

The Formation of Modern Sport and Nationalism in South Korea

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Abstract

This paper employs the approach of historical sociology to observe the developments of sports and nationalism in South Korea. Several historical issues are in focus. First, it examines how imperialism opened the national gate of Korea in the 19th century, and how the western cultures constructed the idea of national sports. Second, Korea suffered multiple suppressions on the fields of their politics and society under the Japanese colonization after 1910, and Korean established vivid ideas of Anti-Japan complex and ethnic nationalism within the fields of sports and the national identity. The dialectical relationship between globalization and localization after 1990, it enhances the complexity within the issue of national identity in a deeper level. Last, the Taekwondo became an important means for shaping the Korean national-identity due to its character of ethnic culture as well as its

historicity of the indigenous sport and its modernity. In particular, during the process of the Korean sports and national identity, it shows the interactions with the influences of imperialism, colonialism, modernization and globalization within the construction of Korean national identity, and Japan has been seen as “the other,” but on the other hand, North Korea has been seen as part of “the self” in the characteristic Pan-Korean nationalism. In sum, this paper analyses the interaction between Korean nationalism and sport, and considers the dynamic relationship among modern sports, traditional sports, nationalism and globalization.

Keywords: nationalism, national identity, South Korea, sport

