# Sports infrastructure and cultural heritage; bridging the gap by Fair Play standards

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# Sports infrastructure and cultural heritage bridging the gap by Fair Play standards

The question of **cultural heritage** is a most fundamental aspect of mankind's endeavor to **preserve human values and memory**.

At the same time, **cultural heritage** serves as a vehicle for carrying these values into the future, ensuring thus **the** continuing of our evolution by the terms that most define us as human.

# Sports infrastructure and cultural heritage bridging the gap by Fair Play standards

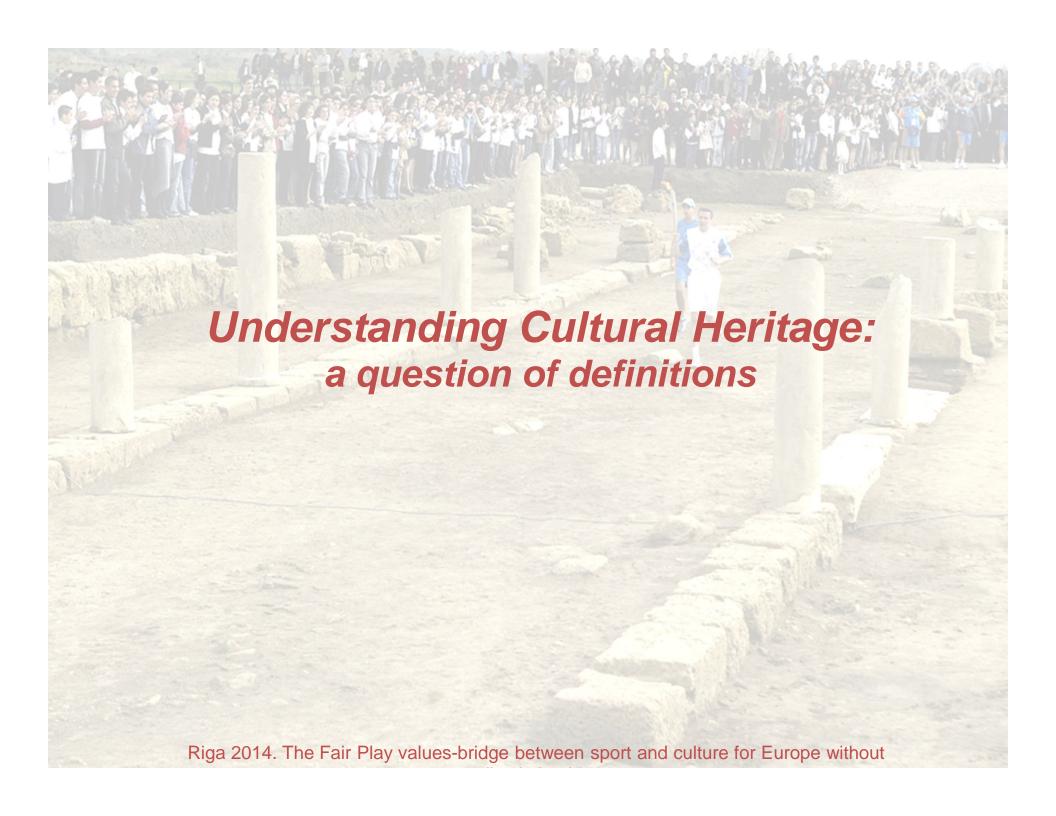
In what follows, we aim to show

- that the problem of heritage is a problem of raising, a certain awareness toward this understanding.
- that embracing extreme positions, either as a ruling authority or as a local community, produces more casualties than benefits

# Sports infrastructure and cultural heritage bridging the gap by Fair Play standards

In what follows, we aim to show

 that Sport already incorporates such values in its very fabric, both as design and as living memory, and that the aspiration of safeguarding these values is part and parcel with the fundamental aims – and practically the very essence – of Fair Play.



Two foremost issues in debates usually reflect either economic or environmental concerns.

However, a third part subtly finds its way into the conversation: it is the subject of cultural heritage.



"Local communities have a vital role to play in environmental management and development because of their particular know ledge and traditional practices. Their identity, culture and interests should be recognized and should not prevent them from participating in the achievement of sustainable development. (...)"



"Efforts must thus be made to protect and enhance significant features of the natural environment and the cultural heritage of a designated area. It is indeed fundamental that sport be fully integrated into the local culture, and that it maintain a social profile molded on the participation of the surrounding community, inclusive of environmental organizations, local residents and underprivileged groups. Their values, traditional know ledge and resource management practices should be recognized and integrated. Specific attention should also be paid to protected areas, historical monuments and other traditional aspects."

The IOC proposes to focus on maintaining a social equilibrium rather than disrupting it, integrating what's uniquely local into a global affair.

By these terms, "Cultural Heritage" consists of:

"(...) goods and resources (monuments, local products, arts and crafts, natural resources); traditional know -how (use and management of local resources); [and] social aspects (local community, cultural values and practices, traditional events and sports)"



UNESCO's standing definitions for "cultural heritage"

continues to put forward individual artifacts in the form of:

#### monuments:

architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

#### groups of buildings:

groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

#### sites.

works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.



"Linking Universal and Local Values: Managing a Sustainable

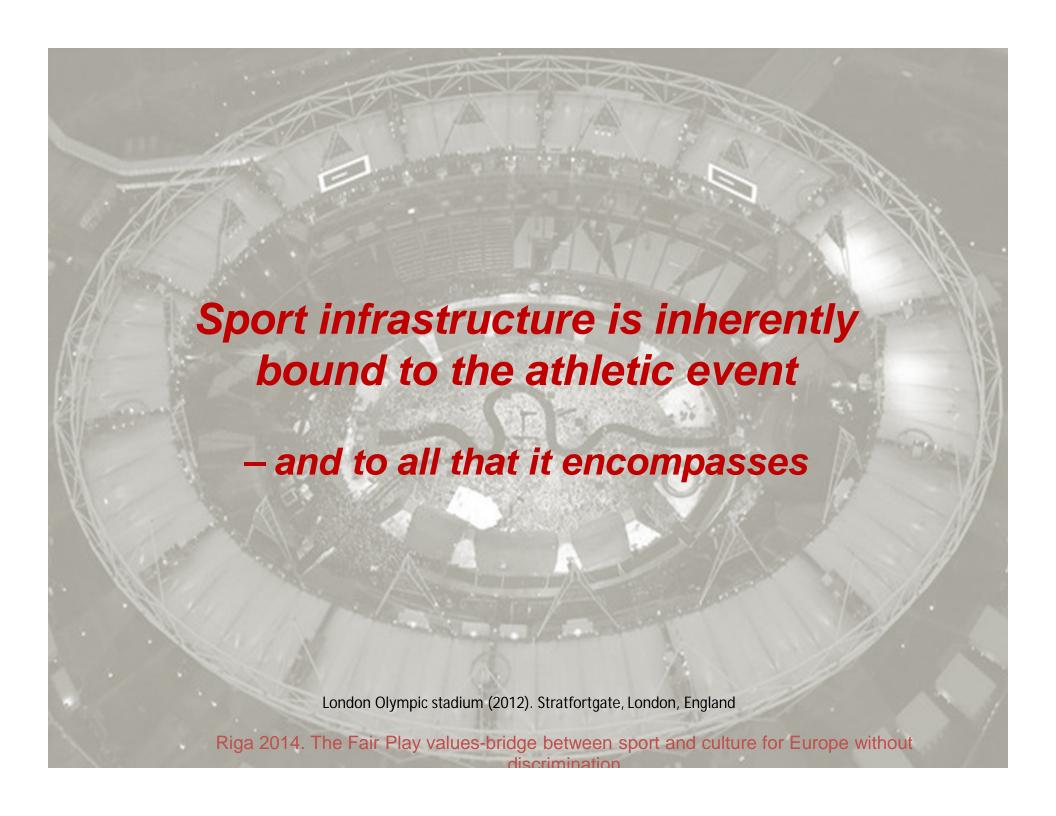
**Future for World Heritage" (2004)** 

- Understanding the nominator 'outstanding universal value' as an inseparable whole with "local values, intangible and spiritual values, and traditional management systems"
- Implementing local communities by participation and involvement namely, understanding that inscribing a property on the World Heritage List raises the stakes for the local community equally to the aspirations of the international community.
- o International co-operation,
- Management systems, by implementing the potential of local knowhow
- Capacity-building, namely implementing human knowledge
- o Partnerships on all scales, being the prerequisite for any sustainable effort

Comparing between all these approaches it becomes evident that the question of cultural heritage is slowly yet lucidly shifting from a problem of definitions to a problem of sustainable practice.

A holistic understanding of the nature of heritage reveals it not as something to be 'frozen in time' for exhibition purposes but rather as a complex and ever-evolving network of relationships between living memory and future aspirations.

In this context, a 'bottom-up' approach is put forward in order to address the particularities of each case in a sustainable manner that is fair to all.



Before we start, we should try first to disambiguate between

- a) The notions of competitive sport, recreational sport and play
- b) The notions of place and space

**Competitive sport** is characterized by 'rigorously enforced spatial parameters', whereas 'recreation, leisure, play and games', are not.

**Competitive sport** usually relies on 'carefully defined spatial contexts' (e.g. 400-m. running) which provide the basis for accurate measurement of the athletes' achievement.

**Leisure and play** actually do occupy a ground defined by the limitations of a given set of rules (simple game of chase) or a user defined objective (e.g. jogging for 'x' miles), but this ground is not *rigorously* defined.

John Bale, Sports Geography, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2003)

Any situated activity binds physical space to experience, memory and social bonds.

Any game is revealed as a **condensed field of relationships**, **partly imposed** 

- a) by the 'rules' of the game
- b) by the fact that a number of actors 'representative of different cultures, nations, races and classes' come into society outside 'normal' social intercourse and 'into the artificially created time and space limits of sports'

According to Michel de Certeau these are the dimensions which distinguish

"place and space"



Place: is the stable product of strategies defined by a ruling authority i.e. a football field as an 'instantaneous configuration' by the rules of the game (place)



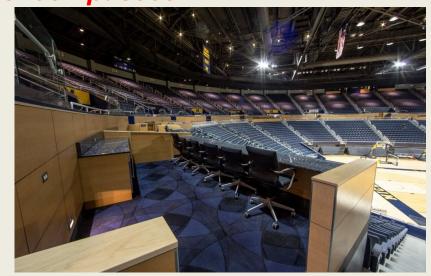
Space: is the unstable and ever-evolving product of variables defined by the tactics that living bodies apply on the spot, which are never really predetermined by the aforementioned rules (space).

Sport infrastructure can thus be conceived in **two distinct ways**:

- A 'top-down' design, by a ruling authority that comes to impose this design on a certain ground (e.g. the IOC, the State, the architect)
- A 'bottom-up' design, by a living community that reorients this ground
  according to the perspective of the lived instance of sport (e.g. of athletes, of
  regular people practicing sport, or children).

In absolute terms, none of these two conditions are meaningful on their own; and it should be obvious that <u>neither notion of design can exist without the other</u>

Consider a stadium which lies still, with no athletic event to make it a lived space



Consider a number of people playing a game without any rules or defined goal.



On the other hand it should be perfectly understandable to shift the focus of design according to the purposes it aims to serve:



a **competitive stadium** is by all means more of a machine that safeguards the evaluation of the athletes' performance, both in place and in time.

On the other hand it should be perfectly understandable to shift the focus of design according to the purposes it aims to serve:



a jogging route, or a street corner where children play is most probably better defined as a place for sport or play by its landscape particularities, its local, living memory and identity, etc.



Again, we see that the very athletic event that this ground aims to support is a powerful generator of meaning;

it generates experiences, memory, collective identities, and it acts as a point of reference for community in various types and sizes



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This powerful generator of meaning is organically embedded to the ground it occupies, either in tangible or intangible form.



think for instance about the colorful patchwork of flags that paint the stadium at an athletic event,

or the songs that resonate in the living memory of the stadium

Examining sport infrastructure by these terms rises the following questions:

- How can we purposefully design places of memory?
- o How can we ensure that by following a determinist route we do not shut out lived space and the communities that stem from within?
- o How can we **design places of identity** without impoverishing the richness of people's spontaneous reactions?

Understanding sport infrastructure by the context that it entails, instead of a mere technical feat, requires principally a certain *understanding of the nature of the problem, if not an elevated awareness of it*.

# Sport infrastructure is inherently bound to cultural production - and to all that it entails Ancient Stadium of Delphi (5<sup>th</sup> century BC – 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD) Riga 2014. The Fair Play values-bridge between sport and culture for Europe without discrimination



In the preface of the DO.CO.MO.MO's volume "The body, sport and modern architecture",
Architectural historian Panayotis Tournikiotis,
establishes Sport as the foundation for the modern redefinition of the human body upon the ideal of 'the health and beauty of the trained body'

revival of the Olympic Games in

1896 meeting point between gymnastics and sport

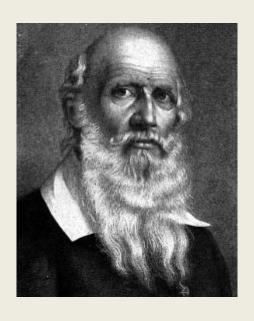
'Pierre de Coubertin's central idea was to employ the ideological power of the Olympic Games (...) to achieve the most widespread dissemination of physical training possible among his contemporaries'



The nature of sport, as we described it before, with this turn towards the body, came with the necessary infrastructure to support it.

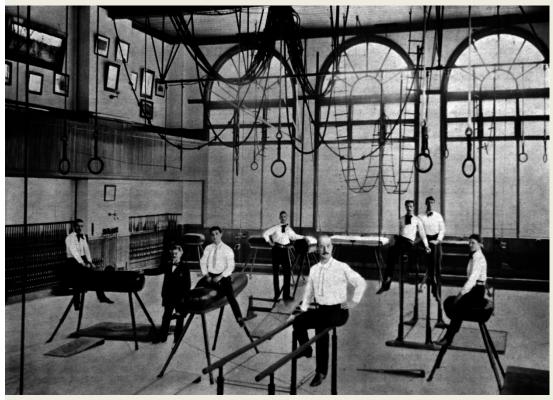


Open and closed Gymnasiums, Stadia, Swimming Pool facilities, etc. infiltrate the landscape of the city, the premises of schools and public spaces.



The ideological charge of sport spaces was evident as early as the 1800s with the movement of the *Turnverein* (literally meaning 'a club to perform gymnastic exercises'), brainchild of the German teacher Friedrich Ludwig Jahn who is considered as 'the father of modern gymnastics'.

Jahn's belief in the cultivation of the body was not a self-sustained ideal; known for his nationalistic views, he believed that 'physical education was the cornerstone of national health and strength and important in strengthening character and national identity'



Gymnastics room in Turner Hall, Milwaukee, ca. 1900

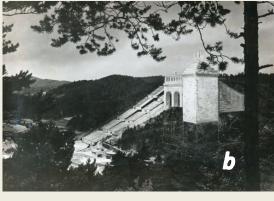
While the first Turnverein were open air gatherings, the culture resonated in many other different countries - most prominently in the United States and the *Turner* movement - which resulted in a number of indoor significant facilities and ideologies, such as the Czech Sokols who saw it as exemplary to their ideal of founding their state upon 'brotherhood', outside class distinctions.

The shape of sport facilities shows also charged with meaning of sports



The *Kallimarmaron* in Athens recalls the form of stadia in classical antiquity (namely those of Olympia and Delphi), a form to be found in a monumentally enlarged version at the also ideologically charged schemes of Adolph Hitler and Albert Speer in Hirschbachtal





- a. Adolph Hitler and Albert Speer's scheme for a monumental complex where all the Olympics from Tokyo onwards were meant to 'be held for all eternity'.
- b. shows the test section that was constructed in Hirschbachtal, in order to 'get a feel' of what the stadium would be like when completed.

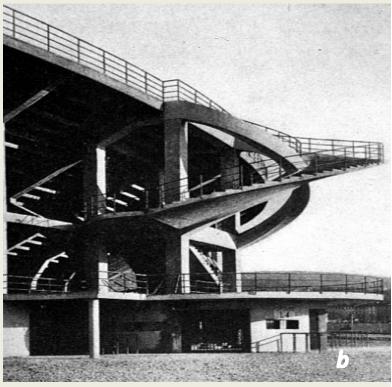




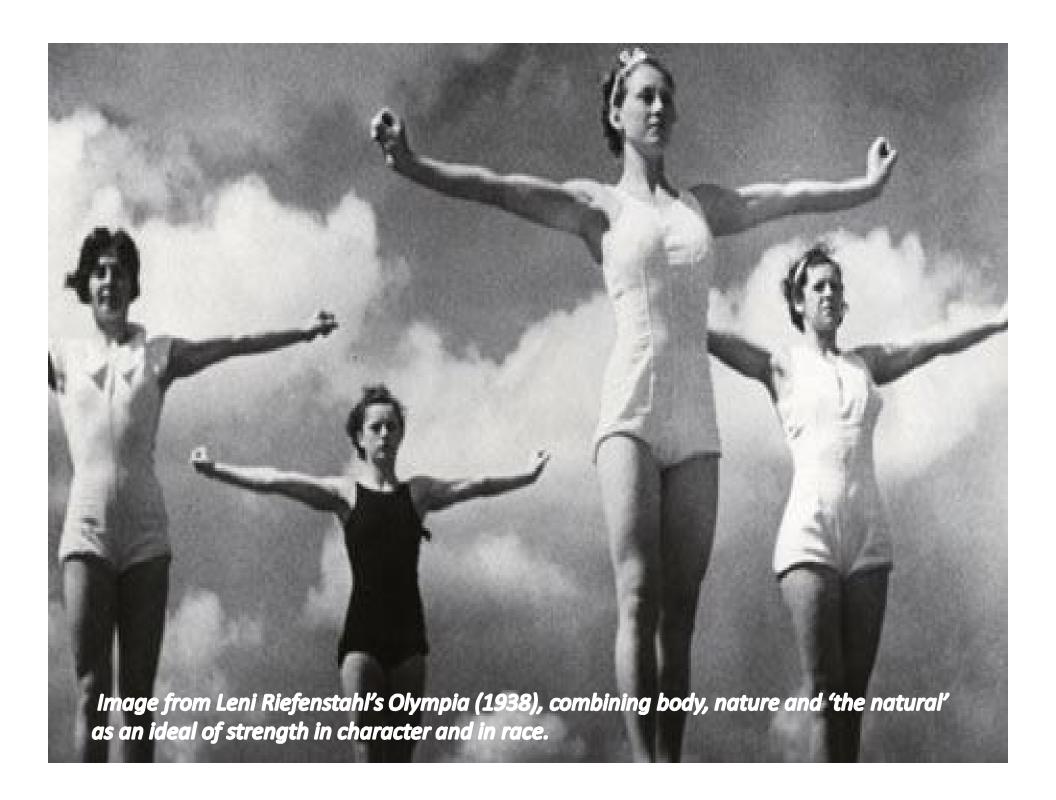
Similarly, stadiums such as Schweizer's Nurenberg Stadium echo a different ideological charge, namely that of the Modernist dictate of eschewing historical reference, in pursuit of the purity of the design in its own fundamental architectural vocabulary – in fact Tournikiotis deems them as 'the first strictly modern stadiums in the sense of Modern architecture'

Städtisches Stadion (now Grundig Stadion), designed by architect Otto Ernst Schweizer in Bauhaus style. It is also the only octagonal stadium in Germany and one of the very few in the world. (1926-28)





Pier Luigi Nervi, "Stadio Giovanni Berta" in Florence (1930-32)



People get a **sense of identity** over territories.

Stadiums become a vehicle of living memories, bound to those emotions that document the athletic event in a personal story.

Gaffney and Bale argue that "in many cultures a stadium – a universal architectural form of the modern city – is the place where the 'most people' have the 'most common experience' most frequently". This is the form of the collective, a shared story, personal and yet common to all.

People gather at these places to live, not to merely be, and this elevates the narrative of the place to the level of living heritage.



# Sport infrastructure is inherently bound to cultural production – and to all that it entails



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Any argument on sport or cultural artifacts ultimately entails a notion of design.

As we have seen earlier, this brings forth a multi-faceted dialectic between an a priori and an a posteriori condition, namely, an in vitro and an in vivo design of space and place, a top-down and a bottom-up perspective of the problem, and the distinction between strategy and tactics.

What we need to understand here most importantly is that all of these are *extremes*.

History has shown beyond doubt that, embracing either one of the two extremes before the other, would eventually turn into a fight over boundaries and the exercise of power.

We have seen grandiosely ambitious development schemes overlook aspects of local cultural expression and built heritage, regardless of the fact that they themselves rightly aspire to be vehicles for carrying culture into the future.





"Man shapes and modifies his basic nature so that it is more suited for living side by side with others. To this end he makes rules, determines principles and fashions an environment that does not exist in nature and is unique to humanity. It is this process by which man adapts nature and his own ways, making them more conducive to a 'human' way of living that gives rise to the many-layered habitat that we call 'culture'. Man is a creature who is obliged to create culture."

Attilla Erdemli, 'Sport and Fair Play as Fundamental Rights', PLAY FAIR! Academic Supplement, 2013/2; 2014/1, 2–4 (p. 2)

Human activity entails significantly more complex implications – **ethics** being one, and **aesthetic** appreciation being another.

Human activity cannot be reduced to utilitarian purposes, nor can it be evaluated by its purposefulness alone.

By the same argument, this also applies to the notion of culture.

#### **Significant questions arise:**

- o How can we then assign 'exceptional value' to anything?
- By what measure is something deemed valuable, and to whom?
   This problem is far better a problem of understanding than a problem of definitions.

What is put forward most prominently is the question of **equal terms**, between a ruling authority and a local community, a **policy that is fair** to both global aspirations and local traditions and practices and a **shared responsibility** for the preservation of human memory and local culture.

Ultimately this entails a process of emancipation for both parties, which is very much consistent with Fair Play values.

As Renson argues, Fair Play itself is founded on the notion of play 'among equals', to give the other 'a fair chance'.

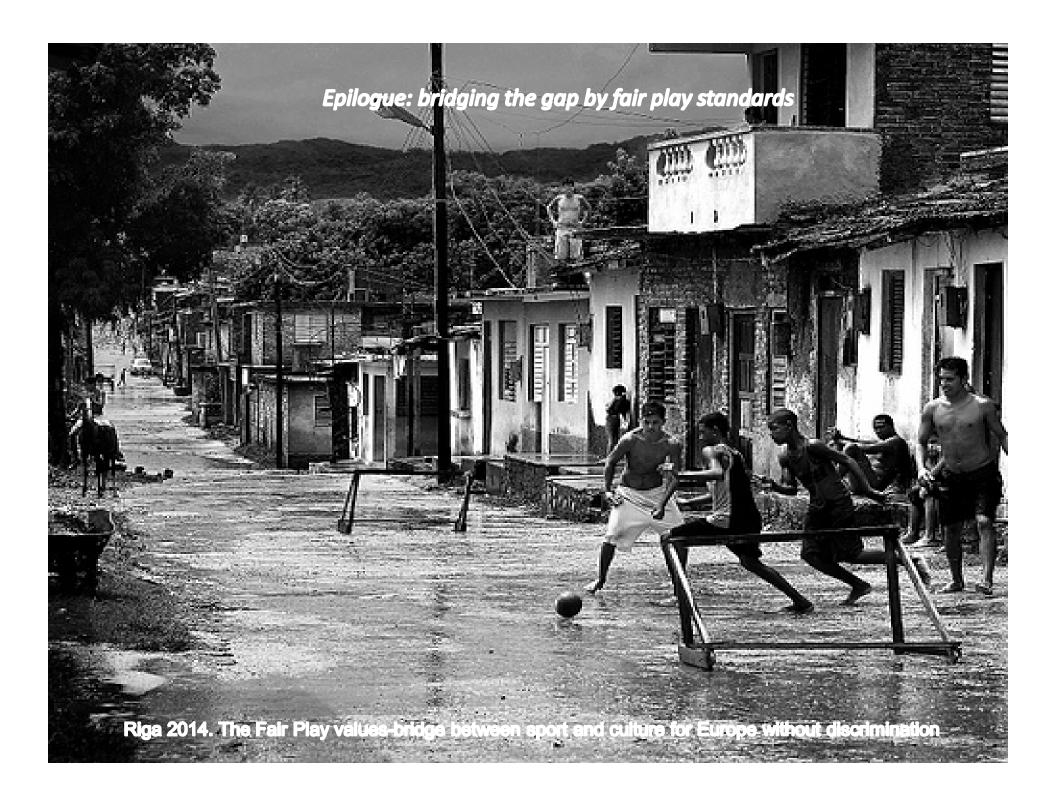
Places of Sport can be condensed with meaning, symbolism, social interaction, and history. It can also be a field of politics, as well as a field of living memory. Most importantly though, places of sport can be the ground of fierce competition, or it can be a place of noble sportsmanship.

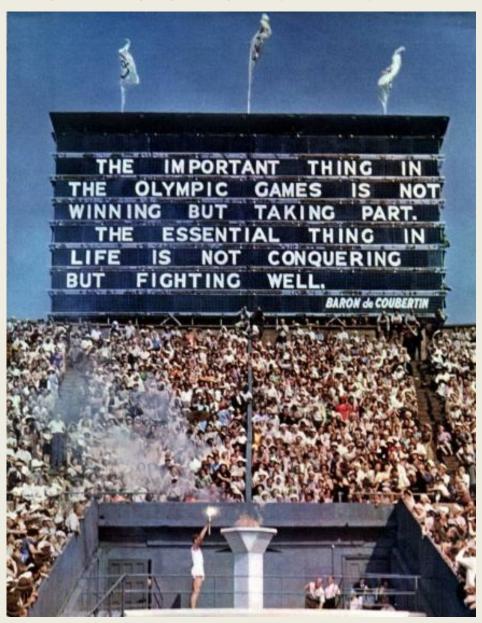
Erdemli suggests that, having a choice between the two, reveals the purpose of sport as a humanistic one.

The stories that are told become the living memory of the community, they teach and they carry this teaching for future generations.

At the same time, place is bound to memory. It gets filled with ghosts that create national, regional, community, or personal identity. They become places of emancipation, places of teaching.

The act becomes *culture*, and the place, ghosts and stories embedded, becomes *heritage*.





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