

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

運動與台灣國家認同： 一些初步的想法

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摘要

過去二十多年來運動與國家認同的議題，已經在東、西方的學界引起相當多的批判性討論。由於歷史的某一瞬間、種族群體和國家的緣故，運動本身可以顯露出其不同的樣貌。特別是透過運動的儀式和競賽得參與和支持，人們產生對共同體的一種歸屬感。運動仍舊是激發人們對政治、社會和文化認同熱情的催化劑。現代運動的發展自1890年代開始，人們對國家的熱情已經逐漸轉化為一種類似宗教的節慶儀式一般，包含有意義的象徵符號和有相關儀式用品。本論文在探討台灣的運動歷史時，提出幾個重要的問題：為何運動和政治的認同關係如此密切？它們如何建構和產生？哪一類的運動和台灣認同有關？本論文在分析上結合現代運動歷史、歷史和社會學理論以及檔案文獻資料進行綜合性的分析。在結論中我們認為目前在國家認同全球資本主義、民族主義的交互影響下已經孕育出一種新的國家認同矩陣，既和國際認同連結卻又不失去台灣的獨特性。

關鍵詞：台灣、現代運動、國家認同、奧林匹克