General description of the Symposium:

Internationalism in the Olympic Movement -

_Idea and Reality between States, Cultures and People_”

Introduction

The Olympic movement is well known in connection to the Olympic Games with the credo “All games all nations”, which had become a synonym for intercultural contact and international relations. Thereby, in analogy, the Olympic rings symbolize the five objectives of the Olympic movement, to gather the athletes from all walks of life to the biggest sports event in the world. Historically Pierre de Coubertin defined the term “Internationalism” and other fundamental norms (principle of equal opportunities, Fair-Play, Peace) as part of the Olympic Idea. Today the idea of Internationalism had been manifested in the intercultural dialogue within the Olympic movement and not only at the Olympic Games as the sportive, cultural and media peak of the four-year-circle. The aspect of Internationalism plays an important role also in many national and international Olympic programs as well as institutionalized in the International Olympic Academy (IOA), where is a continuous cultural dialogue of more than 100 nations organized in different sessions. But the term “Internationalism” is interpreted and used in many specific contexts, which had gain importance in political, social or philosophical scopes and scientific disciplines with diverse reference groups (societies, states, cultures, organizations, athletes, spectators). Even though “Internationalism” had gained a positive connotation especially in form of intercultural dialogue, both terms shall be analyzed and discussed in the symposium in many cultural and institutional perspectives within a dialogue from scientists, officials and practitioners.

General Relevance & Ambitions

The initiative of organizing such a symposium concerning “Internationalism in the Olympic movement” is constituted by the importance of “Internationalism” as apparent connecting, cross-border power with the possibility to overcome international conflicts as well as the chance to find solutions to the global challenges. Theses international challenges ranges e.g. to questions of integration and migration, whereas “Internationalism” means a peaceful interaction in opposition to a theory of “the clash of civilizations/ cultures” (Huntington 1998) in general. In connection to the topic itself, there had been invitations interdisciplinary for the international symposium of scientists of all big cultural areas at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz on the 22.05.2009. The symposium is organized by the Institute of Sport Science of the J.G. University Mainz (Professorship Holger Preuss) in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior/ Germany (BMI), the Centre for Intercultural Studies (ZIS) at the Gutenberg-University and with the National Olympic Academy of Germany (DOA). In this regard, the following speakers of different scopes will talk on: Prof. Kang (South Korea), Prof. DaCosta (Brazil), Prof. Seguin (Canada), Dr. Amara (Algeria), Prof. Fey (USA), Prof. Lentell (UK), Prof. Naul (Germany), Prof. Panagiotopoulou (Greece), Head of Division Schneider (Germany), Dr. h.c. Schormann (Germany) und Mag. Schnitzer (Austria).
One aim of the symposium is to analyze and to discuss the aspect of Internationalism in different professional perspectives within different cultural backgrounds as well as in connection to diverse reference groups to wider the understanding of Internationalism as a social interaction in the Olympic movement. But it is also the ambition of the international symposium to get an outcome about the intersection and equal normative principles of “Internationalism” within the different cultural and institutional scopes. These common grounds shall be used for practical implementation and realization of “Internationalism” through Olympic sports and at Olympic Youth Camps. In the evening of the symposium, there will be a focus on Olympic Youth Camps and international exchange programs to work on a practical area as well as theoretically. In this connection there will be a Workshop for a small group of experts on Saturday.

**Research Program**

The symposium “Internationalism in the Olympic movement” is integrated in a big empirical research program, which concentrates primarily to historical or pedagogical cognitive interests on “Internationalism” as a theory of social interaction. Therefore there is a planned study about the preconditions and process of “Internationalism” exemplarily at the International Olympic Academy (IOA) on an individual and social-group level. After which, the results shall be used for further research programs e.g. concerning the process of Integration through Olympic sports in Europe. The main aim of this research project is also to determine the intercultural exchange in different situations and on different levels of interaction. In the context of multidisciplinary and theoretical pluralism, one economic (rational-choice-theory) and one sociological theory (social constructivism) shall therefore be integrated into one new paradigm to offer different deductions concerning international interaction and intercultural exchange at the IOA.

**Main questions**

- In what way is “Internationalism”, as a process, constructed between the participants of the International Olympic Academy (IOA), viz. if the “Internationalism” is constructed in a similar way or are there different subtypes? If so, what role does the culture and the religion of the different interviewed people in the process of the social construction of “Internationalism”?
- What role does the Olympic culture, the rational interests in the calculus, and the socialized cultural norms and values play in this case?
- What about the sustainability of the experienced “Internationalism” at the International Olympic Academy?
- How deep-seated is “Internationalism”, and how is that shown by the participants after leaving this “idealistic world” (IOA)?
- How does the proportion between rational and value based interaction in the process of peer pressure change?

The theoretical considerations will be tested in an empirical study, which can be seen as an artificial experiment because of the specific social structure at the IOA. The candidate is able to embrace a group of young people (n>800) with a different socialization coming from over 100 nations, who will meet in an Olympic surrounding (with less political intentions). So that this research program offers a special and singular active treatment group to study rational and value-based international interaction in the context of “Internationalism” as a part of the Olympic idea.