

Sport and National Identity in Taiwan: Some Preliminary Thoughts

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Abstract

For over two decades or more, the issues of sport and national identity have generated critical discussion in the West and in the East. Sports manifest themselves in many different forms, depending on the historical moment, ethnic group, and nation. It is through participating in and supporting the rituals and competitions of sporting events that people develop a sense of belonging to a community. Sports remain a critical catalyst to arouse people's passions for political, social and cultural identities. At the beginnings of modern sports, including the Olympics in 1890s, national passions were transformed into something like religious festivities, with meaningful symbols and material interests. This paper addresses several questions, with special reference to Taiwan's sports history. Why did sport and political identity come to be so closely related? How do they construct and reproduce one another? What kind of sports has been related to Taiwanese identity? The analysis of the paper integrates modern sports history and a number of historical and sociological theories as well as archival materials. In conclusion, we argue that the interactive influence of national identity, global capitalism and nationalism has concurrently spawned a new identity matrix that links Taiwan with international identities yet does not lose sight of Taiwanese individuality.

Key words: modern sports, national identity, Olympics, Taiwan

Introduction

According to Chia-lung Lin (2002: 224), "The awakening of Taiwanese consciousness among native Taiwanese and the Mainlanders' deepening sense of crisis have made identity politics the most salient issue on Taiwan's political agenda since the onset of democratization". This article examines the extent to which sport has been implicated in this development?

Over the last two decades, the relationship between sport and national identity has provoked much critical discussion (Bairner, 2001, 2008; Caldwell, 1982; Cronin, 1999; Cronin and Mayall, 1998; Hargreaves, 1992; Liang, 1993; Maguire, Jarvie, Mansfield and Bradley, 2002; Silk et al, 2005; Smith and Porter, 2004). This relationship is complex. In many parts of the world and for various groups of people, identity is highlighted and reproduced through sporting rituals and competitive events. In most countries, sport is arguably a more consuming passion for the population than politics (Caldwell, 1982). Yet it is also one of the main catalysts that arouse people's emotions in relation to political, social, cultural and national identities.

From the birth of modern sport, national passion and glorification have become a major focus. Olympic athletes were organized into national teams for the first time in 1908 at the London Games (Kent, 2008). By this time, ruling elites had infused sporting competitions with symbolic, emblematic, and ritualistic

characteristics that were visible in formal ceremonies much like religious festivities. During international sporting competitions, particularly the Olympic Games, the iconography of national identity is at its most visible with victorious athletes standing on the awards podium, the colours of their nation in plain view. The gold medal is placed around the winner's neck, their national flag raised, their national anthem played. Then the winner waves to the cheering crowd in a powerful demonstration of his or her status as a victorious proxy warrior for the nation. In this way, events such as the Olympics allow sport to be used in the "national interest", and in such circumstances, sport becomes a political tool, not least in terms of securing political legitimacy, strengthening or even creating national identity, pursuing national independence or unification, and striving for political and social equality for a national, racial or ethnic group. Examples of this include Taiwan's gold medal winning performance in taekwondo at the 2004 Olympics, and Wang Chien-ming's pitching for the New York Yankees in Major League Baseball. Both of these became focal points for the Taiwanese people and imbued in them feelings of pride and, potentially, a sense of identity. This article examines the construction and reproduction of national identity or identities in Taiwan and considers in what ways sport, and in particular Olympic sport, has been implicated in these processes.

The article begins with a brief commentary on the relationship between sport and national identity. This is followed by an outline of the development of modern sport in Taiwan. The discussion then turns to the manner in which sport has been implicated in the "Two Chinas" debate, particularly in relation to Taiwan's experiences at the hands of the Olympic movement. Finally, the article examines the contemporary role of sport in relation to Taiwanese identity.

Sport and National Identity – some observations

Although many have accepted that a relationship between sport and national identity undeniably exists, there remains a need to understand more fully how this relationship manifests itself in specific political contexts (Bairner, 2001). Most countries have had to confront the national question, particularly when seeking to build unity out of tribal, racial, ethnic and religious diversity. National signifiers such as the flags, anthems, currency, food, value systems, acceptance by global organizations such as the United Nations, as well as membership of international sporting organizations, are all taken as proof that nations can offer their people a sense of identity and territorial integrity. What should be noted at the outset, however, is that all of this applies more explicitly to nation states than to nations.

There are subtle differences between the English words, nation and state, which have spawned two very different political concepts: the nation-state and the nation. The word nation refers to a social group or community bound together by a common language, religion, race, history, tradition, customary rituals or common characteristics. Nation-state refers to a tangible political entity that possesses territory, citizens, a political structure, a legal system and constitutional sovereignty. Thus, the nation can be regarded as a psychological, cultural and social concept, albeit with material foundations, whereas the nation state is a political and legal designation which may or may not equate to the existence of a nation with its own territorial integrity (Reijai and Enloe, 1972). Shih Cheng-feng, a Taiwanese political scientist, argues that nationality pertains to the recognition of a state machine or political entity (Shih, 2000). National identity, on the other hand, is more easily linked to the idea of the nation (Bairner, 2008).

According to Norbert Elias, the development of modern sport and the progression of national sentiment seemed to be unique historical phenomena that emerged during the same period (Elias, 1998). In other words, sport and national identity possessed a common, fundamental historical characteristic, namely "modernity" (Hobsbawm, 1990). The relationship between sport and national identity in this regard can be explained in part by reference to Hobsbawm's idea of "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm, 1990). He notes, for example, that, from as early as the 1870s and mid-1880s in Britain, association football was implicated in the construction of what became seen as institutional and ritual characteristics, such as professionalism, the League, the Cup, routinely watching games on Saturdays, football club supporters and their passions, all

which were observable in industrial towns and major cities. Yet, in reality, at the outset, football had been an amateur, private school sporting activity used to cultivate middle and upper class values. Only when partially separated from its class origins did it become professional.

Sport is undeniably conducive to encouraging national consciousness and national identity, both of which can be expressed politically in a variety of ways but refer to the existence of a national country with a national history, a national mythology and national traditions. Although national identity may be closely linked to what Benedict Anderson described as an “imagined community”, Anderson himself was quick to point out that “imagined” is not synonymous with “fabrication” or “falsity” (Anderson, 2006: 6). Thus, national identity has real foundations. Nevertheless, creating myths, legends and traditions has continued to be a significant element of nation building. In this respect, the relevance of sport to national identity has often resided in its capacity to perform a myth-making function (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983). Before embarking on a discussion of the precise relationship between sport and national identity in Taiwan, it is necessary to begin by outlining the development of sport in that country.

The Development of Sport in Taiwan

It was not until the Portuguese discovered Ilha Formosa in 1544 that people beyond its shores began to take notice of the small island located in the west Pacific. In spite of its remoteness, it is probable that ancient Chinese publications contained references to Taiwan, albeit mainly based on speculation rather than empirical evidence. Whereas the Chinese might have been the first to know of Taiwan, knowing Taiwan did not equate to ruling Taiwan. Prior to Zheng Cheng-gong (Koxinga, 1624-1662) in the Ming period, Taiwan and the Penghu Islands had separate timelines with Penghu long inhabited by the Han people since the Sung dynasty (which later became part of the Yuan Empire) and Taiwan a hub for Han emigrants, largely due to the Dutch East India Company's incentive and recruitment policies (Chou Wan-yao, 1998). The company began ruling Taiwan in 1624, and did so until the Dutch were expelled by Zheng Cheng-gong in 1662. In a mere 38 years, Dutch rule established the basis for four hundred years of Taiwan's modern history, influenced as it was to be by a combination of Chinese and foreign powers.

Zheng Cheng-gong's expulsion of the Dutch enabled him to use Taiwan as the base for an anti-Qing Empire and the reinstatement of the Ming Dynasty. The Han Chinese began governing Taiwan at this point. In 1683, after Zheng Cheng-gong's army was defeated by the Qing government, Taiwan was annexed to the Qing Empire. However, in 1895, following its defeat in the Sino-Japanese war, China surrendered Taiwan to Japan. At the end of World War Two, in 1945, Taiwan was once again annexed as part of China. According to Roy (2003: 1), “Taiwan's present circumstances are peculiar and intriguing” – scarcely surprising given the island's complex history. Equally, it should come as no surprise that a country with such a unique past has also experienced a complex history in terms of both sport development and the construction of national identity as well as the relationship between the two.

In recent years, studies on the development of sport in Taiwan have become popular (Tsai Jen-hsiung, 1995; Hsu, Pei-hsien, 2006; Hsieh Shih-yuan, Shieh Jia-fen, 2003; Hsieh Shih-yuan, 2004). Most attention has focused on physical education in Taiwan's schools during the Japanese era and the role of the Japanese in the introduction of modern sport to Taiwan.

The Qing dynasty ruled Taiwan for more than two centuries, but initially put no emphasis on infrastructure and education. It was not until the late nineteenth century, when ports were built and trade increased, that the Qing Empire lifted the sea-crossing ban (a ban originally put in place to curtail foreign invasion) and assigned Shen Pao-jeu and Liu Ming-chuan to manage Taiwan as an imperial province. Prior to the Japanese occupation, Taiwan did come into contact with modern movements, as British tea merchant John Dodd documented in his “Chronicle of Closure in Northern Taiwan”. In this book, Dodd, who had relocated to Tamsui, Taiwan in 1864, describes a scene from 24 May, 1885, when British gunship officers and soldiers who had been with him for nine months, engaged in a variety of sports, including lawn tennis,

racing, cricket, high jumping, leaping, billiards and so forth (Chen Rou-jin, 2005). Also worthy of note is the fact that in 1882, Dr. George Leslie MacKay founded the Oxford Study Hall (the predecessor of today's Taiwan Theology College), and later launched the Tamsui Girls High School (the predecessor of today's Tamsui High School). In 1885, the English Presbyterian Church established the Presbyterian Church High School (the predecessor of today's Chang Rong High School). All of these schools were subsequently to enjoy an outstanding reputation for sporting excellence. The question of whether there had been a conscious effort on the part of schools to promote modern exercise and physical education prior to the Japanese occupation has prompted sports historians to conduct further research.

John King Fairbank (1989) emphasizes that, in the late nineteenth century, Taiwan was an ideal colony, in that its residents did not possess a clear sense of ethnic belongingness. The Japanese began their occupation of Taiwan in 1895 and, under Japanese colonial rule, the sport curriculum played an important role in promoting a (Japanese) identity. Through a modernized education system, the colonial rulers introduced school sports and their own physical culture as well as Western sports to Taiwan, thereby marking the first occasion when a government actively promoted sport in Taiwan in a systematic way (Tsai Jen-hsiung, 1995).

What can be deduced from Taiwan's early sports history is that the Japanese colonial government unrelentingly promoted sport in schools of all levels and for all social strata. Superficially this appeared to be a benign policy. In reality, however, it was used to secure Taiwanese approval for Japanese colonial rule. In Taiwan, as elsewhere, as Stoddart (1982) observes, sport was often the major tool used by the dominant class to deliver its official ideas and values. During the Japanese occupation, sports meetings were regularly organized as important events in schools. At these meetings, the Japanese flag was raised, the Japanese national anthem and other military songs were sung, and speeches were addressed to the colonial subjects by various dignitaries. Additionally, military marches were played to showcase regimented sporting formations and uniforms during the opening and closing ceremonies. All of this sought to secure and reinforce respect for and obedience and loyalty to various national symbols, all the while presented as uncontroversial rituals associated with the sports meetings themselves. Moreover, the Japanese colonial government introduced Japan's traditional sports of judo, fencing, sumo wrestling, archery and such like into the physical education curriculum, thus further promoting the educational objectives of the "Kominka" (Japanization) movement. In general, disseminating Japanese activities amongst the Taiwanese people was intended to lead to a Japanese way of thinking and to the growth of a Japanese nationalist spirit.

All of this had a significant impact particularly on intellectual life in Taiwan for, as Ching (2001: 29) notes, "Regardless of Japan's ambivalent relationship to the West, for the Taiwanese intellectuals, Japan irrefutably represented the modern, as compared to the colonizing West". For the majority of people, sport had greater significance than intellectual tastes in terms of conveying identity. As part of people's daily lives, sport served to provide a level of social integration and to ease the tension between the colonizer and the colonized. The Taiwanese quickly took up a variety of new sporting activities, with male and female students keen to partake in track and field and swimming contests, and male students eager to play tennis, basketball, rugby, football, hockey and baseball. In 1912, organized regional sporting events began to emerge. Baseball was particularly well received island-wide, spawning junior, youth and adult leagues (Tsurumi, 1999). In 1931, the Jiayi Agriculture and Forestry high school baseball team made up of Taiwanese and Japanese students, represented Taiwan in the play-off competition for the Japanese High School Baseball League, claiming the runners-up title (Hsieh Shih-yuan, Hsieh Jia-fen, 2003). In 1935, during the largest exhibition in Taiwan's history, the Taiwan Sports Association staged baseball games and other sporting events in Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan, in a bid to highlight Japanese colonial achievements (Cheng Jia-hui, 2004). The development of a baseball culture had a particularly profound significance for Taiwan, and when the colonial power left the island after the Second World War, baseball remained, and became even more significant in terms of national consciousness.

Introducing Japanese-style sports education was less to do with making the Taiwanese Japanese than

with training them to become obedient, industrious Japanese subjects. Taiwan's educated elite did not unconditionally accept Japan's strategy and students' experiences of studying abroad and exposure to other ideological trends slowly began to awaken an alternative national consciousness. The intellectual elite, including Lin Shien-tang, Chiang Wei-shui and Tsai Pei-hou, initiated a movement that included the Taipei Youth Sport Association aimed at promoting cultural exchange, sporting activities, and the development of healthy bodies, but such efforts were banned by the Japanese Governor's Office, and the Association eventually disbanded (Lei Yen-hsiung, 1988). This episode reveals the Japanese colonial government's unwillingness to allow the Taiwanese people to organize their own sports organization, and thereby potentially to challenge Japanese cultural hegemony.

Under colonial rule, major differences emerged between the Taiwanese (including aborigines) and the Japanese and were reflected in the sporting realm. Indeed, the Japanese enshrined these differences in junior baseball competitions which provided an arena for cultural resistance, justifying Anderson's assertion that the "imaginary community" may not necessarily arise from a specific cognitive national consciousness, but rather from the presence of a discernible opponent. Thus, "people in Taiwan experienced clear categorical differences between themselves and Japanese which left them with a sense of non-Japanese identity" (Brown, 2004: 9). Conversely, their attempts to shape an identity or a community consciousness through participating in sport permitted the construction of the Taiwanese as imagined opponents of the colonial government, some of whom had unsuccessfully striven for the formation of a nation state (Brown, 2004: 8). In such ways did an apparently banal activity, sport, come to encompass and underpin "complex" national emotions (Liang Shu-ling, 1993; Chang Li-ke, 2000).

Taiwanese athletes were not only subjected to political and cultural during the Japanese colonial period, but were also treated differently by their motherland in the aftermath of this colonial experience. The Taiwanese track and field athlete Chang Hsing-shien who had represented Japan at two Olympic Games was prompted to represent Taiwan/ "China" in the seventh National Sports Games held in Shanghai in May 1948. Many Taiwanese who had returned to the motherland after Japanese colonial rule did not distinguish between "Taiwanese society and the Taiwanese" and "Chinese society and the Chinese", but rather merged "tangibly existing Taiwan" with "imaginary China" (Chang Mao-guei, 1993). After retiring, Chang Hsing-shien addressed future athletes, saying that he had never had the opportunity to participate in the Olympics as a Taiwanese athlete. This prompted him to lament, "it turned out that I did not have a chance to help out the nation with a little civilian sporting diplomacy". Chang Hsing-shien's son Chang Zhao-ping added, "the government continues to deprive my father from serving in any important position, reckoning that my father was Japanese". Chang's story can be seen as one of a number that exemplify the ambivalent national identities - Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese - in Taiwan after World War Two.

Although the Japanese colonial government had left Taiwan, the sports culture, physical education and sport system it left behind continued to ensure Japanese influence in Taiwan. For example, baseball has developed into Taiwan's "national sport", even though the post-war Kuomintang (KMT/ Chinese Nationalist Party) government tried to ban it as a remnant of colonial rule. However, this deliberate attempt to remove such an important social and cultural experience was inevitably unable to wipe out the Taiwanese people's collective social memory.

In reality, far from being able to ban baseball, the KMT government sought to take the sport over (Lin Chi-wen, 1995) and constructed a system aimed at streamlining, rather than oppressing, grassroots baseball culture. Established to oversee this process, the National Baseball Association took steps to develop and strengthen the sport in Taiwan ² (Liang Shu-ling, 1993; Lin Chi-wen, 1995).

The KMT had decamped to Taiwan in 1945 and on 28 February, 1947, Martial Law was introduced. During what was to become the longest uninterrupted period of Martial Law anywhere, the Taiwanese people's freedom of speech, publication, gathering, religious faith and so forth were severely restricted (see Edmondson, 2002). Meanwhile sport became an important feature of KMT propaganda. The earlier Taiwan Provincial Sports Games continued, but with the opening ceremonies presided over by the KMT party

chairman, and the requisite singing of the national anthem, the president's keynote speech, reciting of slogans, the singing of patriotic songs, dances and drills, these events now directly served the interests of the state. For example, the first Taiwan Provincial Sports Games' track and field competition was held at Taiwan University on 25 October, 1946, and were to be presided over by the highest administrative officer, Chen Yi of the Taiwan Administrative Officer's Office. In the event, however, Chiang Kai Shek presided, along with Madam Sung, and delivered the opening speech:

... You have now returned to the embrace of your motherland, and have become the owners of the Republic of China; consequently, you need to shoulder more national responsibilities, while my coming to Taiwan this time has been to deliver the responsibility of developing Taiwan, developing the nation to our people! Particularly of the youths in Taiwan, where everyone needs to realize their own responsibilities by working collectively, learning and developing a strong physical stamina, and the only way to restore the ancient Chinese virtues is for one to be aware of etiquette and justice, integrity, being responsible and disciplined ... (Lei Yen-hsiung, 1988: 9).

Here was the "party line". Just one month earlier, a KMT publication had emphasized that the Taiwanese people needed to undergo "reeducation, for their minds had been polluted and had been coerced to receive twisted thoughts" (*New Taiwan Monthly*, 1946: 1-3). Drawing upon Confucianism and even older philosophies, the KMT continued to view the people's "national spirit" as the problem, failing to identify or shying away from addressing political, economic and social issues (Barrington Moore, 1966). There was widespread resentment towards the KMT government, resulting in the tragic events of 28 February, 1947 when the government eradicated a majority of the potentially influential leaders of Taiwan's embryonic national movement (Roy, 2003). In such circumstances, the second Provincial Sporting Games in 1947 became a highly significant event from which there would emerge traditions aimed at reaffirming Zheng Cheng-gong as a national hero in the eyes of the Han people.

Thereafter, annual "Chung Cheng (Chiang Kai Shek) Cup" competitions were staged by individual sports associations and by various local authorities; newly built sports buildings were named either the "Chung Cheng Sport Arena" or "Chung Cheng Sports Park", all in an effort by the KMT rulers (through the infusion of large sums of money into sporting activities and facilities) to promote party/ state consciousness by way of symbolism and ritual and, further, to inject their ideology subtly into the general public's sporting and recreational life. A prime example of the state's intrusion into sporting recreational activities was the "China Youth Corps" (CYC, *the China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps*) formed in 1952, which was initially housed in the Department of Defence. It stipulated that all students of high school and vocational high school age were required to join, and branches were set up in schools. The person directly in charge of the CYC's school activities was a military instructor, and the CYC's insignia used the same symbol as the KMT party. The CYC offered more than just sport. Other activities included combat training, hiking, mountain climbing; and wilderness camping. The CYC attracted adolescents and youths by offering sporting recreational activities, together with arranging summer and winter break recreational activities, and subsequently used those opportunities for the purpose of party education and the promotion of a specific Chinese national identity (see Brown, 2004).

The KMT also had plans to use international sports competitions to reawaken the public's collective awareness (Yu and Bairner, 2008). The Hong Yeh junior baseball team defeated Japan by 7-0 in 1968; the Jin Long junior baseball team won the twenty-third World Junior Baseball championship in 1969 and in 1971, the Giants team won the World Junior Baseball Championship. Around 1970, when the KMT regime was suffering setbacks in the international political arena, the triumph of their international baseball team provided the ruling party with an opportunity to reaffirm collective identity intended to divert popular attention from, or even compensate for, political difficulties. Finally, at the 1984 Olympics held in Los Angeles, the Taiwanese team took third place in baseball, causing the *China Times* to publish an editorial on 9 August headed, "Pondering the rise and fall of the baseball sport".

Recently of late, with the country encountering setbacks, we are confronting numerous drawbacks and

humiliation in the international community, no less than an isolation that was difficult to withstand. As a result, triumphing at international competitions brought the people of the entire nation to share the glorious moment, and unleash the resentment in their hearts. While what provided us with the most opportunities was none other than the baseball. The baseball brought us self-esteem, a sense of superiority, and the list went on. Nevertheless, this year's baseball game did not satisfy us, or even on the verge of a setback and disappointment... What we were looking for was an absolute victory, for victory was very important to us, and we simply could not afford to lose (Cheng Chin-jen, 1989: 332-33).

This statement highlights how baseball, as manipulated by the government, had helped to integrate KMT ideology into Taiwan's sporting culture.

International sports competitions offered a means for a country to secure political legitimacy and consolidate national identity, particularly when these were reflected in a representative team's name and in the use of a national anthem and a national flag. Since 1949, the KMT had wrestled with Communist China on the issue of political representation rights in the international sports competing arena and, particularly, in dealings with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and other governing bodies. This representation issue in the competitive sports arena reflected and helped to consolidate two different value systems and political identities, thus warranting detailed examination of the "two Chinas" issue.

The "Two Chinas" Issue (1960s-1980s)

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was ostracized by the Olympic movement from 1949. After an absence of over thirty years, it was restored to the Olympic family and competed at the Los Angeles Games in 1984, the first occasion on which the PRC and Taiwan had taken part in the same Olympics. The "two Chinas" issue was, and has remained, first and foremost, political, emerging in the aftermath of the Chinese civil war when, following their defeat, the Chinese nationalists fled to Taiwan. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established the PRC and the KMT reformed Taiwan as the Republic of China (ROC), a name that had been chosen by the first leader of the KMT, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, as early as 1911. The political conflict between the PRC and the ROC then carried over into the international sporting arena with both the PRC and Taiwan claiming to be the sole legitimate representative of China.

China's relations with the IOC date back to the early of 20th century when China itself was known as the ROC. China's National Amateur Athletic Federation (CNAAF) was recognized by the IOC in 1922. Prior to 1949, China (as the ROC) participated in the Los Angeles Olympics of 1932, at Berlin in 1936, and in London in 1948. In 1949, some Olympic Committee members fled to Taiwan while the ROC government maintained contact with the IOC and claimed jurisdiction over Olympic affairs both in Mainland China and Taiwan. The new ROC's claim was challenged by the PRC, since the CNAAF was still based in Nanjing (mainland China). Subsequently, the CNAAF was reorganized and renamed in October 1949 as the All-China Athletic Federation (ACAF), claiming jurisdiction over all Chinese Olympic activities. These competing claims for jurisdiction by the PRC and Taiwan inevitably led to conflict.

The PRC had no communication with the IOC until February 1952, when the ACAF sent a message expressing its wish to participate in the Helsinki Games. The IOC was put in a difficult position, since Taiwan also intended to take part. According to IOC rules, only one national committee was permitted to represent a country and there were differences of opinion among IOC members as to which Chinese committee should be recognized. Neither the PRC nor Taiwan was willing to negotiate or to form a single team. The IOC adopted a proposal permitting both committees to participate in those events in which they had been recognized by their respective international sport federations. Taiwan was disappointed by the IOC resolution and withdrew from the 1952 Helsinki Olympics to demonstrate its opposition. 1952 was the first time athletes from mainland China participated in the Olympic Games under the authority of the PRC government.

Two years later, the PRC was formally recognized by IOC as the Olympic Committee of the Chinese

Republic, later changed to the Olympic Committee of Democratic China (Olympic Review, No. 66-67, May-June, 1973). At the same time, Taiwan was recognized under the name of the Chinese Olympic Committee. Thus, the Olympic movement created a “two Chinas” situation. At the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, both the PRC and Taiwan were invited to take part. The PRC withdrew in protest at Taiwan’s participation and continued to demand the expulsion of Taiwan from the IOC leading Avery Brundage, the then President of the IOC, to write to Beijing on 8 January 1958:

Everyone knows that there is a separate government in Taiwan, which is recognized internationally, and specifically by the United Nations consisting of the governments of the world. Your government is not recognized by the United Nations (Olympic Review, No. 145, November 1979: 628).

Disappointed by this, the PRC withdrew its membership in 1958 from the IOC and nine other international sporting organizations in protest at the “two Chinas” policy. During the 1960s, there was little contact between the PRC and IOC or other sporting organizations and, as a result, Taiwan was able to claim representation on behalf of all China in international sports events. However, in October 1971, after the PRC was admitted to the United Nations, the ROC (Taiwan) was expelled. This political event greatly aided the PRC’s efforts to participate in other international organizations and, specifically, the IOC. The PRC applied to rejoin the IOC in 1975, was granted admission in 1979 and, since then, has taken an active part in Olympic activities, culminating in Beijing hosting the Summer Games of 2008.

How had the PRC managed to overcome the issue of the “two Chinas” from the late 1970s? When the country fell into relative chaos during the early stage of the Cultural Revolution, most sports training and competitive systems were dismantled, many sports officials and athletes attacked, sport academies closed, and sports equipment and facilities neglected or destroyed. This situation began to change when China re-entered international table tennis competition at the Scandinavian Open Championship in Sweden in November, 1970. This was the first time that a Chinese team had gone abroad for an international sports competition since the Cultural Revolution (The Times, 27, 28 and 30 November, 1970). Later China was invited to join the 31st World Table Tennis Championship in Japan in March-April, 1971. Mao Zedong agreed with Premier Zhou Enlai’s suggestion to send a Chinese table tennis team to Japan with the famous slogan, ‘Friendship first, competition second’ and Mao went on to say: “We shall join this competition. We must not be afraid to bear hardship. We must not be nervous and scared” (Li, 1994: 535; Wu 1999: 238). Thus began China’s so-called “Ping Pong Diplomacy” with the United States.

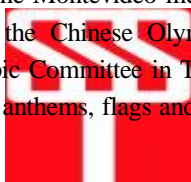
After 1970, Mao changed his sport policy to one of open engagement with certain partners, in particular the US, and consequently, an American table tennis team was invited to play in China in 1971, the first officially sanctioned Sino-American cultural exchange in almost twenty years. Mao increasingly regarded Soviet hegemony as the greatest threat to China following the border clashes of 1969 between Chinese and Soviet troops on China’s north eastern frontier. He reasoned that a tactical accommodation with the US would be less dangerous than the threat posed by the Soviet Union, a shift in attitude that was reflected in Premier Zhou Enlai’s call for peaceful coexistence and friendly relations between states with different social systems.

Although the PRC was invited to send observers to the 1972 Munich Games, the secretary-general of the All-China Sports Federation, Song Zhong, turned down the invitation because of Taiwan’s participation. China could still not tolerate a “two Chinas” or a “one China, one Taiwan” situation (Beijing Review, Volume 15, No. 35, 1 September, 1972). In the early part of 1973, however, the Japanese Olympic Committee suggested to various international sport federations and national Olympic committees that China be reinstated as a member and Taiwan expelled (The Times, 13 February, 1973). In April 1973, Willi Daume, the West German IOC Vice-president, went to Beijing to discuss the possibility of China rejoining the Olympic movement (New York Times, 22 March, 1973). Although he was told that China would not be prepared to rejoin the IOC as long as Taiwan was a member, China was making progress in achieving Olympic recognition.

An important step towards the PRC's eventual admission to the IOC came in 1973 when the Asian Games Federation voted to admit the PRC and exclude Taiwan from for its Teheran Games. Thereafter, more federations recognized the PRC which, in April 1975, made a formal application to rejoin the IOC, demanding its own conditions, the foremost being that Taiwan should be expelled from the IOC and that the All-China Sports Federation would be recognized as the sole sports organization representing the whole of China. Beijing regarded the existing relationship between the PRC and the IOC as abnormal and unjust particularly since the PRC had become a member of the United Nations (UN) from which Taiwan was now excluded (Beijing Review, Volume 18, No. 23, 6 June 1975).

Prior to the 1976 Olympic Games, the PRC requested Canada to unconditionally bar the Taiwanese delegation from Montreal. Instead, the Canadian government asked Taiwanese athletes to compete without any mention of the word China or the term "Republic of China". The IOC considered the Canadian action to be a breach of a promise made in 1970 when Montreal was chosen as the host city (Espy, 1979) and, to avoid further confrontation with the Canadian government, submitted a plan that Taiwan should be allowed to participate as "Taiwan-ROC" with a flag bearing the Olympic rings. This solution drew opposition from both the PRC and Taiwan. The PRC indicated that ROC was only an abbreviation of the title Republic of China and to adopt it would be to officially acknowledge the "two Chinas". On the other hand, Taiwan insisted on competing under its own flag and name - the Republic of China.

The PRC continued to maintain that there was one China not two Chinas or one China and one Taiwan and refused to accept any conditions under which Taiwan could be recognized. To seek a solution to the dilemma, the IOC president, Lord Killanin, tried to arrange a meeting between China, Taiwan and the IOC in 1979. Taiwan refused to enter into direct negotiation with China, thereby forcing the IOC and PRC to pursue a solution without consultation. At the Montevideo meeting of the IOC in April 1979, the plenary session passed a resolution to recognize the Chinese Olympic Committee located in Beijing whilst continuing to recognize the Chinese Olympic Committee in Taipei. However, the resolution made certain stipulations in relation to matters of names, anthems, flags and the constitutions of the two committees. At the meeting, Song Zhong claimed that:



The resolution passed... as it now stands, is unacceptable to us. We hereby reaffirm that there is only one China, that is, the People's Republic of China. And that Taiwan is part of China. The only way to solve the problem of China's representation is to recognize China's Olympic Committee as the national Olympic Committee of the whole of China. As an interim arrangement, the sports organization in Taiwan may remain in the IOC bearing the name of "China Taiwan Olympic Committee", but it must not use any of the emblems of the "Republic of China". We shall only accept solutions compatible with the above-stated conditions (Daily Report, 9 April, 1979: K1).

Song's statement indicated that the PRC would not allow Taiwan to use the name, the Republic of China, or that of the "Chinese Olympic Committee-Taipei" which would imply equal state status with China ("Chinese Olympic Committee-Beijing"). The perceived solution was that Taiwan should be clearly identified as part of China. Song called a press conference in Beijing and repeated China's objection to the resolution, saying that it would be tantamount to China's acceptance of the idea of "two Chinas". Again Song laid down the two necessary conditions: first, that China's Olympic Committee had to be recognized as the sole legitimate Chinese organization in the IOC; and second, that the IOC should forbid the use of the state name, national flag and anthem of the Republic of China by Taiwan.

In June 1979, the IOC executive committee meeting in Puerto Rico confirmed China's Olympic Committee's title as the "Chinese Olympic Committee". It also recommended that Taiwan should stay in the IOC as the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee with a different national anthem and flag. At an IOC executive board meeting in Nagoya, Killanin submitted a resolution to 89 IOC members for a postal vote on 26 October, 1979. According to this resolution, the National Olympic Committee of the PRC would be named the "Chinese Olympic Committee" and would use the flag and anthem of the PRC whilst the Olympic Committee of Taiwan would be named the "Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee" (CTOC) and its

anthem, flag and emblem would be other than those used by the PRC and would have to be approved by the executive board of the IOC. China welcomed this resolution, claiming that it took into consideration the basic fact that there was only one China of which Taiwan was a constituent part (Xinhua Yuebao, December, 1979).

Taiwan was disappointed with the IOC decision. Taipei's Olympic Committee and Henry Hsu, an IOC member from Taiwan, filed lawsuits at the Lausanne Civil District Court against the Nagoya resolution claiming that it violated IOC rules, a claim was rejected by the court. In his ruling, Judge Pierre Bucher said that it seemed obvious that Taipei's Olympic Committee had no right to present a suit against the IOC (Daily Report, 17 January, 1980: A2). The new IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch sent a letter to Hsu, dated 4 December, 1980, guaranteeing that Taipei's Olympic Committee would get the same treatment as any other national committee if Taiwan accepted the conditions of the Nagoya resolution (Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee, 1981). Consequently, the Taipei Olympic Committee agreed to change its name to the 'Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee' and to adopt a new flag and emblem. According to the agreement, the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee would be entitled to participate in future Olympic Games and other activities sponsored by the IOC like every national Olympic Committee, with the same status and rights (Olympic Review, No. 162, April, 1981). At least temporarily, the question of Chinese representation was settled. For the PRC, there were no "two Chinas" or one China and one Taiwan. The latter was subsumed under China – implicit in the naming of the two Olympic committees. This outcome helped to facilitate communication between China and Taiwan through sport and was even seen as conducive to the reunification process. For Taiwan, there was no option but to accept the resolution if it wished to stay in the Olympic movement; for the IOC, one of its biggest problems over the previous twenty years had been resolved.

The increasing importance of sport to the PRC was linked to the international significance of the Olympic movement. In China, sport has been fought over by many different groups and it is relatively easy to demonstrate its role in promoting nationalism and its importance to the ruling elite. According to the ideology of Chinese centrism (Sino-centrism), Taiwan is regarded as part of China which bans the Taiwanese from using their official national name, flag and anthem in all international competitions. Since 1984, Taiwanese athletes have competed internationally under the name of "Chinese Taipei", but the Chinese domestic media consistently refer to Taiwanese sports teams as "Taipei China". Sporting relationships between China and Taiwan are, thus, symbolic of Chinese internal imperialism even though the majority of Taiwanese people oppose unification under the official Chinese nationalist slogan of "one country, two systems".

For the 2004 Olympics in Athens, the National Council on Physical Fitness and Sport announced that the Chinese Taipei Olympic team would consist of 85 competitors across 12 events. Coverage of the Games would be provided by digital broadcast stations with the IOC granting broadcasting rights to Taiwan Television Enterprise Ltd., China Television Co., Chinese Television Systems and Formosa Television. The CTOC praised the IOC for promoting cooperation between the four stations not least because the mission of the CTOC remains that of promoting the Olympic Movement in Taiwan.

Reaction in Taiwan to the successful Beijing Olympic bid was mixed. In the build-up, Yuan Wei-min, the President of China's Olympic Committee (COC), declined to rule out the possibility of Taiwan being involved in co-sponsoring the Games, should the bid be successful, as long as the "one China" principle was adhered to. The CTOC argued that co-hosting the 2008 Games would benefit Taiwan from an economic point of view, but above all, would be an opportunity to promote sporting exchanges and enhance the process of reconciliation across the Taiwan straits. However, Yuan Wei-min pointed out that, unlike the football World Cup and European Championships, which allow for joint bids from different countries, the IOC Olympic Charter only allows the Games to be staged in one city of one country.

Chinese state nationalism involves the imposition of cultural homogeneity from above. One element of this policy is to force Taiwanese sports organizations to accept that the PRC is the only central Chinese government and that Taiwan is merely a provincial authority. However, in the face of the continuing threat

from the PRC, many Taiwanese people have sought their own self-identification, rather than simply accepting a definition arrived at by the Chinese government. That said, to a certain degree, the debate over the “two Chinas” has moved beyond debates about two nationalisms or national identities, with the concept of post-colonialism helping to re-position central concerns.

Republic of China, Chinese Taipei or Taiwan (1980s-2008)

Taiwan’s national title has become a fundamental issue because a national title relates not only to recognition on the international stage but also to internal political identity. The Taiwan government adopted the formal title of the “Republic of China”, yet in the wake of the “two Chinas” issue, was now referred to as “Chinese Taipei”, at least in the international sporting arena. In turn, “Chinese Taipei” became its name on various international, non-sporting occasions. But did this mean that the Taiwanese people had come to accept the designation? Did the title “Chinese Taipei”, in and of itself, truly resolve the “two Chinas” issue? What was the prevailing mood within Taiwan? All these questions prompt us to delve even deeper into the discussion of whether Taiwan is best described as the “Republic of China”, “Chinese Taipei”, or “Taiwan”.

The “two Chinas” period coincided with the Cold War when the ruling KMT thought it could harness international anti-communist sentiment to its own goals. Specifically, it believed it could gain the support of the international community for its “legitimate” right to represent China. The plan failed. After the 1960 and 1964 Olympics, international sporting organizations leaned towards referring to Taiwan as “Taiwan”, but the KMT government adamantly refused to accept this title, and continued to assert its right to represent China, resulting in diplomatic setbacks and the imposition of title “Chinese Taipei” which allowed Taiwanese athletes to participate in international competitions but did nothing to resolve the issues of Taiwanese national identity in the political, social and sporting realms.

There was little explicit opposition in Taiwan to the use of the name “Republic of China” under the KMT’s martial law, but outside of Taiwan, specifically within the sporting arena, it was another matter. The KMT had attempted to solidify Taiwanese identity internally using junior baseball. In 1969, Taiwan sent junior players to the USA to compete for the first time for the William Porter Cup. When the ROC national anthem was played, an ABC close-up showed an advocate for Taiwanese independence holding a poster that read “It is a Taiwanese team not the Chinese team!” At the time, representatives from the US headquarters of the Taiwan Independent League were handing out flyers to junior baseball fans, stating, “Come cheer for Taiwan’s junior baseball league” and “Taiwan (Formosa) does not have freedom nor does it belong to China... The Taiwanese are passionate about the baseball, but Taiwan’s mainlanders are not” (Morris, 2007). This illustrated the close relationship between baseball and the construction of Taiwanese national identities (Yu and Bairner, 2008). Sport had made it possible for the legitimacy of the KMT regime to be challenged by the Taiwanese abroad.

The Olympic experiences of two well-known Taiwanese athletes, Yang Chuan-kwang and Chi Cheng, also shed some light on the relationship between sport and national identity during this period. Yang Chuan-kwang won a silver medal in the decathlon at the Rome Olympics in 1960, earning him the nickname, “Iron Man of Asia”. Chi Cheng, subsequently nicknamed “Leaping Antelope”, won a bronze medal in the women’s 80m hurdles in 1968. These were the first two Asians to achieve such results, and also the first Chinese athletes to be accorded respect by the international sporting community. But their moment of glory was not to last. In 1976, the Taiwanese and the Chinese teams both tried to enter Canada as the sole representatives of China at the 1976 Olympics. Following discussions about Taiwan’s participation, as described above, prior to the opening ceremonies, the then Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, refused to issue entry visas to the ROC delegation because of the continuing “two Chinas” issue, thus leaving the delegation trapped on the border between the USA and Canada. This was especially unfortunate because, as early as the 1968 Mexico Olympics, Hsu Heng of the Taiwan Olympic Committee had succeeded in getting the IOC to accept the name of the “Republic of China Olympic Committee” for Taiwan

and its athletes. Yet at the Montreal Olympics, eight years later, Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau demanded that the ROC delegation use the name of “Taiwan” in order to gain entry and participate in the Games. Not surprisingly, this prompted a strong protest from Taiwan. In an effort not to sacrifice the opportunity for athletes to participate, the ROC Olympic Committee summoned their two world-class athletes, Yang Chuan-kwang and Chi Cheng in the hope that their celebrity status might elicit compassion and support from the international community, and thereby facilitate entry to Canada for the whole ROC delegation (Tsai Hsin-yi, 2002; Kai Lu, 2000).

Countering the attempted illicit entry into Montreal, Trudeau issued a blockade order against the Taiwan Olympic delegation. Thus, when Yang Chuan-kwang and Chi Cheng flew into Montreal international airport with them, they found it difficult to even walk, as they were surrounded by a large international press contingent and were only able to check into the Olympic village with a Canadian police force escort. They had undeniably attracted the attention and support of the international news media, causing the IOC to call an emergency meeting at which it was determined that the ROC Olympic delegation would participate in the Games under the name of “Taiwan”. But neither the Taiwanese flag nor the Taiwanese national anthem would be changed. In response, the Chinese Olympic Committee commissioner in Montreal, Shen Jia-ming, reported to the Education Minister Chiang Yen-shih and after consultation with Executive Yuan spokesman, Chiang Jing-kuo, tried to obtain an Olympic withdrawal order in protest at the “Taiwan” name change.

At the Nagoya conference in 1979, Yang Chuan-kwang and Chi Cheng said of that tumultuous time, “To athletes, the most important thing is to be able to join the competition, and the issues of national flag, anthem and name are not important to them”¹. It was a reflection of the times that the IOC insisted that Taiwan participate in the Games under the name of the “Taiwan”, whereas the “Republic of China”, then under KMT rule, could only insist upon the name of the “Republic of China”. The indifference of these Taiwanese athletes and their verdict in 1979 are even more compelling, given that Taiwan accepted the name of the “Chinese Taipei” in 1981, after many international disputes over changing the name from “Chinese Taipei” to “China Taipei”, for which in fact, Chi Cheng had negotiated and protested.²

By 2001, individuals such as Chi Cheng and Yang Chuan-kwang, who had experienced Olympic wrangling and Chinese oppression, were rallying support for a cross-strait long-distance run in support of Beijing’s petition to host the Olympic Games. When the Olympic torch was unable to pass through Taiwan, Chi Cheng stated straightforwardly that this was a shame, “after all it was rare for the Olympics to be this close to Taiwan”. When she took part in the Olympics for the first time at the age of 16, she had witnessed the exchange between competitors and the formation of friendships and that is what she remembered when she thought of the Games; to her, the Olympic Spirit meant Peace and Freedom (Yang Mong-yu, BBC Chinese website, 22 November, 2007). From the experiences of these two athletes, we can see both benign feelings towards the Olympics, but also helplessness in the face of international sport politics.

The Olympic torch is intended to symbolize peace, unity, progress, mutual respect and accommodation. The Chinese regime used it (and their bid to host the 2008 Olympics) to integrate into the international community, albeit with the potentially ominous ambition of pursuing the dream of a harmonious society. Conversely, the international community thought that the PRC would soften its existing image in order to win the bid to host the Olympics successfully (Tsai Hsin-yi, 2002; Chen Hui-ying, 2007; Tsai Ming-yen, 2007; Yeh Wei-jun, 2004). Despite their proclaimed intent to take the Olympic torch on a “Harmonious journey”, the Chinese authorities planned a route that raised questions about their political motives in relation to Taiwan (Huang Shu-rong, 2007). The major point of contention was that the route for the Olympic torch announced on 26 April, 2007, included Taiwan as part of the domestic leg, indicating Taiwan to be a local government under the jurisdiction of the PRC. Additionally, the COC demanded that no national flag, national emblem, or national anthem representing Taiwan should appear on the torch relay route, which triggered great public resentment in Taiwan. The IOC has historically emphasized a separation of the Games themselves and the policies of individual governments for fear of allowing nation-state politics

to impede international sporting exchanges. The fact remains, however, that it has proved very difficult, if not impossible, to protect the Olympics from political undertones (Tsai Hsin-yi, 2002; Chen Hui-ying, 2007; Tsai Ming-yen, 2007). Certainly the torch relay and its repercussions reinvigorated discussions about Taiwan's identity.

The simple announcement of the logistics of the Olympic torch relay touched a raw nerve for many Taiwanese people and inevitably discussions on the related subjects of Taiwan's sovereignty and the significance of the China connection ensued. As revealed in a poll conducted by Taiwan's Executive Yuan Mainland Affairs Council, over 60% of the respondents expressed the view that to allow the torch to pass through Taiwan would diminish its claim to sovereignty, and, for that reason, Taiwan should not accept such an arrangement (Tsai Ming-yen, 2007). When asked about the torch passing through Taiwan during the first stage of the PRC's domestic route, with the stipulation that Taiwan be referred to as "Taipei, China", nearly 65% of the respondents said this was unacceptable, and only 16.3% of the respondents said they would accept Taiwan being the first stop on China's domestic torch route. As to whether the issue of the torch passing through Taiwan should be negotiated, those in agreement and those opposed accounted for 42.7% and 45.7% respectively. These figures reveal that over a half of the respondents had doubts about Beijing's goodwill, although a substantial minority wanted continued negotiations with Beijing in order to allow the Olympic torch to be taken successfully via Taiwan (Huang Shu-rong, 2007).

According to this poll, the concept of Taiwan as a political entity had garnered increasing support following political change in the 1980s and 1990s.¹ Additionally, Taiwan's "baseball nationalism" had reached a new milestone on 30 April, 2005, when Wang Chien-ming entered Major League Baseball and initiated the so-called "Taiwang era". Chen Tze-shuan (2005) argues that the modernization of Taiwan's baseball not only conforms to Tomlinson's (1985) understanding of national modernization processes, but the "Taiwang" identity that was developed through the baseball was additionally a by-product of global capitalism, thereby differing from the feelings associated with junior baseball successes in the 1970s which were dictated solely by nationalism (Chen, 2005). The term "Taiwang" consisted of a blending of the complex themes of national emotion, hero worship and commercialized sport within an identity matrix. Furthermore, the very essence of this matrix can be traced to the media and, thus, related not only to different levels of individual identity, but also helped to construct a national identity within the context of the global mediatization of Wang Chien-ming's games. In terms of nationalism, the pride of Taiwan, Wang Chien-ming, helped to solidify the Taiwanese sense of pride about their country and validated their feeling of possessing a distinct identity. In terms of global capitalism, Wang Chien-ming became more than a product: he has (personally) introduced Major League Baseball into the Taiwanese and other Asian markets. As for internationalism, Wang Chien-ming and other international athletes who are able to thrive in the US and get the widespread support from American and global fans, create a commonality across borders that is conducive to the process of friendship and reconciliation among countries of the world. Wang Chien-ming is not simply an example of an Asian athlete making it in the "major league" world of sport. In relation to nationalism, global capitalism and internationalism, his career has reflected and contributed to the evolution of Taiwanese identity. It was as though Wang Chien-ming was not just pitching for himself or for the Yankees – he was pitching for all of Taiwan! This phenomenon highlights a collective awareness that is a response to Taiwan's extended international isolation and alienation, but also points to a collective optimism that Wang Chien-ming can enhance Taiwan's international visibility.

The complexity and uniqueness of the engagement of the Taiwanese with the issue of national identity

¹ The history of Taiwan is multi-dimensional and the (national) consciousness issue has emerged strongly since martial law was lifted in 1980s. Chinese identity, which was thought to be a monolithic bloc in the past, now dissolves into Taiwanese and other identities. The fluctuation of the (national) consciousness has been very noticeable with peaceful rotation of political parties since 2000 (Sun, Yu-ping, 2005).

which have led Taiwan to be described as “a laboratory of identities” (Corcuff, 2002: xxiii) and, more metaphorically, “the orphan of Asia” (Wu, 2005), are the consequence of changing external opposition, and concomitant internal dialogue and resistance. National identity, whether in the political, social or sporting fields, has evolved in the last decade. A once dominant Republic of China identity has increasingly been challenged by a Taiwanese identity. Particularly after the political reshuffle of 2000, Taiwanese identity became a major political issue. Meanwhile sport was not only a tool for the promotion of Taiwanese identity but was also used as evidence of the emergence of that identity. For example, at the 2004 Olympics, Taiwan finally captured two gold medals in taekwondo prompting a celebration on the return of the medallists, reminiscent of national spectacles not seen for many years in the country. At the same time, the “May 11 Taiwan Sport Renaming Campaign” launched a national campaign which sought to urge the people and the media to correct their old habits and rename the “Republic of China team” (*Zhong hwa dui*) the “Taiwan team”, and the “Mainland Chinese team” the “China team” (*Zhong guo dui*). This campaign encouraged the general public to correct the media or anyone else who “erroneously” referred to the Taiwanese team as the Chinese team (Huang, Shu-fang., 2004).

Despite such efforts, the official representative team from Taiwan has continued to be referred to as “Chinese Taipei” in international sporting events. Although this is contrary to popular sentiment in Taiwan, and challenges the popular understanding of Taiwanese identity, this has not dampened Taiwan’s interest in participating in international sport. Furthermore, the growth of “Taiwanese identity” has been nurtured by continuing international suppression. For example, the PRC has recently exerted pressure on host countries to change the name of Taiwan’s team from the internationally agreed “Chinese Taipei” to “China Taipei”. Similar influence is even exerted in the academic world of sports studies. Thus, during the 2004 Pre-Olympic Congress held in Thessaloniki, Greece, all references to Taiwan were replaced by the term “Chinese Taipei” regardless of whether the reference was to a location, school name or even a thesis title appearing in the congressional proceedings. Such behaviour though does not serve to reinforce Chinese identity in Taiwan. Rather, it tends to increase Taiwanese consciousness among scholars. In such circumstances, the formation of such a consciousness has become a key issue in the relationship between sport, national identity and Taiwan’s unfolding Olympic history.

Conclusion: Sport, National Identity and Taiwan’s Olympic History

Discussions of nationality tend to presuppose that if a nation possesses sovereignty, its members should have the freedom to handle their own affairs. Either explicit or implicit is the belief that citizens share a common identity (Wang Tze-hong, 1999). The “[Japanese] Colonial government’s internal rule” sought to implement a modernization movement whereby Taiwanese athletes first participated in the Olympics. The “[KMT] Republic government’s internal rule” emphasized community and national identity to which the achievements of Chi Cheng and Yang Chuan-kwang contributed greatly. Because international sporting competitions continued to be nation-centred and individual athletes had to be attached to a country’s sporting organization in order to participate in the Olympics, an athlete’s identity was necessarily tied to the nation, and conversely, the nation’s identity was linked to that athlete and his/her successes and failures.

Identity depends, in part, on recognition by others, or sometimes on the absence of such recognition, but it can also result from others’ misrecognition. Because of the desire for recognition and thus the elimination of misrecognition, a country’s legitimacy in the international sporting domain becomes supremely important. The Olympic movement’s emphasis on national symbolism is such that the struggle for formal Olympic membership has become a political battlefield based on the belief that Olympic acceptance can, or even will, result in wider political recognition. Thus, the disputes between Taiwan and China regarding representation in the Olympics (over the one China principle and the “two Chinas” issue) have clearly been about more than just sport. At its very core has been a fundamental disagreement about Taiwan’s place in the world with Taiwan asserting independence, and China seeking to retain control over a territory believed to be its own. Taiwan has been subjected to Spanish, Dutch and Japanese colonial rules

successively over the past five centuries, and since the KMT government decamped to Taiwan in 1949, the dispute over identity questions has continued. However, because over many years no consensus has been reached through internal dialogue on Taiwanese identity, building a Taiwanese identity, externally – i.e. in terms of how others view Taiwan - became increasingly important.

In the identity formation process, as Cohen (1985) argues, the position of the other party is indispensable. Constructing “the other” is a major factor. Additionally, the boundaries dividing others from ourselves are relative and interactive (Keller, 2003). Furthermore, Castells (1997) emphasizes that building a social identity tends to be rooted in a power relationship. Drawing upon his analysis, sporting culture can be categorized in three ways in relation to the development of national identity.

First, there is legitimized national identity (or nationality). Sporting organizations are steered by a dominant system. This form of national identity is linked to both civil society and the state. When the Japanese controlled a majority of Taiwan’s sporting organizations, the latter were intended to promote an identity supportive of their rule. The same point can be made in relation to the KMT and later, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Regardless of who has been in power, Taiwan’s legitimacy in international sporting organizations has been deeply affected by the Chinese government’s declaration that “the PRC is the sole legal Chinese government, and Taiwan remains part of China” (Tsai Hsin-yi, 2002).

Second, there is resistant national identity. This is a response to suppression or defamation by the politically dominant. This can be the most important element of national identity formation within a sports movement, used as it is to consolidate resistance centred on the existence of a national identity. Scheff (1994: 281) emphasizes that “Nationalism built on ethnic groups tends to create a sense of distinction because of alienated perceptions and political, economic or social inequality”. Thus, having experienced oppression at international sporting events, at the hands of various sporting organizations and international sporting symposia, Taiwan has been forced to substitute “Chinese Taipei” or “Taipei, China” for both “Republic of China” or “Taiwan”. This has prompted a majority of Taiwanese people to oppose “Chinese identity” and seek alternatives.

Finally, there is projected national identity. Here the functionaries of sporting society, in their search for cultural capital, have constructed a new national identity by which to redefine the position of their sporting organizations, and have sought to create a completely new sports structure. Simply put, this expression of national identity becomes the main feature of sporting culture. In the recent decade, as Taiwan’s sporting trajectory has gathered momentum, a projected national identity has begun to emerge.

Each of these three forms of national identity are relevant to Taiwan’s Olympic history. In Taiwan’s history, the interactive influence of national identity, global capitalism and nationalism has concurrently spawned a new identity matrix that links Taiwan with international identities yet does not lose sight of Taiwanese individuality. To date, the emergent Taiwanese consciousness can best be understood by reference to concepts such as “civic nationalism” (Edmondson, 2002) or “pragmatic nationalism” (Wu, 2002). How it will develop is difficult, if not impossible, to predict. What is certain, however, as this article has demonstrated, is that sport will continue to play a significant role in the unfolding process.

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East Asian Sport Thoughts

Volume 1

October 2010

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