

The Cultural Olympiads of Barcelona and Atlanta from German Tourists' Point of View



1. Olympic links of sport and art

Coubertin (1966 [1935], 153) considered „the beauty by the participation of art and spirit at the Games“ as an essential element of modern Olympism. In a mutual help of muscle force and spirit Coubertin gives the leading role to the spirit, „but under the condition, that it will appear in the most perfect forms of artistic and poetic creation“ (ibid., 153 f.).¹ During the Olympic Games in Stockholm 1912 Olympic Art Competitions took place for the first time (cf. Lenk 1972/2, 32). After the London Games 1948 they were changed into Olympic Art Exhibitions (ibid., 36).² For the Olympic Games in Barcelona 1992 and Atlanta 1996 in each case a four year Cultural Olympiad was organized, which had its highlight during the time of sport contests.

The link of art with the olympic sport festival is of high value in Coubertin's Olympic Idea as well as in the Olympic Charter. Today performances of the local culture of the host city are not only extended by regional, national and international contributions but also include a longer period than the sport competitions.

Considering these expenditures, it has to be asked, what resonance the cultural programme produces on the olympic tourists and what part olympic topics have in their reception.

2. Method

Six months after the end of the Summer Games in Barcelona 579 out of 1717 German olympic tourists responded to a questionnaire, which had the cultural programme among its topics.³

In Atlanta one day after the Closing Ceremony 212 out of 896 German tourists filled in a questionnaire and sent it from Germany to the National Olympic Committee with a post-free envelope. Additionally data from 55 German athletes (about 11% from 496) and 19 officials were collected in the Olympic Village. The survey was completed by

1 Translated from German into English by the author.

2 Concerning the arguments and causes see Lenk (1972/2, 36 f.).

3 For more details see Messing/ Müller (1996, 30).

87 participants in the Youth Camp of Rhineland-Palatinate in Macon/ Georgia and 172 members of the Sport Youth of Northrhine-Westfalia staying in Atlanta.

3. Quantity and Direction of Cultural Interests

Both groups of German olympic tourists show almost identical rates concerning the visit of cultural events: about one third affirmed the question (Barcelona: 36,5 %, Atlanta: 34,4 %).

In Barcelona the 471 nominations of events are distributed among 211 individuals, in Atlanta 160 nominations among 72 persons. On average those culturally interested saw 2,2 events in both cities. In Barcelona painting exhibitions were dominating, topics related to sport ranked second (see Table 1).

In Atlanta only „Rings: Five Passions in World Art“ - one out of 7 painting exhibitions focused in the questionnaire - received 8,1 % of 160 nominations. Works from Southern artists amounted to 5 % of nominations. Center of interest in Atlanta was the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change (45 Nominations = 28,1 %). In addition with 13 nominations for the exhibition „The American South“ 36,3 % resulted for the historic section. Concerts, included those in the Olympic Park, ballet and dance performances were an outstanding part of the Atlanta cultural programme, but gained only 18,1 % of nominations. In the sport section the exhibition „Olympilex“ lead with 15 nominations, the „Olympic Woman“ exhibition was mentioned five times (together 12,5 %).

Nobody of this group saw the exhibition „Mind and Body: The Revival of the Olympic Idea“.

In public places and in the Olympic Park tourists in Barcelona and Atlanta primarily remembered street musicians.

In Barcelona „Street theatre“ was mentioned almost in the same frequency.

The comparison demonstrates that a general low perception of the cultural programme is true for Barcelona as well as for Atlanta, but the

Art form / direction	Barcelona N = 579			Atlanta N = 212		
	nominations	abs.	%	nominations	abs.	%
Painting	Picasso	103	} 43,1	„Five Passions“	13	} 13,1
	Dali	61		Clark Atlanta Univ. Collection	3	
	Miro	39		„Out of Bounds“	2	
			Duncanson	2		
			„Souls Grown Deep“	1		
			Dial / Jarrell / Public Art	-		
Related to Sport	Olympic Stamps	33	} 22,9	„Olympihlex“	15	} 12,5
	Sport Photography	31		„The Olympic Woman“	5	
	„Sport in Greek Antiquity“	20		„Mind and Body“	-	
	„Olympiadesign“	16				
	Bullfight	8				
Regional History	„Medieval Catalonia“	37	7,9	M. L. King, Jr. Center	45	} 36,3
				„The American South“	13	
Music und Dance	Concerts	27	5,7	Concerts*	16	} 18,1
				„Southern Crossroads“**	8	
				Dance and Ballet	5	
				Duke Ellington-Exhibition	-	
International Topics	„Estimada terra“-Exhibition	14	3,0	„100 Years of World Cinema“	2	} 1,9
				„Greeting Rituals from Around the World“	1	
				„Muntadas: On Translation“	-	
Theatre		10	2,1		1	0,6
Miscellaneous		72	15,3		28	17,5
Total		471	100,0		160	100,0

* Among it pop concerts with free admission in the Centennial Olympic Park

** Festival of the American South (with regional music, cooking and crafts work etc.) in the Centennial Olympic Park (free admission from 12 a.m. - 12 p.m.)

Table 1: Visit of cultural events in Barcelona and Atlanta by German Olympic tourists

profiles are different in the content: in Barcelona well-known modern Spanish and Catalan painters were a special tourist attraction, in Atlanta - besides historical topics - music from pop over jazz to classic had a stronger resonance.

4. Explanations of low cultural interests

In general it can be stated for the tourists, that the percentage of visitors of the cultural programme in Barcelona (37 %) and Atlanta (34 %) is far below the percentage of informed ones during the Games (65 % and 59 % knew about the Cultural Olympiad).

The number of expired sport tickets - considered as an indication for time shortage - was not related to increasing abstinence from the cultural programme. Sex and education had no influence either. The effect of age was only tested for Barcelona: tourists 50 years of age and older were more engaged more in cultural activities.

The weak demand of excellent cultural programmes is certainly related to the comparative evaluation of sport and art. Between 54 % and 74 % of the tourists in 1992, respectively of the examined German tourists, athletes and officials in Atlanta asked namely for a restriction of Olympic Games to sport. Merely delegates of the Sport Youth of Rhineland Palatinate, which were confronted with olympic topics in a meeting before their US travel, in a small majority accepted other events than sport at Olympic Games (s. Table 2).

Groups	N =	Given answers		
		agree %	disagree %	No answer* %
<i>Barcelona</i>				
Tourists	579	54,0	43,4	2,6
<i>Atlanta</i>				
Tourists	212	64,1	33,5	2,4
Athletes	55	63,6	34,6	1,8
Officials	19	73,7	26,3	-
Sport Youth RP	87	44,8	48,3	6,9
Sport Youth NRW	172	46,5	44,2	9,3

Chi² Tourists Barcelona - Atlanta = 6,48; df = 1, p < 0.05 s

* „No answer“ was not considered in the Chi² -Test.

Table 2: „Olympic Games should be restricted to sport competitions.“

A similar statement „Only in the connection of sport and art the Olympic Idea is realized“ confirms the results above. Again Atlanta tourists (75%) and officials (74%) take the lead in opposing a „second column“ of Olympism.

5. Conclusions

Special measures have to be taken to increase the resonance of the Cultural Festival:

Marketing

- The ticket sale for sport and cultural events should be connected in the national tourist offices as well as in the host city.
- The Cultural Olympiad needs better advertising. According to Babcock (1996, 282 f.) own sponsors and own media contracts are a necessary precondition.

- Time distances and psychological barriers could be lowered by bringing some cultural events into the sport facilities. Convenient transportation facilitates cross-overs into the art and sport sector of the Olympic Festival.

Programming

- A group specific segmentation of the cultural programme could increase participation, especially of the young generation.
- The Olympic Art Festival should present a clear profile within the core of time, that is: well-marked differences to other international cultural events. At least a wide relationship to central components of the Olympic Idea has to be maintained.

Creation

- Contests for young artists, standing at the threshold of an important career (see further Babcock 1996, 280 f.) should be reintroduced.
- An Olympic Village for artists would encourage team work during a longer time (see *ibid.*, 281 f.).

Guiding

To make olympic values a topic in art creation - in an affirmative but also in a critical way - and to balance olympic art presentations better with possibilities respectively needs of potential art recipients, the IOC should install a „Cultural Advisory Panel“ (*ibid.*, 275) to define operational guidelines for future Olympic Art Festivals (*ibid.*).

References

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- NOK = Nationales Olympisches Komitee für Deutschland (Eds.): Olympische Charta. Regelwerk für Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit in Sportsachen, übersetzt u. eingeleitet von C. Vedder/M. Lämmer. Melsungen 1996.