

# Transformation of liberal ideology mirrored by modern olympics: scientific analysis

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## Abstract

**Objective of the study** was to provide scientific evidence for and forecast further progress of the Olympics in the context of modern Western economic, political and sociological research conventions, particularly fixed in the UNESCO materials and encyclopedic documents.

**Results and conclusion.** We found the transformations of the Olympic movement and International Olympic Committee service in the late XIX to XX century replicating in every minor detail regresses of the liberal governance and its social scientific support service in Western countries as verified by the following:

- The idea of the Olympic movement independence from the politics and economy of the capitalist world – proclaimed by Pierre de Coubertin – has turned out erroneous in its essence as demonstrated by the global history since then;
- The ongoing Olympic Games capitalization and politicization process may unlikely be explained by the personal agendas of Juan Antonio Samaranch, Thomas Bach and other International Olympic Committee leaders, rather by the Olympics being effectively subdued by the Western civilization as its immanent product totally dependent on its social contexts;
- Theoretically grounded social forecast of the political and economic progress of Olympic Games in the near future – already formatted by the New Code of Ethics – implies that the Olympic movement will be kept within the liberal ideology transformation track of the Western capitalist society;
- It should be emphasized that in practical reality the Olympics has regressed into one of the key social institutions and pillars of the Western world and, hence, need to be theoretically analyzed within this frame clean of mythology, idealistic philosophy and other ideological manipulations with common public opinions.

**Keywords:** liberal ideology, transformation, economic science, political experts, sociology, Olympic movement, International Olympic Committee, social context.

**Background.** Since the middle to late XX century, Olympic sports have been increasingly subject to analysis by social scientists including philosophers, cultural and political analysts, sociologists, lawyers, economists and, last but not least, historians whose role is to answer with documentary accuracy who, where, when and how has contributed to the Olympic movement chronicles [1, 6]. It should be mentioned that the research community has been widely contrary in its views and conclusions that have varied from expressly negative to unrestrainedly apologetic [2, 4, 8, 9]. This controversy of views on the same subject has been naturally associated with multiple and differently

approached classifications, systems and typologies in the attempts to understand and systematize the Olympic movement and Olympic Games history via the relevant research provisions, topics and contents [3, 4, 7].

Most of the leading national and foreign experts in the issues have been much the same in the sense that they tend to major in specific applied discipline(s) being normally little if ever familiar with the general progress laws addressed by the economic, political and sociological sciences. Moreover, these experts are more often than not alien to the mainstream Western research community in these fields 10 and, hence, their studies of Olympics are normally alien to the sci-



entific conventions common for the Western nations including those fixed in the UNESCO materials and encyclopedic documents [4]. Therefore, their research analyses virtually never go beyond limitations of the traditional fact sampling templates and, hence, fail to track dependencies of the International Olympic Committee policies and practices from variations of the social contexts [3, 6].

**Objective of the study** was to provide scientific evidence for and forecast further progress of the Olympics in the context of modern Western economic, political and sociological research conventions, particularly fixed in the UNESCO materials and encyclopedic documents.

**Results and discussion.** Progress of the Olympics and the International Olympic Committee services appears to strictly replicate, with some natural inertial lag, progress of the Western social system in every period. Thus, the Olympic movement had made fast regress from the liberal declarations of equal opportunities for the harmonious personality development within unrestrained physical and creative progress domains facilitated by fair competitions (in the late XIX to early XX century) to the International Olympic Committee mandated 1936 Olympics in the Nazi Germany – with the further growing support from the International Olympic Committee to many authoritarian, racist and puppet regimen. These International Olympic Committee policies were expanded and advanced after the World War II and peaked in the 28 African countries boycotting the 1976 Olympics in Montreal (Canada) to put the International Olympic Committee on the verge of bankruptcy.

Later on the International Olympic Committee polices have been still geared to establish a global oligopoly by cracking down on the Nordic Games in Scandinavia, subduing the international women's sports movement – and lately the Youth Games – and thereby to betray its own mission, foundation principles, liabilities and the historical Olympic traditions. These polices have always been designed to reinforce the International Olympic Committee financial and political power as verified, among other things, by the key valid International Olympic Committee documents (20x20 Program, New Code of Ethics, etc.) and actual policies and practices of its 14 commissions – with only three of them provisionally free of special financial and political agendas. Note that these policies and practices have always been disguised by idle rhetoric with assurances of the Olympic movement being kept politically neutral.

Of special interest is the ongoing regress of the popular liberal ideas in the political science that have always contributed to the West-European socio-scientific discourse in the XIX-XX centuries by standing the grounds of individualistic morality and ideology. Since the late XIX century, the Western political science has worked hard to develop and establish the conception of "legal positivism" – that may be defined as a logical rationale for the bureaucratic public administration system. A few versions of this conception are driven by a liberal abstract analysis based on the idea that the law is rather an expressed will of a state power than a product of a socially accepted regulatory basis.

In the post-WWII period, the abstract analysis was gradually abandoned to give way to a "professional political science" with its empirical behavioral conceptions of the driving forces and mechanisms behind the "formally systemic management" and operations of political institutions. This was the period when the political analysts fully rejected the liberal individualistic political modeling toolkit. Since the late XX century, the West conventionally approved leadership (still effective nowadays) of the "post-behavioral political science" and "rational choice theory", with the both geared to establish in every target country, under the slogan of "struggle for democracy", controlled institutional provisions for the desired political agenda with the expected practical benefits. As provided by Bjorn Witrock (Sweden), Peter Wagner (USA) and some other Western experts in the political science history, it is traditional of this science nowadays to persistently reject moral reasoning and "management wisdom and modesty".

The International Olympic Committee operations in this context are fairly typical in terms of the "passive" soft power acting on the politics, economies and ideologies of the national governments, particularly in the pre-Olympic and Olympic cycles, plus within the so-called "Olympic legacy". We would emphasize in this context the rapidly growing immorality of the International Olympic Committee policies and practices that are effectively and openly designed to build up the above-mentioned global oligopoly.

It should be mentioned that the sociological science has been no less decisive and consistent in rejecting the liberal ideology. The popular concepts of "classical sociology" of the XIX century, for instance, were condemned in the early XX century for their roots in liberalism. As a result, an empirical sociology was established with major contributions from the Chicago and Columbia based sociological schools in the



USA, the John Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism and the George Herbert Mead's social theory. Unsurprisingly, since the 1940s the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University have switched over to the governmental contracts for the large-scale "administrative research projects" to give way to the system-functionality concept by Talcott Parsons that took the lead in the mid-XX century. In the 1960s it was complemented by the "mid-level sociology" Robert Merton, one more "Colombian", who also prioritized qualitative and quantitative analyses of the existing social organisms viewed as interdependent systems.

This total generalization of the social ordering and consistency ideas, however, was rejected in the 1970s to give room for even more specific alternative theories of "communicative interaction", "structure formation in action", "social movements", "logics of practical activity", etc. The sociology since then has been dominated by the Jurgen Habermas (Germany) and Anthony Giddens (England) concepts geared to create a philosophically and linguistically specific "strong scientific agenda" to rejects once and forever the "social reality inventing" practices.

We feel that that this kind of extremely modernized sociology is destined to explore the modern Olympic movement and services of its governing agency rather as a concrete social reality in the context of the ongoing transformations in the Western world than a sacred symbol and cradle of unshakable Olympic values and ideals.

**Conclusion.** We found the transformations of the Olympic movement and International Olympic Committee service in the late XIX to XX century replicating in every minor detail regresses of the liberal governance and its social scientific support service in Western countries as verified by the following:

– The idea of the Olympic movement independence from the politics and economy of the capitalist world – proclaimed by Pierre de Coubertin – has turned out erroneous in its essence as demonstrated by the global history since then;

– The ongoing Olympic Games capitalization and politicization process may unlikely be explained by the personal agendas of Juan Antonio Samaranch, Thomas Bach and other International Olympic Committee leaders, rather by the Olympics being effectively subdued by the Western civilization as its immanent product totally dependent on its social contexts;

– Theoretically grounded social forecast of the political and economic progress of Olympic Games in the near future – already formatted by the New Code of Ethics – implies that the Olympic movement will be

kept within the liberal ideology transformation track of the Western capitalist society;

– It should be emphasized that in practical reality the Olympics has regressed into one of the key social institutions and pillars of the Western world 11, 12 and, hence, need to be theoretically analyzed within this frame clean of mythology, idealistic philosophy and other ideological manipulations with common public opinions.

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