

# The convergence of Olympism and Confucianism

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## Summary

In the article, the convergence of Olympism and Confucianism is discussed. These are two different cultural products created under different historical and geographical conditions. While analysing their main assumptions, it turned out that they have many common areas, which are primarily fundamental values such as: humanism, harmony and education aimed at realising these values. The overlapping goals and common values of Olympism and Confucianism are promising perspectives, because they can interact with each other and thus, promote intercultural communication, world peace and universal harmony.

**Key words:** Olympism, Confucianism, values, humanism, harmony, education.

## Introduction

Nowadays, in the era of globalisation, international economic, information and efficient communication, it is possible to quickly establish contacts with others, regardless of distance and cultural differences, often resulting from different worldviews, religion, lifestyle or interests. It causes a desire to learn, understand and also examine the strength of cultural interaction. As a written by Beata Szymańska, attempts to understand other cultures have been made since ancient times, when brave travellers brought back stories about unknown countries describing their inhabitants and their strange customs [Szymańska, 2019, p. 7]. Currently, they also arouse the interest of experts, and numerous studies are conducted to address certain similarities, convergence and coherence occurring in various aspects, concerning two cultures: Asian and European, or more broadly, Eastern and Western. Such an attempt was made by Ruiping Fan, who thoroughly studied Confucian tradition and its heritage in light of contemporary Western values [Fan, 2009]. Jan Szmyd writes about the in-flow of higher values in the global world on the example of homocreative martial arts (e.g. karate, judo, jujitsu, ido, aikibodō, aikijutsu, kenjutsu, aikido), who believes that globalisation of the modern world should be a multidirectional process: not only from the West and North to the East and South, but also from the East and South to the West and North. It should ensure a free, unhindered flow of values in different parts of the earth's globe, in its various cultural, social and geographical regions [Szmyd, 2013, p. 32]. The issues of Far Eastern martial arts and their reception by Western civilisations are also dealt with by Wojciech Cynarski [Cynarski, 2004, 2012]. Jim Parry, who believes that sport can educate and develop general values in all cultures, writes about the significant

role of sport, especially Olympic, in shaping understanding and interdependence between various societies within the context of multiculturalism [Parry, 2006]. Mike McNamee also drew attention to the global dimension of Olympism, its role in the world and its importance regarding contemporary social and ethical challenges [McNamee, 2006]. An analysis of contemporary Olympic sports and the main features of traditional Chinese sports culture from the point of view of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, through the attributes of society, sport and culture, were presented by Yan Chen and Jun Hua [Chen, Hua, 2007]. The relationship between Eastern philosophical traditions and sport, including games, physical activity, martial arts and dance, was discussed by Jesús Ilundáin-Agurreza and Takayuki Hata [Ilundáin-Agurreza, Hata, 2015].

However, there are few studies examining the convergences between Olympism and Confucianism. Some researchers of the philosophy of sport have recently pointed out some similarities in the common ideals and values of both doctrines [Messing, 2015; Hsu, Ilundáin-Agurreza, 2016]. The philosophy of sport as an academic discipline developed in the 1960s at colleges and universities in North America and soon spread to Europe and the rest of the world [McNamee, Morgan, 2015, pp. 1-2]. Experts on this issue began to postulate the need to include Asian philosophy in the philosophy of Olympism, if it is to be universal and cover the entire world of sports.

The Olympic gold medallist in rowing from 1960 and the outstanding sports philosopher Hans Lenk, repeatedly wrote in his works about the goals, values and assumptions of modern Olympic Games [Lenk, 1963, 1964, 1972, 1979, 1985]. In one of them, he expressed the view that Olympic ideas were characterised by cultural "multi-compatibility" [Lenk, 1972, p. 15]. The

German philosopher and sociologist Manfred Messing also undertook this topic, who undertook a comparison of Confucian thought and the Olympic idea of Coubertin in his work [Messing, 2015, p. 1]. He focused on 10 selected dimensions of Pierre de Coubertin's Olympism and Confucius' sciences, such as: metaphysics, historical conditions in which they developed, sources of inspiration, leading ideas, hierarchies of values, goals and educational resources, their main recipients, usefulness in life everyday, forecasts for the future society [Messing, 2015, p. 3]. According to him, despite many differences, many similarities can be seen that can help soften the often over-exaggerated contrast between Eastern and Western philosophical thought [Messing, 2015, p. 8].

Experts in the field of sports philosophy: Leo Hsu and Jesús Ilundáin-Agurruza write about the compatibility between modern Olympism and Confucian sciences, now expressed in modern East Asian Confucianisms. They believe that it is important to include East Asian perspectives in contemporary research into Olympism and the Olympic movement within the context of intercultural communication and the promotion of global peace and international cooperation [Hsu L., Ilundáin-Agurruza J., 2016, p. 103]. They emphasize that it is the first philosophical comparison of modern Olympism with Asian philosophy [Ibidem, p. 105]. Comparing the fundamental assumptions of Coubertin's Olympism with the main ideas of Confucian virtue ethics, researchers focused on basic ethical assumptions, such as respect for others, fair play, friendship, tolerance and non-discrimination, character development, striving for the best action with emphasis on participation itself, rhythm and truce [Ibidem, pp. 112-115]. In the analysis, it is shown that there are some connections between modern Olympism and East Asian Confucianisms that may be mutually beneficial to them. Common humanistic values can be used in globalised Olympic education, which is focused on holistic, harmonious human development and social harmony, as in Confucian educational philosophy [Ibidem, pp. 118-119]. This work also falls under this trend, concerning the ideas and values of Olympism and Confucianism and their convergence, i.e. the convergence and similarity of cultural products created independently of each other in different historical and geographical conditions. The aim of the article is to present selected, basic values of Olympism and Confucianism, such as humanism, harmony and education focused on their implementation.

When analysing the main assumptions of Olympism and Confucianism, it seems that they do not have much, or even anything in common, that they are two different and greatly different thoughts, ideas, worldviews, or two different doctrines that arose in completely different and distant periods. Although Pierre de Coubertin's idea of modern Olympism dates back to ancient times and the ancient times of the Greek Olympic Games, it certainly did not refer to the Confucian traditions of China. However, when taking a more close look at Confucianism and Olympism, it turns out that, despite the

very distant historical context and seemingly different assumptions and goals, some similarities and common ground can be observed, especially at the level of their fundamental values, which was pointed out by Pierre de Coubertin and Confucius. Overlapping common goals and values of both doctrines are a promising perspective for the modern world, because by referring to the views of their creators, they can interact with each other now, and thus, promote intercultural communication, world peace and global harmony.

## Olympism

The creator of the idea of Olympism is the French baron, historian, pedagogue and sports activist and founder of the International Olympic Committee - Pierre de Coubertin, who at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, revived the idea of the ancient Olympic Games forgotten for several centuries. It was not an idea developed by one man, but as Bronisław Biliński wrote, by a whole gallery of people who, through literature, art, archaeology and historical studies, prepared the revival of the agonist Hellada, while Coubertin was its final, great and effective organiser [Biliński, 1990, p. 5]. In 1894, at the Paris Congress, he announced to the whole the revival of the ancient Olympic Games and said that their idea had broken through the mists of the ages, as did the ray of the mighty sun and returned to shine the joy of hope at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [Coubertin, 1994, p. 17]. He claimed that the Olympic Games are more than just a competition for the highest score because they are much more valuable. He believed that they were an international festival of youth, a festival of the "spring of humanity", uniting all forms of physical activity and all nations of the world, expressing the joy of life, faith in the future, ambition, and the will to improve [Coubertin, 1994, p. 118]. He attached great importance to public education, he thought it should be universal, focused on comprehensive physical, social and moral development [Coubertin, 1901].

Coubertin introduced the term "Olympism" to the Olympic vocabulary in 1912 to describe a doctrinal and institutional system that included both the Olympic Games and the entire Olympic movement led by the International Olympic Committee [*Mala Encyklopedia Sportu (The Little Encyclopaedia of Sport)*, 1986, p. 229]. The *Olympic Charter*, which is a set of fundamental principles of Olympism, states that it is a philosophy of life combining sport with culture and education, striving to create a life based on the joy of effort and educational values of a good example, and respect for universal ethical principles and social responsibility [*Olympic Charter*, 2019, p. 11].

According to Józef Lipiec, Olympism should be understood from several possible semantic positions: first, as a continuation and recreation of the ancient custom of playing sports in the holy enclave of Olympia; secondly, as the modern Coubertin equivalent of the an-

cient prototype; thirdly, as a purely intentional subject domain, an ideology, a value system design; fourthly, as a doctrine implemented by the social movement, which includes all actions of the global Olympic movement. Olympism is “all the facts in contemporary culture, spreading not only to the area subject to the direct control of structures under this Olympic name, but reaching further into the vast areas of all sport, moreover, the whole universal physical culture” [Lipiec, 1999, p. 67-68].

The Olympic idea is of Eurocentric origin, but has spread and now covers the whole world, not just the European continent. Its contemporary form is multicultural Olympism. It has a huge force of attraction, it is a phenomenon that can arouse admiration and fascination among many millions of people around the world. It engages not only athletes, coaches, activists and supporters around common goals and values, but also concentrates around itself the so-called big world Olympic family, i.e. a community centred around the foundations and principles of an Olympic stadium.

## Confucianism

Similarly, Confucianism, the sources of which can be found in the Far East and has millions of supporters in the Asian part, nowadays extends beyond the Chinese sphere of influence. It is a philosophical and religious system created by Confucius in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Confucius was a form of the name Kong Fuzi or Kong-zi, Latinised by the Jesuits in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which means “Master Kong” [Burns, 2006, p. 163]. He belongs to the few - according to Mieczysław Jerzy Künstler - whose names should be pronounced with the utmost respect, because they mean more in human history than any others. He was one of the giants (along with Buddha and Lao-tzu), whose thoughts left their mark all over the Far East and significantly shaped the cultural, moral, ethical, political and social face [Künstler, 1983, p. 5]. He had great impact on the shape of Chinese philosophical thought, the development of which is sometimes seen as dialectical in nature: from Confucianism as a thesis, through Taoism and Buddhism as an antithesis, to neo-Confucianism as a synthesis. Taoism and Buddhism, which have much in common with it, represent the contemplative aspect of life, while Confucianism represents the principle of action. Confucians have gained the greatest importance in philosophical terms, while Taoism and Buddhism occupy dominant positions as religions [Burns, 2006, pp. 160-161; Ilundáin-Agurruza, Hata, 2015, p. 102].

The term “Confucianism” was created by European Jesuits two thousand years after the death of Master Kong, who even in his lifetime was considered the last of centuries-old tradition of scholars and the most efficient, who perfected and codified this tradition [Clements, 2007, p. 13]. The Confucians themselves did not use this name, but they referred to themselves as scholars

(*ru*) and were representatives of the educated intellectual elite who reflected on philosophical topics [Burns, 2006, p. 161].

His heritage has survived to the present day: 6 million people around the world are considered “Confucians”, while there are 379 million followers in 91 countries. On the American continent, the teachings of Confucius are often treated as a pragmatic and humanitarian ethical system that does not require religious faith [Clements, 2007, p. 9]. His influence permeates institutions and practices at every level of human activity in many Asian countries. Contemporary martial arts have also benefited from this doctrine because traditional Confucian heritage continues to affect its current practices [Simpkins, Simpkins, 2007, p. 46; Bodiford, 2006, p. 1]. It also plays a significant role, even where, according to stereotypes, traditional Confucian ideas were a barrier to the development of sports culture, e.g. baseball in Taiwan [Yu, Bairner, 2012].

## Common values of Olympism and Confucianism

A common ground between Confucianism and Olympism can be seen at the level of analysing their basic values, which are not only the foundation but also the essence of both doctrines. The most important values that were pointed out by both Master Kong and also the restaurateur of the modern Olympic Games baron de Coubertin were, above all, humanism based on respect for other people and justice connected with it, also harmony, including customs, ceremonies, ritual and repetition and extremely important education aimed at achieving these values.

### a. Humanism

Confucianism can be described as humanism, because the main subject of its interest is the social life of man, not other topics, e.g. related to God. He addresses the issues of ethics and psychology of morality, how one should educate character so that man behaves rightly and fairly. He deals with these aspects at all levels, from the closest family relations to the rules governing diplomatic relations between states [Burns, 2006, p. 165].

At the top of his hierarchy of virtues, Confucius places humanity (*ren*), which is a man’s natural ability to relate to other people. Humanity means the relationship of each individual person with the community and mutual relationships, because everyone belongs to society, humanity, and society and humanity belong to everyone. Relations with the environment are not only those with the outside world, but they are part of every human being [Wójcik, 2001, p. 351].

The term *ren* is also interpreted as friendliness, kindness, goodness, compassion and love for other people, which is a basic duty towards every human being [Van

Norden, 2011, pp. 39-40]. Such interpersonal behaviour is associated with a tender concern for other individuals in society. It is a helpful value in building a real community at all levels, both local, regional, state and those broader, continental and global.

The virtue of humanity (*ren*) should be complemented by justice (*yi*) and should be developed in a close relationship. The relationship of one person with another should be limited by justice, the legitimacy of which should be mitigated by a humane attitude towards others. In addition to these two, Confucius recognised the following virtues as most significant: filial piety, being obedient and good to one's parents, elders and ancestors (*xiao*), honesty (*xin*), reciprocity (*shu*), respect (*jing*), bravery (*yong*), loyalty (*zhong*) and knowledge (*zhi*). In order for each of these virtues to be perpetuated in behaviour, they had to be practiced and repeated. Then, each of them could become a moral law (*li*) in the Confucian sense, i.e. a habit and a ritual. A man should obey *li*, i.e. good manners and norms of behaviour, the universality of which in society should be more important than law, because Confucianism is the philosophy of responsible and loyal people [Wójcik, 2001, p. 351]. Confucian tradition values rituals and assumes that they play a very important role in development and moral practice. They provide individuals with a sense of rootedness, they relate to relationships, remind, emphasize and make a person feel comfortable in their place, their role in the family and society [Curzer, 2012, pp. 290-294].

Olympism can also be called humanism. The French Baron's Olympic idea was revived in the spirit of 20<sup>th</sup>-century liberal humanism. The *Olympic Charter* of the International Olympic Committee states that the goal of Olympism is that sport serves the harmonious development of man and society that loves peace and respects human dignity, without any discrimination, in mutual understanding, the spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play [*Olympic Charter*, 2019, p. 11]. Olympism refers to common, simple needs and basic moral values such as equality, justice and freedom [Lipiec, 1999, p. 83]. Coubertin believed that sport is an example of conflict resolution in a deeply humanistic way, opposing hatred, contempt, social inequality and war - peace, friendship, brotherhood and respect of the opponent. He argued that it is possible to create an international community based on respect for national differences and recognition of common values, and the Olympic idea should be recognised as the property of the entire modern world [Zuchora, 1996, p. 11].

In sport, as in Confucian training of virtues and customs, the art of self-development and the method of achieving perfection are revealed. The technique is different, but the goal the same [Wójcik, 1995, p. 45]. According to Stanisław Kowalczyk, personal dignity, natural law and conscience, permanently linked to human nature, are the foundation of the ethics of sport [Kowalczyk, 2010, p. 128]. An athlete is obliged to comply with the rules and laws of sports, but his/her duty is to behave properly, based on ethics. Regulations and rules

are needed to indicate the course of action, to explain how to act and according to what rules, but it is impossible to codify everything and it is the role of the athlete and his/her duty is to demonstrate proper behaviour based on fair, not foul play. As Józef Lipiec writes, sport is "the only area of human life in which ethical values are explicitly centred in the code of normal behaviour, and their violation excludes belonging to the sphere itself. A cheating athlete simply ceases to be an athlete, a field based on blague, trickery and bribery automatically leaves the area of sports" [Lipiec, 2007, p. 50].

## b. Harmony

Harmony is particularly important in both Confucianism and Olympism. Confucianism is focused on social harmony. It represents norms of conduct, customs, labels, protocols, tradition, rituals and ceremonies. It also means avoiding conflicts, cooperation in a group, it is a bond between the individual and the community and affects the harmonious development of the whole society. "Order is born out of the fact that everyone does what they should do, and the natural result of such action is to be a dynamically balanced harmony of social relations" [Wójcik, 2001, p. 354]. A person, family, society, are levels of reality in relation to each other in the world, but one of the most important postulates is harmony, dynamic balance within and between these levels [Wójcik, 1995, p. 13].

Although sport is more commonly associated with rivalry, competition aimed at striving for harmony and not the highest score, is the underlying message of Olympism: "Olympism is a state of mind derived from a dual cult: cult of effort and cult of harmony" [Coubertin, 1994, p. 97]. The core of Olympism is training both the body and mind, and contributing to the development of society and world peace. In the area of sport, various social bonds are created, based on harmony between the individual and others, which are gaining more and more significance and a wider range in the life of modern societies. Sport, especially Olympic, integrates people, plays a significant role in the education of children and youth, and fulfils important patriotic functions. It can also be helpful in establishing, developing and strengthening international relations as well as in alleviating conflicts and political tension between states. The Olympic Games also have their rich ceremonial, specific customs, rituals and certain patterns of action. They have their representative symbolism, such as the opening and closing ceremony of the Olympic Games, lighting the Olympic torch, the Olympic oath, raising the flag on the mast, the Olympic anthem. What is characteristic is their repeatability, standardisation, cyclicity, as well as the continuity of tradition, which is also associated with the numbering of each subsequent Olympics, a specific Olympiad, i.e. a four-year period between games. Durability, repeatability and harmony are closely related to sport. Starting from regular and systematic training, consolidating the perfection of performance of sport-specific activities, or strictly established rules and rules of the game, which must be constantly repeated,

otherwise they cease to be, until the cyclicity of games of all kinds and at all levels: local, national, continental and global.

### c. Education

According to Confucius, virtues are developed through proper education. Without proper upbringing and education, society is threatened with chaos. The master encouraged constant education and exercise in Confucian virtues. He advocated universal education and believed that everyone should have access to education, regardless of which social layer they come from, because there are no state differences in teaching [Confucius, 2017, p. 242]. He claimed that there are no other differences between people than the teachings they received. He taught driving skills and archery, while his real intellectual passion was ceremonial and ritual traditional [Burns, 2006, p. 164]. Among the subjects he taught, one may find art, with particular attention to history, especially that ancient. He also taught such qualities as transformation skills, diligence, loyalty and perseverance. In the *Analects of Confucius* (Lun Yu), containing aphorisms, maxims and short parables, written by Confucius' disciples and describing his teaching, it is stated that the Master said: "Wake up through songs, strengthen through forms, complement through music" [Confucius, 2017, p. 138]. He established the canon of "six pieces", among which there were ceremonies, music, archery and horse-drawn carriages as well as calligraphy and mathematics [Wójcik, 2001, p. 349]. He was zealous in seeking the truth, to the point that he forgot about food, thanks to joy of learning, he even forgot about sadness, while by openness of character, he won over other people, that is why he had so many students. He also had numerous followers of his philosophical thought, one of the most eminent was Mengzi, who was not his direct student, but it was thanks to him that Confucius' teachings were consolidated and survived. Just as Plato made Socrates the central figure of Western philosophy, so in Chinese philosophy, it was thanks to Mengzi that Confucius gained a dominant position.

Pierre de Coubertin, like Confucius, attached great importance to education, making it the essence of his idea. He appreciated the educational values of sport. He was fascinated with the reforms introduced by Thomas Arnold at Rugby School in Great Britain and considered sport a significant factor in the upbringing of young people. He treated Olympic sport as an excellent means of developing the character of young people, their moral and social improvement [Coubertin, 1994, p. 121; Coubertin, 1967, p. 18]. He wanted young people participating in the Olympic Games to become "followers of the religion of sport", that they would become a great holiday, not a tool of commercial interests or politics. "In a modern world, rich in powerful possibilities and, at the same time, endangered by decadence, an Olympic work can be a school of nobility and spiritual purity, as well as endurance and physical energy; however, this will only happen

if one's perception of honour and selflessness is continually rising in equal measure with muscle strength" [Coubertin, 1994, p. 108]. Olympism was to function as a universal, humanistic, democratic and international system for educating people through sport [*Mala Encyklopedia Sportu* (The Little Encyclopaedia of Sports), p. 229; Loland, 1995, p. 63]. Józef Lipiec believes that the concept of Olympic education, or more broadly the humanistic vision of education through sport, has become one of the most important pillars of modern education through values, and "the sports education system is a powerful reservoir of definitely positive values" [Lipiec, 2017, p. 109]. In Olympism we find values that belong to the iron canon of modern humanism, and are also often present in the universal heritage of various cultures, beliefs and religious systems. The canon of universally accepted ethical standards is the "truly sports" nature of human actions, which is identified with selflessness, honesty and nobility towards one's opponent [Lipiec, 1999, p. 203]. The axiological dimension of Olympic education results from equipping it with activities aimed at building high, positive values, such as: respect, dignity, friendship between people, equality and fair assessment, which teach what is right and good [Lipiec, 2014, p. 95-96].

For Krzysztof Zuchora, Olympic education means the development and training of all traits, those physical as well as mental and also spiritual. He sees sport as an important element of global education, contributing to the emotional and aesthetic development of man, providing a sense of physical wealth and natural harmony with the universe [Zuchora, 2016, p. 70]. "Sport serves upbringing only if it accepts a player's personal dignity and specific axiological principles. In other words: sport expressed in the spirit of authentic humanism is always upbringing towards values" [Zuchora, 2016, p. 76]. According to Stanisław Kowalczyk, sport educates man when it takes into account the fact that he is a psychophysical whole, and therefore, subject to somatic-biological, cognitive-intellectual, moral, emotional-volitional and artistic education [Kowalczyk, 2010, p. 90]. "The culture of the body should be combined with mental and spiritual culture" [Kowalczyk, 2010, p. 72]. Olympic education meets these conditions because it is focused on the proper hierarchy of importance, in which emphasis is put on the personal dignity of athletes. The constitutive feature of Olympic sport is its ethical dimension. Although there are researchers who think otherwise [Kosiewicz, 2016], they agree that only autotelic values and the humanistic dimension of sport can counteract the deepening, intensifying pragmatic and utilitarian values aimed at victory [Kosiewicz, 2004, p. 333].

## Discussion and conclusions

Confucius' philosophy had culture-creating strength in the Far East. It created and formed a civilised man in a large part of the Asian continent [Wójcik, 1995, p. 3]. It has had great impact not only on culture but also

on governance and legislation in China. It is the main source of Chinese philosophical thought, whose debt to Confucius is comparable to the debt of Western philosophy to Socrates [Burns, 2006, p. 160]. The Confucian spirit is deeply rooted and still present in the consciousness of many people around the world, not only in the Asian regions.

Currently, it is considered an important carrier of shared culture-creating values, of economically and politically incoherent East Asia. Confucian values are a positive and progressive factor in stimulating economic and cultural development, unlike at the beginning of the 20th century, when Confucianism was burdened with scholasticism and the accompanying extreme moralism, and blamed for the intellectual, social and political failures of the region [Yao, 2009, p. 245].

Olympism has also spread throughout the world and is present not only on the European continent or in the consciousness of the part of humanity that believes their culture is the heritage of ancient Greece and the Mediterranean. As Józef Lipiec writes, modern Olympism has become an astonishing phenomenon with its originality and universality in contemporary civilisation [Lipiec, 1999, p. 67]. Olympic sport is the most successful attempt at cultural universalization in modern times, because it was able to build a common space for a divided world and individuals diversified in it. It engages millions and billions of people, integrating them around common principles, norms and symbols, across divisions [Lipiec, 1999, p. 81]. The Olympic Games are one of the greatest heritage of humanity. They go beyond the boundaries of sport and constitute a set of cultural codes that cover both politics, economics, history, philosophy and art, which are the essence of humanity. Due to their global nature, thanks to Olympic communication, sports competitions cross borders, overcome barriers and reach the whole world. They act as a catalyst connecting different races, ethnic groups and cultures. What is more, they create a unique and lasting heritage for future generations through the global proliferation of the sublime values of Olympic ideology and Olympic culture [Park, Tae, 2016, p. 170].

According to experts, the global significance of China is currently increasing, which was also due to the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 [Czen, Colapinto, Luo, 2012, pp. 188-195]. The organisation of great sporting events can serve to promote a country and its culture not only in the area of sport, but also in other areas. It provides glory, recognition and publicity to the host of the event, also improving its image around the world. Consecutive Asian Winter Olympic Games in Pyongyang in 2018, or those planned in Tokyo for 2020 and in Beijing in 2022, are certainly conducive to intercultural exchange of experiences and building mutual cooperation between people from different cultures, professing different religions, recognising sometimes conflicting worldviews, who follow a different hierarchy of values. This applies to both athletes and people taking an active part in the games, including coaches, activ-

ists, organisers, sponsors and others, but also observers, fans, sport fans and all people interested in the Olympic Games. Even if the ideology of Olympism or the Confucian ethics of virtues among athletes is scarcely known, or there are few athletes aware of the existence of convergence between them, through their participation in the games, they encounter these values. Although the Olympic Games have specific rules and principles related to sports competition and rivalry for the highest possible score, they are based on universally recognized values such as equality and justice.

Contemporary Olympism differs from Coubertin's vision, which changed even in the views of the artist himself, made visible by dissonances and the mutually exclusive views contained in his statements and works [Kosiewicz, 2004, p. 308]. Much has also changed in more than a century of history of the Olympic movement. Since Coubertin's time, we have seen positive changes in his area (lack of racism, participation of women, egalitarianism), but numerous negative phenomena have found their way in as well. Excessive commercialization, mediatisation, politicisation, dehumanisation, corruption, competition at all costs, doping scandals that have caused criticism and the reactions of many outstanding researchers. Wojciech Lipoński writes about this situation, recalling the attitude of Hans Lenk, who abandoned research on the scientific issues of Olympism because he was convinced of their questionable future, in connection with the departure and ignoring of humanistic Olympic values [Lipoński, 2000, p. 165]. Jerzy Kosiewicz believes that competitive sport, including that Olympic, as a rule, is a tough competition for the best result, record, victory and it is all about sporting success and the associated social prestige and high financial gratifications, not higher moral and ethical values. He claims that success is the highest value of sport, not man and his good or excellence, because it is consistent with praxeology and pragmatism of sports performance [Kosiewicz, 2016].

Wiesław Firek created his own typology of various positions of researchers towards the version of Pierre de Coubertin's Olympism. He distinguished 3 positions: enthusiasts (apologists who believe that Olympic sport is equipped with properties within which rivalry is above sport), moderate optimists (claiming that the Olympic Games are one of many global events and if they are well-directed, they will become an excellent opportunity to promote humanistic values) and Olympic pessimists (stating that the Olympic Games are something less than a sport, and the whole organisation serves only the particular interests of specific social groups) [Firek, 2016, p. 142]. According to the second stance, in the face of all irregularities that threaten the idea and values of sport and the Olympic movement, the axiology of sport plays a significant role, guarding truly pure, noble sports competition and related activities. On the other hand, proper education in sport, focused on the implementation of Olympic values, can help combat irregularities in the sports world and prevent their growing threats.

The convergence of Olympism and Confucianism was shown in the article by analysing their fundamental values: humanism, harmony and education aimed at their implementation. From the ideas of Pierre de Coubertin's modern Olympic Games and the teachings preached by Confucius, we can derive tips that may be helpful in meeting the contemporary challenges of civilisation. Their common planes and references can form the basis for creating new challenges, creating vast opportunities, generating numerous benefits. In order to communicate between people, it is worth looking for such convergences, even if the differences are sometimes more diverse and they contradict the conclusions drawn, and thus, can easily be criticised. However, it is worth exploring such opportunities wherever they can result in interpersonal cooperation and obtain its positive effects. As contemporary researchers emphasize, their overlapping goals and common values are a promising perspective because they can interact with each other, and thus foster intercultural communication and help promote global peace and universal harmony. And if modern Olympism aspires to be a global philosophy, doctrine or ideology, covering all people related to sport, then, it must take into account compliance not only with the assumptions and Western tradition, but also the perspective of Eastern philosophies [Hsu, Ilundáin-Agurruza, 2016, p. 104].

The Olympic Games are the only such festival that is common to all those living on this earth, because their rules are understandable to the general public and close to all people [Lipiec, 1988, p. 78]. Olympism and Confucianism are carriers of common universal values, such as: fair play, humanism, the idea of peace, brotherhood, cooperation and social harmony, which through their attractiveness, reach a single person and to entire societies from different parts of the world, both from the western and western parts and eastern. This is of great importance for the modern world, especially after the experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thus the ideas of Olympism and Confucianism should be promoted, as they bring humanitarian values and potential, which is the basis for building international understanding between people.

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