



**VICTORIA UNIVERSITY**  
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

*Olympic rings of peace? The Olympic movement,  
peacemaking and intercultural understanding*

This is the Accepted version of the following publication

Spaij, Ramon (2012) Olympic rings of peace? The Olympic movement,  
peacemaking and intercultural understanding. *Sport in Society*, 15 (6). pp. 761-  
774. ISSN 1743-0437 (print) 1743-0445 (online)

The publisher's official version can be found at  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17430437.2012.708279>  
Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository <https://vuir.vu.edu.au/24927/>

*Sport in Society*, 2012, 15(6): 761-774

## **Olympic rings of peace? The Olympic movement, peacemaking and intercultural understanding**

Ramón Spaaij

*School of Social Sciences, La Trobe University, Australia; Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands*

### **Abstract**

This article examines the historical and contemporary links between Olympism and peacemaking. It traces the development of thought and praxis in relation to the Olympic movement's aim and capacity to promote peaceful coexistence and intercultural understanding from the ancient Olympic Truce to the revival of the modern Olympic Games by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, to the current relationship between the Olympic movement and the United Nations peace agenda. The article highlights the perceived discrepancy between rhetoric and reality, and between theory and practice, as well as the persistent criticisms that have been levelled at the Olympic movement with regard to its peacemaking achievements, drawing together the key issues and debates addressed in this collection of papers.

### **Introduction: from ancient practice to modern ideal**

The attention paid to the associations between sport, peacemaking and conflict resolution has increased in recent years. The 'sport for development and peace' (SDP) movement has emerged as a significant element within global civil society, and since the late 1990s this movement has experienced both sudden expansion and increasing differentiation and coordination.<sup>1</sup> The ideas and beliefs embodied within this movement regarding sport's capacity to promote peaceful coexistence have long historical roots. The earliest sign of the discursive connection between sport and peacemaking is probably the *Ekecheiria*, or Olympic Truce, which was at the heart of the ancient Olympic Games. For nearly twelve centuries, from 776 BC to 393 AD, the Olympic Games and the Olympic Truce went hand in hand against the backdrop of an almost perpetual state of war between Greece's warring city-

states. The Olympic Truce was a period on either side of the Games during which competitors and other visitors were to be granted safe passage to and from Olympia.<sup>2</sup> The Truce was reportedly strictly enforced by Olympic officials, who imposed sanctions (i.e. fines) on violators. Although the Truce was occasionally violated,<sup>3</sup> it has been argued that truce violations ‘were conspicuous by their rarity’ and that, overall, the effectiveness and the duration of the ancient Olympic Games and the Truce stand as ‘a practical demonstration of endurance in the struggle for peace.’<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it has been suggested that the intricate relationship between the Olympic Truce and the ancient Olympic Games (i.e., that it was impossible to have one without the other) shows that ‘the Games were designed with peace in mind, to broker differences between warring states.’<sup>5</sup> Some go as far to claim that the Olympic Truce is ‘the longest-lived institution of international law in the history of the ancient and modern world.’<sup>6</sup>

The nature and application of the ancient Olympic Truce, however, is often misinterpreted; in particular, the notion of a complete cessation of hostilities is disputed. The Olympic Truce was never a time when all Greek city-states ceased all wars and military hostilities. In fact, they often continued to wage war against one another throughout the Games.<sup>7</sup> The Olympic Truce only forbade invasions of Olympia and prohibited anyone from stopping any athlete or spectator on the way to or from the Games, even if required to pass through a hostile state to make the journey.<sup>8</sup> As Golden puts it:

[T]he truce was quite restricted, an armistice (*ekecheiria*), not a period of peace (*eirene*) throughout the Greek world; only open warfare by or against Elis was forbidden. Other wars could (and did) carry on – all that was intended was that they not disrupt the games.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the Olympic Truce was not universally applied or observed throughout the Greek world. Furthermore, it was probably not based on the conception of war as morally repugnant, but rather on pragmatic reasons.<sup>10</sup>

It is important here to emphasize that the ancient Olympic Games contributed to and were associated with the very difference and conflict they are sometimes believed to address. Sport in ancient Greece provided a forum for the creation and reproduction of a ‘discourse of difference’, that is, divisions among groups and the ordering of these groups into hierarchies.<sup>11</sup> In protecting the Olympic Games, the ancient Olympic Truce can be seen to have helped preserve and showcase the political power of the ruling classes that controlled

the means of organized warfare, as well as the skills and spirit of warfare.<sup>12</sup> The dichotomy of war and peace was constantly present in ancient Olympic history, just as it has been in modern sport.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the history of the Olympic Truce corroborates the view that sport is ‘an ambivalent phenomenon which, in principle, is open for use in connection with war *and* peace’.<sup>14</sup>

What, then, is the significance (if any) of the ancient Olympic Truce to the modern Olympic Games and their ability to contribute to a more peaceful world? Although the ancient Games clearly failed to eradicate war and violent conflict, it could be argued that they did help neutralize at least some of the political discord and contributed to the development of a common consciousness linking all Greek states.<sup>15</sup> As Reid argues, the ancient Games’ ability to promote an atmosphere of friendship and solidarity among otherwise diverse, and often warring, peoples may be their most remarkable legacy.<sup>16</sup> In this respect, the ancient practice of Olympic Truce has become a modern ideal. In the present-day context, proponents of the Olympic Truce regard it as one of a range of instruments that can be used to help make peace more likely, notably as ‘an example of what might be possible in the field of human conflict, if only there were sufficient opportunity and motivation for a truce pause’.<sup>17</sup>

In order to evaluate the ways in which the ancient practice of Olympic Truce has been revived within the modern Olympic movement as a global peacemaking tool, as well as the implications and impacts thereof, this paper examines the key ideas, concepts and practices that are associated with Olympism and peacemaking, which can be defined as the process of constituting peace as a condition of life, maintaining it and recovering it when it fails.<sup>18</sup> The paper highlights the perceived discrepancy between rhetoric and reality, and between theory and practice, as well as the persistent criticisms that have been levelled at the Olympic movement with regard to its peacemaking achievements. In so doing, the overall aim of this paper is to outline the key issues and debates addressed in this collection of essays. First, however, it is necessary to consider how the notion of peace has come to be associated with the modern Olympic Games. To do so, we need to go back to the Olympic philosophy developed by the French aristocrat Baron Pierre de Coubertin in the late nineteenth century.

### **Peacemaking in modern Olympic history: the vision of Pierre de Coubertin**

The modern Olympic Games have evolved into a global mega-event with great cultural, political, economic and social significance. More than 11,000 athletes from 204 countries competed in the 2008 Beijing Olympics watched by a global television audience of 4.7

billion viewers, which translates into approximately 70 percent of the world's population.<sup>19</sup> Given its alleged status as 'the pre-eminent international cultural movement in global society'<sup>20</sup> and the 'greatest show on earth'<sup>21</sup>, the Games arguably afford a significant opportunity for international interaction and the development of a global consciousness. The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre de Coubertin, had taken this mission of 'internationalism' very seriously, based on the belief that organized sport can be an agent of physical, social and cultural change.

Olympism, the philosophy developed by de Coubertin, emphasizes the role of sport in world development, international understanding, peaceful coexistence, and social and moral education. It views sport as a means to educate and cultivate the individual; that is, as a formative and developmental influence contributing to desirable characteristics of individual personality and social life.<sup>22</sup> As an educator, de Coubertin recognized the holistic nature of the individual, as expressed in the idea of a perfect harmony between body, mind and spirit as *enrhythmy*. He believed that sport education could effectively contribute to the betterment of society.<sup>23</sup> Being a product of *fin de siècle* liberalism, de Coubertin emphasized values such as democracy, tolerance, solidarity, fairness, respect for others, freedom and excellence.

The issue of peace education through sport occupied a central position in de Coubertin's work. He was aware that education for peace started with the individual.<sup>24</sup> Even though in his early writings he saw the participating athletes as 'ambassadors of peace',<sup>25</sup> he also pointed out that the basis for mutual respect between human beings is not in the competition of elite athletes, but in the education for athleticism which starts with children. De Coubertin's notion of peace can be said to be one of 'peace education for mutual respect on the basis of strength for which the Olympic Games and elite sports are but a small portion'.<sup>26</sup> De Coubertin's plans thus extended beyond the organizing of Olympic Games every four years; he wanted mankind to experience sport in the harmonious interplay of physical and intellectual skills through Olympic education.

It has been argued that the originality of de Coubertin's philosophy consists not in reviving the idea of the Olympic Games, but in using this idea to establish an international movement with global pretensions.<sup>27</sup> The peace ideal that de Coubertin saw as an important part of Olympism drew a parallel between contemporary Europe and ancient Greece. Where the ancient Olympic Games had supposedly been a celebration of 'Greekness', the modern Olympic Games would be, de Coubertin hoped, a celebration of human progress and international understanding and peace.<sup>28</sup> International sports festivals were seen to afford a meeting place where prejudice and ignorance could be overcome, knowledge of other

cultures and peoples be broadened, and international understanding and global human solidarity be promoted.<sup>29</sup> De Coubertin believed that the Olympic Games provided an important contact point across cultures and thereby ‘a potent, if indirect factor in securing universal peace’ among nations.<sup>30</sup> In order to respect each other, de Coubertin argued, people must first know each other. For de Coubertin, mutual understanding was a fundamental value that could underpin the ideal of world peace.<sup>31</sup> He regarded competing with each other a basis of knowledge and mutual understanding:

[T]he revived Olympic Games must give the youth of all the world a chance of a happy and brotherly encounter, which will gradually efface the people’s ignorance of things which concern them all, an ignorance which feeds hatreds, accumulates misunderstandings and hurttles events along a barbarous path towards a merciless conflict.<sup>32</sup>

From the outset, de Coubertin’s envisaged the interplay between nations united by enthusiasm for peace and an internationalism that would set a ceremonial seal on their peaceful ambitions.<sup>33</sup> His aim was to promote peaceful internationalism, a form of enlightened internationalism cultivated by a non-chauvinistic nationalism. He consistently stressed the dual character of the Olympic Games – as both patriotism and world peace – and sought to establish a balance between love for one’s country and love for mankind,<sup>34</sup> arguing that ‘internationalism enjoins not the expulsion of nationalist sentiments and expressions but rather their encapsulation.’<sup>35</sup> De Coubertin expressed this duality as follows:

[N]ationalism is by no means detrimental. However, it would quite easily develop in that direction unless corrected by a sincere internationalism. . . . national peculiarities are an indispensable prerequisite for the life of a people and that contact with other people will strengthen and enliven them . . . . Simply as individuals, people are predestined to a life of solitude. It serves them well to know of one another.<sup>36</sup>

Getting to know each other through the Olympic Games can potentially soften people’s ethnocentrism by enlarging their range of acquaintance and stretching their respective hermeneutic circles so that they might intersect in novel ways.<sup>37</sup> Luring nations into international arenas such as the Olympic Games is arguably an effective way ‘to get them to see that their cherished beliefs and ways of life are only one among many other such

beliefs and ways of life'.<sup>38</sup> According to Morgan, this is not only the key message to glean from de Coubertin's linkage of Olympism and nationalism, but also the moral message that should form the departure point for renewed efforts to articulate the ideal of Olympism.<sup>39</sup> A similar sentiment was recently voiced by political commentator Dennis Altman, who argues:

The real importance of the Games is that it brings together almost every country in the world, not through meetings of leaders but through competition by young sportswomen and men. There are moments when national chauvinism still allows us to hail success by others, whether it is the extraordinary Chinese gymnasts, the Jamaican sprinters or the long-distance runners from Africa. Corny, commercial and costly, yes, but moments that are important in asserting a shared global citizenship.<sup>40</sup>

In order to establish how de Coubertin's vision may inform contemporary peacemaking efforts, it is important to stress that de Coubertin was the bearer of more general ideas which permeated his sociocultural milieu. Indeed, the modern Olympic peace ideal cannot be understood without reference to the political, educational and philosophical ideas that were current in Europe during the late nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> A broad range of thinkers and movements directly or indirectly influenced de Coubertin, not only within the French aristocracy but also in the Anglo-Saxon education system (most notably the legendary Thomas Arnold, who was headmaster at Rugby public school between 1828 and 1842), the international peace movement, the ancient Olympic *mythos*, and *via media* philosophers.<sup>42</sup> It seems that he borrowed rather eclectically from these diverse ideas to develop his philosophy of Olympism.<sup>43</sup>

De Coubertin was a man of his time, which partly explains why his views have attracted substantive criticism from contemporary scholars. Wamsley, Guttmann and others have argued that although de Coubertin's Olympic Games were couched in the language of international understanding, equality and broad participation, they had always been class-based and exclusionary, providing opportunities for participation for middle and upper class men only.<sup>44</sup> They see in the Olympism of de Coubertin and his contemporaries a systematic discrimination against women and working-class athletes and the reinforcement of the competitive values of industrial capitalism.<sup>45</sup> Recently, Segrave and Chatziefstathiou have pointed out that de Coubertin's vision of Olympism was:

theoretically and practically fraught with limitations: not only was it constrained by the historical realities of a bourgeois, capitalist, and masculinist *fin de siècle* [sic] culture – realities that also constrained the world of sport – but it was also grounded in a theory of sport spectatorship that failed to apply itself equally coherently to the lived experience of the athlete.<sup>46</sup>

Despite these important concerns, the capacity of the Olympic movement and the Olympic Truce to foster peaceful coexistence has received renewed and heightened attention in recent years.

### **The Olympic movement and peacemaking: achievements, failures and challenges**

Contemporary Olympic thinking is not a coherent philosophy; it is best viewed as a network of ideas, open to interpretation and application in varying contexts.<sup>47</sup> The Olympic Charter is an important document for the contemporary link between Olympism and peacemaking. The Charter identifies peace as one of the key goals of Olympism, as stated in Fundamental Principle 2: ‘The goal of Olympism is to place sport at the service of the harmonious development of man, with a view to promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity.’<sup>48</sup> The aim of the Olympic movement, then, is ‘to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised in accordance with Olympism and its values’.<sup>49</sup> Jacques Rogge, the President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), recently confirmed that ‘building a peaceful and better world through sport, practised without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit’ is one of the fundamental principles of the Olympic movement.<sup>50</sup> It is for this reason that, in 1992, the IOC revived the ancient Olympic Truce after it had remained dormant for almost a century.<sup>51</sup> The Truce has been invoked at every Olympic Games since.

Since 1993 the Olympic Truce has had formal endorsement from the United Nations (UN). Every two years, before each Summer and Winter Games, the UN General Assembly has passed a resolution to reaffirm its commitment to the ideal of the Olympic Truce and to call on its member states to observe the Truce. On the eve of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan sent out the following message calling for observance of the Olympic Truce:



Though limited in duration, [the Olympic] Truce has unlimited potential. It can provide a pause in which to reconsider the heavy cost of war; an opening to initiate a dialogue, and a window to provide relief for suffering populations. It can demonstrate to the world that peace is possible in even the most seemingly intractable situations if we truly work towards it.<sup>52</sup>

Proponents of Olympic Truce resolutions see the cooperation between the UN and the Olympic movement as a perfect match, and Annan's message clearly articulates this viewpoint:

But the true excellence of the Games rests in their ability to unite humanity around universal aspirations: equality, fair play, sportsmanship, tolerance and, above all, peace. These values represent the driving force of the Olympic Movement, which employs the potential of sports to promote a culture of peace, prosperity and human dignity. These same ideals underpin the United Nations Charter and its aspirations to promote human welfare, safeguard human rights and enhance global understanding and cooperation. Taken together, the Olympic Movement and the United Nations constitute a gold medal team in the race to advance humanity's most cherished ideals.<sup>53</sup>

This 'gold medal team' collaboration reflects the UN's commitment to sport for development and peace, evidence of which is, for example, the establishment of the UN Inter Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace.<sup>54</sup> The IOC, on the other hand, has expressed its commitment to the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Within this context of increased cooperation between the Olympic movement and the UN, it seems that the modern Olympic Truce is more ambitious in its aspirations than the ancient one. However, the Olympic Truce is clearly not a panacea for war and violent conflict. At best, it is one of a wide range of peace-building instruments in what ought to be an integrated, multi-level approach to fostering peaceful coexistence.<sup>55</sup> For example, Briggs et al. note that the Olympic Games are 'just one part' of a gradual process of change, offering 'a window of opportunity within which small gains can be made' towards promoting a culture of peace.<sup>56</sup>

Proponents of the Olympic movement tend to highlight a number of practical achievements that can be seen as evidence of the 'small gains made'. The 1994 Lillehammer

Olympic Games contributed to humanitarian relief in Bosnia. A ceasefire arrangement inspired by the Olympic Truce permitted the supply of humanitarian aid to the area, allowing approximately 10,000 children to be immunized. During the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, there were ceasefires which allowed humanitarian organizations to move forward on immunization campaigns in Afghanistan and Iran. The Olympic Truce has inspired North and South Korean athletes to parade together under the same flag at the opening ceremonies of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, the 2004 Athens Games and the 2008 Beijing Games. The Olympic movement is also believed to have had a significant effect on the process and timing of democratization in South Korea. Black and Bezanson have demonstrated that although the 1988 Seoul Olympics cannot be claimed to have *caused* the process of democratization and political change in South Korea:

they can be claimed to have had a signal effect on the pace and peacefulness of the transition, by creating a deadline for decisive action and the threat of a profound national humiliation if far-reaching change was not in train and/or if it was accompanied by extensive repression and bloodshed. ... It was both engagement on an unprecedented scale, facilitated by the Olympics, and the anticipation of a painful social sanction – the loss of the Games (or their conduct in an atmosphere of disorder and discord) – that created effective pressure for change.<sup>57</sup>

These and other achievements are discussed in more detail in other papers in this collection.<sup>58</sup> Beyond these practical results on the ground, some scholars argue that the Olympic Truce reminds us of the power of idealism and its capacity to inspire a new generation and its leaders at a time of diminishing confidence in political institutions.<sup>59</sup> Parry and Nissiotis, for instance, contend that whether or not the Olympic Truce brings significant political change, we must always have in mind the educative value of its example.<sup>60</sup>

The international torch relay in the lead-up to the Olympic Games has also been characterized as a significant ritual in the promotion of intercultural understanding, arguably affording ‘an expression of peaceful cooperation between human beings, between generations, and between countries’.<sup>61</sup> However, recent experience shows that the torch relay is not necessarily a harmonious or peaceful affair; rather, it personifies intercultural encounter, conflict and negotiation. The Tibetan protests around the Olympic torch relay in India and other countries prior to the 2008 Beijing Games highlight the potential for a mega-event like the Olympic Games to be used as a vehicle for political mobilization.<sup>62</sup> The

protests surrounding the torch relay have not only been mobilized around human rights issues, but also centre on the IOC itself, as in the case of the ‘anti-Olympics movement’. Although at first glance the anti-Olympics movement may be seen to disrupt rather than promote the IOC’s aim of advancing peaceful coexistence, in reality the movement plays a vital role in fostering global dialogue and communicating alternative forms of knowledge and action, including in relation to questions of what a more peaceful and ethical world should look like and how it can best be achieved. The anti-Olympics movement has reinvigorated transnational activist networks and has led to a strengthening of transnational communities of resistance.<sup>63</sup> The Olympic Games thus provide a global platform for both advocates *and* opponents to voice their ideas and concerns regarding the promotion or erosion of peace and human rights.

In addition to high-profile endeavours, (former) Olympic athletes and other actors associated with the Olympic movement have been undertaking a variety of grassroots peacemaking initiatives. The Olympism Project, founded by Olympian participants of the International Olympic Academy, is a case in point. The Olympism Project seeks to nurture ‘human development through training and education, inspiring and empowering individuals and groups to take responsibility for increasing world peace through sport’.<sup>64</sup> The project organizes workshops, symposia and other forms of education and outreach to emphasize and recapture the fundamental Olympic values of peace, humanitarianism and peaceful internationalism.<sup>65</sup> Initiatives such as these echo de Coubertin’s vision that the basis for mutual understanding and respect between human beings is not in the elite sporting competitions that are on display during the Olympic Games, but is ultimately rooted in ongoing Olympic education at the grassroots level.

It cannot be easily assumed that the peacemaking endeavours associated with the modern Olympic movement have had the desired effect of promoting peaceful coexistence. In fact, several authors are highly critical of the Olympic movement’s peacemaking aspirations. In 1984, Seppänen concluded that the independent contribution of the Olympic Games in affairs of peace and war had been ‘rather negligible’, and that the Olympic movement had been ‘quite powerless in putting its dreams of mutual understanding into practice’.<sup>66</sup> Notwithstanding the practical achievements of the 1990s described above, critics argue that the conclusion that the Olympic movement has failed to contribute to any real degree to the goal of ‘promoting a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity’<sup>67</sup>, is still valid today. For example, Toohey and Veal assert that:

[D]espite the rhetoric, the role or influence of the Olympic Games, if any, in these matters is likely to be minor and swamped by much more significant causes of war and peace, such as the play of national and ethnic political and economic interests. ... While a number of minor concessions among hostile nations has been claimed in the name of the [Olympic Truce], there is no evidence to suggest that, in reality, the Olympic Games have any significant or lasting effect on modern armed conflicts.<sup>68</sup>

One of the most scathing critiques of Olympic peacemaking has been formulated by John Hoberman. Hoberman rejects the claim that the Olympic movement is a peace movement not only because there is no evidence to support such a claim, but also because in his view the IOC fails to meet the minimum ethical and humanitarian standards required for international organizations to have credible peace-promoting effects.<sup>69</sup> He points to the ethically compromised leadership of the Olympic movement and the global sports autocrats' 'delusional belief' in their ability to create peace in a conflict-ridden world. For Hoberman, the Olympic Games have been and remain a form of 'show-business internationalism' that must be distinguished from legitimate international humanitarian organizations.<sup>70</sup>

The scepticism of these scholars regarding the Olympic movement's capacity to promote peace should be understood within the context of longstanding concerns about organizational corruption and unaccountability, elitism, commercialization, Eurocentrism, excessive nationalism, masculinism, the marginalization of Olympic education, doping, and so forth.<sup>71</sup> While in recent years reforms have been implemented in order to address some of these issues (e.g. in the wake of the IOC 2000 Reform Commission),<sup>72</sup> some believe that the effects of such reforms are likely to be minimal due to what Brian Martin calls the 'design flaws' of the Olympic Games; that is, 'that they are exclusively competitive games between elite athletes with large numbers of spectators', making them 'ideal vehicles through which states and corporations can pursue their interests'.<sup>73</sup> For Martin, despite their lofty ideals the modern Olympic Games have become the plaything of powerful interest groups, especially governments and multinational corporations.

## **Overview**

The present collection of papers is situated at the intersection of optimism and scepticism, of involved advocacy and critique regarding the Olympic movement's aim and capacity to contribute to intercultural understanding and peaceful coexistence. The purpose of this

special issue is to analyze and reflect on the ways in which the association between sport and peacemaking is being played out at global, national and local levels, with a particular focus on Olympism, the Olympic movement and the Olympic Truce. The contributions have been grouped into three broad sections: (1) philosophical and historical foundations; (2) global politics and international relations; and (3) development and peace legacies. Each of these sections draws upon past, present and future events including, but not limited to, the ancient Olympic Truce, the Paralympic Games, Youth Olympic Games, 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2010 Vancouver Winter Games, 2012 London Olympics, and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games. In conjunction, the contributions demonstrate how the connections between Olympic-style sport and peacemaking have evolved over time. It is no longer the case that the Olympic Games and war games exist in isolation from each other. Increasingly, policymakers, peacekeepers, athletes, development workers, presidents of nations and other actors combine forces in a seemingly ‘integrated’ approach towards peace and development.<sup>74</sup> This approach is grounded not only in contemporary notions of Olympism and Olympic education, but also in the transnational SDP movement. These issues are explored in an interdisciplinary manner, with contributions from philosophy, sociology, political science, international relations, history, and policy studies.

### ***Part 1: Philosophical and historical foundations***

In several respects the essay by philosopher Jim Parry sets the scene for the other papers in this collection. Contributing to the debate on the ‘internal’ qualities and values of sport, Parry argues that the nature of sport lends itself to the task of interpersonal understanding and respect, and that the nature of cooperative striving in rule-governed competition can contribute to peaceful resolutions. It is this peacemaking capacity of sport, Parry asserts, that informs the Olympic movement’s peacekeeping potential. In her essay, Irena Martínková further explores this theme by analyzing Pierre de Coubertin’s thinking on peacemaking in relation to the practice of sport within Olympism. She discusses six themes in the work of de Coubertin that enable sport practice in general, and the Olympic Games in particular, to be peace-promoting: equality, amateurism, the importance of process over result, discipline, internationalism, and respect for others. Martínková concludes that in an age of excessive sport competition, de Coubertin’s thinking needs to be connected to Olympic values education. In contrast, Cindy Burleson examines the peacemaking capacity of the Olympic movement from the perspective of the ancient Olympic Truce and its role in contemporary diplomatic relations. Drawing upon two case studies, the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympic

Games and the OLOS Foundation, she demonstrates how the former offers an example of the Olympic Truce's application in what has been termed 'old war', while the latter indicates how the Olympic Truce could potentially create a robust peacekeeping platform for the United Nations.

### ***Part 2: Global politics and international relations***

The articles in part two of this collection complement and extend Burleson's analysis by scrutinizing the Olympic movement's place in and influence on global politics and international relations. Darin Van Tassell and Dené Terry analyze the case of North and South Korea to reflect on the role sports in general and the Olympic Games in particular play in constructing an increasingly friendly political relationship between warring states. In their paper, Dan Bousfield and Jean Michel Montsion point to the Olympic movement's expanding expectation of reconciling transnational, domestic and corporate normative arenas. They seek to demonstrate that the current position of the IOC in justifying decisions from an intersecting position of these three normative arenas is untenable and impedes more innovative and proactive models of sport governance. They recommend that a clear and consistent normative vision be chosen through refining and restructuring the IOC's normative responsibilities. In a similar vein, Liam Stockdale critically examines the tension between the Olympic movement's normative political aims and its practical operation. Stockdale concludes that the interests of both participant states and the IOC itself in producing an extravagant spectacle tend to trump any ostensible commitment to positive political change in the areas of human rights and peace. Nonetheless, the Olympic movement is seen as having particular outcomes – including unintended consequences – that ought to be taken seriously, for example its role as a site for political protest.

### ***Part 3: Development and peace legacies***

Part three shifts the attention toward Olympic and Paralympic legacies in the realms of peace and social development. Ian Brittain argues that the Paralympic Games have played a key role in helping to overcome many of the issues that have led to negative perceptions of and discrimination against people with disabilities, assisting them to become more socially included and to live their lives in peaceful coexistence. However, Brittain also points out that this Paralympic legacy is work in progress, and that further effort is required to progress the move towards greater and fairer inclusion of people with disabilities. Simon Darnell's analysis of the discourses of international development ascribed to the 2016 Rio de Janeiro

Olympic Games resonates with Bousfield and Montsion's notion of norm confusion. Darnell identifies the competing discourses between the socio-political understandings of, and orientation towards, development put forward by the IOC and Rio 2016 organizers on the one hand, versus those embraced within the broader global political economy of development on the other. Darnell stresses the need for ongoing critical analyses into the ability of the 2016 Olympic Games to contribute to sustainable and equitable change for the people of Rio de Janeiro, as well as for cautious consideration of the extent to which the Olympic movement's ethos of SDP has made inroads within the broader cultural and political economy.

Tess Kay similarly addresses the international development and peace legacies of Olympic and sport initiatives, however her primary focus is on methodological challenges and the relationship between funders and recipients of SDP programmes. Kay shows how the determined search within the SDP movement for 'robust evidence' reflects the interests of external agencies, which may include the IOC, National Olympic Committees or the UN, rather than in-programme or local needs. Kay argues for a reorientation of knowledge production towards internal programme learning independent of external accountability. Kay's findings have direct relevance to the peacemaking and development initiatives undertaken, coordinated or funded by (former) Olympic athletes and other actors within the Olympic movement, and can help improve the credibility and impact of Olympic outreach programmes. This is important because despite providing a valuable opportunity for cross-cultural engagement, grassroots Olympic movement outreach appears to have had little discernable impact. Instead, its ambitious ideas about using sport as a tool for direct development 'have mostly met with failure and resistance at the macro level.'<sup>75</sup>

The articles published here demonstrate the complex and multi-faceted nature of the relationship between Olympism and peacemaking, and identify the various challenges and obstacles that lie ahead on the road to promoting peaceful coexistence and intercultural understanding through sport. They show that there is much to be done if the Olympic movement is to achieve its goal of promoting 'a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity'. Drawing together the contributions to the collection, the epilogue argues for a more theoretically informed approach to peacemaking through sport.

## References

- Altman, D. 'The Olympic Spirit? It's a Simple, Shared Global Experience'. *The Age*, 21 August 2008.
- Beutler, I. 'Sport Serving Development and Peace: Achieving the Goals of the United Nations through Sport'. *Sport in Society* 11, no. 4 (2008): 359-369.
- Black, D., and S. Bezanson. 'The Olympics Games, Human Rights and Democratisation: Lessons from Seoul and Implications for Beijing'. *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 7 (2004): 1245-1261.
- Boutros-Ghali, B. *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*. Report of the UN Secretary-General. New York: United Nations, 1992.
- Boykoff, J. 'The Anti-Olympics'. *New Left Review* 67, no. 1 (2011): 41-59.
- Briggs, R., H. McCarthy and A. Zorbas. *16 Days: The Role of the Olympic Truce in the Toolkit for Peace*. Athens: Demos, 2004.
- Chatziefstathiou, D. 'Paradoxes and Contestations of Olympism in the History of the Modern Olympic Movement'. *Sport in Society* 14, no. 3 (2011): 332-344.
- de Coubertin P. 'L'athlétisme: son rôle et son histoire'. *La Revue Athlétique* 2 (1891): 193-207.
- de Coubertin, P. *The Olympic Idea: Discourses and Essays*, edited by Carl-Diem-Institut. Stuttgart: Karl Hofmann, 1967 [1894].
- de Coubertin, P. *Notes sur l'Éducation Publique*. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2010 [1901].
- Darnell, S. 'Conflict, Education and Sport: Responses, Cautions and Questions'. *Conflict and Education: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1-7.
- Georgiadis, K. 'Sport as a "Battlefield" of Peace'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 51-55. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- Girginov, V., and J. Parry. *The Olympic Games Explained*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Giulianotti, R. 'Sport, Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution: A Contextual Analysis and Modelling of the Sport, Development and Peace Sector'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 2 (2011): 207-228.
- Golden, M. *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Guest, A. 'The Diffusion of Development-through-Sport: Analysing the History and Practice



- of the Olympic Movement's Grassroots Outreach to Africa', *Sport in Society* 12, no. 10 (2009): 1336-1352.
- Güldenpfennig, S. 'Sport in the Peace Movement: A Challenge for the Sport Science'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 20, no. 3 (1985): 203-212.
- Guttman, A. *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- Hoberman, J. 'Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism'. *Journal of Sport History* 22, no. 1 (1995): 1-37.
- Hoberman, J. 'The Myth of Sport as a Peace-Promoting Political Force'. *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 31, no. 1 (2011): 17-29.
- International Olympic Committee. *Olympic Charter*. Lausanne: IOC, 2010.
- Jennings, A. *The New Lords of the Rings: Olympic Corruption and How to Buy Gold Medals*. London: Pocket Books, 1996.
- Kaufman, P., and E. Wolff. 'Playing and Protesting: Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change'. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 34, no. 2 (2010): 154-175.
- Keim, M. 'Translating Olympic Truce into Community Action in South Africa: Myth or Possibility?'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 77-89. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- Kidd, B. "'Another World is Possible": Recapturing Alternative Olympic Histories, Imagining Different Games.' In *Global Olympics*, edited by K. Young and K. Wamsley, 143-158. Oxford: Elsevier, 2005.
- Kidd, B. 'A New Social Movement: Sport for Development and Peace'. *Sport in Society* 11, no. 4 (2008): 370-380.
- Kidd, B., and H. Dichter. 'Introduction'. *Sport in Society* 14, no. 3 (2011): 289-291.
- Kidd B., and M. MacDonnell, 'Peace, Sport and Development'. In *Literature Reviews on Sport for Development and Peace*, edited by Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group, 158-194. Toronto: SDP IWG, 2007.
- Krüger, A. 'De Coubertin and the Olympic Games as Symbols of Peace'. In *Sport and Politics*, edited by G. Redmond, 193-199. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1986.
- Lenskyj, H. *Inside the Olympic Industry: Power, Politics and Activism*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000.
- Loland, S. 'Pierre de Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas'. Paper presented at the Second International Symposium for Olympic Research, London, Ontario, 1994, 26-45.

- Loland, S., and A. Selliaas, 'The Olympic Truce: the Ideal and the Reality'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 57-69. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- MacAloon, J.J. *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
- Maguire, J. *Power and Global Sport: Zones of Prestige, Emulation and Resistance*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Maguire, J., S. Barnard, K. Butler and P. Golding. "Celebrate Humanity" or "Consumers?": A Critical Evaluation of a Brand in Motion'. *Social Identities* 14, no. 1 (2008): 63-76.
- Majumdar, B., and N. Mehta. 'It's Not Just Sport: Delhi and the Olympic Torch Relay', *Esporte e Sociedade* 4, no. 10 (2008): 1-20.
- Martin, B. 'Ten Reasons to Oppose All Olympic Games'. *Freedom* 57, no. 13 (1996).
- Martin, B. 'Design Flaws of the Olympics'. *Social Alternatives* 19, no. 2 (2000): 19-23.
- Milton-Smith, J. 'Ethics, the Olympics and the Search for Global Values'. *Journal of Business Ethics* 35 (2002): 131-142.
- Morgan, W. 'Cosmopolitanism, Olympism and Nationalism: A Critical Interpretation of Coubertin's Ideal of International Sporting Life'. *OLYMPIKA: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 4, no. 1 (1995): 79-92.
- Müller, N. *Olympic Education: University Lecture on the Olympics*. Barcelona: Centre d'Estudis Olímpics, 2004.
- Müller, N. 'The Idea of Peace as Coubertin's Vision for the Modern Olympic Movement: Development and Pedagogic Consequences'. *The Sport Journal* 9, no. 1 (2006).
- Nissiotis, N. 'The Olympic Movement's Contribution to Peace'. *Proceedings of the International Olympic Academy* 25 (1985): 54-63.
- Olympism Project, 'Olympism Project: Making Ideals Real', n.d. <https://sites.google.com/a/olympismproject.org/olympism-project/>. Accessed 10 June 2011
- Parry, J. 'The *Religio Athletae*, Olympism and Peace'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 37-49. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- Quanz, D. 'Civic Pacifism and Sports-Based Internationalism: Framework for the Founding of the International Olympic Committee'. *OLYMPIKA: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 2, no. 1 (1993): 1-23.
- Reid, H. 'Olympic Sport and Its Lessons for Peace'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform*

- for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 25-35. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- Roche, M. 'The Olympics and "Global Citizenship"'. *Citizenship Studies* 6, no. 2 (2002): 165-181.
- Rogge, J. 'Foreword'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 9. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- Schiller K. and C. Young. *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010.
- Segrave, J., and D. Chatziefstathiou 'The Aesthetic Olympic Vision of Baron Pierre de Coubertin'. *Esporte e Sociedade* 4, no. 12(2009): 1-28.
- Seppänen, P 'The Olympics: A Sociological Perspective'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 19, no. 2 (1984): 113-127.
- Shaw, C. *Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society, 2008.
- Sullivan S., and R. Mechikoff. 'A Man of His Time: Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic Ideology and the Via Media'. *OLYMPIKA: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004): 27-52.
- Syrigos, A. 'Olympic Truce: From Myth to Reality'. In *Olympic Truce: Sport as a Platform for Peace*, edited by K. Georgiadis and A. Syrigos, 21-23. Athens: International Olympic Truce Centre, 2009.
- The Nielsen Company. 'The Final Tally: 4.7 Billion Tunes in to Beijing 2008 – More Than Two in Three People Worldwide: Nielsen', 5 September 2008. [http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/press\\_release3.pdf](http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/press_release3.pdf). Accessed 22 May 2011.
- Tomlinson, A., and G. Whannel, eds. *Five Ring Circus: Money, Power and Politics at the Olympic Games*. London: Pluto, 1984.
- Toohy, K., and A. Veal. *The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Wallingford: CABI, 2007.
- United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace. *Sport as a Tool for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals*. New York: United Nations, 2003.
- Wamsley, K. 'The Global Sport Monopoly: A Synopsis of 20th Century Olympic Politics'. *International Journal* 57, no. 3 (2002): 395-410.
- Wamsley, K. 'Laying Olympism to Rest'. In *Post-Olympism? Questioning Sport in the*

*Twenty-first Century*, edited by J. Bale and M. Christensen, 231-242. Oxford: Berg, 2004.

Wamsley, K., and K. Young. 'Introduction'. In *Global Olympics*, edited by K. Young and K. Wamsley, xiii-xxv. Oxford: Elsevier, 2005.

Young, D. *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*. Chicago, IL: Ares, 1985.

Young, D. *A Brief History of the Olympic Games*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> Giulianotti, 'Sport, Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution'; Darnell, 'Conflict, Education and Sport'; Kidd, 'A New Social Movement'.

<sup>2</sup> Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Young, *A Brief History of the Olympic Games*, 125; Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Reid, 'Olympic Sport and Its Lessons for Peace', 29.

<sup>5</sup> Syrigos, 'Olympic Truce', 21.

<sup>6</sup> Georgiadis and Syrigos, 'Introduction', 17.

<sup>7</sup> Young, *A Brief History of the Olympic Games*, 124-5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Loland and Selliaas, 'The Olympic Truce', 59.

<sup>11</sup> Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece*, 176.

<sup>12</sup> Kidd and MacDonnell, 'Peace, Sport and Development', 165.

<sup>13</sup> Krüger, 'De Coubertin and the Olympic Games as Symbols of Peace'.

<sup>14</sup> Güldenpfennig, 'Sport in the Peace Movement', 203-4

<sup>15</sup> Parry, 'The *Religio Athletae*, Olympism and Peace'.

<sup>16</sup> Reid, 'Olympic Sport and Its Lessons for Peace', 27.

<sup>17</sup> Parry, 'The *Religio Athletae*, Olympism and Peace'.

<sup>18</sup> This definition of peacemaking is decidedly broader than that proposed in the UN's *Agenda for Peace* because it seeks to include aspects of what the UN refers to as peacekeeping and peace-building. Boutros-Ghali, *Agenda for Peace*.

<sup>19</sup> The Nielsen Company, 'The Final Tally: 4.7 Billion Tunes in to Beijing 2008'.

<sup>20</sup> Roche, 'The Olympics and "Global Citizenship"', 165.

- 
- <sup>21</sup> Wamsley and Young, 'Introduction'.
- <sup>22</sup> Girginov and Parry, *The Olympic Games Explained*, 2.
- <sup>23</sup> Sullivan and Mechikoff, 'A Man of His Time', 43.
- <sup>24</sup> Krüger, 'De Coubertin and the Olympic Games as Symbols of Peace'.
- <sup>25</sup> Coubertin, 'L'athlétisme: son rôle et son histoire', 204.
- <sup>26</sup> Krüger, 'De Coubertin and the Olympic Games as Symbols of Peace', 197.
- <sup>27</sup> Loland, 'Pierre de Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas', 35.
- <sup>28</sup> Loland and Selliaas, 'The Olympic Truce', 59. It should be noted here that de Coubertin's views on the ancient Games were based on an idealization.
- <sup>29</sup> Keim, 'Translating Olympic Truce into Community Action in South Africa', 79; Parry, 'The *Religio Athletae*, Olympism and Peace', 45.
- <sup>30</sup> Coubertin, quoted in Müller, 'The Idea of Peace as Coubertin's Vision for the Modern Olympic Movement'.
- <sup>31</sup> Georgiadis, 'Sport as a "Battlefield" of Peace', 53.
- <sup>32</sup> Coubertin, *The Olympic Idea*, 9.
- <sup>33</sup> Müller, 'The Idea of Peace as Coubertin's Vision for the Modern Olympic Movement'.
- <sup>34</sup> Quanz, 'Civic Pacifism and Sports-Based Internationalism'.
- <sup>35</sup> Morgan, 'Cosmopolitanism, Olympism and Nationalism', 81.
- <sup>36</sup> Coubertin, *Notes sur l'Éducation Publique*.
- <sup>37</sup> Morgan, 'Cosmopolitanism, Olympism and Nationalism', 88.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>40</sup> Altman, 'The Olympic spirit?'.
- <sup>41</sup> Loland and Selliaas, 'The Olympic Truce'; MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*.
- <sup>42</sup> For example: Loland, 'Pierre de Coubertin's Ideology of Olympism from the Perspective of the History of Ideas'; Quanz, 'Civic Pacifism and Sports-Based Internationalism'; MacAloon, *This Great Symbol*; Sullivan and Mechikoff, 'A Man of His Time'; Guttmann, *The Olympics*; Young, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*.
- <sup>43</sup> Müller, *Olympic Education*.
- <sup>44</sup> Wamsley, 'The Global Sport Monopoly'; Guttmann, *The Olympics*.

---

<sup>45</sup> For example, Coubertin did not approve of the participation of women in public competitions. He also advocated the concept of amateurism which restricted working-class participation in the Olympic Games.

<sup>46</sup> Segrave and Chatziefstathiou, 'The Aesthetic Olympic Vision of Baron Pierre de Coubertin', 20.

<sup>47</sup> Chatziefstathiou, 'Paradoxes and Contestations of Olympism in the History of the Modern Olympic Movement'.

<sup>48</sup> IOC, *Olympic Charter*, 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>50</sup> Rogge, 'Foreword', 9.

<sup>51</sup> There is some evidence, however, that on one occasion the modern Olympic Truce was declared prior to 1992, namely by the Organizing Committee of the 1952 Helsinki Games.

<sup>52</sup> UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Message calling for observance of the Olympic Truce, 8 August 2008.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, *Sport as a Tool for Development and Peace*. See also Beutler, 'Sport Serving Development and Peace'.

<sup>55</sup> Syrigos, 'Olympic Truce'; Briggs et al., *16 Days*. See also the epilogue by Spaaij and Burleson.

<sup>56</sup> Briggs et al., *16 Days*, 30.

<sup>57</sup> Black and Bezanson, 'The Olympics Games, Human Rights and Democratisation', 1254.

<sup>58</sup> Especially in the papers by Van Tassell and Terry, Burleson, Bousfield and Montsion, and Stockdale.

<sup>59</sup> Briggs et al., *16 Days*; Syrigos, 'Olympic Truce'.

<sup>60</sup> Parry, 'The *Religio Athletae*, Olympism and Peace'; Nissiotis, 'The Olympic Movement's Contribution to Peace'.

<sup>61</sup> Georgiadis, 'Sport as a "Battlefield" of Peace', 54.

<sup>62</sup> Majumdar and Mehta, 'It's Not Just Sport'.

<sup>63</sup> Boykoff, 'The Anti-Olympics'.

<sup>64</sup> Olympism Project, 'Olympism Project: Making Ideals Real'.

<sup>65</sup> Kaufman and Wolff, 'Playing and Protesting', 170.

<sup>66</sup> Seppänen, 'The Olympics', 115.

<sup>67</sup> IOC, *Olympic Charter*, 11.

---

<sup>68</sup> Toohey and Veal, *The Olympic Games*, 277.

<sup>69</sup> Hoberman, 'The Myth of Sport as a Peace-Promoting Political Force'.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>71</sup> For example: Tomlinson and Whannel, *Five Ring Circus*; Hoberman, 'Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism'; Jennings, *The New Lords of the Rings*; Martin, 'Ten Reasons to Oppose All Olympic Games'; Lenskyj, *The Olympic Industry*; Wamsley, 'The Global Sport Monopoly' and 'Laying Olympism to Rest'; Milton-Smith, 'Ethics, the Olympics and the Search for Global Values'; Kidd, "'Another World is Possible'"; Shaw, *Five Ring Circus*; Maguire, *Power and Global Sport*; Maguire et al., "'Celebrate Humanity" or "Consumers?"

<sup>72</sup> For a discussion of these reforms see Kidd and Dichter, 'Introduction'.

<sup>73</sup> Martin, 'Design Flaws of the Olympics'. It is important to note, however, that nationalism, which is seen by Martin and other opponents of the Olympic Games as undermining the goal of peaceful internationalism, need not be reactionary and inward-looking. On the contrary, hosting the Olympic Games can also afford an opportunity for collective reflexivity and to construct and present a progressive, future-oriented alternative to thick nationalism. The 1972 Munich Olympics are a case in point, as is eloquently demonstrated by Schiller and Young, *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany*.

<sup>74</sup> This idea was first brought to my attention by Cindy Burleson.

<sup>75</sup> Guest, 'The Diffusion of Development-through-Sport', 1343.