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The Values of Olympism in Conformance with Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter

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Abbreviations

ANOC - Association of National Olympic Committees

AOC - Australian Olympic Committee

CDA - Critical Discourse Analysis

Fig. – Figure

HCC - Host City Contract

IF - International Federation

IOA - International Olympic Academy

IOC - International Olympic Committee

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

NOC - National Olympic Committee

OATH - Olympic Athletes Together Honorably

OPHR - Olympic Project for Human Rights

SGB - Sport Governing Body

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

WPA - World Players Organisation

Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to illuminate and analyse how the values of Olympism are coherent with Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter.

In order to carry out this assignment the Case Study is chosen as research design. The data are collected by a semi-systematic literature review, using secondary data and IOC policy documents. In the first part of the analysis the content of the continuously evolving narrative of Olympism is analysed using a thematic narrative analysis. The second part of the analysis aims at highlighting the role of Rule 50.2 in regard to the values of Olympism and builds upon the results of the previous analysis. Furthermore, it looks at the athletes' position in this institutional structure, drawing upon the theoretical framework using the concept of power by Foucault (1980) and Giddens (1984). It is conducted using aspects of CDA which aids to point out the power relations defined by the Olympic Charter and expressed by Rule 50.2.¹

The narrative analysis concludes that the notion of Olympism is not a neutral term but subject to change according to geographic location, historic, socio-cultural and political background. The values of Olympism are currently in a contended state. They are being adopted in an increasing commercial context and discourse which is taking place around the Olympic Games. Multinational Corporations and external interests are gaining influence on the Olympic Movement, yet athletes are frequently denied the access to implement power.

Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits athletes from demonstrating can be seen as a prime example of the ambiguities of the Olympic Movement. Which in the Olympic Charter claims the goal to improve human rights, and an apolitical character, but simultaneously denies its athletes the right of freedom of expression. Rule 50.2 and acting accordingly can be seen in relation to Foucault's (1980) "mechanics of power", which makes visible how the dominant discourse of commercialisation is influencing the behavior of society and institutions. For athletes to gain more impact and power on the macro level, it is crucial to educate themselves and adopt a critical self-consciousness by applying Giddens (1984) notion of reflexive monitoring.

¹ CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis, see chapter 4.4.

1. Introduction

1.1 Topic

The following introduction aims at giving the reader a brief insight into the thematic of Olympism and its values, as well as providing information about the roots of the modern Olympic movement. Furthermore, this chapter outlines and points towards essential assumptions and research objectives. Additionally, the introduction will display the research purpose as well as its social and scientific relevance.

The opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games was watched by approximately 900 million viewers around the world (Ormsby, 2012). This massive number is a testimonial to the popularity of the Olympic brand across the world. According to Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández (2011) it distinguishes itself from other sporting events and institutions by legitimising its social practices through a string of principles, values and beliefs that are deeply ingrained in the notion of Olympism.

To this day the Olympic Games present themselves to be a non-political festivity in the spirit of humanity, free from discrimination based on gender, sex, race, colour, sexual orientation, religious or political opinion (Edwards, 2012; IOC Olympic Charter, 2019). Furthermore, the Olympic Movement has grown to be a major transnational player involving several powerful actors such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), Organising Committees of the Olympic Games (OCOGs), International Federations (IFs), the United Nations (UN) as well as national and local governments and the private sector (Liu, 2007).

The modern Olympics are firmly rooted in the vision of the French aristocrat Pierre de Coubertin, who was inspired by the English sport- and education system during his travels (Goldblatt, 2016). The British public schools put a strong emphasis on the education of character and moral through sport (Goldblatt, 2016; Gebauer, 2020).² Being a hellenophile at heart and gifted with the ability to “dream big”, de Coubertin added the notion of internationalism to his Olympic cause (Goldblatt, 2016; Hoberman, 1995 in

² According to MacAloon (1981) in Chatziefstathiou and Henry (2007) the English public schools’ main goal was to prepare and produce young males, fit for imperial expansion.

Edwards, 2012).³ The first Olympic Games of the modern era were held in Athens 1896, and hosted 240 athletes from thirteen nations (Gebauer, 2020). All were men and nearly all of them had an aristocratic, bourgeois or military background (Goldblatt, 2016; Gebauer, 2020).

The vision of de Coubertin was to use the Games as a tool to promote peace and give the international youth a platform where they can express themselves to the best of their physical and ethical abilities (Liu, 2007; Takács, 1992). Furthermore, the Games were supposed and still are defined to be a contest between athletes, not nations (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019).

Coubertin founded the Olympic movement on two contradictory pillars, one is the Olympic motto *citius, altius, fortius*⁴ and the other one is “it is not winning, but taking part that is important” (Takács, 1992). Takács (1992) argues that the discrepancy between the Olympic pillars is so large, that its interpretation is up for grasp.

In the process of time, de Coubertin’s perspective on Olympism and its values changed continuously to this day, as he failed to restrict its core meaning (Liu, 2007). Scholars such as Parry (2003) value Olympism for its universal approach and its ability to promote peace and foster mutual understanding. In their opinion the universality of Olympism is rooted in its ability to be adapted by a large audience, no matter what gender, race, cultural or religious background.

The IOC refers to Olympism and its values in the introduction of the Olympic Charter by stating: “The Olympic Charter, as a basic instrument of a constitutional nature, sets forth and recalls the Fundamental Principles and essential values of Olympism” (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019, p. 9).

The IOC adds in the Fundamental Principles of Olympism:

“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

³ Other International organisation of that time, that were influenced by the peace movement and internationalism were: Red Cross (1863), International peace Bureau (1891) Scouting (1907) and Esperanto (1908) (Edwards, 2012).

⁴ Meaning “Faster - Higher - Stronger” adopted by Pierre de Coubertin from the Dominican priest Henri Didon in 1881 (Olympic.org Official Website of the Olympic Movement, n.d.).

of good example, social responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles” (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019. p.11).

This kind of evocative language is supposed to highlight the positive abilities of Olympism. Which is rooted in the ideas of de Coubertin and lies in the use of sport as a universal tool to bring people together, foster mutual respect and neglect any discrimination (Liu, 2007; Lenskyj, 2012). As a result of the IOC’s steady promotion of the Olympic narrative, in the eyes of many the Olympic movement and Olympism have become a major patron of these values.⁵ Yet, past events have frequently shown how the Olympic movement violates its own ethical ambitions by excluding athletes critically expressing their thoughts towards human rights, or showing solidarity with marginalised groups (Gebauer, 2020).

A prime example of the ambiguity within and the direction the Olympic movement is heading towards, is Article 50 (Advertising, demonstrations, propaganda) of the Olympic Charter. While Article 50.1 protects Olympic sponsors and commercial interests, Article 50.2 aims at regulating athletes speaking up.

Rule 50.1 “Except as may be authorised by the IOC Executive Board on an exceptional basis, no form of advertising or other publicity shall be allowed in and above the stadia, venues and other competition areas which are considered as part of the Olympic sites. Commercial installations and advertising signs shall not be allowed in the stadia, venues or other sports grounds” (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019, p.90).

Rule 50.2 “No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas” (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019, p.90). In the following research the ambiguity between Article 50.2 and the values of Olympism will be illuminated and critically analysed.

⁵ To this day, one of the main goals of the IOC is to receive the Nobel Prize for Peace (Gebauer- personal correspondence, March 23, 2020).

1.2 Research Purpose

The IOC has become a major stakeholder in international relations with access to institutions such as the United Nations and leading sports governing bodies (Postlethwaite and Grix, 2016 in Duval, 2018). Its charter is very powerful and its quality has been compared to that of constitutional documents (Latty, 2007 in Duval, 2018). The Olympic movement itself is in a constant process of being monitored and evaluated. Also different epochs relate to different norms and values which produces a continuous and developing narrative. Therefore Brown (2012, p.152) states the following:

“The Games are not a fixed, stable and predictable phenomenon of study, but a discursive space constantly being written about, written on, and written over; ever-changing and in transition.”

The aim of this research is to critically analyse and question the conformity of the values of Olympism and the flowery language used in this narrative, with the restrictions towards freedom of speech as stated in Rule 50.2. The goal is to illuminate the ambiguous tendencies within the Olympic movement. This analysis will adapt the concept of power by Foucault (1980) and Giddens (1984) as well as the concept of human rights (Bevir, 1999; Schwab, 2018).

1.3 Research Question

The aforementioned research purpose leads to the following research question.

How is Article 50.2 of the IOC Olympic Charter compatible with the propagated values of Olympism?

1.4 Social and Scientific Relevance

Szymanski (2010) states two reasons why modern society can benefit from studying sports research and especially the Olympic Movement. First, politicians are modern day rulers, they demonstrate major interest in sport and use it for their benefit to

display power and unity. Second, modern sport and especially the Olympic Games as institution representing global sport, have developed in symbiosis with present-day capitalist structures and those of authoritarian states like the Soviet Union, the former Eastern Bloc and China. Gaining an understanding for present institutions and their values gets us closer to grasping present-day society. As Taylor (1999) puts it, sport mirrors global politics and predominant norms and values. Furthermore, the IOC's policies and their terminology, have already proven themselves on the world stage as being able of pressuring countries and their politics (Zirin and Edwards, 2012).

Scientifically this thesis displays originality and relevance by illuminating and analysing official IOC policy documents which gradually change over time, as well as the values implied by Olympism, which are frequently used in Olympic education. In that context, this study provides an insight into current policies (IOC Charter Article 50.2) and their ambiguous relation to the aforementioned values of Olympism. From a sport governance perspective this research is most useful, as the IOC is often regarded as a leader in enforcing new policies, which are likely to be followed by other sports governing bodies (Cavanagh and Skyes, 2006).

2. Previous Research

Previous studies have looked at the Olympic Movement in depth and from numerous theoretical perspectives. Scholars such as Goldblatt (2016) and Gebauer (2020) manage to critically depict the development of modern Olympism, which is rooted in de Coubertin's vision of physically and ethically strengthening character and fostering international relations, by bringing together the (male) youth. To the evolution of a highly commercialised entity, which is struggling to keep up with its ethical framework (Gebauer, 2020).

While processing the chosen literature three main themes kept occurring and therefore influenced this work. These themes are portrayed in the following sections and will be picked up in the analysis of this thesis.

2.1 Olympism as Foundation

Modern Olympism is rooted in the writings of the Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founding father of the first modern Olympic Games, 1896 in Athens (Gebauer, 2020). Coubertin was a French aristocrat, who was using his social status and the prevalent *Zeitgeist* of internationalism with the aim to establish an event of spiritual proportions, use sports to improve international relations and promote the moral and physical transcendence of young men (Taylor, 1999; Brown, 2012; Goldblatt, 2016; Gebauer, 2020). Brown (2009) points towards the stark influence of British sports on the Olympic movement, according to him, classic Victorian values such as sportsmanship, noble amateurism and fair play belong to the movement's foundation.

The timeless character of Olympism is highlighted in the argument by de Coubertin (1918) in Hsu (2000, p.250), where he states that "Olympism is nor a system; it is a state of mind. The most diverse educational forms may be penetrated by it, and no one race or epoch can claim an exclusive monopoly of it." On one hand this statement shows the vagueness of Olympism, which is often criticized due to a lack of an explicit definition (DaCosta, 2016). On the other hand, it addresses the idea, that Olympism is supposed to be an educational tool, "universal" and no subject to racist ideologies and commercial interests (Loland, 1995).

Even though the Olympic movement still refers to Olympism as a philosophy, DaCosta (2016) concludes that Olympism is filled with ambiguous implications and thus

can not be classified as explicit philosophy but as a complex and constantly redefined meta-narrative (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019). Yet, to this day the values of de Coubertin's Olympism are referred to by the Olympic movement for education purposes (Lenskyj, 2012). By focusing on equality, diversity, tolerance and fair play, these research centres take for granted the idealistic narrative of Olympism and neglect the history of marginalisation and punishment of athletes addressing social inequality (Lenskyj, 2012; O'Bonsawin, 2015). The IOC Fundamentals of Olympic Values Education (2016) refers to the three core values of Olympism in a familiar, flowery fashion as:

Excellence, in the sense of striving for the best possible result, highlighting that taking part is more important than winning.

Respect, with the goal to preserve human dignity. "Respect for yourself and your body, for other people, for rules and regulations, for sport and for the environment" (IOC Fundamentals of Olympic Values Education, 2016, p.16).

And finally, friendship which is at the heart of the Olympic movement and promotes sport as a catalyst for intercultural understanding.

Yet, modern society is more and more aware of the discrepancy between the values propagated by the Olympic Movement and its actual politics. As the Olympic Games are being transformed into a major commercial event, which features the worst characteristics of globalisation (Milton-Smith, 2002). This transformation nurtures the involvement of multinational corporations such as the Olympic "TOP" Sponsor programme, corruption, national rivalry and a winning at all costs mentality (Milton-Smith, 2002; Lenskyj, 2012; Duval, 2018).

Growing public awareness towards the "say-do gap" of the IOC and the ambiguity between values and actions have led to French president Emmanuel Macron's statement about the Paris 2024 Olympics: "Olympic values are our values. They are threatened, called into question by many today, so it's the best moment to defend them" (Goldblatt, 2016, p.1143).

MacAloon (2016, p.779) underlines the statement by Macron about the values of Olympism: "The IOC can no longer talk about "Olympic values" but needs to throw itself into the fray, being a movement means moving."

In conclusion, the notion of Olympism and the values it implies are a central, yet highly debated field within the Olympic narrative, several scholars highlight the ambiguity of this term which is in stark contrast to the growing commercialisation and politicisation of the Olympic Games (Lenk, 1964 in Lenk 1985; Taylor 1999; Brown,

2012). Therefore, this thesis aims at highlighting the ambiguities between the values of Olympism and the IOCs actual conduct, as contextualised in Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter.

2.2 Human Rights and Athlete Activism

According to Brown (2009) the Olympic movement is keen on linking itself to altruistic notions such as civil integrity, equality and human rights. These ideals are often traced back to the thoughts of “the Olympic Humanist” Pierre de Coubertin, and yet due to racist history, such as the imperialist tendencies found in Coubertin’s writings and further commercialisation face severe difficulties in being achieved (Alexandrakis and Krotee, 1988; Taylor, 1999; Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2007).

Still the Olympic Games present a large arena to communicate and address awareness towards issues of human rights (Shahlaei, 2018). The Olympic Games have been used as a tool for athletes to speak up on several occasions. Most notably to this day are the actions by African American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who came in first and third in the 200-meter sprint at the Mexico 1968 Olympics (Gebauer, 2020; Cunningham and Regan, Jr., 2011). They protested shoeless, in order to point towards the poverty of the black community in the USA. Additionally, they wore black leather gloves to show strength and power as they raised their arms and formed a fist to show allegiance with the Black Panther movement. Furthermore, they had beads hanging around their neck to point towards the history of lynching in the USA, and wore buttons of the “Olympic Project for Human Rights” (OPHR) (Carlos with Zirin in Boykoff, 2017). The OPHR was launched in 1967 by Harry Edwards a doctor in sociology to protest racial segregation in the USA, which led to sports being an important site in order to contest social and racial identity and equality (Brooks and Althouse, 2009). As a result of their protest both Smith and Carlos were sent home, suspended from the ongoing Games and excluded from their national teams (Shahlaei, 2018; Gebauer, 2020). Eleven years after the incident Harry Edwards retrospectively looked at the OPHR and its achievements. He highlights the mirroring of sport and society and states the following: “We must understand that a racist, oppressive society can only have a racist,

oppressive sport institution regardless of any appearances to the contrary” (Edwards, 1979, p.7).⁶

Even though at the time, IOC president Brundage was outraged with the act of demonstration by Smith and Carlos, one can claim that their action in the long run supported the promotion of Olympism and human rights. Peter Norman, the Australian who shared the podium with Smith and Carlos, showed solidarity by wearing an OPHR button as well. He was posthumously awarded with the Order of Merit by the Australian Olympic Committee (Schwab, 2018). This is a great example for how values and actions are interpreted differently over time, as actions that were punished in past-times are being honored today.

A more recent example highlights the ambiguities of the Olympic movement, as Australian boxer Damien Hooper, who has indigenous roots was cussed by the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) for wearing a shirt displaying the flag of native Australians (O’Bonsawin, 2015). The IOC and AOC pointed towards Rule 50, which deemed the Aboriginal flag as a tool of racial and political propaganda and therefore as a violation to the ruleset (O’Bonsawin, 2015). And thus, made use of the idea that the Games and the Olympic movement are supposed to be free of any political influence in their favour (MacAloon, 2016). According to O’Bonsawin (2015) the IOC regulations denied Hooper the human right of freedom of expression, by granting him ineligible to represent his indigenous roots. Interestingly, twelve years before, at the Sydney 2000 Games the aboriginal flag was used on several occasions, most notably by Cathy Freeman in her victory lap after winning gold in the 400-meter race (O’Bonsawin, 2015). In this context, the flag was used to create the general perception that sport acts as an equaliser in society and therefore marginalised athletes were being used for political or racial propaganda (Brookes, 2002 in Scambler, 2005; O’Bonsawin, 2015).

Ahead of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, IOC president Rogge and ANOC president Vazquez Rana gave contradicting answers towards how athletes should conduct regarding free speech. IOC president Rogge stated that “freedom of expression is a basic human right”, but at the very same meeting, ANOC president Mario Vazquez Rana said that athletes ‘should be given some guidance on where their freedom ends” (Kidd, 2010, p.902).

⁶ This argument is well in line with the statement by Szymanski (2010) in the chapter 1.4.

According to Shahalei (2018) the IOC is afraid of athletes addressing political issues which will lead to financial loss. This is in line with the argument by Taylor (1999) and Thorpe and Wheaton (2019) who sees the classical humanist ideals of Coubertin being exchanged with the interests of commercialisation and pressure put on the athletes by the IOC to be uncritical and “play along”. This line of thought carries over to a big degree to this works analysis, which will highlight how the IOC puts pressure on its athletes.

2.3 Power Relations

As stated above, the IOC intends to protect its interests and inflict pressure on athletes by referring to the Olympic Charter. Yet, the Olympic Charter can not only be used as a restrictive tool but also as catalyst for equity. This could be witnessed, when African NOCs pointed towards the IOC’s policy banning racism and discrimination and challenged IOC leadership (Kidd, 2013). The IOC tried to keep the South African National Olympic Committee, which supported the apartheid regime, in play as long as possible, until it had no other option but to exclude them from the Olympic movement (IOC Session Amsterdam, 1970; Kidd, 2013; Duval, 2018). Since in the context of Olympism, unethical behaviour is to be regarded as the worst offence, especially when those in charge do not follow their own rules (Gebauer, 2020). In this case the universality of the values of Olympism have been used to hold those accountable who formulated them (Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011).

The Olympic movement is a striking example on how leading social groups are able to control their own representation, by creating a narrative which is based on the “idolisation” of its particular authorities and a lack of self-criticism, while at the same time distancing itself from its image and culture which results in “institutional narcissism” (Hatch and Schultz, 2002; Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011). Great examples are the International Olympic Academy, as well as the Olympic Study Centres which are key instruments to propagate the Olympic narrative (Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011).

Athletes who are the main bearers of the Olympic Games have little say in the institutional apparatus of the IOC, as according to Faut (2014) there is a platform missing

where athletes are democratically able to raise their voice.⁷ To this day the members of the IOC Athletes Commission are “the link between active athletes and the International Olympic Committee” (IOC Athletes’ Commission, n.d.). Instead of being representatives of the athletes (Tavares, 2008).

The leading authorities within the IOC are keen to lead the discourse surrounding the Olympic movement. According to Brown (2009, p.8) “discourses determine who can speak, when, to whom and how and with what authority”. They decide, what counts as a political gesture, and what does not. This power was apparent at the Sochi 2014 Olympics when numerous athletes wore stickers or armbands in order to pay tribute to team members who passed away (Faut, 2014). But the IOC which was keen to nullify any political form of demonstration declared these actions of commemoration to political statements, hence banned them, in order to please the Russian hosts (Wolken, 2014 in Faut, 2014; Grohmann, 2014 in Faut, 2014). Still athletes managed to make political gestures such as gay snowboarder Cheryl Maas, who wore a rainbow colored glove and held it in the camera after her run (Faut, 2014).⁸ Although her influence is limited, Maas decided to make a statement of resistance, hence she possesses power (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2013). This power is expressed in the publicity and the media attention she received, which exceeded the LGBT-Community as a result of her actions.

Foucault (1981) in Sugden and Tomlinson (2013) underlines this notion by stating that nobody is excluded from power. According to Markula and Pringle (2006, p.35) “power” from a Foucauldian perspective refers to relations between people. This perspective of power in the Olympic context is used by scholars such as Faut (2014) and Brown (2009) and will be further addressed and act as the foundation of this works theoretical framework.

⁷ The IOC Athletes Commission was established in 1981 by IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch, as a part of his humanitarian agenda (Kidd, 2010). See chapter 5.3.

⁸ Previous to the Sochi Games, Russian president Putin passed a law which banned the promotion of homosexuality to minors, thus further marginalising the gay community in Russia (Murrmann, 2014).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Structuration Theory and the Concept of Power

The theoretical framework applied within this research is Foucault's (1980) approach towards power. Backed up by the Structuration Theory by Giddens (1984), with focus on how the concept of power is understood within this theory.⁹

Giddens (1984) sees power as the key dynamic of all human interaction. But power implies a “dialectic of control” which means that all individuals possess power to some degree, in order to respond and manipulate their social environment (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2013). Power in the theory of Giddens is characterised as a social factor, created by humans (agents), it implies the ability to control, influence and limit them (Elisheva, 1997). According to Structuration Theory viewing power as a good, that can be monopolised, is inadequate and over-simplified (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2013). Social scientists should seek to examine the reasons, and timeframe of power being transformed from one party to the other (Sugden and Tomlinson, 2013).

A justification for selecting Giddens and his view on power is that according to Whittington (2015) the theory of Giddens is ideally suited to analyze organizations and their policies, which can be witnessed in the growing numbers of articles that can be found on Google scholar related to the search of “Organisation”, “Giddens” and “Structuration”.¹⁰ Furthermore the theory of Structuration by Giddens is a useful tool in order to illuminate Article 50.2 especially athletes ability to “make a difference” and thus exercise power (Giddens, 1984).

The work of Giddens touches upon and adds to the writings of Michel Foucault (1980) whose post-modernist approach concentrates on the relation between power, knowledge and discourse. One of the main components of postmodern theory is the ability to challenge, long existing white, masculine and bourgeoisie narratives which have been influenced by capitalism (Scambler, 2005). This perspective is useful, especially looking at the history of the Olympic movement, as its values are formulated from a European, masculine, bourgeois and aristocratic perspective. Furthermore, this approach is in line

⁹ The works of Giddens (1984) are influenced and build upon previous works of Foucault (Elisheva, 1997).

¹⁰ 112 in 2005 and 156 in 2012 (Whittington, 2015). Since 2020, 917 new published papers can be found on Google Scholar (status 19th of April, 2020).

with Sugden and Tomlinson (2013, p.10) who argue that “any interpretation and theory of the present that does not account for history is bound to be seriously weakened.”

This thesis is choosing Foucault's post-modernist approach instead of a perspective more related to Marxism. Even though a Marxist approach is frequently used in the field of sports sociology, it focuses (too) heavily on the economic interpretations, hence refuses to accredit sports with positive and liberating abilities (Coakley, 2001 in Scambler, 2005). According to Elisheva (1997) and Sibson (2010) the works of Foucault (1980) led to a new perspective on power, away from the narrative of empirically trying to detect who has more power and therefore who is left with less, to a more many-faceted and diverse perspective on power. According to Foucault in Sibson (2010), power can not be retained by a single group, but is a key characteristic of human interaction. The school of thought and especially the approach towards power by Foucault as well as Giddens can be transferred to IOC's policy documents and is rooted in a hermeneutic and constructionist approach.

“From a Foucauldian perspective, the key to understanding an institution is not its formal legal character, its class composition, or the patterns of behaviour associated with it; rather, all of these things, like the institution itself are understood in terms of the ideas or concepts that give them their character” (Bevir 1999, p.352).

Furthermore, for Foucault (1980) power is expressed in a "discourse". The “discourse” includes all elements that play a role in the realization of power, beyond language, including material dispositives, for example institutions, actions and rules. The dispositive is a “thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble” and acts as the relation between material and linguistic carriers of meaning, consisting of “the said as much as the unsaid” (Foucault, 1980, p.194; Raffnsøe, Gudmand-Høyer and Thaning, 2014). This thesis benefits from Foucault's (1980) complex view towards power and his ability not to locate power but to see *how* it is implemented, in this case by the Olympic Charter (Elisheva, 1997).¹¹

¹¹ See Chapter 4.3.

3.2 Olympism as a Concept

This is where the concept of Olympism comes to play, which is no concept in the classical way, as according to Silverman (2017, p.145) a concept is a “clearly specified idea deriving from a particular model.” Yet, the official sources of the Olympic movement refer to Olympism as a concept, being developed in the late 19th century by Pierre de Coubertin (Olympism: World Olympians Association, n.d.). Still the notion of Olympism is very powerful in the Olympic narrative, as it depicts the foundation of the movement and is frequently used to justify its powerful position on the world stage (Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011).

Furthermore, scholars such as Loland (1995) argue that Olympism can be traced back to the philosophical approach of humanism, which was picked up by Coubertin, who added typical ideas of his epoch such as internationalism and peace.¹² Olympism implies the values stated in the writings of de Coubertin, according to Persson and Petersson (2014) these values continue to be largely untouched within the Olympic Charter.

3.3 Concept of Human Rights

The Olympic Charter is closely bound with and committed towards the principles of equality and human rights (Brown, 2009; Liu, 2007). The main component of the concept of human rights is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 2015). In the context of this analysis especially Article 19 of the UDHR (2015, p.40) “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

¹² Which has led to Coubertin being called “the Olympic Humanist” (Taylor, 1999).

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction to Philosophical Perspective

The first approach of research is to address the philosophical perspective, which is the foundation of this work, as the ontology and epistemology have major influence on the further methodological and theoretical structure of this thesis (O’Gorman and McIntosh, 2015).

This work is of qualitative nature, the ontology is from a subjective perspective. The thesis and the data used for analysis deal with human interactions, hence there can not be a claim of being truly objective (Silverman, 2017; O’Gorman and McIntosh, 2015).

The chosen subjective ontology correlates with an interpretive or social-constructionist epistemology, as the values of Olympism are socially constructed by humans and thus can not be empirically measured but only interpreted (Flick, 2009; Batuev, 2015). In this case “social”- constructionism, due to its ability to challenge social conventions, value judgments and perceptions of everyday knowledge, which will be picked up in the analysis (Gergen 1985, 1999 in Flick, 2009). The purpose of using the social-constructionist paradigm is to gain insight how the values of Olympism are created and propagated by the Olympic movement. Additionally, this work adapts an interpretivist paradigm which is intertwined with constructionist epistemology and the philosophical paradigm of phenomenology (Batuev, 2015).

4.1.1 Phenomenology

Due to the complexity of the notion of Olympism, one key element of this work is to cut to its core and the taken-for-grantedness which it implies. Therefore, a phenomenology inspired approach was chosen as a fitting methodological backbone (Smith and Sparkes, 2016). This work does not implement a phenomenological analysis, but displays awareness towards Husserl's' notion of *Epoché*, in order to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about Olympism and the values it supposedly displays (Smith

and Sparkes, 2016).¹³ A phenomenological approach was chosen due to its ability to describe and analyzes the subjective construction of meanings, rules and understandings that were given to Olympism by de Coubertin, the Olympic Charter and the IOC (Flick, 2009). As this thesis works towards questioning the meanings behind Olympism and how they are constructed. Furthermore, throughout the research process an open and curious attitude was utilised (Smith and Sparkes, 2016).¹⁴

According to information given previously, the scheme showing the methodology applied in this thesis is attached in the Appendix and will be further described within this chapter.

4.2 Research Design

The selected research design of this thesis is a Case Study. With the goal to develop an in depth understanding from several angles of a particular phenomenon, in this case IOC's Rule 50.2 (Gratton and Jones, 2011; Silverman, 2017).

According to Simons (2009) in Smith and Sparkes (2016, p.63) the “Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a *particular* project, policy, institution or real-life context. “

Highlight here is the word *particular* which describes a certain *boundedness* which gives the researcher the ability to go in-depth. Yin (2009) in Smith and Sparkes (2016, p.62) states that *boundedness* is achieved by the research phenomenon being limited to one of the three frames.

1. Exclusive membership of a bounded ‘group/entity’ (in-group vs. out-group)
2. A delineated location/place
3. A delimited time frame.

Boundedness in this case is given due to Rule 50.2 being an exclusive and unique IOC policy.

The given research topic qualifies as instrumental case, as the case of IOCs Rule 50.2 is studied in depth, but the focus lies on gaining insight and generalising how the

¹³ Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) German- Austrian philosopher and founder of phenomenology (Beyer, 2018).

¹⁴ Which is derived from the writings of Husserl (2002/1913) in Smith and Sparkes (2016).

IOC manages to implement power on its athletes, while simultaneously promoting the values of Olympism (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019; Smith and Sparkes, 2016).

Further reason for choosing the Case Study as research design is its ability to address the complexity behind the phenomenon, in this case Rule 50.1 (Yin, 1981).

Even though Case Studies are frequently criticised for focusing on single cases and arguably being unable to provide theories and a lack of generalisation, they are able to create new knowledge and be of great educational use (Tellis, 1997).¹⁵

According to Simon (2009) in Smith and Sparkes (2016) the Case Study is not just a method but a structural frame that implies several methods. As the given case is a policy document the methods will involve a critical document analysis which will be conducted with the tools of narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis. The given research design is in line with the argument by Bowen (2009) who highlights the suitability of document analysis within Case Studies.

4.3 Data Collection

The method of data collection used in this thesis is a semi-systematic literature review, using research journals, written documents (books), and policy documents provided by the IOC.

The collection of secondary research presented in this review comprises of a total of 126 research reports, books and articles published between 1972 and 2020 which meet the following requirements a) address any of the key terms as seen in *Figure 2*; b) use a qualitative research approach; c) data selected backed up the research body with relevant citations or other qualitative data (Paterson et al. 2009).

Figure 1 and *Figure 2* address what data are used and which platforms helped to locate them. The key terms provided in the Figures were formed by the research question. Furthermore, the figures aim to give this work a certain amount of reliability, as future researchers will have the ability to pick up, reproduce or expand this work. As well as act as criteria towards transparency of the data sample.

¹⁵ In his article Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research, Flyvbjerg (2006) addresses the most common misconceptions about Case Studies, such as lack of generalisation and uselessness as a tool for further analysis.

The semi- systematic literature review is chosen due to its ability to create “a firm foundation for advancing knowledge and facilitating theory development” (Webster and Watson, 2002 in Snyder, 2019, p.333). Furthermore, it is a solid tool in providing a historical overview of a phenomenon, which is important due to the rich history and varying interpretations of Olympism over the course of time (Zakus and Skinner, 2008; Snyder, 2019).

Reason for this choice of method is the diverse methodological approach used by researchers to cover the Olympic movement which makes a full systematic review difficult to achieve (Smith and Sparkes, 2016).

The review approach has its limits, as documents used in this work are written in either English or German language. In addition, some data might be difficult to obtain, or possess very little useful information (Bowen, 2009). When extracting data for this work a critical perspective not only towards the content, but also awareness towards socio-historical context is needed. This counts especially for policy documents (Flick, 2009).

Type of Literature	Books	Peer Reviewed Articles	Conference papers	Weblinks ¹⁶	Dissertations	Official IOC Documents
Amount	21	64	5	25	2	9

Fig.1 Types of Literature used in this Thesis

¹⁶ Includes newspaper articles and information of homepages.

Source	Google Scholar	Malmö Library Search	OATD Open Access Thesis and Dissertations	Olympic Library
Amount	75	15	2	9
Key Terms	“Olympism” “Olympic values” “Olympic Games” “Olympic discourse” “Olympic narrative” “Athlete’s Rights” “Athlete Demonstrations” “Rule 51” “Discourse” “Narrative”	“Olympism” “Olympic values” “Olympic Games” “Olympic discourse” “Olympic narrative” “Athlete’s Rights” “Athlete Demonstrations” “Rule 51” “Discourse” “Narrative”	“Olympism” “Olympic Games” “Case Study”	“Olympic Charter”

Fig.2 Platforms and key terms used to locate data

4.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this thesis is done from an inductive and hermeneutic approach, as the data which is derived by interpreting texts is linked with existing research paradigms and theories from a data driven “bottom-up” approach, which aims at explaining and describing a certain phenomenon, instead of testing a hypothesis (Sparkes and Smith, 2014 in Smith and Sparkes, 2016; Smith and Sparkes, 2016; Mantzavinos, 2020). The first part of the analysis looks at the narrative behind Olympism, and makes use of a thematic narrative analysis (Smith and Sparkes, 2016). Keeping this works ontological and epistemological background in mind, narratives are affected and influenced by social and cultural constructions (Flick, 2009). Additionally, this work does not aim to discriminate in regard to showing “contrasting opinions”, which might be in contrary to the argument made in this thesis.

The thematic narrative will illuminate and distill key themes from the discourse surrounding Olympism, which influences athletes, society and policy makers. According to Frank (2010) in Smith and Sparkes (2016, p.262), “an analysis can reveal not just what narratives are about, but also what narratives do on, for and with people.”

The thematic narrative analysis will mainly look at what historic key dates influenced the narrative of Olympism today, and the themes, in this case the values constructed in relation to Rule 50.2 (*ask what*). Subsequently, aspects of CDA will be used to gain insight into dimensions of dominance, control and power relations between athletes and the IOC, which are contextualised in Rule 50.2 and ask *how* these are constructed (van Dijk, 1993, Smith and Sparkes, 2016). According to van Dijk (1993) and Smith and Sparkes (2016) (power) relations are frequently embedded and legitimated within rules, and institutions, this notion makes a further case for adapting an approach inspired by CDA within this work.

By creating a methodological frame which makes use of both, a thematic narrative analysis and aspects of CDA, the complex context behind Olympism as well as the notions of how this context is being reproduced and used in form of Rule 50.2 can be analysed.

What makes this work critical, is a clear socio-political stance, which challenges the growing commercialisation and the absence of a powerful say by athletes within the Olympic movement (van Dijk, 1993; Faut, 2014). As neither CDA nor narrative analysis follow a rigid frame in conducting the research, this approach adopted the guidance for narrative inquiry and discourse analysis by Smith and Sparkes, (2016) and implemented it as follows:

Step 1. Collect data from reputable scholarly sources → (see chapter 4.3)

Step 2. Summarize data from secondary literature

Step 3. Coding - organise data in a sense of topics → (see chapter 2)

Step 4. Identify narrative themes and thematic relationships: First step of analysis → (see chapter 5.1)

Step 5. Describe and interpret: Second step of analysis → interpretation of content → what is said → (see chapter 5.1.1)

Step 6. Represent results, open ended as narratives change over the course of time and are susceptible to be interpreted differently within different socio-historic contexts → (see chapter 5.1.1) (Frank, 2010 in Smith and Sparkes, 2016)

Step 7. Apply CDA to look at *how* power relations are implemented and conceptualised in the case of Rule 50.2; Illuminate who has access to power; Point out how dominance is enacted and reproduced → (see chapter 5.2 et seqq.)

4.5 Ethical Considerations

When choosing (semi-)systematic reviews as a method to gather data, researchers are often unaware of ethical considerations, as they do not engage in interviews and extract sensitive information from “life” research subjects (Zawacki-Richter et. al., 2020; Salmons, 2019). Still it is important to reflect on researchers bias and be transparent throughout this work. This approach can be integrated in Suri (2018) in Zawacki-Richter et. al., (2020) and Suri and Clare (2009) in Zawacki-Richter et. al., (2020, p.48) where the authors indicate three key principles for valuable research synthesis, which are:

- Informed subjectivity and reflexivity
- Purposefully informed selective inclusivity
- Audience-appropriate transparency

These principles are used as a base for this work and integrated in the following quality criteria.

Additionally, this work uses confidential data retrieved from the IOC Research Centre in Lausanne.¹⁷ This data is for research purpose only and will not be passed on to third parties.

4.5.1 Perspective on Research Quality

Due to the stated ontological position, which applies a view towards reality which is pluriperspective, the choice was made to adapt a form of quality evaluation which is study specific, thus suitable to this thesis’ research paradigm (Smith and Sparkes, 2016). In this case according to Sparkes and Smith (2009, 2014) in Smith and Sparkes (2016) traditional criteria such as validity and trustworthiness are being exchanged towards a continuous list of characterising features which are applied within the context of the

¹⁷ Minutes of the IOC Session Amsterdam (1970). See Chapter 2.3.

research. This work adapted the criteria by Smith and Caddick (2012) in Smith and Sparkes (2016), as this research aims to:

1. Contribute to social understanding within the issue of power relations between the IOC and athletes
2. Generate new questions for example, how athletes can further implement their voice within the dominant structures of the IOC
3. Coherence by creating an exhaustive and relevant picture, backed up by a strong theoretical framework
4. Credibility by immersing in the data and keeping a critical mind towards this work as well as making use of critical discussion with fellow co-students and scholars
5. Display transparency throughout this work, from data collection to final data evaluation as well as displaying awareness of researchers bias within this interpretivist research paradigm.

5. Analysis

The aim of the following chapter and subchapters is to illuminate the roots of the commercialisation of the Olympic Movement,¹⁸ as well as to point out the status quo of the narrative surrounding Olympism in the 21st century. Followed by an analysis of Rule 50.2 and the power structures behind it.

5.1 Dropping Old Values: Los Angeles 1984 and “TOP” Programme

In 1964 German the sportphilosopher Hans Lenk talked at the 4th IOA Session in Olympia (Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012).¹⁹ In his speech he referred to the long-lasting continuity of values which have helped to guide the Olympic Movement since the Coubertainian days (Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012).

Yet, the narrative about the values of Olympism took a sharp turn with Juan Antonio Samaranch becoming IOC President (1980-2001) (Edwards, 2012). He modernised the IOC and further introduced a profit-oriented approach towards managing the Olympic Games (Gebauer, 2020). Furthermore, he was the first IOC president to reside full-time in Lausanne and implement a financial compensation for his work as IOC president (Goldblatt, 2016). Hand in hand with growing commercial objectives, he abandoned the traditional value of “amateurism” (at the 1981 IOC Session in Baden-Baden), which was one of the previous building blocks of the Olympic movement (Wagner and Møller Pedersen, 2014; Gebauer, 2020).²⁰ The result was further professionalisation of athletes and the Olympic Games throughout (Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012; Gebauer, 2020). This shows the flexibility of the Olympic movement and the influence of those in charge on the general values and discourse that is taking place. In comparison, Thomas Bach, who is the current IOC president is very engaged in linking

¹⁸ Which was pointed out in chapter 2.

¹⁹ Founded in (1938) “The aim of the International Olympic Academy is to create an international cultural centre in Olympia, to preserve and spread the Olympic Spirit, study and implement the educational and social principles of Olympism and consolidate the scientific basis of the Olympic Ideal, in conformity with the principles laid down by the ancient Greeks and the revivers of the contemporary Olympic Movement, through Baron de Coubertin's initiative” (IOA “THE MISSION.”, n.d.).

²⁰ See chapter 2.1.

Olympism with moral and ethical policies by highlighting their importance in the HCC in Agenda 2020 (MacAloon, 2016).

Another key date which marked the beginning of a new era were the Los Angeles (LA) Olympics in 1984, which caused a different view of the Games as a lucrative event, making a surplus of \$230 Mio, hence leading the Movement into a new era (Zirin and Edwards, 2012; Gebauer, 2020).²¹ The Games were funded completely privately and the selling of TV-rights lead to unprecedented revenues (Zirin and Edwards, 2012; Gebauer, 2020).²²

In addition, the LA Games tested the Olympic “TOP” (The Olympic Partner) programme, which was officially introduced at the Seoul 1988 Games. It led to a cut in the total number of sponsors,²³ but introduced more powerful stakeholders and multinational corporations which resulted in the Games being held in a more corporate environment (Edwards, 2012; Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012; Kim, 2013).

Being a “TOP” sponsor means owning the right to use the Olympic Rings, the name IOC and the NOC logo of the host country in order to promote and sell consumer goods (Kim, 2013; IOC Marketing, n.d.). This way, brands have the chance to connect themselves with the positive values which are frequently attributed with Olympism and the Olympic Games.

According to a global study carried out by Sponsorship Intelligence, that reached out to 16 geographic markets and 12,000 individual respondents, the Olympic Rings “outperformed other key global brands across a range of values, including: “Inspirational”, “Heritage & Tradition”, “Diversity”, “Optimistic”, “Excellence”, “Global” and “Inclusive” (IOC, 2013). These universal values transcend the world of sport, being able to build an association to them is very profitable in order establish an attractive brand (Séguin and O’Reilly, 2008). The introduction of more powerful stakeholders such as multinational brands, means more say and ability to steer the Olympic Movement for their lobby. IOC President Bach highlighted the close ties between commercial stakeholders and the IOC by stating that “Our relationship with the

²¹ Which was of major importance for the popularity of the Games, especially in order to attract future host cities after the financial disaster of Montreal in 1978 (Zirin and Edwards, 2012).

²² 1976 Montreal \$34,9 Mio; 1984 Los Angeles \$236,9 Mio; 1988 Seoul \$402,6 Mio; 2012 London \$2569 Mio. (IOC, 2015 in Smart, 2018).

²³ From 628 official sponsors and suppliers at Montreal 1976, to 34 sponsors, 64 suppliers and 5 licenses at LA 1984 (Edwards, 2012).

Worldwide Olympic Partners is more than a commercial relationship; it is a partnership” (IOC Marketing, n.d.).

Only one year after officially establishing the “TOP”-Programme, Hoberman (1986) in Chatziefstathiou (2012) pointed towards the growing interest of the Olympic Movement in favour of commercialisation, instead of reflecting on the values which are consolidated in the Olympic Charter.

Four years after the LA Games and 24 years after the speech by Lenk (1964) in Chatziefstathiou and Henry (2012), the Bulgarian Nadia Lekarska spoke at the IOA. She rallied for a modernisation of “Olympism” in “order to fit the requirements of present times”. She highlighted the need “to draw a line between what we believe to be immutable and/or in need of change according to today's realities” (Lekarska, 1988 in Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012, p. 244). At the same time, she argues that Coubertin’s core principles remain unchallenged, but also hints towards emerging threats to their integrity (Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012).

This statement highlights very well the conflict within the Olympic Movement. Being committed to historic values, but also pursuing to stay relevant and in power in the more and more complex structure of international sport, which can only be done by extending and adjusting internal objects.

5.1.1 Contended: Olympic Values in the 21. Century

Thirty-two years after the speech given by Nadia Lekarska at the IOA, one can only guess what she meant by emerging threats to the integrity of the Olympic values.

Yet, one threatening trend which can be observed within the Olympic narrative is the growing use of market related language, such as the term “Olympic brand” which penetrated through and was adopted and conceptualised by the Olympic movement in no time (MacAloon, 2008).

Many scholars and advocates of Olympism fear that the Olympic sports industry is taking over the values of the Olympic Movement in order to extend the appeal of their brands and adorn themselves with the universal ideals of Olympism. In the long run, this development will lead to a decline of value of the Olympic ideals (Schneider, 2000; MacAloon, 2008; Milton-Smith, 2002 in Chatziefstathiou, 2012; Smart, 2018). According to Smart (2018, p.254), the embracing of corporate interests and commercialisation “diminished the ethos Olympism, reducing it in value to marketing

rhetoric employed to protect the brand image and promote the corporate reputation of the Games.” Furthermore, the IOC increasingly displays compliance with key stakeholders (media, governments, IFs) and grant them “so much power that it undermines its own cultural heritage” (Wagner and Møller Pedersen, 2014, p.170).²⁴ This recognition of external stakeholders re-enforces their power and jeopardises the IOC’s ability to independently steer the Olympic Movement.

One example of corporations taking over spiritual symbols of the Games is the Olympic Torch Relay, which now facilitates corporations to determine who can inherit the role of torch-bearer in order to please sponsors, thus claiming Olympic rituals for their cause (MacAloon, 2008).

Furthermore, sponsoring of brands such as Coca-Cola and McDonalds, which are frequently criticized for promoting goods that lead to severe health problems contributes to the development of what Harris (2012) in Smart (2018, p.247) refers to as “out-of control consumerism”. Additionally, having the petroleum corporation BP, which is responsible for the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, as a sustainability partner for the London 2012 Games can be attributed to sheer “greenwashing” on the behalf of BP (Edwards, 2012; Salome, van Bottenburg and van den Heuvel, 2013).

The current commercial development culminates in the IOC referring to the “TOP” sponsors as the “foundation of the staging of the Olympic Games”, therefore neglecting the role of athletes as carriers of the Olympic Games (IOC Marketing, n.d., p.12). Already in 1908, de Coubertin (2000, 1908) in Smart (2018) described commercial interests and the pursuit of profit as risk for the Olympic Movement. Since the days of de Coubertin the Olympic Motto was *citius, altius, fortius*. Yet, while de Coubertin understood this slogan as quest for athletic and moral perseverance, it seems to be reinterpreted into a commercial slogan, which perfectly fits in the corporate related language of the Olympic Sports Industry (Edwards, 2012). The main focus today seems to be the striving for always greater numbers, what Gebauer (2020) critically refers to as quantitative growth.²⁵ However the Fundamental Principles of Olympism, which have been stated in Chapter 1, aim for goals that transcend beyond mere numbers, these goals

²⁴ While athletes who are arguably the main stakeholders of the Olympic Games, are designated to abide rules and regulations in an institutionalised environment that smothers their objectives (Schwab, 2018). See Chapter 5.3.

²⁵ Growth in any sense such as: Attendance numbers, number of contests, profit and records (Gebauer, 2020).

can not be measured quantitatively, “but in quality and the meaning they produce for those involved” (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019; Gebauer, 2020, p.96).

Over the past 120 years Olympism has been adapted by the Olympic Movement and associated with values present at the given times. For de Coubertin internationalism and amateurism, as well as hellenic ideals such as the unity of body, mind and soul acted as the foundation for “his Olympism” (Chatziefstathiou, 2011). Even though, some of these noble values are still being highlighted today, this is happening more and more in the context of commercials and brand promotion.

Wamsley (2004) in Chatziefstathiou (2012, p.388) fittingly describes Olympism “as a metaphoric empty flask to be filled by the next political, economic, educational opportunist”. From a Foucauldian perspective Olympism is “constituted by all that was said in all the statements that named it, divided it up, described it, explained it, traced its developments, indicated its various correlations, judged it, and possibly gave it speech by articulating, in its name, discourses that were to be taken as its own” (Foucault, 1972, p.32). Furthermore, the Olympics are a discursive arena consisting of opposite discourses, (value driven discourse vs. commercial interests) that incorporate contrasting strategies “which are different mutually opposed, composed, and supposed”, which no longer comply with the lofty goals, set out by de Coubertin (Tavares, 2008; Brown, 2012; Foucault, 1980 in Brown, 2012, p.152).

Today, the growing adaptation and association of the values of Olympism with corporate sponsors might in the long run harm their intrinsic and universal value (Smart, 2018). It seems like the values of Olympism are not of primary importance any longer. However, they are used as the main reason to legitimize the Olympic movement.

The IOC's formulation of Agenda 2020 as result of the negative backlash due to the human rights situation surrounding Sochi 2014 can be viewed skeptically (Grell, 2018). Reason for this position is the fact, that Agenda 2020 does not consist of fixed rules but a formulation of vague recommendations and therefore does not challenge the power structures within the organisation (IOC, 2014; MacAloon, 2016 in Thorpe and Wheaton, 2019). Furthermore, the structure of Agenda 2020 resembles more an event based program, than a sport event with the goal to improve international relations and moral and ethical conduct (Thorpe and Wheaton, 2019).

With this in mind, the threat of losing the integrity of the values that Lekarska (1988) referred to is dangerously close. In the near future the values of Olympism might be associated with consumerism, commercialisation and gigantism (Rohde, 2018). In this

context, Lenk (2015) in Rohde (2018, p.209) calls for the need “to develop a modernized Olympic philosophy of the values and ‘Save Olympic Spirit’, not in a way of completely abandoning them but adjusting within a post-modern context. As dispositions of a given era do not continuously follow each other nor disappear, when new elements occur (Foucault, 2004, 2007 in Raffnsøe, Gudmand-Høyer and Thaning, 2014). Another approach would display more continuity with the original values of Olympism and would require the context to be changed in order to fit the values. Even when this tightrope act which Tavares (2010) in Rohde (2018, p.209) refers to as “reconciliation between continuity and change” is achieved, the narrative surrounding Olympism will be far from over (Brown, 2012).

5.2 Establishing of Rule 50.2 in the Olympic Charter

Building on the aforementioned, the Olympic Charter is currently mirroring its commercial development. Of the 106 pages in the (2019) Charter two are dedicated to the fundamental principles and values, while the remaining content deals with legal, organizational and business related affairs (Loland, 1995; IOC Olympic Charter, 2019).

1967 was the first time an Olympic Charter explicitly addressed the prohibition of political expression as part of the regulations for candidate cities (IOC Olympic Charter, 1967; Faut, 2014). The rule was typical for its time, a period that was characterised by the Cold War, Civil Rights Movement and a climate of uprising (Shahlaei, 2018; Faut, 2014).²⁶ In the following years and due to numerous incidents the rule was adopted and incorporated in the Olympic Charter within a more comprehensive and frequently changing framework, which today constitutes as Rule 50 (Faut, 2014).

“Rule 50. Advertising, demonstrations, propaganda”, which is described in Chapter 1.1 currently consists of two separate regulations (Rule 50.1 and 50.2). It is combined with a total of nine “Bye-Laws” that inter alia provide information about the placement of manufacturer’s brand logos, as well as the use of Olympic mascots for advertisement (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019). A clear measure towards commercial expansion and concentration of power was taken in the 1990s, when the IOC added the following notion to Rule 50 (Faut, 2014).²⁷ “The IOC Executive Board alone has the

²⁶ See OPHR in Chapter 2.2 which was founded in the same year.

²⁷ Which at the time was Rule 60 (IOC Olympic Charter, 1991).

competence to determine the principles and conditions under which any form of publicity may be authorized” (IOC Olympic Charter, 1991, p.60).

This statement symbolises the penetration of a neo-liberal and commercially driven discourse into the Olympic Charter and can be associated with Foucault's (1980) “mechanics of power”, according to which dominant discourses regulate the behavior of society and institutions. Reason for the IOC to be able to gain such a dominant position are its internal power structures. The executive Committee possess a lot of influence and most of its members are hungry for power, wealth and prestige. In this case the “Olympic Family” is a great example for nepotism, and continues to be a circle closed for outsiders (Koss, 2011).

According to Culpan and Meier (2016) in Culpan (2019), neo-liberalism is now deeply embedded as dominant discourse in the realm of professional sport and its institutions. Even though, these institutions are organised in a pyramidal structure, the summit does not distribute all power, as major commercial stakeholders and governments are actively shaping the Olympic Games (Foucault, 1980; Foucault, 1978 in Markula and Pringle, 2006; Cottrell and Nelson, 2010; Kim, 2013). This is according to the perspective of Giddens (1984), who argues that power relations are always present, although they might not be equal, they are always mutual. Relating to the power structures involved in the Olympic Movement, Foucault (1980) claims that power is executed only at a cost, in this case the cost is visible in the absence of accountability, transparency, athlete participation and exclusion of critical voices (Tavares, 2008).

5.2.1 The IOC Athletes’ Commission Rule 50.2 Guidelines

The latest addition to Rule 50 were the IOC Athletes’ Commission (2020) Guidelines for Rule 50, released ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.²⁸ These guidelines address issues regarding the much debated Rule 50.2 and were supposed to educate athletes on their conduct (Elsborg, 2020).

Key argument of these guidelines is the reference towards the fundamental principle that sport and Olympic Games are politically neutral and supposedly “separate from political, religious or any other type of interference” (IOC Athletes’ Commission,

²⁸ Which were postponed due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and thus will be held from July 23. until August 8. 2021 (IOC, IPC, TOKYO 2020 ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND TOKYO METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCE NEW DATES FOR THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES TOKYO 2020, 2020).

2020). To discuss the tightly interwoven character of the Olympic Games and politics is not the aim of this work. Yet, history and the ever growing research body on this topic displays on several occasions how the Olympic Games are connected with world politics. This notion is supported by Tavares' (2008, p.449) argument, he states that "if we observe the basic concept of Aristotle that politics are born of a diversity of interests, only in a very innocent way could the absence of politics be imagined in the Olympic Movement."

The modern Games have been adopted for political purposes from the very beginning. For example by the Greek royalty which strategically made use of the 1896 Games to strengthen their public appeal (Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012).²⁹

The guideline points towards "the unique nature of the Olympic Games which enables athletes from all over the world to come together in peace and harmony" (IOC Athletes' Commission, 2020, p.1). This statement highlights how the Olympic narrative and the associated values such as peace and harmony are used as justification in a broader context of restriction.

In addition, the guideline contains the "Coubertainian" argument that the Olympic Games improve intercultural understanding, and mutual respect (Loland, 1995; IOC Athletes' Commission, 2020). According to Talkington, Lengel, and Byram (2004) in Perry and Southwell (2011) achieving intercultural competences requires critical examination of culture and cultural (self-) awareness. Yet, it seems like critical questioning, especially of the IOCs own cultural and socio-historical background, is frequently neglected, as it might hinder to reproduce the Olympic narrative (Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández; 2012; Lenskyj, 2012; Kidd, 2013).

The guidelines continue by directly addressing the athletes and argues that this framework was formulated for their sake (IOC Athletes' Commission, 2020). Which is a typical strategy applied by the IOC when being pressured, as the example of Spanish IOC representative Samaranch (junior) shows (Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011). When being asked about the protests ahead of the Beijing 2008 Olympics, he referred to the Games being for the athletes and that any protest might spoil their hard work (Samaranch, 2008 in Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011).

²⁹ Furthermore notable historical examples are: 1936 Berlin Olympics, misused for propaganda by the Nazi Regime, 1948 London Olympics, excluded Japan and Germany for their role in World War II, 1970/75 Olympic Movement excluded apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia, 1976 Montreal Olympics, boycott by 33 African Nations, 1980 Moscow Olympics, boycott by the USA, 1984 LA Olympics, boycott by the USSR (Brown, 2012; Zirin and Edwards, 2012; Gebauer, 2020). Additional examples for governments intervening in the Olympic Games were the state sanctioned doping programmes in the former GDR and recently in Russia (Cuffey, 2018).

However, restricting the athletes' ability to influence the movement, when he/she is on the podium and the most powerful, would in the sense of Giddens (1984) be a direct power barrier, implemented in order to hinder them from actively participating. Furthermore, without the ability to use the spotlight provided by the Olympic Games to express political beliefs, athletes as agents are severely restricted in their ability to exercise power which implies the ability to "make a difference" (Giddens, 1984; Cottrell and Nelson, 2011 in O'Bonsawin, 2015).³⁰

From a Foucauldian perspective the "exercise of power creates knowledge and conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (Foucault, 1980, p.52). The exercise of power in this case is restricted by a disciplinary power, which assesses and judges normality in a sense of following the norms (Foucault, 1980; Elisheva, 1997).

In conclusion according to IOC Athletes' Commission (2020) Athletes have the opportunity to express their opinions, while respecting local law:

- During press conferences and interviews, i.e. in the mixed zones, in the International Broadcasting Centre (IBC) or the Main Media Centre (MMC)
- At team meetings
- On digital or traditional media, or on other platforms.

This statement is inherently questionable as the IOC HCC (2018) failed to build a fundamental basis of Human Rights which applies for all Olympic Games. Instead, it focuses only on the Human Rights which are applicable in the host country. Therefore, human rights which include the right of free expression will be subject to severe irregularities within the host countries (Grell, 2018; Schwab, 2018). As not only authoritarian governments (China, Russia, Brazil) have a different approach towards the protection of human rights and marginalised groups.³¹

³⁰ Being an agent in the sense of Giddens (1984, p.14) means "to be able to deploy a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others."

³¹ For example, the USA did not ratify the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, nor the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport (Kidd and Donnelly, 2000).

5.3 Athletes' Role in the Power Dynamics of Rule 50.2

The binding effect of the norms mentioned above are mirrored in principle seven of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism. Which states that “belonging to the Olympic Movement requires compliance with the Olympic Charter and recognition by the IOC” (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019, p.12).

According to Schwab (2018), this key phrase establishes the power and control of the IOC over its athletes. This power relation is explicitly visible within the framework of Rule 50.2, which denies athletes the fundamental human right of speaking up and expressing their cause (O'Bonsawin, 2015; Schwab, 2018). While the IOC is keen to point to the apolitical character of sport, Kidd and Donnelly (2000, p.133) argue that (human) rights which are referred to in the Olympic Charter (2019) and IOC HCC (2018), are ingrained in a constant political context,³² which “involves complex ongoing processes of assertion, struggle and negotiation between competing interests in the context of changing social, economic, political and ideological circumstances”. Hence the fundament of the Olympic Charter is inherently displaying a deep ambiguity.

Laurence Halsted, who is a fencer for team Great Britain and Olympian of the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games, as well as core member of “The True Athletes Project”,³³ spoke ahead of the Rio 2016 Games about the individual responsibility that is needed in order to have the ability to change and engage in a discourse about the Olympic Games (“Team.”, n.d.; Halsted, 2016). He argues that, due to their major involvement it's especially Olympians who hold the right to form the discourse around the Olympic Games from within, hence urges them to speak up without being afraid of the consequences in what he refers to as a “new paradigm” (Halsted, 2016). This argument is in line with Foucault's (1980, p.38) talk about the power structures in prisons, which highlights the importance of making discourses visible from within an institution, as he states that “with the prisons there would be no sense in limiting oneself to discourses *about* prisons; just as important are the discourses which arise within the prison,...”).

Scholars such as Grano (2009) in O'Bonsawin (2015) interpret the lack of will to express political issues as a gross misconduct on the behalf of athletes, as they have the

³² Fundamental principle 4 of the (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019, p.11) states: “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.”

³³ Which aims to educate athletes about mindfulness and mental skills training in order to reduce psychological distress and foster awareness amongst athletes of all levels (“Our Story”.n.d.).

chance to reach out to society due to their broad range of appeal, especially during the media attention provided by the Olympic Games (Taylor, 1999; Tavares, 2008). However, for many athletes a significant reason for not breaking the silence is the fear of suffering a financial backlash and drop of sponsorship income (Cunningham, 2007 in Cunningham and Reagan Jr., 2011). Furthermore, sanctions such as disqualifications or the exclusion of Olympic Games can seriously harm an athletes' career. The career window of professional athletes is very narrow, often in their eyes risking the chance to win a medal by addressing social or political issues, is not worth it (Faut, 2014). Also, athletes are dependent on the benevolence of their coaches and respective NOCs. Speaking up will most likely hinder them from being nominated to Olympic Games. In this case there is a chain of dependence running from the federation to the coaches, and further down to the athletes.³⁴ In addition, one must keep in mind the numerous state sponsored athletes in China and Russia, who are subject to especially high degrees of control (Ge et al., 2019).

This way of surveillance in order to stay within the boundaries of what is considered as normal and lawful can be related to Foucault's' (1980) notion of the panopticon. The panopticon is an architectural structure of surveillance within a prison (Foucault, 1980). Designed by Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century. It aims at effectively implementing power by what Foucault refers to as "inspecting gaze" where each person is exercising surveillance over, and against him/herself (Foucault, 1980, p.155).

Yet, according to Giddens (1984) one must distinguish between the inability to act because of lack of choice, and the absence of ability to act. While athletes participate in the Olympic Games, they do find themselves in a complex power relation with the IOC's regulating body and corporate interests. They are the ones carrying the Games, even though powerful stakeholders such as multinational corporations and governments are influencing policies (Kidd, 2010; MacAloon, 2011; Grell, 2018). If they breach the rules they can expect to be expelled and shun, see Smith, Carlos and Norman in 1968 or get away with being cussed as the example of Damien Hooper showed in 2012 (O'Bonsawin, 2015; Gebauer 2020). Anyhow, more and more athletes don't shy away from expressing their beliefs and take the chance to make a statement, therefore, exercise power in a bottom-up approach, which highlights the multi-directionality of

³⁴ In the Foucauldian sense, the federation as institution can be seen as a dispositive (Foucault, 1980).

power (Foucault, 1980; Elisheva, 1997; Cottrell and Nelson, 2010). Furthermore, continuing silence on the behalf of athletes will lead to the reproduction of what Giddens' (1984, p.25) theory refers to as "Structuration" which is expressed in the "conditions governing the continuity or transmutation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems." In this case a social system which disables athletes from raising their voice and claiming their rights.³⁵

Ann Peel, who is a retired Canadian race walker as well as founding chairwomen of AthletesCAN and OATH,³⁶³⁷ represents the opinion that athletes and citizens share the same rights (Koss, 2011). Those rights are rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes the right to freedom of expression (Koss, 2011; UDHR, 2015). Scott Fujita, who is Executive member of the NFL Players Association argues that "athletes are "people first" and athletes a "distant second" (Fujita, 2013). His statement points towards the multiple and often opposing discourses that athletes, and (all other individuals) are bound by (Foucault, 1972 in Markula and Pringle, 2006).

Still to this day, athletes are frequently criticised by the public for addressing political issues, which are seemingly out of their reach, while Hollywood celebrities are often celebrated for the same actions (Kaufman and Wolff, 2010; Cunningham and Reagan, Jr., 2011; Bryan, 2018 in Szczyglowski 2019). In this regard there is a strong bias in society athletes are citizens, they have the right to vote, therefore they should not be denied the right to participate in social and political discourse (Kaufman and Wolff, 2010). In order to overcome this bias agents need to immerse in the process of "reflexive monitoring" which enables them to be aware of their structural situation and "the contexts in which they move" (Giddens, 1984, p.5). Nevertheless, even if athletes chose to make a stance their impact might be limited or time-delayed.³⁸ External and internal power dynamics have the ability to condemn their actions (Hartman, 1996 in O'Bonsawin, 2015).

Lenk (1984) is well aware of the contradictions between the agenda of commercial, political and public interests in relation to the rights of athletes and pointed

³⁵ The only institution which athletes in severe cases can address is the "CAS" Court of Arbitration for Sport. Yet it very rarely overrules the decisions made by the IOC or NOCs (Schwab, 2018).

³⁶ AthletesCAN's goal is the development and effective representation and education of Athletes. As well as giving them the resources to build and formalize feedback mechanisms across the sport system ("Our Story", n.d.).

³⁷ Goal of OATH was to make sport ethical and accountable by working together with the IOC, after the corruption scandals surrounding the Salt Lake City bid in 1998. Yet, the IOC felt threatened and rejected any cooperation (Koss, 2011).

³⁸ See, the example of Smith, Carlos and Norman in Chapter 2.2.

towards their need to be protected. This conflict of interest between these stakeholders inherently implies a clash of opinion and a struggle for power (Morgan, 1996 in Tavares, 2008). In this case the absence of a powerful and independent democratic structure within the IOC, responsible for athletes' rights is visible (Koss, 2011; Faut, 2014). The IOC is accountable only to itself, as it is the official owner of the Olympic Games (IOC Olympic Charter, 2019). Without neutral outside institutions controlling the IOC, there is significant lack of checks and balances.³⁹

Athletes once elected in the IOC Athletes' Commission have to take an oath to 100% speak in the interests of the IOC (Koss, 2011). In addition, athletes, who want to campaign, need to be backed by their NOC which makes sure that the athlete's attitude is towards cooperation and not investigation (Wassong, 2018). MacAloon (2011) argues that critical athletes such as South Korean Moon Dae-sung, who campaigned for himself at the Beijing 2008 Olympics are not welcome to have a say within the Olympic Movement. All in all the IOC Athletes' Commission which was founded in 1981 did integrate the Athlete in the power structures, but did not help to change them (Tavares, 2008; Wassong, 2018). The feeling of being underrepresented and sidelined by SGBs such as the IOC can be associated with the growing number of athletes joining player organisations and unions such as the WPA, which was established in 2014 (Schwab, 2018).⁴⁰ The "duality of Structure" that Giddens (1984) refers to is expressed by athletes accessing and making use of the same social structures, laws and institutions that are involved in the IOCs policies and referred to in the Olympic Charter. This can be observed by their approach towards institutions such as "The Centre for Sports and Human Rights" and their reference to the UDHR.⁴¹

Previous to athletes as a social group being able employ power, it is important that every athlete on the micro-level individually develops a critical consciousness in the sense of Giddens (1984) notion of "reflexive monitoring". Resulting in awareness about their

³⁹ Although NGOs are regularly pressuring the IOC such as the "Human Rights Watch" ahead of Agenda 2020 (MacAloon, 2016).

⁴⁰ In 2017 the WPA launched a Universal Declaration of Players Rights in order to protect players from ongoing and systemic human rights violations in global sport. It brings together 85,000 players through more than 100 player associations in over 60 countries. Its role is to ensure that the voice of organised players is heard at the highest levels in the decision-making of international sport ("World Players Association Launches Universal Declaration of Player Rights." n.d.)

⁴¹ Which includes intergovernmental organisations, governments, sports bodies, athletes, hosts, sponsors, broadcasters, civil society representatives, trade unions, employers and their associations, and national human rights institutions (Schwab, 2018). Their goal is to "align the world of sport with the fundamental principles of human dignity, human rights, and labour rights" ("Principles." n.d.).

individual actions and role in the power structures of SGBs, before being able to challenge macro-social policies (Elisheva, 1997).

6. Discussion

6.1 Discussing the Narrative of Olympism

This thesis aims to illuminate and critically analyse the ambiguity between Article 50.2 and the values of Olympism.

On the basis of the growing commercial interests and stakeholder influence in the Olympic Games it is apparent how the values and therefore the narrative surrounding Olympism are subject to continuous change. The narrative inquiry suggests that the values used to justify the moral status of the Olympic Games are now being adapted into a neoliberal agenda which has been implemented by the Olympic Movement in the early 1980s. This finding is in line with the work of Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández (2011) and Goldblatt (2016), who bring attention to the change in governance with Samaranch becoming IOC president. The recent adoption of a commercialised language is a key finding which further highlights this development. In his study MacAloon (2008) analyses the influence of corporations on the Olympic Movement and how these influences are being mirrored in the organisational language. He adds that:

“The commercial branding of the Olympics and everything associated with it is now part of Olympic historical heritage, not the other way around. Just so, it is no paradox whatsoever that money and business follow meaning, here as elsewhere” (MacAloon, 2008, p.2068).

Foucault (1972) confirms the notion that attitudes and power relations of society are being expressed and reflected in language and discourses. This indicates the extent to which the commercial discourse has penetrated the Olympic Movement. Core symbols such as the Olympic motto *citius, altius, fortius* have been adopted to symbolise sheer quantitative growth, neglecting the intrinsic value of the Fundamental Principles of Olympism (Gebauer, 2020). This development does not only threaten the old values, but seriously harms them. While Lekarska (1988) in Chatziefstathiou and Henry (2012) touched upon threats to the integrity of Olympic values, current tendencies such as the formulation of Agenda 2020 indicate that the IOC is embracing a full on commercial approach using values and human rights primarily as “white washing” due to external pressure (IOC, 2014; Grell, 2018). Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández (2011) add the IOC’s ability to control the Olympic discourse in society, by reproducing it via its own often

uncritical educational institutions. This way the values of Olympism are being kept alive and the public is being misled.

The development of the Olympic narrative is of major importance for a multidisciplinary field of research. From sports history and sociology to managerial and organisational fields such as “organisational culture, business, event and peak performance management, globalization and public policy” (Wagner and Møller Pedersen, 2014, p. 161). Furthermore, it helps to gain an understanding of the establishing and evolution of a powerful global phenomenon. This phenomenon is rooted in the ideas of a small elitist group (Goldblatt, 2016). Illuminating how this group attained power by strategically choosing its discourses and the representation of values is crucial to understand the power of language and discourse (Moscovici, 1986 in Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández 2011). The development of the 1980s did not only lead to restructuring towards a profit-oriented approach.⁴² It also points towards the decline of governance by an elitist group, which formulated their own narrative, without major external interference.

An alternative interpretation added to these finding is the argument, that with a stronger profit-oriented approach and more stakeholders involved the focus and pressure to implement accountability and good governance increases.

6.2 Discussing Rule 50.2 and Final Results

Rule 50.2 can be seen as prime example for the ambiguities and vagueness within the Olympic Charter, which on one hand refers to sports as human right, then goes on to claim an apolitical nature and furthermore prohibits its athletes to express political and religious believes. These ambiguities are thoroughly debated and lead to discrepancies within the scholarly field. Niehaus (2011) describes patterns of inherent ambiguities within the Olympic Movement. He concludes that these ambiguities help to promote the idea universally. For him, the openness and vague formulations are attractive and primarily aid as a tool for inclusion and spreading the notion of Olympism.

O’Bonsawin (2015) and Shahlaei (2018) point out the ambiguities between the idealistic narrative of Olympism and the restrictive policies against athletes, which culminate in Rule 50.2. and therefore, the denial of the Right of Expression. It seems as

⁴² See chapter 5.1.

if the IOC has the monopoly on promoting human rights, while athletes are discouraged to use their spotlight in order to point towards human rights issues (O'Bonsawin, 2015; Shahlaei, 2018). This finding implies that the IOC is well aware of the power and reach of athletes. Therefore, it aims to prevent them from making political statements. This way the IOC stays in control and sponsors and commercial interests, which have arguably replaced the athlete as foundation for the games are being protected. While athletes' rights are being marginalised.

The Athletes' Commission is actively steering the discourse by stating that Rule 50.2 is for the sake of the athletes, this way they disconnect completely from any commercial or political ulterior motives. This strategy is typical for the narrative of the IOC when being subject to pressure. It could be witnessed by the argument of Samaranch (junior), when being confronted with critic due to the Chinese government's harsh actions against dissidents, ahead of the Beijing 2008 Olympics (Cazorla, Minguet and Fernández, 2011, IOC Athletes' Commission, 2020).⁴³

While athletes are being caught in a web of powerful stakeholders, they furthermore lack access to an organ within the IOC that thoroughly promotes their rights. The result is a growing number of athletes joining unions, which can be associated with the growing commercialisation and exploitation of their interests. The work of Elisheva (1997) gives detailed insight in community empowerment. This approach could very well be beneficial for athletes.

Nevertheless, at this point, it is still up to the individual athlete to actively chose to make a statement and therefore claim their ability to implement power and "make a difference" (Giddens, 1984). The theoretical framework adopted the approach to power of Foucault (1980) and Giddens (1984). This helped to highlight the notion, that even though athletes are finding themselves in a web of power plays, they too possess power and are able to implement it in a bottom-up approach, by raising their voice and uniting themselves in unions or similar organisations. In addition, relating the Olympic Charter with Foucault's (1980) "mechanics of power" is a great way of showing how dominant discourses, in this case the focus on commercial growth regulate the behavior of society and institutions. The same "mechanics of power" apply for athletes who are not willing to speak up, due to fear of losing sponsorships and commercial gains. Therefore, applying "reflexive monitoring" on the behalf of athletes, as well as solidarity amongst athletes is

⁴³ See chapter 5.2.1.

needed in order to understand how the individual (athlete) is contributing to existing power structures (Giddens, 1984; Elisheva, 1997). Building upon this, it is important for athletes to unify their interests, values and understanding of Human Rights, to gain knowledge and take charge in order to be able to actively change the power structures from within (Elisheva, 1997).

6.3 Limitations and Further Research Suggestions

As with the majority of studies, the design and results of the current study is subject to limitations which should be kept in mind and are explained below.

This work just as any other qualitative research contains a certain amount of personal bias, which in this case is rooted in the critical socio-political stance of the researcher, essential for elements of a CDA and the ontological position which guides this research (van Dijk, 1993; Faut, 2004; O’Gorman and McIntosh, 2015).^{44 45}

While the research body on the Olympic Movement is very large, it is also inherently diverse. There is no problem in immersing oneself in data in order to reach an appropriate sample size. Still, in this case time is a major factor which is needed to filter out relevant literature and themes for the analysis, therefore a more longitudinal approach would have helped to gain access to even more specific data. The addition of interviews with Olympic athletes would have further strengthened this body of work and increased its validity. Yet, one must keep in mind, that athletes might be afraid of speaking out due to repercussions by their NOC or federation. For now, this thesis can act as a solid framework which paints a relevant and exhaustive picture and generates new questions.⁴⁶

Furthermore, given the limited extent of this research, it is challenging to provide enough historical and socio-cultural background information for the reader, which is needed to grasp the complexity of the Olympic Movement without slimming down the analysis. The connection between profit interests and IOC policies is evident, yet still complex and multilayered. Therefore, this thesis actively decided to say a lot about a certain phenomenon, in this case the penetration of commercialisation into Olympism and how this development links to rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter.

⁴⁴ See chapter 4.4.

⁴⁵ See chapter 4.1.1.

⁴⁶ See chapter 4.5.1.

A strong methodological framework and precise research question that connects significant themes is crucial in order not to get lost in the abundant literature and interesting themes surrounding the Olympic Games. During the course of this research the complexity of the notion of Olympism became apparent. In order to answer the research question, it was essential to determine the state and narrative surrounding modern Olympism, before being able to focus on Rule 50.2 of the Olympic Charter.

In addition, it must be noted that the significance of this work is limited, as data selected for this thesis is predominantly from a western perspective.⁴⁷ This leads to the need for future scholars to engage with the notion of Olympism from a non-occidental perspective.

The ability to be critical is crucial for this thesis. Being able to research, without being subject to outside pressure is not taken for granted. Too often governments force a certain picture of sports and are heavily involved in the realm of sports governance.

While the Olympic Research Centre in Lausanne is able to provide information by giving access to papers from IOC sessions and pointing towards the chance to download historic Olympic Charters, there seems to be a limited interest in research on the evolution of Rule 50.2. In comparison to business related scholarly work, the research on athletes' rights in the context of the IOC is relatively slim. This highlights the reproduction of the marginalised role of athletes. Which leads to the proposal that future qualitative research conducts interviews which exclusively focus on the role of athletes within the power structures of the IOC. This approach could be backed up by a large-scale quantitative study in the form of a survey addressed at Olympic Athletes. The result would be representative of Athletes within the IOC and their representative NOCs. This could help improve the IOC's and NOC's governance and improve athletes' conditions and establish mutual trust amongst athletes and SGBs.

Furthermore, with many athletes joining unions their impact on SGBs could be analysed. Building upon this is the question of what form of organization or institution is suited best to represent athletes' interests.

The Olympic narrative is a process subject to constant change and therefore worthwhile of studying. Sports scholars should closely watch whether the IOC in the

⁴⁷ Even though scholars such as Taylor (1999) and O'Bonsawin (2015) employ a post-colonial research paradigm. Plus the exception of Taiwanese based Leo Hsu (2000).

future embraces a more athlete and human rights friendly policy as it is suggested in Agenda 2020 (IOC, 2014).

7. Conclusion

The Olympic Movement, its culture and values have been infiltrated by the conflicting interests of a broad range of stakeholders such as multinational corporations, media, governments, NGOs, athletes and IFs (Schneider, 2000). Previous to Samaranch's rule and the commercialisation and professionalisation of the Olympic Games, the values associated with the Games were regarded by IOC members as superior to all outside pressure and commercial interests (Zakus and Skinner, 2008; Wagner and Møller Pedersen, 2014).⁴⁸

Scholars such as Niehaus (2011, p.75) claim that the vagueness implied by Olympism is not inherently negative, but can be linked to its international and cross-cultural appeal, "as the semantic gaps can be filled with whatever is constructed to be one's own." This characteristic vagueness of Olympism is inherently ambiguous. It can be used for critical educational purposes, commercial exploitation, or political propaganda, it is receptive to a wide range of interpretations (Takács, 1992). While the original Coubertainian values are used as justification for the notion of Olympism, they are being frequently adapted in a commercial context (MacAloon, 2008; Smart, 2018). Even though, Olympism and its values are constructed and founded upon typical ideas of the epoch of de Coubertin, if set in a critical framework they, according to Culpan (2019, p. 854/855), do provide a framework which has the ability to question "the wider societal, moral, political and commercial influences and issues that sport and the Olympic Movement generate." Scholars such as Wamsely (2004) in Chatziefstathiou (2012) go as far as arguing that Olympism in a critical context does not depend on the Olympic Games. Damkjaer (2004) claims that current Olympism has distanced itself so far from its core values, that he consequently refers to it as post-Olympism.

Going back to the research question, the conformance of Rule 50.2 and the values of Olympism, the argument is that there can not be a decisive answer, as Olympism is not a neutral or fixed term, but in a constant evolutionary change and subject to contrasting interpretations depending on the location and historical period (DaCosta, 2006; MacAloon, 2011; Chatziefstathiou, 2012; Chatziefstathiou and Henry, 2012; Smart, 2018). Therefore, the conclusion refers to the current discourse and state around Olympism. The final argument is that Rule 50.2 and the athletes' role in the current

⁴⁸ Which is only partly true, as political agendas frequently penetrated and made use of the values of Olympism. Best example are the Berlin 1936 Games (Brown, 2012).

discourse around Olympism, with its drastic commercialisation and external influences can be viewed as significant allegory of the contended state of modern Olympism. Rule 50.2 is giving the IOC a significant amount of power and is a constant threat to athletes who want to make use of their human right of freedom of opinion and expression.

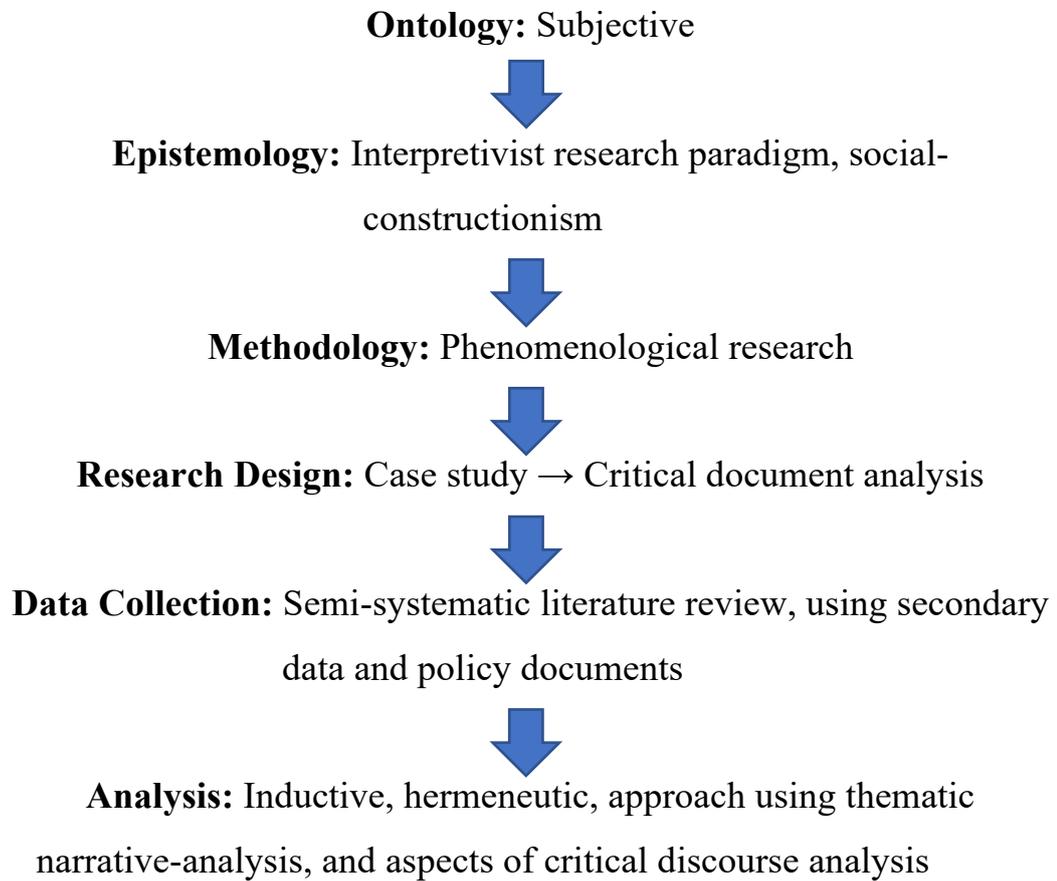
For athletes, education about their rights self-awareness and reflexivity are crucial in order to exercise power and solve conflicts with stakeholders (Markula and Pringle 2006). Consistent with this notion is the statement by Foucault (1980, p.52) who argues that “it is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge; it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.” Yet, this requires that Athletes want to be educated and part take in decisions being made by the IOC (Tavares, 2008).⁴⁹ In this case a sense of “reflexive monitoring” on the behalf of athletes is needed (Giddens, 1984). They must be aware of how their actions might be hindering their ability to implement power.

Building upon that, Athletes need to equip themselves with “the techniques of management, and also the ethics, the *ethos*, the practice of self, which would allow these games of power to be played with a minimum of domination” (Foucault, 1987 in Markula and Pringle, 2006, p.38). Sandburg (1936, p.43) stated, “Sometime they’ll give a war and nobody will come”. Athletes should consider applying this idea to the Olympic Games. Yet, previous to this they need to unite in terms of mutual social values and understanding of human rights. This will strengthen their agency hence the ability to alter their environment and make an impact (Giddens, 1984; Elisheva, 1997). This might aid the IOC to redetermine what group of stakeholders inherently portrays the true fundament of the Games. Yet, history showed on several occasion that outside pressure is needed in order to change the power structures at the core of the IOC (Thorpe and Wheaton, 2019).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ A 2001 study conducted by the Olympic Research Group of Mainz University involving 165 Olympic athletes came to the conclusion that although many athletes want more say in representation in the IOC, they inter alia fear that further democratisation can hinder the managerial efficiency of the organisation (Tavares, 2008).

⁵⁰ Crisis ridden trends of mass boycotts and financial hardship the mid 1970s and early 1980s which lead inter alia to internal restructuring such as the establishing of the IOC Athletes’ Commission and dropping the values of amateurism at the IOC Session in Bade-Baden 1981 (Wassong, 2018); Salt Lake City Scandal in 1998 which lead to a major debate about the IOC’s governance and accountability and founding of IOC 2000 Commission (Koss, 2011); Sochi 2014 which led to adding “non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in Olympic Charter” (Grell, 2018).

Appendix



Appendix 1. Scheme of methodology applied in this thesis

Literature

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