

CONNECTING A COMMUNITY THROUGH SPORT: THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE AND THE CITY OF  
COLORADO SPRINGS

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

More than a decade ago, Ferguson proposed that the concept of the *relationship* between an organization and its key publics be a central unit of study for researchers of public relations (1984). From this proposition, several studies developed, including the work of Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994) which focuses on organizational-public relationships (OPR). OPR research, which has been continued by Ledingham and Bruning, holds an underlying belief that organizations and key publics have three types of relationships that are critical to an organization's strategic mission: professional, personal and community (1999). This paper is an extension of OPR and community relations research and explores sport-specific public relationships. The main method used is a case study which utilizes both content analysis and historical research of the relationship between a sports organization and the community in which it is headquartered. Although a case study cannot show macro-level results, which would benefit the sport industry, beginning with the micro-level results of a case study provides a starting point for the future study of organizational-public relationships in sport organizations.

One of a handful of researchers who have published sport-specific public relations literature, L'Etang, wrote, "Because sport is both international and a part of everyday life, it shapes relationships at every level: diplomatic, cultural, economic, organizational, community and interpersonal" (2006, pp. 386). A prime example of a

sport organization charged with balancing these various relationships is the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), which is a private, non-profit corporation that serves as the coordinating body for all Olympic-related athletic activity in the United States. The USOC is unique to other sport organizations, particularly at the diplomatic and international levels, but also in its choice to move its headquarters from a major city, New York City, N.Y., to a non-major location, Colorado Springs, Colo. The move occurred on July 1, 1978. Colorado Springs, the second largest city in Colorado, recorded a population of 414,358 in 2009, while New York houses approximately 8.3 million and is home to most sport organization's headquarters as well as the highest cluster of partners/sponsors/licensees that the USOC courts for funding each year. In 2010, the USOC marketing portfolio showcased a total of 45 companies – nine of which are based in New York City and three others in nearby Connecticut and New Jersey.

This study focuses on the relationship of the USOC with its host community which can be defined in one of two ways. First, a community can be a *locality*, people grouped together by geographic location; and, second, community can be a *non-geographic community of interest*, people with a common interest, such as the scientific community or the business community (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1988). The focus of this study is of a *locality* and is the most important geographic community to the everyday functioning of the USOC. This relationship vantage was chosen for several reasons, the first of which is based on recent literature that suggests organizations are most stable when supported by the communities in which they reside (Guiniven, 2005). Since the early 2000s, the USOC has pondered and even

been pressured by International Olympic Committee (IOC) member Anita DeFrantz and others on the organization's board to relocate its headquarters to a larger city (Borzilleri, 2003). According to Borzilleri, DeFrantz's argument for moving the headquarters was that USOC executives "would be more effective if they were closer to current and potential sponsors, more accessible to the international sporting community and more visible to major media outlets" (2003).

Regardless of DeFrantz's arguments and after consideration by the USOC executive team, the organization's 11-member board and other Olympic stakeholders, the USOC remains in Colorado Springs because of a business deal struck with the city in 2009. These happenings became known in the local media as "the USOC deal" and sparked conversation and debate about the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs. The ongoing headquarter controversy had unfavorable image implications for the USOC in the Colorado Springs media, and the organization simultaneously faced a troubled international relationship with the IOC in regard to revenue sharing and the creation of an Olympic television network and a wavering national relationship with the public after blame for the loss of Chicago's 2016 bid was shifted to the committee. The content analysis of local newspapers and historical groundwork that follows will continue to explain the existing relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs and the efforts or lack of efforts taken by the organization to be not only a member of the community, but a partner of Colorado Springs.

The level of detail provided by this case study will illustrate the importance of utilizing the organizational-public relationship perspective of public relations and also

provide an example for future researchers interested in employing or studying relationship building techniques between a sports organization and the community in which it is headquartered. Also, this paper's overall purpose is to accurately report what was found by qualitatively measuring the strength of the community relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs through historical analysis and quantitatively measuring local media coverage from 1978 to 2010 of the USOC. On a more conceptual level, the study aims to understand the implications that the community relationship has on the USOC's overall strategic communication plan and will examine the level of effectiveness in communication with the community and provide an evaluation of the efforts. It is the researchers' hope that this exploratory effort will be followed by more in-depth research of the community relationships made, maintained and advanced by sport organizations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Defining Public Relations

The term *public relations* has been defined in many ways, but the definition used for this study, was developed by Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994). Public relations is “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (1994, pp. 2). There are several aspects to this definition that have been further studied by communication scholars interested in expanding the depth of knowledge surrounding the application and, central to this study, evaluation of this function as a vital component of business expansion and success.

In an attempt to determine the most logical purpose of public relations, Hutton (1999) pointed to six relatively distinct orientations of public relations practice, including: persuasion, advocacy, public information, cause-related public relations, image/reputation management and relationship management. While these orientations all qualify as functions or practices of public relations, Hutton concluded that the underlying *purpose* of public relations is relationship management and can be defined in three words “managing strategic relationships” (1999, pp. 205). Further, according to Hon and Grunig’s cross-cultural, multiple-item relationship management scale, in order for a relationship to be claimed, there must be evidence of effective

communication, mutual adaptation, mutual dependency, shared values, trust and commitment (1999).

Public relations' impact on a company is also important when discussing its definition. Ni argued that the relationships developed and maintained by public relations are a unique resource that lead to competitive advantages (2005). Grunig and Hunt's Excellence study adds further to the importance of relationship building and maintenance in public relations by identifying that the field contributes to organizational effectiveness by enacting with its environment and uses two-way communication processes to meet common goals that provide mutual benefit (1984). This view is critical to the proposed study, as the USOC will be analyzed on the effectiveness of its two-way community relationship with Colorado Springs and if a mutually beneficial relationship exists between the two.

### **Defining Organization-Public Relationships (OPR)**

Over the last decade and a half, researchers have devoted an increasing amount of attention to the organization-public relationship (OPR), which some scholars see as the emergence of relationship management as an important philosophy of public relations. In 1998, Ledingham and Bruning expanded on the relationship management approach by utilizing the research of Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994) that proposed the existence of OPR and suggested that this approach illustrates how relationships dually impact the organization and its key publics. Before Cutlip, et al. published their study in 1994, other scholars such as Ferguson (1984) and Leichty and Springston (1993) put forth the call to action for a theory that addressed how a

relationship between and organization and public develops, changes and is maintained over time.

Ledingham and Bruning (1998) state that the OPR approach is a significant change in viewing public relations in terms of what it *is* rather than what it *does*, and they provide a definition of the ideal OPR as “the state that exists between an organization and its key publics that provides economic, social, political and/or cultural benefits to all parties involved, and is characterized by mutual positive regard” (1998, pp. 62). Further, Ledingham and Bruning suggest that an organization’s involvement and support of the community in which it operates engenders loyalty toward an organization among key publics, but only when that involvement and/or support is recognized by these key publics (1998). Based on these conclusions, it is evident that through the development, maintenance and advancement of relationships, particularly in the community, public relations plays a significant role in the strategic corporate planning of that particular organization.

Ledingham and Bruning also contend that this relationship management perspective of public relations has the potential to serve as a platform that guides and merges theory with practice and also provides a consistent method that can evaluate the strength of a relationship (1999). The strength of a relationship is dependent on the extent to which the public is attracted to the organization and vice versa (Johnson, 1999). Johnson references four factors that constitute the structural commitment of a relationship: quality of alternatives, social pressure to remain in the relationship, termination procedures available and the presence of irretrievable investments (1999).

Wood also offered four factors which she deemed essential to a successful interpersonal relationship (1995). Wood's factors are:

1. *Investment* – time, energy, feelings, efforts and resources given to build a relationship;
2. *Commitment* – decision to continue a relationship;
3. *Trust* – feeling that those in the relationship can rely on one another;
4. *Comfort with relational dialectics* – forces which can pull a relationship in opposite directions (1995).

The various methods of analyzing the strength of relationships have been critical in shifting public relations away from the “practice of manipulation” and, instead, toward “a focus on building, nurturing and maintaining organization-public relationships” (Ledingham & Bruning, 1999, pp. 158). Ehling (1992) also cited this as an important change in the primary mission of public relations.

A study conducted by Bruning, Langenhop and Green (2004) showed that the relationship management approach has the power to both define and serve as an organizing philosophy for the field of public relations. The authors built this conclusion after examining city-resident relationships and the level of satisfaction in residents who were exposed to relationship-building activities in their community. Further, Bruning, et al. (2004) discovered that when organization-public relationships are managed effectively, the practitioner has seen advancement in relationship building with key publics, enhanced reputation, satisfaction, behavioral intent and actual behavior. OPR also adds quantitative evidence to the level of strategic contribution that public relations impresses upon the overall well-being of the organization. Bruning, et al. (2004) believe this is important because, “A continued focus on relationship building as a central tenet of public relations will provide practitioners with a perspective that ties public relations activity with organizational

outcomes, and will ground public relations practice on a theoretical foundation from which programs are developed and decisions can be made” (pp. 343).

A case study of OPR was conducted by Jahansoozi (2007) in regard to the Sundre Petroleum Operators Group and the city in which it is headquartered, Sundre, Alberta, Canada. In this study, the author explored the relationship between the company and the community and focused on how the relationship was perceived by the people involved through in-depth interviews with individuals from both the organization and community members. The results indicated that transparency was critical for building trust in the organizational-community relationship, particularly after a crisis situation. Much like the research proposed in studying the USOC-Colorado Springs relationship, Jahansoozi’s study followed the general theory for public relations that collaboration is necessary, and “effectively managing organizational-public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in a mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and publics” (2007, pp. 398).

### **Defining Community Relations as a Relationship Building Tool**

Kruckeberg and Starck pioneered community relations research as a function of public relations in 1998 by utilizing the Chicago School of Social Thought as a theoretical framework. Through the philosophy of the Chicago School, Kruckeberg and Starck suggested that there are six elements in the concept of *community*, which are as follows:

1. An individual usually belongs to one primary community;
2. The individual participates in the common life of the community, is aware of and interested in common ends and regulates activity in light of those ends. For this, communication is required;

3. Functional differentiation occurs to some extent because people have diverse occupations and activities;
4. People in a community occupy a definable geographic area;
5. Institutions develop and become prerequisites to community formation; and
6. A community develops particular cultural characteristics (1998, pp. 56).

Keeping these elements in mind, Kruckeberg and Starck (1998) propose that public relations practitioners play a pivotal role in the cultivation, maintenance and advancement of these various community relationships.

Long-term strategic relationships with the community and even the long-term success of an organization, at least in part, are dependent on how effectively the organization maintains a mutually beneficial relationship with its community (Kim, Brunner, & Fitch-Hauser, 2006). Kim et al. explore this dynamic in a university setting, but the concept of a mutually beneficial relationship with the community is particularly important for an organization, like the non-profit USOC, who looks to the local government for support and local community members for donations. The authors write:

It is the key assumption of community relations that an organization's continuous contributions and investment in its local community will enhance the image of the organization, which in turn may mobilize greater support from the community (Kim et al., 2006, pp. 191).

The data of Kim et al.'s study, collected from telephone surveys of community residents surrounding a university, found that residents who were more aware of the university's goodwill are more likely to perceive a favorable relationship and therefore supports the idea that contributions to a local community may enhance public image.

Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) built the foundation for the concept of community relations and suggested eight ways in which public relations practitioners can help to maintain, restore and/or advance a community relationship. The author's suggestions for public relations practitioners are as follows:

1. Help community members and the organizations they represent become conscious of common interests between the organization and the community;
2. Help individuals in the community to overcome alienation;
3. Help their organizations create a sense of community;
4. Encourage leisure-time activities of citizens to enhance their sense of community;
5. Encourage self-fulfilling communication;
6. Help individuals find security and protection through association with others;
7. Address issues in community welfare, social order and progress; and
8. Help build personal friendships (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1998, pp. 112-117).

Hall (2006) argues that these community actions should be conducted for “ethical, reputational, political and philosophical reasons” and that there is a psychological contract between an organization and its community that a mutual attempt to make one another successful will take place continuously throughout the relationship (pp. 2).

Before this relationship can be maintained, however, the organization must first identify the beliefs and attitudes held by community members; which can be difficult because of the latent rather than visibly active nature of the public. After this audience is established, Berkowitz and Turnmire (1994) express the importance of developing a program of frequent environmental monitoring and proactive communication with these identified publics about local issues in which the organization is involved. They continue to say that “community relations is an

important aspect of public relations because of an organization's close links with the immediate social environment" (Berkowitz & Turnmire, 1994, pp. 105).

Stoldt, Pratt and Jackson (2003) explore the notion of community relationship in the sport context and offer the following definition of sport community relations: "an organizational activity designed to build relationships with residents and civic-minded organizations in the geographic area in which the sport organization is located" (pp. 220). The author's continue to contend that community relations in sports have traditionally been undertaken by organizations because it is viewed as a long-term investment in the sport organization's image, often results in new revenue in the short term and is the "socially responsible thing for sport organizations to do" (Stoldt et al., 2003, pp. 221). Examples of community relations activities undertaken by a sports organization include constructing sport venues in local communities, engaging in partnerships with charitable organizations to advocate important messages or through the generation of important services. The strength of the relationship built by these activities can be measured by the following indicators as suggested by Grunig and Ehling: reciprocity, trust, mutual legitimacy, openness, investment, involvement, community, mutual satisfaction and mutual understanding. These tenets of an OPR will be applied in this research design as the USOC's relationship with Colorado Springs is studied.

Mitrook, Parish and Seltzer (2008) explore the concept of community relations through a case study of the Orlando Magic's efforts in securing a new arena with the help of the city of Orlando. While this is not a non-profit organization like the USOC, the Magic and other professional sports teams often look to the city for

help in funding infrastructure and the city often provides for fear of losing the sports team to another location. This emphasizes the belief of top-level city and sport administrators that sports organizations and communities have a mutually beneficial relationship, otherwise cities would not help to fund such projects. Mitrook et al's study also emphasized the local media's role in shaping public perceptions of a community issue, like raising funds for a new building, and its role in communicating the community involvement of the team. This study illustrated the weaknesses of the Magic's community relations program and offered suggestions of how the team could be a better community player.

Kruckeberg and Starck (2004) looked at consumer communities and defined a *consumer community* as "a group of enthusiasts who believe in the superiority of a product or service whose members individually and as a group publically identify with this product or service" (pp. 140). This type of community is an extension of Kruckeberg and Starck's 1998 research of community relations and is relevant to the USOC study in that Colorado Springs is a part of the USOC's consumer community of the Olympic movement.

In order to expand upon the existing research, the research questions proposed by this study are as follows:

**RQ1:** What is the relationship between the USOC and the city of Colorado Springs?

**RQ2:** How has this relationships changed over time?

**RQ3:** Does the relationship reflect the tenets of the ideal OPR and connect the community of Colorado Springs through sport?

By defining the past and current relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs, this research will uncover mistakes that have been made so that similar failures do not occur in this relationship and in others. Also, it provides information so that improvements to the relationship can be discussed and implemented in the future.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CASE HISTORY**

In order to expand on existing public relations research in the realms of community relations and organizational-public relationships (OPR) and to answer the overarching research question – what is the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs – this section of the paper will outline the mission, purpose and history of the USOC. This historical analysis of the USOC will move chronologically from its inception in 1894 to current events faced by the organization, such as “the USOC deal” with Colorado Springs that began to take shape in 2008. Particular attention will be paid to the organization’s relocation from New York City to Colorado Springs in 1978 and the efforts of the USOC to connect with its new environment.

#### **Early History**

The organization known today as the USOC was originally tabbed the American Olympic Committee (AOC) and headed by William Milligan Sloane in 1894, the same year the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was established by Baron Pierre de Coubertin in France (Weinberg, 2002). In addition to his position at the helm of the fledgling AOC in the United States, Sloane was also one of the original 15 founding members of the IOC and served on the international committee’s board for 30 years. When Sloane led the AOC, it was merely a “conglomeration of Olympically-interested men” and “was little more than a social club, a gathering of

men with nothing more to bind them than this common sporting interest” (Weinberg, 2002, pp. 57).

While Sloane and the AOC were aided by top amateur sport enthusiasts of the time, James E. Sullivan, founder of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and A.G. Spalding, a prominent publisher and sporting goods manufacturer, the early Olympic movement in the United States was “defined by chaos, competition, and cooperation, with the last rarely being the definitive characteristic” (Findling & Pelle, 1996, pp. 395). Some of the main issues with the informal AOC included inadequate training facilities, lack of financial support of athletes, imbalanced support among the Olympic sports and the organization’s inability to raise funds for the overall institution (Findling & Pelle, 1996). Also, the AOC met infrequently, only during the year of the Olympic Games – 1900, 1904, 1906, 1908 and 1912 – and competed with the AAU and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for authority over Olympic athletes (Lucas, 1994). These problems, particularly the infrequent meetings, surfaced after the 1920 Antwerp Games. The 1920 Olympic Games were defined by a poor showing of U.S. athletes due to lack of attention toward athletics in the shadow of World War I, and so it was proposed in a meeting at the New York Athletic Club that the U.S. Olympic effort required a single, formal administrative structure (Findling & Pelle, 1996).

Gustavus Town Kirby led the new charge and in 1921 established a constitution and laws to govern a more formal organization that would promote and ensure the continued success of American athletes in Olympic Games. This restructuring led to a name change and the AOC became known as the American

Olympic Association (AOA). During Kirby's administration, the AOA maintained a headquarters dubbed "Olympic House" at 57 Park Ave. in New York City (Weinberg, 2002).

Throughout the restructuring process, it is important to note the early relationship that was developed between U.S. Olympic sport and the U.S. government. Illustrating the importance of athletic success to U.S. government officials was General Douglas MacArthur, who took the reins of the AOA for a brief period, 1927-28, and in a letter to President Calvin Coolidge wrote of the efforts of the AOA:

Nothing is more characteristic of the genius of the American people than is their genius for athletics. Nothing is more synonymous with our national success than is our success in athletics. If I were required to indicate today that element of American life which is most characteristic of our nationality, my finger would unerringly point to our athletic escutcheon (James, 1970, pp. 673).

The government's respect for Olympic sport as well as the recognition of sports' soft political power internationally is an underlying theme in the early and current relationship between the U.S. government and the USOC.

In addition to the government, the importance of sport figures was also spreading to the public as national heroes like Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey and Bill Tilden, emerged on the Olympic sports scene.

Olympic pentathlete Avery Brundage followed MacArthur at the helm of the AOA and led from 1930-1953. Under Brundage, the organization incurred two more name changes – United States of America Sports Foundation in 1940 and the United States Olympic Association in 1945. Public Law 805, which granted the USOA a federal charter, was enacted soon after in 1950 and enabled the USOA to solicit tax-

deductible contributions as a private, non-profit corporation (“USOC General Information,” 2010). The main function of the organization in these early years, however, was to gather athletes from the various National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and feed, clothe and transport them to the quadrennial Olympic Games (Weinberg, 2002).

It wasn’t until 1961, when major constitutional revisions were made, that the organization received its modern-day name of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Until this point, the U.S. Olympic Movement continued competing with the AAU and NCAA, as each respective organization fought for control of the elite American athlete (Findling & Pelle, 1996). Prior to Public Law 805, the early U.S. Olympic organizations were ineffective at dealing with issues like providing adequate training facilities, financing the needs of “professional” Olympic athletes and institutional fundraising (Findling & Pelle, 1996). Following this federal charter and, in part, due to the failure of U.S. athletes to measure up to Soviet and East German competitors at the 1976 Olympic Games, the government stepped in and formed the President’s Commission on Olympic Sports, which made several recommendations for change in the Olympic organization.

### **Amateur Sports Act (1978)**

Arguably the most important result of the President’s Commission on Olympic Sports was the 1978 passing of Public Law 95-606 – The Amateur Sports Act. This legislation named the USOC the official coordinating body for athletic activity in the United States directly relating to international Olympic family athletic competition, namely the Olympic and Pan-American Games (“USOC General

Information”). Much like the 1950 charter, the Amateur Sports Act supported fundraising efforts, but took it a step further by granting the USOC the exclusive rights to symbols associated with the U.S. Olympic movement, like the USOC emblem, Olympic rings and protected words like *Olympic* and *Olympiad* (Findling & Pelle, 1996). Other provisions included the recognition of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for the sports on the Olympic and Pan American Games programs and gave the USOC the general authority to review issues related to the recognition of the various NGBs (“USOC General Information”). The passing of this legislation is an important step in USOC history and it is, again, interesting to note the unique relationship between the government and the organization. For instance, while the organization boasts non-governmental status, its structure and purpose was determined by the U.S. government. The USOC is considered non-governmental because it receives no direct funding from the U.S. government and therefore fundraising is a major priority for the USOC.

### **From New York to Colorado**

Following the passing of the Amateur Sports Act, it was proposed by Philip Krumm, who was the USOC president from 1973 to 1977, to move the USOC’s headquarters from New York City to Colorado Springs, Colo. Krumm’s proposal included the establishment of a national training center as well as adequate office space to house interested NGBs and the USOC headquarters. The project was spurred by the over-taxation of the USOC’s Olympic House in New York, which was 9,000 square meters, and the prospect of 18,500 square meters of space available in Colorado Springs (Berlioux, 1978). It was reported in the National Olympic

Committee section of the 1978 *Olympic Review*, a newsletter published by the IOC, that 900 square meters of the New York office would be retained to accommodate a communications office on the east coast, but moving to Colorado Springs was overwhelmingly a financial-saving decision highlighted by improved working conditions and a reduction of commute time to work (Berlioux, 1978). A small marketing office remains in New York City today so that the USOC can stay better connected with the business community, which contributes the majority of the organization's operating budget.

The 1978 *Olympic Review* article, edited by Berlioux, also reported that there is "great enthusiasm and support in Colorado Springs for identification with the Olympic effort" (pp. 326). Community support was statewide and Colorado indicated a consideration of a \$10 million contribution to the USOC as well as willingness from the Parks and Recreation Department to include specific needs of the training center, including a velodrome and speedskating rink (Berlioux, 1978). According to McComb, the leaders of Colorado Springs actively promoted the move in an effort to make the city the sports capital of the nation and "the effort has been beneficial to all concerned" (1986, pp. 72).

Although the move may have been beneficial, that doesn't mean it wasn't without controversy. According to the USOC president at the time of the move, William E. Simon, "It wasn't an easy move to make. A lot of people felt we'd miss a lot going to Colorado" (Moss, 1997). One of the most obvious changes between the locations was the difference in populations. At the time of the move, Colorado

Springs counted 214,914 people compared to New York City's 7, 071,639 in the same year (United States Census, 1980).

The USOC's new home in Colorado Springs was located on the grounds of the unoccupied ENT Air Force Base in mid-town Colorado Springs at the corner of Boulder and Union, which was a 34-acre complex filled with run-down buildings and presented to the USOC for a lease price of \$1 per year (Moran, 2010). According to Moran:

Only ten people made up that first USOC staff, all packing up and moving from 57 Park Avenue in New York City to head West and create a new beginning for an organization thrust into the limelight in 1978 by Congress and the Amateur Sports Act, and charged with control of the Olympic movement in the United States in the aftermath of a decade of problems and showdowns between the old AAU and the NCAA over athlete rights and who was in charge (2010).

Moran was brought on board as the organization's first Chief of Communications five months after the USOC arrived in Colorado Springs from the University of Colorado where he served as a Sports Information Director. After serving as the USOC's Chief of Communications for 25 years, Moran is now the Senior Media Consultant for the Colorado Springs Sports Corp, which, according to its website [www.coloradospringssports.net](http://www.coloradospringssports.net), supports the economy of Colorado Springs by promoting the region as a destination for sports business, competition and meetings.

When the USOC moved to Colorado Springs, so too did the majority of NGBs – of the 39 NGBs, half are headquartered either in the U.S. Olympic Training Center (USOTC) complex in Colorado Springs or elsewhere in the city (Weinberg, 2002). From its new office in Colorado Springs, a formalized USOC began to work closely with the NGBs for the first time ever. Also, a system for providing financial,

educational, training and medical support systems for Olympic athletes and hopefuls was formed, as were mechanisms to resolve conflicts involving athletes or Olympic sport organizations through athlete services and the athlete ombudsman (“USOC General Information”). In addition, the USOC communications department began to manage a variety of relationships, with publics ranging from the IOC to the United States government to all Americans, who the USOC hopes will donate to the cause of advancing Olympic sport in the United States. Among these publics is the city of Colorado Springs.

### **Life in Colorado Springs**

Since its relocation to Colorado in 1978, the USOC has undergone major changes in its budget, structure and also in its relationship with Colorado Springs. The relationship changes are seen through the coverage of local newspapers. A main topic of discussion in regard to this relationship is what the Colorado Springs Business Journal (CSBJ) dubbed “the USOC deal.” First, however, it’s important to talk about the budgetary changes that occurred in the organization after it moved to Colorado Springs.

In the 1977-80 quadrennium – the first Olympic Games quad that the USOC was headquartered in Colorado Springs – its operating budget was \$19 million. Now, the organization deals with multi-million dollar contracts and its operating budget for the 2001-04 quad was \$491.5 million (Borzilleri, 2003). Community relations efforts are a part of this four-year budget, set around the Olympic Games time frame, and according to the USOC’s website, the following programs enhance and increase communication of the Olympic Movement on both the local and national level:

Champions in Life, Citizens Through Sport Alliance, Community Olympic Development Programs, FLAME (Finding Leaders Among Minorities Everywhere), Jr. Olympic Skills, Olympic Day, PLAYS (Pipeline Leadership for America's Youth Sports), Team for Tomorrow Fund, USOC Hall of Fame and the Visitor's Center. Both the Hall of Fame and Visitor's Center are located at the Colorado Springs USOTC. The Visitor's Center is 20,475-square-foot and features a cauldron, Olympic spirit retail store, auditorium, displays of sport memorabilia and a conference room that is offered free of charge to local non-profits (Borzilleri, 2003). More than one million people have visited the USOTC since the Visitor's Center opened its doors in 1997 and according to Weinberg (2002), the center is the USOC's way of saying to the public,

This is 'your' place. Our Olympic dreams start here. Thank you for your loyalty, your interest, and your contributions that have made all that you see here possible" (pp. 63).

Besides budgetary expansion, several changes in the USOC's structure have taken place since it moved from New York – the most significant change being the reduction of the 123-member board, which represented Olympic athletes, sporting bodies and community groups, to just 11 members in 2003 (Briggs, 2003). It was around this same time that the organization was facing pressure from American IOC member Anita DeFrantz and other board members to move the organization's headquarters back to New York City. DeFrantz was supportive of a move because she believed it would enable the USOC to "become better integrated with all its stakeholders, especially the public" (Borzilleri, 2003). DeFrantz's suggestion, as well as ethical violations by USOC leadership raised after the 2002 Salt Lake City

Olympic Winter Games, prompted a government commission to meet about restructuring and repurposing the USOC.

The most faithful advocate of the movement to keep the USOC in Colorado Springs was Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., who vowed that a relocation of the USOC would occur “over my dead body” (Briggs, 2003). The City Council of Colorado Springs was also in favor of keeping the USOC in the city because in 2003 the USOC campus housed 500 USOC staffers, 250 Olympic hopefuls and was generating \$315.9 million a year for the Pikes Peak region’s economy (Briggs & Soraghan, 2003). Also according to Briggs and Soraghan (2003), the USOC was providing 4,800 direct and indirect jobs to the community and about 38,000 tourists visited the campus annually.

To tackle the restructuring of the USOC, a Senate Commerce Committee, headed by John McCain, R-Ariz., called for a five-member independent commission to suggest a blueprint for USOC reform. Four of the five commission members either lived in New York City or had strong ties with the city, and members included Donald Fehr, head of the Major League Baseball Players Association; Dick Ebersol, chairman of NBC Sports and the NBC Olympic division; Harvey Schiller, a former USOC executive director; and Donna de Varona, chairwoman of the USOC’s government relations committee (Briggs & Soraghan, 2003). While the topic of relocation was discussed, the commission’s comments on moving the USOC headquarters were never addressed in the commission’s recommendations to the Senate (Briggs & Soraghan, 2003). In the hearing, Sen. Campbell pushed for a contract which would bind the USOC to Colorado Springs – something that continues

to elude Colorado Springs; although after the 2009 “USOC deal,” the USOC is cemented in Colorado Springs until 2035.

### **The USOC Deal**

Talk of “the USOC deal” began to circulate in 2007 because the USOC was running out of room in the aging Colorado Springs facility and was also landlocked on the former ENT Air Force Base located on the corner of Union and Boulder. The last time the USOTC was renovated was in 1997 when two new athlete residence halls and the Visitor’s Center were constructed in Phase II of a \$24 million construction project (Moss, 1997). USOC spokesperson Darryl Seibel said the following in 2007 about the need for another round of renovations:

There’s only so much flexibility we have with the existing footprint at the Olympic Training Center. That said, this is a terrific facility. Our analysis is in no way prompted by any sense of dissatisfaction or unhappiness with our situation in Colorado Springs. We have a terrific situation here and we’ve enjoyed incredible support from this community, going back to the late ‘70s when the training center first opened (Meyer).

Wanting to expand the USOTC was of primary concern, but this also meant that the offices which housed the headquarters would need to move “off campus” in order to provide the space needed by the training facility. The USOC’s need for both space and financial assistance in expansion prompted talks with the local Colorado Springs government, which was eager to support the organization because of the committee’s economic impact on the city (Emery, 2008). The Colorado Springs’ Office of Economic Development published a study in 2007 that provided the economic impact that the Olympic and related sports industry has on Colorado Springs. The report concluded that 3,480 jobs provided for \$146.7 million in

employee earnings and the economic output was tabbed at \$341.3 million (“Olympic and Related Sports...,” 2007). Additionally, it was reported that the city collected approximately \$8.2 million in taxes each year from the sporting industry (“Olympic and Related Sports...,” 2007). Due to these numbers, the local government began drafting a deal with the USOC to ensure that it would remain in the city.

A deal between the USOC, Colorado Springs and LandCo, a local developer, was drafted and the Colorado Springs City Council approved a \$53 million agreement to keep the USOC in Colorado Springs on March 31, 2008 (Emery, 2008). At the time of the agreement, at least 10 other cities had put in bids for the headquarters, but Colorado Springs was the USOC’s final decision for the location of its headquarters, in part, because the city promised to lease a new office building to the USOC for \$1 a year (Emery, 2008). According to an article in *The Gazette* this was “a deal civic leaders trumpeted as a crowning achievement for the community” (Laden, 2009).

It was reported in several articles in the local media that the current mayor of Colorado Springs, Lionel Rivera, and Colorado Springs City Councilman, Jerry Heimlicher, wanted to keep the organization in the city because of the organization’s impact on the local economy and the image which Colorado Springs has built around Olympic sport. Heimlicher was quoted in *The Denver Post* saying:

I think it is very prestigious to be the home of the U.S. Olympic headquarters, and I think to lose them or to have them go to another city would indicate that we’ve lost that designation. That’s emotional, that’s not dollars and cents (Emery, 2007, pp. B-05).

Below is a quote from Rivera:

People know Colorado Springs for being the amateur sports capital of the United States. That’s something we treasure, and that we don’t intend to lose (Meyer, 2007, pp. B-24).

While rejoiced at its inception, the 2008 USOC-Colorado Springs agreement unraveled before it was finished and the plan became “the biggest local story of 2009” (Hazlehurst, 2009). Hazlehurst reported in the Colorado Springs Business Journal (CSBJ) that in March 2009, a year after the original agreement, Colorado Springs had yet to market the certificates of participation (COPs) – the proposed means of raising the money promised to the USOC – because of the weak economy (2009). The city had committed to pay \$27 million of the \$53 million deal. In addition, LandCo was unable to uphold its part of the agreement, and the USOC would not sign the lease for the new building until it had proof that the money was being raised (Hazlehurst, 2009). The stalemate jeopardized the deal and the media attacked.

A summary of key elements of the plan was posted on the city’s website on July 31, 2009 in a power point titled “USOC/City of Colorado Springs Proposed Economic Development Agreement.” The featured element for the project was a new USOC headquarters – five floors (80,881 square feet) at 27 S. Tejon Street in downtown Colorado Springs. Other elements included 40,000 square feet of renovated office space at 30 Cimino Drive for NGBs and 166 units of athlete housing, expansion and enhancement of the Athlete Center and Visitor’s Center at the original USOTC complex on Boulder and Union. This information is available to the public on the City of Colorado Springs website (“USOC Economic Development...”).

According to the CSBJ, the deal was conducted in secrecy and Colorado Springs residents were kept in the dark about the transactions between the city and the USOC. This included a lawsuit from the contractor, LandCo who claimed the USOC

and the city of Colorado Springs were unable to meet the terms of the 2008 agreement. It is important to note that LandCo was unable to meet its responsibilities in the agreement. The CSBJ was quick to point out the lack of transparency from both sides of the deal and “the USOC deal” became a frequent topic of discussion in the publication. In a CSBJ article it states, “The USOC debacle has dismayed and infuriated many in our community, and has caused some to question the competence of city government” (“Time for council...,” 2009). This lack of transparency is not in line with the Excellent tradition of public relations or the making of a successful OPR, and the main ramification was putting the generally positive relationship between the organization and its hometown of 32 years in jeopardy.

Since the collapse of the deal in March 2009, and in secrecy or not, the city assumed full financial responsibility for the headquarters building as LandCo clumsily exited the deal and the city was not going to give up on the USOC (Bowe, 2009). Although the CSBJ and The Gazette continued to report negatively on “the USOC deal,” the USOC signed the lease in Oct. 2009 and moved into its new headquarters in downtown Colorado Springs in May 2010. When the USOC’s current chief executive officer Scott Blackmun was asked about “the USOC deal” by the CSBJ (Hazlehurst, 2010) in a question and answer column, he said:

...we are focused on bringing business to Colorado Springs. I don’t want to say that the community made a bet on us – they made that investment for all the right reasons. And one of the reasons they made that investment was based on the expectation that we’re going to help them grow. That’s what we want to do.

Following the CSBJ interview with Blackmun, the USOC announced a \$250,000 grant to be used for Colorado Springs youth sports and recreation programs and community centers (Laugesen, 2010).

### **The Relationship**

From this history, the following conclusions about the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs can be drawn:

- The USOC has been headquartered in Colorado Springs for 32 years and will remain in Colorado Springs until at least 2045 due to a contract inked in 2009.
- The City of Colorado Springs values having the USOC in its community and invested approximately \$50 million to keep the USOC in Colorado Springs.
- The USOC values the City of Colorado Springs because it houses the “high-altitude” Olympic Training Center as well as the headquarters of 20 of the 39 total National Governing Bodies.
- According to the 2007 Economic Impact Report, the Olympic and Related Sports industry contributed \$341.3 million to the city and employed 3,480 Colorado Springs residents (“Olympic and Related Sports,” 2007).

The above historical analysis provides a starting point for future analysis and offers a perspective of where the USOC has been and where it is going.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

As mentioned by Wimmer and Dominick (2006), the case study approach allows the researcher to employ a wide spectrum of evidence through a variety of data collection techniques, allowing for a more well-rounded and valid analysis of the relationship. In an attempt to integrate theory and research, the main approach proposed for this investigation is qualitative in nature and seeks to test the theory of organization-public relationship (OPR), particularly the importance of a strong community relationship. According to Anderson (1996), studies within the domain of qualitative research begin with interests into how something is done, the social value of an activity, the meaning of an action or the requirements of an accomplishment. This applies directly to the research interest proposed by this study, which seeks to better understand the phenomenon of an OPR between the USOC and Colorado Springs; especially, how community relations is conducted by the USOC, how these efforts affect the relationship between the organization and Colorado Springs and if this relationship is important to the long-term strategic goals of both publics.

In order to best answer these research questions and also obtain information about the topic, the research was conducted as a qualitative case study, which is defined by Stacks (2002) as an in-depth study of a particular people, organization, event or process. Robert Yin (1984) first described the case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context;

when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are clearly not evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (pp. 23). An extension of secondary research, the case study allows for a descriptive analysis of the development and maintenance of the relationship built between the USOC and Colorado Springs via the community relations efforts of the former. From the analysis of this real-life situation, analysis of the USOC’s organizational-public relationship with Colorado Springs is applied to the community relationship that exists between the two publics. Also, while case studies, particularly this case study, can’t be directly applied to other cases, it may provoke introspection from other sport organizations or other organizations, in general, who have pondered the importance of a relationship between itself and the host city of its headquarters or even the host of a sports arena.

This case study utilized historical research and was supplemented with a content analysis of local newspapers – Colorado Springs Business Journal, The Denver Post and The Gazette – to explore the beginning and current relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs. The base of information from the historical analysis came from the Olympic Information Center, which is maintained by the LA84 Foundation and endowed from the surplus funds of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Other sources for the analysis included the USOC website, TeamUSA.org; the Sports Corp website, ColoradoSpringsSports.net; the Historical Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement; and local news sources generated through the content analysis.

The sample for the content analysis, 170 articles from the three publications mentioned above, was drawn from two separate keyword searches of the LexisNexis

News database. The first search was conducted using the terms “USOC” and “community,” while the second search supplemented “Colorado Springs” for “community.” The sample size was determined from the number of articles generated by these searches. Next, the sample was combed in order to determine the most applicable categories for examining the media’s portrayal of the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs.

The following categories were used in the analysis codebook: article title, year written, month written, Olympic Games timeframe, article byline, section, length, document type, keywords in title, tone of article toward USOC, tone of article toward Colorado Springs, quote attributions, main subject, mention of USOC community programs/services and the type of USOC community program/service mentioned (*see Appendix*). There was also a space provided in the codebook for the researcher to enter general comments about the article. The general comments as well as the categories in regard to tone reflect qualitative analysis; however, the other factors allow for a quantitative analysis of the data studied. From this analysis, the researcher was highly interested in tracking the relationships between the publication and the tone of the articles, the publication and the mention of USOC community service/program and also the role that year played in these relationships – this was vital in answering RQ3, which asked how the relationship changed over time. Quote attribution was tracked to gain an understanding of the voices presented in the discussion. This is important, especially in a study of OPR, because it is a way in which to track the availability and therefore transparency of the USOC in its relationship with the public.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **RESULTS**

The overall results of both the historical and content analyses were generally positive in regard to the strength of the organizational-public relationships (OPR) between the USOC and Colorado Springs. The content analysis of local media, however, did show that there has been stress and tension on the relationship, particularly due to the events leading up to “the USOC deal,” which was the plan struck between the USOC and Colorado Springs to keep the organization headquartered in Colorado. This is evidenced by the relationship between the year of publication and the tone of the article toward the city of Colorado Springs and the USOC. Also, the content analysis revealed that the USOC’s community relations programs are a very minimal part of the local media discussion. This means the community is most likely unaware of the efforts put forth by the USOC and is therefore an area the organization needs to strengthen in order to improve and expand its current relationship with Colorado Springs. The following sections will discuss the results found by the content analysis.

#### **Content Analysis Results**

In addition to the demographic information collected by the content analysis, this study calculated the frequency of search terms used in the LexisNexis search when selecting the sample. This query resulted in 80.6 percent of the sample using one of the search terms “USOC,” “Colorado Springs,” “community” or a combination

of the words in the article title. Of interest, however, is the sparing use of the word “community,” which appeared just eight times in the 170 articles studied. This reflects the lack of emphasis placed on the USOC’s community relations efforts by the selected media.

The tone of the article toward both the USOC and Colorado Springs was also studied. Although tone is a qualitative measurement, it was used in this content analysis in order to establish its significance or lack thereof in the selected media sampling. The tone measurements ranged from very negative to very positive and included neutral and not relevant subcategories. *Very negative* or *very positive* tone was indicated if the article was dominated by imbalanced negativism or positivism – meaning more than 50 percent of the article was either negative or positive reporting toward either the USOC or Colorado Springs. *Negative* or *positive* tone was indicated if less than 50 percent of the article reflected either negatively or positively on the subject in question. Finally, *neutral* was checked if the article was evenly balanced and *not relevant* if the article was not talking specifically about either the USOC or Colorado Springs

The researcher noted that a majority 65.9 percent of the 170 articles studied were neutral in tone toward the USOC. Also, more articles were found to have a positive (17.6 percent) or very positive (2.9 percent) tone than negative (9.4 percent) or very negative (3.5 percent). The tone measurements toward Colorado Springs differed from the positive lean enjoyed by the USOC. For instance, while the near majority of articles, 48.8 percent, were noted as neutral toward the city, there were more negative (16.5 percent) or very negatively-toned (11.2 percent) articles than

positive (11.2 percent) or very positive-toned (0.6 percent) articles in the 170 articles sampled.

Another area of interest in the analysis was the source of quotes in each article. This explored the voices behind the article content and showed that there is a slight relationship between the frequency of USOC-sourced quotes and a more positive relationship with the city. Since the majority of articles were *opinion*, however, it's not surprising that 34.1 percent of the sample or 58 of the 170 articles did not use any quotes. The first person quoted in 41 of the articles, or 24.1 percent of the sample, was a USOC executive. The next most popular first quote was a near even split between Colorado Springs government official (9.4 percent) and another member of the Colorado Springs community (8.8 percent).

The existence of mentioning a USOC community service/program was analyzed in the 170 articles and there was little to no mention of a USOC community service/program. In fact, 82.9 percent of the sample or 141 articles did *not* mention such a program or service. Of the 17.1 percent of articles which contained a reference to a USOC community program/service, the most mentioned program was the Visitor's Center on the USOTC complex in Colorado Springs with nine of the 170 articles mentioning the visitor's center. This does not account for the eight articles which listed multiple community services/programs.

**Research Question 1: *What is the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs?***

The results from the historical and content analyses indicate that the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs is quasi-dependent. The relationship is

deemed “quasi” in nature because while both the USOC and the city rely on each other for certain things, their actual survival does not hinge on the existence or strength of this relationship. According to Wood’s four essential elements of interpersonal relationships – as discussed in the literature review – the relationship does contain the essential elements of successful relationships, especially when looking at “the USOC deal” (1995). Wood’s elements are investment, commitment, trust and comfort with relational dialectics (1995). The level of each of these elements is difficult to discern, however, with the methodologies used in this study.

**Research Question 2: *How has this relationship changed over time?***

According to the results of the study, the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs has been stable over time. One of the main factors in this stability has been the city’s commitment to enticing the organization to move to Colorado Springs in the first place and then fighting for it to stay. This commitment is based on the economic impact that Olympic sport has on Colorado Springs as well as the identification that Colorado Springs has with the Olympic Movement. The stability is also reflective of the USOC’s 2009 decision to maintain its headquarter location in Colorado Springs.

YEAR	FREQUENCY
2010-09	89
2004-03	23
2008-07	18
2000-99	10
1998-97	9
2002-01	8
1996-95	6
1994-93	4
2006-05	3

**Figure 5.1:** Frequency of the years of articles used in the content analysis.

**Research Question 3: *Does the relationship reflect the tenets of the ideal organizational-public relationship and connect the community of Colorado Springs through sport?***

As stated in the literature review, Ledingham and Bruning defined the ideal organizational-public relationship (OPR) as “the state that exists between an organization and its key publics that provides economic, social, political and/or cultural benefits to all parties involved, and is characterized by mutual positive regard” (1998, pp. 62). Based on the historical analysis, it’s obvious that the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs reflects these tenets. While there is room for improvement in the relationship, as evidenced by the local media’s coverage of “the USOC deal,” a relationship exists nonetheless and the USOC does help to connect the community of Colorado Springs through sport.

Overall, the results answered the research questions and uncovered that the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs reflects the tenets of an ideal OPR. There was evidence, however, that the strength of the relationship overtime is dependent on current events and is therefore flexible. The relationship can be seen as ideal because although there was criticism found in the media, the tone toward the USOC was skewed positively. Also, throughout the USOC’s decision of whether or not to relocate its headquarters, Colorado Springs fought and paid millions of dollars to keep the USOC in the city. It is unlikely this behavior would have occurred if the relationship between the two was not seen as mutually beneficial, which is an indicator of OPR strength.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION**

The primary purpose of this research was to discover the nature of the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs. There were three research questions presented, the first – what is the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs – being broader than the last two which sought more specific information about the relationship. The history of the USOC as well as the content of Colorado media outlets was studied in order to answer these questions. As discussed throughout the paper, it is important to establish a positive organizational-public relationship (OPR) – based on investment, commitment, trust and comfort with relational dialectics – because this mutually beneficial relationship assists in the overall success of the organization. This section discusses the findings and offers the researcher’s recommendations for improving the OPR between the USOC and Colorado Springs as well as ideas for future research on this subject.

#### **History Lesson**

As history has shown, the USOC and Colorado Springs share a mutually beneficial relationship, which has existed since the organization relocated to Colorado in 1978. There is also evidence that this relationship is based largely on the economic impact that each has on the other. For instance, “the USOC deal” of 2009 showed that Colorado Springs was willing to pay a high price for the USOC, which contributes greatly to the local economy, to remain in Colorado. On the flip side, the USOC is

committed to staying in Colorado Springs as long as the city is able to help fund its needs. This example reflects the element of *commitment* which Woods defined as one of four essential elements for a successful relationship (1995). The USOC's level of commitment to the relationship, however, is not as great as the commitment put forth by Colorado Springs and is an area where the USOC can improve in order to strengthen this OPR. Other elements in the USOC-Colorado Springs relationship evidenced in the history include trust, investment and comfort with relational dialectics.

The history also shows that the USOC-Colorado Springs relationship includes the elements of Hon and Grunig's relationship management scale, which in addition to trust and commitment, includes effective communication, mutual adaptation, mutual dependency and shared values (1999). For instance, the USOC and Colorado Springs are adapting to one another in moving the headquarters downtown to provide more space for the training center to expand. Also, both the USOC and Colorado Springs are dependent on each other to make this deal stick. Perhaps the most obvious element is *shared values*. The two share the values of hard work; dedication to America's current, future and past athletes; and living a healthy, balanced lifestyle. The element that needs the most work in this OPR is effective communication, which was evidenced by the breakdown and frustration of "the USOC deal" in 2009.

The history of the USOC-Colorado Springs relationship also provides insight to Kruckeberg and Starck's (2004) concept of a *consumer community*. For example, the Colorado Springs community is a segment of the larger national consumer community, but exists because members believe in the merits of the service the

USOC provides to the city. This sense of *community* is reinforced by the USOC's community relations programs/services, some of which include Olympic Day, the Visitor's Center and the Hall of Fame. The content analysis revealed, however, that the Colorado Springs media do not report on the USOC's various community programs/services frequently. This is an area for improvement which will be further discussed in the next section.

### **Improving the Relationship**

This research has uncovered several areas where the USOC-Colorado Springs relationship can be strengthened. The first recommendation for an improved community relationship is working with the Colorado Springs media to increase the coverage of community services/programs. This will help to keep the USOC top of mind in Colorado Springs and also illustrate how the Olympic Movement is alive in the city. While there were a few articles that pointed to the positive influence that the USOC's community programs have on Colorado Springs – particularly the Visitor's Center – there were very few which showed how the USOC specifically affected the city.

Another area where the USOC can improve its relationship with Colorado Springs is in its commitment to the city. An article written by the staff of the Colorado Springs Business Journal (CSBJ) in the content analysis titled "Let's not sully Colorado Springs' true icons by including the USOC" discusses the USOC's flawed attempt at being a "true" community member (2009). The article compares the USOC to another Colorado Springs institution – The United States Air Force Academy – and claims that "the academy is not simply in the community, but of the community"

(“Let’s not sully...,” 2009). It also states that an organization, whether for-profit or not, can never achieve this status. The mutually beneficial requirement of a strong OPR, however, suggests differently; and so, the USOC should focus on its commitment to being “of the community” instead of merely in it. This heightened commitment can be achieved through public relations efforts.

Another area for improvement is making the USOC a more prominent community member through increased use of the Olympic rings throughout Colorado Springs and at various community events. The USOC’s public relations efforts should be working to achieve this. Lon Matejczyk, editor of the CSBJ, wrote an article in 2010 about this topic titled, “We’re the proud home of the USOC, but who would know?”

### **Limitations**

In the content analysis, a larger sample size would have benefited the second research question which addressed the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs over time. Also, the content analysis reflects the opinions of relatively few within the Colorado Springs community. With an overall lack of articles prior to 1993, it is impossible to track the early relationship in the content analysis. The historical analysis ran into a similar limitation because the history of the USOC has not been extensively published. One of the sources used – Historical Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement – points to this limitation and refers researchers to the USOC library, which no longer has an employee residing over its archives, so is therefore of no use to researchers unless they are in the Colorado Springs area.

The qualitative nature of this research comes with inherent bias from the researcher. Although the researcher tried to rule out as much bias as possible, particularly through the content analysis, it still needs to be addressed as a limitation in this study. Also, the researcher was employed as an intern for the USOC and at the time this research was conducted had accepted a fulltime position with the organization.

### **Future Research**

Since this study is one of very few that tracks the community relationship of a sports organization with its local host, it is suggested that the study be replicated in order to determine similar results. Other research has studied the relationship between a community and an arena and/or sports team, but the literature on the community relationship between a headquarters and its hometown is limited. Also, a more significant research project would include a greater inspection of local media through content analysis as well as in-depth interviews of key opinion leaders in both the USOC and Colorado Springs to gain a more well-rounded perspective. Interviews and even surveys of Colorado Springs residents could also expand on answering if the USOC truly connects the city of Colorado Springs through sport. It is recommended that the surveys ask questions that can help to measure the relationship based on the relationship scale offered by Hon and Grunig (1999, pp. 28-30).

### **Conclusion**

From the results of the historical and content analyses, it has been determined that the relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs is mutually beneficial and therefore suggests that the relationship reflects an ideal organizational-public

relationship. In addition, the 32-year relationship between the USOC and Colorado Springs has been stable over time, although history shows that it was slightly stronger in the beginning; and the USOC does provide a community connection through sport. This study should result in future research on the topic of sport organizations and community relations. Further research on the USOC-Colorado Springs relationship was also proposed through the use of in-depth interviews and surveys which would measure the strength of the relationship based on Hon and Grunig's scale (1999). Also, it was determined that the research has the potential to be replicated in organizations other than the USOC.

Another highlight of this research includes the recommendations for improvement, as mentioned in the discussion section. These suggestions begin in the USOC public relations department, which should be more proactive in becoming an even better partner in the relationship with Colorado Springs. Along with the public relations department, it is important for the executive team of the USOC to believe in and value its relationship with Colorado Springs because decision-making and action can't be fulfilled without buy-in from the leadership.

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## APPENDIX

1. ARTICLE TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

2. PUBLICATION

1. Colorado Springs Business Journal
2. The Denver Post
3. The Gazette

3. YEAR WRITTEN

1. 2010-09
2. 2008-07
3. 2006-05
4. 2004-03
5. 2002-01
6. 2000-99
7. 1998-97
8. 1996-95
9. 1994-93
10. 1992-91
11. 1990-89
12. 1988-87
13. 1986-85
14. 1984-83
15. 1982-81
16. 1980 or before

4. MONTH WRITTEN

1. January
2. February
3. March
4. April
5. May
6. June
7. July
8. August

9. September
10. October
11. November
12. December

5. OLYMPIC GAMES TIMEFRAME

1. Written three months or less *prior* to an Olympic Games or Olympic Winter Games
2. Written three months or less *after* an Olympic Games or Olympic Winter Games
3. Written during an Olympic Games
4. None of the above

6. ARTICLE BYLINE

1. Meri-Jo Borzilleri
2. Brian Gomez
3. John Hazlehurst
4. Rich Laden
5. John Meyer
6. Mike Spence
7. Multiple
8. Other
9. None/Staff
10. Ton Kensler
11. Bill Briggs
12. Lon Matejczyk
13. Becky Hurley
14. Irv Moss
15. Kamon Simpson
16. Jason Blevins
17. Rob Larimer

7. SECTION

1. Commentary
2. Local
3. News
4. Opinion
5. Sports

6. Other

8. LENGTH OF ARTICLE

1. 1-100 words
2. 101-250 words
3. 251-500 words
4. 501-750 words
5. 751-1,000 words
6. 1,001-1,500 words
7. 1,501-2,000 words
8. 2,001+ words

9. DOCUMENT TYPE LISTED

1. Column
2. General news
3. Government activity
4. Opinion
5. Other
6. Not listed
7. Editorial

10. KEYWORDS USED IN TITLE

1. Colorado Springs (or some form; ie. Springs)
2. Community
3. USOC (or some form; ie. U.S. Olympic)
4. Colorado Springs and Community
5. Colorado Springs and USOC
6. Community and USOC
7. Colorado Springs, Community and USOC
8. None of the above

11. TONE OF ARTICLE TOWARD USOC

1. Very negative
2. Negative
3. Positive
4. Very positive
5. Neutral
6. Not relevant

12. TONE OF ARTICLE TOWARD COLORADO SPRINGS

1. Very negative
2. Negative
3. Positive
4. Very positive
5. Neutral
6. Not relevant

13. QUOTE 1 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

14. QUOTE 2 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

15. QUOTE 3 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official

8. Other
9. No quote

16. QUOTE 4 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

17. QUOTE 5 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

18. QUOTE 6 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

19. QUOTE 7 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

20. QUOTE 8 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

21. QUOTE 9 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete
2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

22. QUOTE 10 ATTRIBUTION

1. Athlete

2. Colorado Springs government official (including City Council members)
3. Other Colorado Springs community member
4. USOC executive
5. Other USOC/NGB employee
6. Colorado Sports Corp employee
7. Non-COS government official
8. Other
9. No quote

23. ARTICLE'S MAIN SUBJECT (if a combo of two/more listed choices then choose "multiple;" if a combo of unlisted choices then choose none of the above)

1. Colorado Springs
2. Community program/service
3. National Governing Body
4. Olympic Training Center
5. U.S. Athletes
6. USOC as an organization (NOT USOC community program)
7. Multiple
8. Other
9. Undeterminable
10. None of the above

*\*"MAIN SUBJECT" refers to the overarching theme of the article, if unable to determine, choose No. 7, undeterminable*

24. USOC COMMUNITY PROGRAMS/SERVICES MENTIONED

1. Yes
2. No

25. TYPE OF USOC COMMUNITY PROGRAM/SERVICE MENTIONED

1. Champions in Life
2. Citizens Through Sport Alliance
3. Community Olympic Development Programs (CODPs)
4. FLAME
5. Jr. Olympic Skills
6. Olympic Day
7. P.L.A.Y.S (Pipeline Leadership for America's Youth Sports)
8. Team for Tomorrow Fund

- 9. USOC Hall of Fame
- 10. Visitor's Center
- 11. Other
- 12. No community program mentioned
- 13. Multiple

26. General comments about article

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