

# Yundong: One Term for Two Different Body Cultures

Chih-Chieh Tang

Associate Research Fellow

## Abstract

In the Chinese speaking world, both the common people and the scholars used to see sport and yundong as synonymous. This article challenges this common understanding and illustrates that yundong in fact refers to two different body cultures: the western style and the eastern style. In my opinion, this hybrid signification is a natural result of translated modernity; therefore, I designed a set of questions attached to the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) questionnaire to test my conjecture. Using these survey data I wanted to demonstrate two points: First, for Taiwanese, yundong signifies not only sport but also cultivation or nourishment of life and exercise. Second, the ISSP comparative survey about sport is questionable, because it is totally blind to the social construction of sport. Assuming that the concept of sport is universal and invariable, this positivistic comparative survey unconsciously takes the research object constructed by itself as reality. After demonstrating the substantive difference of the oriental and the occidental body culture, I claim that the next step is to reconceptualize the originally English concept of sport, if we still want to have a common overarching concept about so many different body cultures.

Key words: Body Culture, Sport, Yundong, Cultivation/ Nourishment of Life, Translated Modernity

## Question

In the Chinese speaking world, both the common people and the scholars used to see sport and yundong (運動) as synonymous. This article challenges this taken-for-granted convention and seeks to illustrate that yundong in fact refers to two different body cultures: the western style and the eastern style.

This hybrid signification results from the general problem of translated modernity (Liu, 1995). It was not until the modern time that sport in the strict sense came into the world. Sport is a one hundred percent import in the Chinese world. Worse, the Chinese is a so called ideographical instead of alphabetical language. Yundong, the new composed term as the usual Chinese translation of sport, was an invention of tradition. It actually had its own life and was not limited to its original role as the translation of sport. In Chinese, yundong simultaneously has four different meanings, namely move (movement, mobility), (physical) exercise, physical education, and sport (Ou, 2006). From a postcolonial perspective I would say, there is not only a hybrid understanding, but also a hybrid reality with regard to yundong. We can not grasp the reality of the bodily activities of Taiwanese; adequately and correctly if we do not take this hybridism into account.

Unfortunately, the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) large scale comparative study did not consider the problem of translated modernity seriously enough. They seemed to assume that by way of translation the same questionnaire would measure the same object. In other words, this study was totally blind about the social construction of sport. Therefore, I design a set of questions attached to the original ISSP questionnaire to test my conjecture. Using these survey data I want to demonstrate that one and the same term, yundong, signifies two or even three different body cultures.

## Literature Review

After Norbert Elias questioned the ancient origin of sport (Elias and Dunning, 1986), it is almost a consensus among sociologists that sport is a modern product (Bourdieu, 1978; Guttman, 2000; Stichweh, 1995; Tang, 2009). Accordingly, sports originated from the leisure activities of the British upper classes and spread in the world no earlier than the 19th century. They referred primarily to institutionalized game-contests that involved bodily performance. There were not only definite rules about such contests, but also organizations and agencies which charged the unification and maintenance of those rules; therefore, individual games which took place sporadically anywhere could be connected with each other and individual's physical performances were comparable (Elias and Dunning, 1986; Tang, 2009; Werron, 2007). This means that there was a rupture between sports and the previous folk game-contests, not to mention the other physical activities without the form of contest. The critical difference resulted from the fact that sports, unlike traditional physical activity, were not embedded in other social contexts anymore and formed themselves a context with sport as its own end. Guttman's (2004[1978]) famous title "From Ritual to Record" attempted to catch and express just such a critical transformation.

Nonetheless, sport as a historical product not only referred to the whole complex historical process, but also changed itself with time. Especially after sport became a concept, people would appropriate this concept, project it onto the past reality and rewrite the history according to this new concept. Therefore, even the Westerners, including scholars, could not always recognize, clearly and correctly, the break between sport and the premodern bodily activities. This led to the result that people used the word "sport" simultaneously in a narrow sense and in a broad sense. In the narrow sense, sport exclusively means the modern sport, which did not spread throughout the world until the 19th century; in the broad sense, sport is a general term that can indicate all types of body movements or exercises and include physical activities and game-contests anytime and anywhere.

In addition, sports were later absorbed into the national education system. The academic spokesmen for sports were trained mainly by the discipline of physical education. They tended to see physical education as a more generic concept than sport. They emphasized that "education is life, life is education". According to

this understanding, physical education could include any activities that pursued physical fitness and was not limited to the courses of physical education in the education system (Chen, 1973). It is no wonder that common people thought physical education( or its Chinese translation: tiyu, 體育 )had broader implications than sport which sought fun and competition, and often mingled sport with physical education (Tang, 2009). It was not until 1960s that the status of sport rose with the rising of social history, sport sociology, and historical sociology, as well as the ambition of departments of physical education to become a true discipline in the college instead of only teacher training. In the meantime, new perspectives of body culture (Eichberg, 1998; Eisenberg, 2002) and kinesiology (Newell, 1990) appeared and together contributed to the transformation of physical education to Sportpädagogie, Sportwissenschaft or kinesiology. Finally, sport became a parallel concept with physical education.

Defining sport does not consequently become easier. As mentioned above, sport is a concept as well as a historical product; as it is a changing process, we cannot find one perfect definition that can subsume all the historical facts. The philosophers recognized that it was difficult to define sport and tended to resolve the problem of definition by way of thinking around the tricky triad of play, game and sport (Meier, 1988; Suits, 1988).<sup>1</sup> Some scholars even argue that seeking the definition of sport is meaningless and in vain (McFee, 2004: Chap. 1; Werron, 2007).

Sure, we cannot find a perfect definition of sport but it does not mean sport is a concept without clear reference. All we need is to keep in mind that the concept of sport varies with time and place, because sport is a social construction instead of a natural given (Coakley, 2007: 7ff.). Just as the theoretical perspective of body culture reminds us, there would be different understandings and meanings about sport in different cultures or even in the same culture (Eichberg, 2010). Taking this insight into consideration, this article attempts to inquire how the Taiwanese understand yundong and to clarify both the similarities and differences between Taiwanese understandings of yundong and the original meaning of sport in the West. In view of the hegemony of the occidental concept of sport in the world and the lack of relevant local research, it is unavoidable to begin my discussion with a clarification of the western concept of sport as a contrast.

When western scholars try to define sport, the simplest, most generalized definition that is nearly equivalent to the “Highest Common Factor” of all types of sports is: sport is an institutionalized competitive game that involves physical activity performed by a human (Guttman, 2004[1978]: Chap. 1; Stichweh, 1995: 17; Suits, 1988). This definition excludes many activities historically classified as sport, e.g. on the one hand bridge and chess that are primarily intellectual activities, on the other hand greyhound racing, fox hunting and cockfighting which are not physical activities involving human beings but rather animals. Nevertheless, it is a systematic and logically consistent definition. In viewing of the impossibility of perfect definition of sport we can after all only find a useful provisional definition to help us to distinguish sport clearly from other activities similar or related to sport.

For sociologists, sport must involve institutionalized game-contests. Sport and exercise are different things (Bourdieu, 1978: 822f.; Elias and Dunning, 1986: Chap. 3; Sleep, 1998: 5f.) but the layperson and the scholars who study sport from the perspective of physical education do not always think so. For example, ICSPE (International Council of Physical Education) promoted such a definition of sport: “Any physical activity which had the character of play and which involves a struggle with oneself or with others, or a confrontation with natural elements, is a sport” (ICSPE, 1964: 9). In order to include struggle with oneself and confrontation with natural elements which are more close to exercises, ICSPE did not use words like “competition” or “games” to define sports; although, struggle with others imply such a competition. In fact, there was already a distinction (and a differentiation) between sport and exercise in the ancient Greek which was often seen as the origin of western sport, namely, a distinction between athletics and gymnastics; the

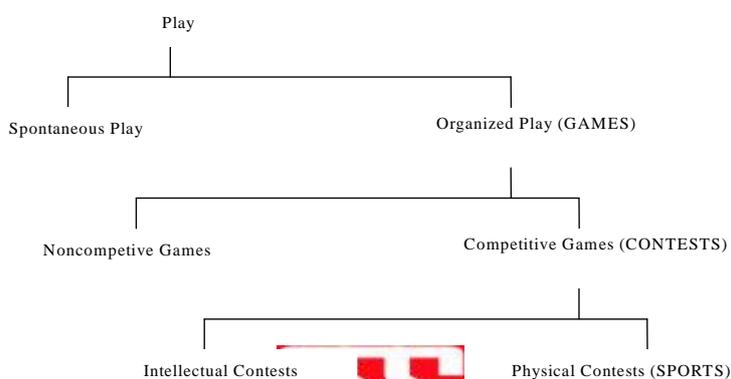
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<sup>1</sup> Suits (1988) thinks that the three are in principle distinguishable, but they overlap with each other. Meier (1988) agrees that there are overlaps among the three, but sport must be included in the game.

former referred to game-contests with award, and the latter is routine training or ordinary practice (Tang, 2009: 12ff.). In other words, physical activities without characteristics of contest are not sport and can only count as exercise.

The stepwise, more sharply limited continuum from play, games, contests to sports sketched by Guttmann (2004[1978]: 9) pointed out the clear distinction between these four types of activities (see Fig. 1), and provided a basic framework for the subsequent discussion. Briefly, sport is an institutionalized physical contest with the character of play. Then it follows that play (fun), organization, competition and body are critical characteristics to define sport. Although the criterion based on physical activity of human beings does not conform to the historical facts, it is nearly self-evident and beyond dispute now - at least it seems so for sociologists.

Figure 1 Continuum from Play, Games, Contests to Sports



As for the characteristics of play and fun, since the famous cultural historian Huizinga (1980[1944]: ix) brought up the argument “civilization arises and unfolds in and as play”, the correlation between play and sport received attention and was confirmed again and again. The above-cited definition of sport from ICSPE agrees play is an important characteristic of sport as well; although, it denies that sport is necessarily a kind of organized play, i.e. sport is not bound to the game. Regardless, it is almost a consensus among social scientists who engaged in research about sport to see game-contest (i.e. institutionalized competition), which subsumes the characteristics of organization and competition, as criterion for sport. For example, one American textbook about sociology of sport define sport as “institutionalized physical competition occurring in a formally organized or corporate structure” (Nixon and Frey, 1996: 3).

Although this definition which restricts sport to the area of “formally organized or corporate structure” is too narrow for me, it expresses clearly that “institutionalized physical competition” is a significant criterion to distinguish sport from other activities. In fact, even historians who tended not to emphasize a break between the traditional and the modern societies with regard to their forms of physical activities and projected therefore the concept of sport onto the past, also agree that competition is a crucial element: “Sports will here encompass competitive activity of the whole human body according to sets of rules for purposes ostensibly or symbolically set apart from serious, essential aspects of life” (Mandell, 1984: xvii).

Mandell does not use the term “organized” or “institutionalized” here, instead he uses the rule to define sport. However, the rule is obviously a criterion derived from the game-contest and implies organization or institutionalization to some extent. Similarly, Mandell does not declare the characteristic of play or fun directly, but he asserts this characteristic indirectly when he distinguished sport from the “serious, essential aspects of life”. Nevertheless, as Hahn (2002) argues, in the West, the actual opposite of sport is labor rather than seriousness. In other words, the traditional western concept of sport is based on the distinction between play, fun and labor, work.

It is so because whatever ancient Greek's athletics or modern sports that spread from the Britain to whole world all originated from educational or leisure activities of the nobles or privileged classes. In line with this tradition Sir Coubertin, the promoter of the modern Olympics, emphasized the distinction amateurism/ professionalism and play/labor and insisted on the importance of amateurism (Tang, 2009). Huizinga (1980[1944]: Chap. 12) complained that the play-element in culture had been on the wane ever since the 18th century. Civilization today looks like play only ostensibly. In fact, it is a false play. Sport lost something of the pure play-quality in the process of increasing systemization and institutionalization. Professional sportsman lost the actual spirit of play in spite that he had better physical ability and performance than the amateur. Scholars from physical education followed this perspective and degraded the tendency towards commercialization and professionalization in early days, so they excluded the increasingly prosperous professional sports from their research subjects.

Nevertheless, professional sports that challenged the distinction between play and labor were an unstoppable current. Therefore, we can find the so-called "traditional definition" of sport in another textbook as following: "Sports are institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards" (Coakley, 2007: 6).

This definition deliberately excludes play as a significant ingredient of sport. I think it gets more loss than gain. Strictly speaking, I agree that there is an overlap among play, game, sport (or among play, sport, work), as Suits (1988) or Sleaf (1998: 8ff.) claimed. However, considering a systematic definition that is feasible for research, I am personally inclined to embrace the viewpoint of Elias and Dunning (1986: 129), Guttmann (2004[1978]), and Meier (1988) who see those sports related to physical activities of human beings must involve a game, even a game-contest.

In addition, we do not need to exclude professional sports as work with external reward from sport as the predecessors in terms of educational consideration did. To make internal and external rewards as prerequisite for the definition of sport and to see them as necessary motives for participation of sport, seems to me overcorrect. In spite that this definition has the advantage to succeed the ancient Greeks' athletics with rewards, I think rewards were to some extent already implied in the characteristic of contest, so it is unnecessary to include rewards in the definition of sport. It is worth reconsidering whether sport must be involved in stern and laborious physical activities. Indeed, sport does have to do with physical skills, but not all sports need huge power, high speed and great endurance, as Sleaf (1998: 4f.) rightly argues. To conclude, institutionalized contest of human body with the characteristic of play could be seen as the most common understanding of sport in the West, at least for the scholars.

### **Local Reflection**

As for local studies, Taiwanese scholars were already aware of the necessity to distinguish yundong (sport) and tiyu (physical education) in the 1970s (e. g. Chen, 1979; Chen, 1973; Hsu, 1973). Nevertheless, most Taiwanese including scholars still confuse yundong with tiyu (see e. g. Wang, 1992; Yamanokuchi, 2007; Zhong, 1990). Even today, due to the training of physical education and the deep-rooted understanding of the Chinese character "yundong", most scholars recognize physical education as modern product, but insist that yundong had existed for thousands years long. They emphasize that yundong is an ontological term. By contrast tiyu is a general term that can subsume yundong (see e. g. Hsu, 2006: Chap. 1; Liu, 2007; Ou, 2006). Explicitly, they see yundong and sport as synonymous. Implicitly and unconsciously, they understand yundong not only as sport, but also as exercise and movement. Therefore, they cannot grasp the modernity of sport and often mingle sport with exercise, not to mention physical education.

This reflects the fact that physical culture or body culture (Körperkultur) was first translated as "tiyu wenhua" ( 體育文化 ). Only recently has "shenti wenhua" ( 身體文化 ) appeared as the alternative new translation. Inspired by the concept of physical culture, scholars begin to investigate the difference between western and Chinese physical cultures (see e. g. Hsu, 2003: Chap. 1; Hsu, 2005: Chap. 2; Yi, 1998a: 161f.;

1998b: Chap. 8). They argue that western physical culture is extrovert, while the Chinese is inward. Western people seek to advance the speed, strength and skill of human body by training. The Chinese instead esteem the human's life potential and pursue an inwardly realization and development of this potential. Based on the concept of qi (氣), the Chinese "move" (yundong) in order to achieve the end of "yangsheng" (養生, cultivation/nourishment of life). Although the western concept of physical fitness also recognizes that sport can contribute to health of mind, it takes the dichotomy body/mind for granted. For the Chinese, such a dichotomy is an unnecessary opposition. "Yangsheng" means not only the healthiness of the whole person, but implies also a harmony with the nature in the framework of the traditional Chinese cosmology of qi.

Thanks to these studies, we are now aware of a significant difference between the Chinese and western body cultures. Nevertheless, the contrast between the cultivation/nourishment of life and "jianshen" (健身, the enhancement of the health of body), is for me to some extent an idealistic and simplified dichotomy. In spite of the praiseworthy efforts of earlier studies, I think they underestimate the complexity of reality and especially do not see the contemporary hybridism. I guess this neglect results from earlier studies which investigated in a sense only the (philosophical) text but not the social reality. To appreciate their efforts, we can say that they attempt to find the "meta" culture pattern. However, they did not pay enough attention to the nuances of reality in research. It is still a question of to what extent these constructed ideal types can be supported or confirmed by empirical data.

## Construction of the Objects of Research

The following will explain how I constructed the objects of my research. I do not assume that there is an unchangeable "objective" reality which is not influenced at all by the observation tools and whose constant essence waits for researcher to discover by an adequate "measurement". On the contrary, here, I will follow Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2003; Bourdieu, Chamboredon and Passeron, 1991, esp. part 2) and the constructivists' viewpoint. It is the specific viewpoint of researchers that creates the objects of scientific research. Man's understanding of the so-called objects is a result of the interaction of the objects and the subject as observer that involved actively in the observation. So the same object will be different and vary with the observers and their ways of observation (measurement). To avoid the false neutrality to blind my eyes, it is necessary to reflect consciously on my own construction. Additionally, this provides an opportunity for successors to objectify the viewpoint (distinction, schema of observation) which I choose, to disclose the blind spots of my framework of observation as well as my construction of objects, and then to go beyond that.

In order to investigate and understand how the Taiwanese understand sport, I sort out some items to ask whether respondents agree with these as criteria of yundong or not.<sup>2</sup> Based on my reading of relevant references and my concern, I choose the following items to investigate: the character of game-contest, definite rules, sufficient physical intensity, able to nourish or cultivate the life, able to strengthen the health of the body. I explain them separately as follows.

1. Character of contest: As the literature review mentioned above, sociologists argue that there is a break between modern and traditional physical activities. Sport as modern product is not only a

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<sup>2</sup> The exact question in the questionnaire is: "Please indicate how important the following conditions are for you to consider an activity as a sport activity (yundong)". Mentioned conditions include "an activity in which people compete against others", "an activity that has definite rules and regulations to govern how it is played", "an activity that requires a high level of physical intensity", "an activity that is good for the cultivation or nourishment of life", and "an activity that is good for the strength and health of the body". Please note the significant difference between the original terse Chinese expression and the detailed but sometimes one-sided English translation with regard to meanings.

game, but a game-contest. As shown in Figure 1, sport is not a spontaneous play, but an intentionally organized play. It is also a physical game with competitive character. For all the nonexhaustiveness of this definition with regard to sport as real historical product, it can help us to clarify those sports primarily related to physical activity and performance. At least, it is a sociological common sense that sport must encompass the qualities of play and contest.

The trouble is that we cannot find a Chinese word which has both the meaning of play and competition at the same time in contrast to *Spiel* in German or *game* in English - even though there is difference between play and game in English, game has both the meaning of play and contest like *Spiel*. After pondering, I decide to choose the phrase “jingsai” ( 競賽 , game-contest ) rather than “youxi” ( 遊戲 , play ) or “bisai” ( 比賽 , game, race, competition, contest ). A flaw of this phrase is that respondents are likely to associate it with “jingzheng” ( 競爭 , competition ) which is negatively evaluated in the Chinese culture. However, as mentioned above, competitiveness is indeed an element of sport, although this element was once controversial in the development of modern sport<sup>3</sup> and is not always valid viewed from the perspective of sport as social construction.<sup>4</sup>

Another merit in using the word *jingsai* with competitive character instead of the more colloquial expression *bisai* is *jingsai* implies a distinction between sport and exercise that is common in the western languages. Hence, it can help us more precisely test whether the Taiwanese, like the Westerner, would confine sport rigorously to competitive games. From this view, routine practice is exercise, but it could count as sport too, if it finally orients toward a contest. For example, shooting alone is not only a dull exercise, but also a practice with the aim to win game, so that it is likeplaying basketball and thus “doing sport”. (People say in German: *Sport betreiben*). It is different from jogging that does not involve competition. Using the item *jingsai* to test, we can grasp the remarkable character of sport on the one hand and distinguish clearly between sport and exercise on the other hand. I think it is a proper instrument to observe whether Taiwanese have the sport-orientation in narrow sense, the modern western orientation of body culture.

2. Definite rules: Basically, this criterion follows the preceding one. To compete, there must be rules, so contest and rules constitute each other mutually. On the contrary, as far as exercise is concerned, rules do not matter; even no rules – excluding such cases as someone setting the “rule” to run a certain number of miles a day. Besides, the difference between sport and premodern folk game-contest is sport has definite, explicit, coherent and unified rules and there is relevant organization that takes charge of maintaining and administrating these rules. In other words, there is a process of rationalization and professionalization with regard to sport. Fair play, to compete fairly, becomes the highest and absolute principle. By contrast, for the premodern folk game-contest, the rules were oral, set up by the participant’s acceptance, and varied according to time and place. There was not only no limitation on the number of participants but also no requirement of equal number on both sides (Dunning, 1973; Elias and Dunning, 1986: Chap. 3; Guttmann, 2000; 2004[1978]: Chap.

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<sup>3</sup> The German Turner-movement that appealed a “return to the nature” and had a romantic character opposed strongly the quantitative measurement and comparison about the bodily performances of human beings. Nevertheless, this gymnastic tradition embodied still a “modern” body culture; although, it was once opposed to sport (Tang, 2009). In fact, the Turner that was hostile to sport and competition included later the competition too and took place the gymnastic competition since 1860 (Guttmann, 2000: 250; 2004[1978]: 88; Hsu, 2005: 175).

<sup>4</sup> This prospering alternative research approach recognizes that the concept of sport varies with time and place and has many reflections and critiques about the cultural prejudices of the modern western concept of competitive sport (Coakley, 2007: 5ff.). However, this cannot negate the fact that the current popular concept of sport, which is deeply influenced by the modern western culture, has a component of competition.

- 2). Hence, adopting definite rules as an observation's tool can help us to understand whether respondents are aware of the break between traditional game-contest and modern sport on the one hand and conscious of distinction between sport and exercise on the other hand. Besides, considering this item and the character of contest together, we can more precisely know whether respondents have sport-orientation or not.
3. The intensity level of physical activities: Although sport historian Bernard Gillet considers sport should encompass three elements – play, competition and intense physical activities (Chen, 1979: 55), most literature about sport does not emphasize intense physical activities as criterion for sport, but are prone to think the intensity level varies with types of sports. Comparatively, physical education, a branch of modern body culture that is often inclined to natural science, is used to regarding external phenomena like intensity level of physical activities or shifts in respiration etc. as the criteria for the definition of sport, and does not stress the distinction between sport and exercise correspondingly. For example, the questionnaire issued by Sports Affairs Council,<sup>5</sup> Executive Yuan, ask respondents direct questions about the frequency, hours and intensity of yundong. It never defines what yundong means and assumes the meaning of yundong is self-evident for respondents. Some researchers advance even further to analyze calorific value, in other words, they convert the frequency, hours and intensity of yundong into consumption of calories, and then claim that only when the consumption of calorific capacity reaches 1000kcal a week can it then be regarded as yundong (Wen et al., 2007). Consequently, using intensity level of physical activities as criterion can help us to distinguish the orientations between sport and exercise (or: physical fitness, physical education) of respondents.

Furthermore, this item can help us clarify whether there is a difference in viewpoint about sport between scholars and the general public. For instance, Horst W. Opaschowski, the famous German scholar of leisure study, investigated how people understood sport according to the principle: if most people think a certain physical activity is sport, then it is sport. Nevertheless, this investigation put emphasis on whether some physical activities except ball games were sport or not. It means that this investigation still assumed that most ball games are sport. However, this investigation inquired especially about table tennis and golf, and got the following results: only 57% and 48% of respondents respectively thought of them as sport in any case; 32% of respondents recognized them as sport in both cases if only man played these ball games intensively; and finally, 10% and 19% of respondents did not see them as sport at all (cited from Voigt, 1992: 102f.). It turns out that the meaning of sport is also obscure to the Westerner, and the criterion “physical intensity” plays a role in people's judgment about what kind of physical activities can count as sport. For example, according to the same investigation, 70% of respondents thought of rowboating and skiing as sport anyhow, comparatively, 42% and 40% of respondents considered bicycling and dancing as sport if only man intensively engaged in it. And 77%, 72% and 60% of respondents did not agree that walking, sauna and fishing belong to sport in any case.

4. “Yangsheng”: Evidently, I construct this item primarily to observe whether the Taiwanese are affected by the inherent concept of life-nourishing, so that they identify certain activity as sport in accordance with whether it can contribute to nourishment of life or not. As the above literature review mentioned, scholars across the Taiwan Strait generally consider life-nourishing a characteristic of Chinese sport tradition (see besides above mentioned literature, Bi, 1990; Lin, 1990; Ren, 1994). Nevertheless, until now, there was no real data to testify whether this tradition changes in the modern situation or not, and if yes, what kind of figure it becomes. Therefore, to ask the item “yangsheng” not only helps us to observe whether the inherent tradition is still effective, but also

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<sup>5</sup> The proper translation of its Chinese name actually should be the “Council of Physical Education”. In fact, this council changed its old English name “National Council on Physical Fitness and Sports” only in recent years.

makes a comparison with the orientation of occidental body culture possible.

Moreover, the design of this question also results from my own experience of learning the traditional Chinese “martial art”, specifically the so called neijia-quan ( 內家拳 ). The master once presented an interesting argument in order to attract pupils, rationalize the physical activity which he taught, and emphasize the characteristics of this physical activity. He said the western sports or the so-called waijia-quan ( 外家拳 ) are “laodong” ( 勞動 , labor ). These bodily movements train only visible muscle and the “external” body-shell, so they have some drawbacks, i.e. going too far is as bad as not going far enough. By contrast, the neijia-quan that concentrates on the operation of the qi can contribute to the correct and smooth circulation of “internal qi” by external figures or movements. Therefore, on the one hand, comparing with the sports or waijia-quan that consume only our life energy, neijia-quan can bring us true well being by cultivating and enhancing our life potential. On the other hand, it has low risk of misperformance in comparison to the static qigong ( 氣功 ). In other words, from the viewpoint of traditional Chinese culture, the critical distinction is “life-nourishing (implying physical fitness already)/ labor” rather than “play (sport) labor” as the Westerner used to think.<sup>6</sup> This is an interesting contrast, and would be easily supported by Chinese classics. Due to the limitation of the number of questions that I can attach, I simply asked if the criterion “life-nourishing” is of importance as a quality of sport without considering whether respondents were conscious of the distinction between life-nourishing, labor or even sport. However, I guess that we can get some messages about this through a cross-comparison with the following item “jianshen”.

5. Health of the body: People normally take this item for granted, so an inquiry about this seems unnecessary. As mentioned above, western scholars did not take this item into consideration but regarded it as self-evident when they discussed the criteria or characteristics of sport. The change from the pessimistic viewpoint that physical practices or trainings led only to consumption of the body, such that the more the body was used or burdened the more it lost to health, to the more optimistic viewpoint that the more the body is trained, the more it becomes stronger and healthier, is in actuality the key to the emergence of sport as a modern body culture (Stichweh, 1990: 380ff.; Tang, 2009: 18ff.). Therefore, it can help us to observe whether respondents are inclined to take either the traditional or modern approach to body culture by testing the item “able to strengthen the health of the body”.

Besides comparing the traditional and modern body cultures, this question also involves a comparison between Chinese and Western body culture. As mentioned earlier, existing discussions recognize that, the Westerners, like the Chinese, pursue stronger, healthier bodies; however, the western standard of evaluation lies in speed, power and skill. Although the Westerner acknowledge that they may have a problem of “excess” such as sport-injuries, the famous Olympic motto “Celtius, Altius, Fortius (faster, higher, stronger)” reveals clearly that, for the Westerner, the ideal lies in exploring and transcending the performance limit of the human body persistently. On the contrary, the Chinese pursue ‘sport’ to strengthen the health of the body too, but this kind of pursuit is directed by the idea of life-nourishing that is inclined somewhat to the pessimistic viewpoint of physical consumption. Hence the Chinese tend to see life-nourishing and labor as opposition on the one hand and the prolonging of life as goal of yundong on the other hand. In other words, even though both the Chinese and the Westerner pursues health of the body, there is a different understanding about the content of bodily health.

Synthesizing these criteria mentioned above, I conjecture that there are primarily three different body cultures or three different orientations of bodily movement. I name the first body culture “sport orientation”. But the reader should keep in mind that I understand sport here in a narrow sense rather in a broaden sense. That is to say, the sport orientation stresses fun and pleasure from doing sport, and see sport as part of leisure

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<sup>6</sup> There are actually many Taiwanese who see labor as “yundong”, especially those laborers, who must pay his physical labor to maintain their life (Chang et al., 2006: 77).

activities. We could rationally guess that the one who possess the sport orientation would express a positive attitude in the following two items: character of contest and definite rules. As for the remaining three items, there are many possible combinations which do not affect this orientation of concern. As for the second body culture, I name it exercise orientation (or training orientation). In my view, this orientation is affected by the tradition of physical education, which constitutes another important branch of modern body culture besides sport. People holding this body culture pursue physical fitness and would orient toward exercise and training. The typical representative is gymnastics. According to my inference, the respondents who possess exercise orientation would express most possibly a positive attitude in the items “physical intensity” and “strengthening of bodily health”. In principle, the combinations of the other items cannot make any effect, so I do not need to consider them. Finally, in contrast to the sport and exercise orientations that originate primarily from the Western body cultures, a life-nourishing orientation embodies the native tradition. The key point in identifying such an orientation lies in taking a positive attitude to the idea of life-nourishing. At the same time, I guess the one who holds the idea of life-nourishing is likely to express a positive attitude in the item “the health of the body” as well, and express a negative or indifferent attitude in items “game-contest” and “rule”; but they are not prerequisites for the life-nourishing orientation, especially the latter.

Because I provide five items for respondents to judge which is a criterion of sport, there are a total of thirty-two possible combinations. There are eight combinations which belong respectively to sport orientation as well as exercise orientation according to the conditions set above. As for life-nourishing orientation, its possible combinations are between eight and sixteen. If we count anyone who answers yes in the item “life-nourishing” as follower of life-nourishing orientation, then there are sixteen possible combinations; if we take a more strict definition that only when one answers yes in both items of life-nourishing and health, then we have eight combinations. When we exclude four possibilities that have an overlaps among three major orientations - choosing eight possibilities in rigorous sense for life-nourishing orientation,<sup>7</sup> we still have twelve possible combinations. In these twelve combinations, eight combinations are either impossible due to incompatibility (e.g., a discrepancy in attitude with regard to game-contest and rule), or improbable in reality (e.g., taking a negative attitude in all five items). Hence, the three major orientations that I construct basically encompass all the possibilities.<sup>8</sup>

## Data

My research data come from the “Taiwan Social Change Survey” (TSCS), 2007, Phase 5, Wave 3. Using the household registration data in Taiwan as sampling frame, the TSCS adopted a stratified three-stage probability proportional to size sampling design. The face-to-face interviews were conducted on the 18 years of age or older population during July to September in 2007. The data acquired 2148 samples,

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<sup>7</sup> The first possibility is a total overlapping of these three orientations (i. e. expressing a positive attitude in all five items). The other three possibilities come from an overlapping between two orientations, namely both sport and exercise (only expressing a negative attitude in the item of life-nourishing, the rest positive), both sport and life-nourishing (only expressing a negative attitude in the item of intensity level, the rest positive; supposedly very improbable), and both exercise and life-nourishing (simultaneously expressing a negative attitude in items of game-contest and rule, the rest positive).

<sup>8</sup> The remaining four possibilities include the three combinations that express only a positive attitude in one of the three items of intensity level, life-nourishing and health, and take a negative attitude in the other four items. The last one is the possibility that combine a positive attitude in intensity level and life-nourishing and a negative attitude in the remaining three items. Viewed from a looser definition, these four combinations could count as exercise or life-nourishing orientation and are encompassed in principle by the above mentioned three major orientations.

and the response rate was 43%. The gender break down of our sample was 49.8% female and 50.2% male; the mean age was 45.7 years old. Those respondents who take part in sport or physical activity regularly (i.e. several times a week) constitute 47.8% in this sample. The percentage is very similar to the results of The National Health Interview Survey in 2001 (49.7%) (see Wen et al., 2007). In addition, this investigation produced almost identical results to the survey about sport participation motivation conducted by the Sports Affairs Council, Executive Yuan in 2000 (Peng, 1996: 12): Generally speaking, men take part in sport or physical activities more often than women, but women have a higher percentage with regard to the habit of “doing sport” (yundong) everyday. Similarly, in general, the younger generations “do sport” more often, but the oldest generation has the highest percentage in “doing sport” everyday. Those who have higher education level show a higher percentage in “doing sport” too, but those who have education level below junior high school acquire highest percentage for “doing sport” everyday. The urban residents “do sport” more often than their counterparts in the country. In view of this comparability and compatibility, we could say that the data from the TSCS are very credible.

## Analysis and Discussion

### 1. The Significant Difference between Taiwanese Understanding of Yundong and the Western Concept of Sport

When the research objects are constructed according to the way mentioned above, the outcomes of the survey reveal that the Taiwanese understanding of yundong is very different from the concept and understanding of sport in western academic literature. Even the simplest descriptive statistics presents this distinction clearly enough to verify my conjecture. Table 1 shows the answers of respondents for what is the criterion for defining sport. It is obvious to see that the order of importance of these criteria stay in the consistent order bodily health (50.2%, 91.3%) > life-nourishing (41.0%, 84.9%) > rule (31.3%, 64.3%) > intensity (16.7%, 55.2%) > contest (9.8%, 35.1%), no matter if we count only the percentage of “very important” or count it together with the percentage of “somewhat important”.

Bodily health and life-nourishing are not only regarded as the most important criteria that have a good lead over other items, but they also show a decrease in percentage on the options “no comment” and “don’t know”. It means that the respondents have a clearer understanding about these two criteria. On the contrary, the character of game-contest, the most appreciated item according to western references, gets the lowest placement. Even the criterion definite rule, the derivative of game-contest, is far higher than the character of game-contest. The character of game-contest is the only one item whose percentage is below 50% in the mode of response that is skewed to the right. One outcome we need to keep an eye on is, while respondents think health and life-nourishing are the most important criteria for yundong, they don’t emphasize physical intensity as being more important a criteria than definite rules.

Table 1 The Order of Importance of Sport Criterion (%) Effective Samples  $\geq$  1998

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important Not Important	Not Important at All	No Comment	Don't Know	Mean	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
Bodily Health	50.2	41.1	5.2	1.8	0.7	1.0	3.42	.679	.196
Life-nourishing	41.0	43.9	9.7	2.8	0.9	1.7	3.26	.753	.230
Rule	31.3	33.0	16.1	12.7	3.2	3.7	2.89	1.021	.353
Intensity	16.7	38.5	27.2	12.3	3.1	2.2	2.63	.919	.349
Contest	9.8	25.3	28.9	29.1	3.5	3.4	2.17	.988	.455

The minimal coefficients of variation of health and life-nourishing also attract our notice. It signifies that Taiwanese not only appreciate these two criteria most, but also have the most consistent opinion about these two criteria. Considering that at least 84.9% or more of respondents agree these two criteria are most

important, we can infer that the traditional idea of life-nourishing has somewhat permeated through most Taiwanese understanding about yundong, independent of whether they have a western concept of sport or not. Basically, the Taiwanese do not have a pure sport orientation, but are more or less infiltrated by life-nourishing orientation. On the contrary, although the item “definite rules” which supposedly represents a sport orientation can get the third place in importance, it has a higher coefficient of variation like the item “character of game-contest”. This reflects that respondents have more divergent opinions about the importance of these two criteria. It suggests that perhaps not only those who have a sport orientation would agree the criterion of rule, but those who orient toward life-nourishing would also agree; therefore, we see a relatively high variation on this item.

While the western references usually did not recognize “contribution to the health of body” as defining criterion of sport, but see it as an evident assumption and consequence of sport, this criterion is the most important criterion among the Taiwanese. It is then very clear that the so-called yundong by Taiwanese standards definitely differs from what the Westerner called sport. Furthermore, the significance of the two criteria “health” and “life-nourishing” is far higher than “game-contest” and “rule”. This reflects a situation that is consistent with the language usage, which we can observe; the Taiwanese do not distinguish sport from exercise. Considering the fact that the Taiwanese do not appreciate the criterion of intensity too, we have good reason to speculate the Taiwanese more tend to hold a traditional, native idea that yundong can contribute to the nourishment of life as well as the health of the body, rather than to follow the modern western idea that sport can help us be healthy.<sup>9</sup> Another clue which leads to such a speculation is that the percentage of the item bodily health (91.3%) is higher than that of life-nourishing (84.9%). Maybe this reflects that some respondents realize yundong (especially when they understand it as sport) is not necessarily conducive to life-nourishment or irrelevant to life-nourishment.

In addition, 61.0% of respondents agree that “when we do yundong, it is enough to move our body, and not necessary to demand ourselves seriously”,<sup>10</sup> and only 23.6% disagree. It indicates that most Taiwanese are more prone to consider yundong as exercise rather than sport. Then it follows that we have enough reasons to infer that life-nourishing orientation is still the dominant orientation in Taiwan nowadays. Nevertheless, we should notice that, as the responses of respondents reveal, the traditional, native idea of life-nourishing is mingled to some extent with the originally imported, modern concept of sport. One support for this judgment is that the item “definite rules” is regarded as more important than “sufficient physical intensity”. These results reflect that the Taiwanese can easily recognize some characteristics of sports because sports were imported and have a clear-cut image in comparison to traditional native physical activities. Therefore, Taiwanese cognitions and understandings about yundong also present a certain sport orientation. On the contrary, the exercise orientation with gymnastics as typical case is the weakest despite this orientation having the closest relation to the national educational system that was backed by the state.

## 2. A Statistical Verification of the Different Body Cultures

From the above theoretical discussion and empirical data, we know that there is no “pure” orientation with regard to physical activities in Taiwan nowadays. Instead, the Taiwanese body cultures show a hybrid situation like a mule that looks like both donkey and horse, but is neither. It is a typical condition of translated modernity. In such a condition, the values of the observed variables (i.e. the defining criteria of sport that I constructed) are a result of the interaction between different orientations of body cultures. In

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<sup>9</sup> Comparing the result of my research with Opaschowski’s survey cited above would strengthen such an impression.

<sup>10</sup> The elegant, but somewhat misleading official translation of this question is, “One does not need to fully work out as long as he/she is engaged in exercise”. It attracts our notice that the translator automatically understands yundong here as exercise.

other words, these values should embody and demonstrate this hybrid condition. Using the statistical tool of factor analysis, I will in advance clarify whether or not there are many body cultures with different orientation and if so, what their pure types are. In doing so, I will test my hypotheses that there are three different body cultures that are all subsumed under the same term “yundong”. The modern western sport orientation whose best representatives are ball games, followed by the exercise orientation that embodies the modern western tradition of physical education, and then the native life-nourishing orientation with taiji-quan ( 太極拳 ) and qigong as sample of traditional Chinese body culture.

To test my hypotheses, I use the method of exploratory factor analysis to analyze the group of questions about criterion of sport. By adopting this covariance-oriented method, I can sort out the variance resulted from common factors besides the unique variance resulted from individually observed variables, and then clarify whether there are different body cultures as common factors behind the individual criterion, as well as the interrelatedness between the individual criterion. As usual, I use the method of principle axis factoring to extract the common factor whose eigenvalue is greater than 1. Then, for rotation, I adopt the method of equamax to distribute equally the variance of square loading among different factors rather than the customary method of varimax to maximize the variance of the squared loadings for each factor. My aim is not to reduce the number of variables, but to find all possible factors and to testify my hypothesis.

In this analysis, I actually only analyze 1949 effective samples and exclude the responses “no comment”, “don’t know” and the missing values. The value of the KMO’s sampling adequacy is 0.571. It is not ideal, but acceptable.<sup>11</sup> Because all observed variables pass the significance test of correlation coefficient, there is no need to delete any one variable. Furthermore, the nonredundant residual with absolute value greater than 0.05 is zero. It means that the rotated factor analysis is very successful. Table 2 shows the original factor matrix and the rotated factor matrix.

The original factor matrix clearly shows the hybridism of Taiwanese body cultures. First, all five variables have a certain loading on the factor 1 even though the two items “health of body” and “life-nourishing” are significantly higher. This reflects that people hold a positive attitude toward all five criteria about sport, as we see in the descriptive statistics. Second, as for the superficially “purer” factor 2, we must notice that it actually involves a common effect of two opposing orientations; positively associated with contest and rule and negatively associated with bodily health and life-nourishing.

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<sup>11</sup> If we substitute the responses “no comment”, “don’t know” and the missing values with mean, the value of KMO’s sampling adequacy can rise up to 0.874. But this substitution is meaningless, because we can extract only one factor under the standard of eigenvalue greater than 1.

Table 2 Factor Analysis about the Understanding of Yundong

	Before rotation <sup>a</sup>		After rotation <sup>b</sup>	
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 1	Factor 2
			Oriental	Occidental
Bodily Health	.800	-.386	.855	.073
Life-nourishing	.704	-.331	.774	.071
Intensity	.388	.151	.257	.327
Contest	.375	.677	-.020	.774
Rule	.418	.546	.084	.683

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization.

a Attempted to extract 2 factors. More than 25 iterations required. (Convergence=.002). Extraction was terminated.

b Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

After rotation, we can acquire factors that are more pure. I name factor 1 the oriental body culture (or the native idea of yundong). This factor is to stand for the Taiwanese orientation and understanding of physical activities which are primarily influenced by the Chinese tradition. I call factor 2 the occidental body culture (or the western concept of sport) to stand for the modern western orientation and understanding of physical activities, despite that these actually have rooted in the Taiwanese body cultures and become part of the contents of native understanding of yundong. According to the rotated factor matrix, the health of the body and the life-nourishing are the key constituents of the oriental body culture that shows a very slight opposition with the character of game-contest. As for the occidental body culture, its two major criteria are character of game-contest and definite rules. It is noticeable that the variable contest has the highest loading on factor 2. Here, the finding that contest has a priority over rules as the defining criterion of sport is consistent with the consensus of western reference mentioned above. Therefore, we can know that the greater importance of rules over contests in the descriptive statistics results from the mangle of native idea of yundong and western concept of sport. In addition, the intensity level of physical activities is not an important variable, and bears little weight on both factors. It is worth mentioning that the physical intensity expresses a higher affinity with contests and rules here. This result is in accordance with my initial conjecture. At the same time, according to the low loading of intensity on factor 2, we may guess that the occidental body culture appears primarily as sport orientation rather than the exercise orientation (or the orientation of physical fitness) in Taiwan.

According to the results of factor analysis, my assumptions are provable in principle; except the exercise orientation is so trivial in reality that I misestimate the importance of the item of physical intensity. However, I successfully distinguish between the oriental and the occidental body culture (or: the native idea of yundong and the western concept of sport) and show that the same Chinese term yundong refers actually to these two different body cultures. This confirms my initial doubt that we cannot, without further consideration, identify yundong in Chinese directly with sport and must always keep the social construction of sport in mind.

As for my theoretical supposition in advance, that is, due to the simultaneous influences from the Chinese and the Western traditions, the Taiwanese not only have an idiosyncratic native understanding of physical activities, but hold in principle three different orientations with regard to body culture: sport, exercise and life-nourishing. From the result of factor analysis, this supposition has more or less some grounds; the result presents only two types as opposition just because of a feeble exercise orientation.

Based on the theoretical supposition that there are three instead of two body cultures, we can try the

variance-oriented method of principal component analysis and force the computer to pick three components. Considering the probable overlaps among these three orientations, I adopt the method of oblique rotation here. Then we will get results like Table 3. It means that it is, in principle, possible to distinguish again a sport orientation and an exercise orientation as subtypes within the occidental body culture.

Theoretically, to testify whether there are actually three different orientations or not, we have to use the method of confirmatory factor analysis. It is unfortunate that it is impossible to do this analysis due to the limited information the existing survey provides. It is so because on the one hand, the TSCS questionnaire did not allow a sufficient number of questions; on the other hand, without any pioneer study as reference, I could not obtain a sufficient grasp on this subject and design my questions appropriately. However, according to my research result, we are now sure the health of the body is the top priority as viewed from the native idea of yundong, while the game-contest constitutes the core of the western concept of sport. We must remember that the real figurations are hybrid. The result of factor analysis tells us that both interpenetration and distinction occur primarily on the two items of life-nourishing and rules. Whether the intensity level of physical activities can be isolated and form an exercise orientation by itself, whether or not the exercise orientation esteems the enhancement of bodily health, and whether the insignificance of physical intensity in my finding is influenced by the native idea of yundong are questions that remain to be investigated and clarified.

Table 3 Principal Component Analysis about the Understanding of Yundong

	Original Factor Matrix <sup>a</sup>			Rotated Factor Matrix <sup>b</sup>		
	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 1 Life-nourishing	Component 2 Sport	Component 3 Exercise
Bodily Health	.716	-.545	-.196	.928	.013	-.034
Life-nourishing	.733	-.537	-.120	.906	-.012	.050
Rules	.581	.601	-.274	.075	.881	-.044
Contest	.508	.692	-.167	-.076	.864	.052
Intensity	.604	.140	.782	.012	.004	.994

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a 3 components extracted.

b Rotation converged in 4 iterations.

## Conclusion

Man is not only an animal of language but also an animal of meaning. Both these traits are based on the fact that man is a social animal. Although “yundong” (sport, movement of body) is an explicitly observable physical fact, it involves at the same time an understanding of language and an endowment of meaning. Of course, we get some insights that cannot be ignored if we take the “objective” facts such as the duration of activity and the variation of breath and pulse as departure to study yundong. However, ultimately speaking, this approach grasps only part of the reality and stays a one-sided perspective. Similarly, if we assume that “sport” is an objective, cross-cultural phenomenon that can be measured and investigated with the

“objective” method of social science and do not take the different understanding and the different meaning-attaching by different cultures to the seemingly same phenomenon of sport into account, this approach would often mislead us to take the second order reality constructed by the researchers as the original reality that we want to observe. Thus it cannot contribute to the correct observation and understanding of the reality as object of observation.

We can see this clearly on the topic “yundong” that I study in this article. Although the Westerners sometimes confuse sport with exercise too, they have a basic idea that sport is distinct from exercise. On the contrary, both the ordinary language usage and my research show that most Taiwanese lack such an idea. In such a condition, when the questionnaire of the ISSP asked the respondent “what sport or physical activity do you take part in most frequently?”, I guess that most Taiwanese respondents would automatically understand the juxtaposed “sport” (yundong) and “physical activity” ( tineng-huodong, 體能活動 ) as one and the same thing. Furthermore, the respondent’s answers to this open question shows that the Taiwanese understanding of yundong is even broader than exercise. For instance, some Taiwanese see singing, sauna, spa, and planting as yundong as well. Considering that 61% of respondents agree “it is enough to move our body, and not necessary to demand ourselves seriously”, we may infer that, for most Taiwanese, everything that involves an activity or a movement of the human body can count as yundong. Such an actor’s perspective can be grasped neither by the “objective” method of the natural science, nor by the “objective” method of the social science that assumes the result of measurement would not be affected by the culture.

As my research demonstrates, only when we understand that yundong is not identical to sport, is it possible to go a step further to clarify what yundong and sport actually mean for the Taiwanese. If we copy the existing western questionnaires without reflection or accommodate ourselves for the sake of adopting them for comparison at the end, there would be a risk that we as researcher are unconsciously caught in the trap to be fascinated with the reality on paper constructed by ourselves. In fact, taking such an approach does not hinder our survival in the academic circle. Instead, it may contribute to our career. Nevertheless, if we do so, we must pay the cost of misrecognizing or distorting the reality and humiliating the social science as “empirical science”. As result, our research could not win a resonance among the actors, the common people who serve as objects of our research and observation. Then, a double hermeneutic circle is impossible (Giddens, 1984: xxxii).

In this article I attempt to grasp the actor’s understanding of yundong by seeing yundong as product of translated modernity. With the second order reality constructed by real data, I demonstrate that a “neither Chinese nor Western” hybridism is our real situation nowadays. The same Chinese term “yundong” refers both an oriental and an occidental body culture. With this in mind, it would not surprise us that the Taiwanese scholars of physical education like to say, “Yundong is only a means; instead, tiyu is the end.” This reflects the Chinese body culture with a thousand years long tradition.

Taking the existence of different body cultures in different regions into account, I think that we must not only point out the social construction of sport, but also need to go a step further to reconceptualize sport. It is hard to avoid the use of a common overarching concept to refer the different physical activities of human beings with different body cultures. Moreover, the tacit assumptions of such a common concept that actually originated from a specific culture (e.g. the implicit achievement principle and elitism of modern western sport) are most difficult to be aware of and to be disclosed. The deconstruction of the hegemony of the western concept of sport and the reconstruction of a more generalized concept of “sport” need not only a thorough theoretical reflection and deliberation, but also a sufficient empirical research and study dedicated to it. In this article I try to figure out how the Taiwanese understand yundong as an alternative to the western concept of sport. It goes without saying that this is only a small beginning. We need a more collaborated effort from different civilizations and different perspectives to realize a reconceptualization of the concept of sport.

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Address: Taiwan Society of Sport Sociology, 250, Wen Hua 1st Rd., Kueishan, Taoyuan County,  
Taiwan 33301  
Phone: +886 (0)3-328-3201\*8532/\*8305  
E-mail: tonhwang@tsss.org.tw  
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