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Article

The Chinese Sports Spirit Strengthens the Sense of the Chinese Nation Community among Young People in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area: Theoretical Logic and Practical Paths

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Abstract: The Chinese sports spirit plays a crucial role in forging the sense of community for the Chinese nation among youth in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and boasts practical implementation paths. Based on sports theory, this paper clarifies the value core of patriotism, collectivism, and striving contained in the Chinese sports spirit, as well as its relationship and mutual transformation with the GBA youth's sense of community for the Chinese nation. It constructs a multi-dimensional integrated logical framework encompassing value internalization and identification, emotional sharing and identification, practical consciousness and identification, symbolic construction and identification, and interactive communication and identification. Meanwhile, it discusses the inherent mechanism of promoting identification through sports cultural carriers and sports social practices. On the basis of meeting the personalized needs of young people, the paper proposes new paths to create influential sports brand activities, innovate sports culture to tell GBA stories, and puts forward specific supporting measures for the future development of GBA youth in combination with how to do a good job in sports work in the new era.

Keywords: Chinese sports spirit; sense of community for the Chinese nation; Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; youth

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1. Introduction

The country attaches great importance to the healthy growth of young people and the strengthening of sports initiatives. Especially in recent years, with the improvement of infrastructure in the GBA, the integration and exchange in the field of sports among the three regions have become more in-depth, and sports have emerged as an important medium for the communication, exchange, and integration of young people in Guangdong, Hong Kong, China and Macao, China [1]. As the future of the Bay Area, the cultivation of young people's sense of national community is of vital significance. The unique environment of "one country, two systems, and three legal jurisdictions" in the GBA has led to the complexity of identity formation among young people under the interweaving of diverse cultures. Against this backdrop, "forging the sense of community for the Chinese nation" is particularly urgent, and there is an urgent need to find effective carriers that can bridge differences and touch people's hearts. The Chinese sports spirit, which embodies the core values of patriotism, collectivism, and striving, provides a

promising cultural resource and practical medium for addressing the aforementioned challenges.

From different perspectives, the research significance of this topic can be summarized into three aspects: first, exploring the connotation of the Chinese sports spirit and the educational function of ideological and political theory courses; second, analyzing the functional mechanism of sports events and activities in cultivating national awareness and strengthening national identity; third, investigating the characteristics of the identity of young people in Guangdong, Hong Kong, China and Macao, China and corresponding educational countermeasures. Previous case studies have mostly been conducted from a single disciplinary or regional perspective, and holistic research featuring "spiritual carrier - specific region - key group - identity goal" remains scarce. Starting from theory and based on the purpose of Bay Area construction, this paper integrates a cross-regional perspective to explore the mechanism by which spiritual carriers play a role in cultivating national awareness. Based on this, it refines an overall framework from "value isomorphism - emotional stimulation - practical generation - symbolic construction - interactive communication", explains the existence of the mechanism, and further summarizes and proposes practical paths for young people to rely on sports to gather strength and promote national identity.

2. Theoretical Basis of the Chinese Sports Spirit and the Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

2.1. Differences

Rooted in the practice of modern Chinese sports development, the Chinese sports spirit has evolved by breaking away from and transcending the narrow competitive dimension, and is embodied in the classic expression of patriotism, collectivism, rule awareness, and striving spirit: "striving for national glory, selfless dedication, seeking truth through science, abiding by laws and disciplines, unity and cooperation, and tenacious struggle" [2]. As a highly inspiring spiritual culture, the Chinese sports spirit not only inherits and carries forward excellent traditional Chinese culture, unites national strength, and inspires people to forge ahead, but also promotes the physical and mental health of individuals, improves their physical and mental personality, and strengthens their physical fitness. It is not only conducive to forming a healthy and civilized lifestyle, but also serves as an important spiritual driving force for enhancing cultural confidence and promoting the inheritance and innovation of civilization [3].

The sense of community for the Chinese nation refers to a highly stable shared individual or group psychological tendency formed by all ethnic groups in China based on common historical memories, shared cultural memories, and a common splendid culture, with a shared destiny. It mainly includes five constituent factors: historical community, cultural community, political community, interest community, and community of shared future, and is a process of building a common spiritual home for the Chinese nation. Its characteristic of "forging" denotes a developmental process where people progress from cognitive identification to emotional identification and then to value identification at different stages, as well as a process from emotional identification to value identification and ultimately to conscious action.

2.2. Ritual Interaction Theory

In essence, a ritual is a process of emotional resonance involving people with shared feelings participating together [4]. In sports ritual activities, different participants perform the same actions, shout the same slogans, and share the same expectations at the same time and space, eliminating individual differences and integrating into a group with a "sense of community". This process exerts a powerful spiritual influence because it achieves emotional communication across barriers both psychologically and emotionally. Drawing nourishment from ancient traditional sports rituals, the Chinese sports spirit

connects the past and the present, playing a pivotal role. Young people can inherit the sports spirit through sports rituals and experience the formation process of the historical memory of the community for the Chinese nation in these rituals. Sports rituals can produce four effects: first, gaining a strong sense of group solidarity; second, acquiring high emotional energy; third, obtaining sanctified group symbols; fourth, generating a collective moral sense of standing up for the group symbols [5]. Through such rituals, the symbols of the country and the nation are continuously strengthened, transforming the abstract concept of the community into tangible and perceptible collective emotional experiences and symbolic memories, thereby constantly deepening the impact on young people in the ritual context.

3. Theoretical Logic Construction of the Chinese Sports Spirit Forging the Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

3.1. Value Isomorphism Logic

The core values of the Chinese sports spirit are interlinked and isomorphic with the sense of community for the Chinese nation. The collectivist values promoted by the Chinese sports spirit are in line with the "unity and unification" and "sharing weal and woe" of the sense of community for the Chinese nation [6]. It conveys the patriotism advocated by sports and effectively integrates into people's political loyalty and identification with the political community and the community of shared future [7]. The awareness of abiding by laws and disciplines displayed on the sports field and the adherence to competitions constitute the foundation of the concept of the rule of law in society and an important support for the standardized order of the community. The value isomorphism between the two means that the Chinese sports spirit is not an external value supplement or element in community education, but an inherent, natural, and vivid value carrier and moral foundation. With the help of sports narratives, role models, and competitive practices, the scattered community values are concretized, personified, and made perceptible, making them easily acceptable to GBA youth, so as to achieve the goal of value guidance.

3.2. Emotional Stimulation Logic

The emotional cohesion effect of sports enables individuals to integrate their emotions into group emotions connected with others and a value identification community based on common values [8]. This emotional connection is not a simple injection; instead, it is the sense of ritual, interaction, and participation generated in the process of sports activities, forming a process from awakening self-emotions to awakening group emotions and then to internalizing value emotions. When young people watch or participate in competitions, they experience tension in anticipation, joy in victory, and empathy in defeat. For a period of time, they can quickly connect with others and develop a sense of group identity. Sports heroes are more inclined to be role models in the Bay Area with inspirational stories of striving and struggling for national glory. Inspired by these role models, young people admire their success and aspire to follow in their footsteps, thereby transforming their personal emotions into collective emotions [9]. The emotional promotion and resonance triggered by shared emotional experiences are the most direct and effective psychological cohesive agents for building a sense of community, which can quickly foster a strong sense of group emotional cohesion.

3.3. Practical Generation Logic

The sense of community cannot be acquired merely through knowledge input; it needs to be cultivated through specific and practical social practices based on personal experience. In this sense, the characteristic of sports targeting the human body precisely provides an important starting point for young people to cultivate a sense of community. For example, when organizing GBA youth to carry out mixed-team training, competitions,

or outdoor development activities, it inherently involves physical coordination, tactical cooperation, and mutual trust among team members. In this process, the abstract concept of "the community for the Chinese nation" is transformed into a "sense of team" through such physical, emotional, and intellectual personal experiences. Meanwhile, the shared experience of cheering for success and encouraging each other after failure makes "sharing weal and woe" not just a slogan but a heartfelt experience. Physical practice builds a bridge between theory and reality, enabling our understanding of social relations to go beyond paper and penetrate into the soul, leading to a deeper perception through such physical practice.

3.4. Symbolic Construction Logic

Sports represent many symbols related to the country and the nation. The national flag, national anthem, and national emblem are used in award ceremonies; each participating team has a unified team uniform with the country name or regional emblem; medals related to competition results, cheering slogans, victory gestures, etc., are continuously repeated and ritualized in this context of high attention and surging patriotic enthusiasm. Through frequent use, the symbolic significance of the national anthem, national flag, and cheering slogans is constantly strengthened. The patriotic spirit is not only concretely reflected in honor, striving, unity, and pursuit, but also has gradually become one of the primary ways to express and reflect the overall style and features of the country, the nation, and even the entire GBA [10]. Therefore, when a student team wins a competition, they will feel that the national anthem is played and the national flag is raised because of their team, subsequently forming an emotional connection between the individual and the national community, and integrating national symbols into their identity.

3.5. Interactive Communication Logic

The GBA is a gathering area covering two special administrative regions and three provinces/municipalities under the framework of "one country, two systems". Young people live in a social system and cultural atmosphere with differences, in a "third space". In this context, sports have the advantage of consistent rules and equality for all on the field, forming an ideal venue for the integration of young people from Guangdong, Hong Kong, China and Macao, China - competing on the same field in three regions, communicating with each other, and learning from one another. In daily training and competitions, mixed teams also have to face differences repeatedly, resolve disputes, and form tacit understanding. Due to the same goals and rules, in the process of completing this common task, in-depth communication will take place. Among them, prejudices caused by limited contact opportunities, preset information asymmetry, and stereotypes of others will be gradually eliminated. As the communication deepens, a more profound mutual understanding and recognition will emerge. The peer friendship and social networks formed on this basis can lay a solid foundation for social relations, promoting the transformation of the abstract "we" identity from a vague cultural and political category to down-to-earth and real interpersonal connections. This is an important path to promote social integration among GBA youth and enhance mutual understanding.

4. Current Situation and Challenges in Cultivating the Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation Among GBA Youth

4.1. Lack of Cross-Regional Overall Planning and Long-Term Cooperation Mechanisms

Guangdong, Hong Kong, China and Macao, China in the GBA each have their own policies and governance frameworks in terms of sports, education, and youth development. Against this background, it is more difficult to achieve the linkage and mutual promotion of youth sports and identity cultivation in the GBA, and even harder to form a true top-level design or strategic coordination for the GBA. At present, there is

no unified and influential regional coordination mechanism for cross-border overall planning and coordination among Hong Kong, China, Macao, China and Taiwan regions. Most activities are independently led and carried out by individual cities or departments, and the activity projects usually lack comprehensive spatial coverage, as well as temporal continuity and stability. The local activity objectives, assessment indicators, and funding input vary, making it difficult for policies to form a strong synergy. The "fragmented" operation mechanism results in various tasks being promoted at different paces, mostly remaining at the superficial and phased level of "projectization" and "activity-based", and it is difficult to achieve influential or penetrating work achievements across regional and temporal barriers.

4.2. Insufficient Exploration of the Spiritual and Cultural Connotations of Exchange Activities

At present, the design and implementation of many sports exchange activities focus on athletes' performance and competitive level, while rarely exploring the cognitive value of sports in promoting young people's understanding of their own and traditional cultural identities, as well as the functional value in promoting young people's social integration. Organizers pay too much attention to whether the event can run smoothly and the ranking of awards, and fail to deliberately create and explore the family and country feelings, unity and cooperation, tenacious struggle, striving for national glory and other connotations of the sports activity, as well as the common historical culture of the GBA. They also fail to strengthen and refine the value implication and emotional orientation of "why we are a community" through situational guidance. Therefore, young people's gains are limited to the short-term friendship formed during the game or a few days of interaction, and it is difficult to form a precipitation of cognition and recognition of the ultimate value of the process for young people. There are drawbacks of "emphasizing form over connotation and competition over education", and the in-depth educational connotation of sports has not been brought into play.

4.3. Gaps in Sports Education, Brand Events and Other Resources Among Guangdong, Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China

There are certain gaps in sports infrastructure, the level of professional coaches, the school sports curriculum system, the maturity and influence of brand event IP among Guangdong, Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China in the GBA. Two unfavorable situations may arise during sports exchange and cooperation: one is that the party with relatively more resource advantages dominates the exchange process, depriving the other party of a sense of equal participation; the other is that young people in the disadvantaged party have limited opportunities and quality of sports participation. If not properly addressed, this may inadvertently widen the gap, which is contrary to the concept of equality and unity of the community, and deprive the due common participation and common development of its true meaning.

4.4. Lack of Scientific Evaluation and Continuous Improvement of Identity Cultivation Effects

The effects of sports exchange activities are often measured by data such as the number of participants, the degree of media coverage, and feedback from public questionnaires. However, there are no specific and effective scientific methods and tools for quantitative analysis to track and evaluate the effect of "forging the sense of community for the Chinese nation". It is difficult for us to know how much the activities have improved young people's national identity, what the effects are for different groups of people, and what types of activities are more effective. There is no data-based effect feedback to provide evidence-based decision-making for the activities, resulting in a lack of targeted improvement and innovation, let alone the solidification and promotion of successful experiences. Moreover, due to the lack of the ability to identify problems and

make up for shortcomings, the practical work is in a "blind trial" stage, which cannot promote the further professionalization and refinement of the work.

5. Practical Paths of the Chinese Sports Spirit Forging the Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

5.1. Strengthen Top-Level Design and Mechanism Innovation

The way to break fragmentation is to establish a strong GBA cross-regional governance system. It is suggested that relevant central departments (the Ministry of Education, the General Administration of Sport of China) jointly with the governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China set up a permanent "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Youth Sports and Integration Development Committee", which is no longer a temporary coordination group but assumes the functions of planning, coordination, and supervision. It will coordinate and integrate the resource advantages and forces of sports, education, youth, and culture in the three regions, and jointly implement a unified set of policy guidelines. The first task is to cooperate in drafting and issuing the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Youth Sports Exchange and Identity Cultivation Action Plan (2025-2035)". Different from general work arrangements, this plan should clearly point out the phased goals and tasks for the next 10 years, the main key tasks, what to do, who will do it, and how to ensure funding. It is also necessary to put forward practical methods and measures, such as setting up a special fund to ensure the continuity of long-term cross-regional projects, and ultimately forming a new pattern of long-term cooperation featuring "top-level coordination, linkage among the three regions, and social participation" [11].

5.2. Deepen Curriculum Teaching and Teacher Resource Co-Construction

To promote the in-depth connotation of sports exchange, we must start from the main position of education and realize the penetration from extracurricular activities to the curriculum system. The core measure is to gather educational experts and excellent physical education teachers from the three regions to jointly develop a set of "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Sports and Health Reader" as a local auxiliary textbook, which includes a core module of "Chinese Sports Spirit and National Culture" to systematically introduce the family and country stories in sports, the cultural origin of traditional sports, and the common struggle history of sports celebrities in the GBA. At the same time, vigorously promote "sports ideological and political" demonstration courses. Through teaching case databases and public courses, guide teachers on how to infiltrate the spirit of teamwork in basketball tactics teaching and interpret the will of tenacious struggle in long-distance running training, so as to realize the "same direction and progress" of skill teaching and value guidance. To ensure teaching effectiveness, it is necessary to implement the "Bay Area Sports Teachers' Collaborative Training Program". Through regular joint teaching and research, mutual visits and training, and thematic workshops, unify the understanding and teaching methods of teachers from the three regions on the cultivation of the sense of community, and build a team of backbone teachers with consistent concepts and strong capabilities.

5.3. Build a System of Landmark Brand Activities

The existing scattered exchange activities should be integrated into an influential and attractive system. First of all, hold a comprehensive large-scale brand activity around the "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Youth Sports Carnival", making it an annual major event [12]. This activity is not a simple competition, but a cultural festival project integrating education, entertainment, and exchange, including competitive events, traditional Chinese sports culture experience exhibitions, sports science and technology interaction areas, and face-to-face exchanges with GBA sports stars. Secondly, promote the institutionalization of key events. The "GBA Traditional Sports Events League" and "Emerging Sports Mixed Team Competition" can be focused on, with mandatory rules

that each participating team must be a mixed team of students from the three regions, so as to achieve the goal of "fighting for the same homeland". Thirdly, launch the "Bay Area Champion Role Model Lecture Tour" project. Regularly invite influential GBA sports role models such as Su Bingtian and Guo Jingjing to return to their hometowns, visit campuses in the three regions to talk about their struggles and growth paths, and share stories of how they grew from ordinary children to successful athletes, conveying and demonstrating their great qualities of striving for progress and winning glory for the motherland to the children.

5.4. Innovate Cultural Communication and Narrative Methods

First, in the digital age, we should use methods popular among young people to construct and disseminate sports stories. For example, produce a series of micro-documentaries or animated short films titled "Bay Area Athletes' Feelings for the Country", which take GBA youth representing the country in competitions as examples, deeply explore the youthful footprints and family and country feelings behind their growth stories in the Bay Area, and widely disseminate them on mainstream video platforms, campus media, and other publicity platforms. Use digital technology such as VR/AR to build an online "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Cloud Sports Museum", comprehensively and three-dimensionally tell the century-old pursuit history of Chinese sports, the magnificent chapter of GBA sports glory, and the chronicle of sports exchanges among the three regions, creating an ever-lasting digital exhibition hall for patriotic education. At the same time, actively encourage young people to be masters and protagonists, guide and inspire them to become co-creators and communicators of sports stories. Organize competitive activities such as short video competitions and photography exhibitions themed "The GBA Sports Stories in My Eyes", guiding young people to tell their own sports stories from daily life, see the people, events, and principles in sports stories from their own perspectives, and inject sports power into the construction of the sense of community for the Chinese nation.

5.5. Construct a Scientific Evaluation and Feedback Loop

To ensure the feasibility of the practical paths, it is necessary to establish a scientific and effective evaluation and continuous improvement system [13]. First, develop a "GBA Youth Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation Literacy Evaluation Index System", which integrates various aspects such as the GBA youth's cognitive level of the community concept from the ontological perspective; their subjective willingness to safeguard the interests and unity of the community from the embodied perspective; their subjective emotional identification attitude from the reflective perspective, and the practical activities based on this (including the field of ethnic identity, the field of learning/voluntary group activities, etc.), forming a set of logically chained index composition methods. Second, develop corresponding standard measurement tools, conduct "pre-test - post-test - follow-up test" on key projects such as the Sports Carnival and "Mixed League", and finally form the "Bay Area Sports Integration Project Effectiveness Evaluation Report" based on the evaluation and summary of this series of projects, pointing out existing problems and deficiencies. Third, open regular online and offline feedback channels, such as setting up a special project feedback platform and organizing irregular focus group interviews with project participants, to enhance information flow and promote upper-level decision-making.

6. Conclusion

The Chinese sports spirit, with its distinct core values of patriotism, collectivism and hard work, provides profound spiritual nourishment and practical carriers for the consolidation of the sense of the Chinese nation among the young people in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. This article constructs a theoretical

logical framework of "value homology - emotional stimulation - practical generation - symbol construction - interaction" that is integrated in five aspects, systematically explaining the internal mechanism by which the sports spirit transforms into a sense of community identity. In response to the practical challenges faced by the Greater Bay Area, such as the lack of coordination mechanisms, superficiality of activity content, unbalanced resources and the absence of assessment, the article proposes specific practical paths including strengthening top-level design, deepening curriculum teaching, creating brand activities, innovating cultural narratives and constructing scientific assessment. These explorations not only provide theoretical support and practical guidelines for the work of young people in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, but also offer a replicable Bay Area solution for promoting national identity and enhancing national cohesion through sports. They have significant contemporary significance for promoting the deep integration of the Greater Bay Area and the all-round development of young people.

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