

Cosmopolitanism: An alternative way of thinking in the contemporary Olympics

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Abstract: This contribution offers an alternative theoretical approach in examining the modern Olympics, using a cosmopolitan perspective. The vast literature and repeated discussions on cosmopolitanism are supplementary reactions to globalisation. The development of Olympic sport is closely linked to globalisation. A great number of controversial issues affecting the Olympics have already been analysed using globalisation concepts and theories that tend to ignore the potential cosmopolitan effects that the contemporary Olympics could have as a global phenomenon and as a common global culture. This paper endeavours to rethink the relationship between the Olympics and cosmopolitanism today, using a cosmopolitan lens.

Keywords: Olympics, cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitanisation, environment, Olympic competition.

Introduction: Key issues

At the turn of the 21st century an awakened problematic on cosmopolitanism is observed and a great number of essays characterise the new century as the age of cosmopolitanism (Beck, 2002, 2007a; Rantanen, 2005b). The renewed discourse on cosmopolitanism is a result of specific social, political, economic and cultural changes. These changes are associated with the dialectics of globalisation, namely the multi-causal, multilayered and non-linear globalisation processes and their contemporary side-effects. In a rather generalised way, cosmopolitanism, an unconditional responsibility for the different other and his/her differences-otherness appears in literature as an ancient and controversial set of political ideas, philosophies and ideologies, whereas scholars from different disciplines – in redefining the meaning of cosmopolitanism – propose this concept as a model of analysis for understanding today's socio-cultural reality. Some see or approach cosmopolitanism more as an aesthetic or purely cognitive (normative) concept (Appiah, 2006; Hannerz, 1990) and others as a product of today's real social-cultural relations (Beck, 2002, 2007a; Vertovec & Cohen, 2002).

With regard to sport literature, and especially sport sociology, many complex and controversial issues affecting sport – social, cultural, economic and political – have been abundantly analysed in global perspectives (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Hoberman, 1986; Tomlinson, 2006b). Certain studies depict contemporary

Olympics as a global phenomenon while stressing that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is one of the main agents in the globalization of modern sport. They argue that the IOC has a great deal of power – more than in the past – and consequently plays an important role in the new sport world order (Brookes 2002; Tomlinson, 2006a, 2006b).

In most cases, the influence of globalisation with regard to the changing nature of sport in general and the Olympics in particular has been extensively discussed in the framework of concepts, or epiphenomena of globalisation like westernisation, cultural imperialism, Americanisation, governmentalisation, televisualisation, commodification, commercialisation and media orientation (Donnelly, 1996; Guttman, 1994; Rowe 1996; Tomlinson, 2006b). Researchers also use Robertson's term globalisation, as opposed to or interconnected to globalisation, providing valuable examples for understanding contemporary sports and the Olympics (Garcia Ferrando, 2010). These studies, and many more, address the plethora of issues associated with globalisation processes in sport. However, cosmopolitanism and the Olympics do not seem to be a popular research subject or topic for discussion, and not without cause. To begin with, Coubertin himself did not see cosmopolitanism as the appropriate or adequate idea-tool for serving the Olympics (Morgan, 1995).

In addition, the modern Olympics as a universal formation are closely connected to colonial and post-colonial processes and implications (Segrave, 2002). Undeniably, European colonialism played a catalytic role in the internationalisation of the Olympics, consolidating them as an expression of a common global culture. Nevertheless, if one examines contemporary Olympics through analytical frameworks that are based on colonial or even post-colonial ideas, then their cosmopolitan effects could be cancelled. Such analytical frameworks were critically connected to western elite social groups, institutions and even individuals that represented European bourgeois capitalism and colonial empires that used cosmopolitanism to achieve their imperialistic goals (Beck, 2007b, 287; Venn, 2002, 70). In that context, cosmopolitanism was used as a means of bridging divisions, or differences between indigenous popular cultures and the universal influences of the colonising powers (Chaney, 2002, 159; Fleishman, 2002, 124). The relationship between the Olympics, colonialism and the global implantation of modernity undeniably has implications on how the Olympics and cosmopolitanism are related today. Yet, if we use the postcolonial problematic, the notion of cosmopolitanism could only mean the reproduction of sameness (Venn, 2002, 67).

A multiple of world events in the last decade of the 20th century necessitate finding new analytical concepts to examine issues concerning the Olympics. Chiefly after the end of the Cold War, the unpredictable and extensive changes that occurred affected the Olympics, providing a renewed vitality and credibility to the universal Olympic ideals (Segrave, 2000, 268). Simultaneously, these changes gave rise to the

triumphal march of the world market (Beck, 2002, 40). Today, more than in the past, the cultural, political and economic dimensions of the Olympics are interconnected with supra-national cultural industries or political institutions (e.g. United Nations) continuing with certainty to serve, among other things, the interests of political and economic elites (Tomlinson, 2006a, 4). Nonetheless these interconnections cannot be analysed one-dimensionally through the perspectives of the colonial or post-colonial elites. Today, the Olympics should be examined as a global phenomenon with multiple dimensions, going beyond the monological, one-dimensional concepts of the recent past, and going beyond concepts based on “colonial nostalgia” (Beck, 2002, 22).

In that spirit, we will focus on certain dimensions of the modern Olympics using an alternative way of thinking. This includes a renewed notion of cosmopolitanism which considers the interconnectedness of the Olympics in a globalised framework that people are aware of, and taking into account the cosmopolitan discourses of scholars who develop their analyses from a non-sport perspective.

Cosmopolitanism seems to offer a mode for managing cultural and political multiplicities. It appears, however, in related literature as a controversial issue defended and defined in a variety of ways (Fleishman, 2002, 122-126). In addition, alternative or competing perspectives exist, rendering the definition of the term cosmopolitanism problematic. As pointed out by Beck (2007b, 286), cosmopolitanism is a “contested term” with no uniform interpretation and the boundaries separating it from competing terms like globalisation, transnationalism, universalism, glocalisation, etc. are not distinct. In that context, an extensive presentation of the multiple versions of cosmopolitanism that appear in related literature and for which some methodological reservations are held, is beyond the scope of this article. The meaning of these terms may be controversial, but we will not in this paper enter this discussion. Recognising that at least an affinity between all versions of cosmopolitanism exists and, with reference to some empirical examples, we will utilise certain versions of cosmopolitanism while giving less emphasis on others. We will therefore not use this as a strictly political issue or as an exclusively philosophical-normative term. We will use it as “a socio-cultural condition” (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002, 7) more in line with cosmopolitanisation as introduced by Beck (2002, 17). In addition, we will approach it descriptively to challenge conventional notions of belonging, which addresses and describes certain Olympic institutional conditions and dispositions that manifest a capacity to engage multiple differences.

In this study we will at first selectively clarify the relationship between cosmopolitanism and Olympism. In doing so, we will present the renewed perceptions of cosmopolitanism and we will discuss how the Olympics, as an established common global culture, offer the opportunity for relational links of people to other countries, to their own societies and to other international institutions. These relational links, caused by the Olympics, enable not only the promotion of cosmopolitanism

abstractly, but, in the perspectives of the cosmopolitanisation of today's societies, also provide opportunities for cosmopolitanism to gain a foothold in social, cultural and political life.

Subsequently, we will discuss two issues: the IOC's environmental policy and the Olympic competition, focusing on their cosmopolitan reflections and effects. The environmental policy in this paper has another dimension. Specifically, it refers to the passage from one wholly anthropocentric cosmology – on which the modern Olympics were structured and from which Coubertin's notion of Olympism sprung out – to the cosmo-logic, as it will be formulated in the analysis of the renewed notion of cosmopolitanism. With regard to Olympic competition, we will discuss how access into Olympic sports requires that participants, in most cases, have a nation-state identity, which may have cosmopolitan implications and effects. Lastly, it should be pointed out that the current analysis is theoretical, with references to empirical evidence. Still, it is by no means exhaustive, as such an effort would require a much longer paper, or multiple ones.

Rethinking Cosmopolitanism in the modern Olympics

The notion of a cosmopolitan community is not new but conceived as an idea in the fourth century BC by the Cynics of ancient Greece and promoted further by the Stoics. It refers to the combination of two central elements, specifically the cosmos and the polis. The modern conception of cosmopolitanism was revived during the Cultural Revolution that occurred in parts of Renaissance Europe and further developed in the period of the Enlightenment (Stade, 2007). Reintroduced throughout the Age of Enlightenment were questions on humanity, the human condition, humanity as a quality, as humankind and so forth. A wholly anthropocentric cosmology made its appearance from which the modern notion of cosmopolitanism sprung out (Stade, 2007, 284). This idea has been built around the logic that draws sharp distinctions between people and things and was in contrast to the cosmology of antiquity according to which animal, human and divine natures were related to one another in different ways, as expressed in the cosmopolitanism of the Cynic philosophers of ancient Greece (Stade, 2007, 283-284). However, Kant, one of the major early proponents of the modern cosmopolitan idea, in line with ancient philosophers, indicates that cosmopolitanism means being a citizen of “two worlds cosmos and polis” (Beck, 2002, 18). Kant calls cosmopolites those people “who strive toward an ordered, harmonious universe” (Conley, 2002, 127).

Pierre de Coubertin, following the great thinkers of the Enlightenment – who in spite of their differences were united in the quest for a new ethical order applicable to the whole world – gave a new dimension to the revival of the Olympics. To cultivate the meaning of cosmos as the ordered harmonious universe, the nation-state appears in modern times as the main and appropriate instrument. In Coubertin's period and

according to his views, the nation-state emerged as the central organising institution for the formation of a progressive homogenous community and “as the rational and morally ordered form of the good society” (Venn, 2002, 68). Yet, this perspective was the basis and foundation for the construction of the colonial nation-state, which was also made up of elements “held together by nothing more than the will and interests of the imperial centres” (Venn, 2002, 70). The colonial perception supports a new form of power with the mission, among other things to promote the realisation “of the moral and material good of the community as a whole” by providing all those means “for the disciplining and normalisation of populations” (Venn, 2002, 68-69). Nation-states and their governments appear here, in an idealised-moralised form, as a basis for safeguarding individual freedoms. These views, with regard to free-will and cultivating ethics, were also adopted by Coubertin.

Pierre de Coubertin, although influenced by the philosophical thinking of the Enlightenment with its concomitant emphasis on rationality, science and progress, “never organized his thoughts into a coherent ideological statement” (Segrave, 2000, 270). By blending, in an idealistic way, central ideas and terms that generally characterised the project of modernity such as internationalism, universalism, nation and nation-state, he conceived Olympism, which was perfectly consistent with the elaboration of universalism. Since the term Olympism appears in a plethora of literature and its meaning has been extensively discussed and criticised (Hoberman, 1986; Patsantaras, 2007; Segrave, 2000); we will selectively refer to Morgan (1995), focusing on specific points that show how the cosmopolitan ideal was undermined in Coubertin’s time.

As Morgan (1995, 81) points out, Coubertin made a distinction between cosmopolitanism and Olympism in an attempt to steer Olympism away from cosmopolitanism by arguing that we should not confuse the terms. During the modern period, cosmopolitanism was connected to and expressed by the European leisure aristocracy, modern day nomads who travelled around the globe in search of adventure and pleasure. Coubertin called this version of cosmopolitanism nomadic cosmopolitanism, a choice all too often of an elite, an elite characteristic, a privilege, which is connected to travel, leisure and the material resources to achieve it.

Another version of cosmopolitanism, called by Coubertin enlightenment cosmopolitanism, refers to country-less people – in other words, those who have no nation and no country (Morgan, 1995, 83). The nation-state was very significant for the French Baron and appeared as a precondition for cultivating the notion of a sincere internationalism, which is understood as the state of mind of those “who love their country above all, who seek to draw to it the friendship of foreigners by professing for the countries of those foreigners an intelligent and enlightened sympathy” (Coubertin, 1898, 434). For him, the foundation of the Olympic movement and its

international character shaped the fundamental principle of universality (Coubertin 1931, 47).

The term internationalism – independent of the diversity of definitions such as sincere – refers to the meaning of the nation-state since, semantically, internationalism requires the prior existence of nations and expresses ways of managing the international system based on the existence of self-determining nation-states. In line with that, the Olympics reinforce internationalism by linking nations together on an international level (Garcia Ferrando, 2010, 210). Consequently, Olympism, based on the idea of internationalism, is a concept which contributes to the logic of transnationality, linking the modern Olympics to the nation-state and all its expressions in a variety of ways. In this spirit, the meaning of cosmos was associated to the meaning of internationality.

The concepts of nomadic and enlightenment cosmopolitanism appear to lack any normative or virtuous credentials that could serve the Olympic ideal of sincere internationalism. The cosmopolitan, as rootless and an elitist, emerges as an enemy of this ideal. Cosmopolitanism appears as an ornament of the elite who occasionally travel as transnational tourists. Cosmopolitanism here appears trivial, unworthy of comment and even suspect. Morgan (1995), in epitomising Coubertin's view, stresses that cosmopolitanism cannot form a basis for universal movements such as Olympism.

At this point, one needs to make some clarifications with regard to today's meaning of cosmopolitanism. In its simple interpretation – as a more cognitive concept – it is perceived as an attempt to come to terms with issues on cultural diversity (Hannerz, 1990, 238). The individual, in this perception, is not directed by his inherited race or ethnicity. It also suggests not breaking bonds with tradition so as to adapt to new conditions, but to make one's relation to traditions more flexible and to develop habits that contribute to peaceful coexistence (Appiah, 2006, XIX). From this point of view, cosmopolitanism is defined as going beyond the national, as going beyond the local, as a home plus experience, as something beyond one's local experience, as a state of mind, a mode of managing meaning, while cosmopolitans are those who have a willingness to engage with the other (Hannerz, 1990, 238; 1996, 90). Hannerz and Appiah define cosmopolitanism aesthetically and cognitively and, in this spirit, it seems to be greatly related to Coubertin's sincere internationalism. Moreover, in a version that Appiah (1996, 22) calls cosmopolitan patriotism or rooted cosmopolitanism, he defines a rooted cosmopolitan as one who takes “pleasure from the presence of other, different places that are home to other, different people”. Today, Coubertin's concepts of nomadic and enlightenment cosmopolitanism could be summarised under the concept banal cosmopolitanism, which does not come about as a result of the conscious affirmation of cosmopolitan values (Beck, 2002, 28). Banal cosmopolitanism refers to those who are not consciously cosmopolitan in the

normative sense. Cosmopolitanism, as a set of normative principles representing a moral and political standpoint, is a shared normative-philosophical commitment that contributes to peaceful co-existence, eliminating national, religious, cultural, ethnic and other discriminations (Beck & Sznaider, 2006,7). Olympism, as we shall see in this study, has always shared similar meanings with the notion of cosmopolitanism in its cognitive-normative perspective.

The renewed notion of cosmopolitanism

Today, some scholars like Vertovec and Cohen (2002) and Beck (2002) move the notion of cosmopolitanism beyond the purely cognitive, towards a relational or conditional concept, conceiving it as product of existing social and institutional relations. Beck, in examining Kant's idea of cosmos and polis, argues that the term cosmos means that everyone as a human being, as part of nature, as part of humanity and the universe, "is by him- or herself, equal but everybody at the same time is part of a different polis-state", ethnicity, gender, religion, etc. (Rantanen, 2005b, 258). In other words a cosmopolitan is not a citizen of the world (understood as the summation of nations-states), but he/she is a citizen of the cosmos and the polis at the same time. This is a model of differentiation that leads to the conclusion that everybody is equal as part of the cosmos, of nature, of humanity and, at the same time, everybody is part of different nation-state, ethnicities, genders, religions etc.

In reconnecting the revived notion of cosmopolitanism with its ancient meanings, Beck goes a step further, one that is beyond the anthropocentric cosmology from which sprang the modern notion of cosmopolitanism. Today's cosmopolitanism refers to a cosmo-logic which aims to cultivate and promote a mentality or a way of "thinking and living in terms of inclusive oppositions (including nature into society, otherness of nature etc.) and rejecting the logic of exclusive oppositions" (Beck, 2002, 18-19). It means that, as an alternative way of thinking, cosmopolitanism recognises the many and numerous otherness of the other, anyone's otherness (particularities/identities). Cosmopolitanism is about the unconditional recognition of the dignity of others and the dignity of difference. Being cosmopolitan means "having specific as well as multiple identities" (Rantanen, 2005b, 257).

Accordingly, cosmopolitanism does not refer to the elimination of particularities-identities (national, local, etc.) but to another way of perceiving, understanding and connecting these particularities. In this sense, the idea of cosmopolitanism does not appear as hostile or as a threat to nationality or locality, to the national or the local. There is no cosmopolitanism without localism (Beck, 2002, 19). Moreover, it could even reinforce local or national identities or particularities, which are open and include the other and the otherness of the other.

Depending on the approach, related studies use terms such as "methodological cosmopolitanism", "banal cosmopolitanism", "rooted cosmopolitanism", and "cos-

mopolitan patriots” (Beck, 2002; Appiah, 1996). Recent sport literature also uses terms or keywords such as “international cosmopolitanism” (Tomlinson, 2006a, 23), or neologisms like “thick” and “thin” cosmopolitanism (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009, 60), that could be connected to the contemporary Olympics, within or beyond the concept of Olympism. Certainly, some scholars discuss the multiple faces of cosmopolitanism that may not be entirely independent one from the other (Beck, 2002, 35; Hannerz, 2002, 229).

Nevertheless, all these interpretations are part of (or are included in) the general meaning of cosmopolitanism, as it is expressed in the term coined by Beck as cosmopolitanisation.¹ With this term Beck essentially refers to the side-effects provoked by the multicausal and multilayered dimensions of globalisation processes. But while globalisation is something taking place out there, cosmopolitanisation happens from within and should be chiefly conceived of as “globalisation within, as internalised cosmopolitanism” (Beck, 2002, 17; Beck & Sznaider, 2006, 9). In this perspective, we are able to build a framework that helps us understand the dualities of the universal and the particular, the similar and the dissimilar, the global and the local, the national and the international, “us and them”, as interconnected and reciprocally interpenetrating principles that have “dissolved and merged together in new forms” (Rantanen, 2005b, 249-250).

Cosmopolitanisation is designed to draw attention to the fact that becoming a cosmopolitan of reality is primarily a function of coerced choices or a side-effect of unconscious decisions and not only a product of choice that distinguishes the elite (Rantanen, 2005b, 249). By making a distinction between philosophy and praxis, Beck suggests that cosmopolitanism cannot “only become real deductively in a translation of the sublime principles of philosophy” (Beck, 2007b, 287). Therefore, it cannot a priori be understood as a task capable of putting the world in order. This meaning of cosmopolitanism is different from that which was given by the thinkers of the enlightenment period. The cosmopolitanisation perspective provides the opportunity to understand cosmopolitanism not as a norm, an order or a precept, but as something that appears through contemporary or real social relations.

Beck distinguishes between cosmopolitanism as a set of normative (ethical) principles and real-existing cosmopolitanisation, giving another dimension, stressing that it is a side effect of today’s multiple faces of globalisation (Rantanen, 2005b, 249). He argues that cosmopolitanisation means internal globalisation, globalisation from within the national societies that transforms consciousness and identities significantly. Issues of global concern are becoming part of the daily local experiences

1 This term could be considered a re-characterisation of Robertsons (1992) glocal, (glocalisation), which means the simultaneous presence of both universalising and particularising tendencies. Additionally, glocalisation is a precondition for cosmopolitanism because it signals a pre-existing blending of global and local considerations in real life.

and the “moral life-worlds of the people” (Beck, 2002, 17). Globalising processes have increased daily encounters with diversity due to the catalytic role of internet, television, etc. As a result differences are unremarkable and consequently are not associated with clear ethical cosmopolitan orientations. Such concerns have made the concept of banal cosmopolitanism useful, since it describes an allegedly silent revolution in daily life, emphasising that it is a species of latent, unconscious and passive cosmopolitanism which shapes reality, as side effects of a multiple of global processes (Rantanen, 2005b, 249-250). Banal cosmopolitanism, to use a somewhat paradoxical but now recurrent formulation, is a matter of being or becoming at home in the world (Hannerz, 2006, 14).

The renewed notion of cosmopolitanism could help us understand and explain today’s social reality, bridge social gaps or even go beyond monological concepts since the cosmopolitan perspective does not focus on processes which historically are non-reversible. It focuses on the effects, the side-effects and the consequences provoked by historical processes that make up or influence today’s socio-cultural reality. In this spirit we will selectively and briefly refer to the aspects which are connected to monological concepts so as to examine the Olympic culture as a common global culture.

Bypassing monological concepts in the Olympics

The Olympic project – a phenomenon of global modernity through its capacity to carry universalistic meanings and ideals – provided fertile ground for a variety of political and economic imperialistic interests and agendas. The term sincere internationalism, as the basic element of Olympism and the Olympics in subsequent periods, refers to the rebirth of universal meanings that are codified in the modern Olympics, specifically a resurgence of universalism (Segrave, 2000, 268), or a global universalism which is hoped to bind a diverse membership of decent nations into a world community (Hoberman, 1986, 9). In this spirit the Olympics, as a universal formation, in line with Hacoheh (1999), were and remain open “to the accusation of imperialism”, as do all other universalisms (cited in Beck, 2002, 35). As a result the universal meaning of Olympic values and ideals has been disputed and challenged in many ways. These disputes are best reflected in perceptions on cultural imperialism, Europeanisation, Westernisation, Americanisation etc. In sport literature these concepts are used mechanically and teleologically to describe all manners of development of modern and post-modern sport, and subsequently the modern and post-modern Olympics, from growing “homogeneity to fragmentation” (Rowe, 2003, 282). To show this we will briefly refer to certain conventional viewpoints and arguments.

Modern sport is described as a process of cultural diffusion from Victorian Britain, either directly exported as part of the apparatus of imperialism and/or absorbed through the unfolding process of (post)colonialism (Rowe, 2003, 285). The majority

of the sports played in the summer Olympics were developed or standardised by the British, and as Britain was still the global hegemonic power they spread via colonialism throughout the world. The modern Olympics, in the framework of colonialism, represented among other things the general progress of humanity as a whole and the basic perception that Europe represented the highest point of development compared to the inferior development of the non-European populations (Venn, 2002, 69). Accordingly, the modern Olympics were connected to the modern nation-state and all its meanings, as previously mentioned, and included characteristics – of the ethical code of the West as it was formulated by the English aristocracy – like higher levels of rationalisation, standardisation, secularisation, quantification, specialisation, along with conceptions of self-discipline, self-government, fair play and violence-controls, that are here interpreted as evidence of a civilising process (Guttmann, 1978, 15; Dunning 1994, 332). The dissemination of Olympic sports meant the dissemination of this western ethical code around the world, which justifies the Olympics civilising mission. In this perspective, sport and the Olympics contributed to “consolidating the hegemonic hold of Western imperialism” (Venn, 2002, 70). In imposing the western model (western sports), Coubertin’s goal – and that of the Olympic movement – was cultural uniformity, sameness and homogeneity. Colonialism played a catalytic role in the internationalisation of this goal, and not only. It also played a critical role in the homogenisation of cultures in the name of a universalism that was not based on justice but on the western (English) model of ethics, force, power and domination. Giving a universal formation to the modern Olympics meant, among other things, an obligation to respect others as equals but without talking about respect for what makes others different. Therefore universalism becomes “two-faced: respect and hegemony” (Rantanen, 2005b, 256-257). The Olympics, a universal formation, appear as a means through which a great number of traditional sports or cultural practices of non-western civilisations were marginalised and systematically eroded in the colonised countries, leading to a common global sport culture. What is apparent here is a standard of rationality that ignores the cultural reasoning of local groups. The modern Olympics did not recognise the otherness of other civilisations. Olympic culture emerged as a common world culture through a homogenisation process, a cultural convergence at the international level resulting from the western cultural hegemony, which overwhelmed the indigenous cultures of local individuals and social groups (Donnelly, 1996, 243; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009, 43).

As Venn (2002, 68) argues, colonialism was the precondition for cultural connections and transformations so as to produce a cosmopolitan culture – a common culture which among other things includes the idea of solidarity. Here colonialism seems to be a necessary condition for projects like the modern Olympics, which are based on universal formation and reflect the relationship between global processes and their effects on local practices. In this perspective there is a difference between

the cultural imperialism thesis that describes how we reached homogenisation with regard to sports and the variety of versions given to globalisation that focus on how an already homogenised culture, such as the one expressed by the Olympics, is managed, preserved or maintained. To illustrate this, we will briefly refer to the concept of Americanisation.

Researchers explain that the international changes occurring in sport – and best expressed in the Olympics – are an example of Americanisation (Donnelly, 1996; Tomlinson, 2006b). They indirectly but clearly refer to the term Americanisation as an extension of global processes, emphasising the determinant potency of global culture that are dominated and manifested by Western (primarily American) institutions, strategies and forms imposing western values and ethics (Tomlinson, 2006b, 5). Evidence exists, for example, that Olympic sport has long been an arm of US foreign policy and on how universalistic Olympic ideals are used by empire-builders. This is clearly seen in the US Congressional censure of Beijing's 2008 Olympic bid, regarding the violation of human rights by the Chinese government, as they appear in forgotten dialogues between IOC members and US Senators in 2001 (Patsantaras, 2013, 36).

With regard to the 2008 Olympics, overcoming objections by US Senators, China used its economic power to host the Olympics, which shows a change in the balance of power in the new millennium. Additionally, the fact that Rio won the bid for the 2016 Olympics was described by the press as “the triumph of the Third World” indicating that the globalised inter-connectedness of the Olympics with governmental organisations and transnational corporations can no longer be easily orchestrated by one single political or economic power (Wallerstein, 2009). Additionally, Therborn (2000) argues that there “is no longer any legitimate centre point, from which to look out and to communicate with the rest of the world” (cited in Beck, 2002, 21). The IOC as a global non-governmental organisation (NGO) transgresses national boundaries and their imaginary spaces and affects local and global relationships of power in ways “that the apparatuses of the older imperialism could not circumscribe” (Venn, 2002, 71). The beginning of the new century has seen a more complex picture emerging, in which the IOC as well as the Olympics can no longer be seen as simply an instrument of cultural imperialism (Brookes, 2002, 67). As a result, arguments like using Olympic sport as a means of cultural imperialism, westernisation and to some degree Americanisation are significantly different than what they were in the recent past, no longer having a dominant meaning. Guttmann (1994, 178) had questioned the suitability of imperialism to explain the diffusion of sports globally. If we are to understand the Olympic project on today's levels of globalised interconnections, we have to use analytical tools that go beyond the one-dimensional or monological concepts.

Nowadays, there are 35 Olympic sports that come from different regions of the world (Stichweh, 2013, 92). In the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th Britain clearly functioned as a centre in the invention of sports and the cultural attributes of sport, but nowadays it is more adequate to say: “Sport [...] is almost everywhere a foreign import” (Keys, 2010, 249 cited in Stichweh, 2013, 92). What can be applied here is Beck’s notion of cosmopolitanisation, according to which my life, my body, my individual existence have become part of another world, of foreign cultures and global interdependencies, “without my realizing or expressly wishing it”, creating, thus, a social space for the appearance of latent, unconscious and passive cosmopolitanism (Rantanen, 2005b, 250). From this standpoint Olympic culture could be seen as the result of globalisation from within – globalisation internalised, as a cosmopolitanisation that “occurs as unintended and unseen side-effects of actions which are not intended as ‘cosmopolitan’ in the normative sense” (Beck, 2006, 7). All these lead to the notion of banal cosmopolitanism, which arms individuals with a new reflexivity to navigate a globalised world by supplying them with the skills necessary to achieve it (Beck, 2006, 41–42).

The Olympics: a common global culture and side-effects

Today the Olympics express a common global culture, a common good for all countries around the world, specifically a common heritage for diverse ethnic groups and nation-states, which have their own Olympic history. By common global culture we mean that people from different national, cultural and social origins are inspired by a single culture, a mutually acceptable values system.

The common global character of the Olympic culture is highlighted today not only by the IOC, but also by representatives of other international-global organisations such as UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, who at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne (25 January 2011) said: “Sport [the Olympics] has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls, all the barriers” (IOC, 2011). Certainly, these views can easily lead us to an elitist perspective. On the other hand, we have facts that support the opposite. For example, the 2008 Beijing Olympics beat all kinds of records by creating a global audience around the world, like few other events ever have: between 8-24 August 2008, 4.7 billion viewers – 70% of the world’s population – watched the Games (Nielsen, 2008). This is an indication that ordinary people around the world are aware, conscious or alert to the global scope of Olympic culture. These high ratings – the billions of viewers/audiences from different cultures, origins and nationalities – indicate that ordinary people are receptive to this form of cultural globalisation. They are aware of the common Olympic culture and the side-effects of this awareness creates a cosmopolitan reality. For instance, the Olympic Games offer an international-global platform of mobilisation for individuals, social groups, countries and nations who have been unfairly treated or remain

disadvantaged. The mass demonstrations around the globe during the Olympic relay from ancient Olympia to Beijing in protest of the violations of human rights in China are a strong example (Patsantaras, 2013). From a cosmopolitan outlook, this interdependence – among social actors-activists across borders through relational links to their own societies, to other countries and to international institutions – does not reflect economic globalisation, neo-liberalism, post-capitalism etc. It reflects the cosmopolitanisation of today's societies, which allows versions of cosmopolitanism to establish a foothold in social and political life. In this perspective, the Olympics could be seen as a means for promoting, in Calhoun's spirit (2002, 90), cosmopolitanism as part of the advance of global democracy, or, in Hannerz's (2006, 14) view, as a means of promoting political cosmopolitanism which "is often a cosmopolitanism with a worried face, trying to come to grips with very large problems". These also could be seen as an indication that the peoples of the world may be alert to the common global character and acceptance of Olympic values, and use them in a cosmopolitan way, according to prevailing socio-political circumstances.

In another example, the Hellenic Olympic Committee excluded triple-jump champion Voula Papachristou from the 2013 London Olympics only a few days before they began, following protests by social media users due to a racist comment she had made on Twitter which represented the extreme right wing ideology of the Golden Dawn party in Greece (Skai, 2012). The interconnection of all these individuals, well beyond the traditional television boundaries and corporate sponsors, present complex and multiple forms of interactions, the effects of which could not be analysed and understood in a one-dimensional (monological) perspective of economic globalisation, the ideology of globalism. Globalism, as a different ideology of globalisation, does not possess an "inspirational force"; it is rather "an ideology which does not motivate and mobilise the masses" and "does not produce a new feeling of belonging, solidarity or identity" (Beck, 2002, 40). Globalism is strongly connected to economic, political or cultural elites. The above-mentioned fact came into existence without the blessing of the elites, but as a result of the conscious affirmation from ordinary people of cosmopolitan values as they are reflected in the Olympic Charter (Olympic Charter, 2013, principle 6, p.11).

Certainly the global character of the Olympics is nothing new. What is new here is the growing global recognition of the Olympics by a global public, which has common cosmopolitan expectations. Following the reasoning of theoretical thinkers of cosmopolitanism (Conley, 2002; Rantanen, 2005a), it can be argued that today, more than in the past, the Olympics as a global event, via the new media, are accessible in many unpredictable and unscripted ways to ordinary people who are responsive to or conscious of a culture that has become global under the impact of new technologies. This implies that it is possible to attain "cosmopolitanism even while staying in one place" (Rantanen, 2005a, 120).

The Olympics can also serve the interests of ordinary people, despite views that “political and economical dimensions are interconnected and serve the interests of political and economic elites and professionals” such as multi-national corporations (Tomlinson, 2006a, 4-5); despite arguments that the Olympics serve “the desired outcome of any specific set of elite individuals or institutions” (Rowe, 2003, 292). Even if we agree that the Olympics reflect commercialisation, a stage of “regular celebration of a global consumerism” and a global commodity (Tomlinson, 2006b, 15) in a cosmopolitan outlook and in a less anti-capitalist way, we can still argue that possible cosmopolitan side-effects are not excluded. Cosmopolitanism can appear as a side-effect of global trade since “capital tears down all national boundaries and jumbles together the native with the foreign” (Rantanen, 2005b, 252). Clearly there are negative impacts that can be connected to the global trade of the Olympics which cannot be ignored, such as the exploitation of the workforce in developing nations by transnational corporations for the production of sportswear and sport equipment (Sage, 2005). On the other hand, the former IOC President Jacques Rogge declared: “Olympic Sport cannot solve all of the world’s ills, but it can contribute to meaningful solutions” (IOC, 2011). The IOC’s environmental policy reflects this meaning in a relatively clear way.

IOC environmental policy: a cosmopolitan reflection

The relationship between the Olympics and the natural environment, a critical issue since the 1980s, was intensified in the beginning of the 1990s with discussions focusing on the need to incorporate the protection of the environment into the structures of Olympic institutions (Patsantaras, 1994, 105). The IOC declaration, according to which environmental protection has become the third dimension of the Olympic movement alongside sport and culture, reflects the responsibility of the contemporary Olympics towards the natural environment. What led to this? The main reason was the widespread environmental damages caused by the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville and the Savoie Region. What followed were the environmentally conscious 1994 Green Games of Lillehammer in Norway. They were the historical benchmarks for the development of this global sport policy that demonstrates the primacy of local initiatives (Albertville, Lillehammer) upon transnational global concerns (IOC environmental policy) (Cantelon & Letters, 2000). This also shows that in today’s interconnected world the global and the local do not exist as cultural polarities but as combined and mutually implicating principles (Beck, 2002, 36).

The Olympic Charter was amended in 1996, adding a paragraph on IOC responsibility regarding environmental issues. Subsequently, the organising committee of the Winter Olympics at Nagano, Japan in 1998 had to follow the IOC environmental protection policy (Cantelon & Letters, 2000, 294). The environmentally-friendly dimension of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney influenced the development of

guidelines, later adopted by the IOC as the standard for Summer Olympic environmental policies (Tomlinson, 2006a, 17). Today, rule 2, paragraph 13 of the Olympic Charter stresses that IOC's role is "to encourage and support a responsible concern for environmental issues, to promote sustainable development in sport and to require that the Olympic Games are held accordingly" (Olympic Charter, 2013, 17).

The environmental policy also has another dimension, specifically it refers to the passage from one wholly anthropocentric cosmology – on which the modern Olympics were structured and from which Coubertin's notion of Olympism sprung out – to the cosmo-logic, as formulated in the analysis of the renewed notion of cosmopolitanism. What is stressed here is that we have to live and to think in terms of inclusive oppositions, which include the otherness of nature. In passing into the 21st century with this environmental policy what is attempted here is the re-correlation between action-relations in the flow of natural existence, social existence and individual life. The universe, the cosmos and the human beings are not two divides and independent worlds, which are inconsistent, contradictory and competitive. A message from this policy is that we need to rethink and re-evaluate the ways in which we perceive progress, namely a progress which occurs at the expense of the otherness of nature, which includes human nature².

The IOC, in adopting such a cosmo-logical standpoint with regard to its environmental policy, allows us to perceive Olympic reality through a cosmopolitan lens. This reality has been created through Olympic global interactions, such as interconnectedness with economic, political and cultural factors. For instance, to achieve an environmentally-friendly dimension, apart from the vast capital investment, the organising committee of the 2008 Beijing Games made considerable sacrifices in economic growth. To confront the problem of air pollution in Beijing, many factories in the wider region were closed down and thousands of people were laid off (Cheung, 2010). Then again, in hosting the Olympics the various Beijing authorities, the Chinese government and Chinese citizens began gaining awareness, understanding the problem of air pollution and environmental issues. The long-term benefits of these "Green Olympics", regardless of the huge costs that Beijing incurred, as Cheung (2010, 110) points out, "will not only reward the Beijing residence but also all the people in the Mainland". Green Peace stressed that the 2008 Games would leave an important environmental legacy to the city of Beijing as well as other Chinese cities and helps strengthen the development of green initiatives in the future (Greenpeace, 2008). This outlook recognises the "otherness of the future" (Beck, 2002, 18). Undeniably, the Olympics have an effect not only on the host cities and their residents but on the country's entire population. Well-suited here is Appiah's (2006, xv) view

2 In this cosmo-logic the use of performance-enhancing drugs could be analysed here not simply as deviance from rules and regulations, but as an issue of the responsibility of athletes towards *the otherness of their nature* and mainly in relation to their future.

according to which cosmopolitanism is the name, not of a solution but of the challenge, as is former IOC President Jacques Rogge's observation that Olympic principles "drive far-reaching social change" (IOC, 2007, 3).

New ways of development and changes in perceptions regarding progress are now demanded from a host city that plans to organise the Olympics. This requirement causes cosmopolitan side-effects because it leads to a form of progress that does not reflect the moral authority of the Enlightenment but something different or "deformed and profane" (Rantanen, 2005b, 254). Progress, in this perspective, is no longer regarded as serving the deceptive purposes of western expansionism. Jacques Rogge argued that the IOC's ultimate objective was to promote development through sport in proactive and concrete ways (IOC, 2011). From this standpoint, in the new millennium, the IOC appears as the authority that dictates norms and ethical values to a sovereign government, state and city that hosts the Olympic games. Today's Olympic city can be transformed into a Cosmopolis, which in Conley's (2002, 129) analysis differs from the global city dominated solely by the market, at the expense of the environment. Even if the "commercial message saturates" the Olympic city as Tomlinson argues (2006b, 15), this city does not reflect solely a global city. The aesthetic and ethical dimensions of the Olympic city are "absent in the purely functional global city" (Conley, 2002, 129) and in purely functional global places. The Olympic city is a place which offers Olympic hospitality which "inherently calls up the ethical since it implicates the welcoming of the other, the stranger" (Venn, 2002, 73) or the foreign. This is why the Olympics are a means that provide the appropriate social conditions for cultivating cosmopolitanism, described by Hannerz (2002, 227) as aesthetic and experiential cosmopolitanism, which could involve an appreciation of cultural diversity. The Olympic city, as a cosmopolis is inflected economically, aesthetically and ethically in several major ways. The 2012 London Olympics reflected this goal to a maximum extent (Shalini & Stubbs, 2013, 495). The Olympic Games afford open horizons for the cosmopolitanisation of global cities and even nation-state societies, the latter clearly shown in Olympic competition.

Declaring differences (Otherness) in Olympic competition in a cosmopolitan way

Cosmopolitanism presupposes individualization" (Beck, 2002, 37) along with institutions based on the recognition of the individual beyond his/her cultural heritage or any other differences: unconditional recognition of the dignity of others and the dignity of difference. According to the Olympic Charter (2013, 11, Principle 6) any "form of discrimination with regard to a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement", the Olympic spirit "requires mutual understanding" (Principles 4 & 11) and "belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter" (Prin-

principle 7). These principles, and mainly the necessity to comply with them, in line with Beck's (2006, 2007b) general views, could be understood as constituting a type of enforced cosmopolitanisation in which the normative is provided by Olympism, striving therefore to become an important critical tool for reforming social realities.

The institutional conditions of Olympic competition provide another way of perceiving how differences (otherness) of the participants (others) are conceived. Specifically, how the multiple particularities (identities) of the participants are negotiated and how this influences not only the athletes themselves, but spectators and audiences. The homogenisation process from which as a global common culture the Olympic one was derived does not take away the fact that we are talking about an assemblage of partners (others) that bring with them visible and invisible differences (otherness).

Although Olympic competition does not take socio-cultural or political differences into account, it is nevertheless based on (nation)-state identity, which expresses diversity; namely, it is based on difference. This opens it up to every type of political and especially nationalistic exploitation, such as civic and ethnic issues, which have been well documented (Hoberman 1986, 1993; Rowe 2003). Also well documented is empirical evidence on the Olympic project, based on the nation-state idea, which has represented an impressive victory for internationalist principles during a violently nationalistic century (Hoberman, 1986, 2; Patsantaras, 2007, 149-160). The deep dependency of the Olympics on the (nation)-state – no matter how the nation might be constructed or conceived – does not mean that understanding Olympic culture today as a global culture is cancelled. The Olympics express a global culture that can reinforce national identities in many ways and directions but, at the same time, they do not prevent anyone from recognising the cosmopolitanisation of reality.

Following the general ideas of Hannerz (1990) and Appiah (2006), cosmopolitans are those who are aware of a culture that has become global, but at the same time, they do not leave their country or fatherland behind. As previously cited, there is no cosmopolitanism without localism. With regard to the Olympics, the boundaries of nation-states exist but at the same time are transcendental and fluid. In this spirit scholars refer to the unique way in which the Olympic games transcend differences (Tomlinson, 2006b, 15). Our observation here does not focus on how the institutional framework of Olympic competition contributes in transcending differences, but on how this mechanism can cause cosmopolitan effects. In line with Olympic rules and regulations, as those expressed in the Olympic charter, every athlete is by himself/herself equal while at the same time every athlete is part of a different nation-state. In other words, the athlete is also a human being who belongs to a nation-state, has an identity, a gender, a social class, an ethnicity etc. (Kamberidou, 2012). The fact that access into Olympic sports requires a nation-state identity that ignores the national origins of the participants has other implications. One implication is that if one does

not have awareness of at least one identity, he/she will not be able to understand the other and the otherness of the other (Rantanen, 2005b, 256). Consideration of national identity does not prevent different participants from sharing values compatible with their own, respecting diversities, seeing others as deserving the same rights, etc. By doing so, the nation-state identity becomes nation-state-plus identity and this is a first step in understanding socio-cultural reality from a cosmopolitan viewpoint. The Olympic institutional contexts offer the opportunity for that.

In this spirit, Olympic competition, based on national-identity, reminds us that the different borders (ideologies, political-religious convictions, ethics, etc) on which a participant's specific national-identity is cultivated do not coincide. In addition, in order to achieve beneficial interrelations with the other, one needs to be able to cross boundaries or to make them fluid. Certainly, this requires ongoing negotiations with ourselves, a self-retrospection to achieve a "drawing of borderlines" that can drive the participants (athletes, spectators-audience) towards an understanding of what Beck calls "the axiom of the incongruity of borders" (Beck, 2002, 19).

Cosmopolitanism, as an alternative way of thinking, does not mean that ethnic boundaries do not exist but it indicates that they are blurred. Ethnic boundaries are not dogmatic and exclusionary when actions and communication are driven in such institutional contexts as those in the Olympics, where the acceptance of a logic of inclusive oppositions is declared. The nation-state identity reminds participants that everyone is an other among all the others. This perception helps the participant to understand his/her self as an other through ongoing negotiations within him/her self. Such a national perspective does not lead to a one-dimensional logic for cultivating a "monologic imagination", which "excludes the otherness of the other" (Beck, 2002, 18). Along these lines, Olympic competition moves participants towards outward-looking national identities that are not only or exclusively stripped of their inner necessity. These identities, whether local or national, are not differentiated or understood on the basis of the either/or principle (exclusive), but on the basis of as-well-as (inclusive) principle.

The Olympic athlete, as a representative of a nation-state, is not simply a distant other but the distant other who is becoming the inclusive other "without being hostage to the current conditional arrangements between nation-states" (Venn, 2002, 73). For example the IOC does not intervene in open conflicts between nations. The declaration of national identities (of athletes, spectators, etc.) in the Olympics does not create conceptual and practical problems, namely a threat to the cultivation of cosmopolitan views, since participation, interactions, social relations and their structuring can be realised, as a rule, unlocked from national-local contexts, unblocked from "the state mastery" (Beck, 2002, 18). The Olympics can influence such contexts in many new and unpredictable ways, and mainly in a cosmopolitan direction. Olympic space and time provide opportunities for cultivating cosmopolitan perceptions, a

common global culture and global good, which is ethically and culturally simultaneously global and local.

Olympic victory in particular could operate catalytically towards a pluralisation of nation-state borders and eliminating national prejudices, leading to the implosion of the “dualism between the national and the international” (Beck, 2002, 19). In the Olympic institutional framework athletes orient their identities “toward agendas outside, as well as within, their resident nations-states” (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002, 2). This orientation is not against a nation-state’s struggle to maintain a singular political identity in the face of globalisation since the Olympics mediates ideals oriented to the universal, the particular, the global, the national or the local.

In connection to prevailing socio-political circumstances, the Olympics could produce a legitimate crisis of anti-democratic and oppressive national morality. In other words, they could create disputes on state mastery with regard to issues concerning morality. For instance, Olympic history provides many examples of female athletes who achieved Olympic distinctions and contributed with their later activities and initiatives in changing, in some ways, the moral life of their societies. Those athletes include Hassiba Boulmerka from Algeria, Nawai El Moutawakel from Morocco, Rada Shoua from Syria, Fatuma Roba from Ethiopia, Chioma Ajunwa from Nigeria, Paulina Konga from Kenya and Maria Mutola from Mozambique (Patsantaras, 2007, 322; Segraves 2000, 277). These female athletes, by showing with their actions that there are some values which can be ethically and culturally simultaneously global and local, cannot be labelled country-less or as cosmopolitans (in an elitist way), but can be described as those who “practice cosmopolitanism” (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002, 4). They symbolise what one may perceive, in line with Beck (2002, 36), as rooted cosmopolitanism. These athletes have also showed that cultures are not fixed, cannot be thought exclusively or primarily in nationalist terms, but should be thought as changeable and permeable. The Olympic experience encourages the permeability of boundaries, facilitating movement and communication across cultures in a process promoting cosmopolitanism.

Consequently, the Olympic Games contribute to an understanding in which the nation (-state) appears not as “a fixed empirical object, but as a mutable concept” (Rowe, 2003, 293). The 2000 Sydney Olympics, in the face of Cathy Freeman, and the success of the new Australian culture reconciliation, offers another example (Tomlinson, 2006a, 21). The Olympics as a global phenomenon do not only refer to interconnections across boundaries, but they involve transformations in the quality of the social and political inside nation-state societies. They can cause changes in national-local life and they can cosmopolitanise nation-state societies.

However, there is another side, which is behind, beyond or outside Olympic space and time. Specifically, that of otherness (particularities), such as sexual orientation, political ideologies and beliefs that are hidden behind athletic identity or are in

all probability arbitrarily attributed to him/her since he/she represents a nation-state. These invisible identities or particularities do not concern the Olympics. Olympic institutions have no control on how this otherness could be declared beyond Olympic space and time. For example, the Olympic awards ceremony places athletes on a value scale according to their sport performance, and for the outside world this hierarchical value scale reflects, in a symbolic way, the categorisation of nations, the athlete's nation-state identity, ethnicity, citizenship or whatever other visible or invisible otherness or particularities. But how Olympic victory will be used by the outside world on national or local levels – whether to promote cosmopolitanism or exploited for nationalistic or other purposes – to a great degree, is not under the athletes' control or within the IOC's jurisdiction. To illustrate, through mass media interventions Olympic competition becomes a means for many people to experience real or unreal forms of the otherness reflected in a symbolic way by the athletes. The media appears as the key element in the process on how “we are related to the otherness of the other” (Rantanen, 2005b, 254). The Olympics as a global phenomenon are held in one city but are broadcast in multiple places throughout the world. Broadcasters, consistent with socio-political or economic agendas, use different texts, constructing different meanings and generating different responses (Bernstein, 2000; Brooks, 2002). The Olympics are frequently presented in the media as highly ethnocentric, reflecting tensions between traditional and modern, exclusive and inclusive visions of the nation (Brooks, 2002, 89). They may be aligned with nationalism, cosmopolitanism or transnational ideologies. The relationship between the nation-state and the Olympics, beyond the institutional regulations of the Olympic charter, is a completely open process. However Olympic competition is realized in terms of inclusive oppositions, the main precondition for the long list of cosmopolitanisms – banal, rooted, methodological, thick, thin, international, aesthetic, experiential, etc. – that open up new ways for understanding and rethinking the relation between the Olympics and cosmopolitanism today.

Concluding remarks

The Olympic games are closely associated to globalisation processes, and in taking into account the common global character of Olympic culture, the contemporary Olympics were examined through a cosmopolitan lens, avoiding any anti-globalisation objectives. In bypassing specific monological or one-dimensional concepts of analysis and going beyond the transcended, nebulous and vague meaning of Olympism, this article explored today's Olympic reality. We did not focus on the fluid system of global interactions stemming from the Olympics, but on particular interactions, which have a cosmopolitan character, including cosmopolitan side-effects.

Cosmopolitanism, in the period of modernity, has been defined as an individual quality associated with the aristocratic elite, which could effortlessly transcend geo-

graphic and cultural boundaries or particular socio-cultural meanings. Indeed, historically, “the elitist character of cosmopolitanism has often been true” (Vertovec & Cohen, 2002, 4), showing a limited interest in engaging the different other or his/her differences (otherness). Today, the concept of cosmopolitanism, having shed any elitist notations or elements, corresponds to Olympism’s normative and socially reformist ambitions. Contemporary discussions examine cosmopolitanism as an institutional question. It is not conceived as purely cognitive concept and solely as a matter of purely individual attitudes, but rather as an institutional one (Stade, 2007, 285). In this paper the term cosmopolitanism has been used descriptively and in line with the notion of cosmopolitanisation, so as to address certain Olympic processes related to institutional conditions and dispositions which manifest a capacity to engage multiple differences, specifically a capacity to include oppositions.

In approaching Olympic competition through a cosmopolitan lens it was shown how differences are encapsulated and how beliefs and values are contextualised in an ever-richer way. The cosmopolitanisation of nation-state societies was discussed as well as how international-global understanding and solidarity could be promoted, but not at the cost of national or local affiliations. The promotion and cultivation of cosmopolitanism focuses on the responsibility of Olympic institutions with regard to (contemporary) universal (global) issues. For instance, the IOC, through its environmental policies, constitutes an institution of global responsibility that can contribute to the cosmopolitanisation of nation-state societies. Namely, the Olympics provide the opportunity to implement cosmopolitan prescriptions into national and regional-local structures and practices, which provides a unique opportunity for cosmopolitan effects. The renewed notion of cosmopolitanism can contribute – more than other similar concepts – to exploring, analysing and understanding the complex interplay between local, national, international and global socio-cultural processes in today’s Olympics.

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