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# № 13: Olympic Ideals as seen by Olympic Scholars and Experts

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## **Abstract**

The goal of this paper is to shed light on the structure and meaning of values that are associated with the Olympic Games. Additionally, we would like to learn more about how the Olympic Idea is perceived by persons that are familiar with the Olympic Movement. This is why an online-survey of Olympic scholars and professional experts was conducted in January and February, 2014, before the start of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. 190 data-sets could thus be collected from respondents from 46 nations. The analysis of the data yielded very interesting results concerning values related to the Olympic Games and the Olympic Idea as well as the current situation of the Olympic Movement and possible suggestions for future actions.

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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b><i>Introduction</i></b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Literature Review on Olympic Values</i></b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>Olympism and Olympic Values</i></b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Methodology</i></b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Results</i></b> .....	<b>11</b>
5.1	<b>Statistical information about survey-participants</b> .....	<b>11</b>
5.2	<b>The Olympic Games today</b> .....	<b>14</b>
5.3	<b>Olympic values</b> .....	<b>16</b>
5.3.1	Unaided awareness .....	16
5.3.2	Aided awareness .....	18
5.4	<b>Olympic features representing Olympic values</b> .....	<b>19</b>
5.5	<b>The future of the Olympic Games</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Conclusion</i></b> .....	<b>25</b>
	<b><i>References</i></b> .....	<b>27</b>
	<b><i>Appendix</i></b> .....	<b>29</b>

## 1 Introduction

The Olympic Movement cannot be guided or further developed without knowing its current position. Scholars agree that the values attributed to the Olympic Games are essential ingredients that make the Olympic Games special and keep the interest in the event alive. But over the course of time the environment changes and therefore the perception of Olympic values is not stable (Chatziefstathiou, 2005). This is not unusual since values and value propositions are changing at a fast pace today.

Already at the beginning of the millennium, Milton-Smith (2002) recognized a criticism against the Olympic Games reflecting the failure of major global institutions in dealing with the social and ethical consequences of globalization often encompassing environmental issues or terrorism. Nowadays, this has led to a widespread disillusionment with the Olympic Games which we will investigate empirically in this paper. Today, the Games seem to mirror the disenchantment with the “modern” values of globalization, including winning at any price (doping), commercialization, intense national rivalry, cronyism (when preparing the Games), cheating (match fixing), corruption and the competitive advantage of highly developed and newly industrialized nations (see in this regards Milton-Smith, 2002, 131).

In 2012 the Olympic Movement had to learn that Italy withdrew from its Rome 2020 bid due to the lack of support from the Italian government (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17030257>). In 2013, Vienna (Austria) did not bid for the Olympic Games 2024 and Graubünden (Switzerland) as well as Munich (Germany) not for the Winter Games in 2022. All cities failed by public votes against bidding for the respective event (Preuss, 2014). However, the past Olympic Games in London 2012 as well as the great media interest in the Sochi 2014 Winter Games somewhat prove that there is still a huge interest in the Games.

The values and principles of Olympism (as described in the Olympic Charter) are claimed to be universal. They must not change over time, but at all times we see rule changes reflecting social changes. For many stakeholders, but in particular for the IOC, it is of interest to learn about the current perception of Olympic values. The target groups at focus in this paper are scholars that

have done research on the Olympic Movement as well as experts that attended Games and/or professionally worked in Olympic sports.

The goal of this paper is to shed light on the structure and meaning of values that are associated with the Olympic Games. Additionally, we would like to learn more about how the Olympic Idea is perceived by persons that are familiar with the Olympic Movement. We launched our research right before the Winter Games in Sochi 2014 started.

## **2 Literature Review on Olympic Values**

One of the basic studies on Olympic values has been conducted by German philosopher Hans Lenk in 1964 (Lenk, 1964). He identified many of the values that appear in the Olympic Charter today (Lenk, 1976).

Another important researcher on Olympic values was Parry (1988, 85) who not only isolated ten values that characterize the modern Olympic Games but also compared the values of the ancient Games with those of the rebirth of the Games in 1896 (Parry, 1988, 82-83). He identified the common nucleus of all these values and found that six outlasted the centuries. It is an important fact for this paper that Parry showed that there are no changes at least in some Olympic values.

Clarke (1988, 101-103) tackles the Olympic values from another perspective. He states that some are indispensable while others are outdated and some even create problems. This is also important for this research because it strengthens the notion by showing that values can become outdated and eventually even can produce complications for the Olympic Movement. Lekarska (1988) presented another but similar set of Olympic values.

Seppänen (1989) brings in the cultural perspective. According to him any culture provides activities which can be identified as a kind of sport. For him it is obvious that the types of games as well as the emphasis put on competition vary greatly from time to time and society to society.

The interesting insight here is that the difference in the values and perceptions linked to sport can be attributed to differences in time and society.

Milton-Smith picked up the thoughts of Parry (1988) by looking at global values. He suggests revitalizing the Olympic values whereas character, credibility and communication will be the critical success factors (Milton-Smith, 2002, 131). He further suggests that a reconceptualization of the Games as a platform for building a framework of global values is necessary in order to counter-balance economic interests. Contrary to this, DaCosta (2006, 169) rejected a reactive solution for values change concerning Olympism.

In 1996 and the following years Preuss (2002) collected empirical data in Germany and Austria about sport students' perception of Olympic values, the future of the Olympic Games and their knowledge about Pierre de Coubertin.

The latest extensive study on Olympic values was conducted by Chatziefstathiou (2005) who had neither emphasized optimistic or pessimistic overviews. Instead, she has sought to identify and evaluate the changing nature of the ideology of Olympism in the modern era against the contemporaneous historical, sociopolitical and economic contexts. Her study demonstrated how the values associated with the ideology of Olympism have changed during the last century. She highlighted the culturally diverse meanings and values associated with Olympic sport in the contemporary world. Due to this a consideration for this research is that Olympism may not be based on a set of immutable values, but on a process for consensus construction in terms of values in the world of global sport (see also Parry, 1997). Her thesis will be a lead study for the further research presented here.

In recent times much has been written about the change of Olympic values. It is questioned whether they are rather continuous or changing (Tavares, 2006), if they need a new ideological basis (Buss et al., 2006) or even if they are only another utopia (Gebauer, 1996).

### 3 Olympism and Olympic Values

Olympic values are an important part of Olympism. Parry (1997, 1) states that Olympism is a “universal philosophy” which applies to everyone. Since a “universal philosophy” is by definition relevant to everyone in every culture irrespective of someone’s socialization, the Olympic Movement represents the concept of Olympism in a universal way. According to Parry, Olympism is based on a number of values to which each culture can commit itself. Irrespective of this, cultural differences may exist in the way the Olympic Idea is expressed.

Tavares describes the Olympic Idea in Coubertin’s interpretation as a

*“reconciliation between romantic values (the notions of honor, duty, selfsurpassing, fair play, moral excellence and a feeling of belonging) and values from illuminism (individualism, universalism, belief in the transforming power of education and the value of competition)” (Tavares, 2006, 6).*

A study from Chatziefstathiou (2005) demonstrated how the values associated with the ideology of Olympism at the time Coubertin started the Olympic Movement have changed until today. She highlighted – as Parry did – the culturally diverse meanings and values associated with Olympic sport. She emphasized that Olympism may not be defined by a set of absolute values. They better have to be seen as being in a process for consensus construction in the world of global sport.

The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, wrote in his Olympic Memoirs (1931, 208) that Olympism is a

*“school of nobility and of moral purity as well as of endurance and physical energy – but only if...honesty and sportsman-like unselfishness are as highly developed as the strength of muscles.”*

Thus, for him Olympism aimed at the harmonious development of the moral, physical and intellectual aspects of mankind through sport competition. Overall, the values Coubertin attributed to the Olympic Movement were:

- equality
- fairness
- justice
- respect for persons
- rationality and understanding
- autonomy
- excellence

As stated before, these values are interpreted differently in different societies at different times.

The values as seen by Coubertin are basically those of humanism.

Loland (1994, 36-38) argued that Olympism has four main goals:

- a) to educate and cultivate the individual through sport,
- b) to cultivate the relations of humans in society,
- c) to promote international understanding and peace, and
- d) to worship human greatness and possibility.

Later, the IOC marketing department conducted a survey among 5,500 persons in eleven countries and gathered four value prepositions summing up the Olympic value system (Edgar et al., 1999):

- a) joy in effort
- b) friendship and Fair Play
- c) hope
- d) dream and inspiration

In his later works Parry (2012, 15) writes that “Olympism is a social philosophy which emphasizes the role of sport in world development, international understanding, peaceful co-existence, and social and moral education.”

However, spectacle, professionalism, nationalism and sectarianism are factors which have played a historical role in the weakening of the humanistic values of sport. In this paper we would like to show what the current perception of values related to the Olympic Games are. Approximately one and a half years after London 2012 and right before Sochi 2014, when media announced the



Russian spectacle quite critically, we launched a survey among people who have observed the Olympic Games over a much longer period and for whom Sochi is just the tip of the iceberg.

For the empirical data collection when we used aided awareness of Olympic Values, we oriented on those values that are written in the Olympic Charter (IOC 2013, 12). The rationale behind that is that all organizations belonging to the Olympic Movement require “compliance with the Olympic Charter”. The Olympic Charter contains the Olympic values in its first six Fundamental Principles (IOC 2013, 11-12):

*“1. Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.*

*2. The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of humankind, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.*

*3. The Olympic Movement is the concerted, organised, universal and permanent action, carried out under the supreme authority of the IOC, of all individuals and entities who are inspired by the values of Olympism. It covers the five continents. It reaches its peak with the bringing together of the world’s athletes at the great sports festival, the Olympic Games. Its symbol is five interlaced rings.*

*4. The practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practising sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play.*

*5. Recognising that sport occurs within the framework of society, sports organisations within the Olympic Movement shall have the rights and obligations of autonomy, which include freely establishing and controlling the rules of sport, determining the structure and governance of their organisations, enjoying the right of elections free from any outside influence and the responsibility for ensuring that principles of good governance.*

*6. Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement.”*

## 4 Methodology

To investigate the perception of the Olympic values nowadays we administered an online-questionnaire among a selected group of approximately 1,500 Olympic scholars and experts worldwide. Thus we collected n=190 completed data sets of high quality from participants from 46 nations. The questionnaire was online between January 27th and February 7th, 2014. A reminder was sent on February 1st and 2nd. The online access was stopped on February 7th before the opening ceremony in Sochi 2014 started.

An e-mail containing some information about the survey, the question for participation and the link to the questionnaire was sent to Olympic researchers and professionals from personal networks of the involved researchers and the following scholarly networks:

- IOC Olympic Studies Centre
- Olympic Studies Centers in
  - Barcelona,
  - London Ontario (ICOS),
  - Sydney,
  - Cologne,
  - Loughborough,
  - Rio de Janeiro
- Beijing Sport University (BSU)
- 3 Brazilian Universities
- Russian International Olympic University (RIOU)
- International Olympic Academy, Olympia (IOA)
- National Olympic Academies in Africa
- Taiwan Sport Management Community and Olympic Researcher
- The European Association of Sport Management (EASM) and the International Association of Sport Economists (IASE)
- International Society of Olympic Historians (ISOH)
- ISDPA (500+ scholars and practitioners in sport for development and peace)

The questionnaire contains a series of 25 questions asked to obtain statistically useful information. It was checked for proper English grammar by a native speaker and discussed with a proficient scientist. It took 12-25 minutes to complete one questionnaire. Since this paper focusses on Olympic values, only the answers related to these values will be presented here (see appendix). The relevant questions contain data about:

- *Socio-demographics*: We wanted to find out what the background of the person is and in what discipline(s) this person is knowledgeable. The data help us to find out whether the prediction of the future of the Olympic idea is related to the professional field.
- *Emotions*: Not all Olympic scholars think positively about the Olympic Games, even though they may be fascinated. Consequently, we wanted to learn more about the individuals' emotions related to the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement.
- *Olympic values*: The respondents were asked to make statements about the values that are explicitly associated with the Olympic Games (unaided recall). Irrespective of the attributed importance we ask them to state the top-of-mind values. Later-on we asked the participants to identify the most important value(s) from a list of values isolated from the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter (aided recall).
- *Remain / Change / Development*: We wanted to have a look at the current perception of both the Olympic Games and Olympic Movement. We explored initiatives / issues / values that should be changed.

The questions are shown in the appendix. A concern was that the questions about Olympic values could lead to a bias. Thus, the data collected may not be meaningful, because the word "value" cannot be used to describe a negative attribute on the Olympic Movement. However, the respondents could either keep the unaided value questions open if no values came to their mind or they could write in negative terms (as some did). The value related questions that were tested for their importance could also be kept open or a respondent could click "unimportant" indicating that this value is not important for the Games as they are staged currently. All other questions were open and several opportunities were given to write a negative answer to express a concern.

Thus said, our research follows a multi method approach being partly quantitative but also explorative. Here we will basically present the quantitative results.

For the open questions, coding was an essential part of this research. The Olympic values collected as well as the suggestions to the IOC president were asked unaided and had to be put in categories. We condensed the data into a limited number of units (25 for values, 14 for IOC suggestions and 15 for research areas). Our coding provided links between the original data and common properties. The coding of the Olympic values was done by two researchers working

independently. Afterwards, differing interpretations were recoded. The conclusions in this paper were drawn on the basis of the final results of the coding process.

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Statistical information about survey-participants

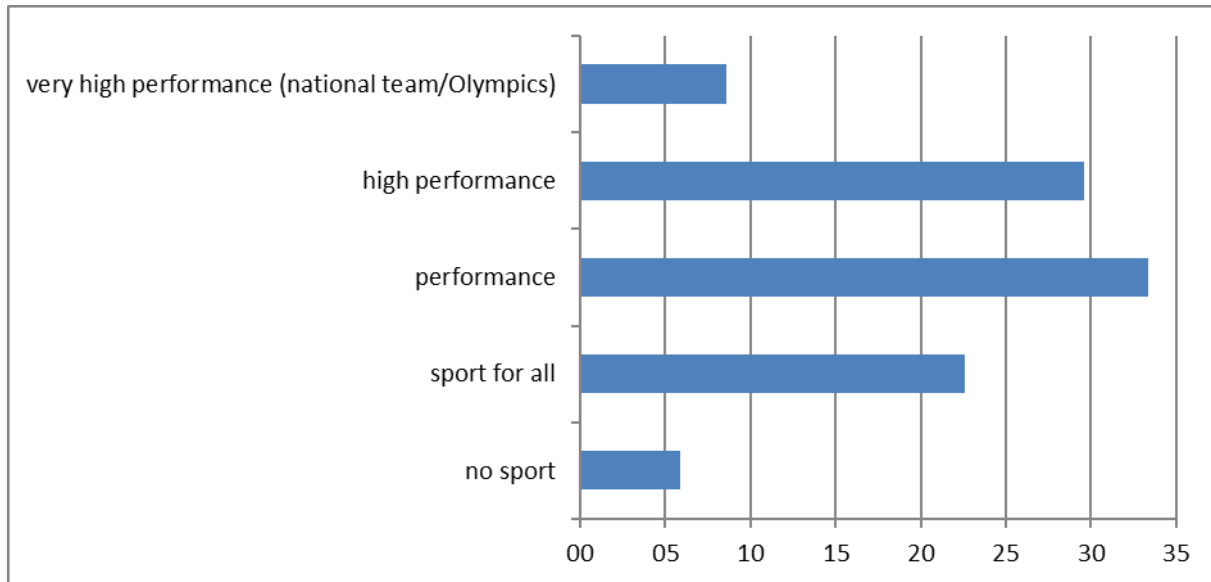
Socio-demographic data on the total population of Olympic scholars are not known. Therefore, the sample cannot be checked for representativity. However, we believe that the selection of the professional networks we addressed, most probably reached the majority of relevant long-time Olympic scholars worldwide. The following statistics of our sample provide information on the participants.

**Tab. 1: Socio-demographic data of the sample (n=190)**

Item			Average
Gender (male/female)	70%	30%	
Age (min/max)	24 years	86 years	49 years
Origin (46 nations)			
Europe		46.6%	
Asia		7.3%	
Australia / Oceania		5.8%	
Africa		3.1%	
North America		21.5%	
Middle & South America		8.4%	
Other		7.3%	
Scholars' publications related to Olympics (min/max)	0	160	13.7
peer-reviewed papers (min/max)	0	70	5
monographs (min/max)	0	50	1.6
other (book chapters, etc.) (min/max)	0	100	7.5

Our target groups were Olympic scholars and professional experts that have known the Olympic Movement for a longer time. Overall, the sample contains 73.3% academics working at universities. 44.5% were professors, 19.6% academics in research positions and 15.2% lecturers. 28.8% were not in academic positions but otherwise related to Olympic sport.

Most participants were also quite ambitious in their sport careers (Fig.1).



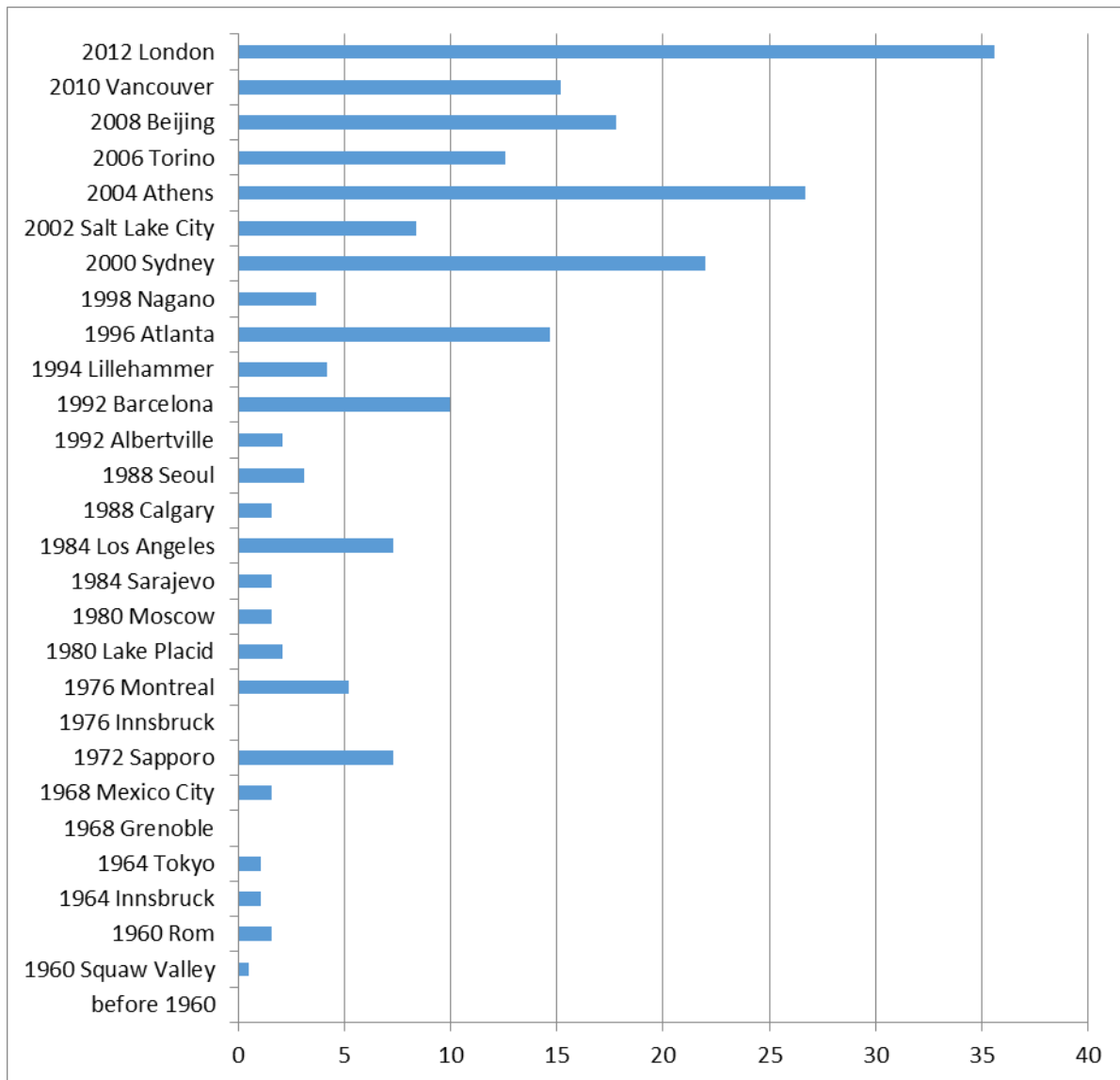
**Fig. 1: Sport careers of sample in per cent (n=190)**

Regarding the (research) interest in the Olympic Games, a variety of topics was mentioned. The general categories of the answers to the question “What are your main research areas? (Please name the most important areas)” are displayed in Fig. 2.



**Fig. 2: The most important research areas in percent (n=190)**

Finally, we asked which Olympic Games the respondent had visited. Multiple answers were possible. All respondents had at least visited Olympic Games once.



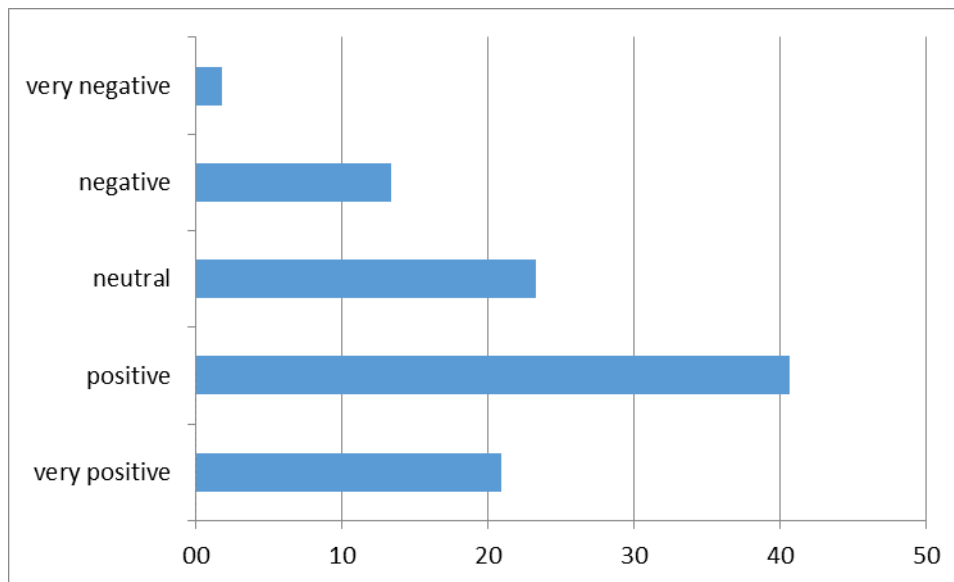
**Fig 3: Olympic Games visited by the respondents (multiple answers possible) in per cent (n=190)**

## 5.2 The Olympic Games today

The field research was conducted right before the start of the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi 2014. At that time, the media reported (probably critically) about the Games without having any sport news. This may have influenced the answers (halo-effect) which could also be true of anchor-heuristics. Both effects may have supported a negative bias regarding the judgment of the Games.

A first question was very general. We asked “How do you feel today about the Olympic Games in general?” The respondents were asked to “tak[e] all aspects of the Olympic Movement into consideration”. This way, we intended to get to know the specific person’s general impression of the Olympic Games.

Only 61.1% feel positive about the Games while 23.3% are neutral between positive and negative feelings and 15.1% have rather negative feelings (Fig 2).



**Fig 4: Current feelings concerning the Olympic Games in general in percent (n=190)**

Trying to find an explanation for this result turned out difficult. Neither gender ( $t=0.763$ ;  $p>0.5$ ), nor the age (non-significant correlation) nor the attendance of Olympic Games before Sarajevo 1984 (no commercialization) or after Los Angeles 1984 ( $t=0.879$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) do explain the feelings. The same can be said regarding the number of publications someone did (non-significant correlation) and the sport career (non-significant correlation).

It was expected that the main research area (see Tab. 2) of the respondent should have a significant influence. Historians or pedagogues could for example focus on other values than economists. However, all t-tests of one research area against all other research areas were without significance.



Thus, none of the mentioned personal factors seemingly influences the overall judgment.

### 5.3 Olympic values

#### 5.3.1 UNAIDED AWARENESS

First the respondents were asked to write down Olympic values that came to their mind irrespective of their importance. The question was constructed to allow multiple answers. This tested their unaided awareness of values. Thus, we can list the “Top of mind” values associated with the Olympic Games (Tab. 2, first column). Looking into the overall unaided awareness of all values the picture is quite similar (Tab. 2, absolute). On average, five values were recalled unaided per person, if a person mentioned at least one value (13 respondents mentioned no values here). Then we asked the respondents to sort the values by their importance. The importance was weighted by points. A value got five points when it was rated as most important, four points when rated as second most important and so on. By adding up all points awarded the overall number was 1348 points (Tab. 2, weighted).

**Tab. 2: “Top of Mind” and all mentions (absolute and weighted) of Olympic values (unaided awareness)**

Value	Top of Mind		All mentions Absolute		All mentions Weighted*	
	n	%	N	%	Weight	%
Fair Play	31	16.2	104	11.7	182	13.50
Respect/ Tolerance	23	12.0	78	8.8	200	14.84
Excellence	21	11.0	77	8.7	130	9.64
Friendship	18	9.4	77	8.7	84	6.23
Peace	11	5.8	61	6.9	81	6.01
Internationalism/ Universality	10	5.2	62	7.0	74	5.49
Competition	7	3.7	15	1.7	13	0.96
citius, altius, fortius	5	2.6	14	1.6	27	2.00
Education/ Youth	4	2.1	15	1.7	15	1.11
Honesty	3	1.6	10	1.1	23	1.71
Equality	3	1.6	26	2.9	48	3.56
Solidarity	3	1.6	17	1.9	31	2.30
Joy in Effort	2	1.0	27	3.0	10	0.74
Mutual understanding	2	1.0	34	3.8	79	5.86

Discipline/ Determination	2	1.0	24	2.7	32	2.37
Participation	2	1.0	6	0.7	5	0.37
Mind-body balance	1	0.5	9	1.0	21	1.56
Inclusion	1	0.5	12	1.3	27	2.00
Courage	-	-	14	1.6	8	0.59
Sustainability/ Environment/ Legacy	-	-	9	1.0	16	1.19
Blending Sport with Culture	-	-	2	0.2	-	
Amateurism	-	-	1	0.1	-	
no value - but positive term	15	7.9	105	11.8	133	9.87
no value - neutral term	6	3.1	65	7.3	64	4.75
no value - but negative term	3	1.6	22	2.5	25	1.85
no values at Olympic Games	4	2.1	4	0.4	20	1.48
Total	177	100	890	100	1348	100

\* weighted by rank of importance (most important = 5 points; second = 4 points; ...; fifth = 1 point)

The core values associated with the Games “Top of mind” as well as overall (“all mentions”) were Fair Play followed by Respect, Excellence and Friendship. However, four persons said that the Games have “no value at all” and overall 2.5% of all mentions were “negative terms” (e.g. commerce or corruption). Due to a potential bias in this question (because it was asked for “values”) the number of those answering negatives might be higher in reality.

Weighted by importance, the order of values did not change dramatically. Only Mutual understanding and Equality are more important when asking unaided. In Tab. 3 the weighting of the values is shown in detail. (Only the 10 values which have been mentioned first position most often are displayed here and considered in the calculation.)

**Tab. 3: Rank of importance of Olympic values (unaided awareness)**

	Ranked Importance (no of mentions)				
	Most (5 points)	Second (4 points)	Third (3 points)	Fourth (2 points)	Fifth (1 point)
1	Respect/ Tolerance (25)	Respect/ Tolerance (12)	no value - but positive term (11)	Respect/ Tolerance (3)	Fair Play (2)
2	Fair Play (24)	Fair Play (11)	Respect/ Tolerance (7)	Solidarity (3)	Internationalism / Universality (2)
3	Excellence (19)	no value - but positive term (8)	Fair Play (4)	no value - but positive term (3)	Joy in Effort (2)
4	no value - but positive term (12)	Excellence (7)	Equality (4)	Excellence (2)	Youth/ Education (2)
5	Peace (10)	Friendship (7)	Peace (3)	Fair Play (2)	no value - but positive term (2)
6	Internationalism / Universality (10)	Mutual understanding (7)	no value - neutral term (3)	Friendship (2)	Friendship (1)
7	Friendship (9)	no value - neutral term (7)	Internationalism / Universality (2)	citius, altius, fortius (2)	mind-body balance (1)

8	Mutual understanding (9)	Peace (5)	Friendship (2)	Inclusion (2)	Solidarity (1)
9	no value - neutral term (5)	Internationalism / Universality (4)	Mutual understanding (2)	Courage (2)	no value - but negative term (1)
10	Several others with 5 points	Equality (4)	Discipline/ Determination (2)	Peace (1)	-

### 5.3.2 AIDED AWARENESS

In order to specify the importance of values, we used a set of values that were mentioned in the Fundamental Principles of the International Olympic Committee (IOC, 2013). Thus, we tested aided awareness by asking “How important are these values for the modern Olympic Games?” The respondent was asked to state his/her “personal opinion”. The following table displays the importance of values starting with the most important one.

**Tab. 4: Importance of Olympic values for the modern Olympic Games.**

Olympic value	Aided Likert 1-5*			Unaided weight**/mentions (cf. above)	
	N	value (mean)	SD	weight**/n	value
Fair Play	183	4.58	0.807	182/43	4.23
Striving for personal excellence	184	4.43	0.921	130/29	4.48
Equality (practicing sport without discrimination of any kind; preservation of human dignity)	185	4.42	1.045	48/12	4.00
Friendship	184	4.18	1.039	84/21	4.00
Mutual understanding	183	4.17	1.034	79/18	4.39
Peace	185	4.05	1.222	81/19	4.26
Solidarity	184	3.94	1.160	31/9	3.44
Sport as a human right	183	3.94	1.154	-	-
Joy of effort	184	3.93	1.119	10/4	2.50
Blending sport with culture, education and environment	184	3.79	1.198	26***/9	2.89
Harmony	184	3.71	1.197	-	-
Reaching a balanced whole in terms of body, will and mind	184	3.64	1.264	21/5	4.20

\* Likert scale 1= unimportant / 5 = very important

\*\* weighted by rank of importance (most important = 5 points; second = 4 points; fifth = 1 point)

\*\*\* mix of Youth/Education and sustainability/ environment/ legacy

The standard deviation (SD) gives some information about the unity of opinions. Fair Play is the value concerning which most respondents have the most common opinion. It is interesting that equality is in position 3 and almost as important as excellence. When asked unaided, equality was mentioned by 2.8%. Another surprise is that “Blending sport with culture” was almost not mentioned unaided (0.1%) but seems quite important when asked aided. However, “Blending sport with education” (1.7%) was at least stated sometimes.

The last column in Tab. 4 compares the importance of the aided and unaided awareness of the values. The weight was divided by the number of mentions which leads to a maximum of 5.0 and is therefore comparable with the mean. The set of mentions looks quite robust. A difference is that Mutual understanding, Peace and Reaching a balanced whole is more important for those that have mentioned that value.

#### **5.4 Olympic features representing Olympic values**

Features are elements at the Olympic Games which are not explicitly mentioned in the Fundamental Principles as being a value. There are several features that are related to Olympic Games and somewhat are associated with Olympic values. For example, the torch relay can be seen as being related to “mutual understanding” or universality, the Olympic motto *citius, altius, fortius* can be seen as reference to “striving for personal best” or excellence. It may confuse that some of the features were already mentioned above in the unaided awareness of Olympic values (Tab. 2). This means that some of the respondents mentioned them as values in the questionnaire, which shows the close relation between features and values.

We asked “How important are these features for the modern Olympic Games?”, again asking directly for the “personal opinion” only. The intention was to test the values indirectly. The reasoning was that, if a feature representing an Olympic value is not important for the Games, the value behind it may also be not important.

The following table displays the importance of Olympic features starting with the most important one.

**Tab. 5: Importance of Olympic Features for the modern Olympic Games**

Feature	Representing the value	N	mean*	SD
Internationalism	Unity, mutual understanding	181	4.35	0.860
Fight against doping	Fair Play	181	4.28	1.207
Olympic rings as symbol	Unity	181	3.97	1.090
Olympic flame	Peace	178	3.56	1.179
Olympic truce	Peace	179	3.55	1.295
Motto: citius, altius, fortius	Striving for personal excellence	181	3.54	1.254
Olympism as philosophy of live	Reaching a balanced whole in terms of body, will and mind	180	3.52	1.301
Cultural Olympiad and festivals	Blending sport with culture, education and environment	182	3.37	1.258
Medal ceremonies	-	180	3.36	1.112
Olympic flag	Indirectly (due to rings) Unity	181	3.36	1.246
Torch relay	Multicultural understanding	182	3.34	1.191
Olympic youth camp	Blending sport with culture, education and environment & Multicultural understanding	182	3.27	1.300
Medal count	-	181	2.75	1.415

\*Likert scale 1= unimportant / 5 = very important

The standard deviation (SD) shows that the opinion of the respondents was not as united as it was with the Olympic values. Interestingly, the medal count (highly promoted by the media) shows the highest ambivalence in the answers. For later analysis we asked other Olympic Features that may be important. Among them, the following were mentioned quite often: Olympic education, Ceremonies, Olympic village and Commercialization.

## 5.5 The future of the Olympic Games

Research among scholars and professional experts is very valuable because both groups observe the Olympic Movement intensively. This offers the opportunity to take a careful look into the future. To do so, we asked two questions:

1. We asked to “think about the evolution of the Olympic Movement in general. Taking everything into consideration, what is your opinion concerning the current development of the Olympic Games?” The categorization of possible answers was related to the product life cycle theory (Vernon, 1966). Thus, the determination of the current development status of the Games provides a conservative look into the future.
2. Then, we asked for a suggestion that can be made to the new IOC president Thomas Bach. “What is needed, from your perspective, to keep the Olympic Movement alive (and constantly successful)?” Here we intended to learn from the analytical ability of the respondents. To formulate an answer, one must tackle the current problem and transform it into a suggestion for a possible future change.

Regarding the life cycle theory we did the following transfer to the Olympic Games development.

**Tab. 6: Development of an “Olympic life cycle” as a basis for an evaluation of the Olympic Games by scholars and professional experts**

“life cycle theory”	“Olympic life cycle” (relating to the Olympic Games)
When a product is firstly introduced, it sees rapid growth in sales volume because market demand is unsatisfied.	It is growing in importance.
As more people want the product and buy it, demand and sales level off.	The growth in importance is slowing down and will reach maturity soon.
Then the demand is satisfied.	Saturation has been reached and importance will remain constant in the future.
When demand has been satisfied for some time, product sales decline to the level required for product replacement.	Saturation has been reached and importance starts to decline slowly.
The importance is low and a replacement is needed.	It is losing in importance.

To prevent any misunderstanding in this regard, we would like to express that the Olympic Games are not a single product. It is a bundle of more or less attractive pieces which may be at different development phases. For example, the sport program undergoes constant changes, the

cultural festivals were added and have a different intensity at each Games. Furthermore, sponsors appear differently over the years.

Since we did not ask for any reasons for the answers relating to the “Olympic life cycle”, it is not clear why the respondents decided as they did.

**Tab. 7: Development of the Olympic Games as seen by Olympic scholars and experts**

“Olympic life cycle”	position in cycle	N	%	% in this position of cycle
It is growing in importance.	up-swing	44	23.0	39.2
The growth in importance is slowing down and will reach maturity soon.		31	16.2	
Saturation has been reached and importance will remain constant in the future.		54	28.3	28.3
Saturation has been reached and importance starts to decline slowly.	down-swing	36	18.8	30.3
It is losing in importance.		22	11.5	
total		187	97.8	97.8

The table shows a clearly diverse view on the development status of the Olympic Games. Neither gender ( $t=1.235$ ;  $p>0.5$ ), nor the age (non-significant correlation), nor the attendance of Olympic Games before Sarajevo 1984 (no commercialization) or after Los Angeles 1984 (commercialization) ( $t=1.527$ ;  $p>0.05$ ) do explain the classification. The same can be said about the number of publications (non-significant correlation) and the sport career (non-significant correlation). Thus, there seems to be no obvious reason which influenced the overall judgment.

One may think that those that have a positive feeling about the Games may also believe that they are still in an up-swing while those that feel the Games are in general negative may also believe the Games are in a down-swing. A t-test for paired samples proved that generally positive/negative feelings about the Olympic Games (Fig. 4) are not related to the opinion whether the Games gain in or lose importance ( $t=-4.472$ ;  $P<0.001$ ). However, related to values we see a pattern (see Tab. 8).

Comparing those that see the Olympic Games in an up-swing to those that see a down-swing, several Olympic Values have been mentioned differently often. In Table 8 provides two comparisons. The column two presents the difference in values of those having a positive/negative feeling about the Games and the third column shows the difference in values mentioned of those seeing an up-swing versus those seeing a down-swing. The table includes only differences greater than 5%.

**Tab. 8: Comparison of positive/negative general opinion of Games as well as notion of Games in an up-/down-swing by different Olympic Values**

Values – unaided awareness	Games today negative see a value more ...% than the positive	Development down-swing see a value more ...% than up-swing
Peace	-20.0%	
Equality	-10.5%	
no value - but positive term		-23.9%
no value - neutral term	-19.0%	-16.0%
Internationalism / Universality	-12.6%	-15.6%
Friendship	-17.0%	-10.8%
citius, altius, fortius	-6.9%	-7.7%
Respect/ Tolerance	-10.0%	-6.8%
Participation		-5.8%
Mutual understanding		6.6%
Discipline/ Determination		6.6%
Inclusion	9.5%	6.4%
Competition		8.5%
no value - but negative term	15.1%	

The differences are calculated by the relative share of values mentioned per group. Column three has to be read as: “The group that sees the Games in a down-swing see the value friendship 10.8% less than the group seeing the Games in an up-swing”.

The same color in both columns related to the same value indicate that the values mentioned by the groups seeing the Games more negative are the same than those seeing the Games in a down-swing and vice versa.



The green color coding visualizes that the group currently having a negative opinion of the Games and the group seeing the Games in a down-swing mentions the values Inclusion, Competition, Mutual understanding, Discipline/ Determination more often. These respondents also mention terms with a negative connotation more frequently which was expected. In red we can see the values which have been mentioned by those seeing the Games positively or in an up-swing more often. The values mentioned most are: Peace, Friendship, Internationalism, Equality and Respect/ Tolerance. Furthermore, this group mentions many more terms with a positive connotation.

Today’s widespread disillusionment with the Olympic Games mirrors the view on mega events and global sport organizations as they struggle with values of globalization. Critical media or issues relating to FIFA and its World Cup may be of some importance when scholars/experts could suggest how to “keep the Olympic Movement alive (and constantly successful)” to the new IOC president. Many respondents answered in long text. For the overview in Tab. 9, only the respective first suggestion was assigned to one of the categories.

**Tab. 9: Overview of the respondents’ first suggestions to keep the Olympic Movement alive (suggestions have been assigned to short categories)**

Suggestion to IOC president	N	%
Set focus on Olympic values	23	12.0
Fight Gigantism	16	8.4
Fight Commercialization	16	8.4
Establish Good Governance	16	8.4
Include of all nations (also the poor)	15	7.9
Secure that Games fit in the city / Legacy	11	5.8
Fight Doping	11	5.8
Olympic Education	11	5.8
Better/ sensitive selection of host city	9	4.7
Set focus on youth	8	4.2
Shorten Sport program / No new Sports	6	3.1
Fight Corruption	3	1.6
Enlarge Sport program / Add new Sports	3	1.6
other answers	20	10.4
no answer	22	12.0

sum	190	100.0
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Most often, we can find the suggestion to strengthen the Olympic values as described above. Many other suggestions also have to do with values. For example “Good Governance” was often mentioned in connection with transparency and fair play.

Realizing these suggestions could help to make the Olympic Movement ready for the 21st century. And the notion to make the Olympic Games more than just a spectator sporting event would create a strong case for including a wider spectrum of activities, modern sports programs and new policies which address not only the governance of the IOC but also the well-being of all humanity in a competitive global economy (see also Milton-Smith, 2002).

## 6 Conclusion

This research collected data from 190 persons that are observing the Olympic Games closely without being dependent (e.g. employee, IOC member) on the Olympic system. The respondents stem from 46 nations and either are professionals with an Olympic background or academics with an average of five publications related to the Olympics. Thus, this group should be capable of analyzing the Olympic Movement.

This paper is dedicated to an analysis of Olympic values. The five main findings are:

1. Today 15% of the scholars/experts feel negatively about the Olympic Games in general, when they take all aspects of the Olympic Movement into consideration. This group cannot be identified by gender, publication intensity, sport career, age or continent of origin.
2. Many of the scholars/experts feeling positively about the Olympic Games or of those seeing the development of the Games in an up-swing mainly mention a) peace, b) friendship, c) internationalism and d) equality as important Olympic values. Those feeling the Games are negative and/or are in a down-swing mention a) mutual understanding, b) discipline/ determination, c) inclusion and d) competition more often.
3. Whether asking the awareness of Olympic values aided or unaided, the pattern of mentions seems to be quite robust. The main difference is that the aided recall

made equality much more important while unaided respect/ tolerance was mentioned surprisingly often.

**Tab. 10: TOP 6 Aided and unaided awareness of values**

Rank	Aided (by importance)	Unaided (no of mentions)
1	Fair Play	Fair Play
2	Striving for personal excellence	Respect/ Tolerance
3	Equality	Excellence
4	Friendship	Friendship
5	Mutual understanding	Internationalism/ Universality
6	Peace	Peace

gray = same rank of value

- When rating the importance of values we get similar results. Here in position 4 “reaching a balanced whole in terms of body, will and mind” entered the top ranks for unaided awareness, while Equality drops out. All others are among the TOP 6 with both methods (Tab. 11).

**Tab. 11: TOP 6 most important values from aided and unaided awareness of values**

Rank	Aided (by importance)	Unaided (importance weighted)
1	Fair Play	Striving for personal excellence
2	Striving for personal excellence	Mutual understanding
3	Equality	Peace
4	Friendship	Reaching a balanced whole in terms of body, will and mind
5	Mutual understanding	Fair Play
6	Peace	Friendship

- Scholars/experts have several suggestions to the IOC on how to keep the Olympic Movement alive and constantly successful. The suggestions tackle a variety of issues. Many of them are indirectly related to the Olympic values. The majority feels that the IOC should put more focus on keeping the Olympic values associated with the Games. Along with that, the scholars want “good governance” at the IOC, which is related to transparency, democracy and anti-corruption. This is followed by two practical recommendations: One is to fight against commercialization and the other is to reduce gigantism. Interestingly, the change of the sport program is not really recommended often.

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## Appendix

Selection of questions used for this analysis:

1. **How do you feel today about the Olympic Games in general** (*taking all aspects of the Olympic Movement into consideration*)?

very positive                      positive                      neutral                      negative                      very negative  
                                                                                       

2. **Note the Olympic values that come to your mind.** *Please write them down in the same order as they appear in your mind (irrespective of their importance).*

3. **Which of the mentioned value(s) is/are the most important one(s) in your opinion?** (*Please write down the corresponding numbers as indicated after the "2." above. Multiple answers are allowed.*)

4. **Which Games did you personally visit?** (*Multiple choice possible!*)

5. **How important are these values for the modern Olympic Games?** (*Please state your personal opinion.*)

Olympic value	Un important	Somewhat un important	Neither unimportant nor important	Somewhat important	Very important
Peace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair play	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Striving for personal excellence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mutual understanding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Solidarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harmony	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equality (practicing sport without discrimination of any kind; preservation of human dignity)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reaching a balanced whole in terms of body, will and mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blending sport with cultural, education and environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joy of effort	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport as a human right	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. **How important are these features for the modern Olympic Games?** (*Please state your personal opinion.*)

Olympic features	Un important	somewhat un important	modest	somewhat important	Very important
Olympic truce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Olympism as philosophy of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medal ceremonies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Torch relay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Olympic flame	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fight against doping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medal count	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internationalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Olympic rings as symbol	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Motto: Citius, altius, fortius	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural Olympiad and festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Olympic flag	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Olympic youth camp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please think about the evolution of the Olympic Movement in general. Taking everything into consideration, what is your opinion concerning the current development of the Olympic Games?

It is growing in importance	The growth in importance is slowing down and will reach maturity soon	Saturation has been reached and importance will remain constant in the future	Saturation has been reached and importance starts to decline slowly	It is losing in importance
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. If you could suggest something to the new IOC president: What is needed, from your perspective, to keep the Olympic Movement alive (and constantly successful)?

9. What are your main research areas? (Please name the most important areas)

10. What is your position in your current institution? (Multiple answers possible; if retired, please mention last institution.)

Lecturer	Research Assistant	Researcher	Reader (UK)	Professor	Other
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Tell us about your sport career. What was the highest level you competed at?

no sport	sport for all	performance	high performance	high performance (national team / Olympics)
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. How many publications that relate to the Olympics / Olympic Movement have you written? (Please indicate approximate numbers in boxes underneath.)

approx. \_\_\_\_\_ peer-reviewed papers

approx. \_\_\_\_\_ monographs

approx. \_\_\_\_\_ others scientific papers (book chapters, etc.)

13. What is your age?

14. What is your gender?

15. What is your nationality?

16. What is your country of residence?