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The development of sports nationalism in Taiwan 1990-2023:

A study of news coverage and social media comments

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

at
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by
Meng-Tyng Hsieh (Bing-Tyng Sia)

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Abstract of a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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With the democratisation and political and economic liberalisation of Taiwan, “Taiwanese” has replaced “Chinese” as the predominant national self-identification. However, sports as a cultural field, which embodies nationalist ideology, has not undergone corresponding changes. For example, terms such as “Chinese Taipei”, “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) athletes”, and the “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team” are still widely used, and the name rectification referendum of 2018, which proposed that national teams compete under the name Taiwan, was voted down. Thus, this study aims to examine the interrelationship of sports nationalism and nationalist transformation. The research data for this study comprised sports news articles from Taiwanese newspapers and social media posts concerning three key topics: international baseball competitions from 1990 to 2023, the name rectification referendum, and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Using the theoretical frameworks of imagined communities, invented traditions, and banal nationalism, along with thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis, this study examines these research materials to explore their underlying nationalist narratives. Thematic analysis identified themes within the texts, while critical discourse analysis was employed to investigate how

content use in sports media strengthened or opposed nationalist ideologies. The findings indicate that Taiwan's sports nationalism evolved from ethnic nationalism to the Republic of China (ROC) civic nationalism, and ultimately to Taiwanese nationalism. The findings further explain that the referendum's defeat can be attributed to the Taiwanisation of the ROC and Chinese Taipei. Further, the findings from the analysis of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games indicate that sport functions as a mechanism for reaffirming Taiwan's nation-statehood and national identity by linking the ROC's national significance to Taiwan, thereby nationalising Taiwan. This study argues that these changes are driven by the interaction of sport, democratisation, and Taiwanisation. Theoretically, the contribution of these findings lies in offering an alternative theoretical framework to better understand the transformation of Taiwan's sports nationalism. Methodologically, while previous studies have primarily focused on how political and cultural elites shape national identity—a top-down approach, this study addresses how the public interacts with nationalist narratives. By incorporating social media posts, this research integrates individuals and grassroots society into the analytical framework of nationalism, providing a bottom-up perspective. The findings reveal that social actors do not merely accept top-down indoctrination but actively interpret, negotiate, and even reshape nationalist narratives. This challenges the traditional view that nation-building was elite-driven by demonstrating that the public can be a driving force in redefining national identity. These findings and this approach offer broader insights into contemporary nationalism in the digital era. In conclusion, sports news articles link national significance to sporting events, athletes, and spectators, constructing a "new tradition" that demonstrates how "banal" sports narratives contribute to the formation of an "imagined community." Overall, this study highlights the role of sport in nation-building, offering a broader perspective and deeper analysis of the development and transformation of Taiwanese nationalism.

Keywords: Sports nationalism, Taiwanese/ Chinese national identity, Chinese Taipei, Taiwanisation, baseball, social media comments

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Nationalism is often observed in the sports field. It is an excellent field for analysing the development of nationalism and national identity because of the characteristics of sport such as secularism (Guttman, 1978) and being easy to observe (Bairner, 1996). Bairner (1996) further stated that some specific behaviour in the sports field, such as waving flags, singing the national anthem and cheering for the national team/ athletes, embodied nationalism and strengthened national identity. In Taiwan, sport is often associated with national identity. Because Taiwan's nationhood is not widely recognised by the international community, participating in mega sports events and sports achievements is considered redemption for the people of Taiwan to seek to be recognised as a nation-state. Thus, the link between sport and nationalism in Taiwan has been studied extensively and continues to attract wider attention from scholars, media and the general public. For example, C.-C. Ni (2009) illustrated how the Kuomintang (KMT)¹ authorities utilised Taiwan's domination over the Little League Baseball (LLB) to consolidate its Chinese-centric ideology from the 1960s to the 1970s. Additionally, T.-H. Chen (2008) demonstrated how, in 2006, Taiwanese authorities spent government funding and used public television to broadcast Taiwanese Major League Baseball (MLB), featuring stars such as pitcher Wang Chien-Ming, to forge a national identity. Further, the term "the glory of Taiwan (臺灣之光)" was commonly used in news stories, such as "17-Year-Old Glory of Taiwan! Ugang wins the championship at Asian Youth Esports in Street Fighter Six" (Central News Agency, 2024) and "Parade for Olympic

¹ Abbreviations list is at Appendix A. From 1945 to 1996, the ruling KMT exercised authoritarian control over Taiwan, implementing martial law from 1949 to 1987. During this period, significant human rights violations occurred, including the February 28 Incident and the White Terror, while governance was guided by Chinese nationalist ideology.

heroes, enthusiastic cheers from the public; Lai expresses gratitude to the glory of Taiwan” (Liberty Times, 2024).

While media coverage frequently celebrates athletes as symbols of national pride, this portrayal does not necessarily align with broader trends in the development of Taiwan’s sports nationalism. According to polls examining changes in the Taiwanese/ Chinese identity of Taiwan, conducted by the Election Study Centre (2025), the public’s self-identification has been transforming gradually from Chinese to Taiwanese during the past three decades. The proportion of those citizens who identify with a Taiwanese identity has risen from 17.6% in 1992 to 64.3% in 2024 (see Figure 1-1).



Figure 1-1 Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese identity of Taiwanese as tracked.

Note. Retrieved from Election Study Centre, by Election Study Centre, NCCU, 2025,

<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7804&id=6960>

Figure 1-1 shows that since 1996, the first time direct presidential elections were held, democracy has developed over more than two decades in Taiwan. With the political liberalisation, people in Taiwan gradually developed a sense of self-identification more as Taiwanese than as Chinese. For example, in 2018, the proportion of people identifying as Taiwanese exceeded half the population (54.5%). However, when it came to the No. 13 referendum— “Do you agree to use the name ‘Taiwan’ when applying to participate in all international sports competitions, including the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics?”, this strong expression of Taiwanese identity did not garner sufficient support. The referendum was rejected, with 54.8% voting against and 45.2% in favour (Central Election Commission (Taiwan), 2018a). The intertwining of sport with society and nation embodies Taiwan's complex social context which provokes the sociological imagination about the dynamics of sports nationalism.

Sports nationalism is often regarded as official nationalism (Hargreaves, 1992). In Taiwan, sport combined with nationalism and exploited by authority as a political tool has been the norm. Since 1899, when the Japanese government introduced modern sport and nationalism to Taiwan, sport was imported and controlled as a colonial by-product to forge nationalism aligned with official ideology. The Japanese government implemented physical education and imported baseball to train qualified workers/citizens who would adapt to modern life and submit to Japanese rule (S. Wang, 2009). This legacy was inherited by the Republic of China (ROC) in 1949, which followed similar sports policies. For example, the KMT administration reinterpreted the 1968 victory of the Taiwanese indigenous baseball team, the Hong-Ye Little League Baseball Team, as a victory for the Chinese people (Yu & Bairner, 2008). However, democratisation, which began with the lifting of martial law in 1987, significantly transformed this dynamic. During the martial law period, as suggested by S. S. Lin (2018), there was neither freedom of speech nor the liberty to openly discuss

nationalism and national identity. Without these freedoms, the dissemination of non-official newly invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) and the banal nationalism embedded in daily life (Billig, 1995) was nearly impossible. As Anderson (1983) suggests, news narratives play a crucial role in reshaping imagined communities. Thus, the absence of fundamental freedoms hindered the construction of a non-official national identity. Although democratisation has altered the situation, where sports served the authorities' ideological nationalism, those in power continue to exploit sports to evoke nationalist sentiments to reach their political agendas. For example, according to C.-Y. Lin (2012), the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government leveraged the opportunity of hosting the 2007 Baseball World Cup to incite nationalistic sentiments and distract attention from its poor governance.

However, the social actors were not passively receiving the gestures from authority. Moreover, sport served as a tool to resist the oppression from authority. For instance, the baseball games/ teams integrated the Hoklo,² the Hakka³ and the Taiwanese indigenous people⁴ into a whole Taiwanese group against the Japanese rule (S. Wang, 2009). The Tokyo Olympics in 2021 mobilised netizens against the People's Republic of China (PRC)'s Chinese nationalism and political pressure (T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2023). These examples demonstrate the dual role of sport as both a medium of discipline and resistance. Thus, this study focuses on the period from 1990 to 2023, capturing the transformation of sports nationalism in Taiwan as influenced by democratisation. The year 1990 marked the intersection of contemporary sport and political change. This period followed the lifting of martial law in 1987 and the abolition of the *Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilisation for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion* in 1991. In 1990, the Chinese

² A major ethnic group in Taiwan.

³ The second largest ethnic group in Taiwan.

⁴ The collective name for more than twenty Taiwanese indigenous ethnic groups.

Professional Baseball League (CPBL) was inaugurated, and baseball was included in the Asian Games for the first time, held in Beijing. Two years later, in 1992, Taiwan won its first silver medal in baseball at the Barcelona Olympics.

Research on sports nationalism in Taiwan has received relatively limited attention within the island's sociological circles. More recently, studies in this field have shifted to examining how specific athletes and their social impact have transformed and strengthened Taiwan's national identity. For example, scholars have explored how the achievements of Wang Chien-Ming (T.-H. Chen, 2008; T.-T. Chen & Wang, 2015), Jeremy Lin (Chiang & Chen, 2013, 2014), and Tseng Yani (Sun, 2019; Y.-c. Wang & Chen, 2016) evoked nationalist sentiments among the Taiwanese people.

On the other hand, the Olympic Games and the use of the name "Chinese Taipei" have also emerged as significant research topics in Taiwan's sports nationalism. These studies demonstrated why the KMT insisted on adopting "Chinese Taipei". The designation that allowed the party to maintain its Chinese ideology and how it was employed to reinforce a sense of Chineseness within the Taiwanese population (G. Chan, 1985; C.-H. Chang, 2004; C.-Y. Chen, 1993; C.-P. Liu, 1997; C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993a, 1994; H.-Y. Liu, 2007; M.-H. Tang & Hung, 2008). Additionally, the research by Chiang and Chen (2021) and Chiu, Lee, and H.-J. Chiu, Lee, and Jiang (2021) demonstrates how contemporary Taiwanese society perceives Chinese Taipei—it is perceived both as evidence of Chinese nationalist ideological oppression and as the only symbol for seeking Taiwan's recognition in the international sporting arena, although under a compromised name—and employs it as a strategic tool to cultivate Taiwanese identity.

Another line of research focuses on specific sports, with particular emphasis on basketball and baseball. For instance, the studies by Chiang and Chen (2014) and Hu and

Chen (2018) demonstrated why, in the 2000s, people in Taiwan adopted a nationalist perspective to interpret Taiwanese basketball talents' participation in Chinese professional events, particularly amidst growing political pressure from China on Taiwan.

Furthermore, as Taiwan's national sport, baseball has garnered significant attention in sports nationalism research. These studies can be categorised into three distinct periods. In the first and second periods, historical studies on sport have examined how the Japanese and the KMT government adopted baseball as a tool to assimilate Taiwanese people and strengthen Japanese/ Chinese national identity (Y. Cho, 2016; C.-M. Chung, 2006; S.-Y. Hsieh, 2012, 2017; S.-Y. H. Hsieh, Chia-Fen, 2003; Morris, 2004, 2011; S. Wang, 2009). Finally, the era of democratisation, research has become more nuanced. This includes studies on ethnicity and sports nationalism (W.-C. Chiu, Hwang, & Bairner, 2014; Hwang, 2015; Yu & Bairner, 2012), sport migration and national identity (T.-H. Chen, 2008; C.-H. Hsu, 2012; C.-D. Liu, 2008), media and sports nationalism (Ahn, 2019; S.-C. Ma, Su, Chen, Sato, & Ma, 2023) and specific sports events and the strengthening of national identity (T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2023; C.-Y. Lin, 2012; C.-Y. Lin & Lee, 2007; C.-Y. Lin, Lee, & Cheng, 2010).

These studies have laid an important foundation for research on sports nationalism in Taiwan. In particular, research on sports nationalism during the Japanese colonial period and the KMT authoritarian era has been comprehensive and contextually rich. However, studies focusing on the post-1990 era remain relatively fragmented. Consequently, this study aims to establish a broader social and historical context for understanding sports nationalism. Additionally, social actors are often assumed to be passive recipients of the ideologies imposed by political elites. However, national identity emerges as a result of social interaction (S. Wang, 2009), particularly in the post-democratisation era, when speech is no longer heavily restricted. The dynamic roles of social actors should therefore be considered. To explore these dynamics, this study utilises social media as a source of research data,

given its accessibility and the anonymity it provides. Finally, research on the relationship between the Olympic Games, Chinese Taipei, and national identity is outdated. Many earlier studies have regarded the Olympic Games as a significant factor in strengthening Chinese nationalism due to the symbolism of “Chinese Taipei”. However, with democratisation and Taiwanisation, Chinese Taipei has also been reinterpreted as a symbol of Taiwan. Accordingly, this study examines the Taiwanisation of Chinese Taipei and explores how it has been used to reinforce Taiwan's national identity.

The transformation of nationalism in Taiwan has been influenced by both top-down and bottom-up driving factors. Increasing Taiwanese self-identification in contemporary Taiwan provides a compelling context to explore how sport interacts with nationalism. Sport can be conceptualised as playing a key role in the dynamics of social forces that construct a national identity from both approaches. Further, sport can also be considered a tool of indoctrination and resistance. This study adopts constructivist nationalism to understand the emergence of nation, nationalism, and nation-state, which are “constructed”, “made up”, “contingent”, and “fluctuating” (Walicki, 1998, p. 612). It further employs the concepts of “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983), “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) and “banal nationalism” (Billig, 1995) as an underlying logics and theoretical frameworks. From this perspective, the nation is understood to emerge as an imagined community, made possible by the development of print capitalism and the popularisation of the vernacular, and mediated through shared narratives in print media. Its connotation was constructed by invented tradition and was spread and embodied in daily life through banal nationalism.

This study follows Anderson in considering printed matter as a medium for forging imagined community and a substantial body of research has shown that sports coverage plays a vital role during the construction of nationalism (e.g. T.-H. Chen, 2008; Chiang & Chen, 2013, 2014, 2021; Hu & Chen, 2018; Hwang, 2019; Jakubowska & Ličen, 2019; J. W.

Lee & Maguire, 2011; C.-D. Liu, 2008; MacInnes, Rosie, Petersoo, Condor, & Kennedy, 2007; C.-C. Ni, 2009; Y.-Y. Ni, 2003; Sun, 2019; Thomas & Antony, 2015; Y.-c. Wang & Chen, 2016; Ying, Bairner, Hwang, & Chen, 2015; Yu & Bairner, 2008). In addition, the reactions of social actors are also a concern of this study. According to Moreau, Roy, Wilson, and Atlani Duault (2020), social media provides a field to analyse the reaction of the social actor towards political, social and sports events. Based on the above reasons, this study uses sports reports and social media comments as research materials and employs thematic analysis and critical content analysis to explore the development and interactive dynamics of sports nationalism in Taiwan. More precisely, the objectives are to investigate the relationship between sport, nationalism, and national identity in the era of democratisation and Taiwanisation and the ways in which nationalism was represented in news coverage of sport or news and social media coverage of sport. This study investigates how the nationalist narrative in sports coverage changed with the major political events and social movements of the period. Finally, the study examines how the public receives nationalist content in sports news reports and how social actors respond to nationalist gestures in sports stories through social media comments.

Thus, this study proposes four questions about Taiwan's sports nationalism: 1. What kind of national features are emphasised or omitted in the sports news articles? How are they narrated, evaluated and inter-related?; 2. How do the sports news articles articulate the performance of athletes or the hosting of sports competitions with the characters of culture, ethnicity, territory and citizenship? How are the meanings constructed in relation to the national significance and changed with political events or social movements?; 3. Do the connotations of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)⁵, Taiwan, Chinese Taipei, China depicted in the

⁵ This study renders untranslatable Chinese terms as "romanisation (Chinese characters/English translation)" and applies this format consistently throughout the thesis. The term "中華" is

sports news articles change over time and, if so, what causes the changes?; 4. How do the readers recognise, interpret and re-articulate the national narratives in the news articles?

By examining sport as an intersection for top-down and bottom-up forces, this study provides a sociological interpretation of the increasing Taiwanese self-identification. It bridges theoretical gaps by integrating the concepts of imagined communities, invented traditions, and banal nationalism, offering new insights into how nationalism is socially constructed and evolves in the Taiwanese context. Thus, sports news reports as an intersection provides the possibility to integrate those three established theories for clearly understanding the social constructivism in Taiwan's nationalism.

Among the numerous studies on sports nationalism, this research is the first to systemically collect and conduct an analysis of national narratives in Taiwan's sports news coverage after democratisation (1990-2023). Furthermore, the present research is one of the few that include social media platform comments in its research scope. The approach deepens a relatively comprehensive perspective on understanding the role of sports in nation-building. By analysing how these narratives were constructed, employed, communicated, and accepted, the study can gain a deeper understanding of how the ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism were interwoven and integrated to shape the current landscape of Taiwan's national identity. Further, the selection and rejection of certain narratives embody the transformation of the social environment. Ultimately, this study attempts to contribute to the understanding of the transformation of sports

translationally ambiguous—it may refer to “China” (noun), “Chinese” (adjective), “Chinese” (noun), or even “Taiwan”. Accordingly, this study uses Chung-Hua (中華/Chinese), adopting Chung-Hua as an intuitive romanisation, retaining “中華” to reflect its political ambiguity, and including “Chinese” to indicate the implied Chineseness. Although the term originally carried strong connotations of Chineseness, over time it has been increasingly reinterpreted by Taiwanese people as embodying a sense of Taiwaneseess. The subsequent chapters further elaborate on this transformation.

nationalism in Taiwan and to provide a potential framework for reducing the conflicts between the Taiwanese national identity and the ROC national identity in Taiwanese society.

This research is organised into eight chapters. Chapter 2, the literature review, critically examines the key theories and debates in the studies of sport and nationalism, alongside empirical research on Taiwan. It distinguishes the fundamental concepts of state, nation and nation-state. Furthermore, it introduces Smith's (2001) analysis of nationalism and his four paradigms: perennialism, primordialism, ethno-symbolism, and modernism. The chapter also outlines the theoretical framework of this research, which is anchored in the concepts of "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983), "the invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983), and "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995). Further, the chapter delves into the concept of sports nationalism. Specifically, it examines the interplay between the theoretical framework and the realm of sport, illustrating how the selected framework can be deployed to analyse the role of sport in forging national identity.

Chapter 3 explores the nationalistic journey in Taiwan to discover how the socio-cultural and socio-political interact with sport in terms of nation-building. This chapter divides the history of Taiwan's sports nationalism into three stages based on changes in national identity: Japanese era (1895-1945); the KMT's authoritarian rule from 1945 to the 1990s; and democratisation and Taiwanisation⁶ from 1987 to the present. Taiwan's nationalism and modernisation were imported by the Japanese government. Sport was adopted as a tool to instil Japaneseness into the people of Taiwan and train them as qualified civilized people. The KMT also exploited sport as a tool of re-Sinicisation. By holding sports events and celebrating sports achievements, the KMT installed their Chineseness into

⁶ According to Wakabayashi (2008/2016), Taiwanisation is the political change process in which the ROC's systems, ideologies, and policies, which aimed to build an authentic China after the Second World War, gradually became consistent with Taiwan's territory, people, and history.

the people of Taiwan and underscored their Chinese political ideology that the ROC is the only Chinese government in the world, within the international community. Following democratisation and Taiwanisation, the narratives of sports nationalism turned to seek recognition and the consolidation of self-identity.

Chapter 4 focuses on the methodology, detailing the research design, data collection processes, and analytical methods employed in this study. This chapter provides an overview of the methodological framework, the criteria for selecting sports news articles and social media comments, the thematic analysis approach and the critical discourse analysis used to categorise and interpret the data.

Chapter 5 uses baseball as a case study to explore the development of sports nationalism. The significance of baseball as Taiwan's national sport is undeniable (S.-Y. Hsieh, 2012). From the LLB triumphs in the 1970s to the absence of China in international baseball, it created a space for the Taiwanese to express their nationalism. Therefore, the analysis of the development of sports nationalism in baseball is the first case study of this research. The analysis shows that the evolution of sports nationalism in Taiwan transitioned from Chinese ethnic nationalism to Chinese civic nationalism, and nowadays, to Taiwanese civic nationalism.

Chapter 6 examines the name rectification referendum of 2018. The referendum can be considered as an embodiment of Taiwanese resistance to Chineseness in the sports field. However, the referendum showed a result contrary to Taiwan's mainstream national identity. This outcome highlighted a paradox: while the Taiwanese people strongly identified as Taiwanese and sought to uphold their distinct national identity, they simultaneously opted to retain the name with Chineseness—Chinese Taipei. Analysis indicates that during the Taiwanisation of the ROC, the concept of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) was also

reinterpreted to reflect Taiwanese characteristics. Consequently, the name “Chinese Taipei” embodies not only elements of Chineseness but also Taiwaneseess.

Chapter 7 focuses on the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games. Following the 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement and the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020, the public identification with Taiwanese as their national identity increased to unprecedented levels, reaching 64.3%. Taiwan’s exceptional management of the pandemic, coupled with its record-breaking performance at the Olympics, further boosted its already rising nationalist sentiment. Analysis reveals the consolidation of Taiwanese national identity. Olympic victories have repeatedly strengthened the self-recognition of being Taiwanese.

Chapter 8, the conclusion, provides a summary of the research findings, drawing from news articles and social media data. Overall, the thesis findings reveal that the concept of the imagined Taiwanese national community has been demonstrated in different forms across various social contexts. The production and reproduction of sports nationalism within Taiwan can be divided into three stages—the 1990s and the change from Chinese ethnic nationalism to Chinese civic nationalism; the 2000s and the Taiwanisation of the ROC from Chinese civic nationalism to Taiwanese civic nationalism; and the 2010’s to the present and the consolidation of Taiwanese nationalism.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the theoretical paradigms in nationalism studies. The nation-state is generally considered as a product of modernisation. The government and society both play an equally important role throughout the formation of the contemporary nation-state. Under this premise, this chapter provides a perspective on the underlying logic and reviews such concepts as “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983), “banal nationalism” (Billig, 1995), and “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

2.1 State, Nation and Nation-state

In order to discuss nationalism and national identity, it is necessary to clarify the differences between state, nation, and nation-state and provide definitions for how this study interprets these terms. First, the concept of the state is discussed. This study views the state as a product of modernity—a political organisation established to serve and fulfil the needs of modern society. The second subsection discusses the concepts of the nation and the nation-state. The term “nation” involves psychological, cultural, and social dimensions, where group consciousness is formed by common values, language, customs, and ideology. On the other hand, the term “nation-state” involves integrating the nation and state power, aiming to govern and organise society based on homogeneous values and political autonomy.

2.1.1 The definition and formation of the state

One of the oldest definitions of the state is that of Weber (1948, p. 78) who defined the concept as “the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory”. Further, Weber (1948) offered three reasons that underpin the legitimacy of the monopolised force: 1. traditional authority such as monarchy and paternalism; 2. the

charisma of leaders; and 3. laws and administrative rules. A number of studies have followed and extended Weber's concept of the state. Rejai and Enloe (1969, pp. 142-143) claimed that the state has a closer linkage with "politics" and "law". Additionally, Connor (1978) emphasised the role of the state as an administrative agency and illustrated that the state is a political entity, such as government and state apparatus, which administers a geographical territory and peoples. Mann (1984b) further extended the view of Weber and argued that the despotic system produced a pivotal power to sustain a traditional state, whilst the contemporary state replaced despotism with increasingly complex societal infrastructure such as parliament and the civil service. Likewise, Giddens (1987) echoed Weber and Connor by focusing on the state apparatus's monopoly on legal violence in the country and the role of bureaucracy.

The Peace of Westphalia, the collective name for The Treaty of Münster and The Treaty of Osnabrück signed to end the Thirty Years' War in October 1648, is considered as the starting point of the formation of the modern nation-state in Europe (Clodfelter, 2017; Croxton, 1999; Gross, 1984; Murphy, 1996). The Peace of Westphalia affirmed that each state has sovereignty and monopoly rights on its territory and excluded the Pope's power and supreme political status (i.e. separation of church and state). Therefore, national sovereignty replaced theocracy as the supreme ruler of the state. However, as Murphy (1996) pointed out, even though the Peace of Westphalia was signed, the state was not the only political entity and the shape of the state was still changed by different historical events. L.-C. Chang (2002) agreed with Murphy's view and further noted that after the downfall of the French Emperor Napoleon in 1815, the European political order was arranged by resolutions of the Congress of Vienna, which confirmed country boundaries and diplomatic equality among states. Thus, Hung (2009) proposed that the nation-state had

become the highest political unit in domestic affairs and international relationships since the emergence of the modern state in the mid-seventeenth century.

However, there are different views about what caused the modern state to be formed and established. Traditionally, the state is seen as a political entity, which was primarily established and maintained by military power. For instance, Giddens (1987), noted that the state was created to meet the needs of modern warfare. From this perspective, the modern state was constructed deliberately. Modern war required human and financial resources that the authorities had to obtain in order to win the war. Giddens (1987) further argued that the emerging modern state was linked to taxation to cover the cost of war through the establishment of bureaucracy, monitoring technology and the monopoly of violence. Thus, Giddens (1987) asserted that the modern state was the best container of power. In addition, Tilly (2005) followed Giddens' view and suggested that the state is the by-product of war. Because of the demands of war, along with conscription and protection, the government had to determine who its citizens were and where the boundaries of its territory were drawn as well as to distinguish the we-group from others (Tilly, 2005). This relationship of rights and obligations linked government, citizen, and territory, thereby establishing the modern state.

In contrast, there are scholars who view industrialisation as a main cause of the formation of the modern state. In his book published in 1983, which has been the subject of much discussion ever since, Gellner (1983) proposed that the state is a product of the needs of modern industrial society. Mann (1984b, 1986) agreed with Gellner's argument and contended that the development of industrialisation led to more complex statehood and social divisions of labour. From this perspective, the formation of the state is an accidental consequence of human actions—it is not intentionally built to respond to the needs of society (Mann, 1986). Under such a premise, Mann (1984a, 1986) contended that the state

is one of the social control organisations and its development was the result of striving to avoid financial collapse than the result of a conscious expansion of power. He further contended that the state was built by the conflicts and negotiations between monarchs/national elites and interest groups over issues related to tax increases, and as a result, this process led to a merger of class, religion and economy in determining the boundaries of the state. More precisely, due to the expanding state-driving infrastructure, monarchs/ national elites faced the pressure of unbalance of revenue and expenditure, and therefore social groups, such as the chamber of commerce and church, were brought under state control as tax bases. Thus, states must both manage and coexist with opposing forces, while these forces, in turn, must cooperate with state-driven infrastructure to sustain their existence, thereby contributing to the emergence of the modern state (Mann, 1984a, 1986).

2.1.2 The definitions of nation and nation-state

In contrast to the state as a political entity which has power and rules over a specific territory, the nation can be considered as a cultural community. Rejai and Enloe (1969, pp. 142-143) distinguish between the state and the nation with the latter being associated with “psychology”, “culture” and “society”. Connor (1978) and Smith (2001) also assert that the nation is a cultural community through which people share the same values, language, customs, and ideas. The conception of the nation emerged in the eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment, in association with nationalist movements and national self-definition (Giesen, 1998). As Connor (1978, p. 379) stated, “defining and conceptualizing the nation is much more difficult because the essence of a nation is intangible”. He asserted that the nation is a psychological bond connecting individuals with others as a group through consensus. This perspective is further developed by Guibernau (1999) who addressed five significances of the nation, which were psychology (consciousness of group formation), shared culture, region of residence, politics (persistence in autonomy) and history (having a

vision of a common past and a common future). In this sense, the nation can be informed by the sharing of a specific place of residence, a common culture and history, and the right to self-determination.

One of the most influential concepts with respect to a nation as a cultural construct is Benedict Anderson's (1983) *Imagined Communities*. He noted the importance of an individual's identity, culture, and vernacular languages replacing the role of Latin as an official language in Europe through the development of "print capitalism". Furthermore, he suggested that the advancement of "print capitalism" dominated the processes of nation-building. Because of the print product, peoples recognised the difference and similarity of language with others. Through this process, language was given the characteristics of "fixity", or "spread and copied by fixed styles", while administrative dialects were absorbed into a unified language of the print media, thereby shaping and fostering the formation of the national language and boundary (Anderson, 1983, pp. 44-46).

Lastly, the nation-state can be defined as a political entity which combines the state and a cultural community. For instance Brubaker (1996, pp. 79, 169) argued that "nation-states were the states of and for particular nations... They committed to promoting the language, culture, demographic position, economic flourishing, and political hegemony of the new state-bearing nation". Gellner (1998) further pointed out that the power base of the nation-state comes from the people within the political organisation who share the same culture. State-making or nation-building is not a one-way, top-down process from elite to civilian; rather, the process of national construction is based on a series of complex negotiations, coordination and conflict between the government and the society. This process could be seen as a response to modernisation, which tended to produce a top-down process of nationalism (Yao, 2015). Thus, nationalism is a useful framework to understand the process of nationalising the state.

2.2 Theories of nationalism

Nationalism is an ideology or movement that asserts that the boundaries of the nation should align with those of the state (Gellner, 1983). As Berlin (2013, p. 445) stated, “Nationalism is one of the most important social and political phenomena in the past 200 years”. As outlined in the previous section, the state is recognised as a supreme political entity in a domestic territory whereas the nation is defined as a cultural community within a specific territory. Nationalism can be considered as a framework to understand and analyse the ways in which statehood and nationhood are integrated into one entity, a nation-state. As nationalism is a complex phenomenon which is linked with the formation of the state, there are many disputes about how the nation-state was formed.

Within the processes of nation-building, the government/ elites often played a crucial role. Shils (1957) and Geertz (1973) emphasised the importance of extant culture as the intangible objects to motivate individuals to develop the sense of community united by ethnicity and nation. Following Shils and Geertz’s theories, Anderson (1983) observed the process of nation-building in southern America and Europe. He further proposed the idea of forging national belongingness—that is, the government conducts “census, map, and museum” to create or re-create official collective memories of citizens and national boundaries of geography. These geo-political products, which are approved by officials, solidified the social and cultural frontier of the imagined community (Anderson, 1983, p. 163). Similar examples are shown in Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) book *The Invention of Tradition* to illustrate that the processes of building nations are based on the nationalisation of history through which the government/ elite gave national significance to historical facts and characters through ceremony, rule and collective memory and turned this history into the national narrative. Thus, the creation and re-creation of the nation-state are based not only on tangible administration but also on cultural production. Geertz (1973, pp. 259-260)

argued that many people's sense of self is "bound up in the gross actualities of blood, race, language, locality, religion, or tradition". These cultural elements play a crucial role in helping governments and elites incorporate culture into nation-building.

Following the previous discussion on the linkages between the nation, ethnicity and culture, Smith (2001) offered a more comprehensive theoretical basis for analysis of nationalism. He proposed that nationalism was divided into four paradigms: perennialism, primordialism, ethno-symbolism, and modernism. Firstly, perennialism stresses that the nation exists in every historical period, and it emphasises the root and continuity of its meaning throughout history. Thus, the nation was founded by "historical accumulation" (Smith, 2010). Under this premise, France, England, and Spain were recognised as the "ancient and continued nations" which provided historical evidence for the immortal will of the nation-states (Gillingham, 1992; Hastings, 1997; Seton-Watson, 1977; Smith, 2001). Secondly, primordialism highlights that bloodline and culture are considered the cornerstone of the nation, whilst reinforcing national consciousness for those individuals who share the same culture or bloodline. Smith (2001) noted that the nation is the first order and root of human development, and as the state became more complex, culture replaced bloodlines as an extensive network beyond kinship. Thirdly, ethno-symbolism is related to an attempt to connect national identity with history and use cultural symbols as the national umbilical cord to unify the community. Ethno-symbolism denotes that nation and ethnicity are bound up by shared symbols, such as myths and historical narratives. For ethno-symbolists, the crucial factor of national formation is the long-term social dynamics (Hutchinson, 1987; Smith, 1987). More specifically, ethno-symbolists regard the linkage of people with national identity to be fostered only by longstanding symbolism including shared narratives, myths and memories (Smith, 2001). In other words, the nation is imagined and forged by the interaction between the people and cultural symbols. Fourthly,

in contrast to the perspectives mentioned above, the modernist perspective suggests that the emergence of the nation was prompted by industrialisation and social division of labour becoming more complex. Smith (2001) asserted that nationalism is the product of modernisation. He further stated that those nationalist ideologies, such as nation, nation-state, and national identity, were a modern phenomenon and were established after the French Revolution.

The transformation of politics, economy, and ideology was an inevitable social phenomenon in the age of industrialisation (J. Breuilly, 1993; Gellner, 1983; Giddens, 1987; Mann, 1986). Industrialisation brought about changes in the mode of production and the social division of labour, which in turn prompted the emergence of the nation-state, driven by the need to adapt to the transformations brought about by modernisation (Gellner, 1983). In traditional societies, the family, as the basic social unit, was responsible for various economic and social activities such as education, without necessarily fostering a broader sense of community; in the modern age, the state replaced the family in playing a central role in education and training, officially endorsing high culture through the educational system and helping to cultivate a sense of community by promoting a shared culture and adapting to a new mode of production (Gellner, 1983).

Spencer and Wollman (2002), followed by others such as A.-J. Liu (2007), simplified Smith's four categories into two types: essentialism and constructionism. In their re-formulation, perennialism, primordialism, and ethno-symbolism are categorised under essentialism, while modernism is placed under constructionism. In essence, essentialist nationalism links individuals to the nation by emphasising commonalities such as language, history, memory, bloodline, and physical attributes. This aligns with the views of Horowitz (1975), Smith (1991) and Isaacs (1989), who argued that the nation-state derived from the convergence of heredity and cultural heritage. As Smith (1991) contended, collective

consciousness stems from ethnicity, and the modern nation-state was built upon ancient cultures that established its boundaries. In brief, the formation of the nation is guided by shared cultural and ethnic characteristics that connect individuals and internalise them as part of the nation.

Another essentialist perspective, offered by Isaacs (1989), posited that the nation is grounded in the genetic construction of physical traits. Isaacs argued that the modern world was shaped by diverse social groups—such as tribes, ethnicities, languages, and religions—each defined by common physical characteristics like skin colour, hair texture, and facial features. These physical traits, in turn, served as a medium for social actors to represent their hometowns, surnames, language, history, and origins. Therefore, through a series of acquiring processes, individuals became group members with ethnic characters and were differentiated from other ethnic group members (Isaacs, 1989). In summary, essentialism asserts that the foundation of the nation is rooted in the cultural or physical characteristics of social actors. Drawing on essentialism, ethnic nationalism emphasises that group membership is defined by shared genetic traits and cultural heritage, such as bloodline, language, and religion (Kaufman, 2011; Smith, 1987, 2001).

In contrast, constructivist nationalism refers to the construction of a nation through integrating different groups via the aspects of law and politics. In other words, the nation as a modern product is conceptually constructed. This is consistent with Gellner's (1983, 1998) argument that the emergence of a modern nation was prompted by the transformation of modes of production or industrialisation.

Another constructivist argument contended that the creation of nationalism was due to the uneven domestic distribution of resources under the capitalist economic and political system. According to Wallerstein (1987, p. 385), "nation and nationalism divides core zones

and peripheral zones intrazonally in the more complex intrazonal as well as interzonal competition for detailed rank order”, in which the majority’s cultural characteristics developed as the national standard. To compete with the majority, the minority united individuals by redefining nationalism or constructing an alternative form of nationalism (Wallerstein, 1987). Drawing on constructivism, civic nationalism emphasises that group membership is defined by shared political values, laws and civil rights (Kymlicka, 1995; Tamir, 1993). Additionally, civic nationalists argue that national identity and democracy are interdependent, with national identity providing the cohesion necessary for a functioning democratic system, while democracy fosters an environment of freedom, tolerance, and equality that allows individuals to embrace and shape their national identity (Kymlicka, 1995).

The characteristics emphasised by essentialism have been challenged, with critics arguing that these inherent traits are, in fact, products of social construction. According to Nagel (1994, pp. 167-168):

For ethnic groups, questions of history, membership, and culture are the problematics solved by the construction process. Whether ethnic divisions are built upon visible biological differences among populations or rest upon invisible cultural and ideational distinctions, the boundaries around and the meanings attached to ethnic groups reflect pure social construction.

Furthermore, a critique of essentialism offered by Hsiao (2002) questioned the premise that if identity is based on essentialism, how can society develop? Additionally, while the majority ethnic group in Taiwan is Han, as in China, an essentialist approach to nationalism cannot account for the emergence of a distinct Taiwanese identity. This study, therefore, adopts a constructionist perspective to conceptualise nationalism and national identity. The

next section reviews three of the key concepts from the constructivist approach: “imagined community”, “invented tradition” and “banal nationalism”.

2.2.1 The formation of “imagined community”

Anderson (1983) offered a seminal analysis of how the transformation of subjectivity was supported by the development of printing technology and its integration with capitalism, which, in turn, led to the establishment of a nation-state. Anderson (1983) illuminated that the rise of national consciousness through language and print media resulted from three factors: “the change in the character of Latin itself”, “the impact of the Reformation”, and “spread of particular vernaculars as instruments of administrative centralisation” (Anderson, 1983, pp. 39-41). First, the writing and literature of Latin was only popular in the intellectual class and stood aloof from church and daily life (Anderson, 1983). Second, there was the impact of the sixteenth century Reformation through the alliance between Protestantism and print capitalism. The Vatican had the advantage of propaganda to win the controversy against heresy before the emergence of mass printing. However, the situation changed after Martin Luther’s 95 Theses published in 1517. These articles were mass-printed in German and spread quickly throughout Germany, which led to a series of Reformations. In the next two decades, many versions of the German Bible circulated in Germany. As Anderson (1983) asserted, the characteristics of printing goods on a mass scale, easy reproduction and long-term preservation made it possible to share the same information faster and wider than the previously defined limits of time and space. Thus, via the combination of Protestantism and print capitalism, the local language quickly created a large number of new readers such as women and business people and provided a common platform for a critical mass necessary for political or religious mobilisation (Anderson, 1983). Third, the separation of language between the ruler and the ruled occurred, and Latin as the common language of the political system at the time did not become an exclusive language of any country. Meanwhile,

vernacular languages slowly replaced Latin as an administrative language in Europe (Anderson, 1983). Because Latin was primarily a bureaucratic language, it was not commonly used at the grassroots level. The elites—such as “nobilities, landed gentries, professionals, functionaries, and men who work in the market” (Anderson, 1983, pp. 77-78)—sought a standardised language within their domain to reflect the development of industry, commerce, and increasing literacy. As a result, vernacular languages were regulated for use in literature, business, and science. Additionally, Anderson (1983) suggested that printed materials serve as a connector, using a fixed vernacular and text to link people who share the same language within an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983). Therefore, based on the above three factors, Anderson (1983) proposed that the decline of Latin and the rise of print-capitalism brought the confirmation of the boundaries of the nation-states in Europe.

Anderson (1983) further suggested that nation formation occurred in Hispano-America at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, such as, Venezuela, Mexico and Peru, and disseminated from there to Europe. The creation of the “imagined communities” in South America was prompted by the Europeans’ discrimination against South Americans. In this context, the Creole⁷ immigrants and their mixed progeny were excluded from critical roles in the home country government, and job transfer was limited within the colonial areas. As such, this institutionalised discrimination against the colonial elite limited their positions to moving between colonies. These colonial elites faced various obstacles in their quest for the same status and identity as in their home countries, which is like a “cramped pilgrimage” (Anderson, 1983). In a journey of cramped pilgrimage, the experience of discrimination overlapped with colonial borders, the Creole elites who were discriminated against by their mother country imagined the colonies as their homeland

⁷ According to Cambridge Dictionary (2021) and Shin (2009) The Collective Identity of Hispano America: From Colonial to Independence, the Creole refers to the descendants of Spanish settlers born in the colony. In a broad sense, it also includes the Mestizos.

and the inhabitants of the colonies as their compatriots. A sense of community was constructed within the colony by the Creoles even though they still shared the same culture and languages as those in their motherland (Anderson, 1983). The new communities, created in South America with local-oriented conditions and cultures, inspired nationalism in European states in the nineteenth century. The traditional authority, such as “religious community” and “dynastic realm”, faced the challenge from nationalism which led to the decline of Latin and the development of secular languages (Anderson, 1983, pp. 12-22). By the second decade of the nineteenth century, independence movement in Hispano-America and the French Revolution spread the concept of the nation-state throughout Europe. According to Anderson (1983, p. 81) “a model of the independent national state was available for pirating” which subsequently influenced the authority of European royal families. By the mid-nineteenth century, “official nationalism” emerged as a reaction against nationalism by the European royal families. The old ruling class, unable to resist the rising tide of nationalism, adopted a strategy to combine the principles of nationalism with the old dynastic principles to avoid being overthrown by the masses (Anderson, 1983, p. 95). Further, European royal families engaged in “self-naturalising”, integrating themselves into the nation to gain control over the interpretation of national imagination. Through top-down assimilation projects, they sought to secure mass loyalty and consolidate dynastic power (Anderson, 1983, p. 113).

With the decline of Latin, the fixity of vernacular and the naturalisation of royal families, the provinciality of newspapers strengthened the sense of identity for the local area and differentiated it from those of the home country and others (Anderson, 1983). Even though they did not know each other, the narratives of newspapers linked individuals as a community, and the imagined community connects not only individuals in the nation but also those living in foreign countries. Anderson’s argument has been supported by many and

applied to analysis of more recent newspaper outlets (Jakubowska & Ličen, 2019; MacInnes et al., 2007; Thomas & Antony, 2015). For instance, MacInnes et al. (2007) analysed British newspapers from 1999 to 2003, both within and outside the UK, and argued that the story structure in newspapers was transmitted to readers regardless of their location. British newspaper outlets fostered a sense of belonging among those outside the UK despite geographical distance. The plots of newspapers served as a cue which triggered the imaginings of social actors with “temporal synchronicity” and “simultaneous experience” which represented the sense of imagined community (MacInnes et al., 2007, p. 188).

2.2.2 Invented Tradition

The concept of “invented tradition” presents a different view on this from the discussions on the nation as an imagined community. The invented tradition emphasises the interpretation of history. Nairn (1977) contended that the nation originates from the uneven development of capitalism. Initially, nationalism occurred in those countries which demanded to break away from the periphery status of capitalism, such as Germany, Italy, and Japan. He further explained that those periphery-countries attempted to eliminate not only economic control but also cultural control from the core nations. Thus, elites within periphery-countries used their status of lagging behind to persuade the people to build the nation together via (re)discovering or inventing the national history and culture and translating it to the vernacular. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) followed Nairn’s argument and further elaborated that the nation was built by the upper class as a tool to maintain the advantage of domination. Moreover, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) proposed that the nation is an invention by specific interest groups of the upper-class who constructed new traditions to integrate individuals into the state and maintain their economic and political authority.

Thus, the concept of the nation as a modern phenomenon is highly associated with invented tradition. According to Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, pp. 13-14), nationalism is rooted in history, and the invention of traditions is “often deliberate” and “always innovative”. The government and elites created “new traditions” of the nation connected to the historical factors (e.g. ritual), thereby forming the idea of nation state to achieve its social aims. Therefore, the nation could be regarded as an invented concept linked to history and adapted to a changing society. Specifically, a nation is a new tradition, constituted through the reinterpretation of existing concepts and ongoing practices, which create the appearance of historical continuity.

According to Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, p. 1), the invented tradition is “a set of practices”, which are governed by open or private rules and “of a ritual or symbolic nature”, which repetitively indoctrinate particular values and behaviours whilst the process undoubtedly implies continuity with the history. From this point of view, the invented traditions can be considered as a series of imposing repetitional processes through “formalisation and ritualisation” while these processes install the modern interpretations of historical events and therefore provide a contemporary significance to these events (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 4). The invented tradition is also accepted as a tool to maintain social stability, and therefore it is commonly practiced in unstable societies. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) suggested, the invented tradition has been frequently found in the past two hundred years under the circumstances of rapid social changes, especially when the new tradition replaced the old one as old authority or social structure weakened or collapsed. For instance, traditional European festivals, such as Thanksgiving, St. Patrick’s Day, and Columbus Day, were absorbed into American life as important events for American celebration. Further, flag worship became a daily ritual in American schools and a ceremony that embodies Americanism as a standard to judge whether the person belongs to America

or not (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Other cases of the invention of tradition were found in Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. The British colonial government transplanted its entire hierarchical control structure ruling system into Africa to facilitate governance. According to Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) two types of governance embodied in Buganda embodied the invented tradition. First the settlers introduced British education, aimed at cultivating local elites who would serve as rulers representing the British colonial administration. Second, they introduced existing European traditions to redefine the relationship between rulers—such as officers and soldiers—and the ruled—such as farmers and serfs, aiming to to transform and modernise the thinking and behaviour of Africans (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Thereafter, at the end of the colonial era, African governments and elites integrated the invented traditions from the colonial period, shifting the basis of legitimacy from family and kinship to ethnicity. This process was instrumental in consolidating their authority and forging national identities (Ranger, 1993).

2.2.3 Banal nationalism

Billig (1995) in his book, *Banal Nationalism*, introduced a more recent theoretical framework for analysing the contemporary medium that the government and elite use to connect the invented traditions with the individuals to reinforce the sense of a cultural community. According to this perspective, building nations is not necessarily dependant on heroic and exciting national narratives. Rather, national construction and maintenance depend not only on mythology or pride/tragic history but also on constant reminders in daily life. According to Billig (1995), the government and elite via a series of routine and subtle activities constructs an environment for everyday nationalism. These daily rituals include flag-raising ceremonies, singing of the national anthem and symbols on currency (Billig, 1995).

Billig (1995) emphasised the critical role of mass media in shaping national identity and fostering a sense of belonging. The semantic framing by the media, such as a “national” team, “international” news, and “domestic” news, illustrate the languages employed to build banal moments of nationalism in everyday life (Billig, 1995, p. 118). Those frames were exploited to (re-)confirm who belongs to the same group of national membership and national territory. The process of constructing the national symbols and identity in everyday life is not only embodied in the official public sphere but also in other fields such as commerce, media and personal lives (Caldwell, 2002; Erdal & Strømsø, 2018; Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008; Hutchings, 2010; Hutchings & Miazhevich, 2010; Millei, 2019; Miller-Idriss, 2006; Palmer, 1998). For example, Russians and Americans prefer to buy products and food with the label of Made in Russia/ the USA (Caldwell, 2002; Wade, 2011), and young Norwegians perceive lifestyle habits, including dress style and behavior on public transportation, as key indicators of whether someone belongs to Norway (Erdal & Strømsø, 2018).

This suggests that the nation-building is an ongoing process of creating and maintaining a sense of national belonging through symbols, language, and practices. Furthermore, governments and elites implicitly employ national symbols to instill, sustain, and reinforce people’s identification with the nation which is often embodied in news narratives.

Accordingly, this study draws on news coverage as a primary source of research material

2.3 Nationalism and sport

The nation-state can be regarded as a product of modernisation, and so is sport. Seminal work on defining modern sport was carried out by Guttmann (1978). He introduced seven characteristics of modern sport – secularism, equality, specialisation, rationalisation, bureaucratisation, quantification, and records. With the advancement of modernisation,

modern sport developed a close relationship with nationalism. Elias (1998) maintained that the development of modern sport and national identity converged in industrialised Western societies at the end of the nineteenth century, and nearly a half-century later in other societies, especially in post-colonial, emerging independent countries. Thus, Szymanski (2008) proposed that the process of modernisation of sport and those characteristics were associated with industrialisation. The relationship between nation-state and modern sport was forged through the processes of integrating sport into government systems. Mangan (2012) stated that in the British public schools in the nineteenth century, sport was imported into education, and the purpose was to raise children from the middle class into “gentlemen” for imperial service. However, the purpose of physical education changed as the government started to use sports education as a physical training course. According to Wagg, Brick, Wheaton, and Caudwell (2009, p. 220), the Education Act was enacted in the UK in 1870 and made sport part of the education system which was to train qualified labour. Furthermore, sports education also provided suitable manpower for war (Wagg et al., 2009). In brief, the nation-state incorporated sports into the administrative system as a tool to obtain disciplined and physically sound human resources.

Sport not only provided a workforce but also served as a vehicle for connecting individuals with the nation to form an imagined community. Numerous studies have concentrated on the relationship between sport and the (re-)construction of nationalism and national identity, with some arguing that sports competitions stimulate conflicts between different groups and strengthen national identity. Therefore, modern sport is a kind of “mimic warfare” (Orwell, 1945, p. 62) where athletes become proxy warriors (Hoberman, 1984). Thus, Bale (1986) asserted that sport is the most popular form and activity that promotes nationalism. Although Orwell, Angus and Hoberman provide a detailed review of the perspective related to the relationship between sport and

nationalism, these studies do not elaborate on how sport strengthens the national consciousness of individuals. In this light, Eric Hobsbawm's (1992) specific statement on the relationship between sport and nationalism has pointed out the importance of understanding how nationalism is re-constructed through sport.

Hobsbawm (1992) contended that sport served as a vehicle for national identity, thereby combining political imagination and social traditions to become a cohesive force of the new middle class in society. Sports competitions can strengthen the concept of a we-group and distinguish "our team" from other teams. According to Hobsbawm (1992, p. 143), "the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people (football)...the individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself". Bairner (1996) agreed with Hobsbawm's perspective and suggested that national identity can be strengthened by performing or watching sports activities. Thus, sport can be considered as an ideal place for observing nationalism and national identity, which can be constructed and reconstructed via a series of different modes of participation.

The development of nationalism has drawn on mythology and multifarious historical memories, in which sport was considered one of the emotionally contagious cultural fields to create collective memory (Bairner, 2001; Giulianott & Robertson, 2007; Hargreaves, 2002). By comparing the sports field with other social fields in the world, Bairner (2008) pointed out that it is far easier to see flag-waving and hear the national anthem playing in the sports field, thereby, constantly strengthening the national identity of the individual. Thus, like printed goods, sport serves as a medium for forging an imagined community. Through representing the country in competitions, sport is embedded with nationalism that aligns with the interests of authorities and elites (Wagg et al., 2009).

The development of nationalism in each nation is unique to adapt to its social environment. According to Greenfeld (1992), the spread of nationalism and modernisation are synchronised and modified with local historical and social conditions. Hoberman (1993, p. 18) stated that “Sportive nationalism is not a single generic phenomenon; on the contrary, it is a complicated socio-political response to challenges and events, both sportive and non-sportive, that must be understood in terms of the varying national contexts in which it appears”. Thus, both sport and nationalism should be understood as products of modernisation the forms of sports nationalism should be considered to vary from nation-state to nation-state. Following studies illustrated the embodiment of sports nationalism in different countries.

According to Hargreaves (1992), sports nationalism is considered official nationalism, and often employed by states to strengthen national identity and achieve political goals. For instance, Hitler exploited the 1936 Berlin Olympics to promote Aryan superiority while Mussolini leveraged football to support his Fascist regime (Martin, 2004). Bairner (1996) echoed Hargreaves contention and illustrated that politics profoundly influence sports nationalism. He examined cases of football in Scotland, the Republic of Ireland, and Sweden. In Scotland, Scottish identity was emphasised against England, while British identity was highlighted against other nations (Bairner, 1996). When a sport is titled as the “national sport”, it can more effectively evoke public emotion and reinforce national identity. Although Gaelic games symbolised resistance against British colonisation in Ireland, football remains the most popular sport and plays a strategic role in Irish sports nationalism. The growing presence of British players and coaches has compelled the Irish to reassert their national identity in football (Bairner, 1996). In Sweden, football’s popularity has grown due to immigration, but it has not been the primary driver of national identity. Instead, hosting international sports events has played the most significant role in fostering Swedish national

identity. This is because, compared to Scotland and Ireland, nationalist issues are less central in Swedish politics, as noted by Bairner (1996).

2.3.1 Sport and imagined community

According to Allison (2005), sport being exploited by political power for its ends is a universal phenomenon. The authorities control the interpretation of nationalism to consolidate their power, as suggested by Anderson (1983). Several studies show that sports landscapes, watching and/ or hosting of international games, and sports news stories have played a crucial role in producing the meanings of nationalism to integrate individuals into a national group (e.g. Bairner, 1996, 2009; Bruce, 2013; Bruce & Wensing, 2012; Chiang & Chen, 2013; Cosgrove & Bruce, 2005; Hargreaves, 1986; Jackson & Hokowhitu, 2002; J. W. Lee & Bairner, 2009; N. Lee, Jackson, & Lee, 2007; Lutan, 2005).

Organising sports events serves as a means to (re)interpret nationalism (Bairner, 1996). For example, the Indonesian government leveraged the 1962 Asian Games to stir up nationalist sentiment to consolidate their authority. By holding the event, national self-confidence and national identity was boosted to demonstrate their equal status with their former colonial rulers, the Dutch. Additionally, Indonesia sought to downplay domestic economic issues and created a new international order under the Cold War system, shifting its diplomatic orientation from the Soviet Union to the United States (Lutan, 2005). Another case is New Zealand. The country hosted its second Rugby World Cup (RWC) in 2011. According to Bruce (2013), overwhelming news coverage intertwined the All Blacks, rugby, and national identity, shaping sports nationalist narratives and stirring nationalist sentiment across the country. This influence extended even to New Zealanders uninterested in rugby. In this context, non-rugby-related discussions were marginalised within the mainstream nationalist discourse (Bruce, 2013). In short, individuals were both actively and passively

integrated into the same community through sports news stories, sharing nationalist sentiment with others they had never met.

Moving the attention back to East Asia, where Taiwan is located, the South Korean government leveraged the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics to improve its national prestige, especially in the Global North (J. W. Lee, 2016). In addition to strengthening national identity through sports, South Korea also integrated sports mega-events with its cultural industry to gain recognition as an emerging cultural power and strive for a position as a core nation (J. W. Lee, 2016). Additionally, another East Asian country, Japan—the first developed country in the region—exhibits a form of nationalism that differs from that of other post-colonial Asian countries. It does not seek to assert itself as a strong nation, but rather emphasises the diverse values of contemporary Japan. Kobayashi, Horne, and Lee (2023) analysed the societal impact of Japan hosting the 2019 Rugby World Cup. They illustrated that the Rugby World Cup drove the national imagination of Japan from a mono-ethnic nation to embracing diversity of values. During the tournament, the respect demonstrated by foreign athletes and fans toward Japanese culture contributed to strengthening Japan’s national pride. In addition, while the multicultural composition of the Japanese national team embodied Japan’s nationalist narratives and its aspiration for “internationalisation”, the media continues to scrutinise naturalised athletes to assess their “qualifications”, such as fluency in the Japanese language, cultural familiarity, and loyalty to Japan, for belonging to the Japanese community (Kobayashi et al., 2023).

Sports celebrities and their achievements can be understood as foundational elements in the process of nation-building (D. Andrews & Jackson, 2001). Building on this perspective, they also operate as cultural icons through which national identities are formed and reaffirmed (L. L. Wong & Trumper, 2002). As one specific example, consider the case of South and North Korea—the South Korean media leveraged the broadcasting of the 2004

Athens Olympics to portray the achievements of athletes from both sides as a source of national pride for the Korean people. Sports achievements became a narrative thread connecting the two Koreas, with the accomplishments of Lee Won-hee, a South Korean gold medallist in men's judo, and Kye Sun-hui, a North Korean silver medallist in women's judo, overshadowing the reality of military tensions between North and South Korea. This depiction fostered an imagined unified Korean community on the Korean Peninsula (J. W. Lee & Maguire, 2011). Thus, "Asian sport celebrities exemplify the process of globalisation, or indigenisation, of sport as a global practice as they simultaneously embody and signify their associated national or local culture, identity, and values" (Kobayashi & Cho, 2019, p. 614).

2.3.2 Sport and invented tradition

Sport played a vital role in the process of inventing new traditions. According to, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), the invented tradition has to be based on the existing phenomenon. For example, according to Jackson and Hokowhitu (2002), the Haka evolved from a Māori ceremonial challenge into a New Zealand national symbol, which was subsequently leveraged by a range of interest groups, including corporate sponsors such as Adidas through their global advertising campaigns. Nowadays, many New Zealand sports teams perform the Haka before games, as it has been reinterpreted as a traditional New Zealand sports ritual to underscore the New Zealand identity.

The sport-related invented tradition was often used to embody the political ideology that the government needs. J. W. Lee and Bairner (2009) analysed how the People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) exploited taekwondo—a martial art originally from Korea—and mass gymnastics to create a new nationalist narrative for its political ends. J. W. Lee and Bairner (2009, p. 402) state that North Korea considered "taekwondo is an ideological

sporting practice and underpinned the notion of Chosun minjok cheil jui—Korea is best nationalism”. Further, the North Korean government employed mass gymnastics performances to present its national history. Through these events, both performers and audiences received nationalist messages, which aligned with the ideology and political idolatry of the Workers' Party of Korea (J. W. Lee & Bairner, 2009).

Sport is often exploited to invent or maintain nationalist narratives, thereby consolidating their status. According to Cosgrove and Bruce (2005) and Bruce and Wensing (2012), in the news coverage of Australia and New Zealand, indigenous peoples were often excluded from the national imagination. Cosgrove and Bruce (2005) analysed the news surrounding the death of Sir Peter Blake, a New Zealand yachtsman who led the country to consecutive victories in the America’s Cup. Their study argued that these news reports connected sport with masculinity and whiteness, to reinterpret the sports nationalism that served the needs of the elites. Further, Bruce and Wensing (2012) suggested that Australian news coverage of Olympic champion Cathy Freeman, who won the women’s 400 metres at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, downplayed her Aboriginal identity. They argued that this approach was an attempt by elites to preserve Australia’s traditional national imagination as a white nation (Bruce & Wensing, 2012).

2.3.3 Sport and banal nationalism

The government and elites exploited sport creating a national environment (Billig, 1995) in everyday life through hosting, participating in, watching games and sports landscapes. Bairner (2009) suggested that individuals unknowingly connected with nationalism and consolidated national identity after visiting the sports landscapes.

Banal nationalism is embodied in the routine watching of sports events. Radio and television are the most important mechanism for forging a national identity in the

contemporary age, in which “media sport” offers the audience an opportunity to “identify” the nation in sports games (Hargreaves, 1986, p. 154). For example, the Canadian government exploited ice hockey, which was considered the national sport of Canada, for strengthening its national identity. According to T.-H. Chen (2008), although the number of American teams was more than the Canadian teams (24 vs. 7), the Canadian government still spent extraordinary sums of money to obtain National Hockey League broadcasting rights and routinely broadcast on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the public broadcaster of Canada. Another example is the South Korean media’s response to Guus Hiddink, the first non-Korean coach of its national football team from 2001 to 2002. Under his leadership, the team achieved its best-ever result, finishing fourth in the FIFA World Cup in 2002. According to N. Lee et al. (2007), widely reporting on Hiddink’s coaching philosophy drove changes in South Korean nationalism, prompting reflection on Confucian values, corrupt practices, and rigid social hierarchies.

Banal nationalism is also embodied in sports marketing. In New Zealand, Adidas has built a connection between its brand and national identity through its sponsorship of the All Blacks and advertising. Its marketing strategy serves as a means of reproducing nationalism, making Adidas and the All Blacks part of New Zealanders’ everyday lives through sports nationalism (Scherer & Jackson, 2007). In the case of Japan, Nike reinterpreted Japanese student sports culture by incorporating the core values of “bukatsu” (部活/ club activities), such as discipline and teamwork, into its brand identity. Thus, Japaneseness was embedded within student sports activities. It made the connection between sports and national identity pervasive in everyday life, gradually internalizing these associations through consumers’ engagement with the brand (Kobayashi, 2012). In Canada, local brewery Molson integrated Canadian national identity into its marketing through the advertising slogan “I Am Canadian”, embedding national symbols such as ice hockey, masculinity, and patriotism into

everyday life. This strategy naturalised Canadianness as an ordinary experience, reinforcing national identity through routine consumption (Jackson, 2014).

Taiwan, as a case of focus for this thesis, also has its style of nationalism, and sports nationalism. Therefore, the next chapter will discuss the links between nationalism, sports, national identity, and history in Taiwan.

Chapter 3

Taiwan's history and nationalistic journey

This chapter reviews the origin and development of nationalism and national identity in Taiwan and clarifies its implication for this research. The development of nationalism and national identity was affected strongly by the historical and social environment. According to Greenfeld (1992) and Smith (2001), nationalism is a global phenomenon that is spread along with modernisation and adapted to local circumstances. The development of nationalism and national identity in Taiwan was also adapted to Taiwan's social environment.

According to M.-K. Chang (1993), most nationalism or national identity studies in Taiwan focus on its context of post-war history, especially the experience of successful democratisation and ethnic groups relations. Other perspectives consider that the development of Taiwanese nationalism and national identity were based on the experience of resisting oppression. According to Tung (2013), academic terms, such as colonial rule, the ethnic complex, and cross-strait opposition, illustrate that the research of Taiwan's nationalism should be understood under the modern historical narrative, which is democracy and freedom versus authoritarianism and communism.

According to Chun-Chieh Huang (2000), the development of Taiwanese consciousness is a significant phenomenon with a clear historical evolution in Taiwanese thought. Before Japanese colonisation in 1895, collective consciousness in Taiwan was primarily defined by ethnic identities, such as Hoklo and Hakka. However, Japanese rule, as an alien regime, played a crucial role in transforming this ethnic awareness into a broader sense of national identity. Tung (2013) and Y. Li and Zhang (2017) identified three stages in the development of Taiwanese identity: (1) 1895–1945—resistance against Japanese colonisation, (2) 1945–

1996—opposition to the Kuomintang (KMT) dictatorship, and (3) post-1996—defiance against political intimidation from China.

Social, cultural, and political landscapes inevitably influence the development of sports nationalism. Thus Chiang (2015) suggested that the development of sport can be divided into three further stages during the ROC ruling period: 1. 1945 to 1972- sport as a medium for national salvation and retaking of Mainland China; 2. 1973 to 2003- sport as a tool for national solidarity under diplomatic defeat; and, 3. 2004 to present- the change of the sports narrative with the shifting of national identity.

Taiwan has experienced successive foreign regimes since the seventeenth century. The first wave of colonial expansion came from the West, with the Dutch (1624–1661) and Spanish (1626–1642), introducing Taiwan to the global stage. The second wave saw the expansion of Eastern imperialists, including the Kingdom of Tungning (1661–1683) and the Ch’ing Empire (1683–1894), which led to significant Han migration, the Sinoisation of Indigenous peoples, and Taiwan’s integration into the Sinosphere. The third wave, Japan as a new imperialist power defeated the Ch’ing Empire in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and took over Taiwan (1895–1945) and brought Japanisation and modernisation. In 1945, the Republic of China (ROC) under the KMT, as a victor of World War II, took control of Taiwan. However, after losing the Chinese Civil War, the ROC government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, imposing authoritarian rule and implementing a re-Sinoisation policy (1945–1996). Taiwan’s first direct presidential election in 1996 marked the first time its residents could choose their leaders. Throughout history, Taiwan has functioned as a periphery to various empires, with its identity shaped and reshaped by external regimes (M.-C. Tsai et al., 2010), providing a foundation for analysing nationalism in contemporary Taiwan.

Thus, the development of nationalism in Taiwan can be analysed through Wallerstein's (1987) core-periphery framework, where the core—represented by Japanese rule and later the KMT's Chinese identity—stood in contrast to the periphery of Taiwanese identity. Nationalism in Taiwan emerged through the competition between these forces, particularly when both the Japanese government and the KMT functioned as dominant (core) powers.

3.1 The Japanese era: from 1895 to 1945

3.1.1 The origins of Taiwanese nationalism: Japanisation and resistance

The emergence of Taiwanese nationalism stemmed from social movements advocating anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. In 1895, the people of Taiwan faced another alien power. Japan as a foreign power with a different culture and language enjoyed privileges in the politics and economy in colonial Taiwan. In the early days of Japanese rule, the residents of Taiwan launched a series of armed anti-Japanese movements, such as the Republic of Formosa (1895), the Beipu Incident⁸ (1907), and the Tapani Incident⁹ (1915). Following several large-scale military crackdowns, Taiwan came fully under Japanese control, leaving no hope for armed resistance. Cultural resistance thus became the primary form of opposition (T.-L. Chen, 2013; C.-F. Shih, 2015). As the embodiment of culture, sports inevitably become a tool of resistance and assimilation.

After 1918, the anti-Japanese movements transformed from physical into non-violent movements. From 1918 to the mid-1930s was the most vigorous era of cultural struggle, and

⁸ An armed conflict occurred in Beipu and nearby areas. Because the local Hakkas and indigenous peoples (Saisiyat peoples) were under high-pressure rule, they jointly attacked the Beipu subprefecture (支庁), resulting in the death of 57 people. In the end, 106 people were sentenced, nine of whom were sentenced to death (M.-C. Chao, Chao, & Chao, 2002).

⁹ A religious-based armed anti-Japanese uprisings originated from the unfair tax system and the brutal and high-pressure police rule. The battlefield of this incident spanned southern Taiwan from early July to the end of August 1915. In the end, about 3000 people were killed including the ordinary people who lived in the incident place and nearby villages and combatants who were arrested and sentenced to death (Dai, 2015).

Taiwanese consciousness also developed in this period. A series of social movements and organisations occurred throughout this period. According to Wakabayashi (1992/1994), after 1920, Taiwanese intellectuals who received a modern education started a national movement against Japanese colonisation. This movement brought two changes. Firstly, Han-Taiwanese developed a sense of collective identity because they shared the same experience of being exploited by the Japanese government. Secondly, this sense of collective identity was politicised through the anti-Japanese national movement, thereby producing Taiwanese identity (Wakabayashi, 1992/1994). For example, Chhòa Pôe-Hóe, the editor and publisher of magazine *Tâi-oân Chheng-liân* (臺灣青年), presented that “Taiwan belongs to the Taiwanese people”, which subsequently became the central ideology of the Taiwanese nationalist movement (I.-L. Ho, 2021). Further, the institutional discrimination by the Japanese towards Taiwanese, such as the inequality of fundamental rights, resulted in the development of Taiwanese nationalism (T.-L. Chen, 2013; C.-F. Shih, 2015). For example, in 1920, in Tokyo, the New People Association (新民会), which was formed by Taiwanese students, Tshuà Sik-Kok, Lâm Tîng-Lòk and Ngô Sam-Liân, led a movement for repealing Law 63¹⁰ (六三法)—the law empowering the Governor to possess executive, legislative, judicial and military powers—and pushing for the establishment of a Taiwanese Parliament.

With the enforcement of Law 31¹¹ (三一法) in 1906—which mandated that ordinances formulated by the Governor could not violate the Japanese Constitution—and Law 3¹² (法三號) in 1921—which further weakened the Governor’s legislative power by stipulating that ordinances could only be applied when no suitable law existed in Mainland Japan or when existing laws were unfit for Taiwan’s special circumstances—the Governor’s authority

¹⁰ 臺灣ニ施行スヘキ法令ニ關スル法律 明治 29 年法律第 63 號.

¹¹ 臺灣ニ施行スヘキ法令ニ關スル法律 明治 39 年法律第 31 號.

¹² 臺灣ニ施行スヘキ法令ニ關スル法律 大正 10 年法律第 3 號.

diminished, and Japanese laws were increasingly applied in Taiwan, leading to a shift from differentiation policies to assimilation policies.

During the era of assimilation policy, nationalism in Taiwan stemmed primarily from separatist sentiments that blended Taiwanese and Chinese identities. Taiwanese elites, dissatisfied with the assimilation policy, were inspired by the March First Movement in Korea—also known as the Samil Independence Movement—a series of nationwide demonstrations for Korean independence from Japan that began on March 1, 1919, in Seoul and soon spread across the country (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). They were also influenced by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, a statement of principles for peace presented at the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, particularly the fifth point:

A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined (Wilson, 1918).

Therefore, in 1921, Lâm Hiàn-Tông, Tsiúnn Ūi-Súi and other Taiwanese elites established the Taiwan Cultural Association (臺灣文化協會). The organisation aimed to bring together intellectuals from across Taiwan to convey progressive ideas and values, while also advocating for a collective Taiwanese consciousness and ideology (P.-W. Lin, 1993). In 1927, because of disagreement between the left and right of the political spectrum, the Taiwan Cultural Association split into several organisations, such as the right-wing Taiwanese People’s Party (臺灣民眾黨), and the left-wing New Taiwan Cultural Association (新臺灣文化協會). The New Taiwan Cultural Association advocated that Taiwan should be independent of its colonial status, it was the first time that Taiwan had a thought of

independent nation-building (Wakabayashi, 1992/ 1992/1994). However, in the mid-1930s, the policy of Japanisation was implemented to meet the needs of war (T.-L. Chen, 2008). Thus, these organisations and cultural movements were prohibited because the Japanese government considered them to be separatist movements (Ching, 2001).

Anderson's (1983) perspective that the emergence of a nation is rooted in cultural transformation and the rise of print capitalism is evident in Taiwanese history. Following the failure of armed resistance against Japan, the cultural sphere became a crucial arena for forging Taiwanese consciousness and identity. This was reflected in publications such as the magazine *Tâi-oân Chheng-liân* (臺灣青年) and the newspaper *Tâi-oân Bîn-pò* (臺灣民報) (Chuang, 2016; S.-B. Su, 2011). According to M.-K. Chen (2005), during the Japanese colonial era, Taiwanese elites resisted Japanisation and reinforced Taiwanese consciousness through Taiwan-based writing, such as narrating Taiwan's stories and reporting news from a Taiwanese perspective. As Ng Sik-Hu (1930) suggested, the development of literary culture in Taiwan had to adapt to the realities of life in Taiwan and construct an independent cultural identity (as cited in M.-K. Chen, 2005).

3.1.2 Sports nationalism in Taiwan's Japanese era: a tool of assimilation and resistance

Sport, initially introduced by the Japanese as an assimilation vehicle, later became a tool of resistance within colonial Taiwan's social structure, fostering an identity distinct from that imposed by the Japanese authorities. Both the Japanese and Taiwanese employed sport to shape their respective national identities. Nationalism and sport as the product of modernisation were introduced into Taiwan along with spreading of colonialism and imperialism during the Japanese colonial period. For the coloniser and the colonised, sport represented different implications. According to C.-Y. Lin and Lee (2007) and S. Wang (2009), sport simultaneously plays the role of assimilation and opposition.

The development of sport and physical education in colonial Taiwan was closely aligned with the governing authority's policies. Since the nineteenth century, the modern sports culture had spread along with imperialism and colonialism (Maguire, Jarvie, Bradley, & Mansfield, 2002). The western style sports as a by-product were exported from core to peripheral countries via education, immigration, and religious missions. Modern sport was introduced to Taiwan through colonialism, developing alongside the establishment of a modern education system during the Japanese colonial period. In 1899, the Japanese government implemented the Primary School Law, incorporating modern sport and physical education into the official curriculum. This aimed to prepare Taiwanese students for the modern world while fostering loyalty to the Japanese Empire (Chiang, 2015; C.-C. Tang, 2009; Tsurumi, 1977/2013). J.-S. Tsai (1994) supplemented Tsurumi's view. He contended that with the development of the modern educational system, modern sports became part of the understanding of the Taiwanese people. Sport also was a vehicle for different purposes in different eras—from posture correction in early Japanese rule to physical exercise for military purposes during the Second World War (J.-S. Tsai, 1994).

Taiwanese people also adopted sport to express their nationalism. Success on the sports field was considered as a victory over colonial rule. For instance, Initially, baseball was considered as a strange activity with waving a stick and meaninglessly chasing a ball (S.-Y. H. Hsieh, Chia-Fen, 2003). However, as baseball developed in Taiwan, it became not only a unifying symbol to awaken Taiwanese national identity but also a means to challenge Japanese dominance (C.-M. Chung, 2006). For example, in 1924, the Noko Baseball Team, composed of indigenous teenagers from Karenkō (Hualien), travelled to western Taiwan to compete against local teams in Kīrun (Keelung), Taihoku (Taipei), Shinchiku (Hsinchu), Taichū (Taichung), Tainan (Tainan), Takao (Kaohsiung), and Heitō (Pingtung). Despite three losses in Taihoku and one in Tainan, they won the remaining five games (Che-Min Chang, 2014). The

following year, they were invited to Japan to face teams in Tokyo, Yokohama, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, and Hiroshima, finishing with six wins, two losses, and one draw (Che-Min Chang, 2014). This demonstrated that Taiwan's indigenous athletes could compete with their Japanese counterparts on the baseball field (Morris, 2004). Thus, Noko's achievement was exploited as a symbol of resistance to Japan (C.-M. Chung, 2006).

3.2 The KMT's authoritarian rule: from 1945 to 1990s

3.2.1 Chinese nationalism and resistance

In 1945, Japan lost the Second World War, and according to the General Order No. 1, Formosa (Taiwan) surrendered to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek (Office of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, 1945). Therefore, due to the Order, the ruling power of Taiwan was transferred from Japan to the ROC. For Taiwanese residents, after Japan, they faced a new alien regime, the KMT-led ROC government (Y.-T. Su, 2016).

Before the KMT administration, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, lost the civil war to Mao Zedong and relocated the ROC central government to Taiwan in 1949, its misgovernance had already provoked widespread public discontent on the island. In September of 1945, Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office (臺灣省行政長官公署) was established in Taipei, Chen Yi held the position of Chief Executive. This position held combined executive, legislative, judicial, and military authority. Thus, the office was considered as a new Government-General (Tzu, 1991) or a military junta (Y.-T. Su, 2009). This political situation led to disappointment with the KMT government among the Taiwanese people, who hoped to be freed from colonial rule and enjoy the rights of normal citizenship.

In 1947, the occurrence of the 228 Incident, also known as the February 28 Massacre, took place in response to widespread grievances against the KMT regime that had been growing since 1945. From February 28 to mid-May, the KMT carried out a massacre of

Taiwanese people, including intellectuals, local elites, political dissidents, and ordinary citizens. The cause of the incident was that on February 27, 1947, Taiwan Tobacco and Wine Monopoly Bureau inspectors deployed excessive use of force which resulted in injury to a cigarette dealer, Lin Chiang-Mai, and the death of a passer-by. The next day, citizens of Taipei protested outside of the Taiwan Provincial Executive Office. The office's guards shot at the protesters without warning, resulting in multiple deaths and sparking public outrage. Thus, the office enforced martial law in Taipei. In the next few days, the situation in Taipei was broadcast to all of Taiwan, leading to anti-government demonstrations throughout Taiwan. On March 13, the martial law was extended to the entire Taiwan. On May 16 the KMT lifted martial law and terminated mopping-up operation. The number of deaths and missing persons resulting from the incident remains a subject of debate, with estimates ranging from hundreds to hundreds of thousands (Lai 1994). According to the latest research report from Memorial Foundation of 228, a semi-official foundation, the figures are estimated to range between 8,324 and 11,841, accounting for approximately 1.5‰ to 2.15‰ of the population at the time (Y.-S. Chen & Hsueh, 2021).

The attribution of the incident was very complicated, involving political, economic, cultural and social factors (Executive Yuan, 1992).¹³ The following five points summarise these factors:

1. Taiwanese lacked understanding of China's political system and social conditions.
2. Inherited Japanese colonial rule system—Similar to Japanese colonial rule, the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office possessed executive, legislative, judicial, and military powers, making it difficult for Taiwanese people to attain fair positions in administration, professional fields, and technology (Executive Yuan,

¹³ The top executive branch of the ROC

1992).

3. Poor civil service and military discipline.

4. The extremely unfair political participation and treatment.

5. Economic distress, inflation, and severe unemployment (Executive Yuan, 1992).

The incident was a cornerstone to create and propagate the legitimization of Taiwanese identity and the pursuit of the Taiwanese nation (Fleischauer, 2007). On the contrary, it also served as a tool for the consolidation of the KMT's power in Taiwan for its following authoritarian rule, because the suppression and killing of Taiwanese resulted in widespread political disengagement among residents (F. Chen, 2015). Further, this incident highlighted the conflict between Chinese-mainlanders (the ruling class) and Taiwanese (the grassroots class), which later became a source of ethnic tensions in contemporary Taiwanese society (C.-L. Chen & Liao, 2017; Y.-S. Chen & Hsueh, 2021).

In May 1947, following the 228 Incident, the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office was restructured into the Taiwan Provincial Government, which no longer held legislative, judicial, and military authority. However, as the civil war intensified, the ROC government, in 1948, passed the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion which provided the legal foundation for the KMT's authoritarian rule. In 1949, the KMT, then the ruling party of China, lost the civil war to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and retreated to Taiwan. Martial law was subsequently imposed across Taiwan until 1987, with Kinmen and Matsu remaining under martial law until 1992. One notable battle in the civil war was the Battle of Kuningtou from 25 to 27 October 1949 in Kinmen, where the KMT successfully repelled the CCP, allowing the ROC to retain control over the outlying islands of Kinmen and Matsu. In October 1949, the CCP established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing. Despite this, the ROC government in Taipei continued to

assert itself as the sole legitimate government of China, viewing the CCP and the PRC as rebel entities.

During the period of Martial Law, the KMT government implemented authoritarianism and restrictions on the freedom of publishing, of speech, of assembly, and political rights. Further, through the party-state system, the KMT exercised complete control over Taiwan's political and economic structures. One of the key governing bodies that intensified authoritarian rule was the Taiwan Garrison Command, an organisation that combined military, police, and secret service authorities. It carried out widespread surveillance, arrests, and persecution to consolidate power and suppress dissent—a period now known as the White Terror—which resulted in at least 3,000 to 4,000 executions and at least 140,000 imprisonments (Kun-Hung, 2007). According to Hechter (1975), internal colonialism refers to the central government applying a colonial ruling system to peripheral domestic regions. Taiwan's internal colonialism was embodied through ethnic boundaries at the time. As a result, the arrival of the KMT subjected the Taiwanese people to a new form of colonial rule (F.-M. Chen, 1999).

The KMT used the PRC's threat to consolidate its legitimacy and Chineseness. During 1954-55, the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, which involved conflicts between the ROC and the PRC, erupted when the PRC army captured Yijiangshan Island and Dachen Island off the coast of Chekiang Province. This marked the last time the ROC lost territory and solidified the current territorial scope of the ROC, including Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu. In 1958, during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, there was a series of battles in the Kinmen islands. These were the final large-scale battles between the KMT and the CCP after the KMT retreated to Taiwan. The KMT administration faced the external threat of force from the PRC and internally consolidated its leadership by monopolising the concept of Chineseness. In response to the KMT's totalitarian rule, Taiwanese elites adopted "Taiwan" as a political

symbol to unite Taiwanese society. Wakabayashi (1992/1994) drew on Wallerstein's (1987) perspective that, under conditions of uneven resource distribution, minority groups (such as the Taiwanese people) seek to compete with dominant groups (such as the KMT) by redefining or constructing new forms of nationalism. He illustrated that, in the context of colonial rule, the Taiwanese people adopted nationalism—positioning Taiwan as a national icon—rather than class ideology as a means of resisting the KMT. First, the KMT monopolised the political meanings of “China” and “Chinese”; second, left-wing ideology was entirely suppressed due to fears of the CCP (Wakabayashi, 1992/1994). These ruling measures effectively downplayed the relevance and impact of social class in Taiwanese society. Within this context, Taiwanese-related symbols became the primary tool for Taiwanese elites to cultivate a sense of Taiwanese consciousness and unify the island's population (Wakabayashi, 1992/1994). C.-C. Tang (2013) echoed the perspectives of Wakabayashi and Wang, suggesting that Chinese nationalism was a crucial tool employed by the ROC government to integrate Taiwanese with Mainlanders and legitimise its rule. Therefore, Taiwanese nationalism was employed as a tool to resist the ruling authority's ideology and unfair governance. C.-F. Shih (2015, p. 17) suggested that “the real reason that made Taiwanese determined to get rid of China was the immigration of the KMT regime after the Second World War”.

Since the 1970s, due to diplomatic setbacks, such as withdrawal from the United Nations (UN), the KMT's China-centric narrative has been under increasing scrutiny. In 1971, the PRC replaced the ROC as the representative of China in the United Nations. The United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 2758 and recognised that “the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations and that the People's Republic of China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council” (United Nations, 1971). Thus, the KMT's claim

that the ROC was the only legal Chinese government was defeated. Chiang Kai-Shek, President of the ROC from 1950 until his death in 1975, was succeeded by his son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, who became president in 1978. Chiang Ching-Kuo initiated political cooperation with Taiwanese elites during his leadership. For instance, Lee Teng-Hui, the first locally born president who served from 1988 to 2000, was initially brought into the cabinet by Chiang Ching-Kuo. Against this backdrop, the KMT's authoritarian rule began to wane, and its Chinese nationalist narratives increasingly faced challenges. For example, in the 1979 Kaohsiung Incident the opposition organised a march to promote and demand for human rights and democracy, but the authorities violently suppressed it and alleged its connection to the Taiwanese independence movement (Y.-S. Chen, 2004). This led to a series of arrests and trials, making it the most significant civil-government conflict since the 228 Incident. Many core members and defence lawyers involved in the incident later became founding members of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and held key government positions after democratisation, including future president Chen Shui-Bian and Premier Hsieh Chang-Ting.

Furthermore, Chinese nationalism and cultural control under the KMT were critically reflected upon by Taiwanese elites. For example, in 1977, Yeh Shih-Tao published "An Introduction to the History of Taiwanese Nativist Literature" in *Summer Tide Magazine* (夏潮雜誌), elucidating the historical origins and characteristics of Taiwanese nativist literature. He stated that Taiwanese literatures must connect to and reflect the life of people in Taiwan (as cited in Hsiau, 1999). The same year, the magazine featured articles by Yang Ching-Chu, Wang Tuo, and Huang Chun-Ming, discussing contemporary Taiwan nativist literature. According to Hsiau (1999), the development of nativist literature in the 1970s is the starting point for the culture in Taiwan that transformed from Chinese-centric narratives, such as anti-communist literature and nostalgic literature, into the Taiwanese-centric narratives. The

development of local literature embodied the transformation of ideology from Chineseness to Taiwanese-ness in Taiwanese society. The development of Taiwanese literature cultivated Taiwanese national identity, counteracting the Chinese national identity promoted by the KMT (Hsiau, 2012). Therefore, the 1970s is referred to as “the era of returning to reality” (Hsiau, 1999, 2010). During this period, a political discourse emerged emphasising freedom, democracy, and the recognition of Taiwan as an independent political entity. Culturally, attention turned to explore Taiwanese literature, the reconstruction of political and social movement histories from the Japanese colonial period, and the development of contemporary local literature, which together laid the groundwork for the significant rise of Taiwanese nationalist narratives after the 1980s (Hsiau, 2010).

M.-K. Chang (1993), C.-F. Shih (1998) and F.-C. Wang (2003) contend that because the KMT—whose leadership was dominated by Taiwanese-mainlander—monopolised political, economic, and cultural spheres, the ethnic inequalities were highlighted in the processes of Taiwanese nationalism and national identity construction after the Second World War. The reinterpretation of the 228 Incident was a significant example. The incident represented the shared oppressed history of the Taiwanese and was exploited by Taiwanese elites (periphery-elites) to create Taiwanese national identity. When analysing post-war Taiwanese nationalism, the 228 Incident is generally considered to be a key factor. Numerous studies contend that the 228 Incident has been developed as a starting point of a tragic national myth for pulling the Taiwanese into an imagined community with ethnic boundaries (M.-K. Chang, 2003; C.-L. Chen, 2007; C.-L. Chen & Liao, 2017; T.-L. Chen, 2002; Fleischauer, 2007; Lynch, 2002; Y.-H. Yang, 2013).

According to Wakabayashi (1992/1994, 2008/2016), the KMT continued the Japanese governance framework, thereby reproducing the institutional inequality against Taiwanese. The new colonial system, political oppression and conflict between the government and the

public strengthened the profile of Taiwanese identity. Thus, the emergence of Taiwan's independent movement was a response to the inequality in Taiwanese society resulting from the KMT's oppression (M.-K. Chang, 1993). M.-K. Chang (1993) further proposed that the independent movement aimed to create a new identity, Taiwanese national identity, to minimise the disagreement among Hoklo, Hakka and indigenous peoples to fight against the KMT's governance and Chinese national identity. From 1945 to 1987, the primary tenet of Taiwanese nationalism was defined by its position against the ROC and the KMT regime.

3.2.2 Sports nationalism in Taiwan's authoritarian era: a tool of Sinicisation and diplomacy

The KMT government had the same attitude towards sports as the Japanese government. Both considered sport as a body training tool for achieving military and political purposes. In addition, the KMT viewed physical education as part of the military policy. For example, in 1950 the Ministry of Education announced the "Implementation Outline of Education for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion and the Nation-Building" which directed that school physical education/ sport served the strategy of retaking Mainland China and for national defence (Y.-M. Hsu & Hsu, 2009; Z.-Y. Liu, 2006). Sport was exploited as a cultural tool to increase the sense of Chineseness by the KMT. The administration promoted Chinese/ nation consciousness through creating a new tradition and invested large sums of money into sporting activities and facilities (Bairner & Hwang, 2010). For example, during the second Taiwan Provincial Games in 1947, the Games' flame was lit at the shrine of Koxinga, the first Han ruler whom the KMT considered a national hero. However, Koxinga was of Sino-Japanese mixed heritage, a fact deliberately ignored by the KMT. The flame was then relayed across Taiwan. Additionally, sports competitions and infrastructure were developed under the name Chung Cheng (Chiang Kai-Shek).

On the other hand, sport was exploited for diplomatic rivalry by the KMT while the Olympics became a battlefield for the ROC to defend its Chineseness. The ROC and the PRC both claimed themselves as the only Chinese government worldwide, which led to the one China issue. The ROC government repeatedly refused to participate in and protested at the Olympic Games due to its inability to represent China (H.-J. Chiu et al., 2021; C.-P. Liu, 1997; C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993a, 1994; H.-Y. Liu, 2007; Nagel, 1994). In the 1952 Helsinki Olympics Games, the ROC was absent due to the one-China issue. In the 1960 Rome Olympics, the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, the ROC delegation protested against competing under the name Taiwan. Despite this, achievements at the Olympics were exploited as a vehicle for national solidarity. For example, the stories of Maysang Kalimud,¹⁴ who won the decathlon silver medal at the 1960 Rome Olympics—the first Olympic medal for Taiwan, and Chi Cheng, who won the 80-metre hurdles bronze medal at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics—the first female athlete from Taiwan to win an Olympic medal, were both exploited for nation-building (Chiang, 2015). For example, Teng Chuan-Kai, then Chairman of the Chinese National Olympic Committee, and Maysang Kalimud issued a statement expressing their hope that the International Olympic Committee would rectify its decision, which required the ROC to compete under the name “Formosa” (*China Times*, 1960). Another example can be found in the KMT’s official newspaper, *Central Daily News*, which reported, “Chi Cheng brought glory to the nation at the Olympic Games... China’s athletes could compete with athletes from around the world and achieve victory” (*Central Daily News*, 1968, p. 6).

In the 1972 Munich Olympics, the ROC got its way adopting China as its name at the event. However, in the 1976 Montreal Olympics and the 1980 Moscow Olympics they were absent due to the PRC’s participation. Although the ROC experienced significant setbacks in

¹⁴ He is a Taiwanese indigenous person, and his Han name is Yang Chuan-Kwang (楊傳廣).

its sports diplomacy and nationalist performativity at the Olympic Games during the 1970s, its sustained dominance in the Little League, Junior League, and Senior League—divisions organised under the LLB—from 1968 to the early 1980s offered an alternative platform for articulating and reiterating its Chinese national identity. During this period, youth baseball functioned as a key medium through which the KMT projected its political ideology and sought to legitimise its claim as the true representative of China. As C.-C. Ni (2009) and S.-Y. Hsieh (2017), these victories were instrumentalised by the KMT to assert the superiority of its governance over that of the CCP. In 1981, the Lausanne Agreement was reached—an agreement between the International Olympic Committee and the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee, which led to the adoption of the name “Chinese Taipei” and marked the conclusion of the one-China issue in the realm of international sports events (Sports Administration (Taiwan), 2017). Taiwan's participation in international sports events gradually resumed, while the KMT-led sports nation-building efforts faded from public view.

In this period, sport was used to carry out different nationalist missions from physical training, uniting the nation to pursuing self-identity. This aligns with Hargreaves (1992) and Bairner's (2001) argument that sports nationalism is usually associated with official nationalism, which is often employed by authorities to reinforce national identity in accordance with their political ideology. By articulating sport and symbolism, the KMT aimed to instil their political ideology into the public (Bairner & Hwang, 2010). Further, acts of absence and protest at the Olympic Games exemplified Taiwan's longstanding institutional dilemma—its contrasting status as a nation and its exclusion from international participation (H.-L. Wang, 2001a, 2001b). Facing this challenge, the KMT administration utilised sports to consolidate its Chinese national identity and uphold its insistence on Chineseness (Chiang & Chen, 2021).

3.3 The wave of democratisation and Taiwanisation: 1987 to present

3.3.1 The transformation of national identity: from Chinese identity to Taiwanese identity

With democratisation, institutional inequalities have been gradually broken down, and Taiwan's territory and citizenship have been reaffirmed with each election. In 1987, the Chiang Ching-Kuo administration lifted Martial Law, marking the beginning of Taiwan's democratisation process (F.-C. Wang, 2004). The next year, President Chiang Ching-Kuo died, Lee Teng-Hui, the first Taiwanese and directly elected president, took over the position and won re-election in 1990 in the National Assembly's indirect election. Lee revoked Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Communist Rebellion in 1991, which meant the end of the state of civil war with the PRC. With the revocation of the provisions, in the same year, the First National Assembly, composed primarily of representatives elected in China in 1947, was dissolved and elections were held for the Second National Assembly, with the main representatives elected by the people of Taiwan. Another central-level legislative body, the Legislative Yuan, with its lawmakers elected in China, was also dissolved and new elections were held in 1992 for Taiwanese citizens.

In 1995, at the Olin Lecture at Cornell University, Lee Teng-Hui articulated a political narrative regarding the status of the Republic of China at the time, which he termed the "Republic of China on Taiwan" in his speech titled "With the People Always in My Heart". The core ideology behind this term was that the Republic of China is a sovereign and independent country, whose territories include Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu. In his speech, he stated:

It is worth remembering what we in the Republic of China on Taiwan have had to work with in achieving all that we now have: a land area of only 14,000 square miles (slightly less than 1/3 the area of New York State) and a population of 21

million ...The people of the Republic of China on Taiwan are determined to play a peaceful and constructive role among the family of nations (T.-H. Lee, 1995).

During 1995-96, the PRC launched missiles off the coasts of Kaohsiung and Keelung and conducted a series of military exercises in response to Lee's statement, aiming to deter his re-election in 1996. This series of events became known as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. However, Lee Teng-Hui won the first direct presidential election, which marked that Taiwan had entered the consolidation of democratisation (Tien, 1997). Further, the 1996 presidential election was a milestone in Taiwan's development of nationalism and democratisation. It confirmed where the boundaries of the nation were and who its citizens were. C.-L. Lin (2001, p. 238) stated:

Lee Teng-Hui strengthened the legitimacy and indigeneity of the ROC rule through these political declarations. Meanwhile, Taiwan through the practice of democracy, delineated the boundaries and defined the connotation of the common community, thereby establishing a collective narrative that excluded the peoples residing in China.

The process of democratisation and political indigenisation in Taiwan presented a transformation from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism (C.-L. Lin, 2001). In other words, Taiwanese nationalism was no longer bound by concepts of ethnic groups or the notion of Chinese ancestry as its foundation. Instead, it attained a geographical and political identity.

The changes in domestic political structure and international norms led to the development of Taiwanese nationalism and national identity. Wakabayashi (1992/1994) asserted that the ideology of Taiwanese nationalism has emerged from the change of domestic and international political-economic structures. Domestically, with the KMT's advocacy of Chineseness declining, and internationally, with increasing political, economic,

military, and diplomatic pressure from the PRC, the “significant other” of Taiwanese identity shifted from the KMT's Chinese identity to that of the PRC. Thus, as H.-L. Wang (2000, 2002) contends contemporary Taiwanese national identity needs to be examined within a global framework. On the other hand, Lee skilfully reinterpreted Taiwanese identity and Taiwanese nationalism to maintain the existence of the KMT, an ex-authoritarian party, after democratisation. According to M.-K. Chang (2003), Lee Teng-Hui exploited the identity of Taiwan to expand its supporters to become leaders of the ROC and KMT while creating an abstract and vague rhetoric of nationalism, such as “Community of fate”, “Taiwan first”, “new Taiwanese”, and “two-State theory”. Thus, the indigenisation of the ROC and the KMT was a legitimisation process that maintained their interests and governing power (M.-K. Chang, 2003).

In 2000, a party alternation occurred when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Chen Shui-Bian won the presidential election. During the election, the DPP followed Lee Teng-Hui's perspective on Taiwan as an independent nation-state; therefore, it was unnecessary to declare independence and the Republic of China as the name of this country. He emphasised again in the 2004 national celebration ceremony: “The sovereignty of the Republic of China belongs to the 23 million people of Taiwan. The Republic of China is Taiwan, and Taiwan is the Republic of China. This is a fact that no one can deny” (S.-B. Chen, 2004b).

Democratisation drove the national identity change from Chinese to Taiwanese. With democratisation, territorial boundaries have been reaffirmed through elections, and the government's composition has gained legitimacy from the people of Taiwan. According to Horowitz (1992, p. 41), “democratisation causes the people to demand a redefinition of the political community”. Further, Wakabayashi (1992/1994), analysing the processes of democratisation and Taiwanisation, suggested that “the Taiwanisation of the ROC” resulted

in the second republic of China, and the dual process fostered a new Taiwanese national identity. Under the processes of democratisation, Taiwanese people created a new sense of community with a “new” territory (Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu) and new meanings to belong to, which distinguished “us” from “them” in constituting its own national identity (Y.-C. Lin, 2005). As mentioned by S. S. Lin (2018), nationalism and national identity can be discussed freely only in a democratic society, the democratisation process since 1987 has precisely reflected the vigorous development of Taiwanese nationalism. Thus, over the past three decades of democratisation, the term “Taiwan” has gradually been (re)invented as a new national icon (a new tradition) replacing the old traditional symbol—“China” (Chiang & Chen, 2021).

3.3.2 Sports nationalism under democratisation and Taiwanisation: seeking for recognition and consolidate self-recognition

In the era of democratisation and Taiwanisation, sports nationalist discussions in Taiwan also transformed. After democratisation, the ability of the ruling party to manipulate sports narratives has gradually weakened and the performance of sports competitions was not as impressive. Thus, the focus of sports nationalism in Taiwan shifted to sports celebrities and their achievements. In this period, Taiwanese sports nationalism presented three aspects: 1. seeking international recognition; 2. representing the collective anxiety about national identity; and 3. distinguishing themselves from China (T.-T. Chen & Wang, 2015; Chiang, 2015; Chiang & Chen, 2013, 2014; W.-C. Chiu et al., 2014; Chih-Cheng Huang, Li, Wang, & Huang, 2011; Hwang, 2019).

In 2005, Taiwan Public Television Service (PTS) broadcast games featuring Yankees pitcher Wang Chien-Ming, who played for the New York Yankees from 2005 to 2009 and was the league leader in wins in 2006. Wang Chien-Ming was employed as a strategic asset to reinforce national consciousness and seek international recognition by Chen Shui-Bian’s

administration. During the live broadcast of Wang Chien-Ming's games, both Wang and the spectators became symbols of Taiwanese nationalism, fostering a three-hour imagined community, in which the Yankees were described as the Taiwan national team (T.-H. Chen, 2008, 2012).

Jeremy Lin and Xavier Chen's stories embodied the collective anxiety about national identity of Taiwanese. Jeremy Lin was a Taiwanese American NBA player. In 2010, when Lin played for the Golden State Warriors, his Taiwanese heritage attracted media attention. In 2011, Lin joined the New York Knicks and averaged 22.5 points and 8.7 assists per game in the 12 games leading up to the All-Star Game, leading the Knicks to a 9-3 record. Due to his outstanding performance, he received frequent media exposure and portrayed as a symbol of Taiwanese nationalism despite being an American citizen (Chiang & Chen, 2014). This phenomenon was dubbed "Linsanity" (Lin + insanity). However, in 2019, after Lin joined the Beijing Shougang Ducks, media attention quickly faded.

Xavier Chen, a biracial football player of Taiwanese and French heritage, represented Taiwan's national football team from 2011 to 2017. Before acquiring Taiwanese citizenship in 2011, Chen had not resided in Taiwan long-term. In 2013, when he joined the professional football team Guizhou Renhe in China, media coverage of him quickly faded, and, due to his "domestic player classification" (as opposed to being classified as a foreign player), he was portrayed as having fallen into the PRC's "one-China trap" (T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2019). In 2015, as the Taiwan team captain, he scored a goal, leading Taiwan to its first home victory in four years, but it did not spark a public reaction.

Sports celebrities embodied the characteristics of sports nationalism (Kobayashi & Cho, 2019). Jeremy Lin and Xavier Chen revealed key characteristics of Taiwanese nationalism in sports. Reflecting the complexities of Taiwan's national anxiety, athletes were objectified as

tools of nationalism by society—celebrated as heroes when they serve a national symbolic purpose yet quickly abandoned when they develop ties to China (T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2019; Chiang, 2015; Chiang & Chen, 2013, 2014). This further embodied the key points of *the invention of tradition* that the formation of national identity relied on the reinterpretation of existing concepts (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

Based on the above literature, while previous research on Taiwanese nationalism has largely centred on political and historical developments, the influence of sports journalism and public responses to nationalist discourse on the formation of national identity have not been sufficiently explored. Although some scholars have systematically explored Taiwan's sports nationalism, their focus has been largely historical—for instance, the development of baseball during the Japanese colonial period (e.g. C.-M. Chung, 2006; S.-Y. Hsieh, 2012; S.-Y. H. Hsieh, Chia-Fen, 2003; Morris, 2004, 2011; S. Wang, 2009; Yu & Gordon, 2006), the KMT's political appropriation of the Golden Dragons Little League Baseball Team's victories in the LLB (e.g. An & Loh, 2010; L.-K. Chang, 2000; W.-C. Chiu et al., 2014; S.-Y. Hsieh, 2017; Morris, 2004; C.-C. Ni, 2009; Sundeen, 2001; S. Wang, 2009; Yu & Bairner, 2008), Taiwan's adoption of the name "Chinese Taipei" in the Olympics (e.g. C.-H. Chang, 2004; C.-Y. Chen, 1993; Chiang & Chen, 2021; H.-J. Chiu et al., 2021; Fairclough, 1992; Hung & Lee, 2011; K.-T. Lin, 1987; C.-P. Liu, 1997; C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993a, 1993b, 1994; H.-Y. Liu, 2007; M.-H. Tang & Hung, 2008). However, after democratisation, research on Taiwan's sports nationalism has been mostly limited to case-specific discussions, lacking a systematic, long-term perspective (e.g. An & Loh, 2010; T.-H. Chen, 2008, 2010, 2012; T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2019, 2023; Chiang & Chen, 2013, 2014, 2021; Hu & Chen, 2018; Jarvie, Hwang, & Brennan, 2008; C.-Y. Lin, 2012; C.-Y. Lin et al., 2010; C.-D. Liu, 2008; Sun, 2019). Thus, one of the aims of this study is to establish a comprehensive analysis of sports nationalism in Taiwan during the democratisation period.

Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter outlines the framework of methodology and sources of data used in this study. The sources of data are the sports news articles in Taiwan from 1990 to 2023 and public reactions on social media after 2008, which can be considered as evidence of the transformation of mainstream opinion and social discourse in forging the national characteristics in the sports field and beyond.

In order to understand the change of Taiwan's identity from a sociological perspective, this study provides separate analyses on the news articles between content units (composed by texts and pictures of sports coverage) and thematic units (composed by the nationalist connotations in sports coverage with respect to performance of athletes and political/ social events). Accordingly, this study adopted thematic content analysis to examine the themes in sports news coverage and social media platforms that articulate nationalism and national identity. Additionally, critical discourse analysis was employed to analyse the rhetoric, metaphors, and grammatical structures used in sports news stories and social media discussions to explore how they contributed to the consolidation and transformation of national identity.

4.1 Research design

This research aims to understand how the authorities created the characteristics of Taiwan/ China within the sports field, how those in power link them with national narratives and how society has reinterpreted and re-articulated them and their ideology. More specifically, this study is designed to understand how the sports media presented the national narratives and

how the narratives were accepted, rejected, or reinterpreted by the readers and re-articulated on social media. The research questions are presented as below:

1. What kind of national features are emphasised or omitted in the sports news articles? How are they narrated, evaluated and inter-related?
2. How do the sports news articles articulate the performance of athletes or the hosting of sports competitions with the characters of culture, ethnicity, territory and citizenship? How are the meanings constructed in relation to the national significance and changed with political events or social movements?
3. Do the connotations of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Taiwan, Chinese Taipei, China depicted in the sports news articles change over time and, if so, what causes the changes?
4. How do the readers recognise, interpret and re-articulate the national narratives in the news articles?

Chinese Taipei can be regarded as the ethnic Chinese in Taipei, China's Taipei, China in Taipei and so on. For example, a contribution in *Taipei Times* stated that "Chinese Taipei, the name of the capital of the ROC, could one day become Chinese Nanjing" (C. K. Lin, 2008, p. 8). Additionally, the translation of Chinese Taipei embodied the name's ambiguity. The ROC translated "Chinese Taipei" into Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北), meaning the Chinese in Taipei, which is considered to represent a cultural connection much like Hispanophone and Anglophone do; the PRC translated it into Zhongguo Taipei¹⁵ (中国台北), meaning China's Taipei, to represent its nationhood (Handley, 2021). Thus, the divergent translations allow the ROC and the PRC to strengthen their national identities via Chinese Taipei.

¹⁵ For translated names or terms related to the PRC, this study uses Hanyu Pinyin, in contrast to the Wade-Giles system employed in Taiwan—for instance, the literal translation of China is Zhongguo in the PRC and Chung-Kuo in Taiwan.

4.2 Methodological Framework

4.2.1 Content analysis and thematic content analysis

According to Holsti (1969, p. 30), “qualitative content analysis is generally understood to investigate the presence and the absence, or, more specifically, the appearance on which the non-appearance is placed, of attributes in texts”. Holsti (1969, p. 59) further stated that: “to understand the attributes, adjectives or hedges used in statements about implicit symbols or explicit ideas can be analysed to indicate the intensity, strength or uncertainty associated with the statement or ideology implied by the word or idea”. Therefore, in order to analyse the ideology in texts, the object of research can be categorised into the text and the content. Texts are comprised of explicit material and implicit symbols which are created for a certain context or end: “to inform their recipients, to instil ideologies, or to invoke feelings and echoes” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 23). To be more precise, content analysis is a method used to collect and examine the content of a text. “Content” refers to the information used for communication, including words, meanings, images, symbols, concepts, and themes, while “text” serves as a medium for conveying messages in visual and spoken forms. Examples include books, newspapers, advertisements, speeches, official documents, letters, photographs, clothing, films, music, poetry, paintings, and other works of art (Babbie, 1979; Neuman, 1997).

According to Neuman (1997), content analysis is a nonreactive research method because it is impossible for the researcher to influence authors and recipients, or more specifically how the authors express their ideas and how the information is received or used by readers. In order to discover or explore the content (messages, meanings, or symbols) from the text (books, articles, or videos), the researcher needs to explore the content of the text in-depth during reading or watching the research object (Neuman, 1997).

Content analysis can be adopted for the examination of ideology in any form of the media. Due to the characteristics of content analysis, Krippendorff (1980) stated that it is frequently conducted to investigate different forms of socialised materials that were produced across time and space. For example, “regarding a large volume of text”, such as newspapers or academic literature crossing 30 years (Neuman, 1997, p. 373). To address various research concerns, qualitative content analysis was developed in different forms, such as thematic analysis, discourse analysis, rhetorical analysis, and pragmatic content analysis (Janis, 1965). This research employs thematic analysis because it provides a method to investigate how the coverage articulates sport with existing national narratives (themes) such as ethnicity and territories. Additionally, critical discourse analysis is also employed because it enables exploration of the relationship between the discourse (as constructed by comments and sports news articles) and the social setting (political and social events).

Thematic analysis is a reflexive method which emphasises how to understand and construct individual life experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013, 2019). “It is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes, stories) within data and theorises language as constitutive of meaning and meaning as social and is worked to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 79, 81). Thematic analysis allows researchers to examine both individual experiences, meanings, and realities, as well as the social discourses shaped by various factors. Since it was not developed within a specific theoretical framework, it can be flexibly applied across different theoretical perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Precisely, the content and range of themes are composed of many codes, and each theme contains central organising concepts which have similarity or commonality to convey and are used to analyse meanings that relate to the question (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The formation of themes in thematic analysis is data-driven or, more precisely, researcher-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013, 2019). The choice of theoretical framework influences the research orientation. For instance, a positivist or descriptive study typically follows a top-down (deductive) approach, where themes are derived from the theoretical framework, and the analysis focuses on the factual aspects of texts. In contrast, a critical theory or experiential approach tends to follow a bottom-up (inductive) approach, where codes are generated directly from the data and then organised into themes. This approach emphasises the social, cultural, and economic contexts embedded within the texts (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012, 2013, 2019).

Thematic analysis provides an approach for investigating the relationship between sport, social setting, and nationalism in Taiwan. This study is grounded in critical theory and primarily adopts a bottom-up approach, with a top-down approach as a supplement. As informed by the previous literature on sport and nationalism, the content of sports coverage was often exploited by the authorities or the elites as a vehicle for embodying the invented tradition to unknowingly instil the consciousness of the imagined community into individuals. Through this approach, this study examined the ways in which the imagined community is articulated by the content of sports coverage, especially at times of political upheavals and societal changes.

4.2.2 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis considers language as a way of social practice and explores how discourse represents the phenomenon of social and political dominance (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Holes, 1995; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). van Dijk (1993, 1997, 2008) stated that critical discourse analysis is suitable for investigating the relationship between discourse, dominance, power, social inequality, and the status of the discussor. Critical discourse

analysis aims to explore the social practices of discourse and the dialectical relationship between discourse and its context, mechanisms, and structures (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The relationship between discourse and social construction is an ideological effect, producing and reproducing unequal power relations among classes, ethnic groups, and cultures (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). Precisely, discourse is shaped by these contexts, mechanisms, and structures, while at the same time, it also shapes them in return. Discourse and society are a “mutually constitutive relationship”, meaning that society is “discursively constructed”, and discourse can only exist within social interactions (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p. 13). Thus, adopting critical discourse analysis assists in seeking an answer for how the discourse (sports news reports) represents or challenges dominance (nationalist ideology).

Fairclough (1992, p. 9) emphasised that discourse analysis should focus on “intertextuality”, meaning that “texts are constructed through other texts being articulated in particular ways, ways which depend upon and change with social circumstances”. Thus, through the intertextuality of news texts, one can discern what is emphasised, what is shaped, what is presented as given, what is framed, as well as what is avoided or omitted (Fairclough, 1992; T.-T. Lin, 2011). The process of interaction between text and society is defined as “interdiscursivity”. Fairclough (1992, p. 85) identified that interdiscursivity transforms existing practices and previous texts into the present, constituting and normalising the current text. Thus, the interplay between discourses is a key focus of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough & Holes, 1995). From this perspective, news discourse shapes, and is shaped by, other discourses, creating a reciprocal relationship with society.

News text is a distinct form of discourse that carries significant ideological power (Van Dijk, 1998). The text of news articles constitutes the content of social discourse, serving as a platform for mediation, communication, and dialogue in response to the constant flow of social interactions and events (T.-T. Lin, 2011). On the one hand, the media must facilitate

dialogue between diverse opinions; on the other hand, ideological biases inevitably find their way into news texts (T.-T. Lin, 2011). This study adopted a critical discourse analysis to investigate the ways in which the content of sports news articles such as the narrative structure, words, and rhetoric represents the connotation of nationalism.

This study adopts Chiang and Chen's (2014) proposition that media representation should be understood as social actions embedded within social context and culture. Additionally, drawing on Kobayashi, Horne, and Lee's research (2023), this study focuses on the contestation and interaction between the discourses of ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism. Moreover, the rise of the internet age, especially in relation to the popularisation of social media, enables the public to interact more frequently with the mediated messages than other media types. Thus, this study examines whether and how the public recognises the nationalist connotations in sports news stories and responds to or challenges the content through text on social media platforms, which aligns with the focus of "interdiscursivity (discursive practice)" in critical discourse analysis.

Further, it has been well-documented that social actors not only passively accept the ideology but also have capacity to react to it within discourse dissemination processes. Certeau (1984) and Chartier (1987) stated that researchers should take into account cultural production, dissemination, acceptance, and re-appropriation because the masses are not passive consumers. N.-T. Wu (2006) echoed this view and emphasised that the identity construction by the public might be different from the discourse provided by the elites. Thus, this research adopted the concept of "social practice" in critical discourse analysis to examine how sports news articles changed or strengthened national identity of Taiwanese people and how these narratives practise the transformation and consolidation of national identity.

4.3 Research material and data collection

This study identified major political and sports events that shaped nationalism and national identity in Taiwan. Drawing on a series of surveys conducted by the Taipei Media Agency Association from 2009 to 2020, this study finds that Taiwan's daily newspaper ratings were dominated by *Apple Daily*, *China Times*, *Liberty Times*, and *United Daily News* (Taipei Media Agency Association, 2020). Thus, this study primarily draws on sports coverage, reader contributions, commentaries, and editorials from these four major newspapers, using both physical archives (1990–2004) and digital archives (2005 onwards). It also considers public comments from the official Facebook fan pages and news websites (via Facebook plugins), as well as from athletes' Facebook fan pages.

A number of studies have recognised that mass communication media is a vehicle for strengthening national identity and nationalism (Anderson, 1983; Bauder, 2009; Billig, 1995; Chih-Cheng Huang et al., 2011; J. W. Lee & Maguire, 2011; MacInnes et al., 2007; Morley & Robins, 1995). According to Y.-Y. Ni (2003), media texts, including newspapers, are products of social structures and conditions. Therefore, to understand the ways in which the ideology was represented in texts, the political, historical, and social contexts must be considered. Additionally, the reason for choosing sports news coverage as the research material is that sport reflects the national passion and identity of citizens more explicitly than other cultural fields (Bairner, 1996, 2001; Hargreaves, 2002; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983).

The content of news articles should be considered an embodiment of particular ideologies upheld by different newspapers. According to Entman (1993, p. 52), "communicators make conscious or unconscious framing judgments in deciding what to say, guided by frames (often called schemata) that organise their belief systems". An example was the choice of terms such as "Mainland" and "Taiwan team". *China Times* and *United*

Daily News have never used “Taiwan team” to refer to Chinese Taipei and always adopted “Mainland” to refer to China in news articles due to their political stance. This asynchronous approach to word meanings intensified the challenges of text analysis. One of the common confusions in news reports is the use of the term “Mainland” to refer to the PRC—a term that, in its political context, implies that Mainland and Taiwan are two regions within the same nation. However, within the context of the news articles, Mainland and Taiwan were not regarded as the same nation. The selection and use of such rhetorical choices are precisely the focal areas of analysis in this study, which employs critical discourse analysis.

To better understand how these rhetorical choices are influenced by political ideologies, it is essential to examine the political stances of the newspapers and their readership. According to L.-Y. Lin (2008), following the lifting of the press ban, the political stances of *China Times*, *United Daily News* and *Liberty Times* were significantly shaped by the perspectives of their respective owners. Due to the intervention of owners and the preferences of their readership, the political ideologies of the newspapers was ultimately determined by both factors (L.-Y. Lin, 2008). Thus, *China Times* and *United Daily News* were considered to have a pro-KMT stance, while *Liberty Times* was regarded as having a pro-DPP stance (L.-Y. Lin, 2008; S.-P. Lin, 2014). The political stance of the readership reflected the political stance of the newspapers. Hsiao (2006) and A. H.-e. Wang (2021) examined the political party affiliation, national identity and the position on unification vs. independence of readership. The findings revealed that readers of *Liberty Times* inclined towards the DPP, identified themselves as Taiwanese and pro-independence, while most readers of *China Times* and *United Daily News* leaned towards the KMT and identified themselves as Chinese in national identity and pro-unification. In terms of *Apple Daily*, the political party affiliation of its readers presented no specific affiliation, and their stance on national identity aligned with the overall trend of all voters and maintaining the status quo with the PRC. Therefore,

to ensure the reliability and validity of this research, the political ideologies of each newspaper are outlined in the following Table 4-1. These data need to be treated circumspectly, as the results may reflect the political position of newspapers instead of nationalist narratives.

Table 4–1 The party affiliation & position on national identity among newspapers.

<div style="text-align: center;">Newspaper</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <i>Apple Daily</i> <i>China Times</i> <i>Liberty Times</i> <i>United Daily News</i> </div>				
Political position				
Party affiliation	Neutral	Pro-KMT	Pro-DPP	Pro-KMT
Position on national identity	Aligned with society-	Chinese	Taiwanese	Chinese
Position on unification vs. independence	Pro-status quo	Pro-unification	Pro-independence	Pro-unification

Note. Author tabulation.

The sports news articles collected in this study are mainly from 1990 onwards for the following two reasons: First, before the lifting of Martial Law in 1987, Taiwan’s newspaper publishing had to be approved by the KMT government and content had to conform to the views of the government, otherwise they would be banned. Second, the junction of Taiwanisation and democratisation of the ROC/ Taiwan was formed in 1988 when Lee Teng-Hui succeeded as the President. Therefore, nationalism and national identity have also changed with the processes of democratisation and Taiwanisation (Wakabayashi, 1992/1994, 2008/2016). It echoed Hobsbawm and Ranger’s (1983) observation that the invented tradition is often observed during a social change.

More specifically, the news articles surrounding sport, including, but not limited to, mega sports events, athletes' behaviour and statements, and sports-related political activities were collected. The collected data focused on three main events: international baseball competitions spanning 30 years (1990–2023), the name rectification referendum in 2018, and the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021. The newspapers analysed in this study were obtained in both physical and digital formats. Newspapers published before 2004 were collected in physical form from the National Central Library, the National Library of Public Information, and the Changhua County Library, while those published afterward were retrieved from the digital databases of various newspapers.

The justification for the selection of the three cases is provided as follows. First, baseball has long been considered a national sport of Taiwan and has received significant attention (S.-Y. Hsieh, 2017; Morris, 2004; Yu & Gordon, 2006). Thus, the pride and humiliation brought about by baseball's achievements and defeats have been associated with the people of Taiwan by news reports. Additionally, due to being reported over a long period, the baseball coverage provided an opportunity to examine how Taiwan's national identity has changed and was reflected in sport more generally. Therefore, this study collects reports from international baseball games from 1990 to 2023, including but not limited to the Olympic Games, Baseball at the Asian Games, Baseball World Cup, World Baseball Classic, WBSC Premier12, Intercontinental Cup, Asian Baseball Championship and those of the Chinese Professional Baseball League (Taiwan). The keywords for collection include "Taiwan (team)", "Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) (team)", "Chinese Taipei", "China (team)", "Mainland (team)", "the competition between Taiwan and X", and "the competition between Chung (中/the ROC) and X".

Next, the name rectification referendum, held on 24 November 2018, was a political event related to sport while provoking debate among different national identities within

Taiwan and reflection on Chinese Taipei. To maximise the collection of data, this study examined the news from June 2017 to June 2019. It was found that the issue gained wider discussion from January 2018 when the referendum organiser, Chi Cheng, held a press conference. Since the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) criticised the referendum as a Taiwanese independence movement in March, the topic remained in the spotlight until the voting day. It was out of public view by the end of 2018 after the result was confirmed. The keywords for collection include "Chinese Taipei", "Taiwan", "referendum" and "Olympic Games".

Third, the Olympic Games are one of the largest international sports events and have consistently garnered significant attention from the Taiwanese people. At the Tokyo Olympics, the Taiwan delegation achieved its highest medal count in history, elevating the nation's sense of pride and pushing Taiwanese nationalism to new heights. As BBC (2021) reported, "This marked a nationalist moment in Taiwan". The Tokyo Olympics was held from 23 July 2021 to 8 August 2021. To maximise data collection, this study examined news coverage throughout 2021. The findings indicated that news articles related to the Olympics began appearing in June and gradually declined by the end of August. The news articles included in this case were collected using keywords: "Tokyo Olympic Games", "winning medals", "Chinese Taipei", and "Taiwan team". Although the dataset covers events up to 2023, cases from 2022–2023 received limited attention and did not yield new insights, so the analysis focuses on cases up to 2021. Overall, a total of 15,230 news articles covering the three cases were collected for this study.

This study further investigated the public reaction toward the sports coverage on social media platforms. In Taiwan, Facebook is the most popular social media platform, and the proportion of users was dramatically higher than those of other social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram (see Figure 4-1). Additionally, each newspaper's official Facebook

pages have over one million subscribers, making Facebook the most appropriate platform to analyse how public comments interact with nationalist narratives.



Figure 4-1 Social media usage rate in Taiwan.

Note. Retrieved from “Taiwan Internet Report”, by Taiwan Network Information Centre (2020), retrieved from https://report.twNIC.tw/2020/assets/download/TWNIC_TaiwanInternetReport_2020_CH.pdf

Additionally, social media comments were collected from the official Facebook pages, athletes’ Facebook fan pages and the comment sections of the four newspapers’ websites, which were integrated with the Facebook Comments Plugin. This integration allowed users to post comments directly on the newspapers’ online articles using their Facebook accounts. Given the high usage rate of Facebook in Taiwan, this study collected social media comments from these news article pages. This approach maximises the likelihood that the

comments were made by individuals who had read and engaged with the content of the articles. The time range is after 2009.

However, while these comments provide valuable insights into public opinion, they may also reflect the limitations of information cocoons, as they primarily represent the views of specific groups and reinforce mutual echo chambers between newspapers and their readers. Due to the nature of the Internet and the anonymity it provides, this study cannot illustrate how social actors of different ages, ethnic groups, cultural backgrounds, and places of residence respond to nationalist discourses. For instance, Taiwanese living in Kinmen or Matsu has different historical memories from those living on Taiwan's main island, as they experienced the Chinese Civil War rather than Japanese colonial rule.

After gathering data, this study analysed it using the six-phase thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 86-91):

1. Familiarising with the data: In this phase, the data were digitised and read repeatedly to ensure accuracy.
2. Generating initial codes: Significant concepts within the data were coded and analysed. In this step, the data were categorised based on both semantic and interpretive understanding into the ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism.
3. Searching for themes: A theme is defined as capturing something important in relation to the overall research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). In this step, similar or overlapping codes that revolved around a specific issue were grouped. For example, Taiwanese nationalist narratives are often centred on tragic narratives and further demonstrate a bottom-up approach.
4. Reviewing themes: This phase involved verifying whether the coding and content supported the identified themes. During this process, sub-themes were identified within both ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism.

5. Defining and naming themes: The meaning, scope, and purpose of each theme were clarified. This phase involved interpreting relationships between sub-themes and the broader categories of ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism to determine whether the overall narrative of the study was coherent and effectively answered the research questions.

6. Producing the report: The final phase involved writing the thesis.

While establishing the themes, this study adopts the three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis to examine how the relationships among the “text (language)”, “discursive practice (power)”, and “social practice (ideology)” is constructed (Fairclough, 1995). First, the textual analysis focuses on rhetorical choices, such as the terms Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Taiwan, Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei), and Ta-Lu (大陸/ Mainland China). At the level of discursive practice, the analysis examines how the media selects and constructs narratives—for example, how news articles portray the victories or losses of Taiwanese teams and athletes, particularly in competitions against China. The third dimension, social practice, explores how sports news articles influence Taiwanese people’s national identity by linking existing social discourses and historical contexts. For instance, how sports victories are interpreted as national triumphs by drawing a parallel between past wartime victories. By employing thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis, this study examines how nationalist narratives are articulated in sports news and social media comments. Notably, most of the research data in this study were originally published in Chinese and Taiwanese and were translated by the author.

4.4 Ethical issues and limitations

4.4.1 Copyright and privacy considerations

This research examined news articles and Facebook comments as data, which may raise potential copyright concerns. To mitigate any disputes, the copyright laws of Taiwan (the country of publication for the news articles) and New Zealand (where the thesis was written) were adhered to. According to Taiwan's *Copyright Act*, Article 52, "Within a reasonable scope, works that have been publicly released may be quoted where necessary for reports, comment, teaching, research, or other legitimate purposes" (Law & Regulations Database of The Republic of China (Taiwan), 2021). Similarly, New Zealand's *Copyright Act 1994*, Article 43 (1), "Fair dealing with a work for the purposes of research or private study does not infringe copyright in the work" (Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment, 2023). Facebook posts cited in this thesis complied not only with copyright acts within two countries but also with Facebook's Terms of Service 3 (1):

Specifically, when you share, post, or upload content that is covered by intellectual property rights on or in connection with our Products, you grant us (Facebook) a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, and worldwide license to host, use, distribute, modify, run, copy, publicly perform or display, translate, and create derivative works of your content (consistent with your privacy and application settings) (Facebook, 2022).

Based on the copyright regulations of Taiwan and New Zealand, this study noted that the news articles, Facebook posts, and YouTube screenshots cited in this thesis are necessary for research and have been appropriately referenced in accordance with the APA 6th edition format to ensure academic integrity. Furthermore, although the cited posts and comments

were publicly accessible, user anonymisation has been applied, particularly for ordinary individuals, to mitigate potential privacy concerns.

4.4.2 Research limitations

The first limitation is that in the case of the Tokyo Olympics, news coverage in the *United Daily News* is absent because its digital database does not allow overseas access. To ensure that the dataset adequately represents the spectrum of Taiwanese political discourse, this study collected three nationally circulated newspapers: *Apple Daily* (pro-status quo), *China Times* (pro-unification), and *Liberty Times* (pro-independence), covering the three main political positions within Taiwan. Further, cross-referencing across multiple sources mitigates the impact of the missing data, so this absence is not expected to compromise the following analysis.

The second limitation stems from the time limit. This study adopted the comments from social media platforms as research data. However, due to the objective conditions of temporal limitations, it was challenging to observe the public interactions with national narratives before the popular adoption of social media platforms. For example, the collecting period of social media comments was only after 2009 when the earliest newspaper (*China Times*) among the four established its fan page. Thus, to address this limitation, the present study opted to collect readers' contributions and letters to the editor, with the aim of drawing a more comprehensive picture of public responses to nationalist narratives. Nevertheless, as the analysis is primarily interpretive in nature, a full statistical count of the sample was not conducted. This constitutes a limitation that future research may seek to address.

The third limitation stems from the lack of documentation. In the case of international baseball games, *Apple Daily* was excluded from the data collection list because its database

had been closed at the time of data collection. Additionally, the hard copy was not archived by the National Library of Taiwan. Furthermore, during the data collection period, *Apple Daily*, the Hong Kong-based newspaper, ceased publication on 18 May 2021, and its database was taken offline on 31 August 2022 due to the 2020 Hong Kong National Security Law and political pressure from China (Shu-Ling, 2021). As a result, the collection of sports news reports from *Apple Daily* was incomplete for the case study of the Tokyo Olympics. However, the missing content mainly concerns follow-up reports after the Games. The missing time period is December 2021, approximately four months after the Games, and follow-up news reports are not central to the analysis. Additionally, based on the content of follow-up coverage collected from other newspapers, the absence reports are not expected to affect the subsequent findings.

Finally, the researcher's reflexivity should be noted. As a Taiwanese researcher abroad, I am aware that my national identity shapes how I approach nationalist narratives involving Taiwan, Chinese Taipei, the ROC, and the PRC. The period covered within this study aligns with the development of my own political consciousness. My personal political stance has been shaped by being exposed to Chinese national identity in primary and junior high school textbooks, witnessing the KMT's loss of power for the first time, participating in the Sunflower Student Movement, and observing Taiwan's sovereignty being continually marginalised or subsumed under Chineseness. As a spectator of sport, I vividly remember the victories and defeats of baseball, the rise, fall, and resurgence of the CPBL, the successes of Taiwanese athletes at the Olympics, and the tensions between Chinese Taipei and Taiwan. It cannot be denied that my personal national identity constitutes one of the major driving forces behind this study. Accordingly, I am particularly attuned to the language that functions to undermine Taiwan's subjectivity. While this stance sensitises me to such issues, I acknowledge the potential for interpretive biases. To mitigate them, I consciously used

extensive research materials—including both pro-China and pro-Taiwan newspapers as well as the social media comments from Chinese/Taiwanese nationalists, a systematic coding process, and cross-referencing with existing scholarship, thereby ensuring that the interpretations presented are grounded in evidence rather than personal conviction. Building on this methodological approach, the subsequent chapters examine the transformation and embodiment of nationalism in sports coverage, focusing on how media discourse mediates, reinforces, and challenges existing nationalist narratives.

Chapter 5

The development of sports nationalism in Taiwan: A study of baseball game coverage (1990–2023)

Baseball has always been recognised as the national sport in Taiwan (S.-Y. Hsieh, 2012, 2017; S.-Y. H. Hsieh, Chia-Fen, 2003). This chapter aims to understand the role of baseball as a national sport in the change and development of sports nationalism in Taiwan. To achieve this objective, the chapter will begin with an analysis of reports on international baseball games from 1990 to 2023. According to Arnold (2020), mega sports events are a mechanism for the dissemination and creation of nationalism. Thus, coverage of the following international major sporting events was examined for this chapter: the Olympic Games, Baseball at the Asian Games, Baseball World Cup, World Baseball Classic, WBSC Premier12, Intercontinental Cup, and Asian Baseball Championship. This study further examines how the Chinese Professional Baseball League (CPBL), as the world's first professional baseball league to commence its season during the COVID-19 pandemic, was represented in sports reports to strengthen Taiwanese people's national identity.

The analysis shows that with the increase of people identifying themselves as Taiwanese on the island, the narrative of sports nationalism changed. The transformation in sports nationalism can be understood through three themes, each corresponding to a distinct period in Taiwan's recent history: 1. from Chinese ethnic nationalism to Chinese/ the Republic of China (ROC) civic nationalism (1990-2000); 2. the Taiwanisation of the ROC political totems and the change of nationalist opponent (2001-2010); and 3. strengthening Taiwanese national identity via seeking recognition from others and creating Taiwanese self-recognition (2011-2023). According to L.-K. Chang (2000), Taiwan's baseball during the

twentieth century can be divided into three main periods: the Japanese colonial era, the 1970s and the 1990s. With democratisation and Taiwanisation, Taiwanese society entered an era of rapid transformation after the 1990s. Freedom of speech opened the door to discussions on politics, including nationalism and national identity, which were no longer confined to a singular Chinese identity as they had been during the era of martial law. The development of sports nationalism in Taiwan is a dynamic process, reflecting the evolution of nationalism from ethnic and Chinese nationalism to civic and Taiwanese nationalism.

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section 5.1 introduces the development of baseball in Taiwan, highlighting its entanglement with politics and its role in sports nationalist narratives. Section 5.2 examines the shift of Chinese nationalism as mediated through baseball during the 1990s. Section 5.3 analyses how baseball reflects Taiwanisation, reconciling ROC nationalism with Taiwanese nationalism in the 2000s. Finally, Section 5.4 explores how Taiwanese people utilise baseball to seek and construct recognition of their nationhood and strengthen national identity.

5.1 A brief history of the development of baseball in Taiwan (1945-1990)

Baseball in Taiwan has deep cultural and political significance. Introduced during the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945), it became part of colonial policy and was later exploited by the Kuomintang (KMT) administration as a political tool for re-Sinicisation and the maintenance of its legitimacy. Thus, the narrative of Taiwanese baseball presented different shapes at different times. According to Bairner (2001), sports nationalism is usually articulated with official nationalism. As part of colonial modernity, baseball served as a tool for nationalising and modernising the colonised population in early Taiwan. According to S. Wang (2009), the development of Taiwanese baseball can be divided into four stages: 1. 1895-1945; 2. 1945-1960s; 3. 1970s-1980s; 4. 1990s onwards.

During Japanese rule, baseball was initially monopolised by Japanese and treated as a means of assimilation and discipline (L.-K. Chang, 2000; S.-Y. Hsieh, 2017; C.-Y. Lin & Lee, 2007). With the spread of education and the media coverage, baseball gradually developed as a popular sport across Taiwan while the successes of baseball were regarded as a testament to the success of colonial rule (S. Wang, 2009). However, discourses about sports are not necessarily monopolised by those in power. S. Wang (2009) illustrated that the Taiwanese were not passively accepting the authorities' narratives. Additionally, they internalised baseball into its own culture and created their own baseball narratives, and shaped different narratives against different authorities, such as the Noko Baseball Team's victories symbolising the victories of the Taiwanese against the Japanese (C.-M. Chung, 2006). The Japanese government's policy could not be fully fulfilled. Conversely, baseball increased the Taiwanese' self-confidence and collective identity because modern sport provided an equal field for the Taiwanese to replace the unfairness of the political field in which Taiwanese could prove that they were as good as the Japanese or even better than them (S. Wang, 2009).

After 1945, when the ROC government ruled Taiwan, the specific policies of baseball also exploited it as a tool for promoting Chinese nationalism (An & Loh, 2010; T.-H. Chen, 2008; C.-M. Chung, 2006; S.-Y. H. Hsieh, Chia-Fen, 2003; C.-H. Hsu, 2012; Hwang, 2019; C.-Y. Lin et al., 2010; C.-D. Liu, 2008; Morris, 2011; C.-C. Ni, 2009; S. Wang, 2009). In the early days of the KMT rule (1945-1960s), due to the government's lack of emphasis on baseball, the sport became a safe haven for Taiwanese to feel colonial nostalgia and to distinguish between Taiwanese and Chinese (W.-C. Chiu et al., 2014; S. Wang, 2009). Although baseball was a popular sport in civil society, it was regarded as a colonial heritage in the re-Sinicisation policy and was marginalised by the KMT regime in which the development of baseball faced the double challenge of space and funds (S. Wang, 2009). Baseball developed

into an exclusive field for Taiwanese because of the government's inaction. According to S. Wang (2009), baseball in Taiwan was a grassroots sport supported by civil society. Its characteristics—for example, the terminology of baseball in Taiwan is a combination of Japanese and Taiwanese languages—allowed Taiwanese people to communicate in familiar languages without the oppression of the KMT. “By this time, the name Taiwanese only referred to the natives, whereas the mainlanders considered themselves Chinese” (S. Wang, 2009, p. 362). Thus, baseball as a symbol of shared colonial experience was utilised to integrate Hoklo, Hakka and the Indigenous people into a national group against the KMT’s Chinese-centrism (W.-C. Chiu et al., 2014).

From the 1960s to the 1970s, amid the wave of severance of diplomatic relations of the ROC, the KMT’s legitimacy of rule was challenged. Sport became a means to consolidate its rule. The achievement at the LLB, held in Williamsport, USA, was used to seek recognition from overseas Chinese communities (Yu & Bairner, 2008) and to strengthen the national identity of a single ethnic group on the island (C.-C. Ni, 2009). This single ethnic Chinese national identity, aimed at reunification of China (Sundeen, 2001), which was a major source of legitimacy for the KMT, and persisted until the 2000s (W.-C. Chiu et al., 2014).

In the 1970s, the success of baseball was coincided with the failure of diplomacy. Baseball was exploited to boost the sentiment of Chinese nationalism and secure its rule legitimacy in Taiwan and as proof of its good governance (C.-C. Ni, 2009). The KMT amalgamated history with victories of baseball games to unify different ethnicities in Taiwan under the concept of Chinese and sought support from overseas Chinese for the ROC. After the Hong-Ye Little League Baseball Team, which was mainly composed of Taiwanese indigenous people, won a friendly match against Japan in 1968, and the Taiwan representative team won a series of championships at the LLB, the KMT produced a series of reinterpretations of Taiwan’s baseball history, which served the needs of the political and

social environment at that time. For example, the Hong-Ye little Baseball Team was promoted as the glory of the Han people. According to C.-C. Ni (2009), a series of propaganda, such as news and celebration ceremonies, portrayed the achievements of the Taiwanese indigenous people as a success of the majority ethnic group, thereby incorporating Taiwanese indigenous people into the Han group to reassert the official national imagination at that time.

Another notable example of the political appropriation of baseball was Taiwan's dominance in youth baseball at the LLB during the 1970s. In 1969, the Golden Dragon Little League Baseball Team won Taiwan's first championship at the LLB World Series, marking the beginning of the golden age of Taiwanese youth baseball. From 1969 to 1981, Taiwanese teams claimed 24 LLB championships—ten in the Little League,¹⁶ nine in the Junior League,¹⁷ and five in the Senior League.¹⁸ These victories at the LLB were interpreted as symbolic assertions of national strength and legitimacy. The authorities exploited Golden Dragon's victories to (re)create two different national narratives to adopt the political needs for domestic and international audiences. For the domestic audience, the KMT regime emphasised the Chinese identity through their victories. According to C.-C. Ni (2009), the victories of the team were magnified by the officials and media as the victory of all Chinese people including Taiwan and Mainland China. Thus, Chineseness as an invented tradition was strengthened by the authorities. For the international audience, the authorities exploited the victories to prove that the KMT was better than the CCP and strengthen overseas Chinese recognition of the ROC. According to C.-C. Ni (2009), at the end of the nineteenth century, Chinese people were under pressure from the West. Through the

¹⁶ Little League championships were won in the following years: 1969, 1971–1974, 1977–1981. For details on the winning teams, see Appendix B.

¹⁷ Junior League championships were won in the following years: 1972–1980. For details on the winning teams, see Appendix B.

¹⁸ Senior League championships were won in the following years: 1974–1978. For details on the winning teams, see Appendix B.

success in baseball, the KMT promoted an idea that Chinese were no less than Westerners under its leadership and sought support from overseas Chinese for the ROC as an orthodox China in the international community. Further, with the spread of TV broadcasting, baseball was widely accessible to families of different ethnicities and developed as a common memory to form an imagined community (S. Wang, 2009). Although the result seemed to achieve the political goal of the KMT, the opposite occurred. According to S. Wang (2009), the popularity of baseball weakened the segregation of Taiwanese-mainlander—those who immigrated to Taiwan with the KMT's exile between 1945 and 1955— and Formosan, despite that they were unlikely to watch baseball together. The experience of watching the LLB baseball games and the media's repeated reporting on the performances of youth players, such as a home run or receiving gold medals, on TV became the collective memory to service creating an imagined community which only belonged to people who resided in Taiwan.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, Taiwan underwent significant political transformation following the lifting of Martial Law and the death of Chiang Ching-Kuo. His successor, Lee Teng-hui—the first Taiwan-born president—further weakened KMT authoritarianism and Chinese-centrism, ushering in an era of political liberalisation, democratisation, and Taiwanisation. The 1990s marked the peak of these reforms, culminating in Taiwan's first direct presidential election in 1996. During this period, Taiwanese national identity became increasingly prominent. With the establishment of the CPBL in 1989 and achieving the silver medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, the public interest in baseball shifted to emphasising the adult game. The development of the CPBL reflected the political and social environment and Taiwan's need for integration with the international community and achieving ethnic harmony. According to S. Wang (2009), the CPBL migrant players played two roles: one of which was evidence of Taiwan integrating into the world, and the other was as a constitutive

“Other” that contributed to the construction of Taiwanese identity. Because of the appearance of migrant players, the boundaries between Formosan players and Taiwanese-mainlander players were gradually blurred and were recreated as local and foreign (S. Wang, 2009). Thus, baseball both reflected and shaped Taiwan’s evolving political, social, and cultural landscape.

5.2 From Chinese ethnic nationalism to Chinese civic nationalism (1990-2000)

5.2.1 Ethnic nationalism in sports coverage (the early 1990s)

This section delves into how nationalism and national identity in Taiwan were described in the early 1990s. The 1990s marked the true starting point of Taiwan’s democratisation. Although martial law was lifted in 1987, the bans on political parties and newspapers remained, while Article 100¹⁹ of the *Criminal Code*, and the *Regulations on the Punishment of Rebellion*²⁰ continued to criminalise political dissent. With the repeal of the Regulations on the Punishment of Rebellion in 1991 and the amendment of *Article 100* in 1992 the people of Taiwan ushered in freedom of speech. According to S. S. Lin (2018), prior to this, neither freedom of speech nor open discussion of nationalism and national identity was permitted.

In the early 1990s, the (re)interpretation of Chinese bloodlines and cultural characteristics were employed to construct a Chinese identity. Firstly, although Taiwan/ the ROC was not a country with a single ethnic group, the term “Han”²¹ was often considered a

¹⁹ *Article 100*: A person who commits an overt act with intent to destroy the organisation of the State, seize State territory, by illegal means change the Constitution, or overthrow the Government shall be punished with imprisonment for not less than seven years; a ringleader shall be punished with imprisonment for life. The Article was widely considered a law that violates human rights and freedom of expression (J.-C. Su, 2016).

²⁰ It is a special law that specifically mandates the death penalty as the only punishment for individuals who violate *Article 100, Paragraph 2, Item 1* of the *Criminal Law*.

²¹ It was considered the largest ethnic group in both Taiwan and China. Notably, it is a political term.

synonym with China/ the ROC. According to the Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics (2000),²² the proportion of indigenous people in Taiwan was about 2%.

However, in the 1990 Baseball World Cup and 1991 Intercontinental Cup, two of twenty players were Taiwanese indigenous people (Baseball reference, 2024a, 2024b), which was five times higher than the proportion of indigenous people in Taiwan. Huang Chung-Yi and Wang Kuang-Shih were both silver medallists at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Additionally, Wang Kuang-Shih received the CPBL Gold Glove Award as a second baseman in 1995. Huang Chung-Yi had an illustrious career, winning the Gold Glove Award (second baseman) in 1993, 1997, and 1998. He also secured the Batting Championship and led in the Most RBI²³ in 2000, was the Most Hits player in 2000 and 2002, and earned the Best Nine Award in multiple seasons: 1993, 1996–2002, and 2004.

Although indigenous athletes were an important power in Taiwanese baseball, their identity has been deliberately ignored. The phenomenon revealed the Han-centric ethnic nationalist narratives at that time. For example, *China Times* reported on the 1990 Baseball World Cup and said that “Today, Han guys will compete against Momotarō²⁴ for fifth place” (Peng, 1990). Another instance is the coverage of the 1991 Intercontinental Cup in the *China Times*. The story was titled “Han has a huge lineup” with the content stating, “The Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) baseball team participating in this Intercontinental Cup has an unprecedentedly large lineup” (A.-H. Yang, 1991). It can be seen that in the news articles, the term “Chinese/ China” was considered as a synonym for Han. The two examples show that in the narrative, Han was portrayed as representative of Taiwan/ the ROC.

Research by M.-L. Lin (2010) showed that nearly 85% of the Taiwanese-Hoklo and the Taiwanese-Hakka are multi-ethnic people with a heritage of Taiwanese indigenous people.

²² The data is closest to the early 1990s. The last time the government surveyed the indigenous population was in 1955.

²³ Run Batted In, is a baseball statistic that counts the number of runs a player scores, either by driving in baserunners or scoring themselves.

²⁴ A popular hero of Japanese folklore, in Taiwan it is often considered a symbol of the Japanese.

In Taiwan during the 1990s, the ROC government adopted Han—an existing concept and the dominant ethnic group—to construct a community with a unified ethnic identity. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) suggested, the new tradition was invented based on existing context. The ethnicisation of Taiwanese indigenous people was after the 1995 constitutional amendment, before that, the indigenous people were named “mountain compatriots”. Meanwhile, in the process of ethnicisation, the Han people of Taiwan were categorised into three ethnic groups—Taiwanese-Hoklo, Taiwanese-Hakka and Taiwanese-mainlander. C.-C. Ni (2009) stated that the mountain compatriots was an assimilation policy, adopting the term “compatriot” to create an imagining that indigenous people and Han people are a homologous ethnic group. Alonso (1988) conceptualised this phenomenon as metaphorical genealogy, which was established by highlighting the characteristics of a major group to strengthen the identity towards the group and generate an imagined community. The baseball news articles embodied that the ROC nationalists employed Han as a vehicle to consolidate the Chineseness of the ROC. As suggested by W.-C. Chiu et al. (2014, p. 355), “dominant groups monopolised the subjectivity of national identity”.

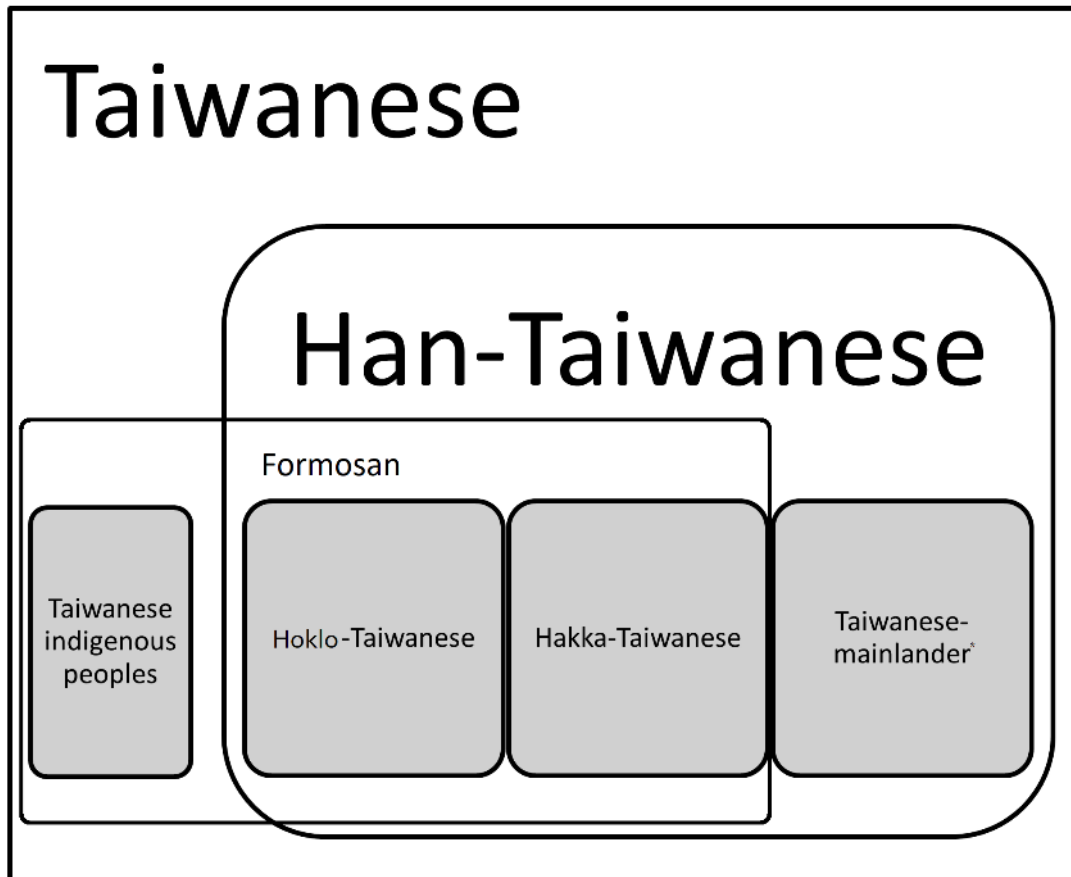


Figure 5-1 The Ethnicisation of Taiwanese People.

Note. Created by the author.

* A group of immigrants who arrived in Taiwan between 1945 and 1955 with the KMT's exile consisted mostly of military, civil, and education personnel, along with a smaller number of civilians. Although they came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including minorities such as Mongolians and Tibetans, these distinctions were largely effaced through the process of ethnicisation. (Executive Yuan, 2018; Fu-Chang, 2016).

In the above news reports, Han as an existing concept was reinvented as a political term of ethnic nationalism, which is the greatest common denominator between Taiwanese-mainlander and Formosan and was used to strengthen Chinese national identity and maintain social stability. Additionally, the legitimacy of the KMT's rule was also reconfirmed

by strengthening the Chinese national identity, in which the indigenous people were deliberately ignored due to their Taiwanese-ness. Moreover, Chinese ethnic nationalism and China-centred ideology were highlighted and further inculcated into the islanders when Mainland China was reported. For instance, the *China Times* reported a speech by Tang Pan-Pan, who was the former chairman of the Chinese Taipei Baseball Association and also served as the president of the KMT-published *Central Daily News*, during the 1990 Beijing Asian Games: “I hope our compatriots in Mainland China love baseball as much as our compatriots in Taiwan” (China Times Asian Games Reporting Team, 1990, p. 10). A report from *China Times* on the 1991 Asian Baseball Championship covered the differences in Baseball terminology between Taiwan and China: “In Mainland China, a Strike (好球/ hao-chiu) is called a ji (擊), a ball (壞球/ huai-chiu) is called a chiu (球) and a home run (全壘打/ chuan-lei-ta) was called a ben-lei-da (本壘打)...requiring the unification of terminology in cross-strait baseball exchanges is a foundational step”, as said by Tang Pan-Pan (H. Lin, 1991, p. 8). The silver medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympiad was used to underline the Chinese identity. Following the Taiwanese baseball team’s silver medal win on August 6 (Taiwan time), the pro-China *China Times* immediately framed the victory in line with its Chinese nationalist ideology. Its report stated that two sides of the Taiwan Strait were happy about winning the baseball silver medal (*China Times*, 1992). At the same time, this can be understood as a form of basking in reflected glory, whereby the pro-China narrative claimed that people on both sides of the Strait shared in the achievement, thereby enhancing the legitimacy of Chinese nationalist identity.

In the 1990s, under the impact of democratisation and Taiwanisation, the KMT re-strengthened and promulgated the ethnic Chinese nationalism based on the achievements of international baseball games to achieve their political ends—resisting the democratic wave and Taiwanisation and maintaining the legitimacy of rule. As suggested by

Wakabayashi (2008/2016), since the 1990s, the KMT and Taiwanese-mainlander elites have perceived a crisis of Taiwanisation and have responded to it, as their deeply held belief in Chinese national identity has been openly criticised and questioned.

The reports reflected the background of Taiwan's ethnic politics in the 1980s and the 1990s. At that time, the relationship between ethnic politics and national identity was very close. C.-F. Shih (2007, p. 17) suggested that "the Taiwanese-mainlander can accept the Chinese identity without thinking". F.-C. Wang (2008) echoed Shih's perspective and added that the China-centred national positioning was accepted by most people born and raised after World War II because of the education and propaganda system of the KMT. Thus, the Taiwanese consciousness was criticised for inciting national unity and harming social stability. However, ethnic politics developed into a confrontation between Taiwanese-mainlander (Chinese nationalism) and Formosan (Taiwanese nationalism) with the democratisation of Taiwan's politics and the ethnicisation of Taiwanese-mainlanders in the 1980s (C.-F. Shih, 2007; F.-C. Wang, 2016). Further, this highlights Bairner's (2008) observation regarding how sport was used by ethnic nationalists to display their exclusivity. In the case of this study, Han was adopted as a bloodline and/or cultural bonding to create an imagined community, and the Taiwanese Indigenous people were excluded by the ROC's Chinese nationalism. Thus, this study posits that the achievements and stories of non-Han and cross-strait surrounding baseball games were used by the KMT administration to strengthen the connection between Han and Chinese nationalism, in which ethnic nationalism and/or the term Han were merely vehicles to strengthen the concept of "we are Chinese", ultimately aiming to maintain the dominance of the KMT/ the Taiwanese-mainlander and fighting against Taiwanisation and democratisation.

5.2.2 Civic nationalism in sports coverage (the late 1990s)

In the second half of the 1990s, with the stabilisation of democratisation and political Taiwanisation on the island, the boundary of the imagined community of Taiwan/ the ROC was restructured (Wakabayashi, 1992/1994, 2008/2016). Additionally, the ethnic imagination in Taiwanese society was no longer singular (F.-C. Wang, 2003). Thus, under the circumstances, the narrative that used to divide people in Taiwan from others had changed from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism. To understand the transformation, in this section, two themes will be emphasised. The first is the self-identity when facing foreign teams. In this theme, the news reports with keywords of “the competition between China/ Chinese (Taipei) and X” embody how the nationhood of the ROC/ Taiwan was recognised. The other theme is the self-identity when facing China/ the PRC/ Mainland. In this theme, this study found that the news reports with keywords of “Mainland China/ Mainland” reflected the transformation of the content of Chung²⁵ (中/ the ROC) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese). To gain a clearer understanding of the development of sports nationalism in Taiwan during the 1990s, it is necessary to clarify the complex use between Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and 中國 (Chung-Kuo/ China). C.-C. Ni’s (2009) research explains:

The term Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) replaced Chung-Kuo (中國/ China) due to the ROC’s failure to maintain China representation. Although using Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) aims to distinguish the team as representing the ROC, its cultural significance remains identical with China Chung-Kuo (中國/ China). Traditionally, Chinese identity was based on culturalism. Thus, using Chung-Kuo (中國/ China) can seamlessly connect to the Chinese imagined community.

In addition, the collected newspapers often used Chung (中/ the ROC) as the short

²⁵ In the Chinese context, the character Chung (中) is used as the abbreviation for Chung-Kuo (中國/ the ROC) or Zhongguo (中国/ the PRC) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese).

name of Chung-Kuo (中國/ China) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), thus, for better clarity, when citing “Chung-Kuo (中國/ China)” or “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” to refer to the ROC and Chinese Taipei, the present study will present Chinese characters with English. To clarify the context of the confusion between Chung-Kuo (中國/ China) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), it is necessary to revisit the political ideology of the KMT. The KMT administration adhered to the belief that the ROC was the only legitimate Chinese government in the world which claimed sovereignty over both Mainland China and Taiwan. Consequently, the term “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” is the brief of the ROC (中華民國) or Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei) to refer to the ROC to demonstrate its Chineseness and develop a common name. However, with Taiwanisation, the term is commonly associated with Taiwan and is equivalent to Taiwan. The term “Ta-Lu (大陸/ Mainland)” initially refers to the ROC’s mainland territory and nowadays, is represented by the PRC. The term “Chung (中/ the ROC)” is an abbreviation of “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” or “Chung-Kuo (中國/ China)” and can refer to either China or Chinese Taipei, depending on the context. To preserve the original cultural and political nuances of “Chung (中/ the ROC)” and “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)”, this thesis retains the original text rather than paraphrasing them as “Taiwan”. Table 5-1 presents both the original and contemporary meanings of various terms.

Table 5–1 The meanings among Chung-Hua (中華), Chung-Kuo (中國), Ta-Lu (大陸) and Chung (中) in Taiwan.

Name	Initial meaning	Current meaning
Chung- Hua (中華)	China (the ROC) The brief of the ROC (中華民國) and Chinese Taipei (中華臺北)	The ROC or Taiwan The brief of the ROC (中華民國) and Chinese Taipei (中華臺北)
Chung-Ku (中國)	China (the ROC)	The PRC
Ta-Lu (大陸/ Mainland)	The ROC's mainland	The PRC
Chung (中)	Brief of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) or Chung-Kuo (中國/ the ROC)	Brief of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) or Zhongguo (中国/ the PRC)

Note. Author tabulation.

5.2.2.1 Strengthening Chinese identity via the portrayal of other countries in sports reporting.

The formation of others is indispensable in the process of nation-building. Thus, without an external “other”, there can be no internal “us”, as stated by Billig (1995). In Taiwan, sports news coverage provided a narrative that served to construct Chinese/ the ROC identity and differentiate “our” group from others. The nationhood and Chineseness of the ROC were re-highlighted by comparing “Chung (中/ the ROC)” and “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” with other countries in sports news articles. For example, a report in *United Daily News* on the 1995 Asian Baseball Championship was titled “The battle between China (中) and Japan today, spy war on starting pitchers, our fighting spirit is very high” (*United Daily News*, 1995). In the same coverage, the term “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” was considered the

pronoun of the ROC/ China and was perennially mentioned as a name of comparison with Japan. For instance, “The Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team will face Japan in the finals of the Asian Baseball Championship today...” (*United Daily News*, 1995). Another case was the *Liberty Times* report on the 1995 Intercontinental Cup with a title: “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) lost its first game to Brazil”, the news stated that “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) baseball team lost to Brazil in the 12th Intercontinental Cup preliminary round...This was the first time the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team lost to Brazil in an international competition... In the competition of Chung (中/ the ROC) and Brazil...” (S.-Y. Chang, 1995, p. 30). The above news articles reflect the social identity theory. Jenkins (2014, p. 17) suggested that “the verb ‘to identify’ is a necessary accompaniment of identity”. In the coverage, Japan and Brazil were identified as others to create Chinese identity. Further, the social identity was created through comparison with others, and vice versa. Jenkins (2014, p. 18) asserted that “Identity is our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us)”. The nationhood of Japan and Brazil was employed to create an understanding for the people of Taiwan, in which the nationhood of China/ the ROC was created/strengthened through comparison with other nation-states’ nationhood. As Hwang and Chiu (2010) stated, Taiwan’s sports nationalism can be understood by civic nationalism. Additionally, the understanding of China/ the ROC’s nationhood was banally instilled into the people on the island through the constant writing of China/ the ROC with names of other nation-states in parallel, as suggested by Billig (1995). Thus, the comparison of Chung (中/ the ROC) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) with other nation-states was used to distinguish “our group” from others.

Waving national flags is one of the methods to demonstrate nationality and identity (Bairner, 2001). However, in Taiwan’s sports context, due to the Olympic Protocol, the ROC

per se and its national image are banned from international sports events. Therefore, the term “Chinese Taipei” was reinterpreted as a national concept in the sports field to build national identity. The impression of Chinese Taipei as a national representative was re-strengthened by connecting it with the national symbols of the ROC. An example was shown in the report of *Liberty Times* on the 1997 Asian Baseball Championship in Taiwan (see Figure 5-2). The flag in the image was considered a plot that connected the national icon of the ROC with the Chinese Taipei team.²⁶ The report embodied Jenkins’s (2014, p. 143) argument, “Symbolisation permits the necessary abstraction of individuals and collectivities, and of the relationships between them, which is the constitutional basis of the notion of society”. The national significance of the ROC was abstracted as a flag and/ or the name of Chinese Taipei. Through newspaper dissemination and reporting, the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Chinese Taipei, imbued with the nation-ness of the ROC/ China, was regarded as a solid connection. It was drilled into the public for self-definition. As C.-C. Ni (2009) suggested, the use of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) enabled the KMT administration to establish a seamless connection with the ROC/ Chinese imagined community. Further, the nationalised/ ROCised Chinese Taipei also answers, in part, the question from Reicher and Hopkins (2001, p. 62): “Which national categories are used for self-definition?”. Thus, in Taiwan’s sports field, the concept of Chinese Taipei—which has been abstracted, symbolised, and nationalised based on the shared citizenship within the ROC—represents one of the most significant national categories used to construct self-identity. In Taiwan’s international sport context, although the ROC is banned, the desire of the Taiwanese people to display their national identity does not disappear. Therefore, Chinese Taipei was established as a national symbol to fulfil this desire. This is consistent with Jarvie (1993, p.

²⁶ In the context of Taiwan, Chinese Taipei is often referred to simply as Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), such as Chung-Hu (中華/ Chinese) Team, when referring to the PRC’s team usually use Chung-Kuo (中國) or Ta-Lu (大陸/ Mainland).

74) who asserts, “Sport provides a form of symbolic action which states the case for the nation itself”.

Democratisation challenged the legitimacy of Chinese nationalism on the island (Stockton, 2002). Compared with the early 1990s, when Chinese nationalism on the island was imbued with ethnic ideology, by the late 1990s, it shifted its focus from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism. National categories from other countries, such as Japan and Brazil's nationhood, and those from the ROC itself, including the national flag and the nationalised concept of Chinese Taipei, were both used to create identity. In this period, as Tilly (2005) suggested, the formation of the boundary of the nation-state and citizenship were based on the connection between citizen and state apparatus rather than based on zone. In the process of building the nation-state boundary, symbols representing the state apparatus of the ROC repeatedly appeared in sports coverage, such as names—Chung (中/the ROC) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)—and the national flag to link Chinese Taipei as tools to identify “our” with “others” and invite people who share the political power into the imagined community. It is exactly what H.-C. Chang and Holt (2009, p. 303) state, “lies the intricate intertwining of language, ideology, and identity construction”. Thus, these findings show that the usage of “Chung (中/ the ROC) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” should not be considered politically neutral. The terms are not only the short form of Chung-Kuo (中國/the ROC) and Chung-Hua Min-Kuo (中華民國/ the ROC), but also a political icon that the KMT can strategically adopt to maintain the ROC framework and the notion of a shared Chinese identity across the Taiwan Strait.

In 1996, the establishment of the Taiwan Major League (TML) mirrored Taiwanese society's growing demand for Taiwanisation at that time. Under this cultural and political climate, the TML named Naluwa, which means “hello” and “beautiful home” in Amis language, as the company's name to present the league's characteristics of caring for the

land and paying attention to local culture (Taiwan WIKI Baseball, 2023). For example, the league started its annual baseball season on February 28, a date marking the 228 Incident—a brutal crackdown by the KMT government on civilian protests in Taiwan in 1947. The TML articulated baseball and localisation through symbolism and rituals. Wang (2009, p. 366) asserted that “all the details of TML’s launch were designed to echo the strong quest for a Taiwanese identity”.



Figure 5-2 Fans waved national flags and cheered for the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team.

Note. Reprinted from: K.-W. Chung (1997). During the match between Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Japanese teams in the Asian Baseball Championship, fans at the scene waved national flags and cheered for the Chinese team, *Liberty Times*, p. 26.

5.2.2.2 The defeat of Chinese nationalism in the face of “real” China.

China/ the PRC, as a significant other in Taiwan’s national identity, is not only the antithesis/ opponent of Taiwanese nationalism but also a critical challenge towards the KMT’s Chinese civic nationalism. News articles covering Taiwan's matches with the PRC team provided examples of Taiwan's transformation from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism, further embodying the change of connotation of Chinese nationalism in Taiwan.

Bairner (1996, 2008) stated that national identity is often emphasised and represented through participation in, watching, and organising sports ceremonies and competitive events. The 1997 Asian Baseball Championship was held in Taipei, Taiwan, marking the first time the PRC baseball team arrived in Taiwan. Their coming also had an impact on the Chinese nationalism of the KMT. The challenge was due to the Olympic Protocol, which means that the national symbols of the ROC must be removed from baseball diamonds, causing the ROC to lose a venue in its territory where it could display the KMT’s Chinese nationalist sentiments. Three main newspapers reported on the issue of the national anthem and flag caused by the Olympic Protocol respectively. *Liberty Times* stated that to avoid unnecessary complications, the national flag would not be raised, and the national anthem would not be played during the opening and closing ceremonies (Y.-M. Wang). *China Times* also reported the issue and stated that “the organiser got the order to handle the issue of the national flag and national anthem in a low-key manner and do not highlight the national flag of Mainland China appearing at the Taipei Municipal Baseball Stadium for the first time” (A.-H. Yang, 1997, p. 30). The issue was further covered by *United Daily News* in its hot news page: “The five-star flag²⁷ hanging at the Taipei Municipal Baseball Stadium...Our side adhered to the Olympic regulations regarding flag display” (K.-Y. Li, 1997a). In the content of news reports, it can be seen that because of the Olympic Protocol,

²⁷ The PRC’s national flag is often called five-star flag in Taiwan.

KMT's Chinese nationalism was treated as a political controversy, by the advent of the PRC. All national symbols with Chinese connotations were expected to yield to the "real" China — in 1971, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 confirmed that "Recognising that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations" (United Nations, 1971).

The 1997 Asian Baseball Championship embodies the ROC civic nationalism. The coverage surrounding competition between Taiwan and China made an impact on the KMT's nationalist ideology, in which news articles were employed to distinguish Taiwan from China although China/ the PRC was still called Mainland in the coverage. A few examples follow. A *United Daily News* article read: "Mainland team landed in Taiwan; we have a very good chance of winning" (Y.-C. Li, 1997, p. 28). On May 26, 1997, *United Daily News* further reported on the game against China that "fortunately, we have Chen Chin-Feng...Yesterday, the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team had a tough game against the Mainland team...But in the end, the (Chung-Hua/Chinese) team won" (K.-Y. Li, 1997b, p. 30). Further, *Liberty Times* regarded defeating China as an honour. In its coverage:

From 1985 to the current Asian Baseball Championship (1997), the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team faced Mainland nine times in international competitions and maintained a perfect record of victories. To defend this honour, when facing the Mainland team, which has made rapid progress in recent years, the Chung-Hua (中華 / Chinese) team was overly nervous at the beginning and almost failed to maintain a win (C.-C. Wu, 1997, p. 30).

Although hosting the 1997 Asian Baseball Championship resulted in the challenge to the KMT's claim to Chinese nationalism and Chineseness, it also provided an opportunity to reconstruct Taiwan's Chinese nationalism to embody a nationalism that was closer to reality.

Similar to the events of 1971, when Beijing replaced Taipei as the “real” China in the UN, this shift prompted Taiwanese intellectuals of that era to confront the political reality (Hsiao, 2010). The arrival of “real” China’s sports team on Taiwan’s baseball diamonds also allowed the masses in the 1990s to get back to reality. The case of the 1997 Asian Baseball Championship confirmed Sundeen’s (2001) argument that baseball in Taiwan revealed that the increasing gaps between the ROC/Taiwan and the PRC/China brought by economics, politics, and culture made the Chinese national Identity undesirable for most Taiwanese.

T. K.-y. Wong (1997) observed that Taiwan/ the ROC after democratisation represented a nascent civil society and nation-state consistent with its existing jurisdictional territory. Further, the PRC’s monopolisation of the name “China” in the international community (Y.-S. Wu, 1996) and Taiwan’s political reformation compelled the KMT to transfer its nationalist narrative from a culture-based ethnic nationalism to a politics-system-based civic nationalism. This transition was necessary to maintain its rule and prevent the ROC from being swept away by the wave of democratisation (T. K.-y. Wong, 2001). Baseball embodied these phenomena. Through reporting sports competition with China/ the PRC, the term “Mainland” came to be considered a foreign country by the people of Taiwan. As a result, Mainland China and Mainlanders gradually ceased being considered part of the territory or members of the ROC by Taiwanese people.

In summary, as Anderson (1983) observed, the narratives in news reports help construct an imagined community by distinguishing between “our group” and “the others”. Moreover, these narratives subtly embed distinctions into the public consciousness via displaying the nationalist plots in news reports (Billig, 1995). Thus, Taiwan’s Chinese nationalism was reproduced and reinterpreted through concepts of bloodline, culture, and political system (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). As Arnold (2020) suggested, sports contribute to overlaying the concepts of civic and ethnic nationalism on a society. The sports coverage

in Taiwan in the 1990s embodied how nationalism was installed into Taiwanese society. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that the Chinese nationalism in Taiwan can be narrated in the form of either ethnic nationalism or civic nationalism, with the goal of achieving the political ends required by the social reality in different eras.

5.3 The Taiwanisation of the ROC political totems and the change of nationalist opponent (2001-2010)

During the Chen Shui-Bian administration (2000-2008), he launched a series of Taiwanese nationalist political movements. For example, in August 2002, he proposed the slogan of one country on each side of the Taiwan Strait; in March 2004 he held a defensive referendum²⁸ with two questions:

1. The People of Taiwan demand that the Taiwan Strait issue be resolved through peaceful means. “Should Communist China refuse to withdraw the missiles it has targeted at Taiwan and to openly renounce the use of force against us, would you agree that the Government should acquire more advanced anti-missile weapons to strengthen Taiwan’s self-defence capabilities?” (Central Election Commission (Taiwan), 2019).
2. “Would you agree that our Government should engage in negotiation with Communist China on the establishment of a ‘peace and stability’ framework for cross-strait interactions in order to build consensus and for the welfare of the peoples on both sides?” (Central Election Commission (Taiwan), 2019).

²⁸ A referendum model that skips collecting citizen signatures and launched by the government, it aims at safeguarding national security. According to Referendum Act (Taiwan) Article 16: When the country is under the threat of foreign force and the national sovereignty is likely to change, the President may, by a resolution of the meeting of the Executive Yuan, put matters regarding national security to referendum (Law & Regulations Database of The Republic of China (Taiwan), 2019).

In February 2006, Chen further repealed the National Unification Council and *Guidelines for National Unification*. In 2007, school history textbooks separated the history of Taiwan from that of China and in other textbooks, the term “Mainland” was renamed to “China” and “our country” was only used to refer to Taiwan.

In March 2008, another referendum was held:

In 1971, the People’s Republic of China joined the United Nations, replacing the Republic of China and causing Taiwan to become an orphan in the world. To strongly express the will of the people of Taiwan and to enhance Taiwan’s international status and participation in international affairs, do you agree that the government should apply for UN membership under the name “Taiwan”? (Central Election Commission (Taiwan), 2019).

Although these referendums were defeated,²⁹ Taiwanese national identity has flourished, while the Chinese identity has gradually diminished. C.-S. Lin, Yu, and Hsieh (2010) suggested that the increase of Taiwanese national identity was due to Chen’s political movements. Additionally, as the coalescence of Taiwan and the ROC, the main political opponent of Taiwanese nationalism transformed from the ROC’s Chinese nationalism to the PRC’s Chinese nationalism. The role of China/ Chinese in sports coverage also changed from compatriot to competitor.

Thus, from 2000 to 2010, under the circumstances of the wave of Taiwanisation, this section explores how Taiwan was narrated and interacted with the ROC in sports news coverage to understand how Taiwan and the ROC used or integrated parts of each other to

²⁹ In 2003, Taiwan’s *Referendum Act* was established with a double 50% threshold. This means that for a national referendum to be approved, it must achieve a turnout rate of over 50%, and more than half of the valid votes must be in favour. The three referendums sponsored by Chen all received over 90% approval from voters. However, they did not pass due to insufficient voter turnout, which was 45.17%, 45.12%, and 35.82% respectively.

achieve individual or common political goals. Specifically, this section aims to comprehend the role of ROC nation-ness in the development of Taiwanese nationalism and the role of Taiwan-ness in maintaining the ROC nationalism³⁰ while coping with the impact of the increasing Taiwanese identity. News articles with keywords “Taiwan (team)”, “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) (team)”, “Chinese Taipei”, “China (team)”, “Mainland (team)”, “the competition between Taiwan and X”, and “the competition between Chung (中/the ROC) and X” embodied the transformation of nationalism in Taiwan.

5.3.1 The interdependence of Taiwan and the ROC

During the 1990s and the early 2000s, the term “Taiwan” was not commonly used in news reports, and when it was, it was often used as a regional name, such as “journalists from Taiwan” or “cheerleaders from Taiwan” (China Times Asian Games Reporting Team, 1998a, p. 31; 1998b). A report from *China Times* on the 1995 Asian Baseball Championship more clearly showed the situation of Taiwan as a regional name. It stated “Taiwan’s sluggers are the most feared by their opponents; the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team’s intense training in Kurashiki attracted reporters to explore the situation” (H. Lin, 1995, p. 21). Taiwan and the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team were mentioned in the same title, in which Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) was the name of the team representing the ROC while Taiwan was referred to as a regional name.

This situation has changed with the wave of Taiwanisation. A report from *China Times* on the flag handover ceremony for the 2000 Sydney Olympiad stated that:

The ROC President Chen Shui-Bian... handed over flags (the ROC national and Chinese Taipei Olympic flag) to the Chinese Taipei Olympic delegation...The president took a

³⁰ The KMT's Chinese nationalism has shifted from ethnic to civic, drawing on the political system of the ROC. Therefore, for accuracy, this study has divided Chinese nationalism into Chinese nationalism (referring to the PRC) and ROC nationalism.

photo with national athletes and wrote “Go Taiwan” on the uniform of the flagbearers and signed his name as a form of encouragement (Wei, 2000, p. 30).

From the above report, it can be seen that Chen’s action in the flag handover ceremony merged the ROC with Chinese Taipei and transformed Taiwan into a national symbol. Thus, the news coverage of “Go Taiwan” and the flag handover ceremony was regarded as a plot to invent a new tradition, which merged the ROC, Chinese Taipei and Taiwan into a unified concept with national significance. Chen’s action elevated the term “Taiwan” to national significance, despite that he appropriated the concept from the ROC.

The news coverage surrounding the 2001 Baseball World Cup held in Taiwan, and in which Taiwan won the bronze medal, embodied the fusion of Taiwan and the ROC, or more precisely, the mutual exploitation of Taiwanese nationalism and the ROC nationalism. In the news reports the three terms were used interchangeably. For example, *China Times* and *United Daily News* reported:

China Times: “Queuing up at 6 a.m.... The Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) baseball team can make Taiwanese go crazy!” (W.-C. Tseng, 2001, p. 30).

China Times: “The Baseball World Cup has caused a sensation in Taiwan, especially with the (Chung-Hua/Chinese) team igniting the passion for watching baseball...the daily routine of the Taiwanese...”(C.-H. Chen, 2001, p. 30).

China Times: “Thank goodness Taiwan still has baseball...The Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team clinched third place in this year's Baseball World Cup!” (Shou, 2001, p. 15).

United Daily News: “The Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) player Hsu Ming-Chieh will be the starting pitcher in the Baseball World Cup opening game...The president will

throw out the ceremonial first pitch for tonight's match between Chung (中/ the ROC) and Italy" (K.-Y. Li, 2001, p. 5).

These examples show that with Taiwanisation and democratisation, the boundaries between the terms "Taiwan" and "Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)" were increasingly blurred in the sports field. The ambiguity allowed both the ROC nationalists and Taiwanese nationalists to selectively adopt or discard specific nationalist significances to re-interpret them to achieve their political ends. The narratives in news coverage illustrate this phenomenon, showing that the ROC's Chineseness, nationhood and national identity were confirmed and strengthened through the repeated mention of the term "Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team". Additionally, the term "president" as a symbol of the ROC was employed to remind the Taiwanese that they are ROC citizens and to support the ROC's status as a nation-state, within its territory - Taiwan. These findings are consistent with C.-Y. Lin et al. (2010) study that the authorities exploited the 2001 Baseball World Cup to establish the connection between baseball and politics, developing Taiwan's nationalism and further reshaping its national identity.

On the other hand, the constantly repeated terms "Taiwan" and "Taiwanese" served as a reminder that Taiwanese people are not Chinese and do not belong to China/ the PRC and that Taiwan has its nationhood. Additionally, the patriotist actions among fans, such as queuing in the early morning and baseball craze, were exploited to strengthen a sense of nationhood in Taiwan. Taiwanese baseball fans' patriotist behaviours were also exploited to be considered the public's reaffirmation of Taiwan as a nation-state, even though the passion of the Taiwanese was directed towards the Chinese Taipei team, which was designed to uphold the ROC's Chinese nation-ness after the ROC lost its recognition as the "real China". The outcome of this case contrasts with the perspective of Billings, Brown, and Brown (2013), who argue that patriotists tend to feel pride in their nation without making

comparisons to other national groups, whereas nationalists are likely to make comparisons and conclude that their home team is superior. In this instance, the development of Taiwanese nationalism was driven not only by comparisons with other national groups but also, to a certain extent, by patriotism.

The success of hosting sports events and the achievement of the baseball team were employed by politicians to achieve political ends through stirring up nationalist fervour on the island. Amidst local elections in Taiwan, politicians' statements regarding the 2001 Baseball World Cup and their attendance at games were widely covered. One obvious example is Chen Shui-bian's speech during the election campaign. The news report said:

Chen Shui-Bian utilised the spirit of the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team, who won third place and became the Asian champion in the World Baseball Cup, to encourage (Taiwanese) nationals to vote for the DPP and its increasingly efficient governance. Chen likened the DPP government to the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team, highlighting its youth and dynamism, and emphasised the need for the people's support... Chen further said that due to the spirit of not giving up, he won the Prize for Freedom, but the prize was not awarded to him personally, but to all 23 million Taiwanese people... (Fanchiang, 2001, p. 2).

The achievement of the baseball team was interpreted as a victory of Taiwan and even Taiwanese people, in which the spirit of the team was considered Taiwan's resilience and determination. The spirit was further narrated as the common values of Taiwanese people. Further the baseball team's success was also employed by Chen to foster a unified Taiwanese national identity as a means of addressing ethnic political tensions, according to C.-Y. Lin et al. (2010). Thus, it can be seen that Chen's speech reconnected the Chung-Hua

(中華/ Chinese) team with the Taiwanese spirit, replacing Taiwanese-ness with Chinese-ness in Chinese Taipei.

Exploiting sport to achieve political goals is not exclusive to Taiwanese nationalists. Baseball games were also exploited by the ROC nationalists to strengthen national identity in opposition to the Taiwanese nationalism. Letters to the editor in the pro-China *United Daily News* demonstrated that the public was mobilised into the ROC nationalism via watching the games. For example, a high school teacher criticised the diminishing visibility of the ROC due to Taiwanisation. She noted that nowadays, students only saw the ROC in textbooks, but through broadcasts of Chung (中/ the ROC)-US and, Chung (中/ the ROC)-Netherlands competitions they realised that the ROC exists not only in textbooks but also in baseball field (M.-Y. Wu, 2001). Another contribution further highlighted that the ROC national flag in the baseball park embodied the passion towards the ROC. The letter stated, “it was truly happy to see numerous flags waving in the ballpark of the Baseball World Cup...What we watch is not just the game, but more importantly the passion for the country, which has been lost for a long time” (Y.-C. Liang, 2001, p. 15). The reports in newspapers of flag waving and celebrating victories were reinterpreted as acts of patriotism to mobilise the public in reaffirming the nationhood of the ROC. However, the mobilisation targets were limited to those on the island.

5.3.2 Taiwan: from a regional name to a short form of the ROC

In 2004, Chen Shui-Bian won the presidential re-election. In his inaugural address, Chen redefined the ROC and Taiwan. He stated:

Regardless of whether an individual identifies with Taiwan or with the Republic of China...a shared sense of belonging has become the common denominator among all the 23 million people of Taiwan... The ROC now exists in Taiwan, Penghu (The

Pescadores), Kinmen and Matsu. This is a fact. Taiwan's existence as a member of international society is also a fact (S.-B. Chen, 2004a).

Chen's address reflected/established an important political statement that the ROC is Taiwan, and vice versa. Via Chen's political declaration, the ROC was Taiwanised and Taiwan was nationalised. Therefore, after that, the term "Taiwan" has become more and more common in official occasions.

The wave of Taiwanisation also hit the sports field. Taiwan became a symbol of building self-recognition. With the national significance of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Taiwan merged, the terms "Taiwan team" and "Zhongguo (中国/ the PRC) team" began to appear in sports news reports following the 2004 Athens Olympics. The appearance of the Taiwan team further strengthened the ambiguity between Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Taiwan although the use of the name "Taiwan team" was criticised. The term "Taiwan Team" was first used in TTV's³¹ broadcast of the Athens Olympics. *United Daily News* reported various opinions. For example, the then general Manager of TTV, Cheng Yo, in an interview stated that:

The timing to switch over to Taiwan team is ready. It is natural to identify ourselves as Taiwanese because we live in Taiwan. In the past, we referred to the team as Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team. This was a mistaken perception (N.-G. Lin, 2004, p. A11).

But the approach caused controversy. A baseball anchor said in an interview with *United Daily News* that "I could not use the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team, and I did not want to mention the Taiwan team, so I had to say representative team of our country" (N.-G. Lin,

³¹ A free-to-air terrestrial television channel of the semi-official Taiwan Television Company.

2004). Cheng and the anchor's speeches illustrate that the term "Taiwan team" was interpreted as a political term with Taiwanese nationalist significance. However, the use of Taiwan team actually strengthened the connection between the ROC and Taiwan. The news reports in *United Daily News* displayed the phenomenon. For instance, "Let us cheer together for both Taiwan and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)" (T.-H. Chang & Wang, 2004, p. A11); "International friends often call us Taiwan, there is no right or wrong" (H.-Y. Huang, 2004, p. A11); "No matter we are Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) or Taiwan, winning the first gold medal is what matters" (Chia, 2004).

The term "Taiwan Team" was not only used by the media but also by officials. In 2004, the term "Taiwan Team" was first shown in official documents. It was in a press release from the Presidential Office, with the title "The First Lady to lead the Taiwan Team to the 2004 Olympic Games³² in Athens" (Office of the President (Taiwan), 2004a). Further, on September 7, 2004, the term "Taiwan team" was mentioned for the first time by President Chen:

On behalf of the government and the people, gratitude to the athletes who achieved outstanding results at the Athens Olympics... by winning two gold medals for our country, completed the historic mission of winning gold medals for Taiwan team. This not only brought supreme honour to Taiwan but also made our compatriots feel proud (Office of the President (Taiwan), 2004b).

There was a tendency in news coverage and press releases to make the equation between the ROC and Taiwan. The plots in the coverage surrounding the use of Taiwan team repeatedly reminded the public of a new tradition that Taiwan and the ROC are the same.

³² It should actually be the Paralympic Games.

In 2006, the Chen Shui-Bian administration faced political pressure both domestically and internationally. At home, he was charged with corruption, while abroad, the PRC enacted the Anti-Secession Law, providing a legal basis for the use of force against Taiwan. Under these circumstances, Chen employed the same strategy as in the 2001 Baseball World Cup, stirring up nationalist sentiment by hosting the 2007 Baseball World Cup to divert attention from governance issues and to foster unity against PRC pressure (C.-Y. Lin, 2012). Additionally, the ceremonies and sports reports surrounding the event further reinforced the Taiwanisation of “Chinese Taipei,” as had been the case in 2001.

The present study illustrates that Taiwanisation is a two-way strategy. For Taiwanese nationalists, it elevates Taiwan into a national concept. For ROC nationalists, the nation-ness of the ROC can continue to exist by relying on Taiwan and the Taiwanese. Thus, in this interrelationship the complex national narratives are embodied in everyday life via sports, especially baseball. Taiwanisation was widely accepted amongst people of Taiwan, and the KMT also appropriated the label of “the Taiwanese” in the 2004 presidential campaign. For example, The theme music of the KMT was titled “*The Wish of Taiwanese people*” (Fishpu, 2012). Further, the ambiguity in Taiwan and the ROC allows Taiwanese society to embrace cultural diversity and reduce political conflict (Lams & Liao, 2011).

5.3.3 The PRC: a main opponent in Taiwan’s nation-building

After the national connotations of Taiwan and the ROC gradually merged, or Taiwanese nationalism appropriated the connotation of the nation-ness of the ROC, China (PRC) was considered a main political opponent in Taiwan’s nation-building. Within sports news covering China, there are two themes that show how Taiwanese nationalism exploited the plots in news articles: 1. the narrative of China’s oppression of Taiwan/ Chinese Taipei; 2. the baseball defeat against China and the collective memory.

During the 2004 Athens Olympics, reports regarding China's oppression were appearing in sports news reports. For example, *China Times* reported:

To welcome the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) delegation to the Athens Olympics, the Government Information Office placed advertisements at Athens Airport to cheer for Taiwan. However, the airport removed the advertisements under political pressure from China, which demanded that Taiwan not be advertised...Lin Chia-lung, then Director-General of the Government Information Office, said that all advertising copy complied with the Olympic Protocol, with "Chinese Taipei awesome! awesome! awesome! (中華臺北棒！棒！棒！)" in Chinese characters and "Chinese Taipei" in English displayed on the trolleys (Wei & Tsai, 2004, p. A1).

The news coverage was the first time since 1990 that China's oppression in the sports field was reported. It illustrated the merger of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Chinese Taipei and Taiwan and further emphasised that China's oppression of Taiwan was indifferent to whether Taiwan was referred to as Taiwan or Chinese Taipei. The news article plots embodied that the nationalist amalgam was constantly mentioned, and the Taiwanese have widely internalised the new tradition as collective memory. Simultaneously, the plots connected past facts of political, military and economic oppression from China with the current oppression in the sports field to remind the Taiwanese who caused their tragedy. As suggested by Halbwachs (1992), collective memory is a form of selective memory. Via contradistinction, distinguishing between Taiwan and China was re-confirmed and presented in the newspapers. As Tung (2013) notes, the identity of the Taiwanese people is strengthened by resisting oppression and by a sense of differentiation.

Another case was the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Xu (2006) suggested that the Beijing authorities leveraged the opportunity of hosting the Olympiad to foster patriotism among

the Chinese people and to demonstrate China's aspirations for greater global influence, with the subjugation of Taiwan being a key component of this broader objective. Against this background, the existence of Taiwan/ the ROC was considered a challenge towards the one-China principle unilaterally declared by China. It was conceivable that China employed the Olympics to take advantage of Taiwan. The controversy surrounding the Olympic torch relay route was a striking example. Liu Qi, the Chairman of the Beijing Olympics Organising Committee, stated that the domestic route of the torch relay should include Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau (N.-S. Lin, 2007). The plan caused dissatisfaction in Taiwan, which saw it as a derogation of its sovereignty and requested the torch must enter Taiwan from a third-party country and depart to a fourth-party country (T.-P. Lo & Chao, 2007). After negotiations, the route in Taiwan was considered an extraterritorial route. However, Beijing demanded that the national flag, anthem, and emblem not be displayed, hence Taiwan refused the torch relay (Cheng-Chun Li, 2007). China's political actions amidst the Olympics again backfired on its political ends. According to Mainland Affairs Council's poll, 64.2% of the respondents refused to accept Beijing's insistence that the torch visit Taiwan as part of the PRC's domestic route, referring to Taiwan as China Taipei (中国台北), and 61.1% believed Taiwan should not accept the torch route if the route would derogate Taiwan's sovereignty. Nevertheless, China still spared no effort to derogate Taiwan. For example, the Chinese Taipei (中華臺北) was translated into China Taipei (中国台北), literal meaning China Taipei, and was placed with Hong Kong and Macao in the same area at the Beijing Olympics International Press Centre (BBC, 2008; *Liberty Times*, 2008b).

The performance of Taiwanese athletes was employed as a vehicle for standing against Chinese nationalism. The baseball team's performance was particularly anticipated as baseball, in addition to being the national sport, was one of the few sports where Taiwan had a clear advantage over China. However, on 15 August, the Taiwanese baseball team lost

to China for the first time³³ in an official international game. The competition received significant attention from the Taiwanese. It was considered a must-win game, and the victory was a requirement to advance to the Final Four, which meant defeating China was one of the necessary conditions for winning medals (*Liberty Times*, 2008c). However, In the overtime game with the rule of a tiebreaker, Taiwan lost to China 7-8 in the bottom of the 12th inning. The game loss was elevated to a national level and interpreted as a national humiliation in news narratives. The news reports on the competition from three newspapers embodied the trauma of the Taiwanese. They stated:

China Times: “The national humiliation of 815: Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) unexpectedly loses to Mainland in baseball” (C.-H. Chen, 2008, p. A6).

Liberty Times: “Ridiculously absurd! Taiwan suffered a turn-around defeat, losing to China with a score of 7-8” (*Liberty Times*, 2008).

United Daily News: “an 8:7 defeat, our first loss to Mainland, the darkest day of baseball” (L.-H. Huang, 2008, p. A1).

The loss sparked anger amongst Taiwanese. *United Daily News* reported that netizens not only called for the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team to swim back to Taiwan but also suggested designating the day of the loss as “August 15 National Disaster Day” (Y.-C. Tseng, Tsai, & Chen, 2008, p. A6). *China Times* also covered the dissatisfaction of the fans and stated that “fans vent online to question who should take responsibility for yesterday’s ‘national disgrace day’. Netizens described losing baseball to China as feeling unified by Mainland China” (H.-P. Li & Chen, 2008, p. A6). The reports and fans reactions illustrate the nationalist significance given to this defeat; it was not only the defeat of the Chinese Taipei

³³ As of 2024, China has defeated Taiwan in baseball games three times. In addition to the competitions in the text, the other games were the 2009 World Baseball Classic and the 2013 Tianjin East Asian Games, but these did not cause as significant a response as the first time.

baseball team but also a blow to the national confidence. The narrative towards failure was elevated to the level of national humiliation and was described as the ultimate defeat—annexed by the PRC, as stated by An and Loh (2010, p. 61), “no matter whether the outcome of the game was described as a national disgrace or a national mourning, it affirms the connection between baseball and the overall values and historical memory of Taiwan”. Therefore, the defeat strengthened Taiwanese national identity. Further, Taiwanese people did not consider China’s team victory as their own victory and the unification with China was interpreted as a failure. Thus, in this defeat, Chinese nationalism was more distinctly excluded by the Taiwanese. Further, this defeat not only affected the people at that time but was also repeatedly mentioned in the years that followed as humiliation, becoming a collective memory exclusive to the Taiwanese people.

According to Halbwachs (1980), collective memory was constructed by contemporary society through the selective remembering or forgetting of specific events according to its needs. Connerton (1989), further, echoed that collective memory was formed through texts, bodies, and celebratory activities. Collective memory provides important techniques and models in the formation of collective identity (An & Loh, 2010; Melucci, 1996). Further, the memories towards specific sports events serviced a plot to form collective memory (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009). In Taiwan, the trauma will be mentioned again and served as a plot to remind people of the humiliation that only belongs to the Taiwanese from time to time. For example, a *China Times* report stated that “two years ago, Taiwanese baseball team’s loss to the China team at the Beijing Olympics was seen as a day of national shame” (J.-H. Ho, 2010, p. A6). Further, in 2012, *Yahoo! News* published a series of reports on Taiwanese baseball and the Olympic games, the loss to China was reported again under the title “Olympic exclamation point/Taiwanese baseball in the Olympics (part V): The historic setback of 2008” (C.-D. Yang, 2012). Even in 2023, the defeat against China continues to

remind Taiwanese of their tragedy. A report in *Mirror Media* of Panama defeating Taiwan in the World Baseball Classic illustrated that the failure has been embedded in the collective memory of the Taiwanese and occasionally used to remind the public. The news covered the anecdotes in 2008 and some comments towards the loss. It stated:

Netizens said, “At least losing to Panama made them work overtime; losing to China is just pathetic”. “Losing to China is more frustrating (than losing to Panama)” “Losing to China is infuriating” ...during the game of Taiwan losing to China, a die-hard fan in his 70s surnamed Huang from Kaohsiung City watched the broadcast in front of the TV. As the game progresses, he becomes more and more angry. During the 11th inning, he suddenly felt difficulty breathing, collapsed, and never regained consciousness. He ultimately passed away from a heart attack (Y. Wu, 2023).

The news article embodied that losing baseball to China has developed as the traumatic collective memory of the Taiwanese. As Alexander (2004, p. 1) suggested, “members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness”. The news articles served as a representational form embodying the marks, constantly reminding Taiwanese about their group trauma. As Numerato and Svoboda (2022, p. 100) assert, “The role of collective memory was more strictly confined by the sphere of sport”. Through the repeated representation of collective memory in the sports news, the plots were instilled into Taiwanese with a subtle method integrating people on the island into an imagined community, as suggested by Anderson (1983) and Billig (1995).

In the 2000s, Taiwanese baseball embodied John Breuilly’s (1996) assertion that, nationalist ideology has three major functions: coordination, mobilisation, and legitimacy, and it plays different roles at different stages. First, Chen Shui-Bian used the 2001 Baseball

World Cup and the nationalist ideology behind it to mobilise the people of Taiwan into a political field. Next, he adopted baseball games and their achievements to connect Taiwan with the ROC and assert Taiwan's legitimacy as an independent political community. Finally, the collective memory of the baseball defeat against China coordinated ROC nationalists and Taiwanese nationalists in their stance towards the outside world, particularly the PRC.

5.4 Looking for recognition and creating self-recognition (2010-2023)

Several social events strengthened and embodied the islanders' identification with Taiwan during this period. The 2014 Sunflower Student Movement—a student movement opposing the signing of the *Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement* between Taiwan and China—later evolved into a broader movement against the ruling party's overly pro-China stance. The movement embodied the antipathy towards China and strong awareness of Taiwan (Au, 2017; P.-T. Lin, Cheng, & Wang, 2020; S. R. Pan, 2014). Tsai Ing-Wen was elected president in 2016 and won re-election in 2020, demonstrating that Taiwanese identity was not only perceived as a regional identity but also developed into a national identity (S.-f. Cheng, 2022; Y.-Y. Liang, 2022). Further, the 2019–2020 Hong Kong protests and in 2020, Xi Jinping's issuing of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, in which Xi made a grand statement about implementing the one country, two systems framework for Taiwan, have both heightened Taiwanese people's sense of crisis toward China (C.-L. Cheng, 2019; Y. Ma, 2020). The subsequent COVID-19 outbreak originating in China further strengthened the national consciousness of Taiwanese people to distinguish more clearly between the two countries (Casado, 2021; SETN Political Centre, 2020; C.-H. Tsai, 2023).

In the meantime, Taiwan's baseball team has gradually overcome the shadow of defeat against China. At the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games the Taiwanese team achieved second place. In the 2011 World Port Tournament, Taiwan beat Cuba to win the title. In the 2012

World Baseball Classic qualifiers, Taiwan won first place and advanced to the main draw. In 2014, 2015, and 2017, the Taiwanese baseball team achieved second place at the Incheon Asian Games and the 27th and 28th Asian Baseball Championships, respectively. Furthermore, in the 2018 Jakarta and 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games, the Taiwan team achieved third and second place, respectively. Additionally, in the 2019 Asian Baseball Championship, after nearly two decades, the Taiwanese baseball team once again defeating Japan (silver medal) and China (bronze medal) won the gold medal.

Thus, with the ROC's Taiwanisation, Taiwan's nationalisation and the Otherisation of China, the development of Taiwanese nationalism and Taiwanese national identity has been gradually transferred to the consolidation of national identity. According to Chiang (2015), looking for recognition from abroad, especially developed countries, was an important theme for Taiwanese nation-building. The sports news coverage embodied the phenomenon. For instance, *Liberty Times* stated that "Taiwanese baseball is different! South Korean coach points out that past weaknesses are gone" (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2023). During the period of the nation-state's consolidation, two major baseball events affected the development of Taiwanese nationalism: 1) The overseas baseball players' patriotic speech; 2) the launch and retransmission of the CPBL season during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4.1 Overseas baseball players, patriotism and national identity

D. Andrews and Jackson (2001) proposed that sports celebrities play an important role in shaping public perceptions, solidifying dominant ideologies, and providing relatable frameworks that help individuals navigate the complexities of modern life. In the context of Taiwanese baseball, the dual identities of overseas players—as both citizens and athletes recognised by modernity—were often reported and utilised in nation-building. News of

overseas Taiwanese baseball players representing or intending to represent Taiwan in international games was often a hot topic in reports and implied patriotism. The news reports on the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games surrounding overseas players served as examples. *Liberty Times* covered the participation intentions of three overseas players respectively and the following are quotes from there reports:

Yang Dai-Kang³⁴ in the interview expressed that he is very willing to wear the national team jersey again. It would not feel right to not play for the Taiwan team after resolving his military service obligations³⁵ (C.-C. Wu, 2010).

Chen Yung-Chi³⁶ said that two years ago (2008), after a knee injury...my performance was not satisfactory. Due to injuries, I did not join the national team again after the 2006 Duha Asian Games. Regarding the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, he expressed a desire to participate in the games. "I want to pick myself up from where I have fallen", Chen said (C.-T. Huang, 2010).

Yang Yao-Hsun³⁷ said: Since returning to Taiwan for the 2006 Intercontinental Cup, I have not participated in international games and have never been back to Taiwan. Yang further said that he is getting used to life in Japan but still misses everything about Taiwan and hopes to get another chance to achieve glory for Taiwan (W.-C. Ni, 2010).

The three news articles presented a patriotist theme of baseball players under different storylines. First, representing Taiwan is not only for fulfilling the military service obligation but also a patriotic action of the athlete, in which patriotism becomes a self-determinative

³⁴ At that time, he played in Hokkaido Nippon-Ham Fighters, Nippon Professional Baseball League, Japan.

³⁵ According to *Supplementary Military Service Regulations for National Sports Teams* (國家體育競技代表隊服補充兵役辦法), athletes representing the nation in international competitions can be considered as fulfilling supplementary military service.

³⁶ At that time, he played in Sacramento River Cats, Pacific Coast League, the USA.

³⁷ At that time, he pitched in Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks, Nippon Professional Baseball League, Japan.

behaviour of athletes. Next, Chen's story illustrated, even after facing injuries, he still had the patriotic fervour to represent Taiwan, and further, the hardships also echo the tragic narrative that is often mentioned in Taiwanese nationalism (N.-T. Wu, 1992, 1996). The third news report demonstrated that Yang cares about his motherland even though he has been away from Taiwan for a long time. The three cases portray athletes as role models of patriotism to mobilise the public into a nationalist field and strengthen national identity. Further, as suggested by Kobayashi and Cho (2019), sports celebrities embody the complexity in nation-building, including cultural, political, religious, and historical contexts.

The focus on overseas baseball players as an identity characteristic in news reports echoed Chiang (2015) and T.-H. Chen and Chiang (2019) argument. Their studies stated that due to Taiwan's status as an inherited country of modernity, the people on the island are anxious about being left behind by modernity. Thus, elite athletes and their achievements serve as a stage to present their identity to the international community and seek recognition. Additionally, the news reports highlight the paradox of Taiwanese nationalism, they aspire to join the ranks of modernity (modern nation-state), yet they depend on the athletes recognised by other entities of modernity to create their self-recognition and distinctiveness. It aligns with Y. Cho (2016, p. 8) assertion, "In colonised Taiwan, baseball was regarded as a Western tool for confronting Eastern imperialism (modernity)". Although contemporary Taiwanese people no longer need to confront Eastern imperialism and colonialism, baseball continues to be perceived as a Western tool for gaining recognition of modernity.

These findings are consistent with Y. Cho's (2016, p. 8) statement, "Baseball competitions often provided venues in which the colonised might excel over the colonisers...When such upsets occurred, the news carried nationalist ramifications". In other words, the players' overseas status caused them to carry nationalist sentiments. Those

narratives in the news reports echoed Morris (2004, 2011) statement, baseball was introduced to Taiwan by Japanese as part of the colonial order. Further, after the Second World War, in Taiwan, baseball embodied two types of modernity. It is both colonial legacies and is considered an embodiment of American values, suggested by Y. Cho (2016). In addition, due to China's oppression, Taiwanese are absent from the international community, and sport are their salvation, especially baseball (Chiang & Chen, 2014). Therefore, Taiwan's sports nationalist context exhibits two characteristics: 1. the development of Taiwan's nationalism is dominated by three forces—Japanese colonisation, American values under Cold War framework, and the PRC's oppression; and 2. Taiwan seeks to be treated as an independent entity but desires to be recognised by modernity.

5.4.2 COVID-19 pandemic, baseball and Taiwan's nationalism.

This section focuses on how Taiwanese people exploited the achievement of baseball to seek and create recognition against the background of the pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic reveals the rise of nationalist politics in the world (Woods, Schertzer, Greenfeld, Hughes, & Miller-Idriss, 2020). The COVID-19 outbreak, which began in Wuhan, China, in late 2019, triggered a wave of nationalism in Taiwan (Z. Wang, 2021). Casado (2021), noted that the pandemic bolstered Taiwanese identity construction. This surge of nationalism was evident in the dispute over evacuating overseas Taiwanese from Wuhan. China's refusal to allow an evacuation flight led to widespread criticism in Taiwan. The Mainland Affairs Council remarked, "If you truly care about our people, respond to our needs" (T.-Y. Kuo, Hsieh, & Chen, 2020). Political scientist Hung Chin-Fu pointed out that China's actions were seen as part of its unification agenda, treating Taiwan's epidemic situation as its own (L.-H. Chung, 2020).

The evacuation flight on February 3, 2020, operated by the China Eastern Airlines, was criticised for including non-priority passengers and those not on the approved list, with one diagnosed with COVID-19 (Chun-Mao Chang, 2020). Further, China insists on excluding Taiwan from the World Health Organisation because it views Taiwan as part of its territory. This illustrates how COVID-19 has been used to exacerbate nationalist conflicts (Woods et al., 2020). The incidents reinforced the negative perception of China using the pandemic for political purposes, further instilling distrust in Taiwanese minds (S.-H. Huang, 2020; Lai, 2020).

Taiwanese authorities also leveraged pandemic management to assert national sovereignty. Policies excluding non-Taiwanese citizens and prioritizing nationals highlighted Taiwan's nationalism. Health Minister Chen Shih-Chung's statement, "The highest principle is to give priority to nationals", emphasised this stance (L.-W. Yeh, 2020). Taiwan's successful pandemic response was portrayed as a model for nation-building, gaining international recognition (Central Health Insurance Agency, 2020; Chou, 2021; H.-Y. Liu, 2020; C.-L. Wang, 2020). This success fostered social cohesion and reinforced Taiwanese national identity (S.-H. Liu, 2022).

Although the pandemic provoked the nationalist sentiment within Taiwan (Woods et al., 2020), it also led to the rescheduling of international baseball events, disrupting their role in fostering national identity. As Majumdar and Naha (2020, p. 1092) stated "Sport, it is universally accepted, means little without its fans". For instance, the 2021 World Baseball Classic was postponed to 2023, and various youth and women's baseball tournaments were delayed. Taiwan's Olympic baseball team also withdrew from the 2021 final round preliminaries in Mexico due to pandemic concerns (C.-F. Yang, 2021). Amid this backdrop, the CPBL season launch, which reconnected spectators with sport, became a significant symbol of sports nationalism in Taiwan.

5.4.2.1 The launch of CPBL: an embodiment of national pride and good governance

Under the circumstances of the provoked nationalism in Taiwan, the CPBL launched its 2020 season before any professional baseball leagues around the world. It undoubtedly added fuel to the already rising nationalism. CPBL's season opening, and subsequent events embodied the two important themes of Taiwanese nationalism, seeking for recognition and constructing narratives for self-recognition.

The news that the CPBL season would open on April 11, 2020, was reported as an important sports event. The narrative linked Taiwan's pandemic management and baseball. The opening game embodied Taiwan's excellent pandemic management. Baseball was considered an obvious example to guide people into a nationalist field that has risen due to the pandemic. A news article with the title "The only one" in the world! While professional baseball leagues worldwide have suspended their seasons, only CPBL is still playing" from *China Times* stated:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage globally, with many countries still struggling to control the outbreak. As a result, professional baseball leagues worldwide, including Major League Baseball (MLB), have been forced to suspend operations...However, Taiwan has managed the pandemic well, the CPBL has been able to start its season as scheduled...The CPBL will play ball on April 11, making it the only professional baseball league in the world to begin its season amid the pandemic. It is expected to attract global attention from baseball fans (H.-Y. Teng, 2020b).

The news reports from *Liberty Times* further highlighted the international recognition and Taiwanese people's reactions. One of the articles reprinted the World Baseball Softball

Confederation (WBSC)'s article and stated that "WBSC noticed CPBL will be the first professional league in the world to play ball" (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2020c). Another stated: "Leading globally, the CPBL open today with extensive coverage from international media" (C.-Y. Hsu, 2020). Further, the COVID-19 management was noticed again. It reported a comment from netizens: "The reason CPBL can bring this good news was attributed to the government's excellent policies, which prevented COVID-19 from spreading widely in Taiwan" (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2020c). Despite the fact that the opening game did not allow spectators, fans were connected through television broadcasts and sports news coverage. It is congruent with Majumdar and Naha (2020) who argue that spectator cheers in front of the TV, just like those on-site, can be considered a symbol representing the emotions provoked by sport.

The rhetoric of "the only" and "the first", along with international media coverage, reflects how Taiwanese people construct their success narrative and self-recognition. These findings align with Evans and Kelly (2002) study, which suggests that national pride is linked to sports achievements, while social environments can influence the sense of belonging positively (Elling, Van Hilvoorde, & Van Den Dool, 2014).

The sports nationalism of CPBL was emphasised by politicians to mobilise the public to recognise their pandemic prevention policies. *Liberty Times* reported President Tsai Ing-Wen's Facebook post:

This year's first home run in the world comes from Taiwan! It is heartening to see fans from across the globe enthusiastically discussing CPBL, the Chinese Professional Baseball League, representing Taiwan in professional baseball. Let's all support Taiwanese baseball together! Of course, we remain steadfast in our pandemic

prevention efforts, Taiwan standing guard with the world! (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2020b).

China Times covered Vice President Lai Ching-Te' s Facebook post:

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected sporting events worldwide...The CPBL's opening became a focal point of international media and highlighted Taiwan's outstanding pandemic prevention achievements (Y.-P. Tseng, 2020).

The politicians' posts clearly showed that the launch of the baseball season was considered an embodiment of the achievements of Taiwan in pandemic control. In the narratives, looking for internationally recognition still occupied a vital role. These results are roughly in agreement with Yoon (2020) study. The South Korean government also employed professional sports games to highlight its good governance and forge nation-building, the opening and regulation of the K-League³⁸ to showcase its effective prevention and control measures against COVID-19 and overseas broadcasts of games improved the image of South Korea. Thus, this study argues that Taiwan's achievements were employed for creating self-recognition. It implied that Taiwan was not only a normal nation-state but also an excellent nation-state. The opening of the CPBL was the best example.

5.4.2.2 Baseball broadcasts in English, propaganda, and strengthening national identity

The news surrounding the CPBL's English broadcasts pushed the sports nationalism to its peak during the COVID-19 pandemic. The broadcast made a political slogan "letting the world see Taiwan" true. In this case, the development of nationalism surrounded the narratives of seeking recognition from others. For example, a report in *China Times* stated

³⁸ The highest level of men's professional football in South Korea.

that “CPBL’s opening attracts international attention, providing English broadcasts to showcase Taiwan”. The anchormen, Wang Ching-Yun and Wayne McNeil, said in the interview:

(We will) introduce the background of CPBL through broadcasting competitions. This is a good publicity opportunity to let everyone know who we are, why we can still play baseball during this time (the pandemic) and introduce where Taiwan is (H.-Y. Teng, 2020a).

Liberty Times interviewed General Manager of Eleven Sports³⁹ Taiwan Branch, Kang Hsiao-Ling, with an article titled “CPBL: 650,000 Viewers Watch ‘Brother Chu’ (Chu Yu-Hsien) Hit Three Home Runs! 60% of Twitter Live Audience from the USA”. She stated:

(Our broadcasts) let spectators worldwide who are eager to watch baseball games see the broadcasts of the CPBL... Let the world know that Taiwan has controlled the COVID-19 pandemic with the concerted efforts of the whole society so that the CPBL can start smoothly. I hope every Taiwanese can feel pride through Eleven Sports's global broadcasts (Liberty Times sports Centre, 2020a).

The news articles embodied a theme of Taiwanese nationalism, seeking recognition from others. The rhetoric such as “650,000 Viewers Watch...60% of Twitter live audience from the USA”, “let everyone know who we are” and “let the world know...” repeatedly implied to Taiwanese people that the world recognised their achievement. The findings of this study are in line with S.-C. Ma et al. (2023) research, confirming that broadcasting CPBL games in English strengthened Taiwanese baseball fans’ sense of national identity. However, Taiwan is located in the semi-peripheral zone of the global sport industry (Tan & Lee, 2020). In fact,

³⁹ A multinational sports and entertainment media group.

according to Y.-H. A. Hsu (2022), the CPBL's oversea viewership was poor and the funding of broadcasts, to a certain extent, was from the Taiwanese government budget aiming to display its excellent COVID-19 prevention measures. It echoes T.-H. Chen (2008) research whereby the government-funded Public Television Service in Taiwan strengthened Taiwanese national identity by broadcasting Wang Chien-Ming's games in Major League Baseball. These findings are in line with Woods et al. (2020, p. 809) who stated "Taiwan utilised COVID-19 to secure greater visibility in the international community". Baseball accelerated this process.

To conclude this chapter, from 1990 to 2023, baseball has played a crucial role in shaping Taiwanese nationalism, evolving through three key stages: democratisation in the 1990s, Taiwanisation in the 2000s, and the consolidation of national identity from 2011 onward. In the 1990s, Taiwanese nationalism transitioned from Han-centric Chinese nationalism to civic Chinese nationalism. Early on, the ROC's imagined community included Taiwan, Mainland China, and Mongolia, with Han ethnicity as a unifying factor. However, democratisation redefined national identity based on political participation rather than ethnicity. Baseball symbolised this shift, particularly through Taiwan's victories over Team China, reinforcing a separate identity from the PRC. The 2000s saw an increasing convergence of "ROC/ Chinese Taipei" and "Taiwan" in sports discourse. Nationalist narratives leveraged baseball to integrate the nationhood of the ROC with Taiwanese identity against the PRC. Taiwan's baseball victories and defeats, and China's political oppression in international sports became collective memories that strengthened national identity

Since 2011, nationalist narratives have focused on consolidating Taiwan's identity and international recognition. Overseas Taiwanese baseball players' patriotic statements reflected the nation's paradox and aspirations to modernity. The COVID-19 pandemic

further intensified baseball as a tool of building national pride. The CPBL's season opening and English broadcasts were framed as Taiwan's global achievements, reinforcing its identity as an independent and competent nation. These events served as political propaganda, stirring up nationalist sentiment of the public to support for the government's pandemic response while strengthening Taiwan's image as an independent nation-state abroad. Overall, baseball has transitioned from strengthening Chinese nationalism to becoming a vehicle for Taiwanese nationalism. through the reinterpretation of sports news, baseball continues to shape national pride, collective memory, and Taiwan's pursuit of international recognition.

Chapter 6

The 2018 name rectification referendum and contested narratives of sport nationalism in Taiwan

On 24 November 2018, Taiwan held a referendum on changing the name of Chinese Taipei to Taiwan in the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Although the Taiwanese national identity has gradually become a social consensus on the island in the last two decades, the referendum was defeated by Taiwanese voters, and the name remained unchanged.

According to NCCU's continuous public opinion surveys conducted since June 1992, as of January 2019, 58.5% of respondents identified themselves as Taiwanese. However, the outcome of the referendum did not align with the national identity prevalent on the island. This raises the question: why did the referendum fail to reflect the reality of Taiwan's national identity? To answer the question, this chapter investigates the coverage of the name rectification referendum in 2018 in Taiwan and its related coverage on social media platforms to examine the kinds of characteristics of sport used to create and recreate the imagined community of Taiwan. Further, it analyses the way in which the name of Chinese Taipei was reinterpreted as a new tradition or as a humiliating name.

This chapter starts by analysing the previous studies to build the context of the origin of the name of Chinese Taipei. It then investigates newspaper articles and comments on the name rectification referendum to analyse the change and range of attitudes and interpretation/re-interpretation of the government, the elites, and public opinion towards Chinese Taipei. Following this, the chapter proceeds to explain how historical events were invented as new traditions and, further, to analyse how the new traditions were given

different national significances and embodied in daily routine to construct an imagined community.

More precisely, this chapter examines five key aspects of the 2018 name rectification referendum. It begins with the dispute between the ROC and the PRC within the IOC and the origin of the term Chinese Taipei, providing essential background and context. The discussion then turns to the political circumstances and outcome of the referendum, highlighting the paradox between Taiwanese people's choices and their identities, as well as the divergent nationalist interpretations of Chinese Taipei. Section 6.3 addresses the cancellation of the East Asian Youth Games, which illustrates the conflicting positions of Taiwanese nationalists and ROC nationalists, while also considering the PRC's political oppression. Section 6.4 explores the political mobilisation of sport and athletes, emphasising the theme of seeking international recognition in shaping Taiwan's sports nationalism. Finally, section 6.5 examines the overlap between Taiwanese and ROC nationhood as reflected in social media comments, while also highlighting the exclusion of China and the Chinese people from Taiwan's imagined community.

6.1 The context of the name rectification referendum: The dispute over the Chinese Olympic Committee's membership in the IOC

With the recognition of the PRC's Chinese government status by the international community, the name of Taiwan in the sports field has changed several times since World War II. After the KMT-led Republic of China (ROC) retreated to Taiwan, the two-Chinas issue has been argued for decades about who is the legal representative of China. Inevitably, membership in the IOC was at the centre of the ROC-PRC spat. According to the Olympic Charter, a country can only be represented by one national committee (G. Chan, 1985). Thus, membership in the IOC can be considered an international recognition. The changes in Taiwan's name used in the Olympic Games are illustrated in Figure 6-1, and significant social,

political, and sports events in Taiwan are presented in Appendix B as timetable.

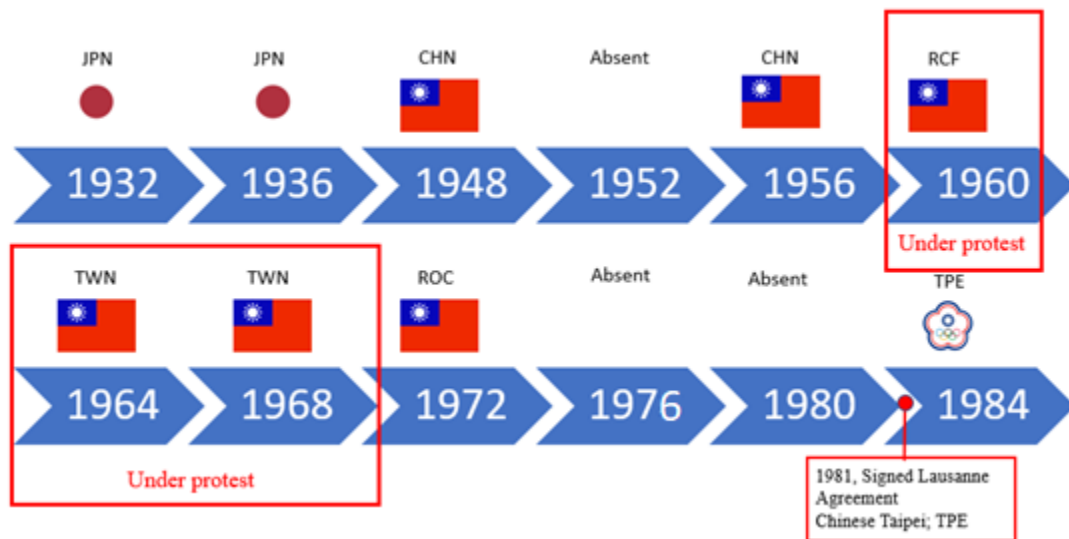


Figure 6-1 The chronicle of Taiwan participating in the Olympics Games.

Note. Author illustration.

The administration of Taiwan's Olympic affairs has been under two political entities: Japan before 1945 and the Republic of China thereafter. The Chinese Olympic Committee was established in 1910, and was recognised by the IOC in 1922, and competed in the Olympic Games as China in 1932, 1936 and 1948. In 1951, the Chinese National Olympic Committee moved from Nanking to Taipei. In 1952, the 47th IOC meeting passed a resolution that both the ROC and the PRC were invited to participate in the Helsinki Olympic Games, with the condition that the ROC should be under the name of Taiwan or Formosa (G. Chan, 1985). However, the ROC government at the time considered that the name of Taiwan was a humiliation because of its strategic position to represent all of China (Chiang & Chen, 2021). Therefore, they remained absent from the games in protest (G. Chan, 1985; H. Cheng et al., 1999). In 1954, the 49th IOC meeting in Athens, Greece, passed a resolution recognising both of the China Olympic committees⁴⁰ (C.-Y. Chen, 1993; H. Cheng et al., 1999;

⁴⁰ Chinese Olympic Committee of the ROC; People's Republic of China Olympic Committee of the PRC

K.-T. Lin, 1987). In the case of double recognition, in the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, the ROC participated using the name of Formosa China (CHN), and the PRC withdrew from the games due to the ROC participating (C.-H. Chang & Pan, 2005; H. Cheng et al., 1999). In 1958, the dispute temporarily hit the pause button as the PRC left the IOC and eight other international sports associations in protest due to its concerns that two Chinese Olympic committees promoted a two China model in the world⁴¹ (C.-H. Chang & Pan, 2005).

However, the PRC's counterattack came quickly. At the 55th IOC meeting, in 1959, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the Eastern Bloc put forward a motion that the Chinese Olympic Committee of the ROC in Taipei should not be recognised under the current name, Chinese Olympic Committee, because it could not manage the sports affairs of Mainland China and must change its name (M.-H. Tang, 2008). In 1960, a resolution of the 56th IOC meeting required that Taipei's Chinese Olympic Committee should change its name. The resolution resulted in the ROC's membership being suspended. In 1959 and 1960, the ROC used the name of the Republic of China Olympic Committee and applied to restore membership of the ROC. However, the IOC declined the application because it thought the ROC could only manage Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu and suggested it adopt the name of Taiwan or Formosa. Subsequently, the suggestion was rejected due to adherence to the one-China ideology by the ROC (Hung & Lee, 2011; M.-H. Tang, 2008).

At the 56th IOC meeting in 1960, then chairman Avery Brundage stated that the Executive Board recommended the recognition of the name of Republic of China Olympic Committee due to the fact that it governed the sports affairs within this territory, and the IOC Session passed the recommendation (International Olympic Committee, 1960). However, the use of Taiwan as a team name caused a debate and was put to the ballot.

⁴¹ The PRC did not return to the Olympics until 1984.

After two rounds of voting, the result was 35 yes; 16 no; 2 void ballots (International Olympic Committee, 1960). In the end, it was accepted that the Republic of China Olympic Committee was used as the name of the governing body while Taiwan was used as the name of the team for the competition. (C.-H. Chang, 2004; M.-H. Tang, 2008). The China issues were raised many times at IOC meetings from 1963 to 1968, but no further decisions were made. Thus, in the 1960s, the ROC could proclaim its Chinese representation in international sports, but its teams had to use Taiwan or Formosa, considering the actual territory of the ROC (G. Chan, 1985; M.-H. Tang, 2008). Thus, the name of the Olympic delegation of the ROC in 1960 was Republic of China (Formosa), IOC code ROC; RCF, and in 1964 and 1968 it was Taiwan, IOC code ROC; TWN.

Although the ROC pulled off a major victory over the PRC in Chinese representation, the IOC rejected the ROC's aspiration to represent all of China, which caused dissatisfaction and reaction within the ROC (Chiang & Chen, 2021). For example, in the 1960 Rome Olympics opening ceremony, the ROC delegation marched with an "Under Protest" sign to express its dissatisfaction with the name of Formosa (see Figure 6-2). However, the ROC's protest was ineffective. In the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the ROC's team was still under the name of Taiwan. But to emphasise the ROC's nation-ness, it added the Kanji⁴² of the Republic of China on the placard in the Parade of Nations (The delegation of the ROC to the 18th Olympic Games, 1968, as cited in C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993b).

⁴² A Japanese writing system derived from Chinese script (Matsunaga, 1996).

Image removed for Copyright compliance

Figure 6-2 The protest of the ROC delegation in 1960 Rome Olympics

Note. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10648/a9b7cce2-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>

The discontent of the ROC with the name of Formosa/Taiwan was solved in 1968. The then IOC chairman, Avery Brundage, considered that the national team should use its national name. Additionally, North Korea could use its official name - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - to participate in events as an example to support that Taiwan/Formosa should adopt the ROC as its name. The name of the ROC's delegation was discussed at the IOC meeting in Mexico in October 1968. It was agreed by 32 votes to 10 to participate in Olympic events in the name of the Republic of China (H. Cheng et al., 1999; Hung & Lee, 2011; C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993b; M.-H. Tang & Hung, 2008). Thus, in the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, the ROC got its wish. Ironically, this was the last time the ROC participated in the Olympics under this name.

6.1.1 The Lausanne agreement: The origin of Chinese Taipei

In the political field, the two-China's issue was settled in 1971. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 was passed, which acknowledged the PRC as the lawful representative of China. Therefore, the PRC replaced the ROC in organisations of the UN system and other international organisations, including the IOC (C.-L. Chen, 2001). However, despite the fact that the UN accepted the PRC's status, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the ROC still stuck to its position that the ROC was the only legitimate Chinese government in the world, and rejected recognising the sovereignty of the PRC over China and attending any international occasions that the PRC participated in. The ROC government went further in boycotting international organisations that did not use its name. Meanwhile, according to C.-P. Liu and Tsai (1993a), the ROC faced a difficult diplomatic situation. Its diplomatic relations dropped from 56 to 26 from 1971 to 1976. Thus, most of the major nations in the world recognised the PRC's national status and the ROC's national status was challenged.

In the 1970s, changes in attitude towards the PRC also spread from politics to sports. For example, in 1973, the PRC replaced the ROC in the Asian Games Federation (predecessor of the Olympic Council of Asia). In 1974 the PRC replaced the ROC as a participant in the Tehran Asian Games (K.-I. Chen, 2020), and in a further four international sports federations membership of the ROC was replaced by the PRC including volleyball (1972), wrestling (1974) weightlifting (1974), and basketball (1976) (Hung & Lee, 2011).

Under this circumstance, the ROC unsurprisingly faced the name/membership issue in the Montreal Olympic Games. In 1976, the ROC refused to participate in the Games because the Canadian government required the ROC Olympic team under the name of Taiwan instead of the ROC (Amdur, 1979; Brownell, 2008). According to C.-P. Liu and Tsai (1993b) and Hung and Lee (2011), the Canadian government refused to issue visas to the ROC's

delegation because of its diplomatic relations with the PRC and the PRC threatened to cancel a wheat purchasing contract with Canada. Canada's approach sparked strong opposition from various countries because it violated the principle of political non-intervention in the Olympic Games⁴³ (M.-H. Tang & Hung, 2008). Therefore, Canada, the ROC and the IOC conducted a series of negotiations. According to C.-P. Liu and Tsai (1993a), after several discussions, the Canadian government agreed that the ROC's athletes could wear uniforms and use the national flag and national anthem and, further, the IOC promised that scoreboards, communiqué, and publications would all use the ROC as the name and pledged to always recognise the ROC's National Olympic Committee. However, the Canadian government insisted that any Chinese national significance would not appear at the opening ceremony. For example, the name ROC/China could not be used on the placard (C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993a). In the end, the IOC Assembly approved the Canadian proposal by a vote of 58 to 2, with 6 abstentions. The news was sent back to the ROC, and then prime minister Chiang Ching-Kuo instructed that the ROC could not accept Canada's insulting proposal and thus withdrew from the competition (C.-P. Liu & Tsai, 1993a, 1993b).

Following the Montreal Olympic Games and the ROC refusal to agree on a compromise, the president of the IOC, Lord Killanin, and some IOC members were dissatisfied with the ROC's decision. At the 1978 IOC general meeting in Athens, the PRC, along with the IOC committees from 35 other nations, pressured the IOC to expel the ROC for threatening to be absent from the Olympics in Moscow. For the above two reasons, Killanin confirmed a determination to solve the two-Chinas problem in the IOC (C.-P. Liu, 1997; H.-Y. Liu, 2007).

In Montevideo, Uruguay, in April 1979, under pressure from the USSR and the PRC, the 81st IOC executive board passed an unfavourable decision for the ROC on the restoration of

⁴³ Note: At that time, the Republic of China committee was still a member of the IOC.

the membership of the PRC and the issue of China's representative. The resolutions recognised two Chinese committees:

1. the committee in Taipei called the Chinese Olympic Committee—Taipei.
2. the committee in Beijing called the Chinese Olympic Committee—Peking.
3. The flags and anthems used by both parties would be negotiated separately, with a consensus to be reached in collaboration with the IOC. (H.-Y. Liu, 2007).

Unfortunately for the ROC, the Montevideo resolutions were overturned due to the PRC and the IOC President Lord Killanin's opposition. It was because Killanin sought to bring the PRC into the organisation (H.-Y. Liu, 2007). Killanin's autobiography later confirmed this inclination, where he stated: "I have repeatedly expressed my desire to make China participate in the Olympic Games. It is a strange thing that the most populous country in the world was absent from the Olympic Games" (Killanin, 1983, p. 108). Consequently, in October of the same year, he organised an absentee ballot of the IOC Executive Board in Nagoya. However, it was a precondition vote. According to Chu and Wei (1982), as cited in C.-P. Liu and Tsai (1993a), a letter was attached stating that if the ROC's athletes still participated in the competition with the ROC's name, flag, and anthem, the dispute from the Montreal Olympics would rise again. As a result, the resolution of Montevideo was rejected by a vote of 61: 17. The resolution of Nagoya required the name of the Chinese Olympic Committee, Taipei be changed to the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (CTOC) while the CTOC could not use the name, flag, anthem, and emblem of the ROC, and further the new symbols had to be approved by the Olympic executive board (Brownell, 2008; H. Cheng et al., 1999; Hung & Lee, 2011; M.-H. Tang, 2008).

The ROC considered the Nagoya resolution a discriminatory decision and thus Hsu Heng, the IOC member with ROC nationality, sued the IOC for violating the Olympic Charter

(H.-Y. Liu, 2007). In 1980, the Nagoya resolution was confirmed at the IOC meeting in Lake Placid. Further, in order to prevent so-called nationhood disputes from happening again, Killanin attempted to remove Hsu from the IOC and amended the Olympic Charter (C.-H. Lin, 2021). As a result, Hsu's delisting proposal was not passed, but instead an amendment to the Olympic Charter was approved (H.-Y. Liu, 2007; M.-H. Tang, 2008). The main parts of the amendments were: 1. All nations' flags, songs and names changed to delegations' flags, songs, and names; 2. All National Olympic Committees (NOC) compete in the Olympic Games in their own name, not in the name of their nation; and 3. Flags and emblems used by NOCs must be approved by the IOC Executive (C.-H. Lin, 2021; M.-H. Tang, 2008). The amended Charter avoided the controversy brought about by national recognition and let the IOC retain its own right to define the nation (C.-H. Lin, 2021).

However, after a series of mutual lawsuits between the ROC and the IOC (Hung & Lee, 2011; H.-Y. Liu, 2007), in March 1981, the ROC government grudgingly came to an agreement with the IOC and signed an "Agreement between the International Olympic Committee, Lausanne and the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee, Taipei" in Lausanne, Switzerland and created the so-called "Olympic Protocol" (Chiang & Chen, 2021). Both sides had made agreements that confirmed the anthem, flag, and emblem of the CTOC instead of those of the ROC proper. Further, the agreement ensured that the CTOC got equal rights with other national Olympic committees to participate in any international sports organisations and competitions. Thus, the two-Chinas issue in the realm of sports was resolved in 1981 through the Lausanne agreement. Ultimately, the agreement enforces that Taiwanese athletes and organisations must adopt the name "Chinese Taipei" to participate in the Olympic system.

6.1.2 Chinese Taipei as the Chinese political connection of the KMT/ROC

Although today Chinese Taipei is perceived as a discriminatory and compromised name, the KMT government at the time accepted it because, as long as it retained a connection to China, the KMT could continue to propagate its China-centred ideology (Chiang & Chen, 2021; Jarvie et al., 2008). Thus, the name of Chinese Taipei became an acceptable/suitable name for the KMT. After it signed the Lausanne agreement, the KMT government did not abandon its insistence on the name of China domestically. According to H. Cheng et al. (1999) and Chiang and Chen (2021), retaining the significance of China in the name could maintain the sovereignty and dignity of the ROC and, further, could sustain the China myth of the KMT, that the sovereignty of the ROC was over Mainland China and Taiwan and that Taipei was only a temporary capital.

Table 6–1 The name order of the ROC for participating in international organisations.

Order	Name	Significance	Note
1	R.O.C (Taiwan)	The ROC on Taiwan	Abbreviation of national name with Taiwan in parenthesis illustrates the ROC on Taiwan.
2	China (Taipei)	China (in Taipei)	The Taipei in parenthesis shows divided China, we are China in Taipei; they are China in Beijing.
3	China (Taiwan)	China (in Taiwan)	Illustrating we are China in Taiwan; they are China on the mainland.
4	China-Taipei	China (in Taipei)	Using hyphen showing we are China in Taipei.
5	China-Taiwan	China (in Taiwan)	Ditto, showing we are China in Taiwan.
6	Taipei China	China in Taipei	Taipei as an adjective shows that we are China in Taipei.
7	Taipei	The current capital	Uses a neutral geographical name to show the current location of the capital of our country.
8	Taiwan	The main administration area	Uses a neutral geographical name to show the current main ruling area.

Note. Author tabulation. Adopted and translated from the official letter (code: 八十七體委(二)字第 000 六八八號), Sports Affairs Council, 26 Feb. 1998, as cited in H. Cheng et al. (1999, p. 111).

Table 6-1 presents evidence that embodies the ROC government’s China-centric nationalist political ideology. The table represents the key aspects of the official letter from

the Sports Affairs Council⁴⁴ to various sports associations in Taiwan in 1998, 17 years after the Lausanne Agreement commenced. The table illustrates that the ROC government still insisted on its Chinese status, and Taiwan still was the last choice. However, under Article 29⁴⁵ of the Olympic Charter, sports associations recognised by the CTOC (NOC) or affiliated with the IOC, whether already established or newly formed, are officially referred to as “Chinese Taipei” in English. For example, the Chinese Taipei Orienteering Association, established in 1996, is not recognised by the CTOC but is affiliated with the International Orienteering Federation and the IOC.

The official letter effectively devolved into a political declaration. It embodied Chiang and Chen’s (2021) suggestion that for the KMT government, Taiwan or Formosa was regarded as a disgraceful name due to its China-minded ideology. Since escaping to Taiwan, the ROC government had been strongly opposed to using Taiwan/Formosa as its representative name. The KMT was not willing to give up the name of China. For the KMT government, Taiwan was considered just a province that embodied the failure of the civil war and governance of the KMT. Thus, Chinese Taipei, a political legacy of the KMT administration’s insistence on Chineseness during Taiwan’s authoritarian era, is a product of nationalism. The KMT extended its influence from the realm of sports to other fields (H.-I. Tsai, 2013). For example, in organisations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Association of Prosecutors, the International Air Transport Association, etc., Taiwan is required to use the name “Chinese Taipei”. Thus, the name was considered a tool to perpetuate Taiwan’s non-nation status. Chinese Taipei expands politics from sports, which not only consolidates

⁴⁴ Now the Sports Administration, Ministry of Education of Taiwan.

⁴⁵ To be recognised by an NOC and accepted as a member of such NOC, a national federation must exercise a specific, real and on-going sports activity, be affiliated to an IF recognised by the IOC and be governed by and comply in all aspects with both the Olympic Charter and the rules of its IF (IOC, 2024).

KMT's Chineseness but also blocks Taiwanese people's desire to be identified as Taiwan. As Chiang and Chen (2021) stated, the KMT administration do not believe Taiwan can carry the foundation of the whole territory and identity of the ROC.

6.1.3 The dispute over the translation of Chinese Taipei

With the normalisation of sports exchanges between Taiwan and China, coupled with China starting to host international competitions, conflicts have arisen regarding the differing translations of “Chinese Taipei” within the Chinese context. According to H. Cheng et al. (1999), the name of the participating nations shall be in the official language of each sports federation and the host nation. Thus, the dispute over Chinese Taipei’s translated name between the ROC and the PRC became a problem that needed to be faced and solved. In 1989, the PRC government and then vice-chairman of the Chinese Olympic Committee (COC), Chen Xian, declared that the name used by Taiwanese sports teams to compete in China must be called Zhongguo Taipei (中国台北/ China Taipei) including the Asian Games (K.-F. Chen, 1989; Chih-Chun Huang, 1989). The Chinese government’s policy aroused the dissatisfaction of the CTOC which offered two conditions in response: 1) enter the competition under the name of Chinese Taipei; 2) the Chinese Taipei team is only allowed to participate in events held by the International Sports Federations (T.-C. Chan, 1997). The response of the CTOC was encouraged by then Minister of Education, Mao Kao-Wen, (Taiwan’s sports affairs authority), who said that the name of the ROC’s sports representative team must use Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei) when participating in the games in China, otherwise Taiwan would not participate (T.-C. Chan, 1997). However, the PRC government rejected the two aforementioned conditions. According to a report by the *Taiwan Times*, the CTOC stated that if any Taiwanese sports association cannot meet the following three conditions, Taiwan would refuse to travel to the PRC to participate in any international official championships:

1. Ensuring that the PRC does not use the name Zhongguo Taipei (中国台北/ China Taipei).
2. The sports associations must require the international sports federation to follow the Olympic Protocol and promise not to use the Chinese translation of the name.
3. If the Chinese translation is used, it must be Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei). (C.-H. Teng, 1989).

On April 6, 1989, after extensive negotiations, the dispute over the translation of Chinese Taipei was finally resolved. The then chairman of the CTOC, Li Ching-Hua, and the chairman of the COC, He Zhenliang, reached an agreement in Hong Kong. The agreement stipulates:

(The PRC) will adhere to the relevant regulations of the IOC when Taiwan's sports teams and organisations travel to mainland (China) to participate in sports competitions, conferences, and events. Documents, brochures, letters, nameplates, broadcasts, etc., issued by the organiser, when referring to Taiwan's sports teams and organisations in Chinese characters, shall use the term Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei) (Sports Administration (Taiwan), 2024, p. 56).

The translated name of Chinese Taipei embodies the reshaping of the imagined community. The PRC government attempted to use the name Zhongguo Taipei (中国台北/ China Taipei) to create an imagined community that included Taiwan and Mainland China and symbolically eliminated the ROC's sovereignty. However, the ROC government rejected the PRC's proposal, actually rejecting being part of the PRC's imagined community. Additionally, giving up the name Chung-Kuo (中國/ China) in Chinese characters represented a retreat by the ROC in its struggle with the PRC for China's representation. Simultaneously, this decision marked the first instance in which the ROC implicitly acknowledged (or did not contest) the PRC as the "real China," while symbolically retracting its claims of sovereignty

over all of China and confining its sovereignty to Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu. The KMT applied a dual strategy: while it yielded internationally, on the island, the KMT authority insisted on using the names Chung-Kuo (中國/ China) and Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), as shown in Table 6-1. Chinese Taipei's ambiguity and insistence on using the term “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” aimed at maintaining the Chineseness of the ROC. This strategy sought to create a culturally rooted national imagination and assert the ROC's position, as the solo Chinese government, thereby preserving its governance over islanders. This finding is congruent with, C.-C. Ni (2009) and Handley (2021) argument that the ambiguity of the term “Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei)” allows nationalists to reinterpret and adapt the term to fit their own narratives.

However, with social changes, such as political democratisation and economic liberalisation, the KMT's Chinese dominant political ideology has been challenged. During the 1990s, Taiwan experienced democratisation, liberalisation and Taiwanisation, which accelerated the transformation of the national identity of the people living in Taiwan from Chinese to Taiwanese. This trend of transformation has continued to the present day. Chinese Taipei has changed from grudging acceptance to humiliation and Taiwan has also evolved from a shameful name to a representative name of Taiwan/the ROC (Chiang & Chen, 2021).

6.1.4 The political landscape in Taiwan prior to the name referendum

Before further analysing the relationship between the referendum and Taiwanese sports nationalism, it is necessary to briefly illustrate the political circumstance in Taiwan at that time. From 2008 to 2016, Taiwan was led by the KMT's Ma Ying-Jeou administration—often regarded as a pro-China government (C.-F. Shih, 2013). Therefore, Taiwan's relations with China had softened during Ma's administration compared to the previous administration

whilst the oppression from the PRC had also eased. Under this circumstance, a series of official meetings and activities began between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Amid relatively favourable Taiwan-China relations, the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement was concluded in 2010. This agreement “provided clear rules for cross-strait economic and trade activities, fostering the institutionalisation of cross-strait economic relations, improving cross-strait relations, promoting peaceful development, and advancing goodwill and peace across the Taiwan Strait” (S.-R. Liu, 2010, p. 108). Further, in 2015, Ma Ying-Jeou and Xi Jinping, had the first conversation between the two presidents since the ROC/KMT moved to Taiwan. However, Ma’s Taiwan-China policy was often criticised by the Opposition. They condemned Ma’s pro-China actions as self-belittling Taiwan’s sovereignty and even selling Taiwan (Yen, 2015). Ma’s pro-China policy provoked a series of protests such as the movement against textbook guidelines revision—a student movement opposing the revision of high school curriculum guidelines to adopt a China-centric historical perspective (Weng, 2014)—and the Sunflower Student Movement, which protested the signing of Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement with China (M.-S. Ho, 2021). Further, in an interview with the *Liberty Times*, a political scientist Wu Rwei-Ren, indicated that the movement is a sign of the formation of the Taiwanese nation-state (Y.-T. Chen, 2015).

Under this political atmosphere, the pro-independence party, the DPP won the presidential election in 2016. In its Taiwan-China relations policy, the DPP administration denied the existence of the 92 consensus, which caused renewed political tension between the two nations (Central News Agency, 2016). The political term “1992 Consensus” refers to an ill-defined concept arising from a semi-official meeting in 1992. Since no official written record exists, the consensus carries different meanings for the KMT and the PRC. The KMT claimed that the content of the consensus is “one China with two interpretations” in which

China could refer to either the ROC or the PRC (P. L. Hsieh, 2009). In contrast, the PRC asserts that the consensus aligns with its One China principle and serves as the fundamental framework for cross-strait dialogue (C.-I. Li, Kuo, & Tsai, 2019). However, whether a consensus was actually reached remains a contentious issue in Taiwan. The DPP administration rejects the existence of any such consensus and instead refers to the meeting as the “1992 Hong Kong Talks” (Mainland Affairs Council (Taiwan), 2022; I.-W. Tsai, 2016). Consequently, the PRC made many countermeasures. For example, it cut off the cross-strait hotline (ET today political centre, 2016), restricted tourists to Taiwan (BBC, 2019), and suspended study in Taiwan (Ministry of education of the PRC, 2020). It can be seen that as the regime changed, China’s attitude towards Taiwan also changed. The frequent turnover of the ruling party embodied the divide and tension between the Pro-China faction and the pro-independence faction in Taiwan. Since Taiwan held its first presidential election in 1996, no single political party has remained in power for more than three consecutive terms. However, in the eighth presidential election in 2024, the DPP became the first party to achieve this, reflecting the fact that Taiwan is a divided society (C.-Y. Liu, 2009), especially in the relationship with China (G. Lin & Wu, 2017).

6.1.5 The nationalisation of Chinese Taipei

The ROC government used incorrect translations or, more precisely, ambiguous translations to link the ROC with Chinese Taipei, thereby imbuing it with national significance. In official narrative, the term “Chinese Taipei” is often simplified to “Chinese”, thereby strengthening the ROC’s national identity. The third aspect is that, with the Taiwanisation of the ROC, Chinese Taipei has also been imbued with Taiwaneseess, resulting in the ROC, Chinese Taipei, and Taiwan being considered a political trinity.

6.1.5.1 The simplification and nationalisation of Chinese Taipei

The differing translations of the name “Chinese Taipei” by Taiwan and China have successfully created an ambiguity that provides a political environment for manipulation by both sides. This section will delve deeper into the ways in which Chinese Taipei was (re)interpreted and utilised for nation-building. According to Renan’s (1947) statement, “Or, l’essence d’une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses” [The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and that they have all forgotten many things as well.] (Renan, 1947 as cited in Anderson, 1983, p. 199). In this sense, the designation of “Chinese Taipei” embodies the deliberately selective remembering and forgetting of national features in the process of nation-building.

The simplification of Chinese Taipei offers a plot that allows the Taiwanese people to connect with the ROC, thereby strengthening ROC national identity. In the context of Taiwan, the sports teams are often referred to as Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team. The term was used as early as 1954, “Chung-Hua⁴⁶ (中華/ Chinese) team beat the Israel team by 51-31 in the FIBA Basketball World Cup” (*Tze-Chiang Daily*, 1954). Thus, after more than half a century of use, the term “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team” has developed into a tradition and it can be regarded as an established fact in this island.

Against this background, although the Lausanne Agreement (1981) and the Chinese translation of the CTOC (1989) have been confirmed, the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese/ China) remains unchanged in both private and official contexts in Taiwan society. The name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese/ China) became the simplified name of Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei). For example, *Liberty Times* reported, “a total of 24 teams participated

⁴⁶ In 1954, 中華 (Chung-Hua/Chinese) should be considered a synonym for China (the ROC).

in this event...the Chung-Hua Tui (中華隊/ Chinese team) won four consecutive victories in the group” (H. Wang, 2005); *China Times* reported, “the eighth in Baseball World Cup, Chung-Hua Tui (中華隊/ Chinese team) is exhausted” (C.-H. Chen, 2009). Another example is from an official press release, “The president congratulates the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) baseball team for winning the qualifying competitions at the Athens Olympics (Office of the President (Taiwan), 2003).

On the other hand, the KMT-led administration violated the 1989 agreement signed in Hong Kong with the PRC. The Chinese name of the CTOC and its affiliated associations still maintained Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) instead of the agreed Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei). The logo, see Figure 6-3, does not overlap with English name and Chinese name. The literal meaning in Chinese script on the logo is “Chinese Olympic Committee”, where 中華 means Chinese, 奧林匹克 means Olympic and 委員會 means Committee. The correct translation is 中華臺北奧林匹克委員會. Obviously, 臺北 (Taipei) disappeared from the Chinese version. Another case is the Chinese Taipei Basketball Association (see Figure 6-3), literal meaning in Chinese script on the logo is “the ROC Basketball Association”, where 中華民國 means the ROC, 籃球 means Basketball and 協會 means Association. The discrepancy between the Chinese and English names illustrates how ROC nationalists employed both misleading and strategic methods to reinforce their national identity, maintain Chineseness in this island and not violate the Olympic Protocol.



Figure 6-3 The logos of Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee & Chinese Taipei Basketball Association.

Note. Retrieved from <https://www.tpenoc.net> & <https://www.basketball-tpe.org/index.html>

The unchanged simplified name, Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), is considered a political tie that creates a direct connection to Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese/ China), a nationalist term used for over 70 years, and to the ROC, thereby infusing the name Chinese Taipei with the nationalist significance of the ROC. The flag presentation ceremony further symbolises the nationalisation of Chinese Taipei. Through the President presenting the national flag to the delegation, reinforced the national significance of Chinese Taipei. Furthermore, this ceremony has evolved into a tradition before Olympics. For example, *Liberty Times* reported “the president, Ma Ying-Jeou, presents the flag and hopes to win the medal at Olympic Games” (*Liberty Times*, 2008d).

Additionally, in the coverage of the flag presentation ceremony, the national flag of the ROC was often juxtaposed with the flag of the CTOC such as in figure 6-4. Thus, simplifying Chinese Taipei into Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) is a strategy for its nationalisation. It is generally compatible with H.-J. Chiu et al.’s (2021) argument, adopting the name Chinese

Taipei is a strategy for the ROC maintaining the term “Chinese”. It aimed to maintain the nationhood of Chineseness. Retaining the name “中華” (Chung-Hua/Chinese) enabled the KMT to perpetuate their political ideology in Taiwan through sport, thereby ensuring that the ROC's nationhood and nation-ness maintain a state unseparated from China, as suggested by (Chiang & Chen, 2021)

The simplified term Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) is a newly invented tradition based on the longstanding usage of the term Chung-Hua (中華/ China) over many years. It is in line with Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) claim that any invented tradition must be based on a connection with past habits and existing cognition. Further, the flag presentation ceremony illustrates its instrumental role in nation-building and strengthening Taiwanese identity, and is consistent with Billig's (1995) suggestion that nation-building is continually reminding and strengthening the consciousness of community of the public through ritual. Although Chiang and Chen (2021) demonstrate how the KMT adopted Chinese Taipei to build its Chinese national identity, their research does not focus on how the ROC nationalists transformed Chinese Taipei into a national symbol. This research supplements Chiang and Chen's study and further explains how Chinese Taipei was depicted as a national symbol and was used for nation-building.

Image removed for Copyright compliance

Figure 6-4 Flag presentation ceremony for Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games, 2016.

Note. Retrieved from: <https://sports.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/1770129>

6.1.5.2 The integration of the four names: the ROC, Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Chinese Taipei and Taiwan

The above section shows that the term Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) has been considered a noun different from Zhongguo (中国/China), especially in Taiwan's Chinese language context. Thus, there are two premises that should be understood before further analysis: 1. The name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) should not be understood as referring to China but rather as a noun representing the ROC and its delegation; 2. Any invented tradition and banal nationalist narrative for creating imaged community should be understood within the Chinese context because it is the dominant language in Taiwan. This section aims to explore how the people of Taiwan perceive the term "Chinese (Taipei)", particularly in the epoch of Taiwanese national identity dominating the island and how is Chinese Taipei, China's political legacy, recognised by the Taiwanese people.

During the referendum campaign, the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) was consistently highlighted in news articles, emphasising its connection with the national significance of the ROC. The Taiwanese political elites created a connection between the ROC with Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) by (re)interpreting two political names as synonyms. For instance, *Apple Daily* reported a comment from Hsieh Tien-Lin, who is chairperson of Chinese Taipei Basketball Association and the Speaker of Changhua County Council, stating that “Under the framework of the Lausanne Agreement, athletes have to compete under the name Chinese Taipei, but it is well understood that they are representing our nation, the ROC” (Y.-L. Tsai, 2018). Further, a statement from another politician, Chao, Shao-Kang, former legislator, minister of environmental protection and political talk show host, embodies that the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) was playing a role as a political bonding to tie up Chinese Taipei with the ROC. “Taking Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei) as an example, Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) refers to the Chung-Hua Min-Kuo (中華民國/the ROC), namely that Chinese Taipei is the ROC’s Taipei” (S.-K. Chao, 2018). The discourse from Hsieh and Chao embodies the connection between Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Chinese Taipei, and the ROC is continuously emphasised as a concept of general consensus. Thus, the ROC nation-ness over Chinese Taipei is strengthened again via bonding of three names.

The connection has penetrated into the hearts of the public and is represented in social media comments. For example, Tu’s comment on *Apple Daily’s* website echoed the connection: “what is the problem with the name of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team? Our national name is the ROC...is correct to shorten the Chung-Hua Min-Kuo (中華民國/ the ROC) to Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” (Y.-H. Ho, 2018).

The reports and comments demonstrate a social fact that the nationalist concepts of the ROC have been installed with Chinese Taipei via the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese).

Thus, the aforesaid three terms have been integrated as a synonym with the same nationalist significance within Taiwan's context, particularly in the sports field.

After the lifting of martial law and the onset of democratisation, Taiwan underwent a series of political reforms in which the connotation and boundaries of the ROC were redefined, a process Wakabayashi (1992/1994, 2008/2016) described as Taiwanisation of the ROC. Due to democratisation, without changing the nationhood of the ROC, Taiwanese-ness replaced Chinese-ness and developed as the dominating nation-ness on the island. With the Taiwanisation of the ROC, unavoidably, the significance and symbols of the ROC, such as Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), and Chinese Taipei, were gradually integrated with Taiwan. For instance, after the referendum, *Apple Daily* interviewed Lin Ching-Neng, the coach of Kuo Hsing-Chun the 2021 Tokyo Olympic gold medallist in the women's 59kg weightlifting: "we will strengthen our training so that Hsing-Chun can achieve good results in the Tokyo Olympics to let everyone know that Chinese Taipei is Taiwan" (C.-C. Chan, 2018). *Apple Daily* published a contribution illustrating the mixture of Taiwan, the ROC, Chinese Taipei and Chang-Hua (中華/Chinese) are deeply rooted in the context of Taiwan:

In 2013, I led Taiwan's junior baseball team to Seoul, South Korea to participate in the Asia-Pacific preliminaries of the PONY Baseball League. At the event, everyone called us Taiwan, even the scoreboards used Taiwan to represent our team. However, our jerseys are still embroidered with Chinese Taipei, and the cheering group is still used to shouting, Come on Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team. When we won the Asia-Pacific Championship, most Taiwanese newspapers and TV stations still used Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) junior baseball team as the name to report the victory over the Asia-Pacific Championship. Although foreign athletes have long been accustomed to calling us Taiwan, only we still insist on the name Chinese Taipei (Y.-H. Ho, 2018).

The contribution demonstrates that social actors, whether participating in sports or watching sports, recognise a social fact that Taiwan, the ROC, Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Chinese Taipei are regarded as synonyms in Taiwan's Chinese language context, although Taiwan is the name by which the island is known internationally.

Via simplification and connection, Chinese Taipei was reinvented as a national symbol and was given the nationalist nature of the ROC, and the invention was instilled into the public by newspapers. Further, with the Taiwanisation of the ROC, the name of Chinese Taipei was also painted with the totem of Taiwan. The present study concludes that Taiwanisation results in a strong connection between these four nationalist terms, and further dovetails the "political unit" with "national unit", thereby preventing the "nationalist anger", as described by Gellner (1983), from occurring in Taiwan. Importantly, these connections can only be fully realised within the Chinese-language context, as the ambiguity of Chung-Hua Min-Kuo (中華民國/ the ROC), Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), and Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei) is linguistically and politically constructed in Chinese discourse. In this context, Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) serves as the key carrier of such connections and ambiguities, and functions as the existing factor creating the new tradition, as illustrated in Figure 6-3. However, the connection is not unbreakable, the name-rectifying referendum, which is the focus of this chapter, also represents a challenge to that connection.

6.2 Divided nationalism and identity politics: The 2018 name rectification referendum

Sport is a vehicle for social change (D. L. Andrews, 2024). Unfortunately, for Taiwanese nationalists, the drive is in the opposite direction to their aspirations because of the name Chinese Taipei. Thus, the referendum represented a counterattack by Taiwanese nationalists against China-centric ideology, which is considered the root of tragedy by Taiwanese

nationalists. For example, a Facebook comment posted by Tsai M-C on *Apple Daily* web page, criticised that “those KMTs preventing the athletes from using the national flag to participate in international sports competitions is in order to make sure the following generational athletes under the name of Chinese Taipei forever” (W.-C. Huang, 2018).

With the gap between the identity of the Taiwanese and the representative name gradually increasing, pro-independence social activists formed an alliance and launched a social/political movement trying to bridge the gap. In 2018, Chi Cheng—a former Olympian and the first female athlete from Taiwan to win an Olympic silver medal, achieving this milestone in the 80-meter hurdles at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games—and a civil group (Name Rectification Action Alliance of Taiwan for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics) launched a petition for a referendum on name rectification: “Do you agree to use the name ‘Taiwan’ when applying to attend all international sport competitions, including the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics?”. The aim of the referendum was to change the name of Chinese Taipei to Taiwan, in order to manifest the national subjectivity of Taiwan (Central Election Commission (Taiwan), 2018b). During the referendum campaign, in addition to the two nationalist controversies in Taiwan, pressure from overseas also influenced the outcome. For example, the IOC sent three letters to the CTOC expressing their concerns and disagreeing with the name change (see Appendix C). Further, on July 24, 2018, East Asian Olympic Committees cancelled hosting rights of the 2018 East Asian Youth Games (EAYG) in Taichung, Taiwan as punishment for the referendum, under political pressure from China. Eventually, the referendum was defeated by a vote of 58% vs. 42%. However, the referendum campaign promoted an opportunity to review the significance of the Olympic Protocol by two sports nationalists (Taiwanese nationalism vs. the ROC nationalism).

The rectifying-referendum embodied the divided sports nationalism in Taiwan. Newspapers as products of social structures and conditions (Y.-Y. Ni, 2003), epitomised the

social context of divided national identities. Thus, this study collected the coverage and related social media comments associated with the referendum during the campaign. Table 6-2 briefly illustrates the important events and their impact, and, further, shows the (re)created nationalist narratives in the interaction between the political/sports elites and public opinion in Taiwan. After collecting and coding newspaper articles and social media comments, two major incidents emerged as central to the sports nationalism debate within Taiwan: the cancellation of the EAYG and the risk of losing Olympic representation.

Table 6–2 The major events and consequences of the name rectification referendum.

Date/2018	Events	Consequence/influence
23/Mar.	The referendum proposal was approved by Taiwan’s Central Election Commission, and the signature collection process was initiated.	Reports of the referendum begin to appear.
28/Mar.	The PRC claimed that the name rectification referendum is a Taiwan independence movement	The statement emphasised the non-China nationalist narrative.
04/May	Before Taiwan applied for the name rectification, the IOC took the initiative to proclaim that it would not approve the application.	The Taiwanese saw the IOC’s statement as perhaps bowing to the pressure from China.
13/Jul.	Yao Yuan-Chao reported the referendum to the IOC for political interference.	This led to further fragmentation of society due to his Taiwanese-mainlander and former official background.
24/Jul.	East Asian Olympic Committees voted down Taiwan’s right to host the East Asian Youth Games	The news strengthened the image of coercion from China. The risk of participation has become the mainstream opinion.
25/Jul.	The PRC claimed that the cancellation of the EAYG was because of the referendum challenged the Olympic Protocol.	This assertion once again confirmed the fact that Chinese Taipei was a compromised name.

16/Oct.	The IOC sent an email asking about the referendum and reiterated that it would not approve a change to the name.	
16/Nov.	The IOC wrote a letter to illustrate their concern about the name rectification referendum: 1. They will not approve name rectification. 2. The referendum was considered an external interference that might cause the CTOC disqualification.	The letter reinforced the awareness of risk of disqualification and the rights of athletes to participate.
19/Nov. & 21/Nov.	The CTOC and athletes appealed for voting down the referendum.	The appeal intensified concerns over the consequences of the passing referendum.
24/Nov.	The voting day of the referendum and local government and council elections. The name rectification referendum was rebuffed and the KMT won the majority of seats.	
After vote		Athletes said that they will work hard and win games to make Taiwan be recognised by the international community.

Note. Author tabulation.

6.3 The nationalist narrative surrounding the cancellation of the East Asian Youth Games

6.3.1 The nationalist struggles surrounding Chinese Taipei and the name rectification referendum

Under these circumstances, the narrative of the tragedy caused by the KMT's ideology was intertwined with ethnic nationalism. Under such social and political conditions, the referendum became an issue for mutual attacks between ROC nationalists and Taiwanese nationalists. In an effort to keep the ROC's national symbol, Chinese Taipei, the ROC nationalists informed the IOC that the referendum was political interference in sport. Yao

Yuan-Chao, a Taiwanese-mainlander, former colonel, and former official of the CTOC, filed a petition to the IOC against the name-rectification referendum. He considered that the referendum was a political movement, which was initiated by Taiwan independence activists attempting to interfere with the operation of the CTOC. In the petition letter, Yao indicated that:

This referendum, which apparently acts as politics interfering with sports, may cause the name's problem again among the members of the Olympic family and what's more, increase cross-strait crisis, since what Ms. Chi Cheng and those people intend to do is to launch Taiwan independence under the guise of changing the name to Taiwan (K.-C. Kuo, 2018).

Yao's letter to the IOC has been widely criticised, and is also considered the main reason why EAYG was cancelled and attracted numerous criticisms (Y.-J. Chen & Chen, 2018). For example, Taiwanese nationalists expressed dissatisfaction with Yao's actions and speech and criticised him as a traitor. The referendum co-initiator and former minister of the Sports Affairs Council Yang Chung-Ho questioned Yao's motives and asked: "Who is behind the scenes? ... those opponents of the referendum and pro-China activists echo each other with China, which aim to confuse the public and intimidate Taiwan" (L.-H. Chung, 2018). In Yang's language, those who opposed the referendum were described as traitors who cooperated with China to oppress Taiwan.

Yao's speech provoked ethnic nationalist sentiments in Taiwan. On social media, his Taiwanese-mainlander identity was repeatedly highlighted as a symbol, reminding Taiwanese people of tragedies brought by the KMT, such as martial law, authoritarian rule, and the White Terror. For example, Up Media reported the criticism from netizens:

After the whistleblowing incident was exposed, many netizens flooded Yao Yuan-Chao's Facebook, attacking him as a traitor, shameless, Communist bandit, ingrate...numerous comments posted that no surprise from a Taiwanese-mainlander (Y.-W. Chao, 2018).

Further, the narratives also highlight the Chineseness and non-nation-ness of Chinese Taipei, and Taiwanese people angered over the name. Those findings correspond to Gellner (1983, p. 1) perspective:

Nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle...nationalist sentiment is quite particularly sensitive: if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety. This can occur either through the incorporation of the national territory in a larger empire, or by the local domination of an alien group.

For Taiwanese nationalists, Taiwan and the Taiwanese are incorporated into the Chinese imagined community, while political and economic power is dominated by an alien Chinese group both violating the nationalist principle. Hsiao (2012, p. 49), further, states that “the core of Taiwanese nationalism is to build a nation-state where political and national boundaries are aligned”. Thus, the name referendum embodies the anger of Taiwanese nationalists against Chinese Taipei, the symbol of Chineseness, and was employed as a tool to achieve their nationalist core end.

6.3.2 The anguish and resistance over the cancellation of the East Asian Youth Games

In late July 2018, the PRC's opposition to the name-rectifying referendum reached its peak when the PRC—dominated East Asian Olympic Committees cancelled the right of Taiwan to

host the 2019 EAYG in Taichung. The president of the East Asian Olympic Committees, Liu Peng, a PRC citizen, convened an ad hoc vote to withdraw Taichung's hosting rights (Y.-J. Chen, 2018a). BBC reported on Liu Peng's speech, highlighting that Taiwan's name rectifying-referendum would expose the East Asian Youth Games to political risk and political interference, and openly challenge the Olympic Protocol (BBC, 2018). Ultimately, the hosting right of Taiwan for the EAYG was voted down by seven to one⁴⁷ (Y.-J. Chen et al., 2018).

The issues relevant to the East Asian Youth Games incident were widely reported and discussed in Taiwanese society. Additionally, news reports subtly created and diffused the tragic narratives of the Taiwanese. They emphasised the image of Taiwan suffering from the PRC's bullying. For instance, *Liberty Times* interviewed an anonymous Taiwanese diplomat who criticised the PRC's actions, comparing them to international sports terrorism (Y.-Y. Su, 2018). In addition, the attitude of the Taiwanese authorities in coverage also reinforced this impression of the PRC's oppression. For example, *Apple Daily* reprinted then-Mayor of Taichung Lin Chia-Lung's speech in which he criticised "the unreasonable action not only hurt the people of Taichung but also severely hurt people of Taiwan and young athletes. It was an out-and-out politics interfering with sports, which went against the spirit of the Olympics" (Apple Daily Local Centre, 2018). Further, the central level of government also commented on the incident. *Apple Daily* reprinted Office of the President's press releases:

It (the cancellation of the EAYG) is an action of politics interfering with sport in an open and outrageous way. Our country expresses its strong regret for China's irrational behaviour in international society and the wrong decision of the EAOC...Over the years, the Chinese government has repeatedly done everything

⁴⁷ China, Hong Kong, Macau, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea and the Chairman of the EAOC voted in favour of cancelling Taichung's right to host the EAYG (Y.-J. Chen, Fu, & Huang, 2018).

possible to suppress Taiwan and the Taiwanese people in surviving and developing in the international community...(Fu, 2018).

Furthermore, the behaviour and speech of the Chinese government were employed as a narrative device for nation-building. News coverage often presented a recurring plot when discussing the Chinese government. For instance, the Chinese government was depicted as constantly sitting in judgment of the people and government of Taiwan, guiding Taiwan's internal affairs with a condescending attitude. An Fengshan, the speaker person of the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office, is an example. He unabashedly stated that the cancelling of the EAYG was a punishment as the PRC government considered that the Olympic Protocol is part of an unchallengeable one-China principle (P.-J. Teng, 2018). *Apple Daily* reported An's statement under the title "The wicked complain first! Pressuring the cancellation of the EAYG":

We (the PRC government) have repeatedly admonished the DPP authorities not to challenge the one-China principle... refrain from actions that undermine the interests of the Chinese nation. However, they turned a deaf ear. Therefore, the Cancellation of the 2019 Taichung EAYG is a correct decision made by the EAOC (*Apple Daily* Mainland Centre, 2018b).

China's political threats, the cancellation of the EAYG, the insistence on the name of Chinese Taipei and patronising attitudes of the Chinese government were constantly shown in the coverage. This is a form of politics of representation, aimed at constructing the primary adversary of Taiwanese nationalism. This agrees with C.-D. Liu's (2015, p. 89) assertion:

Sport, as a crucial vehicle for constructing nationalism, not only necessitates the creation of the nation's "own" traditions but also requires the "invention of

enemies". This is done by establishing a collectively vilified "specific other" as the foundation for distinguishing between the self and others.

Further, the created Chinese image intangibly reminded the Taiwanese their belongingness and the origin of their tragic nationalist narrative, as suggested by banal nationalism (Billig, 1995).

An's speech reinforced China's political image as an oppressor and aroused resentment and response from the Taiwanese people. For example, Tsai Ming-Hsien, a social activist and former Minister of Taiwan's National Defense, stated in an interview with the *Liberty Times* that the PRC's irrational oppression caused a surge in the number of signatures for the name-rectifying referendum (F.-H. Su, 2019). L. J. on Facebook stated, "China's prohibition (ban the name of Taiwan in international events) was not as simple as all that we thought...What China told us is that Taiwanese should be subject to their brainwashing just like people of China...our democracy and freedom cannot exist under their barbaric domination" (Y.-J. Chen, 2018b).

The analysis of the news articles and comments shows that the cancellation of the EAYG and maintaining the name Chinese Taipei were not isolated incidents. They are considered part of a broader narrative embodying the tragic stories of the PRC's political oppression within the context of the Taiwanese building their own national identity. Against this background, the PRC imposed its nationalist significance on the name Chinese Taipei, it was transformed into a yoke to embody the PRC's Chinese nationalism. Thus, for Taiwanese nationalists, it not only was considered the symbol of the KMT's Chinese nationalist oppression but also was regarded as a tool for upholding the PRC's one-China principle. Therefore, the PRC's political oppressions, such as criticism of the referendum, insistence on Chinese Taipei and cancellation of the EAYG, embodied the invention of tradition, the PRC's

past oppression (existing fact) combined with the PRC's oppression towards the referendum (new phenomenon) to reinterpret the meaning of Chinese Taipei to reproduce the image of China, as suggested by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and Ghosh (2016).

Further, under the historical conditions of Taiwan, those tragic narratives based on the KMT and the PRC's oppressions are inevitably mixed together and (re)invented as a new narrative. For example, a social media comment was posted by K, M-C, "A lot of Taiwanese-mainlanders, have worked in the KMT authoritarian system, hoping to sabotage Taiwan in order to pave the way for Chinese rule over Taiwan" (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2018a). The post embodies the way in which the people of Taiwan perceived the tragic narrative of nationalism. Based on historical and contemporary factors, Taiwanese nationalism relies on a victimhood narrative. The public receives the tragic nationalist narratives from the PRC and combines oppressed collective memory by the KMT to (re)invent a new tragic story. Further, the cancellation of the EAYG highlighted how "Chinese Taipei" serves as an embodiment of the tragic narratives rooted in Chineseness. The insistence of Chinese nationalists in Taiwan and the PRC on preserving the name, coupled with the punishment of Taiwanese nationalist narratives, strengthened the tragic in Taiwanese nationalism. Additionally, these tragic narratives are constantly reinterpreted and reshaped, the hegemonic image of China and the victimhood image of Taiwan is reproduced and employed to distinguish between the Taiwanese and the Chinese and strengthen Taiwanese national identity, as asserted by C.-D. Liu (2015) and Ghosh (2016).

6.4 The political mobilisation of sport and athletes

The incident of the East Asian Youth Games's cancellation was threatening the nationalist ideology of the Taiwanese people, desiring international recognition. The findings illustrated that the majority of Taiwanese people voted against the name change referendum, as they

worried about losing a platform for international recognition, which helps explain the failure of the name referendum. This section aims to analyse why the Taiwanese do not provoke anger when confronted with violations of the nationalist political principle. According to Gellner (1983, p. 1) such a principle is “primarily a political principle which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent”.

6.4.1 The impact of opinion from the sports sector

There are two main strategies that the ROC nationalists used to mobilise the public: 1. The letters from the IOC, and 2. The opinions of Taiwan’s sports circles. The letters from the IOC were used for political mobilisation against the name rectification referendum. The IOC sent three letters to the CTOC expressing its concern about the name change on May 4, October 16, and November 16, 2018. The IOC letter in May⁴⁸ indicated their disagreement over the CTOC’s name change although the IOC did not express an opinion on the referendum. The statement of the IOC was considered a cornerstone against the referendum. For example, a contribution from *Apple Daily* stated that “some people stigmatised Chinese Taipei for achieving the goal of Taiwan’s independence...The referendum has raised concerns of the IOC president Thomas Bach...and on May 5th, (the IOC) notified the CTOC that the name change would not be approved” (H.-C. Tseng, 2018).

Liberty Times reprinted IOC’s email. On October 16, CTOC received an email from Jérôme Poivey, IOC’s head of institutional relations, inquiring about Taiwan’s name-rectification referendum. In the email, Poivey explicitly stated, “As you are aware, the IOC is highly concerned about the developments of this case. Our position was reaffirmed through a formal decision by the Executive Board on May 4, 2018, and was communicated to your NOC via email on the same day” (W.-M. Liang, 2018a).

⁴⁸ See Appendix C.1

One week before polling day (24 November 2018), the IOC sent a third letter⁴⁹ to the CTOC regarding the name change to express its contradictory claim, employing notably severe language. In this letter, while the IOC gave respect for the freedom of speech of the Taiwanese populace, it also threateningly said that should the referendum pass, it would be interpreted as political interference. Consequently, the IOC intimated it might result in the expulsion of the CTOC.

The news was revealed by the president of the CTOC, Lin Hong-Dow. *Liberty Times* reported his statement:

The IOC's letter showed very clearly, it was not a personal interpretation, the letter restated the conclusion in May, which rejected the name change. Further, the IOC in the letter emphasised Article 27.9 of the Olympic Charter reminding the recognition of the NOC might be terminated or withdrawn (W.-M. Liang, 2018).

The IOC letter was reported in the news, with the referendum depicted as a Taiwanese nationalist movement and an irrational action that could result in the cancellation of the CTOC's IOC membership and jeopardise athletes' participation rights. By reinterpreting the IOC's letter, ROC nationalists played on the Taiwanese people's fear of losing their platform, such as international sports events, for seeking international recognition, in order to mobilise public opposition to the referendum.

On the other hand, within the social structure of Taiwan, the athletes were also tooled to seek international recognition. In this process, even the athletes reify themselves, either intentionally or unintentionally becoming part of the political mobilisation and undertaking the responsibility of seeking recognition as their duty. Additionally, when the athletes

⁴⁹ See Appendix C.2

expressed their opposition towards the referendum, in their narratives, the risk of losing international stages of seeking overseas recognition was emphasised as a critical factor.

Thus, the opinions of the athletes also played a vital role in mobilisation. The coverage widely reported the concerns of athletes. They cared that their sports events participation rights might be stripped if the referendum was adopted. For example, Wang Tzu-Wei, a tennis player, expressed his opposition as cited in *Apple Daily*: “I want the world to see our great effort” (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2018). This sentiment was not limited to just a few athletes. The Chinese Taipei Olympians Association⁵⁰ launched the “I want a stage to compete on, I oppose the name rectification referendum!” campaign. Many top athletes from Taiwan, such as badminton player Chou Tien-Chen,⁵¹ sprinter Yang Chun-Han⁵² and javelin thrower Cheng Chao-Tsun,⁵³ attended the event. *Apple Daily* reported the campaign and quoted the plea from Chou:

If the referendum proposal is indeed passed, the most affected would be the young talents who are currently working hard and striving to improve. No matter how diligently they train, they may find themselves without competitions to participate in or even without the opportunity to compete in the Olympics in the future. This would be the most cruel reality for Taiwan’s athletes. (Chien-Chung Li, 2018).

Despite the absence of ROC symbols in international sports events, it still serves as a platform for expressing the ROC nationalism. For instance, shooter Lin Yi-Chun⁵⁴ in *China Times* stated:

⁵⁰ Members of the Association are eligible to participate in the Olympic Games and are affiliated with the World Olympians Association, which was established in 1996 (Chinese Taipei Olympians Association, 2024).

⁵¹ The highest ranked Taiwanese players in men’s badminton.

⁵² The Taiwan record holder in men’s 200 meters.

⁵³ The Asian record holder in the man’s javelin throw.

⁵⁴ A shooting player has participated in four Summer Olympics.

When I was elected as the country's representative and wore a Chinese Taipei national team uniform, I felt deeply moved and honoured...The change of name in the Tokyo Olympics really affects our right to compete. If we really can't participate, not only me but also many, many athletes will lose their stage and dreams! If you are an athlete, would you wish that when you get a gold medal, when the organiser presents the award to you without the flag and song of your country? Do you like it? Will you be moved? (C.-L. Huang, 2018).

Another argument from the CTOC chairman Lin Hong-Dow also emphasised the nationalism of Chinese Taipei. He stated that "When the flag representing our country was raised on the podium, it brought glory to Taiwan and showcased Taiwan's achievements to the world" (C.-P. Cho, 2018). The former national baseball team player and publicist of the Chinese Taipei Olympians Association Chao Shih-Chiang told *Apple Daily* that the name of Chinese Taipei is a vital way to maintain the channel of being recognised. He stated that "Sport is a way to let the world recognise Taiwan. Although our country is being suppressed, even if it is called the Chinese Taipei Team, Taiwanese in various fields are still working hard to stand on the international stage and let Taiwan be recognised by the world" (Y.-N. Chung, 2018).

The ROC nationalists adopted strategies that aligned with the desire of most Taiwanese people to break free from diplomatic isolation, whether by using the name Taiwan or Chinese Taipei. Athletic success serves as a symbolic redemption, mobilising public sentiment and reinforcing national identity and patriotism. For Taiwanese nationalists, a referendum on the name represented a pursuit of recognition with the "real name", while ROC nationalists see it as a threat to potential recognition. As noted by H.-J. Chiu et al. (2021), support or opposition to such referenda reflects differing stakeholder interests tied to distinct national identities.

6.4.2 The mobilised masses- the analysis of social media comments

The social media comments showed that the Taiwanese were mobilised to join a nationalist social movement for the referendum because they wanted Taiwan to be recognised. A comment posted by C, A-T under *Apple Daily* on-line news, indicated that “the athlete is representing the country by going abroad to compete...Our (name) is Taiwan. I do not need our athletes to help Chinese Taipei win glory because we are not. I support the name rectification referendum” (C.-C. Lin, 2018). On the other hand, the social media comments also clearly demonstrated that the public was mobilised against the referendum/Taiwanese nationalism, because the narrative of worry about losing channels for international recognition through sports events had been instilled into the public. For examples, a commenter responded to *Apple Daily's* report stating that “Once the name change fails, the membership of the IOC will be revoked denudated and the name of Taiwan is no chance to join the IOC, thence, will miss the Olympic Games” (P.-T. Chang, 2018). Another comment echoed Liu Wei-Ting, Taekwondo player, exposing the connection between being recognised and Chinese Taipei. It stated that “Although it was not the ROC flag flying when winning the championship, it can at least let the world see the efforts of Taiwanese athletes” (K.-W. Chen, 2018). In those comments, the ROC’s nationalist symbol, Chinese Taipei, was described as the only way that guarantees the athlete’s stage. Through this approach, the ROC nationalists mobilised the public against the referendum to maintain the right of the athlete. Opposing the referendum to preserve the rights of athletes is essentially aimed at maintaining the name of Chinese Taipei unchanged.

Overall, social media comments embody the sports nationalist narrative of seeking recognition, which has developed into a widely shared perception. Thus, the narrative was successfully reinterpreted and associated with nationalism to mobilise the public to support or oppose the referendum thereby Taiwanese nationalists and the ROC nationalists

achieving their political ends respectively, as suggested by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), invented traditions require the rooting of existing concepts

6.5 Excluding China and Chinese from the imagined community

In spite of the people of Taiwan having a divided interpretation of the name of Taiwan, they have the most significant consensus that Taiwan does not belong to the PRC/China no matter what their national identity is. There is no doubt that Taiwanese nationalists regarded China as a foreign nation and wanted to cut the political relationship with it. Thus, this section will focus on the attitude of the ROC nationalists and voters, who voted down the referendum, towards the PRC on social media platforms to explain the reasons why a majority of Taiwanese voters voted against name change. The findings indicate that rejecting the referendum was a strategic decision intended to safeguard athletes' participation rights, thereby maintaining an international platform for advancing recognition.

News coverage and social media comments surrounding the referendum often reflected non-China/Chinese or anti-China/Chinese sentiments. For instance, when Taiwan Affairs Office expressed its stance on the defeat of the referendum, it elicited widespread criticism from Taiwanese citizens. *Apple Daily* reported that Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson Ma Xiaoguang said:

The defeat of the so-called name rectification referendum showed that this election reflected the Taiwanese people's desire to continue peaceful development across the Taiwan Strait and improve the economy under the 1992 consensus, and betting the interests of Taiwanese athletes on Taiwan's independence is unpopular and doomed to fail (Apple Daily Mainland Centre, 2018a).

The Taiwan Affairs Office's statement presented two interpretations: 1. they regarded the referendum as an embodiment of Taiwanese sports nationalism; 2. they attributed the

referendum's failure to the Taiwanese people's identification with China. The Taiwan Affairs Office's statement was criticised by Taiwanese people on social media platforms. Those comments emphasised that the name-rectifying referendum is an internal affair of Taiwan, not China, and condemned China for exploiting the referendum's defeat as a means for annexation. For example, in the comments section of the *Apple Daily* website, H H-W posted that "It's so ridiculous; it's the ROC's election, and it is not the CCP's business". Another commented on the same page, "That is enough—using the referendum's failure for unification propaganda is really going too far" (Apple Daily Mainland Centre, 2018a).

The social media comments further countered the Taiwan Affairs Office's argument and indicated that the reason for the referendum's defeat was not for presenting Chinese national identity but for defending the participating rights of Taiwanese athletes. For instance, a comment on *Apple Daily* website posted by T. H.-M., "if it were not for the concern that our athletes would be suppressed by China, potentially losing their opportunity to compete and wasting years of hard work, how could we have made such an aggrieved decision?" (Apple Daily Mainland Centre, 2018a). Another comment holds the same perspective and further emphasises the non-Chineseness. On *Apple Daily* news web page, E.S. posted a comment responding the report on the Taiwan Affairs Office's speech: "you (Taiwan Affairs Office) are overthought, we just don't want our athletes to take risks! Even if we do not seek Taiwan's independence, we certainly don't want to move closer to you (the PRC) either!" (Apple Daily Mainland Centre, 2018a).

The social media comments refute the Taiwan Affairs Office's narratives, although the Taiwan Affairs Office claimed the referendum result as the Taiwanese people's support of Chinese nationalism and Chinese identity. Voting down the referendum is a strategic choice for protecting athletes' participating rights thereby keeping an international stage for seeking recognition. Thus, the present study holds that under the circumstances of Chinese

Taipei being both nationalised and Taiwanised, voting down the name change referendum should not be seen as a capitulation to Chinese nationalism or a retreat of Taiwanese nationalism, it echoes the conclusion of Chiang and Chen's (2021) study. Instead, it represents a compromise aimed at preserving the means of creating national self-confidence. The findings are consistent with H.-J. Chiu et al.'s(2021) study, the referendum is a strategic act in which social actors make choices in accordance with their interests. Therefore, this article argues that the failure of the name referendum is an attempt by the Taiwanese people to preserve the possibility of seeking recognition and that this decision is based on the island's nationalist ideology. These findings complement research on H.-J. Chiu et al. (2021) and point to the choice of Taiwanese voters is based on their nationalist interests rather than political ideology.

In the early years after the KMT's retreat to Taiwan, the ROC/Taiwan's Olympic name faced continuous challenges from 1952 to the 1981 Lausanne Agreement. The ROC government viewed NOC recognition as national recognition, making names like Taiwan or Formosa (1960-1968) humiliating under its one-China ideology. Through the Lausanne Agreement, the KMT maintained its Chinese political connection in sports, but with democratisation and Taiwanisation, national identity shifted towards Taiwanese, creating a gap between the names and their meanings. The Chineseness of Chinese Taipei led Taiwanese nationalists to see it as a symbol of political oppression, prompting the name-rectification referendum. However, the referendum's failure reflected inconsistencies in national identity.

The referendum sparked discussions on sports nationalism, revealing three key themes. First, Chinese Taipei embodies a tragic narrative, representing Taiwan's oppression by the KMT and PRC. Its Chineseness reinforces this perception, blending past ROC and present PRC influences into a nationalist grievance. Second, Chinese Taipei evolved into a vehicle for ROC

and Taiwanese national significance. The abbreviation “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” was used to emphasise nationhood, while rituals like flag handover ceremonies reinforced its link to national identity. These rituals, as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue, serve to construct tradition, and as Billig (1995) notes, their daily presence strengthens nationalism. Over time, Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) was reinterpreted to include Taiwanese identity, making Chinese Taipei synonymous with Taiwan.

The third theme is the political mobilisation of the sports community. The IOC’s letters and athlete statements framed the referendum as a threat to Taiwan’s international participation. This narrative influenced public opinion, as Taiwanese prioritised safeguarding their athletes' rights over renaming their delegation.

The referendum's defeat can be attributed to three factors: 1. fears that name change would jeopardise international participation; 2. the ambiguity of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) reducing its Chinese nationalist significance; and 3. its evolving role in Taiwanese nationalism, making it a recognised symbol of Taiwan. While Chiang and Chen (2021) argue that voters rejected the referendum to protect athletes, this study further suggests that the shifting meaning of Chinese Taipei played a crucial role. Once seen as humiliating, Chinese Taipei was reinterpreted as a synonym for ROC and eventually for Taiwan itself. This layered national significance made Taiwanese unwilling to risk disqualification by changing the name.

Ultimately, the referendum exemplified sports nationalism in Taiwan. Chinese Taipei’s evolving meaning reflects how it was strategically framed to serve different nationalist agendas over time. Rituals and media reinforced these meanings, embedding the name into public consciousness. While its ambiguity has temporarily eased identity conflicts within Taiwan, China's use of this ambiguity to assert territorial claims ensures ongoing

contestation. The referendum is just one episode in a continuing struggle over the meaning of Chinese Taipei, and it will not be the last.

Chapter 7

Reconfirmation of Taiwan's nation-statehood: A study of news articles of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games

In previous chapters, this study categorised the development of Taiwan's sports nationalism into three distinct periods and examined the ambiguity between Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Taiwan. Through the analysis of the name-changing referendum, it explained how this ambiguity functions to mitigate the conflicts over national identity within Taiwan. This chapter explores the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games⁵⁵ to consider how sport and athletes are narrated to reconfirm the state of Taiwan's nation-statehood. The reasons for opting for this period and keywords are to record the impact to the greatest extent possible before and after the Olympic Games. The analysis indicates that with Taiwan achieving the highest number of medals⁵⁶ in its history, nationalist sentiment in Taiwan reached new heights and was called the "nationalist moment of Taiwan" by the BBC (2021). The sports news coverage embodies the rising nationalism within Taiwan. This study suggests that sports nationalist narratives surrounding the Tokyo Olympiad can be divided into the following three themes, which collectively correspond to the theoretical framework of this study, while each theme emphasises a particular dimension of it:

1. Seeking recognition and creating self-recognition mainly echoes the concept of banal nationalism.
2. The narratives surrounding athletes highlight how the ROC's national symbols were invented as a new tradition to strengthen Taiwan's national identity.

⁵⁵ Held in Tokyo, Japan, from July 23 to August 8, 2021, the event was officially branded as Tokyo 2020.

⁵⁶ A total of twelve medals were won, including two gold medals, four silver medals and six bronze medals.

3. The reactions towards the PRC and its athletes and audiences show how the news narratives built the Taiwanese imagined community.

The ideological content in coverage can be seen as an instance of the consciousness of the Taiwanese people being (re)built by the political/ cultural elites in which the content of an imagined national community of Taiwanese was (re)confirmed (Anderson, 1983).

This chapter examines three main themes in news coverage of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Section 7.1 interprets both overseas and domestic news articles in terms of symbolic recognition that reaffirms Taiwan's nationhood. Section 7.2 then builds on the previous discussion and explores the role of Taiwanese sports celebrities in nation-building, highlighting how their achievements, behaviours, remarks, and friendships intersect with existing social, political, cultural, and international contexts to construct nationalistic narratives. In Section 7.3, the focus shifts to the politics of representing China and the Chinese people, with the analysis emphasising how the inappropriate behaviours and statements of Chinese athletes and audiences are framed as typical of Chinese culture, thereby distinguishing Taiwanese identity from Chinese identity. Finally, Section 7.4 provides a summary of the chapter's key findings.

7.1 The reaffirmation of Taiwan's nationhood

As with the name rectification referendum, the news articles of seeking international recognition were still a vital theme of Taiwan's Tokyo Olympic news coverage. For example, news reports regarding Taiwan from overseas news agencies such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and Korea were widely reproduced. This reflects that for Taiwanese, looking for recognition from others is an important issue of nation-building as a result of the special position of Taiwan's nation-statehood, as suggested by Chiang (2015); C.-C. Ni (2009).

However, in Taiwan's nation-building, not only the recognition from overseas but the recognition created by the Taiwanese themselves also plays a role. In news coverage surrounding the Tokyo Olympic Games, syntax, rhetoric, terms, and photos in newspapers such as of the Taiwan team and athletes representing Taiwan, repeatedly strengthened national identity to distinguish between Taiwanese people and non-Taiwanese people.

7.1.1 Reinterpreting overseas news recognition of the name Taiwan

Firstly, the order of the parade of nations in the Tokyo opening ceremony was arranged in Japanese alphabetical order. The entrance order of the Chinese Taipei Olympic team attracted significant public attention because Chinese Taipei adopted 夕 (Ta) rather than 千 (Chi), meaning that Taiwan entered before China for the first time since Taiwan returned to the Olympics in 1984 (except when China entered last as the host country at the 2008 Beijing Olympics). In this event, the Taiwanese delegation was assigned the 104th position, while the Chinese delegation entered at the 110th position. This was described as a symbolic victory over China and recognition of Taiwan. For example, *Liberty Times* reported:

The Tokyo Olympics opened today, and Japan's subtle "arrangement" in the Parade of Nations order not only allowed Taiwan to enter ahead of China for the first time but also triggered an outcry among Chinese netizens on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform, with some criticising Japan as "disgusting" (*Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2021b*).

However, according to the organising committee's interview the entrance order of Chinese Taipei was not based on Taiwan's "Ta", but on Taipei's "Ta" (*Mainichi Shimbun, 2021*).

However, Taiwan's news media presented different stories. For instance, the pro-independence *Liberty Times* and *ETtoday* both stated that the order of entrance was based on Taiwan's "Ta" (*Liberty Times, 2021c; P.-Y. Wang, 2021*). Hence the order of the parade

was reinterpreted as recognition of Taiwan rather than Chinese Taipei. Thus, in the news coverage narrative, the concept of Taiwan as a nation-state was highlighted continuously, but at the same time, the Chineseness of Chinese Taipei was also gradually diluted. For example, a news report from *Liberty Times* stated that “although the Taiwan team adopted the name of Chinese Taipei participating in the opening ceremony, the arrangement of the entrance order was based on Taiwan” (Kung, 2021a). Further, a report from the pro-China *China Times* used the Parade of Nations order to distinguish Taiwan from China, although it continued to refer to China as “Mainland”. The report stated that “this marks the first time that the Taiwanese delegation entered the parade ahead of the Mainland delegation” (K.-C. Chang, 2021a). Thus, the reinterpreted entry order of the parade embodies the development of Taiwanese national identity roots in others’ recognition.

Another widely discussed event for creating national identity was also related to the opening ceremony. On 23 July 2021, during the live broadcast of the ceremony by the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), as the Chinese Taipei team entered the stadium, anchor Mayuko Wakuda (和久田 麻由子) introduced them as Taiwan.⁵⁷ Next day, *Global Times*, an official newspaper of China, criticised NHK’s statement as a dirty political trick in its editorial:

When the Chinese Taipei team walked in, videos the Global Times found show that the narrator introduced them as “Chinese Taipei team” and the subtitles on NHK’s live-stream were also “Chinese Taipei team”. However, the narrator of the NHK used “Taiwan”. This was obviously deliberate. We suggest the Chinese side should take the matter to NHK. As a public television station in Japan, NHK should be responsible as it

⁵⁷ Following links display the video and news report regarding to the NHK anchor using Taiwan to refer to Chinese Taipei.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2V4CxPn2sk>

News report in Japanese: https://www.sankei.com/article/20210801-AI64SNHJVPRJANIOMXDEAAZYI/?outputType=theme_tokyo2020

News report in English: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/07/24/asia-pacific/china-taiwan-map-nbc/>

broadcasts live images of the Olympics to the world. We cannot indulge any acts of it that undermine the “one China” principle (*Global Times*, 2021).

However, China’s criticism went unnoticed in Taiwan. On the contrary, the anchor’s speech was widely reported and further interpreted as evidence of recognition of Taiwan as a nation-state. The title of a *Liberty Times* report presented a clear example: “Help us rectify the name! NHK: Taiwan enters!” (Kung, 2021b). Further, Taiwanese politicians exploited NHK’s statement to strengthen the national identity and nationhood of Taiwan, as shown in the following examples: Chen Ting-Fei, a DPP legislator, told *Liberty Times* that “Japan is really a true friend... When the Taiwan team walked in the stadium, they did not use Chinese Taipei but Taiwan to introduce our national team” (Chien, 2021). Even pro-China politicians could not deny the unreality associated with the name Chinese Taipei. *China Times* reported the speech made by Kuo Cheng-Liang who is a former legislator widely recognised for his pro-China stance. Kuo claimed: “the anchor would definitely illustrate that this is the Taiwanese representative team...because no one knows what is the country of Chinese Taipei” (K.-C. Chang, 2021b).

During the period of the Tokyo Olympic Games, foreign media reports on Taiwan were often reprinted by Taiwanese newspapers to strengthen Taiwan’s national identity. The contents of reports were reinterpreted as recognition of Taiwan rather than Chinese Taipei and invented new narratives based on the content of these reports. For example, there were reports reprinted with titles such as: “Canadian media subtly criticised China during the Tokyo Olympics broadcast! Display our national flag and call us by the name Taiwan” (*Liberty Times*, 2021i); “Three Olympic teams that cannot use their national names in competitions, with BBC noting that Chinese Taipei is the most well-known amongst them” (Apple Daily International Centre, 2021); “Netizens applaud! Not just NHK shattering the snowflakes (of Chinese people), U.S. media (NBC) shows China map without Taiwan” (*Liberty Times*, 2021i).

7.1.2 Reinterpretation of domestic news coverage

Terms such as “our nation” and “Taiwan representatives” repeatedly appeared in news reports, reminding readers of their national identity and sense of belonging (Billig, 1995).

Terms with national significance were commonly used in the Tokyo Olympic news coverage.

7.1.2.1 Nationalism and rhetorical strategies

Table 7-1 shows that the terms “representatives/ to represent (代表)”⁵⁸ were widely used in articles, in which “Taiwan representatives (臺灣代表)” were used almost four times as often as “Chinese Taipei representatives (中華代表) representatives” (329: 105), and further, “to represent Taiwan (代表臺灣)” was used nearly eight times as often as “to represent Chinese Taipei (代表中華)” (191: 24). Although the terms “Taiwan representatives (臺灣代表)” and to represent Taiwan (代表臺灣) were widely used, “Taiwan team (臺灣隊)”, which carried more controversial connotations and was associated with the Taiwan independence movement, did not gain widespread usage except in *Liberty Times*.

⁵⁸ In the Chinese context, the term “代表” can function both as a noun, meaning “representative” or “delegate”, and as a verb, meaning “to represent” or “to stand for”.

Table 7–1 The nationalist terms in the Tokyo Olympic Games news articles.

Newspaper offices	<i>Apple Daily</i>	<i>China Times</i>	<i>Liberty Times</i>	Total
Numbers of articles	592	755	1542	2889
Terms	Numbers* (%)	Numbers (%)	Numbers (%)	Numbers (%)
Taiwan representatives (臺灣代表)	103 (17.40%)	55 (7.28%)	234 (15.1%)	392 (11.39%)
Chinese Taipei** representative (中華代表)	14 (2.36%)	83 (10.99%)	8 (5.2‰)	105 (3.63%)
To represent Taiwan (代表臺灣)	44 (7.43%)	38 (5.03%)	109 (7.07%)	191 (6.61%)
To represent Chinese Taipei (代表中華)	4 (0.68%)	20 (2.65%)	2 (0.13%)	24 (0.83%)
Taiwan team (臺灣隊)	66 (11.15%)	32 (4.24%)	570 (36.96%)	688 (23.81%)
Chinese Taipei team (中華隊)	179 (30.24%)	321 (42.51%)	112 (7.26%)	612 (21.18%)
Taiwan vs. Mainland (臺灣 vs. 大陸)	68 (11.49%)	53 (7.01%)	0	121 (4.19%)
Taiwan vs. China (臺灣 vs. 中國)	253 (72.74)	108 (14.3%)	768 (49.80%)	1129 (39.07%)
Chinese Taipei vs. Mainland (中華 vs. 大陸)	0	3 (3‰)	0	3 (1‰)

Note. Author tabulation.

* It refers to the number of news articles, not the number of occurrences of the term.

** It was Chung-Hua (中華) in Chinese script. To avoid confusion, it shows the full name in English.

Additionally, China’s role as an outsider is repeatedly highlighted in news articles.

Particularly, the rhetorical use of the terms “China” and “Mainland” embody the

phenomenon. In the social context of Taiwan, although these terms are occasionally used

interchangeably, they reflect distinct political concepts. On the one hand, adopting the name “China” suggests that the nationhood of Taiwan and China are relative and not mutually subordinate. On the other hand, using the name “Mainland” implies the concept of one China, where Mainland refers to “Mainland, China” and the opposite is “Taiwan, China”, even though this relationship can be described as two unsubordinated statehoods, but they are still belonging to the concept of one China nation. The data shows that Taiwanese newspapers often referred to their team as “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)”. However, when Taiwan competed with China, Taiwanese newspapers tended to use China instead of Mainland to refer to the PRC’s Chinese Team (1129:121). Table 7-1 also highlights the retreat of Chineseness associated with Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) when confronted with China. There are only three instances where Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) is used as the opposition of Mainland and the term “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) vs. Chung-Kuo (中國/ China)” is absent in reporting games between Taiwan and China. It indicates the Chineseness of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Chinese Taipei had to yield to the “real China—the PRC”.

Further, the nationhood of China is exploited to build Taiwan’s nation-ness through a process of constantly distinguishing Taiwan from China. Further, the Chinese team also challenges the national significance and “Chineseness” of the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese). As analysed in Chapter 5, the presence of China forced the name Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) to confront its reality as a compromised name, despite its Taiwanisation. As Hsiao (1999) suggested, in the 1970’s, when the PRC was regarded as the “real China” by the international community, it compelled the ROC in Taiwan to face the reality that it was not the “real China”. Similarly, the existence of the Chinese team forced the Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) team to admit its compromised status. As noted by Chiang and Chen (2021), Chinese Taipei is a compromised name.

7.1.2.2 The Taiwanisation of the ROC through athletes and their performance

The Taiwanese government exploited sport to produce nation-building in which the athletes' story and their good performance were repeatedly narrated and reinterpreted by the Taiwanese government to strengthen the self-recognition of Taiwanese towards nationhood. There were two examples, 1. fighter aircraft escorting the air transports of the athletes; and 2. the "Our Heroes! Taiwan Heroes Triumph Party" and the "National Day Celebrations and OUR HEROES! Taiwan Heroes Parade".

On August 4, 2021, a plane carrying badminton gold medallists Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin, along with silver medallist Tai Tzu-Ying, returned to Taiwan from Japan. Simultaneously, the Taiwanese government sent four fighter aircraft to escort those medal winners. The incident was widely reported and discussed, in which the athletes and their performance were given nationalist significance via narrating the connection and association between proxy warriors (Hoberman, 1984) and real warriors. For instance, a Facebook post by Taiwan's Ministry of Defence with regard to the escort mission was reported in the *Liberty Times* and stated:

Many thanks for your hard-fought for win glory for the country at the Tokyo Olympics... In front of the TV, we waited with bated breath to meet our glorious moment together. Further, those exclamations and shouts created unforgettable memories during the pandemic. Thank you for your hard work! Welcome home! (Tu, 2021).

The posting by Taiwan's Ministry of Defence illustrates the reinforcement of self-recognition. It reminded the Taiwanese that Taiwan as an imagined community was constructed based on shared experiences such as cheering for the indomitable spirit of soldiers and athletes. Additionally, *China Times* reported the speech of President Tsai Ing-

Wen and further revealed the nationalisation and Taiwanisation of athletes via the armed forces' action, as shown in the following example: "The air force escort ...is to express the country's respect to athletes. Thank you for your brilliant performance in the competitions, which encouraged us and made the world see the courage of the Taiwanese" (Tsui, 2021a). *Liberty Times* reported a Facebook post by Jou Yi-Cheng, a political influencer and former staff consultant to the Office of the President. He said the escort mission was a declaration of sovereignty. It strengthened the image of the existence of this "nation", and it was also an announcement stating that this team belongs to this nation rather than the other country (Liberty Times, 2021b).

Another instance is the Triumph Party—the party was held by the Office of the President (Taiwan) and The General Association of Chinese Culture (Taiwan) at Presidential Office Building—and National Day parade which were crucial events for creating the self-recognition of Taiwan and Taiwanisation of the ROC. Firstly, a national appropriation and incorporation came into public view. The ROC's nationalist significance was painted in the colour of Taiwanese nationalism by exploiting the achievements of athletes. In coverage by *Liberty Times*, the photos of the party decorations at the Presidential Office Building show the ROC flag colours (red, white and blue) and the terms on the welcoming board such as "TEAM TAIWAN"⁵⁹, "Taiwan heroes (台灣英雄)" and "TAIWAN IN" were fused together. See figure 7-1.

⁵⁹ It has evolved into both a sports and political term, with its English pronunciation resembling the Taiwanese phrase for "support Taiwan".

Image removed for Copyright compliance

Figure 7-1 The images of Taiwan Heroes Triumph Party decorations.

Note. Author collaged and retrieved from:

<https://sports.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/3657285>

Next, in the reception ritual by the President, Taiwanese nationalism was emphasised by exploiting the connection between the proxy warriors with real warriors (see Figure 7-2).



Figure 7-2 The athletes entered the Presidential Office Building under sabre salute.

Note. Retrieved from: <https://news.ttv.com.tw/news/11008300028500N>

As *China Times* reported Tsai Ing-Wen's speech in the ceremony:

Taiwan achieved the best ever results at the Tokyo Olympics...greeted athletes with a formation of sabres raised by an honour guard to express the highest respect of the nation. Because these Taiwanese youth people are the glory of the nation...she further said the meaning of the gift, which is a backpack with TAIWAN #1, is that hoping when the Olympic heroes stand on the international stage again, would carry Taiwan abroad and make the nation great because of you (Tsui, 2021b).

Athletes and their accomplishments were interpreted as the national glories. They were exploited as vehicles to create a connection between the ROC and Taiwan, in which the ROC's national symbols have been Taiwanised through terms, such as "Team Taiwan" and

“Taiwan Hero!”, and the nationalist rituals such as the honour guards sabre salute. Consequently, the name “Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)” has gradually disappeared from the official discourse thereby replacing Chinese Taipei in the sports field and appropriating the ROC's national significance.

Another plot presented in newspapers to Taiwanise the ROC and nationalise Taiwan is reporting the athletes, the ROC's national army and national celebrations within the same scene. According to Weber (1948), a monopoly on violence represents the supreme authority of the political entity within its territory. Therefore, the army, which monopolises the legitimate use of force, is inevitably regarded as a national symbol. By depicting athletes and the military through the same lens, Taiwanese self-recognition has been emphasised.

China Times reported the speech of a spokesperson of the Office of the President: “When ending the party, Tsai Ing-wen, then President, Lai Ching-Te, then Vice President, and Su Tseng-Chang, then Premier, took a group photo with Taiwan heroes and a giant national flag at the main entrance of the Presidential office building for appreciating all Taiwan heroes for their contributions at the Olympic Games” (Tsui, 2021d). Another example, see Figure 7-3, is a screenshot from the YouTube channel of the Presidential Office of Taiwan. It showcased to the public the connection between the highest authority, officials, the military, Taiwan, and athletes. In the event, those national symbols of the ROC, such as the flag, building, and soldiers, were reinvented as Taiwan's national symbol via exploiting athletes' achievements with the name of so-called Taiwan heroes.

Image removed for Copyright compliance

Figure 7-3 Group photo of Taiwan Heroes Triumph Party.

Note. Author screenshot and retrieved from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DZViQaRIAY>

The same approach recurred at the Double Ten Day, the National Day of the ROC, Parade. Figure 7-4 is collaged from *China Times* and *Liberty Times*. These photographs display that in the parade, terms on floats, such as “Our Heros”, “Taiwan Heros” and “Team Taiwan”, are used to refer to Olympians and soldiers. Furthermore, the national symbols, the images of the presidential office building and national flags, are also presented in the newspaper's report on the National Day Parade. In the narrative, the name “Taiwan” is adopted as a carrier of nationalism, and this concept is presented to readers through news reports. The news coverage surrounding athletes, and their achievements serves as a coupler linking Taiwan with the ROC. Figure 7-4 demonstrates that Taiwanese national identity has come to dominate the national imagination in Taiwan. Thus, even though the official name of Taiwan's Olympic team is Chinese Taipei and the nation's official name is the ROC, the name Taiwan has appropriated the national significance from the ROC, developing the name into the national symbol and it is widely accepted in the national celebrations.

These findings align with H.-Y. Yeh's (2015) research, which argued that National Day celebrations and parades in Taiwan were an invention of the KMT to reinforce its Chineseness and legitimise its rule. Ironically, this new tradition—originally created to maintain the KMT's governance—is now being re-invented to strengthen Taiwanese national identity and Taiwaneseeness.

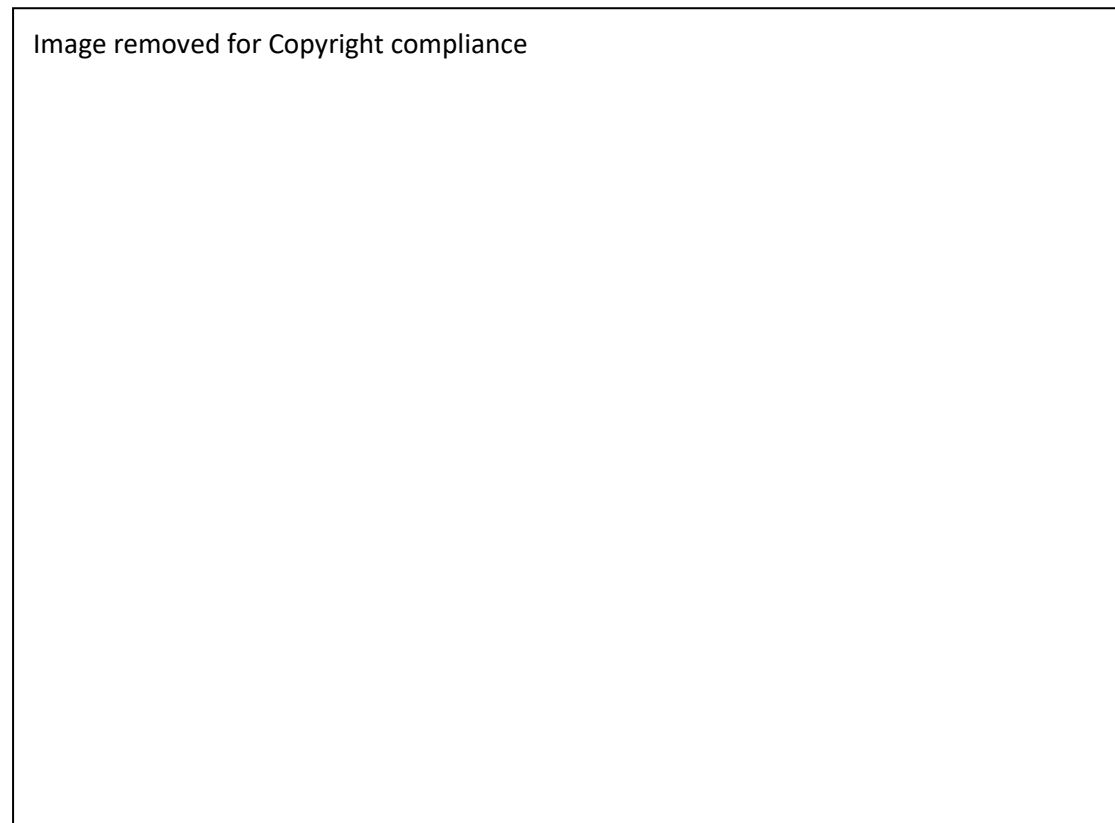


Figure 7-4 The photographs of the National Day celebrations and parade.

Note. Author collaged and retrieved from:

<https://sports.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/3699393> &

<https://www.chinatimes.com/realtimenews/20211010002026-260407?chdtv>

Furthermore, although Taiwan and the US have different social milieux, the present study draws on the research of Knoester and Davis (2022) and Knoester, Ridpath, and Allison (2022) to explore how national symbols were sanctified through military rituals. Additionally,

it examines how these sanctified symbols were connected to sports achievements and athletes to strengthen national identity in Taiwan. According to Knoester and Davis (2022, p. 1026), “patriotic, nationalistic, militaristic, and capitalistic messaging, symbolism, and rituals in sport are present”. Thus, this study argues that celebrating Olympians’ achievements with military-themed rituals, such as fighter jet escorts, sabre arches, honour guards raising the national flag, giving athletes the hero title, and the joint parades of athletes and soldiers on the National Day, have embodied the intensification and amplification of nationalism through sports. These findings are compatible with the argument that sport sacralised patriotism and nationalism thereby teaching exclusionary national identities for the public, as suggested by Knoester and Davis (2022). Further, the sacralisation of the national flag and its colours is employed to strengthen national identity. The display of a huge flag in front of the presidential palace and the widespread use of its colours in ceremonies celebrating the athletes’ triumph reflect the role of the national flag in nation-building. These results roughly align with the research of Knoester et al. (2022), which examines the role of the national flag in fostering sports nationalism in the US. According to Knoester et al. (2022, p. 24), “many Americans see sports as a valued means of enhancing social connections and celebrating shared national histories and identities”. The US national flag’s colours are frequently displayed in sports events, which further strengthens their national pride and identity (Knoester et al., 2022).

Due to Taiwan’s divided national identity, although national symbols, such as the national flag, colours and military are officially associated with the ROC, these symbols have been reinterpreted through Taiwanisation. As a result, they were considered images of Taiwan and were used to strengthen Taiwanese national identity. As suggested by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), those newly invented traditions must be grounded on existing facts—in this case, the new traditions are Taiwanised ROC national symbols which

are grounded on the ROC's nation-ness. Further, those new traditions were presented to the public over and over via manufactured rituals to build national identity as suggested by Billig (1995)—in the case of this section, those rituals are military-themed rituals.

7.2 Taiwanese sports celebrities

According to Bairner (2009) sports events create a nationalist scene and invite audiences into it via watching sports. Those nationalist narratives surrounding sports celebrities such as victorious performance, a backdrop of hardship, and friendship are employed for performing national identity and nation-building. The sentiment can be passed on to more people who don't care about politics, via sports news coverage. Virtually all cultures and citizens have an interest in and appreciation for sport, as stated by Walters (2007). During the period of the sports craze, any discussions unrelated to sport were marginalised (Bruce, 2013). This section examines the news reports revolving around Taiwanese athletes within and outside competition. The analysis indicates that sports events such as archery, badminton, and boxing provoked and embodied numerous nationalist discussions in many news reports about Taiwanese Olympians.

7.2.1 The nationalist narratives amidst victory stories of badminton athletes

Taiwanese badminton players Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin won gold in the men's doubles at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The analysis indicates that coverage surrounding gold medallists Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin, known as the Lin-Yang duo,⁶⁰ connected sport with folk culture, politics, and geography. Two major events amidst the nationalist discussions were exploited to re-emphasise the nationalist significance of Taiwanese-ness.: 1. "Taiwan-in" as a "new"

⁶⁰ The pair was often referred to as Lin-Yang duo in the mass media of Taiwan.

nationalist symbol and outlet for Taiwanese in confronting the oppression of China(s); 2. the reconfirming of nation boundaries by the gold medallists' statements.

In the championship, the Lin-Yang duo defeated Chinese athletes in a dramatic way, in which the landing spot of the final play was just on the baseline in the Hawk-eye challenge. The image of the landing spot was then created as the “new” national flag of Taiwan (see Figure 7-5). This victory was particularly noteworthy because it represented Taiwan breaking through China’s domination of badminton and reflected further nationalist significance (T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2023). For example, their victory was referred to as the “Victory of the Battle of Kuningtou” in *China Times*' report—a reference to the 1949 battle between the KMT and CCP in Kinmen, where the KMT emerged victorious, ensuring the island remained under Taiwanese control. (H.-L. Chen, 2021). Further, it was the first time Chinese athletes had to listen to the national anthem of Taiwan played when standing on the podium. The two incidents surrounding the Lin-Yang duo’s victory were employed to remind the Taiwanese people of the political collective memory of being oppressed by China and provoke the nationalist emotions of the Taiwanese. For example, a *Liberty Times* story stated that “this was a historic moment when Taiwan's Olympic flag was higher than China's national flag at the awards ceremony. It wrote a page of legend for the Taiwanese participation in the Olympics Games” (Y.-H. Wang, 2021).

Further, as “Taiwan-In” is used in opposition to Chinese nationalist narratives, the term is given nationalist meaning and is regarded as a “new” national symbol of Taiwanese nationalism. According to Pease (1997), nationalists gained both their consistency and their perceived universal value by positioning themselves in contrast to opposing nationalism. The “new” nationalist symbol- “Taiwan-In”, embodied the retreat and challenge of the Chinese nationalist narratives in the island nation, wherein the ROC official narratives fail to consolidate and represent the entirety of the Taiwanese population. It cannot satisfy the

function of national narrative. As suggested by Pease (1997, p. 2), “national narratives were transmitted to a national people that they aspired to consolidate and represent the nation simultaneously”. These findings are consistent with the research of T.-H. Chen and Chiang (2023), the victory of the Lin-Yang duo bears a highly nationalist connotation and served as an outlet for the Taiwanese in the face of years of oppression by the PRC . The victory is also an outlet for the Taiwanese to confront the legacies of the ROC’s Chinese national narratives.



Figure 7-5 The image of landing spot and the “new national flag”.

Note. Author collaged and retrieved from:

<https://www.businesstoday.com.tw/article/category/183015/post/202108020001/> &

<https://www.setn.com/news.aspx?newsid=976052>

The other case of the Lin-Yang duo evoking nationalism was off the court. The patriotic posts (see Figure 7-6) made by the Lin-Yang duo became a catalyst for fostering self-recognition within the imagined Taiwanese community. Lee posted:

I am Lee Yang!

I am proud to be from Kinmen

I am proud to be Taiwanese 🇹🇼🇹🇼🇹🇼

Thank you, everyone

Tonight, I share this joy and emotion with all of you

We will continue to work hard, taking big steps toward the final goal 🍊🍊🍊

I am Lee Yang, and I am from Taiwan 🇹🇼🇹🇼🇹🇼

Wang posted:

Now, I just want to shout out loud to everyone.

My name is Wang Chi-Lin.

I am from Taiwan 🇹🇼🇹🇼🇹🇼

Unbelievable!

Their respective social media posts received significant attention, with Lee's post garnering 700,000 reactions and Wang's post receiving 500,000. Additionally, Lee's post attracted 16,000 comments, while Wang's received 17,000 comments. Notably, 680,000 people reacted "like" to Lee's post, with only a handful expressing sad (6) or anger (11). Similarly, Wang's post saw 480,000 "like" reactions, with just 10 expressing sad and 9 showing anger. These large numbers reflect that most people recognised the nationalist connotations behind their posts. However, although there are a few comments with different opinions against their posts, they emphasise the nationalist connotation in the Lin-Yang duo's posts. For example, a comment in simplified Chinese responds to Lee: "Let me say it again, you are

from Kinmen,⁶¹ Fujian, China”. Another comment under Lee’s post: “You are indeed a citizen of the ROC, but you are not Taiwanese, OK? Kinmen County in Fuchien Province has never been under the jurisdiction of Taiwan Province, don’t you know that?” These two comments embody two types of Chinese nationalist narratives and their counterattack against Taiwanese nationalism and a fact that the name Taiwan has been nationalised.

Their posts were widely reported which created a field with sports nationalism for readers who do not care about the Olympics. For instance, *Apple Daily* reported Wang Chi-Lin’s post and underscored his nationalist discusses, “let me introduce myself loudly to the world again: I am Taiwanese badminton player Wang Chi-Lin. I am from Taiwan” (*Apple Daily Breaking News Centre*, 2021f). Further, Lee Yang’s statement emphasised his Kinmenese identity and identification with Taiwanese. As *Liberty Times* reported his post: “I am Lee Yang! I am proud to be a Kinmenese, I am proud to be a Taiwanese...I am from Taiwan” (*Liberty Times*, 2021d). The coverage surrounding Wang and Lee’s speeches embody a collective ideology of people on the island- looking for recognition as Taiwanese, as suggested by Chiang and Chen (2014) and Chiang (2015). A *China Times* report not only restated self-recognition of Taiwan but emphasised the connection between the national significance and Taiwan. It reported Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin’s Facebook posts collectively and titled the article “Lee Yang and Wang Chi-Lin advanced to the men’s doubles gold medal match. Showed the ROC national flag and proudly said: I am from Taiwan” (P.-W. Chiu & Chi, 2021). Thus, the speeches of the Lin-Yang duo created a nationalist affective space where the Taiwanese nationalist sentiments are satisfied. For example, Lin Cho-Shui, a writer, newspaper editor and ex-Legislator, echoed the arguments in a *Liberty Times* report claiming that “the Lin-Yang duo’s Facebook post is a name rectification movement, a national

⁶¹ A county of the ROC, this island county is part of Fuchien Province and is located 10 kilometres off the coast of the PRC.

consciousness consolidating movement, and a necessary infrastructure for looking for international recognition de jure” (Liberty Times, 2021e). Additionally, Lee Yang’s identity as a Kinmenese significantly reaffirms Taiwan as the name of the island nation-state. Lee’s statement was used to reconfirm Taiwan as a name of a nation-state with territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu. Lee’s statement emphasises that nationalism in Taiwan has been changed to civic nationalism. The territory and national borders overlap with the region governed by the Taiwanese government. As Tilly (2005) suggested, the formation of national boundaries depends on the relationship between citizens and state apparatuses. Further, its national people have been dominated by Taiwanese nationalist narrative thereby being consolidated under the Taiwanese imagined community, as suggested by Pease (1997).

Even though Taiwan is one of the islands of the island nation-state, it is still considered a synonym for the nation. Lee’s identities reflect and emphasises that Taiwanese civic nationalism has dominated the nationalist narratives within Taiwan.



Figure 7-6 The Facebook posts by Lee Yang (left) and Wang Chi-Lin (right).

Note: Retrieved from: <https://fbook.cc/5vAf> & <https://fbook.cc/5vAg>

The victory celebration posture of the Lin-Yang duo was widely reported in newspapers and was described as a siūnn-pue, it is one result of puáh-puea, a popular form of divination in Taiwan. This practice involves a tool called a pue, which consists of two crescent-shaped pieces of wood or bamboo, with one side flat and the other rounded. To seek an answer from deities, believers throw the pue on the floor. When one piece lands flat and the other rounded, it is called siūnn-pue and is interpreted as a positive response, often regarded as a sign of divine approval or promise with a predominantly positive connotation. (see Figure 7-7).

The victory posture of the Lin-Yang duo connected the sport and folk memories of the Taiwanese to mobilise the public into the circumstance of sports nationalism. For example, a *Liberty Times* article stated that “their celebration posture was like a siūnn-pue, no wonder the performance of the pair was like a godsend” (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2021d).



Figure 7-7 Victory celebration posture of Lee Yang, Wang Chi-Lin, and Siūnn-pue.

Note. Author collaged and retrieved from:

<https://sports.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/3621190> &

https://www.ht.org.tw/jp/p2_service6.php

Further, the Lin-Yang duo with victories and the image of siūnn-pue was reinterpreted as a new collective memory of Taiwanese people by political elites. For example, after the gold medal competition, then President Tsai Ing-Wen's Facebook post was reprinted in *Liberty Times*, and stated that "the siūnn-pue from Taiwan! Congratulations!" (Liberty Times, 2021j). Another example came from the leader of the opposition Chu Li-Luan. *China Times* reported his statement: "Good teamwork the siūnn-pue duo. Tonight, at the Tokyo Olympic badminton court, the national flag anthem of the ROC⁶² was played again. This was a moment that touched the hearts of all Taiwanese" (W.-C. Chao, 2021).

Folk culture is one of the cornerstones of nation-building. According to Hobsbawm (1992, p. 10), "nationalism...sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations". Sport is an ideal place to combine nationalism with folk culture. Jackson and Hokowhitu (2002) used the haka as an example, suggesting that it is considered a defining element of their national culture to assert New Zealand identity and differentiate themselves from their anglosphere siblings.

Additionally, Kaldor's (2004) study highlighted the role of folk memories in stirring nationalist sentiments. The study asserted that the success of nationalism is not only dependent on the mobilisation of elites but also on its ability to resonate with the authentic sentiments of ordinary people, which stem from shared folk memories, traditions, and customs. Further, these sentiments do not only rely on cultural or ethnic but also political demands such as democracy or anti-colonialism (Kaldor, 2004). The case of the Lin-Yang duo embodies three key conditions for evoking nationalist sentiments (Kaldor, 2004): the mobilisation of elites, as demonstrated by comments from both the President and the leader

⁶² The melody of the anthem of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee is the same as the national flag anthem of the ROC. Thus, in Taiwan, the national flag anthem is often used to refer to the committee song.

of the opposition; folk heritages, such as *siūnn-pue* and folk beliefs; and political demands connected to nation-building. Thus, the achievements of the Lin-Yang duo at the Olympics create a space for the political elites to utilise Taiwanese folk beliefs and the preoccupation with national identities to evoke nationalist sentiments and mobilise the Taiwanese public, thereby strengthening or maintaining their Taiwanese or the ROC national identities, respectively.

7.2.2 Asian friends: the story of the archery team and anti-China sentiment

Taiwanese players, Deng Yu-Cheng, Tang Chih-Chun, and Wei Chun-Heng, won the silver medal in men's team archery at the Tokyo Olympics. The competition caught attention from Taiwanese audiences because it is Taiwan's forte, winning four medals since the 2004 Olympics. The quarterfinal against China and the final against Korea demonstrated two narratives of sports nationalism respectively—China's failure and the recognition of Taiwan's qualifications as a nation-state. The failure of China, the most substantial "other" in Taiwan's nationalist narrative, was highlighted in Taiwan's Olympic news coverage. Even though it was a quarter-final game, it still caught the Taiwanese' eye. For example, *Liberty Times'* news title: "Archery men's team was so cool beating China in the quarterfinal and advancing to the semifinal" (C.-P. Lo, 2021b); and *China Times's* news title: "Archery men's team battle of cross-strait! Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) got a landslide victory against the Mainland to advance to the final four" (C.-J. Huang, 2021). Thus, China's failure was mobilised by the Taiwanese to distinguish themselves from the Chinese, regardless of whether the article title is China or Mainland.

The result of men's team archery at the Tokyo Olympics was that Korea, Taiwan, and Japan stood on the podium.⁶³ Besides the nationalistic narrative on the field, a photograph

⁶³ Korean team won the gold medal, Taiwanese team won the silver medal, and Japanese team won the bronze medal.

(see Figure 7-8) of Taiwanese, Japanese and Korean players at the awards ceremony was reinterpreted as friendship to seek recognition and create self-recognition. For example, *Apple Daily* reported that “after the game, three team players happily took selfies together, prompting netizens to comment that the archery powerhouses are all in East Asia” (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2021c). A *Liberty Times* story also emphasised the good connection between the three nations, titled: “A warm interaction between three nations, Taiwan, Japan and Korea's players at the award stand” (*Liberty Times*, 2021f). The photograph was posted on the Asian Archery Federation’s Facebook fan page with the comment: “Power of Asia” (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2021b). The photograph and its commentaries were considered a plot for creating the self-recognition of Taiwanese. It was reinterpreted and then instilled into the Taiwanese that Taiwan is a normal and even powerful nation-state with ability to form friendly relations with other nation-states.

Image removed for Copyright compliance

Figure 7-8 A selfie of archery men's team medallists at the Tokyo Olympics.

Note. Retrieved from: <https://sports.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/3617931>

The success of Taiwanese archers was used to re-underscore Taiwan's nationhood through a rhetorical strategy of juxtaposing Taiwan with two nation-states: Japan and Korea.

Those findings echo the arguments of Evans and Kelly (2002) and Elling et al. (2014), that sports achievements are used for political purposes and are shaped by social environments. In Taiwan's case, as Evans and Kelly (2002) suggested, these achievements fostered national pride, in which Taiwan portrayed itself as a friendly nation-state capable of competing with other nation-states. Further, the successes at the Olympic Games are employed by Taiwanese people to bolster their international reputation and strengthen a sense of belonging as Taiwanese, as asserted by Elling et al. (2014).

Sport has become a field for embodying the political ideology of anti-China sentiment. The news reports surrounding the archery competition, on and off the range, embody the anti-Chinese sentiment of Taiwan, Japan and Korea. According to Jackson and Haigh (2008), sport, politics, and diplomacy have been closely interconnected for a long time. When sport serves a useful purpose, it is often exploited for political ends. Additionally, Murray and Pigman (2014) drew on the work of Wiseman (1999) and Hocking and Kurbalija (2006), stated that in the modern diplomatic landscape, sport is an ideal platform for new diplomatic actors, such as civil society organisation, multinational corporations, intergovernmental organisations and celebrities. Thus, within this context, sports celebrities are often employed to reinforce the narratives of foreign policy (Murray & Pigman, 2014). Jackson and Haigh (2008, p. 352) argued that "in order to respond to novel social, political, cultural and economic pressures, states are increasingly turning to sport as a foreign policy instrument." The examples of sports coverage discussed in this section are in line with their study, illustrating how sport was utilised for political and diplomatic ends. Further, as part of sports diplomacy, the interaction among archers is also adopted to reinforce the narratives of anti-China sentiment narratives, as suggested by Murray and Pigman (2014). Thus, the findings of this study suggest that the group photograph of international archers was reinterpreted as a symbolic representation of diplomatic relations among East Asian

countries. This reinterpretation reflects Taiwan's international situation and social environment—domestically, Taiwanese people actively pursue international recognition, while internationally, China continues to pose the principal obstacle to their aspirations.

Out of the archery range, the stories from the same photograph (Figure 7-8) were also employed to emphasise the oppression from China and further embedded geopolitical discussions into the Taiwanese nationalist narratives. With the backdrop of China expanding, it created geopolitical tensions in East Asia. The aforesaid three nations all faced a variety of pressures from China, such as military,⁶⁴ diplomatic,⁶⁵ and economic,⁶⁶ respectively. The anti-China sentiment also spread to the sports field. For example, *Apple Daily* stated that “group photographs without China made the world see Taiwan” (Y.-C. Shih, 2021b). The news article further reported a comment from a Korean netizen that “Without Chinese players, the group photos looked comfortable” (Y.-C. Shih, 2021b). Another *Liberty Times's* story reported comments from Twitter users on the competition, it stated: “Korea defeated Japan and reached the gold medal; Taiwan defeated China and got the silver medal.... Justice prevails... Although Japan and Korea are in complicated relations (due to historical issue, Korea was once a Japanese colony) with each other, China is the common enemy of Japan, Korea, and Taiwan” (Liberty Times, 2021g).

According to I. H. Cho and Park (2011, p. 269), “anti-China sentiments in East Asia were mobilised as part of evolving region-wide trends, external and domestic, such as the Cold War environment, democratisation (in Korea and Taiwan), and the rise of China”. Cho and Park (2011) asserted that the post-Cold War honeymoon period between Japan and China,

⁶⁴ *The Diplomat*: Japan scrambles jets as China air force flies bombers, fighters through Miyako strait (Panda, 2016); *Taipei Times*: Chinese aircraft fly around Taiwan (J. Pan, 2016).

⁶⁵ *BBC*: China presses South Korea on Thaad missile system (BBC, 2017).

⁶⁶ *CNBC*: China has banned Taiwan's pineapples. Taiwan says it's not fair play (Ng, 2021)

as well as between Korea and China, ended in 1998⁶⁷ and 2004⁶⁸ respectively, with the rise of China. Further, the anti-China sentiment in Taiwan is not only in response to China's oppression but also presents that Taiwanese people are struggling to build their nationalism. Ahn's (2019) study of anti-Korean sentiment in Taiwan, states that in East Asia amid rising geopolitical tensions, anti-Korean sentiment was given an affective space for Taiwanese people to search for national identity via constantly questioning its neighbouring countries. With the outbreak of the Sunflower Student Movement, which was a protest against the Ma administration's pro-China stance, the target of questioning turned back to China (Ahn, 2019). Thus, sports reports with anti-China sentiment are considered an affective space, embodying the Taiwanese people to gain international recognition under the increasing oppression of China. Additionally, the reprinted overseas news articles further consolidated the boundaries of nation-states. As suggested by Ahn (2019), the transnational consumption of media strengthens cross-national distaste. Thus, this study argues that the anti-China sentiments originally expressed in the Japanese and Korean media were translated and transmitted to the Taiwanese public through their reproduction in Taiwan's sports news coverage. Those reports rationalised the anti-China sentiment and satisfied the sense of recognition of Taiwanese people (Chiang & Chen, 2014), which are essential themes in Taiwan's nation-building. Thus, reporting the achievements and interactions of athletes allows the nationalist diplomatic discourse to be reinterpreted and then delivered to the public via sports news articles. Even if readers are indifferent to politics, those diplomatic messages are successfully conveyed.

⁶⁷ During Jiang Zemin's visit to Japan in 1998, he requested that Japan offer another formal apology for its actions during World War II, it aroused the dissatisfaction of Japan's ruling party at the time. (Cho & Park, 2011).

⁶⁸ China launched the Northeast Project, which aimed to assert its authority over historical interpretation, in which Goguryeo, an ancient Korean kingdom, was claimed as a part of China's history, it provoked anger among the Korean government and citizens towards China (Cho & Park, 2011).

Although China did not stand on the podium, it was still a focus of news articles. It was portrayed as a hegemonic force in news narratives, which framed Taiwan as a strong but unfairly treated nation due to China's pressure. The reports linked Taiwan with other East Asian nations through shared experiences of Chinese oppression, reinforcing anti-China sentiment and strengthening Taiwanese national identity. As Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) suggested, the invention of tradition relies on existing facts, and China's long-term suppression provided the foundation for constructing Taiwan's tragic yet resilient image in sports diplomacy narratives.

7.2.3 The tragic narratives of Olympians

The highlighting of tragic narratives has been a collective inspiration of Taiwanese people due to its history of suffering from alien regimes' oppression. Thus, stories of battling adversity were often used for nation-building. The hardship of Olympians on and off the court was widely reported in newspapers.

The news reports of Olympian in badminton and boxing are taken as examples to illustrate the role of tragic stories in sports nationalism. For example, a hardship story of Tai Tzu-Ying,—the silver medallist in the women's singles at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the world No. 1 in women's singles, holding the top position consecutively for 72 weeks (Badminton World Federation, 2024)—on the court was reported by *Apple Daily* with the title "Tonight's showdown against China for the gold! Tai Tzu-Ying's early morning message: Legs~ hold on for one more match, keep going!" In the story, China and hard work were highlighted again as keywords: "Fight for the gold medal against China tonight! Tai Tzu-Ying gave herself a pep talk with a photograph of a bruised leg this morning and said: my legs, just one more game, cheer up!!" (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2021a). Tai's coverage

narrated the hard work of Taiwanese athletes, especially when competing with China, which further amplified and inducted the nationalist significance.

The stories of Huang Hsiao-Wen, a bronze medallist in boxing in women's flyweight, overcoming her dysfunctional family were reported to link and magnify her accomplishment and patriotism at the Tokyo Olympics. Via this connection, nationalist discourse was embodied in sports coverage. For example, *Liberty Times* reported Huang's Taiwan island tattoo and she said that "It represents my country, Taiwan" (C.-P. Lo, 2021a). Further, the will of Huang to overcome a difficult family background was presented, An *Apple Daily* story stated:

Huang comes from a single-parent family and was raised by her grandfather because her father was jailed three times for substance abuse... Although she had a hard childhood, she doesn't give up on life and stated that "I cannot change the environment of my original family, but I can change my own destiny, even, I want to change the destiny of my family!!" (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2021e).

The image of the will to overcome hardship was exploited to associate with Taiwan and imbue it with nationalistic connotations. It could be seen in a *China Times* news report., Lai Ching-Te, then Vice President, now President, stated that "Huang Shiao-Wen was not bothered by hardships...she broke the constraints and framework of fate and changed it. This bronze medal is a witness to her hardships along the way and also created a new history in Taiwan" (Tsui, 2021c).

The examples of Tai and Huang illustrate how narratives of overcoming hardship were emphasised and employed by political elites to strengthen the connection between sport and Taiwan. Through this connection, Taiwanese people are reminded once again of the difficult circumstances brought by China, and the resilience of the Taiwanese. Drawing from

McGee and Bairner (2011), who identified the Irish nationalist habitus through a shared sense of meaning, sports news reports act as a form of cultural language (Jenkins, 1997) creating shared Taiwanese nationalist habitus with tragic narratives via reporting the hardship of athletes. Further, this Taiwanese nationalist habitus gains national significance when being mobilised to resist Chinese nationalism (Pease, 1997).

7.3 The politics of representation of China over Taiwan's newspapers

According to Ghosh (2016, p. 1), "the politics of representation refers to the struggle in society over the meaning of images and depictions in a specific culture". The images of China and the Chinese in Taiwan's newspapers could be considered a struggle between Taiwanese nationalism and Chinese nationalism, in which the image of China was re-depicted or even belittled to distinguish between Taiwanese and Chinese. Thus, this section aims to analyse the way in which Taiwanese newspapers represented images of Chinese athletes and Chinese spectators to mobilise people on the island into nation-building.

7.3.1 The case of Chinese badminton Olympians

The image of China as rude and unpleasant has been deeply rooted in Taiwan for many years.⁶⁹ A rude image of a Chinese athlete was displayed and reinforced again in sports news reports. In a women's badminton doubles game between China and Korea, Chinese player Chen Qingchen kept swearing to Korean players with profanity on the court. This incident and its following discussions were presented in Taiwan's sports coverage with an image of vulgar Chinese. For Example, an *Apple Daily* report stated that:

⁶⁹ For example, *Liberty Times*: Barbaric Chinese (Chin, 2007). *Liberty Times*: Chinese security touched Taiwanese fans' breasts, pinched their buttocks and unbuttoned their bras (W.-M. Liang, 2008). *China Times*: British media: Queen privately complained that the Chinese delegation was very rude (L.-C. Yeh, 2016).

A few days ago, the Chinese badminton women's doubles team said profanities at Korean players in a group match. Today (31 July 2021), in the semi-final, the two sides faced off again, Chen Qingchen did not change his style, kept swearing at their rivals, like “我曹操草 (Wo Cao Cao Cao—literally, “I fuck, fuck, fuck”)” (Y.-C. Shih, 2021a).

In the coverage, Chen Qingchen’s action was emphasised as a habitual behaviour but not an occasional accident. Further, the personal behaviour of the athlete was reinterpreted as a part of Chinese culture and proud behaviour by reporting Chinese netizens’ reaction towards this incident. A *Liberty Times* report reprinted a Chinese netizen’s post on Weibo with more than 13000 likes which stated that: “I do not find it annoying at all when Chinese athletes said profanities to Korean athletes, and I think it's cute and fun... it (Wo Cao) was a beautiful Chinese language on the badminton court” (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2021a). The represented image of Chinese athletes was employed to distinguish between Taiwanese and Chinese. A *Liberty Times* report took Tai Tzu-Ying’s action as an example and reported that Tai encouraged herself by self-encouragement instead of swearing profanities (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2021c). With the boorish image of China/ the Chinese disseminating in news reports, the Taiwanese people were mobilised. For example, the Facebook comments under an *Apple Daily*’s news article stated:

Hk Lam: “The Chinese are very different from the Taiwanese”.

Sabi Wa: “Without any surprise! the Chinese are ill-mannered. Many Chinese in Taiwan are also like that”

Moon Tsai: “Culture and the quality of people are the gaps between the two nations” (Y.-C. Shih, 2021a).

As with Ghosh (2016), the focus is not on whether the content of the narrative is positive or negative, but on how they function, with the politics of representation demonstrating the maintenance and operation of political power.

7.3.2 The case of Chinese spectators at Tokyo Olympics

An invented label called “Little Pink”, referred to young generation Chinese nationalists and the CCP defenders. Originally, the term referred to the users of the name of a novel website that mainly focuses on homosexual love as it used pink as website colour (Fang & Repnikova, 2018). Further, the label was imported into Taiwan with the first cyber-expedition, Diba Expedition or the so-called cross-strait memes war, in 2016 (Fang & Repnikova, 2018). Because the DPP’s candidate Tsai Ing-wen won the 2016 presidential election, Chinese netizens, especially on a subforum of the Baidu Tieba forum called Diba were mobilised for a cyber-campaign by flooding a large number of meme images of China's political correctness on the Facebook fan pages of pro-Taiwan mass media and Tsai Ing-wen. Their actions resulted in counterattacks from Taiwanese netizens by posting China's political taboos, like the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and massacre (X. Wu & Fitzgerald, 2023). Furthermore, the Chinese netizens’ cyber offensives have been considered patriotic acts, tools for strengthening governance, and models of nationalist political mobilisation by the Chinese government. Consequently, Chinese netizens have been mobilised to flood specific social media fan pages—particularly those perceived to contradict China's official ideology—with countless posts as a demonstration of patriotism, especially when national values are perceived as being challenged (X. Wu & Fitzgerald, 2023; Zhuang, Huang, & Chen, 2023). However, the label was given negative connotations in Taiwan, unlike China, which

considered it a positive term. The Little Pink was represented in Taiwanese mass media with an image of irrational and ridiculous Chinese ultranationalists.⁷⁰

During the period of the Tokyo Olympic Games, the behaviours of the Little Pink's expeditions were widely reported in Taiwanese newspapers in a sarcastic way. There were two examples that displayed the disorder behaviours of Little Pinks for forcing others to follow China's ideology an *Apple Daily* story: Germany's table tennis Olympian, Dimitrij Ovtcharov, posted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter on the evening of August 2nd, said: "through to the semifinal after a very tough win against Taiwan". However, his posts were met with a backlash from Little Pinks. For example, a post on Twitter was reprinted by *Apple Daily*: "NOT TAIWAN, THEY ARE CHINESE TAIBEI" (Y.-C. Shih, 2021c). *Liberty Times* also reported the incident: "Little Pinkies angrily reacted, claiming that Chinese Taipei should be used instead of Taiwan". Eventually, Ovtcharov edited his post from "win against Taiwan" to "win today" (Liberty Times, 2021h).

The Japanese pair, Jun Mizutani and Mima Ito, defeating the Chinese combine, Xu Xin and Liu Shiwen, reached the championship. It was the first time Japan won the gold medal in the Olympic table tennis. Due to China's dominance of the sport,⁷¹ Japan's victory led Chinese spectators, who were dissatisfied with the result of the match, to go to the Japanese Olympians' social media platform to present their fury. The actions of Chinese spectators were labelled as "the Little Pink", "the sore loser", and "the snowflake" by Taiwanese newspapers. For instance, a *Liberty Times* report stated that "Little Pinks flocked to Mima Ito's Instagram fan page with flooding and criticising comments, which highlighted their lack

⁷⁰ *Liberty Times*: Diba army crossed the Great Firewall, NTDTV: Slaves want to liberate freedmen, extremely ridiculous (*Liberty Times*, 2016b); *Liberty Times*: Chinese netizens flooded the Facebook fan pages of Taiwanese media and politician, scholars: it was very pathetic, just like the boxer regiment (*Liberty Times*, 2016a); *Radio Taiwan International*: "Little Pink" issued death threats, China's extreme nationalism under the wave of anti-extradition (C.-L. Chung, 2019).

⁷¹ Since the introduction of table tennis in the Seoul Olympics in 1988, China ranked first with 60 medals, Korea ranked second with 18 medals, and Germany ranked third with 9 medals.

of sportsmanship” (Liberty Times, 2021k). The negative image of China was further emphasised via reprinting their mean words towards Japanese athletes. An *Apple Daily* news article reprinted Jun Mizutani’s Twitter post: “Some netizens from a certain country came to comment “Go to hell; go disappearance; you better go to die” (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2021d). Further, the unfavourable image of the Little Pink was reinterpreted as the negative image of the Chinese. Chi Cheng’s interview on Radio Free Asia was reprinted by *Liberty Times*. She said: “Chinese people have been brainwashed by patriotism to the point of being unreasonable and ignorant” (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2021f). On the other hand, a news report compared the attitude of the Taiwanese towards failure with the Chinese people’s attitude. A Facebook post from the fan pages of ICU Doctor and influencer Tan Che-Kim was reported by *Liberty Time* in which he said that “Tai is the pride of Taiwan! In here (Taiwan), Tai does not need to worry about being flooded by netizens” (Liberty Times, 2021a).

The negative image of Chinese spectators not only happened on the Internet but also at the venues. The Chinese were represented as lawbreakers. According to the principle Covid-19 countermeasures of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, all spectators were banned from Olympic venues (Winsor, 2021). However, the Chinese Olympians organised a cheering group and loudly cheered for the Chinese players at the gold medal match of the mixed doubles table tennis, which caused the fury of Japanese netizens (T.-Y. Lin, 2021). *Liberty Times* reported the incident and represented the image of China in disgrace. The news article was titled: “Shameless! China blatantly violated the rules...” (Liberty Times Sports Centre, 2021g).

The reshaped negative image of the Chinese was exploited to mobilise Taiwanese to distinguish between themselves and Chinese people. For example, some Facebook comment embodied the mobilisation, Wang said that “that’s why the Chinese are so annoying...”; another user Hu: “Those Chinese Little pinks are just like frogs in a well...are green and

inexperienced, and are just like living in the Boxer era...so sad!" (Apple Daily Breaking News Centre, 2021d); Tan: "Typical Chinese sportsmanship" (Liberty Times, 2021k). These comments clearly exclude the Chinese from the imagined community. The representation of China's negative image was instilled into Taiwanese people and was used to prove Taiwanese was better than Chinese.

The negative image of China and the Chinese was repeatedly reinforced, in which the behaviour of a particular group and athlete was amplified into a collective action of Chinese people. In Taiwan's newspaper, Chen Qingchen and Little Pink's actions was represented in the news reports and reinterpreted as the image of the Chinese, which was in line with the Taiwanese existing imagination of Chinese people for many. The findings are in line with the study of T.-H. Chen and Chiang (2023), the athletes' and fans' reactions on social media as a performative form further emphasise the distinction between Taiwan and China. Further, the behaviour of Chinese audiences in the stadium also served as a tool to highlight the difference between Chinese and Taiwanese. Thus, the "rude Chinese" is a form of politics of representation, in which Chinese people and athletes were depicted as falling behind modernity. Similarly, the portrayed characteristics of Taiwanese people, such as respecting free speech and law-abiding, underscored Taiwan's alignment with modernity, that also a form of politics of representation. Those politics of representation satisfied the Taiwanese's desire to become a modernity—a nation-state—and political de-sinicisation.

The focus of sports news coverage surrounding athletes and spectators, both on-line and off-line, is not on rude Chinese or polite Taiwanese, but rather on how the narratives of rude Chinese are presented to the public through the interpretation of Chinese athletes' and spectators' behaviour. The representation of the Chinese image contributes to a dialogue with societal culture, aiming to strengthen and consolidate Taiwanese national identity. As Ghosh (2016), both stigmatisation and idealisation in the politics of representation are

employed as strategies to achieve political objectives. The Interpretation and representation of Chinese athletes and spectators in Taiwanese newspapers and social media platforms, newly invented Chinese image, as a material of nation-building was constantly reprinted by the newspapers and employed to distinguish Taiwanese from Chinese to create an imagined community of Taiwan.

7.4 Chapter summary

The news coverage surrounding the Tokyo Olympic Games embodied a new face of Taiwanese sports nationalism. It was different from the period of the name rectification referendum, the rivalry between the two nationalisms was not evident during the period of the Olympics. During the Tokyo Olympics, Taiwan and the ROC are becoming blurred, with the nationalisation of Taiwan and the Taiwanisation of the ROC. Reports surrounding the Olympics focused on national consolidation and differentiation between Taiwan and China. Although they are somewhat similar, both exhibit the characteristics of civic nationalism, they are still different. For example, Taiwanese was still looking for the recognition from overseas, but the self-recognition played the important role in the nation-build of Taiwan. Thus, the Taiwanese sports news reports surrounding the Tokyo Olympics embody the Taiwanese nationalism in three themes: 1. The confirmation of nationhood of Taiwan through recognition at home and abroad; 2. The invented nationalist narratives surrounding athletes' performance and behaviour on and off the pitch; 3. The politics of representation of China as a significant other of Taiwan.

First, the overseas news coverage was reprinted by Taiwanese newspapers and the content was reinterpreted as recognition towards Taiwan's nationhood. Taiwan as the name of the nation-state on this island was mentioned frequently in overseas news articles. The discourse of foreign media was reported and reinvented as new tradition that Taiwan is

recognised name, which strengthened the legitimacy of Taiwan as a national name and the absurdity of the name of Chinese Taipei. Additionally, the news reports in domestic newspapers of Taiwan presented the self-recognition towards Taiwan. In the news reports, Taiwanese nationalism incorporated the certain ROC national symbols via military ceremony, to strengthen the nation-ness of Taiwan. The ROC national symbols were associated with the name of Taiwan via celebrating the achievements of athletes. Phrases, for example, “Taiwan hero” (臺灣英雄), “the glory of Taiwan” (臺灣之光), “the nation is great because of you (國家因你而偉大)”, were repeatedly presented in the news coverage with the ROC national symbols, such as national representative colours. The connection between the national significances of the ROC and Taiwan was reinterpreted as national significances of Taiwan via exploiting Olympians’ performance and instilled into Taiwanese for nation building.

On the second theme, the news coverage about Olympians on and off the venue was employed to strengthen Taiwanese national identity. The victory stories of badminton athletes were used to link the victory with Taiwanese culture, politics, and territory to narrate the Taiwanese nationalist stories. The photograph of “Taiwan-In” and Taiwan’s unique divination the reaffirmation of Taiwan’s territories and boundaries were reinterpreted as national symbols and represented to the public of Taiwan via reporting the victory story of the badminton Olympian. Next, the good interaction between archers was connected to the existing international situation in Asia, due to their nationality, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. The friendly interaction was reinterpreted as evidence that Taiwan as a normal nation-state is capable and willing to interact well with other nations, and China was narrated as a threat to Taiwan and East Asia. As one of the important narratives of Taiwanese nationalism, the tragic narrative was reported in newspapers. The stories of athletes overcoming hardship within and without the sports field were reinvented. They

reminded the people of Taiwan that Taiwan would not be overwhelmed by difficult situations and that the Taiwanese people are a tenacious nation.

The third theme indicated the politics of representation of China in Taiwan's newspapers. China as a significant other of Taiwanese nationalism. Thus, China and its athletes' news could be considered the most important foreign reports in Taiwan's newspapers. The image of China and the Chinese were often portrayed as a negative role in Taiwan's news reports. The inappropriate remarks of the Chinese athlete, the cyber-bullying from Little Pinks, and the rule-breaking actions of Chinese viewers were all reported in a mocking and belittling tone by the news reports in Taiwan. Thus, China and Chinese people were re-characterised as a negative icon and instilled into Taiwanese society. Further, via belittling the Chinese image, the Taiwanese were mobilised to exclude China/ the Chinese from their imagined community.

This study argues that although seeking recognition from the international community is an important feature of Taiwan's sports nationalism (Chiang, 2015), the (re)creation the self-recognition on the island also plays an important role. Further, the analysis showed that not only the stories of victory and good performance can forge national identity (Chiang, 2015; C.-C. Ni, 2009) but the narratives surrounding athletes also a vital factor in nation-building, as researched by T.-H. Chen (2008); T.-H. Chen and Chiang (2023); Sun (2019); Y.-c. Wang and Chen (2016). Finally, China/ the Chinese has also been reinterpreted from an actor of political oppression of Taiwan to a disrespectful and ignorant clown.

In summation, reports surrounding Olympic athletes and spectators on and off the field are given different political meanings to strengthen Taiwanese national identity and the collective consciousness of the Taiwanese imagined community (Anderson, 1983). The existing concepts were connected with sports events via military rituals (Knoester & Davis,

2022), folk culture (Hobsbawm, 1992), and the interpretation and representation of China (Ghosh, 2016), developing new traditions. As a national narrative, the new tradition is endowed with nationalist significance when facing Chinese nationalism narratives (Pease, 1997). Sport simplifies complex political narratives and embodies nationalist ideology hidden in everyday life, transmitting it directly or indirectly to all. The nationalist ideology embedded in sports coverage—concealed within familiar concepts, rhetoric, and syntax—is stirred by the emotions evoked by athletes and spectators. This process serves to strengthen and consolidate the national consciousness and identity of the Taiwanese people.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This study argued that narratives surrounding sport conferred nationalist significance, redefining it as a “new tradition”. After democratisation, the development of sports nationalism in Taiwan has undergone three key transformations: from Chinese nationalism to ROC nationalism and, ultimately, to Taiwanese nationalism. Through the themes, such as the integration of the ROC, Chinese Taipei and Taiwan, the performativity of sports and patriotism, the amalgamation of sport and tragic collective memories, the politics of representation in sports coverage and the seeking of recognition, the “new tradition” embodied how these “banal” sports narratives were adopted to build an “imagined community”. The role of sport in nation-building offers a broader perspective and deeper insight into the development and transformation of Taiwanese nationalism.

8.1 Research summary, key findings, and responses to research questions

The transformation of national identity is deeply intertwined with changes in the social and political landscape, including the decline of the KMT’s Chinese nationalist ideology, the democratisation and liberalisation of Taiwanese society, and the diplomatic and military pressure exerted by the PRC. Throughout this process, sport has played a dual role as both a catalyst and a conduit for nationalist narratives. The “newly invented” nationalist ideology has often been disseminated to the Taiwanese public through sports—an ostensibly non-political arena—via “banal” cues such as the national flag, anthem, flag presenting ceremonies, and athletes’ speech, thereby strengthening and shaping an “imagined community”.

This study examined how sports coverage connects athletes' performances or sports events with cultural, ethnic, territorial, and citizenship aspects, thereby shaping national significance and reflecting Taiwan's transformation in national identity from Chinese to predominantly Taiwanese over the past three decades. It analysed changes in the connotations of "Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese)", "China", "Taiwanese, Taiwan", and "Chinese Taipei" in sports narratives, the factors driving these changes, and the ways in which readers perceive and reinterpret these narratives. Through three cases—the coverage of baseball games from 1990 to 2023, the 2018 name rectification referendum, and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, this study explored the relationship between sport, nationalism, and national identity. Specifically, it examined how sports nationalism was represented in news articles, how these narratives were shaped by social movements, and how they, in turn, contributed to broader social changes. Sport, with its universal appeal, has served as an effective vehicle for nationalism, often presenting patriotism through cheers, passion, and support for athletes and events. For instance, Taiwanese fans waved flags during international baseball competitions, celebrated Tai Tzu-Ying's silver medal in badminton at the Tokyo Olympics, and participated in National Day parades that nationalised athletes. Sports news articles embodied this dynamic and presented the role of sports in shaping and responding to societal change.

The significance of this study lies in its pioneering analysis of the changes in sports nationalism in Taiwan following democratisation and Taiwanisation. Among the numerous studies on sports nationalism, this research is the first to systemically collect and conduct an analysis of national narratives in Taiwan's sports news coverage after democratisation (1990-2023). Furthermore, the present research is one of the few that include comments on social media platforms in its research scope. This approach provides a more comprehensive perspective on understanding the role of sport in nation-building. By analysing how these

narratives were constructed, employed, communicated, and accepted, the study gained a deeper understanding of how the ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism were interwoven and integrated to shape the current landscape of Taiwan's national identity. Ultimately, this study contributed to the understanding of the transformation of sports nationalism in Taiwan and to provide a potential framework for reducing the conflicts between Taiwanese national identity and the ROC national identity in Taiwanese society.

The examination of three cases addresses the research questions of this study, which are: 1. What national characteristics are highlighted or overlooked in sports news articles? How are these aspects narrated, assessed, and interconnected?; 2. In what ways do sports news articles link athletes' performances or the hosting of sports events to cultural, ethnic, territorial, and civic identities? How are these meanings shaped in relation to national significance, and how do they evolve alongside political events or social movements?; 3. Do the representations of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Taiwan, Chinese Taipei, and China in sports news articles shift over time? If so, what factors contribute to these changes?; 4. How do readers perceive, interpret, and reframe the national narratives presented in sports news articles? The following paragraphs will review the research findings and their relevance to the research questions.

Chapter 5 demonstrated the nationalist narratives surrounding baseball from 1990 to 2023 and divided into three periods and revealed how the sport reflected Taiwan's national identity transformation. Initially, nationalism in Taiwan transitioned from Chinese ethnic nationalism to Chinese civic nationalism. Subsequently, with the Taiwanisation of the social context, Taiwan was associated with the ROC, and Taiwanese nationalism's focus on opposition shifted from the ROC to the PRC. Presently, the narrative of seeking and building recognition has become a crucial component of sports nationalism in Taiwan. In the early 1990s, the nationalist narrative was dominated by Chinese ethnonationalism. Baseball and

its achievements were used to construct a fictional ethnic imagination, wherein the significant representation of Taiwanese Indigenous players on the baseball team was ignored, and the Han people were portrayed as the sole ethnic group in Taiwan. Baseball, as an embodiment of nationalist narratives during that period, aligns with the concept of symbolic nationalism proposed by Smith (2001). The KMT, as the Han-dominated ruling group, monopolised state machinery to position the Han people as the primary symbols of the nation (W.-C. Chiu et al., 2014), thereby strengthening Chinese national identity. This constructed single Han ethnic identity was employed as a link to connect Taiwan with China, particularly through the victories in baseball games. For example, the silver medal in baseball at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics was called the common glory of the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. In the late 1990s, nationalist narratives shifted to the ROC civic nationalism, in which People without the ROC nationality no longer considered compatriots. The hosting, participation and confrontation of international baseball games highlighted the fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait are different countries. It echoed Bairner's (1996) view that hosting and watching sports events can strengthen national identity. Further, the competitions between Taiwanese players and Chinese players also increased the sense of national identity for Taiwan. Baseball players were considered proxy warriors (Hoberman, 1984), and the competition against China exactly emphasised that the two sides were not one nation.

In the 2000s, with the DPP taking power, Taiwan's political environment moved closer to democratisation, liberalisation and Taiwanisation. The hosting of the 2001 Baseball World Cup in Taiwan functioned to blur the boundaries between Taiwan and the ROC. In the process, the name "Taiwan" was gradually given national significance, and the ROC nationalists also used the ambiguity to consolidate the legitimacy of the ROC's rule. The authorities exploited baseball to forge Taiwanese national identity, as suggested by C.-Y. Lin

et al. (2010). Further, baseball fans' positive and enthusiastic, sometimes even extreme, behaviours are described as expressions of patriotic sentiment toward Taiwan. This aligns with Gibbons's (2014) research, which suggests that fan reactions contribute to the construction of national identity.

During the 2004 Athens Olympics, then-President Chen Shui-Bian and the semi-official television station TTV referred to the Chinese Taipei delegation as the "Taiwan Team". This marked an effort by the authorities to leverage sports events to elevate "Taiwan" from a regional designation to a nation, but it also provoked a debate on the name. Further, coverage surrounding the incident equated the ROC with Taiwan, repeatedly reinforcing the narrative that Taiwan and the ROC are synonymous through stories about the Taiwan team. Sport embodied the two-way strategy that drove Taiwanisation, in which Taiwanese nationalists employed the nationhood of the ROC to promote Taiwan to national status, while contrarily the ROC nationalists used the term "Taiwanese people" to seek the islanders' recognition of the ROC. These findings echo with Jacobs's (2005) study. Furthermore, sport contributed to the Taiwanisation process, creating an ambiguous field for Taiwanese nationalists and the ROC nationalists and thereby reducing the conflict between the two forms of nationalism—which is consistent with Lams and Liao's (2011) argument.

Baseball embodied Taiwan's values and memory (An & Loh, 2010). Taiwan's defeat to China in baseball during the 2008 Beijing Olympics has portrayed national trauma and collective memory for the Taiwanese people. This event served as a narrative to distinguish the Taiwanese from the Chinese, strengthening the notion that China and the Chinese do not belong to the ROC. Although Taiwan defeating China in baseball has become common, losses are often given greater emphasis. As Halbwachs (1980) and Connerton (1989) suggested, collective memory is constructed through specific narratives. Especially sports

events played a vital role in building collective memory (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Numerato & Svoboda, 2022). These failure narratives were repeatedly highlighted to strengthen Taiwanese national identity and confirm China is the opponent. It is in line with Melucci (1996) study that the consumption of collective memory plays a crucial role in fostering collective identity.

Overseas baseball players and the CPBL season opening during the COVID-19 pandemic embodied that seeking recognition of modernity is a nationalistic desire of Taiwanese people. These two incidents exemplified the paradox of the desire. This aligns with the arguments of Chiang (2015) and T.-H. Chen and Chiang (2019) that, as a post-colonial nation lacking formal recognition from the international community, Taiwan has utilised sports as a platform to assert its existence on the global stage. In this context, athletes and sports events embodied the paradox of Taiwan's sports nationalism. On one hand, they were exploited in pursuit of recognition from modernity; on the other hand, they served as a means of resisting the oppression of modernity, such as Japanese colonial legacy, American values and international community influenced by China. As Cho (2016) suggested, baseball has been regarded as a Western tool for achieving recognition of modernity. The CPBL's opening season during the pandemic was used as a symbol of Taiwan's successful pandemic response, shifting the Taiwanese people's attitude toward seeking international recognition and reinforcing Taiwan's image as a modern nation-state. Over the past three decades, baseball in Taiwan has reflected the evolution of nationalism, transitioning from Chinese ethnic nationalism to Chinese civic nationalism, then to the competition between Taiwanese nationalism and ROC nationalism driven by Taiwanisation, and to the consolidation of a distinct Taiwanese national identity.

Overall, Chapter 5 establishes a foundational framework for understanding the evolution of sports nationalism in Taiwan. These findings contribute to answering the

research questions. The news coverage of the 1990 Baseball World Championship, athletes were referred to as the “Han team” despite the presence of Indigenous players. In reports on the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, the victory of the Taiwanese baseball team was framed as an honour for the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. However, by the 2001 Baseball World Cup, due to China’s participation, national identity was framed through the symbols of the ROC, such as the national flag, rather than Chinese heritage. The findings revealed that the national characteristics shifted from an emphasis on ethnicity—rooted in bloodline and culture—to political legitimacy, defined by territory and citizenship. These shifts respond to the first and second research questions regarding what kind of national characteristics are emphasised and ignored how sports news articles connect sports events with nationalism.

Nationalist symbols and opponents changed as the Taiwanisation of the ROC occurred, which explained why national characteristics and terms changed and addressed the third research question. For instance, the news reports surrounding the 2004 Athens Olympics suggest that nationalist terms such as Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Taiwan, and Chung-Hua Tai-Pei (中華臺北/ Chinese Taipei) became increasingly blurred. This ambiguity stemmed from the Taiwanisation of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Chinese Taipei, as well as the nationalisation of Taiwan. This study argues that these changes were driven by democratisation and the shift in nationalist discourse toward civic nationalism, presenting a form of “discursive practice”. The reinterpretation of these terms’ nationalist significance reflects the evolving nature of nationalism in alignment with democratisation. In this transformation, sport functioned as a form of “social practice”, transmitting nationalist discourse to the public. An obvious example of social practice is the portrayal of Taiwan’s baseball defeat by the Chinese team in the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a national humiliation, which contributed to the construction of a Taiwanese nationalist narrative. This failure in

baseball was compared to the lasting fear among Taiwanese people—China’s invasion—by fans and was disseminated by the press. Through this narrative, nationalist significance was embedded in the team’s defeat, further highlighting the distinction between Taiwanese and Chinese identities, and the PRC’s hostility. It also responded to the fourth research questions about how social actors reinterpret the national narratives.

Chapter 6 focused on the 2018 referendum, exemplifying the ongoing competition between ROC nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism. While the referendum's result did not directly represent the island's national identity, it highlighted the strategic compromises made by the Taiwanese people to safeguard their nationalist ideology. Chinese Taipei was designed to keep the Chinese-ness of the ROC. The repeated rituals, such as the flag handover ceremony, embedded the ROC’s national significance into Chinese Taipei. It transformed Chinese Taipei from the name of a sports team to a national symbol of the ROC. However, with social changes within Taiwan, the name transformed from an achievement of successfully retaining Chinese-ness to a compromise made to participate in international competitions. The 2018 referendum reflected the paradox between the name and the national perception of the Taiwanese people.

The name “Chinese Taipei” was considered an embodiment of the political oppression of Taiwan by Chinese-centric nationalism, from sports field to political field, from the KMT to the PRC, as exemplified by Yao Yuan-Chao’s “betrayal” and cancellation of the EAYG as punishment. The existence of Chinese Taipei materialises the tragic narrative, an important concept in the Taiwanese nationalist narrative (B. Su, 1986; N.-T. Wu, 1992, 1996). Additionally, the persistent reiteration of the oppression associated with Chineseness plays a crucial role in strengthening Taiwanese national identity. This finding aligns with the arguments of CC.-D. Liu (2015) and Ghosh (2016). Furthermore, this study emphasises the role of sports in driving these tragic narratives.

Next, the process of the nationalisation of Chinese Taipei was examined. This study built on the findings of Chiang and Chen (2021), providing additional insights into how Chinese Taipei was portrayed as a national symbol and utilised in nation-building. While their research focuses on how ROC authorities used Chinese Taipei to maintain the Chineseness of the ROC, it does not address how ROC nationalists reinterpreted Chinese Taipei into both a national symbol and a Taiwan's symbol to sustain the ROC's administration. Against the background of integration of Chinese Taipei, the ROC and Taiwan, the right to participate in the Olympic Games has become both a focal point of contention and a means of mobilising the public. Athletes' concerns over their right to participate, coupled with the concrete example of the EAYG cancellation, provoked a long-term collective sense of nationalism among Taiwanese, the desire for recognition (Chiang, 2015; Chiang & Chen, 2013, 2014; C.-C. Ni, 2009). The social media comment underlined Taiwan's uniqueness and reiterated the fact that Taiwan and China are separate nation-states. As H.-J. Chiu et al. (2021) suggested, the referendum's result represented a strategic action. This study argued that Taiwanese voters were driven more by long-term nationalist interests than short-term political ideology. Rather than risking disqualification by changing the name, they opted to compromise to maintain Taiwan's visibility in the international community and the Olympic Games. The defeat of the name referendum reflects this strategic decision. The analysis showed its grounding in the understanding that "Chinese Taipei" functions as a de facto synonym for Taiwan. This compromise underscores Taiwan's nationalist ideology—one that prioritises international recognition and aspires to affirm its status as a modern nation-state.

This chapter further adopted the concept of discursive practice in critical discourse analysis to understand how Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese), Chinese Taipei and Taiwan were interrelated and how Taiwanese people perceive these relationships, which gives a more

detailed explanation towards research questions three and four. Specifically, they revealed that the transformation of these terms was shaped by political contexts and historical periods, reflecting the shifts in nationalist ideologies. This analysis addresses the third research question by examining what drives these changes, how they occur, and why they take place. However, this change has not reached a consensus among all Taiwanese people, which was also the primary reason why the referendum was both proposed and opposed. The results demonstrate that Taiwanese nationalists refuse to accept or recognise Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Chinese Taipei as having Taiwanese national significance. On the contrary, the ROC nationalists believe that Taiwan is not qualified to embody Chineseness. Furthermore, an analysis of social media posts revealed that the nationalist statement from China's Taiwan Affairs Office regarding the referendum result provoked resentment among both supporters and opponents of the name change in Taiwan. This public reaction suggests that readers not only recognised but also rejected the nationalist narratives embedded in sports news articles. These findings address the fourth research question by illustrating how readers engage with and respond to nationalist narratives.

Chapter 7 analysed the news surrounding the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which presented the narratives of consolidation of nationalism and the enhancement of national identity. This chapter argued that news coverage of sports and athletes' behaviour served as a key vehicle for linking sport, familiar cultural symbols, and nationalism. In other words, sports news articles functioned as a form of social practice (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). For example, the ritual of folk religion, like *siūnn-pue*, was infused with nationalist significance through sports achievement, then passed to the public in a commonplace way. Overseas news outlets on Taiwan and NHK referring to Chinese Taipei as "Taiwan" were utilised to reinforce Taiwanese national identity. These reports highlighted the Taiwanese people's enduring desire and anxiety for modernity (Chiang, 2015; Chiang & Chen, 2014). Moreover, within the

context of sports being overly emphasized, the speeches of politicians and public reactions have amplified the pursuit of recognition as a modern nation, elevating it to the status of a “national movement”. A series of celebrations also sacralised and reinforced the connection between patriotism and sports and through military rituals, including sword arches, military aircraft escorts, Guard of Honour performances and National Day parades, as suggested by Knoester and Davis (2022). Further, the authorities integrated the ROC's national significance with Taiwan through rhetoric and symbolism, such as national heroes, TEAM TAIWAN, and the colours of national flag, while simultaneously using Taiwan to bolster the legitimacy of the ROC governance, thereby strengthening their national pride and identity (Knoester et al., 2022).

News articles of Olympians were reframed to emphasize and highlight key narratives that served distinct purposes: 1. Celebrating Unique Culture and History: Highlighting folk culture to reinforce a distinct national identity; 2. Strengthening National Pride and Identity: Showcasing Taiwan's capability to function as a normal nation-state; and 3. Narratives of Tragedy and Triumph: Portraying the national spirit of resilience and the ability to overcome adversity. This reinterpretation underscored the role of sports as a platform for constructing and reinforcing national identity. The stories of Lin-Yang duo illustrated the narrative of Taiwan's dramatic victory over China in badminton—a sport long dominated by China—was framed as a symbolic national triumph. This victory was linked to the Battle of Kuningtou. Additionally, the emphasis on Lee Yang's Kinmen identity served to reconfirm the territorial scope and legitimacy of the ROC/Taiwan. It intertwined the victory with a broader sense of national pride and identity. This victory represents a symbolic liberation for the Taiwanese people, who have endured years of political oppression from China (T.-H. Chen & Chiang, 2023). By intertwining victories in the war against the PRC with badminton achievements, a new national narrative was created—one aimed at consolidating the nation-state for its

citizens (Pease, 1997). As Hobsbawm (1992) stated, the existing historical memory is one of the cornerstones of nation-building. Additionally, the Lin-Yang duo's victory pose was blended with traditional culture to highlight the uniqueness of Taiwanese identity. Their media coverage embodied Kaldor's (2004) view that national identity depends on its ability to resonate with the genuine emotions of ordinary people, stemming from shared folk memories, traditions, and customs. Their celebratory pose reflected the daily religious life in Taiwan, resonated with the public, and further consolidated a sense of Taiwanese identity.

The interaction between Taiwanese, Japanese and Korean archers was described as an inspiring story, which was used to prove that Taiwan is a qualified, normal and capable nation-state. The injustice and inequality Taiwan has suffered in the international community are the result of China's political suppression. In the narrative, the interactions among sports celebrities, serving as an ideal platform for diplomacy, reflected Taiwan's nationalist aspiration to break free from China's political, economic, military, and diplomatic oppression and to engage with other countries as a sovereign nation-state. The reporting on archers' interaction served as a narrative device to reinterpret diplomatic relations among East Asian countries while reinforcing anti-China sentiment. This aligns with the arguments by Jackson and Haigh (2008), Murray and Pigman (2014) and Kobayashi and Cho (2019) regarding the symbolic and practical roles of athletes in shaping diplomatic discourses. The findings of this study further elaborate that sports activities provide room to transform complex and inaccessible political and diplomatic actions into simple nationalist discourses. With enthusiasm for the Olympics, the narratives were subconsciously embedded in the public's thoughts, thereby strengthening national identity.

A story of fighting against adversity is a vital narrative in nation-building. The stories of Tai Tzu-Ying and Huang Hsiao-Wen overcoming hardships on and off the court and ring were underlined to present the resilience and pride of Taiwanese people. The photos of Tai's

injured leg and Huang's family background were widely reported, in which athletes' sacrifice and overcoming adversity were portrayed as the acts of patriotism. Through the reporting of Tai and Huang's stories, sports news functioned as a form of cultural language, fostering a common Taiwanese consciousness that mobilises the public to resist Chinese nationalism (Jenkins, 1997; McGee & Bairner, 2011; Pease, 1997).

The behaviour of Chinese athletes and spectators was employed as material to distinguish the Taiwanese from the Chinese. In Taiwanese newspapers, the image of Chinese athletes and spectators was labelled Little Pink and portrayed as disrespectful and disorderly. Simultaneously, the image of Taiwanese athletes and spectators was depicted as kind, friendly and law-abiding. These negative and positive images served as embodiments of the politics of representation. As Ghosh (2016) asserted the politics of representation focuses not on the truthfulness of the content but on how it is manipulated to serve political ends. In this case, China was portrayed as non-modern, while Taiwan was depicted as modern, displaying the Taiwanese people's aspiration to be recognised as part of modernity. It echoed T.-H. Chen and Chiang (2023) who stated the actions of athletes and fans on the Internet are a form of performance that is adopted to emphasise the gap between Taiwan and China. Additionally, this research further underlined the role of politics of representation, in which reinterpreted Chinese image online and offline played the crucial role in distinguishing the Taiwanese from the Chinese.

Furthermore, these themes were utilised by sports journalism to enhance the significance of the Taiwanese nation while downplaying the Chinese nationalist connotations of Chung-Hua (中華/ Chinese) and Chinese Taipei. This was achieved by connecting historical narratives, collective memories, and stereotypes to athletes' performances and spectators' behaviours. These findings reflect social practice and address the second research question

by explaining how Taiwanese people's national identity was influenced by sports news articles through the linkage of existing political and social narratives and historical contexts.

Additionally, by analysing news stories and social media posts surrounding the behaviour of Chinese athletes and spectators, this chapter responds to the fourth research question regarding how Taiwanese people understand and interpret sports news stories. The results indicate that Taiwanese people not only recognise the nationalist ideology in the reports but also relate it to their own experiences of interacting with Chinese individuals both in real life and online. They perceived inappropriate behaviours on and off the field as "national characteristics of China", thereby further distancing themselves from Chinese people.

8.2 Research contributions and future directions

To address the lack of systematic and long-term perspective research on sports nationalism in the context of democratisation, this study provided a comprehensive analysis of sports nationalism in Taiwan during the democratisation period. Furthermore, by categorising the evolution of nationalism in democratic Taiwan into three stages—from Chinese ethnic nationalism to the ROC civic nationalism to Taiwanese nationalism—this study established a new framework for understanding how sports media contributes to the transformation of national identity.

This research pioneered the application of the concept of Taiwanisation (Wakabayashi, 1992/1994, 2008/2016) in the field of sports nationalism, an area that has traditionally overlooked this framework. By integrating Taiwanisation with the notion of discursive practice in critical discourse analysis and sports news texts, this research highlighted the role of everyday media narratives in shaping modern Taiwanese nationalism. The findings provided a more precise and contextualised explanation of the historical, social, and sports

factors that construct contemporary Taiwanese identity, and explains why Taiwanese people remain unprovoked when confronted with violations of nationalist political principle (Gellner, 1983). This study noted that in the process of the Taiwanisation of the ROC and Chinese Taipei, and the nationalisation of Taiwan, the national significances of both were intertwined and assimilated into one. Specifically, the integration of the ROC/Chinese Taipei and Taiwan has effectively aligned the political and national units, rendering them congruent, in line with Gellner (1983, p. 1) statement that “the political and the national unit should be congruent”. Therefore, the name change was considered largely symbolic. The perspective of this study serves as a complement to Chiang and Chen’s (2021) research, which contends that Taiwanese people’s opposition to the name change represented a form of compromise. This study argues such compromise stems from the public’s understanding that “Chinese Taipei” is essentially equivalent to “Taiwan”.

While previous studies have explored the link between sport and militarism in various international contexts (e.g., Knoester and Davis, 2022 and Knoester et al., 2022), this study is the first to apply this framework to Taiwan. It examines how national discourse connects athletes to nationalism through military rituals and collective memories, thereby reinforcing national identity. Usually, Taiwan’s military has been regarded as the guardian of the ROC nationalism due to its historical background, such as its role in the Chinese Civil War, its function as an enforcer of authoritarian rule, and its domination by Taiwanese-mainlanders. However, this study makes an original contribution by revealing that sports have played a crucial role in Taiwanising the ROC military and its historical narratives. In addition, the connection between sport and the military has elevated athletes into national symbols. In other words, real warriors and proxy warriors (athletes) were symbolically fused by sports news articles and then disseminated to the public for strengthening Taiwanese national Identity. Additionally, this study breaks new ground in Taiwan’s sports nationalism research

by integrating folk religious rituals with sports. These two approaches extend the understanding of how military and religious elements adopt sport to shape national identity, moving beyond conventional analyses focusing on political areas.

In terms of methodology, this study adopted a novel approach to examining how nationalist ideologies interact with the public. Unlike previous research that primarily focused on elite political narratives, this study incorporated letters to the editor and social media comments as research data. This approach provided insights distinct from past studies that relied solely on mass media sources. By integrating these perspectives, this research offered a clearer observation of social practice within the framework of critical discourse analysis. The findings indicated that in the process of nation-building, social actors do not merely accept top-down indoctrination but also play a vital role and can even serve as the driving force in shaping nationalist discourses. For example, in Chapters 6 and 7, the analysis of how Taiwanese readers perceived the statement of the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office, and the behaviour of Chinese athletes and spectators revealed that negative perceptions of China were strengthened by Taiwanese people based on their own experiences or stereotypes, further excluding China from the Taiwanese imagined community.

The findings provide a foundation for further research into the development of sports nationalism in Taiwan and the role of sport in Taiwanese nation-building, particularly regarding the interaction between the public and nationalist narratives. Nation-building is a process of constant dialogue, interaction and compromise between elites and the masses. How the public perceives, interprets and practices those nationalist narratives outlines an important subject in the research on a history and development of Taiwanese sports nationalism. Even though, nowadays, a majority identified themselves as Taiwanese, its internal composition is complex and diverse. Thus, the nationalism and national identity in

Taiwan cannot be considered a monolith. In addition to narratives from political elites, it is also important to examine how athletes and spectators from various social classes, genders, ethnic groups, and historical backgrounds construct (and are constructed by) their national identities via sport. Additionally, with the PRC's growing expansionist ambitions and its "Wolf Warrior" diplomacy⁷², geopolitics in Asia—particularly across the Taiwan Strait—has become increasingly tense. This tension is also evident in the realm of sports. Two incidents illustrate China's ongoing pressure on Taiwan in international sporting arenas: during the badminton tournament at the Paris Olympics, a handmade "Go Taiwan!" poster was forcibly snatched by Chinese spectators (Nien, 2024); in another case at the 2025 Rhine-Ruhr World University Games, two functionaries from the China Student Sports Federation attempted to seize a congratulatory letter from the Taiwanese government presented to the men's taekwondo team after they won silver (H.-H. Lin, Wu, & Chu, 2025). Therefore, understanding how sports can guide, mediate, and even intensify conflicts—particularly those between Taiwan and China stemming from divergent nationalisms—is an important avenue for future research.

To address these unfinished ambitions, future research is needed to adopt a mixed-methods approach, incorporating surveys and interviews to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of Taiwan's sports nationalism. Given the variations in collective memory across different ethnic groups and generations—for instance, those born after the lifting of martial law who did not directly experience the KMT's authoritarian rule, future research should consider the cultural diversity of Taiwanese people in greater depth and explore how social actors interpret national narratives and construct their national identities within their respective social contexts. This will contribute to a broader and more nuanced

⁷² A radical, confrontational and aggressive form of diplomacy adopted by the PRC, the name originated from a Chinese patriotic movie "Wolf Warrior" (Z. A. Huang, 2022).

understanding of nationalism in Taiwan, acknowledging its internal complexities and diverse perspectives.

Furthermore, the 2024 Paris Olympics and the WBSC Premier 12 provide distinct opportunities for examining the transforming nature of Taiwanese nationalism. Notably, Taiwan's performance in the Paris Olympics was less remarkable compared to Tokyo, ranking 35th with two gold and five bronze medals. However, the same year, Taiwan defeated long-time rival Japan to win the WBSC Premier 12 championship. The contrast between these two major sports events in the same year presents a valuable case study for understanding how national pride, media narratives, and public sentiment fluctuate based on different sports and competitive outcomes. In the context of Taiwan's ongoing struggle for international recognition, future research could examine and compare how national identity evolves across different types of sports and mega-sporting events, as well as the impact of sports performance on national identity in various sports competitions. Completely reconstructing a contextualised and localised history of sports nationalism in Taiwan still has a long journey ahead for future research.

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Appendix A

List of abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definition
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
COC	Chinese Olympic Committee
CPBL	Chinese Professional Baseball League
CTOC	Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
EAYG	East Asian Youth Games
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KMT	Kuomintang
LLB	Little League Baseball
NOC	National Olympic Committee
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
TAO	Taiwan Affairs Office
TML	Taiwan Major League Professional Baseball

Appendix B

The timeline of significant social, political, and sports events in Taiwan (1624-2023)

Years	Social & political events	Sports events
1624	The Dutch colonising southern Taiwan.	
1626	The Spanish colonising northern Taiwan.	
1657	Kingdom of Tungning governing southern Taiwan.	
1683	Ch'ing Empire ruling Western Taiwan.	
1894	First Sino-Japanese War occurred.	
1895	Japan ruling Taiwan.	
1896	Law 63 implementation.	
1898		Introduction of the Primary School Law, sport become part of official education.
1921	Taiwan Cultural Association established. Law 31 implementation.	The Takasago (Noko) Baseball Team established.
1927	Taiwanese People's Party established.	
1931		The KANO Baseball Team claimed second place in Japan national high school tournament, Koshien.
1941	Pacific War occurred.	
1945	The authority over Taiwan shifted from Japan to the ROC.	
1947	The 228 incident occurred.	
1949	The KMT regime escaped to Taiwan. Martial Law implemented.	
1950		The Promulgation and Implementation Outline of the Education for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion and National Founding.

1952		Absent from the Helsinki Olympics due to one China issue.
1954	The First Taiwan Strait Crisis	
1956		Participated in the Melbourne Olympics in the name of Formosa-China.
1958	The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis	
1960		Participated in the Rome Olympics in the name of Chinese Republic of Formosa and Maysang Kalimud won the Taiwanese first Olympic medal.
1964		Participated in the Tokyo Olympics in the name of Taiwan
1968		Participated in the Mexico City Olympics in the name of Taiwan and Chi Cheng Won the first Olympic medal by a Taiwanese women. Hong-Ye Elementary School Little League Baseball Team won a friendly match against Japan.
1969		The Golden Dragon Little League Baseball Team won the championship at Little League Baseball (LLB).
1971	The PRC replaced the seat of the ROC in United Nations.	The Jyu-Ren Little League Baseball Team won the championship at LLB.
1972		Participated in the Munich Olympics, the last time competing under the name of the Republic of China. The Taipei City Little League Baseball Team and the Meiho Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1973		The Jyu-Ren Little League Baseball Team and the Huaxing Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1974		Department of Physical Education, Ministry of Education established.

		The He-Bin Elementary School Little League Baseball Team, the Meiho High School Junior League Baseball Team, and the Chinese All-Star Senior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1975	Chiang Kai-Shek death	The Meiho Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team and the Chinese All-Star Senior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1976		Absent from the Olympic Games. The Meiho Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team and the Chinese All-Star Senior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1977		The He-Bin Elementary School Little League Baseball Team, the Huaxing Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team, and the Chinese All-Star Senior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1978		The Nei-Pu Elementary School Little League Baseball Team, the Pan-Chiao Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team, and the Chinese All-Star Senior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1979	Kaohsiung incident occurred.	The Pu-Tzu Elementary School Little League Baseball Team and the Dongfeng Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB.
1980		The Pan-Chiao Elementary School Little League Baseball Team and the Meiho Junior High School Junior League Baseball Team each won a championship at LLB. Absent from the Olympic Games.

1981		The Tai-Ping Elementary School Little League Baseball Team won the championship at LLB. Signed the Lausanne Agreement.
1984		Returned to the Olympics in name of Chinese Taipei.
1987	The lifting of Martial Law	
1988	Chiang Ching-Kuo dies, and Lee Teng-Hui succeeds as president, the first Taiwanese president.	
1990	Wild Lily student movement.	The Chinese Professional Baseball League established.
1991	First National Assembly election. Revoked the Temporary Provisions Effective during the Period of Communist Rebellion.	
1992	First Legislative Yuan election.	The men's baseball team won silver medal in Barcelona Olympics.
1996	Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. First direct presidential election and Lee Teng-Hui elected president.	
1997		After Taiwan adopted the name Chinese Taipei, the Asian Baseball Championship was first held on the island.
2000	Chen Shui-Bian, pro-independence, DPP, elected president.	
2002		Chen Chin-Feng as the first Taiwanese competitor played in Major League Baseball (MLB). Tsao Chin-Hui as the first Taiwanese pitcher played in MLB.
2004	Chen Shui-Bian re-elected president.	Chen Shih-Sin and Chu Mu-Yen both won the first Olympic gold medal for Taiwan.
2005		Wang Chien-Ming the first Asian to achieve the AL wins leader.

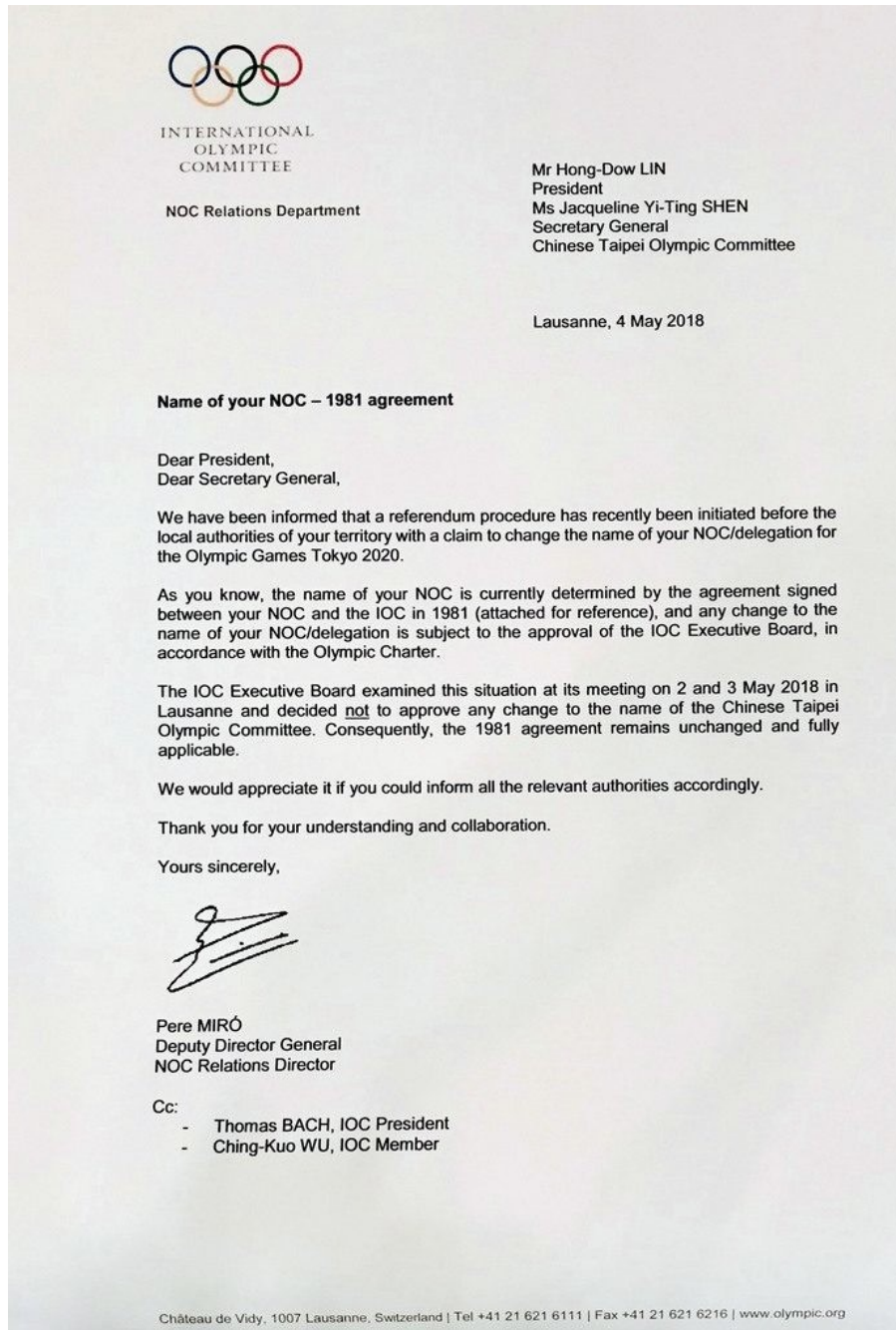
2008	Ma Ying-Jeou, KMT politician, pro-China, elected president.	
2009		Kaohsiung hosted the World Games.
2012	Ma Ying-Jeou re-elected president.	
2014	The Sunflower Student Movement occurred.	
2016	Tsai Ing-Wen, the first woman candidate, elected president.	
2017		Taipei hosted the Summer Universiade.
2018	Civil society held name rectification referendum for changing Chinese Taipei to Taiwan, but it was defeated.	The EAYG cancelled under the pressure of PRC. Taiwanese baseball team achieved third place at Jakarta Asian Game.
2019	Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement occurred in Hong Kong, which led to a deepening of Taiwanese distrust of China.	
2020	Tsai Ing-Wen re-elected president. COVID-19 outbreak and spread globally.	Tokyo Olympics postponed to 2021. The CPBL season started ahead of the rest of the world.
2021		Taiwan achieves record medal count at the Tokyo Olympics.
2023		Taiwanese baseball team achieved second place at Hangzhou Asian Game.

Note. Author tabulation.

Appendix C

The letters from the IOC

C.1 The letter from the IOC on 4 May 2018



Note. Retrieved from: <https://buzzorange.com/citiorange/2018/11/08/ioc-and-tpenoc-issue/>

C.2 The letter from the IOC on 16 November 2018



NOC Relations Department

Mr Hong-Dow LIN
President
Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee

Dr C. H. KAO
Director General, Sports Administration
Department of Education

Lausanne, 16 November 2018

Chinese Taipei – 1981 agreement

Dear Mr Lin,
Dear Dr Kao,

The IOC has been closely following the situation regarding the local referendum about the name of your NOC/delegation for the Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 (and other upcoming international sporting events), which is expected to take place on 24 November 2018.

The IOC does not interfere with local procedures and fully respects freedom of expression. However, to avoid any unnecessary expectations or speculation, the IOC wishes to reiterate that this matter is under its jurisdiction, in accordance with the Olympic Charter.

The name of the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee (CTOC) is currently determined by the agreement signed between the CTOC and the IOC in 1981, and any change to the name of the CTOC/delegation is subject to the approval of the IOC Executive Board, in accordance with the Olympic Charter.

The IOC Executive Board has already examined this situation – at its meeting on 2 and 3 May 2018 in Lausanne – and decided to re-confirm the IOC's position and not to approve any change to the name of the CTOC.

Consequently, the 1981 agreement remains unchanged and fully applicable, and neither the IOC nor the CTOC have any plans to amend the name of the NOC/delegation.

In view of this, any attempts to exercise undue pressure on the CTOC to breach the 1981 agreement and/or to act against the decisions of the IOC Executive Board would be considered as external interference, which might expose the CTOC to the protective measures set out in the Olympic Charter in these circumstances (Rule 27.9 in particular).

Therefore, the IOC is hoping that the interests of the Olympic Movement in Chinese Taipei will prevail over political considerations, so as not to disrupt the CTOC delegation and the athletes in their preparation for upcoming international sporting events, and to avoid any unnecessary complication.

Thank you for your understanding and collaboration.

Yours sincerely,



Pere MIRÓ
Deputy Director General
NOC Relations Director

Cc:

- Thomas BACH, IOC President
- Ching-Kuo WU, IOC Member

Note. Retrieved from: <https://sports.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/2616543>