

THE OLYMPICS AND CAPITALIST SOCIETY: EXAMINATION OF RESEARCH PROBLEMS IN JAPAN AND INTERNATIONALLY

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This paper reviews books on the Olympics and Movement (hereafter, Olympics) from the 1980s and investigates the problems and positive aspects of the Olympics such as the stimulus to the founding of international peace movements.

I. *History of the Olympics and Problems*

The aims and roles of the Olympics are, as stated in the Olympic Charter, to hold the Olympic Games, to promote sport throughout the world, to contribute to the international exchange of people, to conquer discrimination and doping, to enhance sporting morale, to advance environmental protection and to contribute to world peace through the Olympic Truce with the United Nations.

However, with the development of the Olympics, many internal and external problems have emerged, giving rise to not only positive, but also negative views of the Olympics.

1. Positive Views of the Olympics

The status and value of sport in modern society is increasing. The role of sport in engaging the participation of all people helps to build human relations in an alienating society and promotes physical exercise in an excessive calorie society.

In addition, spectator sport is a major area of interest. For example, in TV news, sport is one of the four main news items, Politics, Economy, Sport and Weather. Without news on sport, viewing figures would fall. Because, the news on politics and the economy globally are serious and often depressing items, news programs need to balance their output with sport and human-interest stories. In modern society, sport is cathartic.

The Olympics is a cultural festival that represents the peak of many global sporting events, attracting athletes of the highest caliber in the world. Athletes and spectators from around the world gather together in one place and take part in cultural and social exchange in addition to the sporting events. Whilst for those unable or unwilling to travel, the latest developments and sporting records across the world can be viewed at one time from the comfort of home via TV. The Games also have the scarcity value of being held only every four years.

In the fraught world of international politics, the Olympics can be seen as a kind of 'proxy war' between rival states. If sport were treated as a peaceful tool for national rivalry and real wars were avoided, it would be irreplaceable. At the very least, sport is often seen as a means of peaceful competition and it requires a degree of peace to take place.

Modern society has a diversity of values and abundant choice of cultural genres yet several billion people in the world watch TV programs in real time at the Olympics. In this sense, the Olympics is a precious means of integrating societies globally, as well as being culturally cohesive and contributing to peace in modern society.

In addition, the host country obtains significant political and economic benefits, such as national integration, facility construction, city maintenance and tourism development as a result of holding the Olympics.

Therefore, the Olympics must be protected, although there are problems to resolve.

2. Negative Views of the Olympics

While the history of the Olympics has focused on its social contributions, on the other hand, there have been many problems with both internal and external causes. The internal causes are related to the IOC and the Olympic Movement. They cannot necessarily be separated from the external causes, namely the surrounding capitalist society. As the influence of the Olympics in the world becomes stronger the political and economical utilization of the Olympics grows.

(1) Internal Causes

Internal causes include the organization and finance of the IOC (public support, company support, privatization, TV money), and the bribery of the IOC members, over-enlargement of the Olympics, and the environmental damage caused onsite and by the numerous visitors. Almost all International Sports Federations want to join the Olympics and the size of the Games have become unwieldy to organize and over-expanded. The IOC has recognized that the intensification of doping may lead to a terminal decline in the Olympics.

The relation between amateurism and professionalism has been a central issue. In addition, since their revival, the modern Olympics has been charged with confrontational nationalism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism but also the problems of national anthems, national flags, and methods of commendation and representative selection systems. More worryingly, international affairs have affected the Olympics.

Gender and racial discrimination are important factors, and the Olympics has played an important role in female participation in sport and the anti-apartheid movement.

The Olympics also has a complex public/private dichotomy. Whilst the Games have historically been dependent on subsidies from the host state and the host city as the main source of revenue, money from broadcasting companies and private capital are increasingly being relied upon and thus private influences are growing in importance.

The IOC itself has been industrialized since the 1980s and it has its own original source of revenue. But the Games themselves are still dependent on the subsidy of public and private sectors. The public responsibility for sporting events such as the Olympics, and relations with private capital should be examined.

(2) External Causes

There are many external causes that affect the Olympics such as political and economic exploitation. As examples of political factors, there is the 'North-South divide', which involves the relations between advanced states and developing states, the old colonial problems and

confrontation between capitalism and socialism, as well as geopolitical issues such as the former two Germanys, China and Taiwan, and the two Koreas.

Although some countries may qualify for the Games, they choose not to participate for diplomatic and political reasons. For example, racial discrimination (apartheid) has led to some countries boycotting the Olympics. Other boycotts include the political confrontation over the 'two Chinas' problem and the East-West tensions during the Moscow and Los Angeles Olympics in the 1980s, by the anti-apartheid movement and by anti-tyranny of the developed countries by the less developed countries such as GANEFO.

The threat of terrorism (racial confrontation, religious conflict, market monopoly and cultural invasion, etc.) affecting the Olympics is increasing. On the other hand, it is usual for countries to use the Olympics for national integration domestically and for national propaganda diplomatically. Some people think that the Olympics should be stopped because the rivalry instigates nationalistic confrontation and worsens international crises.

While the Olympics has been seen as a tool of domestic economic stimulation, city infrastructure development, boost to tourism, there is also a down-side to the economic stimulus provided by the games as social capital is depleted and welfare related budgets are slashed to pay for the games, and commercialistic use (monopoly, control of TV by multinational companies) of the Games diverts money towards the private sector. In response to these issues, there have been calls to downsize, reform or even abolish the Olympics.

3. On the Olympics Crisis

In addition to the wide variety of views on the Olympics aside from the positive and negative perspectives, there is also a history of crisis. For example, the second to the fourth Olympics were held as part of expos, and the Games themselves lost their independent identity to some extent. World War I and II were also periods of crisis for the Olympics. As well as geopolitical problems, financial crisis have also affected the Games, such as the financial difficulties of the postwar IOC, and deficit of the Montreal Games in 1976, which led to a reduction in the number of cities bidding to host the Games. Terrorism in the 1972 Munich Games seriously damaged the Olympics. Interconnected with this crisis were several boycotts. Although the crises have threatened the continuation of the Olympic Games, the cause of each crisis has depended on the financial, political, ideological and organizational background.

The levels of crises are widespread from partial to general, and we need to distinguish them. Furthermore, when discussing the crises and related problems, we need to recognize the internal and external causes.

The respective relations of each problem and crisis also need to be clarified. Therefore, the methodology applied to understand the crisis, namely historically and structurally, is important for understanding the Olympics as a whole.

4. The Olympics as a Peace Movement

Many papers on the crises of the Olympic Games analyze each problem in depth. Although these studies are individually insightful, a unifying methodology is required. Research supporting the Olympics, i.e., for its contribution to world peace and theorizing about the peace movement does not match actual activities. In short, the tendency to

emphasize Olympism as a social contribution is rather dogmatic, and persuasive argument is lacking.

5. A Holistic View of the Problems

Many papers on the crises of the Olympics analyze each problem in depth. Although these studies are individually insightful and both the positive and negative perspectives are revealing, a unifying methodology is required. For example, the strong preference for amateurism, which was crucial to the spirit of Olympism and also generally in sport has been undermined by the spread of sport among the working classes and the development of professional sport. Thus, the problem of amateurism and professionalism, for example, needs to be understood as a social phenomenon rather than simply a superficial issue in sport. That is, the problem is who is the social owner of sport culture in capitalist society.

Equally, every problem, for example, the organization and finance of Olympics, commercialization in current sport, nationalism, professionalism in sport, sport for all, political and economic use of the Olympic Games, boycotts, and a victory supreme principle, appear throughout capitalist society. Therefore, to understand the Olympics on the whole means grasping the positive, the negative, and the crises historically and structurally in and through capitalist society. The crises of the Olympic Games, which were reestablished and developed in capitalist society cannot be understood separately from the crises of capitalist society.

For this reason, how previous research understands and analyzes the totality of the Games, especially in and through capitalist society, must be examined.

II. *Review of Books on the Olympics*

1. Classification of Books on the Olympics

Books on the Olympics can be classified into three groups.

(1) Historical Research

There are two main tendencies. One tendency is to focus on the historical records, features and anecdotes of the Olympic Games. Apart from the following two books, most authors in this group do not use a social science methodology.

“The International Olympic Committee: One Hundred Years” (Vol.1, 2, 3, by the IOC, IOC, 1996) is the history of 100 years of the IOC official recognition, composed in three volumes. They divide the history by the president’s terms of office, and describe in detail the Games, the regular committees (sessions) and academic Congress based on abundant data and facts. However, the historical view is influenced by its status as the official history. Relations with capitalist society and the one hundred years of the Olympics as a whole is insufficient.

The “Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympics Movement” by John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle (Greenwood Press, 2004) summarizes the preceding history of the modern Olympics in Europe and America, and the impact on the Modern Olympics in Athens in 1896. Each Olympic Games since the first one, from the early seventeenth century, is in turn described in detail.

Together, the two books provide a useful outline of the one hundred-year history of the modern Olympics. In these two voluminous works, the relation with capitalist society in each description is expressed briefly, however, an overall framework for understanding is missing.

The second group pursues the historical relevance of the Games and the relations with politics, the economy and social background, setting up time classifications. This group, which is the focus of the present paper, is best based on social science and the following materials provide important research subjects and methods. "Five Ring Circus: Money, Power and Politics at the Olympics", by Tomlinson A. and Whannel G.(ed.) (Pluto Press, 1984) organizes several papers focussing on politics (boycotts, terrorism), commercialism, television, apartheid, feminism, mythology (reality of ancient Olympics), the aristocratic principle, and the alternative Games (workers' Olympics and women's Olympics etc.). This book was published in 1984 and provides farsighted criticism of the modern Olympics and became a standard for subsequent Olympics criticism.

"The Olympic Games in Transition" by Segrave, Jeffrey O., Chu, Donald(ed.) (Human Kinetics Publishers, 1988) is also a collected work, tracing the history of the Olympics, the book analyzes and criticizes the problems in each time as in the previous "Five Ring Circus". Many neo-Marxists made contributions and their analytic framework is solid, and positions and methods are also clear. However, the criticism is too strong and ignores positive elements of the Olympics, such as the peace movement and sport diffusing movements. Therefore, the Olympics is understood within a framework in which commercialism and capitalism are purely negative. The relations with capitalist society, commercialization or nationalism with the Olympics need to be considered more carefully also including the viewpoint of reform.

"The Olympics: History of the Modern Games" by Allen Guttman (University of Illinois Press, 1992. 2nd ed. 2002) is written by a single author, and covers political, economic and social viewpoints with good balance. The descriptions in the book are clear and readable, convenient to an understanding of the grand image of the Olympics, and superb as historical and sociological research of the Olympic Games. In the final part, preceding researches are reviewed briefly from the limited viewpoint of politics, economics and social areas. He points out that, although many of the Olympics related publications are biographies and autobiographies, most of them are short on the broader historical context of the Olympics. Guttman is also the author of "Games and Empires, Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism" (Columbia University Press, 1994) and is conscious of capitalist society, but he maintains a distance in discussing relations with capitalist society, which suggests antipathy to the dogmatism of some neo-Marxists.

"Olympic Politics: Athens to Atlanta 1896-1996" by Christopher R. Hill (Manchester University Press, 1996) provides a grand image of the Olympics, and summarizes the history of the Games with good balance.

Furthermore, "Mega-events & Modernity: Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture" by Maurice Roche (Routledge, 2000) is clear regarding the historical relations between the mega events (the Expos, the Olympics) and capitalistic society. In the book, capitalism is shown to relate to three forms of discrimination (class, gender, race), and the influence of the expos on the Olympics is also analyzed. In particular, analysis of the alternatives (the women's Olympics and the workers' Olympics etc.) in the term between the great wars is important also for analysis of the postwar Olympics and the 'sport for all' policy. Sports including those of socialist countries in the term is important as well. Roche contributed

greatly to clarifying the developmental relations between capitalist society and mega events.

“The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective” by Toohey, K., Veal, A. J. (CABI Publishing, 2000) points out the lack to understand the Olympic Games as a whole. They cover the ancient Olympics, the birth of the modern Olympics, nationalism, economy and finances of the IOC, the mass media, doping, women’s participation, and the future of the Olympics. Their research is supported by the abundant collection of information and materials from all over the world held by the Olympics Research Organization. Although in the final chapter on the future of the Olympic Games, the environment around the Olympics is divided into two dimensions, the external and the internal, and both aspects are related to the coming reformation, there is no description of capitalist society.

The “Future of the Olympics” by John, A. Lucas (Human Kinetics Books, 1992) is quoted frequently by other writers as the author is one of the leading researchers of Olympic history. He is well informed about the Olympics and offers many farsighted proposals with rich contents of the Olympics in the 21st century based on a review of the 20th century. However, he hardly comments on the relations with capitalist society.

The researchers in Japan show a similar tendency and most offer only a factual description of Olympic history. “The Modern Olympics: 100 Years” by JOC (Baseball Magazine-Sha, 1994) is typical as a history of records. Although Masaji Kiyokawa, a gold medallist himself and an ex-Vice President of the IOC, has published several books, for example “The Olympics and Amateurism” (1986) and “Sport and the Politics: Viewpoints of the Olympics and Boycott” (1987, both Baseball Magazine-Sha), they are mainly based on data.

In recent years, “Athens to Athens” by Seiji Hirohata (Hon no izumi sha, 2004) should be recognized because it pursues the contribution of the Olympics as a peace movement. However, as it was written as a series in a newspaper, it is too brief and lacks evidence. Also, the relation with capitalist society as a framework is not clear.

“The Olympics Studies: plural experiences and plural politics” by Satoshi Shimizu(ed.) (Serika Shobo, 2004) is a collected work similar to the “Five Ring Circus” and the papers on the creation of the posters and the program of the city reproduction in the Tokyo Olympics 1964 are fresh. Commercialism, gender, nationalism, racism and boycotts and so on are taken up as themes of the papers. If examined on the international level, they have some deficiencies, for example, of critical examination of preceding research, and they remain at an introductory level. Moreover, the works are composed using ‘the Olympics in crises’ as a common basis, and there is no paper with a positive and developmental viewpoint of the Olympics. So that, problem is misunderstood as meaning only crisis. Moreover, the total understanding of the relations to capitalist society is also missing. This work is the result of a joint research project of young researchers, so that further publications are expected. Overcoming the problems mentioned above, and providing their own aspects and proposals, a total picture of the Olympics is expected.

(2) Descriptions of Specific Times and Biographies

This category includes most volumes of the Olympic publications, descriptions of certain times (for example, the birth of the Modern Olympics or the Berlin Olympics and so on) and biographies of the people involved in the Olympics are raised. Although they do not directly aim at grasping the Olympics totally, they provide some interesting factual fragments and the social thought of the age.

“Olympism: Selected Writings” (IOC, 2000) and “Recollection of the Olympics” (composed by Carl Diem in 1959. Japanese version, Baseball magazine-sha, 1976) by Pierre de Coubertin are basic references.

In addition, “The Challenge” by Avery Brundage (proSport-Verlag GmbH & Co., 1972) and other recollections of the ex-presidents are important to understanding the historical backgrounds.

“The First Modern Olympics” by Richard D. Mandell (University of California Press, 1976) verifies the situations before and after the birth of the modern Olympics in detail. In particular, the actual evidence of the exchange between Coubertin and Greece had a major influence on subsequent research. The revival of the Olympics had been voiced several times in nineteenth century Europe. Some preceding researches on the period indicate only the actual evidence, and the thought that the Modern Olympics were likely born in a vacuum of history. But Mandell shows a social science perspective.

“This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympics” by John J. MacAloon (The University of Chicago, 1981) investigates a personal history of Coubertin and his mission. He stresses Coubertin’s distinction and noblesse oblige as a French aristocrat. His indications are academically stimulating. The unprecedented new and deep image of Coubertin and the Olympics are indicated.

Furthermore, “The Modern Olympics” by David Young (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995) is written as an extension of his research on ancient Greece. As a historian, he verifies the pre-history of the Modern Olympic Games, namely the Zappas Olympics of Greece and Much Wenlock Olympics of England in detail, and investigates their influences on the birth of the Modern Olympics.

As seen above, biographies are effective tools for gaining an understanding of the thoughts of policymakers and the environment of the time. The images of the birth of the Modern Olympics and Coubertin himself become clear in the latter three works. However, the historical background of nineteenth century Europe, namely the political, economic and cultural situations in capitalist societies, must be firmly recognized in the birth of the Games. Simultaneously, as the understanding of the time around the birth of the Games provides a basis for understanding the subsequent history, a firm understanding of the Games in capitalist society of the late nineteenth century is crucial.

(3) Problem Areas

This category indicates individual problems rather than attempting a total understanding of the Olympics and contains several problems caused by the globalization of sport (TV televising, marketing, professionalization) since the 1980s. As an initial excellent work, the “Five Ring Circus” is recommended.

Recently, “The Lords of the Rings” by Vyv Simson & A. Jennings (Simon & Schuster, 1992) and “The New Lords of the Rings: Olympics Corruption and How to Buy Gold Medals” by Andrew Jennings (1996) severely criticize the IOC, President A. Samaranch and reveal corruption among the IOC members to international disquiet. But still, the authors seem to cling to the old ideal of amateurism. Their criticism of the IOC and its members, which so far have been considered above reproach, is very important. However, the revelations are too shattering to allow a clear way forward.

“Selling the Five Rings: The International Olympic Committee and the Rise of Olympics

Commercialism” by Barney, Robert K., Wenn, Stephen R., Martyn, Scott G, (The University of Uta Press, 2002) and “The Economics of Staging the Olympics: A Comparison of the Games 1972-2008” by Holger Press (Edward Elger, 2004) etc. have been published with the aspects of commercialization and economic analysis of the Olympics sufficiently evaluated. The former explains in detail the process by which the IOC commercialized the relations mainly with television broadcasting rights and finances historically. The IOC and the Olympics themselves exist in capitalist society, so that they need to cope with a certain level of marketization and commercialization, and some researchers are blind to the present commercialization.

As Japanese researches, “International Politics and the Olympics” by Kengo Fujiwara (Dowa shoin, 1984) describes some political topics including the anti-racial discrimination movement in the 1968 Mexico Games, Palestinian terrorism in the 1972 Munich Games, the anti-apartheid movement in the 1976 Montreal Games, the China/Taiwan problem, and political background and the process of the boycotts at the 1980 Moscow Olympics in detail, with less coverage of development of the Olympic Games. This work may be a pioneer of Olympics research in Japan. The process of each incident is detailed. However, as a result of limiting the content to purely international politics, other political aspects of the Olympic Games, for example, amateurism, TV control and nationalism as ideology etc. are not touched on.

“The Olympics and Politics” by Masaru Ikei (Maruzen library, 1992) as an international-relations theorist clarifies the political affairs around the Olympic Games, especially the Berlin Olympics and the planned Barcelona Peoples Olympics, cancelled Tokyo Olympics in 1940 and the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. And he examines the relations of politics and the Olympics, especially regarding racial problems, and terrorism in 1972.

“Yoshiaki Tsutsumi and the Olympics: Tracks of Ambition” (Sanichi Shobo, 1992) and “Hinomaru and the Olympics” (Bungeishunju, 1997) by Gentaro Taniguchi are respectively like Japanese version of “The Lords of the Rings” and “The New Lords of The Rings: Olympics Corruption and How to Buy Gold Medals”. In an extremely conservative mood of Japanese sport, his exposure and criticism of the Olympic problems should be evaluated. But there is little research focussing on the relations of the Olympics and capitalist society, in Japan.

2. Present Condition of Olympics Research: Few from the Social Science Perspective

John MacAloon claims that Olympics research is lacking social science approaches, and focuses on guidebooks, recollections, reports of the Games and official records. Some academic researches concentrate not on the total of the Olympics but on specific areas. The large scale and complexity of the Olympics as such make the research difficult for a total understanding, and there are still few social science researchers attempting to cover the Olympics as a whole among the vast quantity of publications on the Olympics. In Japan, geographical and linguistic restrictions compound the problem.

Andrew Jennings in his “The New Lords of The Rings: Olympics Corruption and How to Buy Gold Medals” (1996) claims that professors’ research on the Olympics lack an ethical and moral critical response to the corporatization of the Olympics. As suggested above, Olympics researchers need to clarify their relation to the present problems.

III. *Setting up a New Research Theme*

1. **Extraction of a Research Theme**

Social science approaches to the Olympics are not sufficient for its actual development and social contribution. Furthermore, research towards a total understanding of the Olympics is needed in order to grasp the Olympics at the crossroads of the actual problems and of the research trends, namely to be analyzed in capitalist society, politically, economically, socially, militarily, culturally, including social thought and sport situations (organizations of the international sports federations).

The author's previous researches are on the essence of sport, on amateurism and professional sport, on the sports-for-all policy as part of welfare states. These are all phenomena of capitalist society, therefore, the unifying principle must reflect a recognition of capitalist society. This theme is also confirmed by the author's "theory of the ownership of sport". Namely, which social class owns and enjoys modern sport and the modern Olympics is crucially important as a theme in social science.

The research theme 'The Olympics and Capitalist Society' was chosen for the following reasons.

Firstly, modern sport is a child of capitalist society, and the modern Olympics was born as a constituent of its imperial age at the end of the nineteenth century and developed in that environment. Every problem in modern sport is concentrated in a sense in the Olympics. For example, amateurism, which enabled the bourgeoisie to monopolize sport ignored sport of the working class, reflecting the ownership of capitalist society. As a protest against it, professional sport was born. So, it is impossible to examine the amateur/professional problem without an understanding of capitalist society. Although the revival of the modern Olympics was realized by the considerable effort of a rare individual French aristocrat, Coubertin, the social background of the end of the nineteenth century also constituted a crucial basis for the birth of the modern Olympics. It is generally held that sport has no relation with politics, however, this view is incorrect because sport has had very close relations with politics in capitalist society.

Secondly, discrimination in capitalist society, such as class, gender and race and discrimination between states, colonization and the North-South divide problems have been brought into sport. Although sport including the Olympics reflect those discriminations as well, on the other hand, sporting movements have also instigated initiatives to solve such discrimination, which need to be examined in the context of capitalist society.

Thirdly, not only the high level of the Olympic Games, various international competitions, etc., but also the sports-for-all policy as popularization are realized as part of the welfare state policy in capitalist society for promoting the physical and mental health of the people in an age of high economic growth. Sports participation of ordinary local people, a previously unresearched topic, must be grasped in the context of capitalist society, as well.

Fourthly, in capitalist society, a certain level of commercialization of the organizations and several events including the Olympics is necessary, especially in the age of globalization. Recognition and management as a business unit in capitalist society is inescapable, and some means must be sought for coexisting with the Olympic ideals.

Finally, reform of the Olympics without taking into account the perspective of capitalist society has less impact, and becomes too idealistic.

2. Preceding Research on Capitalist Society

There are two main positions on the relations of sport and the Olympics and capitalist society. One group avoids investigation of the relations with capitalist society, holds up the ideal of amateurism, rejects commercialization, and considers the theme of relations with capitalist society to be merely of ideological and political relevance, seeing sport and politics as being unrelated as if sport has developed in a vacuum.

A second group began around the mid-1970s with globalization, and was accelerated by the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, which is a typical example of the globalization of sport (TV televising, commercialization and professionalization). This research trend led, by the neo-Marxists, attempted to consider the relations between the Olympics and capitalist society. Brohm and Gruneau are typical of this trend.

According to Brohm, 'The primary aim of the organizers of sports or Olympics competitions is not sport for its own sake but sport for capitalist profit' (J.M.Brohm, "Sport: A Prison of Measured Time", Ink Links 1978, p137).

Gruneau sees the management of the Los Angeles Olympics as not so much shifting from the usual Games, but as part of the process of ever expanding international capitalism in sport as a whole ('commercialism' in the "Five Ring Circus"). So, he considers the Los Angeles Olympics as one particular point in the process of capitalist society. The viewpoint is also expressed in his other paper, 'Capitalism, Commercialism and the Olympics' (Richard Gruneau and Hart Cantelon. Segrave, Jeffrey O., Chu, D. (ed.), "The Olympic Games in Transition").

As indicated, the Olympics are mainly phenomena within capitalism, and their commercialization and politicization are inherent. However, if analysis goes no further, no positive aspects immerge. The dogmatism of such neo-Marxism is criticized by Allen Guttmann, John Lucas and J.Viel.

However, accepting that capital and states utilize sport as a means of prolongation of capitalism and that this is a common phenomenon not only in sport but also in all cultural areas, should such sport be then rejected? Real Marxism needs to understand sport and sporting events including the Olympics more holistically. Namely real Marxism understands the Olympics from two aspects, one is to understand them as tools for prolongation of capitalism, the other is to understand them as a necessary developmental elements in society. In the present paper, the opinions of neo-Marxists are not rejected like Guttmann, but are not accepted uncritically either. Details are explained in the following chapters. Nevertheless, the criticism that 'neo-Marxism is dogmatic and basement reductionism' is probably true. Such criticism is tackled in the present research. The present paper pursues social scientific relations of sport and capitalist society whilst criticizing the two above-mentioned standpoints.

The countries in the world can be classified into four groups in the early 21st century.

- (1) Countries of developed Capitalism
- (2) Countries of Socialism
- (3) Countries attempting to build an independent economy after independence from

colonization

(4) Countries confronting inconsistencies and difficulties in capitalism after the collapse of former socialist regimes

Current re-examination of capitalism has been conducted in the age of neo-liberalism in advanced capitalist countries. In these circumstances, sport circles of amateur and professional and the Olympics are not separated from those of politics and economy. As Guttmann criticizes in his “Sports and the Imperial State: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism”, the relations between sports and politics and economy have so far been avoided by people in sport.

Thus, the research theme ‘The Olympics and Capitalist Society’ is a mission of the sociology of sports taking the Olympic Games to approximate modern sports. Research in ‘The Olympics and Capitalist Society’ overlaps with research on modern sports and capitalist society. This research project is set up for five to seven years. According to the several restrictions mentioned above, this paper will reexamine and reconstruct a new history and thought of the Olympic Games.

Many people have their own opinions on the Olympics, which indicates that the Olympics has spread widely. However, when it comes to research, there are evident gaps. This research is an attempt to address the situation in Japan and in the world.

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