial silk roads and in foreign cities important to the Chinese diaspora. BOCOG sought to portray China as a sympathetic global power, but protesters subjected many of the international relay legs to trial by fire. As Stephens (2016) observes in the 2012 London Olympics, the sights, sounds, and feelings generated by the mass sporting event “weren’t simply orchestrated from the top-down but rather skipped between different sites and moments” (p. 4). The Chinese state could therefore never hope to control all of the bottom-up reactions in each location visited by the relay, especially the violent protests that erupted in cities located outside of authoritarian regimes where relative quarantines could be enforced for the relay from the outset. The reactionary nature of both officials and Chinese ex-pats to these perceived humiliations demonstrates that feelings of protectiveness towards their geo-body extend beyond the territories held by past Chinese empires to include extraterritorial sites of Chinese emigrants, capital, and influence.

4. Sochi 2014: The relay into the volume

In contrast with the Chinese relay, the Russian relay relied more on military and industrial hard power rather than soft power and international influence in order to promulgate a more expansive vision of the Russian geo-body. Elucidating the strong role of the state in designing the relay, SOCOG, which was charged with its creation, planning, and execution, was atypically headquartered in the nation’s capital rather than in the host city of Sochi (Müller, 2011). Supervisory board members included, at various points, figures such as deputy prime ministers Alexander Zhukov and Dmitry Kozak and other state, cultural, and sport elites. At the top, SOCOG reported to President Vladimir Putin. SOCOG president and CEO Dmitry Chernyshenko, a businessman and Sochi native, asserted that the Olympics “project is under [his] permanent control and we enjoy the full government support” (Associated Press, 2013). It is probable to assume that the Kremlin ultimately approved of the relay’s performance: sources claimed to the Russian newspaper *Kommersant* that Chernyshenko’s work “was highly appreciated by the government” (Melnikov and Afanasyeva, 2014).

The architects of Russia's relay choreographed the route to traverse specific spaces and volumes within the global commons like the North Pole and outer space, symbolically incorporating areas meant to be the common heritage of all mankind into Russia's national geo-body (Figure 3). SOCOG respected the IOC regulation to avoid international territory even though just days after the closing ceremony in Sochi, men alleged to be Russian soldiers invaded Crimea, which the Russian government annexed shortly thereafter. To draw a contrast, the annexation of Crimea incorporated it into the Russian state, whereas the Olympic relay incorporated areas within the global commons into the Russian geo-body. By condoning the Sochi relay route, the IOC effectively recognized the commons of outer space and the North Pole as part of Russia's domestic space rather than international space. The IOC's approval exemplifies the way in which sporting spectacles such as the Olympics can stimulate and sanction nation-building, especially in authoritarian states (Koch, 2013). Had the IOC not instituted such a regulation, one might speculate that the Russian Olympic torch relay may have traveled through areas in the former Soviet Union that the Kremlin sees as still within Moscow's orbit and that others with more extreme views might see as destined to return to the Russian *rodina*, a term typically translated to mean "motherland" (Medvedev, 1997).

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE.]

The Sochi relay relied on heavy, industrial state-owned technology to construct a more vertical and volumetric geo-body than the Beijing relay. Since at least the twentieth century in Russia, industrial technology has proven key to pushing into new frontiers and incorporating them both into the legally defined, sovereign space of Russia and into the more imaginary national geo-body. With the Soviet, and now Russian, state moving into harsh environments like the Arctic, technology – the "highest form of culture" for Soviet ideologues (Josephson, 2014, p. 245) – has proven necessary to transform the landscape into a place suitable for modern, urbanized life and state presence. In the boggy Russian Northwest, for instance, "Soviet planners were determined to turn this difficult environment, terrain, and climate into a machine-like entity" (Josephson, 2014, p. 288), elucidating the roots of the primacy of

state-engineered technology in fostering Russia's extraterritorial socio-spatial consciousness today. For the contemporary Russian state, expanding into harsh environments and incorporating them into the geo-body requires the performance of state-supported industrial technology, while people are somewhat secondary. This contrasts with the Chinese geo-body, which appears to follow in the footsteps of its diaspora. The Sochi relay thus reveals how the Olympics can be instrumentalized to demonstrate hard power, a topic given insufficient consideration in relation to the Games compared to explorations of soft power (Manzenreiter, 2010; Grix and Houlihan 2014). It also suggests that space, in its abstract form, holds greater importance within Russian socio-spatial consciousness than in its Chinese counterpart, for in Russia, "space reigns supreme" and defines "the mentality of its population" (Medvedev, 1997: 523).

Although verticality and the volume have proven to be robust concepts for theorizing demonstrations of the state's hard power above and below ground (Weizman, 2002; Elden, 2013; Bridge, 2013; Steinberg and Peters, 2015), they have been less adequately applied to understandings of the national geo-body and socio-spatial consciousness. Just as vertical demonstrations of the state's hard powers require advanced technologies like airplanes and drones, so too does the development of a multidimensional geo-body. Russia's relay evinced a state aspiration towards "greatness" under Putin's guidance that involves strengthening the country's military and energy leverage (Baev, 2012) – neither of which can be accomplished without Russian industry and technology. KrasMash, the state-owned company that builds ballistic missiles for Russian submarines and Proton rockets for the national space program, manufactured all 16,000 copies of the aluminum Olympic torch (Snytkova, 2013). Wholly and partly state-owned companies like Gazprom (the world's largest natural gas company), Aeroflot (Russia's national airline), and Rosatomflot (the world's only company operating a fleet of nuclear icebreakers), which chartered the nuclear icebreaker that brought the torch to the North Pole, participated in the relay, too. Twelve Gazprom representatives served as torchbearers as the flame made its way across what the company chairman Alexey Miller – himself a torchbearer during the St. Petersburg leg – called "enormous Russia" (Gazprom, 2013). If the relay route is conceived of as an embodied cartographic

practice, then these human torchbearers were visibly performing the Russian geo-body with the assistance of the Russian military-industrial complex.

A great deal of Western media attention focused on the corruption and cost overruns that construction of the Sochi Olympics facilities faced, which arguably detracted from Russia's attempt to enhance its soft power through the Olympics (Müller, 2014). Yet given the relay's reliance on hard power to carry out the relay, SOCOG may have been more concerned with projecting Russian techno-industrial capability than soft power. Thanks to icebreakers, airplanes, and rockets that the state either owned fully or partly, the Russian relay expanded the nation's geo-body past the country's political borders and beyond the flat, terrestrial plane that Weizman (2002) claims forms the typical extent of the modern state's cartographic imagination. At least for a brief moment in outer space and the Arctic, the Russian Olympic relay comprised a state-led effort to establish a volumetric geo-body without relying upon the military operations more conventionally identified with such practices (Elden, 2013; Baghel and Nüsser, 2015). With its Olympic torch spacewalk, the Russian relay visualized the state's capabilities in the celestial domain to the entire world. While this helped solidify the state's reclamation of its status as a space superpower, originally established after the launch of Sputnik (Harvey, 2007), it also pushed outward the edges of the Russian geo-body. The relay did so by rocketing into space from Kazakhstan's Baikonur Cosmodrome, a relic of Russian imperial expansion and Soviet planning that the Russian government is leasing through 2050. It also advanced the narrative within Russia that as the nation's population has advanced into contiguous land, "details of geographical region and historical circumstances are smoothed over and replaced by a picture of six centuries of undifferentiated, organic expansion" (Bassin, 1998, p. 3). This imagining draws parallels with a narrative within China of an almost primordial universalism and outward expansion.

As Chinese officials did with their cosmopolitan Olympic relay and slogan, Russian authorities situated the relay's leg in outer space in cosmopolitan terms. The emblazoning of the five interlaced Olympic rings on the side of the Russian Soyuz rocket and spacecraft and its destination, the International

Space Station (ISS), legitimized this narrative. As two Russian cosmonauts floated outside the ISS with the torch in their hands, the Olympic moment became a Russian moment. This performance illustrates the ability of mega-events such as the Olympics to combine proto-cosmopolitan practices with nationalistic ones (Roche, 2011), a practice that states with universalist visions like China or Russia may be more apt to engage. At the same time, the spectacle of the torch relay in outer space incarnated the tensions between cosmopolitan and nationalist imaginings that also problematized the Chinese slogan, “One World, One Dream.” Vladimir Popovkin, former head of Russian state space agency Roscosmos, remarked, “Sending the Olympic torch into space is an unprecedented event in the history of the Olympic Movement as well as world space” (RIA Novosti, 2013a). But a presenter on Russian television exclaimed, “Taking the Olympic torch to space — only we are capable of that” (AFP, 2013), suggesting the transformation of “world space” into Russian space and the expansion of the Russian geo-body far above the country’s borders and horizontal plane of existence. The infinite geometries of outer space thus begin to defy Anderson’s (1991) determination that the nation is ultimately limited because of its “finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations” (p. 5). Just as the dynamic movement of the volume of the ocean challenges processes of bordering in a way not encountered on land (Steinberg and Peters, 2015), the unconstrained dimensions of outer space create new opportunities and challenges for nation-building, too.

Russia’s relay leg to the North Pole further visualized the country’s unique technological capabilities that allow it to access and project power into geometries few if any other states can reach. For instance, as a previous Winter Olympics host, Canada brought the torch only as far north as Alert, Ellesmere Island (Dvorak, 2009). At 82°N, this location is the most northerly permanently inhabited place in the world, and it lies within Canadian territory. In contrast, the North Pole and the high seas around it represent a global commons into which, like outer space, the relay extended Russia’s geo-body. By taking the torch all the way to the North Pole, SOCOG leveraged Russia’s status as the sole country that can power through thick multi-year Arctic sea ice in winter thanks to its fleet of nuclear icebreakers. *RIA*

Novosti described SOCOG head Chernyshenko as remarking on Russia's demonstration of its "technological capabilities" when he explained, "The Olympic torch relay would be incomplete without sending it to the North Pole...This is proof that Russia has great technological projects" (RIA Novosti, 2013b). Rosatomflot's nuclear icebreaker *50 Years of Victory*, the world's largest, sailed from the Russian city of Murmansk to the North Pole in a record four and a half days. Once at the North Pole, the relay manifested Russian national presence rather than outright sovereignty in an area claimed by Russia as part of its continental shelf in its revised submission to the United Nations in August 2015 (Russian Federation, 2015). SOCOG sent Artur Chilingarov as the torchbearer, who Putin named a "Hero of Russia" for controversially planting the Russian flag on the seabed underneath the North Pole in 2007. Surrounded by flag bearers from seven other permanent member states of the Arctic Council, the region's preeminent intergovernmental organization, Chilingarov carried the Russian flag alongside the Olympic torch, giving Russian technological might a more human face. This pairing also neutralized chances for the same controversy to erupt as after the last time he bore a flag at the North Pole. For the second time in five years, the Russian state sanctioned the planting of a Russian flag at the top of the planet, reifying the northern extent of the national geo-body for domestic and international audiences. Like with outer space, the inclusion of the North Pole within the Sochi relay underscored the distant frontier's geopolitical significance to the Russian state and symbolic importance to the Russian geo-body, which expanded into the global commons thanks to advanced Russian transportation technologies.

5. Conclusion

Analysis of the international legs of the Beijing 2008 and Sochi 2014 relays helps to shed light on the variegated geographical dimensions and expressions of a nation beyond the state's recognized borders along with the underlying logic driving states' interest in promoting extraterritorial nationalism. The globe-spanning Chinese and Russian Olympic torch relays thus force reconsideration of where we locate and focus analysis of the state's performance and mobilization of nationalism. They illustrate that states

encourage more expansive nationalism in places beyond territorial borders, from foreign cities to the global commons. In short, the two relays signify that just as the state is deterritorializing, the nation is, too.

Alexander Murphy (2002, p. 194) asks, “What do nations or nation-state leaders imagine their territory to be? Why? And how do those understandings reflect and shape dominant political-territorial arrangements and processes?” These questions are crucial for understanding the spatial configurations of the nation-state, but research answering these inquiries often falls under the assumption that political officials are striving to ensure and legitimize the spatial convergence of the nation’s spatial extent and the state’s sovereign territory. This assumption is not completely unfounded, for nation-building efforts often do involve narratives that draw legitimacy from a people’s historical presence on a specific, bounded territory. Performances like the Olympic torch relays, however, do not require such territorial legitimation because they do not rely upon sovereign claims by the state. Instead, these border-hopping cartographic spectacles attempt to draw legitimacy both from the cosmopolitan branding of the Olympics and purported civilizational nationalism in order to project a more aspirational, expansive geo-body. The cases of China and Russia – two countries in which universal or civilizational nationalism has long held currency – suggest that further research is needed into other cases where the state and nationalism might have less of a territorial fix and more of a globe-embracing spirit.

China and Russia are often thought of as expansionist powers, and a great deal of media and academic attention focuses on their extraterritorial claims to sovereignty in the South China Sea or Crimea. Extraterritorial displays of nationalism constitute a separate (but sometimes overlapping) process to these territorial claims that involves the creation of a more transcendent geo-body and socio-spatial consciousness rather than the drawing of hard and fast borders. The Chinese relay manifested the state’s ongoing project to build China’s soft power, spanning across six continents and focusing specifically in places where the Chinese diaspora or state exerts a presence. The Russian relay traveled to difficult-to-access global commons like the North Pole and outer space, where it projected the state’s technological

might and modernity while symbolically incorporating these areas into the Russian geo-body, for which national feelings are resurging after it was torn apart by the Soviet collapse in 1991. Taken together, these two relays suggest that state-run projects of mobilizing and performing nationalism can exhibit extraterritorial dimensions disassociated from claims to sovereignty.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

Figure 1. The international route of the Beijing 2008 torch relay.

Figure 2. The domestic route of the Beijing 2008 Olympic torch relay.

Figure 3. The full route of the Sochi 2014 torch relay.