



Pisco Med Publishing

Sports and the Construction of the Chinese Nation: A Shift from State Construction to Nation-State Construction

Guochun Liu, Qing Chang

The College of Exercise Medicine, Chongqing Medical University, Chongqing 400016, China.

Abstract: Using methods that include dynamic investigation, historical research, and theoretical analysis, as well as dialectical thinking about double crises and double solution, this paper explores the relationship between sports and Chinese nation building and highlights the role of sports in constructing the Chinese nation in different historical periods and against different political backgrounds since the founding of the Peoples' Republic of China in 1949. In the early years, sport primarily focused on serving people's health, production and labor, and national defense. However, learning from the Soviet Union model, competitive sports began to serve as a bridge to open up a new prospect for China's diplomacy and help to establish the legitimacy of its international status. After economic reform and opening up, thanks to the "*Ju Guo Ti Zhi*" (national system: unified mobilization and deployment of relevant national forces) with concentrated efforts and resources for Olympic sports, China realized the century-old dream of uniting Chinese national spirits and strengthening national confidence, pride, and honor. Finally, the national rejuvenation as the new historical mission now highlights the shared prosperity of sports and the country and advocates the concept of people-oriented development with humanistic values based on cultural attributes, thereby realizing the transformation of New China's sport from national construction to nation-state construction.

Keywords: Sports; China; State Construction; Nation-State Construction; Shift

Introduction

Since the year 1500, when human beings bid farewell to regional development and entered the era of globalization, the world system has formed a basic structure with the nation-state as the basic unit. Until now, the basic fact that nation-states are the main players in international competitions has not changed. Moreover, promoting national prosperity is still the historical mission for sport and the theme of the new era.¹ From the late Qing Dynasty to modern China, the Chinese nation has experienced the arduous process of evolution from the classical empire to the modern nation-state and experienced national change from feudal autocracy, bourgeois-democratic republic to the people's democratic dictatorship. Along with the dynamic changes in the country's development, the concept of sport in New China is also continually developing and changing in the process of building a nation-state. As a social, cultural, and educational activity with political functions, sport is attached to and embedded in the country in different periods, closely linked with China's modernization process.

Sport contributes to national soft power. That is why nearly all countries seek to enhance their national strength through sports.² In addition, sports have proved "uniquely effective" in defining national identity and a sense of belonging.³ With nation-state construction as the theme, locating sport within the early days of the Mao Zedong era after the founding of the PRC on 1st October, 1949, the reform and opening up period and the modern nation-building new era, this paper interprets the reception and subsequent rejection of the Soviet model approach, the collision of the former closed environment and the reform and opening-up policy, the dilemma between the spirit of sport and political demands and the balance between real

interests and humanistic values in the nation-state construction of New China, to reveal the basic trajectory and internal laws of the metabolism of sports in relation to the construction of the nation-state.

1. The evolution of the nation-state in modern China

The term ‘nation-state’ in Chinese refers to a sovereign state based embracing multiple nations within the same political structure rather than a single nation-state. In other words, it is the basic unit of the modern world state system.⁴ The main symbol of its formation is the establishment of the concept of ‘sovereignty’ and the identification of the national community, that is, occupying a particular territory, the country is composed of nations and people, free from foreign domination and with an organized government.⁵ The concept of ‘nation’ in ancient China was mostly embodied in the cultural sense, while in modern times, it has been gradually transformed from the cultural dimension to a political dimension under the influence of Western social theories and thoughts. The establishment of China’s nation-state originated from the globalization of the modern world and the expansion of capitalism, but it also grew in the process of resisting external oppression and exploitation.

The world entered the modern era in the sixteenth century. Humanity bid farewell to the development of regionalization and entered a world characterized by the integration of different civilizations in various countries on all continents. The first-mover predominantly Western countries developed rapidly, but non-Western countries were also set on the established track of development. Before 1840, China’s feudal system had operated for more than 2,000 years with a strong economy, and the people enjoyed the imperial grace and the powerful Confucian moral appeal. People under the classical monarchy believed only in the view of ‘*Tianxia*’ (world). The state power was based on its primary function with the hierarchical structure of imperial power, bureaucratic power, and gentry power. The world was the emperor’s world, and the people were just the emperor’s subjects. The people lived and worked in peace and contentment, multiplied and thrived in their respective regions, and each had his own destiny and fulfilled his role. There was no nation-state consciousness, but only feudal etiquette and the three principles and five constant virtues (the moral code between people advocated by feudal ethics). The country according to this view of the world was the emperor’s country. Everything in the country was the emperors. Moreover, the enlightenment of Confucianism shaped these political principles of extreme imperial power: ‘the ruler wants his minister to die, and the minister has to die’⁶, ‘Although the emperor is not kind, the minister dare not do anything to the emperor’⁷, ‘Although the emperor is not benevolent, the minister cannot disobey him’⁸, ‘All the world, is the land of the emperor; all the people, are the king’s subjects’⁹. The classical empire was a closed state which maintained its metabolic stability without external challenges.

In the late Qing Dynasty, the internal and external power crisis of the country became more and more serious, and the self-repair mechanisms of imperial China were no longer applicable when faced with the robust import of foreign cultures. The concept of nationalism was awakened, and internal and external conflicts between ethnic groups had accelerated the collapse of the classical monarchical state’s political system. Although steps had been taken to make changes, trying to establish a constitutional monarchy that weakened imperial power to protect civil rights, freedom, and equality, in the end, the results unsuitable. Faced with the challenge of external capitalist countries and the awakening of internal national consciousness, Kang Youwei’s Hundred Days Reform could not make up for the increasingly constricted self-adjustment space of imperial China. Although Liang Qichao pioneered the term ‘Chinese nation’, in the end, the constitutional monarchical system was still unable to be changed and was replaced by the more adaptable Western party-state model. Modern China had finally settled for the paradigm of the modern nation-state through difficult, tortuous, and repeated exploration under the dual pressures of internal division and external oppression.

2. The focus is on national construction: Nationalism and sports in the Mao Zedong era (1949-1976)

2.1 Sports cultivate the builders of socialism and defenders of national defense for the country

Not long after the founding of PRC, a close relationship between sport and politics was established. Training healthy and strong bodies for national defense and the socialist state were the policies and the practice of sport.¹⁰ At the beginning of 'Sports Research', Mao Zedong pointed out that 'The national strength is weak, the martial arts are weak, and the nation's physique is becoming more and more delicate. It is a worrying phenomenon.'¹¹ The national physique and the destiny of the nation-state were closely linked together; the long-term burden of the humiliation of the 'sick man of East Asia' made China's sports development inseparable from the historical mission of becoming a strong country. After the founding of New China, it was necessary to strengthen a country with the world's largest population (541.67 million) and a severe economic recession (4.5% of world GDP) following a century of conflict.¹² Taiwan had not yet been liberated militarily, and the situation in North Korea was tense. Due to these difficulties, sports were bound to be valued by the state from the beginning for restoring the national economy and building a strong national defense. On 21st September, 1949, the 'Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference', with the character of a provisional constitution, was passed. It explained cultural and educational policy: 'Promote national sports, to promote the health of the people.'¹³ 26-27 October 1949, At the 26-27 National Congress of Sports Workers in October 1949, Zhu De pointed out: 'Our sports industry is for the people, national defence and national health, not only for students but also for workers, farmers, citizens, military agencies and groups.' In June 1952, the All-China Sports Association was established. Mao Zedong wrote an inscription for its establishment: 'Develop sports and enhance the people's physical fitness.' Zhu De wrote for the founding ceremony: 'Popularize people's sports for production and national defense service'. The original 'Articles of the All-China Sports Federation' clearly defined the goal: 'Improve people's health and serve national defense and national construction.'¹⁴ These statements outlined the characteristics of sport in nation-state construction in the early days of the People's Republic of China. First, sport was for people. These guidelines enhanced people's physical fitness and safeguarded the people's right to participate in sports. Second, sport was for national defence. It enhanced physical fitness through exercise and reserved the power to protect the fruits of the revolutionary victory; Third, sports served economic construction, promoted people's health, improved labor efficiency, and developed the national economy.

2.2 The people's Republic of China regains IOC status and fully represents China

In a debate about Bohemia and Finland participating in the 1912 Olympics, de Coubertin noted that the modern Olympic competition's spirit was 'all games, all nations.'¹⁵ but his idealism was arguably too optimistic.¹⁶ New China's sport faced a dilemma between ideals and realities.

After World War II, the Soviet Union joined the international sports system and participated in the Olympic Games for the first time in 1952. To expand the socialist camp, it hoped that China would participate with the Soviet ambassador to China visiting the All-China National Sports Federation in Beijing to make this point. After realizing the importance of the Olympic Games for political legitimacy, the Chinese government changed the face of Chinese sports. China and Chinese sports began to play a part in the quest for international recognition of political issues. China participated in the Helsinki

Olympic Games in 1952 for the first time without having set up a specific governing organization. The participation of China and the Soviet Union at the Olympics was considered by many to symbolize the Olympic spirit. The then Olympic President Avery Brundage noted, "That the first raising of the Iron Curtain should be in the field of sport is not without international significance- and a great tribute to the power of the indestructible Olympic idea."¹⁷ Meanwhile the Soviet Union regarded the Olympic Games as a competition on the international stage. China was also aware of the importance of the Olympic Games to China's international legitimacy. The Helsinki Olympics was the first occasion on which The PRC's flag was flown on the international stage, thereby showing to the world the existence of the new China.

However, the IOC did not realize that China's participation and the Soviet Union's promotion of China into the IOC made it necessary to address the two China issues. First of all, after the founding of the PRC, it claimed to be the only legitimate government representing the Chinese people, but the Kuomintang also claimed to represent China and opposed the PRC's entry into the IOC, preventing it from playing a role in other international organizations. Secondly, both the PRC and the Taiwan government considered membership of the IOC to be a political issue, mostly because it decided who was the legal representative of China. Although China was admitted to the IOC later, the IOC did not exclude Taiwan from the subsequent 1956 Olympic Games. Therefore, the PRC withdrew from the national Olympic family until 1979 when the IOC recognized it and required Taiwan to be subordinate to China. After an absence of more than 20 years, the PRC returned to the international Olympic family.

2.3 Elite sports of the Soviet model and China's sports diplomacy

In the introduction of the Soviet model and the process of sinicization, a large number of elites in competitive sports were cultivated. Although New China did not participate in the Olympic Games for a long time, the competitive sport still played an important role as a bridge in the diplomatic field. It made an indelible contribution to China's diplomacy and legitimacy of its international status, promoted China's internationalization, and shaped the new international political pattern in the late twentieth century.

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Soviet Union began to develop a government-led sports model to seek new social forms to serve the working-class country. This model was introduced into other socialist countries from 1948 to 1956, including New China. In the early days of New China, mass sports, school sports, competitive sports were all based on the Soviet model, and New China was constantly digesting and developing to make it its mode, gradually realizing sinicization. Sport plays a vital role in national identity, national cohesion, and national construction. To cultivate competitive sports talents as soon as possible, New China adopted the strategy of bringing in and going out. New China invited Soviet delegations and coaches to China to visit, exchange and coach. At the same time, New China sent athletes, coaches, scholars, and managers to the Soviet Union to learn about competitive sports. In 1956, a three-level selection mechanism of competitive sports talents was established to choose the best athletes to represent the country. Despite the deterioration of China's relations with the Soviet Union and the destruction of competitive sports during the Cultural Revolution, sports still served China's foreign policy objectives well, enabling China to establish good relations with countries in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.¹⁸ It has maintained China's image in the Third World and promoted friendship among nations.

Table tennis diplomacy has become a classic example of sports serving politics. During the Nixon era, the United States needed China's help to deal with the relationship with Vietnam and to increase the bargaining chips with the Soviet Union. It was also crucial for the historical positioning of Nixon's political career. The improvement in the relationship between China and the United States has given China two significant advantages: The Soviet Union's deterrence on China at the northern border at the time was mitigated, and the Taiwan issue was under China's control again. The long-term hostility between China and the United States made both sides cautiously look for different ways to send a positive signal, and finally, a sporting event (table tennis) played a crucial role. The interaction between the Chinese and American table tennis teams at the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in March 1971 finally opened the door for the two countries to make contact. On 10

April of the same year, New China attracted the first group of American guests, American table tennis players. A few months later, Nixon finally made a historic visit to China, which also ushered in the normalization of Sino-US relations. The table tennis diplomacy became a model, and then tennis brought reconciliation between China and South Korea. All in all, sport played a huge political role in the early days of China's founding. In a period of uncertainty and conflict in international relations, sport promoted China's internationalization, played a considerable role in the Sino-US relations, and shaped the world's political structure at the end of the twentieth century.

3. Emphasis on strengthening the state construction: Olympic strategy, national system, and the realization of the century-old dream of Chinese sports (the 1980s to 2008)

3.1 The success of rejoining the Olympic Games has restored the people's confidence in the nation-state

Thirty years after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese people have gained the independence of the nation and the state, and the concept of the nation-state has taken root in the hearts of the people. However, internal and external conflicts intensified, relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated, Sino-US relations were frozen, and social development in the "Great Leap Forward", and the "Cultural Revolution" stagnated, making the Chinese people need to regain their national confidence, national pride and national honor. To realize the economic reform, the internationalization, and the socialist modernization, it is necessary to stress the national spirit and arouse the national enthusiasm. Sports, especially competitive sports, played an important role at that time. After the Cultural Revolution, China completed the rectification of chaos, and made clear the new development goals, plans, and policy measures of sports. With the implementation of reform and opening-up and the acceleration of the construction of socialist Four Modernizations, after returning to the Olympic family, competitive sports represented by the 'National System' has realized the century-old dream of Chinese sports and won countless prizes for the country, effectively serving the country's Four Modernizations and stimulating the enthusiasm of the people to participate in sports. It has laid the foundation for a sports power.

Profound changes occurred in China's society in the 1980s. China's ambition was to achieve modernization and to catch up with the Western capitalist world. Chinese sport played an important part in stimulating the nation's enthusiasm and motivating the Chinese people towards modernization.¹⁹ With the restoration of legal seats in the IOC and other international sports organizations in 1979, Chinese sports started to go out to the world. During this period, Chinese sports, especially competitive sports, also became a microcosm of China's economic and social development. Under the guidance of the Olympic strategy, many elite athletes were trained for the country, and finally won medals in the Olympics. Since then, Chinese competitive sports' slogan has changed from "friendship first, competition second"²⁰ to "making progress and winning glory"²¹. Competitive sports, which once promoted exchanges and friendship, have been given a new mission, which is winning more honors for the country on the international stage, establishing a good international image, and enhancing national self-esteem, self-confidence, and national pride.

The Ministry of Sports held a meeting in Beijing in February 1979 to discuss the future development of sports. The meeting decided to abolish the class struggle-oriented sports policy implemented during the Cultural Revolution and passed a new sports policy to serve the Four Modernizations.²² In 1980, the Ministry of Sports held another national sports conference to formally formulate the future development plan of sports, including mass sports and competitive sports. However, the main focus is on competitive sports after the Olympics. The international success of Chinese athletes are going to bring people

pride, confidence, and hope for the country, which were the urgent needs in the transitional era.⁶⁵ Countries led by the United States refused to participate in the Moscow Olympics in 1980, and China joined them to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 became the first summer Olympics that China participated in since 1952. Xu Haifeng achieved a breakthrough in getting the first gold medal for China, and China won 15 gold medals. Samaranch said: "This is the greatest day in the history of Chinese sports."²³ The success in the Olympics had much inspired the Chinese people and government to develop competitive sports further.

In 1985, the Ministry of Sports officially formulated the Olympic strategy of prioritizing competitive sports and adopted the "National System" to use limited resources for the development of competitive sports. Since then, Chinese competitive sports have achieved fruitful results. From the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics, China won 198 gold medals, 144 silver medals, and 127 bronze medals. From the 7th Tehran Asian Games in 1974 to the 16th Guangzhou Asian Games in 2010, China won 1190 gold medals, 793 silver medals, and 570 bronze medals. Competitive sport has established China's status as a sports power in Asia and the world. It has become a symbol of national rejuvenation. It has also reflected China's outstanding achievements in economic reform and modernization. The "National System" for China's competitive sports not only realizes the people's confidence in the country and the nation, but also builds morale, and injects strong spiritual impetus into the socialist modernization drive. In the achievements of economic construction, the Chinese people see the hope of the country, and the revival of a mighty nation. The "National System" for China's competitive sports have also become the institutional advantage of Chinese sports, and it has also realized the socialization development of sports with Chinese characteristics.

3.2 Get rid of the historical burden to realize the century-old Olympic dream and establish the competitive sports power status

The "National System" not only realized the people's confidence in the country and the nation but also brought together the morale and injected a strong spiritual impetus into the socialist modernization drive. With the achievements of economic construction, the Chinese people saw the hope of reviving a robust nation-state. The "National System" (unified mobilization and deployment of relevant national forces) of the Chinese competitive sport had become the system advantage of Chinese sports, regarded as the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics in sports, and it had directly promoted and guaranteed the realization of the century-old dream of China's Olympics.

In the mid-nineteenth century, following the aggression of Western powers, the harm of opium, civil unrest, natural disasters, and China's absence in sports competitions, especially in the Olympics representing Western democracy and freedom, a discussion of China became the "sick man of East Asia" after the failure of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895. It became an insulting label applied to China by the West and Japan and became a stigma for the weak national physique. China was regarded as the "sick man of East Asia" which was considered by the Chinese as the beginning of a century of national shame.²⁴ In 1907, Zhang Boling actively spread the Olympic concept in China and advocated strengthening the country and people by sports. After that, a student from Naikai University put forward the famous "Three Questions about the Olympics" in "Tientsin Young Men": "When can China send an athlete to participate in the Olympics? When can China send a sports team to participate in the Olympics? When can China host an Olympics on its own?"²⁵ From the time of Liu Changchun participating in the Olympics in the Republic of China to Xu Haifeng made the breakthrough of winning the first gold medal in the 1984 and then to the successful host of the Beijing Olympics with the historical breakthrough of winning the most gold medals, the realization of the century-old dream is intertwined with resistance against foreign aggression, internal struggles, national identity, and national rejuvenation. China's brilliant achievements in the Olympics indicate that China, one of the oldest civilizations globally, has regained the self-confidence of the nation-state and made achievements in its economic reform and modernization after more than one hundred years of humiliation. Getting rid of the shame of 'Sick man of East

Asia' and standing up as an independent country proudly among the nations of the world, China has written a glorious Chinese chapter in the history of world sports.

4. Emphasis on strengthening the nation-state construction: the dream of being a “powerful nation in sports” in a modern country in the new era (after 2008)

4.1 The transformation of sports function in the post-Olympic era: From nation-building to strengthening nation-state building

After the Beijing Olympics, the way to develop China's sports for the country, for the nation, for the society, and the people, and the future presented to the people is undecided in the new era. There are some arguments and predictions that mass sports will replace elite sports after the Beijing Olympics to become the main focus for the government after the Olympics.²⁶ After more than ten years of theoretical and practical exploration, China established the goal of future sports development, which is to serve the overall strategic situation of fully realizing the Chinese Dream and the ‘two-century goals’, building itself into a sports power, and achieving great national rejuvenation. This strategy is not only a continuation of the former one with the country as the main body, but also a consideration of the development of mass sports with the people as the main body, raising the national fitness to the height of the national strategy of healthy China, and realizing the all-round development of competitive sports, mass sports, sports technology, sports industry, sportsmanship, and sports culture.

The Beijing Olympics has realized the one-hundred-year dream, and it is also a symbol of China becoming a sports power.²⁷ With the extinguishing of the Olympic flame, we bid farewell to an era and move towards a new era. The transition from ‘a competitive sports power’ to ‘a comprehensive sports power’ has become a strategic issue concerning the overall development of the country in the post-Olympic era. In his speech at the summary and commendation meeting at the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, Hu Jintao clearly stated that he would further promote the country from ‘competitive sports power’ to ‘a comprehensive sports power’. Speeding up the construction of a comprehensive sports power is the strategy of the Party of Central Committee and the State Council, aiming at fully realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is the requirement for sports development to enter a new stage and a new cycle. On 19 November 2013, when President Xi Jinping met with the then IOC President Bach in the Great Hall of the People, he pointed out: ‘Changing from a competitive sports power to a comprehensive sports power by striving to improve people’s health and developing mass sports and competitive sports simultaneously’²⁸ On 7 February 2014, Xi Jinping reiterated in an exclusive interview with Russian TV in Sochi: “China's sports industry continues to develop, and the Chinese government attaches great importance to sports. Our goal is to build a comprehensive sports power.”²⁹ The essence and core of a powerful country is realizing the comprehensive modernization of Chinese sports, including mass sports, competitive sports, sports industry, sports culture, sports technology, and school sports.

4.2 The people-centered “sports power” in the new era to rejuvenate the Chinese nation

As a late-developing modern country, Chinese sports on the early stage served to meet the needs of political, military, diplomatic, and economic construction in the specific historical background, and domestic and international environment. In the development of Chinese sports, the construction of the nation takes precedence over the construction of the nation-state with people as the central body.

The development of sports is closely related to the development of the country. Sports make the country strong and a prosperous country makes sports developed. Sport carries the dream of national prosperity and national rejuvenation. Building a sports power to realize the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is to change the fact that the country is strong while the people are not, namely to improve the lagging nation-state construction, returning sport its cultural attributes and functions. “To accelerate the construction of a strong country in sports, we must adopt the people-centered idea, which means regarding the people as the center in developing sports, considering people’s fitness and all-round development as the starting point and destination of sports, implementing the national strategy of fitness for all, and constantly improving people’s health.”³⁰ Putting the people at the center is an important goal for building a strong country in sports in the future. Insisting the development of sports is for the people, solving the conflict between meeting the people’s growing needs for a better life and unbalanced and insufficient sports development, and promoting the ‘Healthy China 2030 planning outline And the ‘Outline for Building a Powerful Sports Country’ is to achieve the goal of national fitness for people’s health, the integration of a comprehensive sports power and a healthy China, and to realize the inheritance and development of the Chinese sports spirit and the Chinese national spirit.

The people-centered development concept is Xi Jinping’s important development idea of governance in the new era, marking the future development of Chinese sports focus on the building of the nation-state. Promoting the realization of the Chinese dream through nation-state construction covers the country and the people as the two central bodies, making the humanistic attributes of sports highly consistent with the cultural consciousness of the nation, the national attributes of sports highly consistent with national identity, and the spirit of sports highly consistent with the beliefs of the Chinese nation. The realization of the Chinese dream is closely related to the dream of China’s comprehensive sports power. The construction of a strong nation in sports in the new era has strengthened the people, promoted the recognition of value, developed sport itself, served the nation-state, and promoted a strong nation-state through sports. Sport has become a landmark of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

5. Conclusion

The nation-state view in modern China was formed in the process of resistance to foreign aggression, restoration of national independence, frequent domestic wars and political turmoil. The country has experienced the collapse of the classical monarchy, the failure of the democratic republic. Finally, the founding of New China is a step closer to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Sport has always transformed its functions along with the historical missions of New China in different periods.

After New China was founded in October 1949, during the Mao Zedong period (1949-1976), Chinese sport focused on developing sports and strengthening people’s physique to serve the construction of the national economy and national defense forces. Besides, it mainly relied on the Soviet model to train elite athletes, strengthen sports exchanges with third world countries under the situation of not participating in the Olympics, and serve as a bridge in the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States. The acquisition of a legal seat in the IOC marked the end of the long-troubled “Two China” issue. New China, as an independent legal, political, and legitimate entity, began to represent China in the Olympic Games. During the modernization period of economic reform and opening up, the “National System” realized a one-hundred-year dream of China’s sports. After returning to the Olympics, China formally participated in the Summer Olympics in 1984, won the first gold medal, and then successfully host the 2008 Beijing Olympics. It is a symbol of a comprehensive sports power, inspiring the Chinese nation to realize its dream of national rejuvenation. After the Beijing

Olympics, the entire Chinese nation began to think about what kind of Chinese sports should be promoted in the future. The new era of China led by Xi Jinping finally gives the answer, which is to develop people-centered sports. They include mass sports and competitive sports, sports industry, school sports, sports culture, sports science, and technology, etc., to realize the goal of being a comprehensive sports power.

Summarizing the relationship between sports and the nation-state since the founding of New China, it is not difficult to find that before the Beijing Olympics, China developed competitive sports to make Chinese people regain national self-confidence, national pride and honor to bring together national spirit. During this period, the role of sports in national construction mattered more than that in nation-state construction with people as its core. The fact that China successfully hosts the Beijing Olympics marks the peak of national sports, especially competitive sports, and the people are eagerly looking forward to China's transformation from a competitive sports power to a comprehensive sports power. China's rational thinking and the return of the value of sports in the post-Olympic period has allowed sport to regain its value and function, that is, to adhere to a people-oriented development concept, focus on mass sports and the health of people. It emphasizes the joint construction of the people and the country for China to ultimately become a comprehensive sports power and promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Modern sports in China not only grow in the formation of the nation-state, but also plays a role in the construction of the nation-state, and it will inevitably coexist with the Chinese nation.

Author: Guochun Liu is a lecturer at the College of Exercise Medicine, Chongqing Medical University in China. His main research interests are sports culture, Chinese sports history, sports medicine, and mental health.

Corresponding Author: Chang Qing is a professor at the College of Exercise Medicine, Chongqing Medical University. The main research direction is sports culture, especially sports and nation-state construction.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by the scientific research project of Chongqing Sports Bureau (No. B202014); The Education and Teaching Reform Project of Chongqing Medical University (No. JY200304).

References

1. Houlihan, Barrie, and White, Anita. *The Politics of Sports Development*. Florence: Routledge, 2002.
2. Ren Hai. Sports power: from building on the country to building on the nation *Journal of Shanghai University of Sport*, 2018, 42(01):1-6+40.
3. Hobsbawm, E. J. *Nations, and Nationalism since 1780: programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1992., 143.
4. Smith, Prof Anthony D, and Smith, Anthony. *Nationalism and Modernism*. London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998.
5. Zhou Ping, Recognition of the nation-state, *Political Science Research*, 2009 (04): 89-99.
6. Xu Xiaoqing. Research on Liang Qichao's Nation-State Thought, *Journal of Central China Normal University*, 2000(02):97-102.
7. Zhou Ping. Nation-State and Nation-Building, *Political Science Studies*, 2010(03): 85-96.
8. Zhang Guoqing. He Yi, The concept of a Nation-State—from the perspective of Chinese scholars, *Zhejiang Social Sciences*, 2016(07):22-35+155.
9. Wu Chengen, *Journey to the West*, Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1980:946.
10. Hong, Fan, and Zhouxiang, Lu. 'Representing the New China and the Sovietization of Chinese Sport (1949–1962)', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 29.1 (2012): 1-29.
11. Mao Zedong. (Sports Research), Changsha: Hunan Publishing House, 1990:64.

12. Maddison, Angus, and Organization for Economic Co-operation Development. Development Centre. The World Economy. Paris, France: Development Centre of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006. Development Centre Studies, 1: 263.
13. The First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference), 1949-09-29.
14. All China Sports Association. (All-China Sports Association Constitution, 1952-06-24.
15. Coubertin. Olympic Memoirs, 126.
16. Xu, Guoqi. Olympic Dreams China and Sports, 1895-2008. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.
17. Brundage draft memoir, chapter 11, ABC, box 250, reel 244.
18. Huddleston, Sean. 'The Politicization of Sport in Modern China: Communists and Champions', Sport in History. Volume 37: Issue 4 (2017); Pp 535-537: 535-537.
19. Hong, Fan, and Zhou Xiang, Lu. 'Sport and Politics in the 1980s: The Olympic Strategy', The International Journal of the History of Sport 29.1 (2012): 74-97.
20. Mao Zedong. Mao Zedong's Research Speech in Wuhan, Hubei, 1969-05.
21. Prepared by the National Sports Commission. China Sports Yearbook, Beijing: People's Sports Publishing House, 1993-06:8.
22. Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, Seeking Truth from Facts, 1978 (04): 3-9.
23. Juan Antonio Samaranch. 'Speech at the award ceremony of the men's self-gun shooting competition at the 23rd Olympic Games in 1984', 1984-07-29.
24. Jin Guilan. The cultural origins of the 'Sick man of East Asia, Lantai World, 2014(28): 110-111.
25. Tianjin Youth Christian Association. Three Questions about the Olympics, Tianjin Youth, 1908.
26. Du Shangze. Xi Jinping met with the President of the International Olympic Committee Bach and received the Olympic Gold Medal, People's Daily, 2013-11-20 (01).
27. Du Shangze. Chen Xiaowei. an exclusive interview of Xi Jinping with Russian TV station, People's Daily, 2014-02-09 (01).
28. Xi Jinping. Xi Jinping: The Governance of China , Beijing: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 2014:154.
29. Xi Jinping. Create a new situation in the development of the country's sports industry and accelerate the country's construction into a sports power, People's Daily, 2017-08-28(1).
30. State Sports General Administration. Study and implementation of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important exposition on sports work, 2018-01-09.