



# A COMPATIBILITY ISSUE

International Sporting Events and Domestic Politics,  
1945-2016



2016 UCI World Championships, Doha, Qatar  
*Credit: Doha News*

# Agenda

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- Background & Context
- Data Collection & Synthesis
- Preliminary Findings & Discussion

# International Sporting Events: Current Issues

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Construction waste in the Sochi  
countryside  
[October 2013]



*Credit: Thomas Peter/Reuters/Landov*

# International Sporting Events and Domestic Politics

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Protesters at first public forum concerning Boston's bid to host the 2024 Olympics

[February 2015]



*Credit: Charles Krupa/AP*

# Data Collection

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- Host site data for 1945-2016 (post-WWII era) international championships
  - Summer and Winter Olympics
  - Current (2020) Summer Olympic sports: 47 sports governed by 33 federations
    - Excluded: golf and tennis (no federation-designated world championship event)
    - Data uncertain: skateboarding (contested governance)
  - Current (2018) Winter Olympic sports: 15 sports governed by 7 federations
  
- Resulted in 1,981 event-year data points

# Integration with Polity IV data set

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- Host site data was cross-referenced with individual state POLITY scores from Polity IV data set
  - POLITY score – aggregate measure of regime type
    - Scaled from -10 to 10
      - 7-10 = full democracy
      - 1-6 = partial democracy
      - -10-0 = autocracy

# Findings

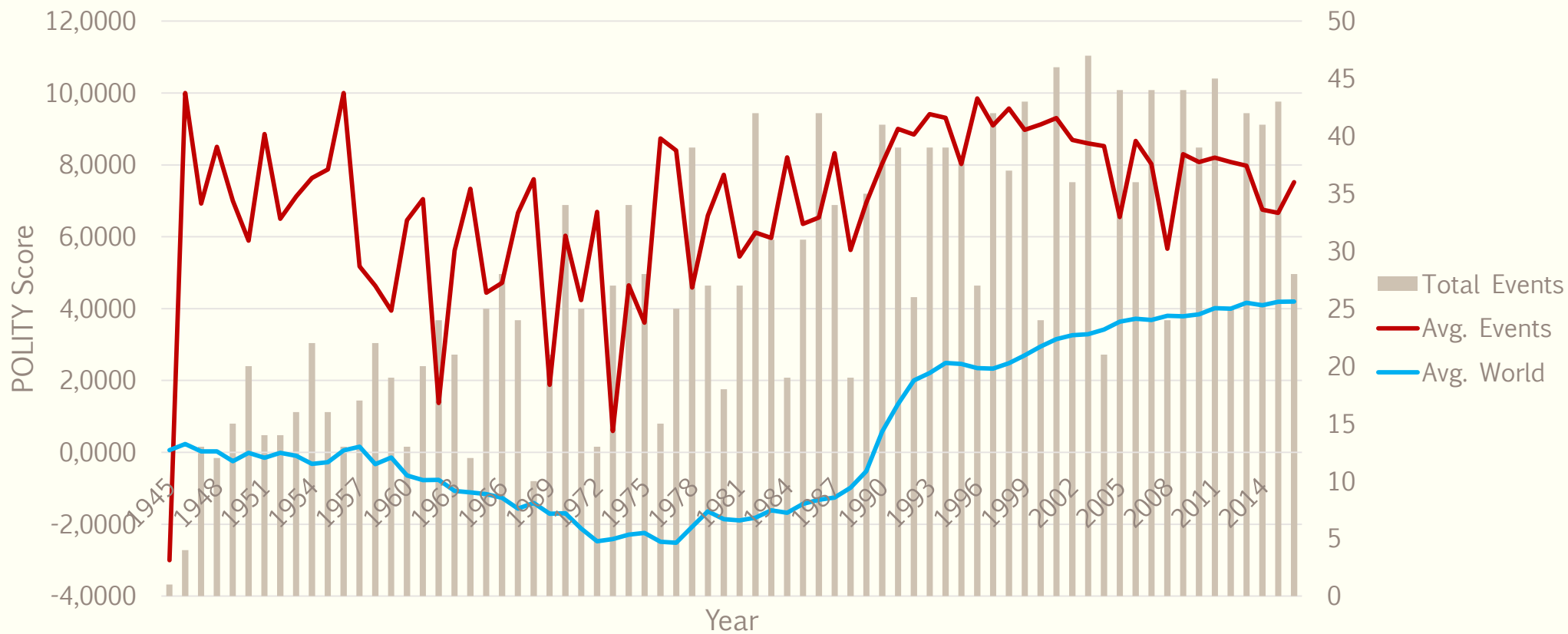
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- Most frequent hosts (by UN region)
  - Western Europe & Others (1,402)
  - Eastern Europe (273)
  - Asia-Pacific (188)
  - Latin America & Caribbean (124)
  - Africa (15)
- Stable democracies →
- Most frequent autocratic hosts
  - #17 China (39), #19 USSR (36)

State	No. of Events
United States	145
Canada	122
France	113
Italy	107
Switzerland	105
Sweden	94
United Kingdom	89
Germany (1991-present)	81
West Germany (1945-1990)	76
Japan	70

# Findings

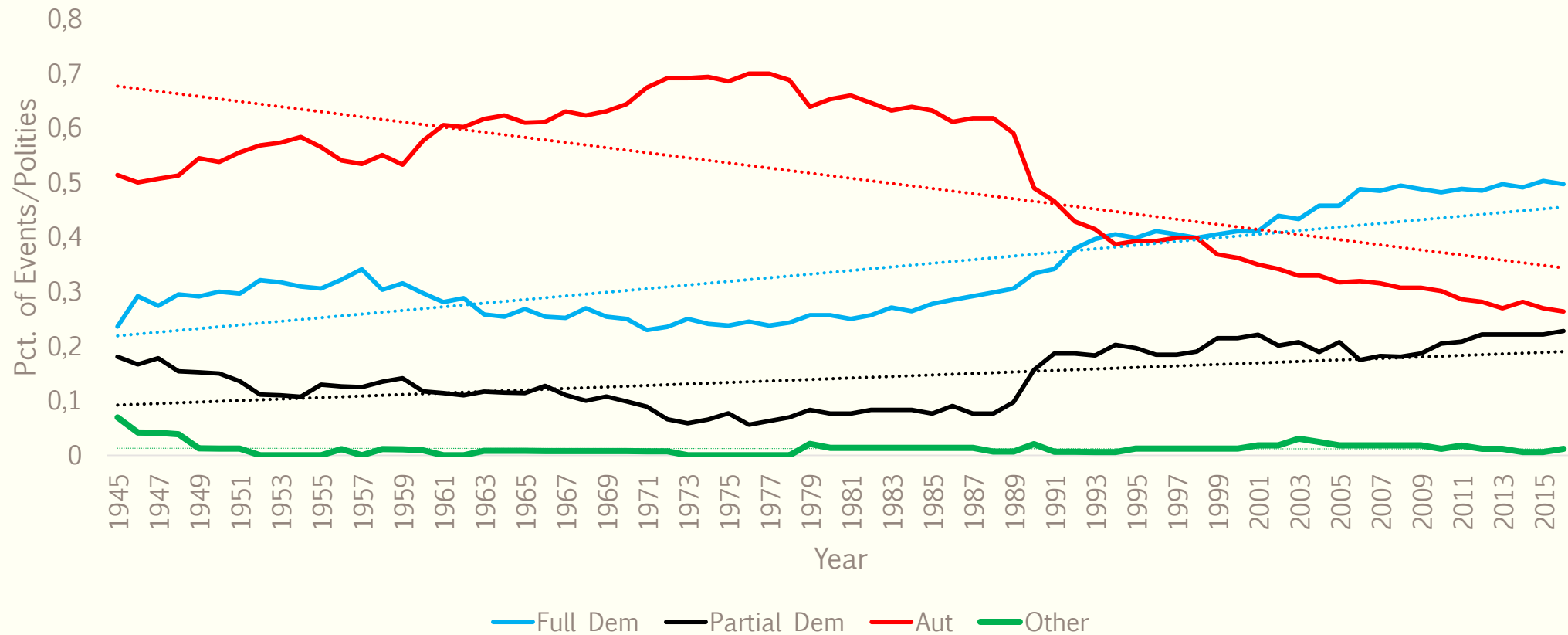
## Average Events and Average Global POLITY Scores, 1945-2016





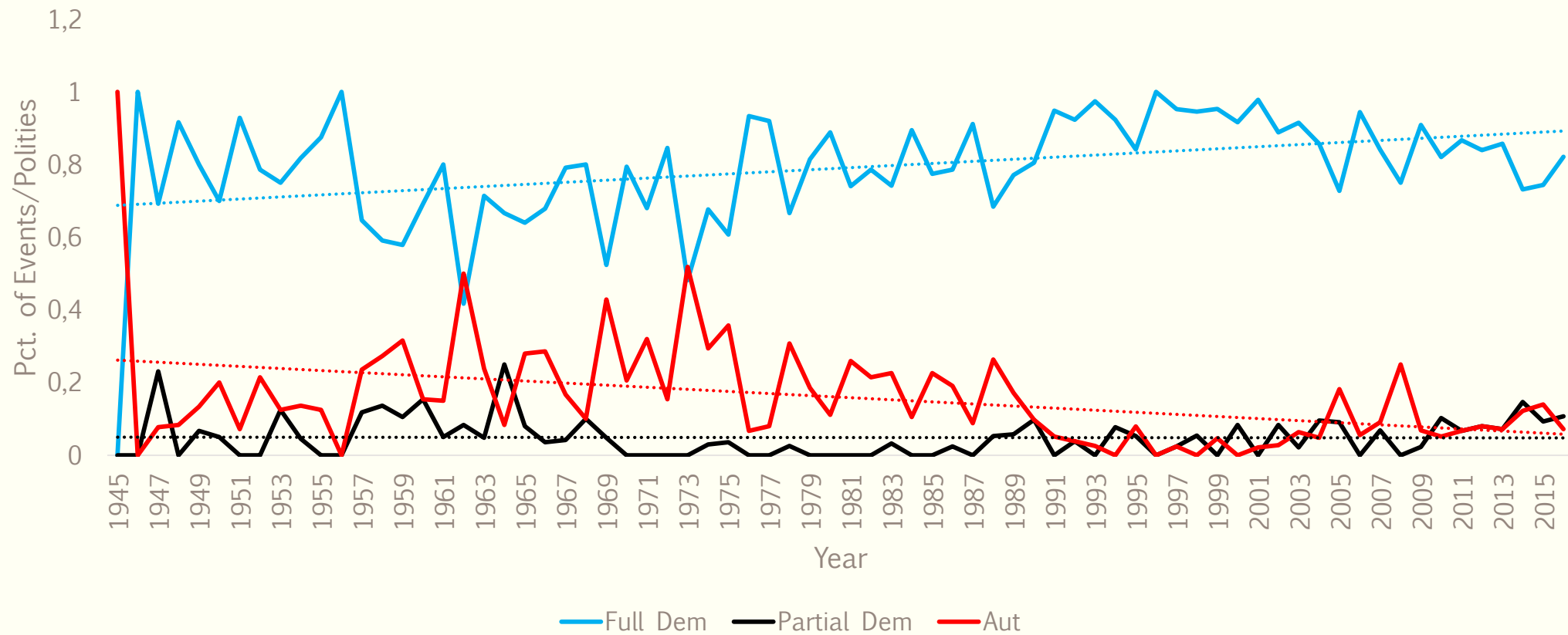
# Findings

## Int'l System Composition by Regime Type, 1945-2016



# Findings

## Int'l Sport Hosts Composition, 1945-2016



# Discussion

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International sport continues to be conducted primarily in democratic polities

However, since 1997, seven (currently) autocratic states have hosted their first international sporting event, and five of these have already hosted multiple events: →

Additionally, China has hosted 30 events since 2001 (hosted nine from 1945-2000)

- Azerbaijan (3)
  - 2005 Rhythmic Gymnastics
  - 2007 Wrestling
  - 2011 Boxing (M)
- Belarus (2)
  - 2013 Track Cycling
  - 2014 Ice Hockey (M)
- Kazakhstan (4)
  - 2013 Boxing (M)
  - 2014 Weightlifting
  - 2015 Judo
  - 2016 Boxing (W)
- Qatar (5)
  - 2004 Table Tennis
  - 2005 Weightlifting
  - 2015 Boxing (M)
  - 2015 Handball (M)
  - 2016 Road Cycling
- Thailand (3)
  - 1997 Weightlifting
  - 2003 Boxing (M)
  - 2007 Weightlifting
- UAE (1)
  - 2009 Rugby Sevens
- Uzbekistan (1)
  - 2014 Wrestling

# Discussion

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## Conclusions

Cannot discount the trend toward more autocratic host destinations

International sport organizations may already be anticipating this shift (2024/2028 Olympic rights, fast-track bidding process for 2026 WC)

## Questions for further research/debate

Explaining changes in POLITY

To what extent is sport a democratizing force?

Explaining changes in hosting frequency

To what extent is regime type (or more specific regime variables) influential in securing hosting rights?

Measuring legacy effects on politics and society

Connect with other existing data sets (human rights records, religion, etc.)



Protesters at the 2015 European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan  
*Credit: Jahangir Yusif/Sports for Rights Coalition*



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# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

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