

**A Comparative Analysis of the Policy Process of Elite
Sport Development in China and the UK (in Relation to
Three Olympic Sports of Artistic Gymnastics, Swimming
and Cycling)**

By

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to analyse the policy making and policy implementation processes of elite sport in China and the UK, covering the period 1992-2012. Three sports are selected for detailed cases studies: artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. They represent a wide range of sports in two countries, based on their varying competitiveness, weights and traditions. Key areas including organisational structure, financial support, talent identification and athlete development, coaching, training, competition opportunities, scientific research and others (including international influence and other sport- and country-specific areas) are identified to organise the discussion. The aim is not only to present key characteristics of the development of each sport in China and the UK respectively and to introduce the successful experience and problems but also to form a basis for the discussion of policy making, policy implementation and policy changes. Hence, a series of policy making and implementation theories and frameworks are utilised. The focus is on meso-level policy frameworks. However, the thesis cannot embrace all frameworks and the focus is narrowed to the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework. These two frameworks' roles are not confined to helping organise the discussion of policy processes in the three sports in the two countries. More importantly, their quality and applicability will be evaluated. Furthermore, globalisation theory, theories of policy learning and transfer, policy implementation and policy instruments are also included to provide a more holistic analysis of the policy processes.

Generally speaking, all these policy making and implementation theories provide valuable lenses to understand policy processes in the three sports in China and the UK and equally importantly help explain policy changes. When it comes to the applicability, both the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework are largely applicable to China. However, the former's applicability to China is confined to its structural factors while the fundamental assumptions of organisational anarchy and the ambiguity of policy making and its pluralistic basis seem to have limited compatibility with China. Moreover, some changes and adaptations need to be made in terms of the structural factors. For example, the

concept of policy windows can be further specified in elite sport in China while the usefulness of the concept of policy entrepreneurs is limited due to the difficulty of identifying groups of policy entrepreneurs outside the government bureau. In comparison, the policy community framework and the concept of policy monopoly sit comfortably with the case of China where key elements of policy community and policy monopoly are very strong and typical. Last, this thesis demonstrates the value of integrating different policy theories, most notably the integration of the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework in the analysis of elite sport in China.

Key Words: Elite sport; policy making; policy implementation; policy change; artistic gymnastics; swimming; cycling; China; UK; the multiple streams framework; the policy community framework

Glossary of Abbreviated Terms

ABGC - Association of British Gymnastics Coaches

ACC - Asian Cycling Confederation

ACF - Advocacy Coalition Framework

AGA - Amateur Gymnastics Association

AI - Artificial Intelligence

AIMs - Action Improvement Monitoring

AIS - Australian Institute of Sport

ASA - Amateur Swimming Association

ASFGB - Amateur Swimming Federation of Great Britain

BA - British Athletics

BAGA - British Amateur Gymnastics Association

BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation

BC - British Cycling

BCF - British Cycling Federation

BCGA - Barter Corner Gymnastics Academy

BG - British Gymnastics

BMW - Bayerische Motoren Werke AG

BOA - British Olympic Association

BR - British Rowing

BS - British Swimming

CBE - Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

CCA - Chinese Cycling Association

CCP - Chinese Communist Party

CCT - Compulsory Competitive Tendering

CCTV - China Central Television

CDF - Coach Development Fund

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

CGA - Chinese Gymnastics Association

CGF - Commonwealth Games Federation

CNR - China National Radio

ChinaDA - China Anti-Doping Agency

CISS - China Institute of Sport Science
CNY - China Yuan
COC - Chinese Olympic Committee
CPD - Continuing Professional Development
CPPCC - Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CSA - Chinese Swimming Association
DCMS - Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DES - Department of Education and Science
DFEE - Department for Education and Employment
DNH - Department for National Heritage
DOE - Department of the Environment
ECAP - Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme
EIS - English Institute of Sport
ETDP - England Talent Development Programme
FAW - First Automobile Works
FC - Football Club
FIFA - Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FINA - Fédération Internationale de Natation
FIG - Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
FSA - Foundation for Sports and Arts
GAS - General Administration of Sport of China
GB - Great Britain
GBP - Great Britain Pound
GLP - Great Leap Forward
IFs - International Federations
ILP - International Leadership Programme
IOC - International Olympic Committee
IT - Information Technology
ITCs - Intensive Training Centres
LEN - European Swimming League
LTAD - Long Term Athlete Development
LTCD - Long Term Coach Development
MBE - Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire
MCA - Ministry of Civil Affairs of China

NAO - National Audit Office
NBA - National Basketball Association
NCU - National Cyclists Union
NGB - National Governing Body (of Sport)
NOC - National Olympic Committee
NPC - National People's Congress
NPD - National Performance Director
NPM - New Public Management
NSA - National Sporting Association
NSO - National Sporting Organisation
NSR - National Schools of Racing
OBE - Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire
OAP - The Olympic Academy Programme
ODP - The Olympic Development Programme
OPP - The Olympic Podium Programme
P3 - Performance Pathway Programme
PE - Physical Education
Ph.D. - Doctor of Philosophy
PLA - People's Liberation Army
POL - Policy-Oriented Learning
PRC - People's Republic of China
Quango - Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation
RSRs - Regional Schools of Racing
RYA - The Royal Yachting Association
SC - Short Course
SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SPLISS - Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success
SR - Sports Reference
SSCs - Specialist Sports Colleges
SSSM - Sports Science Sports Medicine
TSC - Technical Swimming Committee
UCI - Union Cycliste Internationale
UEC - European Cycling Union
UEG - European Union of Gymnastics

UK - United Kingdom

UKA - UK Athletics

UKAD - UK Anti-Doping

UKSI - UK Sports Institute

USA - United States of America

WADA - World Anti-Doping Agency

WCP - World Class Performance

WHO - World Health Organisation

WTO - World Trade Organisation

YOG - Youth Olympic Games

Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to analyse the policy process of elite sport development in China and the UK, covering the period 1992-2012, in relation to three sports: artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. Accordingly, four detailed objectives are specified:

- 1) To identify and analyse the policy contexts in China and the UK (nature of the 'problem'/ambition; political motives/rationale; funding and organisational structure);
- 2) To identify and analyse the process of talent identification and development in three sports: artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling;
- 3) To compare the processes of policy development and the policies generated by these processes and to analyse the similarities and differences across China and the UK;
- 4) To analyse factors (internal and external) influencing the policy making and policy implementation.

1.2 Significance of the Area of the Study

The growth in global attractiveness and influence of the Olympic Games is evidenced in a variety of ways. As Horowitz and McDaniel (2014) argued, the Olympic Games is the most global example of the sports industry and one of the largest and most international sports business ventures. In particular, the Summer Olympic Games is the most influential sports event worldwide the significance of which has transcended sport by exerting far-reaching political, economic, social and diplomatic impact to the world (De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, Van Bottenburg & De Knop, 2008; Toohey & Veal, 2007). A record number of 205 countries or territories sent athletes to the 2012 London Olympic Games (Horowitz & McDaniel, 2014; Houlihan & Zheng, 2013). As a corollary, elite sport success including Olympic success is harnessed by an increasing number of governments to achieve various diplomatic, political, economic, social and cultural objectives.

As Green and Houlihan (2005) noted, there has been increasing government interest in the pursuit of elite sport success over the last four decades at least. This governmental concern with elite sport success started in the Soviet Union and other European communist countries most notably East Germany and then spread to a wider world including many Western countries and China. As summarised by Grix and Carmichael (2012), governments invest in elite sport for a series of diplomatic and domestic considerations, ranging from the 'feel good' factors (De Bosscher et al., 2008, p. 44) which include international image, national pride and identity, to motives such as increasing sports participation, public health and social cohesion. For countries such as the former USSR, European communist countries and contemporary China, elite success is also a platform for showcasing ideological superiority (Green & Houlihan, 2005). As Houlihan (2011, p. 367) argued, elite sport success has become the 'irresistible priority' in many countries.

As the host countries of the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games respectively, China and the UK have attracted enormous interest among researchers across various disciplines and both countries' dramatic progress with Olympic medal successes have further raised their research salience. As Halsey (2009, p. 1354) noticed, China and the UK were 'notable at the Beijing Olympics for their large and increased medal hauls relative to other countries and to previous Olympics'. The achievements in Beijing 2008 were either defended (for China) or further expanded (for the UK) in London 2012. Consequently, it is not surprising that China and the UK's approaches to elite sport development have attracted much research interest. In fact, elite sport has been a priority of sports policies and hence received continuous substantial government support since the 1980s in China and the mid-1990s in the UK. Both countries have adopted a series of measures to systematically support elite sport development (Houlihan & Zheng, 2013). These measures include organisational reform and the establishment of an elite-centred national sports governing body, substantial financial support, the emergence of and holistic support for full-time athletes, the recruitment of foreign coaches and experts, the development of an increasingly sophisticated and supportive domestic competition structure and the development of deliberate strategies to pursue international influence. Moreover, there is evidence of specialisation and search for competitive advantage by both countries (for example, gymnastics, table tennis, badminton, shooting, weightlifting

and diving for China and cycling, rowing, sailing and athletics for the UK, Houlihan & Zheng, 2013). However, there remain many unanswered questions: what are the underlying causes of the above-mentioned quantifiable Olympic achievements including their increased medal tally, number of sports and disciplines with gold medals and medals and the rise in the medals table? As two countries having strikingly different political systems, ideologies, histories and cultures including sporting traditions, what are the similarities and differences of the two countries' approaches to elite sport development? If there is a general consensus that elite sport development and Olympic success is strongly supported by the Chinese and British governments, then what are the similarities and differences regarding the political motives behind the governments of these two politically, ideologically, geographically and sporting culturally different countries? De Bosscher et al. (2008, p. 13) argued that 'elite sports systems of leading nations have become increasingly homogenous', but is it applicable to China and to what extent and in what ways is China involved in this 'homogenisation'?

The contemporary intense competition for elite sport success in general and Olympic success in particular among nations is compared to 'the global sporting arms race' (Oakley & Green, 2001b). This has led to concomitant interest of researchers paying attention to factors determining, or at least, influencing a nation's and an individual's elite sport and Olympic performance. According to De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, Van Bottenburg and De Knop (2008), these factors can be categorised into three levels (see Figure 1.1): macro-level factors such as a country's economic capacity and GDP level, political system, population, geographic and climatic factors and so on; meso-level factors or policy factors; and micro-level factors that influence individual athletes' performance. A general conclusion drawn is that countries with higher levels of economic development, are host countries or nearby countries, have a one-party system and countries with a larger population (but more applicable for richer countries) tend to achieve greater success at the Olympic Games (Johnson & Ali, 2004; Bian, 2005; Rathke & Woitek, 2008). When it comes to the micro-level, researchers including Greenleaf, Gould and Dieffenbach (2001) and Conzelmann and Nagel (2003) investigated how athletes' psychological factors, Olympic accommodation, media coverage, training and injuries influence athletes' Olympic

performance. The significance of factors at macro- and micro-levels in affecting Olympic success, as confirmed by a number of researchers, is widely accepted. However, there are limitations regarding factors at these two levels. The former, such as population, GDP and geography and climate, tend to be stable and not easily changed by policy factors. At least, they are unlikely to be influenced by sports policies. As opposed to the uncontrollability of macro-level factors, micro-level factors tend to be 'trivial', patchy and even situational. Therefore, meso-level factors are selected as the focus of this thesis as they are more suitable for the study of countries and government behaviour. Factors at this level are more manageable and less patchy. Different approaches at this policy level may help explain why countries with similar population size, GDP level, political system and geographic feature may vary a lot in terms of their Olympic achievements (such as the gap of Olympic medals between Netherlands and Belgium). Thus, this thesis analyses policy factors underlying the overall 'rise' or at least progress of China and the UK on the Olympic stage in recent years and policies, policy making and implementation structure and policy change regarding three specific Olympic sports to obtain more in-depth understanding. Horizontal comparisons between China and the UK and vertical comparisons between different sports will be made to understand the similarities and differences, and possibly convergence and divergence regarding elite sport policies. Yet, it is noteworthy that China is the main focus of this research while the UK functions as a point of comparison.

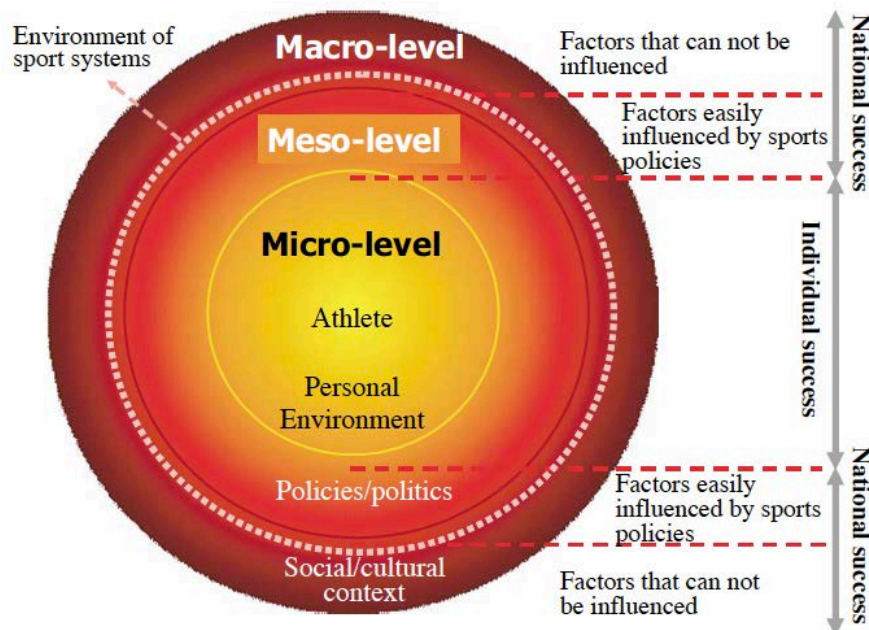


Figure 1.1: A three-level model of factors determining an individual and a nation's elite sport success

Sources: De Bosscher, De Knop, Van Bottenburg and Shibli (2006, p. 187); De Bosscher et al. (2008, p. 17).

Meso-level factors, or policy factors, are the focus of this thesis. The thesis seeks to answer the fundamental questions of how China and the UK achieved notable elite sport success on the international stage in recent years. In other words, this thesis investigates (1) what are the policy factors influencing the performance of China and the UK in general and artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in particular; (2) how these factors influence performance. Meso-level policy theories utilised include the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework. Other important analytical instruments include globalisation theory, policy learning and transfer theory and policy implementation theories. Macro-level theories including pluralism, elite theory and Marxism and the concept of power are also introduced and discussed as supplementary tools for the policy analysis in this thesis.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters. This introduction chapter clarifies the research aim and objectives, discusses the significance of the area of study and

introduces key theories threaded through the thesis and the theoretical frameworks employed.

Chapter Two is a review of the policy theory, which provides this thesis with theoretical underpinnings. This thesis, at its core, falls under the scope of sport policy studies. Prior to the discussion of meso-level policy theories and frameworks, which are the focus of this chapter, macro-level theories that centre on a country's political environment and system are introduced. The discussion of macro-level theories is followed by a section introducing and discussing the concept of power. The rationale is that power is a main theme threaded through policy studies and the analysis of power distribution can help understand both a country's political system at the macro-level and its policy process at the meso-level. Meso-level policy theories are at the centre of this chapter. However, due to limited space, it is unlikely to cover all of the nine meso-level policy theories summarised by Sabatier (2007a). Based on a careful review of existing research regarding (1) sports policy analysis; (2) the UK and China's policy analysis, the multiple streams framework (Kingdon, 1984) and the policy community framework (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992a; 1992b) are selected. In addition to the analytical function, the applicability of the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework will be evaluated at the end of the thesis. In addition to internal factors, policy making is increasingly affected by external factors. Globalisation has made a significant impact on elite sport development and there is evidence that both countries' elite sport developments are increasingly Olympic-centred and influenced by the IOC and IF decisions such as the inclusion and removal of certain sports, disciplines and events. Furthermore, a country's experience is increasingly 'open' to other countries. The prevalence and significance of policy learning and transfer was noted by Green and Houlihan (2005). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that policy learning and transfer is by no means confined to transnational contexts. It also refers to policy and experience transferred and learned from other policy areas or other sports within the same country. Hence, two sections are allocated to globalisation and policy learning and transfer respectively. Policy implementation is another key policy process studied in the thesis, with discussion of both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

Chapter Three reviews the policy contexts of China and the UK, which provide the general 'environment' in which artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling exist and develop. The review of the two countries is periodised, based on major turning points and key events. Accordingly, the review of policy context for China is divided into three periods: 1949-1966, 1966-1976 and 1976-2012. The section 1976-2012 is further divided into three sub-periods based on the key events of China's poor performance in Seoul 1988 and the success of Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001. For the UK, 1965 is identified as the starting point of the review as it was in 1965 that Harold Wilson government established the Advisory Sports Council, which signalled the official inclusion of sport as government responsibility for the first time. The review of the UK policy context is divided into four periods: 1965-1990, 1990-1997, 1997-2005 and 2005-2012. Two key threads through these four periods are the increased government support for sport and the prioritisation of elite sport. Each period for China and the UK consists of four sections: political context, organisational structure, financial support and Olympic performance. The period 1966-1976 for China is the only exception as sport was largely paralysed during this period.

Chapter Four concerns methodology. Key elements discussed in this chapter include type of research, ontological and epistemological assumptions, methodological considerations including logic of inference, research strategy and research design, research methods including data collection methods and data analysis methods. The concepts of reliability and validity are discussed in an independent section. In summary, the thesis is primarily exploratory, blending descriptive elements and is largely primary, empirical and applied (although secondary and theoretical elements are contained but to a lesser extent) in nature. It is ontologically critical realist and epistemologically interpretative. Inductive approaches are the primary logic of inference of the thesis. Qualitative strategy is the main research strategy adopted in this thesis. A case study approach and a comparative approach are selected as research design approaches and semi-structured interviews and documents are used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data while thematic analysis and SPSS are main data analysis instruments.

Chapter Five and Chapter Six are finding chapters for China and the UK respectively. Each chapter includes three case studies for artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. But prior to three case studies, China and the UK's overall Summer Olympic performance and the differentiated positions and contributions of Olympic sports are introduced. In each case study, corresponding national sports governing bodies (National Sports Management Centres in China and National Governing Bodies in the UK) are key research objects. Case studies for each sport follow a largely similar pattern, containing the following sections: (1) organisational structure of the sport; (2) key areas of policy of each sport within which seven key themes are identified: financial support; talent identification and athlete development; coaching; scientific research; training; competition opportunities; and others including international influence and other possible sport- and country-specific areas. These elements are considered by Oakley and Green (2001b), Green and Houlihan (2005) and De Bosscher et al. (2008) as key factors determining a country's elite sport performance. However, there are some developments. For example, international influence, which has been increasingly valued by many countries and is pursued in the form of explicit strategy in China and the UK, is a distinctive feature of this thesis. Moreover, the structure also respects the possible 'uniqueness' and specificity of different sports. For example, anti-doping enjoys an independent section for swimming in China because of the notorious doping scandals in the 1990s and its impact on the whole Chinese sports landscape. Each case study ends up with a brief summary of key characteristics of the development and policy process of each sport.

The Conclusions Chapter highlights key findings of three sports in China and the UK. Major policies, key characteristics of policy making and implementation and their implications, effectiveness and policy changes of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China and the UK are summarised. More important tasks include the vertical comparison inside one country between different sports and horizontal comparison of general policy process of elite sport and that of three target sports between China and the UK is made so that common trends and differences can be presented and further discussed. Undoubtedly, research objectives frame the structure of this chapter. All the above-mentioned country- and sport-specific comparisons revolve around the questions of how policies are made and how they are implemented, in which policy theories are the key analytical instruments.

Moreover, the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework are evaluated to see if they are applicable to China and the UK and to assess the extent of the applicability. The chapter ends with a discussion of the contributions and limitations of the thesis and provides some suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two:

A Review of the Policy Theory

2.1 Introduction

The literature review focuses on theories regarding public policy-making, summarising and comparing different policy theories and exploring the applicability of these theoretical frameworks to sports policy in China and the UK. Public, according to Parsons (1995, p. 3), as opposed to 'private', 'comprises that dimension of human activity which is regarded as requiring governmental or social regulation or intervention, or at least common action'. However, Parsons (1995) also acknowledged that the concept of public has evolved with the times and in many cases, there is a convergence in 'public' and 'private' interests (Dewey, 1927; 1935; Keynes, 1926; 1936). Similarly, the notion of policy is 'subjective' (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984, pp. 19-23) and by no means 'static'. According to Wilson (1887, quoted in Parsons, 1995, p. 14), policy is 'a course of action or plan, a set of political purposes - as opposed to "administration"'. Above all, 'the modern meaning of the word is that of policy as a rationale, a manifestation of considered judgement' (Parsons, 1995, p. 14). In the meantime, Heclo (1972, p. 84) specified the scope of policy: 'the term policy is usually considered to apply to something "bigger" than a particular decision, but "smaller" than general social movements'. Birkland (2005, p. 17) summarised five attributes of public policy:

- The policy is made in the "public's" name;
- Policy is generally made or initiated by government;
- Policy is interpreted and implemented by public and private actors;
- Policy is what the government intends to do;
- Policy is what the government chooses not to do.

Appendix 1 lists some mainstream definitions of public policy. In general, there are three levels inside the theoretical realm of public policy. Macro-level public policy theories, including pluralism and neo-pluralism, Marxism

and elite theory, study the broad and fundamental nature of a country's social and political structure, while micro-level public policy refers to particular decisions, organisations, or local cases (Houlihan, 2005). However, in relation to the focus of this thesis it may be argued that the former and the latter are either too broad or too narrow. By contrast, meso-level theories focus on the level of national organisations such as ministries, national organisations and interest groups and their interaction and relationship. The focus at this level is more specific but not narrow. Moreover, public policy at this level is more operational and manageable and hence meso-level theories take centre stage in this research. However, this does not necessarily minimise the significance of the macro-level and micro-level theories. Especially, macro-level theories, because of their significance in analysing a country's basic direction and political nature and their role as the foundation of the analysis of meso-level frameworks, are given an independent section for some detailed discussion.

The chapter begins with a brief review of macro-level theories regarding public policy including pluralism, elite theory and Marxism. This section is followed by a detailed discussion of the concept of power, which is the most essential concept for the discussion of public policy. However, with the development of globalisation, domestic public policies can hardly avoid external influence and hence the concept of globalisation and its characteristics are introduced. In the same section, policy learning and transfer is discussed. The subsequent section is concerned with meso-level theories regarding public policy. Attention will be given to the discussion and comparison between meso-level frameworks including the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework. This is followed by a brief introduction of implementation theory including top-down and bottom-up approaches and the aim is to provide a stronger theoretical basis for the discussion of elite sport policy in China and the UK. The final section considers the challenges of applying the macro-level and meso-level policy theories to the sports contexts of China and the UK. At the end of the section, a conclusion is drawn regarding the selection of policy making and implementation theories in the analysis of elite sport policy in China and the

UK and the applicability and evaluation of the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework.

2.2 Macro-Level Theories

According to Houlihan and Lindsey (2013, p. 12), 'each meso-level framework or approach has its roots in assumptions at the macro-level ...'. Major theories at this level include pluralism and neo-pluralism, elite theory, Marxism and neo-Marxism and feminism. However, the focus is narrowed to pluralism and neo-pluralism and elite theory, while Marxism and neo-Marxism, which are, to some extent, influential in China, will be briefly introduced. Feminist theory provides a powerful critique of longer established macro-level theories, acts as a useful corrective to other macro-level theories and highlights their ignoring of issues of gender and their implicit patriarchal assumptions, but it is not a theory of the state (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987). Although it is not discussed in details in this thesis, it provides a useful theoretical perspective which sensitises the researcher to gender-related aspects of policy including the gender imbalance in terms of performance and the reliance on female events in many sports in China.

2.2.1 Pluralism and Neo-Pluralism

Pluralism was the most pervasive and influential policy theory in the twentieth century in Western societies (Huang, 1999). The theory was derived from an opposition to an absolute and sovereign state, namely one source of authority (Huang, 1999). According to Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987, p. 13), 'political pluralism recognises the existence of diversity in social, institutional and ideological practices, and values that diversity. The rejection of absolute, unified and uncontrolled state power remains the hallmark of pluralism'. Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987, p. 17) further argued that there are five key features of conventional pluralism:

- 'It (pluralism) began first and foremost as an attack on state monism, whether expressed philosophically in the doctrine of sovereignty, or practically in centralized, absolutist states';
- 'Pluralists valued group and organizational autonomy, activity and diversity' (Hsiao, 1927; Nicholls, 1975);

- 'Pluralists (the intellectual origins of pluralist science) agreed that vigorous group conflicts must be expected in any complex society';
- 'They debated the relative usefulness of institutional or social checks and balances as mechanisms to prevent state monism. They were also divided over whether the rationale for institutional or social pluralism is primarily protective or developmental';
- 'Although they defended the merits of political individualism, pluralists were aware of the dangers of a society where self-interest was the dominant motive and traditional social ties were absent'.

The theorisation of pluralism is by no means static. As a reaction to the limitations exposed due to the development of elite theory, Marxism, the public choice and so forth, many researchers (Bell, 1960; Dahl, 1957; 1967; Dahl & Lindblom, 1953; Galbraith, 1952; 1954; Hirschman, 1970; Lindblom, 1977; 1979) attempted to improve classical pluralism and hence neo-pluralism (contemporary pluralism) emerged and developed in the 1950s and early 1960s, derived from American politics (Ham & Hill, 1993). According to Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987, pp. 284-285), neo-pluralists still advocate the value of 'contemporary liberal democracies' despite its flaws and inadequacies. Neo-pluralism still aims to limit the power of the state, but the focus is narrowed to government rather than state. Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987, p. 288) summarised four key propositions of neo-pluralism:

- The irreversible switch away from simple class-based political divisions;
- The anachronism of left-right ideological conflicts and the growth of new 'post-industrial' issues;
- The radically reduced role of representative institutions as controls on the operations of the extended state;
- The privileged position of business in liberal democratic politics.

As noted previously, meso-level theories have their basic assumptions rooted in macro-level theories. Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) reviewed existing literature of macro-level theories, meso-level theories and the links between these two levels, concluding that pluralism and neo-pluralism are closely associated with meso-level frameworks including the advocacy coalition framework, the punctuated equilibrium theory and institutionalism.

Neo-pluralism was adopted by Green (2005) to analyse sport policy in the UK, Australia and Canada. As regards China and the UK, Barker (2009, p. 35) argued that pluralism has been 'a feature of political life, an aspect of politics and of political theory and political science' in Britain and Huang (1999, p. 325) found that policy process in China has been increasingly influenced by 'the rise of a pluralist tendency'. Therefore, pluralism seems to have certain applicability in both countries.

2.2.2 Elite Theory

Modern elite theory, to a large extent, originates from the theories of two Italian social scientists Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca. Mosca (1896) made the classical statement that in all societies 'two classes of people appear - a class that rules and a class that is ruled'. However, as Huang (1999, p. 21) noted, 'elite is a loose term in political science', the definition of which has evolved over the past century. Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987) narrowed the focus to the public policy domain, stating that sometimes elite is equivalent to leaders. This overlaps with the view of Lasswell (1936, p. 13), who argued that 'the study of politics is the study of influence and the influential ... The influential are those who get the most of what there is to get ... Those who get the most are elite, the rest are mass'. A more recent and better-defined version comes from Scott (2008, p. 28), who argued that the term elites should only be used to refer to 'those groups that have a degree of power'. Accordingly, Scott (2008, p. 32) defined elites as 'those groups that hold or exercise domination within a society or within a particular area of social life'. When it comes to the components of elites, generally speaking, elites mainly include political leaders (including revolutionary elites), the heads of business enterprises, high-ranking bureaucrats, military chiefs and intellectuals. Elites' power is derived from a variety of sources, ranging from 'occupying formal office and wealth', to the 'technological expertise and knowledge' (Huang, 1999, p. 22). Amongst all the sources, 'controlling the significant organisation (large company, trade union and parties, etc.) and important institutionalised positions' are more prominent in a contemporary context (Huang, 1999, p. 23). Furthermore, It is noteworthy that there is no single source of an elite's power and elites achieve their political prominence by virtue of a combination of the resources mentioned above.

Traditionally, elitism is deeply rooted and hence influential in many East Asian societies such as China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore (Huang, 1999; Tan, 2009). However, as regards the Western world, Ham and Hill (1993, p. 33) argued that 'elites is not incompatible with pluralist democracy because competition between elites protects democratic government'. In fact, even in many democratic countries, the discussion of policy issues, decision-making and the implementation are still dominated by a small group or an elite, or like in the UK, a 'narrow social elite' group (BBC News, 2011). Elitism permeates throughout the world, across many different societies. Although there is disagreement over the reasons contributing to the emergence of elites (Mosca, 1896; Schumpeter, 1944; Weber, 1968), they all agree on the inevitability of elites. Generally speaking, elite theory is closely associated with the policy community approach at the meso-level, especially in terms of the policy implementation.

'Actually, in any modern country, the political elites play a key role in state's policy-making' (Huang, 1999, p. 324), even in countries like the USA, in the form of 'elite-driven power structure' (Domhoff, 2006), in areas such as foreign policy (Keskin & Halpern, 2005). However, elitism is the most common across East Asia (Tan, 2009) in general and significantly influential in Confucian societies such as China where political elites still dominate modern policy-making process (Huang, 1999). In the case of the UK, although the degree of elitism is not so high as China and elites in the UK have been traditionally 'more balanced and autonomous' in comparison to countries such as Germany (Best & Higley, 2010, p. 63), elites still play a significant part in the policy-making process (McAllister, 2003) but more in the form of 'democratic elitism' (Best & Higley, 2010, p. 10).

2.2.3 Marxism and Neo-Marxism

Widely viewed as 'the most radical and threatening critique of capitalism and liberal democracy' (Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987, p. 203), Marxism, founded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and neo-Marxism, developed by O'Connor (1973), Offe (1984), Miliband (1970; 1977), Poulantzas (1973; 1978) and Nickel (1992), revolve around the concept of 'class'. According to Huang (1999, p. 25), Marxism argues that:

- The state is an instrument of the ruling class;

- The state is an arbiter in some special situations;
- The state's autonomy exists in serving the long-term interests of the ruling class.

In brief, Marxism, especially the classical Marxism maintains that the state serves capitalist interests while the proletariat is exploited by the capitalist. The conflict between the proletariat and the capitalist is intrinsically unsolvable and with the development of the level of productive forces, capitalism will face a crisis that the capitalist fails to cope with, which will lead to the collapse of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. As many researchers (Carling, 1986; Dunleavy & O'Leary, 1987; Dunn, 2011; Huang, 1999) agreed, Marxism is typically 'determinist', stressing the determination of political events by the economic foundations. Rarely has Marxism been applied to sport analysis. Amongst the limited literature, Hargreaves (1982), Hoch (1972), Morgan (1994) and Rigauer (1981) investigated the relation between left theories including Marxism and sport issues.

Huang (1999, pp. 328-329) observed that 'Marxism is still the fundamental guiding thought of China's policy-making'. However, it is noteworthy that Huang (1999, pp. 328-329) also noticed that a great 'flexibility' has been adopted in China especially in the post-Mao period. A succession of 'localised', or 'Sinicised' versions of Marxism, ranging from Maoism, Deng Xiaoping theory, to Jiang Zemin's 'The "Three Represents"' ¹ theory and Hu Jintao's 'Scientific Outlook on Development', have been advanced and guided China's political, economic and social development during different periods. More specifically, 'China's reality' (Huang, 1999, p. 328), or China's local contexts, are required to be respected when adopting Marxist principles and China follows a road of 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics' (Choi, 2011). One notable example is the significant development of market and commercial elements in China's economy since the adoption of a market economy by the Communist Party in 1992, which had substantial implications for the development of elite sport in China. In contrast, Marxism has traditionally been weak in the British Isles (Bevir, 1996).

¹ The important thought of 'The "Three Represents"' requires that the CCP should always represent advanced social productive forces; should always represent the progressive course of China's advanced culture; and should always represent the fundamental interests of the majority.

2.2.4 Conclusions

In summary, as Ham and Hill (1993, p. 39) outlined, pluralism 'sees government as one set of pressure groups among many others'; elite theory argues that 'the state elite is powerful but not tied to a particular class within society'; and Marxism views the capitalist state as 'the main means the ruling class uses to maintain its dominance'. As noted previously, all of the three theories are applicable in both China and the UK, to varying degrees. However, pluralism is much more influential in the UK while elite theory and Marxism have stronger influence in China.

2.3 Power

According to Parsons (1995, p. 248), macro-level theories introduced above are in essence, power-approaches to decision-making, as pluralism 'focuses on the way in which power is distributed', elite theory 'focuses on the way in which power is concentrated' and Marxism 'focuses on class conflict and economic power'. Power, as Scott (2008, p. 29) posited, 'can be seen as the production of causal effects, and social power is an agent's intentional use of causal powers to affect the conduct of other agents'. Two approaches to power were identified by Scott (2007; 2008): mainstream research, including the work of Steven Lukes, which focuses on the actual exercise of power by a principal over a subaltern and views power as negative, repressive and prohibitive; and a second stream of research, reflected in the work of Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt, which looks at the principal's capacity or potential to do something and power is seen as not just negative but also facilitative and productive. Given the limited space, the focus of this thesis is narrowed to the most classical and influential scholars and their theories: Steven Lukes representing the mainstream, and Michel Foucault representing the second stream. Arendt's (1970; 1973) theory, which shares many similarities with Foucault's approach, has influenced a number of later scholars including many contemporary researchers (Habermas, 1986). However, due to the constraints of the space of Ph.D. research, Arendt's theory of power is not discussed in details.

2.3.1 Steven Lukes's Three Dimensions of Power

Steven Lukes's three-dimensional power theory was a milestone in the history of power study, which unveiled the nature of power in a holistic way and has enlightened, or at least influenced, much later research (Dowding, 2006). However, Lukes's theory was also built on previous insights. Seeing Lukes's three-dimensional power theory as a historic continuum, then Dahl, Lindblom and Polsby's pluralist model was the first step towards the rudiments of the later three-dimensional power theory. The starting point of Dahl (1957; 1961; 1967), Dahl and Lindblom (1953) and Polsby (1963) was that power is widely dispersed among the public and public policy is so organised that the policy ultimately is driven by, and hence represents, public needs. The underlying assumption was that because of political democracy and economically free competition, public policy is unbiased and hence is ultimately the outcome of a free competition between ideas and interests so that any group can have access to the policy process (Parsons, 1995). Therefore, when it comes to power, pluralists argued that power is observable, such as military power or financial power gained from having more money and resources than others. Observable power focuses on the visible behaviour, mostly derived from decision-making, and often in the form of coercive power, that is, as argued by Scott (2008, p. 29), 'the exercise of power by a principal over a subaltern' and 'making someone do something'. The funding cut on some NGBs, imposed by UK Sport following the 'No Compromise' strategy is a good example of coercive power.

However, the pluralist view of power was challenged by many researchers, which made Dahl and Lindblom reconsider their pluralist theories (Dahl, 1982; Lindblom, 1977; 1979). First of all, the argument that the policy process is unbiased and that public policy is open to all was challenged by Schattschneider's (1960) 'mobilization of bias' theory. Opposed to Dahl's view, Schattschneider (1960, p. 71) argued that 'all forms of political organization have a bias in favour of the exploitation of some kinds of conflict and the suppression of others because organization is the mobilization of bias'. Equally importantly, Schattschneider (1960, p. 71) noted that 'some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out'. Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1963; 1970) concurred and put forward the two-face theory of power. According to Bachrach and Baratz (1962; 1963; 1970) and Crenson (1971),

in addition to the observable coercive power and decision-making, there is another significant face of power: power through non-decision-making and inaction, or as Crenson (1971) described, 'unpolitics'. According to Bachrach and Baratz (1962), power also exists in the form of the ability to keep a person from doing what he or she wants to do. In reality, the 'gatekeepers' (Easton, 1965) filter out certain issues, mainly those not interesting or which are threatening to the group who controls power, preventing them from getting on the agenda. As a result, focus is given to the 'safe issues' (Bachrach & Baratz, 1963). For example, as Bachrach and Baratz (1970) revealed, the rights of black people had long been ignored by the US government as they were excluded from the agenda. Similarly, in the UK, before the mid-1960s, disability had long been a 'non-issue'. As Crenson (1971, p. 139) concluded, 'what is not done is more important than what is seen to be done.' Pickup (1996) provided a vivid example of blocking power in sport by revealing the fact that sport-related issues were often ignored by the Margaret Thatcher government in the 1980s.

Another contribution that Crenson has made to the conceptualisation of power is the foundation he laid for the birth of the third face of power. As noted by Lukes (2005, p. 47), Crenson's theory 'lies on the borderline between the second and the third dimension of power'. In his book concerning the policy making of air pollution, Crenson (1971) referred to the concept of 'ideology', taking the discussion of power to a deeper level. Crenson (1971) stated that issues on a political agenda may be rationally linked, not to one another, but to some comprehensive political ideal or principle that transcends the agenda. Based on this, Lukes (1986; 2005) introduced the third face of power. According to Lukes (2005, p. 135), A may exercise power over B by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over B by 'influencing, shaping, or determining his very wants'. This sort of 'intentional shaping of desires' is often fulfilled through the control of information, the mass media and the process of socialisation. As a consequence, it is subtle and non-visible. This form of psychological power is the power which a system has to ensure that its values, beliefs and myths dominate and hence it is termed 'domination' (Dowding, 2006, p. 137). The system exerts 'ideological hegemony' (Gramsci, 1971) to make the public willingly do what may be against the public's interest and take what they do for granted. China in the Cultural Revolution Era and

contemporary North Korea are the most salient examples of communist governments', and often leaders' ideological control. The summary of the three dimensions of power is listed below in Table 2.1. Yet, it is important to note that the three dimensions of power are by no means independent of each other (Gaventa, 1982).

Table 2.1: Three dimensions of power

Dimension	Method	Focuses
One-dimensional view of power (pluralist model)	Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Behaviour - Decision-making - (Key) issues - Observable (overt) conflict - (Subjective) interests, seen as policy preferences revealed by political participation
Two-dimensional view of power (Non-decisionist model)	Critical behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-making and nondecision-making - Issues and potential issues - Observable (overt or covert) conflict - Subjective interests, seen as policy preferences or grievances
Three-dimensional view of power	Radical anti-behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-making and control over political agenda (not necessarily through decisions) - Issues and potential issues - Observable (overt or covert), and latent conflict - Subjective and real interests

Source: Lukes (2005, p. 29).

2.3.2 Michel Foucault's Power Theory

Foucault's power theory provided a new approach to power study, marking a radical

break with previous power theories focusing on the states and its negative aspects (Gaventa, 2003). In brief, Foucault argued that 'power is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them' (Gaventa, 2003, p. 3). Key features of Foucault's theory are summarised below:

- Power is dispersed and subject-less. This overlaps with Lukes's (2005) third dimension of power that looks beyond subject interest.

- Power is not 'wielded' (Gaventa, 2003, p. 3) or possessed, but is a multiplicity of force relations. It is not an institution or a structure, but elements of broad strategy in a particular society. Force relations operate and constitute their own organisation. Individuals are not solely the object for the power, but also 'active subjects' (Foucault, 2012b, p. 316). They 'are the vehicles of power, not its points of application' (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

- Foucault looked beyond the source of power, arguing that power cannot be traced and that power is ubiquitous. 'Power is everywhere. It does not embrace everything, but because it comes from everywhere' (Foucault, 2012a, p. 93).

- A distinctive feature of Foucault's power theory is that power is not necessarily negative. In addition to its repressive, prohibitive or exclusionary aspects, power can be positive and productive. As suggested by Foucault (1980, p. 142), power 'do(es) not take the sole form of prohibition and punishment, but are multiple forms'. In reality, power has been practiced to fulfil positive functions such as the creation of hospitals, charity centres, universities and public transport system.

- The concept of 'bio-power', which was referred to by researchers such as Genel (2006), focusing on life and local situation, is a significant embodiment of Foucault's power theory. As noted earlier, Foucault argued that power exists beyond the political domain revolving around the 'state', but is disseminated across the society. Power permeates people's life, day-to-day interactions between people and institutions, operating by virtue of discipline, subjecting to knowledge and so forth (Gaventa, 2003, p. 4).

- In the above statement, discipline and knowledge are two vehicles in the practice of power. As for the former, Foucault (1986) focused on socialised dispositions towards subjection and self-discipline, which he termed 'disciplinary power'. Scott (2007, p. 30) elaborated Foucault's view of discipline by stating that 'the most effective and pervasive forms of power occur where people have learned to exercise

self-discipline over their own behaviour. They have been discursively formed into subalterns who conform without the need for any direct action on the part of a principal'. This view, to some extent, concurred with Lukes's (2005) third face of ideological power that influences, shapes or determines what one wants.

- When it comes to knowledge, it is closely associated with power (Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1980) stressed that power and knowledge are mutually dependent, which constitutes the fundamental forms of power/knowledge.

- Discourse is another essential concept threaded through Foucault's research. First, discourse plays a vital role in the operation of power, as 'it is the vehicle through which knowledge and subjects are constituted' (Gaventa, 2003, p. 4). However, discourse is also important to resistance. Power study involves understanding existing discourse and creating new language to understand and counter power.

- As regards resistance, Foucault (1980, p. 142) argued that 'there are no relations of power without resistance'. Resistance in power relations is implicit, enabling the possibility of change. 'It (resistance) exists all the more by being in the same place as power; hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies' (Foucault, 1980, p. 142). Absolute domination can hardly be realised in the political power relations and 'a subject can positively resist power through a testing of the limits of domination and subjection' (Hartmann, 2003, p. 11).

- Foucault (1980) proposed the concept of 'governmentality', as opposed to sovereign forms of power. It was argued that governmentality allows for the freedoms of people into the system. Instead of restricting people's freedom and 'ruling over a territory' (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 107), government governs a population and guides people's behaviour in the social body in a much less overtly restrictive way.

Foucault's power theory has significant implications for the study of sport policy. For instance, his theory can be used to analyse the positive and constructive policy behaviours of the related policy participants. Furthermore, his bio-power theory provides a sound basis for the understanding of how power is practiced between individuals and institutions at the micro-level. Equally importantly, Foucault's emphasis on the significance of discourse and language helps to better understand the deep political rationales of certain sport policies through what is presented in the

government documents. In fact, Foucault's power theory has shown a certain degree of applicability to sport (Houlihan & Green, 2009; Klick, 2007; Markula & Pringle, 2006).

2.4 Globalisation and Policy Learning and Transfer

2.4.1 Globalisation

As Henry (2007, p. 6) argued, 'it seemed that globalisation represents not merely a major feature of the contemporary world but rather *the* major feature'. With the development of globalisation, domestic issues including policy-making can hardly be 'insulated' to external influence. Globalisation, as Giulianotti and Robertson (2007, p. 131) defined, is 'a process through which space and time are compressed by technology, information flows and trade and power relations, allowing distant actions to have increased significance at the local level'. However, as Held and McGrew (2003) pointed out, there is no single agreed definition of globalisation. According to Tan and Bairner's (2010) summary based on Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton's (1999) work, there are four mainstream schools of globalisation theory: the hyperglobalism, scepticism, transformationalism and Hay and Marsh's (2000) theory.

Hyperglobalists, such as Ohmae (1995) and Reich (1991), with a focus on an economic logic, argued that with the unprecedented interconnectedness of the world, the world is becoming increasingly borderless and the role of national governments is eroding. Another view that many hyperglobalists maintain is that there is an increasing degree of cross-border independency, inspired by world-system theorists such as Holton (2005). As Held et al. (1999, p. 3) summarised, hyperglobalists believed in the 'denationalization' of economies and the function of national governments has been significantly weakened in the transnational networks such as the world market. Ohmae (1995, p. 5) went even further to assert that nation-states are losing control of economic activity and hence becoming obsolete and globalisation has resulted in 'the end of the nation-state'.

However, hyperglobalists' views have been challenged by many scholars, among which the sceptics' theory is the most influential. Sceptics make a distinction between globalisation and internationalisation, arguing that the hyperglobalists' statement regarding the extent of contemporary globalisation is 'wholly exaggerated' (Hirst, 1997, quoted in Held et al., 1999, p. 5). Instead, sceptics, including Hirst and Thompson (1999), Weiss (1997) and Gilpin (2001), have contended that the world is becoming less interdependent than before and is significantly driven by national interests, the power of national governments has been strengthened rather than weakened. As Held et al. (1999, p. 10) suggested, sceptics define globalisation as 'internationalisation and regionalisation'.

The third mainstream school of globalisation, most notably Held and McGrew (2003) and Held et al. (1999), is referred to as 'transformationalism'. As Tan and Bairner (2010, p. 586) argued, transformationalism critically absorbs the 'virtues' of both hyperglobalism and scepticism. From a transformationalist point of view, globalisation is a 'contingent historical process replete with contradictions' (Mann, 1997, quoted in Held et al., 1999, p. 7) the future of which is still uncertain. Transformationalists recognise the 'unprecedented levels of global interconnectedness' (Held et al., 1999, p. 10). However, instead of focusing on whether the role of national governments has been strengthened or weakened, transformationalists advance a 'third way' by arguing that the power of nation states is in the process of being restructured and world politics and world order are being reconfigured.

As an alternative to the three traditional schools mentioned above, Hay and Marsh's (2000) approach to globalisation, which is self defined as an attempt to mature the yet rudimentary 'third wave' (Hay & Marsh, 2000, p. 3) literature on globalisation, has broadened researchers' horizon. To summarise, there are three key characteristics of Colin Hay's globalisation theory:

- Globalisation should be viewed as an effect rather than a cause, or as Tan and Bairner (2010, p. 586) wrote, the 'explanandum' rather than the 'explanans'.
- Globalisation is both complex and contingent (Hay & Marsh, 2000). It is by no means a singular and inexorable trend. Rather, it is caused by a combination of not only economic, but also social, cultural and political factors. Hence, it is inappropriate

to study globalisation in an 'isolated' manner and it is suggested to study it in an interdisciplinary way as social, political, economic and cultural phenomena are often interrelated (Hay, 2002).

- Empirical evidence should be highly respected (Hay, 2002). This proposition has been best reflected in Hay and his colleagues' study on the resistance to globalisation (Hay, 2000; Hay & Marsh, 2000; Hay & Rosamond, 2002) or 'de-globalisation' (Hay, 2002, p. 4). For example, the convergence based on an Anglo-US model has been increasingly resisted in Asia (Hay, 2000) and the European integration can also be seen as resistance to the global export of 'Americanization' (Hay, 2000, p. 530). Even inside the European Union, there is a high degree of divergence, or variation in different member states especially in terms of domestic reforms (Hay & Rosamond, 2002).

In the area of elite sport development, international organisations most notably the IOC and IFs can exert influence on domestic policy system and the inclusion or removal of a sport (or discipline or event) from the Olympic Games has a clearly discernible impact on domestic elite sport policy (Houlihan, 2009). As Houlihan and Zheng (2014, p. 13) argued, 'most states, even the wealthy, adopt an elite sport policy that is heavily influenced, if not determined, by the decisions of the IOC on the sports to be included in the summer and winter Games'. As a result, there is a high degree of homogenisation regarding sports and event targeting and funding allocation among many nations.

The following chapters centre on China and the UK and therefore, the focus of this thesis is on the relationship between globalisation and state governments, which falls within the global-local theme (Robertson, 1995). According to Ohmae (1999), globalisation did affect national policy and as hyperglobalists maintained, weakened national governments, but governments still enjoy a wide range of options and hence a certain degree of autonomy. This autonomy includes their attitudes towards globalisation as to whether to resist it, to passively accept it or to actively take advantage of it. In summary, it is fair to say that states play a crucial role 'in facilitating, mediating and determining the pace of globalisation' (Houlihan, 2010, p. 15).

Globalisation, which has influenced many nations' sport policies, has been increasingly applied to sport studies. For example, Tan and Bairner (2010; 2011) and Huang (2013) studied how globalisation has influenced the policies of elite football and basketball in China. In addition to China, many Western countries have experienced the double-edged impact of globalisation including the more negative impact of the high proportion of international footballers in the Premier League on the performance of the England Football Team in major international competitions (BBC Sport, 2013c). In the following three case studies of China and the UK, globalisation will act as an important analytical tool for the understanding of how external factors have influenced policy making and contributed to policy change.

2.4.2 Policy Learning and Transfer

From a static perspective, as Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, p. 357) argued, policy 'transfer is a common phenomenon'. From a motional perspective, as Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p. 5) claimed, policy transfer 'is a growing phenomenon'. Especially with the development of globalisation, the academic significance and popularity of policy transfer have increased over the last two decades (Evans, 2009a; Stone, 1999). Policy transfer is concerned with a similar process in which 'knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political setting (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p. 5).

Many scholars (e.g. Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Evans, 2009a; 2009b; Stone, 1999) have identified three types of policy transfer: voluntary transfer including lesson-drawing; 'negotiated' (Evans, 2009b, p. 245) or 'indirect' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 348) coercive transfer mainly compelled by international and supra-national institutions; and direct coercive transfer imposed by another government. In contemporary global politics, the third form of direct coercive transfer, which was popular during the imperialist and colonial era, is rare. Therefore, the former two forms take centre stage. It is evident from this categorisation that policy transfer is by no means equivalent to policy learning. In fact, policy learning, as a voluntary transfer activity 'as a result of the free choices of political actors' (Dolowitz & Marsh,

1996, p. 344), is a form of the broader concept of policy transfer and policy learning can lead to both 'policy innovation or termination' as well as 'policy transfer and/or convergence' (Stone, 1999, p. 52). Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) introduced a policy transfer continuum to better illustrate different types of policy transfer (see Figure 2.1).

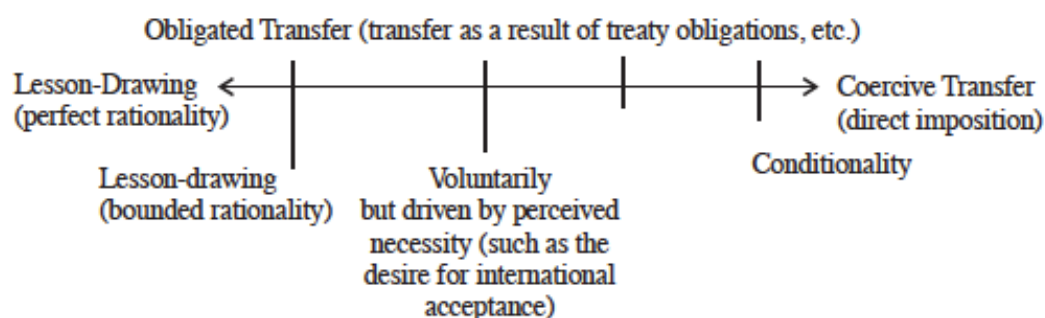


Figure 2.1: Policy transfer continuum

Source: Dolowitz and Marsh (2000, p. 13).

Policy transfer largely encompasses four degrees: copying, emulation, hybridisation and inspiration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996²; Evans, 2009b). The copying of policy without any changes is rare while the other three degrees are relatively common. The subject of policy transfer is diverse (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Evans, 2009b) but much policy transfer literature centres on government or official actors (Stone, 1999), which are also the focus in this thesis. In terms of the objects of policy transfer, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) summarised them into six categories: policy goals, structure and content; policy instruments or administrative techniques; institutions; ideology; ideas, attitudes and concepts; and negative lessons. The sources of policy transfer and learning are not identical either. For example, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) argued that policy learning and transfer could come from both past and current experience of one country in and outside the political systems and other countries.

The rationale for governments to transfer policy also varies. In general, as Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) summarised, voluntary transfer may be driven by the

² Adapted from Rose's (1993) five-degree policy transfer theory: copying, emulation, hybridisation, synthesis and inspiration.

dissatisfaction or problem with the status quo and uncertainty about the cause of problems (for example, poor performance at the Olympic Games), indirect coercive transfer may be driven by externalities or technology (for example, the pressure from the WADA and the development of technologies of both doping substances and the detection methods), as well as falling behind neighbours or competitors (the football rivalry between China, Japan and South Korea), and direct coercive transfer is often driven by hegemonism, colonialism and imperialism. However, in reality, policy transfer, or transferability, is conditioned by factors such as the size and nature of the problem, the information available, past policy constraints, institutional and structural constraints and most importantly economic resources (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996) and the outcomes of policy transfer is often uncertain, unpredictable (Stone, 1999) and 'difficult to steer' (Dunlop, 2009, p. 307). Due to this uncertainty and unpredictability, policy transfer including policy learning can be both successful and unsuccessful (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Marsh & Sharman, 2009) and result in both positive and negative ramifications.

Similar to the policy transfer theory, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) introduced three types of isomorphism, which also provide some theoretical inspiration to this thesis. These three types of isomorphism include: coercive, mimetic and normative. Although DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) isomorphism mainly centres on organisational study, it has reasonable applicability to policy studies.

2.5 Meso-Level Frameworks

Meso-level frameworks, mainly concerning national organisations (ministries, national sports organisations and interest groups), are the focus of this section. Generally speaking, Sabatier (2007a) introduced nine types of meso-level frameworks and theories (see Appendix 2 for more details). Among the various frameworks, two frameworks are selected and discussed in details: the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework. Three criteria were adopted in selecting these two frameworks. First, both frameworks explore both policy stability and policy change. Second, a certain time span (at least a medium term) is required in both these frameworks, which helps provide a less partial picture of the policy process. Finally, both frameworks have been applied in the sports policy

area, which will be detailed later in this chapter. The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) (Jenkins-Smith & Sabatier, 1993; 1994; 1999; Sabatier, 1988; 1998; Sabatier & Weible, 2007), a relatively mature meso-level policy framework with more than 20 years of development and reasonable applicability across a wide range of policy areas (see Appendix 3), was originally identified as a key policy analytical tool. One of the biggest stumbling blocks of the research is that it is often difficult to identify more than two coalitions as sport policy domain has been increasingly categorised into two coalitions: elite and non-elite subsystems. Therefore, the ACF is discussed in rather less details.

2.5.1 The Multiple Streams Framework

The multiple streams framework, derived from Cohen, March and Olsen's (1972) 'garbage can' model, is characterised by its emphasis on 'the anarchical character of organisation and the policy process' (Houlihan, 2005, p. 171). Policy choice, according to Cohen et al. (1972, p. 2), is a 'garbage can' where various kinds of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated'. The multiple streams framework is a non-rational model, marking a radical distinction with rational-models such as the stages heuristic and institutional rational choice. Instead of the rationality, multiple streams assume that public policy is built on a 'temporal order' (Zahariadis, 2007, p. 65). The framework is a powerful analytical tool to explain the policy generation under conditions of ambiguity. As Houlihan (2005, p. 171) outlined, the multiple streams framework 'emphasises the ambiguity, complexity and degree of residual randomness in policy-making in marked contrast to the dominant assumptions of actor rationality'. It is noteworthy that although Zahariadis (2007) argued that the multiple streams framework could run through the entire policy process, it is largely concerned with agenda setting (Houlihan, 2005; Parsons, 1995).

According to Kingdon (1984), policy system comprises three largely separate streams: the problem stream, the policy stream and the political stream. These three streams, together with policy windows and policy entrepreneurs, are referred to as five structural elements of the multiple streams framework.

(1) The problem stream

Problems are identified as issues that government addresses and plans to deal with. Here, it is noteworthy that only issues attracting the attention of policy-makers and requiring government action are included in the problem stream. Therefore, problems and issues that are ignored by the government are excluded from analysis (Houlihan, 2005; Parsons, 1995). Policy-makers identify problems mainly in three ways: indicators, focusing events and feedback. Indicators, such as the decline of the number of gold medals and medals at the Olympic Games and the amount of government grants to elite sport, help measure the system and oftentimes, unusual change in indicators reveals the problem. Focusing events, most notably crisis, often act as a catalyst to strengthen government's emphasis on certain issue and prompt government actions. For example, the UK's poor performance at Atlanta 1996 was a 'wake-up call', greatly accelerating government's further and systematic support for elite sport. In addition to indicators and focusing events, problems can also be understood through feedback. Useful feedback can be gathered not only from those who decide and implement a policy or a programme, but also those who are the target of, or are affected by, the policy. In addition, lessons learnt from previous policies are also of great value. Unsatisfactory lessons from the past should be avoided and negative feedback on current policies might indicate a problem. Finally, Zahariadis (2007, p. 72) mentioned the concept of 'problem load', arguing that 'the number of difficult problems occupying the attention of policy-makers, has a significant negative effect on the efficient utilisation of information and a strong positive effect on the ability to predict the issue's place on the agenda'.

(2) The policy stream

The policy stream is described as a 'primeval soup' within which 'ideas, backed by particular policy communities, float around' (Houlihan, 2005, p. 171) and compete to win acceptance by policy-makers. Some ideas successfully survive and reach the top on the agenda, while others fail to 'go upstairs', fall to the bottom and are ignored. What play a key role in the survival of ideas are policy entrepreneurs, the definition of which is discussed later. As Parsons (1995, p. 194) put it, 'swimming in this soup are policy entrepreneurs'. In brief, there are two criteria determining the destiny of

ideas in the 'soup': technical feasibility and value acceptability. In other words, the ideas should be both 'technically feasible and compatible with the dominant values of the community' (Houlihan, 2005, p. 171; Parsons, 1995, p. 194). At the end of the selection and elimination in the 'primeval soup', a list of proposals emerges, constituting 'a set of alternatives to the governing agenda' (Parsons, 1995, p. 194).

However, in many cases, policy change and policies are not static. Travis and Zahariadis (2002) adopted an incrementalist approach to Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams model, arguing that the adoption and development of policies can be gradual and some policies tend to be lasting. Accordingly Travis and Zahariadis (2002, p. 498) put forward the concept of the 'inertia' of policies, which is of potential value to this thesis.

(3) The political stream

The political stream primarily comprises three elements: the national mood, organised political forces and government. According to Zahariadis (2007, p. 73), the national mood refers to the notion 'that a fairly large number of individuals in a given country tend to think along common lines and that the mood swings from time to time'. Public opinion surveys are a common indicator of the national mood. Government observes the change in the national mood in order to decide for example whether to ignore or to take action in a particular issue. Organised political forces, including parties, interest groups and pressure groups, also influence policy-makers' decisions as their opinions indicate 'consensus or dissent in the broader political arena' (Zahariadis, 2007, p. 73). The third element, also known as administrative or legislative turnover by Zahariadis (2007), refers to key personnel and structural change within the government, which has substantial impact on the political choice. A salient example is John Major's appointment as the UK's Prime Minister in 1990, which raised the prominence of sport in general and elite sport in particular in the UK. Amongst the three elements, Zahariadis (2007) pointed out that the national mood and government have the most significant effect on the government agenda.

(4) Policy windows

Normally, the three streams are largely independent of each other. However, at critical moments of time, the problem, policy and political streams join together. Kingdon (1984, p. 165) vividly termed these moments 'policy windows' - 'opportunities for advocates of proposals to push their pet solutions, or to push attention to their special problems'. Policy windows provide an issue with the chance of getting on to the policy agenda. As Kingdon (1984, p. 174) outlined, the coincidence of the three streams offers an issue a 'launch window' where 'a problem is recognised, a solution is developed and available in the policy community, a political change makes the time right for policy change, and the potential constraints are not severe'. Policy windows are opened by compelling problems or events in the political streams. Parsons (1995, p. 194) further argued that 'if all three streams are coupled in a single package then the item has a high probability of reaching the top of the decision agenda and may result in a spillover to a related area'.

It is important to note that policy windows can be categorised into different types. Exworthy and Powell (2004) introduced the concepts of 'big windows' at national level and 'little windows' at local level. In addition, policy windows can be also categorised against the criterion of predictability, which has been most systematically discussed by Howlett (1998) in his analysis of federal agenda-setting in Canada. Howlett (1998) argued that there is a predictable-unpredictable distinction regarding policy windows and identified four types of policy windows: routine windows, discretionary windows, spillover windows and random windows. In fact, there is a high degree of predictability of policy windows in the area of elite sport policy, most notably evidenced in the performance pressure covering each four-year Olympic cycle.

(5) Policy entrepreneurs

The coincidence of the three streams requires not only policy windows, but also a promoter - a policy entrepreneur. Kingdon (1984, p. 151) defined policy entrepreneurs as 'people who are willing to invest resources of various kinds in hope of a future return in the form of policies they favour'. In order to reach the top of the

government agenda, an idea needs to win the sponsorship of policy entrepreneurs, who will then promote the idea to the policy-makers. However, the support from policy entrepreneurs does not necessarily guarantee the success of these ideas. Some entrepreneurs, with greater access to policy makers, or more resources, are more likely to be successful in promoting their sponsored ideas while other policy entrepreneurs may not. Moreover, policy windows open for a short time and hence policy entrepreneurs need to seize the opportunity instantly in order to get a policy successfully adopted. Zahariadis (2007, pp. 78-79) provided an informative explanation as to why policy-makers adopt some policies over others: 'during open policy windows persistent policy entrepreneurs, who constantly search for solutions to important problems, attempt to couple the three streams. Success is more likely when all three streams are coupled, depending on the type of window that opens and the skills, resources, and strategies of entrepreneurs to focus attention and bias choice'.

However, the value of policy entrepreneurs varies according to different policy areas and as Travis and Zahariadis (2002) argued, the significance of policy entrepreneurs in some areas (such as foreign aid policy) is secondary as there is a very limited number of policy participants outside the government bureau. This is not to deny or downgrade the significance of policy entrepreneurs. Instead, Travis and Zahariadis (2002, p. 498) argued that 'it merely means that identifying individual entrepreneurs is not a prerequisite to modeling the process'. Elite sport is increasingly government-led in the world and in particular in China, it is a government-dominant and highly exclusive policy area. It may be difficult to identify influential non-bureaucratic entrepreneurs in relation to three sports in China and the UK. Hence, Travis and Zahariadis's (2002) dropping or weakening of the concept of policy entrepreneurs may have some implications for this thesis.

In summary, the chances of an issue getting on to the policy agenda are stronger if there is an appropriate window and if the issue is backed and promoted by policy entrepreneurs (see Figure 2.2). The successful launch of a policy change is the result of the opening of such a window in the interplay of streams: 'solutions which have been floating around become attached and coupled to a problem and policy

entrepreneurs seize the opportunity to change the decision agenda' (Parsons, 1995, p. 194).

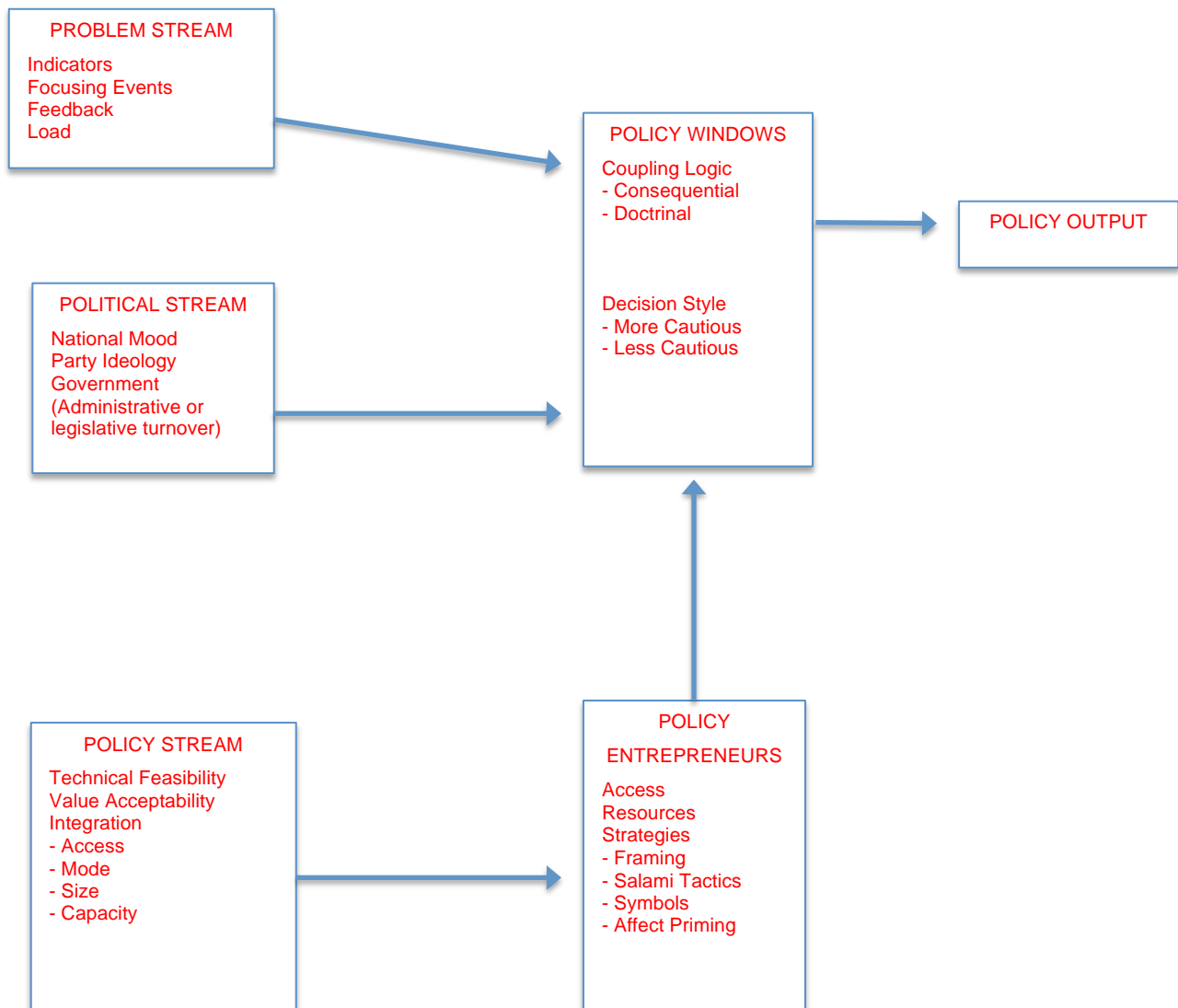


Figure 2.2: A diagram of the multiple streams framework

Source: Zahariadis (2007, p. 71), adapted from Zahariadis (2003).

The multiple streams framework, as a dynamic alternative to the rational models, with its flexibility of working together with other frameworks such as 'policy community' (Houlihan, 2005, p. 172), has been successfully applied across a wide range of policy areas especially in the Western context (for example, Lancaster, Ritter & Colebatch, 2012; Richardson, 2001; Teodorovic, 2008; Travis & Zahariadis, 2002). When it comes to sports study, Chalip (1996) applied the framework to the analysis of sport policy in New Zealand and King (2009) used the framework to

explore sport policy processes at the level of the local authority area in the UK. Similarly, Bergsgard (2000) adopted Cohen et al.'s (1972) garbage can model in the analysis of sports policy making in Norway.

The multiple streams framework has seldom been applied to non-Western contexts in general and China in particular. Zhu, as a pioneer researcher who investigated the applicability of the multiple streams framework in China in the area of detention and repatriation system, concluded that value acceptability is more significant for the adoption of a policy in the Communist China where there are chances for technically infeasible policies being accepted by the government as long as they are ideologically correct (Zhu, 2008). In terms of the concept of policy entrepreneurs, Zhu (2008, p. 319) found that the 'main body of Chinese policy entrepreneurs exists in the policy stream outside of the government'.

However, despite its evident merits listed above, the multiple streams framework is by no means flawless. As Houlihan (2005) suggested, the framework focuses on agenda setting, but undervalues other elements of the policy process. Furthermore, the multiple streams framework, as an America-derived theory, may be less significant in more centralised countries such as the UK and China. Hence, it is better to combine the multiple streams framework with other frameworks, or as Zahariadis (2007, pp. 86-87) put it, 'use multiple frameworks'. Also it is important to take the peculiarity of different countries into consideration when applying the framework.

2.5.2 The Policy Community Framework

The policy community framework, as one type of the network approach, is widely accepted as applicable in countries where the policy process is dominated by a small group of elites such as China (Huang, 1999) and South Korea (Kim & Bell, 1985; Woo & Kim, 1971). Some researchers, for example, Richardson and Jordan (1979) have used the concepts of policy community and policy network interchangeably. However, it is noteworthy that the two concepts are by no means identical, despite their common assumption that policy making is strongly affected by the personal relationships and the interaction among policy actors and the contact and mutually

dependent relationship between key actors aim to achieve and maximise 'mutual interests' (Adam & Kriesi, 2007, p. 129). As Parsons (1995) argued, a policy community is smaller and more closed than a policy network. Figure 2.3 summarises key elements of the network approach.

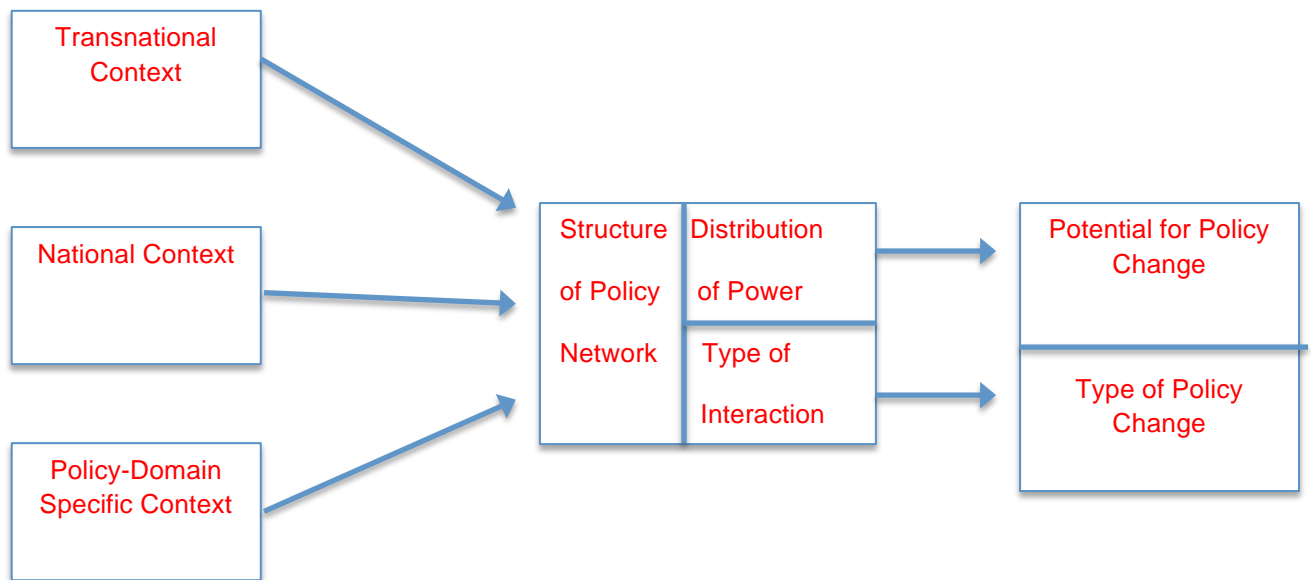


Figure 2.3: A summary of the policy network approach

Source: Adam and Kriesi (2007, p. 148).

There are many cases where the policy process is largely controlled by policy networks which are formed by a limited number of members with shared values and pursuits, and are highly exclusive, following a hierarchical pattern and insulated from other actors. These forms of 'tightknit' (Rhodes, 1988) and stable policy networks are known as policy communities. As pointed out by John (1998, p. 83), one of the key attributes of Rhodes' theory is his argument that 'most decision-making takes place in these limited, closed communities'.

Richardson and Jordan (1979) carried out a pilot study of policy communities, arguing that there is a clientelistic relationship between members within a community and that the community operates on the basis of certain 'rules of the game', or as Richardson and Jordan (1982) later put it, the 'negotiated order'. Richardson and Jordan (1979, pp. 73-74) pointed out the previous neglect of the role of policy communities in affecting policy process, emphasising that 'it is the relationship involved in committees, the policy community of departments and groups, the

practices of co-option and the consensual style that perhaps better account for policy outcomes than do examinations of party stances, or manifestations of parliamentary influence’.

On the basis of this early research into policy communities, Jordan and Maloney (1997) and Rhodes and Marsh (1992a; 1992b) further developed the policy community framework and provided a ‘stricter definition’ (Dudley & Richardson, 1996, p. 67). Policy communities, according to Marsh and Rhodes (1992a), have the following five key characteristics:

- A policy community is a highly exclusive group which usually consists of a small number of members and the memberships are stable and restricted;
- The consultation inside a policy community is frequent and the quality is high;
- The interaction between members is stable and close;
- There is a high level of consensus between members, who share common values and beliefs;
- A policy community is largely hierarchical and vertically interdependent. Often, it follows a top-down structure.

Taken together, policy communities are ‘highly integrated within the policy-making process’ (Parsons, 1995, p. 189). The integration, or the inclusion within the community, is realised and underpinned by shared values and beliefs, exchangeable resources and common interests, based on ‘the gaining of personal trust’ (Cairney, 2011, p. 180). The restricted membership results in exclusion of certain interest of the general public as a whole (Dudley & Richardson, 1996). From this perspective, many researchers have linked policy communities to policy stability. For example, Richardson and Jordan (1979) perceived policy communities as driving forces of policy stability. Policy stability, as Cairney (2011) argued, is often a sought-after benefit by a policy community. Hence, in order to maximise ‘shared objectives’ (Miller & Demir, 2007, p. 137), members within a policy community seek to ensure stability by insulating their decisions from wider participations outside the community and dominating the policy process. Here, Cairney (2011) referred to the concept of ‘policy monopolies’, arguing that successful domination of the policy process and decision making by a certain policy community is virtually a sort of policy monopoly. Below are the characteristics of the policy communities that are successful in

maintaining policy monopoly, as suggested by Jordan and Maloney (1997, quoted in Cairney, 2011, p. 180):

- 'A limited group membership, based on the use of a certain policy image to exclude most participants and reduce the visibility of decisions';
- 'Good quality relations between groups and government, based on shared values or a shared understanding of the policy problem';
- 'Policy and policy community stability, based on a lack of external attention and the fruitful exchange of resources between groups and public officials'.

However, there are cases where a policy community fails to maintain its policy monopoly (Cairney, 2011; Dudley & Richardson, 1996). As Dudley and Richardson (1996) stressed, policy communities can coexist with a powerful dynamic of policy change. Policy change is often caused by exogenous factors most notably scientific and technological developments (Dudley and Richardson, 1996).

The policy network approach in general and the policy community framework in particular has been used in a wide range of highly regarded research and made a significant contribution to the study of public policy. It looks beyond structural elements by focusing on the personal relationship between different participants within a policy subsystem and therefore has enriched researchers' insights into activities regarding public policy. However, the network approach (including the policy community theory) has its critics. First, the policy network approach is an analytical toolbox rather than a theory per se (Dowding, 1995). Hence, it needs to borrow hypothesis and models from other theories (Thatcher, 1998). Second, it should be borne in mind that the applicability of the network approach in general and policy community approach in particular is limited. Many researchers (Hong, 2012; Smith, 1993) warned that the policy community framework might be less applicable in pluralistic countries such as the USA. To overcome these two major weaknesses, it is important to incorporate the policy community framework into other major macro- and meso-level frameworks (Kim & Roh, 2008), or at least use it in conjunction with other frameworks.

Amongst the limited research that has applied the policy community framework, Park's (2011) and Hong's (2012) studies have provided much inspiring food for

thought. In an attempt to adopt the policy community framework to analyse the significant role of Chaebol (large corporations) and Sangmu (armed forces) in contributing to South Korea's success on the Olympic stage, Hong (2012) found that a modified version of policy communities - policy implementation communities largely influence the policy process. This finding concurred with Smith's (1993, p. 10) first proposition of policy communities that 'policy communities are more likely to develop where the state is dependent on groups for implementation'. Hong's (2012) study not only proved the applicability of the policy community framework in the study of sports policy, but also inspired the analysis of sports policy in China where, similar to South Korea, the policy process is largely elite-centred.

Although there is no example of the application of the policy community framework to China, the broad policy network framework has been introduced to and discussed among Chinese scholars (for example, Jiang, 2010; Zhu, 2006). In the case of elite sport, despite a lack of the application of the policy community framework, many researchers' work has been indirectly linked to this framework by discussing many key characteristics regarding policy making and policy implementation within the 'whole country support for elite sport' system in China, which revealed strong evidence of an influential policy community in elite sport development in China. According to both Pan (2012) and Xu (2004), elite sport development in China follows a government-led and government-dominated approach. Fan, Hong and Lu (2010, p. 2398) came to similar conclusions by arguing that 'the development of sports policy has always been state-controlled.' Dai (2009) maintained that government political intervention is a key feature of the 'whole country support for elite sport system' and elite sport in China is largely controlled by the government (central government and provincial governments, GAS, Sports Management Centres and provincial sports governing bodies) and political leaders. The influence of non-government forces is extremely limited in elite sport in particular and in relation to three sports studied in particular. The dominance of government and the inhibition of the development of civil forces and media have made them marginal in elite sport policy-making in China (Dai, 2009). Xu (2004) went further by explicitly pointing out the government's monopolisation of elite sport development in China, which resonates strongly with Cairney's (2011) and Jordan and Maloney's (1997) concept of 'policy monopoly'.

In the case of China, another promising approach is to localise the western-derived policy community framework by incorporating the concept into the 'guanxi' networks. The Chinese term 'guanxi', which means personal relationship or connectedness, is regarded as a significant form of social identity for the Chinese (Chou, Cheng, Huang & Cheng, 2006). It is extremely influential in Chinese culture as an invaluable 'asset' (Vanhonacker, 2004, p. 48), permeating economic (Fan, 2002; Fan, Woodbine & Scully, 2012; Nolan, 2011; Trolie & Zhang, 2012) and political domains (Guo, 2001; McNally, Guo & Hu, 2007). Often guanxi overtakes the influence of structural factors. Guan (2011) even went so far as to claim that guanxi is the key to achieving success in China. In the area of sport, Pan (2012, p. 14) argued that the legal system is still immature and 'human factors' - mainly political leaders' will and connectedness largely determine the policy making in elite sport in China. As argued by Luo and Yeh (2012), there is often a high degree of mutual trust between members, or as Ai (2006, p. 107) vividly described, 'friends' inside a guanxi network, which guarantees the successful operation of guanxi circles. Guo (2001) pointed out the key role of guanxi in elite politics in China, which integrates the meso-level framework with elite theory at the macro-level.

2.5.3 Conclusions

The above section reviewed two meso-level frameworks for the analysis of public policy (the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework) and discussed their applicability to the study of sport policy. Despite their strengths and a certain degree of applicability to the sports policy area, neither of them is without its problems. This prompts the strengths of using multiple theories (Allison, 1969; Allison & Zelikow, 1999; Sabatier, 2007b; Van Der Heijden, 2013). After careful scrutiny, the multiple streams framework is selected as the main analytical tool for both China and the UK while the policy community framework, blending the guanxi elements and working in conjunction with the concept of 'policy monopolies', is selected as an additional toolbox for China. More importantly, their applicability will be tested.

2.6 Policy Implementation

Policy study concerns not only policy making, but also other stages among which policy implementation attracts much attention among scholars. As Anderson (1975, p. 98) stressed, 'policy is being made as it is being administered'. According to Mazmanian and Sabatier (1989, p. 20), 'implementation is the carrying out of a basic policy decision, usually incorporated in a statute but which also take the form of important executive orders or court decisions'. Policy implementation 'encompasses whatever is done to carry a law into effect, to apply it to the target population, and to achieve its goals' (Anderson, 2011, p. 209). Generally speaking, there are two major approaches to policy implementation: top-down approach and bottom-up approach.

Top-down approach, also known as the rational model, is the approach 'to studying policy implementation in which one first understands the goals and motivations of the highest level initiator of policy, and then tracks the policy through its implementation at the lowest level' (Birkland, 2005, p. 182). It is predicated on a set of assumptions including that policies contain clear goals against which performance is measurable, that policies contain effective policy tools to achieve goals, that there exists a 'single statute or other authoritative statement of policy' and that there is an 'implementation chain' (Birkland, 2005, p. 183). However, in reality, implementation is more complex. Accordingly researchers study the possibility of and requirements for 'perfect implementation'. Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) theory of ten ingredients of 'perfect implementation' is useful as an ideal type against which policy implementation can be compared. Details can be found in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Ten ingredients of 'perfect implementation'

Number	Ingredient
1	That circumstances external to the implementing agency do not impose crippling constraints.
2	That adequate time and sufficient resources are made available to the programme.
3	That the required combination of resources is actually available.
4	That the policy to be implemented is based upon a valid theory of cause and effect.
5	That the relationship between cause and effect is direct and there are few if any, intervening links.
6	That dependency relationships are minimal.
7	That there is understanding of, and agreement on, objectives.
8	That tasks are fully specified in correct sequence.
9	That there is perfect communication and co-ordination.
10	That those in authority can demand and obtain perfect compliance.

Source: Hogwood and Gunn (1984, pp. 199-206).

In guaranteeing the implementation of policies, governments use certain policy tools or instruments. According to Houlihan and Lindsey's (2013) summary of the theories of some key authors including Lowi (1964; 1972), Hogwood (1987) and Hood and Margetts (2007), policy instruments mainly comprise three categories: inducements and rewards, threats and sanctions, and marketing, information or education.

Generally speaking, top-down elements permeate most political systems in the world. It is more evident in authoritative or centralised political systems. However, the top-down approach tends to, at least, undervalue the role of the behaviour of 'real people' (Parsons, 1995, p. 467) at the lower implementation levels. Furthermore, Birkland (2005) pointed out that its applicability in less authoritative countries such as the USA might be discounted.

The bottom-up approach, derived from critiques of the top-down approach, involves 'studying policy implementation in which one begins by understanding the goals, motivations, and capabilities of the lowest level implementers and then follows the policy design upward to the highest level indicators of policy' (Birkland, 2005, p. 185). Key features of bottom-up approach include its recognition that goals can be ambiguous and conflicting and that 'policy' can take many forms including laws, rules, practices and norms (Birkland, 2005). Most importantly, it recognises the significant role of lower level implementers. As for organisational implementers, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), as the earliest scholars studying implementation, introduced the concept of 'implementation deficit' which derives from the complexity of a number of implementing agencies. Hence, they recognise the role of lower level organisations in the success of policy implementation. As Pressman and Wildavsky (1973, p. 161) argued, 'if the federal principle maintains its vitality, then it means precisely that state and local organizations must be able to oppose, delay, and reject federal initiatives'. In a similar sense, Hjern and Hull's (1982) implementation theory also focused on the role of organisations in the policy process. In comparison, Lipsky (1980) focused on the significance of the role and response of local actors and his concept of 'street-level bureaucrats' has been very influential in policy studies. According to Lipsky (1980, p. xi), 'street-level bureaucrats' refer to 'the schools, police and welfare departments, lower courts, legal services offices, and other agencies whose workers interact with and have wide discretion over the dispensation of benefits or the allocation of public sanctions'. These street-level bureaucrats' understanding of and attitudes towards polices and their detailed behaviour can affect the effectiveness of the implementation of policies and street-level bureaucrats 'seek ways to manage their own work' (Hupe & Hill, 2007, p. 281).

The bottom-up approach is a useful complement to the top-down approach. However, it is not without shortcomings. First, it tends to overemphasise the 'freedom' of street-level bureaucrats or lower level implementers, without taking their constraints, obligations or affiliations into consideration. Second, it fails to take into account the 'power differences of the target groups' (Sabatier, 1986, pp. 35-36). Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses. Hence, it is better to critically synthesise them in real study and apply them in a context-specific way.

2.7 Conclusions

This chapter seeks to identify appropriate theoretical frameworks for the analysis of elite sport policy in China and the UK by reviewing and assessing various public policy theories and frameworks. At the macro-level, a conclusion is drawn that pluralism is appropriate for the analysis of the UK, while elite theory fits the Chinese context and Marxism is selected as a supplementary state theory in the analysis of China at the macro-level.

The discussion of power follows Scott's (2007; 2008) two-stream classification, summarising Steven Lukes's three-dimensional power theory and Michel Foucault's alternative approach to power. Despite the striking differences between these two theories, the mutually complementary relationship makes it more sensible to combine both power theories in this research.

The discussion of meso-level frameworks, including the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework, occupies the most space of the theory chapter. However, as Houlihan and Green (2005) concluded, it is a demanding and often difficult task to select an appropriate framework for the analysis of public policy. Nevertheless, based on a large-scale review of the existing literature, the multiple streams framework is assumed to be more relevant to the UK context while for China, in the absence of applications of major meso-level policy theories in sport policy area, the policy community approach, which can incorporate the *guanxi* networks in China, is deemed to be the most promising among all the existing meso-level frameworks. However, it will be interesting to see if the multiple streams framework can explain elite sport policy process in China. In addition to the analytical function of these two frameworks, the applicability of the multiple streams to the UK and China and the policy community framework to sport policy making in China will be examined through the three case studies.

To better understand how elite sport policy is made and implemented in the two countries, especially in relation to artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling,

globalisation theory, policy implementation theory and policy learning and transfer theory are also utilised.

Chapter Three:

The Policy Contexts of Elite Sport Development in China and the UK

3.1 Introduction

The two sections below focus on the policy contexts in China and the UK respectively. Although the thesis focuses on three sports, it is necessary to introduce the general context in which the three sports lie in China and the UK. Moreover, there are many policy approaches that do not vary according to sports and many sport-specific approaches are reflections, or based on general approaches.

Several phases of policy are identified on the basis of the political features found in these two countries. Each period follows the same structure comprising four significant components: political context, organisational structure, financial support and Olympic performance. The only exception is the discussion of the Cultural Revolution period of 1966-1976.

3.2 The Context of Elite Sport Development in China

3.2.1 Introduction

Despite China's recent rise as a superpower at the Olympic Games, its formal re-engagement with the Olympic Games did not start until the early 1980s. However, it does not necessarily downgrade China's long-standing relationship with sport and its age-old sports tradition. Traditional sports such as dragon boat racing, cuju (the ancient football) and martial arts have more than thousand years of history. However, as Xu (2008) pointed out, China, with a long tradition of neo-Confucianism and emphasis on intellectual activity, did not have a strong sporting culture before the 20th century. As Hong and Tan (2002, p. 189) observed, 'modern sport in China is not an indigenous product. It was a foreign import and developed in a hot-house of modernisation at the beginning of the 20th century, during which feudalism collapsed

and Western thoughts and products poured into China. In Los Angeles 1932, Liu Changchun, became the first Chinese ever to participate in the Olympic Games.

The establishment of the People's Republic of China was a significant watershed in China. In brief, as Hong (2008, p. 27) argued, China's elite sport system 'began in the 1950s, developed in the 1960s and 1970s and matured with its own character in the 1980s'. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is the focal point of this research and hence the following discussion of China narrows the focus to the period between 1949 and 2012. The period of 1949-1966 was the beginning of the elite sport system in China during which the Soviet model was adopted and applied. Generally speaking, the 'Ten Years of Chaos' of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) had a very damaging effect on sport development in China and elite sport reached a nadir. The end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and the start of the economic reformation and the 'open-door' policy in 1978 were significant milestones in Chinese history. Sport in general and elite sport in particular were beneficiaries of these political changes. Therefore, the period since 1976 is identified as the third period of elite sport development in China and it is also the period in which China's Olympic success is the most evident. In summary, the following discussion regarding the policy context in China will follow the division of three distinctive periods: 1949-1966, 1966-1976 and 1976-2012.

3.2.2 1949-1966

(1) Political context

According to Cao and Brownell (1996) and GAS (2009b), the period between 1949 and 1966 can be further divided into two phases: 1949-1958 (establishing the foundation) and 1958-1966 (two high tides, one low valley).

- 1949-1958

On October 1 1949, the PRC was established. As a consequence of the government's concern for the health of the nation, 'national representation and identity' (Hong, 2008, p. 28), international prestige and the superiority of

Communism (Hong, 1998), sport became an important governmental consideration. There were dual priorities in the development of sport in the 1950s: mass sport and elite sport. The significance of mass sport was best demonstrated in the landmark slogan by Chairman Ma Zedong in 1952: 'Develop physical culture and sports, strengthen the people's physiques' (quoted in Dai, Shao & Bao, 2011, p. 107). In the 1950s, six institutes and eleven schools of physical culture were established and thirty-eight high-level normal colleges reopened their Physical Education departments (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013). Moreover, greatly inspired by the Soviet Union, sport also served national defence.

Elite sport was equally important during the same period. The People's Republic of China's debut at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952 made the government realise that sport could be used as an effective vehicle serving political and diplomatic purposes (Interviewee G, 03 June 2013). Against this background, State Sports Commission (hereafter the Sports Ministry) was created by the Government Administrative Council in November 1952, which became responsible for physical culture work in China (Hong & Lu, 2012a). Vice-Premier He Long was appointed as the chairman of the Sports Commission. Following He Long's instructions, a complete top-down system of physical culture organisations was soon established, 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 & Brownell, 1996, p. 70). In 1956, *The Competitive Sports System of the PRC* was officially published by the Sports Ministry. It was a landmark elite sport-related document that 'laid the foundations for a competitive sports system in China' (Hong, 2008, p. 28). In the document, 43 competitive sports were recognised, rules and regulations were established, full-time sports teams were organised at both national and provincial levels and they were provided with sufficient competition opportunities. In the same year, the Sports Ministry issued *The Regulations for Youth Spare-Time Sports Schools*. In so doing, the Soviet Union's spare-school sports school model was adopted and disseminated in China. Spare-time sports schools still play an essential role in China's sporting success on the global stage, acting as the first rung on the talent development ladder. In brief, during this period, the Sovietisation of sport was a key feature (Hong & Lu, 2012h; Fan, Hong & Lu, 2010). It is noteworthy

that this Sovietised system provided men and women with equal sports opportunities, which laid the foundations for the later success of Chinese sportswomen (Brownell, 2005).

-1958-1966

The period 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') and 'economic difficulties' (the Three Hard Years as a consequence of both the deterioration in the Sino-Soviet relations and natural calamities from 1959 to 1961). Mass sport suffered greatly during the series of political movements noted above, first unrealistic and 'premature' (Cao & Brownell, 1996, p. 72) policies and ambitions in the GLF during which enormous resources were wasted, and then the three-year period of difficulties.

By comparison, elite sport suffered much less, or rather, was even further developed during this period. First, the previous policies of 'preparing for labour and defence' and 'to popularise and to practice regularly' were replaced by a new policy in 1959 designed 'to popularise and to improve', which mentioned the significance of improving the level of competitive sport (Lin, 2006). In 1959, the First National Games brought elite sport in China to a new high. 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.

Until the end of the 1950s, as Wu (1999, pp. 102-106) argued, Chinese sport followed the 'two legs walking system', in which elite and mass sport were developed simultaneously. However, the Great Leap Forward and the Three Hard Years resulted in a change to the sports direction. The Sports Ministry increasingly emphasised elite sport by using limited resources to raise the standards of competitive sport and to produce world-class athletes (Hong & Lu, 2012b). In 1963, a landmark policy document, *Regulations for Outstanding Athletes and Teams*, was published by the Sports Ministry. According to the regulations, each province was required to establish a youth talent search and identification system to support elite

development (Hong, 2011). Meanwhile, ten³ out of the previous 43 sports were selected as the preferred sports, in which the government decided to invest 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). In summary, the period 1961-1966 was the consolidation of the elite sport system in China (Hong, 2011).

(2) Organisational structure and financial support

According to Hong (2008), 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 3.1). This centralised model was largely the outcome of the transfer of the Soviet model, most evident in the establishment of the Sports Ministry the concept of which was borrowed from the State Sports Ministry in Soviet Union and the hierarchical structure from central government to provincial, city and county levels (Dai, 2009). It is worth noting that the system below was largely stable, covering the period 1952-1996.

³ These ten sports were: athletics, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, table tennis, football, weightlifting, swimming, skating and shooting (Hong, 2011).

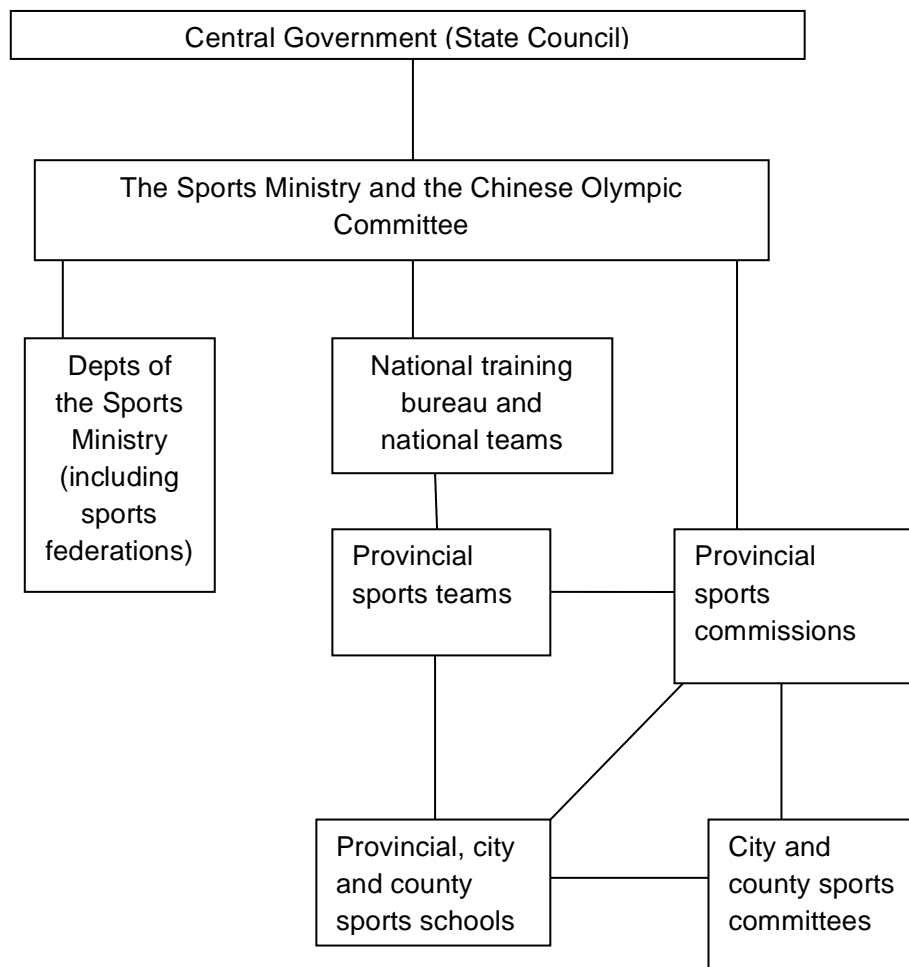


Figure 3.1: China's sporting administrative structure: 1952-1996

Source: Hong (2008, p. 37).

During the period between 1949 and 1966, the vast majority of the funds sport received was from the government budget. However, the figures are not available due to the lack of publicly available financial data.

(3) Olympic performance

The PRC made its Olympic debut in Helsinki 1952, but the athletes' performance was not noteworthy. Primarily because of the Taiwan Question, China was absent from the Olympic Games during the period 1956-1980 (Yang, 2012b).

Being isolated from the Olympic Games did not discourage Chinese athletes. During the 1950s, Chinese athletes achieved a series of world-class performance and broke

world records in weightlifting, athletics and swimming. The highlight was Rong Guotuan's gold medal in the 1959 World Table Tennis Championships, which was the PRC's first world champion.

3.2.3 1966-1976

The following discussion of the period 1966-1976 will not follow the division of political context, organisational structure, financial support and Olympic performance, as this period was special from a political perspective in China and there was not much development in elite sport.

As Johnson (1973, p. 93, quoted in Hong, 2008, p. 30) 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 respected, while the elite group, ranging from science to sport, was severely criticised and often physically threatened or assaulted. Sport suffered much in the late 1960s in particular. In 1968, the 'May 12th Order' suspended almost every sports activity in China (Dai, Shao & Bao, 2011; Hong & Lu, 2012c). The Sports Minister, 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 a victim of the ceaseless and widespread violence. Schools were closed and teachers were persecuted.

However, as Hong (1999) pointed out, the Cultural Revolution was 'not all bad' for sport and 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 positive developments. As Wu (1999, quoted in Hong & Xiong, 2002, p. 335) outlined, Chinese government realised the inseparable relation between sport and politics and athletes acted as sports ambassadors.

3.2.4 1976-2012

The end of the Cultural Revolution marked a new era for China. With regard to sport, elite sport became the unparalleled priority. As Wu (1999, quoted in Hong, 2011, p. 405) argued, 'to raise the flag at the Olympics is our major responsibility'. What underpinned China's unprecedented sporting success were the 'whole country support for the elite sport system' and the *Olympic Strategy* (Hong, 2008).

The following discussion is further divided into three periods: 1976-1988, 1988-2001 and 2001-2012. China's poor performance in Seoul 1988 was a 'wake-up' call for Chinese elite sport, the reflection on which laid the foundations for China's subsequent gradual progress and rise on the Olympic stage. The significance of 2001 is beyond compare, as it was in 2001 that Beijing was awarded the right to host China's first ever Olympic Games.

(1) 1976-1988

- Political context

The profound change 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 great implications for sport. As Hong, Wu and Xiong (2005, p. 513) argued, 'sport played an important part in stimulating the nation's enthusiasm and motivating people to modernity'. In general, the salience of sport was greatly raised and elite sport, in particular, ushered in a golden opportunity for development. As Xu (2008, p. 207) argued, 'since the 1980s, as the Chinese have gained confidence in themselves, nothing better symbolises the drive to achieve greater prestige than sports'.

In late 1979, the IOC passed the *Nagoya Resolution* and the PRC's seat in the IOC was reinstated after a 21-year absence (Hong & Lu, 2012d). A series of successes by Chinese athletes at major sporting events greatly inspired the government. 'Develop elite sport and make China a superpower in the world' became a slogan and pursuit for the Chinese (Hong, 2008).

As early as in 1980, the then Sports Minister, Wang Meng (Wang, 1982) pointed out the significant relationship between sport and economy and the particular importance of elite sport, stressing the significance of elite sport in raising China's global image. Consequently, elite sport received a profile inside the planned economy and administrative system and the government decided to concentrate its limited resources on the medal-winning sports (Rong, 1987).

Right after the success in Los Angeles, 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, 2009b, p. 35). In the 1980s, following the strategy of 'shortening the battle line and emphasising the focus' (Liang, Bao & Zhang, 2006, p. 55), five criteria were established in identifying target sports: 'small, fast, women, water and agile' (Interviewee C, 15 May 2013).

The landmark *Olympic Strategy* was issued in 1985 (Hong, 2008). In this document, elite sport was established as the priority both in the short term and long term (Hong, 2011). As Hong (2008) noted, the *Olympic Strategy* was the blueprint for Chinese sport in the 1980s and 1990s. This Olympic-oriented strategy was consolidated and further developed in the following three decades.

In 1986, the State Physical Education and Sports Ministry 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 (Hong, 2011). Amongst the nine objectives, six were directly associated with elite sport. They were:

- Establishing a scientific training system;
- Improving the sports competition system;
- Enhancing and promoting Chinese traditional indigenous sports;
- Developing sports scientific research gradually;
- Establishing a sports prize-winning system;
- Developing a flexible and open policy to international sport (Jarvie, Hwang & Brennan, 2008).

- Organisational structure and financial support.

In general, the sports organisational structure in China during the late 1970s and the 1980s was the same as the previous pattern (see Figure 3.1) except for some personnel changes.

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 3.1 below). It is noteworthy that 80% of the sports budget was distributed to elite sport, as required by the *Olympic Strategy* (Hong, 2008).

Table 3.1: Chinese sports budget: 1981-1990 (Unit: yuan, in the 1990s, 1 dollar was equivalent to approximately 5 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: Hong (2008, p. 39).

- Olympic performance

China boycotted the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympic Games because of Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. After a 32-year absence, Chinese athletes participated in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, in which Chinese athletes won 15 gold medals and finished fourth in the gold medal table (see Table 3.2). However, when the Soviet Union and East Germany returned to the stage in Seoul 1988, China's gold medals shrank to five and the country came only 11th in the gold medal table.

Table 3.2: China's medal tally and position in the medals table in Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Los Angeles 1984	15	8	9	32	4	6
Seoul 1988	5	11	12	28	11	7

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011b).

In terms of the Winter Olympic Games, China made its debut at the 1980 Lake Placid Winter Olympic Games. However, Chinese athletes did not win any medals between Lake Placid 1980 and Calgary 1988.

(2) 1988-2001

- Political context

China's performance in Seoul 1988 was a big disappointment. The poor performance in Seoul was a 'wake-up call' for China, bringing about a series of government actions aiming to strengthening China's competitiveness on the Olympic stage. First, at the end of 1988, Wu Shaozu was appointed as the new minister at the Sports Ministry. It was during Wu Shaozu's twelve-year tenure (1988-2000) that China established and consolidated its position as a member of the leading group on the Olympic stage. 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 (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 themed the 'Sport in World Nations' was held in 1989, involving detailed analysis of the top three sports nations (Soviet Union, the USA and East Germany) and two top

Asian sports nations (Japan and South Korea). Furthermore, China started to realise the significance of, and hence gave emphasis to, science in sporting success (China.com.cn, 2012a). As Hong (2008, p. 42) concluded, 'since the late 1980s the emphasis has been moved towards advanced scientific training methods ...'. Last, as outlined by Theodoraki (2004, p. 201), China started to develop specialisation in the 'medal intensive sports'.

In 1989, Jiang Zemin became the new Chairman of China. The change in the leadership did not influence the continuity of the government's sports policy. In 1992, the government decided to officially adopt a market economy in the 14th National Communist Party Congress. This decision exerted great influence on Chinese sport with major sports such as football, basketball and table tennis becoming professionalised and commercialised in the following years. However, it is noteworthy that it was impossible for most sports except for football, basketball and table tennis to become self-supporting (Hong, 2008).

China's recovery in Barcelona 1992 strengthened 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 & Xiong, 2005, p. 514) resulted in the issuing of the *National Fitness Programme* by the government, aiming to promoting people's sports participation and strengthening people's physical health (GAS, 2009b). As GAS (2009b) argued, the publication of the *National Fitness Programme* raised mass sport to a new level in China. In relation to elite sport, the first *Olympic Glory Programme* was issued by the Sports Ministry. This heightened the salience of Olympic success within the government. Last but by no means least,

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. This was a milestone in Chinese sport in that it further consolidated the position of sport as a government responsibility.

China's 'stagnant' performance in Atlanta 1996 was not accepted by key leaders (Hong, 2008). In 1998, the Sports Ministry was renamed the 'General Administration of Sport' (GAS) and a series of Olympic-oriented reorganisations were initiated. The size of GAS was reduced. However, GAS is still subordinate to the State Council and plays a concurrent role as the Chinese Olympic Committee. In fact, Hong (2011) pointed out that the restructure was 'both symbolic and pragmatic'.

China's unprecedented success in Sydney was under the tenure of a new Sports Minister - Yuan Weimin, who was appointed in early 2000. If the predecessor Wu Shaozu helped China recover from the failure in Seoul 1988, then it was during Yuan Weimin's tenure (2000-2004) that China developed into a sporting superpower. After the success in Sydney 2000, the term 'the whole country support for the elite sport system' 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 major sports events. The rationale, according to Hong and Lu (2012g, p. 145) 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'. The disappointment in the 1993 Olympic Bid did not discourage Beijing and finally Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001.

- Organisational structure

The lack of progress in Atlanta 1996 prompted the government to reform the existing organisational structure. In 1998, the Sports Ministry was renamed the General Administration of Sport of China. The size of GAS was reduced from 20 departments to 9 departments. Although the reorganisation blended some characteristics of market economy and decentralisation, the intrinsic 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 (Hong & Lu, 2012e; Pan, 2012). Figure 3.2 shows the reformed organisational structure, which is still currently in use.

It is also noteworthy that there was significant improvement in terms of anti-doping in China during this period. In November 1990, the National anti-doping Committee was established by the State Council. In January 1995, *Regulations of Anti-doping by Force* were issued. According to Hong and Lu (2012f, p. 135), '695 rehabilitation centres were set up by 1997 and 650,000 sport drug users had been sent for rehabilitation by police'.

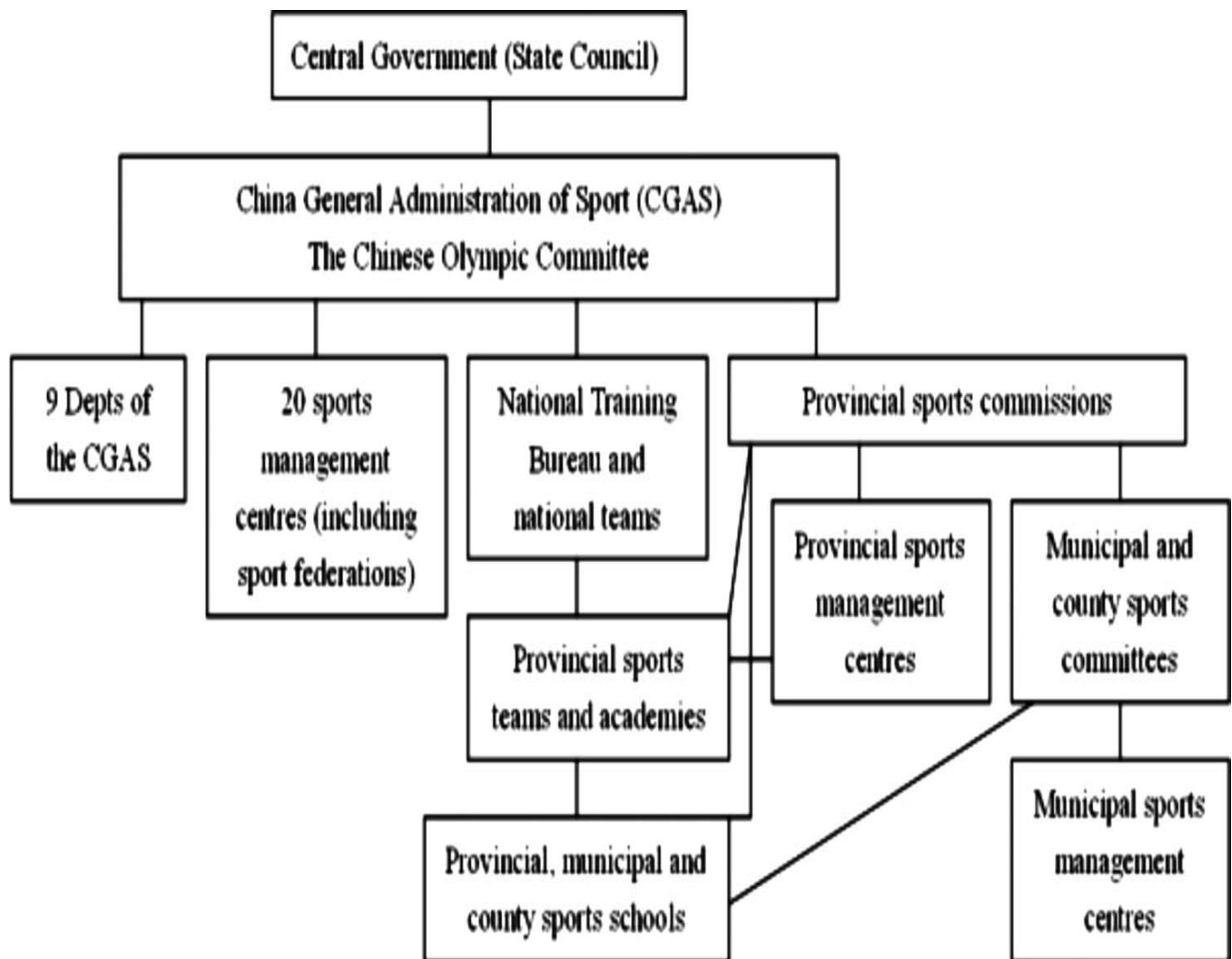


Figure 3.2: China's sporting administrative structure: 1998-2012

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

- Financial support

First, there was a dramatic increase in sports budget after the poor performance in Seoul 1988. As noted earlier, the total sports budget for the Barcelona Olympiad tripled in comparison to that for the Seoul Olympiad (see Table 3.3). 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) discovered, '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 60 per cent of the lottery money was granted to mass sport while 40 per cent was allocated to elite sport.

Table 3.3: Chinese sports budget: 1991-2001 (Unit: yuan, in the 1990s, 1 dollar was equivalent to approximately 5 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).

- Olympic performance

As mentioned above, Sydney 2000 witnessed China's breakthrough as China outperformed the traditional superpower Germany by a big margin (28 gold medals vs. 13 gold medals) and came third in the gold medal table (see Table 3.4). During the period 1992-2000, China started to establish its dominance in table tennis, diving and women's weightlifting.

Table 3.4: China's medal tally and position in the medals table between Barcelona 1992 and Sydney 2000

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Barcelona 1992	16	22	16	54	4	4
Atlanta 1996	16	22	12	50	4	4
Sydney 2000	28	16	14	58	3	3

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011b).

Chinese winter sports finally made a breakthrough in Albertville 1992. Ye Qiaobo won China's first Winter Olympic medal (a silver medal) in speed skating. In the following two Games in Lillehammer (1994) and Nagano (1998), Chinese athletes kept winning medals but failed to win a gold medal (See Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: China's medal tally and position in the medals table at the Winter Olympic Games between Albertville 1992 and Nagano 1998

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Albertville 1992	0	3	0	3	15	15
Lillehammer 1994	0	1	2	3	18	16
Nagano 1998	0	6	2	8	16	12

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011b).

(3) 2001-2012

- Political context

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 a key policy concern for the Chinese government. Later in the same year of 2001, another 'milestone' in Chinese history took place (Prime, 2006). China officially entered the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which has, inevitably, accelerated China's pace of globalisation (Chow, 2001).

Hu Jintao became the leader of China at the beginning of the 21st century and presided over a decade of consistent economic growth (Morrison, 2012). China has become a major global economic power. In addition to economic competitiveness, China was emerging as a major world diplomatic power. Sport, in particular elite sport success, has gained more diplomatic weight as it provides the government with a great platform to showcase its soft power and ideological superiority (Hong, 2008). Economic growth has also benefited elite sport development by providing Olympic sports with increased finance.

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 (Hong, 2008; GAS, 2009b). Accordingly, GAS issued two internal documents: *The Outline Strategy for Winning Olympic Medals 2001-2010* and *the Strategic Plan for Winning Olympic Medals in 2008*, the key features of both were the emphasis given to Olympic medal success. As Lombardi (2008, quoted in Xu, 2008, p. 225) outlined, 'winning is not everything; it is the only thing'.

Athens 2004 was a test bed for China's preparation for the 2008 Olympic Games. In Athens, China's performance 'stole the limelight' (Hong, Wu & Xiong, 2005, p. 510). China finally dominated in the medals table in Beijing 2008, confirming its status as 'a sports superpower' (Hong, 2011, p. 405). As stressed previously, the 'whole country support for the elite sport system' is widely considered as the key factor of

China's Olympic success. The system did not fade away after the Beijing Olympics. As Fan, Hong and Lu (2010) noted, the significance of continuing the system was stressed by Liu Peng, the Sports Minister and later at the National Sports Congress in 2009, this continuity was confirmed by Chairman Hu Jintao. In London 2012 China defended and expanded the achievements gained in Athens and came second in the medal tables, without the home advantage. It is predicted that this system will be kept for the preparation for Rio de Janeiro 2016.

There have been notable improvements regarding mass sport. In general, mass sport is governed by the strategic plan - *the National Fitness Programme* issued in 1995, but also accompanied by some later developments sparked and promoted by seizing the opportunity of the hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games. Key developments included the establishment of August 8 as the National Fitness Day in 2009 and the issue of *National Fitness Regulations* on August 30 by Premier Wen Jiabao (GAS, 2009b).

- Organisational structure

The basic administrative structure for elite sport remained stable during the period 2001-2012. Currently, Olympic sports are divided into fifteen Summer Olympic Sport Management Centres and one Winter Olympic Sport Management Centre to which Sport Associations belong (see Appendix 4). The boundary between management centres and associations is blurred, although associations are defined as social organisations (Liu & Zhang, 2008). Most National Sports Associations are 'nominal' (Li, 2008, p. 3). Li (2011) and Li and Zhou (2012, p. 31) defined this phenomenon as 'the co-structure of management centres and associations'.

- Financial support

In general, there are three main sources of sports funds: government sports budget, commercial money and lottery funding (see Figure 3.3).

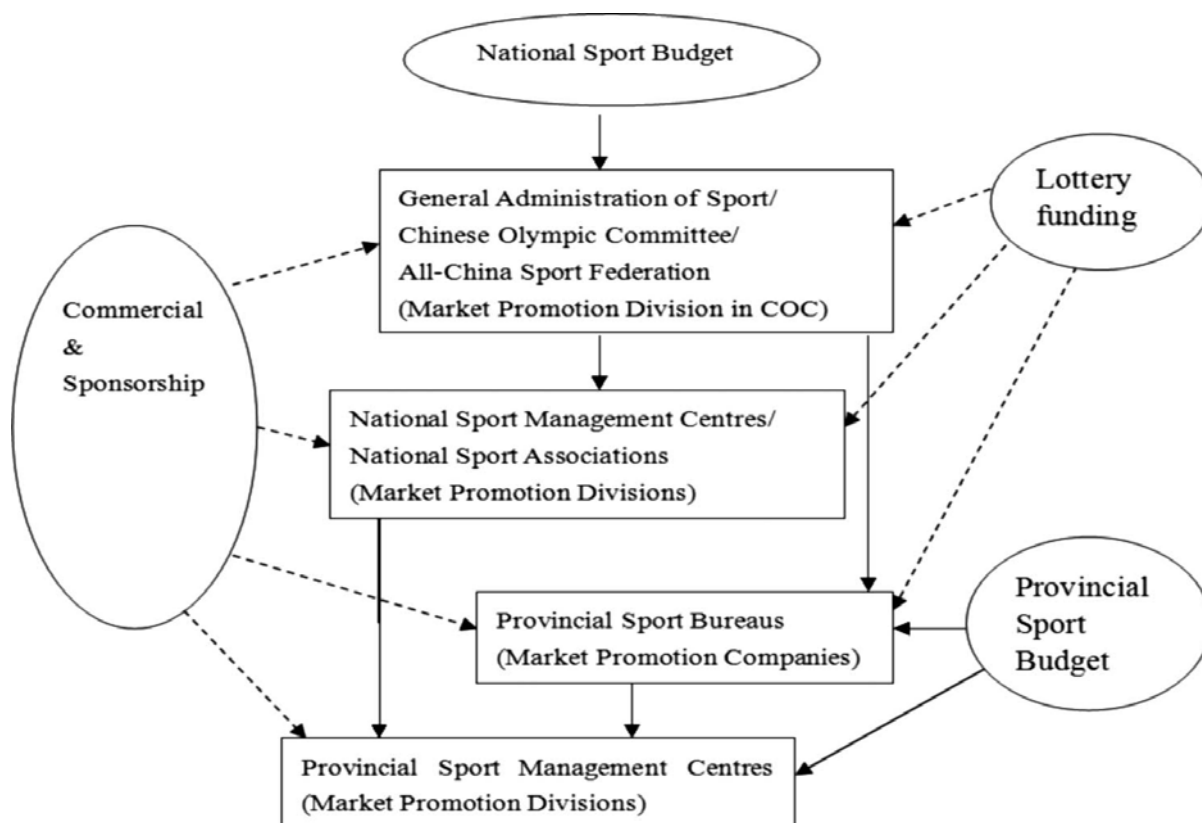


Figure 3.3: Sources of income for the Chinese sport system

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

When the focus is narrowed to elite sport, the government (both national and provincial) remains the largest financial contributor, although the proportions from the commercial sector and the lottery have both increased. Figure 3.4 gives more details, which shows that there was a sharp increase in the sports budget of local governments during the period 2001-2006. In comparison, the increase in central government's sports budget was relatively steady compared to that before 2001 and remained stable during the period 2001-2006. The total sports budget in 2006 was approximately 22 billion yuan, more than four times greater than in 2000. Table 3.6 shows the budget of GAS from 2007 to 2013, which narrows the focus to funding at the central government level. Data prior to 2007 are not accessible.

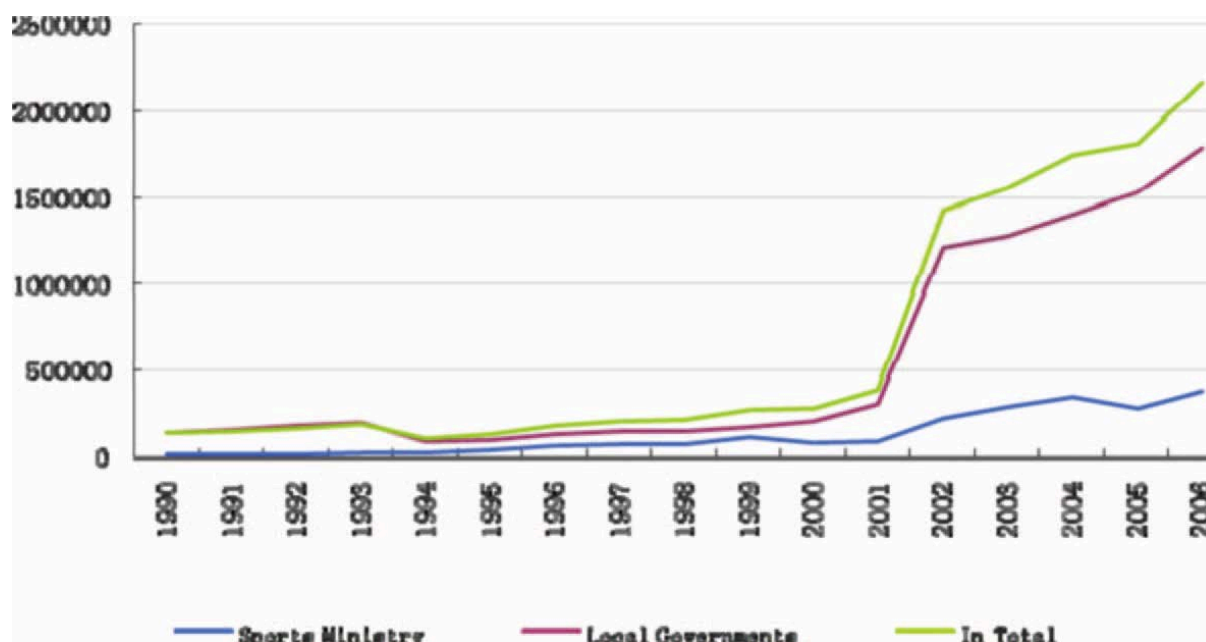


Figure 3.4: Chinese sports budget (central government and local governments): 1990-2006 (Unit: 10,000 yuan)

Source: Hong and Lu (2012e, p. 114).

Table 3.6: 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

Sources: The Economic Department of GAS (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; 2013e).

- Olympic performance

In Athens, China outperformed Russia and came second in the gold medal table and made a breakthrough in some Western ‘fortress’ sports such as canoeing, tennis and track and field. China truly became a sports superpower in 2008 by winning 51 gold medals, overtaking the USA and topping the gold medal table (see Table 3.7). In Beijing, China took full advantage of its host status, realising historic breakthroughs

in boxing, rowing, sailing, archery and trampoline. At the most recent London Olympics, China still had impressive performance, coming second in the medals table.

Table 3.7: China's medal tally and position in the medals table between Athens 2004 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Athens 2004	32	17	14	63	2	3
Beijing 2008	51	21	28	100	1	2
London 2012	38	27	23	88	2	2

Sources: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011b); London 2012 (2012).

Salk Lake City 2002 was a milestone for Chinese winter sport. Yang Yang won China's first gold medal at the Winter Olympic Games in short track speed skating. The success in 2002 was followed by two gold medals in Torino 2006 and five in Vancouver 2010 (see Table 3.8). Short track speed skating was the largest contributor to Chinese Winter Olympic success.

Table 3.8: China's medal tally and position in the medals table between Salt Lake City 2002 and Vancouver 2010

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Salt Lake City 2002	2	2	4	8	13	11
Torino 2006	2	4	5	11	14	11
Vancouver 2010	5	2	4	11	8	9

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011b).

3.3 The Context of Elite Sport Development in the UK

3.3.1 Introduction

Sport has long played a significant role in British society. The UK⁴ is the originator of many contemporary sports including football, tennis, badminton, boxing, hockey, cricket and curling, many of which are Olympic sports. The UK has a close relationship with the Olympic Games. As Gallagher (2011, p. 264) described, 'Britain's participation in, and support of, the Olympic and Paralympic Games has been second to none for over a hundred years'. It is one of the only four countries which have never been absent from the Games since Athens 1896 (both the Summer and the Winter Olympic Games) and London hosted the 1908, 1948 and the 2012 Summer Olympic Games.

The following discussion concerning the policy context in the UK is divided into four phases: 1965-1990, 1990-1997, 1997-2005 and 2005-2012. As Jefferys (2012, p. 195) characterised, in the UK, 'the fortunes of government policy towards sport fluctuated after 1945 in line with the attitude of individual prime ministers'. Sport did

⁴ Kumar (2006, p. 429) acknowledged that the Scots, Welsh and Irish have always been more sensitive to their own individual identities and less willing to accept 'a common Britishness'. In sports events such as the Commonwealth Games and the FIFA World Cup, the four home nations compete as separate teams.

not become a government responsibility until the mid-1960s (McDonald, 2011). However, before the 1990s, especially under Margaret Thatcher's tenure, sport in general and elite sport in particular was, only a 'lightweight' (Major, 1999, p. 404) government responsibility and government support for sport was unsystematic. The appointment of John Major as Prime Minister in the early 1990s was widely accepted as a key turning point in the history of sport in the UK (Green, 2004a; Green & Houlihan, 2004; Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). The salience of sport has been greatly raised in the cabinet and a lot of government-led measures were taken. The rationale to make the year 1997 distinct is that it was in this year that Tony Blair's New Labour government took office in the Downing Street. Unquestionably, London's success in bidding for 2012 Summer Olympic Games in Singapore in 2005 signalled a new period for elite sport in the UK.

3.3.2 1965-1990

(1) Political context

It was not until the 1960s that sport was considered as a legitimate governmental responsibility. Prior to the 1960s, both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party had been reluctant to get involved in sports issues. The establishment of the Advisory Sports Council in 1965 by Harold Wilson's Labour government showed its interest in sport but also its reluctance to get too heavily involved. In brief, the social and diplomatic functions of sport made it a more significant function of government in the 1960s (Hargreaves, 1985; Henry, 2013; Houlihan & White, 2002).

The 1970s was a period when the Conservative Party and the Labour Party in turn governed the UK. In 1972, the Advisory Sports Council was restructured and renamed GB Sports Council. GB Sports Council was granted executive powers through a Royal Charter and became the main organisation concerned with sport in the UK. In 1975, the publication of the White Paper, *Sport and Recreation* (Department of the Environment, DOE, 1975) officially confirmed the significance of sport in the welfare state (Houlihan, 1997). In the White Paper, sport and leisure facilities were defined as 'part of the general fabric of the social services' (Coalter, 2007, p. 10), a tool to improve 'social order', to enhance 'international prestige' and

to strengthen 'individual wellbeing' (DOE, 1975). 'Sport for All' was the dominant campaign in the 1970s and there was little tension between elite sport and mass sport.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister and her strong ideological commitment to 'privatisation' and preference for market solutions had significant consequences for sport. With the growth of neo-liberal ideology, the government tried to reduce its role in the provision of public services including sport through the adoption of market approaches. The introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) was one major element in Margaret Thatcher's 'privatisation' strategy. CCT provided private contractors with the opportunity to run public sport and recreational facilities. Public sector managers were forced to adopt market-led management (GB Sports Council, 1993a).

However, Margaret Thatcher's government was forced to be engaged with one sport issue in the mid-1980s, namely football hooliganism. Moreover, the diplomatic significance of sport was also exploited by the government and Margaret Thatcher government was willing to 'use sport as a weapon in international relations' by putting pressure on the BOA to boycott the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games (Houlihan, 1991, p. 29). The net effect of government policy was that the significance of 'Sport for All' as a policy objective was downgraded in the 1980s. Instead, sport was given greater prominence in tackling social unrest and elite sport began to be promoted because of 'its potential contribution to international prestige and broader foreign policy goals' (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013, p. 27). Generally speaking, Margaret Thatcher's attitude towards sport was cavalier (Jefferys, 2012). Pickup (1996) revealed that oftentimes, the government ignored GB Sports Council's initiatives and reports.

(2) Organisational structure

The GB Sports Council, with substantial executive responsibilities, played an influential role in sport in the UK between the 1970s and 1990s. It was the bridge between the Department of the Environment (DOE) and governing bodies. At central government level, it was the DOE, in which the Minister for Sport was located that

was the most influential governmental department in relation to sport. It is noteworthy that functions of the DOE were limited mainly to determining the grant to the Sports Council and to establishing the policy framework for the sport and leisure service (Houlihan, 1991).

(3) Financial support

According to Houlihan (1997), in the late 1980s, there were two sources of funding for sport in general, namely direct public subsidy and state-supported commercial money. Direct public subsidy was provided through the grants distributed to the Sports Council and the funding for local authorities. As can be seen from Table 3.9, the GB Sports Council continuously received funding from the government, and there was a steady increase in the organisation's grant.

Table 3.9: Grants to the GB Sports Council, received by the government between 1972-1973 and 1988-1989

Year	Grant
1972-1973	£3,600,000
1976-1977	£10,200,000
1980-1981	£19,310,000
1984-1985	£28,600,000
1988-1989	£38,410,000

Source: Houlihan (1997).

(4) Olympic performance

The UK's performance at the summer Olympic Games during the period 1964-1988 was generally stable with a position in the medal table between 5th and 13th (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: The UK's medal tally and position in the medals table at the Summer Olympic Games between Tokyo 1964 and Seoul 1988

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Tokyo 1964	4	12	2	18	10	9
Mexico City 1968	5	5	3	13	10	13
Munich 1972	4	5	9	18	12	10
Montreal 1976	3	5	5	13	13	11
Moscow 1980	5	7	9	21	9	7
Los Angeles 1984	5	11	21	37	11	5
Seoul 1988	5	10	9	24	12	9

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011a).

By contrast, the UK hardly had any market share at the Winter Olympic Games. Between Innsbruck 1964 and Calgary 1988, the UK could win at most one gold medal in each Games and often ended without any medals.

3.3.3 1990-1997

(1) Political context

According to Phillpots, Grix and Quarmby (2010), John Major's tenure from November 1990 signalled the beginning of a new period for sport development in the UK. Although in many aspects, John Major 'cemented much of the legacy of the Thatcher years' (Taylor, 2006), there were two significant differences which contributed to his distinctive sport policy. First, John Major was more sympathetic to the role of the state in providing public support for sport, even if only indirectly through the establishment of the National Lottery. Second, John Major advocated 'continuity, community and stability' (Kavanagh, 1994, p. 13). These personal values,

together with his passion for sport, made John Major an initiator and promoter for a more systematic and active approach to sport.

The document *Sport and Active Recreation* (Department of Education and Science, DES, 1991) was not much different from Margaret Thatcher's sport policy, but three significant changes took place after John Major's re-election in 1992: the creation of the Department for National Heritage (DNH) in 1992; the introduction of the National Lottery money in 1994; and the publication of the policy document *Sport: Raising the Game* (Department for National Heritage, DNH, 1995) in 1995. The changed attitude of society and government to sport was reflected most significantly in the introduction of the National Lottery (Houlihan & White, 1992). National Lottery funds have made a great contribution to the development of sport in general and elite sport in particular since it was introduced in 1994. However, the introduction of the Lottery did not result in a loss of influence by government but rather strengthened its influence on sport policy because of its ability to determine the criteria for the allocation of Lottery funds.

The landmark policy document *Sport: Raising the Game* indicated the withdrawal of central government and the GB Sports Council from the area of mass participation. Instead, elite sport and school sport became key themes. Elite sport was prioritised due to its contribution to 'national identity' (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013, p. 36) and international relations. Meantime, government showed great passion in supporting the bids to host international sports events. In spite of Manchester's unsuccessful bid for the summer Olympic Games in 2000, the Minister for Sport reiterated that attracting the Olympic Games to the UK was a key priority (Sproat, 1995c). Although London's successful bid for 2012 Olympic Games did not happen in John Major's tenure, it can be argued that the policies he introduced laid the foundations. School sport and youth sport was another major focus and one important rationale, as Houlihan and White (2002, pp. 67-68) argued, was that it could be integrated into elite sport development given its potential function in relation to talent identification and its significant role as a 'ladder of progression'. The publication of *Sport: Raising the Game* marked a new period for elite sport development in the UK not least because it strengthened government control over sport policy as grants to NGBs became 'conditional upon support for government objectives' (Green, 2004a, p. 372).

As Houlihan and White (2002, quoted in Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013, p. 30) observed, Major had influence on sport policy beyond his tenure.

(2) Organisational structure

The 1990s was a turbulent time for sports organisations in the UK. During this period, there were several significant organisational reforms derived from John Major's dissatisfaction with the existing fragmented and disharmonious organisational context (Roche, 1993). First, for a short period, the Department for Education and Skills (DES) was given responsibility for sport instead of the DOE. Immediately after John Major's re-election in 1992, the Department for National Heritage (DNH) was created, which brought together responsibility for sport as well as for the arts, broadcasting and tourism. As a result, sport received a higher profile within government and as Green (2009, p. 127) stated, sport policy, for the first time, was officially granted the status of 'a serious national government responsibility'. Although the government tried to avoid direct intervention in sport, the DNH 'exerted a high degree of control over its policy network' (Taylor, 1997, p. 465) by conditioning organisation's operations. Taylor (1997, p. 465) further suggested that there was an increasing 'hands-on' relationship between the government and sports organisations after the establishment of the Department for National Heritage.

The GB Sports Council underwent a period of marginalisation during John Major's tenure. As Pickup (1996, pp. 172-173) suggested, the 'unco-ordinated', 'inconsistent' and 'financially wasteful' organisational structure, in which the GB Sports Council played a key role, was seen as the culprit for the continuing poor elite performance (Oakley & Green, 2001a). Against this background, the reorganisation was conducted and the GB Sports Council was replaced by the UK Sports Council (commonly known as 'UK Sport', which is responsible for the high performance sport at the UK level) and the English Sports Council (known as 'Sport England' for promotional purposes) in 1997. It is noteworthy that the establishment of UK Sport was largely inspired by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) model (De Bosscher et al., 2008). According to Houlihan and White (2002, p. 78), this restructure reinforced 'the increasing priority of elite achievement'.

(3) Financial support

The scale of funding from the Foundation for Sports and Arts (FSA) (introduced in 1991) and Sportmatch scheme (launched in 1992) was limited and John Major's support for sport was characterised as 'rhetorical' (Holt & Tomlinson, 1994, p. 457; Talbot, 1995, p. 7). The accusation that John Major's support for sport was merely rhetorical disappeared when National Lottery money started to be distributed to sport in 1995. Since then, sport has received substantial funds from National Lottery grants and elite sport has been one of the largest beneficiaries.

The GB Sports Council continued to receive government grants during the period of John Major's premiership, despite the fact that it was increasingly marginalised and finally restructured. Table 3.11 shows that there was a steady rise in the government grants received by the GB Sports Council from 1990-1991 to 1994-1995. The GB Sports Council received its last grants from the government in 1996 and there was a slight decrease in the amount granted in 1996-1997.

Table 3.11: Grants to the GB Sports Council, received from the government between 1990-1991 and 1996-1997

Year	Grant
1990-1991	£42,600,000
1992-1993	£47,600,000
1994-1995	£49,800,000
1996-1997	£47,400,000

Source: Houlihan (1997).

Amongst the government grants the GB Sports Council received, a certain proportion was distributed to elite sport. Table 3.12 provides more details regarding funding for elite sport during the period 1990-1997. Generally speaking, the funds distributed to elite sport remained relatively stable during the period of John Major's premiership although they did increase steadily as a proportion of total Sport Council grant.

Table 3.12: Funding (estimates) for elite sport from the GB Sports Council between 1990-1991 and 1996-1997

Year	Amount	Proportion of total GB Sports Council grant allocated to elite sport
1990-1991	£16,623,751	39.02%
1991-1992	£15,776,352	-
1992-1993	£14,196,606	29.82%
1993-1994	£18,082,704	-
1994-1995	£19,960,115	40.08%
1995-1996	£21,837,597	-
1996-1997	£7,539,140	15.91%

Note: The proportion in 1996-1997 is much lower than the other years, largely because of the reorganisation of the GB Sports Council and the establishment of the UK Sport.

Source: Zheng (2011, pp. 174-175).

(4) Olympic performance

The UK's performance in Barcelona 1992 was basically a continuation of its relatively stable performance since Tokyo 1964. By contrast, the UK performed poorly in Atlanta 1996, with only one gold medal and a disappointing position of 36th in the gold medal table (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.13: The UK's medal tally and position in the medals table in Barcelona 1992 and Atlanta 1996

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Barcelona 1992	5	3	12	20	13	12
Atlanta 1996	1	8	6	15	36	19

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011a).

3.3.4 1997-2005

(1) Political context

In 1997, the 'New' Labour government was elected and was to remain its power for thirteen years. According to Finlayson (2003, p. 66), 'If there is one word that might capture the essence of Labour's social and political project then it is "modernisation"'. It was confirmed by Blair (1998) that social inclusion and the modernisation of government around the principles of partnership and decentralisation were the two most prominent policy objectives during his Prime Ministership. For Labour, sport played an increasingly important role in a range of non-sport issues such as welfare objectives, international relations, economic development and nation-building (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013).

With regard to sport policy, although generally there was continuity from John Major's Government to the Labour government, the latter's strategy for sport had some distinctive features. In brief, as characterised by Green and Houlihan (2005, p. 59), 'professionalism' and 'modernisation' were 'key vehicle for achieving welfare goals such as social inclusion and widening access for all'. Although welfare goals including social inclusion were a key policy concern and permeated across almost all public policy areas (Collins, Henry & Houlihan, 1999), their significance varied and in the case of sport, elite sport success took priority over welfare goals.

Another key feature of Tony Blair's policy, as Shaw (2004) argued, was an increasing tendency towards centralisation. Not only did the government tighten its control over UK Sport (and also Sport England), but also, as Houlihan and Lindsey (2013) argued, there was also a marked shift in terms of the nature of the relationship between government and voluntary sport organisations (NGBs and their affiliated clubs) from one based on a reasonable degree of trust to a contractual one.

Shortly after Tony Blair took office, the 'Best Value' initiative was introduced as a demonstration of the Labour Government's policy commitment to modernisation. 'Best Value' was a measure the aim of which was to modernise local government services, including sport and leisure services (Sport England, 1999a). The

introduction of the 'Best Value' also reflected one of the Labour's distinct philosophies – the so-called 'Third Way' (Giddens, 1998).

More substantial government actions were taken after 1999. First of all, the Sport England document, *Lottery Fund Strategy, 1999-2009* was published, which established the twin objectives of local projects for all and elite sport success (Sport England, 1999b). It also specified two key strands of financial support: Community Projects Fund (£150m) and World Class Fund (£50m). According to Green (2004a, p. 372), this was further confirmation of government support for elite sport development. The second action taken by the 'New' Labour Government was the development of the elite sports institute network. In 1999, the specialist elite network centres – the UK Sports Institute (UKSI) started to operate (Theodoraki, 1999), which were intended to concentrate the scarce coaching, medical, lifestyle and sport science resources required for elite sport success. Equally importantly, UK Sport became a distributor of Lottery funds in the same year. Following the recommendation of the *Elite Sports Funding Review* (DCMS, 2001a), a three-tier (Performance, Potential and Start) World Class Lottery Fund scheme was established, designed to make the investment for elite athletes more integrated, structured and efficient. As Green and Houlihan (2005, p. 59) outlined, the UK Sports Institute (UKSI) and National Lottery funding were 'two key elements underlying the UK's emergent elite sport development model'.

The policy statement *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000) was, to a large extent, consistent with the previous government's policy statement *Sport: Raising the Game*. The most significant implication was that while sport had secured a higher position within the government, it was viewed as a much more instrumental tool by the Labour government than by the previous Conservative government. Furthermore, *A Sporting Future for All* outlined the ambition to increase the number of Specialist Sports Colleges (SSCs). With government funding, approximately 400 Specialist Sports Colleges were established and one of their functions was to 'act as the first rung on the talent development ladder' (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 60). Another implication of this statement was that NGB funding has become dependent upon the performance targets. NGBs were required to produce planning documents (Green, 2004b). As a corollary, a results-driven and evidence-based approach to elite sport

development emerged and was strengthened after the publication of *Game Plan* (DCMS/Strategy Unit, 2002).

(2) Organisational structure

As a prelude to the modernisation of sport and leisure services, the Department for National Heritage (DNH) was renamed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 1997 and it remains responsible for sport-related issue in the UK at the government level. UK Sport and Sport England were the pivotal focus for the promotion of modernisation and professionalisation was a central theme.

UK Sport became the distributor of National Lottery funding from 1999. With regard to Sport England, it was required to adopt a 'more strategic' (DCMS, 2000, p. 20) and monitoring role instead of its previous delivery role. Moreover, a primary concern was to clarify the relationship between UK Sport and Sport England. The Quinquennial Review of Sport England and the 2004 report, *The Framework for Sport in England* (Sport England, 2004) further emphasised the need to transform Sport England into a modern organisation. Personnel change was considered by the government to be a vital part in the modernisation process.

(3) Financial support

Several changes in terms of the funding landscape for sport in the UK took place during Tony Blair's Premiership. First of all, as noted above, UK Sport became responsible for the allocation of National Lottery funds from 1999. Second, the *Lottery Fund Strategy* confirmed two key strands of funding – Community Projects Fund (£150m) and World Class Fund (£50m). The 2000 government policy document, *A Sporting Future for All*, closely associated NGB funds with performance targets. More importantly, the introduction of the three-tiered (Performance, Potential and Start) World Class Lottery Fund scheme was a significant step towards a more efficient and effective financial support system for elite athletes. In addition, there was extra funding distributed to coaching-related services.

According to Table 3.14 below, there was a sharp increase in the amount of funding for elite sport development since Tony Blair became the Prime Minister in comparison to that in John Major era (see Table 3.12). The funds distributed to elite sport during the Sydney Olympiad were basically stable, while the funding for elite sport in the Athens Olympiad fluctuated strongly. However, the total amounts between the two Olympiads were at the same level.

Table 3.14: Funding (estimates) for elite sport from UK Sport between 1997-1998 and 2004-2005

Year	Amount
1997-1998	£42,935,000
1998-1999	£42,935,000
1999-2000	£48,726,000
2000-2001	£37,144,000
Sydney Olympiad	£171,740,000
2001-2002	£70,856,000
2002-2003	£29,295,000
2003-2004	£18,618,000
2004-2005	£47,829,000
Athens Olympiad	£166,598,000

Source: Zheng (2011, pp. 176-177).

(4) Olympic performance

After the 'unusually poor Olympics' (McDonald, 2011, p. 371) in Atlanta 1996, the UK won 11 gold medals and returned to the 'top ten' in the medals table in Sydney 2000. The UK maintained its 'top ten' position in Athens 2004 and its performance in Athens 2004 was basically at the same level as Sydney 2000 (see Table 3.15).

Table 3.15: The UK's medal tally and position in the medals table in Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Sydney 2000	11	10	7	28	10	9
Athens 2004	9	9	12	30	10	10

Source: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011a).

When it comes to the Winter Olympic Games, the UK's performance in Nagano 1998 and Salt Lake 2002 was as in most previous post-war Winter Games, modest. The highlight happened in Salt Lake City when the UK won the gold medal in women's curling, which was the UK's first gold medal since Sarajevo 1984.

3.3.5 2005-2012

(1) Political context

There were three prime ministers from two parties in charge of the Downing Street during the period 2005-2012: Tony Blair's Labour Government between 2005 and 2007, Gordon Brown's Labour Government between 2007 and 2010 and David Cameron's coalition government from May 2010 onwards.

On 27 June, 2005, London was awarded the right to host the 2012 Summer Olympic Games by the IOC during the 117th IOC Session in Singapore. Since then, as McDonald (2011, p. 379) argued, high-performance sport has secured its 'hegemonic' position within the sports policy domain at the sacrifice of the development of other forms of sport.

London's victory in Singapore did not bring about any fundamental change in terms of the Labour Government's dominant policy objectives most notably modernisation

and social inclusion. In fact, hosting the Olympic Games was viewed by the then Labour Government as a tool serving a series of political considerations such as enhancing national pride, improving social inclusion and regenerating East London. What has changed is the increasingly significant role of elite sport and Olympic preparation. According to Houlihan and Lindsey (2013, p. 65), 'the decision made by the IOC in July 2005 to award the right to host the 2012 Olympic Games provided significant political legitimation for policy decisions taken over the previous decade to prioritise elite sport development'. Olympic success, including both the success of hosting the Games and medal success, has become the key policy concern. Against this background, several measures were taken by the Tony Blair government and his Labour successor Gordon Brown.

First, in 2005, sports organisational apparatus was restructured, which involved DCMS, UK Sport, Sport England, National Governing Bodies and the Youth Sport Trust. The details will be discussed in the organisational structure section. Second and equally importantly, the World Class Performance (WCP) programme, managed by UK Sport since 1997, began to play an increasingly important role in ensuring top-level athletes' success in London 2012 (UK Sport, 2012). There are three distinct levels within the programme based on the likelihood of and the lead time for medal winning at the Olympic Games (see Figure 3.5). The first level is called 'Podium', which supports those who are identified as having a real chance of winning a medal at the forthcoming Olympic Games (London 2012). These 'Podium' athletes are the most highly prioritised. In addition to the support from the NGB via the WCP programme, they can also obtain financial support from other channels. For instance, the Athlete Personal Award contributes a maximum of £26,142 to 'Podium' athletes per year (McDonald, 2011, p. 380). The second level is called 'Development' which targets athletes who are deemed to have a realistic chance of winning medals for the next cycle of the Olympic Games (Rio de Janeiro 2016). The third level is called the 'Talent Identification and Confirmation' and is aimed at those who may need another six year or more before achieving the 'Podium' level. It is worth noting that these three levels are not mutually exclusive. Many of the previous 'Development' athletes have successfully upgraded to the 'Podium' level before London 2012 (National Audit Office, NAO, 2008).

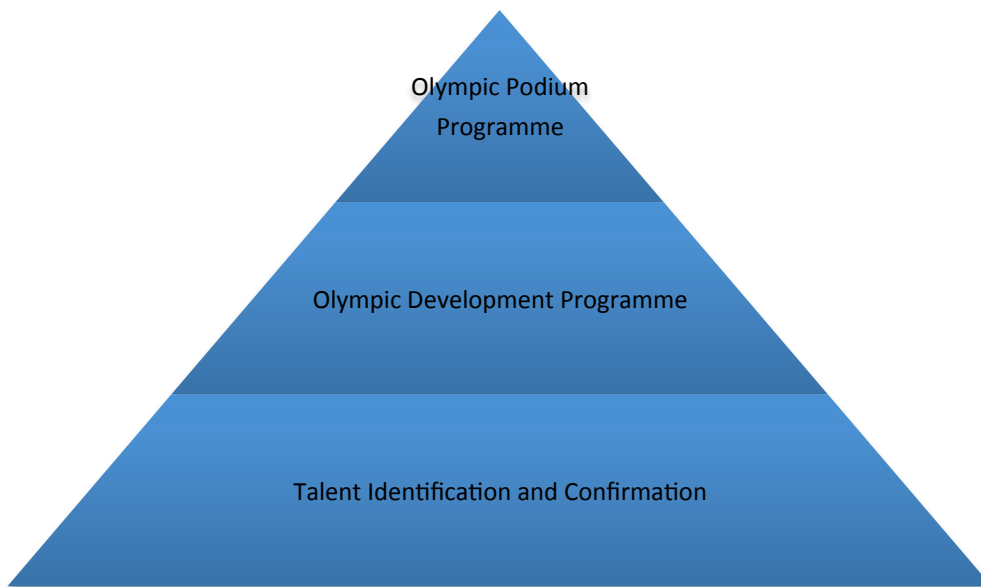


Figure 3.5: UK Sport's World Class Performance programme

Source: UK Sport (2012a).

The publication of *Playing to Win: A new era for sport* (DCMS, 2008) was the most significant sport document during the period of Gordon Brown's premiership. The government's instrumentalist view towards community sport did not change with community sport being viewed as a tool serving elite sport development and ensuring medal success in high-profile sports events in relation to talent identification and development (Houlihan & Lindsey, 2013). In contrast to community sport, the dominant position of elite sport was secured. The goal of breaking records, winning medals and tournaments for the country were clearly stated in the document.

The hegemonic position of elite sport was established and strengthened during Gordon Brown's tenure, which was vividly described by Burnham (2008) as 'sport is about winning and losing'. It was also reflected in UK Sport's 'No Compromise' investment strategy. 'No Compromise' is a 'ruthless' strategy and the dominant criterion of investment is how many medals one sport contributes to the UK Squad at the Olympic Games. NGBs that fail in meeting the medal targets at the Olympic Games will suffer cuts in the next Olympic cycle. However, before Gordon Brown put his manifesto of 'a golden decade of sport in Britain' (The Labour, 2010) into effect, the Labour Party was replaced by the coalition government in May 2010.

If there is one phrase that might capture the essence of the political project of David Cameron's coalition government then it is 'Big Society', an anti-state notion the idea of which is to weaken the role of government by promoting community and voluntary associations. Although the coalition government confirmed the significance of sport in *The Conservative Sports Manifesto* (Conservative Party, 2010), the notion of 'Big Society' has implications for the detailed approaches to sport development.

Based on the *Comprehensive Spending Review of October 2010*, the DCMS, authorities and quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations (quangos) including UK Sport and Sport England, suffered budget cuts. Furthermore, UK Sport and Sport England were required to merge in order to save money and to reduce the number of quangos. However, the coalition government compromised due to the London Olympic Games. There was protection in terms of the financial support for elite athletes preparing for the London Olympic Games. In fact, the current government was willing to continue heavy investment in elite sport. Moreover, the merger of UK Sport and Sport England was delayed and subsequently abandoned.

The most recent government sports strategy *Creating a sporting habit for life: A new youth sport strategy* (DCMS, 2012) is concerned with the issue of raising sports participation levels. Instead of focusing on all age groups, the new strategy targets the 14-25 age group, based on the assumption that a change in attitudes towards sport participation is a long-term project. This document, to some extent, indicated the coalition government's concern with regard to grass-roots sport. However, it is too soon to conclude whether this document will have a long-term impact or is rhetorical only.

(2) Organisational structure

In 2005 a further and more comprehensive sports organisational reform was launched by New Labour as a quick response to London's successful bid for the 2012 Olympic Games. UK Sport was the largest beneficiary as it took over the responsibility related to elite sport from Sport England. As a consequence, UK Sport became the primary agency responsible for elite sport development in the UK. NGBs also benefited from the reorganisation as they were empowered a more significant

responsibility especially in terms of implementing elite sport policy. In order to receive more funding, NGBs were required to submit detailed performance plans ('whole support plans') to UK Sport whereby they were to set medal targets and to have a 'accountable officer' responsible for financial accountability. With regard to non-elite sport areas, the Youth Sport Trust became responsible for school sport and physical education. By comparison, Sport England's role in relation to elite sport was largely marginalised and its remit was limited in what was termed 'community sport' associated with the legacy of the London Olympic Games (McDonald, 2011). As Green (2009, p. 131) concluded, 'there is just a hint of suspicion then that this restructuring had more to do with ensuring a successful Olympic Games for the country's elite athletes in 2012 than it had to do with organisational repair'.

(3) Financial support

There was a sharp increase in funding for elite sport for the Beijing Olympiad in comparison to the Athens Olympiad (see Table 3.14 and 3.16). Compared to the John Major government, the New Labour government was more willing to use taxpayer's money to achieve sport objectives especially those associated with the Olympics after London was awarded the right to host the 2012 Olympic Games. Table 3.16 shows that the annual expenditure of UK Sport on elite sport reached a record high in 2012-2013, exceeding £200 million.

It is noteworthy that there was a decrease in funding for elite sport from UK Sport from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 because of the cuts in relation to the National Lottery funds distributed to UK Sport (£109,615,000 vs. £34,755,000). This mirrored the coalition government's policy of cutting public expenditure given to quangos.

Table 3.16: Funding for elite sport from UK Sport between 2005-2006 and 2012-2013

Year	Amount
2005-2006	£110,958,000
2006-2007	£85,988,000
2007-2008	£83,415,000
2008-2009	£113,655,000
Beijing Olympiad	£394,016,000
2009-2010	£167,476,000
2010-2011	£90,586,000
2011-2012	£76,534,000
2012-2013	£203,787,000
London Olympiad	£538,383,000

Note: Formula: Grant-in-aid: (Grants and Other Operating Costs) + Lottery Funds: (Hard Commitments - Hard De-Commitments). Staff costs are not considered.

Sources: UK Sport (2012b; 2013b); Zheng (2011, p. 178).

(4) Olympic performance

The UK achieved a breakthrough in Beijing 2008 by winning 19 gold medals and finishing fourth position in the gold medal table (see Table 3.17). However, the UK's success in Beijing 2008 was just a prelude to its greater success in London 2012. In London, the host country won 29 gold medals and 65 medals in total, outstripping Russia and ranking 3rd in the gold medal table. This was the best medal performance by the UK since London 1908 and the highest position in the medal tables since Antwerp 1920. Water sports (including rowing, sailing, canoeing and swimming), cycling and athletics are the most reliable sources of medal success to Team GB.

Table 3.17: The UK's medal tally and position in the medals table in Beijing 2008 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Position in the Gold Medal Table	Position in the Total Medal Table
Beijing 2008	19	13	15	47	4	4
London 2012	29	17	19	65	3	4

Sources: International Olympic Committee (IOC) (2011a); London 2012 (2012).

By contrast, there was no breakthrough in terms of the UK's performance in the Winter Olympic Games during the same period. The UK won one silver medal in Torino 2006 and one gold medal in Vancouver 2010. Noticeably, both medals were from skeleton, which has become one of the UK's few, if not, only areas of advantage and the largest contributor of medals in the Winter Olympic Games.

3.4 Conclusions

Despite the differences regarding the time and extent, it is evident in both countries that elite sport is becoming a key policy concern. This is evidenced in a) increasing state involvement and interest in elite sport success; b) increased sport funding; c) the change in relationship between Olympic NGBs and the state (UK Sport) to a more contractual one; d) the use of performance measures in the UK; (e) increased separation between elites port policy and other areas of sport (youth and community sports). As a result of an increasingly systematic government-led approach to elite sport development, both China and the UK have made notable progress in Olympic medal success.

Chapter Four:

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Prior to the methodological discussion, it is necessary to reiterate the aims and objectives of this research. The aim of this research, as stated in Chapter One, is to analyse the policy process of elite sport development in China and the UK, covering the period 1992-2012, in relation to three sports: artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. Accordingly, four detailed objectives are specified:

- 1) To identify and analyse the policy contexts in China and the UK (nature of the 'problem'/ambition; political motives/rationale; funding and organisational structure);
- 2) To identify and analyse the process of talent identification and development in three sports: swimming, cycling and artistic gymnastics;
- 3) To compare the processes of policy development and the policies generated by these processes and to analyse the similarities and differences across China and the UK;
- 4) To analyse factors (internal and external) influencing the policy making and policy implementation.

According to Grix (2002), research contains five key components: ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources. The relationship between these five components is summarised in Figure 4.1. This chapter is structured around these key components but with some additional sections included in order to strengthen the coherence of the chapter.

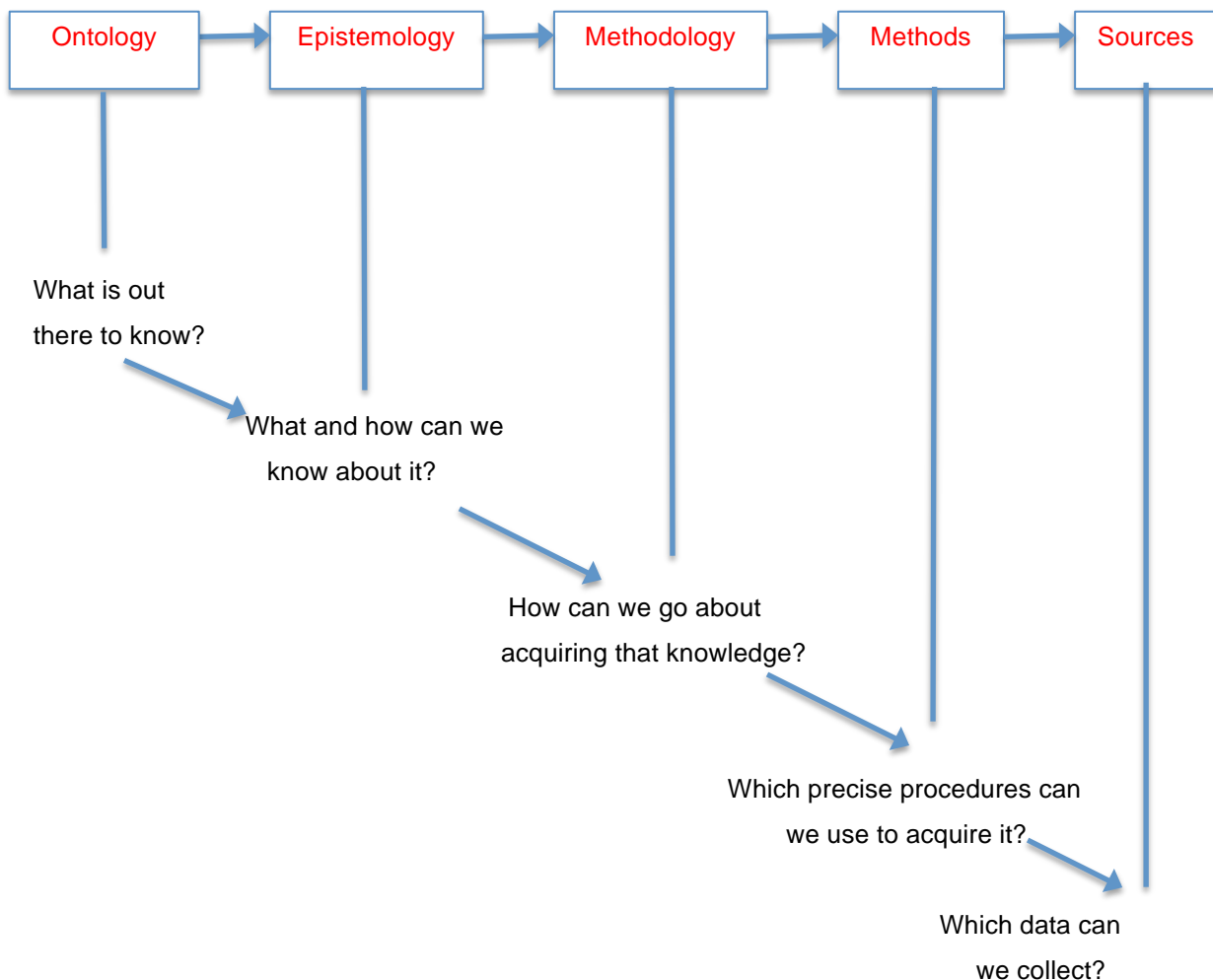


Figure 4.1: The interrelationship between key components of research

Sources: Grix (2002, p. 180); Hay (2002, p. 64).

4.2 Type of Research

Gratton and Jones (2010) identified several approaches to the classification of research. General criteria include the purpose of the research, the nature of the data collected, the way that data are analysed and the stages involved in the research process.

The first approach divides research into four types: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory and predictive. This is the most common method for the classification of types of research, as reflected in Brotherton (2008) and Grix (2010). Key features, the goals of each type and their corresponding sports examples are outlined in Appendix 5. This thesis does not investigate causal relationships between variables or provide policy solutions although some problems are identified. Consequently, this

thesis is not explanatory in nature. Nor is this research a predictive study as there are no forecasts concerning future phenomena. Despite the systematic theorisation in the area of sports policy, for example, Houlihan (2005) and Houlihan and Green (2005), rarely have these Western-derived policy theories and frameworks in general, and the multiple streams framework in particular, been applied to explore elite sport policy processes in China. Moreover, to explore how policies are made and policy changes took place in three selected Olympic sports in both China and the UK is also a key objective of this thesis. Hence, this thesis is exploratory. In addition, this research also blends descriptive elements regarding funding and performance analysis. However, it is worth noting that exploratory and descriptive elements are not mutually exclusive. As defined by Giorgi (1992, p. 121), descriptive research describes 'what presents itself precisely as it presents itself, neither adding nor subtracting from it'. This research involves the presentation of both countries' sports policy context including political context, funding and organisational structure and elite sport performance in general and Olympic performance in particular. A large volume of quantitative data regarding the performance of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in both countries and associated data such as funding figures are required to be gathered and analysed. However, these descriptive analyses are by no means the end point of this research, but form a basis for further exploratory analysis of how this level of performance has been achieved through the examination of how elite sport policy is made, developed and implemented in China and the UK.

There is also a distinction between pure and applied research. Pure research, as Brotherton (2008) argued, is conceptual or theoretical in nature, without direct value to the real-world problem. Its value is usually restricted to the contribution to the development of new thinking or knowledge to an existing area of intellectual inquiry. Applied research, on the other hand, seeks to 'solve a specific problem or provide a solution to a practical question' (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 7). As commented on by Brotherton (2008, p. 14), applied research 'is much more focused and goal-directed than pure research and therefore, more utilitarian'. Both Brotherton (2008) and Gratton and Jones (2010) encouraged applied research over pure research due to the former's close relevance to contemporary issues and problems. This thesis, with immediate relevance to elite sport development in China and the UK and its potential

value in explaining and improving the existing elite sport systems in both countries, is applied research rather than pure 'blue sky thinking' (Brotherton, 2008, p. 14). Appendix 6 gives more details of these two types of research.

In addition, research can also be located on a continuum between primary and secondary as per the type of data or information. Briefly speaking, primary research requires the collection of original, or new data while secondary research only involves the collection of existing data mainly from sources such as existing literature. It is noteworthy that hardly any research is purely independent of secondary data even in the cases of primary research. This research combines both primary and secondary elements.

Last, different types of research introduced above can also be categorised based on their theoretical or empirical nature. According to Brotherton (2008, p. 15), theoretical research is often, if not always, closely associated with secondary data while 'empirical and primary research are synonymous in the sense that the former always involves collection of the latter kind of data'. This thesis contains both theoretical and empirical considerations. However, it is noteworthy that empirical elements outweigh theoretical elements as one of the most significant tasks in this thesis is to empirically test the applicability of the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework in China and the UK.

4.3 Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

Ontology and epistemology deal with the philosophical position of research. Ontological and epistemological assumptions, similar to the 'footings' of a house, form the foundations of the research (Grix, 2010, p. 57). Grix (2010, pp. 57-58) specified three reasons for clarifying one's ontological and epistemological position:

- 'To understand the interrelationship of the key components of research (including methodology and methods)';
- 'To avoid confusion when discussing theoretical debates and approaches to social phenomena';
- 'To be able to recognise others', and defend our own, positions'.

Ontology, the philosophy of the existence and the nature of social reality, 'is the starting point of all research, after which one's epistemological and methodological positions logically follow' (Grix, 2002, p. 177). Blaikie (2000, p. 8) provided a detailed definition of ontology, stating that ontology refers to 'claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other'. Epistemology, on the other hand, is 'the branch of philosophy that deals with how knowledge of such phenomena is acquired, and what counts as knowledge' (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 24). As summarised by Grix (2010, p. 63), 'if ontology is about what we may know, then epistemology is about how we come to know what we know'.

4.3.1 Ontology

Ontology concerns 'the form and nature of reality' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). The ontological position selected forms the most fundamental basis for the research, determining and constraining epistemology, methodology and the methods adopted by the researcher. According to Bryman (2008, p. 18), the central orientation regarding the categorisation of ontology 'is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors'. Accordingly, two positions are identified: realism (objectivism) and constructionism.

(1) Realism

As Bryman (2008, p. 19) defined, 'objectivism (also known as realism) is an ontological position that asserts that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors. It implies that social phenomena and the categories that we use in everyday discourse have an existence that is independent or separate from actors'. Realists argue that social realities are objective and are free from human impact or influence. Social actors are part of the reality, but act closer to 'receivers and obeyers' than 'makers or changers'. Based on a realist assumption, knowledge is objective, which should not involve actors' subjective attitudes, feelings, understandings or judgments. Knowledge should be

gathered from objective and observable sources which often involves the collection of quantitative data. Hence, a social researcher's role is to find out the truth and to objectively report it rather than 'interpret' the truth.

(2) Constructivism

In contrast to realism, constructivism (also referred to as constructionism) is an ontological position that challenges realists' view that social entities are purely external realities that ignore, or at least minimise the social actor's role. According to Bryman (2008, p. 19), constructivists assert 'that social phenomena and their meaning are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision'. This confers dynamics of change on social phenomena and raises the significance of social actors in forming the reality. As opposed to realism, constructivism claims that researchers' are active participants and constructors of the social world and knowledge. Social reality, in nature, is not definitive and hence social actors' involvement often provides a good insight into, or a window on, the truth. Unlike the relatively more objective natural sciences, subjectivity seems inevitable in social sciences. Therefore, as stressed by Bryman (2008, p. 19), knowledge is viewed as 'indeterminate' based on a constructivist assumption. Traditionally, constructivism often requires qualitative approaches, which means that actors' feelings, understandings and experiences are important in forming the knowledge and revealing the truth.

(3) Critical realism

However, in practice, it is not as simple as 'either... or', with regard to the establishment of the ontological orientation. In reality, there are cases in social research where neither realism nor constructivism alone are appropriate. Hence, an alternative, or rather, compromise position - critical realism emerged and has become popular. In brief, critical realism is a modified form of realism that absorbs what it considers reasonable regarding constructivism. As defined by Bhaskar (1989, p. 2), critical realists assert that 'we will only be able to understand - and so change - the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events and

discourses. ... These structures are not spontaneously apparent in the observable pattern of events. They can only be identified through the practical and theoretical work of the social sciences'. Hence, critical realism recognises the reality of the natural order and both the events and discourses of the social world (Bryman, 2008). From a critical realist point of view, reality exists and facts need to be objectively reflected. However, in the social world, subjectivity is inevitable as not all 'facts' are straightforward, observable and quantifiable. As outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 110), 'reality is assumed to exist but to be only imperfectly apprehendable because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena'. It is better to try to minimise the subjectivity rather than deny it. When it is considered on the basis of the relationship between structure and agency, critical realists assert that selfhood, or individual agency, is 'to be understood in terms of an ongoing process, whereby selfhood is socially mediated but not socially determined' (Cruickshank, 2003, p. 1). Structures have great influence over individual agency but not as much as to 'determine'. Agents play a significant role in forming the structure and reality and the relationship between structures and agents should by no means be viewed as 'one-way', that is with structure dominating agency. Individual agents can respond and react to structures, to varying degrees. Critical realists accept those unobservable 'generative mechanisms' (Bhaskar, 2008). As summarised by Baert (2005, p. 90), the realism advocated by critical realists is 'metaphysical or transcendental'.

Critical realism has substantial implications for methodological considerations. In terms of knowledge, critical realists claim that instead of seeking to gain absolute knowledge and uncover a 'definitive' truth, it is more feasible to improve the interpretations of reality, which are also a valuable form of knowledge. Thus, it opens the door for qualitative approaches and subjective data. Critical realism is the ontological position adopted for this research. There are relatively objective realities such as observable elite sport performance in this research. However, in order to probe the factors leading to the performance, it is highly significant to investigate the less tangible policy process and policy factors (individual interests, political priorities and cultural values relating to sport) and hence qualitative data, or 'narratives' are required.

4.3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is about 'how what is assumed to exist can be known' (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8) and is concerned with the question of 'what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline' (Bryman, 2008, p. 13) and focuses on the knowledge-gathering process. Epistemology, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) stressed, is determined and constrained by a researcher's ontological position. There are two contrasting epistemological positions within the research paradigms: positivism and interpretivism.

(1) Positivism

Closely related to realism at the ontological level, positivism refers to 'the school of thought that the only 'true' or valid form of knowledge is that which is "scientific", that is where the principles and methods of the natural sciences (...) are used to study human behaviour, which in itself is objective and tangible in nature' (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 24). Positivism, to a large extent, is a transplant of the methods of natural sciences in the realm of social science, emphasising that there are value-free 'facts' external to social science researchers and the facts should be understood through observable and measurable methods. The establishment and testing of hypotheses is often involved in the positivist research. Subjective elements such as feelings, attitudes, emotions and beliefs are considered by positivists as unreliable and hence rejected. In practice, positivism is largely realised by virtue of quantitative approaches that deal with and provide objective information. It is noteworthy that a key point of positivism is that the researcher has no influence on the results.

As summarised by Gratton and Jones (2010), positivistic research has advantages in terms of its a) precision and objectivity; and b) straightforwardness, low risk and low difficulty. However, the straightforwardness of the positivistic approach often hampers its use in relation to more complicated research concerning less easily observable phenomena. As Elias (1986, p. 20) pointed out, positivists place too much emphasis on 'law-like' theories and methods, but tend to lack experience in social reality. Positivism is by no means sufficient in this research which tries to

unveil the underlying policy factors behind the elite sport performance of China and the UK.

(2) Interpretivism

As an alternative to positivism, interpretivism 'is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action' (Bryman, 2008, p. 16). Interpretivism takes the fundamental difference between natural sciences and social sciences into consideration, asserting that human beings are a significant part of the social reality and hence their actions and feelings are a crucial part of knowledge, and thus more compatible with the constructivist ontology. As human beings are part of the social entity, researchers could and should 'interpret their actions and social world from their point of view' to gather information and gain results. Emotions, attitudes, discourses and beliefs, once disdained and ignored by the positivists, form an integral part of knowledge and provide valuable access to knowledge. In addition to quantitative indicators, reality can also be 'measured' by 'words, statements, and other non-numerical measures' (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 28).

Gratton and Jones (2010) exemplified the great usefulness of interpretivism in sports research. Positivistic approach dominated early sports-related studies. However, there has been a dramatic increase in sports research based on interpretivism, ranging from spectator satisfaction to the study of elite sport development policy. It is noteworthy that interpretative approaches are particularly valuable for researchers to investigate causal relationships and uncover explanations of certain phenomena (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Similar to this research, Houlihan and Green's (2005) analysis of elite sport development in the UK, Australia and Canada was premised on an interpretative epistemology.

Undoubtedly, interpretivism has the advantage of looking beyond the descriptive surface of the social reality by exploring the in-depth details, causal relations and explanations of social phenomena. However, it is not without its weaknesses. Although some revised versions of interpretivism, for example, Sudgen and

Tomlinson's (1999) critical interpretivism have developed, two major shortcomings have not yet been overcome. First and foremost, because of its inclusion of, and often reliance on, subjective information, the reliability and validity, or as Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 28) put it, 'trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity' are inclined to be discounted. This leads to its second drawback of limited generalisability. These weaknesses will be discussed in the later section of methodological limitations.

4.3.3 Conclusions

Critical realism is identified as the ontological assumption in this research. Interpretivism, though overall sits comfortably in this research, has the risk of exaggerating the significance of people and their subjective responses. In other words, it may over-focus on agency rather than structure. Consistent with the critical realist ontology, a slightly modified interpretative epistemology is established in this research and the function and significance of both structure and agency will be carefully considered in this thesis.

4.4 Methodological Considerations

This section acts as a role of 'bridge' between the more abstract ontological and epistemological assumptions and the more specific research methods. Three issues are to be addressed in this section: logic of inference, research strategy and research design.

4.4.1 Logic of Inference: Deductive and Inductive Approaches

Deduction, as defined by Landman (2008, p. 314), is 'the logical process where conclusions are derived from starting assumptions'. Induction, on the other hand, according to Landman (2008, p. 316), refers to 'the process by which conclusions are drawn from direct observation of empirical evidence'. Both concepts concern the relationship between theory and social research. The former, as advocated by Merton (1967), is the commonest approach adopted in sociology to guide empirical inquiry. Theories, data, hypothesis and premises are indispensable elements from a deductive point of view. Stages involved in a deductive study are outlined in Figure

4.2. Gratton and Jones (2010) stressed that deductive approaches are closely associated with a positivist epistemology and quantitative methods. The latter (induction), however, is to some extent the opposite of the deductive process, generating theories out of data and findings. As argued by Grix (2010, p. 114), induction is ‘usually, but not exclusively, associated with the interpretative research tradition and qualitative research strategies’.

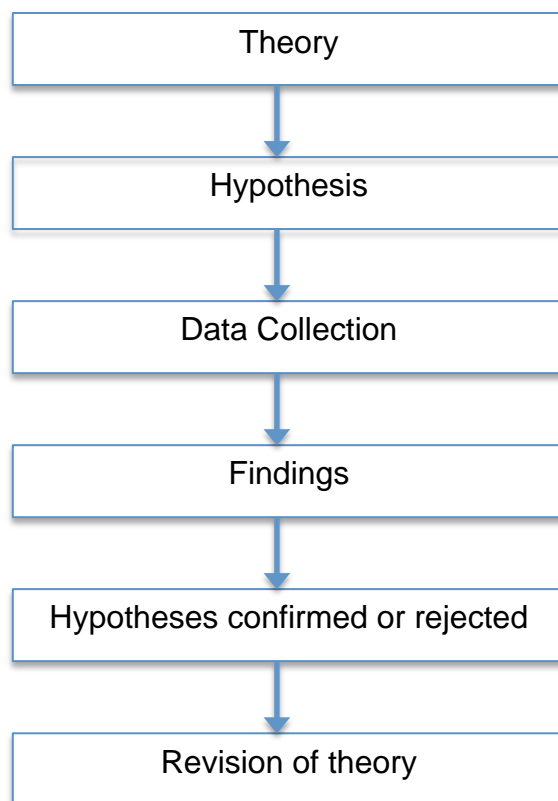


Figure 4.2: The process of deduction

Source: Bryman (2008, p. 10).

While deduction proceeds from theory to observations and findings, induction involves the converse direction, from known to unknown (Buchdahl, 1956), or as May (2001, p. 32) put it, ‘research comes before theory’ (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4). However, it is worth noting that it is better to avoid viewing deductive and inductive approaches as a ‘hard-and-fast distinction’ (Bryman, 2008, p. 13). In addition to deduction and induction, there has emerged a new approach termed ‘retroduction’. Retroduction, advocated by critical realists (Downward & Merman, 2007), seeks to identify mechanisms which explain particular observed regularities. Hence, it

involves the construction of hypothetical models of structure and mechanisms that will potentially produce 'empirical phenomena' (Bhaskar, 1979, p. 15).

To some extent, retroduction resembles induction but also involves deductive elements such as predictions and hypothesis. This research, as promoted by Ragin (1994), adopts both deduction and induction, since this research is complicated in the sense that the objectives are multi-level and that both quantitative and qualitative data are required. On the one hand, this research will draw on existing policy theories, ranging from macro-level (including pluralism, elite theory and Marxism), to the meso-level multiple streams framework and the policy community framework to analyse and understand policy processes of elite sport development in both China and the UK. The research will also evaluate the applicability of these theories and frameworks. On the other hand, there is high possibility that 'additional' and local information may be gained and hence new theory, or at least modified theory may be developed. Relatively speaking, inductive elements tend to be awarded more weight due to the interpretative epistemology established for this research.

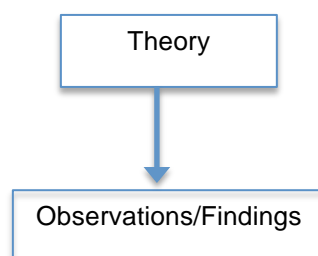


Figure 4.3: Deductive approaches to the relationship between theory and research

Source: Bryman (2008, p. 11).

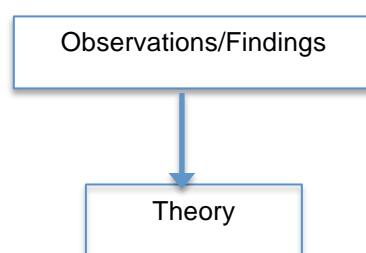


Figure 4.4: Inductive approaches to the relationship between theory and research

Source: Bryman (2008, p. 11).

4.4.2 Research Strategy: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

There are two common research strategies: quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative analysis, as defined by Landman (2008, p. 318), refers to 'any method that uses numerical indicators of political phenomena and seeks to establish the existence of relationships between them across a selection of countries, time periods or both'. Quantitative research strategy, as summarised by Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 32):

- 'Uses numerical analysis to measure social phenomena to provide 'facts';
- 'Assumes a single, objective social reality'
- 'Assumes social reality is constant across different times and settings';
- 'Uses statistical analysis to determine causal relationships';
- 'Studies samples with the intention of generalizing to populations';
- 'Researcher is objective, and "detached" from the subjects under investigation';
- 'The setting is often contrived';
- 'Data is collected using inanimate objects, for example pen and paper'.

In comparison, qualitative analysis is termed 'any method that examines the inherent traits, characteristics, and qualities of the political objects of inquiry' (Landman, 2008, p. 318). According to Landman (2008), it sits more comfortably in more holistic and interpretative studies. The essence of qualitative research strategy is that it focuses on unquantifiable and often more subjective information such as meanings, qualities, feelings and experiences, rather than more absolute numerical data. Similarly, Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 32) summarised key characteristics of qualitative strategy as follows:

- 'Relies on non-numerical analysis to provide understanding';
- 'Assumes social reality is a subjective experience';
- 'Assumes social reality is continuously constructed and related to the immediate social context';
- 'Objectives are description, understanding and meaning';
- 'Uses smaller samples, or 'cases';
- 'Data are rich and subjective';
- 'The location of the research is often natural';
- Flexible approach to data collection; often non-traditional approaches, e.g..

content analysis’;

- The researcher is the data collection instrument’.

Qualitative approaches tend to be more compatible with a constructivist ontology, interpretative epistemology and inductive logic. Taking the ontological and epistemological considerations, logic of inference and research strategy together, as outlined by Gratton and Jones (2010), there are two broad research traditions as Table 4.1 shows below.

Table 4.1: Two broad research traditions

Approach ‘A’	Approach ‘B’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positivist - Quantitative - Deductive - Questions such as ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘how many’ - Follows a pre-determined design - Establishes causality - Confirms theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpretative - Qualitative - Inductive - Questions such as ‘why’ and ‘how’ - Follows a flexible research design, that may be continually adapted - Explains causality - Develops theory

Source: Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 37).

However, it is noteworthy that the above division is by no means rigid. As alerted by Bryman (2008), in reality, the study may not be straightforward. It is wiser to view them as ‘complementary’ (Malterud, 2001, p. 483). In many cases, especially where the research requires rich data and is more holistic and multi-level, it is necessary to synthesise both strategies rather than choose ‘A’ or ‘B’. The importance and advantages of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods have been alluded to by many researchers (for example, Brannen, 2005; Jick, 1979; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Singleton, 1999).

Although the thesis includes numerical data (for example, Olympic performance and funding), they are largely descriptive while there is no discussion of tested hypotheses, variables and statistical measurements. Accordingly, the research is primarily qualitative rather than quantitative.

4.4.3 Research Design

Bryman (2008) identified five types of research design: experimental design, cross-sectional or survey design, longitudinal design, case study design and comparative design. In this research, case studies are the primary research design adopted but the research also involves a comparative element.

(1) Case study design

The case study is one of the commonest research designs and is the primary research design employed in this research. As defined by Piekkari, Weich and Paavilainen (2009, p. 569), case study is a research design that ‘examines, through the use of a variety of data sources, a phenomenon in its naturalistic context, with the purpose of “confronting” theory with the empirical world’. According to Yin (1981), the distinguishing characteristic of case study design is that it attempts to examine: a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Traditionally, it involves the in-depth and intensive study of a single case. This is what was referred to by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) and Yin (2009) as ‘single-case studies’. However, in addition to single-case studies, there is another type of case study design - multiple-case studies. Needless to say, multiple-case studies entail the analysis of more than one case and often there is a comparative element between the cases involved. Thus multiple-case studies often overlap with comparative design. This research, comparing the elite sport development systems of China and the UK and focusing on three sports (artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling), is a multiple-case study, or as Carmel (1999) put it, a ‘comparative case study’. Yet, it is pertinent to note that China is the main focus of this thesis while the UK plays a more comparative role. Taking single- and multiple-case studies together, as Schramm (1971, p. 5) argued, ‘a case study is centrally concerned both with time and with description. It seeks to record why a given decision was taken, how it was worked out, and what happened as a result’. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996), case study research has the following four characteristics:

- Focus is given to specific cases;

- The analysis of each case is both in-depth and intensive;
- Cases are studied within the natural context;
- The researcher draws on the perspective of those within the case, instead of his or her own perspective.

Denscombe (2007, p. 37) used six 'rather than' statements to highlight the characteristics of case study design (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Key characteristics of case studies

Key Characteristics of Case Studies		
1. Depth of study	rather than	Breadth of study
2. The particular	rather than	The general
3. Relationships/processes	rather than	Outcomes and end-products
4. Holistic view	rather than	Isolated factors
5. Natural settings	rather than	Artificial situations
6. Multiple sources	rather than	One research method

Source: Denscombe (2007, p. 37).

According to Bryman (2008), cases can be classified into five categories based on their nature: the critical case; the extreme or unique case; the 'representative' or 'typical case' (Stake, 1995, p. 4) (or 'exemplifying' case, according to Bryman, 2008, p. 56); the revelatory case; and the longitudinal case. However, representativeness is by no means the only criterion considered in selecting the above two countries and three sports. Eisenhardt (1989) argued that it is better to select samples theoretically rather than randomly. To achieve this theoretical selection, Denscombe (2007, pp. 39-42) suggested the following criteria:

- 'A case study should be chosen deliberately on the basis of specific attributes to be found in the case – attributes that are particularly significant in terms of the practical problem or theoretical issue that the researcher wants to investigate' (Denscombe, 2007, p. 39);
- A case can be typical, extreme, or least likely, or provides a 'test-site' (Denscombe, 2007, p. 41) for theory;
- The selection of cases needs to take convenience and feasibility into consideration. Moreover, the cases selected should be 'intrinsically interesting' (Denscombe, 2007, p. 41);

- Sometimes researchers do not really have much choice in terms of suitable cases when the study is 'part of commissioned research' or 'there are unique opportunities' (Denscombe, 2007, p. 42).

Accordingly, factors considered in selecting China and the UK are:

- Representativeness: Both countries are high profile in the global configuration in general and on the elite sport stage in particular. Both China and the UK have been successful at the Olympic Games over the past decade and especially successful at the two most recent Summer Olympic Games. It is assumed that both countries value elite sport and that the governments in both countries have prioritised elite sport. Hence, an analysis of elite sport development in these two countries helps gain a valuable insight into the general approaches of elite sport policy systems.

- 'Geographical and mental distance': This enhances the representativeness of the two cases. Anckar (2007, pp. 52-53) argued that the selection of countries in policy studies should represent some 'evident variation in terms of geographical and mental distance'. There is a significant geographical difference between China and the UK as the former represents the Western world while the latter stands for the Oriental countries. Moreover, both countries represent different ideologies (communism in China vs. capitalism in the UK). This thus strengthens the geographical and ideological 'coverage' of this research.

- Similarities and comparability: There are a number of similarities between China and the UK in terms of elite sport. First, elite sport has become a key policy concern in both countries. Second, both countries' performance at the latest Summer Olympic Games was impressive. Third, China and the UK have been the host countries of the two latest Summer Olympic Games.

- Convenience, feasibility and the availability of data: Given the fact that the researcher comes from China and is now doing a Ph.D. in the UK (and previously completed a Masters degree in the UK), it is feasible, convenient and less costly to access the necessary data in both countries. Furthermore, there will be fewer linguistic barriers in conducting research involving these two countries.

When it comes to the selection of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling, the following factors have been considered:

- All three sports are prominent Olympic sports. All three sports have a relatively

high number of gold medals and total medals available. In London 2012, there are 34, 14 and 18 gold medals respectively available in swimming (excluding synchronised swimming, diving and water polo), artistic gymnastics and cycling (including track cycling, road cycling, mountain bike and BMX).

- Necessary data regarding the three sports in both countries are accessible.
- NGBs and NSOs (National Sporting Organisations) of the three sports in both countries have clear responsibility for a number of issues regarding the development of the sports including resource distribution and policy implementation. Thus, it is possible to investigate the elite sport policy development including resource allocation, policy impact and power relationship through the subjects of NGBs and NSOs.

- There is a high degree of comparability between these sports in China and the UK. Before London 2012, both countries' performance in swimming had been largely on the same level. Although China impressively outperformed the UK in swimming at the latest London Olympic Games, generally speaking swimming is still not a significant source of gold medals and total medals for China. This applies to the UK as well. When it comes to artistic gymnastics and cycling, as will be introduced below, there is a high degree of complementarity between China and the UK: the UK is quite successful in cycling while cycling is an insignificant contributor to China's overall performance. Artistic gymnastics represents the opposite situation. As a result, the three sports selected represent a great opportunity for comparison.

Undoubtedly, case study design has many strengths. The most important strength stems from its often deep insight into a particular phenomenon. The 'tailor-made' (Meyer, 2001, p. 330) case study approaches provide researchers with the 'opportunity for a holistic view of the process' (Gummesson, 1988, p. 76). Moreover, although there are criteria for the selection of cases, there is a degree of freedom for the researcher regarding the selection of the units of analysis. Often, convenience and feasibility are respected in case studies. Multiple-case studies, which are preferred by Yin (2009), tend to be 'more generalizable' than single-case studies (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). Finally, case studies have proved wide applicability.

On the other hand, case study design has some explicit and implicit weaknesses. To begin with, its internal validity is often questioned. In other words, it has low generalisability (Bryman, 2008; Merriam, 1988; Ragin, 1989). Other weaknesses are less serious but still noteworthy, including the vulnerability of the findings to change in contexts or, as in this research, the changes in competing nations, and the lack of objectivity and researcher's independence derived from researcher's 'interactive' role in research and the close link between research methods and the 'personality' of the researcher (Verschuren, 2003, p. 122).

(2) Comparative design

The research also blends some comparative elements. Comparative design involves the comparison between two or more cases using more or less identical methods. Amongst all forms of comparative research, cross-national research takes centre stage. Hantrais (1996; 1999) pointed out that the aim of cross-national research is to identify the similarities and differences between the countries and ideally the reasons behind the similarities and differences and offer to gain a better awareness and a deeper insight into the research subject across different national contexts.

Comparative design is by no means isolated from other research designs. Instead, it is strongly associated with cross-sectional and case study designs. It is widely viewed as an extension of a case study design in qualitative research. However, it is necessary to note that although there is a high degree of overlap between comparative design and multiple-case study design, there is an essential distinction between them in terms of research focus. Both approaches involve two or more cases but the emphasis is placed on 'comparison' in the former while the emphasis in the latter might be purely on producing a wider 'coverage' of a phenomenon. In this thesis, the comparison between these two countries in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling will be conducted in order to determine whether there are any interesting similarities and differences which will help to achieve the research aim and objectives.

Comparative design has the strengths of higher generalisability and the result is relatively more convincing than the single-case study approach. In addition, it often

contributes to theory development (May, 2001). However, on the other hand, it often faces the problem of funding and there is a high requirement in terms of the consistency between data, data-collection instruments and genuine comparability. More importantly, the researcher needs to ensure that samples selected are equivalent, that methods are identical and that the specific national contexts are carefully considered.

Henry, Amara, Al-Tauqi and Lee (2005) identified four types of comparative studies of sport policy: seeking similarities, a nomothetic approach that seeks to establish law-like generalisations; describing differences, an ideographic approach emphasising the specificity of often middle-range policy systems such as policy networks; theorising the transnational, which considers sports policy within the global context and studies the influence of global interaction on local cases; and defining discourse with a focus on discursive process and discourse analysis. As clarified in the research aim and the third research objective at the beginning of this chapter, this research aims to comparing elite sport policy development in China and the UK, analysing the similarities and differences across China and the UK (if any) and explaining them. Therefore, this thesis combines the first two types of comparative studies identified above. In addition to seeking similarities and describing differences, the third type of theorising the transnational is of potential value to this research. Henry and Uchiyama's (2001) comparative study of sports policy in the UK and Japan, the geographical, ethnic, psychological, linguistic and cultural differences between which are striking, is illuminating to this thesis.

4.5 Research Methods

This section discusses the detailed methods employed in this research. These methods are divided into two categories: data collection and data analysis. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis are two key research methods adopted for data collection. Data gained through these two methods are then subjected to either thematic analysis or SPSS, based on their qualitative or quantitative nature.

4.5.1 Data Collection

(1) Semi-structured interviews

Interviews 'are an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, see the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasise the social situatedness of research data' (Kvale, 1996, p. 14). Semi-structured interviews, as summarised by Corbetta (2003, p. 270), are a popular method for data collection 'in which the various topics are dealt with and the wording of the question are left to the interviewer's discretion'. Thus, interviewees' participation and viewpoint play a vital part in the qualitative interviews and both interviewers and interviewees have more 'freedom' (Pathak & Intrat, 2012, p. 4) than in structured interviews. When it comes to the comparison with unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews have the merit of synthesising flexibility and orderliness, avoiding excessive information irrelevant to the themes. Moreover, semi-structured interviews also imply the possibility of thematic analysis of qualitative data (Alvarez & Urla, 2002). 'Probing' (Gray, 2004, p. 217) and additional questions are possible and often necessary in a semi-structured interview (Patton, 2002). The researcher only needs to prepare key themes and 'general questions or topics' (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 5) instead of specific questions prior to the conversation and 'unplanned encounters' (David & Sutton, 2004, p. 87) can be expected. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate for this research as (1) this research is small-scale and primarily qualitative and hence interpretations and opinions should be counted as a significant type of knowledge; (2) existing research has suggested broad elite sport policy development process and key policy factors determining a country's Olympic performance, which form the broad themes or general topics of interview questions, such as coaching system, funding structure, talent identification and development and (inter)national competitions in relation to artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China and the UK. However, detailed approaches vary according to countries and sports and hence it is impossible to pre-determine the interview questions at the micro-level. Instead, interviewees, with more freedom, tend to provide substantial additional and in-depth information in relation to each theme and even inspire the researchers by providing valuable information beyond the predetermined themes and topics. As pointed out by Barriball and While (1994),

semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity of probing perceptions and opinions regarding some sensitive issues such as funding allocation and the relationship between athletes, coaches and their provinces and the country in China.

Semi-structured interviews are established as the key method for data collection in this research. The next question is how to conduct the interviews. World Health Organisation (WHO, 2005, quoted in Kajornboon, 2005) proposed the following six steps:

- Identify appropriate topics and questions;
- Decide on the level of detail;
- Draft the questions;
- Order the questions;
- List any probes or prompts;
- Pilot the questions and have the informant identify the problems during the pilot.

Based on both the aims and objectives of this research and the feasibility, inspired by De Bosscher et al.'s (2008) SPLISS model and Green and Oakley's (2001) ten characteristic of elite sport success, interview themes and topics of this research are identified, covering the areas of political rationale, financial support, organisational structure, talent identification and athlete development and so on (detailed themes and questions can be found in Appendix 7). However, it is noteworthy that a number of potential interviewees in the UK rejected the interview requests due to the status of the researcher as being from a 'rival country'. Yet, sufficient information from documents and official online channels remedies this limitation.

It is also important to specify the criteria for the selection of interviewees. Denscombe (2007) argued that semi-structured interviews require a higher degree of selectivity and less randomness in terms of the choice of informants in comparison to questionnaire surveys. Ideal interviewees include those who hold a relevant or key position or have unique insight into, familiarity with or close relationship with the research topic. However, in practice, the above considerations often compromise with feasibility, or the availability and willingness of selected interviewees. Accordingly, consistent with the research themes established above and inspired by Tan (2008), interviewees identified for this research are mainly key officials and

senior staff working inside sports governing bodies in China and senior scholars in the area of sport policy (see Appendix 8 for detailed interviewee identification). Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted for the analysis of three sports in China. Interviewees included: current and some former senior officials and staff in GAS (and its predecessor the Sports Ministry) from a range of departments; staff working in the China Institute of Sport Science (CISS); key insiders of three Management Centres and the NSAs including the team leader and head coach of the National Team; a senior international judge; professors and scholars in relevant universities and research academies most notably Beijing Sport University; retired athletes; a senior sports journalist of CCTV; and senior officials in the Anhui Provincial Sports Bureau.

Interviews in general, as summarised by Bailey (1994), have the advantages of flexibility, high response rate (see also Austin, 1981), data from nonverbal behaviour, control over the environment, control over question order, spontaneity, answers from respondent alone, completeness, time of interview and greater complexity of questions. Semi-structured interviews in particular, have the strengths of being flexible in form and providing in-depth and 'unplanned' information. According to Drever (1995), semi-structured interviews are appropriate for small-scale research. In addition, as noted earlier, they are amenable to thematic analysis.

However, semi-structured interviews have some drawbacks. First and foremost, as Bailey (1994) argued, interviews (including semi-structured interviews) are both time-consuming and costly. Second, the selection of the interview themes and questions and interviewees directly determines the quality of the interview and hence the research. The suitability of and accessibility to interviewees are two essential requirements but also two challenges in many cases. Meanwhile, the information provided by some respondents in relation to certain topics, especially sensitive topics may be biased or erroneous. Last but not least, the competence of the researcher, or the interviewer, greatly influences the quality of the interview and the research and this competence requires great skills and experience. As Kajornboon (2005) warned, inexperienced interviewers may lack the ability to ask prompt questions.

(2) Documents

Another key method used in this research for data collection is document analysis. Document analysis is a widely used data collection method in social research. Documents, as May (2001, p. 176) argued, are 'sedimentations of social practices', having the potential 'to inform and structure the decisions which people make on a daily and longer-term basis' and constituting 'particular readings of social events'. According to Scott (1990, p. 13), 'documents may be regarded as physically embodied texts, where the containment of the text is the primary purpose of the physical medium'. Thus, as Bryman (2008, p. 515) identified, documents have the following four key attributes: they

- 'can be read';
- 'have not been produced specifically for the purpose of social research';
- 'are preserved so that they become available for analysis';
- 'are relevant to the concerns of the social researcher'.

However, the diversity of documents prompts a question regarding the criteria for the selection of documents. Grix (2010) highlighted three factors for consideration in selecting documents and evaluating their quality: the origins and authors of the documents; the original purpose of the documents; and the target audience of the document. Prior to, but consistent with, these three factors, Scott (1990, p. 6) suggested four criteria for the selection of documents:

- Authenticity: Is the evidence genuine and from official, authoritative and reliable source?
- Credibility: Is the evidence a sincere expression of the views of the document's author? And what is the nature of the author's perspective?
- Representativeness: Is the evidence typical of its kind, and, if not, is the extent of its unrepresentativeness unknown?
- Meaning: Is the evidence unambiguous and understandable?

On the basis of the above criteria, the type of documents of potential relevance to this research are listed in Appendix 9, ranging from public inquiries, official annual reports, magazines and other types of documents, to newspapers, television programmes and other internet resources. The vast majority of the sources are

policy-related documents and official statistics. As noted previously, official documents (the first three types of documents listed in Appendix 9) are the primary sources of document data but data gained from letters, mass-media outputs such as newspapers and television programmes, and internet sources are also of great value and hence act as a supplement. As shown in Appendix 9, the documents targeted are mainly from official sources. This will be detailed in the reliability and validity section later in this chapter. These documents can be obtained from libraries, museums, office shelves, archive establishments, mass-media outputs, the Internet and even 'store rooms' (Mogalakwe, 2006, p. 223). Documents necessary in this research can be obtained from online database such as SPORTDiscus, organisational websites and interviewees. Documents retrieved are systematically organised according to themes, countries, sports and periods. These documents are then subjected to both computer-based and manual techniques for interpretation and further analysis.

Documents as a source of data undoubtedly have some advantages. Bailey (1994) outlined three major advantages: easy and broad accessibility, nonreactivity (documents are lifeless objects which would not respond to the researcher spontaneously) and suitability for longitudinal analysis. Furthermore, documents reviewed in this research can provide both qualitative and quantitative data and after careful scrutiny, documents selected are largely official and authentic. Hence it is a powerful and reliable supplement to the semi-structured interviews the primary concern of which is qualitative data. In addition, Denscombe (2007) commended document analysis for its cost-effectiveness and the permanence, or non-perishability of data.

However, there are some drawbacks regarding documents as a source of data. The above-mentioned nonreactivity is a double-edged sword. Bryman (2008) stressed that the validity of data is vulnerable to challenges as a result of the lack of the reactive effect derived from the fact that the documents are not specifically produced for the research. Moreover, 'selective bias' (i.e. the subjectivity of the researcher in the selection of data) is a concept frequently referred to by researchers in describing the limitations of documents (Bailey, 1994, p. 319; Bell, 2005, p. 128). To minimise the impact of these limitations, it is important for the researcher to be careful and

systematic in selecting, accessing, organising and analysing the documentary information gained and to be familiar with the documents in general and relevant information in particular. Documents are not a panacea and hence they need to be used together with other data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews. Another point that is noteworthy, which is not confined to document data, but also including interview data, is that official data provided by officials inside the government organisations, NGBs or NSAs, may be 'sanitised' or 'harmonious'. For example, information provided by policy documents of GAS and the Management Centres or the NSAs and major Chinese media, all of which are strictly controlled by the Communist Government, may be selective in the information provided and may deliberately avoid mentioning politically critical or sensitive information. Hence, it is important to bear this limitation in mind, be critical towards the data gathered and try to find alternative insights out of the 'insiders'.

4.5.2 Data analysis

(1) Thematic analysis

As noted previously, data gained from interviews are subjected to qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis, according to Gratton and Jones (2010), is a broad concept which embraces a variety of detailed approaches. However, there are common stages relating to qualitative analysis: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The most vital part in the first step is the coding of data. As defined by Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 240), 'coding is the organisation of raw data into conceptual categories ... Coding is the first stage to providing some form of logical structure to the data'. Themes are widely deemed as a powerful 'code' and hence thematic analysis, belonging to the 'qualitative document analysis' (Altheide, 1996, p. 15) tradition, is popularly used to process qualitative data in general and interview data in particular to help to tease out how different discourses structure the activities of actors and how they 'are produced, how they function, and how they are changed' (Howarth, 1995, p. 115). Thematic analysis is the key method used in this research for the analysis of interview data. Moreover, it can also serve the analysis of quantitative data by helping the categorisation of the data according to different themes.

The next question concerns the identification of 'themes'. As Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012, p. 10) argued, 'thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes'. Generally speaking, thematic analysis involves four key stages. The identification of themes requires careful reading of data and statements relating to research questions and coding and categorising them. Ryan and Bernard (2003) recommended the following elements to be focused on in searching for themes in the data: repetitions; indigenous typologies or categories; metaphors and analogies; transitions: similarities and differences; linguistic connectors examining the use of words like 'because' or 'since'; missing data; and theory-related material. Consistent with research themes and topics identified for the semi-structured interviews, possible themes guiding the categorisation of both interview data and document information in this thesis are four-dimensional:

- Countries: China and the UK;
- Periods: the Barcelona Olympiad, the Atlanta Olympiad, the Sydney Olympiad, the Athens Olympiad, the Beijing Olympiad and the London Olympiad;
- Sports: Overall performance, artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling;
- Policy factors: Significance and function of sport and elite sport within the government and government's political rationales or motives, policy development systems, financial support, organisational structure, participation in sport, talent identification and development, athletics and post-career support, training facilities, coaching provision and development, (inter)national competition, scientific research, gender targeting, sport targeting, regional division and cooperation, international influence and so forth.

Following the identification of themes, the qualitative data are reread and located into appropriate themes. Further themes can also be developed in this stage of 'axial coding' (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 242). In this research, it makes sense to probe if there are any additional policy factors affecting Olympic performance in China and the UK. The third stage requires analytical work, searching for patterns and explanations in the themes. It is required to see if there are any relationships in general and causal relationships in particular between different codes or themes. The fourth stage is referred to as 'selective coding' (Gratton & Jones, 2010, p. 242). Explanations of certain concepts and of contradictory as well as confirmatory

information are expected to be extracted in this stage. Key processes of thematic analysis are summarised in Figure 4.5 below.

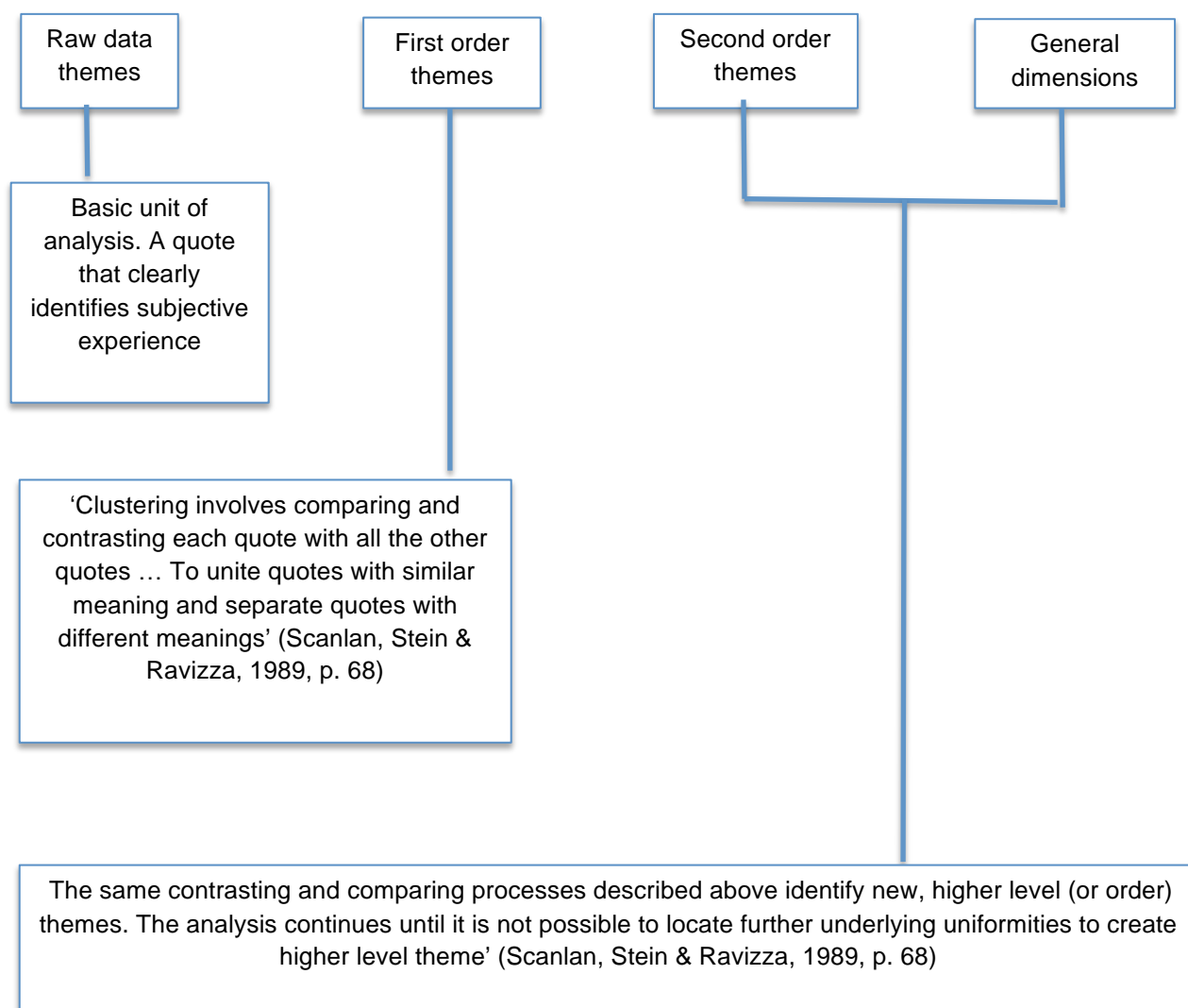


Figure 4.5: A summary of thematic analysis

Source: Adapted from Biddle, Markland, Gilbourne, Chatzisarantis and Sparkes (2001, p. 797).

Thematic analysis helps categorise and organise the data and hence plays a crucial role in drawing findings and conclusions. In addition, it has great flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Alhojailan (2012) commended, thematic analysis is considered as the most appropriate for studies that involve interpretation. However, the quality of the identification of the themes and of the allocation of data to appropriate themes is required. Moreover, thematic analysis can better serve the research if it is accompanied by other analytical tools.

(2) SPSS

As noted above, the research also needs to deal with some quantitative data. However, quantitative data themselves cannot be meaningful without being carefully acquired, merged and transformed (Levesque & SPSS Inc., 2006). SPSS is a pervasive, powerful and user-friendly instrument for quantitative data analysis (Einspruch, 2004; Landau & Everitt, 2004; SPSS Inc., 2003), which is capable of handling very 'complex statistical procedures' (Pallant, 2001, p. xiv).

In this research, SPSS fulfills three key responsibilities: computation (such as the calculation of Olympic performance-related statistics and funding figures), comparison (such as vertical comparisons of two countries' trends in performance between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012 and trends in performance in three target sports and horizontal comparisons between two countries regarding Olympic performance and trends in government financial support) and correlation (mainly the correlations between both countries' Olympic performance and the assumed policy determinants that can be statistically reflected).

SPSS is sufficient for the analysis of the quantitative data required in this thesis and the the presentation of quantitative data is largely straightforward. In effect, what influences the quality of data analysis is the quality of data collection. Griffith's (2010, p. 9) 'sewer' metaphor of statistical analysis fully illustrates the fundamental significance of data collection. As Griffith (2010, p. 9) stressed, 'what you get out of it depends on what you put into it'.

4.6 Reliability and Validity

4.6.1 Reliability

Reliability is an indispensable element for any successful research project. According to Drost (2011, p. 106), reliability 'is the extent to which measurements are repeatable – when different persons perform the measurements, on different occasions, under different conditions, with supposedly alternative instruments which measure the same thing'. Consistency is the essence of reliability. Pierce (2008)

argued that reliability implies that the source of the data and the data per se should be dependable and genuine and therefore the reputation of the source of the data is vital. In general, there are two sources of data in this research: semi-structured interviews and documents. As for the former, interviewees contacted are senior, professional and 'insiders'. Professors and researchers in China are interviewed as they are reputable experts in the sport policy area and hence likely to provide professional insight. As for the latter, documents accessed in this thesis are carefully selected. For instance, as Appendix 9 shows, reports and publications referred to are issued by authoritative and official government departments and international and national sporting governing bodies. Media including BBC, the Times, Xinhua News Agency and CCTV are very influential and have a high reputation of professionalism and credibility in the UK and China. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV have very strong government and party background and act as the window of government and party movements in China. Internet resources per se can be broad but in this thesis only official websites of government department, international and national sporting governing bodies, influential and reliable media and authors with a high reputation are retrieved. However, it should be acknowledged that the information provided by interviewees and extracted from documents was largely confined to politically 'safe' issues and sensitive issues were often avoided. This is a limitation of the thesis despite the researcher's critical review of data and his attempt to gain insight beyond the 'safe' and 'official' responses. Consequently, this is a limitation that the researcher had to bear in mind during the research process.

Gratton and Jones (2010) outlined three major forms of reliability: inter-observer reliability, test-retest reliability and internal consistency reliability. Inter-observer reliability, also referred to as 'equivalence', is concerned with the question of whether the measure employed by different researchers will yield similar results. Test-retest reliability, also known as 'stability', concerns the question of whether the measure employed repeatedly by the same researchers will yield similar results. Internal consistency reliability, also called 'homogeneity', refers to the question of whether each question within a measure actually measures the same phenomenon. As shown in Appendix 7, interview themes and questions identified are central to the elite sport development and are widely regarded as keys to elite sport success. Thus, as long as the interviewees' answers are consistent (this requires careful selection of

interviewees in terms of their competence, position and professionalism, which has been discussed above), the information gathered and results obtained are unlikely to change significantly over time whether collected by the same researcher or by a different researcher. This also applies to the selection of documents. Based on similar criteria in relation to factors influencing elite sport development and elite sport success, relatively limited and focused but official sources of documents (see Appendix 9) are identified. These documents are, to a large extent, formalised and hence available to different researchers to refer to. In addition to data collection methods, data analysis methods further strengthen reliability. Thematic analysis not only helps with the organisation of the data, but also raises the standardisation of data analysis, which frames researchers' analytical activities and hence greatly enhances the 'stability' and 'equivalence'. This is more evident in terms of SPSS as this quantitative computer-based technique provides less changeable results. With respect to internal consistency reliability, or 'homogeneity', interview questions and subcategories identified reflect the broad theme and all the themes identified revolve around the central theme of teasing out how elite sport is developed in China and the UK in relation to artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. In summary, the methods employed in this research make similar research highly repeatable.

Gratton and Jones (2010) mentioned three main threats to reliability among which subject bias is underlined. As noted previously, bias and subjectivity inevitably exist in social research in general. In this research, interviewees may provide biased information and what is recorded in official publications may be the product of 'decoration and filtration' in accordance with a certain ideology. For Chinese interviewees, it is likely that they tend to avoid providing politically sensitive information although some sensitive issues were kindly referred to and even elaborated by some interviewees. In addition, researchers' selection and interpretation may involve more or less subjectivity.

4.6.2 Validity

The above subsection discusses the reliability of this research. However, as Golafshani (2003) argued, although the reliability can be fully proven, there is still a problem as to whether the instrument itself is valid. Validity, as another important

criterion for assessing the quality of research, is 'concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research' (Bryman, 2008, p. 32). It assesses whether the methods employed really measure the theoretical concept. As summarised by Pierce (2008, p. 83), 'in effect, the validity of information is its relevance and appropriateness to your research question and the directness and strength of its association with the concepts under scrutiny'.

Bryman (2008) suggested four types of validity: measurement validity, internal validity, external validity and ecological validity. Measurement validity, also referred to as 'construct validity', is about the question of whether a measure really reflects the concept. As stressed above, interview questions identified reflect corresponding themes and these themes (see Appendix 7 for more details), together with document themes, are widely accepted as key components of elite sport development systems and determinants leading to elite sport success. Moreover, the combination of primary and secondary data ensures a high degree of validity of data.

Internal validity is to do with the question of 'whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water' (Bryman, 2008, p. 32). This research involves the examination of whether policy factors such as funding, the coaching system, talent identification and development, organisational structure and competition opportunities influence Olympic performance of China and the UK in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. In other words, the research seeks to investigate the causal relationships between Olympic performance and its assumed policy determinants. Here, Olympic performance is the dependent variable while policy factors are independent variables.

The third type of validity is external validity that concerns the generalisability of the results. As discussed above, the adoption of case study design certainly implies the limitation of the generalisability of the findings and results obtained in this research. However, this limitation can be effectively compensated for by carefully selecting the cases and the exercise of caution in drawing the conclusions. As noted above, both China and the UK are highly 'representative samples' (Bryman, 2008, p. 33) given their 'membership' of leading sporting nations, prominent recent progress on the Olympic stage, emphasis on elite sport and ideological and regional

representativeness. Likewise, although elite sport development systems in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling cannot encompass all Olympic sports, they have great value in revealing at least part of the picture of generic approaches to elite sport development. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that even though the findings have limited generalisability, the methodology and methods employed in this research are highly transferrable and other researchers can apply similar methodology and methods to other countries and sports in order to increase the generalisability. In comparison, the generalisability derived from the analysis of three cases in the UK tends to be more limited compared to China due to the lack of primary interview data.

Finally, ecological validity discusses the applicability of social scientific findings to 'everyday life' (Brewer, 2000, p. 12). Generally speaking, researchers' intervention in natural settings or creation of unnatural settings (such as laboratory or a special room) for interviews has the risk of prompting invalid findings (Bryman, 2008). However, a degree of ecological invalidity is inevitable as the researcher is also a participant in the interview process and is unlikely to always conduct the interviews in a place that is natural rather than special. However, while the risk of ecological invalidity is one of which the researcher should be aware of, it is the first three types of validity take centre stage (Shadish, Cook & Campbell, 2002).

4.7 Conclusions

In summary, this research is primarily exploratory, blending descriptive elements and is largely primary, empirical and applied (although it contains some less significant secondary and theoretical elements). When it comes to ontological and epistemological considerations, similar to Houlihan and Green's (2005) prior study, this research is ontologically critical realist and epistemologically interpretative. As new theory, including new and localised findings regarding elite sport development, is to be generated, this research is predominantly inductive rather than purely testing certain theories. This research is mainly qualitative. In order to answer the basic research questions, two types of research designs are employed: case study approach and comparative approach. Based on the methodology identified, this research adopts both semi-structured interviews and documents to collect both

qualitative and quantitative data and the data gathered are then subjected to either thematic analysis or SPSS. Table 4.3 summarises the methodology chapter.

Table 4.3: A summary of methodological characteristics of this research

Type of Research		(1) Exploratory > Descriptive (2) Applied (3) Primary > Secondary (4) Empirical > Theoretical
Fundamental Philosophy	Ontology	Critical Realism
	Epistemology	Interpretivism
Methodology	Logic of Inference	Inductive > Deductive
	Research Strategy	Qualitative
	Research Design	(1) Case Study Design (2) Comparative Design
Research Methods	Data Collection	(1) Semi-Structured Interviews
		(2) Documents
	Data Analysis	(1) Thematic Analysis
		(2) SPSS

Though carefully scrutinised, inevitably there are some limitations in terms of the methodology and methods selected. For example, the adoption of case study design implies that the generalisability of the findings drawn in this research is limited. Whether the approaches to elite sport development in China and the UK represent a global phenomenon and whether elite sport development systems in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling are applicable to other sports remain inconclusive and hence debatable. Equally importantly, changes in other countries may exert spillover for the countries studied in this research, leading to possible change of elite sport development systems in China and the UK. Similarly, comparative design is a valuable approach but the degree of comparability between China and the UK needs to be carefully assessed. For instance, the term ‘modernisation’ has been a significant policy theme in both China and the UK but it refers more to political restructuring in the UK while is dominantly related to economic issues in China. As regards detailed research methods, semi-structured interviews can provide a large volume of data but great patience and economic resources are required for analysis. Even though these problems can be overcome, interviewees may provide biased and misleading information. Hence, interviewer’s experience is highly valued. Similar

drawbacks may not occur in documents, but documents have their own vulnerabilities. For example, it can be nonreactive and subjective due to the 'selective bias'. Furthermore, the media are largely controlled by the Communist Government in China and some 'sensitive' issues such as corruption and human rights abuse such as child athlete protection are not open to public debate. Hence, the researcher and the readers need to bear in mind that information provided by major media in China may be confined to politically acceptable, or 'safe' issues. Data analysis methods per se do not seem to have significant shortcomings but researcher's proficiency in mastering these methods is vital. To overcome these limitations, it is important to acknowledge that none of the above-mentioned techniques is a panacea. Although each has notable merits, they are more powerful when used collectively. For example, semi-structured interviews and documents are, to a large extent, mutually complementary and a combination of them can effectively compensate for the drawbacks of each other and therefore greatly enhance the reliability and validity of this research. At the same time, the researcher's competence, including his or her experience, attitude, ability to identify themes for data collection and to organise, analyse and interpret data is highly significant. Some of the limitations are unlikely to be fundamentally overcome at least in the short term but may be alleviated with more resources. As for the seemingly more 'stubborn' limitations such as the generalisability of this research, it is the researcher's responsibility to draw the conclusion carefully with the limitations in mind and give feasible and illuminating suggestions to future researchers. Finally, Figure 4.6 summarises key stages of this thesis.

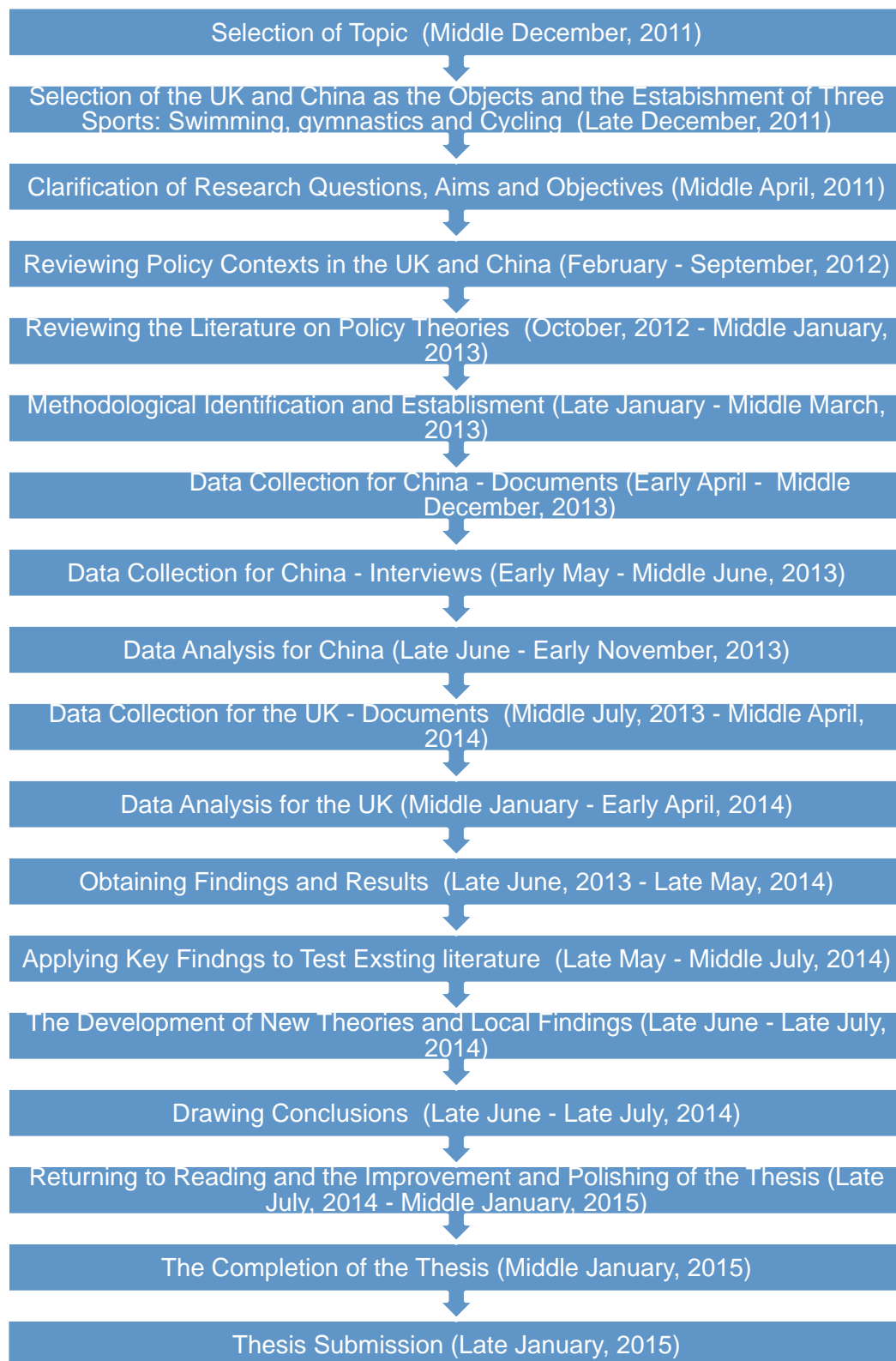


Figure 4.6: The order of research activities of this thesis

Chapter Five:

China

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings regarding China's approaches to artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling at elite level. Each case study is organised in three sections: (1) organisational structure of the sport; (2) key areas of policy of each sport within which seven key themes are identified: financial support; talent identification and athlete development; coaching; training; competition opportunities; scientific research; and others including China's international influence; (3) the analysis of decision-making pattern and policy-making process within each NSA.

However, before beginning the three detailed case studies, the general elite sport strategy and the categorisation and differentiation of Olympic sports are introduced in order to locate artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China's sporting landscape.

5.2 China's Categorisation and Differentiation of Olympic Sports and Its Implications

China's rise on the international sporting stage and at the Olympic Games has been a gradual process and its guiding ideology has shifted from searching for a competitive advantage and dominance in a limited number of sports to a concern to increase the range of sports from which medals are gained. As Shibli and Bingham (2008, p. 291) concluded, 'priority' and 'diversity' might be simultaneously pursued by China. The dual pursuits have been more evident since Athens 2004. However, although China has achieved a breakthrough in many sports in which it has previously been weak, the vast majority of its gold medals and other medals come from six sports: diving, weightlifting, artistic gymnastics, table tennis, shooting and badminton. During the period 1992-2012, China won 181 gold medals and a total of

413 medals. The gold medals and total medals won in these six sports account for 72.4% and 62.0% respectively.

It is evident that there are distinctive features in terms of China's Olympic success among different sports. At this point, it is pertinent to refer to Tian's (1998) theory, which had a profound effect on China's Olympic medal strategy and latest rise since Sydney 2000. Adapted from Tian (1998), Summer Olympic sports can be divided into three major categories and several sub-categories (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Tian's (1998) categorisation of Olympic sports and disciplines

Category	Sub-Category		Sport (Summer Olympics only)
Primarily Physical-Based	Explosive power		Field sports, weightlifting
	Speed		Sprint, short-distance swimming, short-distance track cycling
	Endurance		Distance running, race walk, rowing, distance cycling, distance and open water swimming
Primarily Skill-Based	Performance	Accuracy	Shooting, archery
		Difficult and artistic (Judge sports)	Artistic gymnastics, trampoline, diving, synchronised swimming, rhythmic gymnastics
	Direct competition	Net	Volleyball, table tennis, badminton, tennis
		Non-Net (Same-Arena)	Football, basketball, hockey, handball, water polo
		Combat	Fencing, judo, boxing, wrestling, taekwondo
Combined (Multidisciplinary) (Physical/Skill)	Same sport, but different disciplines		Decathlon, heptathlon
	Multi-Sport		Triathlon, modern pentathlon

Note: It is acknowledged that the Tian's (1998) original categorisation did not include the 'combined' category including modern pentathlon, triathlon, decathlon and heptathlon, which happens not to be China's strong suits.

Source: Adapted from Tian (1998, p. 11).

It is apparent from Table 5.1 that China's advantage largely comes from the second category - primarily skill-based sports. Five out of the major six are located inside the second category (weightlifting is the only exception as it belongs to the explosive power subcategory within Category 1). More specifically, difficult and artistic category and net category are China's most solid strongholds and largest contributors to gold medal and medal success.

Tian's (1998) categorisation of sport clarifies the similarities and differences between different Olympic sports and reveals the dominant factors determining the success in different sports, becoming the guideline of China's Olympic medal strategy. This segmentation of the Olympic market conferred the opportunity of making an informed and rational decision in positioning and targeting by China. In fact, current Chinese Olympic strategy inherited, and is still benefiting from, the legacy of the strategic prioritisation of 'small, speed, female, water and agile' sports in the 1980s, following the *Olympic Strategy* (Gu, 2013; Interviewee C, 15 May 2013). As regards the three sports studied in this thesis, artistic gymnastics is undoubtedly a primary source of Olympic medals for China and it echoes 'agile'. Generally speaking, swimming is officially identified as a 'lagging sport' (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013), although China's latest performance in London was considered successful. In fact, China has big ambitions in water sports including swimming, which is clearly illustrated in the '119 project'⁵ (He & Lu, 2009; Lu & Xu, 2009; Shen & Peng, 2005). Clearly, China is quite competitive in a number of swimming events and hence the self-positioning of 'lagging sport' for these events tends to be overly humble. The position of the primarily physical-based cycling is less contentious as China is still working for its first Olympic gold medal in this sport. According to Liang et al. (2006, p. 57), women's cycling belongs to 'potential advantage' category while men's cycling, in which Chinese athletes have seldom had the chance to participate in major world events, is categorised in the 'weak sports' family. The better performance of females in swimming and cycling reflects the prioritisation of women sports and the competitiveness of Chinese female athletes (Dong, 1998; Dong & Mangan, 2008; GAS, 2004).

⁵ *119 Project*, implicitly initiated after Sydney 2000, was a project aiming at improving China's performance and competitiveness in athletics, swimming and other water sports including sailing, canoeing and rowing. There were 119 gold medals generated from these sports.

5.3 Artistic Gymnastics

5.3.1 Introduction

First of all, consistent with the IOC's (2013a) terminology, gymnastics refers to artistic gymnastics only in this thesis. Artistic gymnastics, as one of the oldest Olympic disciplines (TeamGB.com, 2014), has never been absent from the modern Olympic Games. It has been a major contributor to China's elite sport success ever since China returned to the IOC, as one of the seven fortress sports of China officially identified by GAS (GAS, 2002). Table 5.2 below demonstrates the contribution of artistic gymnastics to China's Olympic success and the country's position on the global gymnastics stage.

Table 5.2: A summary of China's performance in artistic gymnastic at the Summer Olympic Games between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Medal Points	Ranking
Barcelona 1992	2	4	2	8	16	2
Atlanta 1996	1	4	1	6	12	5
Sydney 2000	3	2	2	7	15	2
Athens 2004	1	0	2	3	5	4
Beijing 2008	9	1	4	14	33	1
London 2012	4	3	1	8	19	1
Total	20	14	12	46	100	1

Note: Medal points = the number of gold medals \times 3 + the number of silver medals \times 2 + the number of bronze medals \times 1.

Sources: Sports Reference (SR) (2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; 2013e; 2013f).

It is not surprising that artistic gymnastics is a major sport for China as it is a primarily skill-based sport belonging to the 'difficult and artistic' subcategory (Yang,

2012a, p. 403). However, what is 'unusual' is that artistic gymnastics is one of the very few sports in which Chinese male athletes outperform their female counterparts, although Chinese female gymnasts have also achieved many successes.

The gender imbalance determines the different medal strategies at the Olympic Games. Generally speaking, winning the gold medal in the team competition is 'the paramount priority' (CCTV, 2012f) of Chinese Men's National Artistic Gymnastics Team but the emphasis on team competition does not downgrade China's equal success at other male events. By contrast, as the world's 'fourth most successful nation' during the period 1992-2012, Chinese female gymnasts target the 'niche markets' of women's uneven bars and women's balance beam instead of a wide range of events (GAS, 2012m; Peng, Tang & Yang, 2012; Yao, Jin, Xu & Jiang, 2001).

In general, southern provinces are relatively more successful in artistic gymnastics. Provinces including Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan strategically target 'agile' sports and prioritise artistic gymnastics in preparation for the National Games (J. Li, 2009; S. Li, 2009; Zhu, 2009). This shows the flexibility of provincial governments in selecting target sports and hence draws attention to the relevance of the analysis of bottom-up implementation. However, northern provinces most notably Beijing and Shandong have also made a significant contribution to the success of Chinese artistic gymnastics (Sun, 2009).

5.3.2 Organisational Structure

To understand sports organisational structure in China, it is a prerequisite to beware of a Chinese political speciality: 'two brands of a same organisation'. GAS, as a department directly under the State Council, is responsible for all sports issues in China. In theory, GAS is a governmental department while the COC is supposed to be a non-governmental organisation. However, in reality, there is only a thin line between them and COC is largely nominal, which is directly under the administrative intervention. Within GAS, the Gymnastics Management Centre, founded in 1994 (Zheng, 2012), is the only and the highest government institution specifically

responsible for the development of artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics and trampoline in China (Gymnastics Management Centre of GAS, 2011; 2013).

In theory, the Chinese Gymnastics Association (CGA) is an independent non-governmental governing body. Founded in 1954, the CGA joined FIG in October, 1978 (COC, 2004b; GAS, 2012f) and is one of its 133 affiliated members (FIG, 2013a). However, in reality, the Gymnastics Management Centre is responsible for the management and development of the CGA (GAS, 2013f). Some researchers such as Liu (2008, p. 21) described it as the blur of the function and positioning of the associations. The CGA is literally governed, or at least 'supervised' by the Management Centre and hence 'nominal'. As Lai (2009) summarised, artistic gymnastics follows a state-controlled pattern in China. This centralised and hierarchical structure conforms to many features of elitism and policy community theory. The decision-making process does not involve mass participation and is not visible to 'outsiders'. Often, decision-making is a synonym for administrative orders from upper authorities. For example, current director of the Gymnastics Luo Chaoyi was previously in charge of the Athletics Management Centre. This kind of inter-management centre leader transfer is very common within GAS. In the case of fundamental sport policies and strategies made by GAS, such as the *Olympic Strategy* and *Olympic Glory Plans*, the Gymnastics Management Centre acts as a policy implementation community. When it comes to non-fundamental and gymnastics-specific issues such as the selection of national team, domestic competition arrangement and non-head coach assignments, the Gymnastics Management Centre enjoys a high degree of autonomy as long as its activities comply with the general principles of GAS. In summary, the Gymnastics Management Centre is directly accountable to GAS and it governs, or even monopolies gymnastics-related issues in China, which largely echoes Caimey (2012) and Jordan and Maloney's (1997) theory of policy monopoly.

Most provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions have established gymnastics branches, with some sharing a management centre with other sports such as fencing, weightlifting and cycling. Provincial Management Centres that are responsible for regional gymnastics development are directly under the leadership of 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. They are not directly governed by the National Gymnastics Management Centre just as Provincial Sports Bureaus are not governed by GAS. The link between the National Management Centre and the Regional Management Centre is defined as a mentoring or supervisory one (Interviewee G, 03 June 2013). However, in practice, especially when it comes to nationwide and Olympic-related gymnastics issues, regional management centres often follow the decisions and serve the needs of the National Gymnastics Management Centre. This relationship applies to many other Olympic sports including swimming and non-road cycling (see Figure 5.1 below for more details).

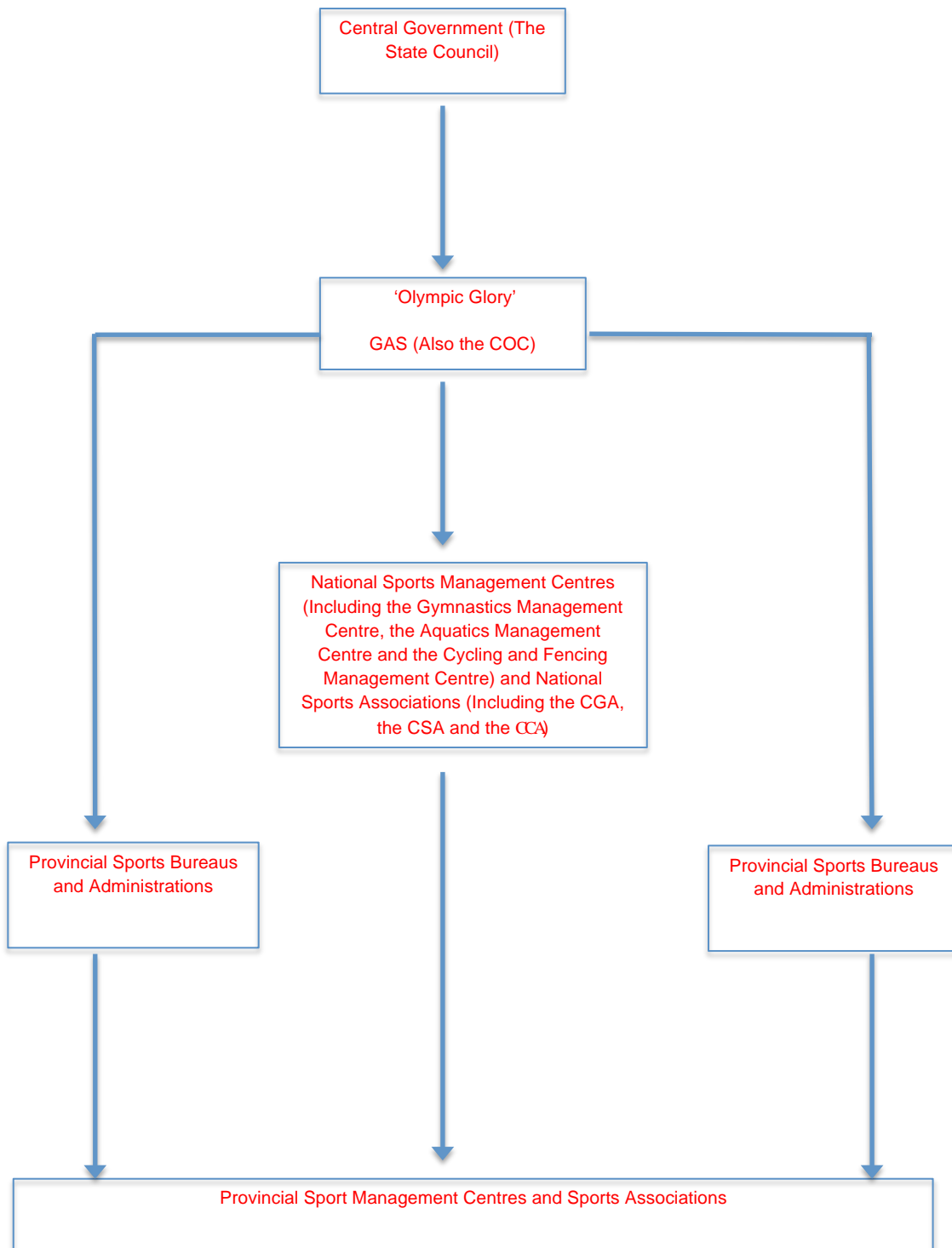


Figure 5.1: China's centralised and hierarchical elite sport structure at the central and provincial levels

Sources: Adapted from Hong and Lu (2012e, p. 116) and Tan and Green (2008, p. 318).

5.3.3 Key Areas of Policy

(1) Financial support

Elite gymnastics in China relies heavily on state funds through the distribution of GAS (Zheng, 2012). The State Council and GAS secure continuous substantial financial support for gymnastics in general and artistic gymnastics in particular to guarantee its productivity of generating Olympic gold medals. The Gymnastics Management Centre is the recipient of the funds and is responsible for the detailed allocation of money. However, despite the effort of the researcher, it proved impossible to access official figures regarding state funds allocated to the Gymnastics Management Centre. This lack of financial transparency reflects the low degree of visibility of decision-making in China and hence is an illustration of elitism and the power of the government (GAS) as a dominant policy community, or policy monopoliser.

It is noteworthy that state funds are by no means the only source of finance for artistic gymnastics. Commercial money has also made a contribution to the development of artistic gymnastics in China. For example, the CGA is currently sponsored by Li-Ning and several other companies (CGA, 2013) and the National Team has been sponsored by Samsung since 2006 (GAS, 2006b; Wang, 2008). However, market elements are still very weak and the commercialisation level is low (Zheng & Pan, 2006) and hence it is unlikely to promote professionalisation and marketisation of gymnastics in China in the near future (Liu, 2011; Mo, 2007; Zhang & Zheng, 1999).

At the regional level, provincial, municipality and autonomous regional levels of artistic gymnastics is mainly funded by corresponding regional government. The performance at the National Games directly influences the political future of leaders of regional sports bureaus and administrations (Lin & Luo, 2011), which provides a motive for many provincial governments to invest in regional development of artistic gymnastics, especially for provinces such as Hubei, Hunan, Shanghai and Sichuan where artistic gymnastics acts as a major contributor to their elite sport success

(Interviewee B, 11 May 2013). In addition, some regional artistic gymnastics teams also receive financial support from non-governmental sources (Sina, 2009b).

(2) Talent identification and athlete development

Compared to many Western countries, China has a relatively long history of a deliberate talent identification and cultivation system, which started in the early 1960s (Liang et al., 2006). The legacy of elite sport system in the planned economy era including spare-time sports schools and talent identification system basically remains 'intact' (Ma, Xu, Liu & Luo, 2003, p. 39). This system is embodied as a streamlined, continuous and hierarchical (top-down) ladder or pyramid of talent development, three-level talent development and training system and the nationwide search and selection of young talent stretched to the grass-roots level in China, many of which were inspired by and transferred from the Soviet Union. The Sovietisation of sport in the early era of People's Republic of China was an illustration of policy learning and policy transfer and the adoption of the talent identification and athlete development model most evident in East Germany showed evidence of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) mimetic isomorphism theory.

A distinctive feature of the above-mentioned communist approach to talent recruitment is, as Fisher and Borms (1990), Riordan (1991) and Riordan (1996) highlighted, a systematic and scientific talent identification process aiming to detect and recruit potential elite athletes beyond the sports participation base. Scientific talent identification of artistic gymnastics started in the mid-1970s in China (Guo, 2004). Generally speaking, artistic gymnastics in China follows the traditional top-down nationwide talent identification and progression and training system, referred to as the 'streamlined continuous ladder'. This system is formed by three levels: (1) spare-time sports schools; (2) sports schools; and (3) full-time sports teams (including provincial teams and national teams). Due to the nature of artistic gymnastics, there are many child spare time gymnastics schools established for preschool children. These grass-roots spare schools form the foundation of the Chinese elite sport system (Mu & Shao, 2005). In the case of artistic gymnastics in China, the overall environment is conducive to the smoothness of the top-down policy implementation, which largely reflects Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) ten

ingredients of perfect policy implementation including the lack of external constraint, adequate time and resources, a consensus over the importance of elite gymnastics success and a high degree of top-down obedience and compliance and the dominant authority of the Gymnastics Management Centre. Here, it is pertinent to refer to the issue of *the First Outline of the Teaching of Artistic Gymnastics* (modified in 2004) by the Sports Ministry in 1987 (Luo, 2009). The outline and the later improved versions unified artistic gymnastics activities in China, set guidelines and detailed standards for the requirement of young gymnasts at different ages and hence provided coaches at different levels with the criteria for identifying young talent and with the direction of their teaching activities (Gao & Zhang, 2005; Meng, 1990). In so doing, the foundation of Chinese artistic gymnastics has been consolidated and artistic gymnastics at grass-roots level started to be consistent with the requirements of higher levels and ultimately the needs of the National Team. This is a vivid reflection of the top-down structure and the compliance of lower level implementers with the policy of higher level of policy makers.

Female gymnasts start their training at around four to five in spare time sports schools or child gymnastics schools while the starting age for male gymnasts tends to be slightly older (Interviewee B, 11 May 2013). After a period of training and further selection, the promising child athletes get the chance to progress to a higher level of the talent development ladder - 'semi-professional' training at sports schools. Young talent in sports schools who are identified as having potential are selected for the provincial sports academies and training centres in which their performance is observed and assessed by professional coaches of the provincial, municipal and autonomous regional teams. Those who survive this stage enter the regular provincial, municipality and autonomous regional teams and become full-time gymnasts enjoying salaries paid by the government. In some cases, full-time coaches of provincial teams or provincial reserve teams go down to the sports schools and spare time sports schools to spot and recruit young talent. As Hong (2011) found, only five per cent of the athletes are able to reach the top of the pyramid and the vast majority is eliminated only with a 'broken sports dream'. It is noteworthy that there are occasions when coaches of the National Team directly go to the provincial team to guide the training and select young talent (GAS, 2012e).

In addition to provincial teams, there has been a certain proportion of gymnasts representing the National Team cultivated by the PLA system, including the Olympic champion - the 'King of the Pommel Horse' Xiao Qin (Ifeng, 2008). The role of People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the development of elite sport in China deserves some detailed discussion. As early as in the 1950s and 1960s, semi-militarised physical structure and sports teams were established across China and their athletes were state-funded and official cadres. They form a key platform for cultivating sports talent for the National Team. The PLA delegation is a parallel unit to provincial teams in domestic competitions including the National Games in which the PLA has long been a superpower. Moreover, the PLA has continuously contributed Olympic gold medal athletes and coaches to China at the Olympic Games. For example, five gold Olympians were from the PLA system in both Beijing 2008 and London 2012 (China National Radio, CNR, 2012; Xinhuanet.com, 2008c). As is widely accepted, PLA athletes are generally more hard working, disciplinarian and perseverant (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013; Interviewee E, 22 May 2013; Interviewee F, 27 May 2013). A retired senior official of GAS summarised the role of the PLA in elite sport in China.

'The PLA has made a great contribution to elite sport in China and is an integral part of the elite system. Especially in the planned economy era, the PLA was an independent "nation" inside the "nation" of the "whole country support for elite sport system" in China. During that time, most of the sports officials and leaders were previous soldiers and militants transferred from the PLA system. The most notable example was the appointment of Marshall He Long as the PRC's first Head of the Sports Ministry. The centralised elite sport system in China was very close to the management system of military. Elite sport in China followed a semi-militarised system and sport was popular and necessary among PLA soldiers. In particular, during that time, soldiers were a popular and glorious occupation to young people. Hence, the PLA team, with a well-rounded system across China (six military regions across all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities) and sufficient facility provision, assembled talent all over China and hence its competitiveness was far beyond any single Provincial team. The PLA system was the largest

beneficiary of the planned economy and the whole country support for elite sport system. Until now, despite the shock and decline it has experienced as a result of the globalisation and professionalisation most notably in basketball and football, it is still influential and vital in the development of most sports in China in terms of the cultivation of elite athletes and coaches’.

(Interviewee C, 15 May 2013)

Hong (2012) advanced the concept of ‘policy implementation community’ based on the analysis of the roles of Sangmu (arms force) and Chaebol (large corporations) in elite sport development in South Korea. In a similar sense, the PLA is a vital member of the policy implementation community in elite sport development in China, although it can hardly influence policy making.

Chinese National Artistic Gymnastics Team, established in 1953, has produced 66 world champions including Olympic champions (People.com.cn, 2013c). The competition inside the National Team is very intense as the number of the Olympic squad is limited. The Olympic squad is selected largely based on gymnasts’ performance in training and at domestic and international competitions. However, there are additional considerations most notably the pursuit of victory in the team competition especially for Chinese Men’s Artistic Gymnastics Team (CCTV, 2012f; GAS, 2012j). Therefore, ‘versatile’ or ‘balanced’ gymnasts (Huang & Shao, 2001, p. 1) are usually more welcomed than those who have expertise in one event but have major shortcomings in other events. The consecutive exclusions of ‘the King of Rings’ Dong Zhen from the Olympic squads for Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 was a good example (Sina, 2004). Figure 5.2 below outlines the ‘three-level’ network of athlete development and progression of artistic gymnastics in China.

Similar to other fortress sports such as table tennis, badminton and diving, China is vulnerable to and hence often the ‘victim’ of the involuntary ‘export’ of talent in artistic gymnastics. The case of Li Donghua, who previously served Chinese National Artistic Gymnastics Team but was not selected in the Seoul 1988 squad, transferred the nationality to Switzerland for marriage reason and won a gold medal in Atlanta 1996 in men’s pommel horse for Switzerland. This was a good example of the

potential risk of the loss of talent because of globalisation especially in strong sports where there is a high degree of talent redundancy and attractiveness to other countries. This is a demonstration of the double-edged effect of globalisation.

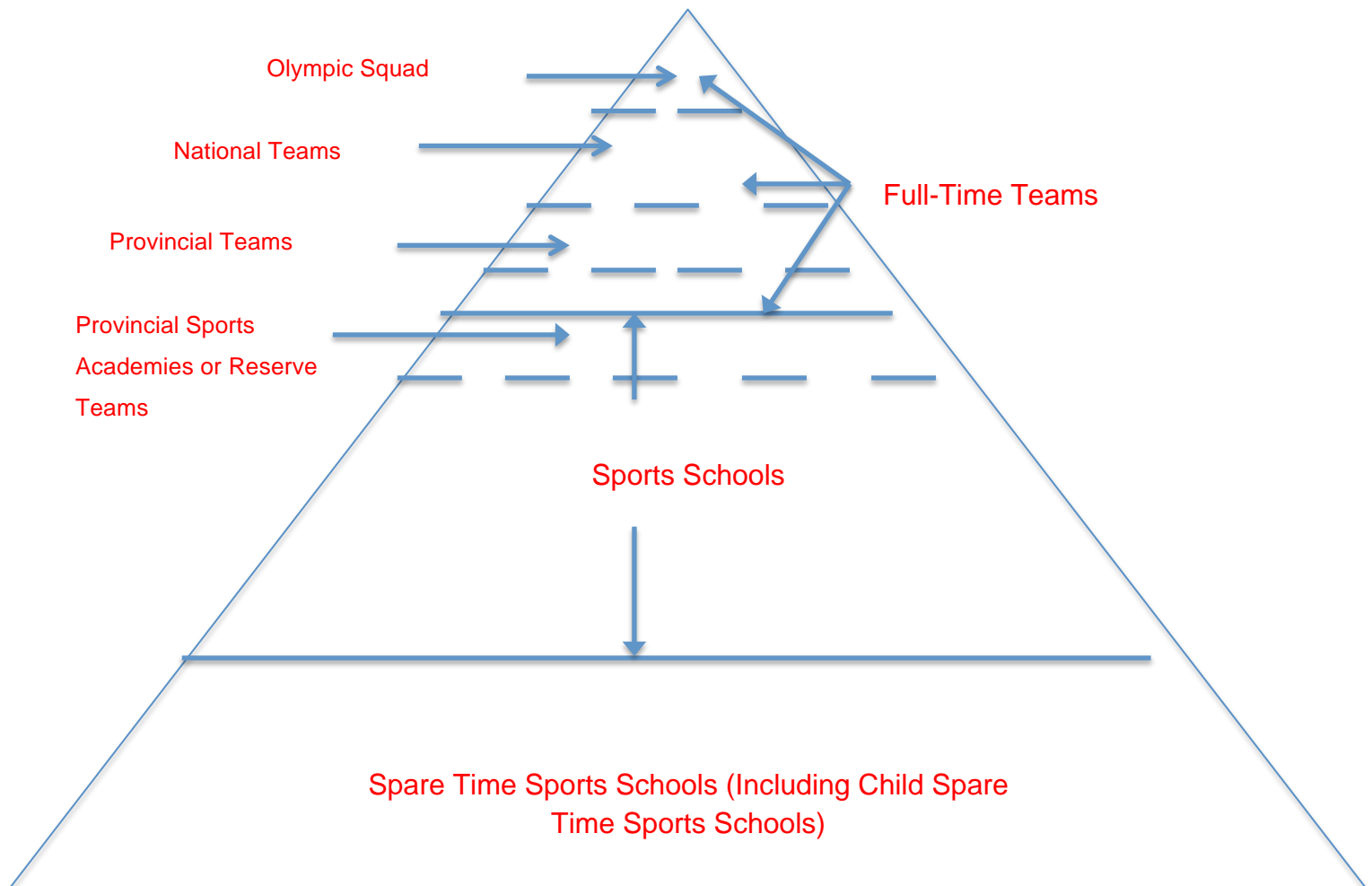


Figure 5.2: A pyramid of the 'three-level' training network in China

As Liang et al. (2006) calculated, the vast majority of Chinese Olympic gold medallists including gymnastics champions stem from spare time sports schools all over China. Guided by the priority of Olympic success, Central government and regional governments monopolise the development of artistic gymnastics and there had hardly been any community club established in China before 2000 (Liu, 2001). Changes took place in the 21st century and some private gymnastics clubs have been founded most notably in affluent areas such as Zhejiang Province and Shanghai (GAS, 2012a; 2012h; 2012i). Although they are not entirely independent from government influence as many of them are sponsored by or associated with

traditional sports schools, their positive role in expanding talent base and promoting mass participation has been recognised (GAS, 2012i; Wenzhou Daily, 2010). Profit is not the most important goal. For example, Xinqiao Club has a deficit every year (Wenzhou Daily, 2010).

The traditional approach has some weaknesses and is faced with some new challenges including 1) the reduced number of gymnasts and the decrease in young talent base (Lu & Jin, 2007; Yu, 2012; Zhou & Zhang, 2006), due to the combined influence of the one-child policy (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013; Interviewee C, 15 May 2013), the changed value and pursuit of many families which give more emphasis to education and academic results (Lao & Deng, 2008) and the economic development and the consequent import of talent outside the region in compensation for the shortage of local talent resources (Zhou & Zhang, 2006); 2) the lack of educational and post-career support and the difficulty retired gymnasts face in finding a decent job in spite of several central and regional athlete support policies (most notably *the Interim Procedure of Hiring Athletes* jointly issued by six government departments including GAS, The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2007; Yang, 2012a); and 3) the minimum age requirement of gymnasts to compete in the Olympic Games issued by the FIG in 1997 (BBC Sport, 2010) and its profound impact on the traditional athlete cultivation approach in China (Jie, Yao, Li & He, 2000), especially for female 'child athletes' (Hong, 2004). As a senior insider of artistic gymnastics in China noted:

'Chinese Men's Artistic Gymnastics Team has better mastered the rules and regularities of training methods, while the traditional training methods of Women's Team have been greatly disadvantaged by the minimum age requirement. Traditionally, due to the physical characteristics and the prevailing training methods, Chinese female gymnasts start their training at a very young age and the peak of their career appears at a young age, mainly between 12 and 14. However, the peak period does not last long due to Chinese female's physical development. Most notably the increase in weight dramatically weakens Chinese female gymnasts' agility and hence negatively affects their performance especially in China's niche markets of women's uneven bars and balance beam the dominant factors of both of

which are agility. For Chinese female gymnasts, few can maintain high level of competitiveness after 18'.

(Interviewee B, 11 May 2013)

In fact, FIG's rule of the minimum age of 16 shows China's weak position in FIG back then and the dominance of traditional Western coalition.

With respect to athlete development, it is pertinent to refer to the function of ideological education. The Training Bureau of GAS, honoured with the title of 'National Demonstration Centre of National Patriotism Education' (GAS, 2009a), is directly responsible for the operation of formal ideological education (GAS, 2013g). Patriotism, collectivism, revolutionary heroism and Marxism are the key themes (GAS, 2008h). The form of formal ideological education varies from lectures (GAS, 2013o), forums, visits, to short-term military training (Sina, 1999), learning of heroic and good deeds and so forth.

Top gymnasts especially Olympic gold medallists enjoy a wide range of material and non-material rewards. Rewards are provided by both the state and different levels of government and the society (Liang et al., 2006; Zhang, 2006). Financial rewards for Olympic medallists provided by GAS are fixed and do not vary across different sports. Table 5.3 shows the dramatic increase in the amount of money awarded to Olympic medallists by GAS from Barcelona 1992 to London 2012. Moreover, as Tan and Green (2008) noted, Management Centres sign contracts with the Chinese government for medal target and if the target is fulfilled, the Gymnastics Management Centre receives awards from the government. Provincial and City Sports Bureaus and Administrations are also awarded by GAS if they make an 'outstanding' contribution to China's Olympic performance (GAS, 2012p; Xu et al., 2010).

Table 5.3: The amount of money award to each Chinese Olympic gold provided by the state (GAS) from Barcelona 1992 to London 2012 (Unit: Yuan)

	Barcelona 1992	Atlanta 1996	Sydney 2000	Athens 2004	Beijing 2008	London 2012
Gold	80,000	80,000	150,000	200,000	350,000	500,000 (unofficial)

Note: In mid 2014, one Chinese yuan is approximately equivalent to 0.1 UK sterling.

Sources: Xinhuanet.com (2012c); Xu, Pei, Zhang, Xu, Zhou, Zhang, Li & Wang (2010, p. 140).

In addition, there are financial rewards provided by the Management Centre and provincial, city and county governments. In fact, provinces play a significant role in producing elite sport talent and deliver the policy made by GAS and the Gymnastics Management Centre and the rivalry between provinces is a significant driving force to produce elite gymnasts and hence promote the development of artistic gymnastics in China. With respect to social rewards, the form and source tend to be more diverse, including company rewards and sponsorship, rewards provided by non-governmental organisations and private foundations in Mainland China and Hong Kong (COC, 2006). In addition to monetary incentives, material rewards provided by the government and society also include houses, cars and other non-monetary forms (Xu et al., 2010). Many gymnastics stars have endorsed famous brands such as Coca Cola, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pepsi and so forth. Taking commercial and non-commercial revenues together, Chinese National Artistic Gymnastics Team in general and star-level gymnasts are very valuable. The increased use of material rewards, to some extent, reflects the fact that in modern China, the traditional ideological education alone can hardly provide top athletes with sufficient commitment and morale. However, as a non-commercialised sport where collective interest is overriding, there is hardly any explicit conflict between athlete's individualism on the one hand, and patriotism and the need of the nation on the other.

In addition to material rewards, Chinese Olympic champion gymnasts are frequent recipients of non-material rewards and social honours. Some gymnastics Olympic champions are even involved in politics including positions in highly elitist and exclusive political groups such as the National People's Congress (NPC) and the

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) (NPC, 2008; People's Political Consultative Conference of Anhui Province, 2013). This demonstrates the social status of high-profile Olympic champions in China.

(3) Coaching

Artistic gymnastics coaches of full-time teams including National Teams and provincial teams are full-time coaches and once registered, they enjoy administrative appointments and fixed wages from the government. The vast majority of gymnastic coaches working for the National Team are appointed by the leaders of the Gymnastics Management Centre but the appointment of the head and deputy head coaches needs to be approved by GAS (Yang, 2012a).

There is a clear top-down pyramid regarding the composition of coaches of the National Artistic Gymnastics Team. According to Yu and Wei (2010), the head coach of the National Team (managing both Men's and Women's Teams) is the supreme manager of the National Team. Directly under the head coach are the chief coaches for the Men's and Women's Teams respectively (one chief coach each). Men's and Women's Teams are further divided into several groups and each group comprises a coach in charge, several other coaches and gymnasts. The outstanding representatives of 'gold medal coaches' are able to move upward to the higher level of the coaching pyramid and even obtain administrative and political promotion and fulfilling the posts of the Director of the Chinese Gymnastics Management Centre (level of 'leading roles of departments or equivalents') (People.com.cn, 2008a).

Chinese National Artistic Gymnastics Team seldom uses a foreign coach. Women's floor exercise is the only exception. The Romanian-born French coach Adrian Pop has helped with the design of routines (mainly choreography) of women's floor exercise for top Chinese female gymnasts since 2002 (Barter Corner Gymnastics Academy, BCGA, 2013; People.com.cn, 2006). Adrian Pop has helped improve China's performance in women's floor exercise especially in the World Championships. However, women's floor exercise remains the weakest area of Chinese artistic gymnastics (CCTV, 2011c; COC, 2010). In addition, GAS and the Gymnastics Management Centre invites foreign coaches (for example those from

Russia and Romania) to give lectures (People.com.cn, 2005). The hiring of a foreign coach and invitation of foreign experts demonstrate that even in a strong and largely self-reliant sport, China is willing to import specialist coaches and successful foreign experience to improve its weak area.

(4) Training

As noted above, artistic gymnastics in China adopts the traditional ‘three-level’ training network (GAS, 2003). The National Training Base of GAS is the stronghold for most National Teams and the National Artistic Gymnastics Team spends most of the training time there, inside the gymnastics hall. GAS is in charge of the funding allocation and the maintenance of the hall and equipment through its Sports Facilities and Equipment Centre (GAS, 2013j) and food and accommodation of athletes through its Training Bureau (GAS, 2013f). Immediately before major events such as the Olympic Games and the World Championships, the National Artistic Gymnastics Team moves to the training base in Jixian, Tianjin for intensive training (People.com.cn, 2011).

The National Team is divided into men’s and women’s coaching teams and each team is further categorised into seven to eight training teams (Luo, 2009). It is noteworthy that members of National Teams seldom leave the National Training Bases for their regional team even if there are domestic competitions which require them to represent their provinces, municipalities or autonomous regions. In addition to the National Adult Artistic Gymnastics Team, young elite talent from regional teams and the National Youth Team also get the chance to train in the National Training Bases (Xinhuanet.com, 2005b). The inclusion of young talent ensures China’s smoothness in replacing the old athletes by fresh blood and contributes to China’s continuing success in artistic gymnastics.

Winter training is especially crucial to Chinese Artistic Gymnastics Team. Winter training usually starts right after the end of competition season (usually at the beginning of December) (CCTV, 2011b; GAS, 2011f) and ends at the end of February or the beginning of March, with a large-scale internal examination and assessment (GAS, 2012d). Generally speaking, male athletes take at least nine

sessions per week, three to four hours per session. Female athletes are considered to need more training and hence they take at least nine sessions per week but four to five hours per session (Interviewee B, 11 May 2013).

(5) Competition opportunities

Major domestic artistic gymnastics-specific competitions include the annual National Artistic Gymnastics Champions Competition, which is held in the second half of a year, and the annual National Artistic Gymnastics Championships (first held in 1979, Luo, 2009) for three age groups respectively: adult, youth and juvenile (GAS, 2012c). The scale of each of these competitions is around 400 to 500 gymnasts (GAS, 2013e). At regional level, there are provincial-, municipality- and autonomous regional-scale competitions designed to spot young talent from grass-roots level. It is worth noting that in between the level of national competitions and provincial level, there are competitions covering certain provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions within the same geographical area, known as the 'Cooperation Area (Communication) Artistic Gymnastics Competitions', including the North China Cooperation Area, East China Cooperation Area and Southwest China Cooperation Artistic Gymnastics Competition (Anhui Bureau of Sport, 2011; China Daily, 2012a; GAS, 2011c). In addition to artistic gymnastics-specific competitions, the National Games, as the most important sporting platform to showcase 'political achievements' (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013) in China, are the most important comprehensive event for Chinese gymnasts in the form of provincial teams.

Chinese elite gymnasts compete in a wide range of international and continental competitions. Among these, the World Championships are the most valued event to which Chinese Artistic Gymnastics Team usually sends its strongest squad especially at the World Championships held in the year before the Olympic Games (Interviewee B, 11 May 2013). Meanwhile, China is active in hosting major international artistic gymnastics events and has held several major events including World Championships and World Cup Series (FIG, 2011; GAS, 2012b). Despite the various forms and natures of competitions, the ultimate goal and function of them is identical: to serve the Olympic Games.

(6) Scientific research

Two units of GAS - The Science and Education Department and China Institute of Sport Science are responsible for the scientific support for elite sport in China at national level (China Institute of Sport Science, CISS, 2008; GAS, 2013h; 2013i). These two units are administratively parallel. Furthermore, the Sports Information Centre and the Research Institute of Sports Medicine under GAS are responsible for the provision of domestic and international sports information and medical services respectively (GAS, 2013k; 2013l).

Artistic gymnastics especially the National Team receives constant multi-dimensional scientific support from the state following the national policy of 'revitalising the nation through science and education' (Xinhuanet.com, 2003b). There is a scientific team including statistical analysts, psychologists, nutritionists and physicians staying with the team and serving their daily training. This team comprises experts from CISS, the Sports Information Centre and the Research Institute of Sports Medical and universities including both sports universities and leading comprehensive universities. 'The scientisation of training' is a key concern and objective (Yang, 2012a, p. 533). In the case of the Olympic Games, the scientific team is stationed close to the Olympic village in order to provide timely and prompt support (GAS, 2011g).

It is noteworthy that the perception that the underperformance of the physical and psychological adjustments of many top gymnasts was one of the key reasons leading to China's disappointing performance at Athens 2004 became the catalyst for a more scientific approach to artistic gymnastics. From a theoretical perspective, China's poor performance in Athens 2004 opened a 'policy window' (Kingdon, 1984) and the dramatically reduced number of gold medals and medals was the indicator reflecting the problem. Public disappointment and criticism throughout the country and the dissatisfaction of the state and GAS were the political stream. With sufficient money and policy approval from GAS, pushed forward by external forces including the society, the media and internal forces including GAS and the Gymnastics Management Centre, a series of steps were taken and science was a key dimension. Key steps include the invitation of senior scientists of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University for physical training and health care in preparation for Beijing 2008 (The

Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2005) and the hiring top Chinese psychologists to provide psychological support to the team (Zheng & Zhou, 2008).

(7) Others

- *The Mastery of the rules*

As Luo (2009, p. 254) summarised, 'the learning, mastering and using of new rules' is the heart and soul of Chinese Artistic Gymnastic Team. New rules-related issues always take centre stage of the activities of the National Team in the year after the Olympics (CGA, 2012b). The translated version of the new rules is published and sent to each region as soon as possible. At the beginning of the year after the Olympic Games, the Gymnastics Management Centre and the Chinese Gymnastics Association organise a national-scale course, assembling all the coaches serving the National Team and National-Level judges (GAS, 2013b). An ex-member of the Men's Technical Committee of FIG who is also a senior gymnastics judge noted that:

'The study of the new rules is essential to the Chinese Artistic Gymnastics Team and the Management Centre and the Gymnastics Team places great emphasis on the nationwide promotion of the new rules. At the central level, national-level judges and coaches are required to attend the course at the beginning of the year after the previous Olympic Games and only those who pass the exams at the end of the course can continue their gymnastics work for the new Olympiad'.

(Interviewee B, 11 May 2013)

In addition to the top-down nationwide delivery of the spirit of the rules, there are courses and other forms of studying new rules organised at provincial level. This shows Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) and Hjern and Hull's (1982) theory of the significance of bottom-up implementation and a certain degree of flexibility in policy implementation at provincial government level in China.

The 'prompt and smooth adaptation to and rational grasp of the new rules' (GAS, 2007e) has been the key to China's dominance in major artistic gymnastics

competitions. A most recent example was China's adaptation to and taking advantage of the radical change after Athens 2004 that the previous 'ten-point' limit was replaced with the non-maximum scoring system in 2006 (People.com.cn, 2008b).

- International influence

Chinese officials have not been absent from representation on FIG since the 1980s. There has been one Chinese member in either the Executive Committee or the Council in each Olympiad since 1984 (CCTV, 2008; CGA, 2012a; GAS, 2008g; Xinhuanet.com, 2008d). In fact, this echoes GAS's and its predecessor the Sports Ministry's deliberate strategy. In the *Strategic Olympic Glory Plan 1994-2000* and the latest version of *2011-2020*, the Sports Ministry and GAS stated that:

'Cultivate leaders and officials in the international sports organisations, actively participate in international sporting affairs and gradually strengthen China's influence in the international organisations. In order to adapt to the internationalisation of sport, (we) need to enhance the pace of designing the plan of cultivating leaders and officials of the international sports organisations and select retired world-class sporting stars and world famous young coaches and referees for concentrated training. Recommend a batch of professional sports officials who are good at foreign languages to the international sports organisations as soon as possible. Try to occupy a position in the IFs of all of the 18 key sports and this is an important supplementary element of the *Olympic Glory Plan*'.

(Sports Ministry of China, 1995)

‘Further the cultivation of personnel working in the international sports organisations and talent of foreign affairs. Support and encourage appropriate candidates to run for posts in the international sports organisations and try to be more involved in the activities of international sports organisations and in the decision making of the IFs. Strengthen China’s influence and voice in international sporting affairs’.

(GAS, 2011d)

In addition, there has always been a Chinese member in the Men’s Technical Committee since 1988 and in the Women’s Technical Committee since 2000 (CCTV, 2008). Furthermore, until the time of writing this thesis, China has more than 100 International Judges recognised by FIG, including two male and three female judges with a Category One (highest level) Certificate (FIG, 2013b).

China has continuously had its representatives in the FIG and to some extent, it secures China’s participation in the decision-making process of FIG and provides China with some advantages, or at least convenience in designing and implementing the rules (Interviewee B, 11 May 2013). However, FIG is still Western-dominated (CGA, 2012a; FIG, 2013c). Especially, Chinese females have very limited influence (FIG, 2013d). The minimum age requirement for female gymnasts was a good example of China’s limited influence.

5.3.4 Conclusions

Artistic gymnastics in China follows the rigidly centralised and hierarchical structure and is underpinned by much legacy of the planned economy such as sports schools and three-level network. GAS and the Chinese Gymnastics Management Centre are the community dominating, and to some extent, monopolising the development of artistic gymnastics in China and key CCP officials are the key decision makers, following the central government and CCP’s fundamental spirit and principles. The policy making process involves very limited number of ‘bureaucratic insiders’ and the decision-making process is seldom visible. Olympic success and elite sport performance is the paramount pursuit and elite gymnastics takes substantial priority over non-elite gymnastics. University academics are one of the very few non-

government groups that can influence policy making but their role is mainly advisory. The role of universities, together with provincial sports bureaus and provincial gymnastics governing bodies and teams and PLA team, is more evident in the policy implementation stage. The policy implementation primarily follows a top-down structure especially when it comes to fundamental issues and this structure is stretched to spare time sports schools and sports schools at the grass-roots level. The organisational structure is clearly hierarchical and the power is highly centralised. The high degree of obedience and compliance, the substantial financial resources and the consensus over the Olympic success at different levels together produce a conducive environment for the smooth implementation of policy in China. In general, the tension between the National Team and regional teams is not significant and the interests of the National Team are prioritised and well protected (Interviewee B, 11 May 2013). This makes the policy implementation pattern for artistic gymnastics in China close to Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) conditions of 'perfect implementation'. However, there are also bottom-up elements on Chinese gymnastics map with coaches and administrators at the provincial level having some influence over the priority given to the sport and over the development of gymnastics.

Chinese artistic gymnastics is largely self-reliant and China is in a leading position in the world in terms of the cultivation of coaches and athletes, training methods, the mastery of rules, the designing of routines and scientific support. Especially, the success of Chinese Men's Artistic Gymnastics Team is generally 'made in China' and 'made by Chinese'. However, even in a strong sport like artistic gymnastics, China is by no means exclusivist but is willing to import foreign experts especially in its weak areas.

Though largely self-reliant, the development of artistic gymnastics in China can hardly avoid external environment. Instead of passively resisting global trends, China has actively adapted itself to the changing environment. The prompt and effective study and mastery of the new rules most notably the non-maximum scoring system have made Chinese National Teams, especially male gymnasts, more successful in the last two Olympiads. In comparison, the loss of talent most notably the Li Donghua case shows the negative impact of globalisation.

Chinese gymnasts' journey to glory has not always been smooth. The unexpected poor performance in Athens 2004 became a wake-up call for China after which China has taken a lot of innovative and effective measures to improve the performance of the National Team. From the perspective of Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams theory, the poor performance in Athens 2004 was a policy window for the policy change. However, what is more fundamental to the development of artistic gymnastics in China was Beijing's success in bidding for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and Chinese government's medal ambition. The Beijing Olympic Games provided the Gymnastics Management Centre and the National Team with both pressure and unprecedented resources to achieve higher success and contribute more gold medals to Chinese delegation. To improve scientific support and to employ non-mainland scientific expertise was a key solution.

GAS and the Gymnastics Management Centre are able to control domestic artistic gymnastics and integrate domestic resources to serve the Olympic preparation, but much less able to influence the decision-making of FIG. Despite its increased significance, China is still relatively weak in FIG, which is firmly controlled by Western groups. The rule of the minimum age of 16 issued in 1997 was a salient example of China's limited influence over the decision of the FIG, especially in relation to female gymnastics.

5.4 Swimming

5.4.1 Introduction

The English term 'swimming' is often confused with 'aquatics'. Therefore, consistent with the IOC (2013b), swimming studied in this thesis does not include diving, synchronised swimming and water polo. Swimming has a relatively long history in China. As early as in 1936, the then Nationalist Government sent a delegation including two swimmers to the Berlin Olympic Games (SR, 2013m). In the 1950s, Chinese swimmers broke the world record of men's breaststroke five times (Li, 2009). Table 5.4 summarises China's performance in the six most recent Olympic Games. It is evident from the table that there is a u-shape curve regarding China's Olympic performance from Barcelona 1992 to London 2012.

Table 5.4: A summary of China's performance in swimming at the Summer Olympic Games between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Medal Points	Ranking
Barcelona 1992	4	5	0	9	22	4
Atlanta 1996	1	3	2	6	11	8
Sydney 2000	0	0	0	0	0	-
Athens 2004	1	1	0	2	5	10
Beijing 2008	1	3	2	6	11	7
London 2012	5	2	3	10	22	2
Total	12	14	7	33	71	3

Note: Medal points = the number of gold medals \times 3 + the number of silver medals \times 2 + the number of bronze medals \times 1.

Sources: Sports Reference (SR) (2013g; 2013h; 2013i; 2013j; 2013k; 2013l).

Akin to athletics, swimming is officially identified as a foundation and lagging sport in China (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013; Yang, 2012a). The positioning as a foundation sport is appropriate. However, the positioning as a lagging sport is humbling, but oversimplified especially considering 1) Chinese swimmers' recent rise and its significant contribution to the Chinese Olympic delegation; 2) Chinese female swimmers' long-standing competitiveness on the international stage and China's recent progress in some male events most notably men's medium and long distance freestyle. Here, Liang et al.'s (2006) categorisation is more precise as they argued that only parts of swimming events should be identified as 'lagging'. In fact, the positioning is not static and men's long distance freestyle has been identified as a 'potential advantage' after Beijing 2008 (Interviewee F, 27 May 2013; see also Yuan, 2013). Different from artistic gymnastics, swimming is a good example of a common rule in Chinese elite sport that female athletes outperform their male counterparts. Categorisation and positioning apart, what is less contentious is the significance of swimming in China, which is reflected in the *119 Project* noted previously, a

purposive project that targeted athletics, swimming and water sports including rowing, sailing and canoeing.

5.4.2 Organisational Structure

The Aquatics Management Centre, subordinate to GAS, is the highest swimming-specific organ of state administration (Aquatics Management Centre of GAS, 2013a). With respect to fundamental issues and basic principles and directions, GAS holds the decision-making power and in these cases, the Aquatics Management Centre acts as a policy implementation community. However, the Aquatics Management Centre enjoys a high degree of autonomy when it comes to more specific swimming-related issues as long as it obeys the fundamental direction and principles of GAS.

The National Team focuses on the management and operation of the athletes, coaches and other staff of the National Team. According to the team leader of the National Swimming Team, the decision-making process is highly hierarchical.

‘Key decision makers mainly come from the National Team Committee and the Swimming Department inside the Aquatics Management Centre. The current director of the Team Committee is also the secretary of the Aquatics Management Centre. He is a key decision maker, working together with the team leader and the head coach of the National Team and so on. In general, decision making involves four to five people. They form the core of the policy making community. Olympic gold medal coaches join the decision making if it concerns the National Team. When it comes to non-National team issues such as competition schedules, the Swimming Department takes up the responsibility ... Athletes are seldom involved in the policy making process. There is not any athlete committee inside the Aquatics Management Centre and the Swimming Department. The exclusion of athletes from the policy making process helps enhance the efficiency of the policy implementation. ... Provincial Teams regularly provide suggestions and feedbacks to the Management Centre and the National Team and the Management Centre and the Swimming Department often exchange opinions with Provincial Teams regarding

issues such as competition schedules and the method of Olympic squad selection. But the leaders of the Management Centre, the Swimming Department and the National Team make final decisions’.

(Interviewee E, 22 May 2013)

A limited number of people, mainly four to five, decide the policies of swimming at national level. The overriding interests inside the policy community are to pursue Olympic glory and elite sport success. The summary made by a key official inside the National Swimming Team demonstrates the role of leaders and officials in the development of elite sport in China.

‘More importantly, it shows the significant role of the directors, leaders and head coaches of the National Team Committee, namely the officials of the Aquatics Management Centre in the development of elite swimming in China. Their logic, understanding and thoughts make a huge impact on the development of swimming in China’.

(Interviewee E, 22 May 2013)

Chinese Swimming Association (CSA), founded in 1956, is nominally a non-government organisation (CSA, 2013). It represents Chinese swimming in the world and is a member of FINA (FINA, 2013a; GAS, 2012g). However, in reality, the CSA follows the will of GAS and the Aquatics Management Centre.

At the regional level, swimming-related management centres and departments are affiliated to regional sports bureaus or administrations and hence belong to regional governments. In principle, the Chinese Aquatics Management Centre does not govern provincial aquatics management centres and the relationship is in the form of ‘professional guidance’ (Interviewee G, 03 June 2013). However, in reality, there are many cases where provincial teams serve the need of the National Team especially in relation to fundamental policies such as the *Olympic Glory Plan* (Anhui Athletics & Swimming Sports Management Association, 2013).

5.4.3 Key Areas of Policy

(1) Financial support

State funds are the most significant financial source to the Aquatics Management Centre and the CSA. It is known that the annual government investment in the National Swimming Team has been approximately 13 million yuan (1 GBP is equivalent to about 10 CNY) for the London Olympiad (interviewee E, 22 May 2013). GAS is in charge of the funding allocation to each sport including swimming according to the number of administrative appointments.

In recent years, swimming has attracted substantial commercial money especially in the Olympic year (for example, from Audi, Midea and PING AN, CSA, 2013; Ifeng, 2010; 2012a; Xinhuanet.com, 2008a). However, state funds are largely sufficient and hence there has always been a surplus of the commercial money. The balance of the Aquatics Management Centre account has reached 100 million yuan and annual tax is more than 10 million yuan (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). A main area in which commercial investment makes a great contribution is the overseas training of the National Team, where commercial sponsoring money is usually around 10 million yuan each year in the London Olympiad, accounting for 50% of the total expenditure (CCTV, 2011a; Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). It is noteworthy that sponsorship and commercial money is strictly controlled by the Economic Department of GAS (The Economic Department of GAS, 2013a), which, instead of the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Swimming Team, is the recipient of the money and regulates its use. Commercial money can only be used for training (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). Hence, it demonstrates a rigidly hierarchical relationship between GAS and the Aquatics Management Centre.

(2) Talent identification and athlete development

Elite swimming in China is still largely dependent on the traditional three-level network for the cultivation of talent (Chen, Guo & Cheng, 2007; Tan, 2005) (see Figure 5.1). In the early 1980s, based on the learning of experience from some European countries, China established the *Training Programme of Swimming for*

Different Age Groups, which provided specific standards for talent identification and was promoted nationwide (Xu, 2013). Children start their rudimentary swimming training at spare-time sports schools at six or seven. Promising young swimmers are promoted to sports schools or the reserve teams of provincial swimming teams at the age of 12 or 13 for boys and 11 or 12 for girls (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). Young swimmers are observed in the reserve teams or the sports schools for one year (sometimes two years) and the promising ones win the opportunity to enter provincial teams and become full-time swimmers. In general, the maximum age of the progression to the provincial team for a swimmer is 14 and if a swimmer still fails to show potential at 14, then he or she is 'abandoned'. This selection method is ruthless, but it ensures the quality of the full-time swimming teams and the concentration of resources (Zhang, 2013). Akin to artistic gymnastics, the PLA team has continuously provided the National Team with coaches and swimmers including the London Olympic champion Jiao Liuyang (Ifeng, 2012b).

Almost all swimmers in the National Team come from provincial or PLA teams. Before 2000, there was no regular National Swimming Team, or only a 'federalised' loose team (Bai, 2011, p. 38; Chen, Guo & Cheng, 2007, p. 17). Provincial teams were often reluctant to send top athletes to the National Team because it conflicted with their provincial interests and the National Team was hence largely 'hollowed out' (Liu, 2001, p. 17). Provincial teams provided more substantial benefits including financial rewards to swimmers in an attempt to achieve better performance at the National Games and hence influenced their preferences (Xinhuanet.com, 2001). However, the lack of concentration was proven unbeneficial to the performance of the National Team in major competitions. As a consequence, the event-oriented transitional National Team system was established after Sydney 2000 and finally, following the *119 Project* and led by new leaders of the Aquatics Management Centre, a regular National Team was created at the end of 2002. There were innovations regarding the National Team system in the Beijing Olympiad and the most notable example was the introduction of the concept of the 'Big National Team'.

Previously, the National Team was only in charge of the recruitment of swimming talent from provincial teams and the management of the National Team. Following the 'Big National Team', the National Team, to some extent, transcends the top-

down hierarchy between the National Team and provincial teams by fully taking advantage of provincial resources including facilities, scientific support, coaches and young talent and including them in the broader scale of the National Team. Pre-eminent young talent of provincial teams can be directly recruited to the National Team irrespective of age (GAS, 2013p). The concept of the 'Big National Team' better integrates domestic resources and transcends provincial boundaries. As will be discussed below, coaches of one provincial team (coaches serving the National Team are also working for their provincial teams) are often in charge of swimmers from different provinces. In so doing, provincial rivalry has been ingeniously transformed into inter-provincial support and an atmosphere that provincial teams fully consider and respect the interests of the National Team has been gradually formed (Bai, 2011). Moreover, the National Team has become more active in communicating with provincial teams and absorbing young swimming talent in provincial teams. The most salient example is the collective training for reserve swimmers organised by the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Team since the Beijing Olympiad (GAS, 2013p). Details will be provided in the training section.

In addition to the traditional three-level system, there are some private swimming schools established in affluent regions such as Hangzhou City, Guangzhou City and some cities in Liaoning Province. The aim of these private schools is often the cultivation of top elite swimmers instead of short-term profit making (CCTV, 2012c). The attempt to integrate education and sport has also benefited the development of swimming especially in Zhejiang province and has contributed to the rise of Zhejiang in swimming. The most salient example is the inclusion of swimming as one of the sports subjects in the high-school entrance examination in many cities in Zhejiang (GAS, 2011b).

Despite China's progress in swimming and the swimming 'boom' most notably in cities in Zhejiang Province such as Hangzhou (People.com.cn, 2013b), the number of young swimmers at the grass-roots level is decreasing for which one-child policy and many families' preference for academic success are main causes (Interviewee F, 27 May 2013). The population of registered full-time swimmers in China is only around 1,000 (Liu, Huang & Zhang, 2005). Taking the half of below-15 swimmers

who are not mature enough to compete in international events out of consideration, the number of elite swimmers that Chinese National Team can use is around 400 to 500 (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). This insufficiency has rendered it difficult for China to develop a sustainable competitive advantage in certain events, as it is difficult to establish group advantage, which is evidenced in the recent decline of China's competitiveness in women's breaststroke. The unsolved dilemma of retired elite swimmers exacerbates this problem.

There is no major difference between sports regarding ideological education and hence details can be found in the above section of artistic gymnastics (CSA, 2004; People.com.cn, 2007). However, ideological education alone can no longer be sufficient to enhance athletes' morale in modern China. The role of material and non-material rewards has become more significant in enhancing top swimmers' morale. Similar to artistic gymnastics, governments of different levels, ranging from central government and provincial governments, to city, county, district and even town governments provide financial rewards and other forms of material rewards including cars and houses to Olympic medallists. The detailed figures of financial award provided by GAS can be found in Table 5.3 above. Moreover, athletes and coaches receive financial rewards from non-governmental sources. Sun Yang is a good example of substantial financial rewards. Taken together, Sun Yang received approximately 11 million yuan for his medal performance in London 2012 (CCTV, 2013b). Detailed breakdowns can be found in Appendix 10. Furthermore, top swimmers especially Olympic gold medallists are highly sought-after endorsers. For example, Sun Yang has endorsed brands including Hyundai, Coca-Cola and Amway (CCTV, 2013b), but the athlete per se can receive only 50% of the money and the remainder is required to be given to the coaches, provincial and city swimming teams and GAS (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). The Aquatics Management Centre also receives financial rewards from the Chinese government if it meets the target established in the contract (Tan & Green, 2008). Provincial and city sports bureaus and administrations are also recipients of financial rewards for the production of Olympic medallists (GAS, 2012p; Xu et al., 2010). Last, top elite swimmers, similar to other sports, can enjoy social honours and even political titles. For example, Olympic champion Jiao Liuyang was elected as a member of the 18th National People's Congress (NPC) (Xinhuanet.com, 2012f).

(3) Coaching

The head coach of Chinese National Swimming Team is appointed by the Aquatics Management Centre (People.com.cn, 2009), but the appointment needs to be approved by GAS (Yang, 2012a). Coaches of the National Team also belong to their corresponding provincial teams, leading the provincial teams in major domestic competitions such as the National Games (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). However, when they fulfill roles in the National Team, following the concept of the 'Big National Team', coaching transcends provincial boundaries and coaches are often in charge of athletes from different provinces. This is a better integration of talent resources, which has better reconciled the interests of the National Team and provincial teams.

In fact, Chinese swimming is very willing to be involved in international swimming (GAS, 2012o). Following the strategy of 'Invite In and Go Out', Chinese National Swimming Team has been committed to the hiring of foreign coaches and overseas training. The trigger was the poor performance at the 2007 Melbourne FINA World Championships in which China failed to win any gold medals. After that, the Director of GAS - Liu Peng put forward four points to Chinese National Swimming Team including the hiring of high-level foreign coaches and the sending of key swimmers to leading swimming countries for training (GAS, 2011a). From the perspective of Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams theory, poor performance in Melbourne 2007 opened a policy window for the cooperation with foreign coaches and overseas training. The training with Denis Cotterell, the coach of Grant Hackett, since 2007 helped improve Zhang Lin's performance and he became the first Chinese male ever to win an Olympic swimming medal in Beijing 2008 (The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2008). Chinese National Swimming Team has maintained cooperation with Denis Cotterell and regularly sends key swimmers including Sun Yang to Australia for training. The contract does not set any specific goals but Denis Cotterell and other foreign coaches such as Ken Wood, are financially rewarded by the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Team for Olympic gold medal performance (CCTV, 2012d; People.com.cn, 2012). Denis Cotterell occasionally visits the National Training Base in Beijing to guide swimmers of the National Team. The cooperation with leading foreign coaches and the 'Go Out' strategy was continued and the hiring of foreign coaches was strengthened after

London 2012 (CCTV, 2013a; GAS, 2012q). The relationship between foreign coaches and provincial teams is largely contractual. The hiring of foreign coaches in general has produced many positive results and the National Swimming Team have become one of the leading sports teams in conducting a long-term 'Invite In and Go Out' strategy (CCTV, 2012g).

(4) Training

With the establishment of a regular National Team instead of the previously 'federal' system in 2002, the training of the swimmers of the National Team has been more systematic and concentrated. The average annual training time for swimmers of the National Team is approximately 340 days (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). The Training Base of GAS is the headquarters for the National Swimming Team. In the London Olympiad, including pre-eminent reserve athletes, the size of the National Team remained between 100 and 200 swimmers. In addition to Beijing, there are training bases for the National Team in Hangzhou, Dalian and other places in China (GAS, 2007a; 2012r). In order to improve the aerobic capacity of swimmers of the National Team, many coaches have taken their swimmers, covering a wide range of events, to the Duoba National Plateau Sports Training Base in Qinghai Province, sometimes the base in Kunming, Yunnan Province (GAS, 2012n; 2013d) for annual high altitude training since 2006, the duration of which is normally four to five weeks (COC, 2013; GAS, 2008b).

In fact, as early as in 2006, Chinese National Swimming Team started to send top swimmers abroad for overseas training but the training in the USA was, according to Zhou (2012), not satisfactory. The Management Centre and the National Team learned lessons and concluded that overseas training should be more targeted and selective and the training destinations should have world-leading facilities, coaches and swimmers (GAS, 2012t). First major breakthrough took place after Zhang Lin became Denis Cotterell's 'apprentice' and received training in Australia after the 2007 Melbourne FINA World Championships. Zhang Lin's later success consolidated the Management Centre and the National Team's determination to continue with overseas training. The vast majority of the National Team goes abroad for overseas training on a regular basis and Australia has become the main destination (CCTV,

2012a). Individual overseas training was expanded to collective training in 2010 (CCTV, 2012a), which was referred to as the ‘modern Self-Strengthening Movement⁶ of Chinese swimming’ (Zhou, 2012, p. 54). Chinese National Team sends a team to Australia each year and the training usually lasts four to six weeks. Some key groups go to Australia twice a year. In addition to Australia, the USA, Germany and the UK are also destinations for overseas training (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). Overseas training demonstrates the determination of GAS in general and the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Swimming Team in particular to further international communication and to adapt to global trends in athlete development. Thus, this shows a controlled and managed engagement with globalisation of the Aquatics Management Centre. In provinces such as Shanghai, top swimmers are also sent abroad for overseas training (CCTV, 2010). This is another example of the strengthening of the ‘Invite In and Go Out’ at regional level and hence echoes bottom-up policy implementation theory.

As noted above, the relationship between the National Team and provincial teams has become closer with the introduction of the concept of the ‘Big National Team’ and collective training for reserve swimmers. The collective training, usually held three to four times annually, gathers almost all young talented swimmers from each provincial team and the coaches of the National Team deliver guidance to young coaches and swimmers. In the collective training for reserve swimmers, provincial teams are divided into several big groups and each group contains several provincial teams from both North China which are generally better at physical training and those from South China which are better at skills (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). Teams in the same big group, including coaches and athletes from different provinces, follow a unified plan and they train together. More importantly, these innovative measures have unified the interests of the National Team and provincial teams. In addition to its contribution of many excellent swimmers and some Olympic gold medal coaches (GAS, 2011e), collective training for reserve swimmers has also helped with the progress of some lagging provinces such as Henan and Anhui because of the deliberate policy ‘bias’ in terms of venue selection (GAS, 2012o).

⁶ Self-Strengthening Movement (*Yangwu Yundong* in Chinese), from the early 1860s to the middle 1890s, was a period of institutional reforms in the late Qing Dynasty following a series of military defeats and concessions to Western powers, aiming to strengthen China through learning from Western experience.

Home team can send two coaches and eight swimmers to the collective training for reserve swimmers in comparison to one coach and four swimmers allowed for non-home provincial teams (CSA, 2011). This is a demonstration of the Aquatics Management Centre's deliberate policy to improve the overall development of swimming nationwide.

(5) Competition opportunities

The National Games, as the most high-profile domestic competition, is the 'Olympic Games' to many provincial swimming teams (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013). For provinces and municipalities such as Zhejiang and Shanghai, the performance in swimming largely determines, or at least, influences their positions in the medals table. Taking Zhejiang Province as an example, at the 2013 Liaoning National Games, Zhejiang won 35 gold medals and ranked 7th in the medals table. Swimming contributed 25 gold medals to the delegation, accounting for more than two thirds of the total gold medals that Zhejiang won. It is noteworthy that only 15 gold medals were actually won during the National Games as the remaining 10 gold medals were 'transferred' from the 2012 London Olympic Games (Liaoning 2013, 2013a; 2013b). These transferred gold medals are referred to as 'policy medals' (Wu, 2013, quoted in CCTV, 2013d)⁷. GAS adopted this medal calculation method as part of its strategy to implement national policy with an aim to better coordinate regional interests with those of the National Teams, trying to make provincial sports teams, which prioritise the National Games, better serve GAS' goal of Olympic success. At the same time, it mirrors the integral role of provincial teams in delivering Chinese elite sport success. The detailed medal and point system is complicated. In the case of swimming, a gold medal in the individual events at the Olympic Games is counted as two gold medals at the National Games. An additional gold medal is transferred to the National Games if the champion breaks a world record. When it comes to team events such as relay events, the affiliation teams all win a medal if their swimmers are in the medal squad but the maximum for one provincial team is two if there are more than

⁷ In order to alleviate the conflict between national interests and provincial interests, to encourage provincial sports bureaus to cooperate in the delivery of the *Olympic Glory Plan* and to guarantee their delivery of sports talent to pursue Olympic success, Olympic medals have been transferred to the National Games since the 1993 Beijing National Games (CCTV, 2009), which provincial sports bureaus and administrations value the most. These transferred medals are referred to as 'policy medals' (Wu, 2013, quoted in CCTV, 2013d).

two swimmers from the same provincial team (not applicable to football, basketball and volleyball). A double-point system is also adopted for athletes representing the PLA team according to which both the home province of the PLA athlete and the PLA team win a medal at the National Games if the medallist represents the PLA team (CCTV, 2013c).

The National Swimming Champions Competition (in the first half of a year) and the National Swimming Championships (in the second half of a year), both held annually, are the two most important swimming-specific domestic competitions (Aquatics Management Centre of GAS, 2013b; 2013c; CSA, 2012). Again, they are fully exploited by the Aquatics Management Centre to provide incentives to provincial teams in order to invest in the development of swimming in general and to improve certain events in particular. The most salient example is China's recent progress in men's 4×200 metres freestyle relay.

'On the final day of the National Swimming Champions Competition, all the best 16 swimmers in the events of men's 100 metres freestyle and men's 200 metres freestyle are assembled. They are divided into four relay teams by lot to have a star relay competition. This measure is a purposive policy support for men's freestyle events and has led to more substantial regional support for men's freestyle. Several world-class male freestyle swimmers have emerged from this competition'.

(Interviewee F, 27 May 2013)

In addition, National Juvenile and Youth Swimming Champions Competition and Championships are organised, aiming to detect and recruit potential seed-corn for future elite squads (CSA, 2008).

As regards international competitions, the Olympic Games is undoubtedly the paramount focus. The FINA World Aquatics Championships, as the most significant swimming-specific event, is the most valued non-Olympic competition for Chinese National Swimming Team. With respect to other events organised by FINA such as the FINA Swimming World Cup, China may be deliberately absent or send non-top

swimmers. In comparison, the Asian Games is highly emphasised and the rivalry with Japan has long attracted enormous domestic attention (GAS, 2010d; Ye, 2004). China has hosted several international swimming events in recent years. Shanghai hosted the 2011 FINA World Aquatics Championships, the most high-profile swimming-specific event that China has hosted (FINA, 2011; Shanghai 2011, 2011). Moreover, Beijing has been a regular venue for FINA Swimming World Cup (China Daily, 2012c).

(6) Scientific research

GAS and CISS send a specialised team including top sports medical experts from both leading comprehensive universities and sports universities in China to the National Team training centre and the scientific team stays with the team to provide day-to-day support. Key athletes especially those who have a real chance of winning gold medals at the Olympic Games and FINA World Championships, enjoy additional care (GAS, 2007b). They are accompanied by special scientific and medical teams and personalised masseurs (CCTV, 2012b; GAS, 2010c). It is noteworthy that in the case of the Olympic Games, scientific and medical staff from provincial teams may join the National Team to support some key swimmers such as Sun Yang and Ye Shiwen (China Daily, 2012b; GAS, 2012l). Consistent with the 'Invite In and Go Out' strategy, the National Team has sent key swimmers to Hong Kong Polytechnic University for recuperation (Xinhuanet.com, 2009). Moreover, the team invites experts from Hong Kong for long-term and short-term scientific support (Interviewee F, 27 May 2013).

With respect to research and academia, universities have made a great contribution to elite sport in general including elite swimming in China. Among these comprehensive and sport-specific universities, the role of Beijing Sport University is pre-eminent. The team leader and the head coach of the National Swimming Team, the director of the National Team Committee and the head of the Aquatics Management Centre are all graduates of Beijing Sport University. Many of the Olympic gold medal coaches also graduated from Beijing Sport University.

‘Beijing Sport University is known as the “Whampoa Military Academy”⁸ of Chinese Sport’. The vast majority of officials working in GAS and Management Centres graduated from Beijing Sport University. The trainings and advanced courses for these officials are also undertaken by Beijing Sport University. In fact, Beijing Sport University is the founder of Chinese sport, the role of which is beyond compare... Taking swimming as an example, the team leader and the head coach of the National Team, the director of the National Team Committee and the head of the Aquatics Management Centre are all graduates of Beijing Sport University. Many of the Olympic gold medal coaches also graduated from Beijing Sport University. In addition, Chinese Elite Sport National Teams including National Swimming Team have maintained cooperation with the university in relation to scientific support. The head of the Science Team of the National Swimming Team is from Beijing Sport University, too. As for athletes, many current and retired athletes rely on Beijing Sport University for education’.

(Interviewee E, 22 May 2013)

It is no exaggeration to say that people from Beijing Sport University form the core of Chinese elite sport community and the decision-making group of GAS and many management centres. Its influence permeates many areas of elite sport in China especially at central level. In fact, about 40% of Chinese sports officials including key leaders of GAS and Management Centres come from Beijing Sport University (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013).

In addition to Beijing Sport University, sport universities in Shanghai, Wuhan, Guangzhou, Xi’an, Tianjin, Shenyang and Chengdu have also made significant contributions to elite sport development in China and these eight sports universities have formed a sports sub-community, constituting an integral part in the elite sport landscape in China. They not only provide

⁸ Whampoa Military Academy, also known as Kuomintang Army Officer Academy, founded in the 1920s, was a renowned military school that produced many prestigious commanders both for Kuomintang and the Communist Party, many of which became key founders of the People's Republic of China and the Kuomintang government in Taiwan. Sun Yat-Sen was the premier of the academy, Chiang Kai-shek was the first commandant and Zhou Enlai was a political instructor.

direct support to different National Teams, but also strengthen the relationship between insiders of the government system as the vast majority of key insiders are graduates of these eight sports universities. Hence, as will be further discussed later, these sports universities better bridge insiders of the 'whole country support for elite sport system' and tighten the policy community in elite sport in China (interviewee A, 08 May 2013; Interviewee H, 05 June 2013). Their largely similar background also strengthens the communication and personal relationship between members in the community, which resonates with the concept of *guanxi* (connectedness) in China in general and in elite sport in particular.

In fact, universities and scholars may be one of the very few non-government groups that have some real impact on the policy making of elite sport in China, although they do not hold the decision making power. Their roles are largely similar in relation to the contribution of scientific and research support and the important advisory role of the scholars, who are regularly invited to attend the conferences, meetings and discussions organised by GAS and Management Centres (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013). Many leading scholars maintain close relationship with leaders and officials and their communication is regular and often frequent.

(7) Others

- *Anti-doping*

Chinese National Swimming Team especially the Women's Team rose in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games and swept the 1994 Rome World Championships. However, the Team experienced a nadir between the late 1990s and the early 2000s and the large-scale drug use was the culprit (Xu, Qu & Zhong, 2005). It is noteworthy that the eruption of doping incidents was closely related to the recruitment of former East German coaches and medical staff (Hu, 2013). The policy learning and transfer from East Germany led to nightmarish consequences. Moreover, the use of drugs by many East German coaches on their swimmers reflected Lipsky's (1980) 'street-level bureaucrats' bottom-up implementation theory. These doping uses, most notably the

scandals at the 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games and 1998 Perth FINA World Championships (People.com.cn, 2003b; The Telegraph, 2012b), were the largest scale of doping scandals in Chinese elite sport history, which have had a profound impact on not only Chinese elite swimming but also the whole Chinese elite sport realm (People.com.cn, 2013a). The overall competitiveness of Chinese swimming was also vastly weakened (Xu, Qu & Zhong, 2005). These two humiliating scandals, officially identified as 'subversive incidents' (Xinhuanet.com, 2012b) in Chinese swimming history, became the catalysts for GAS and the Aquatics Management Centre to take strict measures to crack down on drug use and China became one of the earliest countries to adopt blood tests in 1999 (People.com.cn, 2000).

The approaching of Beijing 2008 accelerated the development of anti-doping in China. The establishment of China Anti-Doping Agency (ChinaDA, affiliated to GAS) in 2007 was a milestone, which signaled China's determination to fight against doping (ChinaDA, 2013). As for swimming, in addition to general anti-doping codes of WADA and ChinaDA, the Aquatics Management Centre and the CSA have required registered swimmers to provide non-competition whereabouts and increased the frequency of out of competition tests since 2005 (ChinaDA, 2010). 'Zero tolerance' policy has been adopted and the punishment was once more severe than that of WADA, which was best demonstrated in the Aquatics Management Centre's lifelong ban on Ouyang Kunpeng, approved by GAS (China Daily, 2008). The establishment of a regular National Team renders it possible to strictly track and detect whether key swimmers use banned substance. In addition to the tests conducted by WADA and ChinaDA, swimmers that regularly train in the National Team have been required to take blood tests on a weekly basis since 2008 (Bai, 2012; Interviewee E, 22 May 2013). These 'heavyweight' measures on anti-doping have created a healthy environment for Chinese elite swimming and the number of doping cases has dropped significantly over the last decade.

- International influence

China had been a member of FINA before the establishment of the PRC. However, due to the Taiwan issue, China left FINA in 1958 and did not return until 1980 (GAS, 2012g). In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of Chinese

holding positions in key organs of FINA including the FINA Bureau and various committees such as the Athletes Committees, Technical Swimming Committees (TSC) and Coaches Committee (FINA, 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; 2013e). In addition, there are several Chinese swimming officials in FINA (FINA, 2013f; 2013g; 2013h). China's increased influence in FINA is also reflected in Midea's sponsoring of FINA (FINA, 2013i).

Although it is evident that China's position in FINA has increased in recent years, the dominance of Western countries in FINA is still beyond challenge. Chinese Aquatics Management Centre's leadership in Chinese elite swimming is dominant but on the international stage, China has limited power (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013).

5.4.4 Conclusions

China's dramatic progress in swimming in London 2012 was not achieved in a day. Poor performance in Sydney 2000 was a significant exogenous factor and Beijing's success in bid for the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001 and the launch of the *119 Project* provided the development of elite swimming with a golden opportunity. More specifically, personnel change especially the appointment of the new Director and Vice Director of the Aquatics Management Centre brought sea change to the National Swimming Team. A regular National Team was established and the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Team have adopted many effective measures to reconcile the interests of the National Team and provincial teams and to integrate domestic resources. The establishment of a 'Big National Team' and the frequent organisation of collective training for reserve swimmers are demonstrations of the more harmonious relation between the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Team on the one hand, and provincial swimming teams on the other. Moreover, GAS and the Aquatics Management Centre have used the competition leverage to enhance provincial teams' willingness to cooperate in pursuing Olympic success and to deliver good swimmers to the National Team. The 'policy medals' transferred from the Olympic Games to the National Games and the star relay competition in the National Swimming Champions Competition are good examples. The smoother relationship between the National Team and provincial teams has

benefited the progress of the National Team in international competitions. Again, it shows the important role of provincial teams in backing elite sport success of China. Equally importantly, the long-term and systematic rather than short-term and pragmatic hiring of top foreign coaches and regular overseas trainings have made a great contribution to China's progress in swimming. In fact, the Aquatics Management Centre, compared with many other Olympic sports, is the most active and committed in delivering GAS' 'Invite In and Go Out' strategy.

As noted above, Chinese swimming experienced a nadir in the late 1990s and large-scale drug use was the culprit. This was a significant problem. From the perspective of Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective of the multiple streams, the doping scandals in the 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games and the 1998 Perth World Championships and the poor performance in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games were focusing events (Birkland, 1998) and indicators (the decline in the number of medals and in the medals table in Sydney 2000) of the problem stream. Beijing 2008 was another key focusing event for Chinese swimming. In response to these problems and Beijing 2008, some solutions were put forward. The 'survived' ideas included the cracking down on doping, the establishment of a regular National Team, the hiring of foreign coaches and overseas training, the change of leadership of the Aquatics Management Centre and so forth. These formed the policy stream. In terms of political stream, as noted in the political context chapter, elite sport has long been valued by the Communist government due to its function to raise China's international image and strengthen national pride. The adoption of a market economy and the determination to strengthen global integration after entering the WTO has occupied a key position on the agenda of the Communist Party since the late 1990s and the early 2000s. This provided a backdrop of the support for elite swimming and the 'Invite In and Go Out' strategy, which can be vividly demonstrated in the *119 Project*. Doping scandals at Hiroshima 1994 and Perth 1998 made GAS and the Aquatics Management Centre realise the serious consequences of doping offence and prompted the organisational response. The poor performance in Sydney 2000 further strengthened their determination to change existing approaches to the development of swimming. Actions included more effective measures on anti-doping, personnel turnovers in the Aquatics Management Centre and the National Team, the concentration of the National Team and the rudimentary plans to take advantage of

foreign expertise. The success in bid for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in 2001 was a key policy window for policy changes in many Olympic sports in China including swimming. The issue of the *119 Project* provided a golden opportunity for elite swimming authorities to improve their policies and put these plans into practice. In fact, these formed key policy windows for many important policy changes in the history of elite swimming in China, many of which have laid the foundations for China's current achievement. More importantly, the doping incidents of swimming in 1994 and 1998 opened a policy window not only for the strengthening of anti-doping policies in swimming, but also for the whole Chinese elite sport landscape. Poor performance in Melbourne 2007 opened a policy window for the adoption of foreign coaches and large-scale overseas training.

It is evident that there is a policy community existing in the development of swimming in China. Provincial teams may provide suggestions and feedback, but the decision power is in the hands of GAS and the Aquatics Management Centre. These stakeholders, with a common aim of the paramount pursuit of elite swimming success and Olympic glory, form a highly exclusive and government-dominated policy community. GAS and the Chinese Aquatics Management Centre form the community dominating, and to some extent, monopolising the development of swimming in China and key leaders and CCP officials are the key decision makers, following the central government and CCP's fundamental spirit and principles. The policy-making process involves very limited number of insiders and some senior scholars and universities are one of the very few non-government groups that can influence the policy making but their role is mainly advisory. Moreover, a key thread that ties interest groups inside the policy community together is their largely common educational background - the origin of Beijing Sport University. This common background further strengthens mutual trust inside the policy community and provides convenience for smooth and frequent internal communication. Of equal importance to the provincial swimming governing bodies and provincial swimming teams is the PLA which constitutes an integral part of the policy implementation community in elite swimming in China and its most important contribution is the cultivation of competent including leading coaches and swimmers.

However, despite the positive improvements mentioned above, there are several potential barriers to the long-term development of elite swimming in China. The most noteworthy threat is the limited swimming population. Moreover, the Aquatics Management Centre is largely able to control domestic swimming issues through various policy instruments, but its influence in the world is still very limited.

5.5 Cycling

5.5.1 Introduction

Cycling is one of the oldest Olympic sports and has never been absent from the Summer Olympic Games since Athens 1896. As the third largest source of gold medals, Olympic cycling currently comprises four disciplines: track cycling, road cycling, mountain bike and BMX (IOC, 2013c).

The development of elite cycling in China can be traced back to the Nationalist period before the establishment of the PRC. The delegation sent to the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games included one cyclist (Sport Reference, SR, 2013n). However, the overall competitiveness of Chinese cycling in the world is insignificant and its contribution to China's performance at the Olympic Games is very limited. It is the only Olympic sport with more than ten Olympic gold medals at a single Olympic Games in which China has not yet won a gold medal. As a 'primarily physical-based' sport that mainly requires either speed or endurance (GAS, 2008f; Tian, 1998), China's weakness in cycling is not surprising. Another characteristic is the gender imbalance. Chinese cycling is a perfect illustration of the underperformance of male athletes in China. Since the medal breakthrough in Sydney 2000, China has continuously won at least one medal in Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012 (see Table 5.5) and all the six medals are from female events. Of particular note is Chinese female cyclists' emerging group advantage in short-distance events (GAS, 2013c). In comparison, Chinese male cyclists can hardly build advantage in Asia (Cai, 1997) and struggle for Olympic qualification. Consequently, women's cycling, especially women's short-distance track cycling, is officially identified as 'potential advantage' (Liang et al., 2006, p. 57), while men's cycling is identified as 'lagging'.

Table 5.5: A summary of China's performance in cycling at the Summer Olympic Games between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Medal Points	Ranking
Barcelona 1992	0	0	0	0	0	-
Atlanta 1996	0	0	0	0	0	-
Sydney 2000	0	0	1	1	1	15
Athens 2004	0	1	0	1	2	14
Beijing 2008	0	0	1	1	1	17
London 2012	0	2	1	3	5	12
Total	0	3	3	6	9	21

Note: Medal points = the number of gold medals \times 3 + the number of silver medals \times 2 + the number of bronze medals \times 1.

Sources: Sports Reference (SR) (2013o; 2013p; 2013q; 2013r; 2013s; 2013t).

5.5.2 Organisational Structure

Previous to the reform of the Sports Ministry into GAS in 1998, cycling fell within the same governing body with a non-Olympic sport of motorcycling, in the charge of the Cycling and Motorcycling Management Centre under the Sports Ministry (Cai, 1997). The degree of specialisation for cycling was limited. The organisational reform of the Sports Ministry and the restructuring of Management Centres after the 'stagnant' performance in Atlanta 1996 opened a door for cycling in China. The National Cycling and Fencing Management Centre was established and became the highest governing body for cycling in China in the early 2000s. However, the range of the responsibility of the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre is far beyond its name. In fact, it is the national governing body for five Olympic sports, covering the responsibility of cycling, fencing, equestrian, modern pentathlon and triathlon (Cycling and Fencing Management Centre of GAS, 2011a). The rationales for combining these five sports in the same Management Centre were:

‘First, all these five sports are highly European sports. They are not China’s traditional advantages. Second, there are overlaps between these sports. For example, triathlon contains cycling and modern pentathlon includes fencing and equestrian. Considering the limited scale of these sports, it is not appropriate to establish an independent management centre for any of them’.

(Interviewee D, 16 May 2013)

The degree of specialisation has improved as the distinction between Olympic and non-Olympic sports has become clear. However, cycling still fails to enjoy an ‘independent’ or ‘individualised’ management centre. The sharing of administrative leadership, personnel and resources with other four Olympic sports, inevitably weakens and dilutes the support for and resources available to cycling. In fact, what the ‘limited scale’ referred to above really suggests is the peripheral position of cycling in China. This also reflects, at least, GAS’ less systematic support for cycling in comparison to many other Olympic sports.

There are two units inside the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre that directly govern the development of cycling in China: the Cycling Department and National Cycling Team (Cycling and Fencing Management Centre of GAS, 2011b; 2011c). Chinese Cycling Association (CCA), as the only legal organisation representing China in the UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale, UCI, 2013a), is nominally a social organisation registered in the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) of China (CCA, 2007). However, the development of cycling especially elite cycling is largely a government responsibility in China and the CCA is virtually another brand of Cycling Department of the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013).

At provincial level, full-time cycling teams have been established in the vast majority of provinces in China (Cycling and Fencing Management Centre of GAS, 2013). The form of the governing bodies of cycling at provincial level varies but what tends to be common is the sharing of cycling with other sports in a management centre (except for very few provinces such as Shanxi Province, Shanxi Provincial Sports Bureau, 2005) (Henan Provincial Cycling and Modern Pentathlon Management Centre, 2013; Jilin Provincial Sports Bureau, 2013; Liaoning Provincial Sports Bureau, 2011),

which is consistent with the organisational structure at the central level. Although provincial cycling teams are expected to serve the needs of the National Team, provincial cycling governing bodies are affiliated to provincial governments and hence there is no direct leadership relationship between the National Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and provincial management centres and provincial teams. The tension between the interests of the National Team and of provincial teams tended to be notable, especially before 2000, in the form of protectionism of the cyclists from the same home province in the National Team and the reluctance to send top cyclists to the National Team by provincial teams.

5.5.3 Key Areas of Policy

(1) Financial support

Except for road cycling which is more commercialised and professionalised, the development of elite track cycling, mountain bike and BMX relies overwhelmingly on government subvention in China. Regular National Team is only established for women's short-distance track events which are the paramount priority and all the other events are primarily developed by provincial teams. Hence, these cyclists are primarily funded by their corresponding provincial governments. GAS is the distributor of government funds to the Management Centre and the National Team. However, detailed funding figures are not available to public. This is a demonstration of the limited transparency of decision making and information inside the policy community. Nevertheless, it is known that following the *Olympic Glory Plan* and the committed pursuit of Olympic gold medals, GAS provides sufficient financial support for the events in which China has a chance to win Olympic gold medals and multi-dimensional support for potential gold medallists is secured by GAS (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). It is noteworthy that the cultivation of some top Chinese female cyclists once used money provided by Olympic Solidarity (People.com.cn, 2001), which is uncommon among Chinese elite athletes. This illustrates that even in a highly self-funded (mainly government-funded) 'whole country support for elite sport' system, China still employs foreign resources including financial resources. Therefore, this demonstrates the engagement with globalisation of Chinese elite sport.

In provinces where there is a highly competitive team or there are potential gold medal-level cyclists at the National Games, the governments are very financially generous. The 'Olympic gold medal fever' at the central level has been transformed into 'National Game gold medal fever' at the provincial level. A lack of systematic support for non-key events at the central level does not discourage provincial support for these events as long as these events are included in the National Games.

Although elite non-road cycling in China is overwhelmingly funded by governments, it is wrong to think that there is no commercial element. The CCA has several commercial partners (CCA, 2013b) and the National Cycling Team has been continuously sponsored by some commercial enterprises (Cycling and Fencing Management Centre of GAS, 2012). Provincial cycling associations and teams obtain commercial sponsorship including title sponsorship as well (Xinhuanet.com, 2007; 2012a).

(2) Talent identification and athlete development

Even in the early 1980s, large-scale scientific talent identification of elite cyclists was conducted in many provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions across China (He, Pang, Bai, Song, Zhang, Li, Dong & Zhang, 1993). This further proved that China is an early adopter of systematic talent identification as even in a non-major sport, systematic talent identification has existed for more than three decades. The traditional three-level training network and the (spare-time) sports school system dominates the cultivation of elite cyclists in China. However, due to a lack of cycling culture and mass base (Sina, 2009a), many coaches complain that it is very difficult to find promising cycling seed-corn in China (Xinhuanet.com, 2012d).

Cyclists successfully entering provincial teams become full-time athletes and enjoy administrative appointments and salaries. However, as Hong (2011) pointed out, only 5% of athletes can survive the ruthless elimination and finally become full-time athletes, while the remaining 95% leave sports schools with a 'shattered dream' and are very uncompetitive in the job market due to poor educational background. According to Yang's (2012a) categorisation of elite national teams in China, National Cycling Team adopts a flexible combination of both 'centralised' and 'federal'

systems. For events in which China has a real chance of winning medals or gold medal potential in major international competitions, namely women's short-distance track events, there is a regular National Team, which is long congregated for collective training in the Laoshan Base in the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre in Beijing. They are led by specialised coaches of the National Team, who are often carefully selected and hired by the National Team. In comparison, there are no regular National Teams for men's track events, women's medium- and long-distance track events, BMX, mountainbike, and especially road events (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). As for non-road non-key events, there are regular collective training events for top cyclists in the Laoshan Base during a year. But provincial teams are primarily responsible for the training of top cyclists in these events. In preparation for major international cycling events such as the Olympic Games, the UCI World Championships and the Asian Games, according to recent performance in domestic and international competitions (usually a point system), cyclists and coaches of these non-key events are temporarily selected (usually based on the same provincial teams) and the National Teams are formed (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). Road cycling is even 'looser'. Due to its high degree of commercialisation and professionalisation and China's almost 'zero possibility' of winning medals in major international competitions, road cycling is strategically 'given up' at the National Team level (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). Immediately before major competitions, a temporary National Road Cycling Team is formed and cyclists and coaches are selected based on a point system.

It is noteworthy that Guo Shuang and Gong Jinjie, the pillars of Chinese National Cycling Team in the last two Olympiads, are not fostered by the traditional three-level network. Different from the traditional three-level delivery style, coaches of the National Team went down to provincial and city teams and even grass-roots sports schools to seek and recruit young talent (mainly 12 to 13 years old) at the very beginning of the 21st century. It is noteworthy that Gong Jinjie had previously been engaged in athletics and hence this was an example of talent transfer. Provincial teams were required to recommend promising talent. However, due to their prioritisation of the National Games, many provincial teams recommended very 'raw' (inexperienced) children instead of more 'processed' and experienced cycling talent, or budding stars of their own youth or reserve teams, with an intention to maximise

their interests in domestic competitions. This can be seen as a diluting, or negative response to the demand or requirement of the central government by provincial governments. For cyclists, to represent the provincial teams to compete in domestic competitions may result in more return than to represent the National Team (Xinmin.cn, 2009b). Therefore, it echoes Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) and Hjern and Hull's (1982) theory of the significance of lower-level organisations in the implementation process. Young talent, both recommended by provincial and city teams and identified by the coaches of the National Team, directly entered the National Team, skipping the provincial level. The most successful representatives, such as Guo Shuang and Li Na, later becoming China's only two world champions so far, received the opportunity of training in the International Training Centre in Switzerland in the early 2000s, following the coaching of renowned foreign coaches and sponsored by Olympic Solidarity. However, there were some unfavourable factors forcing the National Team to adopt direct talent recruitment.

'The negative competition between provinces and provincial rivalries have harmed the benefits of the National Team. Many provincial cycling teams prioritise the performance at the National Games over the interests of the National Team. There are provinces standing behind elite cyclists in China, even in the National Team. In order to minimise the 'distraction' such as the potential injury risk due to training in and competitions for the National Team, many provincial teams, especially previously, often refused to send top cyclists to the National Team. Even in the National Team, 'protectionism' was once very popular as coaches of one province tended to 'promote' athletes from the same province, at the sacrifice of promising and talented cyclists from other provinces'.

(Interviewee D, 16 May 2013)

What is evident from the direct selection and recruitment of young talent at provincial and city level by the coaches of the National Team was the emphasis given by provinces to local interests instead of the interests of the National Team and the influence of provincial teams in diluting or negatively responding to policies and requirements of the National Team and protecting their own interests. Hence, it showed the tension between provincial teams and the National Team and the limited

medal-winning opportunities of Chinese National Cycling Team. It also showed the National Team's limited control over provincial teams.

Nevertheless, traditional sports school system and three-level network still play a dominant role in producing elite cyclists in China (Sina, 2009a). Similar to artistic gymnastics and swimming, the PLA team is very competitive in domestic cycling competitions most notably at the National Games and has contributed many coaches and cyclists including Olympic athletes to the National Team (GAS, 2008e). However, there is evidence of the development of alternative approaches most notably the development of commercialisation and professionalisation of road cycling in China noted above. A number of private road cycling clubs have been established, which recruit both foreign and domestic talented cyclists including those representing the Chinese National Team (CCTV, 2005a). In comparison, there is much less evidence of commercialisation in the other three disciplines in general and in track cycling in particular and there is a separation, or partition between the development of government-led elite cycling and that of amateur cycling.

BMX has attracted much government attention since it was decided by the IOC to include the discipline in the Olympic Games (since Beijing 2008) in 2003 (GAS, 2007c; 2013m). Examples of government support included the establishment of the inaugural Chinese National BMX Team in 2005 (COC, 2005; Sports.cn, 2007), the hiring of a French coach (COC, 2005), the inclusion of BMX in the National Games since Jiangsu 2005 (Xinhuanet.com, 2005a) and the establishment of a complete domestic BMX competition system in the Beijing Olympiad (GAS, 2013m) and the support for Taiyuan's bid for the 2008 BMX World Championships (CCTV, 2005c). This echoed Houlihan (2009) and Houlihan and Zheng's (2014) argument regarding the impact of the IOC and IF decisions of the inclusion and removal of Olympic sports, disciplines and events on domestic sport policy.

The ideological education of the National Cycling Team is largely similar to that of the National Artistic Gymnastics Team and the National Swimming Team. With respect to the rewarding system, the figures of government financial rewards have been introduced above as the standards are not sport-specific. However, due to the very limited Olympic medal productivity and zero record of Olympic gold medal of

cycling in China, financial rewards that Chinese elite cyclists receive are much less than top swimmers or gymnasts. The National Games provides top elite cyclists in China with a precious opportunity to receive cash rewards from provincial governments but the detailed figure varies according to different provinces. Similarly, due to the limited popularity and the lack of Olympic gold medal heroes, top cyclists are not in demand for endorsements or sponsorship. Their chances of being awarded social honours and entering the political realm are also much lower than top gymnasts and swimming Olympic champions.

(3) Coaching

The National Cycling Team adopts a combined method of contract hiring and temporary transfer from provincial teams in terms of coaching. The National Cycling Team usually hires very limited number of coaches on contract and the vast majority of coaches serving the National Team are temporarily transferred from provincial teams. However, the number of hired coaches who sign contracts with the Cycling and Fencing Management has dramatically increased in the last decade, from one in 2003 to six in 2013 (CCA, 2013a; Xinhuanet.com, 2003a). Another noteworthy feature is that the hiring of coaches serving the National Team has become more specialised and event-specific. The hiring of coaches also reflects the female-prioritised ideology, as the vast majority of coaches hired with contracts work for women's events (five for women and one for men in 2013) and women's short-distance track events attract the largest number (CCA, 2013a). Similar to other Olympic sports, the appointment of the head coach of the National Cycling Team needs to get the approval from GAS, which reflects the central role of GAS in deciding fundamental issues within each management centre. Successful candidates can maintain their previous salaries and administrative positions in provincial teams and enjoy additional benefits provided by the National Team including training subsidy, rewards and equipment (CCA, 2013a). Due to the nature of the National Team especially a non-regular National Team system for non-key events, the Management Centre and the National Cycling Team transfer a certain number of temporary coaches from provincial teams before major international competitions (Henan Provincial Cycling and Modern Pentathlon Management Centre, 2013; Xinhuanet.com, 2003a). This reflects the flexible coaching system of the National

Team and the differentiation between events, which better concentrates resources to support key events. Furthermore, it is an effective way to take advantage of provincial resources to serve the National Team. However, despite a certain degree of progress in the last two decades, the overall level of elite cycling coaches in China is still far behind that of leading countries in the world, which affects the further progress in the development of elite cycling in China (Yang & Li, 2006).

‘Despite the system and financial support from GAS, the overall competitiveness of cycling coaches in China is very limited, which is a stumbling block for further breakthrough of Chinese cycling in the world. The vast majority of cycling coaches are retired athletes and 99% of elite cyclists come from relatively poor rural areas. Their horizon, leaning ability, knowledge and comprehensive ability are deficient. Especially, the level of cycling coaches working in the grass-roots level is very limited, which affects the rudimentary basics of elite cyclists in China’.

(Interviewee D, 16 May 2013)

In addition to the ‘quality’ problem, the quantity of elite cycling coaches is also worrying. According to Zhao (2007a), there were only 150 elite cycling coaches serving full-time cycling teams in China the majority of which were young and middle-aged. Faced with this coaching problem, a key step taken by the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre is the hiring of leading foreign cycling coaches. As early as in the early 2000s, several Chinese budding stars were selected by renowned foreign coaches and sent to the International Training Centre in Switzerland for training, coached by top foreign coaches (All-China Women’s Federation, 2007). 2009 was a milestone in the history of elite cycling in China as the National Cycling Team, for the first time, officially hired the Frenchman Daniel Morelon as the head coach of Chinese National Cycling Team after the Shandong National Games (GAS, 2012k). Previously, Daniel Morelon had been Guo Shuang’s coach and helped her win a bronze medal in Beijing 2008 (Xinhuanet.com, 2012e). In fact, before Daniel Morelon was hired by the National Team in 2009, there had been foreign coaches (from France, Russia, the USA and so on) serving several provincial cycling teams (CCA, 2009d). The hiring of foreign coaches in Chinese

cycling first started at provincial level and the National Team adopted the same strategy after noticing its positive results. This was more like a bottom-up process of policy learning and transfer. Daniel Morelon regularly went to the base in Beijing to deliver guidance. But instead of a French team, Daniel Morelon's work in the National Team was mainly assisted by a Chinese coaching team. As officially defined, the relationship between Daniel Morelon and the National Cycling Team was 'cooperative' (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). At the same time, key athletes went overseas to follow Daniel Morelon's training for a certain period in a year. The National Cycling Team achieved progress in a wider range of events and more competitive cyclists emerged in the London Olympiad, to which Daniel Morelon made a great contribution. In addition, some provincial teams hire foreign coaches for the National Games (Xinhuanet.com, 2013a; Xinmin.cn, 2009b). It is also pertinent to note that the Management Centre has frequently invited world-leading coaches to give lectures in the National Team (CCA, 2009d).

The CCA adopted the 'Go Out' policy more than a decade ago and key measures included sending top cyclists and budding stars abroad for training (Xinhuanet.com, 2008b). However, in comparison, the Chinese Cycling Team is a 'late adopter' of the 'invite In'. The National Track Cycling Team did not officially hire any foreign coaches in the Beijing Olympiad, showing that the CCA's response was not so prompt as many other Olympic sports including fencing inside the same Management Centre (GAS, 2006c; 2013n). The poor performance at Beijing 2008 became an important impetus for the hiring of leading foreign coaches in the London Olympiad. The progress in London 2012 secured the continuity of the hiring of high-level foreign coaches for women's short track events at least in the Rio Olympiad (GAS, 2012s), following GAS' requirement that key events needed to hire high-level foreign coaches (CCA, 2013c).

(4) Training

Currently, there are 18 advanced cycling velodromes in China, equipped with world-leading facilities (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). The Laoshan Base, which hosted the cycling events of Beijing 2008, has been the fortress of the National Cycling Team after Beijing 2008, with spacious room and world class equipment and facilities (GAS,

2007f). Cyclists in the National Team, especially of the women's short-distance track group, mainly spend time at the National Base. Basically, the training of elite cyclists in China, especially those of the National Team, occupies ten months of a year and top cyclists need to train for six days a week. The National Team organises quarterly trainings. However, compared to the concentrated training system of National Artistic Gymnastics Team, the training system of the National Cycling Team tends to be more dispersed, or at least combined. Cyclists in non-key events do not regularly stay with the National Team and provincial teams are mainly in charge of their training. Even at the national team level, the training system is much looser and more diverse. Instead of congregating in Beijing, the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre selects several coaches undertaking 'dispersed training' and their home provincial teams become the unit in charge of the training of these cyclists representing the National Team. Hence, cyclists can be located in different provinces (CCA, 2009c). The Cycling and Fencing Management Centre stays in contact with the 'dispersed' training groups and the coaches are required to provide regular training records. In addition, the officials and coaches of the National Team regularly visit these dispersed training bases to examine the training outcome. The 'dispersed' training regime is mainly supported by corresponding provincial sports governing bodies including the provision of equipment. The National Management Centre provides certain funds to the dispersed training in the form of training subsidies, living and catering costs and so on (CCA, 2009b). The Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and the CCA adopts a punitive system on the coaches and provincial units to strengthen the quality of 'dispersed' training. According to the CCA (2009b), units and coaches failing to submit training materials or meeting the training requirements suffer a subsidy deduction. In critical cases, the units and coaches are deprived of their training qualifications and the punishment is reported to provincial sports bureaus. However, the training of these events is by no means in the form of 'dispersed training' solely. The Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and the CCA organises concentrated training for the National Team regularly according to the needs but the events are selective (road cycling is not included) and the training venues are often dispersed in several provinces (CCA, 2013c).

In addition to the Laoshan Training Base in Beijing, there are advanced cycling velodromes in many other provinces and municipalities across China such as

Shanghai, Jiangsu, Liaoning, Shandong, Hebei, and Yunnan (CCA, 2009b; GAS, 2006a; 2012k; 2013m). However, it is pertinent to point out that the National Team needs to pay for the training in the velodromes of provincial teams as they are the assets of provincial sports bureaus and administrations instead of the National Team.

In order to strengthen the aerobic capacity, cyclists of the National Team go to the training base in Kunming, Yunnan Province for altitude training annually (occasionally to Qinghai Province) (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). However, the altitude training has become more selective as it is confined to cyclists in medium and long distance events only instead of all events previously (Xinhuanet.com, 2004). Provincial teams also go to Yunnan Province for altitude training (Shanghai.gov.cn, 2013)

Overseas training has made a great contribution to the cultivation of top Chinese cyclists. As noted previously, the pioneers of overseas training were Guo Shuang and Li Na, who were selected to receive training in the International Training Centre in Switzerland in the early 2000s, following the UCI's programme of promoting cycling in Asia, sponsored by Olympic Solidarity. The training in Switzerland has been proven very effective as Guo Shuang and Li Na have won China's only two gold medals in the World Championships (Chinese Cycling Association, CCA, 2009a; Xinhuanet.com, 2002). In the Beijing Olympiad, Guo Shuang followed the coaching of Daniel Morelon abroad and the training with the French coach further improved her performance. After the official appointment of Daniel Morelon as the head coach of the National Team in 2009, more cyclists of the National Team including Guo Shuang's partner in women's team sprint in London 2012 - Gong Jinjie, acquired the chance to train abroad (GAS, 2013c). However, the overseas training of Chinese National Team is still relatively new and the scale is very limited. Currently, it is only confined to women's short-distance track cyclists, reflecting again the emphasis on these events. Consistent with the relatively more systematic support at the provincial level, some provincial teams have organised overseas training for their cyclists (GAS, 2008a).

The prioritisation of women's events in general and the position of women's short-distance track events as top priorities can also be clearly reflected in the training. In

order to improve the performance of key female cyclists, many male cyclists act as the ladder players. For example, Guo Shuang and Gong Jinjie often have one-on-one or even one-on-two competitions with male cyclists in the training (Xinhuanet.com, 2013b).

(5) Competition opportunities

The National Games is undoubtedly the most significant domestic event for elite cyclists in China in general and cyclists of provincial teams in particular. The training and daily preparation of provincial cycling teams is National Games-oriented and the performance at the National Games largely determines the future of coaches and cyclists of provincial teams. As noted above, many provincial governments invest heavily in cycling and they become the major engine of the development of non-key cycling events in China. GAS and the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre, similar to the Aquatics Management Centre, fully exploit the leverage of the National Games to promote the development of cycling at basic level and guarantee the sources of talent of the National Team. The detailed approaches, including the 'policy medal' transferred from the Olympic Games and the double-point system can be found in the swimming section above. As a senior official inside the Cycling and Fencing Management and the CCA said: 'If there were no National Games or cycling were not included in the National Games, elite cycling, at least many non-key events would have disappeared in China' (interviewee D, 16 May 2013).

There are National Championships and National Cycling Champions Competitions held annually, specifically for track cycling, road cycling, BMX and mountain bike (CCA, 2010; GAS, 2013a). There are also National Youth Cycling Championships held in order to expand the talent base and promote the development of cycling in younger age groups (CCA, 2010; GAS, 2013a). Yet, competition opportunities for Chinese elite cyclists are still fewer than those available to their Western counterparts (GAS, 2008f; Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). Especially, grass-roots and amateur competitions are very scarce.

The UCI World Championships is the most important non-Olympic international event for Chinese elite cyclists. China usually sends its strongest squad to the World

Championships held annually and the UCI Track World Championships is the focus (GAS, 2008c). As for the World Championships for Road Cycling, BMX and Mountain Bike, China does not establish a medal target, despite sporadic medal performance (GAS, 2007d; UCI, 2007). When it comes to the UCI World Cup, China in turn sends top cyclists (mainly women's short-distance track cyclists) to compete in different stages (GAS, 2007g) while the UCI Track Cycling World Cup in Beijing attracts a larger home team squad. In the case of the Asian Games, Chinese female cyclists have dominated the medals table and won many gold medals in all four disciplines (Sports.cn, 2010) while their male compatriots face fierce competition with South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Last, China has hosted several continental and international cycling events in recent years (CCA, 2010; 2011; GAS, 2008d; 2010a; 2010b; UCI, 2013b).

(6) Scientific research

Similar to artistic gymnastics and swimming, there is a scientific team sent by GAS, the PLA system and comprehensive and sports universities in China based in the National Team. Female short-distance track cyclists, especially potential Olympic medallists receive more systematic scientific support (Sports.cn, 2011). The service provided ranges from medical treatment and physiology, to psychology and information (Li, 2006). With regard to research, including funded research programmes and journal articles and thesis, it is highly Olympic-oriented. Due to the flexible system of the National Cycling Team, provincial teams also play a critical role in the scientific support for the National Team especially in relation to non-major events.

Anti-doping occupies a key position on the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and the National Cycling Team's agenda. In addition to frequent doping tests organised by WADA and ChinaDA, there is the requirement for cyclists to provide biological passports and bans are imposed on cyclists who are found guilty of doping offences (Interview, 20 May 2013). In addition, coaches with any doping record in the last four years are not eligible to apply for the coaching posts for the National Team (CCA, 2013b). Furthermore, a '1+1 punitive system' was adopted in the 2009 Shandong National Games. According to the '1+1 punitive system', for any provincial

or PLA cycling team that had one cyclist who was found guilty of doping offence, this cyclist would be disqualified and punished. One additional cyclist from the same delegation would be disqualified (Xinmin.cn, 2009a). This is a demonstration of Chinese cycling governing body's determination to tackle the doping issue and its use of sanctions to regulate and control the behaviours of cyclists at provincial team level.

(7) Others

- International influence

The Nationalist China became a member of the UCI in 1939 but the PRC government quitted the UCI in 1958 because of the Taiwan issue (COC, 2003). In 1979, China returned to the UCI and the CCA is the only official representative of the People's Republic of China in the UCI (CCA, 2007).

Unlike artistic gymnastics and swimming mentioned previously, China's position in the UCI is extremely insignificant, which, to a large extent, echoes China's competitiveness in cycling in the world. There is not any Chinese member in any organs of the UCI including the Executive Board (UCI, 2013c), Management Committee (UCI, 2013d), Professional Cycling Council (UCI, 2013e) and even any of its more than ten Commissions (UCI, 2013f). The UCI is predominantly occupied by Western countries and even the very limited numbers of Asian members are from South Korea and Japan (UCI, 2013d; 2013f). It is no exaggeration to say that China is totally excluded from the decision making inside the UCI. In fact, China has been disadvantaged by many decisions made by the UCI, including the exclusion of women's 500m time trial since Beijing 2008 (CCTV, 2005b; China.com.cn, 2005) and the cancelling of China's gold medal result in women's team sprint in London 2012 (CCTV, 2012e). What a senior official working inside the CCA said can summarise China's peripheral role in the world.

'We do not have any person working inside the UCI, even for an insignificant position. Hence, we have very limited discursive power and are very vulnerable to unfair decisions. We are disadvantaged in the

establishment of rules, the event setting at the Olympic Games and specific match arbitrations. What is worse, because of a lack of presence in the UCI, it is extremely difficult for us to protect our rights when unfair decisions fall on us. The exclusion of our previous only hope - women's 500m individual time trial once greatly shocked us and significantly affected our preparation for Beijing 2008. China is a policy taker rather than a policy maker in the UCI'.

(Interviewee D, 16 May 2013)

Even in Asia, China's influence in cycling is very weak as the Asian Cycling Confederation (ACC) is largely controlled by Koreans and there is no Chinese member in the Executive Committee (Asian Cycling Confederation, ACC, 2013).

5.4.4 Conclusions

There is a perennial question upon many people's minds: Why has China, the 'bicycle kingdom', with the world's number one bicycle production and consumption, failed to produce any Olympic cycling champion? (GAS, 2008f). There are many 'culprits' identifiable. In essence, there is no competitive cycling culture or tradition in China (Sina, 2009a; Titan24.com, 2011). Cycling is 'more a means of transportation than an entertainment or lifestyle choice in China' (GAS, 2008f). In comparison to many Western countries, cycling is still a young sport in China (Xinhuanet.com, 2010). The lack of mass base is the most essential cause of the underdevelopment of cycling including elite cycling in China. If the tradition, the mass base or the popularity are the deep-level reasons, then the sports system especially the elite sport system in China has, to a large extent, exacerbated the dilemma. First, the hegemonic dominance of the traditional three-level pyramid in talent cultivation and athlete delivery (Xinhuanet.com, 2012d) has denied the entrance of and association with amateur, or non-government cycling resources including cycling talent (Sina, 2009a), which has artificially further narrowed the talent base. Second, even the limited cycling base cannot be fully used by the National Team as a result of provincial rivalry and the prioritisation of the National Games, despite provincial teams' significant contribution to the development of Chinese elite cycling. The central government, through its representative of GAS, cannot escape its

responsibility either. While it would not be objective to say that the central government and GAS does not support cycling, it is fair to say that the support is less systematic and focused in comparison to more high profile sports. There is no policy document targeting cycling as opposed to *119 Project* that included most of China's non-fortress sports, which is a demonstration of the lack of systematic support mentioned previously. Cycling is the only sport with more than ten gold medals at the Olympic Games that was not mentioned in GAS' official book summarising the history of sport in China between 1949 and 2009 (GAS, 2009c). Moreover, cycling shares a management centre with four other sports.

In spite of these problems, Chinese elite cycling in general and women's short-distance track cyclists in particular has made notable progress in the last decade. Another significant change is the implementation of the 'Invite In and Go Out' strategy and the attitude towards foreign coaches. China's performance in London 2012 was unprecedented and the hiring of world-leading foreign coaches was perceived as a key contributory factor. In fact, the use of foreign expertise and the recruitment of top foreign coaches is a demonstration of China's interaction with the world. Another example of the impact of globalisation on Chinese cycling is the increased government support for BMX. This reflected China's prioritisation of Olympic sports, disciplines and events and the concomitant dependence on the IOC and IF decision of the inclusion or removal of a sport, discipline or event (Houlihan, 2009) and the impact of international sports organisations on domestic elite sport policy.

A key factor contributing to these changes was the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, or rather, Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Olympic Games in 2001. The trajectory of Chinese cycling since 2001 when Beijing was awarded the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games can largely be demonstrated by Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams framework. The perennially poor performance of Chinese cycling and the disappointing performance in Beijing 2008 in particular was the most significant problem. This could be reflected in the limited number of medals and even limited number of cyclists in limited number of events (indicators) competing at the Olympic Games (focusing events). Provincial rivalry and 'protectionism' inside the National Team were also significant barriers hindering the healthy development of the

National Team. An interesting phenomenon regarding elite cycling China has frequently taken place as many cyclists achieve better performance at the National Games than that at the Olympic Games (Titan24.com, 2013; Xinmin.cn, 2009b). Faced with these problems, many policies were identified and measures including the hiring of leading foreign coaches (mainly started at provincial team level, then adopted by the National Team), direct recruitment of potential cyclists at grass-roots level by the coaches of the National Team and sending them abroad for overseas training, the emphasis on science and technology and so forth were adopted. As regards the political stream, the CCP's stable leadership and its continuous focus on elite sport and high expectation on Beijing 2008 to showcase China's strength and development provided Chinese cycling with a golden opportunity to change and develop. Undoubtedly, Beijing's success in bid for the 2008 Olympic Games was the most important policy window. In addition, the UCI's programmes to promote cycling in the world and help improve the competitiveness of non-Western nations also benefited Chinese cycling. Key officials and coaches of the National Team, the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and the CCA are main policy entrepreneurs advocating and pushing these changes forward. However, the dissatisfaction with the status quo ante and concomitant pressure and expectation from the officials in GAS and media was also a significant push factor. It is noteworthy that direct recruitment of potential cyclists at grass-roots level by the coaches of the National Team was an attempt to shorten the implementation chain and hence it tried to solve one of the problems of effective or 'perfect' top-down implementation identified by Hogwood and Gunn (1984, p. 202) that 'that there is a single implementing agency which need not depend on other agencies for success or, if other agencies must be involved, that the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance' can improve the smoothness of top-down implementation.

Except for road cycling, the development of non-road cycling is largely monopolised by the government. GAS and the Chinese Cycling and Fencing Management Centre dominate the development of non-road cycling in China and senior leaders and officials within the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre are key decision makers, following the central government and CCP's fundamental value and principles. The policy making process involves very limited number of insiders and the decision making process tends not to be publicly visible. Senior scholars and

universities may be the only identified non-government group that can influence the policy making but their role is mainly advisory. Provincial sports bureau and cycling governing bodies' decision making power is mainly confined to the development of cycling at the provincial level and they form the most important part in the implementation community of elite cycling at the national level. In comparison to the traditionally centralised artistic gymnastics and the increasingly centralised swimming, cycling in China follows a combined system in terms of the management of the National Team in which the development of many non-key events relies primarily on provincial resources. Hence, the implementation role of provincial teams as well as the parallel role of the PLA team tends to be more significant in cycling in comparison to artistic gymnastics and swimming.

The objective for Rio de Janeiro 2016 is simple: to realise the gold medal breakthrough (GAS, 2012s). In comparison to this seemingly realisable objective, what seems difficult to change in the short term is China's absence, or at least extremely limited influence in the UCI. Cycling in China can be seen as a good representative of China's overall limited discursive power (except for some fortress sports) in the world especially the peripheral role of non-key sports in the IFs. However, as a popular Chinese proverb goes, 'a weak nation has no diplomacy'. In order to earn more respect in the world and gain more power in the UCI, China needs to learn from the UK and try to improve the overall competitiveness of the National Team and strengthen its 'hard power' in international cycling.

Chapter Six:

United Kingdom

6.1 Introduction

The following three case studies of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling comprise two main sections: (1) organisational structure of the sport; (2) key areas of policy of each sport within which seven key themes are identified: financial support; talent identification and athlete development; coaching; training; competition opportunities; scientific research; and the UK's influence.

Prior to the three case studies, it is necessary to understand the general elite sports landscape and Olympic strategy of the UK so that the position and contribution of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling can be identified and compared.

6.2 The UK's Overall Summer Olympic Performance and the Differentiated Contributions of Olympic Sports

The UK's performance at the Summer Olympic Games between Amsterdam 1928 and Barcelona 1992 was largely stable, occupying a place between 10th and 15th in the medals table (the only exception was Helsinki 1952 in which the UK ranked 18th in the medals table). The UK's recovery in Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004 and its breakthroughs in Beijing 2008 and London 2012 have benefited from its specialisation in key sports. During the period 1992-2012, the UK has won 74 gold medals and 205 medals at the Summer Olympic Games, to which the contribution of, what is called the 'Major Four' in this thesis - cycling, athletics, rowing and sailing, is unparalleled to other sports. Each of the 'Major Four' has contributed more than ten gold medals to the UK (far more than the fifth contributor, boxing, in which the UK has won five gold medals), altogether accounting for 73.0% and 58.0% of all the gold medals and medals that the UK has won during this period. The Major Four along with five secondary sources of gold medals (in which the UK has won at least two gold medals between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012) which are boxing, equestrian, canoeing, swimming and shooting together, have constituted 94.6% of

the gold medals and 83.4% of the total medals that the UK has won during this period. This reveals the UK's high degree of dependency on a relatively narrow range of sports. In brief, the UK's advantage mainly exists in cycling, water sports and athletics (Zheng, 2011). In fact, the UK has won gold medals in only 13 sports (14 disciplines) during this period and medals in no more than 20 disciplines. In comparison to China, there are fewer sources of gold medals and total medals for the UK and there is a stronger evidence of specialisation. Table 6.1 categorises UK Olympic sports according to the contribution and performance.

Table 6.1: The categorisation of summer Olympic sports based on the UK's competitiveness and performance between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Category	Sports
Primary sources of medals	Cycling, Sailing, Athletics, Rowing
Secondary sources of medals	Boxing, Equestrian, Swimming, Canoeing, Shooting
Competitive but no 'above average' sources of medals	Modern Pentathlon, Triathlon, Hockey, Tennis, Taekwondo
Occasionally competitive	Badminton, Diving, Football, Judo, Archery, Artistic Gymnastics
Weak sports	Fencing, Synchronised Swimming, Trampoline, Weightlifting, Wrestling, Table Tennis, Trampoline, Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Handball, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Water Polo

Applying Tian's (1998) categorisation of Olympic sports (see Table 5.1 in previous Chapter), the UK's medal success relies overwhelmingly on primarily physical-based sports including cycling, athletics, rowing, swimming and canoeing, which strikingly contrasts with China's reliance on primarily skill-based sports⁹. It is fair to say that the contribution of primarily skill-based sports to the UK is very limited. Another noteworthy distinction between the UK and China is that the former's success relies

⁹ It is noteworthy that the categorisation of physical-based and skill-based sports are not absolute. In fact, some sports, including field athletics, blend the requirements of both physics and skills and techniques. The categorisation is based on the primary requirement of the sport.

primarily on male athletes¹⁰ while female athletes' contribution is more significant in China. Male athletes have won 67% and 64% of the UK's Olympic gold medals and total medals respectively during this period, twice as many as that won by their female counterparts.

6.3 Artistic Gymnastics

6.3.1 Introduction

The UK's performance in artistic gymnastics at the Olympic Games has been generally 'mediocre' and artistic gymnastics has traditionally been a weak discipline for the UK despite its recent progress since Beijing 2008. So far, British gymnasts have not won any gold medals at the Olympic Games despite their almost continuous appearance since Athens 1896 (except for St. Louis 1904 and Los Angeles 1932) (Sports Reference, SR, 2014e; 2014f) and very sporadic medal performance before the second World War (BG, 2004c; Sports Reference, SR, 2014b; 2014c; 2014d). After an eighty-year absence of Olympic medals, British gymnasts returned to the medal podium in Beijing 2008. British gymnasts achieved higher and more holistic success on home ground in the 2012 Olympic Games but the regret remained that the UK still failed to win a gold medal in artistic gymnastics despite some very strong performance (see Table 6.2).

¹⁰ There are some mixed events in equestrian and sailing.

Table 6.2: The UK's medal performance in artistic gymnastics at the Summer Olympic Games between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Medal Points	Ranking
Barcelona 1992	0	0	0	0	0	-
Atlanta 1996	0	0	0	0	0	-
Sydney 2000	0	0	0	0	0	-
Athens 2004	0	0	0	0	0	-
Beijing 2008	0	0	1	1	1	13
London 2012	0	1	3	4	5	11
Total	0	1	4	5	6	23

Note: Medal points = the number of gold medals \times 3 + the number of silver medals \times 2 + the number of bronze medals \times 1.

Sources: Sports Reference (SR) (2013a; 2013b; 2013c; 2013d; 2013e; 2013f).

6.3.2 Organisational Structure

British Gymnastics (BG) is recognised by UK Sport (UK Sport, 2013c) as the official governing body for gymnastics in the UK (British Gymnastics, BG, 2014a). It is the representative of British gymnastics in FIG (FIG, 2014a). The predecessor of British Gymnastics was founded in 1888, known as Amateur Gymnastics Association (AGA) (BG, 2014b), later becoming the British Amateur Gymnastics Association (BAGA) in 1963 (BG, 2014c). In 1997, BAGA was renamed the BG (BG, 2014d).

The structure inside the BG is outlined in Figure 6.1.

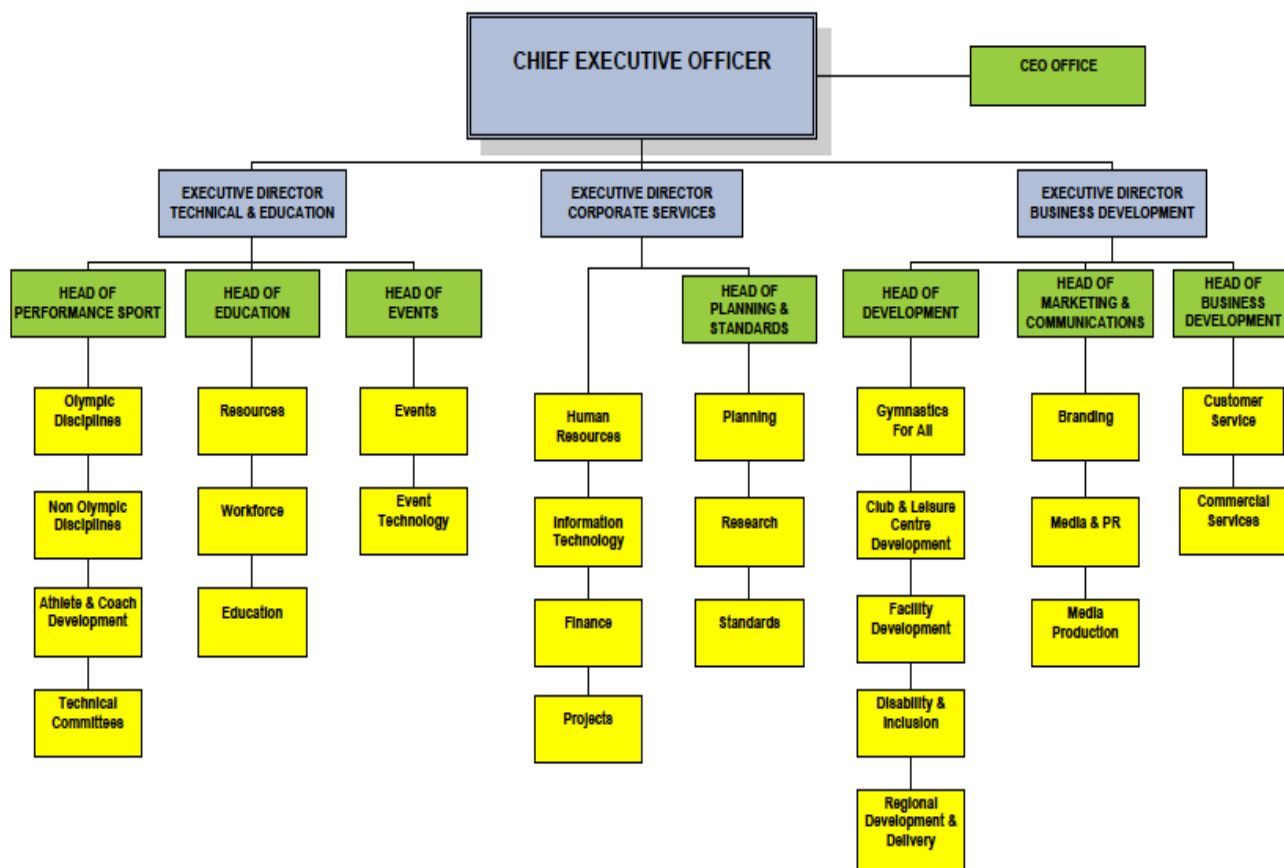


Figure 6.1: The organisational structure of the BG

Source: BG (2013b).

Currently, the BG has four aspirations for 2017, which are that:

- 'Gymnastics is seen as one of the top three sports in the UK;
- The British Gymnastics brand is internationally recognised and a household name;
- The Gymnastics club is the hub of the local community;
- Success creates global icons' (BG, 2014a).

These aspirations are supported by eight strategic priorities for 2011-2017 one of which is to 'strengthen and support the high performance network/system across all disciplines' (BG, 2014i).

Previously, BAGA, as a non-governmental and non-profit sports organisation (Taylor & O'Sullivan, 2009), enjoyed a very high degree of autonomy and immunity from government intervention. However, following New Labour's adoption of the principles

of 'new public management' (NPM) (Green, 2009, p. 121) and the promotion of organisational modernisation (Green, 2005; Green, 2009), BAGA was renamed the BG and NGBs including BAGA were required to modernise their structures (BG, 2002a). Although the BG still enjoys the status of an independent sports organisation responsible for the development of gymnastics in the UK (BG, 2014k), its dependency on funding allocation from UK Sport makes this autonomy conditional (Green, 2005). In order to receive more funds, the BG is required to set and meet performance targets (Green, 2009), establish a talent identification and development system (Green, 2006) and improve its organisational clarity and effectiveness. The rationale of UK Sport was to use this economic leverage to encourage NGBs to better serve the priority of elite sport (mainly Olympic) success (Green, 2004; Grix, 2009). As Houlihan and Green (2009) pointed out, NGBs including the BG have become key delivery agents for the government's Olympic ambitions. Due to UK Sport's accountability to the DCMS (UK Sport, 2014c), NGBs' resource dependency on UK Sport is, in essence, a form of government's indirect, or 'arm's length' intervention (Green, 2009, p. 125; Oakley & Green, 2001a, p. 80). An 'uneasy' (Green, 2009, p. 129) relationship, characterised as a contractual and 'resource-dependent' (Green, 2007, p. 939) relationship, has been formed between sports councils and NGBs. The reform of NGBs including the BG in the late 1990s was a key step towards organisational specialisation and elite sport was to be the largest beneficiary. The modernisation of NGBs including British Gymnastics can be explored utilising Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams theory. The previous ineffective and fragmented organisational structure, which was perceived to be a culprit for the UK's poor performance in Atlanta 1996 (Oakley & Green, 2001a), formed the problem stream. Organisational reform including the reform of the GB Sports Council and NGBs was a key element within the policy stream. The change in the political stream provided a significant impetus to the reform as the newly elected Tony Blair's Labour government was a key advocate of 'modernisation'. This echoes Zahariadis's (2007) third element of the political stream - key personnel and structural change within the government. Policy windows included the poor performance in Atlanta and the coming into office of the New Labour government. Tony Blair's New Labour government, together with UK Sport, was the main agent of the organisational reform.

6.3.3 Key Areas of Policy

(1) Financial support

The introduction of the National Lottery money in 1994 has generated enormous financial resources for elite sport development (Lindsey, 2010). In 1998, the BG became a recipient of the lottery money from UK Sport and lottery funding was primarily used to support World Class Performance (WCP) (BG, 2014d; UK Sport, 2010b).

Table 6.3 gives details of government funds that the BG and its predecessor BAGA have received from the Barcelona Olympia to the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad. The trend shows a substantial increase (except for the Athens Olympiad) and the figure for the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad is approximately ten times that available for the Barcelona Olympiad. According to the 'No Compromise' strategy, the funding figure has kept rising from the Beijing Olympiad to the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad due to the medal breakthrough in Beijing 2008 (BG, 2014g) and the record-breaking performance in London 2012. In particular, the funding figure rose by 34% for the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad (BBC Sport, 2012d). According to BBC Newsbeat (2012), artistic gymnastics became one of the three sports that enjoyed the most dramatic increase in funding from UK Sport for the 2016 Olympiad. Nevertheless, funding that the BG has received is still far less than that allocated to cycling and swimming.

Table 6.3: Funding figures that the BG and its predecessor BAGA have received from UK Sport and its predecessor GB Sports Council in the six most recent Olympiads

Olympiad	Figure
Barcelona Olympiad	£1,339,100
Atlanta Olympiad	£1,748,750
Sydney Olympiad	£5,900,000
Athens Olympiad	£4,100,000
Beijing Olympiad	£9,036,000
London Olympiad	£10,770,600
Rio de Janeiro	£14,465,428
Total	£47,359,878

Note: Funding figure for the Atlanta Olympiad is estimated, as official annual reports are inaccessible.

Sources: GB Sports Council, annual reports, various years between 1990 and 1996; UK Sport, annual reports and financial statements, various years between 2000 and 2013; UK Sport (2011a; 2014a; 2014b); Zheng (2011, p. 180).

In addition to the financial support for top gymnasts, UK Sport also provides the BG with National Lottery funds to support major gymnastics events, following its Gold Event Series (UK Sport, 2012c). For artistic gymnastics, the 2012 Glasgow FIG World Cup was on the Gold Events list and the 2015 Artistic Gymnastics World Championships will also receive financial support from National Lottery money (BG, 2012a; UK Sport, 2012d). Moreover, the BG also receives financial support from commercial sources including sponsors such as GymAid, Milano Pro Sport and Honda (BG, 2014j).

(2) Talent identification and athlete development

Compared to many former and current Communist countries and even Western counterparts such as Australia (Green & Oakley, 2001), the UK is a late adopter of many former Eastern bloc approaches to elite sport (Green & Houlihan, 2005). Historically, talent identification was relatively an underemphasised area in the UK due to the traditional view that talent would naturally emerge from a nation with a relatively large population (De Bosscher et al., 2008). However, the lack of elite

success prompted dissatisfaction with the relaxed talent system dependent on 'chance and goodwill' (DCMS, 2000, p. 15). More profound change took place after 2005 in which London succeeded in bidding for the 2012 Olympic Games. As the previous men's Technical Director Eddie Van Hoof (quoted in Williams, 2010a) acknowledged, British gymnastics 'have replicated a lot of what the Eastern bloc used to have 20 years ago, but found a good balance which suits the British way'. From a theoretical perspective, the adoption of an Eastern bloc approach to talent identification and athlete development resonates strongly with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) mimetic isomorphism theory or Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996) voluntary policy transfer or policy learning from other countries. However, it is noteworthy that as British Gymnastics critically learned these approaches and has adjusted them to the UK context, this sort of policy transfer is by no means copying. Instead, it is more consistent with 'emulation' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996).

The establishment of the Performance Pathway Team that is in charge of the identification, recruitment and development of talented athletes (UK Sport, 2013a), and the UK Talent Team (UK Sport, 2014e), were key milestones in the talent identification and development in the UK. As an important pillar supporting the World Class Programme (WCP) (UK Sport, 2013a), the Performance Pathway Team (jointly backed by UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport, EIS) launched the Performance Pathway Programme (P3) after London 2012, which made talent identification for many Olympic sports more systematic and scientific (UK Sport, 2014g).

Inspired by the unprecedented success in London 2012, British Gymnastics has been working on the development of a sustainable World Class athlete 'production line' with an ambition to achieve higher success in the future. Against this backdrop, the BG has initiated the Performance Pathway, which aims to transfer the expertise and successful experience of the National Squad to gymnastics clubs in home nations. In so doing, the quality of gymnastics coaches at the rudimentary level is expected to be enhanced and more quality young gymnasts can be produced and serve the National Squad (BG, 2014I). Of equal importance is the plan of 'earlier talent identification' (BG, 2014I). The task is mainly fulfilled by regional Performance Pathway Co-ordinators employed by the BG. Two platforms are identified: the Coach

Education Clinics which target all local clubs; and the Camps the focus of which is narrowed to the promising gymnasts (the age group 9-14) forming the Regional Squad (BG, 2014m). The National Coaching Team will appoint some Performance Pathway Coaches for both Women's and Men's programme and these appointed coaches have the 'mission' of conveying the standards of the National Team and the WCP down to the grass-roots coaches and gymnasts at local clubs. The success in London 2012 opened a 'policy window' (Kingdon, 1984) for this coherent and systematic approach to talent identification and cultivation.

Talent identification, in nature, is only the foundation of the three-tiered World Class Programme (see Figure 3.1 above for more details). UK Sport has provided WCP athletes at the Podium (Performance), Development (Potential) and Talent (Start) (who are identified as having realistic medal winning capabilities) levels with enormous financial support from National Lottery. Currently, there are 62 British gymnasts listed on the World Class Performance programme (UK Sport, 2014d). The 'crucial' (BG, 2009a) role of National Lottery funds has been easily illustrated by reference to the case of Beth Tweddle, the most successful British female gymnast so far and World champion, who noted that it would have been impossible to fully concentrate on training and become a full-time gymnast without the 'escorting' of the National Lottery money (quoted in UK Sport, 2014d). Furthermore, as pointed out by Former UK Squad gymnast - Ross Brewer, the influx of the National Lottery money has 'produced some strong juniors' (quoted in Crumlish, 2007, p. 32) and seed-corn for the Senior National Squad. Figure 6.2 summarises the talent development and athlete progression ladder of British gymnastics.

(3) Coaching

The improved coaching strategy has been perceived as a key to the recent progress of British artistic gymnastics (Williams, 2010b). Generally speaking, there are three notable developments regarding coaching of British gymnastics. First and foremost, there has been an increased degree of mutual support and trust between the BG and local clubs. A funding cut was imposed on the BG in the early 2000s due to the National team's underperformance. In the face of a lack of funds, the BG decided to change its centralised structure of training of the National Squad in Lilleshall and relied more on clubs for the training and development of gymnasts and coaches. Hence, a semi-centralised National Squad structure was formed and funding was primarily distributed to clubs and coaches serving these National gymnasts (Williams, 2010a). Clubs became the largest beneficiary of Lottery funds, which strengthened the morale of clubs and their willingness to cooperate with the BG and the National Squad. Recently, the BG introduced the Coach Development Fund (CDF) to provide aspiring coaches in different regions with financial support (BG, 2013a). At the same time, previous measures such as coaching courses, conferences and awards have been largely continued (BG, 2003; 2004a; 2005; 2007). As men's technical director Eddie Van Hoof noted, 'clubs and coaches are pulling together on the national programme and it is the first time, in my 25 years of national coaching, that everyone is so behind the programme' (quoted in Williams, 2010a). From Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) theoretical perspective, the recently established mutually supportive relation between the BG and clubs and clubs' support for the national programmes, in particular those concerning elite performance, comes closer to one of the requirements for 'perfect implementation'. The current structure and relationship echo many of the ten ingredients of 'perfect implementation', such as adequate economic, information and technical resources, relatively long-term strategy which allows sufficient time for implementation, the clear objectives of elite sport success and Olympic medal target, increasingly frequent and effective communication, consultation and cooperation between the BG and clubs and the authority of a single governing body of the BG. In addition, gymnastics coaches in the UK have also benefited from UK Sport's comprehensive coaching programmes such as the World Class Coaching: Elite Programme, the Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme

(ECAP) and TeamGB's Olympic Ambition Programme (TeamGB.com, 2012a; UK Sport, 2013d; 2014h). Of particular note is that attention has been increasingly paid to young coaches.

Second, the coaching squad is relatively stable and the relationship between coaches and their gymnasts is relatively long-term. Back in the 1990s, as the ex-National gymnast and current junior National coach Barry Collie recalled, talented gymnasts often failed to find suitable coaches, which hindered the further development of these gymnasts (quoted in BG, 2013d, p. 17). However, this coaching system has been gradually replaced by a more effective system in which coaches are empowered with 'ownership' of their gymnasts throughout their careers and gymnasts can follow the coaching of 'coaches they trust and understand at all times' (Williams, 2010a). National gymnasts, most notably Beth Tweddle, are primarily coached by their club coaches throughout their sporting careers while National coaches mainly play an indirect role as 'advisors' (Williams, 2010a). However, this system was by no means established and accepted in a day. As early as in 2003, the very poor performance for Team GB in general and for British male gymnasts in particular at the Anaheim World Championships became the wake-up call prompting deep reflection (BG, 2013d). There was a general consensus regarding the need to change the existing coaching system but it was not until Beth Tweddle's breakthrough at the 2006 World Championships that the above-mentioned gymnast-coach relationship proved effective and hence was recognised (Williams, 2010a). From the perspective of Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams theory, poor performance including the disappointing result in Anaheim 2003 comprised the problem stream. The improvement of coaching system was a key area requiring policy change. The political stream was relatively stable, but London's success in bidding for the 2012 Olympic Games in 2005 might act as a catalyst accelerating the process of reform and reinforcing the political stream. Beth Tweddle's victory in 2006 opened a policy window and provided a feasible solution to past problems in the coaching system.

Compared to the former two developments, the adoption of foreign expertise and the recruitment of foreign coaches have been a much older phenomenon that can be traced back to the mid-1970s at the club level (BAGA, 2001b). Coaches such as the

Romanian Adrian Stan has served the Women's National Artistic Gymnastics Squad for more than two decades and was the ex-Head National Coach for the women's programme (BG, 2012b; 2012c). Similarly, many former Soviet and current Russian coaches including Vladimir Ufimtzev and Nikolai Liskovitch had served the National Squad and Andrei Popov has been the Head Coach of the Men's National Artistic Gymnastics Squad since 2004 (BAGA, 1998; BG, 2008; *Russia Beyond The Headlines*, 2013). The vast majority of these foreign artistic gymnastics coaches come from Eastern Europe and foreign coaches can also be found in many clubs. It is noteworthy that the collapse of the Soviet Union and Communist regimes in many other Eastern European countries in the late 1980s and the early 1990s greatly influenced the development of artistic gymnastics and many gymnastics coaches, including Nikolai Liskovitch and Andrei Popov went to Western countries including the UK. This can be seen as the effect of exogenous factors on British gymnastics. From the perspective of globalisation theory, this echoed Hay (2002) and Hay and Marsh's (2000) views that globalisation is complex and contingent and it is by no means solely caused by economic factors, but also by other factors most notably, in this case, political factors (the sudden collapse of Communist regimes in the Eastern Bloc).

(4) Training

A key theme threaded through the training of elite artistic gymnasts in the UK over the last two decades has been the 'fluctuation' in the degree of 'centralisation'. Pushed by the then Men's National Coach Eddie Van Hoof and advocated by Dr. John Atkinson, a legendary figure who had served British gymnastics for more than four decades, there were measures that greatly increased the degree of centralised training of top British gymnasts in Lilleshall in the 1990s, in an attempt to overcome the previous lack of professionalism due to the prevalence of amateurism (BAGA, 1997; BG, 2004b). However, despite some occasional breakthroughs, British gymnastics as a whole still lacked international competitiveness, which resulted in a severe funding cut imposed by UK Sport. The funding cut became a double-edged sword, which forced the BG to come up with more effective approaches to the development of elite artistic gymnastics, including the increased reliance on club resources and shared responsibilities with clubs in the training of National Squad

gymnasts with funds primarily allocated to clubs. Hence, as a consequence of 'a lack of cash' (Williams, 2010a), a semi-centralised training structure was established, which has effectively integrated the resources from both the National and club levels.

Lilleshall has been the headquarters for British Gymnastics and National Squad gymnasts since the 1970s and it is the base for the National Squad (Lilleshall, 2014a; 2014b). In addition to the Lilleshall National Centre, the gymnastics hall of the National Gymnastics Performance and Research Centre at Loughborough University is also used by national squads of all ages for training (BG, 2006b). Within the semi-centralised training regime, National Squad gymnasts also spend some time in their clubs with club coaches for training. Club resources are fully employed in supporting the training of WCP gymnasts.

Akin to the Chinese National Artistic Gymnastics Team, British National Squads also arrange winter trainings in the non-competition season and intensive trainings immediately before major competitions. What is different from the largely self-sufficient Chinese Artistic Gymnastics Team is that TeamGB intermittently organises overseas trainings. For example in 2002, the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Squad went to the BOA's overseas training centre in Lofer, Austria for a 14-day intensive winter training while the Men's Squad went to Switzerland for a two-week joint training camp with the Swiss National Team (UK Sport, 2002a).

The Men's Technical Committee of the BG has long been promoting a Regional Squad Training Programme. Accordingly, any gymnast who wishes to compete in the National Finals must attend Regional Training in order to represent his corresponding region (BG, 2014n). This compulsory requirement reveals an increased top-down structure of the training and gymnast selection and progression pathway in the UK. It is also a demonstration of the use of coercive measures to regulate club gymnastics development at the grass-roots level.

(5) Competition opportunities

Major domestic competitions include the Men's and Women's British Championships for senior, junior and youth gymnasts (BG, 2013c; 2013h), Home Nation National

Championships such as English Championships and Scottish Championships, National Development Plan Finals, Men's Club Team Championships, British Schools Championships for boys and girls and so forth.

The National Senior and Junior Squads have a number of chances to compete in international and continental artistic gymnastics competitions, ranging from the Olympic Games and the World Championships, to European Championships, the Universiade and more recently the Youth Olympic Games (YOG). Admittedly, the Olympic Games is the top priority and World Championships is the most high-profile non-Olympic event. With the progress of British gymnasts in the world most notably Beth Tweddle's three gold medals at the World Championships (BG, 2013e), there is a notable increase in the number of British gymnasts competing in major international artistic gymnastics events in general and at the Olympic Games in particular. One direct reason contributing to the overall improvement of British gymnasts' performance in the world, as pointed out by Colin Still, the women's national coach, is the changed attitude and psychology towards international competitions, a shift from a 'participating' psychology to a 'competing' one (quoted in Williams, 2010a). Men's Head National Coach Eddie Van Hoof concurred and noted that the expectation of British gymnasts and their coaches has changed from taking part in the competition to 'performance' and 'results' (quoted in BG, 2013d, pp.12-13). In fact, there has been an increase in the selectivity of the competitions that the BG competes in, which was confirmed by Skille and Houlihan (2014) in the case of YOG as top young gymnasts are sent to compete in highest levels of competitions. For the BG, YOG is viewed as important 'developmental opportunities' (Skille & Houlihan, 2014, p. 46). Likewise, Australian Youth Olympic Festival is valued by the BG as the superpower China sends gymnasts to the Festival (BG, 2014h).

Last, in addition to the 2012 London Olympic Games, the UK has hosted a number of major international artistic gymnastics events including the 1993 Birmingham and 2009 London World Artistic Gymnastics Championships and will hold the 2015 Glasgow World Championships (BAGA, 1993; BG, 2009c; UK Sport, 2011c). In addition, there are Glasgow Grand Prix and Glasgow World Cup held in the UK (BG, 2009b; 2012d; 2013h).

(6) Scientific research

The English Institute of Sport (EIS) is a specialist institution providing science, medicine, technology, psychological and engineering support to TeamGB including the British National Artistic Gymnastics Squads (English Institute of Sport, EIS, 2014). the EIS has supported the BG since 2002 and there are 134 gymnasts working with the EIS currently (EIS, 2012a). Over £1.1 million has been invested in EIS services since 2009 (EIS, 2012a). Furthermore, there is Sport Science and Medicine for British Gymnastics backing WCP programme in the EIS (BG, n.d.). The establishment of the EIS in 2002 was against the backdrop that the New Labour government was keen on the development of an elite sports institutes network the aim of which was to concentrate the scientific resources on the development of elite sport in the 1990s. As noted previously, the UK's poor performance in Atlanta 1996 prompted a series of government actions that aimed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the elite sport system, although the poor performance of gymnasts was not a particular focusing event. The poor performance in Atlanta 1996 formed a major problem stream from Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective. To improve scientific support for elite athletes including elite gymnasts was identified as a significant and feasible policy. The subsequent New Labour's taking office was a major government leadership turnover and its political ideology of new public management (NPM) and promotion of organisational modernisation were the most important elements in the political stream. The poor performance in Atlanta 1996 and the leadership change opened policy windows for the more systematic and professional scientific support for elite sport in the UK including elite artistic gymnastics.

The salience of science in artistic gymnastics has been significantly raised in the last decade, most evidently illustrated by reference to the establishment of the EIS National Gymnastics Performance and Research Centre at Loughborough University in June 2004, the primary target group of which are gymnasts belonging to World Class Start Programme (BG, 2006a). In fact, prior to the establishment of the Centre, BAGA and the BG had maintained close collaboration with the Sports Biomechanics Research Group at Loughborough University for two decades. A key organ within the National Gymnastics Performance and Research Centre is the Centre for

Gymnastics Research that provides British elite gymnasts with technical, skill and biomechanical support via its advanced AI-based equipment and specialised researchers (Loughborough University, 2014). Moreover, there has long been close collaboration between the BG and the Centre in gymnastics-related research topics.

(7) International influence

The UK's representation in key organs of FIG started in 1976 when George Whiteley was elected onto the FIG Executive Committee (BG, 2014c). Franklyn Edmonds' election to the Vice Presidency of FIG raised the UK's profile in FIG to a new high (BAGA, 2001a). Since the late 1990s, there have continuously been British delegates in various Committees and Councils of FIG. Table 6.4 below is a chronicle of the UK's representation in FIG since 1997.

Table 6.4: Britons that have taken positions in key organs in FIG between 1997 and 2014

Year of Election	British Member	Organ and Role
1997	John Atkinson	Chairman, FIG Sports Aerobics Commission
2000	Brian Stocks	Member, FIG Council
2008	Brian Stocks	Member, FIG Executive Committee
2008	Karl Wharton	Member, FIG Acrobatic Gymnastics
2013	Beth Tweddle	Member, FIG Athletes Commission; Athletes CO Member, FIG Women's Artistic Gymnastics Technical Committee

Sources: BG (2013f; 2014d; 2014e; 2014g; 2014o); FIG (2014b; 2014c; 2014d); UK Sport (2009a; 2013g).

Currently, Brian Stocks is holding a position in the FIG Council and Beth Tweddle is a member of both the FIG Athletes Commission and Women's Artistic Gymnastics Technical Committee (FIG, 2014b; 2014c; 2014d). Moreover, John Aldridge is the Vice President of the FIG Medical Commission and Karl Wharton is still a member of

the Acrobatic Gymnastics Technical Committee (BG, 2014o). The UK's presence in FIG has been stable and with Beth Tweddle's appointment, there is evidence of a British voice in more organs in FIG. In addition, the UK's influence in the European Union of Gymnastics (UEG) has been significant (BG, 2014d; 2014f; European Union of Gymnastics, UEG, 2013).

It is widely perceived that the UK's influence in international sport has declined since the previous century (UK Sport, 2013g). However, this trend has recently been reversed with a number of British candidates gaining positions in many international sporting bodies which is seen as a sign of the recovery of the UK's international sporting influence. In fact, this recovery has, at least, partly benefited from some deliberate strategies led by UK Sport. The fundamental motives were to safeguard and promote the country's interests in the governance of sport internationally (UK Sport, 2009c; 2014l) and to ensure that the country continues to have a voice in the global development of sport (UK Sport, 2014i). Accordingly, UK Sport has taken a broad International strategy, which aims to strengthen the positive relationship between British NGBs and their corresponding IFs and other influential international sporting bodies including the IOC and the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF). UK Sport works collaboratively with NGBs. Gymnastics examples include the UK Sport's support for the bid for and the hosting of major international artistic gymnastics events most notably the 2009 London World Artistic Gymnastics Championships and the to-be-held 2015 Glasgow World Championships (BAGA, 1993; BG, 2009c; UK Sport, 2011c). Positive communication between the BG and FIG has been built and strengthened through these major events. However, a more important aspect of the International strategy, as is the same as China, is the pursuit of more international representations by having more Britons holding positions in the Boards of the international sports governing bodies. In this regard, UK Sport launched the International Leadership Programme (ILP) in 2006. UK Sport identified five major functions or types of decision-making power of the international governing bodies, which also formed the direct rationale for the promotion of ILP. According to UK Sport (2014j), international governing bodies decide:

- ‘ - Where and when events are held;
- The disciplines and sports held as part of sport events;
- Rules, regulations and scoring systems;

- Qualification, selection and ranking systems;
- Permitted equipment and classification (for disability events)'.

According to ILP, NGBs nominates suitable candidates to UK Sport and successful candidates receive workshops, trainings, personal development programme and learning opportunities from veterans organised by UK Sport (UK Sport, 2014j; 2014k). So far, five editions have been conducted and the sixth edition is in the process and is expected to be completed in April 2014. Some of the ILP alumni have already become members of some Olympic IFs (UK Sport, 2013g).

6.3.4 Conclusions

British gymnasts have made notable progress in the last two Olympiads and the reasons contributing to the fundamental change from the 'backwater' in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s to the recent 'medal eruption' are manifold: 'a change in the way British Gymnastics is structured, a change in coaching strategies, Tweddle's game-changing foray into the medals at world events, and even the gradual weakening of other nations' (Williams, 2010b). Of equal importance is the support from National Lottery money and the steady improvement in communication and cooperation between the BG and clubs. For British gymnastics, the lack of funds due to the funding cut in the early 2000s forced the BG to allocate Lottery funds primarily to clubs and rely more on club resources in the development of elite artistic gymnastics and hence became an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the BG and clubs, which has been widely perceived as a key to guaranteeing the sustainable rather than short-lived progress of elite artistic gymnastics in the UK.

Looking back on the history of British gymnastics in the last two to three decades, several turning points can be identified: John Major's appointment as the Prime Minister in 1990, overall poor performance of the UK delegation in Atlanta 1996, New Labour's taking office in 1997, the continuing poor performance of British gymnasts in general and male gymnasts in particular and the very poor performance in Anaheim 2003, London's successful bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games in 2005, Beth Tweddle's gold medal breakthrough in the 2006 World Championships, Louis

Smith's bronze medal in Beijing 2008 and the successful hosting of the 2012 London Olympic Games and British gymnasts' unprecedented achievement in London 2012. Applying Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams theory, they are policy windows which have prompted more effective policies or accelerated policy change. However, there is a distinction between general and artistic gymnastics-specific windows, derived from Exworthy and Powell's (2004) concepts of 'big' windows and 'little' windows. In the case of British Gymnastics, John Major's coming into office, the UK's 'Waterloo' in Atlanta and the success of London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games in 2005 were general policy windows influencing the whole elite sport landscape in the UK while British Gymnast's performance including both perennially poor performance and consecutive breakthroughs in the last two Olympiads were specific windows the impact of which was confined to British Gymnastics. It was during John Major's era that the salience of sport was greatly raised in the Cabinet and the foundation for future development of elite sport was laid. Political leadership change and the start of the New Labour era, with its commitment to organisational modernisation, provided a substantial impetus to many policy developments in sport most notably the organisational reform of the Sports Council and NGBs. These major political developments, together with the success in bid for the 2012 Olympic Games, formed and reinforced the political stream. The problem stream was easily identified. For example, the UK's overall poor performance in Atlanta 1996 and British gymnasts' longstanding poor performance on the international stage were direct indicators of the problems and 'culprits' identified included fragmented and poor professional organisational structure, a low degree of compatibility between coaches and gymnasts, a lack of funds, a lack of systematic scientific support structure and a lack of 'competition' psychology. Feasible policies put forward included a more efficient and club-oriented use of Lottery money, the reform and modernisation of the BG, the adoption of a 'semi-centralised' training structure, the increased use of foreign expertise and coaches, the 'devolution' to some club coaches of responsibilities for the training of some National Squad gymnasts and the adoption of a more stable coach-gymnast relationship which tends to be long-term and stable, and the establishment of the sports science institutes including the UKSI and the EIS. These policies and approaches became accepted and established when the above-mentioned turning points, or 'policy windows', were open and advocated and

promoted by strong support from the government, UK Sport and key staff in the NGB and the National Squad.

However, the development of elite artistic gymnastics in the UK is by no means insulated from exogenous factors. First, FIG's decisions regarding disciplines, event venues and rules have had a great impact on the direction of gymnastics development in the UK. More importantly, the development of artistic gymnastics in the UK is not immune from global politics. In fact, the UK has been a beneficiary of the collapse of the Communist regimes of the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s and the early 1990s as the country has attracted many talented gymnastics coaches previously serving Eastern European countries. This demonstrates both the effect of exogenous factors, or globalisation on British gymnastics and the contingency and complexity of globalisation and its possible cause of political factors, which echoes Hay (2002) Hay and Marsh's (2000) globalisation theory.

In fact, coaching is one example of, or the 'carrier' of the BG's imitation of many approaches previously prevalent in the Eastern Bloc, ranging from talent identification, the structure of the National Squad, to the emergence and development of full-time gymnasts and coaches. This imitation echoes many features of policy learning and transfer theory. However, it is noteworthy that this sort of voluntary policy transfer, or policy learning by no means takes the form of copying as instead of an attitude of 'accept all', the BG made great effort to adapt these approaches to the British context and make them suit the British way (Eddie Van Hoof, quoted in Williams 2010a). Hence, this sort of policy transfer comes closer to 'emulation' (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). From the theoretical perspective of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the development of British gymnastics in the last two to three decades reveals some evidence of mimetic isomorphism from former Eastern Bloc.

With respect to policy implementation, the BG has used a combination of various policy instruments to strengthen the relationship with clubs and enhance their morale and willingness to cooperate especially with elite programme. More common instruments include financial incentive or inducement (e.g.: the generous funding allocation to clubs even in the face of the lack of cash) and education or information (e.g.: the BG's coaching education to and information sharing with local clubs and

also Anti-Doping Education Strategy). In addition, in some cases, most notably in relation to anti-doping, the BG also uses coercive measures including sanctions on those who are found guilty. The requirement that gymnasts who do not participate in Regional Squad Training are not eligible for National Finals is also a demonstration of the BG's use of coercive measures. The outcome of the combined use of three types of policy instruments has been generally effective so far. As noted previously, there is an increasingly mutually cooperative relationship between the BG and its clubs and clubs and coaches are fully behind the BG's national programme in general and elite programme in particular (Eddie Van Hoof, quoted in Williams, 2010a). This satisfies many requirements for what was advanced by Hogwood and Gunn (1984) as 'perfect implementation'.

In addition to sporting achievements, the BG is also pursuing more international influence and higher profile in FIG following UK Sport's International strategy and the International Leadership Programme. Having fully recognised the power of international governing bodies, the BG, akin to other NGBs in the UK, has been working hard to secure its voice and increase its representation in FIG. Moreover, the hosting of a series of major artistic gymnastics events also provides opportunities to strengthen the mutual understanding and cooperation between the BG and FIG.

6.4 Swimming

6.4.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this research swimming refers to its narrow meaning only and hence diving, synchronised swimming and water polo are not included. British swimmers made their Olympic debut in Paris 1900 and have only been absent once, St. Louis 1904, since then (SR, 2014e). However, despite British swimmers' overall constant Olympic medal productivity (except for Berlin 1936 and Sydney 2000, SR, 2013i; 2014g), their gold medal performance is best described as 'intermittent' since the late 1920s. When the focus is narrowed to the period 1992-2012, the performance of British swimmers at the Olympic Games can be characterised as 'one peak and two trough': non-medal performance in Sydney 2000 (Amateur Swimming Association, ASA, 2000a), two-gold success in Beijing and non-gold

disappointment in London 2012 (see Table 6.5). As the seventh largest gold medal contributor and the fifth largest total medal contributor to TeamGB over the last two decades, swimming is identified as a secondary source of medals to the UK (see Table 6.1 above).

Table 6.5: The UK's medal performance in swimming between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Medal Points	Ranking
Barcelona 1992	0	0	1	1	1	16
Atlanta 1996	0	1	1	2	3	14
Sydney 2000	0	0	0	0	0	-
Athens 2004	0	0	2	2	2	18
Beijing 2008	2	2	2	6	12	3
London 2012	0	1	2	3	4	15
Total	2	4	8	14	22	16

Note: Medal points = the number of gold medals \times 3 + the number of silver medals \times 2 + the number of bronze medals \times 1.

Sources: Sports Reference (SR) (2013g; 2013h; 2013i; 2013j; 2013k; 2013l).

6.4.2 Organisational Structure

As the official national governing body recognised by UK Sport (UK Sport, 2013j), British Swimming (BS) is responsible for the development of elite swimming, synchronised swimming, water polo and diving in Great Britain. The BS is a member of BOA and it is the only recognised representative of British swimming in FINA (FINA, 2014).

Currently, the BS Board comprises 12 members including an athlete representative (BS, 2014b). This contrasts with its Chinese counterpart where athletes are excluded from the decision making process.

According to the BS (2013a, p. 3), two strategic objectives were identified for 2013-2017:

- 'To achieve medal success at Olympic and Paralympic Games';
- 'To influence key decisions at world and European level'.

Among the BS' three home country national governing bodies (England, Scotland and Wales), the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) (established in 1886), the governing body for swimming in England, is very influential. As Green and Houlihan (2005) pointed out, there has been a perennial ambiguity regarding the function and structure between the ASA and the BS, in part, due to the strong influence of the ASA. For example, there are overlaps regarding key personnel and location between the ASA and the BS. However, in fact, it is important to point out that these two organisations are now legally and financially separate and the scope of their responsibilities is by no means equal (the ASA's responsibility is confined to England as Scotland and Wales have their own ASAs). As the Chief Executive of the ASA, David Sparkes, suggested (quoted in ASA & BS, 2013b, p. 42), 'the ASA is complementary to the work of British Swimming'.

The restructure of the ASFGB and the renaming as British Swimming in 2000 was a key step towards organisational clarity and specialisation. This organisational reform was an example of the New Labour government's promotion of 'new public management' (NPM) and the commitment to organisational modernisation. NGBs were required to set and meet performance (or rather medal) targets in order to receive Lottery money. High performance sport became the largest beneficiary.

6.4.3 Key Areas of Policy

(1) Financial support

The development of elite swimming has received substantial financial support since the introduction of National Lottery. The money primarily goes to the WCP programme. Currently, there are 65 elite swimmers listed on the World Class Performance programme (UK Sport, 2013j). As the Olympic champion Rebecca Adlington noted, it is the investment of National Lottery money that has guaranteed elite swimmers' full-time training and access to leading coaching, equipment and facilities (UK Sport, 2013j). UK Sport has strengthened its influence over NGBs including the BS through the financial leverage resulting from the distribution of National Lottery funds. This is a demonstration of the use of financial resource dependency as a policy instrument to strengthen the compliance of organisations in the implementation process.

As reflected in Table 6.6, there have been two dramatic increases in funding: one for the Sydney Olympiad and the other for the Beijing Olympiad. Table 6.6 also provides evidence of the execution of UK Sport's 'No Compromise' investment strategy. British swimmers' very poor performance in Sydney 2000 led to a slight funding cut for the Athens Olympiad while the success in Beijing 2008 (although also affected by the fact that London 2012 was a 'home' Olympic Games) resulted in a considerable funding rise in the London Olympiad. However, as the third largest funding recipient, the BS failed to win a gold medal in London 2012 and the target of six medals was not met either (BS, 2009a). This led to a 14.9% funding cut in the 2016 Olympic cycle (BBC Sport, 2012c; 2012d; 2013f). The funding cut imposed on the BS reflected UK Sport's use of coercive power, which echoes the first dimension of Lukes's (2005) power theory. Based on Houlihan and Lindsey's (2013) summary of policy instruments, this was an example of the use of sanctions by UK Sport on the BS.

Table 6.6: Funding received by the BS and its predecessor ASFGB from UK Sport and its predecessor GB Sports Council from the Barcelona Olympiad to the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad

Olympiad	Figure
Barcelona Olympiad	£1,371,978
Atlanta Olympiad	£1,325,375
Sydney Olympiad	£6,900,000
Athens Olympiad	£6,400,000
Beijing Olympiad	£20,659,000
London Olympiad	£25,144,600
Rio de Janeiro	£21,352,191
Total	£83,153,144

Note: Funding figure for the Atlanta Olympiad is estimated, as official annual reports are inaccessible.

Sources: GB Sports Council, annual reports, various years between 1990 and 1996; UK Sport, annual reports and financial statements, various years between 2000 and 2013; UK Sport (2011a; 2014a; 2014b); Zheng (2011, p. 181).

The BS is also sponsored by commercial companies most notably British Gas as the principal partner and other partners and suppliers including Speedo, Holiday Inn and so forth (BS, 2014a; British Gas, 2014). In 2009, both British Gas and Speedo signed a £15m sponsorship deal (a six-year contract for the former and a four-year contract for the latter) with the BS (ASA, 2009c; 2009d; BBC Sport, 2009).

(2) Talent identification and athlete development

As mentioned earlier, the UK is a late adopter of a systematic approach to talent identification. There was an absence of a deliberate talent identification strategy back in the 1980s and the early 1990s, despite the annually held National Age Group Swimming Competition that targeted young swimmers (ASA, 1989b). Substantial change took place in the 21st century, directly as a result of the poor performance in Sydney 2000. British Swimming has benefited from both UK Sport's generic talent programme and measures most notably the WCP Programme, and the BS and ASA's own talent search and development programmes. The appointment of the Australian Bill Sweetenham as the performance director of the British Swimming

Team in November 2000 (ASA, 2000b) was a significant watershed in the history of British Swimming. Bill Sweetenham brought a series of revolutionary approaches and ideas to British Swimming and talent search and identification was an important area. Accordingly, the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) programme was launched in 2003, aiming to pave the way for Great Britain's swimming excellence for the next ten years and beyond (ASA, 2003b). The LTAD programme was carefully designed and age-specific (ASA, 2010a). Figure 6.3 summarises the five stages identified in the LTAD framework. The Swim21 Club programme, the ASA's programme which specifically targeted club development, was intended to strengthen the link between the NGB and swimming clubs and hence it was perceived to be vital in helping maximise club resources and make clubs better serve the implementation of the LTAD (ASA, 2003c; 2014). In fact, akin to artistic gymnastics, elite swimming in the UK follows a club-based system in which clubs play a fundamental role in the production of elite level swimmers and coaches including the Olympic Champion Rebecca Adlington (RebeccaAdlington.co.uk, 2014a).

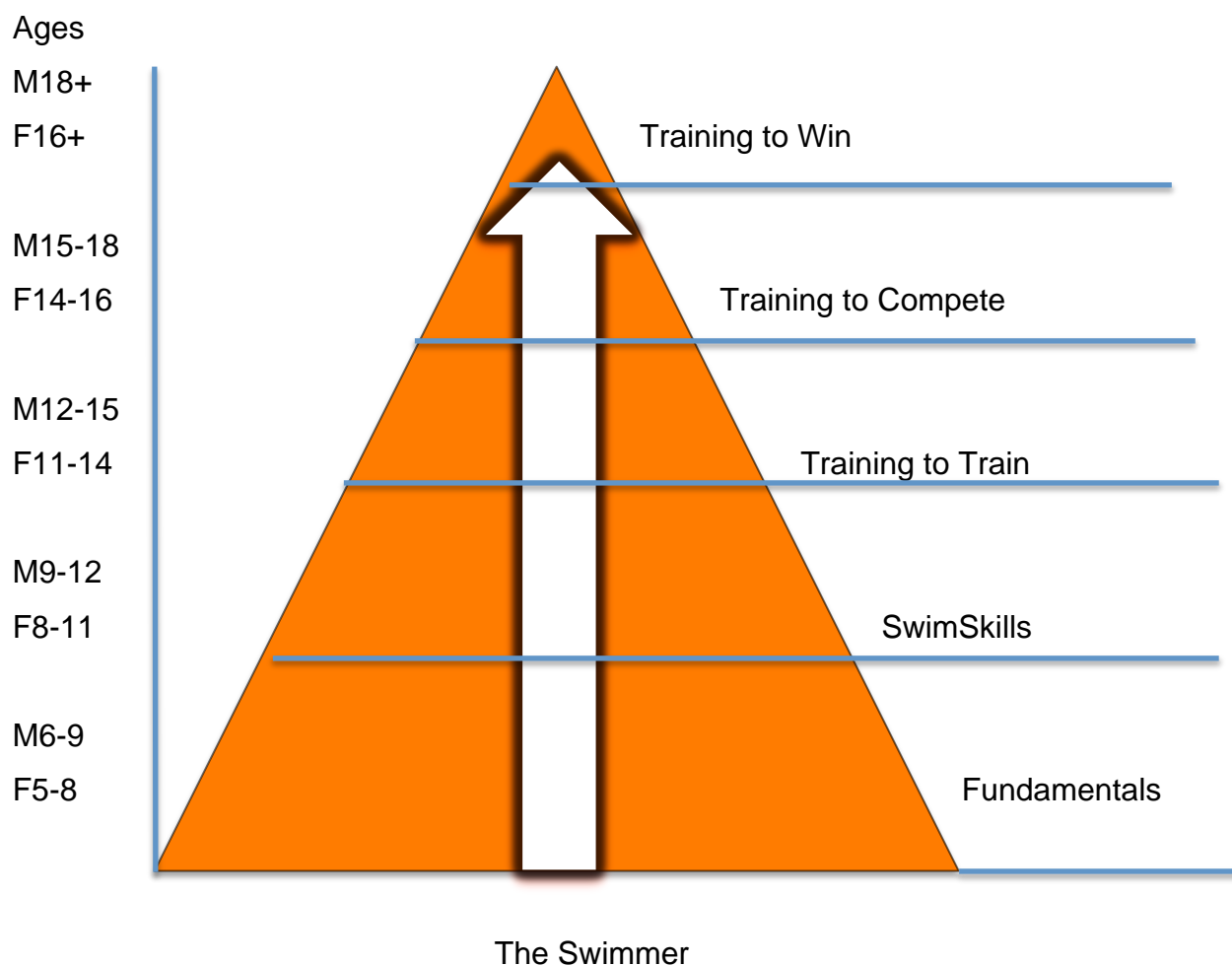


Figure 6.3: Five stages of the LTAD programme

Source: ASA (2003c, p. 27).

London's successful bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games accelerated progress in talent identification and development in the UK. For swimming, the England Talent Development Programme (ETDP) was launched in 2007 and involved eight regional camps across the country covering three levels. ETDP targeted swimming talent ranging from 12 to 20 years plus. Level 1 and 2 were conducted at regional level while Level 3 was at the national level (ASA, 2007; 2008a). This formed a progressive pyramid. Furthermore, the London 2012 Target Squad was formed in 2008 and assembled more than 100 of the country's most talented young swimmers (ASA, 2008a; 2008c). Applying Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams framework, London's successful bid in 2005 was a significant policy window for talent identification and development in many Olympic sports in the UK including elite swimming.

British swimmers' underperformance against the medal target in London 2012 prompted major rethink of the existing system and some new actions have been taken or are under consideration. First, British Swimming launched a new talent development programme - the Podium Potential Programme, which was identified by British Swimming as 'groundbreaking in the UK' (ASA & BS, 2013e, p. 19). Podium Potential Programme narrows the target group by focusing on medal potential swimmers and providing them with more holistic and detailed support. Moreover, the system has been more medal-oriented. As the new GB Head Coach Bill Furness (2013, quoted in ASA & BS, 2013f, p. 41) said, talent search for good swimmers is going to be more 'detailed and focused'. Accordingly, a new talent identification system named 'The Aims' (Action Improvement Monitoring) is being put in place (ASA & BS, 2013f, p. 41). More recently, the ETDP was remodelled and integrated within the World Class structure (ASA & BS, 2013f). Three phases have been identified and they form a progressive pyramid. As England Talent Delivery Manager Ciaran O'Brien said: 'The format of these days ensures that the focus of the programme is on identifying areas for development rather than being perceived purely as a reward for a past performance' (quoted in ASA & BS, 2013g, p. 19).

New actions have also been taken in relation to the National Squad. The fundamental philosophy of the National Squad has been reoriented to be 'smaller', 'tighter' and more 'performance-driven' (Bill Furniss, 2013, quoted in ASA & BS, 2013f, p. 40). Quality takes precedence over quantity and focus will be given to the relatively more narrowly target group of swimmers who are identified as having a real chance of winning medals in major international swimming competitions most notably at the Olympic Games. However, there remains a central challenge for British Swimming to make the transition from young talent to the senior squad more efficient.

There is no official evidence of cash rewards programme in place by governing bodies for Olympic and World Championships medallists, although a cash reward plan for British medallists in London 2012 was once under consideration (ASA & BS, 2011b). This contrasts not only with China, but also with many Western counterparts including the USA (ASA & BS, 2011b). However, top swimmers most notably Rebecca Adlington are sought-after by non-public sponsors

(RebeccaAdlington.co.uk, 2014b). Moreover, top swimmers receive non-material rewards and social honours. Rebecca Adlington was voted third in the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award in 2008 (ASA, 2009a) and received an OBE in 2009 (RebeccaAdlington.co.uk, 2009).

(3) Coaching

The appointment of the former Australian Olympic Head Coach Bill Sweetenham as the National Performance Director of British Swimming soon after British swimmers' very poor performance in Sydney 2000 was a milestone in the development of swimming in Britain (Dryden, 2002). As the Chief Executive David Sparkes (2014, quoted in *The Independent*, 2014) commented, 'the biggest turning point was when we got Bill Sweetenham ... he changed the attitude, the professionalism, the way people trained, the way the coaches worked... The mindset is much more professional - it's now built in and everyone buys into it. He was tough and he was eccentric but sport is tough. He was a great leader. We are still benefiting from his work now'.

Bill Sweetenham revolutionised the system of elite swimming in Great Britain, transforming the system into a more integrated, professional and performance-driven one (BS, 2004; 2008; *The Independent*, 2014). As Bill Sweetenham clarified, 'our team motto is that winning is the only option. We don't want to know about anything else' (quoted in Dryden, 2002, p. 13). Many approaches including the improved competition structure, the increased emphasis on training and the adoption of a rigorous training regime, the raised salience of science and the above-mentioned launch of a long-term talent identification and development system were conducted under Bill Sweetenham's 'tenure' (ASA, 2003b; *The Independent*, 2014) and many current elite swimmers and coaches are still benefiting from his 'legacy' (*The Independent*, 2014). More importantly, the attitude of elite swimming coaches and athletes was significantly changed to a more professional one under Bill Sweetenham's guidance (ASA, 2000b; 2003a).

The BS has continued to adopt world-class foreign expertise after Bill Sweetenham's departure in 2007 (BBC Sport, 2007). Another Australian Michael Scott was

appointed the National Performance Director (NPD) in 2007, guiding Team GB in Beijing 2008 and London 2012 (BBC Sport, 2012a). More recently, the American Dennis Pursley became the head coach of Team GB soon after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and led the team in London 2012 (ASA, 2008d). These appointments reflected the BS's open attitude towards globalisation and willingness to use foreign expertise to improve British elite swimming and many concomitant measures showed some evidence of policy learning and transfer from Australia and the USA. A more direct example of policy learning and transfer from other countries was British Swimming's adoption of a financial reward scheme for coaches producing Olympic medallists in Beijing 2008 following Michael Scott's introduction, which had already been conducted in Australia and the USA (ASA, 2008b). According to the scheme, each coach who produced an individual Olympic gold, silver and bronze could receive £10,000, £7,500 and £5,000 respectively. Multiple bonuses were available for coaches producing more than one medal-winning results (ASA, 2008b). These are the NGBs' use of inducements and rewards. This voluntary policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996) included elements of inspiration and emulation (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). From Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective, British swimmers' 'rock bottom' (Dryden, 2002, p. 13) in Sydney 2000 was the problem stream and the non-medal performance was the indicator. Coaching was identified as one area with weakness and hence formed a sub-problem stream. As Bill Sweetenham pointed out in 2003 (ASA, 2003a, p. 22), 'we don't have the best educated or most experienced coaches in the world'. In the face of this problem, the hiring of world-class foreign coaches was perceived as a viable solution. Poor performance in Sydney 2000 opened the policy window and an immediate response for the BS was to hire a top Australian coach - Bill Sweetenham as the National Performance Director.

Poor performance in London 2012 prompted comprehensive reflection and in-depth review within British Swimming (BS, 2012). A five-man panel was formed for London 2012 debrief. These five members included an American Bob Bowman who is Michael Phelps' coach, an Irish man Conor O'Shea who was the former rugby captain of Ireland and a German Thomas Lurz who is an open water swimmer (ASA & BS, 2012a). It became apparent that the BS tried to seek advice outside the UK and swimming, learning experience from other countries and other sports such as

rugby. From Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996) theoretical perspective, this was the BS's intention of both external policy learning and transfer from other countries and internal policy learning from experience of another sport within the country. Further action was taken in early 2013 as former rugby, hockey and basketball Chief Chris Spice was appointed the new NPD of British Swimming (ASA & BS, 2013c). This appointment further demonstrated the BS' intention of 'borrowing' experience from other sports. Coaching became an important area for improvement. Chris Spice pointed out three areas for improvement the first of which was coaching:

'The first is coaching and making the coaches better. I don't think we've invested enough in that. We have some very good coaches but we need to make them world class. We need to put resource and energy into making as many world class coaches as we can'.

(Chris Spice 2013, quoted in ASA & BS, 2013f, p. 40)

Accordingly, some actions have already been taken. A most recent action was the selection of elite swimming coaches in the first UK Sport World Class Coaching Elite Programme (BS, 2013b). However, it is too early to assess their effectiveness.

(4) Training

Bill Sweetenham introduced a large-scale restructure of the elite swimming system in Great Britain, among which training was a key targeted area for improvement. Bill Sweetenham (2003, quoted in ASA, 2003a, p. 23) once explicitly criticised British Swimming's minimum training and maximum competition approach, stressing the significance of sufficient time of training and the leading role of coaches in pursuing excellence on the world stage. As Bill Sweetenham clarified, the Olympic Games should be the only end and the highest pursuit and British swimmers needed to be more selective in participating in competitions (Dryden, 2002), which concurred with the ex-Potential Director John Atkinson's criticism that British Swimmers had spent much time on insignificant competitions (ASA, 2001). Based on this changed training philosophy and attitude (Dryden, 2002), a series of measures were taken. First, regular training for the National Squad became routinised. According to the BS's recommendation in its annual report in 2005, targeted swimmers should have 200

days of camps per year in 50m outdoor facilities (BS, 2005). Especially, collective training was highly valued and promoted by Bill Sweetenham (ASA, 2006). A rigorous training regime was adopted and swimmers of the National Squad were required to start a day's training at 6am (The Independent, 2014).

The increased emphasis on training did not reduce after Bill Sweetenham's departure. In the post-Sweetenham era, the fundamental philosophy and attitude towards training have been largely maintained and further developed. The most noteworthy development was the establishment of the Intensive Training Centres (ITCs). As a programme targeting the success in London 2012, the Intensive Training Centre (ITC) network, sponsored by British Gas, was established in 2008 and five bases (in Loughborough, Bath, Swansea, Stirling and Stockport respectively, BS, 2013c) were selected as the ITCs. The selection of the five ITCs took the geographical location into consideration as each of each home nation had at least one ITC (ASA, 2008e). The establishment of the ITCs showed an increased degree of centralisation of British Swimming. Each training centre was equipped with a head coach and many full-time support staff (ASA, 2008f). As officially summarised by the ASA (2009b, pp. 30-31), 'the five ITCs recently launched by British Swimming are aimed at providing talented swimmers with a fully integrated training programme in one location'. In addition, British Swimming also organises altitude training (for middle and long distance swimmers, BS, 2013b) and overseas training in the USA, Australia, Singapore, Spain and South Africa (ASA & BS, 2009; BS, 2012).

However, several measures were taken after British Swimmers' poor performance in London 2012. First and foremost, three of the five ITCs, the ITCs in Stockport, Swansea and Stirling were shut as a result of the funding cut imposed on the BS (BBC Sport, 2013d). In so doing, intensive training became more focused in centres in Loughborough and Bath. A more significant change was the action to replace the previous National Squad which assembled swimmers in all events by a more event-specific system, following the London 2012 debrief. Six event-based training camps were organised in 2013, bringing together top British swimmers in each event 'for focused and more bespoke training and development activity' (BS, 2013b, p. 10). This less concentrated but more flexible National Squad structure and training regime was an innovation by British Swimming (ASA & BS, 2013a).

(5) Competition opportunities

Details regarding the increasingly structured domestic competition system can be found in Appendix 11. As regards international competitions, the Olympic Games is undoubtedly the top priority. In fact, especially with the restructure in the last ten to fifteen years, an Olympic-centred philosophy has been established and consolidated. As mentioned above, former BS NPD Bill Sweetenham stressed (quoted in Dryden, 2002, p. 13) that ‘no competition is an end in itself except the Olympics’. As the new NPD Chris Spice clarified (quoted in ASA & BS, 2013f, p. 40), ‘our job is about producing Olympic medals ... That’s how we will be judged and everything in between is medium- and short-term goals.’ The FINA Aquatics Championships is the most important non-Olympic international competition for the BS to which Great Britain usually sends its strongest squad. Appendix 11 summarises international and domestic elite swimming competitions that British swimmers compete in.

A key theme regarding the competition structure of the BS and the ASA revolves around the theme of selectivity. An improved and more selective competition structure, an Olympic-driven and Olympic-centred competitive philosophy, and a more balanced relationship between competition and training were key issues on Bill Sweetenham’s restructure agenda in the early 2000s (Dryden, 2002). However, the disappointing performance in London 2012 prompted the debate regarding the balance between competition selectivity and participation frequency. As David Sparkes admitted (quoted in ASA & BS, 2013b, p. 40), ‘I think there’s enough world-class competition but I don’t think we go often enough’. David Sparkes further reflected upon the example of the 2012 European Championships to which the BS deliberately sent a non-top squad, admitting that not sending a strong team to the European Championships was a ‘massive mistake’ (quoted in ASA & BS, 2013b, p. 40) as they missed the opportunity to understand and learn from their opponents. Therefore, it is expected that the BS will send top swimmers more often to major International and Continental events. In addition to the selectivity, selection policy and trials for major competitions have been changed, or at least, adjusted. For example, one-off trials five weeks prior to the World Championships have replaced the previous two-stage trials starting 21 weeks before the competition. As the current Head Coach Bill Furniss said (quoted in ASA & BS, 2013f), this approach was the

outcome of the review and policy learning from the underperformance in London 2012 and partly inspired by American approaches introduced by Michael Phelps's coach Bob Bowman in the five-man review panel. From a theoretical perspective, this is an example of policy learning from other countries, blending elements of inspiration and emulation (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). Furthermore, the most recent consultation paper suggested that the BS tries to raise the quality of domestic competition system and make it better related to international standard (BS, 2014n).

(6) Scientific research

Akin to British Gymnastics, British Swimming has received scientific support from the EIS since 2002, covering the area of sport medicine, physiology, psychology, nutrition and so forth (EIS, 2012c). The EIS support team is integrated with the BS support team and often stay with British elite swimmers in training bases most notably the ITCs and competitions. Currently, there are 127 elite swimmers receiving support from the EIS and more than £1.3m has been invested in EIS swimming services since 2009 (EIS, 2012c).

The BS has conducted a number of Sports Science and Sport Medicine (SSSM) projects (over 20 projects by 2011, BS, 2011). According to the BS (2014m), the SSSM is fundamentally established to provide access and support to the best performed swimmers. Support is provided to both ITC and non-ITC swimmers through core scientific staff and SSSM practitioners recruited (BS, 2010; 2014m). Currently, there are over 100 WCP swimmers enjoying SSSM support (BS, 2014m). Starts and turns have become a key targeted science area in recent years. A series of measures have been taken to strengthen British elite swimmer's starts and turns, ranging from the adoption of the Swimtrack software which provides quantitative analysis via visual image and the Starts and Turns Technical Plan (BS, 2011). Moreover, the US Team's techniques in starts, turns and relay takeovers were introduced to Team GB by Bob Bowman (ASA & BS, 2013d). This is a demonstration of policy learning and transfer from other countries. Moreover, the BS has maintained close cooperation with a number of universities for training and scientific support (BS, 2013b).

Following the London 2012 debrief, two areas in relation to sports science were identified for improvement: athletes' self-management and psychology (ASA & BS, 2013a; 2013f; BS, 2013b). In response to the former, which was identified as a priority in the debrief (BS, 2013b), the BS developed an Athlete Self-Management Guide and the copies were distributed to all funded swimmers. This can be seen as the BS's use of education and information as policy instrument. As for psychology, it has been a perennial area of weakness. Former BS NPD Bill Sweetenham (2005, quoted in BS, 2005) explicitly pointed out the significance of psychology in Olympic success and the need to rely on more experienced swimmers due to their relatively higher degree of psychological maturity as a reflection on the performance in Athens 2004. In the aftermath of London 2012, more actions have been taken regarding psychology, following the London Olympic debrief recommendation that a clearer, more strategic and 'monitorable' performance psychological system should be established (ASA & BS, 2013a). A good example is a three-year project in collaboration with Loughborough University and other partners aiming at improving psychological preparedness and mental toughness (BS, 2013b). From Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective, underperformance in London 2012 was both a problem and policy window for the above-mentioned actions regarding science.

(7) International influence

There were participants from British Swimming in the ILP since the inaugural edition in 2006 (UK Sport, 2014l) and Fran Leighton from British Swimming is included in the latest 2013/14 edition (UK Sport, 2013f). In the case of swimming specifically, increased international influence, as noted previously, has been a longstanding objective for the BS and its salience has been further raised in the most recent BS Strategy for 2013-2017 (BS, 2013a). As specified in the BS's annual reports from 2006 to 2009 (BS, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009b), the vision for British Swimming regarding international influence was to 'ensure that we achieve gold medal success'. The rationale was that 'British Swimming acknowledges the significant role it plays in providing skilled and knowledgeable administrators who, where appropriate, can influence the sport at an international level' (BS, 2006, p. 11). Two routes have been identified: 'through representation on European and world decision-making bodies'; and 'by staging major international events' (BS, 2006, p. 11; 2009b, p. 13).

Accordingly, British Swimming established some quantified targets (by 2009) of international influence following these two dimensions (BS, 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009b) and all these targets, according to the BS (2010), were met by 2009-2010. In 2013, there were seven British delegates in FINA including David Sparkes's role on the Disciplinary Panel and his nomination for the FINA Bureau and the role of other British representatives on the Technical Committees for various disciplines and in the Sports Medicine and Facilities Committees (BS, 2013b). At the continental level, there were six British members appointed in the 2012 LEN Congress (BS, 2013b) and the Chief Executive of the BS David Sparkes was appointed as the General Secretary of the LEN Bureau in 2012 (ASA & BS, 2012b). In addition, there were 48 British officials in FINA and 27 were on the LEN lists by 2012 (BS, 2011; 2012). As for major swimming events, Sheffield hosted the 1993 LEN European Championships (ASA, 1993a). More recently, Great Britain has successfully hosted the 2008 FINA World Swimming Championships (25m) in Manchester and the 2007 FINA 10km Marathon Swimming World Cup in London (BS, 2006; 2008). In addition, Great Britain has hosted several FINA and LEN Congresses including the 1989 FINA Congress in London and more recently the 2013 LEN Congress in Edinburgh (ASA, 1989a; BS, 2013b).

In summary, the BS has placed great emphasis on increasing its international influence and some achievements have been made. A key feature of the BS' international influence strategy is its clear and quantified targets regarding international influence. However, the UK still lacks a leadership voice in the FINA Bureau and it has never hosted the FINA Aquatics World Championships. The BS has recognised its relatively limited influence in the FINA and the most recent Strategy for 2013-2017 showed the BS's higher ambition as the BS established the targets of one FINA Bureau member, one LEN Officer by 2017 and the target of bid for and win the FINA SC¹¹ event 2022 by 2016 (BS, 2013a).

¹¹ SC: Short course.

6.4.4 Conclusions

Generally speaking, British elite swimmers have made notable progress on the international stage since the Athens Olympic cycle. More importantly, British Swimming's elite system has been restructured over the last decade and an increasingly Olympic-driven and professional system has been established. Applying Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams theory, the failure to win a medal at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney was a focusing event. Accepted policies covered a wide range, the most important and fundamental of which was the appointment of a foreign coach, Bill Sweetenham, as the NPD of British Swimming. Many other performance-driven and professional measures were initiated, promoted and led by Bill Sweetenham. A more professional and Olympic-centred philosophy was introduced and finally established within British Swimming. It was agreed that he laid the foundations for the subsequent progress of British Swimming in general and British swimmers' success in Beijing 2008 in particular. The political stream during this period, as discussed in the Policy Context Chapter, was generally stable and conducive to the development of elite sport. The salience of sport in general and elite sport in particular has been greatly raised since John Major's Prime Ministership and elite sport was also valued by New Labour government. The successful bid for the 2012 Olympic Games was another milestone for British elite sport including British Swimming. As David Sparkes (quoted in BS, 2005, p. 3) said: 'the decision to award the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012 to London will bring significant challenges'. This backdrop provided an additional impetus for government to support Olympic sport including swimming and hence reinforced political stream and was conducive to the policy stream.

However, GB swimmers' performance in London 2012 was below the target and expectation, which made British Swimming realise that Great Britain was not yet a top swimming nation and hence the BS need to be more realistic (BS, 2013b). From Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective, GB swimmers' underperformance in London 2012 was both a problem and a policy window prompting a further large-scale review led by a five-man panel. According to the debrief (ASA & BS, 2013a), areas in the policy stream under review included coaching, selection policy, training and national squad structure, athletes' self-management and psychology, sport

science and medicine all of which were identified as 'problems' requiring further actions. Accordingly, some actions including the one-off trials, the Self-Management Guide, the closedown of three out of the five ITCs and a flexible and event-based national squad and training structure have already been adopted and further changes are under discussion. One notable change concerned the appointment of BS personnel. The appointment of Chris Spice and Bill Furniss as the new NPD and GB head coach respectively after the London Olympics reflected the post-Games debrief conclusion that the NPD in future must be UK-based (ASA & BS, 2013a). The developments within the policy stream were reinforced by the political stream which reflected Coalition government's continuous support for elite sport until at least Rio de Janeiro 2016.

Although many of the factors shaping policy towards elite swimming were domestic, there were a number of non-domestic factors that need to be acknowledged. First, UK Sport's support for elite sport in the UK is heavily influenced by the IOC and the sports to be included in the Olympic Games. There is an Olympic bias regarding UK Sport's funding strategy. As the second largest sport at the Olympic Games, British Swimming has received substantial support from UK Sport. Within the BS, the best example is the substantial and systematic support that the BS has provided to open water swimming since its 'promotion' to an Olympic discipline. This echoes Houlihan's (2009) view that international organisations can exert influence on domestic policy system and the inclusion or removal of a sport, discipline or even event in and from the Olympic Games has a clearly discernible impact on domestic government funding decisions. The impact of globalisation is also reflected in the global movement of coaches and the extent to which the BS has taken advantage of foreign expertise, as reflected in the cases of Bill Sweetenham, Michael Scott and Dennis Pursley. This showed British Swimming's open attitude towards and a certain degree of reliance on the transfer of not only policy but also personnel. Many new approaches outside the country have been introduced and adopted in the UK. Examples include the promotion of a more professional and performance-driven attitude among athletes, a cash reward scheme for coaches producing Olympic medallists, the one-off trials for major international competitions and advanced techniques in starts, turns and relay takeovers, which have been 'imported' to the UK from Australian and American experts. These 'imported' measures are

demonstrations of policy learning and transfer. Of particular note is the strong Australian influence within the BS, which is a good illustration of the UK's imitation and adoption of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) model in the 1990s, on which the current British elite sport system is based (De Bosscher et al., 2008). The Australianisation of elite sport in the UK is a good example of both policy learning and transfer and mimetic isomorphism. However, the BS's policy learning and transfer is by no means confined to the 'international' level. In fact, the BS has learned from the experience of other sports in the UK. For example, the centralisation of the National Squad most notably the establishment and refinement of the ITC network after Beijing 2008 was in part, inspired by the success of other sports most notably British Cycling (BC) and similarly British Rowing (BR) (BBC Sport, 2012b). Among other examples of the BS's intention of 'borrowing' experience from other sports is the inclusion of the former Irish rugby captain in the London 2012 review panel and the appointment of Chris Spice as the new NPD after London 2012. The imitation of the BC and BR's centralised approach resonates with mimetic isomorphism theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). However, it is noteworthy that not all BS's policies and measures are 'learned', 'transferred' or 'borrowed'. The adoption of a more flexible event-based National Squad structure and the corresponding dispersed training regime was an example of the BS's policy innovation.

In relation to policy implementation, education or information and inducements and rewards are often used by the BS in dealing with its relationship with affiliated coaches, athletes and clubs, on issues including science, talent identification and development, coaching, training and anti-doping. Despite their limited 'applicability', sanctions are also used in dealing with particular issues most notably anti-doping and also the deprivation of the qualification of clubs that have long owed membership fees. There is a top-down relationship between UK Sport and the BS especially in relation to elite sport issues. Through the financial leverage of funding allocation, UK Sport exerts influence over the BS and makes it better serve many of its policy objectives especially regarding elite success. The flexibility allowed for sports NGBs including the ASA's Swim21 in the implementation of Sport England's Clubmark system is a good demonstration of bottom-up elements. The relationship between the BS and swimming clubs is also largely 'harmonious' and there is little resistance from clubs in implementing the BS and ASA's policies. Many clubs try to

become affiliated to the ASA and receive the Swim21 accreditation as affiliated clubs are generally well-funded. Elite swimming, as a relatively isolated area in the UK, does not have the capacity to produce much conflict between the National Swimming Governing Bodies and local clubs. A lack of the battlefield like the National Games in China further reduces the chance of regional and club rivalry in the UK. However, compared to other sports NGBs, British Swimming is not as active in policy changes as expected by UK Sport. As a large organisation with a strong leader David Sparkes, the BS often resists or at least, delays reform and change. A good example is its slow response to best practices of other sports and the expectation of the imitation of good experience from more successful sports. From Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) and Hjern and Hull's (1982) perspective, the BS's resistance to change is a demonstration of lower-level implementing organisations' bottom-up approach to policy implementation.

In tandem with Olympic medal success, international influence has been a longstanding pursuit for the BS as a way of exerting some control over its international environment and it is officially identified as a strategic objective in BS strategy 2013-2017. Great Britain has secured its presence in FINA and LEN and successfully hosted a series of international and continental swimming events and congresses. However, what has been done is not enough. The BS is aware of its lack of influence in the FINA Bureau and accordingly developed strategy to pursue higher influence in key organs in FINA and bid for more high-profile FINA swimming events.

6.5 Cycling

6.5.1 Introduction

British cyclists have only been absent from the 1904 St. Louis Olympic Games. Although they won their first Olympic gold medal in London 1908 (SR, 2014h), British cyclists suffered a long trough between the 1920s and 1980s, during which they failed to win any Olympic gold medals. Except for the two-bronze performance in Atlanta 1996, British cyclists have won at least one gold medal in all the other five Games during the period 1992-2012 (SR, 2013p; 2013q; 2013r; 2013s; 2013t). A

new era dawned for British elite cycling in 2008 when British cyclists swept Beijing, winning eight out of the eighteen gold medals and started to establish their dominance on the international stage. The dominance was defended in London 2012 when British cyclists again won eight gold medals on home soil. As can be seen from Table 6.7 below, Great Britain is the most successful cycling nation in the six most recent Olympic Games. Compared to other Summer Olympic sports, cycling's contribution to TeamGB is unparalleled and cycling is a primary source of medals for TeamGB (see Table 6.1 above).

Table 6.7: The UK's medal performance in cycling between Barcelona 1992 and London 2012

Edition	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Medal Points	Ranking
Barcelona 1992	1	0	0	1	3	4
Atlanta 1996	0	0	2	2	2	12
Sydney 2000	1	1	2	4	7	6
Athens 2004	2	1	1	4	9	3
Beijing 2008	8	4	2	14	34	1
London 2012	8	2	2	12	30	1
Total	20	8	9	37	85	1

Note: Medal points = the number of gold medals \times 3 + the number of silver medals \times 2 + the number of bronze medals \times 1.

Sources: Sports Reference (SR) (2013o; 2013p; 2013q; 2013r; 2013s; 2013t).

6.5.2 Organisational Structure

British Cycling (BC) is the national governing body for cycling in the UK (British Cycling, BC, 2009a; 2014b) and is a member of BOA. It is the only recognised representative of British cyclists in the UCI and European Cycling Union (European Cycling Union, UEC, 2014; UCI, 2014a). British Cycling, formerly known as the

British Cycling Federation (BCF), was founded in 1959 through the amalgamation of the National Cyclists Union (NCU) and the British League of Racing Cyclists (BC, 2005a; 2014c). In August 2001, the BCF was renamed the BC and became the recipient of Lottery funding (UK Sport, 2001c).

According to the official strategy for 2013-2017, the BC aims to 'succeed on the world stage, to inspire more people to enjoy riding their bikes more often, be it for sport, recreation or transport' (BC, 2013h, p. 11; 2013i). This demonstrates that elite sport success and mass participation are dual priorities for the BC and these two priorities are considered to be mutually dependent (BC, 2013h; 2014d). As the BC's current Chief Executive Ian Drake (2013, quoted in BC, 2013h, p. 4) said, 'British Cycling is now well-established as the leading sports governing body in this country'.

However, the BC's success as an efficient and effective sports governing body was hard-won. The prevalent amateurism and a lack of an elite system were perceived as the main stumbling blocks hindering the improvement of British elite cyclists on the international stage (for example, pointed out by Peter King and Peter Keen, quoted in BBC Sport, 2008b; Golf Club Management, 2012). The UK's overall poor performance in Atlanta 1996 was a turning point for elite sport in the UK in general and British Cycling in particular, which prompted the organisational revolution of the BC. As the executive director of the BC Peter King (2012, quoted in Golf Club Management, 2012) summarised, 'the best opportunity to remodel your business is when you are at rock bottom with your back to the wall'. In addition to the introduction of the National Lottery, a series of actions were taken to improve the organisational structure, against the backdrop of the modernisation of British sports governing bodies. An increasingly resource-based relationship was formed between UK Sport and national sports governing bodies including the BC. Akin to the BG and the BS noted previously, the BC has become more professional and elite-driven. Brian Cookson became the president of the BC in 1997 (British Cycling Federation, BCF, 1997; BC, 2013b).

6.5.3 Key Areas of Policy

(1) Financial support

The contribution of the National Lottery to the development of elite cycling in the UK is enormous (BBC Sport, 2008b), which was confirmed by six-Olympic-gold winner Sir Chris Hoy, who admitted that the National Lottery has played a vital role in his achievement (UK Sport, 2014m). In fact, as the most successful Olympic sport in the UK in the last decade, cycling has continuously been prioritised by UK Sport regarding funding distribution in the 21st century. As can be seen in Table 6.8 below, funding leaped in the Beijing Olympiad, which exceeded £20 million as opposed to £8.6 million in the previous Athens Olympiad. Funding has kept going up based on UK Sport's 'No Compromise' policy: a 17.5% rise from the Beijing Olympiad to the London Olympiad and a 17.4% rise from the London Olympiad to the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad. Funding for British Cycling for the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad reached a new high by exceeding £30 million. Closely following rowing, cycling is currently the second largest recipient of Lottery funding (BBC Sport, 2012c; 2012d).

Table 6.8: Funding received by the BC and its predecessor the BCF from UK Sport and its predecessor GB Sports Council from the Barcelona Olympiad to the Rio de Janeiro Olympiad

Olympiad	Figure
Barcelona Olympiad	£1,468,105
Atlanta Olympiad	£2,116,275
Sydney Olympiad	£5,400,000
Athens Olympiad	£8,600,000
Beijing Olympiad	£22,151,000
London Olympiad	£26,032,000
Rio de Janeiro	£30,565,816
Total	£96,333,196

Note: Funding figure for the Atlanta Olympiad is estimated, as official annual reports are inaccessible.

Sources: GB Sports Council, annual reports, various years between 1990 and 1996; UK Sport, annual reports and financial statements, various years between 2000 and 2013; UK Sport (2011a; 2014a; 2014b); Zheng (2011, p. 180).

The WCP programme is a main area attracting funding investment. By May 2012, 85 cyclists were listed on the WCP Performance Programme (UK Sport, 2014m). UK Sport also provides financial support to Gold Event Series including the 2012 Track Cycling World Cup in Glasgow and the already successfully bid 2016 UCI Track World Championships in London (UK Sport, 2012d; 2013e). According to the BC (2014f), UK Sport has provided over £2 million to support 15 cycling events between 2007 and 2013. In addition, the BC has a number of private partners including Sky, Adidas, Madison, Fiat and so on (Adidas, 2013; BC, 2013j; 2014e; The Telegraph, 2012a).

(2) Talent identification and athlete development

Despite its late emergence, the talent system has developed at an ever-accelerating pace in British Cycling. A series of generic talent programmes have been conducted by UK Sport, which has benefited a wide range of sports including elite cycling. The most notable example is the World Class Start and Potential Programmes. Taking the period 2001-2003 as an example, there was a dramatic increase in the number of young riders attending the preliminary stage of the Programmes but the numbers of riders accepted by the Talent Team were strictly controlled (see Appendix 12). UK Sport's talent-specific campaigns most notably Girls4Gold contributed some talent young athletes to the British Cycling squad (UK Sport, 2008b; 2014f). Launched in June 2008 and working in collaboration with the EIS, Girls4Gold searched for female sporting talent and future Olympic champions for London 2012 and beyond in six sports including cycling (UK Sport, 2014n; UK Sport & EIS, 2014). This female-specific programme was the UK Sport's deliberate attempt to achieve higher success in female events in many of the UK's male-dominated 'fortress' sports (including cycling, rowing and sailing).

The BC has established its own well-rounded talent identification and athlete development system, which comprises four mutually dependent and hierarchical programmes: Olympic Talent Programme, Olympic Development Programme (ODP), Olympic Academy Programme (OAP) and Olympic Podium Programme (OPP) (BC, 2013f; 2014g). Table 6.9 provides more details of these four programmes.

The Olympic Talent Programme is the first step for promising young riders to enter the BC's World champion 'production line', which consists of two programmes: the regionally based Talent Development Programme and the Nationally based Olympic Talent Team Programme. As for the former, Go-Ride club coaches nominate promising young cyclists to attend Regional Schools of Racing (RSRs) and National Schools of Racing (NSR) operated by Talent Development Programme coaches. There are also Go-Ride Games organised for young riders from Go-Ride clubs to participate in cycling (BC, 2014l). In fact, Go-Ride, as the BC's fundamental programme to attract young people to the world of cycling and provide them with a platform to improve their skills (BC, 2013l), has made a great contribution to the development of elite cycling in the UK since it was launched in 2004. Each year, around 30 new talented riders move onto the National Talent Programme from the Go-Ride scheme (BC, 2014f). London 2012 Olympic champions Jason Kenny and Laura Trott are the most outstanding representatives of Go-Ride graduates (BC, 2013k) and were nurtured by the Talent Team Programme (BC, 2012d). Currently, more than 60% of riders on the road to Rio de Janeiro 2016 are graduates of Go-Ride clubs (BC, 2013k).

The Olympic Talent Team Programme, funded by Sport England (BC, 2003, p. 13) and referred to as a 'precursor to the Olympic Development Programme' by the BC's Talent Team Performance Manager Gary Coltman (quoted in BC, 2012d), aims to identify promising young riders aged 14-16 and provide them with access to top-level coaching and other resources (BBC Sport, 2008a). Training camps are organised for carefully selected young riders and detailed support and assessment are provided. Performance in designated domestic youth and senior-level competitions are the main criteria in selecting the cyclists into the Talent Team (BC, 2014h). Different from the Talent Development Programme, the Talent Team Programme focuses on talent development rather than talent identification (Gary Coltman, 2011, quoted in BC, 2011c). Riders who are identified as having further potential are then moved onto the Olympic Development and Olympic Academy Programmes (BC, 2004; 2005b). As the CEO of the BC Ian Drake summarised in the 2012 National Council Meeting (BC, 2012a), British Cycling's elite success is underpinned by Go-Ride and Talent Team.

Table 6.9: British Cycling's four Olympic programmes

Programme	Full-Time or Part-Time	Scale and Form	Age Group	Level of Athletes
Olympic Podium Programme	Full Time	Nationally based	Mostly over 23	Riders considered to be world class with a strong palmares
Olympic Academy Programme	Full Time	Nationally based (generally based near the Manchester Headquarters)	Typically 18-23	Riders with clear potential to be future champions
Olympic Development Programme	Part Time	Nationally based (Usually camp-based)	Typically between 16-18	Riders who are still in education
Olympic Talent Programme	Part Time	Regionally-based Talent Development Programme + Nationally based Olympic Talent Team Programme	Typically between 13-16 for the Talent Development Programme and typically between 14-16 for the Olympic Talent Team	Young riders with a talent for cycling and an ambition for success; Highly skilled youth riders

Sources: BC (2013f; 2014g; 2014h; 2014i; 2014j; 2014k).

The contribution of the Fast Track Programme launched by the BC in 2006 is noteworthy. The Fast Track programme, working across all four Olympic Programmes from Talent to Podium, tried to identify and recruit talented athletes from other sports, universities, the army and other non-traditional venues and help them make a smooth and rapid transition into competitive cycling (BC, 2006a). The most salient example was Olympic gold medal cyclist Rebecca Romero, who had been an Olympic rowing silver medallist in Athens 2004 (SR, 2014i). This is a policy innovation for the BC regarding the source of talent identification and recruitment. The launch of the Fast Track programme was, to a large extent driven by the increased medal expectation as a result of both the BC's success in Athens 2004

and the success of London's bid for 2012 Olympic Games in 2005. However, talent transfer, as a 'quicker' way of recruiting and cultivating sports talent, is not seen as a long-term strategy by Ian Drake, the CEO of the BC and another senior official previously serving the BC, who viewed the establishment of a big grass-roots base at the club level from which young talent can naturally emerge through effective development processes and pathways as a more secure foundation (quoted in Houlihan & Chapman, forthcoming 2015).

The Olympic Development Programme was launched in 2005. Training programmes are provided and selected riders enjoy one-on-one coaching. Endurance riders have the chance to race in Europe (BC, 2014i). In order to guarantee the quality, the number of ODP riders is strictly controlled. ODP cyclists have already achieved great medal success at both Junior World and European Championships (BC, 2007). In the stage of the Olympic Academy Programme, cyclists are full-time based, living in apartment-style residential accommodation in Manchester (BC, 2007) and training seven days a week. Although the majority of the OAP riders are progressed from the ODP, the OAP is not a 'closed door' programme as there are still opportunities provided for talented cyclists from other background (BC, 2014j). It is noteworthy that the OAP has a heavy track bias, reflecting its Olympic medal-centred philosophy (BC, 2014j). Successful graduates of the OAP move onto professional teams or the Olympic Podium Programme (BC, 2009a). Cyclists in the Podium Programme form the senior GB Cycling Team (BC, 2014k). The main task for them is to win medals in major international competitions (BC, 2014k). As the then Performance Director of the BC Dave Brailsford (2010, quoted in Bevan, 2010) stressed, 'we will just look at the Olympic disciplines and where we are at in those in relation to the rest of the world'. Executive Director of the BC Peter King CBE accurately encapsulated the ethos of the GB Cycling Team as follows:

'Our programme is centralised, focused and uncompromising. We aim for medals and nothing less. We coined the expression 'Podium Programme', now adopted across all Olympic sports, because fourth is not good enough. Unlike some sports, we do not target making the final or getting into the top ten. It's medal or nothing. Our focus is not on 40 plus athletes as the UK Sport formula would permit but on 22 or 23, being the only ones

we assess to be capable of winning an Olympic medal’.

(Peter King, 2012, quoted in Golf Club Management, 2012)

In fact, the prioritisation of Olympic success and the creation of the ‘Podium Programme’ was one of the BC’s contributions to the whole UK elite sport landscape. Many Olympic sports, inspired by British Cyclists’ enormous success on the international stage, learned and adopted many of the BC’s approaches. The prevalence of the performance-driven approach and the adoption of the Podium Programme across many Olympic sports can be seen as an example of both voluntary policy learning and transfer by other Olympic Sport NGBs (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996) and mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

There has been a notable increase in the BC’s interest and investment in BMX over the last decade. This is vividly reflected in the BC’s BMX-specific talent programmes (UK Sport, 2007a), the building and opening of the £24m National BMX Centre in Manchester, which is World’s first indoor BMX centre (BC, 2009d; 2011b) and the launch of British Cycling BMX Talent Team at the end of 2009 (BC, 2009e). Responding to the IOC’s approval of including BMX events in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in 2003 (People.com.cn, 2003a), the BMX squad became a higher priority during the Beijing and London Olympiads (BC, 2006a). As the BC (2006a, p. 34) stated in its annual report,

‘the BMX programme adapts to the way the sport is structured, and as the participants adapt to the demands of life as elite athletes with the goal of an Olympic medal. The BMX riders have been offered some exciting opportunities, including taking part in Track sprint training camps alongside the more experienced Olympic competitors. Staffing and resources support for this still-evolving squad will be high as the Olympic Programmes enthusiastically embrace the considerable talent we have in this area’.

Similar changes have been undertaken to adapt to the increased number of female events and reduced male events since London 2012, targeting the new Omnium and women’s team events, as reflected in the BC’s ‘vision for women’s cycling’ campaign

(BC, 2010a, p. 8; Slater, 2013). These two examples demonstrated the influence of external factors - the IOC and UCI's decision regarding Olympic event-setting on British Cycling, as noted by Houlihan (2009).

Although there is no evidence of cash rewards for Olympic gold medal cyclists, top cyclists, including Sir Chris Hoy, Sir Bradley Wiggins and Victoria Pendleton, are highly attractive to sponsors (ChrisHoy.com, 2014; Fordyce, 2013; Road Cycling UK, 2010; The Pan-Arabia Enquirer, 2012). As regards non-material rewards and social honours, the vast majority of Olympic cycling champions have at least received the title of either OBE or MBE. Chris Hoy and Bradley Wiggins were awarded Knighthoods in 2009 and 2013 respectively (BC, 2013c; 2013d). As the representative of female cycling, Victoria Pendleton received the tile of CBE in 2013 (BC, 2013a). In addition, cyclists won three out of the six most recent BBC Sports Personality titles between 2008 and 2013 (BBC Sport, 2013g). All these honours reflect the high status and popularity of cycling and top cyclists in the UK.

(3) Coaching

A world leading coaching set-up is another key contributory factor to the BC's recent success (Cycling Weekly, 2009). Various policy instruments have been adopted by the BC to regulate the behaviour of cycling coaches at both the National Squad and club levels and to cultivate competitive home grown coaches. Among the three types of policy instruments summarised by Houlihan and Lindsey (2013), education and information and rewards are more often used by the BC primarily through its Coaching and Education Department (BC, 2014d). Examples include Regional Coaching Plan, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), Go-Ride Coaching Activity Programme, Coaching 2012, and other coaching courses or academies (BCF, 1995; BC, 2003; 2009f; 2012f; 2014l; 2014m). Regional Coaching Centres were established in the early 2000s to provide structured support for coaches and riders at the regional level (BCF, 2000). As for inducements and rewards, regional and national funding, in the form of bursaries or grants, is available for coaches in every region in Britain (BC, 2014o). Currently, coaching in cycling is regulated by the Level 1-3 qualification, certificate and award system (BC, 2014o).

In addition, the BC has also benefited from UK Sport's coaching programmes most notably UK Sport's Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme (ECAP) that targeted emerging coaches (UK Sport, 2013h; 2014h). ECAP graduates have already played an important role in British Cycling (UK Sport, 2013i). Chris Newton was appointed the lead coach of women's track endurance squad in 2013 (BC, 2013e) and Paul Manning won UK Sport's 2012 High Performance Team Coach of the Year (UK Sport, 2012e).

The contribution of foreign coaches to the rise of British elite cycling is also noteworthy. In fact, British Cycling has been willing to employ high-level foreign expertise to help improve the National Squad for the last two decades. Shane Sutton (Australian), Jan Van Eijden (German) and Heiko Salzwedel (German) are the most famous representatives. Shane Sutton, former Head Coach of Team GB and current Technical Director, has served Team GB for more than ten years since 2002. He has been praised as having played an important role of the rise of British Cycling in the world and the BC's unprecedented success in Beijing 2008 and London 2012 (BBC Sport, 2012a). In 2010, Shane Sutton received the title of OBE (BC, 2010b).

Jan Van Eijden's appointment as a coach of the British National Squad was the BC's direct response to the changed event-setting at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Due to the removal of the BC's previous advantage of men's 1km time trial, top cyclists including Chris Hoy started to concentrate on the preparation for sprint events and former sprint champion Jan Van Eijden was believed by British Cycling to be an ideal person to coach Chris Hoy and later Victoria Pendleton (BC, 2012c; Golf Club Management, 2012). This appointment generated positive outcomes and both Chris Hoy and Victoria Pendleton achieved high success in Beijing and London. The recruitment of Jan Van Eijden demonstrated the influence of international organisations - the IOC and UCI in this case, on British Cycling's policy making. However, the BC's successful reaction demonstrated that this influence is not necessarily negative. Active adaptation may lead to positive outcomes. Moreover, the progress of British sprinters has also benefited from some German experience brought by Jan Van Eijden (BC, 2006b), providing a further example of Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996) theory of voluntary policy learning and transfer.

(4) Training

There are two distinctive features regarding the training of the GB National Squad. The first is the high degree of centralisation. As an early adopter of a centralised approach, British Cycling locates the National Squad in the headquarters in Manchester for training (BC, 2014c; National Cycling Centre, 2014). As Peter King (quoted in Golf Club Management, 2012) revealed, to concentrate everything in Manchester was an approach decided and adopted as part of the post-1996 reform. Hence, from Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective, Atlanta 1996 formed a policy window for the revolution and reform of the BCF and a centralised regime was accepted as a solution to a series of problems regarding talent and athlete development, coaching and training. In fact, in addition to the Senior National Squad, cyclists of the Olympic Academy Programme are also based in the National Cycling Centre in Manchester to access quality resources and coaching. As summarised by Dave Brailsford (2012, quoted in Slater, 2012b), a strong advocate and promoter of centralisation who believes that athletes perform better when they are under the same roof, this centralised approach can create an intense competitive environment for athletes and cultivate 'competitive beasts'. Resources are more efficiently concentrated and integrated under this centralised approach. More importantly, the success of the BC has resulted in its centralised approach moving beyond cycling by being learned and adopted by a wide range of Olympic sports (Slater, 2012b). A general consensus has been reached across the majority of British Olympic sports that 'we are usually better together' (Slater, 2012b). This 'popularisation' of centralisation provides another example of voluntary policy learning and transfer and mimetic isomorphism.

Another key principle threaded through British Cycling's recent development is the philosophy of incrementalism. As Dave Brailsford argued (2008, quoted in UK Sport, 2008c, p. 14), British Cycling's success is down to 'the aggregation of marginal gains - finding that extra one per cent in everything we do' and it is marginal gains that underpin British Cycling's dominance (Slater, 2012a). The launch of the programme of the 'the aggregation of marginal gains' was an important product of the BC's comprehensive review and assessment of its performance in Athens 2004 (Golf Club

Management, 2012). Despite the BC's success of two-gold performance in Athens, the BC realised that they needed to do more to maintain and expand their advantage.

'Athens kickstarted probably the most intense programme of assessment and detail refinement ever to be seen in British sport. We realised that there were no more quantum leaps to be made - such as Chris Boardman's Lotus bike in Barcelona or the intense training methods we were already adopting in Manchester. The world is catching up. Everybody's equipment was getting better and the rules had been tightened to minimise opportunities for technological advantage. We needed a new approach to not only stay ahead but to try to move out of reach. Hence the oft-quoted programme of "the aggregation of marginal gains"'.

(Peter King, quoted in Golf Club Management, 2012)

It is evident that Athens 2004 and the subsequent assessment and review opened a policy window for the launch of the programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains', an example of policy innovation. UK's performance in Athens 2004 was very successful. Hence, the launch of this programme was a solution to the need to stay ahead in the world and expand its advantage as opposed to a 'problem'. The most important policy entrepreneur was Dave Braisford, who brought the philosophy of rigorous marginal gains to the BC. In fact, the philosophy of marginal gains had already existed in the BC prior to Athens 2004 as it was introduced by Dave Braisford who was appointed the NPD in 2003 (BC, 2014p). The success in Athens 2004 proved the value of the marginal gains philosophy and opened a window for the promotion of this philosophy in the team as a programme.

(5) Competition opportunities

British Cycling has established a structured domestic competition system. Major domestic competitions most notably the annually held National Championships and National Series for track, road, BMX and mountain bike provide a valuable platform for junior, youth and senior cyclists (BC, 2011a,; 2012b; 2013b). The Senior National Squad cyclists, or the Podium cyclists, participate in a wide range of international

competitions. The World Championships for four Olympic disciplines are the most important non-Olympic events that the BC targets (BC, 2013m). In addition, European Championships, World Cup and Series also provide top British cyclists with competition opportunities (BC, 2013b). The Youth and Junior Squads compete in competitions including the UCI World and European Youth and Junior Championships and the UCI Under 23 Nations Cup (BC, 2011a).

(6) Scientific research

The EIS has provided the BC with substantial scientific and medical support mostly taking place at SportCity in Manchester, very close to the Manchester Headquarters. Currently, the EIS backs 86 cyclists and over £1.01 million has been offered to EIS services since 2009 (EIS, 2012b). The EIS's support covers a wide range of areas, from biomechanics, performance analysis, physiology, to sport medicine, lifestyle support and psychology (EIS, 2012b). In fact, the development of elite cycling has attracted much government interest. For example, cycling was the first user of UK Sport and BAE System's wind tunnel testing system (BAE Systems, 2012; UK Sport, 2014m).

The contribution of scientific support to the BC's successes is widely accepted and in particular the accumulation of incremental improvement in a wide range of scientific areas plays a crucial role in the BC's rise at the two most recent Olympic Games. As a programme targeting the expansion of British cyclists' advantage in the world after Athens 2004, led by David Brailsford, the BC has carefully identified areas for improvement and made a consistent effort in every possible progress.

'Between 2004 and 2008 we looked at every aspect of athlete preparation and lifestyle, equipment, clothing, training methods, nutrition and anything else which might produce a marginal gain. We put the bikes and the riders into a wind tunnel. We used nutritionists to ensure that no athlete carried an ounce of spare weight. We experimented with dozens of types of material for skin suits'.

(Peter King, quoted in Golf Club Management, 2012).

A key contributory factor to the success of the programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' was the complete secrecy of key technologies, which is evidenced by reference to the 'secret squirrel club' which was founded by Dave Brailsford and directly led by former Olympic champion Chris Boardman and seeks marginal gains utilising technological advances across sport, science, industry and the military and equipment (BBC Sport, 2013a; Gallagher, 2011).

(7) International influence

Cycling is a good representative of the UK's increased international influence over the last two decades. Back in the mid-1990s, the BCF's voice in the UCI was weak as there was no British member in the UCI Executive Committee.

'We no longer have any representation on this Committee and are therefore unable to influence the final decision. Where the UCI fails to seek comments on proposed changes, these would simply go direct to the UCI Executive Committee and we would have no knowledge of the proposals until a decision had been made and announced'.

(National Council Meeting minutes, BCF, 1997, p. 3)

However, the position of British cycling in the world has been greatly elevated, indicated by a increased number and nature of positions held by British representatives in the UCI and UEC and the increase in the number of major international and continental cycling events staged in the UK. The BC has become one of the strongest National Federations in the UCI and one of the 'leading lights' in international cycling (BC, 2012e, p. 9). The launch of UK Sport's strategy to re-build influence in international sport including the ILP has benefited a wide range of sports governing bodies including the BC. Jonny Clay was included in the inaugural edition of ILP (UK Sport, 2014l) and Charles Jackson was listed in the most recent edition (UK Sport, 2013f).

The domestic and international prestige and status of British Cycling has risen greatly, largely due to the unprecedented success of British cyclists on the international stage recently (BC, 2014q; Slater, 2013). Accordingly, more and more

Britons have entered various organs of the UCI and UEC. Brian Cookson's election as the president of the UCI in 2013 was undoubtedly the highlight (BBC Sport, 2013b; UK Sport, 2013g). Brian Cookson became the first Briton since 1994 to be elected as president of an international federation of a core summer Olympic sport (UK Sport, 2013g). This further affirmed the BC's international stance and the interests of British Cycling in the making of key policy decisions could be ensured (BC, 2014q). As the UCI president, Brian Cookson is a member of the UCI Executive Board (UCI, 2014b) and fulfils concurrent roles of the president of both the International Development and National Federations' Commission and the Equipment Commission (UCI, 2014i; 2014j). In addition, there are several British members serving on various UCI commissions (see Table 6.10).

Table 6.10: British members in the UCI

Name	Organs and Position
Brian Cookson	President of the UCI; Member of the Executive Board; President of the International Development and National Federations' Commission; President of the Equipment Commission
Charlie Jackson	Member of the Road Commission
Helen Wyman	Member of the Cyclo-cross Commission
Sarah Storey	Riders' representative of the Para-cycling Commission
Andy Cook	Member of the Mass Participation Events Commission
Chris Jarvis	Member of the CAD - Anti-doping Commission
Emma Pooley	Rider's representative of the Women's Commission

Sources: UCI (2014b; 2014c; 2014d; 2014e; 2014f; 2014g; 2014h; 2014i; 2014j).

The staging of major international events is another key pursuit of the BC. 'To exercise Britain's international influence by staging major international events in the UK' was officially identified as a key policy objective and explicitly stated in the BC's 2009-2013 Plan (BC, 2009c). Major International Events programme, with an aim to 'develop international influence and provide home advantage for the GB Cycling

Team' (BC, 2011a, p. 14), has successfully 'invited' a number of international cycling events including the 2012 UCI BMX World Championships in Birmingham (BC, 2012b) and the upcoming 2016 UCI Track World Championships in London (BC, 2013g; UK Sport, 2013e). UK Sport provides support to the UCI World Championships and World Cups through the Gold Event Series (UK Sport, 2012d). Britain has become 'a trusted and respected host of major international cycling events' (BC, 2014q).

6.5.4 Conclusions

Great Britain has been the most successful cycling nation over the last two decades. However, its cycling 'dynasty' (Slater, 2012a) was by no means built in a day. As the BC's former president and current president of the UCI Brian Cookson (quoted in BC, 2013b, p. 3) recalled, 'when I first became the leader of British Cycling in 1996 it was on the brink of collapse, had limited resources, a record of medals and championships that was patchy at best, and a historic low in its membership'. From Kingdon's (1984) theoretical perspective, these issues defined the problem stream. The UK's overall poor performance in Atlanta 1996 formed a secondary aspect of the problem stream. The Atlanta 'Waterloo' led to nationwide dissatisfaction and prompted a comprehensive reflection and review of the existing elite system and a large-scale reform of British elite sport of which British Cycling was a beneficiary. A wide range of measures, many of which are still working and have contributed to British cycling's rise were identified and adopted during that period. For example, the introduction of National Lottery money, the launch of talent programmes including the WCP, the centralisation of the national squad and the subsequent hiring of foreign coaches in the early 2000s were the BC's key actions in the post-1996 revolution. Of particular note was the organisational structure including the professionalisation and the resource-dependent relationship between the BC and UK Sport and increased emphasis on elite success. Major personnel change after Atlanta 1996 also made a great impact on the future of British Cycling. Examples included the election of Brian Cookson as the president of the BC, the appointment of Peter Keen as the NPD and Peter King as the CEO in 1996 and 1997 (BC, 2009b; BCF, 1997; Loughborough University, 2012). These measures formed the policy stream.

The development of the strategy of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' was an example of the BC's further revolution after Athens 2004. As Peter King (quoted in Golf Club Management, 2012) recalled, British cyclists' success in Athens 2004 did not lead to complacency but to a large-scale review and greater urgency to seek sustainable and greater success. Against this background, a series of steps were taken, ranging from the launch of Go-Ride, four Olympic Programmes for talent identification and athlete development, to the Fast Track programme and the programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains'. Using Kingdon's (1984) analytical framework, Athens 2004 and the subsequent success of London's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games in 2005 opened another two policy windows for policy development of the BC. However, in comparison to Atlanta 1996, actions taken during the Beijing Olympiad were responses to increased medal expectation and ambition: in other words, a policy window opened as a result of success rather than a crisis. The political stream which provided the context for the BC's policy changes has been generally conducive and despite the leadership change from John Major's Conservative government, to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's new Labour and then the Coalition government, government support for elite sport has been continuous and substantial. The success of London's bid for the 2012 Olympic Games provided an additional impetus for further government support for Olympic sports including cycling.

The impact of globalisation on the development of elite cycling in the UK is evident and the BC's positive adaptation to and exploitation of global trends and external change has cemented British cyclists' competitive advantage on the world stage. As is the case in other Olympic sports, the IOC and UCI's decisions regarding the inclusion or removal of certain disciplines and events make a lasting and profound impact on the BC's activities. The inclusion of BMX since Beijing 2008 and the gender parity and the new events of Omnium in London 2012 resulted in the BC's substantial and systematic investment in BMX, women's team events and men's and women's omnium events. In addition, the BC positively responded to the removal of men's 1km time trial and took a series of prompt and effective steps to help top cyclists make the transition to sprint events. The hiring of the German expert Jan Van Eijden to coach Chris Hoy and later Victoria Pendleton contributed to both cyclists' greater successes in Beijing 2008 and London 2012. In fact, the hiring of

foreign coaches and the use of foreign expertise is another demonstration of the impact of globalisation on British Cycling. The BC's attitude towards foreign expertise has been positive and consistent and Britain is a beneficiary of the global movement of cycling coaches.

With the increased 'influx' of foreign experts, much foreign experience, ranging from Jan Van Eijden's German expertise in sprint events, to Shane Sutton's Australian approaches to managing the National Squad have been introduced to Team GB. In addition to policy learning and transfer from other countries, the BC has also benefited from policy learning and transfer from other organisations in the UK. For example, as the first sport to enjoy BAE System's wind tunnel testing system and performance monitoring system, British cyclists have access to military technology outside of sport. Nevertheless, there is also evidence of policy innovation. The programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' and the Fast Track programme were the most salient examples.

As the largest contributor to Team GB's Olympic medal success and the Sports Governing Body of the Year (BC, 2013b), British Cycling has become a good model for many other UK NGBs to learn from and imitate. The centralisation of the National Squad and the concept of the Podium Programme, which originated from the BC, have been adopted by many other Olympic sports in the UK. These contributions of the BC to the generic elite sport development in the UK are examples of DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) mimetic isomorphism theory.

UK Sport's power to distribute National Lottery money has strengthened the top-down relationship with the BC. The BC has generally served the needs of the prioritisation of elite sport and Olympic medal success, as expected by UK Sport. In many areas such as anti-doping, the WCP and international influence, there is evidence of top-down implementation between UK Sport and the BC. However, there are cases where the BC strengthened or 'localised' UK Sport's policies and requirements. For example, the BC has four Olympic Programmes in comparison to UK Sport's three-tier World Class Programme and the Olympic Academy Programme is the BC's extension. Likewise, Go-Ride programme is the BC's version of Sport England's Clubmark. It is more detailed and step-by-step than Clubmark

general principles. These are examples of bottom-up elements in policy implementation. The relationship between the BC and its member clubs is also highly 'harmonious'. There is very little resistance from clubs and clubs are generally supportive of the BC's elite policies such as the Olympic Talent Programme and competition participation. In implementing these policies and programmes, the BC adopts various policy instruments including information and education, rewards and inducements and less often sanctions (e.g.: deprivation of club membership for clubs that do not pay member fees and disqualification and bans on athletes and support staff who are found guilty of doping offence) to regulate the development of cycling in the UK and ensure clubs' compliance and cooperation.

Equally important with medal success is the BC's pursuit of international influence. The outcome has been fruitful. Britain has not only secured its presence in the UCI and UEC, but also has strong voice in the core organs especially with Brian Cookson's election as the president of the UCI. Progress has also been made in the staging of major international cycling events. The increased international status of Britain and its influence over the UCI's policy making is both a result and an indication of British Cycling's unparalleled competitiveness on the international stage.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

Chapter Five and Chapter Six presented key findings regarding elite sport development in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China and the UK respectively. In this chapter the key findings are summarised against the key areas identified, on the basis of which key comparisons between China and the UK are made. Common themes regarding elite sport development between China and the UK are identified and major differences are also discussed. More importantly, the usefulness and quality of policy making and implementation theories are discussed. Of particular note is the discussion of the usefulness and relevance of the multiple streams and the policy community frameworks and the adaptation of these theories to better suit the context of China and the characteristics of elite sport. At the end of this chapter, the contributions and limitations of this thesis are discussed and suggestions for future research are proffered.

7.2 Main Conclusions regarding Elite Sport Development in Artistic Gymnastics, Swimming and Cycling in China and the UK

This section summarises key characteristics of three sports in China and the UK in the policy areas identified in the findings chapter. Moreover, sport-to-sport and country-to-country comparisons are made to identify the similarities and differences in each area. This section lays the foundations for further comparison of the elite sport development in the two countries.

7.2.1 Organisational Structure

Although there is evidence of centralised organisational structure in both China and the UK, the historic tradition and forms of centralisation differ significantly. Elite sport development in both China and the UK is directed by a national governing body - GAS in China and UK Sport in the UK, yet the

former is a government department directly accountable to the State Council while the latter is formally a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation (quango). Centralisation is a more general and fundamental characteristic in China and the centralisation of sport has been a longstanding feature which dates from the 1950s, while it is relatively new in the UK. Furthermore, the organisational structure in the two countries differs in the relationship between GAS and UK Sport and the sports governing bodies. There is a rigidly hierarchical relationship between the central government, GAS and national sports governing bodies (also in the case of the relationship between provincial governments, provincial sports bureaus or administrations and provincial sport management centres or associations) in China. Sports Management Centres including the Gymnastics Management Centre, the Aquatics Management Centre and the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre in China are units of GAS and hence they are government administrations whereas there is no political or administrative accountability or affiliation between UK Sport and NGBs including British Gymnastics, British Swimming and British Cycling, although due to the extent of public funding there is considerable financial accountability. While the extent of centralisation in China is not surprising the degree of centralisation developed in the UK since the turn of the century is less easy to explain given the election of a government in 2010 committed to a reduced role for the state and less regulation. One possible explanation is that elite talent identification and development and the effective pursuit of Olympic medals can best be achieved through a highly educated system. It would be too far to argue that the UK experience is an example of policy dominating politics (given the case of the USA as a significant exception), but there is evidence from the research that centralisation is not simply the result of policy learning and mimetic isomorphism and is also the result of characteristics inherent in the processes of talent identification and development.

The basic form of organisational structure for artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China is largely similar. However, the variation in government support for the three sports resulted in some differences regarding

organisational structure. While artistic gymnastics and swimming in China enjoy distinct Management Centres, cycling, due to its limited size, Olympic success and popularity, shares a Management Centre with four other sports. Provincial governing bodies and teams are traditionally more compliant in artistic gymnastics, increasingly cooperative in swimming while less cooperative and obedient and sometimes resistant in cycling. Not only is this pattern of organisational arrangements an illustration of the government's strategic approach to talent identification and development, but it also offers an acute insight into the significant role of the provinces in policy implementation and their relationship to government policy.

When it comes to the UK, British Gymnastics, British Swimming and British Cycling are all outcomes of the UK Sport-led organisational reforms of the late 1990s. The relationship between the BG, the BS and the BC on the one hand, and UK Sport on the other, has been strengthened largely due to the latter's control of the distribution of the National Lottery money. The three NGBs have all placed an emphasis on elite sport development and elite success is explicitly identified as a key policy objective. Another notable similarity across these three sports is that the relationship between NGBs and member clubs is largely 'harmonious', at least in relation to elite sport development. However, two notable organisational differences between the BS and the other two organisations need to be addressed. First, there has long been a blurred or ambiguous relationship regarding the administrative functions of the BS and the ASA. It is fair to say that the ASA is significantly influential in the UK, while in the other two sports there is no home nation governing bodies influential enough to 'steal thunder' from British national sports governing bodies. Second, the BG and the BC are relatively more cooperative with UK Sport and more active in implementing UK Sport's programmes and suggestions. By contrast, the BS, as a large and influential organisation with a charismatic leader, tends to be reluctant, or at least, less responsive to some of UK Sport's suggestions and expectations such as the use of National lottery funds and the imitation of the strategies adopted by successful British sports at least before London 2012. In both countries, centralisation is the dominant characteristic but is clearly mediated by and to an extent limited by powerful partners, namely - provinces in China and NGBs in the UK.

7.2.2 Financial Support

The development of elite gymnastics, swimming and cycling relies overwhelmingly on government funds in both China and the UK. However, several distinctions between China and the UK need to be noted. First, state funds have a longer history in elite sport in China while it was not until the introduction of the National Lottery in the late 1990s that government started to provide elite sport development with substantial financial support. Second, there is no detailed information regarding the figures for funding invested in elite sport including the three sports studied in China, although there is a general consensus that government investment is substantial and the vast majority of Olympic sports in China do not lack financial resources. In comparison, detailed sport-by-sport financial information for each Olympiad since the Sydney Olympiad is retrievable from official channels of UK Sport. The lack of financial transparency is an additional demonstration of the exclusivity of GAS and Sports Management Centres in China as a policy community, and in many issues, policy monopoliser. Third, provincial government's financial support also plays an indispensable role in China especially for non-national squad athletes and is another illustration of the significant role of the provinces in China. Despite these differences, both countries have been generous in investing in elite sport development, with funding distribution reflecting a strong bias towards Olympic sports. In addition to public funding, there is evidence of commercial sponsorship in all the three sports in both countries. In China, the infusion of commercial money is a mirror of China's development of a market economy since the early 1990s.

It is not surprising that artistic gymnastics, as a major sport and primary source of Olympic and other medals and swimming, a foundation sport and highly targeted, received enormous financial support from the government through GAS and provincial governments. The detailed figure for funds invested in artistic gymnastics is unknown, but for swimming, it is clear that state funds are sufficient for the needs of the National Team. The circumstance of cycling in China is slightly different from artistic gymnastics

and swimming in the following three ways. First, the contribution of provincial government funds is more significant in cycling as provincial teams share much of the work of the National Team due to the flexible system of the National Team which combines the centralisation of women's short-distance track cyclists and the 'federalisation' of cyclists in other events and the heavy reliance on the contribution of coaches from provincial teams. Second, largely due to its limited popularity and the lack of gold medal productivity at the Olympic Games, financial rewards from GAS for elite cyclists are limited. Cyclists are not so attractive to commercial sponsors as top gymnasts and swimmers. Third, as noted above, it is a general principle that the Chinese government provides financial support to Olympic sports, disciplines and events. However, road cycling is an exception. GAS and the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre deliberately 'abandons' this discipline at the National team level as a result of its limited medal prospects and its relatively high degree of commercialisation and professionalisation. Nevertheless, according to a key official inside the Cycling and Fencing Management Centre, GAS is by no means 'stingy' in investing in cycling (Interviewee D, 16 May 2013). Instead of an 'all-encompassed' holistic funding policy, GAS' investment in cycling is more concentrated on the relatively strong areas - women's short-distance track events. This echoes the 'gold medal or nothing' philosophy of Chinese elite sport.

The performance-contingent 'No Compromise' strategy is a key characteristic of funding policy for NGBs in the UK. This ruthless funding policy helps UK Sport control NGBs and make them better serve elite-related policies and programmes. All three sports have been beneficiaries of substantial support from the National Lottery and the funding figure has generally kept rising in the last two decades. However, despite these trends, there are some differences among the NGBs. British Cycling and British Swimming receive far more Lottery money than British Gymnastics. Funding that the BC and the BS received in the Beijing Olympiad and the London Olympiad was more than twice as much as that distributed to the BG. This is

consistent with the differentiated competitiveness and medal potential in these three sports.

7.2.3 Talent Identification and Athlete Development

There are six significant similarities between China and the UK in the area of talent identification and elite athlete development: the emergence and increased number of full-time elite athletes; holistic support including substantial financial support to elite athletes in general and athletes who have a real chance of winning (gold) medals at the Olympic Games in particular; increasingly systematic, coherent and sophisticated talent identification and athlete development programmes; evidence of talent transfer from other sports; similarities in talent identification processes; and rewards provided for top athletes especially Olympic (gold) medallists.

In China, athletes in the National Teams and provincial teams train on a full-time basis, enjoying funds and salaries provided by the National and provincial governments. In the UK, since the mid-1990s, National Lottery funding has enabled top athletes to train full-time. As regards talent identification in China, it has been a longstanding tradition for nationwide regular talent search for the vast majority of Olympic sports and the system is systematic and mature, with the spare-time sports schools on the foundation. In the UK, talent identification has developed at an ever-accelerating pace in the last decade especially since 2005. UK Sport's World Class Programmes have been supplemented by programmes organised by sports NGBs, for example, the BG's plan of 'earlier talent identification', the BS's Long Term Athlete Development Programme (LTAD) and England Talent Development Programme (ETDP) and, most successfully, the BC's four Olympic Programmes. As for talent transfer, British Cycling's Fast Track Programme successfully recruited talent that had been previously engaged in other sports. Talent transfer is also very common in China as evidenced in the case of cycling.

However, there are some significant differences in the identification and development of talent between China and the UK which necessitate cautions in making claims of policy convergence. First, in China, talent and athlete development relies overwhelmingly on the traditional Soviet-based three-level system and spare-time sports schools. The recent emergence of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling clubs has yet to make a noticeable contribution to talent identification and development. China's elite success also relies overwhelmingly on provincial teams and the PLA system, even in the case of cycling. This contrasts strikingly with the club-based system in the UK. Second, there is a longer history of full-time athletes and coaches in Olympic sports in China, even in the weak sport of cycling. By contrast, in the UK, systematic talent identification and search did not start until the Beijing Olympiad. This supports De Bosscher et al.'s (2008) finding that talent identification and development is a relatively underdeveloped area in many Western nations including the UK. Finally, China adopts a wider range of strategies to ensure athletes' allegiance most notably through its massive financial rewards. By contrast, there is no evidence of financial rewards for Olympic medallists from the British Government, UK Sport or NGBs. Moreover, ideological education has been a longstanding weapon to mobilise athletes and secure their obedience and allegiance in China while there is little evidence of organised ideological education in the UK.

In addition, there are some sport-specific characteristics that need to be discussed. In China, although centralisation is a key characteristic, the degree of centralisation varies and is the highest in artistic gymnastics. However, the degree of centralisation has increased significantly in swimming over the last decade. Cycling is distinctive in China in many aspects, including its flexible National Team structure, more reliance on provincial teams and some distinctiveness in the approach to athlete cultivation. There is, or at least used to be tension between the National Team and provincial teams and strong resistance from provincial teams. The most notable example was the provincial teams' frequent reluctance to send top cyclists to the National Team, driven by the logic of the

prioritisation of provincial interests in domestic competitions over the need of the National Team. In addition, elite cycling in China was disadvantaged by the 'protectionism' in the National Team as coaches tended to 'prefer' athletes from the same provinces. In part derived from the flexible system of the National Team and the resistance from Provincial teams, there was direct recruitment of young talent at the sports school level by the National Cycling Team in the early 2000s without the transition from and cultivation in provincial teams. Some leading Chinese cyclists have been cultivated in the International Training Centre in Switzerland since the early 2000s. One explanation for the more complex pattern of talent identification in cycling might be that it is a consequence of the power of the provinces and the preference of national coaches to favour cyclists from the same provinces. However, it is more likely that the explanation lies in the relatively low status of cycling in the government's strategy. Should cycling be considered to be a viable source of Olympic medals then it is likely that cycling would follow the same trajectory as swimming and come under tighter central control.

When it comes to the UK, British Cycling is one of the most successful NGBs in talent identification and recruitment and athlete development. It was the first major sport to adopt a centralised structure in the UK. British cyclists' achievements and successes have resulted in some of BC's policies, such as the Podium Programme and the centralisation, being copied by many other NGBs in the UK. However, despite UK Sport's promoting the BC as a model, the BC remains only one potential focus for policy learning and transfer. The BG has learned and replicated strategies from former Eastern bloc despite a certain degree of 'localisation', while there is a high degree of Australian and American influence in the development of elite swimming in the UK.

7.2.4 Coaching

Several similarities can be found between China and the UK in the area of elite coaching, the most notable of which is the evidence of the import of foreign coaches and experts in all the three sports studied. Even in a largely

self-sufficient fortress sport of artistic gymnastics in China, there is evidence of 'Invite In' in its weakest area - floor exercise. The governing bodies of three sports in both countries are, at least, not resistant to globalisation.

However, there are differences between the two countries and between different sports in the same country. Foreign coaches tend to take on more important jobs in the UK such as the NPD or head coach, while foreign coaches' roles are largely supplementary in China (with the exception of cycling). Another noteworthy difference is that foreign coaches play an important role in the UK's strong and traditional sports, as evident in cycling, but also in all the other three major sports of rowing, athletics and sailing (British Rowing, BR, 2014a; 2014b; The Royal Yachting Association, RYA, 2012; British Athletics, BA, 2012). By contrast, the recruitment of foreign coaches is largely confined to non-major sports in China. In fact, artistic gymnastics is the only major-six sports in which a foreign coach is employed or invited and even the employment of foreign coach in artistic gymnastics is sporadic.

In terms of differences between sports, swimming in China is the most committed to the use of foreign coaches, whereas cycling is a late adopter of foreign coaches as it only started to hire foreign coaches at the National Team level in preparation for the London Olympic Games. However, compared to the short-term and pragmatic adoption of foreign experts in many other sports, the Cycling Management Centre recently decided on a longer term commitment to foreign coaches at least in the lead-up to Rio de Janeiro 2016. In comparison to swimming and cycling, the influence of foreign coaches in artistic gymnastics is very limited and narrowly-targeted.

Another common feature of these three sports in China and the UK is a degree of correlation between the appointment of home-grown coaches and the level of competitiveness in a sport. Strong and traditional sports tend to have a group of world-leading home-grown coaches while the quality of home-grown coaches in Olympic sports where the history of success is more sparse tends to be weaker.

Finally, the differences regarding the coaching structure in different sports within the same country need to be stressed. In China, the coaching set-up is the most centralised in artistic gymnastics and the distinction between coaches of the National Team and coaches of provincial teams tends to be clear. In the case of swimming, along with the abandonment of the previous federal National Team structure and the establishment of a more centralised scheme, there is an increased degree of centralisation of coaching and emphasis on coaches of the National Team. However, the distinction between coaches of the National Team and coaches of provincial teams is blurred as most of the coaches serving the National Swimming Team also belong to their corresponding provincial or PLA teams. Cycling is very different from artistic gymnastics and swimming but its coaching structure is typical among less successful sports in China. The methods of both contract hiring and temporary transfer from provincial teams are adopted in the National Cycling Team.

As regards the UK, there is more reliance on club coaches in artistic gymnastics due to its semi-centralised structure while the degree of centralisation is higher in swimming and cycling.

7.2.5 Training

The most noteworthy theme revolving around training at the National Team or National Squad level for the three sports in China and the UK is a generally increased degree of centralisation. A nationwide centralised training regime dates back to the early 1960s in China and it has become increasingly common in the UK, spreading from originally British Cycling and British Rowing to more Olympic sports including swimming in the last decade. In addition, evidence of convergence can also be found in the organisation of intensive training, selective altitude training and overseas training in most of the sports studied in this thesis in both countries. However, it is important to point out that centralisation and intensive training are not adopted in all sports in China and there are alternative systems such

as loose federalised, temporary and combined systems for National Teams for some sports.

Centralisation in strong and important sports also applies in the UK. British Cycling is a pioneer and the most successful representative of centralisation, although the BC's strategy has been adopted by many NGBs including British Swimming. The extent of centralisation has varied in artistic gymnastics, from the centralised approach in the late 1990s and early 2000s to the semi-centralised training structure currently, with National Squad still spending a certain amount of time training in their clubs with their club coaches, as well as training at Lilleshall. Similar to cycling in China, the degree of centralisation tends to be lower in the UK's non-traditional and relatively weaker sports.

The factors driving greater centralisation in elite sport systems are not simply political but also pragmatic. While it is accurate to argue that China and, though to a less pronounced extent, the UK have long histories of centralised political culture it is possible to argue that the primary driving forces for centralised elite sport systems are: a) the pragmatic need to concentrate scarce resources such as world class coaches and facilities; b) the adoption of a squad system in many individualised Olympic sports; and c) a degree of policy transfer and mimetic isomorphism.

7.2.6 Competition Opportunities

What has been common in China and the UK over the last two decades across artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling is an increasingly sophisticated and elite-centred, or rather Olympic-centred competition structure. The guiding logic that a competition structure needs to serve the Olympic Games is pervasive in both countries emerging in the 1980s in China and in the early 2000s in the UK. Under this principle, competition structures in the three sports in China and the UK share several similarities, including the increased coherence and interconnectedness between different levels of domestic competition, the increasingly clearly defined age-

specific competitions, a degree of selectivity in terms of participation in international competitions, the emphasis on and valuing of the World Championships as the most important non-Olympic events and the passion to host major international competitions in priority sports. This similarity demonstrates the influence of the IOC and IFs and their competition systems on domestic competition policies and hence resonates with globalisation theory and also with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) mimetic isomorphism theory. However, despite the high degree of similarity, differences do persist between the two countries. The most notable difference is the importance of the National Games in China which contrasts with the lack of domestic competition of equivalent importance in the UK.

The importance of the National Games in China reflects the significance of provinces in the national elite sport development system and the need for GAS to carefully negotiate its relationships with the provinces. The continuing significance of the National Games also indicates the limits on centralisation in China. In China, the National Games provides a fundamental motive for provinces to develop Olympic sports and disciplines because of the attractiveness of the good performance at the National Games to provincial governments and the possible impact of the performance on the political future of sports officials and on the sporting future of coaches and athletes in provincial teams. More importantly, the National Games provides crucial leverage for GAS and National Sports Management Centres to regulate and influence the behaviour of provincial sports bureaus and sports teams. The most notable examples are the policy medals transferred to the National Games from the Olympic Games and the double-point system targeting athletes representing the PLA delegation.

In the UK, despite the three sports' adoption of a more coherent, age-specific, elite- and Olympic-centred competition structure, they are much later than their Chinese counterparts. Clubs are the units competing in domestic competitions, which contrasts with the prevalence of provincial teams in China. Among the three sports studied, British Cycling's progress is the most notable and fruitful, which is also reflected in its well-developed

competition structure. In the case of artistic gymnastics, there is notable progress made in the development of an elite-centred competition structure and club resources have been more effectively mobilised and integrated in the last decade. However, a perennial problem regarding both artistic gymnastics and swimming in the UK is the limited level of domestic competition and the gap between the quality of performance in domestic competitions and the level of performance in major international competitions. Hence, to improve the quality of domestic competitions, to be more cautious in assessing the results of domestic competitions and to participate more in quality international competitions in which leading nations (such as China for artistic gymnastics and the USA for swimming) compete have become serious considerations for decision makers within the BG and the BS.

7.2.7 Scientific Research

The salience of science in elite sport has been greatly raised in both China and the UK in the last 15 or more years, evidenced in both countries' establishment of specialised scientific organisations, substantial financial support, the launch of a series of scientific programmes especially psychology and the increased cooperation with universities.

In China, under the national policy of 'revitalising the nation through science and education', GAS put forth the slogan of 'revitalising sport through science and education'. China's increased attention to scientific support is further evidenced in the collaboration with leading experts from universities in Hong Kong in artistic gymnastics and swimming in the last decade, reflecting a more open attitude by GAS and sports management centres towards non-mainland resources. For artistic gymnastics, the 'scientisation of training' has been a longstanding slogan but what elevated the profile of science in general and athletes' physical and psychological preparation in particular was the series of actions taken after the very poor performance in Athens 2004.

In the UK, the establishment of elite sports institute network as an important post-1996 action was a milestone. The EIS is largely the English version of China's CISS. All the three NGBs studied in this thesis have enjoyed enormous scientific support from the EIS. In addition, it is common for NGBs to collaborate with university resources, evidenced in all the three sports studied.

7.2.8 Other Areas

Increasing national influence at international level has become a common objective for both China and the UK. The rationales are largely identical: to safeguard and promote the country's interests in the governance of sport internationally, to ensure the country continues to have a voice in the global development of sport and to be more involved in the decision making of the IFs. The strategy of increasing China's international influence, as stressed in the *Olympic Glory Plans*, has generated some positive outcomes. For artistic gymnastics and swimming, China's presence and voice in key organs of FIG and FINA has been continuously secured. However, FIG and FINA, similar to the IOC and other IFs, are Western-dominated. China is not excluded from the decision making in these two sports, but China's power to influence the decision making tends to be limited. A good example was the FIG's rule of the minimum age of 16 in 1997, which had a negative effect on Chinese female gymnasts who tend to peak at a very young age.

Compared to artistic gymnastics and swimming, cycling is a good illustration of China's weak diplomacy in its weaker sports. The absence of Chinese representatives in the UCI makes Chinese cycling vulnerable to potentially disadvantageous UCI decisions. The removal of China's previous advantage - women's 500m time trial and the deprivation of China's gold medal result in women's team sprint in London 2012 were two most salient examples of China's lack of influence and support within the UCI. In many cases, China is a passive policy taker rather than a policy maker.

When it comes to the UK, the International Leadership Programme summarises UK Sport's ambition to increase international influence. The strategy has been fruitful in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling. Of particular note is British Cycling's rise in the UCI, from the absence of voice in the key organ of the UCI in the mid-1990s to Brian Cookson's election as the president of the UCI in 2013. The positive outcome is also reflected in the increased number of international sports events staged in the UK. However, the strategy has been rather less successful in relation to swimming where there is no Briton in the FINA Bureau and the UK has never staged the FINA World Championships, which contrasts with artistic gymnastics and cycling.

In summary, a horizontal comparison between China and the UK has revealed a high degree of Western bias in the international sport configuration. For example, Brian Cookson is the president of the UCI while there is no Chinese fulfilling similar role in the IFs for the three sports. Furthermore, even for a relatively weak discipline of artistic gymnastics, British membership of FIG has been stable and there is Briton in the core organ of the Executive Committee while China is totally excluded from the community of the UCI. Last, the pursuit of international influence in general and the cultivation of international representatives in particular is more detailed (such as the quantified targets in the case of the BS) and effective in the UK while it is more rhetorical in China as the pursuit of international influence is still no more than an abstract objective identified in the fundamental *Olympic Glory Plan*, without any detailed programme for achieving the ambition.

7.3 Comparisons of Elite Sport Development between China and the UK

7.3.1 Common Themes in Elite Sport Development

There are four common themes identified regarding elite sport development in China and the UK, the first two of which echo Green and Houlihan's

(2005) conclusion. Elite sport development in the Communist China shares many similarities with many leading Western sports nations, which reinforces De Bosscher et al.'s (2008) view that there is a high degree of homogeneity and uniformity regarding elite sport development among major sports nations.

(1) There is a high degree of government intervention and organisational control in influencing elite sport policy in both China and the UK, as evidenced in all the three sports. In China, the NSAs of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling are subordinates of GAS and their activities are literally controlled by corresponding Management Centres. Similar administrative structure is also adopted at provincial level. In the UK, government intervention has increased significantly since the mid-1990s, following the establishment of UK Sport. Another illustration of the significance of government in elite sport development is the reliance on public funds in both countries. Elite sport in China has long relied overwhelmingly on state funds at both central and provincial levels and the National Lottery money and Exchequer have provided enormous financial resources to NGBs, resulting in a relationship of substantial resource dependence and hence policy leverage.

(2) The insulation of elite resources and services from grass-roots sport is evident in all the three sports in both countries. Despite the publication in China of some documents related to community sport most notably the *National Fitness Programme*, the profile of mass sport in China is much less salient than elite sport within the State Council and GAS. The increased insulation of elite sport is also evident in the UK since the organisational reform and the introduction of the National Lottery money in the late 1990s, as a corollary of the prioritisation of elite sport. The establishment of the specialist elite sport organisation of UK Sport, the launch of the World Class Programme and the substantial support from National Lottery money, the promotion of a series of talent programmes, the creation of the post of Performance Directors and the establishment of Olympic medal targets in

the NGBs are all evidence of the prioritisation and the increasingly distinct organisational characteristics of elite sport.

(3) Government is generous in using public funds to support elite sport development but financial support is differentiated and increasingly conditional. Funding allocation is uneven among sports, as traditional and more successful sports tend to receive more money. However, a general and simple principle in China is that substantial support is guaranteed as long as there is a real chance of winning an Olympic gold medal. Accordingly, even in a weak sport of cycling in China, women's short-distance track cyclists enjoy more centralised, holistic and substantial government support due to their near-gold-medal performance. A similar performance-contingent approach is evident and more 'ruthless' in the UK. According to the No Compromise policy, funding depends on performance against medal targets at the Olympic Games.

(4) Elite sport development in both countries is increasingly influenced by non-domestic factors and non-domestic resources have become valuable assets for many sports, which is mainly evidenced in the following four ways: a) the influence of the IOC's decisions regarding the inclusion or removal of Olympic sports, disciplines and events and IFs' Olympic rules on national participation; b) the import of foreign expertise most notable foreign coaches and the organisation of overseas training but also possible loss of talent; c) both countries' strategic pursuit of influence in international sport organisations; d) and policy learning and transfer from other countries.

7.3.2 Differences between China and the UK

(1) Although elite sport and Olympic success have become priorities in both China and the UK, there are major differences regarding the development, nature and scope of the systems between China and the UK. Olympic success has become a top priority since the 1980s after China returned to the Olympic family whereas it did not receive serious government attention in the UK until the mid and late 1990s. If the focus is broadened to elite

sport, the 'time difference' between China and the UK is more significant as a government-led elite system was established in the 1950s in China whereas it did not become a significant government responsibility until the 1990s in the UK. This echoes the mainstream view that Communist countries were early adopters of a systematic and strategic government-led approach to elite sport development.

Elite sport development, as evidenced in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling studied in this thesis, is highly centralised, government-led and structured in China. China was an early adopter of public funds in elite sport development, systematic and a nationwide talent identification system and athlete development pyramid, full-time coaches and athletes, a centralised and rigorous training regime and an Olympic-centred competition structure. In comparison, all the above-noted measures, ranging from the establishment of elite-centred organisations, the transition from amateurism to professionalism, to the introduction of public funds and the launch of systematic talent and athlete programmes, seemed to emerge later in the UK and are still immature in some sports.

(2) Clubs form the basis of elite sport development in the UK while elite sport success is underpinned by sports schools and provincial and PLA system in China. In the UK clubs play a vital role in the development of coaches and athletes despite the increase in talent transfer schemes in some sports such as rowing and women's basketball, the training of young athletes and in some cases (for example, in the case of artistic gymnastics) share the responsibility of the training of athletes of the National Squad and are the main providers of domestic competitions. Contrasting with the UK's club-based system is China's longstanding reliance on sports schools and provincial and PLA teams. The unparalleled contribution of the sports school and three level system is undeniable. However, this exclusive approach has, to a large extent, narrowed the route of the cultivation of elite athletes and talent base in many sports. Provincial rivalry is also a double-edged sword as it has also led to vicious provincial competition and the prioritisation of

provincial interests at the sacrifice of the National Teams in some sports (as evidenced in cycling).

7.4 Theoretical Reflection

7.4.1 Macro-Level Theories and Power

The dominance of Marxism and its 'Sinicised' versions in China is evidenced in a variety of ways, most notably in the hierarchical relationship from the State Council and GAS, to National Management Centres and often provincial sports bureaus and management centres and a top-down implementation pattern which is a key characteristic in all three sports studied. It can also be illustrated by reference to the dominance, or even monopolisation by GAS and its subordinate Management Centres of policy making on general and sport-specific issues at the national level in China. The growth of market and commercial elements in China has been a noteworthy phenomenon in elite sport development. The evidence of the adoption of cash reward schemes for Olympic medallists and their coaches, funding provided to the NSAs and National Teams and the spread of commercial sponsorship and endorsement of competitions, National Teams and individual athletes can be found in all three sports in China. However, it should be noted that the involvement of market and commercial elements is centrally controlled and is not allowed to conflict with GAS and Management Centres' values. More importantly, commercial values and market elements are not allowed to influence decision making and the use of commercial money is strictly controlled by GAS even that income which is provided to the National Team, Sport Management Centres and individual athletes. The controlled and limited involvement of market and commercial elements is also a demonstration of the limited evidence of pluralism in China at least in two of the three sports studied (the exception was road cycling).

With regard to elite theory, its relevance to the analysis of elite sport policy processes in China can be illustrated by reference to the existence and dominance of a highly exclusive policy making, as well as policy

implementation, community in China. As will be elaborated below, a small group of members, mainly officials and leaders inside the government system in China, most notably key members in GAS and the Management Centres, decide major policies regarding elite sport in China. The community is highly exclusive and the decisions are not visible, or transparent, to 'outsiders'. The community members share a common belief in the importance of 'winning gold medals at the Olympic Games' with this belief largely shaped by the Communist Party ideology and reinforced by their accountability to the State Council and the Communist Party. There is a high degree of mutual trust among most of the members inside the community and their often similar background, most notably those from Sports Universities in China further strengthens their ease of communication and degree of mutual trust. The composition of the policy community is also a demonstration of the importance of identity in policy making in China. However, there are conflicting identities within the system. The most notable example is the provincial identity and the extent to which it conflicts with national level policy priorities and the 'protectionism' in some sports most notably in cycling. There is conflict between the National Team and Provincial Teams, which was previously notable in swimming and is still evident in cycling. These examples, in addition to the increasingly significant yet controlled role of market and commercial elements, reveal some pluralistic characteristics inside the largely elitist model of high performance sport in China. It remains a challenge for GAS and many National Management Centres to reconcile the needs of the National Teams which target success at the Olympic Games with those of provincial teams which often prioritise the National Games despite incentives to support national priorities such as the policy of 'transferring' medals from the Olympic Games to the National Games. The tension remains significant in China's less successful sports, although many of the strategies to mitigate the tension between provinces and the centre adopted by the National Aquatics Management Centre and the National Swimming Team, such as the establishment of a 'Big National Team' and the nationwide training of reserve swimmers organised by the National Team, are likely to provide other sports with some useful examples of potential policy responses.

Another key characteristic regarding elite sport in China is gender 'imbalance'. However, this imbalance is by no means in the form of male dominance. As a country which relies more on female athletes for Olympic medals including gold medals, female athletes tend to outperform and hence receive more substantial resources in many sports including cycling studied. Female athletes' better performance also applies to swimming in China but there has been increased resources, including policy and financial support, given to male swimmers in recent years, which has laid the foundations for the notable progress of Chinese male swimmers. In fact, elite sport may be one of the very few areas in China in which there is a high degree of 'gender equity' and in which women play a significant role. This gender equity is also evident in the equal salary level between full-time male and female athletes in China. Artistic gymnastics is a counter-example to swimming and cycling as Chinese male gymnasts outperform their female compatriots despite the high degree of competitiveness of Chinese female gymnasts in the world. Support for male gymnasts focuses on the success of team competition while a more event-based support strategy which prioritises women's balance beam and uneven bars are adopted for female gymnast in China.

However, gender equity of elite sport in China has significant relative and subjective aspects. The more significant role of males is still prevalent, as evidenced in the much greater number of male officials and coaches in the three sports studied. A good example is the dominance of male coaches in National Women's Artistic Gymnastics and in the Cycling Team. In addition, male athletes are generally more popular among sponsors although their personal value is a key determinant. This is evident in the higher commercial value of Sun Yang than Ye Shiwen in the case of elite swimming in China. A better example is the incomparable value of Yao Ming (basketball) and Liu Xiang (athletics) in China while the only female with a similar level of social and commercial influence is Li Na (tennis). This is also reflected in the frequent neglect of many female Olympic champions in weightlifting, judo and wrestling by sponsors in China, although the profile of sport is also a key factor.

Last, when it comes to power structure, it is evident from this research that policy making power at the national level is largely in the hands of GAS and the corresponding National Management Centres, which is also illustrated by reference to the discussion of elite theory above and the policy community below. However, the differences between sports need to be addressed. Centralised power is more evident in the case of artistic gymnastics while power is more dispersed and the power of provincial governing bodies tends to be stronger in the case of cycling where there is a high degree of resistance from provincial teams. The power of National Aquatics Management Centre, the CSA and the National Team in swimming has been strengthened with the establishment of a regular national team instead of the previously loose 'federal' system. However, the centralisation of power goes in line with smooth communication with provincial teams, which is evidenced in the National Governing Bodies and the National Team's consideration of the interests of provincial teams. The power of National Management Centres also differs in relation to the importance of the corresponding sport in China's elite sport landscape. The power of the Gymnastics Management Centre and the Aquatics Management Centre is evidently stronger than their cycling counterpart which shares a Management Centre with four other Olympic sports. In addition, it is noteworthy that provincial configuration also largely influences the power structure within different sports. Provinces, municipalities and autonomic regions, including the PLA team in many cases, which have a traditional link with a particular sport and those which are also more effective in producing successful athletes and coaches, play a more significant role in policy making and implementation processes. This can be evidenced in the incomparable contribution of athletes and coaches from Zhejiang Province and Shanghai Municipality in the case of swimming and the influence of many South China provinces including Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan in the case of artistic gymnastics. However, this does not necessarily mean the exclusion of other provinces or the 'non-consideration' of the interests of less successful provinces. Preferential policies given to less successful and less traditional provinces regarding venue selection of nationwide training of reserve swimmers is a good example.

Non-government groups hardly have any power in policy making or implementation and scholars may be one of the very few non-government groups who may influence decision making although their role is only advisory. Current athletes are excluded from policy making process but it is noteworthy that stakeholders including full-time elite coaches, athletes and the PLA system all enjoy administrative positions and hence they are government and system 'insiders'. However, many successful athletes, in particular Olympic champions, become key leaders, officials and coaches after retirement and hence are able to participate in the decision making process. Internal hierarchical accountability, instead of external attention to pressure from the media and public, is a key feature of elite sport in China in general and the three sports studied in particular.

7.4.2 The Multiple Streams Framework and The Policy Community Framework

(1) The multiple streams framework

Despite its strong pluralist foundation, Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams framework provides a valuable lens to analyse elite sport policy in relation to artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in particular in both China and the UK. The concept of policy windows proved to be particularly useful and helped identify key events in the development of elite sport in China and the UK. As evident in Kingdon's (1984) concept of 'spillover', elite sport policy is largely shaped by the general political background and vulnerable to the influence of other areas including diplomacy, political and social affairs, which also highlights the importance of the political stream. In China, as a highly politicised policy area, elite sport is a high-profile government responsibility the development of which is largely determined by political needs and strongly influenced by the political stream. In the UK, the extent to which the government is interested determines the profile of elite sport in the Cabinet and hence the scale and pace of its development.

During the period 1992-2012, fundamental policies including the adoption of a market economy in 1992, the strengthening of the Reform and Open-door policy and the ever-accelerating pace of globalisation and international interaction most notably China's joining of the WTO in 2001, the slogan of 'Revitalising the nation through Science and Education' all have left a marked imprint on elite sport development in China. Examples include the reform of the elite sport organisational structure, increased emphasis and reliance on science after the poor performance in Seoul 1988, the emergence of the strategies of 'Revitalising sport through science and education' and 'Invite In and Go Out' and the concomitant large-scale cooperation with foreign coaches and other experts and the organisation of overseas training. More importantly, a main thread through elite sport development in China since the establishment of the PRC is the continuous substantial support from the government and an increased government intention to employ elite sport to showcase the economic achievements of China and enhance its national identity. This provided the rationale for China's bids for the Summer Olympic Games. All these political and economic events and Chinese government and CCP's ideology and attitudes not only formed the political stream for elite sport policies, but also opened policy windows for policy changes and developments in relation to sport.

However, policy windows can also be opened by compelling problems or 'focusing events'. In addition to the influence of the general climate (political stream) mentioned above, measures such as the large-scale recruitment of and cooperation with foreign experts, the prevalence of overseas training, the systematic refinement of the scientific support system, the organisational reform in the late 1990s were also directly driven by problems or crises most notably the very poor performance in Seoul 1988 and the lack of progress in Atlanta 1996. However, 'problems' most notably poor or disappointing performances could at most spark partial rather than substantial reform which did not affect non-traditional sports in China. The success of Beijing's bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games was a much more significant 'focusing event' which had a much broader impact affecting the

development of not only fortress sports but also non-traditional sports. The most notable example was the launch of the *119 Project* of which swimming was a beneficiary. Many sports in China seized this golden opportunity by achieving greater success and establishing or consolidating dominance (artistic gymnastics, weightlifting, diving and shooting) or achieving gold medal breakthroughs at or before Beijing 2008 (rowing, sailing, canoeing, boxing, hockey).

When these windows, both general political and economic developments and sport-specific opportunities or problems opened, there was strong evidence of the coupling of the three streams. The political stream was very supportive and conducive to the development of elite sport because of its 'compatibility' with the national mood and Party and therefore government ideology. Government strategies such as the acceptance of the market economy, the increased pace of globalisation and the emphasis on science and education legitimised and promoted the 'scientisation' of sport in China, the increased involvement with international sport and the large-scale import of foreign expertise. It is against a largely stable and supportive political stream that the interaction between the problem and policy streams took place. In the problem stream, poor performance in Seoul and the lack of progress in Atlanta (indicated by the stagnation in the number of gold medals) were the focusing events prompting the reflection on and identification of the problems hindering the progress of Chinese elite sport. Key problems identified during this period included: the undervaluing of science and a lack of knowledge of opponents; weak competition structure and its lack of connection with the preparation for the Olympic Games; tension between the interests of the National Teams and provincial teams in many sports; a lack of sufficient specialisation and efficiency in organisational structures; coaching quality, training philosophy and methods; and doping issues in the late 1990s. Solutions that emerged from the policy stream included: a greater emphasis on science and the deployment of a specialist scientific and medical support team for the National Teams; the establishment of the Sports Information Institute the main task of which was to collect information of other countries; the

Olympic-standardisation of the National Games; the introduction of 'policy medals' transferred from the Olympic Games and the double-point system targeting the PLA athletes; the reform of the Sports Ministry into GAS with more power devolved to Sports Management Centres in sport-specific development; the restructuring of the Management Centres which made a clear distinction between Olympic and non-Olympic sports and disciplines; the promotion of the 'Invite In and Go Out' strategy; the development in the recruitment of and cooperation with leading foreign coaches; the increased centralisation of the National Teams in many sports and the adoption of the concept of 'scientific training rather than excessive training'; and the establishment of an international-standardised anti-doping system most notably the creation of the ChinaDA and serious punishments imposed on doping violators. These approaches echoed the government's ideology of international prestige, the open-door policy and global involvement, the salience of science while not threatening the centralisation and hierarchical political structure or weakening the power of the government and CCP. Hence, they were largely 'value acceptable'. At the same time, with substantial resources provided by the government, the development in economy and technology in China, these approaches were basically technically feasible.

While the multiple streams framework has utility in directing attention to problems and the policies that they prompted, it is important to note that problems have different levels of significance and that one 'problem' might be one element of a broader and often more politically significant problem. Consequently, it would be unrealistic to conceptualise the sport problems (for example, poor medal performance in Seoul 1988) as discrete and self-contained when in reality they were an element or a symptom of the broader problem of the concern of the Chinese government to improve its international image and status. Similarly, many of the 'sport' policies were derived from a more general policy designed to increase the profile and standing of China in a wide range of international organisations and international arenas.

When it comes to the UK, the election of a pro-sport Prime Minister John Major was a milestone in the development of sport in general and elite sport in particular. John Major's tenure also signalled the start of substantial government financial support for elite sport. Generally speaking, the political stream has been conducive to elite sport development in the UK since John Major's prime ministership and irrespective of the party in office. In other words, political stream has been largely stable and supportive of the development of elite sport. However, while John Major laid the foundations for the systematic government-led development of elite sport, it was during Tony Blair's tenure that the fruits of policy change became notable. The reform was a direct result of the UK's very poor performance in Atlanta 1996 which prompted a large-scale review of the existing system and the reflection on the problems in many areas. The fragmented and amateur-led organisational structure, the lack of financial support, the amateur-led coaching and athlete structure, the looseness of the National Squad, the lack of an elite-centred philosophy, the lack of a deliberate and scientific talent identification system, the lack of a systematic sports science system, the limited quality of home-grown coaches in many sports and a lack of Olympic-centred competition pyramid were identified as key problems. Accordingly, the AIS model was largely imitated and organisational reform was carried out, UK Sport and Sport England replaced the Sports Council and UK Sport became a specialist elite sport governing body in the UK, NGBs were modernised, National Lottery money became available, centralisation started in cycling and was spread to many other sports, a competing or winning philosophy emerged and was cemented, a number of talent campaigns and athlete development programmes were launched, leading foreign coaches were hired in many sports and the elite sports institutes network was established and started to provide specialist and systematic scientific support to NGBs. These formed the policy stream in the post-1996 reform. In the case of the reform and modernisation of British sports governing bodies, it is noteworthy that new Labour's promotion of the ideology modernisation and its New Public Management approach was an important element in the political stream guiding the organisational revolution and leading to a more resource-dependent relationship and

vertical accountability between UK Sport and NGBs. Similar to Beijing's success, London's successful bid for the 2012 Olympic Games in 2005 increased the status of elite sport in the Cabinet and more substantial government support enabled both the extension and further development of many post-1996 approaches and the possibility to tackle some unsolved questions and promote the development of some less traditional and less successful sports. A number of talent campaigns were launched, international influence became a key concern and the ILP was promoted, non-traditional sports NGBs received more funds while financial support for traditional sports became more substantial and coaching development became more systematic most notably reflected in the ECAP. These were the solutions to improve key areas of elite sport and hence achieve high success in London 2012.

As was the case with China, the UK's acknowledgement of problems in elite sport and the readiness of government to fund policy solutions suggests that the priority given to sport was influenced, if not determined, by other more politically significant concerns such as the concern to promote and protect British heritage and the concern with the damage to 'brand UK' from poor performance in international sport. Thus the 'problem' in sport can be seen as symptoms of much broader problems such as the UK's post-colonial status. Furthermore, the identification of modernisation as part of the policy response has to be seen not as a bespoke policy for the problems in sport but as a policy adapted to sport problems but one which was developed to deal with more substantial problems with the machinery of government, the economy and the health service.

With continuous substantial support from the Government, together with the fruits of technological development transferred from other areas including military, approaches noted above were largely technically and financially feasible. Their value acceptability can be demonstrated by reference to the government's continuous and increased valuing of elite sport and the ambition to achieve higher medal success at the 2016 Olympic Games.

Many approaches, including the modernisation of NGBs and the use of public funds were promoted or at least, approved by the government.

The development of three target sports in the two countries have been fundamentally influenced by the general political and economic background and key events that have had an impact on the whole elite sport landscape. Nevertheless, each sport has its own characteristics and policy trajectories and there are many sport-specific policy windows, problems and policies or solutions and policy entrepreneurs. Taking policy windows as an example, in addition to the general (non-sport-specific) windows noted above, each sport has its own milestones in terms of policy development and in many cases, there are sport-specific 'wake-up calls' prompting policy change and development. It is noteworthy that sport-specific windows often work in combination with general policy windows most notably the approaching of the Olympic Games on home soil in both countries. In other words, the high expectation as well as the pressure derived from the Olympic Games on home soil often strengthened and further drove the adoption and development of some policies and measures. What was more stable, constant and less sport-specific was the political stream in both countries.

Despite the high degree of usefulness of multiple streams framework for the analysis of elite sport policy in China and the UK, some elements need to be adapted to better fit with elite sport in different contexts in general and in China in particular. The applicability and transferability mainly refers to its five structural factors. The basic assumptions of organisational pluralism reflect its American origin and their transferability to more centralised China and the UK is, to varying degrees, limited. In particular the pluralistic underpinnings contrast strikingly with the hierarchical, centralised and elite-dominated political system in China.

As regards the more useful and relevant structural factors, several modifications are suggested to increase the utility of the multiple streams framework in exploring the policy process in more centralised political systems.

The political stream: There is a high degree of overlap between party ideology and government in the one-party system in China. The CCP represents and monopolises government actions in China. As regards the national mood, it is strongly shaped and influenced by the CCP and the government. A good example was the high degree of enthusiasm for the staging of the Olympic Games and Olympic medal success in China. Although there were criticisms of the cost of staging the Olympic Games and of the Olympic-gold-medal-only philosophy as well as of some specific issues such as the recruitment and training of child athletes, they were only expressed by a limited group of people and had a limited impact on national mood.

The problem stream: Kingdon (1984) argued that policy windows are opened by compelling problems or events in the political stream. However, this thesis found that policy windows can also be opened by successful performances such as British cyclists' success in Athens 2004 and in the case of British Gymnastics, Beth Tweddle's gold medal breakthrough in the World Championships and Louis Smith's bronze medal in Beijing 2008. These performances per se were not problems, but they could either trigger the pressure or the problem of maintaining and expanding success as evident in the BC or result in more resources received (such as more Lottery funds based on the No Compromise principle) and proved the effectiveness of previous approaches and hence they can be maintained or further strengthened.

The policy stream: First, although Kingdon (1984) emphasised the ambiguity and residual randomness of policy making, there is very limited evidence of ambiguity and randomness in elite sport policy making in China and the UK. In China, most of the policies made, such as the targeting of female, agile and skill-based sports and the recruitment of foreign coaches and the organisation of overseas training is evidence-based and carefully evaluated. Similarly, the degree of ambiguity and randomness in the UK tends to be compromised in the contemporary context characterised as a more professional and performance-based approach to elite sport. Policy making

in UK Sport in general and in British Cycling in particular is highly evidence-based and rational. However, as mentioned previously, it is possible to argue that elite sport problems' identification and prominence as well as the policy solutions were to a significant extent the consequence of 'spillover' from more politically salient policy areas.

Second, as regards the conditions for the successful adoption of a policy, value acceptability seems more significant in the Communist China where there are chances for technically infeasible policies being accepted by the government as long as they are ideologically correct (Zhu, 2008). As Zahariadis (1999, p. 80) maintained, 'the ideology of the governing party (or coalition) shapes the kind of issues that will rise to the top of the agenda and demarcates the solutions available for adoption'. In the case of elite sport in China, key values include the substantial support for elite sport development and the maximisation of Olympic gold medal success, the centralisation of elite sport and the unparalleled role of government in elite sport issues, the emphasis on science and education and a generally positive attitude towards globalisation but more in a controlled manner which guarantees China's independence and autonomy.

Third, Travis and Zahariadis's (2002) incrementalist approach to Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams model which argued that the adoption and development of policies can be gradual and some policies tend to be lasting and their concept of the 'inertia' are evident in this thesis. British Cycling's promotion and large-scale adoption of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' and its being imitated by many other British sports and the Chinese National Swimming Team's development and increased commitment to overseas training were the best illustrations. It is apparent that these developments and strengthening of policies are often related to incremental policy windows most notably the performance in major competitions (for example, British cyclists' steady progress from Athens 2004 to London 2012 and Chinese swimmers' recovery and recent rise). Satisfactory performance usually results in the continuation, strengthening or the 'advancement' of the profile of some policies and measures. Major competitions provide a valuable opportunity to assess the effectiveness and quality of policies and

successful experience are generally considered to be worthy of inheriting and strengthening. The concept of incremental policy windows will be further discussed in the next section.

Policy windows: First of all, the scale of policy windows advanced by Kingdon (1984) tends to be unclear and hence it needs to be carefully discussed and identified. Exworthy and Powell (2004)'s categorisation of 'big windows' at national level and 'little windows' at local level provided this thesis with some inspiration. Especially, a concept of 'general windows' is advanced, as a valuable refinement of Kingdon's (1984) basic concept. A general window involves changes and key events in the political stream and fundamental events affecting a country's whole political system or elite sport landscape and contrasts with 'specific' windows which mainly concern policy changes or developments for a policy sub-sector or particular sport. Examples of the former include China's joining the WTO and increased pace of globalisation, the success of Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games and similarly John Major's election as the Prime Minister of the UK and the success of London's bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. When it comes to sport-specific windows, sport-specific poor performances often became 'wake-up calls' for the actions and changes for corresponding sports. Hence, it is apparent that policy windows can be coupled at different levels. For example, British Cyclists' successful performance in Athens 2004 and London's successful Olympic bid in 2005 together raised the salience of the urgency to maintain and expand British cyclists' success on the international stage and a series of actions including the programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' and talent transfer from other sports were adopted or further strengthened. When it comes to China, the organisational reform in the late 1990s was a direct response to China's lack of progress in Atlanta 1996 and the absorption of market approaches in particular in the development of non-Olympic sports and high-profile collective sports was a reflection of the implementation of the spirit of the government's market economy policy.

Another concern regarding policy windows is their predictability, which has been most systematically illustrated by Howlett's (1998) categorisation of routine, discretionary, spillover and random windows. In fact, there is a high degree of predictability of policy windows in the area of elite sport policy. As noted above, performance in major international competitions often opened a window for either policy change or policy continuation and consolidation. Although the detailed results or the outcomes at the Olympic Games, for example, tend to be unpredictable, it is fairly common that the four-year cycle of the (Summer) Olympic Games often leads to regular and routinised general and sport-specific reviews and summaries. The Olympic Games has become a regular examination for Olympic sports in both China and the UK and the policies for the new Olympiad, whether in the form of policy continuation and development or substantial policy changes, are often dependent on the performance at the Olympic Games and the evaluation. Similarly, at a non-national level, the performances at the National Games which is held every four year in the year following the Summer Olympic Games often leads to routinised review and reflection including policy change and restructure among provincial teams in China. Predictable windows can also be illustrated by reference to UK Sport's regular funding review of NGBs and FIG's routinised rule changes after each Olympic Games.

The third issue is closely associated with the 'inertia' of some policies discussed above in the policy stream section. As noted above, some policies are not established in a day and some policies tend to be very long-lasting. The gradual adoption, consolidation and the continuation and development of some policies, as evident in the gradual acceptance and promotion of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' in the case of the BC and the development from tentative overseas training and cooperation with foreign coaches to the large-scale and regular overseas training and import of world-leading foreign coaches of Chinese swimming demonstrate that some policies are not completed 'within' one policy window. Instead, they are developed in a more incremental way which usually involves more than one policy window covering a certain time span.

The interrelation between windows can be also illustrated by reference to the inhibitive or weakening function of some policy windows in relation to others. The most typical example was the significance of the success of Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in 2001 and its concomitant slowing down of the reform of the 'whole country support for elite sport system' and the 'marketisation' of Chinese elite sport. Driven by the high expectation of Olympic gold medal success in Beijing 2008, the 'whole country support for elite sport system' and government's role in particular in Olympic sports were strengthened, which at least, postponed the reform of the system.

As noted above, domestic elite sport policies can hardly be independent of exogenous factors. The IOC and IF decisions such as FIG's non-maximum scoring system and new rules for each Olympiad, the inclusion of open water swimming and BMX in the Olympic Games and the removal and inclusion of some other cycling events at the Olympic Games all had a marked impact on policy making in three sports in China and the UK and resulted in more substantial and systematic policy support for new Olympic disciplines and events. Accordingly, a term of 'non-domestic policy windows' is introduced as an elite sport-specific type of policy windows that is perhaps not typical in other policy areas. This type of policy window demonstrates the significant impact of the IOC on domestic elite sport policy making, the significance of the Olympic Games to many nations and the increased homogenisation of Olympic sports. Hence, it shows the impact of globalisation on domestic policy making. Moreover, this echoes Kingdon's (1984) concept of 'spillover' of the IOC and IF decisions on domestic elite sport policy making.

Last, as in the discussion of the problem stream, policy windows can be opened by events other than crisis or events in the political stream. The BC's success in Athens 2004 and the subsequent large-scale review and a series of actions taken most notably the programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains' is a good example. Policy windows can be opened by positive events rather than only by crisis in the problem stream.

Policy entrepreneurs: It is difficult to identify individuals or independent groups of policy entrepreneurs in the area of elite sport in China and the UK. It is undeniable that policy entrepreneurs, or policy promoters exist in both countries. However, they are often inside the government system and often it is difficult to separate them from policy makers (for example, promoters such as the Director of the Chinese National Swimming Team and the NPD of British Cycling). Similar to Travis and Zahariadis' (2002) study on foreign aid policy, the significance of policy entrepreneurs tend to be limited in elite sport policy at least in China and the UK. In China, policy making of elite sport is dominated and often monopolised by elite groups inside the system. Although there are cases scholars providing advice and suggestions, their role is advisory and it is largely GAS and Management Centres decide. This contrasts with Zhu's (2008, p. 319) conclusion in his study of detention and repatriation system in China that the 'main body of Chinese policy entrepreneurs exists in the policy stream outside of the government'. On the contrary, in relation to elite sport policy, there is a high degree of internal performance pressure and the regular cycles most notably the performance at the Olympic Games and the World Championships provide opportunities for policy evaluation which often lead to policy change. Hence, 'bureaucratic entrepreneurs' inside the government system are much more significant.

When it comes to the UK, although there are independent participants such as Sir Sebastian Coe who has the ability to influence policy making, examples from artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling are rare. Most often, policy changes and developments are internally driven, pushed by key 'insiders', with the approval by key leaders and it is often difficult to separate policy entrepreneurs and policy advocates from policy makers. Hence, the concept of policy entrepreneurs is to some extent, of marginal value in this thesis. This is not to deny or downgrade the significance of policy entrepreneurs. Instead, as Travis and Zahariadis (2002, p. 498) argued, 'it merely means that identifying individual entrepreneurs is not a prerequisite to modeling the process'.

In summary, the multiple streams framework is a very illuminating analytical toolbox

for the analysis of elite sport policy in China and the UK with a reasonable degree of applicability. However, it should be borne in mind that its usefulness is context-dependent. Hence, there is a need to adapt and localise some of its concepts and refine its theoretical system to better suit the more centralised countries such as China and the increasingly independent, specialised, prioritised and government-led area of elite sport policy. Figure 7.1 is the adapted version of the multiple streams framework for elite sport in China.

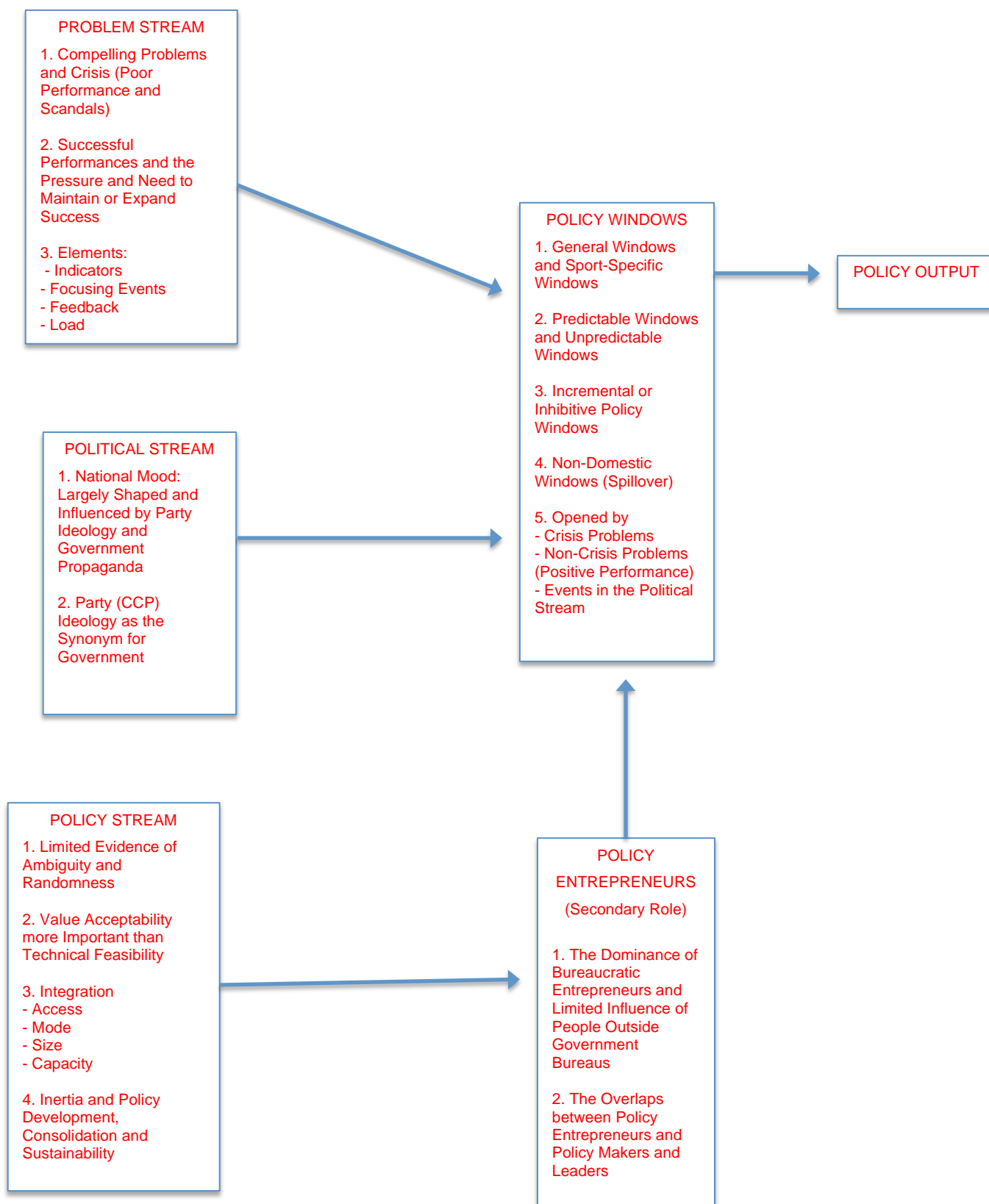


Figure 7.1: An adapted model of the multiple streams framework for elite sport in China

Source: Adapted from Zahariadis (2007, p. 71).

(2) The policy community framework

The policy community framework is significantly compatible with the government-led and often government-dominated elite sport system in China especially in relation to the development of Olympic sports. In comparison, the evidence of a policy community in the UK is weaker as sport policies are mainly made through the interaction of competing coalitions instead of a unified policy community (Green & Houlihan, 2005). Hence the discussion of the applicability of the policy community framework is confined to China.

Different from the multiple streams framework the fundamental assumptions, theoretical roots at the macro-level and some structural factors of which need to be adapted to suit China, the whole package of the policy community framework, ranging from its macro-level roots in elite theory, theoretical underpinnings and key elements, has a high degree of applicability to the elite sport system in China. In fact, elite sport in China may be one of the best examples of the influence and monopolisation of policy communities in policy making.

First, it is necessary to identify the composition of the policy community dominating Chinese elite sport. In terms of policy making, key members of the policy community include the central government (the State Council), GAS, National Sports Management Centres subordinate to GAS, provincial, city and county governments and sports bureaus and management centres, political leaders, CCP officials and administrators and universities and scholars.

Elite sport in China is state-controlled and government-dominated. Despite some limited development of marketisation and professionalisation in non-Olympic sports and a limited range of Olympic sports such as football, volleyball and tennis, civil forces are still very weak and immature in China and hence non-government elements play a significantly marginal role in China's elite sport landscape in general and in artistic gymnastics, swimming and non-road cycling in particular. As argued by Pan (2012), central government, working through GAS and the Management Centres, combines the roles of decision maker, coordinator and operator and the power is highly centralised. However, it is worth noting that there are other levels of

government that are significant in relation to elite sport in China.

The important role of provincial, city and county resources has been frequently noted in previous chapters. For sports including artistic gymnastics, swimming and non-road cycling in which traditional three-level system still dominates, elite sport at provincial, city and county levels are the foundations and as such are important actors within the policy community. Although there is no direct administrative relationship between GAS and National Management Centres on the one hand and provincial sports organisations on the other, the latter largely follow the decisions and implement the policies made by the former, despite a certain degree of variation between different sports. Thus while sub-national levels of governments can be identified as members of the elite sport policy community - it is a community whose primary function is implementation rather than policy-making. However, the sub-national actors do have occasional influence over policy especially in relation to the incentive structure offered to the provinces. Moreover, provincial, city and county sports bureau and management centres or sports associations lead the development of elite sport and specific sports in their corresponding regions and are the most influential policy makers in relation to region-specific elite sport issues.

Although officials of the CCP are closely integrated into the machinery of government, they have a substantial impact on policy and it is often the CCP officials inside the government system that reserve the right to make final policy decisions. Furthermore, their close personal relationship and frequent interaction and the high degree of consistency regarding the beliefs, values and objectives largely determine the paradigm for policy making in elite sport in China and confirms the conclusion of Dai (2009) that the government and the CCP officials are the most direct stakeholders of the 'whole country support for elite sport system'.

Non-government forces are largely excluded from the policy making in China. Universities and scholars may be one of the very few groups that have some impact on the policy making of elite sport in China, although they do not hold the decision making power. Universities mentioned here refer to both comprehensive universities and the eight sports universities across China. Their roles are largely similar in relation to the contribution of scientific and research support and the important

advisory role of the scholars, who are regularly invited to attend the conferences, meetings and discussions organised by GAS and Management Centres (Interviewee A, 08 May 2013). Many leading scholars maintain close relationship with political leaders and CCP officials and their communication is regular and often frequent. There are many cases where scholar's advice is accepted by the leaders and officials such as the categorisation of Olympic sports and China's sport targeting and many science- and research-related proposals and suggestions. In addition, universities also play a vital role in the implementation stage with substantial scientific and research support. As noted in Chapter Five, the contribution of sports universities in providing advice and in policy implementation is substantial although mainly limited to the more technical aspects of policy.

In considering the concept of the policy community, Hong (2012), based on her analysis of elite sport in South Korea, advanced the concept of 'policy implementation community' that refers to groups that are unable to influence policy making significantly but which play a important role in policy implementation. There is evidence of the existence of policy implementation community in China. This community includes the above-mentioned government organisations which often fulfil a combined role of policy makers and policy implementers. However, there are groups that have little influence in policy making and whose function is confined to policy implementation. Coaches and athletes in the National and provincial teams also belong to the government as they enjoy administrative appointments and salaries provided by the Central and provincial governments. Hence, they are 'system insiders'. What deserves some detailed discussion is the role of People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the development of elite sport in China. Although the PLA sports system has declined as a result of commercialisation and globalisation in sports including football and basketball, its role is still significant especially in the less professionalised and marketised sports of artistic gymnastics, swimming and non-road cycling particularly in relation to the cultivation of elite coaches and athletes.

In summary, government's policy dominance in artistic gymnastics, swimming and non-road cycling in China is unchallenged. The vast majority of the policy makers and implementers in the policy community of elite sport in China are inside the government system. Universities and scholars are one of the very few non-

government groups that are able to participate in policy making and play a role in the policy implementation, but they do not have the power to make decisions. Nevertheless, they are closely related to the government in China. When it comes to areas which concern contiguous policy areas such as the education of athletes, the post-career support of athletes and coaches and the financial support for elite sport, GAS and Management Centres mainly interact with other government departments such as the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. Non-government forces including civil forces and the public are largely excluded from the policy making and, as indirect stakeholders, their role in the policy implementation is also limited.

The analysis of elite sport development in China and the policy process of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in particular largely echoes five key characteristics of policy communities summarised by Marsh and Rhodes (1992a). First, policy making in artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling is largely controlled by and confined to government, mainly involving the political leaders and CCP officials in GAS, Management Centres and other key 'insiders'. Scholars may be the only group of policy participants outside the government bureau. Second, the consultation and communication inside the policy community is frequent and the quality is high. Key decision makers work together and often meet to discuss the development of each sport. There are regular formal and informal meetings and discussions between key members. Third, the interaction between members is stable and close. Moreover, many members, as in the case of swimming, share the same background of Beijing Sport University or other major sports universities, which strengthens their mutual trust and personal relationship. This is the evidence of *guanxi* (connectedness) between key members of elite sport in China. Fourth, the members share common beliefs and values regarding the pursuit of Olympic gold medals and Olympic successes and there is a high degree of consensus between members on most elite-related issues in Olympic sports. Despite the increased evidence of the tension between the National Team and provincial teams in some sports and the cases of the pursuit of individual interests, these phenomena tend to be patchy and rare and they are overpowered by mainstream consensus and values. Last and significantly typical in China, there is a longstanding and rigidly hierarchical and vertically interdependent relationship in elite sport in China. This system was

established in the 1950s as a result of the Sovietisation of sport in China. The hierarchical relationship is evident in all the three sports studied at different levels.

Cairney (2011) argued that a strong policy community could result in policy monopoly. This concept is very useful in the analysis of elite sport in China. Elite sport resources are monopolised by different levels of governments in China with only limited scope for the development of non-government policy actors in elite sport in general and in less commercialised sports including artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in particular. These findings reinforce the conclusions drawn by Dai (2009) and Xu (2004). The degree of monopolisation of policy making in artistic gymnastics, swimming and non-road cycling is even stronger as there is little alternative sources of influence such as commercial and civil elements in these sports. In fact, the three key characteristics regarding policy monopoly suggested by Jordan and Maloney (1997, quoted in Cairney, 2011, p. 180) are all clearly evident in the three sports in China: first, 'a limited group membership, based on the use of a certain policy image to exclude most participants and reduce the visibility of decisions'; second, 'good quality relations between groups and government, based on shared values or a shared understanding of the policy problem'; and third, 'policy and policy community stability, based on a lack of external attention and the fruitful exchange of resources between groups and public officials'.

Elite sport in China in general and the development of artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in particular resonates strongly with the policy community framework and the assumption of dominance of the policy process. Yet, two points need to be stressed. First, akin to South Korea, the power of the policy community in elite sport policy making in China is derived from the government's dominance and often monopoly (as evident in the three sports in this thesis) rather than the interaction between the state and civil society. In fact, as a highly politicised and prioritised policy area, elite sport in China is largely insulated from the civil society, or at least, civil society has little influence in the decision making. It is a product of the planned economy, the centralisation of the power of government and the politicisation of elite sport. In the traditionally centralised and government-dominated societies including both China and South Korea, the power of civil society is far weaker than that in many Western countries and its influence in areas including elite sport is very limited.

Second, the existence and influence of the policy community is a legacy of the planned economy and the politicisation of elite sport and hence can be seen as a deliberate government measure rather than an organic process in China. Despite the development of pluralistic elements and non-government forces with the adoption of a market economy and the abandonment of the 'planned economy' in the early 1990s, the 'residue' of the planned economy is significant and the 'whole country support for elite sport system' for most Olympic sports largely remains intact. The dominance of the community by a small group of elites in most Olympic sports in China is expected to continue in the near future. Table 7.1 summarises the policy community for elite sport in China.

Table 7.1: The policy community for artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China

Members of the policy community	In relation to policy making and policy implementation	Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The central government (The State Council); - GAS; - National Sports Management Centres subordinate to GAS; - Provincial sports bureaus and provincial sports management centres and associations; - Political leaders, CCP officials and administrators.
		Non-Government: Universities and scholars
	Mainly in relation to policy implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PLA (Government-controlled); - Coaches and athletes (mostly belonging to government administrative structure, still 'system insiders').
Context for the formation of the community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Planned Economy; 2 The politicisation and centralisation of elite sport: 'Whole Country Support for Elite Sport System'; 3. The limited development of alternative forces (commercial and social) to government in China. 	
Extent of community influence	Administrative monopoly: Control of sports resources, political and administrative orders.	
Key characteristics of the elite sport policy community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exclusive, very limited number of members and participant, closed, elitist; 2. Frequent and high quality formal and informal interaction, consultation and communication, stable; high degree of mutual acceptability and trust and close personal relationships; largely similar background and the vital role of sports universities most notably Beijing Sport University in the tightening of the policy community; 3. High degree of consensus and common values and beliefs: the production of gold medals and 'Olympic glory'; 4. Rigidly hierarchical and vertically interdependent, mainly top-down vertical accountability and obedience and compliance; 5. Low degree of decision visibility; 6. Concentration on internal goals and vertical accountability rather than a focus on external pressure; 7. The government's monopolisation of political, financial and administrative resources despite exchange of resources most notably intellectual, scientific and informational resources with universities. 	

The integration of the policy community framework and the multiple streams framework is of great value in analysing elite sport in China as the former explains who is involved in the decision making process and who promotes certain policies while the latter helps understand how policies are made and in particular how policies change. The two frameworks are mutually supportive insofar as the policy community framework helps explain the difficulty in identifying non-government policy entrepreneurs and the dominance of bureaucratic entrepreneurs in elite sport policy making in China while the multiple streams framework provides a more sophisticated theoretical framework and set of concepts through which to explore the process of policy change. This supports Houlihan's (2005) argument regarding the value of the multiple streams framework in working in combination with other frameworks such as the policy community framework.

7.4.3 Globalisation and Policy Transfer

(1) Globalisation theory

As noted above, the impact of globalisation and non-domestic factors on domestic elite sport policy is marked, as is evidenced not only in the more liberal capitalist Britain and but also in the more centralised but increasingly economically globalised China. First, the IOC and IF decisions to include or remove certain sports, disciplines and events as well as to alter the rules of Olympic sports have a significant effect on countries' Olympic preparation and they guide the activities of athletes in many countries in a wide range of sports, which confirms Houlihan (2009) and Houlihan and Zheng's (2014) argument regarding the impact of international sports organisations on domestic elite sport policy. This Olympic-centred and Olympic-driven model is evidenced in China's Olympic-standardisation of the National Games, both countries' commencement of systematic and government-led support for BMX and open water swimming, the Chinese National Artistic Gymnastics Team's prompt and innovative response to and mastery of

FIG's new rules and British Cycling's effective adaptation to the removal of time trials from and the inclusion of sprint events in the Olympic programme.

Second, all the three sports in both countries have adopted foreign expertise and recruited foreign coaches and overseas training has been organised in most of the sports in both countries. Despite a relatively more controlled involvement in global sport and a more supplementary role for foreign expertise in China, it is undeniable that the adoption of foreign expertise has become more common and the role of foreign experts has become increasingly significant. The recruitment of former Soviet and East European coaches, as evidenced in swimming in China and artistic gymnastics and cycling in the UK, is the demonstration of the impact of global talent movement caused by political change. This resonates strongly with Hay and Marsh's (2000) view that globalisation is contingent and it can be caused by non-economic factors including political change in this case. However, comparatively speaking, the UK is more open to the adoption of foreign expertise as foreign coaches tend to occupy more significant positions in all three sports studied and they are employed in a wider range of sports including all major four sports. China's 'import' of foreign expertise has been more recent, more narrowly-targeted and in some sports more pragmatic and temporary. The role of foreign coaches is mainly supplementary and foreign coaches are very rare in China's fortress sports. The variation between China and the UK and between different sports regarding the extent of the reliance on foreign expertise echoes the view that domestic policy makers enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in dealing with globalisation and they play a crucial role 'in facilitating, mediating and determining the pace of globalisation' (Houlihan, 2010, p. 15). Yet, the impact of globalisation can be beyond domestic policy makers' control. Despite a generally cautious attitude towards foreign expertise, fortress sports in China including badminton, table tennis, weightlifting and artistic gymnastics have to tackle another problem derived from globalisation: talent loss. Similar to other fortress sports, China is vulnerable to and hence the 'victim' of the often involuntary 'export' of talent in artistic gymnastics. Talent loss is also evident in Britain (for example, Olympic athletes Jo Fergus and

Robin Francis, ASA, 2005). However, it is mainly confined to non-key athletes in the UK.

The third aspect of globalisation and international involvement is both countries' pursuit of international influence. Deliberate programmes have been launched and the ambitions have been explicitly expressed in key policy documents. Except for Chinese cycling, both countries have made progress in international representation. At the same time, both China and the UK have bid to host a wide range of international sports events ranging from the Summer Olympic Games to the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, the World BMX Championships and the FINA World Aquatics Championships. The bidding process and especially successful bids is considered an important opportunity to strengthen links with the IOC and IFs and hence increase their status in the international sporting family and consequently be better placed to protect and promote national interests.

Last, there are many examples of policy learning and transfer from other countries. As noted previously, the current elite sport system in China exhibits and retains many features of the Sovietisation of Chinese sport in the 1950s. The current elite system in the UK reveals a high degree of 'Australianisation' in the 1990s as many approaches imitated, or were at least inspired by the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) model (De Bosscher et al., 2008). However, the Soviet and Australian models have been localised in China and the UK respectively to better suit two countries' realities and needs.

(2) Policy transfer and policy innovation

There are plenty of examples of policy transfer in both countries' elite sport policies which cover the three sports studied. Generally speaking, the elite sport system in China is the legacy of the Sovietisation and politicisation of sport in the 1950s while the UK's system is largely based on the AIS model although the AIS model was itself strongly influenced by the experience of East Germany.

Evidence of policy transfer can be easily found in all the three sports studied in both countries. Artistic gymnastics in China and swimming in the UK are the best examples of the Sovietisation and Australianisation. Elite artistic gymnastics in China abounds with the elements of former Soviet approaches to artistic gymnastics, ranging from systematic and nationwide talent identification, three-level athlete development structure and the nationwide establishment of spare time sports schools and sports schools, to the prevalence of full-time athletes and coaches. Similarly, as the previous Technical Director of the BG Eddie Van Hoof argued, British Gymnastics has replicated many East European and Soviet approaches and hired a number of former Soviet and East European coaches in the National Squad. Hence, similar to China, artistic gymnastics in the UK also has strong Soviet and East European influences.

The 'Australianisation' of British Swimming was primarily the consequence of the recruitment of foreign coaches most notably Bill Sweetenham and Michael Scott. There is also evidence of American influence in the BS with the appointment of Dennis Pursley as the NPD in the London Olympiad and the inclusion of Bob Bowman in the London 2012 review panel. For example, the USA's one-off trial selection system and Bob Bowman's and hence the USA's skills in start, turn and relay takeovers were introduced and applied to the UK. In addition to lessons learnt from other countries, the BS has been increasingly interested in the experience of other sports in the UK. For example, the BS adopted a more centralised approach which was learnt from British Cycling and British Rowing. Akin to the BS, swimming governing bodies in China are also willing to transfer policy from outside mainland China indicated by the Australian influence on the Chinese National Swimming Team since its cooperation with Australia in the last six to seven years. In fact, swimming in China is not a late adopter of policy transfer. In addition the transfer of the Soviet model of talent identification and training, China's *Training Programme of Swimming for different Age Groups* standardised talent identification and development as early as in the 1980s, based on substantially learning from the experience of some European countries. More negatively, doping was originally introduced by East German coaches hired for the National and provincial teams in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. This demonstrates that policy learning is not always positive.

Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996; 2000) policy learning and transfer theory provides a very useful lens to analyse and understand elite sport policies in China and the UK. According to this thesis, voluntary policy transfer is the most popular across three sports in China and the UK while there is little evidence of direct coercive transfer, although evidence of indirect coercive transfer can be found by reference most notably to China's refinement of its anti-doping structure and technologies and the establishment of the China Anti-Doping Agency as required by WADA. Indirect coercive policy transfer often involves externalities and in many cases, powerful external organisations. This echoes Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996) view regarding the role of externalities and functional interdependence (WADA and GAS, UK Sport and NGBs) and technology (the development and standardisation of doping detection methods) in indirect coercive transfer. Last, indirect coercive transfer is also often the result of a fear of falling behind the competitors. For example, the UK's establishment of a professional elite sport system based on the AIS model was both a countermeasure to the very poor performance in Atlanta 1996 and a demonstration of the UK's intension to catch up with its former colony Australia. The findings of this thesis also support Dolowitz and Marsh's (1996) view that voluntary policy transfer often results from dissatisfaction and problems (for example, Chinese Artistic Gymnastics Team's cooperation with universities of Hong Kong for psychological services after its very poor performance in Athens 2004 and British Swimming's appointment of Bill Sweetenham as the NPD after the failure to win a medal in Sydney 2000).

The objects for policy learning and transfer vary, ranging from policy goals and content, administrative structure, institutions, to ideology, ideas, attitudes and concepts and specific techniques and skills most commonly introduced and transferred by foreign coaches and experts from other areas. It is also apparent that policies and experience can be transferred and learnt from both domestic and non-domestic sources. Finally, as regards the outcome of policy transfer, this thesis shows that policy transfer can be both successful and unsuccessful (such as Chinese National Swimming Team's early attempt to train in the USA and absorb some American approaches which was later regarded as unsatisfactory, and the limited success of British gymnasts after the BG's adoption of a centralised approach and its later replacement by a semi-centralised approach). Explaining the reasons for

the failure of policy transfer is difficult and would require in-depth case study. However, on the basis of the current study it is possible to suggest that among the more important factors that can be conducive to the success of policy transfer are: a) the acceptance of the need for new policy by government and other key policy actors such as NGBs/Sport Management Centres, coaches and athletes; b) adequate preparation for the introduction of the new policy in order to facilitate not only acceptance by key actors, but also adequate understanding of the new policy; and c) relatively quick evidence of improvement and policy effectiveness.

Policy learning and transfer, in some cases, overlaps with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) isomorphism theory. As far as this thesis is concerned, there is strong evidence of mimetic isomorphism in the development of elite sport in both China and the UK. Examples include China's Sovietisation of sport, British Gymnastics' replication of former Soviet and East European approaches, the popularisation of the BC and BR's centralisation among many other Olympic sports, UK Sport's absorption of the BC's concept of the 'Podium Programme' and its subsequent promotion of the World Class Programme that includes the Podium Level to NGBs.

However, absolute 'copying' of policies and experience from other areas and countries is very rare. Policy transfer is more evident in the forms of emulation and hybridisation (such as the simultaneous influence of American and Australian practices in basketball, rugby and hockey experience in British Swimming). Foreign practices are often adapted and localised, as evidenced in the BG's critical replication of former Soviet and East European approaches and similarly China's localisation and refinement of the Soviet elite sport model. More importantly, policy transfer often goes together with policy innovation, which is illustrated by reference to Chinese National Swimming Team's concept of the 'Big National Team' and nationwide collective training for reserve swimmers, Chinese cycling governing body's '1+1' doping punitive system, National Cycling Team's direct recruitment of young talent which skipped the provincial team stage, policy medals and double-point system at the National Games, and British Swimming's event-specific training system launched after London 2012 and British Cycling's introduction of the Podium Programme, fast-track programme which transferred talent from other sports and the programme of 'the aggregation of marginal gains'.

7.4.4 Policy Implementation and Policy Instruments

There is evidence of both top-down and bottom-up approaches in the implementation of elite sport policies in both China and the UK. However, the extent of top-down and bottom-up implementation varies between China and the UK and there are variations between the different sports. The evidence of top-down implementation is stronger in China. As a salient government responsibility and a highly politicised policy area, elite sport development in China is largely determined by the general political climate and organisational system. This is particularly evident in the relationship between GAS and its subordinate National Sports Management Centres. GAS directly decides fundamental issues relevant to the National Sports Management Centres, ranging from the appointment of directors and key officials to funding allocation. Management Centres are affiliated to GAS and are required by GAS to comply with fundamental policies such as the *Olympic Glory Plan* and Olympic guarantee. An additional example of the hierarchical relationship is GAS' strict control of the use of the sponsorship money National Sports Management Centres and National Teams receive. National Sports Management Centres have a certain degree of autonomy in deciding non-fundamental sport-specific issues such as the recruitment of less senior coaches and also athletes for the National Teams and training and competition arrangements for individual athletes which could be seen as evidence of a degree of bottom-up autonomy of National Sports Management Centres and a recognition of the need to adapt centralist policy to local context. However, their autonomy in implementation is constrained by the need to conform to the value of GAS, which cannot violate or conflict general principles such as the prioritisation of the Olympic sports, disciplines and events and Olympic gold medals.

The relationship between National Sports Management Centres and National Teams on the one hand, and provincial sports governing bodies and provincial teams on the other, is more complicated, which is largely due to the greater extent of political autonomy of provincial sports organisations. Artistic gymnastics is a good example of a top-down implementation pattern,

with very high degree of implementation efficiency and compliance with national policy. The interests and needs of the National Team are prioritised and well protected as provincial teams largely support the decisions made by the National Gymnastics Management Centre and comply with the needs of the National Team in the areas of the delivery of athletes and coaches and the training of the National Team athletes. There is little resistance from provincial governing bodies and teams and the near 'perfect implementation' is the result of a) the key position of artistic gymnastics in China and the substantial support it receives at the central level; b) sufficient and high quality resources possessed by the National Team; and c) the high degree of centralisation and the unchallenged position and power of the National Gymnastics Management Centre and the National team. More importantly, there is a high degree of overlap regarding the interests of the National Team and provincial teams. In other words, high success of the National Artistic Gymnastics Team has greatly benefited provincial teams through the award of 'Olympic policy medals' at the National Games. Yet, even in artistic gymnastics, there is some evidence of bottom-up influences on implementation. First, as indicated in Chapter Five, provincial sports bureau and administrations have the authority to strategically target and prioritise some sports and artistic gymnastics has been valued by some provinces but devalued by many others. Second, artistic gymnastics from different provincial teams and sports schools may have different expertise and adopt various approaches to the cultivation of young gymnasts, although approaches conform to FIG's rules and *the Outline of Teaching of Artistic Gymnastics*. This is an example of how implementation at the street-level involves adapting to local conditions.

In relation to swimming in China, there are examples of provinces exceeding the requirements of GAS such as the investment by Shanghai in overseas training for its swimmers. However, exceeding the 'top-down' requirements of GAS occurs in the context of the abandonment of the previous loose federal system and the replacement by a centralised system, in tandem with the construction of a 'big national team' and the organisation of collective training for reserve swimmers, resulting in much tighter coordination

between the National Team and provincial teams and more positive and effective communication between them. Overall, provincial boundaries have been blurred and resources are more tightly integrated nationwide by GAS. On the one hand, the National Team provides coaching and other support to provincial teams and promotes the development of swimming in less developed inland provinces. On the other hand, provincial teams are better mobilised and motivated and tend to protect the interests of the National Team rather than prioritise interests of the provincial teams. Provincial teams' willingness to serve the needs of the National Team is further enhanced as a result of China's improved performance, particularly at the Olympic Games, due to the substantial return through 'policy medals' transferred from the Olympic Games to the National Games. Some of the measures taken by provinces such as Zhejiang and municipalities such as Shanghai are a strengthening or extension of the requirements and expectations of the National Aquatics Management Centre and the National Team and these bottom-up elements have largely benefited the National Team. From a theoretical point of view, this echoes Pressman and Wildavsky's (1973) and Hjern and Hull's (1982) argument regarding the importance of understanding the bottom-up context of policy implementation in which lower-level organisations are significant policy actors. The significance of lower-level policy actors is evident in swimming in China. China's notorious doping scandal in the 1990s was closely associated with the import of East German coaches at the provincial level and their 'unethical' approaches to swimming which largely undermined Chinese swimming at the national level. A more positive example is that different coaches have different expertise and approaches to the cultivation of swimmers. For example, according to the team leader of the National Swimming Team, coaches from Northern provinces are good at physical training while coaches from South China are generally better at developing technical skills (Interviewee E, 22 May 2013) and the nationwide collective training for reserve swimmers provides a valuable platform for mutual learning.

Cycling in China is a counter-example to swimming as there is a high degree of resistance from provincial policy actors who prioritise the interests of provincial teams to an extent which is detrimental rather than helpful to the National Team. Despite some progress regarding the relationship between the National Team and provincial teams in the last two Olympiads, bottom-up resistance to and modification of policies of the National Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and the National Team is more evident in cycling than in swimming and artistic gymnastics. Two major reasons have led to or exacerbated this tension: (1) the high degree of independence of provincial sports governing bodies and sports teams; and (2) the very low degree of overlap between the interests of the National Team and provincial teams. First, the power of the National Cycling and Fencing Management Centre and the National Team is limited and the resources they possess are not as substantial as those of the Gymnastics Management Centre and the Aquatics Management Centre. This is a result of the relatively low priority given to cycling by the government and the dispersed and less specialised national governing body. From Hogwood and Gunn's (1984, p. 206) perspective, elite cycling in China lacks a central authority that 'can demand and obtain perfect compliance'. More fundamentally, provincial sports governing bodies and provincial teams 'belong' to provincial governments rather than being affiliated to National Sports Management Centres and National Teams. If these make provincial teams 'able to' resist, then what makes them 'want to' is the National Team's generally poor performance at the Olympic Games. Despite the 'policy medal' rhetoric, the limited Olympic medal productivity of the National Cycling Team has reduced the attractiveness of the policy to provincial teams. Consequently, provincial teams tend to be 'protectionist' and prioritise the interests of their own provinces over the National Team and performance at the National Games is considered more important than the performance of the National Team on the global stage as it is the former which determines the political career of the officials and the sporting future of athletes and coaches at provincial level. Provincial teams fear that the training and competition with the National Team can negatively affect the preparation of provincial teams for the National Games. However, some solutions were provided. For example, direct recruitment of talent young cyclists at grass-roots level by the coaches of the National Team was an attempt to solve one of the problems of effective or 'perfect' top-down implementation identified by Hogwood and Gunn (1984) - namely

shortening the implementation chain and hence echoed Hogwood and Gunn's (1984, p. 198) condition for 'perfect implementation' that 'there is a single implementing agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success or, if other agencies must be involved, that the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance'.

In the UK, despite a less centralised and less politicised elite sport system in comparison to China, there is strong evidence of a top-down approach to policy implementation. With respect to the relationship between UK Sport and sports NGBs, although NGBs are not politically or administratively affiliated to UK Sport, as a result of the organisational reform in the late 1990s and the early 2000s and particularly the introduction of the National Lottery, UK Sport has strengthened its control over NGBs and a horizontal accountability has been formed between UK Sport and NGBs. With the prioritisation of elite sport and the development of organisational specialisation and modernisation, there is much evidence of a top-down approach to implementation as well as a higher degree of compliance and cooperation. NGBs have become more willing to cooperate in most elite-related policies and programmes within this resource-dependent relationship. The most notable examples included the modernisation of NGBs, the creation of the post of NPDs, the acceptance of performance targets, the adoption of the World Class Programmes, the launch and promotion of talent identification and athlete development programmes, the large-scale import of foreign coaches and the increased degree of centralisation. When it comes to the relationship between NGBs and clubs, a largely harmonious and cooperative relationship emerged in most Olympic sports in the last decade and there is very little resistance from clubs in relation to elite issues in the cases of British Gymnastics, British Swimming and British Cycling. Not surprisingly, this relationship is predicated on the substantial support including financial support provided to clubs. The 'harmonious' relationship between NGBs and clubs and the increasingly smooth implementation and cooperation in the development of elite sport in the UK resonate strongly with many of the ten ingredients of Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) 'perfect implementation' model. The three elements of the

model which are arguably the most significant are: the increases in available resources due to the introduction of the National Lottery; the dominant authority of UK Sport; and the improved communication between UK Sport and NGBs.

Taking China and the UK together, there is a better chance of successful top-down implementation if the higher-level policy makers and implementers control abundant resources and have political legitimacy. Anti-doping is the best example of top-down implementation. Other examples include the Sports Management Centres' signing responsibility agreements with GAS which specify their Olympic (gold) medal tasks and the standard for financial rewards, UK Sport's No Compromise funding strategy and the requirement that NGBs need to create NPDs and set performance targets, and BG's requirement that athletes who wish to compete in the National Finals must attend Regional Squad Training. It is noteworthy that these measures often result in standardisation among sports or different regions and clubs (for example, the creation of NPDs and performance target, the standardisation of regional squads) and hence illustrates DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) coercive isomorphism theory. By contrast, when it comes to less prescriptive policies, for example, GAS' strong expectation that key events should employ leading foreign coaches and UK Sport's suggestion that NGBs should learn from other sports' successful experience and imitate leading sports' approaches, there is a greater chance of policy variation of lower-levels although there are also pressures of mimetic isomorphism.

Finally, when it comes to policy instruments, all three types of policy instruments (inducements and rewards, education and information, and sanctions and threat) are used in three sports in China and the UK. A common feature is that instead of using a single type of policy instrument, GAS and UK Sport, together with Management Centres in China and NGBs in the UK, tend to use a combination of different policy instruments to regulate the development of sports and secure the cooperation of lower-level implementers including both organisations and individual athletes, coaches and other support staff. The combination of policy instruments is

evidenced in the area of the training of athletes, athlete and coach development and anti-doping. Comparatively speaking, sanctions and threat are more common in China but even in China, a recent trend is that coercive measures such as sanctions and threat alone are often insufficient. For example, relatively softer measures including education and information become an important preventative measure to cope with the doping issue, which works in conjunction with the traditional approaches of sanctions and punishments. The combination of different types of policy instruments can also be illustrated by reference to the insufficiency of traditional ideological and patriotic education in securing athletes' allegiance and the increasingly common use of financial and non-financial rewards to enhance their morale.

7.5 Contributions of the Thesis, Its Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

7.5.1 The Value of This Thesis

The most significant value of this research is the application of policy-making theories to the analysis of elite sport policies in China. There is some research (written in English) regarding sport policy in China. Brownell and Hong are pioneers introducing sport including elite sport of China to the world audience (for example, Brownell, 2004; 2005; Cao & Brownell, 1996; Hong, 1998; 1999; 2008; 2011; Hong, Wu & Xiong, 2005). However, most of their research falls within the domain of sports history rather than sport policy. There is very little application of policy theories to Chinese elite sport and the vast majority of this limited research is not undertaken in a comparative manner. It is no exaggeration to say that the current sport policy studies in the world is Western-centred: (1) popular policy theories applied are Western-derived; (2) and almost all of the influential elite sport studies including comparative studies only look at Western countries (for example, Green & Houlihan, 2005; De Bosscher et al., 2008). This research bias offers the opportunity to enrich existing research and sport policy theories on this thesis. Similarities between China and the UK reinforce claims of international convergence or homogenisation for at least major sports nations (De Bosscher et al., 2008). The differences may as well provide some mutual learning opportunities. Some non-transferrable approaches

may provide a lens to study the differences regarding fundamental political system, ideology and cultural tradition between China and some Western countries.

In fact, there are many authors (mainly Chinese) publishing books or papers regarding sport policy including elite sport policy in China. However, most of these publications are written in Chinese and hence the audience is limited. Another common ‘shortcoming’, not only for the study of sport policy in China, is that sport policy study is still relatively undertheorised in comparison to other policy areas (Houlihan, 2005). There is limited research using policy theories to analyse and discuss sport policies even on an international scale. The multiple streams framework (including its rudiments the ‘garbage can’ model) has only been used twice in the area of sport policy (Chalip, 1996, for New Zealand; and Bergsgard, 2000, for Norway). The policy community framework is considered by many researchers to be more applicable to East Asian societies and the most famous sport examples are Hong’s (2012) and Park’s (2011) application and evaluation of this theory in the context of elite sport policy in South Korea. Zhu (2008) is a pioneer researcher who applied the multiple streams framework to China but it focused on the detention and repatriation system. Never have these theories been applied to or evaluated in the context of sport policy in China. This thesis fills this gap by applying a series of policy making and implementation theories to the study of elite sport policy in China. In addition to the influence of a policy community in elite sport in China, it is evident that the Western-derived multiple streams framework, in particular its structural elements, is reasonably applicable to the analysis of elite sport policy in China despite the necessity of some adaptations, which to an extent contrasts with many researchers’ view that the multiple streams framework may be less easily transferrable across political systems and less applicable to centralised political systems as argued by Houlihan (2005).

The combined use of a series of policy making and implementation theories rather than focusing on one stage of the policy process is another feature of this thesis. This research encompasses a wide range of macro-level political theories, power analysis, meso-level policy theories, globalisation, policy learning and transfer theories and policy implementation theories. These seemingly independent theories are organised around the research questions of how policies are made and

implemented in relation to artistic gymnastics, swimming and cycling in China and the UK and they provide lenses through which factors internal and external to the sub-sector influence the policy process.

Finally, this thesis covers the most recent Beijing and London Olympic Games. Given the fact that the target countries of this research were the host countries of the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games, their elite sport policies are expected to experience some major changes or developments during this period, which strengthens the value of this research. From the perspective of Olympic performance, it is at these two Olympic Games that China and the UK achieved unprecedented medal success and made notable progress. It is during this period that Chinese artistic gymnasts started to dominate, Chinese swimmers strongly recovered and became the world's number two country. Even Chinese cycling has made notable progress in this period and is very close to an Olympic gold medal breakthrough. Similarly, it is at the last two Olympics that British cyclists established their dominance and British gymnasts achieved their historic medal breakthrough. The case of British Swimming deserves more attention as British swimmers experienced both historic success and setback from Beijing to London. Fortunately, this thesis is able to look inside these new phenomena and analyse policy factors behind these general and sport-specific developments, some of which have been beyond researchers' expectations. For example, De Bosscher et al. (2008) expressed concerns about the UK's ambitious target of the fourth position in the medals table in London 2012 from its tenth position in Athens 2004. However, the truth is that the UK fulfilled this target earlier in Beijing 2008 and ranked third in the medals table in London 2012. This above-expectation performance makes the UK's elite sport policy in the last two decades in general and in the last two Olympiads in particular more worthy of study.

7.5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In spite of the above-mentioned value, there are some limitations of this thesis. First, there are limitations regarding the data collected in both China and the UK. Despite the researcher's best effort, a small number of potential interviewees in the UK rejected the interview requests possibly due to an understandable sensitivity of providing information to a 'rival country' while

for China, due to the lack of annual reports and financial statements, much detailed information most notably financial information was not accessible. Second, even the data acquired from interviews and documents for China and official documents and publications for the UK can be 'biased' because they are largely made by 'system insiders' and hence inevitably subjective. Third, despite the comparative elements between China and the UK, there remains a question regarding the extent to which they can strengthen the claim of a global trend to convergence. Even in a highly homogenised Western system, there are many differences regarding the approaches to elite sport as found by De Bosscher et al. (2008). More importantly, there are many countries the elite sport system of which is neither 'capitalist' (although the concept per se has many variations) nor 'communist'. Fourth, a wide range of policy making and implementation theories and frameworks have been applied and tested in this thesis. However, due to the limited space, some other relatively promising policy frameworks most notably Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) punctuated equilibrium theory and Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier's (1993; 1994; 1999) advocacy coalition framework were not included in this thesis. Last, this thesis focuses on the policy making and implementation stages, while other stages most notably policy review and evaluation are less prominent.

Future researchers studying elite sport development might integrate elite sport systems in a wider range of national contexts and across a different set of sports. In addition, policy theories and frameworks need to be applied and tested more often in a wider range of contexts in order to refine their application outside the political systems in which they were developed. Moreover, the combined use of multiple frameworks is encouraged and in many cases, different frameworks can be mutually supportive and complementary, as evident from the integration of the multiple streams framework and the policy community framework in this thesis. Finally, future research can go beyond the policy making and implementation stages and probe elite sport policy in other stages such as policy evaluation and review.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Definitions of Public Policy

Author	Definition
Anderson (1975)	'Public policies are those policies developed by governmental bodies and officials.'
Dye (1992)	'Whatever governments choose to do or not to do.'
Parsons (1995)	'It is concerned with how issues and problems come to be defined and constructed and how they are placed on the political and policy agenda.' 'It is also the study of how, why and to what effect governments pursue particular courses of action and inaction' (Heidenheimer, Helco & Adams, 1990, p. 3).
John (1998)	'Public policy seeks to explain the operation of the political system as a whole.'
Peters (1999)	'Stated most simple, public policy is the sum of government activities, whether acting directly or through agents, as it has an influence on the life of citizens.'
Houlihan (2005)	'Policies that originate within, or are dependent upon the resources of, the state.'

Sources: Anderson (1975); Birkland (2005); Dye (1992); Heidenheimer et al. (1990); Houlihan (2005); John (1998); Parsons (1995); Peters (1999).

Appendix 2: Major Meso-level Policy Frameworks and Theories Introduced by Sabatier (2007a)

Frameworks or Theories	Representative Scholars
The Stages Heuristic	Lasswell, 1956; Jones, 1970; Anderson, 1975; Brewer and DeLeon, 1983
Institutional Rational Choice	Kiser and Ostrom, 1982; Ostrom, 1986; 1990; Thelen and Steinmo, 1992
The Multiple Streams Framework	Kingdon, 1984; Zahariadis, 1995; 2003; 2007
Social Construction and Policy Design	Simon, 1981; Bobrow and Dryzek, 1987; Schneider and Ingram, 1988; 1993
The Network Approach	Marsh and Rhode, 1992a; 1992b; Smith, 1993; Dowding, 1995; Marsh, 1998; Marsh and Smith, 2000; Scott, 2000
Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory	Baumgartner and Jones, 1993
The Advocacy Coalition Framework	Sabatier, 1986; 1988; 1998; Jenkins-Smith, 1988; Heintz and Jenkins-Smith, 1988; Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1993; 1994; 1999; Jenkins-Smith, St. Clair and Woods, 1991; Sabatier & Pelkey, 1987; Sabatier & Weible, 2007; Schlager, 1995
Policy Diffusion Framework	F. S. Berry and W. D. Berry, 1990; 1992
Approaches based on Large-N Comparative Studies	Dye, 1966; Sharkansky, 1970; Hofferbert, 1974

Source: Sabatier (2007a).

Appendix 3: Examples of Applications of the Advocacy Coalition Framework to Various Policy Areas

Author(s)	Policy area
Dolan (2003)	Economic policy
Dudley and Richardson (1999)	Steel industry
Elliot and Schlaepfer (2001); Hysing and Olsson (2008)	Forest protection
Ellison (1998)	Endangered species and water policy
Farquharson (2003); Sato (1999)	Tobacco policy and smoking control
Kubler (2001)	Drug policy
Fenger and Klok (2001); Freudenburg and Gramling (2002)	Offshore oil industry
Green (2005); Houlihan and Green (2005; 2006)	Sport policy
Larsen, Vrangbaek and Traulsen (2006)	Pharmacy policy
Litfin (2000)	Climate change
Meijerink (2005)	Coastal flooding policy
Nohrstedt (2005)	Nuclear energy
Radaelli (1999)	Tax policy
Szarka (2010)	Wind power
Zafonte and Sabatier (2004)	Air pollution

Appendix 4: National Sports Management Centres Subordinated to GAS

Olympic Type	Management Centre	Olympic Sport Association 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
	Football Management Centre	Football
	'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, Synchronized Swimming, Water Polo
	Volleyball Management Centre	Volleyball, Beach Volleyball
Winter	Winter Sport Management Centre	All Winter Olympic Sports

Sources: GAS (2013c); Li and Zhou (2012, p. 30).

Appendix 5: Key Features of Exploratory, Descriptive, Explanatory and Predictive Research

Type of research	Key features	Goals	Sports examples
Exploratory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New situation 2. Lack of prior knowledge 3. Initial exploration 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Become familiar with the basic facts, people and concerns involved. 2. Develop a well-grounded mental picture of what is happening. 3. Generate many ideas and develop tentative theories and conjectures. 4. Determine the feasibility of doing additional research. 5. Formulate questions and refine issues for more systematic enquiry. 6. Develop techniques and a sense of direction for future research. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An exploratory study of the behavioural consequences of perceived service quality of private fitness clubs in Greece (Alexandris, Dimitriadis & Kasiara, 2001); 2. An exploratory study of the symbolic struggles in terms of participation in sport-related studies in higher education (Lundvall & Meckbach, 2012)
Descriptive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A factual picture of the issue 2. A focus on the issue of what is happening, or how much of it has happened, rather than why it is happening 3. Simply reporting the results 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide an accurate profile of a group. 2. Describe a process, mechanism or relationship. 3. Give a verbal or numerical picture. 4. Find information to stimulate new explanations. 5. Present basic background information or a context. 6. Create a set of categories or classify types. 7. Clarify a sequence, set of stages or steps. 8. Document information that contradicts prior beliefs about a subject. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who wins the Olympic Games (Bernard & Busse, 2004); 2. Youth Olympic Games (Wong, 2011)
Explanatory	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explaining the why and how of the situation 2. Assessing causal relationships between variables 3. Requirement of theoretical framework so that explanation may be 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine the accuracy of a principle or theory. 2. Find out which competing explanation is better. 3. Advance knowledge about an underlying process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sports policy factors leading to international sporting success (De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, Van Bottenburg & De Knop, 2008); 2. Why do government invest in elite sport (Grix &

	deduced from the data	<p>4. Link different issues or topics under a common general statement.</p> <p>5. Build and elaborate a theory so it becomes complete.</p> <p>6. Extend a theory or principle into new areas or issues.</p> <p>7. Provide evidence to support or refute and explanation.</p>	Carmichael, 2012)
Predictive	1. Forecasts about the future phenomena	1. Predict future phenomena based on existing trends and facts.	<p>1. A forecast of China's success in the Beijing Olympic Games 2008 (Shibli & Bingham, 2008);</p> <p>2. Forecasting South Africa's performance at the 2010 Commonwealth Games (Ramchandani & Wilson, 2010)</p>

Sources: Brotherton (2008, p. 13); Gratton and Jones (2010, pp. 6-7).

Appendix 6: A Comparison between Pure and Applied Research

Pure research	Applied research
<p>1. Research is intrinsically satisfying and judgements are made by other academics.</p> <p>2. Research problems and subjects are selected with a great deal of freedom.</p> <p>3. Research is judged by the absolute norms of scientific rigour and the highest standards of scholarship are sought.</p> <p>4. The primary concern is with the internal design, logic and rigour of research.</p> <p>5. The driving goal is to contribute to basic, theoretical knowledge.</p> <p>6. Success comes when results appear in a scholarly journal and have a broad impact on others in the scientific community.</p>	<p>1. Research is part of a job and is judged by sponsors from outside the academic discipline.</p> <p>2. Research problems are 'narrowly constrained' in line with the demands of employers or sponsors.</p> <p>3. The rigour and standards of scholarship depend on the uses of the results. Research can be 'quick and dirty' or may match high scientific standards.</p> <p>4. The primary concern is with the ability to generalise from findings to areas of interest to sponsors.</p> <p>5. The driving goal is to have practical pay-offs or uses for results.</p> <p>6. Success comes when results are used by sponsors in decisionmaking.</p>

Source: Collis and Hussey (2003, adapted in Brotherton, 2008, p. 15).

Appendix 7: Interview Themes and Question Examples

Themes (Directions)	Question Example(s)
Significance and function of sport and elite sport within the government and government's political rationales or motives	Is elite sport a key concern or peripheral policy domain? To what extent is the role of elite sport valued by government: international prestige, social construction, economic catalyst or others?
Sport policy in general and elite sport policy in particular	What policies have been made; How have they been made; How have they been implemented; The relationship between elite sport policies and Olympic performance
Financial support and funding allocation	Sources of funding for elite sport; Total expenditure on elite sport; Increase or decrease and corresponding margin from Barcelona Olympiad to London Olympiad
Organisational structure of elite sport	Existence of specific ministry; Government department in charge of sport and elite sport; Relationship between ministry, central and regional government, National Olympic Committee or Association and NGBs
Participation in sport	PE curriculum; Number of sports clubs; Population's participation rate
Talent identification and development	The sport-school system and youth identification and recruitment in China; Different but mutually supplementary national squads and provincial and city squad system in China; Three-tiered policy in the UK; Educational background of elite athletes; Financial support for elite athletes
Athletic and post-career support	Lifestyle support for athletes; Athletes' annual income; Occupations among retired athletes
Training	Existence and the number of national training centres and their date of establishment, location, quality of facilities, targeting athletes

Coaching provision and development	<p>The number of qualified coaches; Whether coaches are full-time or part-time;</p> <p>Percentage of home grown and foreign coaches;</p> <p>Approaches to the development of home grown coaches;</p> <p>Gross annual income of coaches</p>
(Inter)national competition	<p>Bidding for major international sporting events;</p> <p>Frequency and availability for athletes to participate in world championship and other international sporting events - international exposure; Existence of national competition mechanism such as the National Games in China and its relationship with Olympic performance</p>
Scientific research	<p>The existence of national research centre;</p> <p>Role of universities;</p> <p>Specific subsidies and expenditure on elite sport-related scientific research</p>
Gender targeting	Whether there is gender targeting? Since when? Why?
Sport targeting	Whether there is sport targeting and specialisation? What sports? Since when? Why?
Regional division and cooperation	Whether there is a division or specialisation across different provinces in China or regions and counties in the UK? The significance of provinces and counties in China and the UK respectively.

Appendix 8: Interviewees Identified for the UK and China

UK	China
Senior officials and staff (including former) in NGBs such as BOA, UK Sport and Sport England	Senior officials and staff (including former) in COC and GAS (and its predecessor the Sports Ministry), including Personnel Department, Training Centre for Sport Officials and Coaches, External Affairs Department, Policy and Regulation Department, Sport Industry Section of Finance Department, Competition and Training Department, Scientific and Education Department, Sport Apparatus Centre and Chinese Sport Museum)
Senior officials and staff (including former) in DCMS (ideally DNH and DOE)	Professors and scholars in relevant universities and research academies such as Beijing Sport University (including Olympic Study Centre), Shanghai Sport University and Central University of Finance and Economics
Professors and scholars (sport policy area) in relevant universities such as Loughborough University, De Montfort University and Sheffield Hallam University	Senior staff and personnel (including former) associated with mainstream sports media such as Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, CCTV-5, Titan, Journal of Sport History and Culture under GAS
Senior staff and personnel (including former) in British Swimming (official governing body)	Senior staff and personnel (including former) in Chinese Swimming Association (official governing body)
Senior staff and personnel (including former) in British Gymnastics (official governing body)	Senior staff and personnel (including former) in Chinese Gymnastics Association (official governing body)
Senior staff and personnel (including former) in British Cycling (official governing body)	Senior staff and personnel (including former) in Chinese Cycling Association (official governing body)
Senior officials and staff (including former) in charge of National Lottery	Senior officials and staff (including former) in some Provincial and Municipal Bureau of Sports (such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Liaoning, Anhui) and the PLA Team
Executive member in the London Organising	Executive member in the Beijing Organising

Committee for the Olympic Games	Committee for the Olympic Games
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Appendix 9: Types of Documents Selected for This Research

Type of documents	Detailed sources
Public inquiries	Inquiries conducted and reported by International Organisations such as the IOC, Olympic Museum, FINA, FIG and UCI concerning the UK and China
	Inquiries conducted and reported by the UK Government, Olympic Delivery Authority, DFEE, DCMS (DCMS Meta-evaluation study led by Ian Henry by applying the SPLISS factors), DNH, DOE and so forth
	Inquiries conducted and reported by the Chinese Central Government and Provincial Government, GAS (and its predecessor the Sports Ministry), Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, National Bureau of Statistics of China, Provincial and Municipal Bureau of Sports and so forth
Government reports and publications	Publications, reports (annual reports and periodic or summary reports) and meeting minutes by the UK Government, Olympic Delivery Authority, DFEE, DCMS, DNH, DOE and so forth
	Publications, reports (annual reports and periodic or summary reports) and meeting minutes by the Chinese Central Government and Provincial Government, GAS (and its predecessor the Sports Ministry), Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, National Bureau of Statistics of China, Provincial and Municipal Bureau of Sports and so forth

Documents produced by organisations	Publications, reports (annual reports and periodic or summary reports) and meetings minutes by International Organisations such as the IOC, Olympic Museum, FINA, FIG and UCI concerning the UK and China
	Publications, reports (annual reports and periodic or summary reports) and meeting minutes by GB Sports Council, UK Sport, Sport England, BOA, ASFGB, British Swimming, British Gymnastics, British Cycling, Team GB, National Lottery, NAO, major sports-related universities and academies such as Loughborough University, De Montfort University and Sheffield Hallam University and Sport industry Research Centre and so forth
	Official magazines published by British Gymnastics and British Swimming and ASA between 1988 and 2013
	National Council Meeting minutes of British Cycling between 1995 and 2013
	Publications, reports (annual reports and periodic or summary reports) and meeting minutes by COC, Chinese Swimming Association, Chinese Gymnastics Association, Chinese Cycling Association, major sport-specific and sports-related universities and academies such as Beijing Sport University (including Olympic Study Centre), Shanghai Sport University and Central University of Finance and Economics and so forth
Newspapers	BBC, Sky, the Guardian, the Sun, the Times, the Telegraph, Observer and so forth
	Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, Titan and so forth
Letters	Letters and other forms of personal documents involving elite sport actors (including officials, IOC members, NOC members and members of IFs) from

	international organisations
	Letters and other forms of personal documents involving elite sport actors (including officials, scholars, coaches and athletes) from the UK
	Letters and other forms of personal documents involving elite sport actors (including officials, scholars, coaches and athletes) from the China
Television programmes and documentaries	Programmes, videos and Olympic documentaries by the IOC, Olympic Museums and IFs
	Sports programmes and documentaries of BBC, Sky and so forth
	Sports programmes and documentaries of CCTV (especially CCTV-5, the sport channel), Xinhua News Agency, provincial sports channel and so forth
Internet resources	Official websites of the IOC, SR, Olympic Museum, FINA, FIG, UCI and influential sports journals
	Official websites of the UK Government, Olympic Delivery Authority, DFEE, DCMS, DNH, DOE, GB Sports Council, UK Sport, Sport England, BOA, ASFGB, British Swimming, British Gymnastics, British Cycling, Team GB, National Lottery, NAO, major sports-related universities and academies such as Loughborough University, De Montfort University and Sheffield Hallam University and Sport industry Research Centre, influential media such as BBC, Sky, the Guardian, the Sun, the Times, Observer, and London 2012
	Official websites of the Chinese Central Government and Provincial Government, GAS (and its predecessor the Sports Ministry), Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Finance of the People's

	Republic of China, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, National Bureau of Statistics of China, COC, Provincial and Municipal Bureau of Sports, Chinese Swimming Association, Chinese Gymnastics Association, Chinese Cycling Association, major sport-specific and sports-related universities and academies such as Beijing Sport University (including Olympic Study Centre), Shanghai Sport University and Central University of Finance and Economics, influential media such as CCTV, Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, Titan, Journal of Sport History and Culture under GAS (and its predecessor the Sports Ministry) and Beijing 2008
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Appendix 10: A List of Financial and Other Forms of Material Rewards that Sun Yang Received for His Performance at the 2012 London Olympic Games

Olympic Performance	Source of Rewards	Reward Contents
Two gold medals, one silver medal and one bronze medal; One world record.	Zhejiang Provincial Government	2.6 million yuan (0.8 million yuan for each gold medal, 0.5 million yuan for each silver medal, 0.3 million yuan for each bronze medal, 0.2 million yuan for the new world record)
	Hangzhou City Government	2.4 million yuan (the amount is largely the same as that of the Provincial Government but no additional reward for the new world record)
	GAS	1 million yuan (0.5 million for each gold medal)
	Greentown Holdings Limited	A house (worth 3 million yuan)
	Foundations established by some rich men in Hong Kong and Macao	Additional monetary awards
	Total	Approximately 11 million yuan

Source: CCTV (2013b).

Appendix 11: Major International and Domestic Competitions that British Elite Swimmers Participate In

Domestic Competitions	International Competitions
GB level: British Gas Swimming Championships (BS) (Selection trials in the Olympic year)	Priority: The Olympic Games
Home nation level: British Gas ASA National Championships (including youth and age group championships); British Gas ASA National County Team Championships; National Swimming League	Most valued swimming-specific events: FINA World Aquatics Championships; LEN European Swimming Championships
Regional level: ASA Regional Championships (including youth and age group championships)	Other swimming-specific events: FINA SC Events including FINA World SC Championships; LEN European SC Championships; European Youth and Junior Championships
County level: County Championships (including age group championships)	Other comprehensive events: Commonwealth Games; YOG; World University Games; European Youth Olympic Festival etc.

Sources: BS (2014c; 2014d; 2014e; 2014f; 2014g; 2014h; 2014i; 2014j; 2014k; 2014l).

Appendix 12: The Number of Riders Invited to and Accepted by the World Class Start/Potential Programmes between 2001 and 2003

	2001	2002	2003
Stage 1	934	3,716	10,549
Invitation to Stage 2	546	396	500*
Invitation to Stage 3	133	108	125*
Accepted onto Talent Team - Talent	50	48	50*
Acceptance onto Talent Team - Tracking	49	18	20*

Note: Figures marked for 2003 were estimates.

Source: BC (2003, p. 13).

Appendix 13: A Sample of Interview Transcriptions

- Interviewee E, 22 May 2013 (Z stands for the researcher and I stands for the interviewee)

Z: First of all, congratulations on the unprecedented successes of Chinese National Swimming Team at the 2012 London Olympic Games! The performance of five gold medals and ten medals was a new high, which was even better than that at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. So what are the successful experience and contributory factors of the success?

I: Changes mainly took place in the London Olympiad between 2008 and 2012. However, the preparation prior to the London Olympic laid a solid foundation for the achievements made in London 2012 as the majority of the swimmers representing the National Team in London had competed in Beijing 2008. Yet, the change was more substantial and notable after Beijing 2008. In terms of the successful experience, you can search online as we had a comprehensive review and summarised the activities in the London Olympiad. Several factors can be identified as contributing to the successful performance in London. First, we advocate a concept of the 'Big National Team' based on the reality of China, which may be different from the context in the UK.

Z: This may be difficult in the UK due to the scale of the country ...

I: This is not only the limitations of the scale of the country.

Z: Is it because of the differences in the system?

I: There is no major change regarding the system. The 'Big National Team' is mainly an innovation of the training regime. Previously according to the traditional system, we were only responsible for the selection of talented swimmers and coaches and the formation of the National Team and the collective training of them. Within this system, the National Team was an independent training unit. In comparison, the 'Big National Team' transcends the narrow meaning of the previous National Team and extends the scope of the National Team. In other words, all the resources including

people and materials that are available to the National Team and that are willing to serve the National Team across China are included in the scope of the National Team. Previously, there was no direct relationship between provincial teams and swimmers in the National Team after these swimmers were sent to the National Team by provincial teams. The 'Big National Team' has strengthened the link and interaction between the National Team and provincial teams. You can hardly avoid mentioning the concept of 'whole country support for elite sport system' in China when talking about elite sport and the concept of the 'Big National Team' is indeed a demonstration of the 'whole country support for elite sport system'. All the resources at the provincial and city level can be better employed by the National Team ...

Z: So it is a more effective way of integrating domestic resources...

I: A good point. This is a reintegration of resources. Maybe we have not reached the level of 'integration'. Yet, we try to make the best of all possible resources. For the time being, all the possible resources are harnessed by the National Team, yet we may not have achieved the high efficiency of resources integration. This is an extension of the concept of the 'Big National Team'. The National Team is no longer independent of or isolated from provincial teams but is closely associated with provincial resources. More importantly, it shows the significant role of the directors, leaders and head coaches of the National Team Committee, namely the officials of the Aquatics Management Centre in the development of elite swimming in China. Their logic, understanding and thoughts make a huge impact on the development of swimming in China. Previously, key leaders and officials of the National Team might only be in charge of 70 to 80, no more than 100 people at the National Team level. However, now we need to consider the future of the whole swimming development in China rather than the pure interests of the National Team. Because the National Team and provincial teams are interrelated, we take the interests of provincial teams into consideration when making policies to better develop swimming in the future. This is the change of the role and function of the National Team. In fact, we have governing bodies such as the Aquatics Management Centre in particular the Swimming Department responsible for the development across China. Although the introduction of the 'Big National Team' aims to better serve the needs of the National Team, we have undertaken many additional responsibilities. In summary, the

introduction of the concept of the 'Big National Team' is the most important measure taken at the macro level.

Z: So this means that there are broader sources of talent and athlete selection from provincial teams for the National Team?

I: Well, we have special measures targeting talent identification and development at the second-line (provincial team) level. Previously, collective trainings of reserve swimmers were organised by provincial teams. But now this is organised by the Central State.

Z: This is a very effective way to centralise and promote the development of future swimming talent and swimmers of provincial teams.

I: Yes. For example, we organise the nationwide collective training for reserve swimmers three to four times per year and coaches of the National Team go down to provide guidance to these swimmers.

Z: So it is coaches going down rather than congregating swimmers of different provincial teams in the National Team?

I: Not in Beijing, because there is not sufficient space here (in Beijing). Trainings are organised by different provinces. The advantages are that the facilities and other resources of provincial teams can be employed and the regular training of the National Team in Beijing is not distracted. Moreover, we purposely select some underdeveloped (relatively underdeveloped) areas as the venue of the collective training. As the proverb goes, 'a little spark can light great fires'. All the young swimmers are good across different places and what is different is their access to high quality coaching, training and facilities. If they are assembled together, then they can have better coaching and training opportunities, which is an impetus to the development of swimmers from relatively underdeveloped areas. Furthermore, young coaches from different provinces gather and hence it is a good opportunity for mutual learning. In the past, provincial teams were largely independent of each other. Swimmers and coaches could only train and develop within their own provinces.

They could seldom communicate with swimmers and coaches from other provinces. For example, traditionally strong (at swimming) provinces such as Zhejiang, Shanghai and Guangdong ...

Z: Most of the strong provinces at swimming are from the East Coastal area?

I: Yes, they are. Coaches from relatively underdeveloped provinces can learn experience from coaches from strong provinces and in so doing, the overall level of swimming coaches in China can be improved. Moreover, each province has its own strengths and regional characteristics in training. For example, provincial teams from Southern China are good at skills and details while those from Northern China do better in physical training. (The collective training for reserve swimmers) offers a valuable opportunity to exchange expertise. Hence, provincial boundary is purposely broken in the collective training and five to six provincial teams (usually from both Northern and Southern China) form a big team. In general, there are three to four big teams in the collective training which cover in total approximately 20 provincial teams. Each big team follows a unified schedule and training regime. So as for your question regarding the factors leading to the National (Swimming) Team's success in London, the first is the concept of the 'Big National Team' and the second is the emphasis placed on the cultivation of reserve swimmers (through the collective training for reserve swimmers organised at the national level). They are the key measures. Let me give an example. The (National Aquatics Management Centre-organised) nationwide collective training for reserve swimmers was a new approach. However, this is not a major change as it was only a development of previous mutually independent cultivation of reserve swimmers in different provinces. Hence, it is more appropriate to identify these approaches as 'system innovation', which means that they are still within the ('whole country support for elite sport system' and the system is not changed. But we have refined the system as the central state takes up more responsibility and its resources are employed to better integrate resources and manage the development of swimming across provinces. Another advantage is that the coaches of the National Team, including the Head Coach and many gold medal coaches are able to share experience with young coaches from provincial teams in the collective training for reserve swimmers. So this prompts another key factor of success - the cultivation of quality coaches.

Z: This makes sense. During my interview with a senior gymnastics official previously working in the FIG, he said that all the strong sports in China are underpinned by gold medal coaches.

I: Yes, I agree. Yet we (swimming) did not so well as these fortress sports such as artistic gymnastics. (However, the fierceness of international competition and the level of difficulty in winning gold medals vary according to different sports). Honestly speaking, as a physical-based sport (discipline), swimming is much more difficult than artistic gymnastics as well as badminton and table tennis. Sports such as artistic gymnastics, badminton and table tennis enjoy 'system advantages'. Do you understand? For example, diving is a real 'international sport' which the USA and the UK value and in which these countries are competitive. However, although I do not mean to undervalue some sports, badminton and table tennis belong to 'continental sports' in which the competition at international level is limited.

Z: There are not many international opponents in these sports.

I: Yes, you are right. For badminton, you can easily enter top eight. In addition to China, Indonesia and South Korea are strong in badminton, almost all of which come from Asia. Malaysia and Denmark are also competitive and Denmark may be the only non-Asia superpower in Badminton. It is amateur-led in most countries in the world. As for diving and artistic gymnastics, the system advantage is that we (China) develop athletes in a full-time manner since they are five or six years old (even younger in artistic gymnastics), which is rare in most Western countries. They depend on the Training Bureau for compulsory education and inevitably their education time and quality is compromised. However, in terms of athletics and swimming which is highly developed in most countries in the world and even more professional in other countries, we do not have system advantages although similar to other Olympic sports in China, they are heavily invested by the government and conducted on a full-time basis. Hence, the competition is very intense in these foundation and physical-based sports.

Z: Yes. China has more opponents from more continents in these sports. For example, the Tunisian Oussama Mellouli is a gold Olympian (while in badminton and

table tennis, there are no Olympic champions or even medallists outside Asia and Europe).

I: So the role of coaches is very important. The coaching set-up of the National Team is relatively fixed and stable. Provincial teams send leading coaches to the National Team. If a coach is really good, he or she can produce good swimmers in provincial teams. Many of the coaches of the provincial teams also serve in the National Team. These coaches belong to provincial teams but also take on roles in the National Team. This is similar to 'Ma Junren model' in which Ma Junren forged a world leading medium and long-distance running team in the Liaoning Provincial Athletics Team and then due to the success at the provincial team level he was transferred to the National Team. This is a characteristic of physical-based sports including athletics and swimming.

Z: So do coaches such as Zhu Zhigen and Zhang Yadong belong to the National Team or Zhejiang Provincial Team?

I: The National Team. All these Olympic gold medal coaches, including Ye Shiwen's coach Xu Guoyi (who is very young, only one year older than me) and Jiao Liuyang's coach Liu Haitao were selected in the collective training for reserve swimmers.

Z: So they were selected from provincial teams.

I: Yes, right through the platform of the collective training for reserve swimmers. The fourth key factor is the (strategy of) 'Invite In and Go Out'. The reason that I said that there were great changes in the London Olympiad is that overseas training for the National Swimming Team reached a groundbreaking and unprecedented level in this Olympic cycle after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Z: Can you elaborate how groundbreaking and unprecedented it was?

I: The unprecedented is reflected in the number of swimmers, the frequency and the scale of the team of overseas training. The main venue of overseas training is Australia, while we used to send some swimmers to the USA. However, honestly

speaking, the training in the USA was not very satisfactory. In comparison, training in Australia has been fruitful and quality. We mainly cooperate with Denis Cotterell as Chinese swimmers mainly follow him for training. Key swimmers include Sun Yang. The training outcome has been very productive and beneficial.

Z: Is Denis the coach of the Olympic gold medallist Grant Hackett?

I: Yes, he is. So the quality of training with him is guaranteed and Chinese swimmers have benefited a lot. Of course, he is not a 'god' or 'myth' and not all of the swimmers made progress in the training in Australia.

Z: So swimmers' endogenous factors are more important.

I: Well, swimmers' own ability and potential are important. However, equally important is whether the training methods of the foreign coaches are suitable for the swimmers. It is noteworthy that Denis Cotterell is mainly an expert in medium and long-distance events and hence swimmers who belong to these events tend to make more notable progress. However, another advantage which goes beyond sporting performance is the 'education' that Chinese swimmers and coaches receive in Australia. The training environment of foreign swimmers are much worse than Chinese elite swimmers who are carefully and holistically supported and looked after. Chinese elite swimmers are largely state-funded and the expenses of overseas straining are covered by the National Team while foreign swimmers are largely self-funded and they are 'distracted' by education. So most Chinese swimmers and coaches are touch by the professional attitude of foreign counterparts. Second, overseas training in Australia can be a 'refreshing' opportunity for the swimmers and coaches as they can enjoy fresh air and sunshine and the relatively more Arcadian atmosphere there. Third, no matter whether swimmers are able to make progress, overseas training provides a valuable learning opportunity for Chinese swimming coaches. Training is a combination of science and 'understanding, comprehension and learning'. Experience is very important for training. I personally think training is largely experience-dominated, accompanied by scientific support. Elite sport is very difficult in a sense that it is challenging the limit of human beings themselves. So you can hardly define elite sport simply by science. For example, every stage is strictly

managed and all the indicators are well. However, a trivial matter such as the breaking up with the girlfriend can largely influence an athlete's performance in the competitions. A disappointing result due to the bad mood can hardly reflect the possibly good and scientific training in the lead-up to the competitions. 'Good' must be reflected by performance and result however there are too many factors including many uncontrollable factors influencing the performance and the result. So elite sport is not simply science. But we need to admit that there is a high degree of regularity in elite sport. For Chinese swimming coaches, they can access world-leading experience and methods and the mastery of the regularities of swimming of leading foreign coaches. A key factor contributing to the overall better quality of foreign coaches is their generally more scientific and accurate mastery of training regularities. For Denis, he has the prototype of Hackett, which acts as a model for training and all indicators can be quantified and detailed against Hackett's level.

Z: It is a short-cut than probing the regularities on our own.

I: Yes, it is a faster way to reach the world-leading level. Many of Chinese swimming coaches are world-class, but there is still some distance to go to be 'masters'. Of course, many factors can be discussed in terms of this 'distance', ranging from their understanding and comprehension level, to their experience and educational background. A shortcoming of Chinese elite swimming coaches is that the vast majority of them were previously athletes. They are disadvantaged in the above-mentioned areas due to a generally poor educational background. This is akin to the education system in China which has produced a lot of world-leading talent in many areas but fails to produce any Nobel winners. I think the lack of creativity is closely associated with the cultural background in China.

Z: So the National Team mainly goes to Australia for overseas training?

I: Yes. But we have also been to the USA and Germany. We just went to Germany before the Spring Festival this year. We have also been to the UK. But to be honest, the outcome was not very satisfactory. The coach of Beijing Olympic champion Liu Zige went to three bases in the UK including the Intensive Training Centre in Bath and several other universities where Team GB trains. British side highly hoped that

Liu Zige could go to the UK for training. However, Liu Zige only stayed in the UK for only one month between the end of 2009 and the beginning of 2010. Liu Zige's coach said that the level of British swimming coaches was very poor after Liu Zige returned from the UK. Team GB wanted Liu Zige to stay. However, it was more like British swimmers learning from Liu Zige, which meant limited progress for Liu Zige. The training quality of British Swimming was really poor.

Z: Despite the medal success most notably Rebecca Adlington's two-gold performance in Beijing 2008, British swimmers' non-gold performance in London 2012 was a big disappointment. UK Sport adopts a 'No Compromise' funding policy and British Swimming's poor performance against substantial financial support resulted in a large-scale review and enquiry.

I: Yes, the UK government invested enormously in swimming. I did not actually witness but Liu Zige's coach experienced and said that the BS' physiological monitoring system was well-equipped, advanced and world-leading, way out the league of the Chinese Team. But the government should be very furious about their performance. British swimmers are very competitive in open water swimming. However, open water swimming tends to be full of accidents the result of which is very unpredictable, which is different from the indoor swimming in which absolute ability is more decisive.

Z: Sports such as artistic gymnastics, table tennis and badminton are fortress sports in China. So what is the position of swimming in China?

I: In fact, swimming used to be identified as a lagging sport. Athletics and swimming are physical-based foundation sports and China is lagging in these big sports. They were not even potential advantages.

Z: When was this identification?

I: You could refer to Professor Tian Maijiu's theory regarding the clusters of Olympic sports. I think it is very illuminating. The planning of elite sport in general and Olympic sports in particular in China has been largely directed by his theory. Sports

are categorised into different clusters according to their nature and similar sports are categorised into the same cluster. For example, tennis belongs to the net competition category. Hence, it shares many similarities with table tennis and badminton. An implication of this categorisation is that similar sports can learn experience from each other. For example, artistic gymnastics and diving share many similarities regarding training methods. Similarly, rhythmic gymnastics can learn from the relatively stronger discipline of synchronised swimming. Similarly, China's breakthrough in tennis is not surprising due to our strengths in other net competition sports such as table tennis, badminton and volleyball. There are many researchers inside GAS studying into the regularities and nature of sports. Accordingly, (Olympic) sports in China are categorised into three groups: advantages, potential advantages and lagging sports. In general, sports in which China has won Olympic medals can be identified as potential advantages. However, our internal consensus is that swimming is still a lagging discipline in China. At least, we are not a superpower as there is a large difference between the number of gold medals and medals between the USA and us. So we are still discussing the criteria of a swimming superpower. Some people may say that China is already the second most successful swimming nation on the Olympic stage and is the one of the 'big three' and hence China should be a strong nation. But due to the lack of official criteria provided by GAS, we still think we are lagging. But apparently, we are better than some other lagging sports including football.

Z: China is also better at swimming than athletics.

I: We way outperform athletics. Olympic gold medals in athletics have been sporadic. Physical requirement in athletics is more demanding than that in swimming and the level of international competition is higher in athletics.

Z: It seems that Chinese female swimmers generally outperform their male compatriots. Is it a natural process or the result of deliberate targeting and specialisation?

I: Indeed female swimmers are more successful in the world but we have never given up male events. Otherwise, the achievements made by Zhang Lin and Sun

Yang would have been impossible. However, we have to recognise the gap in terms of physical conditions between different races although its influence is not insurmountable.

Z: Exactly. The Yugoslavians are good at most team-based ball sports including football, basketball, volleyball, water polo and handball. Their physical advantages are really hard to compare for Asians.

I: Popularisation and mass base is really important. Yet, for globally popular sports, physical conditions make a big difference. It is easier for us Chinese to win gold medals in race walk. However, it is much more difficult to make breakthrough in (men's) sprint events. That is why Liu Xiang's success in men's 110m hurdles attracted such enormous social attention and has been hailed to such a high degree. However, if there were no hurdles, then it would be difficult for Chinese men to be that successful because the significance of skills would downgrade. Indeed, we are less disadvantageous in swimming than that in athletics. But Chinese male swimmers' recent successes demonstrated that Asian males could also succeed in physical-based sports. For example, it is not an exaggeration to say that Sun Yang is the greatest long distance swimmer in the world in the last 50 years.

Z: So Sun Yang is a leading figure of Chinese sport.

I: Well, his personality stops him from taking on the role of a sports leader. However, his sporting success is indescribable. His success in medium and long distance freestyle has exceeded Grant Hackett.

Z: Especially Sun Yang broke Grant Hackett's world record in the post-shark skin era.

I: That was really marvellous.

Z: I was so excited and inspired when I watched this in the UK.

I: This is why the country including GAS raise Sun Yang to such high social status because of the difficulty and value of the success in swimming in comparison to

fortress sports such as table tennis and badminton. Elite sport success has much symbolic meaning to the country and people.

Z: A proverb inside elite sport in China is that money is not a problem as long as you have a real chance of winning an Olympic gold medal. Is it correct?

I: Well, it is a little exaggerated. Financial resources are not infinite.

Z: Then could you give me some information regarding financial support for the National Swimming Team?

I: The central state invests 13 million yuan (around 1.3 million GB pounds) in the National Swimming Team each year.

Z: From GAS?

I: Yes. What makes us different from most foreign countries is that we enjoy administrative appointments. For example, for swimming, there are 122 people within the establishments. Hence, the annual figure equals 122 multiply 365 days times daily support and guarantee expenses.

Z: Are these funds only distributed to the National Team?

I: Yes, the National Team only.

Z: Are provincial teams funded by their corresponding provincial governments?

I: Yes, they are. But similarly, they enjoy administrative appointments at provincial level. The so-called pyramid of elite sport is difficult to achieve in elite swimming because we only have 1200 to 1300 registered full-time swimmers all over China.

Z: To be honest, this is not a big number.

I: No, it is very small. There are several hundred thousands in the USA. I mean top-level swimmers. In the USA, they refer to university swimmers. For China, top-level refers to full-time swimming teams, including those young children who are mostly 12 to 13 years old who entered full-time swimming teams. In regular years, we have even fewer full-time swimmers (around 1000).

Z: This is really small.

I: Very small. We do not have exact figure regarding the number of registered swimmers in the USA. However, I asked this question to some US insiders and they told me that there are several hundred thousands swimmers in the university clubs. If amateur swimmers are counted (those who regularly train in club), then the figure may exceed several millions. By contrast, we have only several tens of thousands in China, only 1% of the number in the USA. Yet, you can say that we are more efficient in producing Olympic gold medals. So elite sport system in China is a well-refined selection and elimination system. It is known as the three-level training network. It is a talent selection and filtration system. You cannot promote to the upper level unless you are not good enough.

Z: So are there cases where swimmers of the National Team are returned to provincial teams?

I: Yes, of course. But if you cannot move upward to the second-level, then you are eliminated. This was particular true in the past (before the 1990s).

Z: In addition to state funds, are there sources of commercial investment in the National Swimming Team?

I: Yes, we have many sponsorship deals. The figure varies but we have received much sponsorship during these two years.

Z: What about the proportion of commercial and sponsorship money?

I: Well, although we have much sponsorship, we do not spend much of the sponsorship money because there is sufficient financial support from the government. So it is hard to calculate the proportion. But we do spend much money on overseas training. The figure is around 10 million yuan per year. Sponsorship money accounts for about 50%.

Z: Can you list some sponsors?

I: Midea. We have more sponsors in the Olympic year. For example, Audi and Coca Cola are also our sponsors, but the sponsorship they provide tends to be limited.

Z: Are the sponsorship money given to individual athletes?

I: No. There are strict regulations regarding the sponsorship. Money direct goes to the account of the Financial Department of GAS after the sponsorship deals are signed. Also, the expense of the money is also strictly controlled and regulated. Sponsorship money can only be used for training. They cannot be used for bonus, financial rewards, pensions or welfare functions. None of these. So this is very strict. In fact, we do not need that much extra sponsorship in addition to current sponsors, because we are not able to dispose this money and government funds are sufficient. Much of the sponsorship money has not been used. They are still stored in the account and according to the financial policy of China, there is a big amount of tax paid regarding the sponsorship money. For the National Aquatics Management Centre (but also including disciplines of diving, water polo and synchronised swimming), I remembered the annual tax figure was more than 10 million yuan in the last two years.

Z: That is huge.

I: Yes. We have more than hundred million yuan of sponsorship money in the account.

Z: How about the endorsement of individual athletes?

I: Sun Yang has several endorsements.

Z: So popularity is needed.

I: Yes. But GAS has also issued detailed regulations regarding the endorsements. In the cases of endorsements of individual athletes, the athlete can only receive half of the money. The rest is given to the coaches, provincial and city affiliations and GAS according to certain proportions. But GAS only receives 10%.

Z: So the popularity, and the selling point of the athletes are important for attracting endorsements.

I: Yes, this is reflected in the popularity of Liu Xiang, Yao Ming and Li Na. Sun Yang is basically a very good swimmer. But he has been distracted by his personal life and hence his endorsements have been influenced. But still he is endorsed by Kia, Ping'an Insurance and some other sponsors. The major three sponsors provide 10 million yuan each and according to the regulation, Sun Yang in total receives 1.5 million yuan from these three major sponsors. The remaining 50% goes to his coaches, provincial and city teams and GAS.

Z: You introduced the concept of the 'Big National Team' in relation to the development of athletes. However, does elite swimming in China still follow the traditional three-level network in which (spare-time) sports schools and provincial teams are the main sources of talented coaches and swimmers?

I: Yes, we do.

Z: So when do most children start swimming training in spare time sports schools?

I: Children start their training in spare time sports schools at around seven (after six years old).

Z: So are they mainly based in cities?

I: Training in spare time sports schools also includes district-level (for example, in Beijing). Yet, grass-roots swimming training may be carried out in some counties if they have the resources. However, swimming mainly involves children in the urban areas because there are more swimming pools and they are generally more economically affluent. There is a certain degree of investment and cost in being engaged with a certain sport including swimming. Comparatively speaking, the investment in swimming is not much. It only costs several hundred yuan per month. However, it requires 'human investment' as in many cases, one of the parents need to spend time sending and picking up the child for training. In brief, it is generally a middle-class sport. Financial cost is not dramatic in comparison to many other sports such as tennis. However, it involves 'human costs' and 'time costs'. The second level, or as we call, the second-line teams, usually recruits athletes at 12 or 13 years old for boys and 11 or 12 years for girls. They are the reserve teams of provincial teams. The first level is spare-time sports schools. The second level is sports schools. The third level refers to full-time sports teams including provincial teams and the National Team. In fact, the National Team is parallel to provincial teams in the three-level training network. These boys and girls are usually assessed and observed in the reserve teams for only one year and most boys and girls enter provincial teams and hence become full-time swimmers at 14. If a child still fails to show talent or potential at 14, then he or she is largely ruled out the chance of being a full-time swimmer. In fact, three-level training network is a well-refined selection system with very high efficiency. As a result of the limited resources such as the coaches and facilities provided by the state, we can only include the best ones and concentrate our resources on the elite group. However it is undeniable that this system is ruthless and it often lacks fairness especially before the 1990s. People who desired swimming training maybe denied the access to swimming pools in the spare time sports schools if they are not competitive as spare time sports schools used to be funded by the government. Not everyone could enter spare time sports schools. Swimmers were selected to enter the spare time sports schools and successful candidates could enjoy welfare and the bread provided by the government.

Z: This ensured the consistency between spare-time sports schools and full-time sports teams.

I: Now looking back, I thought the limited access to sports facilities in the spare time sports schools was the result of the limited resources back then in China. There was a very limited number of swimming pools back then. In comparison, now spare time sport schools are marketised and hence open to public now. You can train however long you want in an amateur way. But if you want to be a full-time swimmer, you need to be good enough as the second-line and full-time teams still follow the selection and elimination system derived from the planned economy.

Z: I think it is a good combination which shows great flexibility. The marketised spare time sports schools satisfy the increased demand of mass participation while the traditional ruthless selection and elimination system on the top two levels ensures the efficiency and productivity of competitive swimmers representing China on the international stage. It is common that there are traditional or more successful events inside each sport or discipline in China. Are the establishment and developments of these more successful events the result of natural process or deliberate strategies and targeting?

I: This is what we have been discussing and thinking about. We hope the advantages in some events to be sustainable and lasting. However, it is difficult in China. As I told you, we have only 1000 swimmers in China. Among them, only half are available at the moment as the other 50% are still children who are 12 or 13 years old. In other words, children swimmers who are below 15 years old. Among the 400 to 500 swimmers who are available for Chinese swimming, they cover the range of more than 30 Olympic events. Hence, on average, there are only 10 swimmers for each event. How can it be possible to develop group advantage and consolidate the competitive advantage in an event? The degree of internal competition is low. That is what bothers us.

Z: A good example is women's breaststroke in which Luo Xuejuan and Qi Hui used to top in the world and win Olympic gold medals in the early 2000s. However, it seems to be the weakest area for Chinese female swimming currently.

I: Yes, this is a good example. Certain swimmers' dominance in some events may lead to other swimmers' deliberate escaping and changing to other events driven by

the higher possibility of good performance. Hence, an interesting phenomenon in Chinese swimming is that the stronger Chinese swimmers are in certain events, the less intense the domestic competition in these events is and the fewer competitive reserve swimmers we have in these events. This again illustrates the difficulty of developing and cementing competitive advantage in one event. Indeed, we lack tradition in this respect. But there are some positive signs regarding the sustainable and group advantages most notably the group progress in male medium and long distance events.

Z: So group advantage is indispensable.

I: Yes but in addition, we need to make full use of the policy leverage.

Z: So does it imply that we do not have special policies aiming to develop and consolidate sustainable advantage so far?

I: Not yet. I think the most important area is the competition structure. If I were responsible for competitions, I would take some special measures. In fact, I used to be in charge of competitions and made some progress in this area. However, it was not enough for the sustainability and group advantage.

Z: When it comes to gender balance, the general attitude is to try to be equal but female swimmers' actual performance has been traditionally better. Is it correct?

I: Yes.

Z: Does it mean that female swimmers receive more resources?

I: Well, it is not based on gender. Instead, what matters is the chance of good performance in international competitions. A general rule is that good performance usually results in more investment. This by no means implies that we deliberately target female swimmers or give them preferential treatments. In fact, we tend to give preferential treatment to male swimmers. For example, for welfare opportunities and overseas training, the threshold for male swimmers is top 8 in major international

competitions while for female swimmers, they need to be medallists. We offer money and pension to male swimmers during overseas training as long as they are top 8 in the world.

Z: In terms of coaching, you mentioned a good point of mutual leaning and expertise exchange between coaches from different provinces. When it comes to foreign coaches, it seems that apart from the National Team, many provincial swimming teams such as Shanghai has recruited foreign coaches. Are they hired on a contractual basis?

I: Yes, contractual.

Z: Is there any performance target specified and required in the contracts?

I: I do not have much information regarding the hiring of foreign coaches at provincial team level.

Z: How about Denis Cotterell? Is there any performance and result requirement in the contract?

I: No. But we provide financial rewards for gold medal performances. This is the same as the rewards for domestic coaches.

Z: Are there much mutual learning and communication between foreign coaches such as Denis and Chinese swimming coaches?

I: Yes, a lot during the overseas training.

Z: How often does the National Team go to Australia?

I: Twice a year for each group. Important teams all go to Australia annually.

Z: How long each time?

I: Four to six weeks each time.

Z: Do swimmers of the National Team spend most of their training time in the base in GAS in Beijing?

I: Yes.

Z: How long do they stay in the base in GAS each year?

I: You mean the number of days? We do not have free days. Training occupies almost 340 days a year, including weekends. The rest of a year is spent on various domestic and international competitions.

Z: Do they even spend the Spring Festival in the base in Beijing?

I: Yes.

Z: I read some news regarding Ye Shiwen's successful experience regarding altitude training. Is it regularly organised by the National Team?

I: Yes, mainly based on the needs of different coaches. The venues are Kunming in Yunnan Province and the Duoba Base in Qinghai Province.

Z: It seems that the National Race Walk Team also train in Duoba?

I: Yes, they do.

Z: Is altitude training a regular event for the National Team?

I: It depends on the needs and experience of different coaches. For some coaches, altitude training is a habit. It is mainly organised in the preparation period?

Z: When is the preparation period?

I: Mainly the end of a competition season.

Z: So it is also a recovery period?

I: Yes, you are right. Altitude training helps improve the aerobic capacity.

Z: For cycling, mainly those athletes of medium and long distance events need altitude training. I wonder if the altitude training for the National Swimming Team is also selective?

I: No. Swimmers of all events go to altitude bases for training.

Z: Basically, how long does the altitude training last each time?

I: Generally four to five weeks each time.

Z: And after that, members return to the Base in GAS.

I: Yes.

Z: Do star swimmers such as Sun Yang and Ye Shiwen spend most time in the Base in Beijing?

I: Yes, they spend most time in GAS base. This year is special because it is the National Games year and they need to represent their provincial teams. Hence, they may spend some time in the provincial teams.

Z: So they go back to provincial teams in preparation for the National Games?

I: Yes. Because the coaches of the National Team are also responsible for other non-National Squad members inside their provincial teams. They go back to provincial teams to take care of these young swimmers. The National Team cannot include that many people including some accompany training stuff.

Z: So this is different from artistic gymnastics where the members of the National Team stay in the National Team to prepare for the National Games.

I: These fortress sports are different from swimming. For sports such as gymnastics, coaches in the National Team are the best. Gymnastics are more willing to train in the National Team. This is also increasingly evident in swimming as swimmers are increasingly willing to train in the National Team, but we have limited capacity. A major difference is that artistic gymnastics is a judge sport and the impression of a gymnast of the National Team can be very different from a provincial team gymnast. For swimming, the criteria are more objective and there have been many dark horses from provincial teams in domestic competitions. Training conditions in many provincial teams are very good.

Z: Next, please allow me to refer to a relatively sensitive topic. China won four gold medals in the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games and one gold medal in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. However, Chinese swimming hit the rock bottom in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games in which no medals were won. Was the poor performance related to doping?

I: I think doping was the main culprit. You may know the notorious doping scandal in the 1998 Perth World Championships. I think it was the result of some historic reasons and I think it is not fair to simply blame that generation of swimmers and coaches. But the negative consequences were objective and undeniable. A golden generation of Chinese swimmers who had great physical conditions and potential were ruined by doping issues. Hence, we must learn lessons and avoid making the same mistake. That is why Chinese swimming authorities took heavyweight measures after 2000 and zero tolerance policy was adopted. I think anti-doping may be the most important issue for us and it is an additional key contributory factor to our success in London last year. The serious damage of doping on Chinese swimming was traumatic. In fact, the overall trend of Chinese swimming since Barcelona 1992 was upwards. A series of talented female swimmers were ruined by doping and the most serious consequence is the blank of a generation of swimmers. Chinese swimming had to start from scratch at top level. These swimmers would also be very competitive on international stage if they did not use drugs, although the

gold medal performances in the Olympic Games and the World Championships may not have been easily achieved. If they had chosen to improve in a gradual manner, they might achieve a series of successes in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. It took much time to compensate the loss and remedy the damage derived from doping for us after 2000 and our success should have come earlier. Doping is always a 'sword hanging over our heads'. It is a 'poisonous tumour'. There must be someone trying to find this sort of unethical short cut to success and it is ubiquitous such as Lance Armstrong's doping scandal in cycling. That is also another rationale for us to adopt a centralised approach at the National Team level and congregate members of the National Team in Beijing for the vast majority of a year. We are making the best of the whole country system by inspecting swimmers.

Z: So what are the anti-doping requirements or thresholds for a swimmer to represent China in international competitions? What are the testing procedures for these swimmers?

I: The FINA organises doping tests through WADA and there are In addition, we National Swimming Team have some innovative approaches in relation to anti-doping. We organise blood tests for all the swimmers of the National Team on weekly basis.

Z: Do swimmers need to provide the biology passport?

I: That is mainly required by the WADA. But we have strict internal inspection and surveillance system. We have a system checking all indicators of regular members of the National Team. This will form a tracking and long-term database. Hence, we are very confident in facing the groundless criticisms, accusations and suspicions of some foreign media and coaches on Ye Shiwen's performance in London. We are very confident in the innocence of Chinese swimmers on the international stage. I think anti-doping is the most important area. We are the first to adopt weekly blood tests within GAS and invest heavily in anti-doping.

Z: Can you tell me some information regarding the punishments on those who commit doping offence?

I: We introduced an internal policy of lifetime ban on whoever commits doping offence in 2008. We reported the policy to GAS and GAS adopted our approach, launching the policy that members of the National Teams will receive lifetime ban if they are found guilty of doping offence. However, this policy violated some principles of WADA.

Z: It seems that the WADA rule is that a two-year ban is imposed on the first-time doping offenders.

I: Yes. Hence, as required by WADA, the lifetime ban was aborted. The most famous case was the previous ban imposed on Ouyang Kunpeng. However, as a member of WADA, we need to obey their policies and principles and hence Ouyang Kunpeng's ban was reduced later. But WADA did appreciate and understand our determination in cracking down on doping offences.

Z: How is China's relationship with FINA?

I: We have maintained a good relationship with FINA, since we have hosted a series of FINA swimming events including the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2011 Shanghai World Championships, FINA SC World Championships and other SC events and other disciplines. Next year, YOG will be held in China. In summary, China has staged all kinds of FINA events. The relationship between the CSA and FINA is very close. Furthermore, we have executive members, technical representatives and international judges in the FINA. However, in comparison, our influence inside the FINA especially the discursive power is weak. I personally think FINA is largely influenced and maybe to some extent, manipulated by the USA.

Z: In terms of scientific support, what kinds of scientific support are available to the National Swimming Team?

I: We have some cooperation with universities in the form of research topics. To be honest, the research area is not good enough. Science and research is more rigorous and more advanced in the UK and there is a stronger tradition there. Most

Chinese are not rigorous enough in terms of scientific research. We still need to improve a lot in research and innovation.

Z: Research has done much better in the UK as far as I know.

I: Chinese government has invested heavily in science and research but the outcome is limited. However, we are better at scientific support and guarantee.

Z: So this refers to the holistic support right before major international competitions such as the Olympic Games?

I: Not only right before the competitions. We enjoy holistic daily scientific support. This is the area in which we have made notable progress and even breakthrough. Previously, the whole National Team had three to four masseuses. But now, key swimmers all enjoy their own masseuse.

Z: In addition to masseuses, are there any psychiatrists and nutritionists inside the National Team providing day-to-day support?

I: We do not have regular psychiatrists while there are professional nutritionists serving the National Team.

Z: As far as I am concerned, psychology is very important in major competitions. It determines whether the substantial input can produce satisfactory outcomes.

I: Yes. We may not be so systematic or detailed as the UK. However, the traditional view in China is that coaches have a significant impact on athletes' psychological state. Because of the athlete development approach in China, there is sort of parental relationship between athletes and coaches in many cases. They usually have a very long relationship and most athletes start to spend much time with their coaches since they are very children. In other words, swimmers may spend more time with their coaches than with their parents. In some cases, whether a swimmer can win a gold medal is influenced by the personality and charisma of his or her coach. If a coach is easily mentally unstable, then his or her athletes can easily get

nervous and hence their performance is discounted. The athlete-coach relationship in China is different from most foreign countries. Of course, we need professional psychological support as there have been many unsuccessful cases of psychological failure in physical-based sports including swimming. But we think the coaches may be more influential. Hence, we may need to provide psychological support to coaches so that they can positively influence their athletes.

Z: Another key characteristic of elite sport in China is the sports university network which comprises eight major sport universities. How do you comment on their function in the success of Chinese swimming?

I: They have made a notable contribution to the success of elite sport in China in general and swimming in particular. Sports universities in China, in particular Beijing Sport University, are world leading. Beijing Sport University is known as the “Whampoa Military Academy of Chinese Sport”. The vast majority of officials working in GAS and Management Centres graduated from Beijing Sport University. 90% of the leaders and officials inside the Aquatics Management Centre including me were from Beijing Sport University. The trainings and advanced courses for these officials are also undertaken by Beijing Sport University. In fact, Beijing Sport University is the founder of Chinese sport, the role of which is beyond compare. When it comes to their influence, their role is not direct as they do not directly cultivate athletes or provide direct support. More importantly, its atmosphere and culture and the people they have cultivated who are working in the front line of elite sport in China have made a great impact on sport in China. Taking swimming as an example, the team leader and the head coach of the National Team, the director of the National Team Committee and the head of the Aquatics Management Centre are all graduates of Beijing Sport University. Many of the Olympic gold medal coaches and the current head coach of the National Team also graduated from Beijing Sport University. Moreover, Chinese Elite Sport National Teams including National Swimming Team have maintained cooperation with the university in relation to scientific support. The head of the Science Team of the National Swimming Team is from Beijing Sport University, too. As for athletes, many of the current and retired athletes rely on Beijing Sport University for education.

Z: Competition opportunities are very important for the success in many sports including swimming. How is the competition structure developed and refined within the Aquatics Management Centre and the CSA?

I: National Swimming Champions Competitions and the National Swimming Championships, which are held in the first half and the second half of a year respectively, are the most important swimming-specific events nationwide. They are very important for swimmers as they need reach certain standards in these competitions.

Z: Do they also act as the platforms for the selection and recruitment of young talent?

I: Yes, the provision of fresh blood and also they are related to the rewards and the promotion of coaches.

Z: Do key swimmers who are already internationally successful compete in these events?

I: Of course they do. We have major international competitions each year and their performance at these two national events determines who can represent China in these international events. Hence, they need to try their best in these domestic competitions.

Z: So National Swimming Champions Competitions and the National Swimming Championships also play the role as the selection trials for major international competitions.

I: Yes, for example they function as the selection trials for the Olympic Games, World Championships and the Asian Games.

Z: These events also provide swimmers and coaches with opportunities to assess their training outcomes.

I: Yes, indeed.

Z: What is the role and position of the National Games?

I: The National Games is the most important competition to swimmers of provincial teams. The National Games is the paramount pursuit for provincial teams.

Z: Does the National Team identify and recruit young talent from the National Games?

I: Of course, it does. Provincial governments invest enormous resources in the National Games. Hence, there must be some outcomes such as budding stars and talented coaches. There are very favourable financial rewarding schemes provided by provincial governments. For athletes at the provincial team level, the National Games means the Olympic Games.

Z: Do coaches working inside the National Team also belong to their corresponding provincial swimming teams?

I: Yes, they all do.

Z: So where do they work in the National Games?

I: They return to their corresponding provincial teams in preparation for the National Games.

Z: It seems that Zhejiang Province has made notable progress in swimming and plays a very important role in the development and rise of Chinese swimming. What are the possible reasons leading to the swimming boom in Zhejiang and Zhejiang's dramatic progress?

I: In fact, Zhejiang has done a wonderful job at the bottom level. In other words, Zhejiang has placed a great emphasis on the development of swimming at the spare time sports school level.

Z: What are the key characteristics of the swimming in spare time sports schools in Zhejiang Province.

I: As far as I know, there is a very big participation base in spare time sports schools. There is a big number of children engaged in swimming in Zhejiang. Second, their training methods and objectives in the stage of spare time sports schools are very reasonable and scientific. The guidance and support to swimming training in spare time sports schools tend to be insufficient in other provinces. More importantly, the dominant value in Zhejiang in relation to the cultivation of child swimmers is not gold medals at child competitions. Instead, the potential of child swimmers and their future development are key considerations in Zhejiang. There is a better connection between spare time sports schools and sports schools and full-time teams for swimmers in Zhejiang. The basis tends to be more solid for swimmers in Zhejiang. More importantly, the evaluation system is different in Zhejiang. Rather than concentrating on how many gold medals young swimmers win in child competitions, key criteria of evaluating the performance of coaches and working in spare time sports schools in Zhejiang are how many of their swimmers having been elected by provincial teams and how many gold medals their swimmers win after they become adults. Sustainability is the key.

Z: So in addition to Zhejiang, what are the other provinces that have a strong swimming tradition? Do they include Shanghai, Liaoning and Shandong?

I: Yes, they are all good at swimming in China.

Z: Then, how about the contribution of the PLA to swimming in China?

I: There are some very good swimmers in the PLA system including the Navy Delegation and the Guangzhou Military Regional Squad. The scale of sport in the PLA system has shrunk due to the decrease in the investment in sport. However, their role is still significant. First of all, there are high-level swimming coaches in the PLA team. Examples included Ye Jin, Qi Hui' (former world record of women's 200m breaststroke and World Championships medallist) coach. Second, PLA soldiers have very good traditions and personalities. They can endure hardship and are highly disciplined. The athletes the PLA has produced are militarised, which contrasts strikingly with athletes produced by provincial teams. Swimmers cultivated by the PLA system tend to have very high quality. For example, gold Olympian Jiao Liuyang

is a Party representative. It is a very high social status in China. She was a representative of the PLA delegation in the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

There are two ways in the contemporary context regarding the cultivation of elite athletes in the PLA system. First, there are many cooperative cultivation schemes between the PLA and provincial teams, with the former providing quality coaches while the latter providing talented athletes and financial resources. This is a good way of resource integration and often leads to a win-win situation in the National Games according to the double-point system. Second, the PLA can provide an opportunity to those redundant athletes in provincial teams (each provincial team has fixed number of administrative appointments), which opens another door for these athletes and strengthens the athlete mobility. Athletes of one provincial team may find it difficult to represent another province but it is easier for them to continue their sporting career in the PLA. There have been many cases of athletes being successful after entering the PLA team.

Z: Last, what are the regular departments or sub-organisations inside the Aquatics Management Centre and the CSA?

I: There are discipline-specific departments inside the Management Centre: the Swimming Department, the Diving Department, the Water Polo Department and the Synchronised Swimming Department. In addition, there is a Social Activity Department responsible for mass participation.

Z: Are there any subordinate organisations inside the Swimming Department?

I: No. The Swimming Department dominates and manages all swimming-related issues in China. The implementation of decisions is mainly top-down.

Z: Does GAS decide the fundamental direction of the development of swimming in China?

I: GAS has many regulations regarding issues such as competitions such as the National Games. However, we enjoy a very high degree of autonomy as long as we comply with the general principles and spirits of GAS.

Z: Is there an implementation pattern from the National Team to provincial teams?

I: Yes, there is.

Z: Who are involved in the decision making process?

I: For the time being, it is the National Swimming Team Committee that mainly makes decisions, as every policy is more or less related to the National Team. Key decision makers mainly come from the National Team Committee and the Swimming Department inside the Aquatics Management Centre. The current director of the Team Committee is also the secretary of the Aquatics Management Centre. He is a key decision maker, working together with the team leader and the head coach of the National Team and so on. In general, decision making involves four to five people. They form the core of the policy making community. Olympic gold medal coaches join the decision making if it concerns the National Team. When it comes to non-National team issues such as the competition schedules, the Swimming Department takes up the responsibility ... Athletes are seldom involved in the policy making process. There is not any athlete committee inside the Aquatics Management Centre and the Swimming Department. The exclusion of athletes in the policy making process helps enhance the efficiency of the policy implementation. Provincial Teams regularly provide suggestions and feedbacks to the Management Centre and the National Team and the Management Centre and the Swimming Department often exchange opinions with Provincial Teams regarding issues such as the competition schedules and the method of selecting Olympic squad. But the leaders of the Management Centre, the Swimming Department and the National Team make final decisions.

Z: That is all for my questions. You have provided much insightful and valuable information. Thanks very much for your time.

I: Glad to be able to help.