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and sports integrity
– Ethical concerns
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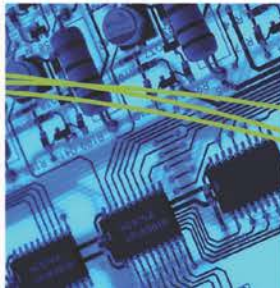
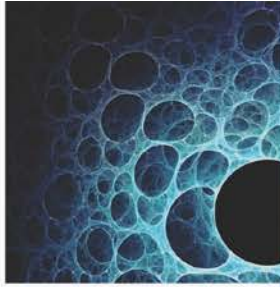
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“Ability, disability and sports integrity – Ethical concerns regarding maximizing Paralympian athletes’ performance”

We all know that Paralympians strive for athletic excellence.

But that does not occur in a value-free vacuum

I will propose some ethical dimensions of Paralympism, partly be critique and reconstruction of IPC values, and partly be ethical case study considerations.



Paralympic Values

- The International Paralympic Committee sets out 4 values
- **Courage Determination Inspiration and Equality**



Paralympism, Paralympic values and disability sport: a conceptual and ethical critique

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To cite this article: M. J. McNamee (2016): Paralympism, Paralympic values and disability sport: a conceptual and ethical critique, Disability and Rehabilitation, DOI: [10.3109/09638288.2015.1095247](https://doi.org/10.3109/09638288.2015.1095247)





An important IPC development

- The fundamental principles that IPC Athletics is promoting regarding the evolution of equipment used during Recognised Competitions are:
 - a) **Safety** (i.e., to the user, other competitors, officials, spectators and the environment);
 - b) **Fairness** (i.e., the athlete does not receive an unfair advantage that is not within the “spirit” of the event they are contesting);
 - c) **Universality** (e.g., reasonably commercially available to all);
 - d) **Physical Prowess** (i.e., human performance is the critical endeavour not the impact of technology and equipment).

http://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/document/131218164256138_2014+athletics+rules+and+regulations+2014-2015_digital.pdf



A problem and four examples

How might these examples fare with respect to the Four Values (Courage, Determination, Inspiration, Equality) and Four Fundamental Principles (Safety Fairness Equality, Universality and Physical Prowess)?

1. Prosthetically/genetically modified high jumper
2. Oscar's and Alan's blades.....
3. Mr Zanardi's Ferrari
4. Markus Rehm's aims?



Inspiration



Torbjorn Tannsjo's (2009) thought experiment

Tannsjo, T. (2009) Medical enhancement and the ethos of elite sports, in J. Savulescu and N Bostrom (eds) Human Enhancement, Oxford: Blackwell Wiley, 315-26.

- Imagine a sport in which excellence was apparently achieved so efficiently that it ceased to inspire us.
- Imagine a medical intervention among athletes one of whom now had 3m legs.
- Why watch someone step over the bar to win ... ? Why admire that?
- It is a good thing indeed that Paralympic sports inspire us, but inspire us to do what?
- Moreover, one may admire their efforts without being inspired to do anything in particular other than say hurrah or applaud, and forget about it 5 minutes later.



Equality: Your prosthetics are taller than mine!



Some discussions needed about the reasonable equality/fair opportunity to contest

But remember this applies within Paralympic sport not just between OG and PG (cf 2012 : Oscar Pistorius v Alan Fonteles Cardoso Oliveira “If you look at videos from last year, Alan was shorter than me but now he’s taller than me.”

<http://www.smh.com.au/sport/we-arent-racing-a-fair-race-pistorius-furious-after-shock-200m-defeat-20120903-25908.html#ixzz2v0aGzqLe>





Equality: Alex Zanardi's Ferrari

“The mass of a wheelchair is the most important parameter for improving the winning time.”





Equality: justice v inclusion



Markus Rehm's incredible athletic achievements

Understanding and evaluating his performance is not an exclusively scientific exercise; it is a multidisciplinary

Why the binary ethical – unethical is often not very helpful

Here our problem is ethical concepts and values v ethical concepts and values

Inclusion v justice (or fair equality of opportunity)



Paralympism: a beginning

While I cannot fully articulate here an account of Paralympism beyond these thoughts here are some key questions

Why do we admire Paralympic athletes?

What kinds of excellence to they exemplify?

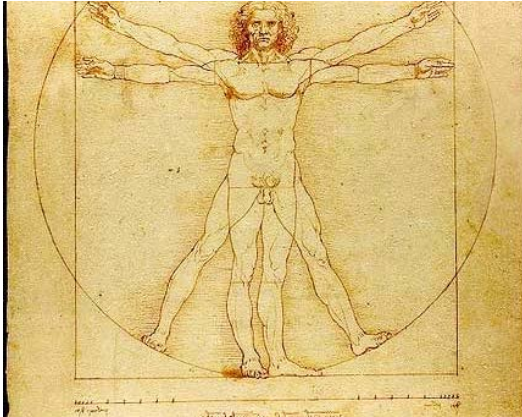
We need an account of Paralympic excellence (but I don't think it should necessarily be distinct from Olympic values: excellence, friendship, dignity)

The classification system is exceptionally important here to make sense of our admiration, to see whether it is properly founded.

But ethical problems not exclusively classification ones. (eg, movement forms, para populations)



Paralympism must avoid essentialism



Without denying the reality of impairment



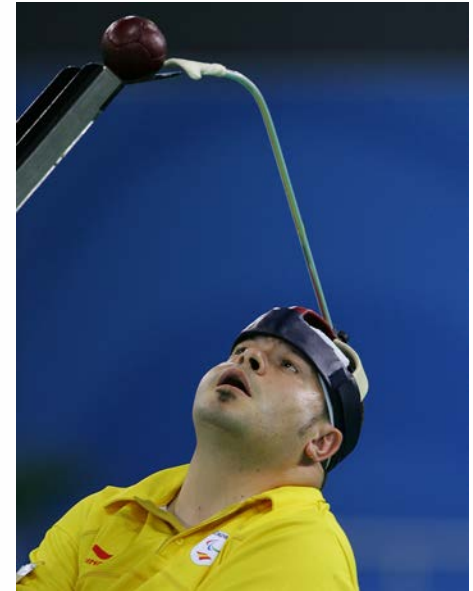
Paralympism must contextualize athletic excellence



Without sliding into hyper technologization



Paralympism must acknowledge limitations



Not glorify some naïve redemptive story



Paralympism: take home message

A deeper consideration of the technology is required alongside our understanding of athletic ability relevant to the Paralympic community.

This should be multidisciplinary in nature and be part of the function of the IPC Integrity department.

Three key consideration will be:

- (i) Fair equality of opportunity to contest
- (ii) Able/impaired competition integration
- (iii) Economic injustices and equipment standardization

**Thank you for your
attention**

