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Sport policy in China (Mainland)

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Abstract

Sport has been an integral part of the Chinese government's policy agenda since the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949. The policy prominence of sport has been further elevated in the last two to three decades, as indicated by the steady increase in elite sport success, the hosting of sports events such as the Olympic Games, China's increased global engagement with sport organisations and the developments in sport professionalisation and commercialisation. This article reviews China's sport policy at different periods since its inception, analyses the rationale for, and form and extent of, government intervention, presents the sport structure in China and identifies the dominant characteristics of its sport policy. In addition, various sport policy areas, ranging from elite sport and mass sport, to sports mega-events, and sports professionalisation are discussed, and their relative policy significances are compared. The degree of balance between these areas and policy priorities are thus defined. Finally, emerging trends and issues are introduced.

Keywords: China; sport policy; elite sport; sport for all; GAS

Introduction

Sport has a long history in China. Traditional sports such as dragon boat racing, *cujū* (the ancient football) and martial arts have been rooted in China for more than a thousand years. However, China, which has long been influenced by neo-Confucianism and by an emphasis on intellectual activities (Xu, 2008), did not have a strong sporting culture before the 20th century. Only following the establishment of People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 did sport become an important policy area. In brief, China's sport system 'began in the 1950s, developed in the 1960s and 1970s and matured with its own character in the 1980s' (Hong 2008, p. 27).

Politicisation is a dominant characteristic of sport development in China (Zheng 2015). In recent years, various aspects of sport, including elite sport, mass sport, sports professionalisation, and the hosting of sports mega-events (SMEs) have developed rapidly, and sport has become a prominent industry in the country. This has enabled sport to receive an increasingly significant status within the government. A wide range of sports policy documents and laws have been formulated and implemented, including the *Sports Law*, three versions of *Strategic Olympic Glory Plan*, several editions of the *Five-Year Plan for Sport Development in China* and the *National Fitness Programme* (GAS, 2002, 2006, 2011a, 2011b, 2016, Sports Commission of China 1995, The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2014, 2016).

This paper, as a panoramic country profile in nature, reviews sport policy development in all prominent areas in China and aims to present the basic sports landscape and introduce the fundamental sport policies of various sport areas to an international audience. These include elite sport, mass sport, sport professionalisation and the hosting of SMEs. It is noteworthy that the discussion of elite sport is the most detailed because of the Chinese government's longstanding prioritisation of elite sport success. However, other areas are also reviewed, particularly China's

policy development in relation to mass sport, professionalisation and the hosting of SMEs over the last two to three decades. The value of this research resides in its (1) comprehensive presentation of the sport scene in China; and (2) timely coverage of and reflection on the latest developments in various aspects of sport in China, which are not reflected in the vast majority of existing studies on sport in China. In specific terms, this article aims to (1) summarise government involvement in sport in China at different periods with primacy given to the last three to four decades (i.e. since the 1980s); (2) introduce the organisational structure and analyse the role of government within China's elite sport system; (3) identify the sources of funding and the trends with a focus on elite sport; (4) explore policy and strategic factors underpinning China's notable elite sport success, one of the most dominant characteristics and overriding government priorities; and (5) discuss the emerging trends and key contemporary issues in elite sport, mass sport, sport professionalisation and the hosting of SMEs.

This article is structured into eight sections. The next section critically reviews existing literature on sport policy in China. The next section is concerned with the trajectory of sport policy development in China, and government involvement at different periods. This is followed by a summary of the organisational structure of sport in China, after which the funding sources, figures and trends are introduced. A separate section on elite sport in China is provided, because of the distinctive politicised sport system of China where elite sport has long been the most salient policy area, despite recent developments in other sports areas such as mass sport and sports professionalisation. The penultimate section discusses the new trends in Chinese sport. The article ends with a brief conclusion, which summarises the key findings of the analysis.

Literature review: sport in China

Research on various aspects of sport in China has burgeoned in English literature in the last two decades. Fan Hong and her colleagues (for example, Hong 1998, 2008, 2011, Hong and Lu 2012a, Hong, Wu and Xiong 2005) introduced the history of various aspects, most notably elite sport and mass sport in China at different periods since 1949. The political, economic and cultural contexts, political rationale, and significance of sport throughout the PRC period are analysed in depth in their works, which enables a basic understanding of the sport scene in this nation. Susan Brownell and Jinxia Dong also published a number of studies on sport, including the political and non-political utility of sport in China, women and sport and the development of the sport policy agenda from historical and sociological perspectives (Brownell 2005, Cao and Brownell 1996, Dong 1998, Dong and Mangan 2008).

Xu (2008) summarises sport history in the PRC, from its origins to Beijing 2008, including a discussion of important political events that involved sport such as the tension between the PRC and Taiwan, and the Ping-Pong diplomacy between the USA and PRC. In addition, Xu (2008) explored the politics of the growing significance of elite sport success and of the hosting of the Olympic Games. This book provides very insightful understanding of the sport development in China and its politicisation, with considerable historic detail presented and analysed. However, mass sport was not included, and the book's historical nature implied a lack of policy analysis.

More recently, Jinming Zheng and Xiaoqian Hu's works have contributed to the existing literature on sport in China. For example, Zheng and Chen (2016) explored China's strategic approaches to elite sport success and sport categorisation and prioritisation, Zheng (2016, in press) and Zheng, Tan and Bairner (2017) examined the detailed development and policy

approaches in three sports/disciplines in China: cycling, swimming and artistic gymnastics. Hu and Henry (2016) focused on the development of Chinese elite sport discourse in the lead-up to and in the aftermath of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, while Hu and Henry (2017) applied discourse analysis to investigate the reform and maintenance of *Juguo Tizhi* (the whole country support for the elite sport system), a fundamental underpinning of China's significant elite sport success.

Tien-Chin Tan and his colleagues have advanced research on sport in China through case studies of several sports (for example, basketball, football and table tennis, Chen, Tan and Lee, 2015, Houlihan, Tan and Green, 2010, Tan and Bairner, 2010, 2011, Tan and Houlihan, 2012) from the distinctive perspectives of globalisation and the professionalisation of sport in China. Regarding sport for all, X. Chen and S. Chen's (2016) work provides an analysis of youth sport in China and considers the role played by the state in its development.

Despite the significant contributions of these scholars, there remains a dearth of research systematically examining the rich tapestry of sport policy in the People's Republic of China that encompasses a discussion of elite sport, mass sport, major sports events, professional sport and their relative significance and interaction within the entire realm of sport in China. In addition, as noted above, China's most recent developments and trends in various sport policy areas have not been fully discussed. This research fills this gap through its comprehensiveness and timeliness.

A history of government involvement in sport and rationale

This section reviews sport policy development and government involvement in sport at different periods since the establishment of the PRC in 1949. Discussion is further divided into five sections, echoing four critical junctures either in the history of China in general or in Chinese

sport history in particular: the eruption of the Cultural Revolution in 1966; the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976; China's poor performance at the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games; and Beijing's success in bidding to host the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001. The rationale behind such periodisation is that the 1950s and early 1960s witnessed the establishment of a government-led sport system, and the early development of elite sport and mass sport, while sport was largely paralysed during the ten-year turbulence of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The end of the Cultural Revolution, and the subsequent economic reform and opening up policy raised the salience of sport and particularly prompted China's rapid progress in elite sport. However, China's poor performance at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games (five gold medals vs. 15 gold medals at Los Angeles 1984) was a turning point, as well as a wake-up call propelling large-scale reform in elite sport development, which was a key priority in China. The significance of Beijing's successful bid in 2001 transcends sport. It was a key political event in China, and gave elite sport, as well as other aspects of sport in China a new prominence. It is noteworthy that this periodisation is elite sport-centred, but despite the Seoul 1988 the impact of which was more specific to elite sport, all the other junctures also had a marked impact on the entire sport scene in China.

1949-1966

On October 1 1949, the PRC was established. As a consequence of the government's concern for the health of the nation, national representation, nationalism and identity, international prestige and the superiority of Communism (Hong 1998, 2008, Xu 2008), sport became an important government consideration. There were dual priorities in the development of sport in the 1950s: mass sport and elite sport. The significance of mass sport was demonstrated in the landmark

slogan by Chairman Mao Zedong in 1952: 'Develop physical culture and sports, strengthen the people's physiques (*fazhan tiyu yundong zengqiang renmin tizhi*)' (Dai, Shao and Bao 2011, p. 107). In the 1950s, six institutes and eleven schools of physical culture were established and 38 high-level normal colleges reopened their Physical Education departments. Following the lead of the Soviet Union sport was not only a vehicle for improving health but also served national defence (*laoweizhi*).

Concerning elite sport, the Sovietisation of sport was a key feature in the 1950s (Jarvie, Hwang and Brennan 2008). The PRC's debut at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952 demonstrated the potential of sport as an effective vehicle serving the political and diplomatic purposes of the government (Hong and Lu 2012a). Against this backdrop, the State Sports Commission (hereafter the Sports Commission) was created by the Government Administrative Council in November 1952, which became responsible for sport-related issues in China. Vice-Premier He Long was appointed chairman of the Sports Commission. Following He Long's instructions, a complete top-down organisational system was soon established nationwide, with each province, municipality, and autonomous regions creating their own sports commissions in the 'relevant bureaus of the Ministry of education, the Central Youth League, and the General Political department of the Military Commission' (Cao and Brownell 1996, p. 70). In 1956, *The Elite Sport System of the PRC* was officially launched by the Sports Commission. It was a landmark document that laid the foundations for the elite sport system in China (Hong and Lu 2012a). According to the document, 43 elite sports were recognised, rules and regulations were formulated, full-time sports teams were organised at both national and provincial levels and sufficient competition opportunities were provided. In the same year, the Sports Commission issued *The Regulations for Youth Extra-Curricular Sports Schools*. In so doing, the Soviet

Union's extra-curricular sports school model was adopted and disseminated in China. Extra-curricular sports schools still play an essential role in China's sporting success on the international stage, acting as the first rung on the talent development ladder. It is noteworthy that this Sovietised system provided men and women with equal sports opportunities, which propelled the later success of Chinese sportswomen (Brownell 2005).

The time between 1958 and 1966 was characterised by Cao and Brownell (1996, p. 71) as a period of 'political upheavals' (the anti-rightist movement and 'the Great Leap Forward', GLF, *dayuejin*) and 'economic difficulties' (the Three Hard Years, *sannian ziran zaihai*, as a consequence of both the deterioration in the Sino-Soviet relations and natural calamities from 1959 to 1961). Mass sport suffered greatly during this series of political movements, first because of unrealistic and 'premature' (Cao & Brownell 1996, p. 72) policies and ambitions in the GLF during which enormous resources were wasted, and then during the three-year period of famine and economic difficulties. In contrast, elite sport was arguably a beneficiary. The previous policies of 'preparing for labour and defence' and 'to popularise and to practice regularly' were replaced with a new policy in 1959 designed 'to popularise and to improve', which stressed the significance of improving the level of elite sport (Lin 2006). In 1959, the First National Games was held in Beijing. Different from mass sport, elite sport served the government's slogan of catching up with and overtaking leading nations and hence its development was accelerated.

In 1963, another key policy document *Regulations for Outstanding Athletes and Teams*, was issued by the Sports Commission. According to the regulations, each province was required to establish a youth talent search and identification system to support elite development. In addition, ten¹ out of the previous 43 sports were selected as the priority sports, in which the

government invested heavily for future success on the global stage. From that time, Chinese sport started to shift from ‘two legs’ (mass sport and elite sport) to ‘one leg’ (elite sport prioritised) (Hong 2011). In brief, the period 1961-1966 was the consolidation of the elite sport system in China.

1966-1976

The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was a special and turbulent time in China, during which sport was paralysed and largely demolished (Jarvie, Hwang and Brennan 2008). As Johnson (1973, p. 93) characterised, ‘the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s smashed across China like a violent sandstorm’. In so doing, Mao Zedong’s unparalleled authority was established. During the Cultural Revolution, the people (workers and peasants) and collectivism were highly valued, while the elite group, ranging from science to sport, was severely criticised and often physically threatened or assaulted. In 1968, the ‘May 12th Order’ suspended almost every sports activity in China (Dai, Shao and Bao 2011). The head of the Sports Commission, Marshal He Long was severely criticised and beaten by the Red Guards and finally died in prison in 1969. In the first half of the Cultural Revolution the elite sport system was devastated. According to Hong (2008, p. 30), ‘the training system broke down, sports schools closed, sports competitions vanished, and the Chinese teams stopped touring abroad’. Mass sport was also undermined by the ceaseless and widespread violence. Schools were closed and teachers were persecuted. However, there were several developments from 1971 onwards. ‘Ping-pong diplomacy’ with the USA and frequent sporting communication with China’s ‘Third World’ friends were the most noteworthy developments (Xu 2008, p. 117). As Wu (1999) outlined, Chinese government realised the

inseparable relation between sport and politics and athletes acted as sports ambassadors, which conferred new diplomatic utility on sport.

1976-1988

A new era dawned for sport in China with the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 with elite sport emerging as the overriding priority. As Wu (1999) pointed out, to raise the national flag of China at the Olympic Games became an important government responsibility. What underpinned China's unprecedented sporting success were the 'whole country support for the elite sport system' and the *Olympic Strategy*. By contrast, mass participation was required to take a back seat. From the origins of sports reform in 1979, China's sports development pivoted on the principle of 'prioritising elite sport, then leading subsequent general development' (Wu 1999).

The profound changes regarding the political backdrop in the late 1970s, including the end of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping's taking office and the adoption of large-scale domestic reform and the 'open-door policy' had a marked and irreversible impact on sport. Since the 1980s, as the Chinese have become more self-confident, 'nothing better symbolises the drive to achieve greater prestige than sports' (Xu 2008, p. 207).

In late 1979, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) passed the *Nagoya Resolution* and the PRC's seat in the IOC was reinstated after a 21-year absence (Jarvie, Hwang and Brennan 2008). 'Develop elite sport and make China a superpower in the world' became a slogan and pursuit for the Chinese (Hong 2008). Elite sport received a salient profile inside the planned economy and administrative system and the government decided to concentrate its limited resources on the medal-winning sports (Rong 1987).

Immediately in the wake of the success at Los Angeles 1984, the Central Committee of the Party issued the *Notifications Regarding the Further Development of Sport*, the main theme of which was ‘to better arrange the strategic distribution, to concentrate on the sports in which China had advantages, and to enhance weak sports such as athletics and swimming’ (GAS 2009, p. 35). The landmark *Olympic Strategy* was issued in 1985. In this document, elite sport was established as the priority both in the short term and long term.

In 1986, the Sports Commission issued the *Decisions about the Reform of the Sports System (Draft)*, further emphasising and confirming the *Olympic Strategy* and the significance of elite sport in relation to the modernisation of China in the 20th century.

1988-2001

China’s poor performance at the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games was a ‘wake-up call’ prompting a succession of government actions designed to enhance China’s competitiveness on the Olympic stage. First, at the end of 1988, Wu Shaozu was appointed as the new head of the Sports Commission. China established and consolidated its position as a member of the leading group on the Olympic stage during Wu Shaozu’s twelve-year tenure (1988-2000). Second, the government raised the sports budget by a big margin. It was revealed by Xu (2008) that the total sports budget covering the Seoul Olympiad was four billion yuan (Chinese currency unit) (one billion yuan per year) while the budget surged to three billion yuan per year in the Barcelona Olympiad (twelve billion yuan in total). Third, the disappointing experience in Seoul urged China to pay more attention to the elite sport development systems of its major rivals. A national symposium was held in 1989, involving detailed analysis of the top three sports nations (Soviet Union, the USA and East Germany) and two major Asian rivals (Japan and South Korea).

Furthermore, China started to realise the significance of, and hence place serious emphasis on, science in sporting success (ifeng 2009).

In 1992, the government decided to officially adopt a market economy in the 14th National Communist Party Congress. This decision has left an indelible imprint on Chinese sport, with major sports such as football, basketball and table tennis becoming professionalised and commercialised in ensuing years. However, it was very difficult for most other sports to become financially self-sufficient.

China's recovery at Barcelona 1992 (16 gold medals vs. five at Seoul 1988) reinforced the government's commitment to elite sport success. In 1993, the National Games was rescheduled to the year after the Summer Olympic Games in order to better serve Olympic preparations. Furthermore, the National Games started to be integrated into the preparations for the Olympic Games, copying the Olympic sports setting and including all Summer Olympic sports and events. The National Games has since become a development event, or 'training ground' (Hong 2008, p. 42) for the Olympic Games. It is also used as a platform for the selection of talented athletes and coaches.

1995 was a milestone in Chinese sports history. Within one year, three landmark sports documents were published. First, in the 1990s, the pressure of 'rising demands of grass-roots sports participation' (Hong, Wu and Xiong 2005, p. 514) resulted in the issue of the *National Fitness Programme* by the government, aiming to promoting people's sports participation and strengthening people's physical health (GAS, 2009b). As the General Administration of Sport of China (GAS 2009b) noted, the publication of the *National Fitness Programme* raised mass sport to a new level in China. The conception of the *National Fitness Programme*, in combination with the accompanying legislation, signalled the sport-for-all agenda's active role in policymaking;

however, sport for all was still deemed a lower priority than was the agenda of elite sport development. In relation to elite sport, the first *Outline of the Strategic Olympic Glory Plan: 1994-2000* was published by the Sports Commission (Sports Commission of China 1995). This heightened the salience of Olympic success within the government. Last, China's first sports-related law – *Sports Law of People's Republic of China* was passed by the government on August 29 and came into effect on October 1.

After China's gold medal success at Sydney 2000, the term *Juguo Tizhi* (Liang, Bao and Zhang, 2006) began to be frequently referred to as the key contributory factor of China's rise since 2000, the significance of which was recognised by the then Chairman Jiang Zemin (Li 2000). The definition of the concept can be summarised as 'the government, both central and local governments, ought to efficiently channel the limited resources, including financial, scientific, human and so forth to fully support elite sport development and Olympic success, in order to win glory for the nation' (Yuan 2001, p. 364).

Equally important was the Chinese government's effort in hosting SMEs. The rationale was that 'hosting the Olympic Games was an important part of the Olympic strategy to make China a sports superpower, as well as a political and economic power, that could compete on equal grounds with the USA, Japan and South Korea' (Hong and Lu 2012c p. 145). The unsuccessful experience in the 1993 Olympic Bid did not discourage Beijing and finally Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001.

2001-2016

After Beijing was elected the host city of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, the Olympics became the focal point within the realm of sport in China and to some extent, one of the

paramount policy concerns for the Chinese government. Later in the same year of 2001, China officially entered the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which has, inevitably, accelerated China's pace of globalisation (Chow 2001).

Since the 21st century, sport, in particular elite sport success, has gained more diplomatic legitimacy because it provided the government with a great platform to showcase its soft power and ideological superiority (Jarvie, Hwang and Brennan 2008). Economic growth has also benefited elite sport development by providing Olympic sports with increased finance (see Table 3 and Table 4 for funding trends).

In July 2002, the government issued the policy document *Further Strengthening and Progressing Sport in the New Era*, which stressed the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as the paramount priority for the whole country (GAS 2009b). Accordingly, GAS issued two internal documents: *The Outline of the Strategic Olympic Glory Plan: 2001-2010*, and *The 2008 Olympic Glory Action Plan*, the dominant features of both were the emphasis placed on Olympic medal success (GAS 2002, 2003). As Lombardi (2008, quoted in Xu 2008, p. 225) argued, 'winning is not everything; it is the only thing'.

Athens 2004 was a rehearsal for China's preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games. In Athens, China's performance 'stole the limelight' (Hong, Wu and Xiong 2005, p. 510). China finally dominated in the gold medal table in Beijing 2008, confirming its status as a sports superpower. The system of *Juguo Tizhi* did not fade away after the Beijing Olympics. The significance of maintaining the system was stressed by Liu Peng, the head of the GAS (Hu and Henry 2016). Later at the National Sports Congress in 2009, this continuity was confirmed by Chairman Hu Jintao (Hu 2015a). At London 2012 China defended and consolidated the

achievements gained in Athens and came second in the gold medal table, without the home advantage.

There have been improvements regarding mass sport. In the 2000s, fresh concerns about young persons' health brought mass participation development into the limelight (X. Chen and S. Chen 2016). In 2002, GAS issued *Opinions on Accelerating the Development and Improvement of Sports Work in the New Era*. This publication reiterated that the development of sports should serve the Chinese people and that the development of national fitness should be one of the top sports priorities. In light of Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games in 2008, however, political attention and state financial investment were for the most part still strategically focused on the development of elite sport. Except for some sporadically issued policy statements relating to the agenda of sport-for-all development, the ideal of mass participation received little more than lip service.

Sport for all gradually gathered momentum again in the aftermath of Beijing 2008. The State Council made August 8th national 'Sport-For-All Day' (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2009) and issued *National Fitness Regulations* in 2009 by Premier Wen Jiabao (GAS 2009b). This regulation distinguished itself from the often vague and inadequately implemented policy statements published previously and it clarified the responsibility of relevant bodies in the national fitness system, formalised a systematic national fitness test programme, and formally addressed issues in relation to sports facilities and sports-related businesses.

The political priority of sport further increased following the election of the pro-sport President Xi Jinping in 2013. His explicit sports passion propelled further development of sport in China led by increased government support (Hu 2015b). China's increased support for and reform of football, the continuing endeavour to host high-profile SMEs most notably the

successful bid for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games and intended bid for the FIFA Men's World Cup, and Chinese entrepreneurs' international participation including the purchasing of renowned European league clubs were facilitated by Xi Jinping government's favourable policy environment and the policy objective to transform China into a 'world sports power' (Tan, Huang, Bairner and Chen 2016, p. 1449).

At the London 2012 Olympic Games, China cemented its second-place position in the gold medal table. There soon began to be much more public debate on how elite sport's interests could be complemented with potential benefits of developing sport for all. With these issues in mind, the agenda of developing sport for all was finally singled out as a state priority. During the preparation of the bid for hosting the 2022 Winter Olympics, President Xi proposed the goal of 'using the 2022 Games to get a population of 300 million in China involved in winter sports' (People.cn 2015). This target for the 2022 Winter Olympic Games was ambitious; linking an Olympic event with sport-for-all development had not been explicitly addressed when the 2008 Summer Olympic Games was hosted. A few months after President Xi's remarks, a strategic document entitled *Opinions of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption* (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2014) was published. This signalled a clear government desire for sport for all, urged by growing concern about the deterioration of children's physical fitness and about the steady increase in overweight among the population. Two documents published in 2016 provided evidence of discourses consistently elevating the policy prominence of sport for all: *The National Fitness Programme (2016–2020)* (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2016) and the *13th Five-Year Plan for Sports Development in China* (GAS 2016). Fitness was

identified by the Chinese government as an important vehicle in achieving the policy objective of upgrading China from a 'major sports country to a world sports power' (Tan 2015, p. 1071).

However, the increased emphasis on mass sport was again subjected to review because of China's underperformance at Rio de Janeiro 2016. In particular, the fact that China was overtaken by Great Britain in the gold medal table prompted some policy interventions by the State Council and GAS. The quality of (gold) medals is valued and China expressed its explicit ambition in gold medal-abundant foundation sports (athletics and all water sports) and collective ball sports (GAS 2011a). Leadership change was an immediate antidote prescribed by GAS, which replaced the head coaches of the national teams in China's 'fortress' sports that experienced a sharp gold medal decline at Rio 2016, including artistic gymnastics, shooting and badminton. These dismissed coaches had steered their respective national teams for more than ten, or even twenty years (ifeng 2017a). In addition, debate arose again over the relative significance of mass sport and elite sport, and over the danger of emphasising mass sport but undervaluing the impact of elite sport success.

Organisational structure

The most distinctive feature of China's elite sport system is its centralised organisational structure. As Hong, Wu and Xiong (2005, p. 514) argued, 'the model of the Chinese sports administrative system reflected the wider social system in China: both the Communist Party and state administrations were organised in a vast hierarchy with power flowing down from the top' (see Figure 1). This centralised model was largely the outcome of the transfer of the Soviet model, most evident in the establishment of the Sports Commission the concept of which was copied from the State Sports Commission in Soviet Union and the hierarchical structure from central government to provincial, city and county levels (Dai 2009).

[Figure 1 near here]

In 1998, the Sports Commission was renamed the General Administration of Sport of China (GAS). The GAS was simplified, with the previous 20 departments merged into nine departments. Although ostensibly this was a response to China's 'stagnant' performance at Atlanta 1996 compared to Barcelona 1992, this organisational reform needs to be understood within the wider context of the restructure of government ministries of the Central Government in the 1990s, following the simplification campaign and the objective of administrative efficiency enhancement (Jizhong Wei, former Secretary General of the Chinese Olympic Committee and the President of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball, FIVB, 2017, quoted in ifeng 2017b). Although the reorganisation blended some characteristics of market economy and decentralisation, the aim was to establish a more efficient, cooperative and standardised administrative system to serve the development of elite sport, as most evidently reflected in the organisational specialisation on Olympic sports and disciplines (Pan 2012). Management centres became the core governing bodies responsible for the development of each sport/discipline (Tan and Green 2008). Figure 2 presents the reformed organisational structure, which is still in place.

[Figure 2 near here]

The basic administrative structure for elite sport remained stable during the period 2001-2017. Currently, Olympic sports are governed by 14 Summer Olympic sport management centres and one Winter Olympic sport management centre to which national sport associations (NSAs) are affiliated (see Table 1). There is only a thin line between management centres and

associations, although associations are rhetorically defined as social organisations (Liu and Zhang 2008). Most NSAs are nominal (Li 2008, p. 3). Li (2011) and Li and Zhou (2012, p. 31) described this phenomenon as ‘the co-structure of management centres and associations’.

[Table 1 near here]

Provincial management centres that govern regional sport development are directly led by their corresponding provincial sports bureaus or administrations (for example, Hubei Administration of Sport 2013). Therefore, these management centres are the government units of their province, municipality and autonomous region. Similar to the relationship between provincial sports bureaus and GAS, provincial management centres are not directly governed by the national management centre. The link between the national management centre and the regional management centres is defined as a mentoring one (a previous department head of GAS 2013, quoted in Zheng 2015). Yet, in the cases of nationwide and Olympic-related issues, regional management centres are expected to comply with the decisions and serve the needs of their respective national management centre (see Figure 3).

[Figure 3 near here]

Funding

In China, the vast majority of the funds directed to sport are derived from the government budget. This particularly applies to elite sport development in China. During the period 1976-1988, elite sport relied overwhelmingly on central and local government sports budgets. The total amount of

money granted to sport during the period 1986-1990 doubled in comparison to that between 1981-1985 (see Table 2). It is noteworthy that 80% of the sports budget was distributed to elite sport, as required by the *Olympic Strategy* (Hong 2008).

[Table 2 near here]

As noted above, there were drastic policy reforms in the aftermath of China's poor performance at Seoul 1988. An immediate response by the Chinese government was the dramatic increase in sports budget. The total sports budget for the Barcelona Olympiad tripled in comparison to that for the Seoul Olympiad (see Table 3). The annual figure increased by a larger margin in the Sydney Olympiad and finally exceeded 10 billion yuan in 2001. The total amount of sports funds for the Sydney Olympiad was almost twice as much as that for the Atlanta Olympiad. Elite sport was the largest beneficiary. As Hong (2011, p. 406) observed, 'the proportion of the government's sports budget spent on elite sport compared with mass sport became extremely skewed'. In comparison, sports lottery was fairer and it was reported that the vast majority of the lottery money was granted to mass sport.

[Table 3 near here]

Despite the hegemonic dominance of government subvention in funding sport development, the source of financial support for sport in China has become more diverse in recent years. In general, there are three main sources of sports funds: government sports budget, commercial money and lottery funding (see Figure 4). The incorporation of commercial money

in supporting sport, including elite sport (through sponsoring the team or individual, mainly star athletes) is a clear manifestation of the burgeoning developments of economics in general, and of commercialisation and professionalisation in China since the 1990s. However, it is noteworthy that private sectors, despite their substantial financial contributions, are strictly excluded from decision making of GAS, and hence have very limited impact on the policy direction of sport development in China (a senior policy maker and previous department head of GAS 2013, quoted in Zheng 2015).

[Figure 4 near here]

Table 4 shows the budget of GAS from 2007 to 2015, which focuses on funding at the central government level. Data prior to 2007 are not accessible, while the figure for 2016 has not been released at the time of writing.

[Table 4 near here]

Elite sport achievement, and underlying policies and strategies

There is little doubt that elite sport has been the most prominent sport policy area in China. Despite the increased policy profile of mass sport in recent years, elite sport remains the overriding priority within the Chinese government. Government involvement has been propelled by a series of political, diplomatic, social and ideological purposes, which has been consistent in securing the prominence of elite sport on Chinese government's agenda almost since the inception of the PRC.

China's rise on the Olympic stage in particular its growth to be one of the most successful Summer Olympic nations has been noticeable. Since China returned to the Summer Olympic Games, Chinese athletes have won 227 gold medals at the Summer Olympic Games. In addition, since the gold medal breakthrough at Salt Lake 2002, China has won 12 gold medals at the Winter Olympic Games. This success has been fuelled by various deliberate and effective policies and strategies. First, a wide range of ongoing fundamental policy documents have laid the foundations for China's elite sport success. As noted above, the issue of *Olympic Strategy* was a landmark event in sport in China, which legitimised elite sport's status as the policy priority. After this, three versions of *The Outline of the Strategic Olympic Glory Plan* directed elite sport development in each of the three decades between the 1990s and 2010s. According to Zheng and Chen (2016, p. 164), China's underlying philosophy has evolved from 'shortening the battle line and emphasise the focus' prior to the 2000s, to 'seeking new sources of Olympic gold medals' in the 2000s and 'raising the quality and value of Olympic gold medals' after Beijing 2008 which targets the quality of medals and the success in more internationally popular sports/disciplines.

In addition to these fundamental policy documents, there were a series of specific policy documents published and measures adopted at various critical junctures. Beijing's successful Olympic bid further accelerated elite sport development in China, which eventually paved the way for China's top position in the gold medal table. In addition to *The Outline of the Strategic Olympic Glory Plan: 2001-2010*, a Beijing 2008-specific elite sport policy document *The 2008 Olympic Glory Action Plan* (GAS 2003) was issued to further emphasise China's quest for the maximisation of success on home soil as a paramount policy objective. Furthermore, two landmark projects were launched, namely *119 Project* (GAS restricted internal document), and

Preliminary recruitment of foreign coaches and organisation of overseas training: The inception of the 'Invite In and Go Out' (GAS restricted internal document). All these policy initiatives lifted elite sport development to a new high in China.

While various policies have made substantial contributions to China's elite sport achievements, the role of China's longstanding deliberate and strategic planning is also noteworthy. To avoid the misuse of money, increase funding efficiency and maximise China's Olympic (gold) medal prospect, China has prioritised primarily skill-based, and 'small, fast, women, water and agile' sports, disciplines and events since as early as the 1980s. This strategy was predicated on the identification of the 'Five-Word principle' and Tian's clustering theory which categorised Olympic sports/disciplines into primarily physical-based (including sub-categories of speed, explosive power and endurance) and primary skill-based (including sub-categories of accuracy, difficult and artistic, net, non-net and combat) categories (Tian 1998). The fruit has been that China has effectively identified and largely reinforced its niche markets, which led to China's rapid rise on the Summer Olympic stage. China's longstanding dominance in 'small ball' sports of table tennis and badminton, and lightweight divisions in weightlifting echoes 'small', the substantial contributions of artistic gymnastics and diving resonate with 'agile' and China's great success in diving also reflects China's strategic targeting of 'water', which is also evident in aforementioned *119 Project* which emphasised all water sports. Concerning 'women', female athletes have contributed to 56% of all gold medals and 58% of all medals that China has won at the Summer Olympic Games. Female athletes outperform their male counterparts in the most sports and disciplines. Appendix 1 summarises the gender-specific medal contributions of all sports/disciplines to China at the Summer Olympic Games between Los Angeles 1984 and Rio de Janeiro 2016.

The impact of Tian's (1998) clustering theory is also discernible. According to Table 5, primarily skill-based sports/disciplines constitute the main source of China's Olympic (gold) medals (more than 70%), with the subcategories of difficult and artistic (for example, diving, artistic gymnastics and trampoline) and net competition (table tennis, badminton, volleyball and tennis) having contributed the most.

[Table 5 near here]

The strategic targeting and prioritisation is also evident in winter sports/disciplines. It is apparent from Table 6 that short track speed skating contributed the bulk of gold medals won by China, with the remaining medals coming from freestyle skiing, speed skating and figure skating. 11 out of the total 12 gold medals come from ice-based sports/disciplines. China's solitary competitive advantage in snow-based competitions is freestyle skiing, which in combination with figure skating, are the Winter Olympic manifestations of the principle of 'agile'. Winter sports/disciplines are a better illustration of the principle of 'fast' *vis-à-vis* their Summer Olympic counterparts. This is illustrated by China's high degree of competitiveness in short track speed skating, and to a lesser extent, speed skating. The gender polarisation is more evident in winter sports. Female athletes have won 10.5 out of the 12 gold medals, and accounted for 76.3 % of all medals that China has won at the Winter Olympic Games. This is another illustration of China's deliberate targeting and prioritisation of female competitions.

[Table 6 near here]

However, China's strategic targeting is confronted with issues most notably sustainability and external threats. This combination has eroded China's competitiveness, illustrated by China's sharp decline in gold medal tally at Rio de Janeiro 2016, overtaken by the UK in the gold medal table. China's traditional 'markets', most notably shooting (one gold in 2016), artistic gymnastics (no gold in 2016 vs. four in 2012), and to a lesser extent, badminton (two in 2016 vs. five in 2012) shrank significantly, while there was little progress, but more commonly, deterioration in potential advantages (in swimming, fencing and women's combat sports) and lagging sports/disciplines. In fact, GAS realised the difficulty of maintaining or expanding China's advantage simply by relying on traditional sports which tend to be vulnerable to a wide range of emerging nations' 'invasion'. Accordingly, the quality of (gold) medals in internationally popular and mostly Western-dominated sports/disciplines was valued. This is evident in the explicit policy objectives of enhancing China's competitiveness in foundation sports (athletics, swimming and other water sports of rowing, canoeing and sailing) and collective ball sports most notably three 'big ball' sports (football, basketball and volleyball) (GAS 2011a). There is some evidence of success, for example, in athletics and volleyball, but the impact in most targeted sports/disciplines has not been discernible.

As a consequence of Beijing and Zhangjiakou's successful bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, it is projected that there will be a winter sports boom in China in the lead-up to 2022. The salience of and support for Winter Olympic sports/disciplines have already been elevated, providing opportunities both for the further progress most notably gold medal winning capabilities in traditional sports/disciplines, and for breakthroughs in a wide range of peripheral sports, most notably snow-based sports/disciplines.

Emerging issues and debates

Resonating with the changing political and economic contexts of China in recent years, there are many new trends in Chinese sport that have received considerable attention. Major issues include (a) the balance amongst varying policy areas most notably between elite sport and sport for all; (b) China's ambitious SME strategy and the likely legacy; (c) the reform of sports governing bodies, and the conflict between traditional bureaucratic *modus operandi* and professional and market approaches; and (d) the development of sports commercialisation, professionalisation and China's increased and more proactive sports globalisation.

First, the balance between elite sport and mass sport or sport for all is a perennial issue in China. Although elite sport has long been the overriding priority and the distribution of government resources is biased in favour of elite sport, sport for all has received increased government attention in recent years. If the *National Fitness Programme* published in 1995 was largely rhetorical, then a succession of policy documents issued during Xi Jinping's tenure, including the No. 46 Document (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2014), the No.37 document (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2016) and the *13th Five Year Plan for Sports Development in China* (GAS, 2016) officially elevated the policy salience of sport for all. The transformation of China's national fitness policy, propelled by health concerns most notably for young persons, serves as an integral part in the realisation of the fundamental policy objective of shaping China into a world sports power.

However, in realising this policy objective, it seems that the Chinese government does not plan to downgrade the support for elite sport. Although the support for mass sport has been more substantial and the polarisation between elite sport and sport for all has been, to some extent, reduced, the priority status of elite sport is secure because of its multiple political, social

and economic functions. In the near future, it is unlikely that the government will significantly reduce its support for elite sport, in particular against the backdrop of China's decline at Rio de Janeiro 2016, the concerns for challenges at Tokyo 2020 and the approaching of the home Winter Olympic Games in 2022 and a global trend that elite sport has become an 'irresistible priority' (Houlihan 2011, p. 367) in many nations, including China's direct competitors most notably the UK and Japan. A more constructive solution would be to resolve the conflict between elite sport and mass sport, and reconcile and balance their development, rather than downgrade one to elevate another.

Hosting SMEs has been another main feature of Chinese sport in particular since the 2000s. This is particularly pertinent in showcasing China's 'soft power' (Grix and Lee, 2013, Nye 1990, 2008). In addition to China's hosting of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games and the forthcoming 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing and Zhangjiakou, China has hosted a series of SMEs such as the 1990 Beijing Asian Games, 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, 2014 Nanjing Youth Olympic Games, and the World Championships of various Olympic sports and disciplines including the 2011 Shanghai World Aquatics World Championships, the 2015 Beijing World Athletics Championships, and the country will host the 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup. There is a burgeoning of SMEs hosted in China in the last decade (see Table 7). In addition, various internationally popular professional sports events have been attempting to expand their influence and popularity in China. Notable examples include Shanghai Formula One Grand Prix, NBA pre-seasonal tour in China, Italian Cup Final, and major events of tennis and snooker. More recently, the Vice President and Secretary of the Chinese Football Association (CFA) Zhang Jian (2017, quoted in Xinhuanet 2017) explicitly confirmed China's ambition to host the FIFA Men's World Cup, which has already been stated as an ambition in the

fundamental No. 11 policy document of *The Overall Plan for the Reform and Development of Football in China* (The State Council of the People's Republic of China 2015).

[Table 7 near here]

The football reform made football one of the pioneer sports for the 'substantiation' (Liu 2008, p. 21), or 'de-governmentalisation' (Hu 2015) of Chinese sports. The CFA has been undergoing a major reform to achieve a development pathway largely independent from the government, and currently, football is the only Olympic sport in China which is governed by the NSA, without a football-specific national management centre (GAS, 2017). In China, NSAs of almost all Olympic sports/disciplines are just another brand of their corresponding national sports management centres, and hence affiliated to GAS and governed by GAS officials. However, despite the difficulty of avoiding actual government intervention in practice, the independence reform of CFA is still a big step forward in sport in China, which is likely to spill over to other sports most notably these having been professionalised in China. More recently, the former NBA star Yao Ming, was appointed the President of the Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) through election (NBA 2017). This differed from the direct appointment of some 'insider' officials within the machinery of Communist government. This attempt also involves the development of alternative, or non-government forces in the participation of sport, in particular elite sport in China transcending the traditional government-led *Juguo Tizhi*.

Despite the hyperbole that surrounds the arguments on the politicised and government-dominant nature of the sport system in China, it is safe to say that previously, non-governmental sectors, most notably private sectors were largely excluded from sport, particularly in relation to

elite sport. However, influenced by China's increased pace of globalisation and the introduction of commercialisation and professionalisation in sport, commercial elements, despite their exclusion from decision-making, have become increasingly significant in sport development through sponsorship, broadcasting and professional leagues organised most notably in football, basketball and table tennis (Chen, Tan and Lee 2015, Houlihan, Tan and Green 2010, Tan and Bairner 2010, 2011, Tan and Houlihan 2012).

In China, 'sport is a field of both cultural and economic significance and hence has been experiencing pressures to open its management up to market forces' (Hu and Henry 2017, p. 2). The number of internationally renowned football stars (for example, Didier Drogba, Carlos Tevez and Graziano Pellè) and basketball stars (for example, Tracy McGrady, Stephon Marbury and J. R. Smith) playing for Chinese clubs has exploded in the last five to ten years. In addition to the establishment and development of professional leagues since the mid-1990s most notably in football, basketball, table tennis, and volleyball, top female tennis players have been allowed to achieve a high degree of independence from the control of the National Tennis Management Centre and the Chinese Tennis Association, and to organise their own teams including coaches and scientific support staff to participate in professional tours. However, the tentacles and influence of market elements vary considerably amongst sports, and most non-popular and non-professionalised sports still rely overwhelmingly on the traditional government-led model and government funding (ifeng 2013). Furthermore, there is still a clash between the emerging commercial and the traditional bureaucratic elements even in the relatively more professionalised sports such as football and basketball. Government order and administrative intervention are still prevalent in these sports, illustrated by the most recent case of the CFA's new rule that the

number of foreign athletes each club sent on pitch should equalise that of under-23 players in a match (People.cn 2017).

Last, China has become more proactive in sports globalisation, evolving from an importing to an exporting country. Notable examples included Chinese entrepreneurs' recent purchase of internationally renowned football clubs such as Inter Milan and AC Milan. Chinese companies' sponsoring of and investment in foreign clubs and international organisations has also become more pervasive, facilitated by China's rapid economic growth in the last ten to 15 years.

Conclusions

Sport has consistently been an important government responsibility in PR China, with specialised government departments at the central level and substantial financial support, with the only exception of the turbulent time of the Cultural Revolution. Its policy significance has been further raised in recent decades, commensurate with the rapid development of sport in China, ranging from elite sport success, the hosting of SMEs, to China's increased global sports participation and the ever-growing professionalisation, and policies regarding sport for all. However, China is confronted with a series of issues and challenges in sport development.

Elite sport has long been the overriding priority in China, and China's notable success has been underpinned by effective policy and strategic approaches. However, elite sport in China is confronted with several challenges in the modern era, ranging from the sustainability of China's traditional advantages and the enhancement in the competitiveness in non-traditional sports, to the ever-changing global environment and increasingly intense global competition, the need to expand China's sources of advantages in Winter Olympic sports and disciplines, and the

increasing concern with mass sport and other sports areas. Many of these issues have been stated in the latest policy documents, but it remains challenging to implement effective policies.

Mass sport seems to welcome a new era of development in China, because of various political, cultural and social factors mentioned above. The increased public demand for and government emphasis on mass sport, instead of clashing with China's traditional focus on elite sport, should be effectively synergised with elite sport success. How to drive mass participation and raise the awareness and passion for a healthy lifestyle amongst the general public through the trickle-down effects of elite sport success, and how to expand the talent base for elite sport development may be important in realising a balance, and more importantly, developing a synergy between these two prominent sport areas.

Sport professionalisation, globalisation, and the burgeoning hosting opportunities of SMEs are relatively new features of Chinese sport, resonating with China's increased wealth, globalisation process and elevated political ambition. However, the relic of bureaucratic elements, in particular 'planned economy' elements, thoughts and approaches, are likely to constrain the further development of these new phenomena. A notable example would be the clashes between traditional government-led governing system and its concomitant political intervention, and the professionalisation process of some sports. The reform of the organisational structure particularly 'de-governmentalisation' has been put in place, but it is still in its relative infancy. For the hosting of SMEs, to create a sustainable legacy to benefit the general public is what the government may need to consider.

In the foreseeable future, it is projected that sport will remain a significant government concern, and both opportunities and challenges will befall Chinese sport. Although some of these may be more evident in China, the nation is not immune from some common themes of sport

development on a global scale, for example, the balance between various aspects, the need to realise the full potential of sport in benefiting the public, and sport globalisation.

Notes

1. These ten sports were: athletics, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, table tennis, football, weightlifting, swimming, skating and shooting (Hong 2011).

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Table 1. National sports management centres subordinated to GAS (Olympic sports only).

Olympic Type	Management Centre	Olympic Sports and Disciplines Included
Summer	Water Sports Management Centre	Rowing, Sailing, Canoeing
	Gymnastics Management Centre	Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Trampoline
	Table Tennis and Badminton Management Centre	Table Tennis, Badminton
	Weightlifting, Wrestling and Judo Management Centre	Weightlifting, Wrestling, Judo
	Handball, Hockey, Baseball and Softball Management Centre	Handball, Hockey, Baseball, Softball
	Tennis Management Centre	Tennis
	Boxing and Taekwondo Management Centre	Boxing, Taekwondo
	'Small Balls' Management Centre (Including golf, bowling, billiards and so on)	Golf, Rugby
	Shooting and Archery Management Centre	Shooting, Archery
	Athletics Management Centre	Athletics
	Basketball Management Centre	Basketball
	Cycling and Fencing Management Centre	Cycling, Fencing, Modern Pentathlon, Triathlon, Equestrian
	Aquatics Management Centre	Swimming, Diving, Synchronised Swimming, Water Polo
	Volleyball Management Centre	Volleyball, Beach Volleyball
Winter	Winter Sport Management Centre	All Winter Olympic Sports and Disciplines

Sources: GAS (2017); Li and Zhou (2012, p. 30).

Table 2. Chinese sports budget: 1981-1990 (Unit: yuan, in the 1990s, one dollar was equivalent to approximately seven yuan).

Year	Central Government Funding	Local Government Funding	Total Amount	Amount Per Year
1981-1985	305,320,000	2,261,120,000	2,566,440,000	513,288,000
1986-1990	566,250,000	5,431,660,000	5,997,910,000	1,199,582,000

Source: Zheng (2015).

Table 3. Chinese sports budget: 1991-2001 (Unit: yuan, in the 1990s, one dollar was equivalent to approximately seven yuan).

Year	Government Funding	Commercial Investment	Total Amount
1991	1,665,760,000	-	1,665,760,000
1992	1,865,000,000	-	1,865,000,000
1993	2,094,000,000	784,527,000	2,878,527,000
1994	2,023,546,000	715,801,000	2,739,347,000
1995	2,388,064,000	814,354,000	3,202,418,000
1996	2,841,742,000	1,045,266,000	3,887,008,000
Atlanta Olympiad	9,347,352,000	3,359,948,000	12,707,300,000
1997	4,013,596,000	-	4,013,596,000
1998	4,062,260,000	1,619,130,000	5,681,390,000
1999	4,155,850,000	2,161,230,000	6,317,080,000
2000	5,051,960,000	3,632,560,000	8,684,520,000
Sydney Olympiad	17,283,666,000	7,412,920,000	24,696,586,000
2001	6,753,920,000	5,156,950,000	11,910,870,000

Sources: Hong (2008, p. 39; 2011, p. 408).

Table 4. Annual budget of GAS from 2007 to 2013 (Unit: yuan).

Year	Budget
2007	3,416,030,800
2008	3,042,413,500
2009	2,877,338,600
2010	2,624,292,600
2011	2,900,608,600
2012	3,356,113,500
2013	3,729,041,200
2014	3,961,440,300
2015	2,743,051,000

Sources: The Economic Department of GAS (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2014, 2015).

Note: In May 2017, one British Pound is equivalent to approximately nine Chinese RMBs.

Table 5. A summary of the contribution of each category and subcategory of Summer Olympic sports/disciplines between Los Angeles 1984 and Rio de Janeiro 2016, predicated on Tian's (1998) clustering theory.

Sport/discipline		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Gold medal proportion (%)	Medal proportion (%)
Primarily physical-based (including weightlifting, swimming, athletics, canoeing sprint, rowing and cycling)		59	46	40	145	26.0	26.7
Primarily Skill-Based	Accuracy (including shooting, archery and golf)	23	21	22	66	10.1	12.2
	Difficult and Artistic (including diving, artistic gymnastics, trampoline, synchronised swimming and rhythmic gymnastics)	69	43	35	147	30.4	27.1
	Net Competition (including table tennis, badminton, volleyball, tennis and beach volleyball)	50	27	27	104	22.0	19.2
	Non-Net Competition (including basketball, hockey, football and handball)	0	3	2	5	0.0	1.0
	Combat (including judo, taekwondo, fencing, boxing and wrestling)	24	17	27	68	10.6	12.5
	Total	166	111	113	390	73.1	71.8
Others (sailing, softball and modern pentathlon)		2	5	1	8	1.0	1.5
Total		227	162	154	543		

Source: IOC (2017b).

Table 6. A sport/discipline- and gender-specific summary of China's medal performances at the Winter Olympic Games.

Sport/discipline	Gender	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total Medals	Medal Points
Short track speed skating	Male	0	5	4	9	14
	Female	9	8	4	21	47
	Total	9	13	8	30	61
Freestyle skiing	Male	1	0	2	3	5
	Female	0	4	1	5	9
	Total	1	4	3	8	14
Speed skating	Male	0	0	0	0	0
	Female	1	3	3	7	12
	Total	1	3	3	7	12
Figure skating	Male	0.5	1	1	2.5	4.5
	Female	0.5	1	3	4.5	6.5
	Total	1	2	4	7	11
Curling	Male	0	0	0	0	0
	Female	0	0	1	1	1
	Total	0	0	1	1	1
Total	Male	1.5	6	7	14.5	23.5
	Female	10.5	16	12	38.5	75.5
	Total	12	22	19	53	99

Source: Sports-Reference (2017).

Table 7. Non-professional international- and Asian-level SMEs (to be) held in China since 2001.

Year	City	Sport	Event
2022	Beijing and Zhangjiakou	Multi-Sport	Winter Olympic Games and Paralympics
2022	Hangzhou	Multi-Sport	Asian Games
2019	Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Wuhan, Dongguan, Foshan, Guangzhou, Shenzhen	Basketball	FIBA Basketball World Cup
2015	Beijing	Athletics	IAAF World Championships in Athletics
2015	Suzhou	Table Tennis	World Table Tennis Championships
2014	Nanjing	Multi-Sport	Summer Youth Olympics
2014	Nanning	Gymnastics	World Artistic Gymnastics Championships
2013	Guangzhou	Badminton	BWF World Championships
2011	Shenzhen	Multi-Sport	Summer Universiade
2011	Shanghai	Aquatics	FINA World Championships
2010	Guangzhou	Multi-Sport	Asian Games
2009	Harbin	Multi-Sport	Winter Universiade
2009	Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Changzhou and Yangzhou: Jiangsu Province	Handball	World Women's Handball Championship
2008	Beijing	Multi-Sport	Summer Olympic Games and Paralympics
2008	Taiyuan	Cycling	UCI BMX World Championships
2008	Beijing	Fencing	World Fencing Championships
2008	Guangzhou	Table Tennis	World Team Table Tennis Championships
2007	Beijing	Taekwondo	World Taekwondo Championships
2006	Beijing	Softball	ISF Women's Softball World Championship
2006	Guangzhou	Wrestling	FILA Wrestling World Championships
2005	Mianyang	Boxing	AIBA World Boxing Championships
2005	Shanghai	Table Tennis	World Table Tennis Championships

2001	Beijing	Multi-Sport	Summer Universiade
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Sources: Administration of Sports of Guangzhou Municipality (2006); Badminton World Federation (BWF 2013); International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF 2016); International Basketball Association (FIBA, 2015); International Boxing Association (AIBA 2016); International Gymnastics Federation (FIG 2016); International Handball Federation (IHF 2016); International Olympic Committee (IOC 2016, 2017a); International Softball Federation (ISF 2006); International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF 2016); International University Sports Federation (FISU 2016); Olympic Council of Asia (OCA 2016a, 2016b); Shanghai 2011 (2011); Sports.cn (2007); Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI 2008); Universiade 2011 Shenzhen (2011); Xinhuanet (2008).

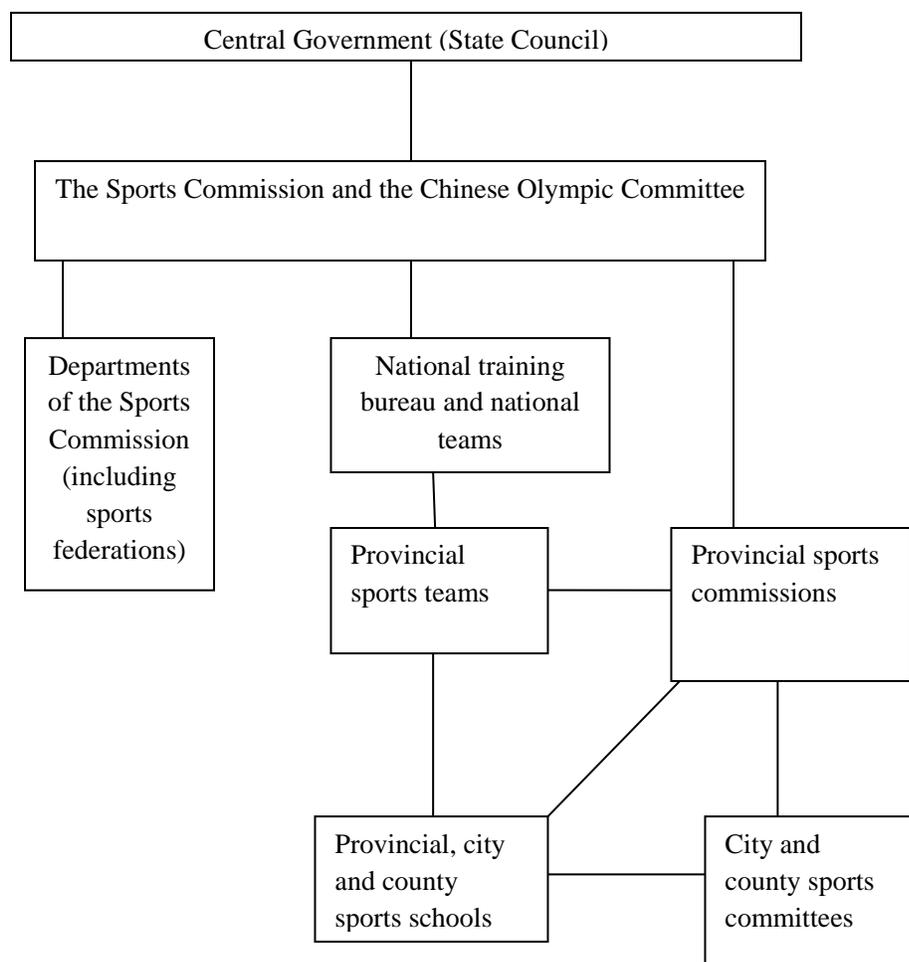


Figure 1. China's sporting administrative structure: 1952-1996.

Source: Hong (2008, p. 37).

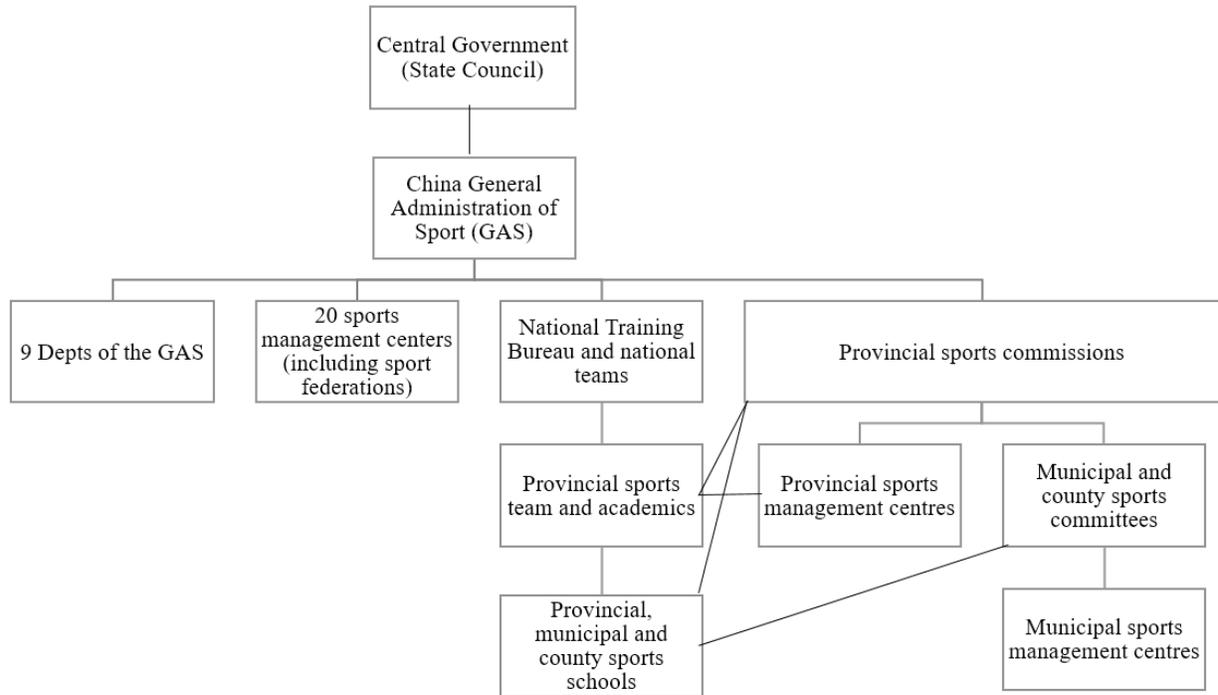


Figure 2. China's sporting administrative structure: 1998-2017.

Source: Hong and Lu (2012b, p. 116).

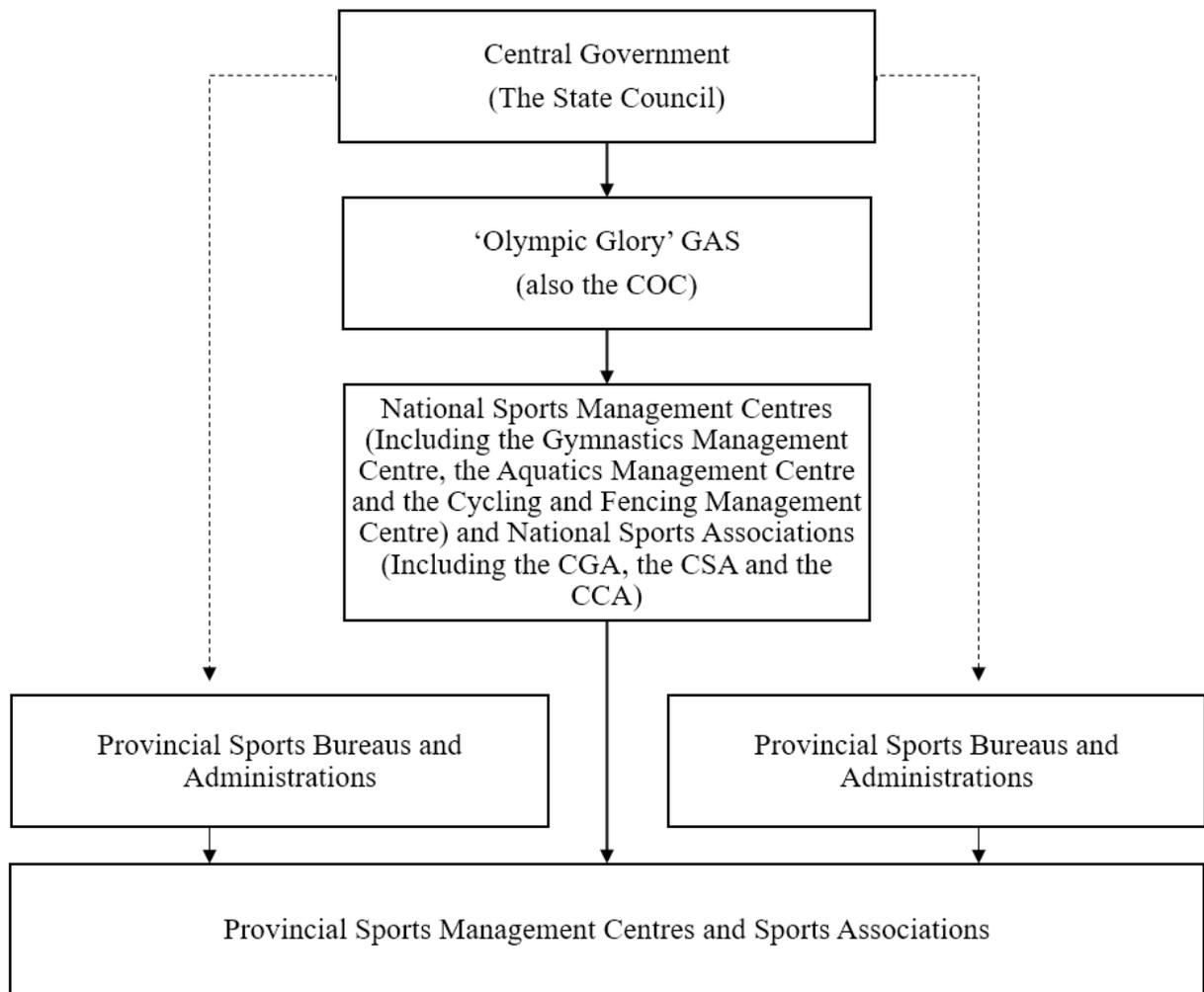


Figure 3. China's centralised and hierarchical elite sport structure.

Source: Zheng (2016, p. 590).

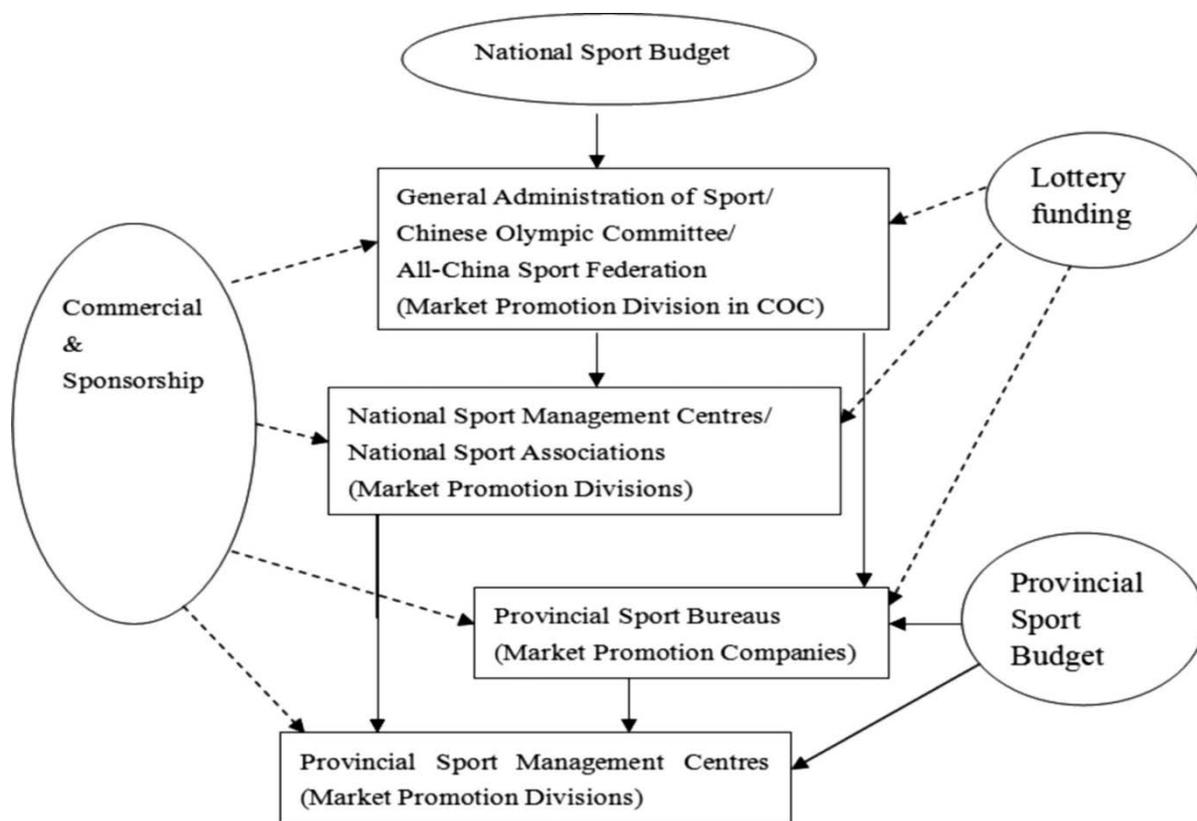


Figure 4. Sources of income for the Chinese sport system.

Source: Tan and Green (2008, p. 328).