

**Global Sport, Nationalism and National Identity Construction: The Case of Naturalised  
Chinese Table Tennis Players in South Korea**

By

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A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of  
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

March, 2018

School of Sport and Exercise Science

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to analyse the process of South Korean nationalism and national identity construction through studying Chinese table tennis players that have become naturalised citizens of South Korea. Based on an Eliasian theoretical and methodological perspective, this research employs three different methods of analysis. First, it employs archival analysis in the historical context chapter to determine the origins of table tennis and its spread to Northeast Asia, the political and societal role of table tennis in China and South Korea, and the appearance of the first naturalised player in South Korea. Second, this study employs newspaper text analysis to investigate newspaper reports of the South Korean and Chinese table tennis matches from the 1988 Seoul Olympics Games to the 2012 Games in London. This section first examines the flow of Korean nationalism through the table tennis matches between Korea and China, and then explores how the newspaper reports expressed nationalism in regard to the Korean players and naturalised players. Third, this study employs an interview method to gather data from 17 interviewees who have been associated directly or indirectly associated with the Chinese naturalised table tennis players in order to further examine the process of the formation of South Korean national identity.

The first analysis regarding historical findings identifies that table tennis has evolved precisely alongside Elias's sportisation theory. In South Korea and China, table tennis has played the role of a national sport. Especially in South Korea, table tennis was a nationalistic sport that opposed anti-colonialism and anti-communism. It was in table tennis that the first naturalised athlete in the history of South Korean sport was selected for the Olympics. In the second analysis, through examining news reports of the Olympic table tennis matches between China and South Korea, this research identifies that South Korean newspapers

continue to generate a strong image of nationalism. Moreover, the newspaper reports do not use the same nationalistic sentiments and personal pronouns for South Korean players and naturalised players. Finally, the interview analysis investigates the formation of South Korean identity through the naturalised table tennis players in South Korea. Three national identities groups have arisen in South Korea in response to the emergence of naturalised athletes. The first group approves of globalisation and naturalisation. The second group opposes globalisation and naturalisation. The third group, which comprises the media, has no specific interest in globalisation and naturalisation, but has an identity that changes based on the interests of the media company. In other words, the evidence from the interviews carried out for this thesis shows that South Korean national identity in regard to naturalised athletes remains diversified and not unified.

Keywords: globalisation, nationalism, national identity, table tennis, athletic naturalisation, sport media, South Korea, China.

## Acknowledgements

There are many people I would like to thank for their help in completing this thesis. First, I would like to thank Professor Maguire for three years of supervising my doctorate with endless patience and kind assistance. Without his academic advice and encouragement, I would not have finished this thesis. I would also like to thank Professor Bairner for helping me with my research every year since my first year. I am also very glad that you have been my supervisor for the last year of my PhD. Moreover, thank you to Dr Malcolm for helping as my second supervisor. I am deeply grateful to my examiners Dr Lee and Professor Giulianotti.

I would also like to thank the 17 people who helped me with the study interviews for giving me their valuable time. In particular, I would like to thank coach Dang Yeo-Seo, who teaches juniors for the development of Korean table tennis. I would also like to thank the young table tennis players, their parents, and the local sports table tennis leaders who were interviewed during the Korean Table Tennis Championship at Danjin in 2014. Moreover, I would like to thank my interviewees: Kim Jeong Gil, the Former Minister of Justice; Kim Un-Yong, a former International Olympic Committee member and a resident of the Korean Sport Committee; Kim Chung Young, the vice-chairman of the Korean Table Tennis Association; Kim Bun Sik, the manager of the Table Tennis Association; Yang Yong Ja, the Korea Youth Table Tennis Association coach; and the broadcast sports managers of the four studied media outlets—SBS, KBS, *Dong-A* and *Chosun*.

Moreover, thank you very much to Professor Choi Hyeon Cheol, who always helps my family. Finally, I would like to send my love to my parents and my family Curie and Hyewon.

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## **Introduction**

### **1. Preliminary Investigation**

This thesis aims to analyse the flow of Korean nationalism and national identity construction through examining Chinese naturalised athletes in South Korea. While these fields have previously been examined by other scholars, the goal of this research is to add new knowledge to existing disciplines in academic fields. Elias (1978) stated that there are many facts not yet known to humans, and the nature of human knowledge is such that there are many parts that are not yet marked on a large map. In other words, even though there are many existing research contributions, there are still many fields that require investigation. In the case of sports migration, Maguire (2008) stated that sports such as hockey, cricket, baseball, basketball and football have been the main research subjects. In addition, sports migration has contributed research from various scholars. In particular, the pattern of sports migration called ‘naturalisation’ has not yet received much research attention. Moreover, there has been limited research on table tennis, naturalised athletes, nationalism and national identity.

Thus, this research examines the topic of table tennis, which has not yet received many social or academic contributions. Although there are many different areas to explore in relation to table tennis, this research mainly focuses on Chinese<sup>1</sup> naturalised table tennis players, who now appear in many countries around the world. Moreover, one of these athletes became a naturalised citizen of Korea, and subsequently won a medal at the Beijing Olympic Games—the first time in the history of Korean sports that a naturalised athlete had been a

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<sup>1</sup> The official name of China is the People’s Republic of China; however, this research will use the shortened name of China.

national representative of Korea.<sup>2</sup> Through examining the topic of Chinese naturalised table tennis players in Korea, this research studies existing nationalism and national identity. As Smith (1995) argued, nationalism is undergoing various changes in the era of globalisation. Maguire (2011) claimed that ‘national cultures and identities are weakened, strengthened or pluralized by globalization processes’. In this respect, this research investigates the established nationalism and national identity of Korea through examining the emergence of ‘outsider’ table tennis naturalised players in the global era.

This research has three main parts. The first part presents the basis for this research through a theoretical background, literature review, and methodology. The second part presents a historical overview of table tennis, which is the basis for the following chapters that present the empirical findings. This part examines the origins of table tennis, the proliferation of table tennis in Europe and expansion into Northeast Asia, and the social and political role of table tennis in China and South Korea. Ultimately, the goal of this part is to observe the emergence of Chinese naturalised players for the first time in Korea through studying this long-term history.

The third part is divided into two empirical chapters. The first chapter investigates the process of Korean nationalism. More specifically, it observes the flow of South Korean nationalism from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics by examining Korean newspaper reports discussing Korea versus China table tennis matches. Another observation made in this chapter is that, it was in the 2008 Beijing Olympics in 2008 that a naturalised athlete first appeared on the Korean team. Thus, this chapter also observes the reporting behaviour of the Korean media when discussing the naturalised Chinese athletes, in

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<sup>2</sup> The original official name of Korea is the Republic of Korea or South Korea. However, this research will use the commonly known national name of South Korea or Korea.

comparison to the Korean athletes. This chapter examines whether the Korean media portrays the naturalised and Korean athletes with equal nationalistic sentiment. The second empirical chapter examines the national identity formed in Korea by the naturalised players. It examines the national identities of Korea, which is achieved by examining various participants' views of the naturalised athletes via 17 interviewees with people directly or indirectly associated with these naturalised athletes.

In terms of methodology, this research applies both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative methods used during the research include the analysis of various statistical records of table tennis. The different chapters used three qualitative methods: archive analysis, newspaper content analysis and interview analysis of unstructured interviews. Chapter 4 employs archive analysis because sociological and academic research on table tennis is rare. This chapter documents published by the International Table Tennis Association; historical data from the United Kingdom, Korea, the United States and Australia's Table Tennis Federations; and table tennis magazines and documents to determine the development of table tennis. Chapter 5 also employs media analysis of Korean newspaper articles that reported on the Korea versus China table tennis matches from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics. This analysis is conducted as a thematic analysis.

Finally, Chapter 6 presents interviews conducted with 17 interviewees who were directly and indirectly related to naturalised table tennis athletes. This chapter seeks to understand the process of Korean national identity formation through examining the naturalised players. The interviewees are divided into three main groups. The first group includes representatives of governing organisations such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a former International Olympic Committee member, the

vice-chairman of the Korea Table Tennis Association, the manager of the Korean Table Tennis Association, and the director of the Korean Youth Table Tennis Team. The second group includes local athletes such as Korean *Sil-Up*<sup>3</sup> table tennis players, local high school table tennis players, as well as the high school players' parents, local table tennis coaches, and local table tennis members. The third and final group includes sports journalists from four Korean newspapers. The interviews with these different groups provided a detailed insight into the construct of Korean national identity in relation to the naturalised table tennis players. By using three different methods of investigation and applying the macro, meso and micro approach, this study observes the naturalised athletes from the broad (macro) historical viewpoint, from the media viewpoint in the middle (meso), and from the perspective of the researcher (micro) to understand the naturalised players' identity formation process. Thus far, this section has explained the basic structure of this thesis to understand Korean nationalism and national identity through examining Chinese naturalised athletes. Therefore, the next part will examine each subject in detail.

## **2. The Issue of Globalisation**

While it is interesting to investigate the details of the processes of athlete naturalisation, nationalism and national identity to understand South Korean's nationalism and national identity, it is also important to understand the larger sociological frames of this issue from a macroscopic viewpoint. Although this study investigates the issue of sport naturalisation in terms of South Korean nationalism and national identity, these processes can be largely understood within the wider process of globalisation. This study focuses on the facets of time–space compression, accelerating interdependence, a shrinking world, global

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<sup>3</sup>*Sil-Up* is Korea's semi-professional table tennis league.

integration, the reordering of interregional power relationships, consciousness of the global condition, and the intensification of interregional interconnectedness (Albrow, 1996; Geyer & Bright, 1995; Giddens, 1990; Held et al., 1999; Held & McGrew, 2000; Robertson, 1992; Rosenau, 1990).

Robertson (1992) argued that globalisation is not simply the annihilation of local economies, politics and socio-culture, but is also cooperation between global and local regions, as expressed through the concepts of 'glocalisation', multiculturalism and hybridity. He claimed that globalisation refers to 'the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson, 1992, p. 8). Meanwhile, Maguire (1999) stated that, 'the world becomes "compressed" as the scope and intensity of global interconnectedness has increased' (p. 13). Due to changes caused by globalisation, time and place seem to be diminishing, while interdependencies are increasing and becoming more diverse between new people, societies and nations.

For example, the development of a variety of local cultures (Tomlinson, 1991), the need for independent national development (Featherstone & Lash, 1995), and nationalism conflicts in the global era (Smith, 1995) represent varied relationships between local and global regions. Ohmae (1995) claimed that neo-liberalistic global market forces will decrease the power of nation-states, and that the status of nation-states is unnecessary. In this regard, it is true that regions are influenced by globalisation, and their unique political, economic, cultural and social aspects are challenged by the globalisation process. However, globalisation does not work in a one-sided direction. According to Elias (1982), from a dichotomous view, homogenising and heterogenising should be examined together. The process of globalisation should also be regarded as multifaceted and multidirectional



(Maguire, 1999). In other words, globalisation and regions are variously interrelated, not unilaterally related. This relationship is evidenced throughout this research, such as in the relationship between Korean nationalism and national identity through the Chinese naturalised table tennis players and the influence of globalisation. It is possible to observe local social problems through the globalisation process. From the definition and concepts of globalisation to capital, people can move more freely across borders through globalisation than ever before. Thus, the next part will examine the relationship between globalisation and the naturalised athletes in Korea.

### **3. The Problem of Athlete Naturalisation in Korea**

Sports naturalisation is a kind of global sport migration. Global migration includes groups of people who are termed pioneers, mercenaries, nomads, returnees and settlers (Maguire et al., 2002). Naturalisation involves settlers (unlike other sports relocations), in which athletes change their nationality and live in their countries on a permanent basis. Interestingly, sports naturalisation is now emerging as a prominent social issue in South Korea—and is probably one of the most significant issues in contemporary Korean sports. As foreign sports migrants began to enter South Korea in 1983, Korean sports began to change to represent a more multicultural sport society (Lee, 2010). Foreign sports migrants were previously largely active in domestic sports, such as soccer, basketball, volleyball and baseball, and had not been selected for the South Korean national team (Lee & Kwak, 2016).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Volleyball player Hòu Yíntíng was officially the first national representative in 1995; however, this athlete's parents had lived in Korea for a long time with Chinese citizenship. Therefore, this player was only Chinese by nationality. He was born in Korea and had lived in Korea for his entire life. Moreover, Shin Eui-Son was a Russian soccer player who became naturalised in Korea in 2000. However, he was not selected for the Korean national team and was only active in the Korean football league.

However, in 2008, a Chinese naturalised table tennis player was the first naturalised athlete to be selected as a national representative of Korea (Cho, 2014). Although it may have been because of the influence of the first Chinese player, the other South Korean national sport teams also began to take an active interest in naturalisation. Thus, the issue of naturalisation began at this point.

The issue of naturalisation received increased attention when the South Korean national football team wished for a Brazilian player, Ênio Oliveira Júnior, to join the Korean international team in 2011 (Lee & Kwak, 2016). Local fans, the South Korean Sport Committee, the government, the local professional administration and the media all discussed this issue extensively. In an examination of the South Korean case of nation, state and football, Guy (2008) noted that South Korean football identity has been constructed in a way that strongly incorporates a strong historical nationalist background. Thus, Korean society has difficulty considering the idea of a foreigner playing for the South Korean national football team.

In response to this football issue, one of the most popular South Korean athletes, Ji-Sung Park (a prominent football migrant who formerly played for Manchester United), offered his personal stance: 'I agree with naturalised players in the South Korean national team; however, the national team represents a symbol of South Korean national identity so the decision has to be made carefully' (KBS Sport News, 2012). Ultimately, Ênio Oliveira Júnior was not allowed to join the South Korean international team. The reason for this athlete's disqualification was that he was a foreigner not born in Korea and thus had no South Korean nationalistic feelings (Lee & Kawk, 2016).

Even after these setbacks for sports naturalisation in South Korea, a Canadian ice hockey player, Brock Ladunske, who was born in Canada and previously played for the United States, represented South Korea in ice hockey during international competitions in 2013. The main reason for his participation was that South Korea is a host nation for the Winter Olympics in 2018, and therefore South Korean hockey needs to develop its national team to prepare for this competition. As such, the local sport committee decided to accept naturalised players in order to help local ice hockey reach a higher level (Kim, 2013). Moreover, in Korea's other national sport teams, more than 15 naturalised athletes will be participating in the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in ice hockey, short track, ice skating, biathlon and luge, which accounts for more than 13 per cent of the 130 Korean nationals participating in the Winter Olympics (*Chungang*, 2017, p. 30).

While increased debate surrounding athletics naturalisation has appeared in South Korean society, there have also been unprecedented occurrences with respect to South Korean sport. At the women's team table tennis event in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, the South Korean national team included two Chinese-born players. On the ninth day of the London Olympic Games, South Korean media outlets began focusing attention on the issue of the naturalised players on the South Korean table tennis national team. The captain of the men's team, Se-Hyk Joo, was interviewed by the South Korean media after the team's failure to earn a medal. He commented on the number of Chinese-born players on the South Korean table tennis team and noted that, 'they seemed to not be part of our team'. He said that, 'South Korean table tennis should not have made this choice, but should have instead had South Korean players on the national team because our team seems divided'. The opinion from the London Olympics was quite interesting. The reason is that table tennis was

the first South Korean sport to have a naturalised athlete, and he won a gold medal at the Beijing Olympic Games. The negative reason for naturalisation given by this table tennis player was that the presence of naturalised athletes meant that the team could not feel a shared national identity and therefore were not as cohesive as a team with no naturalised athletes would have been.

Thus far, throughout the process of increasing the number of naturalised players in South Korea, this discussion has observed that sports naturalisation in South Korea has become a social issue. In particular, naturalised athletes have become a problem in relation to Korea's nationalism and national identity and have thus led to nationalist issues. Therefore, the next section briefly examines the nationalism and national identity of South Korea, and considers them in relation to naturalised athletes.

#### **4. Nationalism and National Identity in Korean Sport**

The above section examined the emergence of globalisation and naturalisation in Korea. It is important to understand the changes in the nationalism and national identity of the host nation when globalisation and global naturalised athletes meet. Understandings of the terms 'nation', 'state' and 'nationalism' can vary, reflecting differences within time and space. In particular, the development of nationalism is one of the most challenging processes to grasp, and has become more complicated due to globalisation (Smith, 1995). For example, in the case of globalisation, as national influence diminishes, nationalism may disappear and national identity may change in a single direction. In contrast, even if a nation experiences the influence of globalisation, nationalism can continue to express the power of the nation, and national identity can vary in many ways. However, it should be observed from various perspectives on nationalism and national identity that are shaped differently by time and

place than by dichotomy. Bairner (2001) argued that, as globalisation progresses, nationalism have emerged in two patterns: open nationalism and exclusive nationalism. Maguire (1999, p. 202) argued that national cultures and identities are weakened, strengthened or pluralised by globalisation processes.

Taking South Korea as an example of this flow of globalisation, nationalism and national identity, in recent times, nationalism and national identity have acted as important social factors in the formation of a strong homogeneity in South Korean, even during the era of globalisation (Kim, 2010). As Hobsbawm (1990) argued, in the case of Korea, Japan and China, it is hard to find even in a world where tribes are almost homogeneous. South Korean nationalism is maintained through a long history based on the spirit of a single nation (Lee, 2010). In contrast, nationalism in South Korean society is fiction, and, in the age of globalisation, nationalism is an obsession and anachronistic idea (Yang, 2007). Korean nationalism must change in South Korea, which is becoming a multicultural society in the era of globalisation (Kang, 2013). It is necessary for South Korea to become a diverse society and to embrace multiculturalism—to create a new nationalism that is free of the idea of a one-blood nation (Seol, 2014). The idea of a one-blood nation, which South Koreans have long upheld as their national concept, is merely a myth that causes dysfunction in the globalisation era (Han & Han, 2007).

In this regard, the changes in nationalism and national identity observed in South Korean sports in the globalisation process have been studied in various forms. The existing research that has been carried out by South Korean scholars argues that sports nationalism in South Korea will change in various ways, rather than uniformly. In particular, the common conclusion of scholars who have studied global sports migrant workers is that South Korean

nationalism is inadequate for South Korean multicultural environments in the age of globalisation (Cho, 2014; Kim, 2010; Lee, 2010; Lee & Kwak, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2007; Maeng & Kwon, 2014; Yang, 2012). In particular, it has been argued that the various responses of local people are induced at the border of nationality and nation through the migrant sports players, and thus the national identity should be reconstructed due to their appearance in South Korea (Cho, 2014).

In terms of Korea's single nationalist environment, global sports migrants can be a starting point for creating diverse nationalism and national identities in South Korea (Lee, 2010). A study of professional sports fandom found that there are many people who respond positively to the selection of national players, and are more likely to prefer civic national identity, rather than ethnic national identity (Maeng & Kwon, 2014). A study of Korean American athletes argued that Korean society should abandon the single ethnic fantasy and become a multicultural society (Lee & Lee, 2007). An analysis of foreign reports of professional sports argued that Korea, which has entered a multicultural society in the era of globalisation, should re-establish an identity of the 'other' (Hwang, 2013).

Thus far, regarding the effect of the current globalisation in the relationship between sport naturalisation and nationalism / national identity issues in South Korea, there is a consensus that Korean nationalism and national identity should be reconstructed by Korea in progressing towards between globalisation and multiculturalism. In this regard, the next section will discuss the research questions addressed by this study in order to determine the relationship between Korean nationalism and national identity, through examining the Chinese naturalised table tennis players who are emerging in South Korea due to the flow of globalisation.

## 5. Statement of Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to study South Korean nationalism and national identity construction through examining the Chinese naturalised athletes who have recently appeared in Korean society. Elias and Dunning (1986) explored the origin and sociological interest of sport in *Quest for Excitement*. Dunning (1999) also considered sport as a serious social problem in *Sport Matters*. Among sport's sociological problems, various publications have indicated that sports migration, nationalism and identity are sociological issues regarding sports in the global era, including Maguire's (1999) *Global Sport*, Maguire et al.'s (2002) *Sport Worlds* and Maguire and Falco's (2011) *Sport and Migration*. These sociological problems of sport are also evident in South Korea. In particular, the field of sport naturalisation regarding sports migration is important because it relates to South Korea's nationalism and national identity.

Since 2008, the problem of athlete naturalisation in South Korea has become increasingly notable. South Korea is currently experiencing the era of sport naturalisation. Since the first Olympian naturalised table tennis player became a national representative of South Korea in 2008—a central sample of this research—the number of naturalised athletes has continued to increase, so that more than 19 naturalised athletes were part of the Korean team attending the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics. Other sports have actively sought to attract naturalised players, such as basketball, athletics and gymnastics. According to the Korean Olympics Committee, naturalised athletes will continue to be accepted in order to improve the standard of Korean sport. However, within Korean society, there are concerns about nationalism and the national identity of naturalised athletes (Cho, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2016; Maeng & Kwon, 2014). In response to this social and national issue of naturalised

athletes emerging in Korea, this study began with the following research questions, focusing on the themes of globalisation, sports naturalisation, nationalism and national identity. The following three main research questions and sub questions were addressed in this research project;

1. How did Chinese naturalised table tennis players appear in South Korea?
  - How was table tennis introduced to Northeast Asia?
  - How did table tennis become a nationalist sport in China and South Korea?
2. How do South Korean newspapers present nationalism during Olympic table tennis matches between China and South Korea?
  - What are the notable differences when South Korean newspapers discuss naturalised table tennis players versus South Korean table tennis players?
3. How have South Korean national identities diversified through Chinese naturalised athletes in the global era?
  - How has the identity of the Chinese naturalised table tennis player progressed in South Korea?
  - What national identities are formed through naturalised players in South Korea?

The structure of the remainder of this thesis is as follows. Chapters 1 and 2 present the theoretical background and literature review. Chapter 3 explains the main methodology of this research and the methods used in the research. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present the findings of this research. Finally, Chapter 7 presents the conclusion.

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical background that is the logical basis of this research. It reviews the contributions of Elias (1994; 1982; 1987; 1996), Elias and Dunning (1986) and Elias and Scotson (1994) and the general theories of figurational sociology.



Chapter 2 reviews the existing literature on this topic. In particular, based on this study's research question, it organises the five main topics in the literature as follows: globalisation, nationalism, national identity, and sport migration/naturalisation. First, the problem of globalisation and global sports is examined. Second, this chapter explores the existing literature on global sport migration and naturalisation, and athletic naturalisation in Korea. Third, this chapter reviews existing nationalism and national identity, process sociology's perspective to nationalism and nationalism and national identity in Korean sport. Fourth, the existing literature on sports media is reviewed.

Chapter 3 begins by exploring the underpinning methodological questions of epistemology and ontology, then discusses the quantitative and qualitative relationship, and finally outlines the research methods applied in this thesis. In particular, this research adopts Eliasian methodology and examines three important figurational methodological approaches of 'theory and evidence', 'involvement and detachment' and the 'adequacy of evidence' (Maguire, 1988; Maguire & Young, 2002).

This study has three findings chapters, with each chapter employing a different research method. First, Chapter 4 uses archival analysis to determine the historical progress of the development of table tennis and naturalised athletes in Korean society. Second, Chapter 5 uses newspaper text analysis of coverage of tennis matches between South Korea and China from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics in order to determine the process of Korean nationalism via the reproduction of newspaper texts. Finally, Chapter 6 applies the interview method to examine the process of Korea's national identity through 17 interviewees who are associated with Chinese naturalised athletes.

Chapter 4 investigates the process of how Chinese naturalised players appeared in Korea. This chapter seeks to understand the processual development of table tennis and the Chinese naturalised athlete in Korea. To achieve this aim, this chapter begins by investigating the long history of table tennis, the progression of table tennis to Northeast Asia as a minority sport, the way table tennis developed in China and Korea, and how Chinese naturalised players eventually appeared in Korea. The emergence of Korean naturalised athletes in this history is important to observe in relation to the nationalism and national identity of Korea, as explored in Chapters 5 and 6 by examining the naturalised national athletes. Importantly, this is also linked to the contribution of this research to the sociology of sport. There has previously been no developmental study of Northeast Asia from the early origins of table tennis. Moreover, it is rare to study a country's nationalism and national identity through examining the Chinese naturalised players who are now spread all over the world.

Chapter 5 observes the flow of South Korean nationalism through Olympic table tennis. Bairner (2001) argued that sports can often be used to express nationalistic emotions. Particularly in the Olympic Games, table tennis provoked various nationalistic sentiments in the games between South Korea and China. Specifically, this chapter investigates two forms of South Korean nationalism through table tennis. First, this chapter observes South Korean nationalism against China, using the texts reported by South Korean newspapers during the table tennis competitions of seven Olympics (from the Seoul Olympics in 1988 to the London Olympics in 2012). Second, this chapter observes how the South Korean newspapers reported on the naturalised table tennis player who became the first South Korean national sport representative at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and how these reports produced a different nationalism frame for the South Korean athletes.

Chapter 6 employs the interview research method to observe the process of South Korean national identity through naturalised athletes. As Maguire (1994) claimed, identity is neither naturally created nor set in a fixed format, but is constructed socially, and can change in relation to time and place. In the process of changing the South Korean identity in relation to time and place, it is important to examine the identity of South Korea through the Chinese naturalised athlete. As a result, it is necessary to observe whether the national identity of South Korea is changing as a result of the naturalised athletes, or is being maintained. To make this observation, this chapter observes the changes occurring in the South Korean national identity through examining naturalised athletes, with evidence from 17 interviewees who were directly or indirectly associated with Chinese naturalised athletes.

In summary, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the process of South Korean nationalism and national identity construction through the Chinese naturalised players in the era of globalisation. Similar previous studies have frequently examined other sports in Korea, such as football (Choi, 2007; Kim & Kwon, 2007; Yang, 2012) and baseball (Choi, 2010; Kim, Lee, & In, 2011; Lim & Jeong, 2010). Therefore, from the next section, it approaches the purpose of this thesis through the theoretical background of this thesis and the literature review.

## **Chapter One**

### **Theoretical Observation**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical background of this thesis. Theory is significant because it provides the background and justification for the research to be conducted, and provides a framework for how the research findings can be interpreted (Bryman, 2012). Generally, there are various interesting social science theories to understand the social world. As the research proceeded through this thesis, the theory served as a milestone to illuminate the way. Among the available interesting theories, this thesis adopted the figurational theory. The reason for this choice is that figurational sociology has not been widely used in Korea. In particular, the figurational sociology of naturalised athletes has never been examined in South Korea. This factor was the greatest driver for using figurational sociology in this thesis. Supported by this understanding of theory, this research adopts figurational sociology as the theoretical basis for the study and to interpret the results. This research uses figurational sociology because although civilisation processes and figurational sociology are fundamentally derived from a Western European theatrical background, many scholars are applying figurational sociology to the context of South Korean society. Particularly for the sociology of sport in relation to Korea, research on sport and nationalism in Korea has been undertaken using figurational sociology (Lee & Maguire, 2009; 2011). In addition, scholars have applied figurational sociology to the sports and civilisation process of Korea, the civilisation process of taekwondo, and many other fields (Choo, 2017; Park, 1998; Song, 2004). This research applies Eliasian theory because there is

limited research on the nationalisation of sport, nationalism and national identity which applies the theory of figurational sociology. To elaborate upon this research's theoretical basis, this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses the overall characteristics of the theory of figurative sociology. The second part, among the various theories of figurational sociology, explores sportisation, personal pronouns and habitus, which are the focus of this thesis.

## **1.2 Characteristics of Figurational Sociology**

Figurational sociology is based on Norbert Elias's work, *The Civilising Process*. The two main concepts of figurational sociology are interdependence and process (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998, p. 36). Humans are not isolated within the social structure. Elias's (1991) ideal society is a society of individuals, not the traditional sociology of the society and the individual. Individuals are dependent on other humans from the early stages of their lives (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998) and the interdependence of human activity is a hallmark of figurational sociology (Dunning & Rojek, 1992, p. xiii). However, during the processes of interdependence, humans are not equally dependent on each other—different power balances often occur. Moreover, this unequal power balance changes over time in structured processes (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998). This change in power indicates that absolute power does not belong exclusively to one individual or group, and Elias (1978, p. 74) emphasised that power cannot be possessed permanently by any particular individual or group.

Eliasian theorists critique the traditional approaches of sociological models, stating that society is not an abstract structure that exists somewhere 'over' people. Elias criticised the concept of *homo clausus* as a dichotomous relationship between individuals and society,

and referred to individuals and society as separate. Elias's rejection of process reduction ensured that the relationships between individuals and society were viewed as dynamic and interdependent. Elias (1978) suggested the term '*homines aperti*' between individual and society to indicate the continual flowing of interdependent relationships. Krieken (1998) emphasised society as groups of people who have intentions and purposes; however, the results of human behaviours can be different from their original intended plans. Thus, Eliasian theorists seek to identify the patterns of unintended results in human society.

To analyse these social changes, Eliasian theorists use the term 'figuration', which Elias (1978) suggested is a notion that indicates the interdependent relationships in human structures. Humans cannot exist without society, and society cannot exist without a human structure (Elias, 1978). In other words, a figuration simultaneously refers to the relationships between individuals in society, and the society of individuals. Due to individuals' interdependence, they engage with a variety of families, schools, cities, social groups and nation-states. These processes of interdependence include the flowing of power relationships and varied figurations, and emergence of individuals who are related to different figurational processes (Elias, 1978). This figuration can involve the simple pattern of two people, or can involve an entire nation-state, with sets of figurations having the capacity to be expanded and varied. Thus, the processes of individuals' interdependence can be enlarged (Elias, 1978). The notion of figuration indicates the reality of complicated relationships of interdependence and power balances. In other words, figuration refers to people's independent networks of changeable asymmetrical power balances (Bogner, 1986). Therefore, the theory of figurational sociology can be used to examine the unequal power balances in people's interdependent relationships.

Power is one of the most important issues in figurational sociology. Elias (1978) introduced the flowing of power balances through the concept of '*spielmodelle*'. From two people can compete their power a balance, this power balance exists between people's interdependent relationships without differentiation of power (Elias, 1978). This is not a reality relationship, but an interdependent relationship. Social processes move in regular directions and structures; however, these processes can be used to understand unintended processes. Elias (1978) also argued that figurations include a particular social order. Civilising processes and other types of long-term historical processes can be viewed as blind processes. These unintended processes are interdependent with people's social actions, and people's behaviours can be understood by these interdependent relationships within the processes of social conflicts and competitions. The nature of figurational sociology explained thus far can be divided into four essential components (Dunning, 1999; Dunning & Hughes, 2013; Elias, 1978; Kilminster, 2007; Mennell, 1992). First, each human is independent. Second, independent humans form figurations, and each object is connected. Third, these figurations are not fixed, but are constantly moving and changing according to the surrounding environment. Fourth, during the long-term development of these figurations, social phenomena are unpredictable or unplanned.

To emphasise the meaning of 'power' in the perspective of figurational sociology, Elias (1978) stated: 'power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another' (p. 74). Power does not stay in one place and is not constantly owned by anyone. Power flows in unintended directions, depending on the surrounding environment. By adopting the character of figurational sociology as its background, this research is based on the civilising processes,

with a focus on sportisation, personal pronoun usage, and habitus from the established and the outsider and Germans, and diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties in next part.

### **1.2.1 Civilising Processes**

Elias's concept of civilisation indicates changes of historical meanings. Elias's book *The Court Society* explains how humans' social behaviours and psychology have changed. Elias critically demonstrated that civilisation is not the opposite concept to barbarianism, and that the superiority of Westernisation is not static. Elias maintained his position regarding the main forces that construct civilisation, based on long-term processes of society and changes in people's actions and feelings (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998). Elias (1994) identified psychological and social processes in his work *The Civilising Process*. The concept of psychological processes presents the from external constraint to internal constraint, such as the refinement of manners, secret processes of physiological functions, the development of ego, the constraint of impetus and emotions, and people's ability to predict their future. Social processes indicate patterns of change in how people develop relationships with other people and specialised of society, and the formation of the nation-state.

Through examining these processes on a long-term historical basis, the patterns of figuration can be identified as involving the centralisation of power, more complicated interdependence and functional democratisation. This requires further explanation. First, the power of the nation-state includes powers such as the right to use physical force and tax collection, so that the nation-state can retain power over its people. Second, because of increasingly specialised and divided labour, these have occurred as two different issues as the development of people's lives and constraints relationships between people. Last, functional



democratisation emphasises that balance of power directs to equal conditions from the status of unequal power, such as expanding the right to the vote and developing citizenship. Elias (1978) claimed that:

It is perfectly possible that by their own actions, groups of people consciously oriented towards preserving and maintaining the present figuration in fact strengthen its tendency to change. It is equally possible for groups of people consciously oriented towards change just to strengthen the tendency of their figuration to remain as it is (p. 147).

Thus, understanding the development of social actions and feelings is related to the processes of preserving and maintaining. Some of the important social changes identified by Elias are conflict, competition and power, which can be understood as the dynamic processes of completions and monopolies. Thus, society can be viewed as a structured pattern created from disorder, chaos and unintended circumstances.

### **1.2.2 Sportisation**

In order to create a long-term historical understanding of sport, the concept of sportisation is helpful to investigate how modern sport has been developed through both intended and unintended processes. Dunning (1999) argued that sportisation is mainly a Westernised process. First, it is important to define the word 'sport' in order to understand this process. Elias and Dunning (1986) emphasised the process of the word 'sport' and claimed that sport refers to 'the social datum as well as the word' (pp. 126–127). Before the 20th century, the word 'sport' could not be found in countries such as Germany and France (Elias & Dunning, 1986). Following this same process, English sports-related words such as 'jockey', 'steeplechase' and 'match' were also introduced to French society (Elias & Dunning, 1986). The original concept of sportisation was based on whether an activity was considered

a 'civilising sport'. This distinction arose in the 16th and 17th centuries; however, more culturally formatted folk games and rules developed in the 18th and 19th centuries (Dunning, 1986). The concept of the word 'sport' and its two early sportisation processes were established by Elias and Dunning (1986), while the sportisation process was extended by Maguire (1999) into the globalisation era.

Dunning (1999, pp. 47–61) categorised three historical stages of sportisation: the sports of the ancient world, the sports of medieval and early modern Europe, and the initial development of modern sport. The concept of sports in ancient times—such as in Ancient Greece or Rome—is different to contemporary sport (Dunning, 1999). In ancient times, the aim of sports was to gain 'honour', rather than to pursue the notion of 'fairness'. The high level of brutality in Roman sports was indicative of the fact that these events were partly understood as related to training for war (Dunning, 1999). Despite the difference between ancient and contemporary sports, sports of the present period can still seem violent and brutal, as evidenced by the banning of Cornish hurling (Dunning & Sheard, 1979, p. 23). Moreover, many kinds of contemporary sports have descended from more ancient violent games, including football, campball, hurling and knappan (Dunning, 1999). However, sportisation has become more organised and related to the current processes of sports. Sports have moved from conditions of hunting and killing, such as those seen in foxhunting, to become 'competitive leisure activities' (Dunning, 1999). Elias and Dunning (1986) emphasised that these processes of transformation play an important role in contemporary types of sports. An important aspect of sport's transformation is its expansion overseas. The development of sport processes can be found in many other countries during the Western colonisation process.

Robertson (1992, pp. 58–59) indicated five stages of the globalisation process: germinal (early 15th to mid-18th centuries), incipient (mid-18th century to 1870s), take off (1870s to 1920s), struggling for hegemony (1920s to late 1960s) and uncertainty (late 1960s to the present). Maguire (1999) applied the last three stages to explain the processes of sportisation. For the third phase of sportisation, Maguire (1999) claimed that the aspect of sportisation that fits within the ‘take off’ era witnessed an expansion of international sport activities, with greater establishment of international sport organisations and competitions. These sports processes included increased global sporting events and activities, with one of the most important outcomes being the advent of the modern Olympic Games, as well as many kinds of world championships. Dunning (1999) stated that sportisation is based on a Westernised process, and this dominant Westernised nature is evident in present-day sportisation. Maguire (1999) asserted that the main development of sportisation has been dominated by Anglo-European effects in this phase. In particular, colonisation can be connected to the further diffusion of global sport.

The fourth era of sportisation occurred within the context of globalisation’s struggle for hegemony. Maguire (1999) claimed that there was an Americanisation of sport processes around the world, as evidenced by the rise of baseball, ice hockey and volleyball. As a result, this period saw the withdrawal of dominant European powers, such as the British, with the hegemonic power of Britain and continental Europe replaced by American sports processes. Moreover, even though international sport remained dominated by the West, there were movements within the process of sportisation. Maguire (1999) noted that:

From the 1920s through to the late 1960s, the ‘West’ regulated the field of play, sports organization, the financial surpluses generated by sporting festivals and the ideological meanings associated with such events. ‘Western’ and non-Western people

actively—as opposed to passively—embraced some aspects of the sports that diffused out of the Anglo-Euro-American core (p. 85).

The process of sportisation has become more globalised. Increasing global competition and interdependencies of sportisation have allowed sport to become a tool to express local national identity and nationalism.

The fifth phase of sportisation includes the more dynamic development of power processes in world sport. The power balance of global sport has been influenced through British, European and American processes. However, this established power balance also includes other directions, such as from West to East. Maguire (1999) stated that there seems to be not only decreasing Anglo/Euro and American power, but also increasing East and local sport power during the fifth phase of global sport. Maguire (1999) noted that, ‘representatives of different civilizational traditions not only resist Westernization and Americanization but also seek to express and develop their own cultural heritage’ (p. 89). Thus, although many features of global sport are still controlled by Western powers, the power balance of sport has developed in more dynamic directions through the sportisation process. This is evidenced by the development of local folk games of north-east Asian martial arts in America and Europe (Maguire, 1999).

The process of sportisation indicates how sport has diffused around the world. It also stresses the dynamic power balance of global sport from its Anglo/European regions to American and East regions. As result of sportisation, the process of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties can be seen in the global sport arena. It is important to consider sportisation because this research seeks to study the long-term processes that led to naturalised athletes emerging in Korea over a century after the origin of table tennis in the theoretical framework.

### **1.2.3 Relationship between the Established and the Outsider**

Established and outsider relation studied three groups of residence in a small city called Winston Parva in Leicester, England. Apart from the most important points here, the established group separated themselves from the outsiders through collective cohesion, internal control, holding the same norms, and strengthening their identities (Elias & Scotson, 1994). They used the pronoun pairs 'I/we' and 'us/them' to denote the relationship of power between the two groups in the process of power flowing in one direction. The focus of the research was on the flow of power in three different groups within the forehead. The first group was the 'old families' residing in Zone One, who held a long-term resident power. The second group comprised workers, some of whom had residence power in this area. The third group comprised newcomers to the area, who experienced despair and stigma. The problems between these groups were not social, such as social class, educational environment, nationality, race or religion. The problems arose from the power relations in the three groups. For example, all people in the first and some people in the second groups were recognised as the established, who had lived in the area for a long period. These groups stigmatised people who were new to the area from the second and third groups, and labelled them as outsiders (Elias & Scotson, 1994).

The established group created this idea of the outsider group because, through rumours and stigma, they created the ideal image that they were superior to the 'outsiders' (Elias & Scotson, 1994). Collectively, the established group consistently generated negative words and images to depict the inferiority of the outsider group, while the outsider group internalised this inferiority. Interestingly, the actions of the established group derived solely from the power of having lived in the area for a long time (Elias & Scotson, 1994). In other

words, the established group firmly believed that their beliefs and belief systems in their area of living through their long dwelling period are their charisma and power. However, the power relations between these two groups were not fixed, but always changed and moved. Thus, the established group was reconfigured as charisma and we ideal images to distinguish them from the outsider, while the outsider group felt the group's shame with the image of them. This is an important clue to understanding the power process through 'I/we' and 'us/them', as discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to the Korean newspapers' articles about the Chinese naturalised table tennis athletes and Korean athletes. In addition, the interviews in Chapter 5 with different Korean national identity groups formed around naturalised athletes will help this thesis examine the relative power processes among these different groups through nominal pronouns.

#### **1.2.4 Personal Pronouns and Habitus**

Elias (1996) introduced the notion of using personal pronoun pairs, such as 'I/we' and 'us/them', in the relationship to understand identity and national character in his book, *The Germans*. Maguire (1999) argued that:

Elias investigated the deeply embodied aspects of German habitus, personality, social structure and conduct and how these features (the I/we-images of the Germans) emerged out of the nation's history and pattern of social development. The fortunes of the nation became sediment, internalised and fused as part of the 'second nature' (the habitus) of its citizens, whose actions made and remade the national habitus anew. The 'image' of the nation is also constitutive of a person's self-image (p. 184).

The habitus is important in interpreting this nominal pronoun. Through the habitus, the state and individual are bound together (Tuck, 2003). The term 'habitus' was made famous by the sociologist Bourdieu; however, Elias (1991) originally used this term to solve the false dichotomy between individuals and society. However, the emotional solidarity between

individuals and their country can create ‘sleeping memories’, which become organised around common symbols, such as the Olympic team (Lee & Maguire, 2011). Although these symbols and ‘sleeping memories’ are not well recognised, they are strongly reinforced by ‘I/we-relations’ and are based on strong belief systems (1999, p. 184). Lee and Maguire (2011) stated that ‘international sport contests involve “patriot games” in which the “special charisma” embodied in the view that nations have of themselves can be nurtured, refined and further developed’ (p. 852). Athletes in these ‘patriot games’ play an important role in reflecting the country’s special charisma. Through their heroic efforts, the sport gradually turns into a ‘fantasy field’, and the country’s ‘charisma’ is safely protected (Tuck, 2003).

### **1.3 Conclusion**

In summary, I have debated the features of figurational sociology in the theoretical section, and discussed the concepts necessary for this paper. Against the background of figurational sociology, this research studies Korean nationalism and national identity through Chinese naturalised table tennis players in South Korea. It particularly focuses on the following concepts: civilisation processes, the relationship between the established and the outsider, sportisation, and personal pronouns and habitus. The concepts of figurational sociology are linked to the concepts in this research. Through globalisation and civilisation for a long time, individuals freely cross the country. The relationship between outsiders and established concepts is used in this paper to view the changes in nationalism and national identity in Korea, and to examine the social position of Chinese naturalised athletes in Korea. Sportisation is used to understand the history of table tennis and its route to Northeast Asia, especially China and Korea. An important issue to examine is the social power of table tennis. Finally, the concept of personal pronouns and habitus is used to demonstrate how Korean

athletes and naturalised athletes are represented in Korean newspapers, and the difference in social power among their personal pronouns. The concept of habitus also examines how Korean media habitus appears in the expression of nationalism in Korean newspaper reports. The next chapter will begin to study the literature relevant to this thesis, while considering the theoretical background of figurational sociology and the purpose of this thesis.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review is one of the most important parts of the thesis because it determines whether there have been previous contributions to the field, and to take a seat in an area that has not been studied. This thesis organises the literature on Korean nationalism and national identity that is known through the table tennis sport naturalisation in Korea during the globalisation process. Before this research seeks to examine the sociological issues related to athlete naturalisation, nationalism and the national identity process in South Korea, it is important to explore previous contributions regarding the main framework and theoretical and conceptual components of these areas. This literature review is divided into four main parts.

The first section reviews the globalisation process, which is the background to sports migration, especially sports naturalisation. The second section briefly investigates the current flow of global athletics migration/naturalisation, and focuses on the naturalisation of sports in Korea. The third section broadly examines sports nationalism and national identity, mainly concerning Korea's sports nationalism and national identity. Finally, the last part will review the sport media complex. Under the influence of globalisation, people have more opportunity to move across borders; however, the movement of these people causes problems, such as the confrontation of identity between migrants and locals (Held & McGrew, 2000). This is an important aspect of this research, as Chinese table tennis players are migrating to other countries through the process of globalisation. In addition, each of the Chinese naturalised

athletes has a problem with the reason, which is related to nationalism and the national identity of each country. Therefore, this chapter presents a literature review to examine globalisation, sports naturalisation, nationalism, national identity, and the sport media complex in South Korean sport.

## **2.2 The Demography of South Korea**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the nationalism and national identity of South Korea through considering Chinese naturalised athletes. This literature review investigates the past literature on globalisation, sport migration, sport naturalisation, nationalism and sport media. This final section reviews the literature on Korea, where this research is actually occurring. In particular, the literature review about Korea is divided into two parts. First, this section examines South Korea's historical, cultural and political background, and, more importantly, focuses on South Korean demographic and population details, migration policy, multiculturalism and relations with China. Second, this section examines the relationship between South Korea and China within the concepts of globalisation, regionalism and regionalisation. The situation of Chinese athletes who are naturalised to South Korea may be able to explain South Korean society, based on the regionalism and regionalisation relations of Korea and China. The general literature on Korea divided into the above two fields will expand understandings of the changes in Korean nationalism and national identity caused by Chinese naturalised table tennis players in Korea.

### **2.2.1 South Korea Becoming a Multicultural Society**

This thesis examines the changes in South Korean society through considering the Chinese table tennis players in current South Korea. To achieve this goal, this section explains the broader historical, social and political backgrounds of South Korea for this

research, and examines the historical, social and political situation of Korea, focusing on foreign migration in South Korea. Therefore, this part of the thesis presents the key literature review on South Korean demographic circumstances, such as foreign migration, multiculturalism, migration policy and relations with China. This section starts by examining the issue of South Korean demographics and population. This part examines the historical, social and political environment of South Korea by identifying changes in Korean demographics and population. Starting from the next paragraph, it discusses the fact that Korea is now entering a multicultural era, and reviews Korea's current immigration policy, starting with the immigration policy of the 1960s. This part will then discuss one of the foundations of this research—the globalisation of Korea–China relations, regionalisation and regionalism.

Korea faced various historical, social and political changes in the 1990s and 2000s. Perhaps the newest and most unusual of these is the change in Korean society to multiculturalism. Korea is becoming a multicultural society so rapidly that it will not hesitate anymore, and the Korean government understands that Korea will gain various benefits as a result of civic society (Castle, 2007). However, while South Korea is already becoming a multicultural society, it is unprepared for multiculturalism or for globalisation (Chae, 2009). Korea is not prepared for multiculturalism—a trend of globalisation—and seems to be preparing with the start of multiculturalism. Therefore, this part reviews the immigration policy of Korea until this Korea comes to the multicultural process. Given that South Korea is becoming a multicultural society, it is interesting to examine what kind of society it was in the past, and which migration policies it implemented previously.

Essentially, at the beginning of the 1960s, Korea's immigration policy did not accept foreigners into Korea, but sent Koreans to other countries. Figure 1 presents the numbers of Koreans who permanently left South Korea to move overseas from 1960 to 2013. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in South Korea (2010), from the 1960s to the mid-1980s, Korea was an immigrant dispatching country, with a large number of South Koreans moving to other countries to gain better employment. Figure 1 shows the status of South Korean people moving overseas from 1962 to 2013, as released by the South Korean government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in 2014. From this time on, since the Korean War (1950 to 1953), South Koreans have started to migrate to foreign countries since the 1960s.

Another interesting point is that, while South Koreans migrated to foreign countries in large numbers in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, these numbers declined from the 1990s. In 1976, the largest number of people (46,533) moved to foreign countries. At this time, the Korean government's immigration policy had a national incentive to seek employment and new jobs in foreign countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). In the 1960s, immigration policy in Korea encouraged sending highly educated professionals from Korea to places such as Germany and the United States—good Western countries where money could be earned (IOM MRTTC Research Report Series, 2014). In other words, near the 1970s, the Korean government politically sent Koreans to countries with good economic conditions. Thus, a large number of Koreans migrated to foreign countries. The *Seoul* newspaper labelled the overseas migration of Koreans from 1960 to early 2000 the 'Korea exodus' (*Seoul*, 2014, p.8).

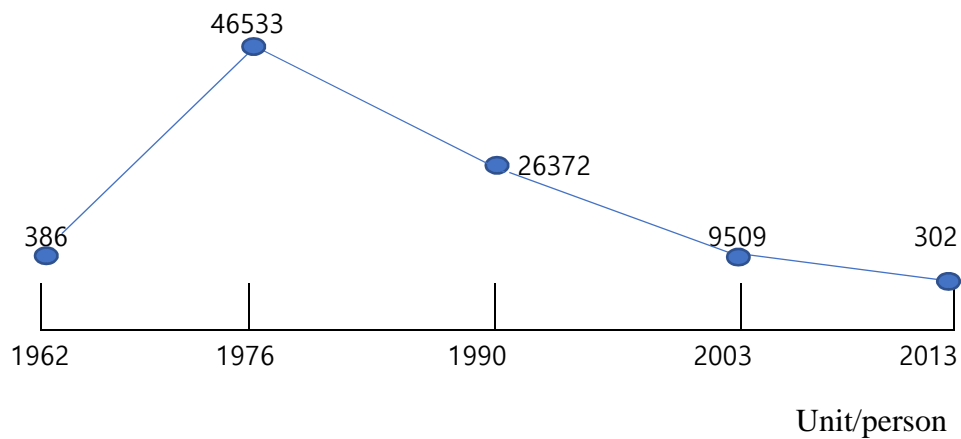


Figure 2.1. Korean migration status by year, 1962–2013. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014.

In contrast, since early 2000, the number of foreign migrants from Korea has decreased to less than 10,000 people. Moreover, as shown in Figure 2.1, only the smallest number of Koreans migrated to foreign countries over the last 50 years in 2013. Various Korean immigration scholars and academics abroad have studied this phenomenon, and identified that this demographic change in Korean society has arisen because of the development of the Korean economy (Ha & Jang, 2015; Kim, 2017; Moon, 2003, 2010; Seol & Skrentny, 2009). Another reason for this change is that South Korea passed the International Monetary Fund economic crisis in the late 1990s, and became stable politically, economically and socially (Lee, 2007).

Figure 2.1 displays the predicted growth of the Korean population, released by the Korea Statistical Office in South Korea in 2017. This figure also displays the changes in the population of Korea from 1965 to the present, and predicts the future of the Korean population until 2065. According to the Korea Statistical Office (2017), the two major changes in Korean society are as follows. First, the total population of South Korea will increase from 51.1 million in 2015 to 52.96 million in 2031, and then decrease to 40.32

million by 2065, which is the same as the 1990 level. Second, as indicated in Figure 2.1 and Table 2.1, among the factors causing population change in Korea are births, deaths and international migration. The declining birth rate, ageing population and number of deaths outweighing the number of births will cause the population to begin to decline in 2029 (Lee, 2010; Chung, 2010).

As Bang and Lee (2015) stated, the ageing population appears to be the largest problem in East Asia, especially in Korean society, and the ageing migration policy of the South Korean government is not yet sufficient. A potential solution to the problem of the declining Korean population is the introduction of foreigners to Korean society in the future, which is called ‘racial substitution’ (Lee, 2010). Another main reason for the decline in the Korean population is the low birth rate. This problem is that Korean women refuse to give up their children due to economic problems or to lose their jobs during the temporary period (Choi, 2004). In other words, Korean women are given unreasonable treatment in the labour market during pregnancy, and are either ceasing or delaying pregnancy to preserve their jobs (Chung, 2010). However, the population decline is predicted from 2032, but since the early 2000s, the number of foreigners (migration and naturalisation) coming from foreign countries has slowed down the population of Korea.

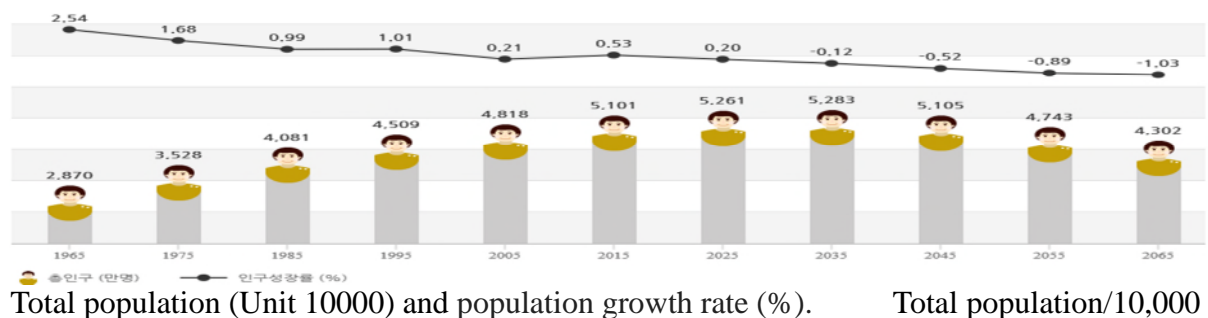


Figure 2.2. Total population numbers and population growth rate in South Korea. Source: Korea Statistical Office, 2017.

Table 2.1

*Total Population Numbers and Population Growth Rate in South Korea*

	1965	1975	1985	1995	2005	2015	2025	2035	2045	2055	2065
Total population (10,000)	2,870	3,528	4,081	4,509	4,818	5,101	5,261	5,283	5,105	4,743	4,302
Population growth rate	2.54	1.68	0.99	1.01	0.21	0.53	0.20	-0.12	-0.52	-0.89	-1.03
Total population/10,000											

Source: Korea Statistical Office, 2017.

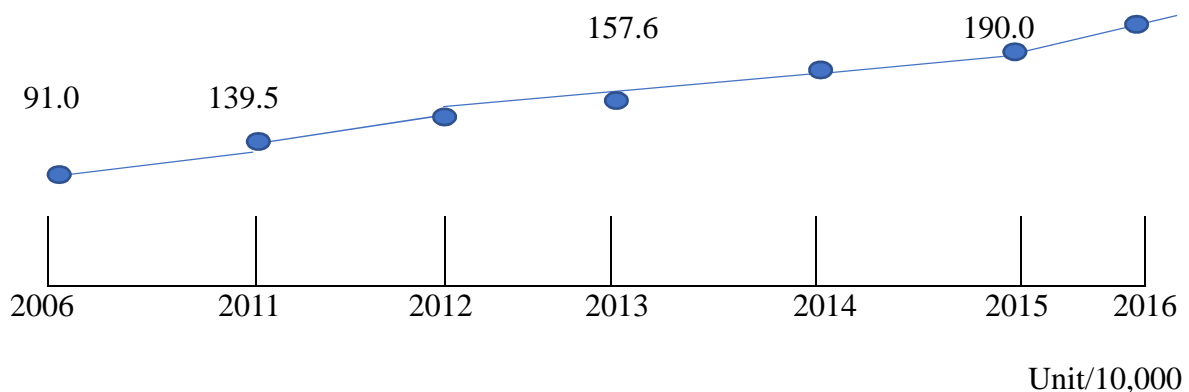
The Korea Statistical Office shows that the South Korean population will decrease from 2035. However, it is possible that foreign migrants who came to South Korea during earlier times could help the population increase. It is expected that the proportion of foreigners in South Korea will increase to fill the space of the low birth rate and ageing issue in Korean society. For this reason, this section examines the number of foreigners who have entered Korea since 2000. As aforementioned, many scholars state that Korea is now becoming a multicultural society. Thus, this section also examines official data to determine the growth rate of foreigners in Korea and which kinds of foreigners live in Korea.

Figure 2.3 below displays the status of foreigners residing in South Korea from 2006 to 2016, as investigated by the Ministry of Justice. It shows that the number of foreigners who have entered Korea since 2006 is steadily increasing, reaching over 200 million in 2016. According to the *Seoul* (2017) newspaper, the number of foreign residents in Korea will reach 300 million in the next five years, which will account for 5.8% of the Korean population. Moreover, 5% of the more than 200 million foreigners living in Korea are naturalised people who live in Korea permanently. In short, the beginning and the present of Korean naturalisation, as the *Seoul* (2011), a Taiwanese person became naturalised for the first time

in 1957. There were only 34 naturalised individuals in Korea in the 2000s; however, during the last 10 years, more than 9,000 people have become naturalised into South Korea.

There are many reasons for this sudden change and rapid increase in naturalised people in Korea, but it is said that the reason for the fast increase of international marriage in Korea and the influx of Chinese Korea in the last 10 years (*Seoul*, 2011). The largest number of naturalised people in Korea come from China (79% of the total), followed by Vietnam (9%) and the Philippines (5%) (The Ministry of Justice, 2015) Since 2011, the Korean government has implemented a ‘Special Naturalisation Policy’ to attract Korean experts to certain fields, such as sports, music and science. As a result, 19 foreign athletes were selected to represent Korea at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games.

The growth rate of foreigners living in Korea is causing multicultural social change, which Korean society is experiencing for the first time in its history (Chang, 2010). From this perspective, one significant consideration is to determine from which countries these different people are coming to Korea to create this multiculturalism.

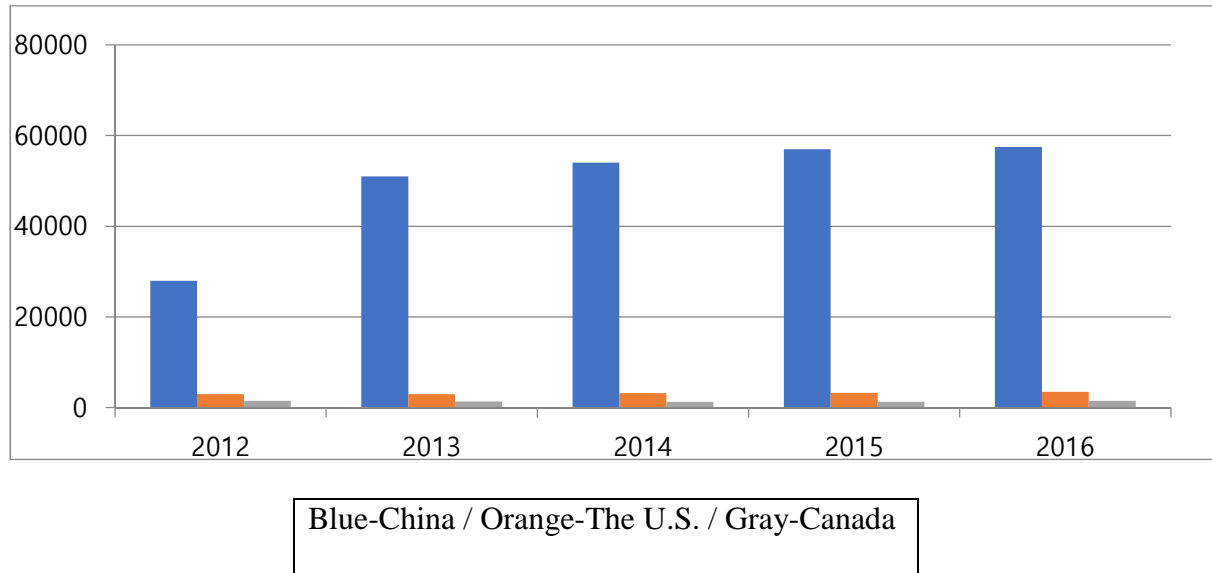


Nationalities	Number of People
China	1.017.000
Vietnam	149.000
The U.S.	140.000
Thailand	100.100
Philippines	57.000
Uzbekistan	54.000



By 2016 - Unit/10,000

Figure 2.3. Foreigner growth rate and status of foreigners in Korea Source: Ministry of Justice, 2006–2016.



Unit / person

Figure 2.4. Status of foreign nationals in Korea by nationality and year. Source: Statistical Yearbook of Immigration, 2017.

The bottom section of Figure 2.3 displays that the foreigners of some countries are the seven representative countries in South Korea, and the largest number of foreigners living in South Korea come from China, with the largest number of people in Vietnam, the United States, Thailand, the Philippines, Uzbekistan and Japan. Another interesting fact, as shown in Figure 2.4, is that an overwhelming number of foreigners have relocated from China to South Korea. It should be noted here that the Chinese people who migrated to South Korea are actually Korean descendants—they are Chinese–Korean people who were born in China (Hu, 2012).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, according to the Korean Ministry of Justice’s (2015) statistical data,

<sup>5</sup> The Chinese people mentioned here are the children of people whose grandparents or parents moved to China. In Korea, these people are called ‘*Cho-Sun-Jok*’, but they do not use it well because they are gradually

people from more than 214 countries have relocated to live in South Korea. During the past 5,000 years, there have never been so many foreigners in Korea. This change has led to the new experience of multiculturalism because of the flow of globalisation to Korea. Therefore, Korean society argues that South Korea should develop a foundation to prepare for this multicultural society by considering new social and political policies suitable for this multicultural era (Yang & Park, 2012).

The current change of Korea to a multicultural society is divided into three categories by scholars, who argue that policies should be based on their views. The first is to change the myth of a 'one-blood' nation to globalisation. The second is de-nationalisation. The third is the notion of South Korea changing from an ethnic society to civic society. First, Korea is struggling to create an active policy for multiculturalism because it is difficult to escape the national ideology of a single culturally descended nation and of 'pure blood' (Lee & Baik, 2012). During the past 100 years, South Korean society has been applying the ideology of the nation, nationalism and cultural concepts centred on anti-colonialism and anti-communism (Chen, 1999). The meaning of 'nation' in Korea referred only to Koreans as a one-blood nation and encompassed only people from South Korea. The concept of this one-blood nation should be changed through a national migration policy.

Second, South Korea still has an ethnic society element; however, Korean immigration policy should be denationalised in the form of liberal democracy (Cho, 2009). As shown in Figure 2, by 2025, South Korea's population will start to decline. To prepare for this decline, the South Korean government should establish a political immigration policy

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dismissing them. Currently, they are referred to in Korea as '*Jung-Kuk-Gye-Po*' (Chinese-Korean). Most of these people lived in the Manchu area of China and relocated to Korea for employment. They speak two languages—Korean and Chinese—and most have a Chinese passport. These people have two identities: Korean and Chinese (Hu, 2012).

based on liberalism and democracy, and prepare to welcome a variety of immigrants coming to South Korea from abroad (Cho, 2009). Foreigners should enjoy equal rights in a politically multicultural society, where the concept of the nation is reinterpreted.

Third, as discussed by Castle (2007), South Korean society can no longer avoid the multicultural process. However, Korea's immigration policy still has an 'ethnicity card'. The reason is that the Korean government will be easier for the ethnic society to control society. However, if the Korean government's card policy is still valid, yet more foreigners enter Korea in the future, the card migration policy will be a hindrance to a Korean multicultural society. The Korean government has already been asked by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2007) to change its national policy in a multiracial manner, since Korea's multicultural policy is centred only on Korean people.

To summarise this section on demographic migration and multiculturalism in Korea, Korean immigration in the early 1960s comprised a national immigration policy that encouraged Korean people to seek jobs abroad. These patterns persisted until the end of the 1980s, when a large number of foreigners came to Korea because of its economic development and political stability. This number of foreigners has increased, and Korea has become a multicultural society. The most influential group in this process is the Korean-Chinese people who come from China. People have also migrated to Korea from Vietnam, the Philippines, the United States and Uzbekistan. In total, people from 214 countries live in Korea. Therefore, the Korean government should prepare and revise a policy that can ensure migrants have equal rights in Korean society. The Korean government has created and implemented various policies for Korean society during the multicultural changes that it has experienced over the past 20 years; however, it still needs to solve the problems of the one-

blood nation, de-nationalism and ethnic society. Through this demographic change in Korean society, this thesis examines the nationality and national identity of Korean society by studying Chinese naturalised table tennis players. Chinese naturalised athletes in Korea are part of the multicultural process in Korea and are an important social science sample for studying Korean multiculturalism, especially in terms of Korean nationalism and national identity.

### **2.2.2 Globalisation or Regionalisation in Multicultural South Korea**

The concept of globalisation was mentioned at the beginning of this literature review.

Once again stressing the point of globalisation, Robertson (1992) emphasised that:

Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole ... both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole (p. 8).

In other words, globalisation is a process through which time and space are compressed and the earth is connected. From this perspective, global migration is an important pattern in the globalisation process (Held & McGrew, 2000). The discussion prior to this section confirmed that South Korea has become a multicultural society through global migration—one of the various changes caused by globalisation. According to immigrant data, immigrants entering Korea come from more than 214 different countries (Korean Ministry of Justice, 2015). This evidence suggests that South Korea's multicultural process is proceeding via globalisation. However, there is a reason to closely examine the distribution of foreign immigrants in South Korea.

According to Figures 3 and 4, more than half of the overseas migrants in Korea are from China. These immigrants are Chinese–Koreans (*Cho-Sun-Jek*), who were born in China. More than half of the total foreigners entering Korea come from China (Kim, 2003). This is a

phenomenon of migration in Korea, which is bordered by China in the Northeast Asia regional area. This may be part of globalisation, yet may also be a process of regionalisation within the same region. According to the concept of regionalisation, capital, goods and people interact in a particular area, usually without government involvement, to freely cross borders and travel (Hoshiro, 2013). Important to the view of regionalisation is a voluntary exchange of free non-organisational people (Hoshiro, 2013). This section explores the concepts of regionalisation and regionalism as follows. Unlike regionalisation, regionalism is a state-led policy (Beeson, 2005). The relationship between these two concepts is that regionalisation may be influenced by the national policy of regionalism, yet regionalisation essentially comprises private sector activities (Breslin & Higgott, 2000). Therefore, regionalisation is a regional interchange that is included in globalisation, and regionalism is a political concept centring on the region—unlike globalisation.

Through globalisation and regional relations, human relations between South Korea and China have involved a somewhat governmental diplomatic policy; however, most Chinese–Korean people are entering South Korea for personal reasons. The mass influx of Chinese–Koreans into Korea began in 1992, after South Korea established diplomatic ties with China (Park, 2010). Before 1992, diplomatic relations between Korea and China were not established, under the influence of the Cold War (Kim, 1999). Until this time, China maintained diplomatic relations with North Korea, and viewed South Korea as a hostile country. However, in 1992, Korea and China suddenly developed diplomatic ties. One of the reasons for this change derived from an incident on 5 May 1983, when a Chinese high-jacked aircraft landed in South Korea.<sup>6</sup> Against this political background, China participated in the

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<sup>6</sup> After the Korean War, Korea and China had almost no connection. However, on 5 May 1983, a Chinese civil aircraft was abducted and landed in South Korea. This was a serious event that could have caused a diplomatic

1986 Asian Games in Seoul and the 1988 Seoul Olympics. In 1992, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. As a result of this process, Chinese–Korean people who were living in China mass-migrated to Korea. As aforementioned, more than half of the total foreigners living in South Korea are Chinese–Koreans. Although these two countries have political backgrounds, most of the human exchange that flows from China to South Korea is personal migration. Most Chinese people come to Korea to visit relatives, undertake international marriage, and seek personal employment or study abroad.

Therefore, the background of the Chinese people who enter South Korea is influenced by globalisation, yet also includes aspects of regionalisation. However, it seems that the human exchange of this pattern from China to South Korea is far from regionalism. Perhaps this is the environment in which Koreans can live in South Korea based on human exchange, which is the influence of globalisation and regionalisation. For example, there are Chinese naturalised table tennis players in South Korea. Although these athletes are not all Chinese–Koreans, they could enter South Korea for personal purposes and play table tennis. It is also interesting to note that private South Korean companies brought them to Korea. Further, a few of them came to South Korea and, after a certain period, changed their nationality to South Korea and became national athletes representing Korea. However, it is not only Korea that has Chinese naturalised athletes. Chinese naturalised athletes have also advanced into

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problem because the plane carried 105 passengers and crew who were abducted from the air and entered the Korean airspace, rather than an emergency landing because of the failure of the aircraft. Following this event, the South Korean government allowed the Chinese civilians to return safely to China, and the hostages were treated according to Korean law.

us, 40 years after the Korean War, the two governments took the first step towards improving their relationship. As a result of these improvements, China has since participated in the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Seoul Olympics in Korea.

many other countries through the flow of globalisation. There are also exchanges of Chinese naturalised table tennis players like Korea in the same region.

### **2.3 Globalisation and Global Sport**

Sociologists seek to understand the dominant forces that have affected society throughout human history. Sociology deals with problems in society, while also being a part of this society (Elias, 1978). In regard to globalisation, social scientists seek to understand what globalisation is and which area of globalisation is appropriate for their research. Among the various effects of globalisation, the current research focuses on the migration of people, especially in regard to sports naturalisation. Globalisation is one of the main forces affecting both local and global sociocultural circumstances. Robertson (1992) emphasised that ‘globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole ... both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole’ (p. 8).

Globalisation broadly refers to the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnections, taking into account many factors of people’s life circumstances (Held et al., 1999). Moreover, the processes of globalisation are occurring with a ‘greater degree of interdependence’ and causing an ‘increased awareness of a sense of the world as a whole’ (Maguire, 1994, p. 400). Giddens (2009) stated that the global development of humanity has engaged every aspect of human history. The main theme of globalisation is that all aspects of social life are connected globally, which is leading to ‘the process whereby the world becomes a single place’ (Robertson, 1992, p. 27). Virilio (1992) claimed that globalisation indicates the ‘end of geography’ (p. 17) with regard to exchanging cultural, economic, political and social activities. The effect of globalisation on sport is also an

important feature that symbolises the flow of globalisation. Thus, this research examines the relationship between globalisation and sport from a figurational sociology perspective.

Robertson's (1992) fifth phase of globalisation and Maguire's (1999) sportisation phases are helpful in understanding the process of globalisation in general and in relation to sport. From the perspective of sportisation (Maguire, 1999; Maguire et al., 2002), the globalisation of sports takes place through the process of standardisation and the organised process from the origin of sports through the first phase and second phase, through the time of Anglo/European and Anglo/American dominance, in which global sports flowed from West to East. The direction is now tending to change from East to West. To understand globalisation and global sport, this study applies the perspective of figurational sociology. Maguire (1999) stated:

Globalization possesses involve multidirectional movements of people, practices, customs and ideas. Yet, although the globe can be understood as an interdependent whole, in different figurational fields, established (core) and outsider (peripheral) groups and nations-states are constantly vying with each other for dominant positions, global processes are multidirectional, involve a serious of power balances, yet have *neither* the hidden hand of progress *nor* some all-pervasive, overarching conspiracy guiding them. For process sociologists, globalization processes have a blind, unplanned dimension to them and a relative autonomy from the intensions of specific groups of people. (p. 40)

To be more specific, in relation to the globalisation and global sport, figurational sociologists need to avoid using homogenisation thesis in the same way as the modernisation thesis, which confirms the 'triumph of the West' and indicates that a unified Western culture is the main stream of globalisation. However, this view does not wholly encompass the process of globalisation (Maguire, 1994). To reduce misunderstandings of the homogenisation theory, figurational sociology introduced the concept of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties, which is also related to the concept of power in figurational



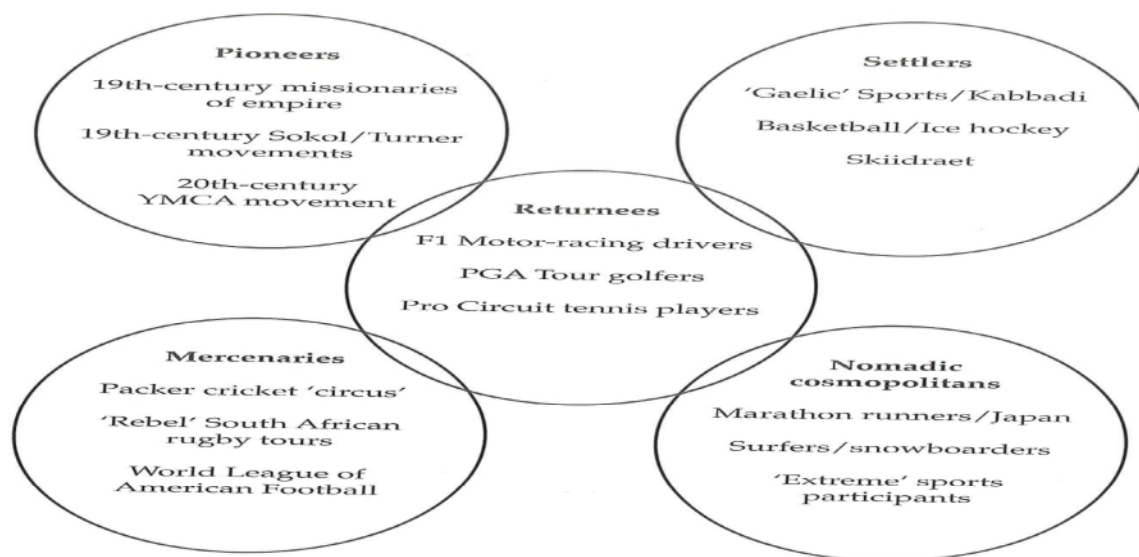
sociology. What is also important is the power to move groups, nations and civilisations in a complex and unequal manner through globalisation and global sport relations (Maguire, 2005).

When a sport originates in the West and develops into the East, the direction of power flows from the West to East. However, after a certain period, the East learns the sport and develops similar skills to the West or even surpasses the West. The subject of this research, table tennis, is a good example of this process. Table tennis originated in the West and entered the East, where it was further developed. As a result, much later, Chinese table tennis players started becoming naturalised to compete in Western countries. Maguire (1994, p. 403) argued that this exchange of cultures has led to non-Western codes and customs permeating Western society. In addition, the results of this cross-cultural exchange are diminishing the contrasts between East and West, and the power ratio of the two groups is moving in a parallel direction. Through these concepts of figurational sociology, this research observes the flow of South Korean society's nationalism and national identity through examining Chinese naturalised athletes. The following section reviews global sports migration, global sports naturalisation, sports nationalism, national identity, and the sports media complex.

## **2.4 Athlete Migration**

Migrant labourers frequently cross social and geographic borders. Maguire and Bale (1994, p. 1) highlighted that athletes are moving around the globe—as they stated, ‘athletes are on the move’ (p. 1)—and that sport migration is one of the more prominent aspects of global sport. Maguire (1999) stated that ‘labour migration is an established feature of the sporting “global village”’. These global athletes can be divided into particular categories

according to their varied interests. Global sport migration not only involves players, but also other groups of sporting professionals, including managers and officials (Maguire et al., 2002). Maguire and Bale (1994) and Maguire (1999) categorised sport migrants into five groups: pioneers, mercenaries, nomads, settlers and returnees. Maguire (1996, p. 339; 1999, p. 106) illustrated the typology of sport labour migration, as indicated in Figure 2.5.



**Figure 2.5** Typology of sports labour migration. Source: Maguire, 1996, p. 339; 1999, p. 106.

First, as this typology indicates, the group of pioneer athletes represented the first expansion of sport to the rest of the world. In case of the planned sport pioneers process of missionary as YMCA movement, it can be seen as the process of introducing sport to other countries. This can include unintended introductions, such as when football was imported to Korea in 1882 by the British navy on the *Flying Horse*.<sup>7</sup> Second, some mercenaries play sports in different countries in order to earn money—they can be understood as short-term

<sup>7</sup> The *Flying Horse* was an English navy ship that arrived at Incheon Harbour in Korea in 1882. According to the Korean Football Association, English navy soldiers played football on the ship and subsequently introduced the sport to some Korean people in the harbour area. From [http://www.kfa.or.kr/kfa\\_history/history\\_01.asp](http://www.kfa.or.kr/kfa_history/history_01.asp).

employed 'hired guns' (Maguire, 1999, p. 105). The particular characteristics of mercenaries are that they have little or no attachment to the local, no sense of place in relation to the space where they currently reside or do their body work' (Maguire, 1999, p. 105). Third, global nomad athletes have greater cosmopolitan engagement with migration (Maguire, 1999). Nomads' cosmopolitan sport labour is focused on travelling and experiencing varied global cultures (Maguire & Stead, 1996).

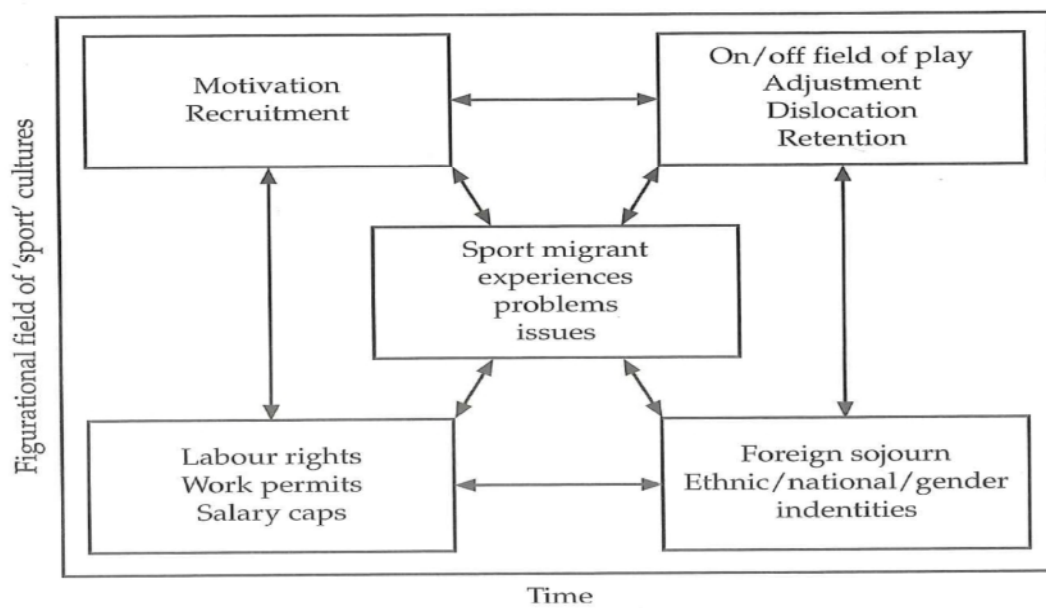
Fourth, returnees are people who have not settled in the host countries where they perform their sport. Even if they are pioneers, mercenaries or long-term settlers in other parts of the world, they can become returnees because of the lure of 'home soil' (Maguire, 1999, p. 106). Finally, settlers are one of the most interesting groups in this research. Unlike returnees, Maguire (1999) stated that settlers 'not only bring their sports with them but are sports migrants who subsequently stay and settle in the society where they perform their labour' (p. 105). Pioneers, mercenaries and nomadic cosmopolitans can also be returnees or settlers due to the varied cultural, economic, political, social, personal and national circumstances in the host countries where they play. Maguire and Pearton (2000) noted that:

Sports workers tend to be 'hired' by a specific club or organization and individuals reside in the host country for a limited period. However, this is not always the case. Some athletes stay on and make the host country their 'home'. This occurs either through marriage to a citizen of that country or through staying 'attached' to a specific country for long enough to qualify for nationality status. Chen Xinhua, a former citizen of the People's Republic of China who played table tennis for Britain during the early 1990s, and Sydney Maree, a South African runner who became a naturalized American citizen to run in international competitions during the same period, are examples. Sometimes, such as in European basketball, individual begin to play for country in which they become resident then subsequently claim 'nationality' (p. 177).

One of the most significant issues for athlete settlers is changing their nationality. Thus, it is important to examine how and why athletes are naturalised to the host country, rather than returning to their own country. This examination should include the circumstances between

athletes' home countries and host nations. Investigating the case of settlers should include both planned and unintended approaches, with multidimensional considerations. The important concept of settlers in the naturalisation process will be examined later in this review.

Given these features of global sport migration, it is also important to understand the athletes' lives in their host nations. Maguire (1999) examined cases involving global migrants and the various issues they confront with respect to labour rights, work permits, quotas, salary caps, recruitment and retention strategies, national designation, foreign sojourns and cultural dislocations in figure 2.6.



**Figure 2.6** Sport migrant experiences and issues. Source: Maguire, 1999.

The concepts of the typology of sport migration and sport migrant experiences and issues can be interconnected to each case of global athlete migration. Maguire (1999) emphasised that the processes of sport migration are shaped by a series of complex interdependencies, such as cultural, economic, political, social and geographical issues. Thus,

rather than employing a mono-dimensional approach in this research, it is important to consider the varied webs of an interdependent approach. There are many different factors behind the global migration of athletes. For example, global migrants may have pride in their sporting talents and seek to teach or play overseas, rather than seeking purely economic benefits, such as in the case of those athletes who play in other countries in order to earn money. Maguire and Pearton (2000, p. 761) stressed that although global sport labour seems to mainly entail seeking economic benefit, this is also interdependent with a web of other cultural, political, geographical and historical components.

One simple reason that athletes relocate to a different country is to leave an area that is overpopulated by talented athletes in their sport which means a lack of professional opportunities. For example, it is for this reason that many talented ice hockey players from Canada (Maguire, 1996) and football players from Brazil (Taylor, 2006) have migrated to other countries. Maguire (1996) and Maguire and Stead (1996, 1998) found that many American basketball and ice hockey players prefer to work in European nations, including Britain. Even if these athletes' main purpose is economic benefit, their decisions are related to a series of other reasons, such as having a similar cultural background, including language. Moreover, Maguire and Stead (1998) and Stead and Maguire (2000) investigated the processes of Nordic/Scandinavian football players in the English league. One of their most interesting findings was that these football players' purpose for relocating was to play at a more competitive level than at home. All of this previous research appears to indicate that, in investigating the process of global migration, it is necessary to follow a multidimensional approach that considers both planned and unintended development.

To more closely consider particular athletes' migration patterns as settlers, as well as athlete naturalisation, some interesting issues reveal a variety of interdependencies among the topics of naturalisation with respect to other topics, such as culture, economic, politics and social components. For example, although China previously restricted the ability of its nationals to migrate elsewhere, nowadays, many Chinese athletes have moved around the world, and some have become naturalised citizens of democratic and capitalist host countries. Thus, the following section focuses on the concept of the naturalisation of global sport labour.

## **2.5 Global Athlete Naturalisation**

As Figure 2.5 indicated, settlers prefer to stay in the host country, rather than returning home. Castles and Miller (2003, p. 31) referred to naturalisation as a settlement process in which migrants stay in their new country and change their citizenship. In terms of sports naturalisation, the world is witnessing many cases of borderless athletes who cross not only national borders, but also racial and ethnic borders, within the process of globalisation (Chiba et al., 2001, p. 203). Terms dictating the course of naturalisation are one of the main factors of migration affecting settlers and mercenaries (Maguire, 1999). Among global athletes, some people elect to remain overseas in order to create a new home for themselves (Lanfranchi, 1994; Maguire, 1996, p. 337), with many naturalised athletes remaining in other nations. Moreover, sports migration also encompasses coaches, officials, administrators and sports scientists (Maguire, 2012) who cross borders for migration and naturalisation.

This research mainly focuses on the naturalisation of athletes. Athlete naturalisation can be divided into two types. The first type involves working in a sports club in the naturalised country. The second type involves representing the naturalised country as an

athlete. An example of the first type is the naturalisation of American basketball players for British clubs (Falcous & Maguire, 2005). An example of the latter is a Brazilian soccer player being selected as a representative of the Japanese national soccer team (Chiba, Ebihara, & Morino, 2001). The number of national delegates selected to play for host countries is constantly increasing. Andreff (2006) stated that the number of naturalised athletes increased significantly from the 2004 Athens Olympics to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

However, while the process of global athletes' movement has taken a prominent position within the phenomenon of global migration, the question of sport naturalisation has not garnered as much attention as the processes of sport migration. There are some previous contributions to the field of global sport naturalisation, including work by Maguire and Bale (1994), Maguire (1996), Chiba et al. (2001), Wong and Trumper (2002), Falcous and Maguire (2005), Siekmann (2006), Poli (2007), Andreff (2010), Campbell (2010) and Poulton and Maguire (2012). However, this work tends to focus on Western countries and Western-based sports relations. For example, in Asia, Chiba, Ebihara, and Norino (2001) studied naturalisation in Japanese soccer and various cases of sport naturalisation in Qatar (Campbell, 2010). Sport naturalisation has taken a more prominent role across a range of sports since 1990. Campbell (2010, p. 47) argued that when local sport becomes more professional, National Governing Bodies sports bodies seek talented players from around the world to improve their local teams. They search the international sports labour market, rather than only looking for home-grown players. These athletes can be considered to be permanent 'hired guns' for the host country. For example, at the 1999 Rugby World Cup, many New Zealand rugby players competed for the international teams of Scotland, Wales and Japan (Chiba et al., 2001). Other examples include Chen Xinhua, a Chinese athlete who played for the British

national table tennis team in the early 1990s; Sydney Maree, a South African who represented the USA in athletics (Maguire & Pearton, 2000, p. 177); and Saif Saeed Shaheen, a Kenyan who won the 3,000-metre steeple chase event for Qatar at the World Track and Field Championships in 2003 and 2005 (Hunter, 2003, p. 409).

Moreover, many Canadian ice hockey athletes play for Britain, which decreases opportunities for young British players (Maguire, 1996, p. 347). According to Maguire (1996) and Maguire and Stead (1996), cases involving Canadian ice hockey and cricket indicate that particular countries have a range of potentially international players who compete either locally or for other countries. Maguire (1996), Maguire and Stead (1996) and Maguire and Pearton (2000) discussed the issues and processes affecting naturalised players in Canadian ice hockey and British cricket, particularly with regard to the issue of migration and naturalisation in the 1998 FIFA World Cup. Athletes playing for national teams other than their home country were common in archery, baseball, basketball, track and field, ice hockey and rugby.

These previous sports naturalisation studies not only examined the process of naturalisation, but also considered the effects of sports naturalisation on local athletes. The local influence of sports naturalisation can be both positive and negative. While naturalisation can lead to skills transfer to local athletes and improve the area's reputation for the sport, it can also alienate local players (Falcous & Maguire, 2005). Maguire (1996) argued that altered financial status and lack of opportunities for local athletes have arisen because of the presence of naturalised players. Moreover, an important issue is how these naturalised players connect with local social agendas, such as those related to nationalism (Chiba et al., 2001). In many respects, naturalised athletes epitomise 'transnational cultural and capitalist business



practices’, while also ‘willingly serving as national cultural icons for the re-affirmation of national identities’ (Trumper & Wong, as cited in Maguire & Falcous, 2010, p. 230). Maguire (1996) claimed that playing for another country includes the case of ‘flag of convenience and “dual nationals” playing for the local’ (pp. 349–351). To understand the processes that govern and explain naturalised athletes and national identity, the next section of this study examines more broadly the concept of national identity and nationalism. Maguire’s (1996) contribution to understanding naturalised athletes examined Canadian ice hockey athletes who played for the British national team. This example indicated the figurational processes of athletes’ naturalisation. Maguire (1996) noted:

Canadians are seen as providing a powerful role model and as acting as a spur to the development of indigenous talent ... Given that the GB [Great Britain] team was languishing in the bottom division of world hockey ... the recruitment of foreign migrants came to be seen as desirable by key figures within the ice hockey federation and the club owner’s association ... As residents, they qualify as GB players ... Teams actively recruit this category of player and, indeed, they, along with the dual nationals who hold British passports, are eligible to play for the national team ... Representing another nation involves playing for a ‘flag of convenience’ (p. 347–351).

This implies that the pattern of athlete movement—specifically regarding naturalisation, the formation of nationalism and identity politics—is intertwined with many different local sports in the global context. Thus, these complex interdependencies should be investigated. To closely examine these processes, it will review the progress of Korean athletes’ naturalisation, and will later discuss nationalism and national identity.

### **2.5.1 Global Athlete Naturalisation in Korea**

Sports migration is an important phenomenon in global sports (Maguire, 1999) and is increasingly evident in South Korea. In South Korea, the number of overseas players is increasing due to the trend of globalisation. In 1983, two Brazilian soccer players began

playing for South Korea. Since then, with the development of South Korean professional sports, there has been a steady increase in foreign athletes. According to data from the Ministry of Justice (2009), South Korean sports had 62 foreign athletes in 2005, which increased to 138 in 2009 across South Korean domestic sport leagues such as baseball, football, basketball, and volleyball (Lee, 2010). Moreover, what is even more unusual is that the number of naturalised athletes has suddenly increased since 2008. As for the reasons for this increase in naturalised players, nowadays, South Korea is fielding naturalised athletes in various sports. If South Korea does not have enough competent athletes in a specific Olympic sport, substitute athletes can be sourced from foreign countries (Lee, 2016). Thus, South Korea is aiming to attain more Olympic medals by accepting naturalised athletes.

The process of athlete naturalisation in South Korea can be divided into two types. The first type involves naturalisation by marrying Korean citizens. The second type involves the individual applying for naturalisation to the Korean government. There are also two main issues that arise in relation to naturalisation in South Korean sports. First, if a South Korean player becomes naturalised to a foreign country, he or she is criticised for the fact that the problem of South Korean sports has made them become naturalised abroad. An example of this is Ahn Hyun-Soo, a Korean short-track skater who won three gold medals at the Sochi Olympic Games in 2014 competing for Russia (Kim, Moon, & Kim, 2014; Lee, 2015).<sup>8</sup> When Ahn Hyun-Soo won three gold medals after naturalisation from Korea to Russia, there are two reasons for the naturalisation of a player in Korea. The first is the image of betraying the country, and the second is accusation of a disagreement between the player and the sports

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<sup>8</sup> Ahn Hyun-Soo was a national representative of short-track skating in Korea. He became naturalised to Russia due to personal disagreement with the Korean Short Track Federation, and subsequently won three gold medals at the Sochi Winter Olympics.

federation (Kim et al., 2014). Moreover, through naturalised players, discourses of ethnic-based nationalism and civic nationalism are rooted in traditional problems of Korean society (Lee, 2015). The reason is that the concepts of the traditional nation that Korean society has through the naturalisation players can see the change of the basic values that the individual can choose the nationality from the brink of the nation in the new reification process (Lee, 2015).

The second issue associated with naturalisation in Korean sports is when foreign players become naturalised in Korea. Problems arise because even though the foreign athletes are naturalised, they experience social inequality due to their different appearance and nationality. This issue is the focus of this research because Korean society is experiencing various social problems due to the sudden appearance of naturalised players. Lee and Kwck (2016) argued that sports naturalisation in Korea is subject to confusion in relation to national and transnational boundaries. For example, ordinary people are usually not interested in naturalised players; however, if naturalised players do not attain a good result, they are criticised based on nationalism. Thus, despite their naturalisation, they remain foreigners, and remain on the board (Lee & Kwck, 2016). In addition, as Poulton and Maguire (2012) argued, the British media have portrayed an image of naturalised athletes as ‘plastic Brits’ rather than ‘fantastic Brits’ that receive less media exposure than British players. Similarly, naturalised athletes should not be treated as domestic players as Koreans in Korean society and should be treated continuously by strangers. There is a very simple reason for this background—it is because of the ethnic-based identity view that naturalised players are not Korean (Lee & Kwck, 2016). This relates to two forms of naturalisation: outgoing naturalisation and incoming naturalisation. Athletes moving abroad are traitors, while athletes entering the

country are not Korean. Thus, it seems that Korean nationalism and national identity continue to be maintained in the midst of globalisation, but the movement of change also seems to be hindered. Of the two cases of naturalisation, this research focuses on foreigners who are entering Korea. Table 2.2 details the athletes who have naturalised to Korea.

Table 2.2

*Naturalised Athletes in South Korea*

Athletes' names	Sports area	Country of origin	Further information
Hòu, Yíntíng	Volleyball	China	First naturalised athlete in Korea
Shin, Eui-Son	Football	Russia	First naturalised professional athlete in Korea
Dang, Yeo Seo	Table tennis	China	First naturalised Olympic medallist in Korea
Joo, Gwon	Baseball	China	First naturalised athlete in professional baseball in Korea
Moon, Tae Jung, Moon, Tae Young, Lee, Seong Jun, Lee, Dong Jun	Basketball	United States	Naturalised basketball player
Jang, Kun Young	Shooting	China	Naturalised through marriage
Brock Radunske, Michael Owen Swift, Bryan William Young, Matt Dalton, Eric Regan, Michael 'Mike' Testwuide	Ice hockey	Canada and the United States	Naturalised for the PyeongChang Olympic Games
Anna Seo, Yekaterina Avvakumova	Biathlon	Russia	Naturalised for the PyeongChang Olympic Games
Aileen Frisch	Luge	Germany	Naturalised for the PyeongChang Olympic Games

Since the arrival of Korea's first naturalised athlete, Hòu, Yíntíng, in 1994, the number of naturalised Korean athletes has substantially increased. For example, 15 of the 130 delegates attending the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Games are nationalised—a

naturalisation rate of over 10%. Throughout the naturalisation process, the patterns of Korean sports naturalisation have changed over the past 20 years. At the beginning of the naturalisation process, most of the dual nationalities were Korean–Chinese or American–Korean. However, currently, athletes from a variety of countries have been naturalised in order to attend the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games.

There are two aspects of this variety of Korean sports naturalisation: political and personal (Lee & Kwck, 2016). First, it aims to improve the national status politically through the success of naturalised athletes. In particular, Korea's recruitment of more than 15 naturalised athletes is aimed at achieving positive outcomes at the PyeongChang Winter Olympics in Korea. In addition, socially, from the viewpoint of the nation, skilled athletes demonstrate Korea's status through sports, including the changes in Korean ethnicity that is taking place in the era of globalisation. Second, regarding the personal aspects of naturalised athletes, individuals naturalise for many reasons. However, what is significant in Korea is that a variety of naturalised athletes fill the gaps in Korean sports. For example, while Korea is lacking certain skilled athletes, other countries have produced too many of these athletes. As Maguire (1996) stated, Canadian ice hockey is producing too many successful players. The same applies to Chinese table tennis players, many of whom have naturalised to Korea. Competition in these athletes' home countries is so intense that it is easier to become a national representative for another country. Examples include the aforementioned Canadian ice hockey (Maguire, 1996), as well as American basketball (Falcous & Maguire, 2005), Chinese table tennis (Cho, 2014), Korean archery (Lee & Kwck, 2016), Korean taekwondo (Choi, 2007) and Korean short-track speed skating (Kim et al., 2014; Lee, 2015).

This research has examined Korea's 20-year naturalisation history, yet what are particularly important to observe is the changes in Korea's nationalism and national identity due to the emergence of naturalised athletes (Kim, 2006). Korean society has a national identity that has always distinguished Koreans and non-Koreans based on their bloodline and ethnicity. Thus, controversy has arisen in Korea regarding naturalised athletes, emphasising a single-blood nation and the national belief that, if an athlete does not have 'Korean blood', they should not be a national representative (Lee & Kwck, 2016). However, as Smith (1995) argued, the issue of nationalism and national identity became more complicated with the advent of globalisation and its processes. As Korean society experienced the effects of globalisation in the 2000s, the selection system of representative sports nation focused on nationalism began to change (Maeng & Kwon, 2014).

The beginning of this change in Korean society will probably have a momentum. Table 2.1 above depicts athlete Dang Yeo Seo, who was naturalised from China. Lee and Kwck (2016) argued that Korean society's perspective changed after Dang Yeo Seo attended the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games—the first time in Korean sports history that a naturalised athlete had represented Korea in international competition—and won a bronze medal. Thus, this research examines the changes occurring in the dominant notion of Korean nationalism and national identity through considering the first Chinese naturalised player who won a bronze medal for Korea. In this part has discussed the fact that naturalised athletes can encounter problems due to the notion of nationalism in the host country. In addition, the national identity of the host nation is changing due to the emergence of naturalised players. Therefore, it is common that, when athletes win a medal at the Olympics, they will be focused on in the media, especially in their own country. In particular, the event of winning

medals at the Olympics is a good opportunity to view the nationalism and national identity of each country. Therefore, to study the nationalism and national identity of Korean naturalised athletes, this paper studies the related literature in the next section.

## **2.6 Conceptualising Nationalism and National Identity**

The reason is that, to study nationalism and national identity through naturalised table tennis players, various nationalist theories and concepts should be summarised, and the nationalism theory appropriate for this thesis should be defined. This part observes nationalism and national identity as important elements of this thesis. This section examines the notion of nationalism and national identity, understands the modernist theory and long-term historical theory, and determines the most appropriate concept of nationalism with the characteristics of process sociology for this research. The concept of nationalism can be a political and cultural ideology, and allows members of the nation to feel the identity of the country (Smith, 2001). The process of nationalism refers to a nation's main ideology, and explains the process by which a nation seeks to uphold its wellbeing (Smith, 2001). In other words, a nation shares with its people common 'historic' names, symbols, language, heroes and cultural practices (Hutchinson, 1994, p. 2). Anderson (1983) described the nation as an 'imagined community', and national identity as a construction assembled through symbols and rituals related to territorial and administrative categories. Most nations establish their national identities in order to bond their community (Hooson, 1994). Maguire et al. (2002, p. 148) argued that, in most nations, people try to build an image of 'national unity' within a continuously changing world.

McCrone et al. (1998, p. 629) asserted that the issue of national identity has become more important since the 20th century, and that the results of nationalism and regionalism are closely related to national identity. Spencer and Wollman (2002) stated that identity was previously applied to individuals, yet now 'there has been increasing application of identity of groups and collectiveness' (p. 58). They also argued that the terms of identity have fully connected with political significance in relation to the concept of nationalism, and suggested that, 'it may be that human beings have a fundamental and deep-seated need to belong to a group, to identify themselves with one set (or sets) of people rather than another' (Spencer & Wollman, 2002, p. 58). Spencer and Wollman (2002, pp. 64–93) also emphasised that nations and national identities can be referenced by matters of historical background, such as race, ethnicity, culture, myth, memory and belief.

Moreover, local nation-states, nationalism and national identity have altered in the era of globalisation (Held & McGrew, 1999). From the viewpoint of traditional hyperglobalists and skeptics, the processes of nationalism and national identity are becoming increasingly homogenised. Held et al. (1999) emphasised that nationalism and national identity vanish or intensify with the onset of globalisation. Smith (1995, p. 85) argued that global communications and economic effects will change the notion of national boundaries, and that local nations will no longer have the power to control their local cultures and economies. However, he also claimed that, while the world tends to operate as a homogenised structure, the increasing importance of national identity has made the world more hybridised. These concepts require detailed examination from different viewpoints; thus, each process is considered in the next section. The interconnectedness of the state, nationalism and national identity has been discussed by Anderson (1983), Hutchinson (1994), Smith (1995), Gellner



(1983), Hobsbawn (1990) and Spencer and Wollman (2002). Based on the research of these scholars, there are several different perspectives to approach nationalism, including the viewpoint of modernists and long-term historical approaches, primordialism as ethno-symbolism, and process sociology. Therefore, the next section examines the well-known concept of nationalism, the viewpoint of modernist theory and the long-term historical theory. It also examines the concept of nationalism in which a concept of nationalism is well associated with this research and process sociology.

First, modernists' view of nationalism is based on the modernisation processes created by capitalism, industrialism, political engagement, mass education and development of science. Modernists agree that nationalism was structured by the development of modern nation-states and their political circumstances. Thus, modernists' viewpoint is that the emergence of nations and nationalism can be understood in a contemporary pattern as 'artificial', an 'invented tradition' and a set of 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983; Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawn, 1992). Anderson (1983) emphasised the term of 'imagined communities', which refers to national traditions and cultures, while the term 'nation' refers to imagined political communities. In this concept, these 'imagined communities' represents the people or nation. Anderson (1983) identified three main developments of mainly capitalism with science/technology and production and communication. In particular, the typography of technology leads to the process of nationalism. Hobsbawn (1992) suggested 'the invented tradition' to explain the term 'nationalism'. The invented tradition is related to mass nationalism in Western society, and entails three categories or concepts: communities build a sense of belonging or symbols of particular groups, either real or artificial; communities justify a system, status and authority; and communities instil social beliefs, a

value system and a standard of behaviour. Given these concepts of modernisation, modernists agree that nations and nationalism are the result of the modernism process.

Second, the long-term historical approach emphasises that the development of nationalism can be contested in different times and spaces. It is the opposite concept to the modernists' approach to nationalism development. It partially agrees with the significant influence of modernisation processes, and argues that nations and nationalism are not structured by the modernisation process, and that it is difficult to investigate the future of nations and nationalism without reference to the long-term process of historical background. Smith (2001) claimed that the concept of nationalism must be understood and investigated in terms of a long-term historical approach because the processes of nationalism are reflected in the long-term history of a nation's sociocultural background. Although people who support the long-term historical viewpoint agree with the modernist approaches, they emphasise that modern history is connected to the long-term history of every nation.

Unlike the position of modernists, ethno-nationalism advocates emphasise the relationship between nations and ethnicity. Smith (1986) stated that nations cannot be built in a short period—they require a long historical and social period. Advocators of ethno-symbolism believe that it is difficult to understand nations and nationalism without investigating the connection between nations and ethnicity. Thus, a nation is based on historical ethnicity and networks. This naturalistic concept is interrelated with nations and nationalism (Smith, 2001). Primordialism claims that the nation was not created by modernisation, but already existed with people within a long-term history. Interestingly, Smith (1986) argued that a nation is structured by blood relationships and people who share the same ethnic background. In other words, nations and nationalism are not artificial

developments—as stated by the modernists—but are produced by a naturalistic process.

As a result of examining the two concepts of nationalism reviewed in this section—the modernists’ view of nationalism and the long-term historical approach—this research and the process sociology have identified the long-term historical theory as the more appropriate nationalist theory. The long-term historical theory is appropriate because, as modern is part of a long history, the concept of the civilisation of the process sociology is more like the long-term historical theory of this research than the temporal division of history into time. To understand nationalism for this research, the researcher selected the concept of the long-term historical theory. Based on this background, the next section examines the concept of nationalism in the process sociology.

### **2.6.1 Process Sociology of Nationalism**

Among the many aforementioned theories of nationalism, this thesis adopts the long-term historical theory, and this section examines the concept of nationalism as seen in figurational sociology. Elias (1996) used the personal pronoun pairs of ‘I/we’ and ‘us/them’ to understand identity and national characters. This has since been used in the observation of the relationship between global sport and national identity politics (Maguire, 1999). Habitus is the most important concept to understand Elias’s personal pronoun pairs. To understand the dynamic social structure, it is important to consider that no individual is independent, but is articulated within varied sets of figurational webs. Thus, people are related to particular habitus through their social and historical circumstances. The development of people’s natural structure leads to their moving between interdependent relationships and power

balances, and humans themselves fluctuate within the relationships of interdependency (Elias, 2001).

The formulation of habitus depends on the functions of social interdependence. Elias (1994) emphasised the processes between changes of habitus and changes of personal social actions and social structure. The concept of habitus presents the relationships between individuals and society. Elias (1994) used this term to understand the relationships between the structure of human nature and social structure. Elias (1996) stated that habitus is a second nature that humans are not born with, but is interdependent with social influences, which lead people to adopt the processes of habitus as their original nature. These processes of habitus tend to understand individual behaviours as natural characteristics, however, habitus is formulated by special power balances within social changes in relation to a long-term historical background. Thus, individual habitus is related to social and national habitus (Elias, 1996).

Elias's (1996) work, *The Germans*, analysed how the personal pronoun 'I/we' image of the German people emerged out of the nation's history and pattern of social development (Maguire, 1999; Maguire, Poulton, & Possamai, 1999). The image of nations has 'become remained, internalised, and combined as part of the second nature (the habitus of its citizens, whose actions made and remade the national habitus anew'; therefore, it becomes established in 'a person's self-image' (Maguire, 1999, p. 184). Maguire (1999) also emphasised:

In fact, the emotional bonds of individuals with the nations they form with each other can have, as one of their levels, 'sleeping memories' which tend to crystallise and become organised around common symbols—national sports teams being one example. These symbols and sleeping memories usually go unnoticed, yet they powerfully reinforce the notion of I/we-relations and form the focal point of a common belief system. Examining these habitus codes allows investigation of why, for example, European integration at the level of political institutions is running ahead

of the degree of identification that many, perhaps the majority, of the citizens of the European nation-states feel towards the notion of being 'European' (p. 184).

However, the processes of national identity and nationalism are not fixed—they are the changeable characteristics of national identity (*habitus*) (Elias, 1996). Thus, the concept of the national character can be seen as flexible (Elias, 1991).

It is impossible to predict the effects of globalisation on individuals, national identity (*habitus*) and nationalism. Most nation-states are faced with the problem of controlling a concept of national identity (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 148). As Maguire (1999) stated, the processes of globalisation have affected national identity in ways that cause that identity to be 'weakened', 'strengthened' or 'pluralised' (pp. 179–180). In this regard, this research examines the form of nationalism and national identity that is not unified, but is diversified due to globalisation. In other words, nationalism can be weakened, strengthened and complicated over a long history and long periods of civilisation. For another example, it is difficult to judge how the concept of nationalism will change, especially in the flow of globalisation. Therefore, to observe changes in nationalism, it is appropriate to conduct research while confirming scientific evidence in long history or long civilisation. Based on these nationalisms and theories, the following section examines the changes in nationalism in South Korean sports.

### **2.6.2 Nationalism and National Identity in Korean Sport**

Until now, the literature study of this thesis has examined the macro aspects of globalisation, global sport, global athletics, nationalism and national identity. From now on, the perspective is narrowed to the nationalism of Korean sports to examine how nationalism and national identity are expressed and created in Korea, especially in Korean sports. Maguire et al., (2002) assert that most states are struggling to control their national identity.

Korean nationalism and national identity have changed, been maintained or stagnated throughout Korea's history, based on the broader situational factors. Throughout these historical changes, Korean sports have facilitated the expression nationalism and organised national identity, in relation to the times. Elias (1978, p. 62) argued that, throughout the previous century, conflicts between people have processed according to the particular system of social ideology dominant at different times, such as conservatism, communism, socialism and capitalism. In the case of Korea, throughout Japanese colonisation, the Cold War era and globalisation process, South Korea has experienced dynamic development of nationalism through its sport activities.

In particular, since the late 1880s, Korea has slowly drifted into an international paradigm (Robinson, 1986). In terms of nationalism, it is difficult to understand the significant development of nationalism before Korea's opening up to other nations (Yoon, 2007).<sup>9</sup> This was changed by the Japanese colonisation period (1910 to 1945) and Korean nationalism turned to the national scale. One of the first cases of national-scale Korean nationalism was the '3-1 Movement' against Japanese tyranny. Jeong (2007) highlighted that the 3-1 Movement was not only a resistance demonstration, but also expressed the modern process of Korean nationalism.<sup>10</sup> As a result of this movement, the Japanese had to alter their use of armed force to cultural policy management in order to colonise Korea. The modern expression of Korean nationalism began with this movement.

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<sup>9</sup> During Korea's period of isolation, the formation of nationalism was focused internally on a united Korean dynasty. In addition, different types of nationalism could be found in the case of the people's uprising against a regional landlord. However, this did not indicate full representation of local nationalism (Yoon, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> The 3-1 Movement was the largest Korean people's demonstration, held on 1 March 1919. This movement was non-violent and involved no aggressive demonstration against the colonisers; however, the Japanese police killed large numbers of Korean people through execution by firing squad on the street.

In the colonial atmosphere, Korea expressed nationalism through sports. Kim (2013) argued that sports nationalism in Korea during the Japanese colonial period represented a nationalism of resistance against the colonists. For example, at the Berlin Olympics in 1936, Korean athlete Sohn Kee-Chung won a gold medal in the marathon as a representative of Japan during the colonial period. During the awards ceremony, he appeared downcast, wearing the Japanese flag on his chest, instead of his national flag. This event had a great influence on Korean resistance nationalism (Joo, Kim, & Kim, 2012). Since guns and swords were not available in colonial times, sports became the best way to express Korean nationalism (Bae, 2013). The Korean Sports Council as *Chosun* Sport association, which managed Korea's physical education, was newly established in 1920. This council helped and supported Korean sportspeople to resist Japanese colonial rule. However, the Japanese government dismissed this council in 1938 to avoid it inspiring nationalism through sports activities. Thus, overall, during Korea's colonial period, sports can be seen to have represented a site for the expression of nationalist resistance.

After the era of Japanese imperialism, Korea experienced the Korean War and the Cold War from 1950 to early 1980. This period saw similar resistance as that demonstrated against the Japanese occupation, yet with a different opponent. In South Korea, North Korea, China, Russia and other communist countries were the counterparts of Cold War nationalism (Heo, 2011). Cho (2004) argued that since the 1960s, the main focus of South Korean nationalism was North Korea. At that time, sports competitions between North and South Korea represented two different manifestations of the state; one communist and one liberal. The South Korean government also supported sport in seeking to defeat the communist state. At the time, the South Korean government was a military dictatorship that emphasised the

concept of anti-communist nationalism to maintain the military government. Thus, the anti-communist nationalism was generated by the military government (Ok, 2007). At this time, Korean sport nationalism displayed national resistance to the communism that was created under the state leadership.

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in 1993, the president of South Korea, Young-Sam Kim—whose government accelerated the process of globalisation in Korea—announced the ‘*Segaehwa*’ (‘globalisation’) policy as a national doctrine for Korea’s future (Jeong, 2005). In response, there have been a variety of changes to the economic, political and cultural characteristics of South Korean society, with problems in this area regarding national identity potentially changing rapidly (Seo, 2004). In terms of nationalism flow, South Korea was a socio-culturally homogenous nation until the early 20th century (Yang, 2007) and the most important national identity of the Korean people was the concept of the ‘one-blood nation’ (Kang, 2006). However, since the early 1980s, due to the effects of globalisation, South Korea has become a more open and heterogeneous society (Kim, 2002).

In particular, Ok (2007) noted that, after the Seoul Olympics, Korean sport expanded significantly, which demonstrated one effect of globalisation, and indicated that the Seoul Olympics was an important part of the first wave of globalisation-induced transformations of Korean society (Bridges, 2008). Korean nationalism was focused on global competition via international sports events, such as the Asian Games in 1986 and 2002, Olympic Games in 1988, FIFA World Cup in 2002, and World Championships in Athletics in 2011. In the era of globalisation, Korean sports nationalism and national identity is continually developing from the traditional nationalism as defined in opposition to communism. This change in



nationalism is a form of self-esteem and happiness expressed through nationalism, rather than the existing defeatist form of resistance nationalism (Kim, 2013).

However, even if the Korean people are enjoying the new globalised set of circumstances, mainstream local nationalism is opposed to globalisation. Among the important changes in migration, Seol (2014) argued that foreign labour migration has led to a new paradigm in terms of national identity patterns. Indeed, migration is one of the most important changes within Korean society that has affected identity in the global era (Seol, 2014). During Korea's long-term historical period, the identity of South Koreans has mainly focused on the country's status as an ethnic nation, rather than the concept of a civic nation (Seol, 2014). However, Jeong (2005) argued that it is important for the Korean government to renew the law that relates to nationalism and the requirements for foreign people in South Korea. Korea's nationalism process has been based on the current main hegemony of the society; however, the development of nationalism in globalisation can be contested. The following section provides a closer examination of the example used by this research. Nationalism in Korean sports has changed throughout the ages of Korean history through the anti-Japanese, anti-communist and globalisation eras. It is important to note that, in the age of globalisation, Korean sports nationalism is in some ways changing to a civic nationalism, rather than a blind ethnic nationalism. The next section examines the media, and considers Korean sports nationalism through Korean newspaper reports. In order to understand the Olympic sports media in which examples of this sport naturalization and nationalism can be seen, it reviews the media sport complex.

### **2.6.3 Nationalism in Sports Media Content**

The media texts that people encounter in everyday life imply the ideological and hegemonic meanings of the age (Devereux, 2013). Media texts are related to political, cultural, commercial and social ideals, and they unconsciously influence people (Nicholson, Kerr, and Sherwood 2015). In terms of sports media, it is also an important part of our daily lives, providing information about sports and athletes and allowing people to think in new ways about the world (Maguire et al., 2002). In other words, the media and sports are related to people's daily lives, and in this relationship, they coincide with people's behaviours and thoughts. Considering these thoughts and behaviours as seen in sports media, this section focuses on expressions of nationalism.

Among the ideas of society implicated in the media, nationalism is often one component of sports media coverage. Athletes and sports teams are regularly connected to cultural nationalism in their home nations (Bairner, 2005). Further, at the national team level, athletes are seen as representatives of the country (Bernstein & Blain, 2002). It is interesting to consider the media in terms of the relationship between sports and nationalism. Olympic broadcasts are perhaps the best format for observing the relationship among media, sports and nationalism, as international sporting competitions often feature nationalist elements (Hogan, 2003).

Global sporting events tend to maximise the expression of nationalism (Rowe, Mckay, & Miller, 1998). For example, Catalan nationalism was on display during the Barcelona Olympics, in 1992 (Hargreaves, 2000). Moreover, Lee and Maguire (2011) studied unitary Korean nationalism in South Korea and North Korea in terms of the media output during the

2004 Athens Games. It is interesting to observe the Korean and Catalan nationalism expressed at these events.

The reason why the media, sports and nationalism are so important for this thesis is that the researcher is trying to identify instances of Korean nationalism through Olympic table tennis matches and the participation of naturalised Chinese players. It is important to note that this thesis will also consider banal nationalism when looking at the symptoms of various forms of nationalism observable through Olympic media coverage.

The basic meaning of 'banal nationalism' refers to people's lack of awareness of nationalism in their daily lives; for example, many in the US are not surprised to see the American flag, as it always flies in many locations (Skey, 144-145). According to Billig (1995), nationalism helps to establish a national identity that is maintained in everyday life. The actions that make up these phenomena are accepted as a part of everyday life. For example, the specific pronouns 'we', 'our', 'their' and 'us' are used by politicians and in media texts to mean the nation within the national frame. Billig has also pointed out that the use of personal pronouns such as 'I' and 'our' frequently appear in media texts as a symbol of national culture. Hearn (2007) argues that the expression of nationalism in the words of ordinary people is an expression of true nationalism.

The expression and flow of nationalism in Billig's (1995) observations of everyday life are in the same vein as the habitus code, which is one of Elias's (1996) concepts. An example of this is found in Maguire and Poulton's (1999) study, where the occurrence of I / we identities is seen in the behaviours of everyday people, as if they seem to be naturally accepted in everyday life and their mutual understanding seems to have formed. As Billig (1995) noted, we can find banal nationalism's common appearance in very small comments,

or in a general way of life, rather than a big meaning of the state that makes people forget their national identity. Elias (1996) and Billig (1995) refer to two expressions of nationalism: Elias focuses on the 'I-image' and 'We-image', arguing that they are internalised and become a nationalistic expression linking individuals and countries. Billig focuses on the pronouns used in the media to imply a specific nation.

To summarise the above, the media quietly expresses ideologies about people living in society and concepts of nationalism. This is especially true in Olympic media broadcasts, which commonly include nationalistic expressions related to the broadcaster's home country (Billings et al., 2013). Billig (1995) and Elias (1996) link everyday life to nationalism.

The purpose of this thesis and its focus on nationalist expressions in the media are as follows. This thesis analyses the flow of Korean nationalism and national identity through naturalised Chinese table tennis athletes from the 1988 Seoul Olympics table tennis matches through the 2012 London Olympics table tennis matches. It includes analyses of the 'I-image', 'we-image' and 'their image' to determine what nationalist expressions are used between individuals and countries. Another point to emphasise is that naturalised Chinese players have represented Korea since the Beijing Olympics of 2008. This allows us to compare Korean players and naturalised Chinese players.

This study examines two forms of Korean nationalism related to table tennis. First, during the Olympic table tennis matches against China, the study considers how the South Korean sports media used a variety of nationalistic expressions to discuss the Korean table tennis teams and athletes. Second, since the Korean table tennis team has included naturalised Chinese athletes since the 2008 Beijing Olympics, this study also considers whether the Korean media uses the same forms of nationalism to discuss Korean athletes and naturalised

Chinese ones. In brief, this thesis studies the flow of Korean nationalism through Olympic table tennis, naturalised Chinese table tennis players, Korean table tennis players and Korean newspaper reports.

## **2.7 The Media Sport Complex**

This review examines whether global sports and naturalisation are occurring through globalisation processes, and how they affect local nationalism and national identity in Korea. When undertaking research with these themes, it is useful to examine media in a methodological manner. Bernstein and Blain (2002) emphasised the central themes of global media and sports related to issues of gender, national identity, and images of nations, race and globalisation. Various scholars have contributed to this field of research (Bernstein & Blain, 2003; Lee & Maguire, 2011; Maguire & Poulton, 1999, 2012; Maguire, Poulton, & Possamai, 1999; Rowe, 2004; Wenner, 1998). South Korea is also witnessing new issues related to sports migration/naturalisation and nationalism/national identity through sports media (Cho, 2014; Hwang, 2013; Lee, 2010; Lee & Lee, 2007). These examples are also found in the Korean sports media, where various researchers are studying sports migration, nationalism and national identity using such as newspapers.

Various types of media can be analysed when undertaking sports sociological research. Sports media can be divided into various categories. The mass media is part of daily life and people experience various media forms such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and the internet (Maguire et al., 2002). Among these different media forms, this research analyses Korean newspaper reports and a couple of television clips. The analysis examines the table tennis matches between Korea and China during the seven Olympic

Games from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics. This research places special emphasis on two of the topics analysed. The first is the Korean newspaper coverage of the Olympic table tennis games between Korea and China. The second is the difference in reporting on Korean players and on Chinese naturalised players in the Korean media during the Olympic table tennis matches. This topic also considers the reporting of the Korean players and Chinese naturalised players in the same Korean national team during the Olympic table tennis matches. Before analysing these topics in detail in the findings chapters, the next subsection more closely examines the sports media complex.

### **2.7.1 The Media Sport Production Process**

This section observes how the media sport is produced. Its production complex consists of three different groups: sports organisations, and marketing organisations and media personnel, markedly media organisation and personnel (Maguire et al., 2002, p. 51). These three groups are interdependent with each other to produce sports media (Maguire, 1991). Maguire (1991) argued that sports are dependent on the media, while sports organisations have little influence on the media. Thus, this section examines how media organisations and personnel produce sports media, the consumers of sports media, and the perspectives of media marketing organisations and personnel.

First, in terms of media organisations and personnel, there are two main factors involved in the media sports complex. First, sports media production particularly emphasises technical dimensions and narrative techniques associated with sports representation (Maguire et al., 2002, p. 51). Technical dimensions involve the technical aspects of broadcast production, such as what are highlighted, what cameras focus on, and what sports scenes are

emphasised (Whannel, 1992). The narrative technique involves what is stated by sports commentators and what the media discusses. As argued by McLuhan (1967) and Fedeman (2004), the reason commentators in sports media are interested in what they say is that the media does not simply send a message, but also sends social meaning through the message. A mediated sport constitutes specific images and messages about people (Maguire et al., 2002). In these processes, the media organisation group has to consider three factors regarding their media products: 'the existing station style and ethos, scheduling constraints and the market potential advertisers, and the social composition of the media audiences and the participants and spectators of the sport covered' (Maguire, 1991, p. 317). This process ultimately benefits the media company's finances by benefiting consumers from media products and securing advertising orders.

Second, when a media organisation group creates a media text, there must be a group that consumes this text, which encompasses mediated sport and audience consumption (Maguire et al., 2002). Numerous people consume various sports products through the media. Here, it is an observation of what specific sports products are primarily consumed by people and which social classes consume sports media. It is also about how consumers' thoughts about reality are formed through sports media products.

Third, marketing organisations and personnel are involved in media ownership, power and decision making (Maguire et al., 2002). This is also related to lowering the cost of media products and securing consumers (Maguire, 1991). Thus far, the three groups in the sport media complex seem to be separate; however, they are organically associated through interdependencies. The sport organisation does not influence the other groups; however, through this group, media organisations and personnel produce media, and marketing

organisations gain economic benefit through consumers and advertising. In other words, the purpose of using sports is that 'low production costs and the potentially high audience ratings that can be achieved' (Maguire, 1991, p. 154).

### **2.7.2 Nationalism in Media Sport Content**

The media text that people encounter in everyday life implies the ideological and hegemonic meanings of the age (Devereux, 2013). In the example of sports, people identify their place in their world through the sports media texts they encounter in their everyday lives. These texts are related to political, cultural, commercial and social ideals, and people are unconsciously influenced by these ideals (Nicholson, Kerr, and Sherwood 2015). Sports media often embodies established notions of society, such as race and ethnicity (Maguire et al., 2002). Among the ideas of society implicated in the media, nationalism is often considered in sports media. For example, when the European media discusses World Cup football, they may liken football to a nationalist war (Blain, Boyle, & O'Donnell, 1993). In the 1996 European Football Championships, the national teams of England and Germany were presented by the English media as playing roles in an armed conflict (Maguire et al., 1999). Moreover, Lee and Maguire (2011) studied unitary Korean nationalism in Korea and North Korea through the media published during the 2004 Athens Olympics.

Among the various contents of sports media, global sports events, such as the Olympics and soccer World Cup, are fields where the expression of nationalism is maximised (Rowe, McKay, & Miller, 1998). Sports nationalism is one of the most important features of sports media (Boyle & Haynes, 2000). Certain sports are nationalistic symbols of particular countries. However, Bairner (2001) argued that the concept of national sport is unclear. A



national sport must be a popular or traditional sport in the country, with traditional sports such as Scotland's Shinty promoting nationalism through a national sport. In this regard, table tennis is considered the national sport of China, with Chinese people believing table tennis to be a symbol of Chinese sport (Yan & Choi, 2009). Moreover, table tennis was a popular sport in Korea in the 1970s to mid-1990s (Bae & Yoon, 2011). Thus, interestingly, when Korea and China meet in Olympic table tennis competitions, the Korean media often use nationalistic expressions.

However, in the existing research, sports media do not have about the formation of South Korean nationalism through the Olympic table tennis competitions between Korea and China. For this reason, this study examines two forms of Korean nationalism related to table tennis. First, during the Olympic table tennis matches against China, this study considers how the South Korean sport media uses a variety of nationalistic expressions to discuss the Korean table tennis teams and athletes. Second, since the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Korean table tennis team has included Chinese naturalised athletes. Thus, this study also considers whether the same kind of nationalism is evident in the Korean media's representations of Korean athletes in comparison to its portrayals of Chinese naturalised athletes.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This literature review investigated previous studies in accordance with this thesis's observation of the structure of nationalism and national identity in Korea through Chinese table tennis players. In particular, it started with the concept of globalisation and examined global sports migration, global sports naturalisation, nationalism, national identity, Korean sports and nationalism, and sports media. This literature review was divided into three main

parts. First, it reviewed the existing research on global sport migration and global sport naturalisation. Second, it examined existing studies on nationalism and national identity, and observed the nationalist view of figurational sociology. It also examined the trends of nationalism and national identity in Korea. Third, this review examined the sports media complex in order to inform the analysis of newspaper reports that is undertaken in Chapter 4.

In terms of global sport migration and naturalisation, based on the global sport migration process discussed by Maguire (1999), this chapter considered naturalised athletes based on the concept of settlers, in accordance with the five forms of sports migration: pioneers, settlers, returnees, mercenaries, and nomadic cosmopolitans. This chapter also reviewed previous research on the naturalisation of sports up to the present. Most previous studies on sports naturalisation have been Western based, although there have also been studies conducted in Asia, Japan, Qatar and Korea. This review identified that most previous sport naturalisation research has found that athletes tend to move from North America to Europe, from Africa to Europe, and from Oceania to Europe. However, South American football players have been naturalised to Japan, while African athletes and South American football players have been naturalised to Qatar. Moreover, a few studies have considered Chinese table tennis players being naturalised to foreign countries. However, no research has been carried out on the nationalism and national identity of the host nation based on the naturalisation of Chinese athletes. This chapter also examined the process of naturalised athletes entering Korean sports and examined existing related studies.

To review nationalism and national identity, this chapter presented a precise conceptualisation of the two fields, and examined nationalism and national identity from the perspective of figurational sociology. Based on this perspective, this chapter examined

existing studies on nationalism and national identity in Korean sports. Finally, this chapter reviewed the sports media complex in order to undertake a newspaper analysis in Chapter 4. In order to understand the sports media production process, this chapter considered the involvement of sports organisations, media and marketing organisations and media personnel, markedly media organisations and personnel. Through this literature review, this thesis investigated Korean naturalised athletes among the various sports exchanges in the flow of globalisation. In addition, it examined the literature related to globalisation, sports naturalisation, nationalism, the Korean situation, Korean newspaper reports that displayed the Korean media through the long-term historical nationalism theory, and figurational sociology among the various nationalism theories. Thus, this thesis has now thoroughly examined the existing research and essential topics that underpin this research. Thus far, for the purposes of this thesis, the theoretical background in Chapter 1 connected with the research problem, and the literature review in Chapter 2 examined the background of this thesis, while considering the research questions and the existing literature. The next chapter now turns to examining the methodology in terms of how to gather the data and evidence needed for this thesis.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The most important purpose of the methodology chapter is to find evidence and data that provide the most appropriate answers to investigate Korea's nationalism and flow of national identity through the Chinese athletes who are the research problem of this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology applied in this research. Most social science research is unpredictable; therefore, researchers should establish a clear methodological position in relation to the course of research (Mason, 2002). To ensure precise methodological positioning, the most important aims of research are to collect appropriate evidence from fieldwork and apply that evidence to solve the research problems at hand. In this regard, this chapter on research methodology is divided into three different parts. First, this chapter debates the philosophical background of different methodological paradigms. Second, given the dynamic issues related to the question of research paradigms, this chapter examines the broad concepts of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Lastly, this chapter discusses the methodological approach of figurational sociology in terms of 'theory and evidence', 'involvement and detachment' and the 'adequacy of evidence' to determine how the researcher can gain useful data from real society. Having discussed the mainstream roots of the methodological paradigm, this chapter moves on to examine three particular research methods: secondary archive analysis, media (newspaper) analysis and the semi-structured interview. This research consists mainly of a qualitative approach, complimented by some quantitative work.

### 3.2 The Problems of a Philosophical Approach

The main purpose of this chapter is to set out the research approach and particular methods used in this study. This section begins by addressing the question of epistemology and ontology, and then explains the precise nature of the applicability of these concepts to the research at hand. It is important to build the methodological framework in order to continue this research. Given that there is a directional connection between ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources (Grix, 2002; Pawson, 2010), the concepts of ontology (what is ‘out there’ to know about) and epistemology (what and how we can know about it) constitute the most important elements of research procedures conducted in social science. Pawson (2010, p. 21) illustrates the researcher easily understands the methodology system.

Table 3.1

#### *The Essential Ingredients of Research Methodology*

Methodology	Epistemology + ontology + method
Epistemology	Guiding philosophies of enquiry
Ontology	Essential nature of the (social) world
Method	Practical technique of research

The concepts of ontology and epistemology are related—epistemology considers how human agents can ask about and make sense of ontology (Furlong & Marsh, 2010). Furlong and Marsh (2010) stated that the concepts of ontology and epistemology are challenging issues, and have a long debate about research methodology; thus, they illustrated the contours that exist in the relationships between ontology, epistemology and methodology to better understand these relationships, as described in the table below.

Table 3.2

*Relationships between Epistemology, Ontology and Methodology*

Ontology	Foundationalism	Anti-foundationalism
Epistemology	Positivism	Interpretivism
Methodology	Quantitative	Qualitative

Looking at Table 3.2, as ontological considerations, Bryman (2012) noted:

Questions of social ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities. The central point of orientation here 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 (p. 18).

This concept of ontology is identified as objectivism (foundationalism) and constructionism (anti-foundationalism) (Bryman, 2012). Foundationalism reflects the independent relationship between social phenomena and social actors (Bryman, 2012; Furlong & Marsh, 2010). The notion of foundationalism refers to the fact that ‘a real world is out there’ that is external to agents (Marsh & Furlong, 2002, p. 19). Researchers should take a position about their perceptions of how things really are and how things really work. In any instance in which researchers have taken ontological positions about the nature of the world, they need to also have an epistemological view that substantiates how they can know the given information about the world (Furlong & Marsh, 2010, p. 185).

Regarding epistemology, this philosophy of knowledge makes reference to ‘the claims or assumptions about the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality, whatever it is understood to be: that is, claims about how what exists may be known’ (Blaikie, 2000, p. 8). Epistemological matters also concern ‘what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 13). Epistemology is identified with

reference to three different viewpoints; however, it is mainly interpretivism that is discussed in this section.

Interpretivism views the world as socially constructed (Furlong & Marsh, 2010). Its perceptions are based on anti-foundationalism. Ontological social practices and their different meanings are subjectively fabricated by people (Marsh & Stoker, 2010). Interpretivism 'is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural science that requires the social scientist to understand the subjective meaning of social action' (Bryman, 2012, p. 13). This position attempts to measure people's natural behaviours, such as talking, thinking, gesturing and every nuance of their social behaviours (Thomas, 2003). It also indicates that humans create their own social world that seems to change dynamically (Collins, 1992). Therefore, constructionism and anti-foundationalism are focused on the meaning of behaviour through understandings that go beyond the description of a phenomenon (Marsh & Furlong, 2010).

Epistemological and ontological approaches are unavoidably connected, given that epistemology is concerned with how human agents question and make logic of ontology (Furlong & Marsh, 2010). In other words, the confusing interconnection between epistemology and ontology can be debated by social researchers. Hay (2007) stated that it is difficult to prove to researchers the ontological position and also the relationship between ontology and epistemology. Therefore, researchers need to develop their own positions regarding this question that both makes sense and is used consistently (Furlong & Marsh, 2010).

It is common for researchers to choose methodological approaches so that their research is based on two different methodologies. This might mean the use of a combination

of both the epistemological and ontological approaches. For example, Denzin (1989) and Fielding and Fielding (1986) practised a combination of both methodologies to overcome the limitations and problems of a single methodological approach. Bloyce (2004) argued that there is a false dichotomy between epistemology and ontology because the two notions are related to each other. In other words, ‘knowledge and reality are not separate entities; they are part of the same process’ (Bloyce, 2004, p. 146). Epistemology and ontology are not separated—in fact, they are interdependent. In this case, figurational sociology provides a methodological approach that adopts both traditional paradigms. Even though the main methodological approach used in this study is qualitative, it is worth reviewing the concept of quantitative methodology to more fully understand this research paradigm.

### **3.3 Quantitative Research**

The early social scientists, such as psychologists and sociologists, were impressed by the progress of the natural sciences and resolved to follow the practice of the scientific method in order to build knowledge. This approach is based on positivism or logical empiricism as a hypothetico-deductive method, and emphasises the scientific method (Bryman, 2012). The main philosophical view of the quantitative approach recognises a social reality that exists outside of human beings (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The merits of the positivistic quantitative method include the following:

Its central idea involves the artificial manipulation of some treatment variable(s) for research purpose, setting up controlled comparison groups. In the simplest case, the comparison groups are alike in all respects, on all other variables, except for their differential exposure to the treatment variable. The other variables are controlled by the design. The aim is to relate the treatment variables(s) to outcome variable(s), having controlled the effects of other variables. The experiment was seen as the basis for establishing cause-effect relationships between variables, and its variables had to



be measured. Thus a great deal of early social science research was characterized by experimental design, and measurement (Punch, 1999, p. 68).

In other words, this approach is based on the interconnection between the practices of deductive theory testing, a belief in objectivism, and the application of positivist methods of enquiry (Atkinson, 2012). Moreover, ‘the testing process of deductive method means using principles derived from theories that explain events, happenings, processes, entities, phenomena in the world as the basis for researchers’ (Atkinson, 2012). It can also be understood that the main aim of the quantitative method is to find true principles, rather than the process of phenomena. It excludes the consideration of context, and emphasises the ‘generalised rule’. Bryman (2012) explained that this research method mainly adapts statistical analysis to understand the social world.

Most quantitative analysis in the social sciences involves reducing individuals to numbers (Bernard, 2012).<sup>11</sup> Bryman (2012, p. 175–178) identified the main preoccupations of quantitative research as measurement, causality, generalisation and replication. First, the concept of measurement is the foundation of this theory, and represents the data points around which social research is conducted.<sup>12</sup> Second, causality refers to the relationships between cause and effect. Third, the quantitative research method aims to generalise its own theoretical background. Lastly, in terms of lack of ‘objectivity’ in particular research, researchers attempt to reproduce others’ experiments to prove their work. Given these characteristics of quantitative research methods, the subjects of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ are important to understand how quantitative researchers prove their experiments.

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<sup>11</sup> The concept of quantity is derived from the Latin word *quantitas*, meaning ‘how many’ or ‘how much’. It is understood that quantitative methods are based on a statistically numerical background (Berger, 2000).

<sup>12</sup> The main reasons are identified as ‘fine differences between people in terms of the characteristic in question’, ‘consistent device or yardstick for making such distinction’ and ‘more precise estimates of the degree relationship between concepts’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 164).

Simply put, reliability refers to the use of objective tools for observation, while validity is a measure of how researchers are able to confirm objective results. In the example of using scales to check a person's weight, the scales can be considered reliable because they are universally understood as reliable tools to determine weight. It can be understood that 'reality' is not changeable; thus, researchers should be able to achieve similar results (Punch, 1998). In addition, checking weight, rather than height, conforms to the objective use of scales. People can check their weight over time and space, and produce similar results that can be objectively reliable and valid. In theory, researchers' personal biases are prohibited as a value-free, dependent relationship between the researcher and object is ideal. Reliability is a central concept in measurement that relates to the consistency of given measurements (Atkinson, 2012; Bryman, 2012). Joppe (2000) defined reliability as follows:

The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. (p. 1)

Punch (1998, p. 99) stated that consistency over time—or stability—indicates the stability of measurement over time. Bryman (2012) emphasised the importance of objectivity in social science research conducted by quantitative researchers because they believe that the real social world understands as external and independent circumstances. In instances where the results of studies are similar, a high degree of stability indicates a high degree of reliability, which subsequently indicates that the results are repeatable (Golafshani, 2003, p. 599). If a measurement tool is not consistent, and thus the results are not repeatable, the research cannot be considered reliable. In other words, if research is designed to truly measure a particular cause of a social issue, then each time the research is administered to a subject, the results of the research need to be similar. Otherwise, the lack of reliability in the

measurement procedure can indicate the rather serious influence of random and systematic errors (Atkinson, 2012).

In contrast, validity monitors whether research actually measures what it was intended to measure, and how truthful the results are understood to be (Joppe, 2000). Atkinson (2012) stated that researchers often ask themselves: ‘am I truly measuring what I think I am measuring?’ (p. 227). Punch (1998) indicated that:

One view of its meaning is the question: how do we know that this instrument measures what we think (or wish) it measures? In this view, measurement validity means the extent to which an instrument measures what it is claimed to measure; an indicator is valid to the extent that it empirically represents the concept it purports to measure (p. 100).

In other words, how effectively do researchers’ measurements relate to the research questions? Different types of validity are identified as face validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, construct validity and convergent validity (Bryman, 2012).<sup>13</sup> Validity is an important part of research development. If researchers are not careful to maintain the validity of their research, they will not succeed in achieving accurate results.

The concept of quantitative research methods has faced some criticism regarding its ability to investigate the social world. Bryman (2012) raised four problematic issues with quantitative research methods. First, this approach fails to distinguish people and social institutions from ‘the world of nature’. Second, the measurement processes create an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy. Third, the reliance on instruments and

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<sup>13</sup>Face validity might be established by asking other people whether the measure seems to be measuring the concept that is the focus of attention. Concurrent validity indicates that researchers compared their result through other measurement tools. Predictive validity involves the researcher using a future criterion measure, rather than a contemporary one. Construct validity is an approach in which the researcher is encouraged to deduce hypotheses from a theory that is relevant to the concept. Lastly, convergent validity shows that the validity of a measure should be gauged by comparing it to measures of the same concept developed through other methods.

procedures hinders the connection between research and everyday life. Lastly, the analysis of relationships between variables creates a static view of social life that is independent of people's lives. Moreover, quantitative research often engages in studies that are too narrow and which are based solely on what can be counted, measured and observed, while ignoring other matters (Berger, 2000). Researchers should acknowledge that they themselves are also part of the social world, and subsequently need to determine their position in relation to objectivism and subjectivism. The rise of qualitative research methods supports some of the aforementioned criticisms of quantitative research methods. Therefore, the qualitative research paradigm will be examined in the next section.

### **3.4 Qualitative Research**

Given the drawbacks of quantitative research methods, the qualitative research approach uses a different spectrum to view the social world. Essentially, research is conducted in naturally occurring circumstances that can help answer the research questions. Unlike the way that positivists control the research setting artificially, qualitative research tends not to control the research setting. Qualitative researchers do not control the natural setting that can influence the results of the research, and do not claim to know the result of research a priori (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). To best understand the 'real world', qualitative research stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, the familiar relationship between the researcher and what is investigated, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Researchers seek answers to questions that emphasise how social experience is generated and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). To investigate natural

social behaviours, qualitative research mainly measures people's natural behaviours, such as talking, thinking and other nuances of social actions (Thomas, 2009).

Before fully examining the concept of the qualitative method, it is necessary to explain the ontological and epistemological positions that underpin qualitative research. Qualitative research is rooted in anti-foundationalism (subjectivism and constructivism) from ontology, and believing that 'there is no real world' (Marsh & Furlong, 2002). Its perceptions are based on anti-foundationalist ontological social practices, and their different meanings are understood to be subjectively fabricated by people (Marsh & Stoker, 2010). In terms of constructivism, researchers find understanding in the world in which their everyday life circles. Therefore, qualitative researchers aim to interpret the results that have been found through their own experiences and backgrounds. These researchers seek to interpret results through meanings that others may have about the social world (Creswell, 2007). While examining ontological positions on the nature of the world, these researchers also need to have an epistemological view of how they can know these things about the world (Furlong & Marsh, 2010, p. 185).

In terms of epistemological background, the qualitative method is directly connected to interpretivism. Positioned in opposition to positivism and realism, interpretivism is grounded in an anti-foundationalist epistemology and subscribes to the view that the world does not exist independently of people's knowledge of it (Grix, 2010). Atkinson (2012, p. 116) pointed out that interpretivism can be a powerful tool to understand the realities of human movement, and is often the most useful approach for asking and answering important questions. Interpretivism is based on lines of thought that lie between social sciences and humanities, and is most often associated with German sociological traditions of the late 19th

and early 20th centuries. Interpretivism's most notable theorists include Max Weber, George Simmel, Wilhelm Dilthey, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Alfred Schutz, as well as American behaviourist researchers, including George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer (Atkinson, 2012, p. 117). The roots of interpretivism are derived from the intellectual traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology,<sup>14</sup> and many terms have been used to describe the approach, such as anti-naturalist and anti-positivist (Blaikie, 1993, p. 36).

Atkinson (2012) also stated that, 'interpretivism is a paradigm that provides an organized set of assumptions about the nature of reality and how to study that reality through empirical methods'. When analysing the epistemological concept of interpretivism, some issues should be considered. Interpretivists do not intend to observe in order to understand phenomena in the social world, and the social world should be investigated with research methods different from those of the positivist approach. Moreover, researchers are also part of the researched social world. In other words, in opposition to the quest for 'objective' data, researchers' personal sociocultural involvement is a valuable tool in a subjective approach. Unlike positivism, the naturalism paradigm can be understood as a post-positivist viewpoint in which researchers should observe social processes in the 'real' world (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).<sup>15</sup> In other words, qualitative research is grouped under the umbrella term of the naturalism paradigm that includes grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, feminist theory, history and philosophy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

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<sup>14</sup> 'Hermeneutics is a term that is drawn from theology and that, when imported into the social sciences, is concerned with the theory and method of the interpretation of human action. Phenomenology is a philosophy that is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them and how in particular the philosopher should bracket out preconceptions in his or her grasp of that world' (Bryman, 2012, pp. 29–30).

<sup>15</sup> Natural setting research can also be described as using post-positivist, ethnographic, phenomenological, subjective, case study, qualitative, hermeneutic and humanistic views.

When examining the characteristics of the qualitative approach by tracking its roots from ontological and epistemological discourses, the subjects of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ are crucial to understanding how qualitative researchers demonstrate their views of the social world. Mason (1996) stated that reliability, validity and generalisability are different kinds of measurements within qualitative research. As in positivist epistemology and ontology, reliability is a yardstick tool used in the quantitative method. Thus, the qualitative method refers to value-bound, holistic enquiry. In summary, researchers observe the social world in natural settings in order to understand the truth. Unlike positivists’ viewpoint of measurement systems as reliable and valid, the qualitative method has an alternate tool to collect data (Bryman, 2012). When contrasting positivists’ approach to understanding the social world, some researchers argue that positivist measurements are not suitable for adaptation to qualitative research.<sup>16</sup>

Sandelowski (1986) identified the qualities of ‘truth value’, ‘applicability’, ‘consistency’ and ‘neutrality’ to evaluate reliability and validity in qualitative research. In terms of attaining ‘truth value’, which can constitute internal validity in the quantitative method, credibility requires the ability to describe and interpret human experiences. To improve this, researchers should describe and interpret participants’ social experience accurately, and should also provide verbatim quotations from participants to best ensure that readers are able to understand the participants’ views. Researchers also need to have close relationships with the participants, so researchers need to have feeling, behaviour and experience as the term of reflexivity. To understand applicability as a measure of external

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<sup>16</sup> The following researchers have built particular measurements for qualitative research: Sandelowski (1986), Burn (1989), Cull-Willy and Pepin (1987), Gortner and Schultz (1988), Huber (1973), Lincoln and Guba (1985, 1994) and Watson (1988).

validity in quantitative research, fittingness refers to the assurance that the research result can be transferred to other contexts. To prove credibility, researchers must maintain the checking of the representation of data, the area of coding. Researchers also monitor the process of data collection for consistency and adeptness. Auditability refers to reliability in quantitative research. Simply put, it presents an understandable methodological process to readers, so they can understand what has been researched, the results of the research, the period of data collection, and the methods of data collection. Lastly, conformability indicates 'research neutralisation without biases'. To achieve successful conformability, research needs to have a combination of credibility, fittingness and auditability (Bryman, 2012).

Just as there are academic and disciplinary criticisms of the quantitative research approach, arguments have also been made against the qualitative method. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggested that the qualitative research approach can be called journalistic, soft science or unscientific because of researchers' biases and subjectivities. Bryman (2012) argued that qualitative methods can be 'difficult to replicate', can produce 'problems of generalization' and can often lack transparency. The results and data collecting procedures can be different for each study; thus, the results are difficult to replicate. Data collection can also be too narrow and can lead to problems of validity and a lack of generalizability. Researchers using qualitative methods should understand these criticisms to better approach their research task.

By examining the contradictory criticisms of quantitative and qualitative research, Bryman (2012, pp. 407–408) defined the tensions between the two research paradigms as follows: numbers/words; perspective of researcher/perspective of participant; research is distant/research is close; theory and concepts tested in research/theory and concepts emergent from data; static/process; structured/unstructured, generalising/contextual understanding;



hard, reliable data/rich, deep data; macro/micro; behaviour/meaning; and artificial setting/natural setting. To support this statement, Bryman (2012, p. 409) considered the similarities between quantitative and qualitative methods. Both approaches ‘treat frequency as a springboard for analysis’; ‘seek to ensure that deliberate distortion does not occur’; ‘argue for the importance of transparency’; ‘must address the question of error’; use research methods that ‘should be appropriate to the research questions’; and are concerned with ‘data reduction’, ‘answering research questions’, ‘relating data analysis to the research literature’ and ‘variation’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 409).

Given the similarities between these research methods, some researchers have attempted to combine the two different approaches. Creswell (1994) introduced two models for combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. First, the ‘two-phase model’ indicates that qualitative research can be used before or after quantitative research. Second, the ‘dominant–less dominant’ model requires that the researcher choose one dominant method to conduct research, while employing the other research method in a less dominant manner. Grix (2010) described the contrasts between these two research methods as ‘the quantitative–qualitative dichotomy: a false antithesis’ (p. 122). In recognition of the complementary aspects of qualitative and quantitative research methods, many researchers have attempted to combine the two (Creswell, 2007). To understand the social world, it is essential that researchers use both the data of ‘numbers’ and ‘words’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, to achieve better research results, researchers should ideally combine quantitative and qualitative methods.

### 3.5 Methodology and Figural Sociology

Although traditional qualitative and quantitative methods have dominated the approaches with which social scientists investigate the world, a mixed-method approach can be a powerful tool to help understand the social world; thus, it has emerged as the third paradigm with which to see the world (Sale et al., 2002). They do not have a common background of methodological understanding of metaphysical principles, such as ontologically and epistemologically, and, at the same time, also provide two methodologies from which to choose, depending on their practical value for dealing with a particular research problem (Denscombe, 2008; Denzin 1989). However, the mixed-method approach is still contested due to conflicts between devotees of the two contributing methodological paradigms (Bryman, 2012).

Researchers are often involved in debates regarding two dichotomous approaches, such as objectivity and subjectivity (Maguire, 1988; Maguire & Young, 2008). Bloyce (2004) argued that research can be distorted from the beginning because of the conventional frameworks of each methodological issue. The main point of contention between quantitative and qualitative methods is based on the distance between the researcher and the research subject. To solve this methodological problem, figural sociologists have developed a practical methodology with which to approach social research. Bloyce (2004) discussed the dichotomous relationships of the methodological concepts as follows:

It is not that the two considerations are diametrically opposed, rather epistemology and ontology are so integrally related, they are so *interdependent*, there seems little sense in discussing them separately. That is to say, knowledge and reality are not separate entities; they are part of the same process (p. 146).

Given the viewpoint of figural sociology, an Eliasian methodological approach leads researchers to overcome the dichotomous paradigm of quantitative and qualitative

methods. To support this point, figurational sociology does not intimate with the conventional problematic of methodology concerning its epistemology and ontology (Dunning & Hughes, 2013). Elias stressed that it is important to understand that, because researchers are human beings studying a social world of which they are inevitably a part, researchers are unavoidably emotionally involved with, and thus have an emotional orientation towards, the subject of their study (van Krieken, 1998). It is interesting to note that some criticism has raised the question of subjectivity in figurational research (Hargreaves, 1992). However, Elias (1971) emphasised the two concepts of ‘object-adequacy’ and ‘reality-congruence’ (Murphy, Sheard, & Waddington, 2000). Social researchers are also part of the processes, serving as ‘sociologist-as-observer and interpreter’ (Maguire & Young, 2008, p. 16). As the social location of social researcher in social interdependent and development, a researcher cannot be entirely free of social context. Therefore, as Van Krieken (2001) pointed out, all scientific attempts need to be made from a flexible position between social reality and scientific analysis.

When using a figurational approach to collect knowledge, Maguire (1988) emphasised three important concepts to understand: ‘theory and evidence’, ‘involvement and detachment’ and the ‘adequacy of evidence’ (Maguire, 1988; Maguire & Young, 2002). First, the issue of ‘theory and evidence’ is often conflicted in the research methodology process. A theory may be the main tool of a study in two different ways. On the one hand, theory is used as the basis for deriving hypotheses to be tested in a study as a deductive approach (Atkinson, 2012). At the beginning of deductive research, hypotheses command what evidence the researchers should seek and what data will be collected to confirm or negate the hypotheses (Grix, 2010). In other words, the theory controls the researchers’ evidence. On the other hand,

an inductive approach builds theoretical backgrounds from the collected data (Atkinson, 2012). However, Gilbert (2001) used research practices in his study that included both inductive and detective approaches, and the interplay of both theoretical approaches was critical.

According to figurational sociology's understanding of 'theory and evidence', sociological theory can be a research guide, yet cannot provide '*the answer*' (Maguire & Young, 2002, p. 4). Maguire and Young (2002) stressed that, 'the craft of sociology necessitates steering between the imposition of "grand theory" onto evidence, and abstracted empiricism, seemingly uninformed by theoretical insight. For us, the processes of theory formation and empirical enquires are interwoven and individual' (p. 15). The 'back-and-forth' movement between theoretical synthesis and empirical investigation needs to be constant (Elias, 1978). Adapting theory provides researchers with useful, well-organised questions to be asked in the study, and the optimal sequence in which to ask these questions (Maguire & Young, 2002, p. 4). In other words, researchers can trace what the discipline has previously asked, thought about, and reflected on (Maguire & Young, 2002, p. 4). Maguire and Young (2002) emphasised the term 'finely tuned time-space sensitivity' (p. 4) and stated that theory needs to be sensitive to this.

To extend this concept, Elias (1987) described the retreat of sociologists to the present, which is driven by failing to sensitise oneself to the consequences of historical results. Elias explained the tendency to focus heavily on contemporary contributions to sociology, without reference or sensitivity to social research that has already examined a series of very long-term social processes. Elias referred to the tendency of sociologists to view their subject matter as concerning the 'here-and-now', without reference to how that 'here-and-now' emerged out of

the past (Maguire & Young, 2002, p. 4). Elias stated that it is essential to focus on long-term historical processes. Therefore, it is important to understand the development of the social issues that are being studied in relation to their previous patterns throughout their long historical frame (Maguire, 1988). In particular, figurational sociologists seek to understand the relationship between how knowledge is built and how that process is related to different times and places.

Second, the term 'involvement and detachment' is one of the most significant facets of the Eliasian approach to observing the social world. This developed as one of the main features of Elias's (1987) important work on the process of thinking sociologically (Perry, Thurston, & Green, 2004). The problems of involvement and detachment are also driven by the traditional dichotomous approach to natural science and social science. In terms of involvement and detachment, the former refers to being rational and objective, while the latter refers to being irrational and subjective. In the case of quantitative methodology, researchers and research objects are considered detached, while, in qualitative methodology, researchers are considered part of the processes being studied. Figurational sociologists should not be viewed as methodological atheists; rather, these researchers seek to observe the social world from a balanced viewpoint.

Figurational sociologists emphasise that applying a combination of involvement and detachment is necessary for the research process (Bloyce, 2004). Social science uses particular measurements to confirm their research process as value-free because social science cannot be measured in the same way as natural science. The main reason for this is that the relationships between subject and object are not entirely separated in social science. Elias (1987) also recognised that absolute detachment and involvement is impossible. This

methodological issue is described by sociologists as being due to ‘the relative lack of emancipation from interests groups’ and the fact that ‘they are involved in what they study’ (Maguire, 1988, p. 189). Maguire (1988) also argued that:

As social actors, sociologists cannot cease to take part. In fact, their very participation and involvement is itself one of the conditions for comprehending the problem they try to solve as scientists ... Sociologists must, therefore, be both relatively involved and detached in order to grasp the basic experience of social life—it is a question of balance. The sociologists-as-participant must be able to stand back and become the sociologist-as-observer-and-interpreter (p. 190).

Maguire emphasised that balance allows social researchers to be appropriately positioned to observe the social world with a flexible back-and-forth approach to involvement and detachment. The core concept of the Eliasian methodological approach is to accumulate knowledge in the social world. Figural sociology provides guidelines to follow in working to achieve this aim.

Figural sociologists also attempt to critique evidence to gauge its adequacy. Research data may be diverse around the researcher, but it is a matter of whether the materials really represent the world and society. In the same way that balance is essential when considering ‘involvement and detachment’, researchers must also take a balanced stance when assessing the ‘adequacy of evidence’. In other words, researchers need to understand the balance of power between interdependent and distinct groups of people. Maguire and Young (2002) stated that: ‘Hence, the analysis should focus on both the level of participation by the observers of the particular events in question, and on the pattern of tension and conflict evidence in the relationship between observers and observed’ (p. 17). However, this relationship can be observed differently from the viewpoints of different groups or people. Maguire (1988) argued that, while insiders are very emotionally engaged in social issues and evidence, outsiders tend to be more detached, without a detailed approach to

understand particular issues of class or gender bias. Thus, the object of study can be distorted by the researcher's position as an insider or outsider (Maguire & Young, 2002). To maintain the appropriate balance between insider and outsider views, a *verstehen* analysis should be adapted. This concept, established by German sociologist Max Weber and developed by Maguire, describes balanced positions of power and tension between insiders and outsiders in figurational processes.

Identification with the 'we' perspective of different groups is necessary in order for the researcher to understand something of the manner in which certain actions are meaningful. At the same time, it is necessary to grasp that, no matter how sincere, these interpretations can be misleading. Compression of different 'we' perspectives will help; however, employing 'they' perspectives—which view the situation from a greater distance—offers a different perspective on how the actions and intentions of the various groups are interlocked (Maguire & Young, 2002, p. 18). Thus, in terms of the adequacy of evidence, it is important to understand that the process of the adequacy of evidence can indicate varied, dynamic developments between classes and groups of people (Maguire & Young, 2002).

By discussing the traditional debates within ontology about foundationalism and anti-foundationalism, within epistemology about positivism and interpretivism, and within methodology about quantitative and qualitative, this chapter has examined the history of the methodological background of figurational sociology. Given these methodological arguments, two main issues should be considered. First, researchers should avoid becoming preoccupied with the dichotomous structure of methodology because they are not dealing with separate concepts, but with concepts that are interdependent with each other. Second, researchers need to be deeply concerned with taking balanced positions to best conduct a successful study.

Following this methodological approach, the data for this research were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. In terms of quantitative methods, statistical data were collected from the Korean Ministry of Justice, the Korean Ministry of Culture and Sport, the International Table Tennis Federation, the Korean Table Tennis Association, private documents, and newspaper data. Data from these sources were used to determine the broad structure of the processes of Chinese naturalised table tennis players in Korean sport.

In terms of qualitative methods, this study adopted a semi-structured interview analysis and qualitative media content analysis. This study undertook interviews with a variety of participants engaged in the processes of Chinese naturalised table tennis athletes in Korean society in order to attain data on real experiences to answer the questions of this study regarding the process of Korean nationalism and national identity. Finally, through the media text analysis, this study sought to understand how Korean nationalism and national identity have been demonstrated via reports on Olympics table tennis matches and through discussions of the naturalised Chinese athletes in South Korea. The next section discusses each of these research methods of interview analysis, archive analysis and media text analysis.

### **3.6 Research Methods**

This section explains the procedure for gathering data employed in this research. This research used three research methods: archive analysis, newspaper content analysis and interview analysis. The archival data analysis aimed to determine the process of the emergence of naturalised players in Korea in the age of globalisation, based on the historical progress of table tennis. The newspaper content analysis sought to examine the flow of Korean nationalism through the coverage of Olympic table tennis matches between Korea



and China from the 1988 Seoul Olympics through to the 2012 London Olympics. It also observed the differences in reports when the Korean newspapers discussed naturalised athletes and Korean athletes. Finally, the interview analysis aimed to observe the Korean national identity through the Chinese naturalised athletes. Additionally, in order to elaborate the identity of naturalised athletes in Korea, these research methods were arranged by archive analysis, media analysis and interview analysis. First, Chapter 4 examines the naturalised athletes who appeared in Korea from the sporting aspect of long table tennis from a historical point of view. Second, Chapter 5 examines the naturalised athletes from the viewpoint of the Korean media. Finally, Chapter 6 examines the naturalised athletes from the researcher's perspective. Therefore, this study aimed to better understand Chinese naturalised players through the development of macro, meso and micro perspectives.

### **3.7 Secondary Analysis**

The overall flow of this research—especially examining the history of table tennis and the data in Chapter 4—was largely collected through archival analysis, with both official and private archive materials used at the same time. The materials examined included the official archives of the Korean government and sports associations, and archives of the Korean, British and International Table Tennis Federations. This study also collected data from the blogs of individuals who are interested in table tennis. According to Sarantakos (2005, p. 296), secondary analysis seeks to scrutinise documents collected by researchers, institutions or state authorities. Bryman (2012) pointed out that large amounts of data have been collected by various researchers and institutions, and that these data generally prove useful in the analysis of other people's research. These documents provide data and information on

particular topics that are of interest to other researchers who wish to contribute to producing research on topics not investigated by previous researchers (Sarantakos, 2005). Secondary analysis mainly deals with archival data that many institutions and government organisations hold on file—survey procedures are one such example (Seale, 2006, pp. 356–365). This method is suitable for quantitative research and statistical analysis; however, it is also a useful method for qualitative analysis (Sarantakos, 2005).

### **3.7.1 Approaching the data**

Archive analysis is one of the most important research methods to study South Korea's changes in nationalism and national identity through Chinese naturalised athletes, which is the core of this research. Archive analysis is valuable because, to study this topic, the research requires much data on table tennis. Most of these materials are kept in different archive centres. According to Bryman (2012), the secondary analysis methodology is divided into two sections: data from other researchers and data from other institutions. Bryman (2012) noted that a wide range of different materials and documents can be found in papers such as personal documents, the official documents of private organisations, and governmental department memos. The most useful documents are official information documents, newspapers, reports, statistical data and journals from government bodies or non-governmental institutions. Denscombe (2010) claimed that one of the most useful advantages of document analysis is its ease of accessibility through methods such as visiting institutions and collecting data via the internet. To obtain data, this research used the following institutional archives to study the history of table tennis around the world, and specifically in China and Korea, and to examine the emergence of naturalised table tennis players in Korea,

as described in Chapter 4. At the start of this research, the researcher employed more than 30 archives, and, based on frequency of use, employed the following seven archives the most often. The institutions contacted for this research are detailed in the table below.

Table 3.3 *Information Archives Accessed for this Research*

Names of Archives	
1	Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Culture and Sport
2	International Table Tennis Federation
3	Korean Table Tennis Association
4	English Table Tennis Association
5	Naver Korean newspaper finder
6	Six Korean newspaper archives
7	Korean table tennis history blogs

There are two reasons for choosing the seven archives used in this study. First, these are the most appropriate data retention archives for this thesis. Second, more than 60 other archives were considered, but, for example, the ‘personal pong’ information archive in Korea lacked consistency and accuracy. In particular, there was no reliable and accurate source for its information. However, seven archives do provide accurate sources of data persistence, durability and data from the 1988 Seoul Olympics through the 2012 London Olympics via materials that would benefit this thesis.

Archive 1 is from the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Korea. It contains data on Korean multiculturalism, naturalisation laws, population and Korean social data in sequence. Archives 2, 3 and 4 contain materials from the International Table Tennis Federation, the Korean Table Tennis Association and the English Table Tennis Association, respectively. The table tennis federations of other countries also had interesting data, but these three organisations include players’ naturalisation status and other data, which

is helpful for the present analysis. Archives 5 and 6, the Korean newspaper archives, contained all of the papers from the 1988 Seoul Olympics through the 2012 London Games, sorted in order. They feature Olympic table tennis articles from all six Korean newspapers and include about 3,400 articles. The three table tennis organisations and individual table tennis blogs whose archives this study used were centred on table tennis magazines and historical records on table tennis, the history of table tennis and the development of table tennis as a competitive sport.

This research employed three types of archive—one type owned by the government, one type owned by table tennis associations, and one type owned privately. The analysis of archives in this research was important because there is not much existing academic research on table tennis; thus, when examining historical data, archival documents were useful for enabling data collection. In particular, materials describing the history of Korean table tennis were very difficult to locate. Thus, the researcher examined useful materials on blogs created by people interested in table tennis. Interesting discoveries were found in the blogs managed by individuals, rather than in the archive of the Korean Table Tennis Association, where more nourishing materials were found. Through these various archival materials, the first findings for the chapter on the history of table tennis were established. From the beginning of this research, these archive materials were able to offer various quantitative data on Olympic table tennis games, the interesting table tennis history in Korea and China, and table tennis. In particular, through archival analysis, the researcher was able to obtain data on the relationship between Korean table tennis and nationalism, the appearance of Chinese naturalised athletes in Korea, and the relationship between Korean and Chinese naturalised table tennis players. Many of the data in this archive analysis were used in Chapter 4 of this thesis on the topics of

world table tennis history, Chinese table tennis history, Korean table tennis history, and the emergence of Chinese naturalised athletes in Korea.

### **3.7.2 Limitations of secondary analysis**

Secondary analysis was important for this research; however, there were many problems that needed to be overcome. Researchers often encounter certain difficulties when using the secondary analysis method. These issues usually relate to authenticity, credibility and meaning (Scott, 1990). Authenticity refers to how selected documents are classified as genuine materials. Credibility refers to the extent to which documents can be trusted as useful or germane to the research at hand. Meaning can be understood as a metric regarding how documents are able to provide clear and accurate information concerning the research. In addition, Corti and Thompson (2004) stated that ethics and consent, methodological unfamiliarity, lack of data-sharing infrastructure and misinterpretation are some of the myriad issues that researchers can encounter in their pursuit of quality sources. Thus, it should come as no surprise that Bryman (2012) stated that matters of validity and reliability are of pivotal concern for researchers. This research sought to establish the reliability of data for examples of how documents can provide consistent results and outcomes for different projects.

Silverman (2013) stated that objectivity is an important factor for verifying the data of many documents—including the innate biases of the researchers themselves. In other words, some documents are based on the viewpoint of government and non-governmental institutions, which may affect certain stages of the research process as a result of subjective application or interpretation. Thus, this method should be used in combination with other primary research methods (Scott, 1990). In this case, researchers should consider their standpoint as an objective position between involvement and detachment when accessing

secondary data. This issue led to a problem in the current research. When the researcher was examining the data on Korean table tennis history from individuals' blogs, most of the data were very personally subjective. Through the advantages and disadvantages of this archive analysis, this research used the following classifications. First, this research divided the data collected into government data and non-government data. Second, the non-governmental materials were divided into two parts: individuals' data and companies' data. Through this classification, this thesis selected government data and materials from companies such as newspapers or internet portals. Finally, this research used personal archive data to identify the owner of the data, to confirm that they were associated with table tennis, and to use only materials that were relevant to other official data. Through this basic archive analysis, the researcher collected and selected data on nationalism, national identity and naturalised athletes, which were the basis of this research. The next section describes the newspaper content analysis for Chapter 5—another method used in this research.

### **3.8. Methodological Debates in Media and Communications Studies**

Before examining the debates of newspaper content analysis for this thesis, I will elaborate on the historical background of content analysis and communications studies. Maguire (1988) stressed the terms of 'theory and evidence' because these are the most commonly challenged elements of the research methodology process. A theory is used as the basis for deriving hypotheses to be tested in a study as deductive approaches (Atkinson, 2012). At the beginning of deductive research, hypotheses command the evidence that researchers are looking for, and data is collected to confirm or falsify these hypotheses (Grix, 2010). In other words, the theory in question is responsible for dictating the researcher's evidence. The early standards of media and communications studies were previously based upon deductive

approaches. Therefore, quantitative methodology is considered to be most adequately adapted for use in media and communication studies.<sup>17</sup>

However, many media scholars found that the measurement of positivism via hypothetic-deductive method cannot sufficiently address many research questions in media and communications studies (Jensen & Jankowsky, 1991). This is likely attributable to the subjective nature of debates within the scope of traditional methodological paradigm wars; as media and communications studies were interpreted under a new paradigm of cultural studies that traces its roots to the Frankfurt School since 1950.<sup>18</sup> In particular, cultural studies focus on ‘interpretation’ of media in which represents social patterns of ideology, social class, ethnicity, and gender (Turner, 1995). Carey (1989) alternatively emphasizes that the field of mass communications is beginning to observe and interpret varied meanings of particular groups’ rituals, songs, dances, and local myths. In other words, present-day media studies attempt to not only interpret the cultural codes of texts but also configure specific relationships between the economic, political, and socio-cultural frameworks of the texts in question (Turner, 1995).

Given this board history of media studies’ methodological processes, this research should consider appropriate methods for solving complex research questions. This study mainly analyses six Korean newspapers to determine the nature of interactional processes between

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<sup>17</sup> The early communication theories are used to describe as ‘model’ or ‘formula’. For instance, they are Lasswell’s formula, Schram’s model, Katz & Lazarsfield’s model, Hovland’s model, McGuire’s model, and Jacobson’s model (McQuail, 1993). These are based on the relationships between ‘cause and effect’, and collected data by the approach of quantitative method.

<sup>18</sup> The British cultural studies was developed by Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and Stuart Hall in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham in the 1950s and 1960 (Turner, 1995).

Chinese naturalized table tennis players and formative elements of local nationalism and the national identity. As this research's investigation to collect data, Korean newspapers have engaged to produce numerous texts about this issue about this thesis's research question. Based on issues of content analysis in media and communication studies, the next section examines newspaper content analysis. There are many different methods for dissecting media studies, however: according to Seale (2008), content analysis is frequently used in the breakdown of media texts such as newspapers, and it can be used with both quantitative and qualitative methods. As this research's investigation to collect data, Korean newspapers have engaged to produce numerous texts about this issue about this thesis's research question. Based on issues of content analysis in media and communication studies, the next section examines newspaper content analysis.

### **3.8.1 Newspaper content analysis**

Content analysis is a quantitative method for studying textual data that seeks to analyse texts in terms of the presence and frequency of specific terms, narratives or concepts (Tonkiss, as cited in Seale, 2008, p. 368). This variant of analysis mainly includes objective, systematic and quantitative characteristics (Kassarjian, 1977). Krippendorff (1980) stressed the following three advantages of content analysis. First, it has the characteristic of unobtrusiveness, which allows the researcher to collect data indirectly through common vectors of consumption, such as newspapers. Second, it provides for the gratuitous employment of unstructured materials. Third, it offers the benefit of allowing for a larger amount of comprehensive data coverage. Bryman (2008) emphasised that, 'Content analysis is an approach to the analysis of documents and texts that seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories in a systematic and replicable manner' (p. 275).



Given this definition of content analysis, research conducted under this interpretation tends to foster a sense of the empiricist and positivist tradition. Thus, it should be the status quo for objective application of neutral rules (Bryman, 2008). By using content analysis, the standpoint between researcher and object should be separated, and efforts need to be undertaken in order to achieve similar results in different times and spaces (Punch, 1998). Moreover, it is also a useful method for large-scale and comparative studies of textual data, featuring a great degree of validity and reliability in terms of accurate sampling (Seale, 2008). However, some critics have argued that content analysis can be used as a qualitative research method. For example, Selltiz (1959) maintained the view in which content analysis is established as a quantitative research method because they supported the ‘process of analyses’, rather than the ‘characteristics of texts’. In contrast, Abrahamson (1983) claimed that content analysis should be used both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Content analysis is used in various quantitative and qualitative studies. However, in this research, content analysis was mainly used for qualitative research. As Macnamara (2005) stated, when content analysis is used in qualitative research, there are generally various key elements. For example, research can focus on adjective usage, metaphors, verb usage (in terms of active and passive), narrator viewpoints, emotional language and visual images. In this regard, through this content analysis of qualitative research, this research analysed 723 Korean newspaper reports featuring stories about the Korea versus China table tennis matches of the seven Olympic Games from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics. These reports were examined to observe the process of the construction of Korean nationalism through the table tennis matches between Korea and China during the seven Olympic Games. In addition, starting from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a Chinese naturalised

player participated in the Olympic Games as a representative of Korea. In response to this situation, the Korean newspapers published different viewpoints when reporting on the Korean players and the Chinese players.

Through examining six Korean newspapers, this research collected 733 newspaper articles via online and offline searches. The most significant terms used when searching for articles were ‘globalisation’, ‘Olympic table tennis’, ‘nationalism’, ‘nation’, ‘identity’, ‘Chinese table tennis’, ‘South Korean table tennis’ ‘naturalisation’, and ‘Chinese naturalised players’. The six examined Korean newspapers were as follows: *Chosun*, *Choungang*, *Dong-A* (conservative viewpoint), *Hankyorhe*, *Kyunghyung* (progressive viewpoint) and *Seoul* (midway tendency). The next table 3.4 presents the articles from six different newspapers in Korea for each Olympic Games. These articles closely discussed the topic of this research, with 733 relevant articles found out of 3,429 articles generated when the researchers entered the above-mentioned nine research theme words.

Table 3.4

*Selected articles from 1988 Seoul Olympic table tennis game to 2012 London Olympic table tennis game in Korean newspaper.*

Olympic Games location	Name of newspaper						Total
	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>	
Seoul	26	21	14	19	19	16	115
Barcelona	14	17	8	11	13	15	78
Atlanta	14	18	14	21	15	19	101
Sydney	14	15	13	16	17	12	87
Athens	26	30	18	27	19	15	135
Beijing	14	19	12	26	23	14	108
London	21	11	18	29	21	9	109
Total	129	131	97	149	127	100	733

As Table 3.4 shows that the 733 articles selected to study the research question of this thesis were divided into two major categories. The first category was articles on Korean table tennis players and Korean table tennis. The second category was articles on Chinese table tennis and Chinese athletes in Korean newspapers. Korean newspapers reported mostly on Korean table tennis and Korean athletes at the Olympic Pitch Barcelona Olympics in Seoul, and there was no specific report about Chinese athletes. However, from the Atlanta Olympics to the London Olympics, Korean newspapers consistently produced articles about Korean table tennis players and Chinese table tennis. Interestingly, during the Beijing and London Olympics, more than half of the newspaper articles on Korean table tennis in Korean newspapers were about Chinese naturalised athletes.

The analysis of 733 articles was divided into articles about Korean athletes and Chinese athletes. In Chapter 5, this research examined the changes in Korean nationalism with the nine key words mentioned above in the newspaper articles. Seven Olympic table tennis games were conducted between South Korea and China to observe the flow of South Korean's nationalism. Particularly interesting is the article about the Chinese table tennis athlete about half of Chinese Olympic athletes during the Beijing Olympics and the London Olympics. In this research, especially in Chapter 5, the main theme is to study the transformation of Korean nationalism through Chinese naturalised athletes.

Importantly, this research examines the Olympic table tennis competitions since the Seoul Olympics. If this research only studied news articles from the Beijing and London Olympics, in which naturalised athletes competed, it could not understand the flow of Korean nationalism seen through previous Olympic table tennis games. Therefore, Chapter 5 is based

on the precedence of seven consecutive Olympic table tennis games between South Korea and China, from the Seoul Olympics to the London Olympics, to understand the long-term trend of Korean nationalism. The analysis for this thesis again examines the flow of Korean nationalism through the newly introduced Chinese naturalised athletes in Korean society. For this purpose, it is important to compare the nationalism of the previous Olympic Games involving table tennis matches between Korea and China, rather than only investigating newspaper articles from the Beijing and London Olympics, in which naturalised athletes participated.

To strengthen this limitation of content analysis, qualitative content analysis focuses on an exclusive interpretation of media texts (Tonkiss, in Seale, 2008). Hall (1980) claims that all messages are artificially produced because they are already structured by a social nature. Therefore, researchers should be clear on what exactly texts represent that is interrelated with varied issues in society. To solve the problems of specific media discourses between Chinese naturalized athletes and processes of local nationalism within global movements; the approach of qualitative content analysis will be used. In particular, this research mainly uses the newspaper materials because of how they have succeeded in maintaining discourse between this research topic and other texts regarding the Olympic Games (and more specifically, the sport of table tennis). Therefore, this research combines the both quantitative and qualitative characteristics of content analysis as both thematic and discourse analysis to answer the research problems at hand. In addition, it is useful to employ quantitative readings as a thematic analysis and qualitative readings as discourse analysis. A thematic analysis can collect quantitative data within a large amount of data symmetrically. By accumulating data from a thematic analytical standpoint, a researcher can select which

data to interpret with the help of corresponding discourse analysis. Therefore, the next section explains the thematic analysis and discourse analysis employed to enable a more scientific research method for this thesis

### **3.8.2 Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying and analysing particular patterns of meaning in a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In particular, thematic analysis is used to investigate verbal interview data and textual newspaper data (Goffe in Harper & Thompson, 2011). It demonstrates which themes are significantly important in the description of the phenomenon under study (Daly et al., 1997). The end result of a thematic analysis should provide the most significant groups of meanings present in the data set – these groups include affective, cognitive, and symbolic dimensions (Goffe in Harper & Thompson, 2011). Because a thematic analysis naturally applies to social themes, the notion of what constitutes said theme must be examined with proper scrutiny; as a theme refers to a specific pattern of recurring meaning found inside the data (Goffe in Harper & Thompson, 2011).

Tonkiss (in Seale, 2004) indicates the process of content analysis. A general starting point is to define categories of analysis and to code the data using these categories. One of the important issues in content analysis how a researcher categorizes particular groups. Berelson, 1952 & Merton, 1968) recommend that these groups should be categorised by ‘words’, ‘themes’, ‘characters’, ‘paragraphs’, and ‘items’. The categories may be pre-set by the researcher before reading the data, or they may be based on an original reading of the texts. In doing this, coding categories emerge from a combination of these two processes:

Some will be partially pre-set to reflect the aims and the theoretical framing of the research. Further categories will arise from detailed reading and coding of textual content. This stage of the research requires intensive work to ensure that coding categories will capture the content of the texts in ways that are clear (while simultaneously reducing ambiguity and overlap). A key aim in constructing and applying codes is to limit the margin for interpretation on the part of individual researchers (Tonkiss in Seale, 2004, p. 369).

In terms of reliability, the coding process is an important consideration in content analysis. In these cases, content analysis often uses tests of inter-coder reliability or inter-rater agreement to ensure that codes are matched to content in a consistent manner.

Given the nature of the available process tools for successfully applying content analysis, this pays specific attention to six Korean newspapers and how they are representative of the larger concepts of Chinese table tennis, Korean table tennis, athletic migration, athletic naturalization, nationalism, and globalization from the Seoul Olympic Games to the 2012 London Olympic Games. When approaching the end result of a thematic analysis, it is vital that the researcher consider the terms of ‘manifest content’ and ‘latent content’ (Tonkiss in Seale, 2004). The former refers to an understanding of what the data presents. The latter can be read as how the data is distorted or affected by the researcher’s interpretation. Like the quantitative method, content analysis can also be illustrated by systematic data – in this point, Tonkiss (in Seale, 2004) emphasizes that ‘the context, the meaning and the effect of the speeches remain open to interpretation. This can be enforced by combining content analysis with other methods that can interpret texts (Tonkiss in Seale, 2004). Bryman (2012) also points out that one of the disadvantages of content analysis is that it typically does not include room for the researcher’s interpretation of the texts in question. Therefore, by combining the systematic accumulated data from thematic analysis, discourse

analysis will be used to interpret particular meanings in Korean newspapers about categorized themes within specific research questions.

### **3.8.3 Discourse analysis**

Dimbleby & Burton (1992) describe communication as ‘more than words’. The language of words is basically a neutral medium for reflecting or describing the world bracketed by a conviction in the central importance of discourse with regards to constructing social life (Gill in Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). Unlike researchers who typically understand numeric results in quantitative research, researchers specializing in discourse analysis are free to subjectively interpret the varied meanings of words within language. Discourse analysis is not only a brilliant research technique but also a means through which to better understand interrelated techniques, methods, ways of writing; representing, or knowing (Atkinson, 2012). This approach can be used within a larger body of social and cultural research that is concerned with the production of meaning through conversation and texts (Tonkiss in Seale, 2004).

This method is widely used in a qualitative manner, interpreting ‘reading’ of texts such as books, newspapers, television, and articles while seeking to discover how the language of the texts illustrates something about established power relationships between people in a society (Atkinson, 2012). ‘Discourse analysis is therefore a mode of performing inquiry into how stories about the world are told, disseminated, interpreted, and reproduced in a society, and the effects of such storytelling on people’(Atkinson, 2012). To closely understand discourse analysis, it is essential to understand the concept of ‘discourse’. Sewell (1980) indicates that:

A discourse refers to the sum total of the “manifestos, records of debates at meetings, actions of political demonstrations, newspaper articles, slogans, speeches, posters, satirical prints, statutes of associations, pamphlets, and so on” of a time, a place, and a people (p. 8-9).

In this meaning, it can be also identified as ‘text’ and ‘context’. Van Dijk (1988) asserts that:

The major aim of discourse analysis, then, is to produce explicit and systematic descriptions of units of language use that we have called discourse. Such descriptions have two main dimensions, which we may simply call textual and contextual. Textual dimensions account for the structures of discourse at various levels of description. Contextual dimensions related these structural descriptions to various properties of the context, such as cognitive processes and representations or sociocultural factors (p. 24-25).

However, it is important to also investigate how the texts and contexts have been produced to larger society. Entman (1993) argues that news can be produced and represented by particular power structures in specific circumstances. Scheufele (1999) considers three power groups to produce news texts and contexts as journalists, media political positions, and external power assertions of government and elite groups. Therefore, to better understand texts and contexts one should consider how each of these dimensions are constructed and represented in a society. To analyse these contested textual data, critical discourse analysis provides suitable methodological approach. Fairclough (1992, 1995) and Van Dijk (1998) introduced this as a systematic approach for analysis of textual data. In particular, Fairclough (1995) focuses on the delineation of media discourse and social context and how they are interconnected in society. Fairclough (1995) proffers a further investigation into the three main analysis concepts of ‘textual practice’, ‘discourse practice’, and ‘social practice’.

Textual analysis refers to ‘linguistic analysis’ that covers traditional forms of linguistics processes within a text. In particular, linguistic analysis concerns itself with both the forms and meanings of words within a language – essentially, how certain elements of linguistics



have been constructed in a given text. Textual analysis only focuses on investigation of singular textual formation, whereas discourse practice refers to the interconnectivity that exists within a text structure. This approach seeks to establish the communicative event that involves various aspects of the processes of both text production and text consumption. In terms of patterns of convention such as textual discourse and linguistics, questions are also raised as to how these entities operate within the process of production and interpretation in texts.

Lastly, social practice can be viewed as a type of macro analysis for understanding the formative processes behind social hegemony. Given these three concepts for framing and analysing texts, this research seeks to investigate the cultural details of newspaper texts such as specific linguistic styles in the process of Chinese naturalized players as well as nationalism and the national identity processes through which these athletes in Korean society must endure in order to endear themselves to current cultural hegemony as a social issue. Therefore, this thesis investigated the data and evidence in social, psychological, visual, vocabulary and word elements related to this thesis in Korean newspaper reports by adopting both thematic analysis and discourse analysis to enable a more scientific and accurate newspaper analysis.

### **3.9 Interviewing Participants**

This study's interviews involved interviewing 17 individuals in South Korea who were directly or indirectly associated with Chinese naturalised athletes (see Appendix I). Interviewing is one of the most useful techniques to collect data for research on sport, exercise and health, with interviewing becoming the methodological *lingua franca* for researchers who are qualitatively oriented (Atkinson, 2012). Qualitative researchers

investigate spoken and written representations and records of human experience via multiple methods and sources of data (Punch, 1999). The interview process is one of the most useful research tools for analysis in qualitative research because it is able to access perceptions, meanings and definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Punch, 1999). It also provides a variety of viewpoints of experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and emotions (May, 2001, p. 121).

Three different approaches can be employed when conducting interview research: structured, semi-structured and unstructured face-to-face interviews. Before discussing the main interview approach used for this study, it is important to understand the differences between these three approaches. First, in structured interviews the interviewee is asked a set of predetermined questions (Robson 2002). This interview style enforces total control over the format of the questions and answers (Denscombe, 2010). Structured interviews do not include a high degree of variation in responses, although open-ended questions may sometimes be used (Punch, 2005). If the interview is conducted in a standardised format, all respondents receive the same questions in the same order provided in a consistent manner, with minimised internal flexibility and variation (Punch, 2005). In other words, structured interviews are similar to surveys and interviews within the arena of quantitative research.

Second, the semi-structured interview format is widely used in flexible research designs, and presents more opportunities for an intimate approach and relationship to develop between researchers and participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Atkinson (2012) stated that, 'the semi-structured interview is the gold standard' (p. 123). Essentially, the researcher prepares a list of 10 to 30 questions in advance, with a designated time and location outside of or proximal to everyday events (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). One

of the foremost advantages of the semi-structured interview is that the process of conversation takes the form of a back-and-forth exchange between the researcher and participant. During this exchanging of dialogue, the researcher is constantly gathering new, exciting, important, and ambiguous or conceptually interesting information (Atkinson, 2012). To effectively conduct interviews through this method, the researcher requires a 'shopping list' and interview guide of topics and conversational avenues for acquiring specific responses; however, they still have a substantial degree of freedom in the particular sequencing of questions, wording, and amount of time or attention allotted to different topics (Bryman, 2012; Robson, 2002).

Third, the open or unstructured interview has more flexibility than both the structured interview and semi-structured interview (Punch, 2005). Robson (1998) explained that:

The traditional type of unstructured interview is the non-standardized, open-ended, in-depth interview, sometimes called the ethnographic interview. It is used as a way of understanding the complex behavior of people without imposing any a priori categorization which might limit the field of inquiry (p. 178).

Unstructured interviews provide a liberal position for interviewees because the researcher is not in control of the interviewees' answers (May, 2001). In other words, a researcher can gain access to more effective ideas from the interviewees (May, 2001). Punch (1998) stated that, 'there is, and needs to be, flexibility in the unstructured interview situation (what Douglas, 1985, calls "creative interviewing"), especially for oral history and life history projects' (p. 178). Both the unstructured interview and ethnographic interview have to hold a particular request formation from the research question (Punch, 2005). Even though this interview method may provide richer detail description and information than the natural setting of interview circumstances, as Atkinson (2012) suggested, if the researcher is inexperienced, then the unstructured interview should be avoided because it can prove too difficult for a

novice researcher to control the participants and information in such an environment. Punch (2005) admitted that the skill of unconstructed interviewing can be difficult to learn; thus, most researchers should train to develop their knowledge on how to further process the results obtained via the unconstructed interview methodology.

Given the aforementioned comparisons between structured, semi-structured and unconstructed interviews, this study sought to adapt the semi-constructed interview method for several reasons. First and foremost, when a quantitative interview seems to dominate a researcher's concerns, the semi-structured approach offers infinitely more flexibility between researcher and participant. Positive rapport can be one of the most important issues for establishing free and open dialogue between researcher and participant. The researcher can attain new, exciting, important, ambiguous or interesting information during the conversations with participants (Atkinson, 2012). The semi-constructed interview can be an efficient and practical way of acquiring data about matters that cannot be simply observed from a distance, such as participants' behaviours and emotions. Thus, through proper use of these tools, the savvy researcher is able to obtain more appropriate and accurate data.

Additionally, the semi-structured interview is mainly an open-ended method; however, researchers may conduct the interview process with a predetermined set of questions or question lists.<sup>19</sup> The researcher should determine the amount of data and time investment that will be expected during the interviews within their respective list of concerns. With a pre-set questionnaire, researchers can avoid unnecessarily long interview times and extraneous information. Finally, the semi-structured interview format also offers high validity because

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<sup>19</sup>See Appendix ii.

people are more willing and able to talk about issues in significant detail and depth. The meanings behind actions can be better revealed because the participants possess the ability to speak freely as a result of the minimised level of direction on behalf of the researcher.

### 3.9.1 Approaching the participants

Given the diversity of reasons behind accepting the semi-structured interview for this research, it is important to address the specific approaches employed when interacting with interviewees. Bryman (2012) argued that the management of participants, groups and questions is essential before beginning the interview research process. However, the problem in the current research was that the researcher did not personally know the people selected for the interviews. Snowball sampling using a gatekeeper can be useful when starting a study without knowing the interviewees (Bryman, 2012; Mason, 2002). Thus, this research largely sought to manage these admittedly difficult interviews by pursuing gatekeepers. However, Korczynski (2004) stated that researchers are constantly negotiating their objectives with gatekeepers, who can potentially sanction or block their work. Therefore, the current researcher decided to divide the interviews into six groups and conduct group interviews. The total number of interviewees was 17.<sup>20</sup> These interviews were conducted from April to May 2014 in South Korea.

Table 3.5

#### *Six Interview Groups*

1	Government	Former Minister of Justice and Former Korean Athletic Chairman (Former International Olympics Committee) member	2
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<sup>20</sup>See Appendix i.

2	Media (newspapers)	Four sports journalists from four newspapers: <i>Chosun</i> , <i>Dong-A</i> , <i>Hankyoreh</i> and <i>Seoul</i>	4
3	Korean Table Tennis Association	Former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Federation, manager, and Korean youth table tennis team coach, and Korean semi-professional player	4
4	Chinese naturalised player	First Korean naturalised athlete	1
5	Local table tennis players and their parents	Two high school table tennis players and their parents	3
6	Local coaches and club members	Two local table tennis club coaches and two club members	3

First, in the government group, the researcher interviewed the former Attorney General and the Director of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The reason is that, when the Minister of Justice was in office in 1999 to 2001, Korean society had fully embraced globalisation. At that time, the researcher wished to attain the viewpoint of the government in response to the massive influx of workers and Korean society beginning to experience the greatest influence of globalisation. The Attorney General met with the researcher due to a personal acquaintance. It took approximately three weeks to organise this meeting because it was difficult to schedule an interview with him. The researcher also wished to discuss the naturalisation of foreigners in Korean sports with the director of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This person was also met through a personal acquaintance. In the case of the interview with the former president of the Korean Sports Committee and former International Olympics Committee member, the researcher was unable to find a gatekeeper. The researcher approached him through his office, but was rejected. After two weeks, the researcher contacted him again by telephone and was able to attain an interview.

Second, the researcher met with the former vice-president, manager and head youth team coach of the Korean Table Tennis Association. The researcher made telephone calls and sent email requests to interview these people one year before beginning the fieldwork. This

group provides an example of the snowball sampling effect because the original plan was to meet only the manager. However, after the interview, the manager introduced two other people, and the research subsequently interviewed a semi-professional table tennis player through the manager.

Third, the researcher attended the Korean Table Tennis Championships held in Dangjin from 10 to 17 April 2014 in order to determine some general views about the naturalised athletes playing Korean table tennis. The researcher spent two days at the championships and interviewed two Korean high school table tennis players and their parents. Fourth, the researcher approached two local table tennis coaches and the private members of two local table tennis clubs, and requested permission to conduct interviews with these stakeholders.

Fifth, the researcher wished to interview Korea's first naturalised table tennis player. However, this initially proved to be virtually impossible. At first, the researcher contacted Korean Air, given that this athlete plays for the Korean Air table tennis team; however, the request for interview was rejected because Korean Air did not allow the athletes to conduct personal interviews. Moreover, there was a problem between the naturalised player and the Korean newspaper interview at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, so they refused the interview. The researcher then contacted the Korean Table Tennis Federation and asked them to organise an interview with the naturalised athlete. However, when Korean Air refused this interview, the federation said they could not assist. However, by chance, the researcher then met an individual who personally sponsored the Korean Air table tennis team. Following a careful request, he was able to organise an interview with a naturalised player within two weeks.

Finally, the researcher interviewed sports journalists from four different newspapers in Korea by organising appointments via email from the United Kingdom five months before the fieldwork was conducted. I briefly explained the approaching with the interviewers, this was an interview that was not easy. The most difficult issue was the refusal of some stakeholders to conduct an interview. For example, two other naturalised players did not wish to be interviewed because they were not proficient in speaking Korean. It also took at least two weeks to meet one interviewer. The issue of time and distance was another important concern because the researcher had to travel to various cities around Korea to conduct the interviews. Finally, it was important to locate gatekeepers in order to conduct successful interviews; however, it was not easy to locate suitable gatekeepers.

### **3.9.2 Interviewing circumstances**

In conducting these 17 interviews, the researcher experienced various situations in the field. Researchers need to be aware of and prepare for the many things that can occur in the field (Yin, 2015). First, in the current study, the most significant issue was time. Some people did not meet at the agreed interview time—they cancelled the appointment and organised another time. The interview time generally ranged from 50 minutes to one hour and 10 minutes. Interviewees show a tendency to become fatigued after an hour. The second problem was the location. Most of the interviews were conducted at the interviewees' desired locations; however, cafés or restaurants were not well focused. In contrast, interviews conducted at the interviewees' offices seem to have been mostly stable and progressing. A number of interviewees did not wish to be interviewed in their colleagues' offices, but wanted to be interviewed outside the company. The interview with the Korean youth director



on 13 April 2014 was held at the Korean Table Tennis Championship competition in Danjin. Finally, some of the interviewees felt that they always interviewed using a mobile telephone during the interview. As a researcher, I was uncomfortable, but I did not feel that I could tell an interviewee not to use a phone in the interview.

### **3.9.3 Ethical considerations**

Researchers must consider various ethical issues during their relationships with interviewees throughout the interview process (Mason, 2002). The researcher should clearly explain the purpose of the research to the participants, and clearly explain the process and outcome of the research results. As detailed in the ethical form of the Loughborough University, interviewees can quit at any time during the interview and cancel their involvement. This is entirely their right and researchers must respect their wishes. In addition, if interviewees wish to read their material, they can view the material at any time.

This research had no particular ethical issues, although the interviewees asked the researcher to use their nicknames, rather than their real names. Two interviewees also sent their interview agreement two weeks later, and the reason is that they confirmed their team to which they belong. In addition, the researcher met with two Korean high school table tennis players at the Korea Table Tennis Championships held in Dangjin from 10 to 17 April 2014. Their parents also participated in the interviews, and the school students were interviewed with the consent of their guardian. The written results of this research protect the personal information of the interviewees, and any presented names are pseudonyms.

## **3.9 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 aimed to determine the most appropriate methodology and method to understand Korean nationalism and national identity construction through Chinese naturalised athletes. Beginning with understanding quantitative research and qualitative research, which are two mountain ranges of methodology, this thesis includes qualitative research methods and various quantitative data (statistical data). A more detailed and robust research methodology has chosen three research methods that are most appropriate for this thesis's research question: archive analysis, semi-structured interviews and newspaper analysis. The flow of nationalism and national identity in Korea is examined through studying data via these research methods, examining past newspapers, and direct enquiry of people concerned with and understanding Chinese naturalised table tennis athletes. Another important point is that this research has been objective through the methodology of figurational sociology, and has chosen materials in detailed and scientific ways through the interaction of theories and data. Therefore, it goes to the three finding chapters obtained through this methodological background and three research methods.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Lightest Ball has caused the Heaviest Changes: The Development of Table Tennis**

**(19th Century to Present)**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

As aforementioned, the central focus of this thesis is to examine the nationalism and national identity of Korea through Chinese naturalised table tennis players in Korea. To understand this, it is important to understand the origins of the sport of table tennis and its progress to the present. In particular, it is important for this chapter to focus on the role played by table tennis in China and Korea through the history of world table tennis, and to observe how Chinese table tennis players became naturalised in Korea in this relationship. Thus, this chapter focuses on the naturalisation of Chinese athletes in Korea in relation to table tennis, China and Korea, through archival materials and various table tennis materials. It is necessary to confirm the process of naturalisation in Korea, and, in the following Chapters 5 and 6, it is possible to recognise the nationalism and national identity of Korea through naturalised athletes.

To achieve this aim, it is initially important to investigate the historical development of table tennis as a sport. To understand this sport's long-term development and trace the historical development of table tennis, the theory of sportisation is useful in helping to illuminate the historical development of the 'sport world' (Elias & Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1999). The theory of sportisation states that, 'sport worlds of the past have developed into our contemporary sport worlds, just as our actions of today shape what may come tomorrow' (Maguire, 2011, p. 862). Thus, this chapter examines the origins and development of table

tennis, and the increasing varieties and diminishing contrasts caused by this development. In addition, examining the development of table tennis will help to demonstrate the relationship between table tennis and the particular people, societies and countries that have been involved in the sport's long-term developmental period, and the strength of the power that is involved with table tennis.

While table tennis initially appears to be a simple game, it has more complicated meanings. The sport began as a post-dinner exercise in upper-class Victorian society, and used to be a popular indoor sport in the United Kingdom (UK) (Bale, 1981; International Olympic Committee, 2017). Table tennis was the most popular indoor sport in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Northern Europe from the 1920s onwards (Park & Chae, 2011). Table tennis played an important role in China's initiative of exchanges with the US and Western countries through what became known as 'Ping Pong Diplomacy' with the United States in April 1971. From then on, China began to interact more with the world, gradually opening its doors over several decades until the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (Carter & Sugden, 2011). The sport of table tennis itself crossed the country as well as the wider continent of Asia, arriving in Northeast Asia and becoming established as the national sport of South Korea. Also, table tennis now enjoys great popularity among Koreans at recreational level, (Bae et al., 2008). Moreover, table tennis has an important place in Korean society by virtue of being the first sport in which a naturalised athlete won a Olympic medal for Korea. This chapter therefore investigates the important developmental process of table tennis.

This study is not an examination of the entire history of table tennis. However, throughout previous sports research, the history of table tennis has received limited attention compared to many other sports. This study therefore set out to examine this history in shortly.

In order to understand this process, the first part of this chapter considers the early development of table tennis in England and Europe, and how the sport spread to the Far East Asian countries (from the 11th to early 20th century). The second part of the chapter investigates the relationships between table tennis and China as a national sport from the 1950s to present. This second part focuses on the reasons that led China to select the foreign sport of table tennis as a national sport, among the many other sports practised in the country. Moreover, this part also considers why China has become the ‘powerhouse’ of global table tennis. The third and final part of this chapter examines the historical context of table tennis and South Korean society. In order to investigate the history of Korean table tennis in detail, the last part of the chapter is divided into four periods: early Korean modern sport (19th century), the Japanese colonial period (1910 to 1945), the Cold War period (1950 to 1980) and the globalisation period (1980 to present).

#### **4.2.1 Table tennis: The Origin, The Development, and The Diffusion**

Briefly, the origin, development, and proliferation of table tennis are divided into five historical categories. The first three historical divisions among the five divisions are the origin of the table tennis (11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century), the development (19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century), and the diffusion (1926 to late 1950). This thesis is about table tennis, but it will be difficult to mention all the history of table tennis unfortunately because it is studying nationalism and national identity of Korean society through Chinese naturalization player. Therefore, the history of 100 years of table tennis from the origins of table tennis to the mid-20th century will only explain the points of very simple table tennis.

Table tennis originated as an upper-class indoor sport in the 19th century in England. As indicated by Bale's (1981) data, table tennis soon became a popular indoor sport in the UK. In the 1920s, table tennis spread throughout Western Europe, Northern Europe and Eastern Europe. It also became a popular sport in British colonies such as Egypt and India. In 1950, China and Japan began actively playing the sport in Northeast Asia, and began to defeat European players in the international arena. Especially in China, table tennis played an important role in opening the country to the world via the 'ping pong diplomacy' with the United States in 1971. For this thesis, the role of table tennis in China is very important because of the importance of table tennis in China, Chinese players have become naturalised to Korea.

#### **4.3 Table Tennis and China**

This section considers the relationship between China and table tennis, and examines the reasons behind the global dominance of Chinese table tennis. It is not known exactly when and how table tennis arrived in China; however, the most common explanation is that table tennis was introduced to China by foreigners or missionaries living in China in the early 1920s (ITTF, 2016). Later, table tennis became China's national and favourite sport (Geng, Burton, & Blakerrioe, 2002; Wu, 2006). The importance of table tennis to China and the Chinese people can be seen in many examples in the fields of sport culture, economics and politics.

For example, as reported by Yang (2014), Cai Zhenhua—a past Chinese table tennis hero and the current Chinese sports vice-president—has become chairperson of the China

Football Association.<sup>21</sup> The Korean newspaper article reported that while it will not be easy, it seems that Chinese football hopes to reach the same world-class standard as Chinese table tennis. In terms of business with Chinese people, China is not only the largest international market, but also a country with considerable investment value. However, when it comes to business with Chinese people, it is good to have a ‘ping pong model’ that satisfies and reassures Chinese people (Ghauri & Fang, 2001).<sup>22</sup>

Above all, it is now important for China to continue to open up and interact with the rest of the world, as a result of the 1971 Ping Pong Diplomacy with the United States (Hong & Sun, 2000). Maguire (1999) pointed out that the Cold War influenced global sport between the communist nations of the Soviet Bloc and the West. For instance, the United States and many Western countries boycotted the Moscow Olympics in 1980; conversely, the Soviet Bloc boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 (Cottrell & Nelson, 2010). However, an opposite political relation was achieved between the communist nation of China (Mao Zedong administration, 1949–1976) and the United States (Nixon administration, 1969–1974) through the concept of the Ping Pong Diplomacy (Hong & Sun, 2010).

In 1972, ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’ between Red China and the American President Richard Nixon played a vital role in the Cold War, and represented the first steps towards the opening of China’s ‘bamboo curtain’. Chen, Tan, and Lee (2015) claimed that table tennis was China’s best tool to establish international relations, and that Ping Pong Diplomacy could

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<sup>21</sup>The news article, ‘Chinese Football’ (2014) stated that Cai Zhenhua was a national table tennis player in China from 1980 to 1985, and served as a coach of the Chinese men’s team until 2004. This Chinese table tennis hero was at the centre of the rebirth of Chinese table tennis.

<sup>22</sup>Ghauri and Fang (2001) investigated how to undertake successful business dealings with Chinese people, and explored the Chinese-style ‘ping pong model’. The model states that, in order to interact with Chinese people, it is necessary to slowly understand the Confucian habits of Chinese people and their lifestyle, as if they are to be exchanged like a table tennis ball.

be seen as ‘a small ball turning the big ball’. Hong (1999) noted Chinese premier Zhou Enlai’s comment to the American table tennis players that, ‘your visit to China has opened the door for people-to-people exchanges between China and the USA’. This case of diplomacy further contributed to China’s global dominance in table tennis. The ITTF (2015) described this dominance as a ‘total triumph for China’, referring to the period from 1981 onwards. This example further highlights the pivotal role of table tennis in Chinese politics, economics and culture. Moreover, the policy of Chinese ‘Ping Pong Diplomacy’ tennis had numerous effects on sporting and other political exchanges between China and other countries in the years that followed (Hong & Xiaozheng, 2002).

#### **4.3.1 Global Domination of Chinese Table Tennis**

This section focuses on the previous Olympic table tennis match record, from Seoul in 1988 to London in 2012. The status of table tennis in China can be recognised as that of an important national sport, while China’s image in the sport of table tennis can be recognised as one of global dominance (Laborde et al., 2012). The Chinese believe that table tennis is a national sport as explained by Yan and Choi (2009):

In 1952, a Chinese table tennis team called Young-Kuk-Dan obtained the first gold medal from an international sport event. Since 1952, China has achieved more than 100 gold medals from international table tennis championships, and they earned every gold medal from each Olympic Games from 1988 to 2012. In particular, the Chinese team swept all gold medals. (p. 876)<sup>23</sup>

There are many reasons for the strength of Chinese table tennis players at international level. However, the most influential factor in Chinese table tennis seems to be

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<sup>23</sup>Young-Kuk-Dan was represented as the team of national dragons for China.



government policy. In regard to the Chinese government's policy on table tennis, Xu (2006) stated that table tennis was nominated as a national sport by Mao Zedong. Moreover, the ITTF was one of the only sporting national structures formed during Mao's Chinese administration, and Mao supported and invested in the development of Chinese table tennis (Liew, 2012).

There were many reasons that Mao promoted table tennis as an important sport for his government. One reason is evident from the records of the ITTF, Chinese table tennis history, and Korean newspapers. As reported by Lee (2016), Mao promoted the use of table tennis for rest and fitness for soldiers during the Chinese Civil War, and table tennis was very popular with Mao's army at the time. Mao and his cadres also had considerable table tennis skills (1927 to 1936). After Mao gained power over China, he encouraged the playing of table tennis to improve the welfare of the Chinese people. In addition, when a Japanese player (Hiroji Satoh) became the world champion in 1952 (ITTF Museum, 2016), Mao developed the idea that Chinese athletes could achieve international dominance in the sport. Mao believed that Chinese players could defeat their Western colonial masters in table tennis, and took pride in China's excellence in this sport (Liew, 2012).

In addition, according to Son & Hwang (2011), Mao wanted to make his country a dream after he took power, but it was not easy in the 1950s. Even worse, in the 1960s, China was facing severe drought and famine, and the society was in ruins. However, in the late 1950s, a Chinese men's table tennis player, Rong Guotuan, became the first world table tennis champion, which represented one positive story to report to the demoralised Chinese government and people in 1959 (ITTF Museum, 2016). In response to this event, table tennis became China's national sport, and Lee (2016) stated that table tennis was also used by China

as a tool for nation building. Since the 1950s, the Chinese government has promoted the policy of ‘ping pong for all’ among Chinese sports policies, which is a policy that allows many Chinese people to play table tennis (Chen, 2009).

Another interesting fact to note, as reported by Kim (2012), is that Chinese table tennis players are viewed as national representatives and are subsequently presented with two guarantees for the future. First, they receive wealth, honour and huge advertising revenues. Second, after retirement, they are offered senior official positions in the government. Another interesting fact is the table tennis system employed by the Chinese government. The Chinese table tennis system is too complicated to explain here in depth; however, this section explains it briefly. Chinese table tennis is said to train Chinese players based on ‘ideal player selection system’, ‘scientific player upbringing’ and ‘training content’ (Yan & Choi, 2009). China has 30 million registered table tennis players, who have all come through the Chinese table tennis system. Among these players, 50 to 60 athletes are selected from each region, and eventually only five to six of these players will represent China in international competition (Kim, 2012).<sup>24</sup>

Due to the full support of the Chinese government, there is a tendency for Chinese players to have the power to dominate international table tennis. The table below indicates how Chinese players dominated the Olympic Games from 1988 to 2016. This table presents the table tennis results for each Olympic Games for the men’s singles, women’s singles, men’s doubles, men’s team and women’s team medal results, from Seoul 1988 through to Rio 2016.

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<sup>24</sup> In Japan, the number of registered table tennis players is 200,000, while in Korea, the number of registered players is 2,000 (KTTA, 2016).

Table 4.1

*Olympic Table Tennis Medal Totals (1988–2016)*

Rank	Country	Gold medal	Silver medal	Bronze medal	Total
1	China	28	17	8	53
2	South Korea	3	3	12	18
3	Sweden	1	1	1	3
4	Germany	0	3	4	7
5	Japan	0	2	2	4
6	North Korea	0	1	3	4
7	Singapore	0	1	2	3
8	Taiwan	0	1	1	2
9	France	0	1	1	2
10	Yugoslavia	0	1	1	2
11	Hong Kong	0	1	0	1
12	Denmark	0	0	1	1
	Total	32	32	36	100

Source: ITTF (2017).

The results from the 1998 to 2016 Olympic Games indicated that China obtained four gold medals and one silver medal in the table tennis men's singles, South Korea achieved two gold medals and one silver medal in the men's singles, and Sweden achieved one gold medal and one silver medal. However, China's dominance in table tennis is identified clearly in the women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, men's team and women's team. In each Olympic Games, table tennis was led by Chinese players. In the total count of gold medals, as shown in the table above, China won 28 of 32 gold medals and 53 of 100 total medals in Olympic table tennis games from 1988 to 2016. In addition, the presence of only Chinese athletes on the Olympic podium became a common sight, with there being many cases of

China's representatives being awarded the gold, silver and bronze medals, as indicated in Figure 4.3.



*Figure 4.1.* Photographs of Olympic table tennis medal ceremonies showing Chinese players winning all medals (Rio, London and Beijing Olympic Games men's singles ceremonies).

According to the ITTF (2015), there are 249 table tennis associations, and only about 50 nations' table tennis teams can be accepted to the Olympic Games. Even when these nations are competing on the Olympic stage, the results are mainly dominated by China. Table 4.3 demonstrates that, in the years examined, only 10 nations obtained medals, and only two nations (South Korea and Sweden) achieved gold medals, other than China. This significant achievement of the Chinese table tennis team indicates their global success in this field. However, this research does not seek to enumerate the international success of Chinese table tennis, but is rather a study of how the problems arising from this success affect Korean table tennis and society. Thus, in relation to this goal, this study aimed to examine these problems. Therefore, the next section examines the issues that have arisen from China's domination of international table tennis.

#### **4.3.2 The Problems of Chinese Domination**

To maintain their global domination of table tennis, Chinese table tennis teams must work hard to develop athletes and skills that other countries cannot achieve (Yan & Choi,

2009). While there are large numbers of Chinese table tennis players in training, not every Chinese table tennis player can compete at international level. At this point, it is important to discuss how Chinese table tennis players are categorised. Shin (2016) investigated Wang's (2005) four-step training system of Chinese table tennis players as figure 4.2. Moreover, through a complex system, Liew (2012) reported that the Chinese table tennis federation indicates that 30 million table tennis teams are registered, and there are 5,000 professional players in China. Moreover, 200,000 players are registered as table tennis players, and 2,000 players are listed as professional in China. Due to the sheer number of players in China, only the best seven to eight players can be selected as Chinese national team members. At this point, many players who have not become Chinese representatives through this system need to question what they are doing.

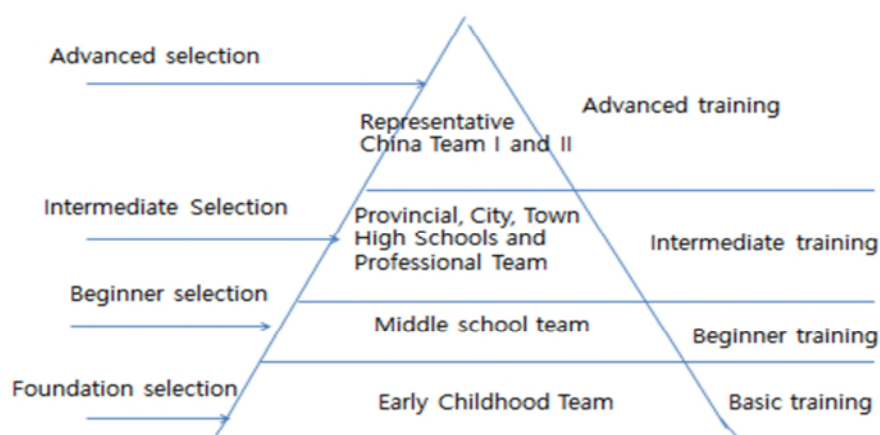


Figure 4.2. Four-step training system of Chinese table tennis players.

According to Shin (2016), when a Chinese national representative is eliminated, that player must seek another job. The problem here is that the organised structure of Chinese

table tennis has produced an overpopulation of table tennis players. Thus, among these many Chinese table tennis players, it is becoming an option for Chinese table tennis players to travel abroad to play table tennis elsewhere.

As a result of this relocation, media reports about the naturalisation of Chinese players began to appear. NBC Olympic Broadcasting (2016) reported that ‘Chinese table tennis domination leads to exodus of talent’, with many Chinese players forced to go abroad because there are too many successful table tennis players in China. As reported by *New York Times* journalist, Hill (2016), in the Rio Olympics table tennis competition, in which 172 athletes took part, 44 players were Chinese naturalised players, with 21 countries having Chinese naturalised players as part of their Olympic teams. Yang (2012) addressed this issue in the Seoul Broadcasting Service coverage of the London Olympics:

China has too many great players. Ten million talented table tennis players are selected from the one point four billion population of China. These ten million players are away from their homes at the early age of six or seven years old, and stay in a training camp. They spend more than seven hours training in table tennis every day. These players are divided into six different categories as Chinese Super League, A, B, C, D, and E local leagues. Among these players, ninety-six players are chosen as a standing squadron. Even if they are members of a standing squadron team, they have to join the local Chinese professional team. In professional teams, they need to perform table tennis every day. They normally have only twelve days off per year. However, if they do not qualify for every tournament, other players replace them instantly. In other words, it is hard to compete with Chinese table tennis for other countries. The result of this, there is two interesting issues that there are too many great table tennis players in China, and other countries want to know about Chinese table tennis. Therefore, some of the Chinese table tennis players escape to another country.

There are far more world-class Chinese table tennis players than can appear in global table tennis competitions, such as the Olympic Games. Therefore, with a variety of skills, Chinese players depart from their own country to work in other countries. Many countries

have accepted Chinese players, including the 21 nations at the Rio Olympics.<sup>25</sup> While this is a topic worthy of study, the specific focus of the current research is the phenomenon of Chinese table tennis players in Korean society. To examine this phenomenon, it is necessary to understand the conditions of Korean table tennis, including the circumstances under which Korean table tennis has accepted Chinese players, despite the long history of rivalry between Korean and Chinese table tennis. In order to begin exploring the history of Chinese naturalised players, the next section examines Korean table tennis and society.

#### **4.4 Table Tennis and South Korea**

Thus far, this research has traced the origins of table tennis, the expansion of this sport to the rest of the world, and the role of table tennis in China. In this relationship, many Chinese players have traced the requirements for naturalisation to other countries. This research now investigates the role of table tennis in South Korea, where Chinese players have become naturalised in order to compete at international level. Furthermore, this section also examines the relationship between Korea and table tennis.

Table tennis was one of the most popular sports for Korean people until the early 1990s (Bae & Yoon, 2011) because table tennis epitomised the sport in which South Korea defeated colonisers and communist nations (Chae, 2011). Moreover, table tennis was the portal joining the two Koreas (Kim, 2015). It was the easiest sport to access and was

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<sup>25</sup> The countries with Chinese naturalised players at the Rio Olympics were as follows: Singapore (five of five players), Australia (three of six players), United States (three of six players), Canada (two of two players), Turkey (two of two players), the Netherlands (two of three players), Spain (two of three players), Portugal (two of five players), Austria (two of six players), Germany (two of six players), Hong Kong (two of six players), Poland (two of six players), Luxembourg (one of one player), Qatar (one of one player), Ukraine (one of two players), Republic of Congo (one of three players), Slovakia (one of three players), France (one of four players) Sweden (one of five players), Brazil (one of six players) and Korea (one of six players).

frequently played for leisure because it required only simple equipment and a small space, at a time when the Korean economy was under-developed (Bae et al., 2008). Moreover, table tennis became the first national Korean sport to select foreign nationalised players (Lee & Kwak, 2016). In order to understand the characteristics of table tennis development in Korea, this section takes a closer look at the next period. Therefore, the last part of this chapter is divided into four periods: early Korean modern sport (19th century), the Japanese colonisation period (1910 to 1945), the Cold War period (1950 to 1980) and the globalisation period (1980 to the present).

In addition, first, I will address how Western sports were introduced into Korea in the late 19th century. Second, the first time table tennis was introduced to Korea was during the Japanese colonial period. Third, table tennis was popular when Korea did not have much sport during its economic development. In particular, at this time, there was great national pride that the table tennis beat communism with the anti-communist ideology of the Korean government. At this time, table tennis was an important element of national identity construction. Lastly, throughout the final examined historical period, this chapter seeks to understand the role of table tennis in Korean society at the time when it became a globalised society.

#### **4.4.1 Early Modern Sports in Korea (19<sup>th</sup> century)**

Before examining the development of table tennis in Korea, it is useful to understand how Korean society encountered Western forms of sport and ultimately came to accept Western sports. The western sports mentioned here also include table tennis. In this way, detailed explanations of Western sports such as table tennis which were introduced into



Korean society in the late 19th century are important, but here this part briefly examine how table tennis entered Korean society at this time. It was in the late Cho-Sun Dynasty (1392–1897) that Western sports were introduced to Korean history.<sup>26</sup> This section seeks to investigate the background of adopting Western sports, such as table tennis, at the end of the Cho-Sun Dynasty. In 2010, the Korean Olympic Committee published *The 90<sup>th</sup> History of Korean Sport*, and described how Western sport was adopted into Korean society as follows:

A nation's sport interrelates with the conditions of politics and military influences. Western sports arrived into Korea around time of 'the Political Reform' in 1884. During this period, Korea was in a place of power games with Japan, the Qing Dynasty (China) and Russia. To maintain national sovereignty and independence, King Go-Jung focused on nationalism in sport and ordered physical education to be a major subject in schools. This was influenced by the case of Sweden, Denmark and Germany. These countries built their physical education to protect their country. (p. 9). To understand this history, it is necessary to examine the time of King Go-Jung and his regime.

What seems important in the above article is that the king of Cho-Sun in Northeast Asia at the time thought that the purpose of raising national power and nationalism was through Western sports. In particular, the aim was to cultivate national power through Western sports in preparation for the oncoming Japanese colonial invasion. However, post-1910, new forms of Western sports were introduced by the Japanese, such as table tennis, tennis and rugby (Son & Seo, 2011).<sup>27</sup> This part of thesis briefly reviewed the background of the influx of Western sports to Korea including table tennis in the late 19th and early 20th century. Thus far, it was interesting to know one reason for adopting Western sports in Korea—to develop the Korean nation through sports, but in various domestic international situations, the result

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<sup>26</sup> The Cho-Sun Dynasty (1392–1897) was the last royal family in Korea, after which the region was colonised by the Japanese (1910–1945). After this colonisation, Cho-Sun was abolished and Korea was founded (1948 to the present).

<sup>27</sup> Table tennis was introduced to Japan by the British in around 1899 (ITTF, 2015).

was a failure as a process of colonisation. However, after the collapse of the Cho-Sun Dynasty, sports still played a special role in the Japanese colonial process (Kim, 2002). In particular, this research now moves to examine the development of table tennis in Korean society, including the development of table tennis as a sport during colonial times. In the following section, it will examine the role of table tennis in Korea during the Japanese colonial period for this reason.

#### 4.4.2 Korean Table Tennis and the Colonisation Period (1919–1945)

During Japanese colonial times, Korean society entered a period of darkness, although Korean sports became a tool to overcome these difficulties (Ok, 2011). In the case of Korean table tennis, even though the sport was introduced by the Japanese, it began to be played with the aim of ‘beating the coloniser’ (Park, 2015). According to the Korean Table Tennis Association (KTTA), the first Korean table tennis competition was held in January 1924 by the KyungSung Daily Newspaper Company.<sup>28</sup> In 1927, the *Cho-Sun Shin-Gung-Dae-Hei* (sports festival) was launched, and a Korean player, Sang-Soon Kwon, won the championship.<sup>29</sup> In 1928, the first Cho-Sun table tennis championship was held at the YMCA in Seoul, supported by the *Dong-A Daily* newspaper. Historically, according to the KTTA (2015), this event is regarded as the first championship of Korean table tennis, and had deliberate anti-colonialists intentions. It was important to play table tennis, but one thing to check here is the place of the YMCA and the sponsor as *Dong-A Daily*. Maguire (2012)

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<sup>28</sup> ‘*Kyung Sung*’ means ‘Seoul’ in Japanese.

<sup>29</sup> *Cho-Sun Shin-Gung-Dae-Hei* was based on Japanese people’s sports events in Korea. Some talented Korean sports players also participated in this event to compete with Japanese players.

has demonstrated the importance of the role of the YMCA in the diffusion of sport. With reference to the YMCA in Korea, Kim, Jang, and Park (2012) argued that:

The Korean YMCA was established by Hwang Sung Youth Missionary group in 1903.<sup>30</sup> The roles of the YMCA were to develop and distribute Western sport, popularization of sport, sport science, and preserve Korean traditional sport. It can be seen that YMCA made a great contribution to Korean modern sport. (p. 34)

This YMCA sport education also had an influence on Korean nationalism through sport activities. The first table tennis championship was also sponsored by *Dong-A Daily*. This newspaper is known for the removal of the Japanese national flag from the Korean marathoner Ki-Jeong Son, who was then competing for Japan, during his medal ceremony at the Berlin Olympics in 1936.<sup>31</sup> During the time of colonisation, the media played an important role, and it is important to understand the case of the *Dong-A Daily* as a constant supporter of the anti-Japanese movement. Lee (2012) also illustrated the nationalistic role of the media using the case of Chae-Ho Shin, who suggested the use of ‘writing as a battlefield’ for an independent nation.<sup>32</sup> One interesting feature of the *Dong-ADaily* company’s methods in the struggle for independence is that they used similar methods to those employed in Ireland. Yoon (2010) described *Dong-ADaily*’s reporting on Korean independence as follows:

Dong-A researched the important factors of Irish independence for Korean independence. They believed that the geographical location of Ireland had similarities to the Korean situation of the time. In 1922, Ireland became the independent nation of the Irish Republic, based on the Sinn Fein Party. Dong-A was especially focused on

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Hwang Sung’ is another name for Seoul.

<sup>31</sup> Ki-Jeong Son won the gold medal in the marathon at the Berlin Olympics in 1936. He was a Korean athlete; however, Son represented Japan during the colonisation period. At the medal ceremony, he concealed the Japanese flag with a flower, and hung his head so that he did not watch the raising of the Japanese flag. The next morning, two Korean daily newspaper (*Cho-Sun* and *Dong-A*) presented the medal ceremony photograph without the Japanese flag. As result, these newspapers were suspended for nine months (Chae, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Chae-ho Shin began the anti-Japanese movement by using the media to produce nationalists’ writing (Lee, 2012).

the activities of Sinn Fein rather than those of the Irish Nationalists. *Dong-A* argued that the Irish Nationalist Party emphasised long-term negotiation with the UK; however, the result of Irish independence was based on radical nationalist activities. *Dong-A* supported the case of the Sinn Fein party's realistic independence movement. (p. 344).

In these circumstances regarding the roles of the YMCA and the Korean media, the first Korean table tennis championship was held in 1928. In other words, the YMCA and *Dong-A* hosted and organised the first table tennis tournament, which indicated their willingness to start and maintain an anti-colonial movement through table tennis. Korean table tennis later went on to international games in Japan afterwards through the continual will and competition in this country.

In 1932, Korean table tennis players visited Japan for the Korean team's first international match (KTTA, 2015). This team was not a really national team, but comprised players from the dental college at Kyung Sung University. There was no greater rival for Korean table tennis in 1933 than Japan, and a Korean table tennis player won the championship of *Meiji Shin-Gung-Dae-Hei* in 1934.<sup>33</sup> This Japanese sport event reflected the nationalism of the glorious Meiji period, and included sportspeople from colonised countries such as Korea, Taiwan and Manchukuo.<sup>34</sup> Ham (2014) argued that the Japanese wanted to show their superiority through this sport event. In contrast, for Korean sportspeople, it was a

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<sup>33</sup> Ham (2013) described the *Meiji Shin-Gung-Dae-Hei* (1924–1943) as the first modern Japanese national sport competition. During the period of Meiji, Japan opened its ports to accept Western civilisation. The main purpose of this sports event was that the Japanese government was interested in preparing people in Japan to enter the military. Therefore, they were interested in training people and monitoring their progress. In doing so, Japan used Western sport to coach the Japanese people, including football, basketball, baseball and judo. The reason to use Meiji is that Japanese want to amend the place of the King of Meiji to celebrate the glory of Japanese success. The main stadium was just outside the palace.

<sup>34</sup> Manchukuo (1932–1945) was a puppet state between the northern part of Korean and north-western part of China, created by the Japanese.

chance to defeat their colonisers, and to avenge the Korean people's colonial grief through their representatives' performances in table tennis (KTTA, 2015).

Kun-Hang Choi(1920–1982) was the top Korean table tennis player from 1936 to 1951, and the champion of the Pan-Pacific Table Tennis Open and Japanese national table tennis tournament in the 1940s (ITTF, 2016). He became a national hero, and offered vicarious satisfaction through his victories (KTTA, 2015). This historical evidence illustrates how the early development of Korean table tennis was a means of expressing opposition to Japanese colonisation. This Korean mentality regarding colonisation has persisted since Korean independence.

In brief, this section of the research has examined the development and role of Korean table tennis during the Japanese colonial period. Although it seems that table tennis was introduced and developed by the Japanese, the sport eventually came to express the Korean people's will for independence when seeing table tennis tournaments or support company which was held at that time (Chae, 2011). After the potential use of table tennis to the independence movement became apparent, and after the end of Japanese rule in Korea, Korea was once again surrounded by the international ideologies of the era of the Korean Civil War and the Cold War. Therefore, this chapter now turns to explore Korean table tennis during the Cold War period, beyond the sport's origins and the colonial period in Korea.

#### **4.4.3 Korean Table Tennis and Anti-Communism (1950 to early 1980)**

This section of the research examines the evolution the Korean society and sports during the Cold War era, and focuses particularly upon development of table tennis within this broader social and political context. After the Japanese withdrawal from Korea in 1945,

Korea became a separated nation, divided into two countries in 1953. The Republic of Korea as South Korea selected democracy as its national policy, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as North Korea accepted communism as the basis on which to build its nation (Lee, 2012). This can be seen as resulting from Cold War's influence from 1945. The Cold War was recognised as a conflict between the two global powers: the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The outbreak of the Korean War was one of the most significant manifestations of the Cold War between the late 1940s and mid-1970s (Armstrong, 2003). The Korean War is understood as a result of the confrontation between the United States and USSR, and was also a preliminary war between the United States and China (Yufan & Zhihai, 1990).<sup>35</sup>

The Korean War commenced with the invasion of South Korea by North Korea in the 1950s, when South Korea and its allies were nearly defeated. However, the dream of unifying the two Koreas was not realised. The Chinese Red Army crossed the border and entered the Korean War to support North Korea against the United Nations. As a result of China's intervention as a communist country, the Korean people's dream of becoming one nation went unfulfilled, and the two Koreas remain divided with a ceasefire until today (Lee, 2011). This Chinese intervention has caused special tensions between China and South Korea in many different ways, from the conclusion of Korean War in 1953 to the present day. The geo-political structures on the force of the communist bloc of North East Asia changed many features of politics, economics and sociocultural circumstances in South Korean society. In particular, the term *Ban-Gong* (anti-communism)—in which *Ban* means 'against' and *Gong*

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<sup>35</sup> China's entry into the Korean War to support the Democratic People's Republic of Korea arose for two main reasons. First, the North Korean communist party was closely related to the Chinese Communist Party. Second, China was seeking to remove the foreign imperialist powers of the United States in North East Asia (Yufan & Zhihai, 1990).

means ‘communism’—was one of the most important national policies for South Korea after the Korean War (Han, 1997).

The Korean national policy of *Ban-Gong* had similar aspects to the practice of ‘McCarthyism’ which originated in the USA in the 1940s and 1950s. On 16 May 1961, Korea saw a military coup in which the military leader Chung-Hee Park seized power (1961–1979). His regime made *Ban-Gong* a top priority of national policy (Han, 1997). Korean politics, economics, society and culture were all influenced by this policy. In the case of Korean sport, Park’s administration of sports policy was based on the idea that ‘physical fitness is the base of national power’ (Ok, 2007, p. 311), which entailed strong nationalistic ideas. At the centre of this form of Korean nationalism was an anti-communist ideology, which has been evident in the dominant discourses of Korean society since the Korean War (Jeon & Joo, 2005). At the President’s Cup for South East Female Basketball in 1963, Park made the following address: ‘Today, we invite Taiwan and Japanese female teams as anti-communism ally nations ... as the purpose of this competition is to make friends, and to build an anti-Chinese connection between us’ (Jeon & Joo, 2005, p. 17). It is interesting to observe from this speech that Japan was recognised as Korea’s ally during the Cold War period in opposition to Communist states.

Moreover, Park’s administration used sport to promote an image of the superiority of the Korean people over the rest of the world (Kim, 2010). Given these conditions in Korean society since the Korean War, sport, anti-communism and nationalism are intertwined in many cases (Ha & Mangan, 2002). In particular, Korean table tennis has been one of the sports used to emphasise these ideologies. To understand this, it is useful to observe the

achievements of South Korean table tennis during the Cold War period. Table 4.2 offers a broad overview of Korean table tennis between 1952 and 1991.

Table 4.2  
*Historically Significant Events in Korean Table Tennis*

Year	Competition	Achievement
1952	1st Asian Table Tennis Championship in Singapore	Korea's first participation in an international table tennis competition
1954	4th Asian Table Tennis Championship in Singapore	First gold medal in mixed doubles
1956	23rd World Table Tennis Championship in Japan	First time participating at this event
1959	25th World Table Tennis Championship in Germany	First victory in female semi-finals
1973	32nd World Table Tennis Championship in Sarajevo	First gold medal by a Korean female team, and first championship title in the history of Korean sport
1986	10th Asian Games in Seoul	Three gold medals from men's group, women's group and men's singles
1988	24th Olympic Games in Seoul	Two gold medals (men's singles and women's doubles), one silver medal (men's singles) and one bronze medal (men's doubles)
1991	41st World Table Tennis Championship in Japan	First united team of the two Koreas participates at this championship, and gold medal is awarded to the women's group

Source: KTTA (2015).

From the early 1950s, Korean table tennis rose to prominence in international championships. In particular, the 32nd World Table Tennis Championship in Sarajevo in 1973 was the most important victory in the representation of South Korean sport and nationalism against communism. Chae (2011) argued that this was the first major victory of South Korean table tennis - representing Korean sport nationalism - in the Cold War period, and the South Korean media focused on how the team defeated the communist nations of China, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, North Korea and the USSR in the communist



host nation of Yugoslavia. The victory was also the first gold medal gained by a Korean women's international team in any sport, and news of the raising of Korean flag and the national anthem in a communist country when there was no communist country exchange at that time, was broadcasted for several days in Korea. Many people had been desperate for the thrill of victory over a communist country, and the government announced that this result represented the greatest source of national pride. When the Korean team returned home, they were paraded from the airport to Seoul, gave public speeches and were invited to the Blue House to meet President Park.<sup>36</sup> During public speeches, they expressed how they had defeated the communist nations and described their feelings of nationalism during the games. Figure 4.3 shows the players during the parade and at the Blue House.



Figure 4.3. The Korean table tennis team's car parade and meeting with the president. Source: KTTA, 2015.

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<sup>36</sup> The symbolic car parade and ceremony used by the president on this occasion echoed the way in which important foreign visitors such as American presidents Lyndon Baines Johnson or George Walker Bush were received in Korea. (*Hankyrae*, 2007). Moreover, athletes who have achieved major international victories can be offered a symbolic car parade. For example, the first gold medal winning team in women's table tennis had one of the largest car parades in Korea in 1973 – as way of expressing anti-communist sentiment. (*Ping-Pong Life*, 2014) Retrieved from <http://m.thepingpong.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=925>.

However, after 1973 the South Korean team faced a dilemma regarding the Asian Table Tennis Federation (ATTF) and Asian Table Tennis Union (ATTU). Ha and Choi (2014) argued that the ATTF and ATTU came into conflict both in terms of table tennis as a sport and in terms of international ideology during the Cold War.<sup>37</sup> This was one reason that South Korean table tennis experienced a downturn from the mid-1970s, and could not produce world-class players during this period. South Korea tried to isolate this international sports diplomacy by hosting the Seoul Open Table Tennis Championship in 1982; however, the communist bloc of China, North Korea and Eastern European countries boycotted these games (Ha & Choi, 2014). Given these circumstances during the Cold War, South Korean table tennis was one of the symbols of confronting communism through sport—and not only communism in China and North Korea. However, this pattern changed in the mid-1980s. In 1986, South Korea hosted the Asian Games, bringing South Korean sport and table tennis into a new era. Koh (2005) observed that:

To Korea, the 1986 Asian Games have a special meaning, for it was the first international sporting event held in Korea. After the liberation from Japanese rule and the Korean War, Korea needed the momentum to leap into the ranks of Asian countries and made a bid to host the Asian Games as a way of realising its goal. (p. 468)

In the particular case of table tennis, even though North Korea announced that it would not participate, China decided to participate in the Asian Games in Seoul. Park et al. (1987) wrote:

The purpose of the Seoul Asian Games was to walk together towards the future and harmony of thirty billion Asian people. This Asian Games provided the utmost

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<sup>37</sup>According to the Foreign Ministry of Korea (1979), the ITTF announced that the ATTF was the oldest table tennis organisation, but ATTU is also argued to have represented Asia Table Tennis. Since 1970, conflict began between the ATTF (1952) and ATTU (1972). China, North Korean and Japan withdrew from the ATTF to enter the new table tennis organisation, the ATTU. The main purpose of the ATTU was to isolate Khmer (Cambodia), Taiwan, South Korea and Vietnam. South Korea became a member of the ATTU in 1984.

national pride to Korean people, and was an international sport event cherished deep in Korean people's hearts. Above all, the highest of the world, the strongest Great Wall of Chinese table tennis was defeated by Korean table tennis. Associated Press (AP) reported that the achievement of Korean table tennis was 'the international sport coup'. It provided Korean national pride and dignity as a true victory. (p. 547)

Korean people were drawn into a 'vortex of joy' at defeating the Chinese in table tennis (Park et al., 1987). This national excitement at defeating China in table tennis continued through later global sport events, such as the Olympic Games. The Seoul Olympics in 1988 was one of the most significant moments for Korean table tennis because it was for those Games that table tennis first became an official Olympic sport (ITTF, 2015). Even though Korea had played table tennis against communist nations in international competitions since the early 1950s, the Olympic Games represented an even more significant battleground for Korean table tennis to obtain global prominence. At the Olympics China was Korea's strongest opponent, both in terms of sporting competition and political ideology (Ha & Choi, 2014).

As shown in Table 4.4, the Korean table tennis team won four medals at the Seoul Olympics.<sup>38</sup> In particular, the women's doubles defeated the greatest team in the history from the communist country of China. Even in the late 1980s, Koreans were still well aware that China had attacked South Korea to help North Korea during the Korean War, and that it was a state without exchanges with South Korea for the past 40 years (Lee, 2000). It is also interesting that, until around 1988, Korea officially did not use the accurate name of *Jung-Kuk* for China in Korean expressions but meaning *Jung-Kong* as communist state (Lee, 2008). In the Cold War era, the name of *Jung-Kong* meant to Koreans is that China was understood as a demonic entity that helped the Soviet Union to lead the expansion of communism since

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<sup>38</sup> Korea won two gold medals, one silver medal and one bronze medal.

the Korean War (Chung, 2011). Thus, China has always been regarded as politically threatening to South Korea (Chung, 2007). Thus, during the Cold War era, Korea's victory over China in table tennis was considered a victory of national ideology, as well as a sporting victory.

At that time, because of the diplomatic situation between Korea and China, Koreans became more enthusiastic about winning against China. Moreover, the Korean table tennis team formed a single team with North Korea and set a record for beating the strongest Chinese team again in the women's doubles at the World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, Japan, in 1991. Interestingly, even though North Korea is a communist country, the two Korean countries formed a single team and defeated China - and South Korea's unity with North Korea brought about a feeling of national pride for having defeated China (Ji, 2012).

In summarising Korean table tennis in this time, the sport seems to have played a role in resolving the issue of anti-communism in Korean politics and society. In particular, the anti-China sentiment expressed through table tennis seemed to be stronger than in other countries. However, at the end of the 20th century, the political ideology of the Cold War era had almost disappeared, as Korea embraced the onset of the globalisation process. Therefore, the next section of this research examines the state of Korean table tennis during the era of globalisation.

#### **4.4.4 Korean Table Tennis and the Globalisation Era (1990 to Present)**

In this section, this discussion seeks to understand how Korean table tennis has changed during the globalisation era. As discussed throughout the previous sections, table

tennis has developed in relation to various changes in Korean society over the past 100 years. Although Korean table tennis used to boost to Korean society, it has faced various difficulties during the age of globalisation. However, before discussing the specific case of table tennis, this section examines four problems encountered in Korean society. The first is the presentation of globalisation. Korean society has tended to deviate from the ideology of colonisation, the Cold War and dictatorship in the age of globalisation (Hyun, 2008). Second, there is the problem of Korea's low birth rate and ageing society, which is causing drastic changes in Korean society. For example, Korea now has a shortage of workers, which means they must be imported from abroad (Lee, 2012). Third, there is the elite sport policy for Korean sports which was once helpful to Korean sports, but which has seen its limitations become exposed in the global age (Kim, et al., 2012). Fourth, the popularity of table tennis is falling, and the number of Korean table tennis players is noticeably decreasing (Park, Park, & Chen, 2016). The following paragraphs explore these issues in more detail.

Korean sports have been labelled as 'organised culture and invented sport' because they were used in the past for nationalistic reasons and to promote the state's ideology (Bae, 2013). In addition, Kim (2012) criticised Korean sports as primarily a commitment to the nation from the Cold War and military dictatorship to victory. However, these past ideologies have seemed to disappear during the age of globalisation. In Korean sport in the era of globalisation, athletes tend to undertake sport more because of their own individual enjoyment and ambition, although national pride is still considered important. Another change in Korean sports in the age of globalisation is the lack of athletes due to low birth rates. Among the problems of Korea's elite sports policy, more resources are being devoted to sports in which the chances of winning Olympic medals are higher (Kim, 2016). In other

words, some Korean sports that struggle to obtain medals are excluded from intensive investment. Lastly, Korean table tennis has become an unpopular sport despite its former glory.

While, at the macro scale, globalisation and low birth rates are recognised as important, at the micro scale, the most important influence on Korean table tennis is securing athletes in light of the decreasing popularity of the sport. In the midst of changes in Korean society and Korean sports, participation in weightlifting, boxing, hockey, wrestling and fencing is increasingly rare among elementary school students, while the number of elementary schools teaching sports such as judo and handball is rapidly decreasing (Kim et al., 2012). Korean table tennis has also been affected by this change. Park et al. (2016) stated that the main problems currently experienced by Korean table tennis are the shortage of players and the decreasing popularity of the sport. The number of middle school high school table tennis players was 1,482 in 2010 and had decreased to 1,301 in 2012. The reason for this decreasing number is that, when sports are excluded from the elite policies of elementary school and middle school, students tend to quit table tennis immediately (Park et al., 2016). The problems of Korean table tennis are discussed in detail in the following section.

#### **4.4.5 Problems of Korean Table Tennis**

Due to the changes in Korean society described above, table tennis has faced numerous dilemmas since the early 2000s. Another interesting issue to explain the shortage of athletes in less popular sports is that Korean conglomerates mainly invest in popular sports, such as baseball, associate football, basketball, volleyball and golf (Jung & Kang, 2012).

Therefore, many sportspeople seek popular sports without government control in order to attain better economic benefits and career prospects.

For example, one Korean male table tennis legend was asked, ‘Do you want to teach your child to be a table tennis player?’ He said he did not wish to do so, and stated: ‘I might teach him golf’. Indeed, Byung-Hun Ahn, who won the European major golf BMW PGA Championship on 24 May 2015, was the son of the global table tennis couple, Jae-Hyung Ahn and Jiao Zhimin.<sup>39</sup> Although his parents were the most popular table tennis players in Korea, they did not intend to pass this skill on to their children.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it can be recognised that table tennis players wish to avoid the effects of elite sport policy on table tennis, and guide their children towards participating in a more popular sport, for the children’s own benefit.

These circumstances represent difficult conditions in which to develop table tennis, and the sport is still seeking a solution to advance its development. According to the KTTA, Korean table tennis is mainly based on the education system and the *Sil-Up* system.<sup>41</sup> Korean table tennis players usually begin the sport in an elementary school in each region, and progress step by step to the *Sil-Up* stage. Despite this system, the number of *Sil-Up* players is declining, and the number of Korean table tennis players is decreasing. For example, the total

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<sup>39</sup> Jae-Hyung Ahn was a Korean male table tennis player who won the bronze medal in the Seoul Olympics in 1988. Jiao Zhimin was a Chinese female table tennis player who achieved a silver medal in the women’s doubles and one bronze medal in the women’s singles in the Seoul Olympics in 1988. They married after the Seoul Olympics, and were often recognised as the love of international table tennis.

<sup>40</sup> In many popular Korean sports, such as baseball, football, basketball and volleyball, athletes’ children go on to enter their parents’ sport.

<sup>41</sup> The word ‘*Sil-Up*’ means ‘semi-professional’. In Korea, table tennis has not yet been promoted to a professional system and a player is registered as an employee of a company that owns the team rather than a table tennis player.

numbers of *Sil-Up* players fell every year from 2011 to 2014, from 283 players in 2011 to 237 players in 2014 (KTTA, 2014). As the numbers of professional table tennis players have decreased, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Korean table tennis to maintain world-class players.

Most of the Korean national team members are selected from Korean *Sil-Up* teams, after players have finished their compulsory education in the school system. The champions of these *Sil-Up* team competitions usually go on to become Korean national team members. What is interesting in this process is that such a problem is not exposed in Korea. Korean table tennis has often had worse results in the world tournament than before. The reason is that it is difficult to expect a global player to emerge from a small group of players in Korean table tennis (Min, 2008). Even the many schools and *Sil-Up* teams have difficulty securing players; thus, the school and the *Sil-Up* team themselves give up the team. When Korean table tennis was not able to solve these problems, there were things that were not seen in Korean society and Korean table tennis before.

#### **4.4.6 The Advent of Chinese Players in Korea**

Given these problems in Korean table tennis and the circumstances of the national team and *Sil-Up* team competitions, unfamiliar players have appeared in Korean *Sil-Up* tournaments since 2005. Players who had never been seen before started to play in Korea. There had been athletes from other countries in other popular sports, such as baseball and soccer, and it gradually became known that there were now also foreign players in table tennis. Some Chinese table tennis players had represented Korean local teams; however, people did not recognise them due to their Chinese origin. A few years later, in 2007, the



names of one or two naturalised players were discussed in the selection of national representatives, and, for the first time in the history of the Republic of Korea, there was a case in which these foreigners became Korean national representatives. Moreover, a Chinese naturalised player came to represent Korea at the Olympic Games, and made history by becoming the first naturalised player to win a bronze medal.

Table 4.3 summarises the Chinese naturalised athletes in Korea who appeared in various archives and newspapers. In addition to the seven people described here, more Chinese players have been included in each school and *Sil-Up* team in Korea. However, the information about these seven players accurately depicts a representative sample. Some of these seven players work on *Sil-Up* teams and some work on the Korean national team. One other important factor to note is that some of these Chinese naturalised players were born in China as descendants of Koreans. These individuals are called ‘Korean ethnic groups’ or ‘*Cho-Sun-Jek*’ in China.<sup>42</sup>

Table 4.3  
*List of Chinese Naturalised Players, 2005 to Present*

	Name	Details
1	Baejun Joo	The first Chinese male naturalised player in the Korean <i>Sil-Up</i> ( <i>Posdata</i> ) league, which he joined in 2005.
2	Bang-Bang Kuack (Hong Kong)	The first naturalised (2005) female table tennis player in the <i>Sil-Up</i> KBO Korean Horse Racing Association and the Korean national team. She married a Korean local table tennis player in 2005.
3	Yeaseo Dang	The first naturalised (2008) player from Mainland China to win an Olympic medal for Korea (2008). She was a player in the <i>Sil-Up</i> Korean Air and Korean national team (2008 to 2012).

<sup>42</sup>*Cho-Sun-Jek* is the group of people born in China who are descendants of Koreans. ‘*Cho-Sun*’ is an old Korean dynasty name, while ‘*Jek*’ refers to an ethnic group. In other words, this name refers to Korean people who moved to China before the 19th century. Their residential area is around the north-east part of China. According to Korean administration expressions, they are Korean–Chinese. According to the Korean Nationality Act, *Cho-Sun-Jek* need to follow the same naturalisation process as other Chinese people.

4	Hajung Sek	A naturalised player in the <i>Sil-Up</i> Korean Air and Korean national team (2010 to 2014).
5	Misoon Kang	A naturalised (2009) Chinese–Korean player, born in China. She was in <i>Sil-Up</i> Daewoo Stock and the Korean national team in 2010.
6	Jihee Cheon	A naturalised (2011) player in <i>Sil-Up</i> Posco Energy and the Korean national team (2014 to present).
7	Sangeun Jung	A naturalised (2009) Chinese–Korean player, born in China. He played in the Samsung table tennis team and Korean national team (2014 to present).

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The first Chinese naturalised table tennis player was Bae-Jun Joo, who was a Chinese youth international player in 1998. He came to Korea in 2003 to play for the Posdata local *Sil-Up* team, and was naturalised in 2005. Even if Joo had been an outstanding player among the international Chinese youth team members, he could not have become a member of the Chinese national team. When he failed to become a Chinese international, Joo used an alternative means of becoming naturalised. He became the adopted son of Korean parents who were friends of his own parents, after applying to the *Special Naturalisation Act*.<sup>43</sup> The motivation for his naturalisation to Korea was that Joo wished to continue playing table tennis at international level, but this was impossible in China (Jeong, 2003). However, Joo could not succeed in his dream of becoming a member of the Korean international team because of personal issues, and currently plays in the Korean *Sil-Up* league.

The second athlete to be naturalised, Bang-Bang Kuack, was in 2005 the first foreigner naturalised to Korea from Hong Kong in 2005. According to the *Chosun* (2006), Kuack was born in China and moved to Hong Kong to compete in the Hong Kong

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<sup>43</sup> This Act states that, if at least one of the foster parents is a Korean national, the applicants are eligible for special naturalisation. Since special naturalisation does not require applicants to spend a certain amount of time in Korea, the applicant may apply for naturalisation directly after entry. Adopted adults cannot apply for special naturalisation, and must apply for naturalisation after legal residence in Korea for three or more consecutive years (Korea e-Government, retrieved from <http://www.hikorea.go.kr/pt/Info>).

international competition. In 2000, she met her husband, who was also a Korean table tennis player. Kuack subsequently became a Korean international player in 2006 at the Asian Games in Qatar.

The third player to be naturalised, Yeaseo Dang, is one of the most interesting cases in the Chinese naturalisation process. Although Dang was a Chinese youth international, she did not continue her table tennis career as a Chinese international member. When Dang came to Korea in 2001, she faced unexpected conditions in the Korean table tennis arena. She could not play table tennis in Korea at all—only Korean citizens who are registered to the KTTA are allowed to participate in any table tennis events. For this reason, she had to pass the naturalisation test to play in Korea. After passing the test, she also faced the requirement of being naturalised to become a Korean citizen in 2008. Dang began playing as a Korean in Korean table tennis competitions in 2008. These competitions were used to select players for the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. Dang won 10 straight games and became a Korean international in Beijing in 2008. At the 2012 London Olympic Games, Dang was again selected for the Korean national team; however, unfortunately, the Korean women's team did not win any medals. Dang is currently a playing coach for Korean Air and staying in the Korean Air Company's residential area in Incheon with other Korean Air team members. When Dang played in London in 2012, another Chinese naturalised player joined her.

Hajung Sek came to Korea in 2000 as a training partner for Korean Air (*Chosun*, 2009). She had to wait five years before she met the requirements to be naturalised, and did not pass the test until 2007 (KTTF, 2014). Previously, she had represented her province in China in 1999. In 2012, she became a Korean international and won a bronze medal at the World Table Tennis Competitions in Germany. Sek also participated in the London Olympics,

but did not win a medal. After the London Olympics in 2012, the Korean media argued that Korea had failed to win medals because of the two Chinese naturalised players. Many Korean sport news articles criticised Korean table tennis, and stated that the Chinese players should be replaced by local Koreans. Sek retired in 2014, but remains a playing coach for Korean Air.

Jihee Cheon was another Chinese naturalised table tennis player who competed for the Korean national team (KTTF, 2014). According to *Joongang* (2014), she began playing table tennis as a seven year old, and used to be a Chinese table tennis rookie. She gained second place in the Asian Youth Competition in 2007 as a Chinese team member. However, she was eliminated from the Chinese national team. At the same time, a new Korean *Sil-Up* team was established by PoscoEnergy, which was looking for a new player from Chinese table tennis. Cheon's naturalisation process involved being adopted by her father's friend, Cho-Sun-Jek, and she passed the general naturalisation test in 2011. According to the ITTF's *Naturalisation Act*, which was passed in 2008, she was unable to play for Korea for a period of seven years. Cheon played for the Republic of Korea in the Rio Olympic Games and failed to win any medals.

The final two Chinese naturalised players discussed here are Misoon Kang and Sangeun Jung (KTTF, 2014). Both of these athletes came to Korea as high-school students in 2006. In 2011, they both competed for the Korean *Sil-Up* team and the national standing table tennis team. They are both Korean–Chinese (*Cho-Sun-Jek*). One of the main reasons they wanted to become naturalised was because Korean–Chinese people face discrimination in Chinese table tennis, making it difficult for them to become members of the Chinese team (*Cho-Sun-Jek Daily*, 2011). Their naturalisation process differed from those of other Chinese

naturalised players because their parents were already naturalised. Therefore, they needed to wait only two years to become naturalised.

However, this research mainly examines the two players, Dang Yeo-Seo and Sek Ha-Jung, who competed at the Olympic Games as representatives of Korea. Dang Yeo-Seo participated in the Beijing Olympics and London Olympics, while Sek Ha-Jung participated in the London Olympics. This chapter has investigated the origins of table tennis, from England to Europe, China and Korea, as well as the process of the emergence of Chinese naturalised players in Korean society. With reference to naturalised Korean athletes during this long development of table tennis, the next two chapters of this thesis will examine the nationalism and national identity of Korea.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The results of Chapter 4 demonstrate the history of table tennis and what kind of social and political role the batting movement played in China and Korea. The history of table tennis has played a role as a sport in different countries over the past 100 years, especially in Northeast Asian countries, and has developed uniquely in Korea and China. In particular, in China, table tennis was the national sport for a long period, while Korea demonstrated nationalism through table tennis from the 1960s to 1990s. Bairner (2001) stated that certain sports in particular countries are strongly related to nationalism. The evidence examined in this chapter has demonstrated that, in Korea, table tennis was a sport that symbolised Korean nationalism during the early modern era, Japanese colonial era and Cold War era. However, Korean table tennis has since entered a period of globalisation and undergone various changes. As Maguire et al. (2002) argued, multiculturalism and hybridity

are related to almost every nation, and no country is bound to a single identity or nationalism. In response to this process of globalisation, for the first time in the history of Korean table tennis—a symbolic Korean sport—naturalised foreign players represented the Korean national team.

In observing the course of the development of Korean table tennis, the theory of sportisation helps in understanding the development of table tennis. As stated by Elias and Dunning (1986) and Maguire (1999), the sportisation process helps to indicate how the sport developed and how it is interdependent with others, by observing the progress from the origins of table tennis to the present. According to Elias and Dunning (1986), the first phase is to spurts the origin of sport as form of folk activities and pastimes, such as fox hunting, and expands to other countries within the second phase. The evidence suggests that table tennis, as discussed in relation to sportisation theory, began being played as an after dinner sport in the UK, and then gradually spread to other countries around the world.

Maguire (1999) stated that the third phase helps explain the diffusion of table tennis during the period of the British Empire between the late 19th century and early 20th century, during the ‘take off’ of sport. The fourth phase was more linked to American sporting circumstances, alongside the decreasing power of the British. Finally, the fifth phase is recognised as ‘creolisation’, which presented interesting increasing varieties and diminishing contrasts throughout world sport. The direction of sport is not solely from West to East—rather, a variety of commingling of sport cultures has occurred between the West and East. By investigating the development of table tennis, as claimed by Maguire (1999), this study found that table tennis has caused a variety of changes in different countries, such as the increasing varieties and diminishing contrast between the West and East. Eventually,

although table tennis was originally an established sport of Westerners, after a long period of sportisation, China has now become dominant in world table tennis and is exporting table tennis-related skills and players to the West. The sport entered Korea from the West and its role has varied over time. During the colonial period, table tennis was a symbol of anti-colonisation. During the Cold War era, it was a sport that represented anti-communist sentiment. Finally, in the era of globalisation, it has diversified to recruit foreigners as representatives in a nation that were previously negative towards them.

After this long history of table tennis, the Chinese naturalised athletes who appeared in Korea were free to cross the border and enter Korea; however, this movement implied many social and political problems in China and South Korea. Although explained in the chapter, it also shows the domestic problems of both countries, including the overabundance of Chinese table tennis players, problems in Chinese table tennis and problems in Korean table tennis. The most problematic of them was in Korea. The time came for foreigners to represent Korea in the Olympic Games, which had never occurred before in Korea's history. This issue was linked to Korea's nationalistic background, whereby only Korean national sports representatives were considered Korean. Therefore, the next chapter examines the Korean national Olympic newspaper reports about the trends and changes in Korean nationalism with regard to Chinese naturalised athletes in Korean table tennis.

## Chapter Five

### Table Tennis, Nationalism and the Newspaper in South Korea: The Representation of Olympics Table Tennis Games from Seoul 1988 to London 2012

#### 5.1 Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to analyse texts discussing Korean table tennis players and Chinese naturalised table tennis players in order to examine the process of Korean nationalism through Korean newspapers. To achieve this aim, this chapter investigates empirical data from news articles about Olympic table tennis in South Korea and China that appeared in Korean newspapers during each Summer Olympic Games from the 1988 Seoul Olympics through to the 2012 London Olympics. There are a range of newspapers in Korea. However, during the past seven Olympics, six newspapers consistently produced articles on Olympic table tennis competitions. These six newspapers were *Chosun*, *Dong-A* and *Joongang* (the Korean conservative newspapers), *Hankyoreh* and *Kyunghyang* (the Korean progressive newspapers), and *Seoul* (a centrist newspaper). During the past 28 years, table tennis-related news articles about China and Korea in each Olympic Games have employed specific personal pronouns, constant titles, expressions and vocabulary patterns. By examining these newspaper data, this study determined the theme of sport nationalism between China and Korea.

First, this section explains the composition of the chapter. Within the examined time period from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics, Chinese naturalised players came to Korea in time for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. According to this timeframe, this chapter first examines newspaper texts relating to Korean and Chinese players in each



Olympics table tennis competition, from the Seoul Olympics in 1988 to the Athens Olympics in 2004. Second, the chapter checks whether the Korean newspaper texts differ in their discussion of traditional Korean players and the Chinese naturalised players, in the period from the Beijing Olympics in 2008 to the London Olympics in 2012. By doing so, this chapter specifically considers the usage of personal pronouns throughout Korean newspapers to describe Korean, Chinese and naturalised players.

This chapter seeks to examine two issues from the 1988 Seoul Olympics that were reported by six Korean newspapers throughout the table tennis game in London in 2012. First, the Korean newspapers were concerned with how Korean nationalism was involved in the relationship between Korean and Chinese athletes during the seventh Olympic Games. Second, the Korean newspapers shows what kind of Korean nationalism it showed through the newly emerged Korean nationalised athletes, Korean athletes and other Chinese athletes in 2008 and 2012. In these two cases, the existing Korean nationalism could be influenced through the naturalised table tennis player who places the most importance on this thesis. To examine the different nationalist trends, this chapter will compare and analyse the two Olympic Games in which the naturalised athletes appeared, starting from the Seoul Olympic Games to the Athens Olympics, where there were no naturalised athletes. If there were no naturalised athletes, nationalism through Korean Olympic table tennis could have been the same. However, the issue of naturalised athletes is important for understanding Korean nationalism because the appearance of Korean nationalism changes or is the same as the appearance of naturalised players, and may go in other directions. To observe such issues, the next section will begin to observe Korean newspaper reports about table tennis games since the Seoul Olympics.

## 5.2 Seoul Olympic Games in 1988

Before beginning this section, it is necessary to briefly explain the geo-political circumstances surrounding the 1988 Seoul Olympics, which are considered to be special to Korea for various reasons. First, as MacAloon and Kang (1990) noted, the Seoul Olympics had the highest number of participating nations around the world, and was also understood as taking place at the end of the Cold War. The Seoul Games were the Olympics that saw the end of the problems related to boycotting that had affected the two previous Games in Moscow and Los Angeles Olympics (Guttman, 1988). Second, this Olympics was an important sports festival that lifted the hopes of the Korean people. As Cho and Bairner (2012) stated, Korea had struggled due to its previous victimisation from colonisation, World War II and the Korean War. Therefore, the Seoul Olympics provided a moment for South Koreans to overcome the nation's dark experiences of the last century. *AsKyunghyang* (1988) stated, 'since the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988, Korea was no longer a land of colonisation and Cold War. It was the place to feel the new nation of Korea'.

Considering the political background of the Seoul Olympic Games, the peaceful Olympics seemed to erase all traces of the Cold War. Korea has been influenced by political changes of and international relations, linked to globalisation since the 1988 Olympics (Cho & Bairner, 2012). In the particular case of sport, the slogan of the Seoul Olympic Games was: 'Seoul to the World and the World to the Seoul'. In other words, after the experiences of the Cold War and colonisation, Korea came into contact with the world through the Seoul Olympics, and the world came into contact with Korea.

Articles on globalisation in relation to the Seoul Olympic Games in Korean newspapers reported that: 'Now! A global sports festival was held in Korea' (*Dong-A*, 1988,

p. 1), ‘over the barriers of the nation, our global festival starts’ (*Dong-A*, 1988, p. 3), and ‘Korea has now opened its doors to world and we make the world as one peaceful party’ (*Kyunghyang*, 1988, p. 3). Most of the articles related to the games and globalisation as seen in the newspaper headlines. The titles and articles emphasised the notion that Korea was now a part of the globalising world. Further, articles about Chinese news had been very limited in Korean newspapers before 1988. However, during the Olympics, *Joongang* (1988) reported that ‘China dispatches the biggest athletes Olympic team ever to Seoul and China is expecting better Olympics result than the LA Olympic Games’. From this point on, news reports on the sports powerhouse of China would become louder and more numerous.

Regarding table tennis, which became an Olympic sport for the first time at the Seoul Olympics, South Korea won two gold medals, one silver medal and one bronze medal—the best performance until now. In particular, in the women’s doubles competition, the Chinese and Korean teams made the final. This section investigates newspapers focusing on this match. The six Korean newspapers examined in this study—*Dong-A*, *Joongang*, *Kyunghyung*, *Hankyoreh*, *Chosun* and *Seoul*—published articles on the Korean team’s table tennis games almost every day during the Seoul Olympics. More generally, they usually gave daily reports on the situation and results of the Korean national team. In particular, when the Korean women’s group won the gold medal on 1 October 1988, the normal articles were mixed with strong nationalist texts. However, before examining these patterns, it is worth considering the number of articles related to Korean table tennis athletes published by each newspaper. The number of articles per newspaper is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during the Seoul Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
Number of articles	26	21	14	19	19	16

In an aggregate of 115 table tennis articles, these are divided into two categories. The first category includes reports on the general appearance of the Korean team. Here, newspapers have special words and expressions that express them and the appearance and up - to - date Chinese players. The second category includes articles which, before and after the game, reported on table tennis players with significant references to ideas of nationalism and national identity. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, two of the most spectacular Korean table tennis games in each of the Olympic Games are analysed in this chapter. Among the total of 96 articles, 51 articles are the first case, and the remaining 64 articles are articles published the day after the gold medal game of women’s double (01.Oct. 1988).

**5.2.1 The Representation of Korean Newspapers with Korean Table Tennis**

In an aggregate of 115 table tennis articles, the first Korean newspaper reports (comprising 51 articles) on Korean table tennis players generally discussed how the athletes were training before games, how the athletes were spending their time, the preliminary results, and statements of hope that the table tennis players would beat China and win the gold medal for South Korea. Most of these first 51 newspaper articles were published at the start of the Olympic Games started and one week after the table tennis preliminaries began. Investigating some of the news reports from the beginning of the Seoul Olympics, as reported by

*Hankyoreh* (1988) (Figure 5.1), ‘our Korean sisters Young-Ja Yang and Jung-Hwa Hyun a representative of Korean women double of table tennis, and the so-called Korean Fantastic Duo, are being trained as one body for a gold medal’ (p. 9).



Figure 5.1. Young-Ja Yang and Jung-Hwa Hyunas the ‘Korean fantastic duo’. Source: *Hankyoreh*, 1988, p. 9.

*Joongang* (1988) stated that Korea’s ‘two sisters’ had ‘a green light until the gold medal’ (p. 13). At the beginning of the Games in Seoul, the newspaper reports did not refer to the Korean women as individuals, but portrayed a collective team image. Moreover, Korean media always referred to them using the terms ‘our’ and ‘fantastic duo’. The news reports following this praise reported that the ‘Korean women’s table tennis players can break down the world’s strongest China and Japan’ (*Dong-A*, 1988, p. 23). After the match against Japan, *Seoul* (1988) announced, ‘Japan was so easy to beat, and our Young-Ja Yang and Jung-Hwa Hyun put Japan aside with light effort’ (1988, p. 11).

After the preliminary contest began, the Korean media frequently quoted the phrase ‘our safe cruise’ and reported triumphantly on their triumphant. *Kyunghyang* (1988) reported that ‘our fantastic duo is having a good and safe cruise in the preliminary round’ (p. 11),

while *Chosun* (1988) stated that, ‘our table tennis team settled well in the semi-finals’ (p. 11). Most of the newspaper reports used careful and steady words—such as expressing hope for Korea and the team’s arrival in the semi-finals—until the day of the preliminaries and the final day of the match with China. Until then, news about matches with other countries were reported only in terms of the results. However, one day before the game against China, a different pattern of news reporting emerged.

As the Games entered their mid-point, the Chinese team indicated their intentions. As *Dong-A* (1988) stated, ‘China has come to Korea with a plan to win all four gold medals at the Seoul Olympic Games’ (p. 9), in the first Games after table tennis had become an official Olympic sport. A report in *Chosun* (1988), based on an interview with a Chinese sports reporter, indicated that, ‘many countries are against us, but our Chinese table tennis is the strongest in the world’ (p. 10). From 30 September 1988, the Korean newspaper reports on table tennis games against China differed from their original soft word usage. First, the Korean newspapers condemned the Chinese women’s doubles team itself. Originally, the team had a right- and left-handed player. However, China had paired up two left-handed players just before the Olympics. The *Chosun* (1988) stated that this decision was: ‘just their team’s strategy to ignore international rules and tactics to beat Korea in the final’ (p. 7).<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, *Dong-A* (1988) reported that: ‘there was a chance to finally break down the Great Wall’ (p. 6). *Kyunghyang* (1988) also began to use words with military metaphors, such as, ‘[tomorrow] only one of the two major mountain ranges of the world table tennis

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<sup>44</sup> Originally, the 1988 Chinese women’s doubles team was composed of He Zhili and Jiao Zhimin. However, because He Zhili was right-handed, the best Chinese women’s table tennis player at the time was replaced before the Olympics because he was weak for Korean players. He Zhili became a naturalised Japanese national player in Japan under the name of Chire Koyama because of the conflict between the players and the manager inside Chinese table tennis.

team will win and this will be a bloody war with China, however, we will win'. *Chosun* (1988) also represented the competition as follows: 'today is Korea's fateful day, we must win against China' (p. 8). As the pattern of the Korean newspaper reports changed, the finals between Korea and China finished and Korea's championship was confirmed.

*Dong-A* (1988) expressed the result of the final between China and Korea as follows: 'at last we broke the Great Wall and washed away the table tennis complex for China' (p. 7). *Dong-A* (1988) also reported: 'hooray for our glorious daughters' (p. 15). Afterwards, *Hankyoreh* (1988) reported that 'Korea's fantastic duo finally defeated China and South Korea has reached the top of the world' (p. 1). *Kyunghyang* (1988) also stated:

The daughters of our finally become one of the world's tops. The two girls beat China by becoming one, not you and me. They have had a long time to breathe together, and they have used the *Han-Sot-Bab* for long time. Now, China has become frightened of these girls (p. 3).<sup>45</sup>

Based on data from the Korean Leespr Marketing Research Institute (1988), the final women's doubles table tennis game was the second most impressive game in the Seoul Olympics for Korean audiences. This can be understood via the cartoon presented in Figure 5.2, showing the characteristics of Korea against China in table tennis, drawn by American political cartoonist, Ranan R Lurie.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>*Han-Sot-bab* translates to mean 'one pottery'. It refers to a family eating and living together.

<sup>46</sup>Ranan R Lurie was an American political cartoonist invited to work for a Korean newspaper during the Seoul Olympics.



Figure 5.2. Korean versus Chinese table tennis cartoon from the Seoul Olympics. Source: Dong-A, 1988, p. 3.

The two Korean female players depicted in the above image are Young-Ja Yang (on the left) and Jung-Hwa Hyun (on the right), before the final match of the female doubles competition against China. They were often identified as the ‘fantastic double team’, ‘our daughters’ and ‘a golden pair’. In the above image, there are blocks on the table, representing the Great Wall of China, with the two players trying to break the wall. Korean media often used the expression ‘to beat the Great Wall’, while calling the Korean players ‘our daughters’. *Chosun* (1988) reported that ‘the fantastic duo completely defeated the Chinese secret weapon and new weapon’ (p. 6). The reports also seemed to imply the unification of Korean national identity through the frequent expression of the two players as one. The fantastic duo had reached the top of the world: ‘They have been preparing for a Chinese overthrow for a long time by using *Han-Sot-Bab*’<sup>47</sup> (*Kyunghyang*, 1988, p. 3). *Hankyoreh* (1988) also announced that ‘our younger sisters’ table tennis team, made up of sisters and sisters, became

<sup>47</sup> ‘*Han-Sot-Bab*’ (a traditional Korean rice cooker) is often used to describe a family because families eat rice from their own rice cooker at home.



world champions’ (p. 9). Figure 5.3 presents an advertisement that was released on the day that the athletes won the gold medal. This advertisement states that the great ‘Korean daughters’ finally conquered the world (*Kyunghyang*, 1988, p. 3).



Figure 5.3. Korean newspaper advertisement released on the day of the gold medal victory.

Source: *Kyunghyang*, 1988, p. 3.

In addition, when representing table tennis games, the Korean media used significant military words, such as ‘on a cruise’, ‘capture a hill’ and ‘Gyk-Pa’ (crashes).<sup>48</sup> The Korean media also often used the words ‘Eun-Ni’ (sisters), ‘Ja-Mae’ (sisters) and ‘Han-Sot-Bab’ (traditional Korean rice cooker) to describe the relationship between the two female players.<sup>49</sup> From these data, it seems that the newspapers emphasised unity and organisation rather than individual importance. It can also be recognised that Korean media representations used in

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<sup>48</sup> The phrase ‘on a cruise’ can be understood as travelling to beat an opponent, while ‘capture a hill’ refers to conquering an enemy’s military base. Lastly, ‘Gyk-Pa’ is normally used to badly break enemy and destroy.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Eun-Ni’ and ‘Ja-Mae’ are identified as sisterhood in the same family.

coverage of the Games still used heavy nationalist expressions from the Cold War period when discussing China and Chinese table tennis players.

Observing the Korean newspapers that reported on the women's table tennis final between China and Korea at the Seoul Olympic Games, there are four interesting patterns. First, as Maguire (1999) argued, the Olympic Games may be one of the most symbolic forms of the globalisation process. The Korean newspapers often compared the Olympic Games and the trend of globalisation, and the Olympics seemed to be the most appropriate analogy for globalisation. Second, the newspaper reports used a variety of Korean cultural adjectives before the Korean players' names—such as 'we', 'our', 'sister', 'our Korean', 'our daughter' and 'fantastic duo'. Third, the Korean media used negative words and meanings to describe Chinese table tennis and the Chinese players. For example, China and Chinese table tennis were referred to as the 'Great Wall'. In other words, there was a view that the Great Wall was China. Fourth, the media often claimed that the Korean players were breaking down, crossing or climbing the Great Wall. Most notably, there was a tendency to show strong nationalist coverage of individual players alongside national images, such as in Figure 5.3, including the national flag. In addition, in the table tennis match reports about Korea and China, Korean newspapers often used military terms when discussing China.

The next section of this paper continues this discussion by exploring whether this focus of the media only occurred during the Seoul Olympic Games. It achieves this by examining what occurred during the next Olympic Games in Barcelona.

### 5.3 Barcelona Olympics in 1992

Many articles related to table tennis at the beginning of the Olympic Games in Barcelona also connected the Olympics and globalisation, such as:

The 5 billion people of the world are united and started to party in this global village and here we hope for harmony, passion and equality of the world (*Dong-A*, 1992, p. 1). The Olympic Games in Barcelona, one of the world, one of humanity, one of us, and one of the festivals of the world, started today (*Kyunghyang*, 1992, p. 1). It is the largest festival in the global village that matches the era of globalization (*Chosun*, 1992, p. 9). Among interesting Korean table tennis articles, the reason why China is sluggish in other sports such as shooting and weightlifting other than table tennis is that liberalization by globalization has changed the mental state of Chinese players (*Joongang*, 1988).

The influence of globalisation continued to appear in Korean newspaper reports at the start of and during the Olympic Games in Barcelona.

In terms of the Pax-Sinica issue, according to Korean newspaper reports, the overall medal position of South Korea would improve if China showed strength in other events at the Barcelona Olympic Games, such as table tennis. As *Seoul* (1992) reported: 'Chinese sports have changed and there is a breakthrough. Even at the Seoul Olympics, China had not reached the world level, and now Chinese sports have reached the world level' (p. 14). *Chosun* (1992) also stated that 'Korean sports have done well in Barcelona, but Chinese sports seem to be developing enough to think that the Chinese Olympics sport era will come'. *Joongang* (1992, p. 16) stated that China's yellow dust warning had appeared on the world Olympics stage. These reports evidence that the Korean newspapers had been monitoring the Chinese competitors in Barcelona, and realised that Chinese sports were continuing to develop. This can also be seen in the Olympic medal table record, in which China was ranked 11th overall in the Seoul Olympics in 1988, and 4th overall in the Barcelona Olympics.

At the Barcelona Olympics, China was in a tournament to regain the position of the table tennis powerhouse. China achieved three gold medals, two silver medals and one bronze medal. During the Games, China was a virtual enemy for Korean table tennis, but Korea won five bronze medals. In this competition, there was no prominent match between Korea and China, as can be seen through the reports on Chinese and Korean table tennis in the Korean newspaper articles. As shown below, six Korean newspapers produced 81 table tennis reports at the Olympic Games in Barcelona.

Table 5.2

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during the Barcelona Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
Number of articles	14	17	8	11	13	15

This table indicates that the amount of newspaper reports decreased compared to the Seoul Olympic Games because Korean players played no games against Chinese players. However, when examining these 78 articles of the Barcelona Olympics table tennis in detail, they can be divided into two categories. The first 38 articles were reports showing the scores of Korean table tennis, while the remaining 40 articles discussed the individual players of China and Korea.

### **5.3.1 The Representation of Korean Newspapers with Korean Table Tennis**

At the start of the Olympics, the Korean media predicted that the Korean team would perform well in Barcelona, and that there seemed to be an opportunity to surpass China. *Chosun* (1992) analysed that, ‘our Korean team expects at least two gold medals and will meet China’s new weapons to achieve that goal - and we will fight against China at the end’

(p. 10). ‘The most important thing to go over the Great Wall is to take the time that Chinese table tennis does not like and go for a long way in the rally’ (*Dong-A*, 1992, p. 18). These hopeful reports were mainly produced during the preliminary to the 4th rounds of the table tennis competition, up until 2 August. ‘Our Korean men’s and women’s table tennis double teams are proudly cruising to be a champion’ (*Dong-A*, 1992, p. 19). *Joongang* (1992) stated, ‘we are cruising along with a good wind and our Korean players have arrived safely in the quarter-finals’ (p. 15).

This optimism continued, with it being claimed that ‘our Korean daughters Hyun Jung Hwa and Lee Jung Im are rushing to victory’ (*Hankyoreh*, 1992, p. 11) and that ‘our men and women’s doubles were victorious as they taught the CIS team, and our *Taegeuk* mark was the highlight of the day’ (*Dong-A*, 1992, p. 17).<sup>50</sup> In addition, the phrase ‘Korea’s fantastic duo’ was also used for Hyun Jung Hwa and Hong Cha Ok (*Kyunghyang*, 1992, p. 1). In one newspaper report, words that included the identity of Koreans—such as ‘we’, ‘daughters’ and ‘daughters of Korea’—were frequently used in expressions about the table tennis players. The reports also tended to give the table tennis players a national symbol—the *Taegeuk* mark.

The soft and friendly statements in the media changed somewhat when the Korean athletes failed to win a gold medal after being eliminated by Chinese players in the quarter finals. When the Korean table tennis players started to lose on 5 August, the newspapers began to employ more coarse and negative statements, rather than the previous positive and soft expressions: ‘It was a poor Korean table tennis who did not win the gold medal and it was so terrible’ (*Chosun*, 1992, p. 16). *Dong-A* (1992) reported that this ‘Korean table tennis is a typical poor harvest’ (p. 18), while *Kyunghyang* (1992) reported:

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<sup>50</sup> The *Taegeuk* mark refers to the Korean flag on the athletes’ uniforms; however, only the national team can wear this mark on their clothes.

Korea prepared only for the Seoul Olympics and then did not prepare for future. I cannot even make a domestic league team because I do not have a player right now. It is hard to even get a level player to take to the international convention. If the current national players retire now, I think that the future of Korean table tennis is not really there (p. 18).

Thus, the Korean media did not seem inclined to use the expressions of ‘us’, ‘our daughters’ and ‘fantastic duo’ when the Korean table tennis team lost the opportunity to win gold medals. In addition, in the Korean newspaper reports, the expression of a distinctive nationalism used only in relation to China, for example, the Great Wall of China, or the Chinese dust storm. The country’s long fate flows over time to its people, and people and countries are interconnected (Elias, 1996). These emotional connections between individuals and countries became common symbols over time in the form of ‘sleeping memories’ (Maguire & Poulton, 1999, p. 19). The nationalistic expressions in the Korean newspaper reports appeared to have derived from the long historical relationship between Korea and China.

Overall, in the Korean newspapers’ reporting of the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the topics of globalisation and China’s Pax-Sinica issue frequently appeared in table tennis–related news. At the beginning of the preliminary table tennis matches, the Korean newspaper reports used Korean cultural names and expressions that were familiar to Korean players. However, the coverage of the Olympic table tennis competition in Barcelona can be differed from that of the Seoul Olympics because, when Korea did not win a gold medal by playing against a Chinese opponent, the Korean newspaper reports were very different from those written in response to the Korean team winning a gold medal. Before the game, Korean newspaper reports used familiar words and expressions for Korean players, as in the Seoul Olympics. However, the newspapers did not use these familiar words and expressions when

the Korean players failed to win a gold medal and lost to Chinese players. Even though the Korean team won five bronze medals, the newspapers not report on these medals in the same way as it had on the gold medals of 1988, or use the same images of nationalism in relation to the players. However, when the Korean newspapers reported on China and Chinese table tennis, they still believed in Korean table tennis. For example, Korea continued to have the image that Korea should conquer the Olympic table tennis game, again comparing the Chinese team to the Great Wall.

#### **5.4 Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996**

Even though the Atlanta Olympic Games were criticised for the multinational commercialism of the Olympics (McDaniel & Chalip, 2002; Real, 1996), these Games were also a symbol of the one of global sport event before the end of the 20th century. According to a report in *Chosun* (1996) written on the first day of the Olympics, the Atlanta Games represented that: ‘the culture of our region became a global culture and many people in the world would like our local culture’ (p. 2). When describing the Atlanta Olympics, *Hankyoreh* (1996) stated that, ‘the last Olympic event of the 20th century of mankind will begin today as one united all over the world’ (p. 1). Moreover, *Dong-A* (1996) stated that ‘in the first century of the modern Olympic Games, the biggest global sporting event on earth began today’ (p. 1). Based on these Korean newspaper reports, there was a tendency to use the concept of globalisation frequently when reporting on the opening ceremonies and sports events. Thus, the Korean media appeared to view the Olympics as an example of the best of the globalisation process.

Alongside the globalisation-based image of the Atlanta Olympics, Chinese sports were becoming more and more widespread in this process, and the power of Chinese sports grew over time. First, there was the opportunity for Chinese sports to witness a steady rise in the Olympics and China loses to fourth place of the Olympic medal record (Brownell, 2005). In particular, China took eight medals from a total of 12 medals in table tennis. It won all four gold medals, as well as three silver medals and one bronze medal. When reporting on the strength of Chinese table tennis and sports in general, *Chosun* (1996) stated: ‘at the current Olympic Games in Atlanta, China tends to be ranked fourth in the overall ranking and will challenge for third place as the power of Chinese sports is becoming greater’ (p. 16), while *Joongang* (1996) stated: ‘China is making a storm yellow dust of China in Atlanta by breaking three world records in the weightlifting’ (p. 42).

Meanwhile, the Korean newspapers were also monitoring the strength of the Chinese athletes in order to determine how their success would affect Korean sports during the Olympics. Due to the strength of the Chinese table tennis players and the decline in the standard of the Korean players, Korea only won two bronze medals (in women’s doubles and men’s doubles) at the Atlanta Olympic Games. The above data were gathered by examining 101 texts produced by six newspapers, as presented in Table 5.3 below. 72 texts reported on the current status and qualifying results of Korean players from the beginning of the Olympics, while 29 texts reported on Chinese players and table tennis.

Table 5.3

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during Atlanta Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
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#### 5.4.1 Representation of Korean Table Tennis in Korean Newspapers

The Korean newspaper reports on the Korean table tennis team at the beginning of the Olympic Games indicated that the coverage began with the hope of winning a table tennis medal, and especially a gold one. By the time the table tennis preliminary rounds started, *Chosun* (1996) stated: ‘Chinese table tennis is our enemy, but table tennis is a Korean sports event that can get enough medals and we watch the performance of our athletes who have been training by using *Han-Sot-bab*’ (p. 12). As *Kyunghyang* (1996) reported, ‘table tennis is probably the most promising sport to give us medals and our athletes have made a good start towards the gold medals’ (p. 1). As reported by the *Dong-A* (1996), ‘our Korean table tennis team has started a smooth cruise’ (p. 12). Moreover, the enemy’s idea about Chinese table tennis is that, in this early positive atmosphere, the Korean table tennis team should break down the Great Wall (*Chosun*, 1996, p. 20). It seems that the news reports often sought to attack the Great Wall by creating a consciousness of ‘our’ nationalism before the table tennis preliminary competition began, in order to guard against the historical rivals of China.

As the preliminary contests continued, the Korean individual athletes moved further away from the medals. However, the men’s and women’s doubles entered the semi-finals to fight for the bronze medal. When South Korea won the bronze medal in the women’s doubles, *Dong-A* (1996, p. 9) described Park Hae-Jung and Yoo Ji-Hey, who were from the same school and played table tennis using the same *Han-Sot-Bab*, as the ‘fantastic duo’ of Korean women's table tennis. The Korean table tennis team also won bronze in the men’s doubles (Lee Chul-Seung and Yoo Nam-Kyu).

Two notable factors are that the Korean newspaper reports promoted more of a national community image than the personal image of the players, with ‘I’, ‘our’, ‘our daughters’ and ‘*Han-Sot-Bab*’. In addition, the Korean newspaper reports still frequently tended to use the Korean Cold War or historical anti-Chinese expressions when discussing the Korean and Chinese table tennis teams. Here, the Korean newspapers seemed to be dealing with China’s historical geographical rivals by using ‘sleeping memories’ to promote sports nationalism.

#### **5.4.2 Representation of Chinese Table Tennis in Korean Newspapers**

Chinese table tennis is probably the most helpful for successful Chinese sport. What is strange is that reports of Chinese table tennis success in Korean newspapers show a different aspect. At the Atlanta Olympics table tennis tournament in particular, Korean newspapers produced many negative articles about the Chinese table tennis players. Perhaps this was because Chinese table tennis team was too strong. Elias and Scotson (1994) argued that if the status of a group declines compared to another group, there is a point at which the unrealistic point of their collective expression is strengthened; moreover, there is an intention to counteract the outsider thoroughly by denying and stigmatising the outsider—in other words, to counterattack. It may be that negative texts were directed at the Chinese table tennis team because it was too strong, or the text may simply have expressed a desire to beat them. However, the Korean newspapers displayed unprecedented condemnation of the Chinese table tennis team. For example, there was a critique of seeding placement, blame on the players’ appearance, suggestions of a plot against China’s naturalised players, and reference to the negative Chinese table tennis culture.

Before the table tennis preliminaries began, the Chinese table tennis executives implemented a tactic to have the world's highest ranked teams—South Korea and North Korea—meet in the first qualifying match (*Kyungnyang*, 1996, p. 18). In international rankings, 'these players had to start in a different group, and they faced each other in the first round'. As *Joongang* (1996) stated, 'the Atlanta Olympic table tennis tournament was not fair because of the table tennis administration and polarization judgment that China is involved in' (p. 42).

An article about a Chinese female player was published in a Korean newspaper. This Chinese player had won two gold medals in the women's singles and doubles, and the newspaper described her as follows: 'Den Yapping is the witch on the green table' (*Chosun*, 1996, p. 11; *Joongang*, 1996, p. 42). Moreover, *Dong-A* (1996) also described her as follows: 'She is a small giant and invincible weapon in the world table tennis world' (p. 14). Further, *Seoul* (1996, p. 21) described this Chinese player as a table tennis witch. Thus, it can be seen here that the text representing the Chinese table tennis players during the Atlanta Olympics was very different from the text used to represent the Korean players.

Another two articles in Korean newspapers spoke negatively about a separate issue regarding naturalised Chinese table tennis players at the Atlanta Olympics. This text implied that the Chinese government would not let Chinese-native naturalised players for the British team leave the country to attend the Atlanta Olympics. Maguire and Bale (1994) pointed out that a Chinese table tennis player, Chen Xinhua, became naturalised to Britain and prepared to take part in the Olympic Games in Barcelona. However, Chen failed to participate in the Barcelona Olympics (*Chosun*, 1996, p. 24). Even as a 36 year old, Chen was training in China to play for the Atlanta Olympics as a representative of Britain. Alan Ransome (former

president of the Britain Table Tennis Association and current chairperson of the Commonwealth Table Tennis Federation) complained about the Chinese local transportation system because of Chen a Chinese naturalised table tennis player for Britain (1990) (*Chosun*, 1996, p. 24; *Kyunghyan*, 1996, p. 3; *Seoul*, 1996, p. 3). Chen was supposed to participate at the Atlanta Olympics as a representative of the UK; however, he could not obtain a plane ticket to Beijing from the city of Fujian.

The second article in a Korean newspaper discussed the chronic injustice and plotting occurring inside Chinese table tennis. The Korean table tennis team faced a Chinese born player on the Japanese team at the Atlanta Olympics, and *Joongang* (1995) reported that ‘a Japanese table tennis player, Goyama Jilae, had previously been number one in the world until being overtaken in 1987 by the Chinese player, Hujili (a former Chinese international table tennis player who became naturalised in Japan) (p. 39). *Joongang* (1995) explained this issue in more detail, as follows:

Hujili was eliminated from the Chinese national team during the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The reason for the drop was the generation change of the Chinese team. However, Hujili disagreed and became a Japanese national in 1989 after becoming naturalised to Japan. As a result of the move, she becomes naturalised to Japan because of the internal problem between the player and the coach inside the Chinese table tennis.

Thus, it can be identified that Chinese sporting structures encouraged players to make sacrifices for the nation as a whole. In that sense, players could be encouraged to lose a game deliberately if it would further the nation’s glory. Therefore, some Chinese table tennis players left for other countries in order to actually continue playing table tennis for the country of their birth.

Thus far, this section has examined articles published in Korean newspapers about the table tennis competition at the Atlanta Olympic Games. A number of the patterns found in

Korean newspaper reports were similar to those found in the coverage of the Seoul and Barcelona Olympics. In the preliminary round of table tennis matches, Korean newspapers described Korean players with various forms of Korean rhetoric and familiar pronouns. Some of them were particularly nationalistic in relation to the desire to defeat China. However, if Korean players failed to win gold medals and lost to Chinese players, the newspapers tended not to use such expressions, but simply used the players' names. However, what is more important in this case is that Korean newspaper articles criticised the appearance of Chinese players and China's table tennis administration, player management and seeding allocation.

### **5.5 Sydney Olympic Games in 2000**

The first Olympics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century began under the slogan of peaceful unity and a global village. Those Games were symbolic of the beginning of the 2000s, and many Korean newspapers made similar reports:

Global peace and environmentally friendly Olympics as green-and-green catch phrase (*Chosun*, 2000, p. 1). The new Millennium global Olympic Games has begun today (*Joongang*, 2000, p.1). The Sydney Olympic Games are 6 billion's global festivals (*Chosun*, 2000, p. 1). Unity of global community and unity of global humanity (*Kyunghyang*, 2000, p. 15).

Thus, the articles published in these Korean newspapers again emphasised the relationship between the Olympics and globalisation during the first Olympic Games of the millennium. It was the continuing strength of Chinese sport that stood out amid the onset of globalisation at the Sydney Olympics. Chinese table tennis attained eight out of a total 12 medals which were available at this Olympics. In particular, they won all four gold medals, three silver medals and one bronze medal. In addition to Chinese table tennis, Korean newspapers reported Chinese sports in general as representing a powerful emerging force in world sport. This

significant growth of Chinese sports received significant media attention during the Sydney Olympic Games (Seoul, 2000, p. 20).

*Hankyoreh* (2000, p. 4) also stated that it was particularly noticeable that German sports were in a state of decline, while China was now a sports powerhouse that was seeking to be one of the two strongest countries at the Olympic Games. During the Sydney Olympics, the Korean newspapers reported on the potential of Chinese sports to develop for each Olympic Games, anticipating a Pax-Sinica of Chinese sports. Even though Korean table tennis struggled against China at the previous three Olympic Games, Korea had won at least two to three table tennis medals during each Olympic Games. However, the Korean table tennis team won only one bronze medal during the Sydney Olympic Games. Reflecting on this situation, this part of the research analysed 87 newspapers that related to table tennis matches at the Sydney Olympic Games, published in six Korean newspapers. In detail, these articles are divided into two categories. The first category encompasses articles about Korean players and Korean table tennis matches, while the second category comprises articles about Chinese players.

Table 5.4

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during Sydney Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
Number of articles	14	15	13	16	17	12

### **5.5.1 The Representation of Korean Newspapers with Korean Table Tennis**

Most of the reports said at the beginning that Korean table tennis has seen cruising at each of the last Olympics. The Sydney Olympic Games seemed to be the same; however,

reports of the team's decline started from the beginning. According to *Kyunghyang* (2000), 'our medal event finally begins and table tennis can earn enough medals if they have luck on their side and avoid meeting China in the seed placement' (p. 45). *Hankyoreh* (2000) reported that, in the 'South Korean women's (Lee Eun-Sil) and men's (Yoo Seong-Min) singles in the first round, Korean players had safely negotiated the first round and moved up to the next round' (p. 5). Lee Cheul-Seong also managed to advance smoothly to the next round (*Kyunghyang*, 2000, p. 45). In most common forms of reporting, the Korean newspapers tended to use language that did not include words or meanings associated with national identity or nationalism when discussing the Korean table tennis players at this stage.

However, the next day, it was reported that the three Korean players had been eliminated from the men's singles competition. According to *Chosun* (2000), for 'men's table tennis today is black Thursday, when all the men's singles are eliminated' (p. 19) and 'the men's doubles team also fail to win medals and must return home empty-handed' (*Chosun*, 2000, p. 15). The women's doubles also failed to advance to the finals due to the 'Chinese Great Wall' (*Joongang*, 2000, p. 39). Among these poor results, Korea won a bronze medal in the women's doubles. In response, *Kyunghyang* (2000) reported that 'the women's doubles bronze medal won at the Sydney Olympics is an important medal, like gold' (p. 45). In response to the poor results of Korean table tennis, it seems that the Korean newspaper reports tended not to highlight the distinctive and diverse national identity or the meaning of nationalism. Overall, when analysing the newspapers coverage of table tennis at the Sydney Olympics, it is interesting that there was not much nationalist expression devoted to Korean players, nor anti-Chinese discussion. However, as we shall see the newspaper reports of this type were noticeably different at the next Summer Olympics in Athens.

### 5.5.2 The Representation of Korean Newspaper with Chinese Table Tennis

The Korean newspapers reported on the Chinese players with a special report on the news: 'although Korean table tennis has shouted out China, the Great Wall seems to be a wall that cannot be surpassed' (*Chosun*, 2000, p. 18). *Chosun* (2000) also stated: 'We nominate Kong Linghui [the men's singles gold medallist] as emperor and Wang Nan [women's singles gold medallist] as the queen of the world table tennis'(p. 18). *Hankyoreh* (2000) reported: 'as China takes four gold medals, it will serve as a catalyst for China to climb to the top of world sports' (p. 37). *Kyunghyang* (2000) also stated that, 'China has come to the world's third largest sports powerhouse and China is likely to be at the top of Olympic sport soon' (p. 45). Further, *Seoul* (2000) stated that, 'China is cautiously predicting that it will overtake the United States and become a global sports power after the next Olympics' (p. 22). *Seoul* (2000, p. 22) also stated that China had won four gold medals during the table tennis, had finally attained third place in the overall competition at the Olympic Games, and was subsequently likely to begin an era of Chinese domination in future Olympic Games.

To summarise, in the coverage of the table tennis competition at the Sydney Olympics table tennis games, the image portrayed of Chinese table tennis indicated that China tended to show greater strength at international level, just as in the image of Chinese sports as a whole. The Korean newspapers also reported more seriously on the rise of China's sports prowess on stage offered by the Olympic Games. Although there was no important table tennis match between Korea and China, the Korean newspapers reported very few nationalist expressions during the Sydney Olympic Games. The Korean newspapers reported in similar ways during the Atlanta and Sydney Olympics. At the Sydney Olympics, the Korean team won only one bronze medal in the women's doubles, and the newspapers used no nationalistic expressions



or personal titles, only reporting the results of the matches. Moreover, during the Sydney Olympics, it was unusual that the Korean newspapers more frequently used positive expressions, rather than negative statements, when discussing the Chinese players—such as referring to Chinese players as the queen or emperor of table tennis.

## 5.6 Athens Olympic Games in 2004

In 2004, the Olympic Games was held in Athens—the birthplace of the Olympics.

The Korean newspapers referred to the historical element of Athens hosting the Games in the following ways:

In the land of the gods, beyond the borders, religions and races, the greatest global festival of the world has been held (*Chosun*, 2004, p. 20).

Borderless global youth gathered here in the land of the gods of Athens (*Kyunghyang*, 2004, p. 11).

This global festival of the world will be as an opportunity to heal the pain on the earth (*Seoul*, 2004, p. 18).

At the 2004 Games in Athens, China ranked third in the overall medal table, following the United States and Russia. At the start of the Games, China won five gold medals in three days, which represented a strong start. *Kyunghyang* (2004) subsequently reported: ‘I expected China’s strength from the beginning of the Olympics, but I did not know it was so strong like this’ (p. 18). *Chosun* (2004) stated: ‘Olympic sports have been in the top two in the United States and Russia, but now China is on the way to a ‘Big 3 structure’’. *Joongang* (2004) stated: ‘China has now begun to earn medals in diving, canoeing, athletics, women’s tennis and other sports where Westerners have been stronger’ (p. 6). Previously, China was strong in particular sports, such as table tennis, badminton and gymnastics; however, it was now winning a variety of gold medals in sports such as track and field, which was previously the strength of the United States. *Dong-A* (2004) described that: ‘China has been said to be a

semi-sports powerhouse because it has not won gold medals in the athletics - the basis of sports'. As such, China was moving towards the top of the Olympic Games medal table by increasing the number of sports in which it could win medals with each Olympic Games that arrived.

During the Athens Olympic Games in 2004, China obtained six medals in table tennis—including three gold medals, one silver medal and two bronze medals—out of a total of 12 medals. In contrast, the Korean team won one gold medal in the men's singles, a silver medal in the women's doubles and a bronze medal in the women's singles. This was Korean table tennis's best result since the Seoul Olympics. As a result, the Korean newspapers exhibited quite strong nationalist expressions in their news articles, which differed from those of the Barcelona, Atlanta and Sydney Olympics. Lee and Maguire (2009) investigated the process of Korean nationalism at the 2004 Athens Olympics, and found that Korea's sports media featured a variety of aspects of nationalism and national identity, which indicated that the state was still viewed as important. Similarly, this research indicated that Korean table tennis was different from the three preceding Olympic Games because of its strong performance at the Athens Olympics. There is an element of aggression in Korean nationalism, especially in the expression of Korean nationalism against China.

During the table tennis tournament at the Athens Olympics, 135 newspaper articles were published in six Korean newspapers. Of these, 98 were articles about Korea's men's singles gold medal win (Yoo Seong-Min) and 37 concerned the Chinese players. Therefore, the articles published during the Athens Olympics indicated a pattern of Korean nationalism regarding China. This section presents as evidence a video clip of a Korean-Chinese table

tennis match shown during the television coverage of the Athens Olympics, as well as a news article from *MunhwaDaily*.

Table 5.5

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during Athens Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
Number of articles	26	30	18	27	19	15

### 5.6.1 The Representation of Korean Newspapers with Korean Table Tennis

Although the Korean Olympic athletes had not achieved good results in the previous three Olympic Games, Korean newspapers carefully, yet vaguely, reported hopes that the Korean table tennis would win medals at the Athens Olympics. At the beginning of the Olympic Games, Korean newspapers reported on the progress of the Korean athletes using a quiet tone. As the quarter-finals were approaching, articles about China's progress also began to emerge, featuring statements such as 'the Korean table tennis team is starting to go beyond the Great Wall this time' (*Dong-A*, 2004, p. 22). However, the Athens Olympics began on 13 August, and, on 5 August, a strongly worded newspaper article aimed at Chinese table tennis came out. According to *Seoul* (2004):

The Great Wall this time whether over or crushed. During the last Olympic Games, China, which has emerged as the world sports big 3 aimed at the United States and Russia, pledges to be at the top of the Athens Olympics. China is an obstacle to us. Therefore, Korea should prevent this kind of Chinese momentum with tremendous training. In particular, Korean table tennis must overtake the Great Wall of China like the impenetrable one (p. 10).

Moreover, prior to the Olympics, newspaper reports in July had a stronger tone, stating that, 'China is a minefield to Korean sports and table tennis' (*Chosun*, 2004, p. 13). From this

point of view, the basic tone of the article seems to refer to the victory of Korean table tennis; however, it also seems to imply that Chinese sport in general is an obstructive presence to Korea.

The distortion of Korean history in China resulted in this strongly worded article being published, indicating resentment towards the Chinese table tennis team. In fact, this incident was an academic battle that misrepresented Korea's national identity and nationalism, and changed Korea's identity from having a Chinese-oriented historical perspective. Another article in the same issue stated: 'the new table tennis emperor Yoo Seung-Min overcame the obstacle of the Great Wall and overcome the friction of ancient *Goguryeo* history by China' (*Dong-A*, 2004, p. 24).<sup>51</sup> This problem of historical nationalism between Korea and China appeared to create a strong pattern of Korean nationalism during the Athens Olympic table tennis tournament. On 24 August, the Korean table tennis player, Yoo Seung-min, won a gold medal at the men's singles after defeating Wang Hao of China, by a score of four to two. On the day of winning the gold medal, *Chosun* (2004, p. 1) had two interesting headlines on its front page, as shown in the figure 5.4 below.

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<sup>51</sup> *Goguryeo* was one of the ancient Korean dynasties (37 BC–668 AD) that conquered the northern part of China. In terms of the Chinese Northeast Project (*Dongbei Gongcheng*), China wished to include *Goguryeo* in its history.



Figure 5.4. The Chosun newspaper’s front page showing Yoo Seung-min winning the gold medal. Source: Chosun, 2004, p. 1.

The interesting thing about this front page is that Yoo Seung-min was in the headlines after winning. In addition, this article correctly explains the case of Chinese historical distortion. The newspaper states the Chinese government did not officially list the history of *Goguryeo* in Chinese textbooks. Thus, this photograph and article present the victory of the athlete alongside the victory of historical diplomacy as a victory of the Korean people.<sup>52</sup>

By again closely examining the texts of Korean newspapers, it can be seen that the strongest expression of Korean national identity and nationalism appeared in Korean newspapers, such as: ‘South Korea’s Yoo Seung-min made the 1.3 billion Chinese sad with a

<sup>52</sup> These expressions can be related to the foreign policy of the Chinese government in North East Asia in the early 2000s. This policy was called the Chinese North East Project (*Dongbei Gongcheng*). A particular area of the land that was then part of northern China used to be part of ancient Korean territory. As Chinese economic power grew, the Chinese government sought to subjugate the ancient Korean history and annex the territory. Kim and Mohan (2006) argued that this policy represented China’s expanding power and cultural and political interference in Korea. Even though the land belonged to China, China did not include its ancient Korean sociocultural history alongside the Chinese history. Therefore, anti-Chinese sentiment began to grow in the early 2000s. These anti-Chinese patterns were clearly reproduced in the men’s final singles table tennis match between Korean and China on 23 August 2004 at Athens.

2.7-gram table tennis ball' (*Dong-A*, 2004, p. 22) and 'finally, Korea has finished the Chinese table tennis world' (*Dong-A*, 2004, p. 20). Moreover, according to *Kyunghyang* (2004): 'It was an incredible victory. The Chinese cheering squad shouting *Jiayou* and shaking Chinese national flag were in silence.<sup>53</sup> The Great Wall has now collapsed. Our *Goguryeo* tiger came to roar on the Great Wall' (p. 19).

Moreover, *Chosun* (2004, p. 8) reported that South Korea had finally broken down the Great Wall after 16 years to win a gold medal, and now the Korean national flag would wave and the national anthem would play. *Hankyoreh* (2004, p. 4) reported that this young Korean man gave Korea a table tennis gold medal after 16 years by breaking through the wall of the world's strongest players from China. Thus far, nationalism related to Korean table tennis against China was evident throughout the Korean newspapers. The evidence indicates that the Korean newspaper texts from the 2004 Athens Olympics table tennis games featured nationalistic rhetoric. This evidence supports the notion that the quantity and quality of newspaper articles varied depending on whether Korean table tennis players had won gold medals. In other words, the expression of Korean nationalism in table tennis varied according to whether Korean athletes had won medals or not. If Korea's athletes did not win a medal, especially a gold medal, newspaper articles were rarely produced. For example, this had occurred during the previous Olympic Games in Sydney.

### **5.6.2 The Representation of Korean Newspaper with Chinese Table Tennis**

The articles about China and Chinese players reported by the Korean media during every Olympics seemed to have negative implications. Interestingly, this time, the

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<sup>53</sup>*Jiayou* means 'to fight' in Chinese.

nationalism between China and South Korea in the men's table tennis match was caused by the problem of historical identity between the two countries. As a result of this on-going issue, China also held negative views about Korea. For example, Chinese television did not broadcast the awards ceremony after China was defeated by South Korea in the men's singles.

According to *Kyunghyang* (2004):

The Chinese have not seen this awards ceremony. CCTV, the national broadcasting station that relayed the game, did not show the award ceremony but replaced it with another program, which showed all the Olympic broadcasts on three of the 12 CCTV channels. Indeed, it seems to us that China is cowardly and intolerant. Chinese do not want to see two Chinese flags under the Korean flag as much as in table tennis (p. 18).<sup>54</sup>

Thus, China did not want to show that Chinese table tennis, which had strong links to Chinese nationalism, had been defeated by Korea.

To summarise the Athens table tennis competition, during the Athens Olympics table tennis tournament, South Korea won gold medals in the men's singles for the first time in 16 years. Korean newspapers subsequently published articles, with nationalist expressions and images in relation to Chinese defeats. In particular, 2004 was a period during which Korea and China were thoroughly replacing their historical records, and the relationship between the two countries was not positive. The newspaper reports related to table tennis seemed to turn into a battle of history between the two countries, and gold medallist Yoo Seung-min became the hero of Korea who defeated China.

## **5.7 Beijing Olympic Games in 2008**

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<sup>54</sup>CCTV is the medium of China and the abbreviation of China Central Television.

Even though human rights and bidding issues continued to plague Beijing's candidacy for the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing became the third Summer Olympic host city in Asia, after Tokyo and Seoul (Maguire, 2011). China embraced the notion of a Chinese renaissance during the Beijing Olympic Games, and pursued the concept of a harmonious world under the slogan: 'One World, One Dream' for the global era (Xu, 2006). There were a number of reasons that led to China hosting its first Olympic Games, yet the 1971 Ping Pong Diplomacy may have been the country's first significant step towards achieving this outcome (Wei, Hong, & Zhouxiang, 2010). Korean newspapers reported on the Beijing Olympics in the following ways:

Like the slogan of the Beijing Olympics, 'one world, one dream', let's go beyond the borders, crossing the races beyond national boundaries and establishing a diverse global society (*Chosun*, 2008, p. 1).

Today, the festival of global sport begins in China, and the population of 1 billion Chinese meet the world. And 100 years of the modern Olympics, China comes to the world today (*Seoul*, 2008, p. 1).

China's Olympic team had been increasingly successful ever since the 1984 Olympics. However, at the Beijing Olympics, the United States and Russia held first place overall. Despite this, the Chinese table tennis team surpassed all other countries, and the Beijing Olympics offered the team a home advantage. China attained four table tennis gold medals, two silver medals and two bronze medals in the men's singles and team competitions. Korea earned two bronze medals at the men's and women's team competitions. The relationship between table tennis, gold medals, media, and nationalism mentioned in the previous section was also shown to vary depending on the colour of the medals achieved. However, at this Olympics, Korea's bronze medal win was slightly different because a Chinese naturalised player became the first naturalised Korean Olympic representative in Korean sports history. Observing newspaper articles related to table tennis in Beijing and London since the Seoul



Olympics was one of the reasons for this chapter to observe the differences between the Korean media's views on Korean players and Chinese naturalised players. Therefore, this section examines whether the Korean newspapers used the same nationalist expressions for with the Korean born players and the naturalised players.

Thus, this section examines the pattern of nationalism related to table tennis in Korean newspaper reports during the Beijing Olympics. A total of 108 table tennis news reports were published by six Korean newspapers at the Beijing Olympics. 72 reports conveyed news of the Korean table tennis team, while 21 articles were about the Chinese athletes. Particularly noteworthy is that 41 of the 87 Korean table tennis articles were about naturalised players who were selected from China to represent Korea. This section first examines the Korean players discussed in the text, then examines the Chinese players, and finally considers how the first Chinese naturalised player was depicted in Korean newspapers.

Table 5.6

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during Beijing Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
Number of articles	14	19	12	26	23	14

### **5.7.1 The Representation of Korean Newspapers with Korean Table Tennis**

Four years previously, at the Athens Olympic Games in 2004, the Korean table tennis team recreated the glorious memories of the Seoul Olympic Games by defeating the Chinese team. In this atmosphere, the Korean newspaper reports highlighted the prospect of the Korean table tennis team winning medals, and there was still a notion that China was a greater enemy than just an opponent in table tennis. On 7 August 2008, the day before the

Olympic Games began, a Korean left-wing newspaper, *Hankyoreh* (2008) wrote an article reporting that:

Table tennis, which competes with the 2.5 g ball, became the official Olympic sport in the Seoul Olympic Games, and our Korean national team led the game against China to victory and upgraded the table tennis to national sports. What about the Korean national team this time in Beijing, can we win a gold medal in Beijing, on the enemy's soil? (p. 22)

This news pinpointed Beijing as the enemy's location, and labelled table tennis as a Korean national sport. This indicates that the Korean Olympic table tennis team was playing the sport at the enemy's location in Beijing. Against this backdrop, the table tennis competition would begin, and the Korean newspaper reports stated that, 'our Korean team will cruise safely the semi-finals like the previous Olympics and then play the Chinese player according to the tide' (*Dong-A*, 2008, p. 8).

From the Seoul Olympics through to the Beijing Olympics, newspapers in Korea continually used the symbolic landmark of the Great Wall to represent China and the Chinese table tennis team. As *Joongang* (2008) described, 'our Korean men's women's table tennis team made a pleasant start with the first start of the game, and hope to go beyond the Great Wall this time' (p. 14). *Dong-A* (2008) stated, 'We must overcome the Great Wall to prevent the Chinese tennis players' domination' (p. 8), while *Kyunghyang* (2008) stated, 'The Great Wall is a goal to overcome and I want to deal with China soon' (p. 19). Further, during the games, if the Korean team failed to progress to the next round or failed to compete, the Korean newspapers often used expressions indicating that the team had been 'defeated' by Chinese players or surrounded by the Great Wall. For example, 'a Korean men's table tennis team that fell on the Great Wall of China' (*Chosun*, 2008, p. 3).

It is also important to observe the tendency of Korean newspapers in describing Korean players at the Beijing Games to use terms such as personal pronouns. For Kim Kyoung-A, a Korean female captain, the Korean newspaper reports often used phrases such as, ‘*Mat-Eun-Ni* as an oldest daughter’. Meanwhile, for the Korean male player, Oh Sang-Eun, the newspapers often used the expression, ‘*Mat-Hyung* as an oldest brother’. When the women’s group defeated the Japanese team and won the bronze medal, the newspaper reports stated, ‘our eldest daughter led the team well’ (*Kyunghyang*, 2008, p. 21). *Chosun* (2008) also reported that ‘Kim Kyung-Ae, our eldest sister, guided us well and the women’s team won the bronze medal’ (p. 31). *Seoul* (2008) stated that, ‘Men’s team table tennis finally got a bronze medal, because of our trusty eldest brother’ (p. 7), while *Dong-A* (2008) stated that, ‘Our oldest brother, Oh Sang-Eun, went up to the quarter-finals alone’ (p. 14). In this manner, the Korean newspaper reports referred to the Korean players as ‘our’, ‘our eldest brother’ and ‘our older brother’. The next section examines the pronouns and words used to refer to the Chinese naturalised athletes.

### **5.7.2 The Representation of Korean Newspaper with Chinese Table Tennis**

China finished second to the United States in the total medal tally at the Beijing Olympic Games, but finally outperformed the United States in terms of the number of gold medals won. According to *Kyunghyang* (2008):

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games ended with a unilateral family feast in the host country, as expected. The Olympics ‘Pax Americana’ era, where peace has been maintained for more than 12 years under the supremacy of the world’s sports, has come to an end. It is the age of ‘Pax-Sinica’ where China dominates the world sports order (p. 16).

However, *Dong-A* (2008) referred to this domination as ‘China’s gold medal overeating and host country premium’ (p. 3). China won a considerable number of medals across a variety of sports, and in table tennis, China attained a large number of medals. *Kyunghyang* (2008) described that the ‘Beijing Olympic table tennis was a Chinese celebration party’ (p. 18). However, these strong results by China in table tennis were consistent with its performances in table tennis every Olympic Games, although a significant factor in the Beijing Olympic Games was the Chinese naturalised players who were playing under different flags for other national table tennis teams. As *Hankyoreh* (2008) reported:

On one side of the table, a Chinese player puts a serve. The other player on the other side is also Chinese. It is not a fastball game between China national team. It is the women’s group game of the United States and Singapore held on the 13<sup>th</sup> Aug. The Singapore national team’s Li Jia Wei is from Beijing and the US national team’s Wang Chen is from Shanghai. They were both born in China, but they represent other countries at the Beijing Olympics. Gao Zun, who won the silver medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics with the Chinese flag, competed under the American flag at the first Olympics in his home country. China has one billion people of 1.3 billion people playing table tennis, and four million tournaments take place in the selection of national team players. Some of the Chinese players who have not penetrated the competition become naturalised to other countries and become national teams. There is a similar case is in Korea too. (p. 20)

Even in the last Olympics, when Japanese and British naturalised table tennis players were mentioned, it was rare that this sentiment was expressed so openly. Korea’s right-wing newspaper, *Chosun* (2008) published a negative article stating that, ‘Beijing 2008’s Olympic table tennis competition looks like the Chinese national championships, not the Olympic Games’ (p. 22). This issue is further elaborated in the interview data examined in Chapter 6, which highlight the pros and cons of naturalisation.

Thus far, the Korean media had always wanted medals, but the titles and nationalistic expressions relating to Korean players had not changed significantly and had been used continuously since the Seoul Olympics. In contrast, when the Korean media represented

Chinese players and table tennis, the media continued to use nationalist expressions that emanate from a background of certain bilateral interpretations. However, a problem arose when a Chinese nationalised player was selected for the Korean table tennis team.

### **5.7.3 The Representation of Korean Newspaper with Chinese Naturalised Player**

Before the start of the Beijing Olympics, Korean newspapers published articles on the first Chinese naturalised athletes who were selected for the Korean national team. *Kyunhyung* (2008) wrote, ‘we hope the “Chinese naturalised player” Dang can be able to make a “Korean dream” in Beijing’ (p. 21).<sup>55</sup> *Hankyrae* (2008) also reported that, ‘We are so happy with Dang, who naturalised into Korea from China, for her “Korean dream”’ (p. 14). *Dong-A* (2008) examined why this Chinese player became naturalised to Korea, quoting the athlete’s explanation that ‘it was my dream to go to the Olympics, so I got naturalised to Korea’ (p. 8). On 7 August, a Korean newspaper published a list of Korean table tennis representatives for the Beijing Olympics, on which there was a strange name with which readers were unfamiliar. One week later, the news emerged of this athlete’s victory: ‘Chinese Dang, who became naturalised to Korea, won her first victory for South Korea’ (*Joongang*, 2008, p. 21). After the first victory, other news reports stated that the ‘Korean sister’ Dang would continue to win (*Dong-A*, 2008, p. 20). However, the articles published during this Olympic Games only sometimes referred to Dang as ‘sister’, and did not always use this terminology.

News reports about Dang were silent for two days, and were then published intensively for four days from 17 August. Among the victories were Dang’s singles

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<sup>55</sup> Dang Yeo-Seo was a table tennis player from China who became a national representative of Korea. For the first time in the history of Korean sport, the team won an Olympic medal (in table tennis) through a foreign national who was representing Korea.

qualifying games and team bronze medals. It seems that Korean table tennis fans became interested in Dang because she was the first naturalised player. According to *Dong-A* (2008, p. 9), the first naturalised player Dang's media rating was 19.3%, which was the highest rating in the Korean media's Beijing Olympics coverage. In the women's team event, Dang won the bronze medal, thereby becoming the first naturalised player to win a medal for Korea. Figure 5.5 below presents a photograph taken after the bronze medal match. The title of this photograph was: 'I give my bronze medal to my second country' (*Dong-A*, 2008, p. 2).



*Figure 5.5.* Published photograph of Dang Yeo-Seo winning the bronze medal for Korea.

Source: *Dong-A*, 2008, p. 2.

*Hankyoreh* (2008) reported that, 'Chinese naturalised player Dang achieved a bronze medal for South Korea' (p. 6). *Chosun* (2008) wrote, 'who is this Dang?' (p. 11), while *Joongang* (2008) reported that the table tennis team 'acquired a bronze medal for the Korean women's group including this naturalised Dang' (p. 9). *Dong-A* (2008) stated that for the 'naturalised player Dang, this is her Korean Dream of Tears' (p. 12). Meanwhile, *Kyunghyang* (2008) reported that, 'Chinese naturalised Dang has won bronze for the first time in her second country' (p. 9). Here, the Korean newspapers referred to Dang mostly as a 'Chinese naturalised player', rather than referring to her as 'our', 'our daughter', 'Eun-Ni' or

‘our sister’. This is in contrast to previous articles published in Korean newspapers, which generally used the terms ‘our’, ‘sister’ and ‘brother’ to describe Korean players. In this regard, it can be argued that it was not yet easy for the Korean media to discuss naturalised players as though they were Korean players.

To summarise the Beijing Olympic Games, this section sought to examine the table tennis matches of this Olympics and to determine how the Korean newspapers discussed Chinese naturalised players. The evidence suggests that the Korean newspapers did not use the same terms to refer to naturalised players and Korean players, even though the naturalised players technically were Korean due to becoming naturalised. However, the newspapers also did not express any negative statements about the naturalised players. In addition, the evidence in this section indicates that as China finished top of the medal table at the Beijing Olympic Games, there were suggestions that it may have become a time of Pax-Sinica in world sport.

### **5.8 London Olympic Games in 2012**

At the London Olympics, China finished in second place in the overall medal rankings, and Chinese table tennis continued to demonstrate its strength. *Joongang* (2012) reported that:

Just as the political powers of the United States and the Soviet Union have long been rivals in the Olympics. The US and China, Pax-Sinica, who wants to win the US and world supremacy next to Russia, is likely to come from Olympic sports (p. 14).

In the table tennis competition at the London Olympics, China won four gold medals and two silver medals, Korea and Japan each won a silver medal, and Germany and Singapore each won two bronze medals. China’s world table tennis dominance was again apparent. Regarding the strength of Chinese table tennis, and with a certain level of arrogance, the

Chinese Table Tennis Association executive stated, ‘it’s no fun now that world table tennis is under our control and I want other countries to try’ (*Chosun*, 2012, p. 11). From this point on, this section investigates the efforts of other countries. For example, in the case of Korean table tennis, Korea employed a special female team that included two Chinese naturalised players in order to work against China’s domination of Olympics table tennis. Six Korean newspapers produced 109 articles about Korean table tennis during the 2012 London Olympics. There were 81 articles about the Korean table tennis team and 28 articles about the Chinese table tennis team. In particular, 42 of the 81 texts about Korean players were articles about Chinese naturalised players who competed for the Korean national table tennis team.

Table 5.7

*Number of Newspaper Articles about Korean Table Tennis during London Olympics*

Name of newspaper	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Joongang</i>	<i>Seoul</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Kyunghyang</i>	<i>Hankyoreh</i>
Number of articles	21	11	18	29	21	9

### 5.8.1 The Representation of Korean Newspapers with Korean Table Tennis

During the London Olympics, two issues emerged regarding the Korean table tennis team, and Korean newspaper reports discussed these issues. First, the Korean men’s team was referred to as ‘old boys’ because there were no young table tennis players to replace the more established a player (*Dong-A*, 2012, p. 10). Second, two Chinese naturalised players were selected for the Korean women’s table tennis team as representatives of Korea (*Hankyoreh*, 2012, p. 14). The goal of the Korean table tennis team at the Games was to win a medal and defeat the Chinese team—the same goal as at previous Olympic table tennis games. Three days before the start of the Olympics, *Dong-A* (2012) reported the mission of Korean table



tennis as follows: ‘the Korean national team have to break down “the Ping-Pong Wall” of China’ (p. 23).<sup>56</sup> Similar news articles were published on the opening day of the London Olympics. For example, one newspaper published an interview with Kim Kyung-A, the Korean table tennis women’s captain, who stated that, ‘our Korean team is a table tennis powerhouse and we are the most threatening team to China’ (*Chosun*, 2012, p. 34).

In this challenging atmosphere, the Korean team began its competition at the London Olympic Games; however, the Korean players were all eliminated from the preliminaries, and were subsequently all defeated. *Dong-A* (2012) reported that, ‘Korean table tennis has all disappeared from the war’ (p. 21), while *Chosun* (2012) stated that, ‘All of Korea’s veterans have collapsed’ (p. 33). It was shocking news that the women’s team failed to win any medals, given that they had won medals from the 1988 Olympics in Seoul to the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. According to *Kyunghyang* (2012), ‘the Korean women team set the no-medal record at the Olympics’ (p. 14). For the first time in 24 years, ‘the Korean women team is on their way back home empty-handed.

Moreover, the Korean newspapers attributed the failure of the Korean team to the strength of the Chinese team. *Joongang* (2012) described that, ‘China is now a wall that cannot be surpassed, Chinese women are like men’ (p. 25). *Seoul* (2012) reported:

Now it seems hard to go beyond the Great Wall. Today, the Korean women’s team lost to Singapore, not to China, but Singapore, the three Chinese naturalised player’s Little-China team, seemed to be looking at another great wall. (p. 17)

The Korean newspapers reported that the Korean team did not lose to Singapore, but to the ‘second Chinese team’ or the ‘little China team’. Further, it is interesting to note that the

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<sup>56</sup> The meaning of the ‘Ping Pong Wall’ here is a combination of ‘Ping Pong’ and the ‘Great Wall’ of China.

defeat of the Korean team led to attacks against the naturalised players who represented Korea. For example, *Chosun* (2012) argued that:

Even though we had two Chinese naturalised players to beat China, the result went wrong. We did not even get any medals, and our run of consecutive medals is finished. Korean table tennis has failed to produce Korean players. Specifically, the women's team mainly relied on naturalised players. I do not think it was the right decision to accept naturalised players. Instead of that, we should produce our own local players to beat China. From this Olympics, people give signs of displeasure to those naturalised players. If our national team is filled with naturalised players, who will be the table tennis player of Korea? Chinese naturalised players cannot overcome their own Great Wall (p. 32).

*Dong-A* (2012) also stated that, 'the Korean plan to beat China with Chinese naturalised players had failed' (p. 22). *Joongang* (2012, p. 24) reported that the Korean table tennis mission was at an end, while *Kyunghyang* (2012, p. 14) stated that Korean table tennis had a tendency to be overly dependent on Chinese naturalised players. *Joongang* (2012) also reported that: 'Many Chinese players play in foreign countries, however, they are not the highest class players in China, and other countries have imported them and are trying to beat China. 'This phenomenon is disappointing for world table tennis' (p. 25).

Thus, the disappointing result of the Korean women's table tennis team seemed to be portrayed as a result of the failure of the Chinese naturalised players. This was the opposite reaction to the previous Olympics, when a Chinese naturalised athlete won a bronze medal for Korea in Beijing. To further this comparison, this section examines what expressions and pronouns were attached to these athletes in Korean newspapers. When discussing the Korean player Kim Kyung-A of the Korean women's table tennis team, Korean news expressed the words '*U-Ri Enu-Ni* as our sister', '*Mat-Enu-Ni* as our old sister' and '*Dae-Pyo-Tim Sang-Jing* as the symbol of Korean team'. For example, as *Chosun* (2012) reported, '*Mat-eun-Ni* Kim Kyung-A said that Korea is a table tennis powerhouse' (p. 32). *Kyunghyang* (2012)

stated that, 'Kim Kyung-A, the eldest sister of our team, is playing in the women's singles competition' (p. 15).

However, when the Korean newspaper reports discussed the Chinese naturalised players, in contrast to the Korean born players, most of them referred to the athletes as 'naturalised players from China'. However, this pattern did seem to change slightly, with the evidence indicating that the expression 'naturalised player' disappeared at times, and the articles used only the athletes' names, without any pronouns. For example, *Chosun* (2012) stated, 'Dang Yeo-Seo from China arrives at the London Olympics' (p. 34). According to *Hankyoreh* (2012), 'Korean players who are "naturalised from China" play games with their native country players' (p. 14). *Kyunghyang* (2012) reported, 'Dang and Sek defeated in group stage' (p. 14). Moreover, *Dong-A* (2012) stated that, 'there is Kim Kyung-A, and other naturalised players from China' (p. 21). *Dong-A* (2012) also reported: 'Today, Sek and Dang are playing in the game' (p. 7), 'Dang and Sek were beaten by Chinese players (p. 5) and 'Sek did not play well, and Dang was overtaken by his opponent' (p. 12). Here, newspaper articles did not use 'naturalised players' to refer to these athletes. However, when discussing the naturalised players, the newspaper reports still did not use the specific phrases generally employed when discussing other Korean players.

To summarise the London Olympic Games, these Olympics were viewed as a stage that demonstrated the renaissance of the UK's rich culture through the media, along with the continuing process of the UK's globalisation. In addition, although China had only been participating in foreign sports since 2008, the Chinese team once again confirmed the strength of Chinese sports in London. The evidence from the examined news articles indicates that the pattern of discussing Chinese naturalised players had changed somewhat.

The newspaper reports occasionally used only the athletes' names rather than always referring to them as 'Chinese naturalised players'.

### **5.8.2 The Representation of Korean Newspaper with Chinese Table Tennis**

As mentioned earlier, during the London Olympics table tennis competition, China won four gold medals and two silver medals. China displayed a degree of arrogance and self-confidence in remarking that 'the Chinese monopoly of world table tennis is no longer fun' (*Chosun*, 2012, p. 11). Chinese table tennis was reported by the Korean media as a power that Korea could not surpass. *Dong-A* (2012) remarked that, 'the Great Wall of China table tennis was high and completely obstructed' (p. 22), while *Kyunghyang* (2012) stated that, 'Korean table tennis cannot reach the Great Wall. It is hard now' (p. 15). Chinese table tennis is *Num-Sa-Byok*, which means impossible to break. *Seoul* (2012) also reported that, 'it is now impossible to win a gold medal at table tennis beyond the Great Wall' (p. 14).

On the other hand, there were other explanations offered for China's dominance of table tennis. According to *Joongang* (2012):

There are many reasons why China is a table tennis powerhouse such as many athletes, scientific table tennis training, government support, and the production of scientific table tennis equipment. However, one thing to check, table tennis is important for table tennis racket, and Chinese table tennis racket are made of special materials made in China, which nobody knows. It is authorized by the ITTA, but it is impossible to know the secret (p. 24).

From this point onwards, Korean newspaper reports were often concerned with investigating the secret of Chinese table tennis, while acknowledging the advanced table tennis skills of the Chinese team.

To summarise, the evidence indicates that the newspaper reports always discussed the progression of globalisation, Pax-Sinica and the nationalism of Korea in Olympic texts

associated with table tennis. The evidence also indicates that the Olympics demonstrated both the flow of globalisation and the localisation of the Olympic city. It was evidenced through table tennis that China was becoming the most successful Olympic sports team in the world. In terms of sports nationalism in relation to reports about Korean table tennis, the Korean newspapers consistently gave the Korean team a sense of a nationalistic mission, yet there was no opportunity to achieve this mission due to the strength of the Chinese team and the gold medals that it achieved.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This newspaper text analysis chapter has explored the table tennis competitions from the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games to the 2012 London Olympic Games in order to identify the flow of South Korean nationalism. The evidence in Chapter five discussed the emergence of a Chinese naturalised athlete in Korea, while the discussion in Chapter 5 indicated how Korean nationalism changed through Chinese naturalised athletes. To find this evidence, Chapter 5 examined Korean newspapers from the 1988 Seoul Olympics to the 2012 London Olympics, and compared the articles from the period when there were no naturalised athletes to the period when naturalised athletes appeared. The results indicated that Korean newspapers consistently maintained Korean nationalist reporting behaviour regarding Olympic table tennis, from the Seoul Olympics to the London Olympics. The newspaper reports also used a pronoun of nuance different from that of Korean athletes through naturalised athletes, and always used the word ‘naturalised athlete’. In contrast, when reporting on Korean athletes, they always emphasised Korean athletes and nationalism by using similar Korean expressions. Once the Korean newspaper reported that when the

naturalised player won the bronze medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Korean newspaper briefly expressed the naturalised athlete as 'our athlete', but it was a while. However, the newspaper then used the term 'Chinese naturalised athlete'. Olympic table tennis In the relationship between Korea and China, the flow of Korean nationalism through Korean table tennis and naturalisation players did not show any difference from the nationalism expressed in the existing Korean newspaper reports. Even in 2012, during the London Olympic Games, the Korean newspapers presented a preliminary report that two Chinese women naturalised athletes were representing Korea, yet did not achieve good results. Therefore, the comparative analysis revealed little difference between the Korean newspaper reports through the existing Korean table tennis from the last Seoul Olympics to the London Olympics, and after the emergence of the naturalised athletes. Rather, the reports maintained the expression of the existing nationalism. In other words, according to the analysis of the Korean newspaper reports, the expression of Korean nationalism through table tennis tended to maintain the expression of Korean nationalism mainly for Korean athletes. In Chapter 4, this thesis examined the naturalised athletes who appeared in Korean table tennis, while Chapter 5 observed Korean nationalism from the media perspective. Chapter 6 will present direct interviews with naturalised athletes, will determine these athletes' identities in Korean society and will observe the national identity of Korea in regard to the naturalised athletes.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The National Identity Construction of Chinese Naturalised Players and Korean Society**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

Through empirical data from the last two chapters, this thesis has indicated the emergence of Chinese naturalised athletes in Korea, and the Korean newspaper reports observed the flow of Korean nationalism through naturalised athletes. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the process of Korean national identity construction through the development of Chinese naturalised table tennis players based on interview evidence. Throughout different phases of history, Korea's national identity has changed, persisted and stagnated. This chapter mainly observes Korean national identity during the time in which Chinese naturalised table tennis players emerged. To do this, the chapter first examines the changing identities of Chinese naturalised players in order to understand the players' identities and the identity of Korean people in relation to them. According to evidence gained from interviews conducted for this research, two types of Korean national identity are related to Chinese naturalised athletes. The first type is exhibited by people who support globalisation and welcome 'outsiders'. The second type comprises people who wish to maintain the 'established' Korean identity, despite the influence of globalisation. Therefore, this chapter seeks to investigate the current state of Korean national identity through its relationship with globalisation, these Chinese naturalised athletes and the two Korean national identities. In order to observe this process of identify, this interview chapter is divided into three sections based on the groups studied: (1) the Chinese naturalised table tennis player herself, (2) those organisations who support naturalisation (including the

Korean government, the Korean Sport Committee and the Korean Table Tennis Federation) and (3) those of people opposed to naturalisation (the local media, young table tennis players, the parents of young players, and local coaches).

Many countries have problems managing national identities, yet sports are a useful field in which this construct can be understood (Maguire et al., 2002). As Maguire (2011) suggested, through sports it is possible to understand the process of identity formation and the development of tradition. Therefore, the issue of Chinese naturalised athletes represents a useful context to examine the construction of Korean national identity. Another reason to examine contemporary Korean identity is that Korea is rapidly becoming one of the world's fastest-growing multicultural societies (Castle, 2007). The changes and flows of national identity are becoming increasingly diverse and complex (Kim, 2013). However, among the many multicultural issues existing in Korea, the issue of naturalisation remains under-researched (Lee, 2014).

In the case of Chinese naturalised athletes, the Korean government has sought to emphasise civic identity, yet particular groups still strongly adhere to an ethnic-based identity. Maguire (2008) discussed the government policy towards global sport migration in relation to 'real politics' and 'ethnically based politics'; thus, this chapter investigates how Korean society is debating the sport naturalisation issue of Chinese players between 'real politics' and 'ethnically based'. Maguire (2011, p. 986) also stated that 'national cultures and identities weaken, strengthened or pluralized by globalization processes'. Therefore, by studying Chinese nationalised table tennis players, this chapter approaches the issue of whether the national identity of Korea has been weakened, strengthened or pluralised by globalisation processes.



The first section of the chapter presents interview data gathered from Chinese naturalised players in order to understand the naturalised players' identity in Korean society. The second section presents interviews with member decision-making groups related to Korean table tennis (Korea's Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Korea Sports Council, and the Korea Table Tennis Federation) in order to examine the reasons for approving athletic naturalisation. Finally, the third section presents interviews with local people in order to present their response to this issue and examine the reasons for opposing naturalisation. The interviewees include four Korean media personnel, young Korean table tennis players, the parents of these players, local table tennis coaches, and local table tennis players. The emergent themes revealed through these interviews include globalisation, open society, local protectionism and multi-national identities. To further examine these topics, the chapter now turns to data that was generated by these interviews.

## **6.2 National Identity Construction of Naturalised Chinese Players in South Korea**

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed table tennis and the advent of Chinese naturalised table tennis players, caused by increasing varieties and diminishing contrasts in various relationships through the process of intended and unintended consequences and via the processes of sportisation and globalisation. Specifically, Korean table tennis has a long history. It was employed to improve physical fitness during the early modern era, then viewed as a sport that promoted anti-colonialism and anti-communism, and later, at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, became the first sport in which a nationalised athlete achieved an Olympic medal for Korea. Previous chapters in this thesis examined these macroscopic aspects of Korean table tennis and Chinese naturalised players through historical archives and

the media. In contrast, the current chapter examines the microscopic aspects of this issue through the analysis of interview data. This first part of chapter will present the evidence obtained from intensive interviews with the first table tennis naturalised player in South Korea.

### 6.2.1 Naturalised Chinese Players as Training Partners

In this section of the chapter, the focus is primarily upon an interview carried out with Jeong, the naturalised athlete, to explore her process of identity formation. The movements of sport migrants are divided into subdivisions in the same country, on the same continent, on different continents and hemispheres, and they comprise five categories: pioneers, mercenaries, nomadic cosmopolitans, returnees and settlers (Maguire et al., 2002). According to this typology, the first Chinese naturalised player in Korea seems to fit the category of mercenary and returnee from China to Korea, within the same continent. When this naturalised player came to Korea, she was not a guaranteed to be an official player for the Korean team, and subsequently came to Korea as a ‘training partner’ for the Korean Air table tennis *Sil-Up* team, with a short-term work permit visa.<sup>57</sup> In other words, she was a ‘practice partner’ of the Korean Air table tennis players. This Chinese naturalised table tennis player, Jeong, stated that:

I started playing table tennis when I was 10 years of age. From that time, I wanted to be a Chinese representative for the World Table Tennis Championships and Olympic Games, and this was my dream as a table tennis player in China. However, I could not be selected as a Chinese national team member because there are too many great players in China. Even if I was in the Chinese youth national team, I did not have an opportunity to be a Chinese international member. After I failed to become a Chinese international, I lost my motivation to continue my table tennis career in my hometown.

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<sup>57</sup>*Sil-Up* is one of the sports league systems in Korea. It is a semi-professional system in which the sports teams are sponsored by local companies.

I have not been able to play table tennis for a while due to disappointment. I was trying to retire and find another job. While I was preparing for my retirement, I met a person from the Korean company [Korean Air]. He told me that I could play table tennis in Korea. After that, I immediately packed my bag and followed this person to Korea.<sup>58</sup>

However, problems arose because Jeong travelled to Korea on the advice of the Korean Air employee, yet apparently this employee did not know that Jeong would not be able to play table tennis in Korea officially. Jeong could not play because, in order to register to play in the Korean table tennis league, foreign players had to have Korean nationality. Thus, the Korean Air staff did not welcome Jeong as an official table tennis player upon her arrival in Korea. Another Korean Air table tennis player, Shin, stated that:

Korean Air originally brought Chinese players for training partner purposes and, in the Korean Air team, there are many Korean national players as well, and so if they trained with Jeong, they would know the pros and cons of Chinese players.

It is clear that Korean Air did not intend to naturalise Jeong upon her arrival in order to enable her to become a Korean Air player or national representative. The manager of the Korean Table Tennis Association, Kim, stated:

In 2003, a Hong Kong-based table tennis player became naturalised to Korea through marriage with a Korean man, and she was at the Korea Racing Authority team, and then the Korean players learned a lot from her and the team was good. From then on, other Korean teams have become interested in using Chinese players to improve. However, the teams did not naturalise the players or even think of them first.

It is clear that, based on the route through which the Chinese naturalised players first came to Korea, naturalisation was not their primary purpose, and the Korean *Sil-Up* team was seeking to improve the performance of the Korean local players and the team. However, in Jeong's interview, she did not recall whether she knew this, but she had greater aspirations

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<sup>58</sup>Korean Air is a company that sponsors its own table tennis team in Korea. Korean table tennis has not become a professional sport, such as in China or Germany. Thus, players act as semi-professionals under the name *Sil-Up*. These athletes are not part of the national table tennis team, but are supported by the company that sponsors them.

than simply being a ‘training partner’. Looking at the reason for this in the interview data above, Jeong had lost her motivation and was seeking to retire from table tennis after she was not selected for the Chinese national team. In contrast, in Korea, Jeong wished to start playing table tennis again. She remarked: ‘my dream kept motivating me to carry on my table tennis career’. She also stated that she had another motive that she could not express publically at the time of her entry into Korea. Jeong stated that: ‘If I worked hard, I had a dream that someday I would be registered to *Sil-Up* players to play Korean table tennis tournament and even become a national player in Korea’.

Maguire (2008, p. 447) stated that the motivation of global sports migration is not merely economic, but also includes political, historical, geographical, social and cultural factors that create ‘multi-layered’ patterns. Jeong’s interview above did not indicate any economic motivation, yet a former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Association, Young, stated that:

As far as I know, Chinese players have many reasons to naturalise in Korea and other countries. The first of the reasons that Chinese players come to Korea is the liberalisation of Chinese players since the opening of China. Secondly, China has too many great table tennis players. On the other hand, there is not enough economic benefit for players, unless they are a top class player. Thirdly, before the Chinese players brought them to Korea, there is not cost for the scout expenses. Finally, there is the quality of life in Korea. For this reason, the number of naturalised Chinese players seems to be increasing. One more reason I have, actually—Chinese naturalised players think they are better off than local players when they go abroad.

Maguire and Pearton (2000) argued that the reason for elite migration in soccer is not just economic, but is also based upon interdependencies with other factors. According to the above statement from Young, while economic aspects were undoubtedly important for Jeong and other naturalised players, other social, political and cultural aspects were also important in motivating them to relocate to other countries. In Jeong’s interview, she stated that she

came to Korea for a variety of reasons, including personal motivation, the existing conditions within Chinese table tennis, the demand for Chinese players in the Korean team, and the international relations between Korea and China.

As Maguire et al. (2002, p. 28) indicated, if athletes wish to be naturalised to a host country, they must marry a citizen or become a citizen of the country; however, each country makes it possible to specify the period of stay for naturalisation by law. In terms of the Korean case, according to the Ministry of Justice, the basic requirements for foreigners to become naturalised are as follows. Each person must:

1. have had a domicile address in the Republic of Korea for more than five consecutive years
2. be legally an adult according to Korean civil law
3. have good conduct
4. have the ability to maintain an income from his or her own assets or skills, or be a dependent member of a family capable of that feat
5. have basic knowledge befitting a Korean national, such as understanding the Korean language, customs and culture.

Based on the conditions of naturalisation in Korea, Jeong had to wait five years from her arrival to apply for naturalisation. The naturalisation conditions allowed Jeong to apply for naturalisation in 2005, at least five years after she came to Korea in 2000. Thus, because Jeong was not a Korean during that five-year period, she could not play as an official table tennis player in Korea, and could only work in restrictive employment due to her visiting visa conditions. Jeong came to recognise these naturalisation conditions in Korea, and faced difficulty in meeting the complicated naturalisation requirements. She described the consequences of this unexpected naturalisation requirement: 'I was hoping to be a Korean representative someday, but there was no hope of realising that dream for five years'.

In addition, based on Korea's naturalisation law, as stated in Article 5, 'Applicants must have the basic knowledge of a Korean national; such an understanding of the Korean

language, customs and culture'. The purpose of this law is to test applicants' general knowledge about Korea, which foreign people should theoretically have learned from living in Korea for five years. However, this aspect of the naturalisation test meant that Jeong was unable to naturalise in 2005, and was only able to naturalise in 2007. This occurred because Jeong failed her naturalisation test in 2006, and had to take the test again one year later. While Jeong waited for the naturalisation period, it is wondering how she had spent five years in Korea before she actually became a naturalised Korean citizen. She cautiously replied that:

I wanted to go back to China the first time that I found out about the naturalisation details. I had many problems with the language, culture and food in Korea. I could not only be a training partner and I wanted to play an official game. When I came back from table tennis practice every day as training partner for Korean Air players, I stayed in my room all the time, without going out. I just listened to my Korean coach about what I have to do in Korean society. I spent seven years like this. However, five years after I do not know, seven years later, I am Korean. I do not know how that time has passed. It was hard for me.

Jeong entered Korea to begin playing table tennis again. However, she was misled due to the lack of information provided by the person who brought her to Korea, and was initially unable to become an official registered player in Korea. As a result, Jeong seems to have experienced a difficult and lonely personal life, while waiting to become naturalised. After spending seven years as a Korean Air training partner, Jeong finally passed the naturalisation test in August 2007 and acquired Korean nationality. When Jeong gained Korean nationality, her Chinese nationality automatically disappeared because the Chinese government does not recognise dual citizenship. This is different from other countries. For example, American basketball players may have dual nationalities as American and British citizens while they are staying in the UK, as discussed by Maguire (1996).

Jeong had lived in Korea for seven years as a Chinese citizen, which is how she experienced her naturalisation process. Jeong remarked:

I got a Korean citizenship card after naturalisation. I was so glad and I could not believe that I was Korean. I had really wanted to be a Korean since 2000. I also changed my name to a Korean name as well.

Here it is worth emphasising in detail the fact that Jeong failed her naturalisation test in 2006, subsequently repeated the test in 2007, and eventually qualified to represent Korea in 2008. Young, the former vice-president of the former Korean Table Tennis Association, stated in an interview:

Jeong first came to Korea as a practice partner. I think it was probably only as a trainee for over seven years. Although she is not a top class player in China, she came to Korea and worked very hard [and] later defeated all the Korean players and became Korean champion in 2008. At that time, we could not even imagine that this would happen. But before the Beijing Olympics, we had to think about her again.

Based on Young's interview, the Korean Table Tennis Federation seemed initially to be embarrassed by the appearance of Jeong, which was unimaginable for Korean table tennis because, until 2008, Korean sports for the Olympics Games had never selected a sportsperson born in a foreign country as a representative. Indeed, even though Jeong had become naturalised, the federation could not reach a decision about whether to allow her to join the national team. However, after a lengthy debate, the Korean Table Tennis Federation (KTTF) concluded that, if Jeong passed the preliminary contest, she would be chosen as a representative of Korea. The manager of the Korea Table Tennis Association, Kim, concluded:

Jeong's table tennis ability was the best in Korea at that time. I saw the possibility of winning a medal. We decided to be the representative of Jeong, but she became a Korean national representative with her table tennis ability. Jeong was naturalised in 2007 - less than a year prior to the Beijing Olympics.

However, this did not resolve all Jeong's problems because, by this time, she had not entered a tournament for seven years, and subsequently seemed unable to attend the Beijing

Olympics as a national representative, since she had no domestic or international table tennis results or rankings as proof of player qualification. However, Korean Air immediately sought to resolve this problem for Jeong. They quickly registered her and prepared for the closing official game in Korea. It was finally time for Jeong's identity to change from training partner to Korean *Sil-Up* player.

### **6.2.2 Naturalised Chinese Player as Korean *Sil-Up* Players**

Chiba, Ebihara, and Morino (2001), noted that the Japanese Ministry of Justice states that, when Brazilian football players are selected as representatives of Japan, they are allowed to naturalise because they provide benefits to the Japanese nation. Campbell (2010) stated that Qatar is trading nationality to attain the benefits brought by national sports. However, the reasons in Jeong's case in Korea was different - and perhaps more similar to those of the naturalised American basketball players joined the UK basketball team between 1970 and 1980. Maguire (2008) explained that, during this period, British basketball teams could have only two American players per team; however, if an American player became naturalised in the UK, the team could include more American players. Jeong was also selected to improve the Korean Air table tennis team. Kim, the manager of the Korean Table Tennis Association (KTTF), stated:

In my memory, when I was on the Korean Air team with Jeong, she contributed a lot to the team, even though was not an official player for seven years in Korea. It helped Korean Air athletes' ability and Korean aviation team exhibition. When Korean players played practice games with her, they learned Chinese table tennis skills. At this point, domestic teams also wanted to bring Chinese practice partners from China. If such Chinese players become naturalised, their team will naturally want to help her become naturalised players.

Here again, Jeong could personally envisage naturalisation from the beginning, but Korean Air and the Table Tennis Federation did not think about it. However, over time,



Jeong successfully became naturalised, and Korean Air rewarded her with the opportunity to play table tennis in Korea for the first time. In January 2008, five months after Jeong's naturalisation in August 2007, she won all the singles matches at the Korean National Championships and won the first place except in one team game. After seven years, Jeong, a previous training partner in Korea, suddenly climbed to the top of Korean table tennis, and she and the Korean Air team worked together to win. Jeong stated:

It was nice to win for the very first time for me in Korea. I liked participating in the Korean competition. I have been envious of many Korean players for seven years when they do for a Korean league games every time. I wanted to go out for official table tennis games before, when I did not have a Korean citizenship. Now, as a Korean and as a Korean Air player, I was so happy to go to the game.

Jeong further recalled:

[After] I became a Korean citizen, a lot of my life changed and I feel equal to other local Korean players, and I am proud to be a Korean *Sil-Up* player of the Korean Air team, and I wanted to give back something to Korean Air that helped me out for a long time.

During Jeong's interview, she indicated a strong sense of identity as a Korean Air player and a Korean *Sil-Up* league player. Another Korean Air table tennis player, Shin, stated, 'As I know, it seems that Jeong has spent seven years of hard life in Korea with Korean Air. For this reason, she is always proud to be a Korean Air player'. Jeong herself commented that: 'if there was no ongoing support from Korean Air, I would have stopped playing table tennis, and I would like to become a Korean Air coach if I retire from the future'. Jeong's naturalisation seemed to be a personal matter and was more motivated by her desire to become an official Korean Air player, rather than to emphasise her changing citizenship from Chinese to Korean.

### **6.2.3 Naturalised Chinese Players as International Korean Players**

As mentioned above, Jeong became naturalised and, after her first successful domestic games with Korean Air, the Korean table tennis team had a discussion about her future involvement in the sport. Jeong subsequently participated in a Korean table tennis tournament held in January 2008 as a Korean Air player, and won two consecutive women's singles and women's groups matches. In short, she had been a practice partner for seven years and then conquered Korean table tennis. The Korean Table Tennis Federation manager, Kim, detailed how they resolved this situation:

When we select Olympic athletes, our federation will combine national and international points. The first was the domestic ranking points and the second was the international competition points. The federation decided to combine the two scores to make it possible for the players to compete in the Beijing Olympics. Despite the absence from international competitions for the previous seven years, Jeong was the top Korean table tennis player that time. This has caused us a lot of trouble in selecting players for the Beijing Olympic Games.

At that time, the Korea Sports Committee and the Korean Table Tennis Association (KTTF) failed to make a decision. During this period, Korean table tennis was a sport that involved a lot of nationalistic sentiment - especially towards China - as described in Chapters 4 and 5. When the Olympic Games were approaching, the Korean Table Tennis Federation finally reached a decision. Instead of choosing existing Olympic athletes, the Olympic table tennis players who represented Korea would be selected based on the results of the Olympic table tennis tournament held in February 2008. After this announcement, two different views arose. The first view argued that Olympic representatives must be selected via the traditional system of collecting points through domestic and international games. The second view argued that it was preferable that the most qualified players at the current time should be selected. Many Korean table tennis players had gained their points for the Olympic Games in

the previous year through various domestic and international games. They argued that it was dangerous to send an athlete to the Olympics who had not gained any competition points for seven years, and that this indicated a lack of respect for the other players. In contrast, the other perspective insisted that the best athletes should attend the Olympic Games. It was also argued that, even though the scores of the past year were important, the Olympic players should be chosen based on their current abilities.

One month later, at the Korean Olympic Games qualification in February 2008, Jeong did not lose game—from the preliminary to the main event. Rather, with 10 victories, she confirmed herself as the best female player in Korea. Jeong explained the situation at this time:

I did my best. Before the game, I was told by the Korean Air coach that the Table Tennis Federation had changed the rules to select the players for the Beijing Olympic Games. I thought it was a scary moment for me, and, on the other hand, I had to do my best. When I finished the tournament, I did not really feel that I was Korea's representative. When I came to Korea as a training partner, I had hope in my heart, but I did not really know what to expect.

During Jeong's selection process, it is interesting to note that it had been a private company that was initially interested in Jeong as a practice partner before she came to Korea. Then the same private company was interested in Jeong as a player, and finally the state was interested in Jeong joining the national team. This resonates with the aforementioned cases of Japan (Chiba et al., 2001) and Qatar (Campbell, 2010), where sports naturalisation and national interests have been connected. In Jeong's case, she was not interested in sports naturalisation when she first came to Korea. However, the Korean Table Tennis Federation gave her an opportunity to compete in table tennis ahead of the Beijing Olympics. As result, Jeong became symbolic as the first naturalised player to compete in the Olympic Games as a national representative athlete for Korea. Moreover, she was the first naturalised player to

win a bronze medal for Korea. When discussing her identity at the Beijing Olympics, Jeong stated:

It felt strange to go to my parents' country and play. I have become a Korean, but my family and friends in China think I am still Chinese. Before the Olympics began, the Chinese media called me a traitor to China. And when I took the bronze medal in the final, the Chinese newspaper called me a skilled Chinese player as well. Many South Koreans cheered, but certain media said that, if there is no possibility of gold medal, they should not choose the Chinese naturalised players, but pick domestic players.

Jeong's identity flow can be seen here. As Maguire (1994, p. 410) asserted, identity is neither natural nor fixed, but is formed socially by changes of time and place. Sport is a field where people can see the process of identity formation which plays an important role in understanding the formation of a complex identity (Lee & Maguire, 2011, p. 852). At the Beijing Olympics, it was interesting that the four different identities of Jeong were represented in the media. The China media called Jeong a 'traitor' at first because there was the possibility that she could defeat a Chinese player at the Games. However, she failed to win the women's singles medal, and the Chinese media subsequently praised her as a Chinese athlete who played well in table tennis at Beijing. The Korean newspapers referred to Jeong a national representative of Korea at the beginning of the Beijing Olympics, yet later referred to her an unnecessary naturalised player, given that she did not win a medal in the women's singles. Dividing these identities into two positive and negative parts indicates that Jeong was a representative of Korea and a successful athlete in China, while also being described as a traitor in China and an unnecessary naturalised player in Korea.

Moreover, she also won the Korean Table Tennis Grand Prix award in 2009, which was organised by the Korean Table Tennis Federation. This award was given to the most successful Korean players of 2008. Jeong's personal identity changed to that of a Korean athlete in the *Sil-Up* league and a representative of the Korean Olympic team, seven years

after relocating to Korea as a training partner. Therefore, as demonstrated by the above discussion, Jeong's ability was superior to that of everyone else in Korean table tennis. Korean Air recognised her skills for improving their table tennis team, and the Korean Table Tennis Federation recognised these skills as being in the national interest.

However, if the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games gave Jeong the national identity of a Korean representative, then the 2012 London Olympic Games gave her the image of an unnecessary naturalised player. As already described in Chapter 2, the London Olympics was the first time in the history of Korean table tennis that the women's team did not win any medals. Thus, issues arose because Jeong and a new Chinese naturalised player participated in the women's team event for Korea. During an interview, Jeong described her experience of participating in the London Olympic Games:

There are strong Chinese players, but there were two Chinese teams and three Chinese teams in Singapore and Hong Kong. It was all my Chinese friends and they have become naturalised in those countries. But this time I felt like fighting against China every game in London. Now it's hard to win against Hong Kong, Singapore and other countries where only China is not an opponent, but a good naturalised player in those teams.

This indicates the strength of Chinese table tennis and the number of talented Chinese naturalised players representing other countries. However, during the London Olympics, doubts were expressed regarding whether Chinese nationalised players should be selected for the Korean national team. A Korean Air player, Shin, remarked, 'it is better to send out Korean players if Chinese naturalised players are not likely to win medals anyway'. In contrast, the former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Association, Young, stated that, 'even if the naturalised players do not win medals at the Olympic Games, there is still no Korean player who overcomes them in Korea'. Interestingly, at the Rio Olympics in 2016, there was little public criticism when the Korean men's table tennis team failed to win a

medal for the first time in history. Thus far, in Jeong's 15 years of identity transformation, her identity has altered as her surroundings have changed. However, it can be understood that there are always two types of Korean national identity for Jeong, based on the positive and negative responses to her. Therefore, in the next section, this chapter investigates the attitudes of Korean people through two group interviews that explored views in favour of and in opposition to Chinese naturalised players.

Overall, by observing the process of naturalisation of Jeong, a Chinese naturalised player, this section has noted that Jeong's identity changed based on both time and the environment in Korea. Jeong seems to have had multiple identities in Korea; a training partner, a Korean Air player, and a national representative. In addition, when she was in China or Korea, her identity in the Chinese media and Korean media varied according to place. This is consistent with Maguire (1994, p. 410) who stated that identity is not natural and immovable, but is formed socially and changes with time and place: 'Multiple identities—of which national identity is a key feature—are constructed by a process of cultural representation. In this interchange, there are dominant, emergent, and residual notions of identity'. In the case of Jeong, it had been rare to examine the identity of a naturalised person in Korea. This was a new identity that indicated the issue of emergent naturalisation. Therefore, the various Korean identities that responded to this were socially formed in the relationship of emergent, dominant and residual.

#### **6.2.4 Naturalised Chinese Players as Highly Skilled Sports Labourers**

This section discusses the identification of naturalised table players as highly skilled athletes in Korean society. It also investigates the process of changing the ethically-based

national identity of Korea to a civic society in the process of globalisation, based on evidence of the nation-state policies of the Korean government that naturalise Chinese players. According to Maguire (2008), global sports migrants and naturalised players can be understood as ‘real politics’ through the nation-state policies of host countries. The nation-state policies referred to here are linked to the national identity of the host country, including whether or not there is an open attitude towards the globalisation of a particular nation-state or global migration, which is the case for Singapore. Yang (2014) noted that Singapore, with its stable political and economic environment, fosters foreign naturalised players through open government policy due to the flow of globalisation. For example, Singapore offers the sporting program Foreign Sport Talent, which fosters naturalised players. This underlines the Singapore government’s openness to foreign players. In this respect, the national identity of the Singaporean government is not ethnically based, but is an identity that embraces diversity in the global era. It is interesting that Korean national identity is now less ethnic, which confirms that global sport migrants are increasingly recognised as highly skilled labour and the link of policy of the Korean government towards them.

The Korean women’s table tennis team, including Jeong (Korea’s first naturalised table tennis player), played against the Singapore women’s team in the semi-finals of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. There were three players in the Singapore team and three players in the Korean team; however, four of these six players had something in common—three of the athletes on the Singapore team and Jeong on the Korean team were all naturalised players from China. They were former colleagues and friends, yet were now representatives of different countries. In that competition, Singapore won the silver medal and Korea won the bronze medal. These silver and bronze medals awarded to the four naturalised players were

highly significant. The silver medals won by the three Chinese naturalised players were the first that Singapore had attained since 1960. Moreover, Jeong of Korea was the first naturalised player in Korean history to win Olympic medal for Korea.

According to a Singaporean scholar, Yang (2014), the aforementioned three naturalised players relocated to Singapore from China as highly skilled sports workers through Singapore's Foreign Sport Talent programme. They were recognised as highly skilled sports labourers. In contrast, Jeong was not given that status in Korea. The movement of talented athletes in the process of globalisation is referred to as 'feet drain' or 'muscle drain' (Andreff, 2001), with some players continuing to live in certain countries as settlers (Maguire, 1999, 2008). According to Elliott and Maguire (2008, pp. 489–493), studying highly skilled migration involves a specific pattern of methods, called the 'value of synthesis', which is divided into four categories: migrant motivations, recruiter motivations, recruiting mechanisms, and effects of migration. This part of the present study further investigates Chinese naturalised table tennis players in Korea.

The first naturalised player in Korea, Jeong, was motivated to relocate to Korea essentially because she wished to begin playing table tennis again. She had been a Chinese representative, but could not gain selection for the Chinese national team. She explained:

After I failed to be in the Chinese international team, I lost my motivation to continue my table tennis career in my hometown. I have not been able to play table tennis for a while due to disappointment. I was trying to retire and find another job. While I was preparing for my retirement, I met a person from the Korean company [Korean Air]. He told me that I could play table tennis in Korea. After that, I immediately packed my bag and followed this person to Korea.

According to Jeong's interview, she did not consider living in Korea at first, but relocated to work as a table tennis 'training partner' as a Korean Air employee. Jeong was subsequently a



training partner for seven years, and has been a Korean Air player since 2007. She also worked in the Korean semi-professional league, and was selected to be a member of the Korean national team in 2008. During the time period of this study's interviews, she was a coach for Korean Air. Her unplanned table tennis motivation can therefore be seen to have taken her through various phases

Up to this point, this thesis has explored the motivation for migration from the perspective of a naturalised player. The next section will examine recruiter motivation, which differs from athlete motivation. As stated by the manager of the Korean Table Tennis Federation, Kim:

There are a lot of players in China, and there are many competitive players. Among them, we are buying Chinese players who we need for Korean table tennis. We pay them money and provide financial support so that they can live in Korea. Chinese players all over the world know this well.

Kim stated that Korean table tennis is 'buying' Chinese players; thus, table tennis ability can be viewed as a significant 'skill' and a form of 'capital' possessed by the Chinese naturalised players. Moreover, there is a surplus of table tennis players in China. The manager, Shin, stated that: 'Chinese table tennis does not seem to intentionally attempt to naturalise its players to other countries, but there are about 300 to 400 top class [Chinese] players who are not national players'. Significantly, the former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Federation, Young, remarked:

If a player who has been eliminated from the national team is in China, he or she will not be getting great personal gain. Even if they do not receive a lot in Korea, it is more economic than China. Moreover, maybe a house and medical insurance that they can afford is a benefit here.

Taking Shin's and Young's comments together indicates that Chinese players who are targeted by Korean recruiters can include athletes who have not gained team selection in China, and athletes who wish to play table tennis in foreign countries. However, most players are likely to have been affected by economic shortages in China. Thus, recruiters are able to bring these players to Korea. It is true that Jeong did not mention this economic factor, but it might be that there were also economic reasons behind her motivation to play table tennis.

In terms of the recruiting mechanism, previous research has employed the concepts of 'friends of friends' (Bale, 1991), the 'bridgehead' by (Meyer, 2001), and the 'developmental' approach (Maguire, 2005). The letter explains how the process of employing Chinese naturalised players has progressed from both global and local perspectives with the effects of unintended mechanisms. The Chinese naturalised player, Jeong, stated:

I've been really nervous about how I lived in Korea for the past 14 years. Especially when I first came to Korea, I had almost seven years as a training partner. I just carried my bag and went to Korea. I thought I would come and not know anything.

During the interview, Jeong continuously stated, 'I did not know Korea well before I came to Korea'. Jeong also stated: 'I just heard from Korean Air staff and bought a bag and came to Korea'. In other words, Jeong came to Korea based on an informal coincidence, rather than as a result of an official sport migration process. She followed the advice of a Korean Air employee who was not an official player and was not confirmed to play on the team. As a result of her outstanding table tennis skills she became an international player for Korea through informal recruiting systems.

Finally, I examine the effect of Jeong's entry to table tennis. The effect of migrants can be observed in both donor and host countries (Elliott & Maguire, 2008). In a typical case, the donor country loses talented workers to other countries, while the host country attracts

competent and highly skilled labour. However, these talented and highly skilled labourers can have both positive and negative effects on the donor country. For example, a native of China can help improve the skills of players in Korea's *Sil-Up* team and national team. As stated by a Korean youth table tennis team coach, Lee:

Chinese naturalised players are not exactly the best of the world. However, their skills and abilities are better than current Korean players. These table tennis techniques are not available to Korean players. Local players have to learn these things through naturalised players.

This is similar to the finding in the study by Maguire (1996) that Canadian ice hockey players can inform the skills and knowledge of local players in the UK through a 'brain exchange'. In a similar manner, Chinese naturalised players are also developing their skills and knowledge about table tennis alongside their local *Sil-Up* team players and national coworkers while playing table tennis in Korea.

Thus far, I have first observed the changes that occur in the personal identities of Chinese naturalised players living in Korea. Next, I investigated the transformation of Korean national identity, which implies diversity, rather than ethnicity, based on changes in Korean government and Korean society under the influence of globalisation. Finally, this section has studied the development of athletes who have various talents that allow them to combination to an open national identity in Korea. It is inferred that Korean society and national identity as seen through Chinese naturalised players are globalised and inclusive. However, according to Maguire (2011, p. 7), behind the various positive outcomes of sport migration discussed above, there are always 'inconvenient truths'. The next section will examine some of the negative aspects of table tennis naturalisation and local view point of athletics naturalisation.

## **6.3 National Identity Construction of Korean Society through Naturalised Chinese**

### **Players in Korean Society**

Maguire (2008) indicated that people and countries react differently to global sport migration in a global flow as it occurs. When sports migrants move through the ‘talent migratory pipelines’, one of the most common problems they encounter concerns national identity. Thus, this section empirically and sociologically investigates the process of identity politics in Korea by studying Chinese naturalised table tennis players. Bairner (2001) argued that sports can promote multiple national identities in the same political environment. To understand this, this section mainly examines two different forms of national identity flow in contemporary Korea.

According to the evidence from this study’s interviews, there are two groups which are engaged with Chinese naturalised table tennis players. The first group accepts Chinese naturalised players, and this includes Korean government agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; the Korea Sports Committee; and the Korean Table Tennis Federation. The second group does not accept Chinese naturalised players for various reasons, and includes the local media, young table tennis players, young players’ parents and local coaches. First, this part of research discusses the group that welcomes Chinese naturalised players.

#### **6.3.1 Globalised National Identity with Sport Naturalisation in Korea**

Globalisation has changed relationships between time and space, with the planet becoming increasingly compacted and many countries experiencing the restructuring of their nations through the advent of ‘wired societies’ and the ‘global village’ (Maguire, 2008, p.

443). As Korean society is experiencing many changes in the global age, transformations in various national identities are also occurring (Chang, Seok, & Baker, 2008). In the middle of the nineteenth century (1871 to 1875), Korea closed its doors and adopted isolationism a feature of its national identity; however, the result was a hopeless colonial period (Kim, 2006).<sup>59</sup> This was a time of pain during which Korea experienced the danger of adhering to national isolation without communicating with the world.

Due to this prior experience of isolation, rather than avoiding or rejecting globalisation, Korea tends to cherish the flow of globalisation and actively participates in the globalised world. Many Koreans also view the changes brought about by globalisation positively. In particular, through the process of globalisation in Korea, there is a view that Korea is able to actively attract foreigners who are helpful to Korean society. Kim (2002) stated that Korean society is rapidly experiencing the effects of globalisation, with the most noticeable change occurring in the process of national identity construction. Increased exposure to foreigners may lead to further changes in Korea's national identity.

The date of 7 January 2015 will be remembered as a special day for those who are preparing for naturalisation in Korea, as it was on this day that the Korean government enacted a special naturalisation law.<sup>60</sup> Although the Korean government generally does not allow multiple nationalities, special naturalised people can now acquire Korean nationality on the condition that they do not exercise any other nationality in Korea. By July 2015, benefactors of this new Naturalisation Act included 19 people in the academic field; 17

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<sup>59</sup> In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Korean Kingdom of Chosun (1392 to 1897) closed the country and cut off contact with all foreign countries due to imperialist aggression and political unrest from neighbouring countries.

<sup>60</sup> The existing naturalisation process includes a generalised naturalisation method, whereby individuals must stay in Korea for five years and then pass the naturalisation test in order to be naturalised to Korea.

people in culture, arts and sports; four people in management; four people in trade; and seven people in the field of advanced technology. Significant among these are the 17 people who received special naturalisation for culture, arts and sports. In the lead-up to the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games in 2018, Korea has become an increasingly naturalised country in terms of sports, with seven ice hockey players, two biathletes, one short track skater, and four other athletes preparing for naturalisation.

The phenomenon of Korean naturalisation has often been reported in newspapers, especially when related to sport. Since the mid-1980s, a few of the athletes who entered the professional leagues of Korean sports have become naturalised as Korean citizens (Lee, 2010). Regarding this sport naturalisation phenomenon, a former member of the International Olympic Committee, Dr Kim, stated:

Sports naturalisation is not a familiar field in Korea, but other countries are already becoming a generalisation on the Olympic stage. In the case of Korea, sporting naturalisation has affected Korean athletes for a long time. Taekwondo is a typical example. There are a lot of Korean taekwondo masters in other countries. However, it was difficult for foreigner to become naturalised in South Korea. The reason for this was that the procedure was not easy. Also, Korean sports seem to have opposed naturalisation because of a tendency towards nationalism. However, just as Korean taekwondo instructors have long been welcome in foreign countries, Korea should also welcome foreign sportspeople.

An examination of Korean taekwondo and naturalisation laws indicates that many Korean taekwondo instructors have naturalised to other countries, yet Korean naturalisation laws are still not always sufficient to enable the naturalisation of other countries' athletes to Korea. Even when Chinese table tennis players came to Korea in 2000, naturalisation was unimaginable. However, as noted above, the naturalisation laws of Korea have continued to expand in range since 2010. One of the reasons for this is that Chinese players are no longer applying to the General Naturalisation Act, and there is also a way to naturalise and have

foster parents in Korea, and this diversification of naturalisation laws allows many players to naturalise to Korea. Using this method, the naturalisation period can be reduced from five years to two years. Yang, a Seoul Olympic women's table tennis doubles gold medallist and current Korean youth manager, stated:

I trained young players who were good at table tennis in Mongolia before. In Mongolia, the table tennis environment is poor, so good players cannot improve. I would like to bring these young players to Korea and make them Korean *Sil-Up* players or Korean internationals. The reason is that the number of young table tennis players in Korea is gradually decreasing. This way you cannot develop a good player in Korea. Nowadays, naturalisation methods have changed a great deal, and I think that this will help the development of Korean table tennis.

Interestingly, Yang created a table tennis classroom in Mongolia in order to train young and promising Mongolian table tennis athletes, and introduce successful players to Korea. There are two reasons for the naturalisation of Mongolian players—the first is to participate in the *Sil-Up* league in Korea, while the second is to enable these athletes to become Korean international players. Yang stated 'Mongolian naturalised players will develop Korean table tennis, in my opinion'. Korea is now becoming a global village of table tennis, with naturalised Chinese players and young players from Mongolia becoming naturalised to Korea. Regarding the relationship between Korean table tennis and table tennis naturalisation, the former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Federation, Young, observes:

There is a simple reason that Korean table tennis has slowed the naturalisation of table tennis compared to other countries. Korean table tennis was strong. Although it lost against China, it was probably only Korean table tennis that could challenge China. However, the gap has only widened since the late 2000s. The way to narrow the difference between China and South Korea's table tennis is probably not realistic. One of the best ways is to bring them [foreign athletes] to Korea and learn from them.

While China's table tennis is evolving day by day, Korea's table tennis is deteriorating as many problems are exposed, such as a lack of promising table tennis players,

a lack of successful players, and a lack of medal wins. Yang remarked ‘Chinese naturalisation players are able to solve these problems’. It is difficult to expect good quality table tennis players to develop in Korea. From this point of view, the role of Chinese naturalised players seems to be crucial in maintaining Korean table tennis at present, for a number of reasons. First, Chinese players can help improve Korean athletes’ skills for Korea’s *Sil-Up* teams. Second, if Chinese naturalised players are selected as national players, the Korean national team will improve. However, throughout this process, this research has sought to consider the identity issue that exists between the Korean table tennis team and Chinese naturalised players, especially because this may become a greater problem if there are increased numbers of Chinese players in Korea. Professor Kim, who served as the Korean Attorney General at the beginning of 2000, stated:

In 2000, when I was Minister of Justice, many foreign workers in Korea came to Korea and it became a multicultural society. Now, the pattern of migration is not at an age at which a country chooses a person, but at a time when a person chooses a country.

Professor Kim’s remarks aptly summarise the views of all the interviewees discussed in this section. To China, Chinese naturalised people or other naturalised people have determined their countries of residence by their table tennis skills. However, this is only because of their ability, but because Korean society is affected by globalisation unlike in the past, people from other countries are living and naturalising in Korea. From the multiculturalism that began with foreign workers entering Korea, Korean society has become a diverse place in which newly arrived foreigners reside alongside each other.

### **6.3.2 Korean Society Becomes a Civic Society**



The term ‘nation’ is important to Koreans. The same people with the same national identity have endured long colonial periods and communism. Moreover, as Kymlicka (2007) has argued, Korea has been a nation of a single lineage until recently, and has been recognised as a unified ethnic group, like neighbouring Japan. Korea is also a nation that has shown a great deal of national pride because of the fact that the society comprises one line of blood (Hong & Kim, 2010). The national identity of this one bloodline is expressed by the collective behaviour of Koreans when Korea encounters problems, both domestically and internationally. The national identity that preceded this nation changed during the period of Japanese imperialism from to a national identity associated with anti-colonialism, then to an anti-communist national identity of the Cold War era, and then to the identity of state economic development under the military dictatorship. Given this backdrop, it would be interesting to examine how the construct of national identity that has changed throughout history, now appears in the era of globalisation.

The Korean society is known to have a strong homogeneous pure-blood identity. It is not certain if this statement is correct, but it is commonly held. The term ‘one-blood nation’, which generalises the existing national identity of Korea, continues to be relevant in the era of globalisation. Professor Kim, who served as the Minister of Justice of Korea in the early 2000s, discussed the invisible common notion of Korean society as a one-blood nation:

I am also one of the most conservative thinkers a national interest in Korea. However, globalisation can no longer allow a conservative stance. In particular, the nation is now limited. Media, capital and ideology cross borders. The same is true of man. The border that people cannot cross is now globalisation. Globalisation is not an option—globalisation is inevitable. When I became the Attorney General, I made the first human rights law for a time in 2000, and this applies to all foreign workers in Korea.

From this point of view, Korean society adapted to the trend of globalisation in 2000s and applied it equally to both domestic people and foreigners. The Korean government intended

to use domestic politics and policy against the backdrop of the international trend of globalisation. In particular, foreign workers had been treated unequally because in the past there was no human rights law for foreigners in Korea. Apart from the stories about foreigners in relation to the general process of globalisation in Korea, the naturalisation of Korean society is rather different, but this is also changing. Professor Kim again discussed naturalisation:

Naturalisation is not a matter only for us, but for the North East Asian countries, such as China, North Korea, Japan and Korea. Everyone is quite negative about naturalisation. It seems to me that the majority of the inhabitants of the country are based on blood religion. I think there are still exclusives for foreigners. However, the naturalisation of Korea has changed considerably. Before the Korean Ministry of Justice, it was exclusively about naturalisation. But now, if naturalisation is helpful to the national interest, most are trying to allow it. Moreover, if they live with their children, they [the children] are Koreans from the next generation. They should not be treated unfairly.

In detail, although the number of foreigners has been influenced by the effects of globalisation in Korean society, not many naturalised citizens have been granted Korean citizenship. However, it is important here that Professor Kim mentioned the relationship between naturalisation and national interest. The concept of national interest is significant and, within the interview data obtained from members of the Korean Table Tennis Federation, a clear connection is made between Chinese naturalised players and the (Korean) national interest. From this point on, this section of the research examines the concept of national interest and migration in relation to Korean society, which has been gradually changing since the 2000s. In particular, the focus will be on Chinese naturalised table tennis players. The manager of the Korean Table Tennis Federation, Kim, mentioned:

When naturalising Chinese players, we must first apply for naturalisation to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Ministry of Justice. In this section, when a Chinese player becomes naturalised, he or she emphasises the part that helps the national interest.

As a result, a Chinese born player won a bronze medal at the Beijing Olympics and became the first foreigner to win an Olympic medal for Korea. Three years after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the Korean government enacted special naturalisation laws for foreigners who could benefit Korea's national interests, including in cases related to sports. As a result, in 2018, more than 10 naturalised athletes will be included in the Korean national team for the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games. This represents 10% of the total Korean team of 130 athletes.<sup>61</sup> This phenomenon shows how the idea of Korean sports and society as examples of a one-blood nation is changing in the era of globalisation.

Korean table tennis has become a starting point for change in Korean sports with its acceptance of naturalised players. This part of the research further examines the relationship between Chinese naturalised players and Korean society. Dr Kim, a former member of the International Olympic Committee, clarified that:

The Olympics is the most globalised international organisation. However, the Olympic Games have strong nationalistic elements. The reason is because it is a sports competition between countries. However, when you look at countries with many naturalised athletes, there are many developed sporting countries, such as the United States, Canada, Britain, Germany, France and Australia. These countries have similarities in their experiences of multiculturalism. And they know the interests of the nation in relation to social diversity. Over the last 20 years, Korean society is learning how to coexist with foreigners while experiencing multiculturalism.

By applying Dr Kim's perspective to the case of the naturalisation of table tennis players, it can be recognised that Korean society is changing from a uniform monolithic national identity to a nationwide national identity. Examples of this changing identify were evident in the 2012 London Olympics table tennis team competition. The only teams that did not have Chinese naturalised players among the eight teams that related women's team 8

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<sup>61</sup>There are six ice hockey players, three biathlon athletes, one figure skating athlete, and one luge athlete. There are still other athletes preparing for naturalisation.

contest were North Korea and Japan. Japan did not have a naturalised player at London in 2012, but have used naturalised players previously. Where North Korea is concerned, as Lee and Bairner (2009) claimed, this nation is particularly mysterious, far removed from the idea of globalisation, and the world's most closed country. Lee and Bairner's claim is demonstrated by the fact that, of the teams that contested the London 2012 table tennis tournament, North Korea was the only one who had never fielded a Chinese naturalised player.

According to Seol (2014), on 17 May 2006, an inter-Korean general meeting discussed the issue of the one-blood nation. South Korean delegates highlighted that women in Mongolia, Vietnam and the Philippines were now married to Koreans. The head of the North Korean national delegation stated that South Korea was harming the unity of the people. The North Korean representative stated that no international marriage should be possible with Korean people. Here, it can be seen why North Korea is seen as a country that goes against globalisation. North Koreans cannot live with other people and their closed national identity is well represented in their sport. In the case of North Korea, regardless of whether athletes wish to naturalise to North Korea, the fact that North Korea remains strongly opposed to naturalisation means that narratives of naturalisation, sports, national identity and globalisation cannot be created.

This example shows that is the figuration of Korean society, sport naturalisation and globalisation processes are all important factors that have reshaped Korean identity. It seems that Korean society is in the process of moving away from an ethnically-based national identity. In anticipating the increase of naturalised table tennis players, the former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Association, Young, claimed:

The Korean Table Tennis Federation actually knew that Korean table tennis needed a Chinese naturalised player a long time ago. However, we hesitated a lot because of the symbolism of Korean table tennis and sports nationalism. However, this is stubbornness that Korean table tennis should not take this idea anymore. Even now, there are dozens of Chinese players who are preparing for naturalisation in Korea. I think that Korean table tennis will further develop.

Initially, the Korean Table Tennis Federation hesitated to recruit athletes of Chinese nationality because of the sport's inherent nationalism, which encompassed the ethnic concept of Korean identity and the status of table tennis in Korean history. However, it seems that the identity of the Korean Table Tennis League and Korean society is becoming more diverse in the era of globalisation. By approving Chinese naturalisation, Korean society is influenced by globalisation and Korean social identity seems to be increasingly detached from ethnic identity. In examining the changes in Korean national identity, one thing remains unclear: the identity of naturalised players within Korean society in relation to globalisation and table tennis capital. This issue will be discussed in the next section in relation to the notion of highly skilled sport labour.

#### **6.4 Korean National Identity becomes Regionalized**

Looking at the key trends in the flow of globalisation, the most notable feature is that information and people cross borders freely, which changes the concept of established borders between nation-states. In this process, it is important to observe how the culture and identity of the people within the borders are affected by globalisation (Held & McGrew, 2000). In the diverse process of globalisation, it is important to examine how the identity of a region or country appears in various interrelations between the global and the local. Even if Korean national identity has become more open and less ethnically-based in the era of globalisation, this is not the only form of Korean identity. The reason for this is that national

culture and national identity can be strengthened, weakened or pluralised in the flow of globalisation (Maguire, 2011). Thus far, I have examined the globally positive Korean national identity through the experiences of Chinese naturalised players. Thus, the next sections examine local resistance to globalisation in relation to naturalised table tennis players.

In the interviews carried out for this study, the interviewees employed numerous pronouns, such as 'they', 'Chinese', 'us' and 'our' when referring to Chinese and Korean players. Therefore, this section focuses on Elias's (1994) work, *The Established and the Outsiders* to refer to identity and national identity. In particular, in his book *Germans* (Elias, 1996) discussed the relationship between national identities and individual identity. Elias argued that the good fortune of the nation is internalised and connected to the people of the country, and it becomes a 'second nature' or 'habitus' for the people. The connection here becomes the general belief system of the people through the 'I/we' use of personal pronouns. In terms of habitus codes, the reason for using these pronouns is because the study sought to understand hidden thoughts about Chinese and naturalised players and to hear 'sleeping memories' about China that interviewees describe as Koreans.

The format of the interviews was as follows. The interviewees were first divided into four different groups who were resistant to Chinese naturalised players. The first group comprised local high school table tennis players and their parents. These interviews were undertaken during the Korean table tennis national tournament held from 10 to 17 April 2014. The second group comprised members of the Korean table tennis *Sil-Up* team. The third group involved two regional table tennis coaches from Seoul. The fourth group comprised members of local table tennis clubs in Seoul. Moreover, as is discussed at the end of this

chapter, this research also conducted interviews with Korean sports reporters. These interviews were conducted to complement the newspaper analysis in Chapter 5, which examined nationalism in Korea and China through table tennis and the naturalisation of table tennis players. In addition, this research reflects on the responsibility of the newspapers and broadcasters to produce table tennis coverage and newspaper sport reports. Interestingly, the interview evidence revealed that the media is quite involved in this area because there are many negative aspects of naturalisation.

#### **6.4.1 Korean Society is a still Ethnic Society**

The original Korean society was viewed as a blood-centred one; however, due to the effects of globalisation, this idea is changing considerably. Seol (2014) argued that Korean national identity should be seen as changing from an ethnic identity to civic identity because Korea has been transformed into a place where various ethnic groups are gathered together under the influence of globalisation. Civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism are both helpful for the development and preservation of the state, especially when ethnic forms of nationality are linked to the origins of the state (Bairner, 2001, p. 3). Civic nationalism is primarily related to citizenship, whereas ethnic nationalism is related to blood (Maguire et al., 2002).

When interviewing people about Chinese naturalised athletes, this research identified a pattern by which ethnic-based ideas were often derived from Korean identity. The interviewees who opposed Chinese naturalised athletes often discussed the status of table tennis, which is a sport which holds particular significance for Koreans. For example, Jungduk Kim, a local table tennis coach from Ilsan City, stated that:

Table tennis is a sport that has been a force for our people after the marathon. At the Berlin Olympic Games during the Japanese occupation, Son Ji-jeong won a gold medal to please our nation. In the 70s and 80s, in table tennis our country triumphed and beat North Korea and China, and our people loved table tennis.<sup>62</sup>

This interviewee reiterated that, when Korean table tennis was confronted with communism, young female Korean table tennis players defeated the communist countries. He also stated that ‘table tennis was a sport of the people’; therefore, table tennis national representatives should be Korean people, not Chinese people. This attitude was also identified in Chapter 4. The Korean women’s team won the gold medal at the World Table Tennis Championships in 1973 in Yugoslavia for the first time at the women’s sports event. At the time, table tennis was viewed as a sport of symbolic significance to Korea. Interestingly, it has been found that there is a national identity concerning on as ethnic based continuously on the national common belief system between table tennis and Korean society. Minkyung Yoon, a member of the table tennis club in Ilsan City, expressed her position on naturalisation. She stated that:

It was not a story about table tennis at all, and it seemed to be a general question about naturalised players. However, from her point of view, it was mentioned that for a naturalised player, it would not be culturally easy to live in Korea. Do they eat Korean food? Or do they understand Korean? Do they come here and eat Chinese food and speak Chinese? They should eat Korean food that makes them become Korean.

Minkyung Yoon pointed out that her observation about foreigners ‘living in our country’ referred to their adaptability to Korean culture. She seemed to suggest that if they could not adapt to Korean culture, they should leave the country. She seemed to believe that foreigners should eat Korean food, speak Korean and live in a Korean cultural system; otherwise, local people cannot accept them as Korean. Moreover, the Korean high school youth players’

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<sup>62</sup> Son Ji-jeong was a marathoner. During the Japanese colonial period, Korea attended the Olympic Games in Berlin under the Japanese flag. Son Ji-jeong subsequently won a gold medal in the marathon; however, during the ceremony, he bowed his head and turned away from the Japanese flag.



parents who met to be interviewed at the national table tennis tournament held from 10 to 17 April 2014 in Dangjin expressed similar sentiments. For example, Dooghun Choi stated: ‘the people [naturalised athletes] themselves are speaking Chinese, I do not think they can speak Korean like me’. Thus, based on this interview data, it seems that these views of naturalised players relate to the ethnic-based identity in Korean society, which has been maintained throughout history and has been an important part of Korean identity.

#### **6.4.2 The Anti-Global Korean National Identity and Sports Naturalisation in Korea**

In an interview conducted in 2014, Jeong stated that there were two naturalised players in Korea’s table tennis team. In addition, about three to four Chinese naturalised players were active in each *Sil-Up* team in Korea. However, the growing number of naturalised players in Korean table tennis had started to affect various other people and groups involved in table tennis in the region. In other words, ‘outsider’ Chinese naturalised players could change the position of Korean players who were already established, while also impacting negatively on local jobs and local sports. In the sociology of sport, this issue has been explored in relation to underdevelopment and resistance of the Dominican baseball community (Klein, 1989; 1991). Falcous and Maguire (2005) similarly examined the negative reactions that arose in the area around Leicester in the UK due to the presence of basketball migrants from the United States.

The interviews in this section were carried out with Korean table tennis players, coaches from the Korean regional table tennis association, and the table tennis players’ parents and family members. Most of the interviewees in these groups were indifferent to Chinese naturalised players, but knew there were naturalised players in the Korean team at

the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Most of them had a lifetime of table tennis experience, so they had a great dislike for Chinese table tennis. This group of people can be divided into two categories: (1) those who completely opposed naturalisation and (2) those who viewed naturalisation as acceptable. Sunghee Park, a member of a table tennis lifestyle sports club in Seoul, stated:

I thought that they would win gold at the Beijing Olympics and the London Olympics. However, the naturalised players did not win gold medals either. I do not know why they are not winning gold medals after putting Chinese players in our national team. I'd rather send out our Korean players.

Most of the interviewees believed that the naturalised athletes would naturally win gold medals. The reason was that given the assumptions of the Koreans about Chinese table tennis, they believed that the naturalised players would be successful at the Olympics. In addition, although the naturalised players had changed their nationality to Korean, the interviewees still viewed those players as being Chinese. They did not view them as Korean at all. Thus, if the naturalised players could not win medals, they believed that it would be better for Korean athletes to experience the Olympic Games, even if they were not as successful as the naturalised athletes.

For example, according to Sunghee Park, the naturalised player and Korean player do not really compete for the same team. When I interviewed Park in detail, she referred to the naturalised players using the pronoun 'they' and the Korean players as 'our players'. Here, 'they' refers to the Chinese table tennis players, while 'our' refers to the Korean table tennis players. Park also referred to the Korean national team as 'our' national team. Looking at Park's wording, she was a woman in her mid-fifties, which means that her childhood was spent during the military dictatorship and that she had experienced the Cold War atmosphere

in Korea. In particular, she felt very negative towards China. In a similar interview, Jungduk Kim, a local table tennis coach from Ilsan City, stated:

I do not feel like seeing a naturalised player using the *Taegeuk* mark. The *Taegeuk* mark must be just for *Toe-Jung* player. If we go out this way, our Korean table tennis will be annihilated, not just deteriorate. I personally do not cheer them on. Nowadays, Korean ice hockey has a lot of naturalised players, but in ice hockey Korea is a new country. The advantage is understood. However, table tennis has our history. We are the only country that can beat China. I am also teaching young players in the area, and they are occupying the place of our *Toe-Jung* players.

There were many interesting terms used during the interview with Jungduk Kim. The first was the '*Taegeuk* mark'. This refers to the national flag of Korea, which is pictured on national athletes' uniforms. Moreover, the word '*Toe-Jung*' means 'purely from Korea'. Thus, some people believe if an individual is not a 'pure' Korean person born in Korea, they are not suitable for the *Taegeuk* mark. The important implication of this statement is that if a person is not born in Korea, they should not be qualified to be a national representative. Moreover, Kim emphasised the history of Korean table tennis, and the belief that only Korean table tennis players can overcome Chinese players. Here, the habitus codes that internalise the image of the country into the image of the individual can be easily seen. In Kim's general narrative, there are various expressions that integrate him and the nation. For example, he tends to think of himself as a unified whole comprising the nation, table tennis and himself. In addition, the collective memory that he has of Korean table tennis involves the 'sleeping memory' and the 'special charisma' of Korean table tennis when Korean players defeated Chinese players in the 1970s and 1980s.

As also indicated by the other interviewees, Kim was distrustful of naturalised players because they were taking local players' places in *Sil-Up* teams and the Korean international team. It is also interesting to note that Kim compared Korean ice hockey and table tennis. He

stated that ice hockey is a new sport in Korea, but it is not clear why table tennis should not be allowed naturalised players and ice hockey should. In comparison to ice hockey, Kim remarked that table tennis is a movement that gave strength to the Korean people when Korea was a poor and under-developed nation. As Bairner (2001) stated, sports are often a means of expressing nationalistic emotions, and have a role in promoting the nation-state's purpose. Thus, it was interesting to hear Kim discuss the relationship between table tennis and Korean history, whereby table tennis was a sport that gave strength to the Korean people when Korea was struggling politically and economically in the 1970s and 1980s. As previously discussed in Chapter 4, Korean table tennis had a strong nationalist function when the Korean team defeated the communist nations in the Cold War era, such as those of Eastern Europe and China.

The interviewees with the strongest negative images of Chinese nationalised players were the high school athletes and their parents, who met at a national table tennis tournament held from 10 to 17 April 2014 in Dangjin, Korea. Jungsek Lee, the father of a high school student who competed in the tournament, stated:

On the first and second day of the tournament, top ranking Korean players competed. There were naturalised players, but we do not feel comfortable with them. Our children have played table tennis for more than 10 years, but the national representative is a naturalised player. Here's a table tennis tournament, many of these players here want to be national representatives, but Chinese naturalised players suddenly come to Korea and our kids' dreams are gone.

Studying Jungsek Lee's wording closely, he often used the terms 'they', 'naturalised', 'Chinese' and 'them' to refer to naturalised players. In contrast, when referring to Korean players, he mainly used the words 'we' and 'our'. Lee also stated something similar to Kim's expression above, about his children having played table tennis in Korea for 10 years, and emphasising that his children should become national representatives, rather than naturalised

players. However, the reality does not seem to be what she wants, as Chinese players who have become naturalised are increasingly being selected for the Korean Olympic team.

Other stakeholders sensitive to this situation are the Korean youth players themselves who dream of entering Korea's *Sil-Up* league and eventually becoming national players. Sujin Oh, a high school table tennis player at this national table tennis tournament, was prepared to begin college or enter Korea's *Sil-Up* league at the end of that year. She remarked:

I have to worry about having to choose a career after finishing high school this year. If I go to the *Sil-Up* league, I have to give up university. I have to give up *Sil-Up* to go to college. In the past, there were some places in each *Sil-Up* teams for us. But now there are a lot of naturalised players, and the competition is getting fierce. Honestly, they're good at table tennis. But I feel they are just foreigners—they do not think of Koreans. We often meet at the convention and we do not even speak.

It seems that Korean young players are reluctant to naturalised players because of their future prospects of playing in Korean *Sil-Up* teams and in the Korean national team. 'Honestly, they are great at table tennis. But I feel they are just foreigners. I do not think they are Korean to me'. In this way, Sujin Oh frequently used the pronoun of 'they' when referring to Chinese players. Importantly, she expressed the existence of an invisible bond between the local players and the Korean national team because most Korean players know each other from a young age through the competitions they attend. Therefore, most national athletes are seniors or colleagues from the same school, which creates a bond between the players through their school-based years. In contrast, there is no common bond with a naturalised player. As a result, even if they meet during a national table tennis tournament, they do not tend to talk to each other.

During the interviews, the youth players and their parents expressed their belief that it was important to enter a *Sil-Up* team because it is the best job available for table tennis

players. In one of the interviews with the *Sil-Up* players, a Korean Air *Sil-Up* team player, Shin, stated:

I love the naturalised players on our team personally. We are friends and colleagues in this team. This is our job, so we are like colleagues with each other. As a table tennis player, playing for a *Sil-Up* team is the best job here. We only have to play table tennis here. All facilities are complete here. There are two naturalised players here. I like having a naturalised player on the same team. However, I am the opposite of what they go to the national representative. They are naturalised for themselves, not naturalised for Korea. Personally, I do not agree with naturalisation.

The interview evidence data suggests that the dream of many Korean youth players was to play professionally in a *Sil-Up* team in the future. Thus, they did not like the large number of naturalised players in the league. Similarly, the *Sil-Up* player who was interviewed accepted the idea of a naturalised player being on the same *Sil-Up* team; however, the same player stated that Chinese naturalised players should not be eligible for the national team. Interpreting the words of the interviewees, their negative attitudes towards naturalised athletes can be attributed primarily to their own career prospects. Youth players wish to enter the *Sil-Up* team and *Sil-Up* players wish to become international players, and naturalised players are therefore equally blamed for making it more difficult for Korean players to attain these positions.

Overall, by interviewing the Korean group that opposed the naturalised players, this research further determined that Korean society has various identities. In particular, the groups opposed to foreigners and sports naturalisation continue to exist in the era of globalisation. The group of naturalised players and the opposing groups can be divided into two groups. The first group internalised individuals, table tennis and the nation, and used terms that linked table tennis, ethnicity and national identity. They indicated that Korea should not accept naturalised players because these aforementioned elements are all

connected. The second group discussed their prospects career in table tennis. The interviews indicated a general pattern of Korean identity opposed to naturalisation. Most interviewees opposed naturalisation because of their conceptions of what constitutes national and Korean table tennis; however, in fact, the real problem relates to their practical career prospects. The next section examines how these two groups were represented in the media.

## **6.5 The Korean Media's Various National Identities as Observed in Naturalised Chinese Players**

The newspaper analysis presented in Chapter 5 indicated patterns of how the newspapers discussed the Korean table tennis players and naturalised players, and examined how these discussions related to the changes in national identity occurring in contemporary Korean society. The media sport complex (Wenner, 1989, p. 29; Maguire, 1999; Maguire et al., 2002), is divided into four categories: sports organisations and personnel, media organisations and personnel, mediated sports audience consumption, and marketing organisations and personnel. Although these four categories are all connected, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine all four together. Thus, to enable a more detailed study of one aspect of the relationship between the identity of Korean table tennis players, newspaper reports and Korean society, four related Korean newspapers were selected for this analysis (*Chosun*, *Dong-A*, *Hankyoreh* and *Seoul*), as explored in Chapter 5, and this data was supplemented by interviews conducted with Korean sports journalists.

### **6.5.1 The Media and Table Tennis as an Unpopular Sport**

The interviews with sports journalists from the aforementioned four newspapers revealed that the most important themes were ‘the benefits of the newspaper’ and ‘the viewpoint of the newspaper’. First, the benefits of the newspaper concerns who buys newspapers and who reads newspapers on the internet. Therefore, it is possible to make the viewpoint of the newspaper can be a selling point in itself. Among these four newspapers, the sports journalists were asked whether they regularly wrote articles about table tennis. A sports journalist for the right-wing newspaper *Dong-A*, Donghyun Park, stated:

Since table tennis has been a non-popular sport event since the late 1990s, it has become alienated from other events in newspaper and, we are now more interested in popular sports, such as baseball and football.

Meanwhile, a sports journalist for left-wing newspaper *Hankyoreh*, Wondaek Kim, stated that he aims to cover less popular sports, yet discussion of such sports usually does not appear in newspapers. However, when the Olympics begin, it is more likely that newspapers will publish articles about table tennis. According to the sports chief editor of *Chosun*, Taesok Lim:

I do not know about the 70s and 80s, but now it’s hard to see table tennis articles, except for [during] the Olympics and the World Table Tennis Championships. Even the Olympics will win the medal and the news will come out.

A newspaper journalist for the moderately-oriented newspaper *Seoul*, Johun Ann, stated: ‘Our newspaper is also trying to promote non-popular sports such as table tennis, but it is not easy ... there are so many sports to play in Korea in a day [and] we have to deal with all of them’. Thus, the interviews indicated that table tennis is not a sport that generally draws much interest in the Korean media, which publishes more articles about more popular sports such as baseball, football and basketball. This tendency is also reflected in Korean sports broadcasts, with previous research indicating that television sports programme generally only



televise popular international events and popular sports (Park, 2006, 2008). Newspapers tend to publish articles about popular sports because newspapers are private companies that seek to generate economic profit by writing about what people wish to read. The sports journalist from *Dong-A*, Donghyun Park, remarked that:

A private newspaper company is a private company, not a public one, and always a profit-making company. We also need to think about advertising companies that use our newspapers. Always make newspapers think about popularity. For that reason, we should focus on writing about popular sport, rather than other sport.

In other words, table tennis is identified as an unpopular sport; thus, there are not many articles written about table tennis because such articles do not offer much economic benefit to the newspapers.

### **6.5.2 The Media and Table tennis with a Naturalised Player**

In the field of Korean scholarship in the sociology of sport and media studies, there have been several previous studies on Korean naturalised athletes (Cho, 2014; Kim & Kim, 2016; Lee, 2016; Maeng & Kwon, 2014; Yang, 2009). Through using this study's interview evidence, it is now possible to examine the process of becoming a naturalised athlete in Korea and the extent of interest in naturalisation expressed in the media. A sports journalist from *Dong-A*, Doohyun Park, stated: 'Well, I am not sure that our newspaper had any particular interest in naturalised players, but I knew there were naturalised players in table tennis'. Also, the sports chief editor of *Chosun*, Taesek Lim, remarked:

So far, foreign and naturalised players have never been the subject of much talk. The reason is that the foreign players in Korea are not top class players in the world ... I am honestly saying that naturalisation is a change of nationality and money. There is no interest in our newspaper unless there are specific issues. However, I sometimes find articles about Chinese naturalised players.

By 2017, naturalisation has been generalised due to the Special Naturalisation Act of 2011. However, until 2014, Jeong was the only naturalised player in the Korean national team. A sports journalist from *Hankyoreh*, Wondae Kim, stated that: ‘The way to distinguish foreign players from Korean players in our newspapers is by the words “*Yung-Byung*” and “*Toe-Jung*”. I do not know what a naturalised player will say’.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Korean newspapers clearly distinguish Korean athletes from foreign athletes. However, there is no such title for naturalised players, which may be because table tennis is an unpopular sport, and naturalised athletes are not regularly discussed in Korean newspaper reports outside of major competitions such as the Olympic Games.

### 6.5.3 The Media and Olympic Table Tennis Game and Medals

Despite the fact that table tennis is generally seen as an unpopular sport, there are many articles written about table tennis during the Olympic Games. *Hankyoreh* sports journalist, Wondae Kim, stated simply: ‘table tennis is one of the sports in which Korea can win medals at the Olympics’. The sports chief editor of *Chosun*, Taesek Lim, stated that: ‘Korean table tennis is always a medal winner in the Olympics, so we prepare for the players and the event that are likely to medal before the Olympics’. *Dong-A* sports journalist, Doohyun Park, stated:

We know what viewers want at the Olympics. It’s a medal, and the biggest concern is about which medals will come out. Table tennis is sometimes a gold medal [winner] and is a valuable sport in the Olympics.

Thus, the evidence demonstrates that table tennis, which is not a popular sport in everyday life in Korea, becomes a popular sport for newspapers during the Olympic season

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<sup>63</sup> ‘*Yung-Byung*’ is a collective term for foreign athletes in Korea. The sports chief editor of *Chosun*, Taesek Lim, is a foreign sports man who came to Korean sports with money. ‘*Toe-Jung*’ means a person born in Korea.

because it can win medals. Korean sports media are overcrowded with gold medals and this is known as ‘medalism’ of the Korean sports media (Kim, 2016, pp. 236–237; Yun, 2003).<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, therefore, every four years, table tennis becomes a sport that attracts media and national attention. Therefore, it was interesting to examine what types of articles were published when the Korean table tennis team won medals during the Olympics.

#### **6.5.4 The Media and Olympic Table Tennis Games’ Medals and Nationalism**

The relationship between table tennis, naturalised players and Olympic medals strongly suggests that Korean newspaper reports are only interested in table tennis during the Olympic Games. There is also an indication that interest in naturalised players also only appears during the Games. If so, the significant thing is that this only happens at the time of the Games because one element of nationalism is combined. There is significant existing research on the relationship between the media, sports and nationalism (Falcous, 2007; Lee & Maguire, 2009, 2011; Maguire, Poulton, & Possamai, 1999). In one of the interviews conducted for the current study, the sports chief editor of *Chosun*, Taesek Lim, stated:

The core of Olympic sports is nationalism. The lack of nationalism in the Olympics means nothing to us. Seeing the national anthem at the Olympics is only one way to feel nationalism. The people who see the newspaper is Korean people. Korean newspapers are for Koreans, not Japanese people.

Given that the Olympic Games facilitate the expression of nationalism on a global scale, Olympic media coverage differs in that unpopular sports and naturalised players can be seen as heroic at a moment’s notice. However, as claimed by Maguire et al. (2002, p. 154), the identity created in sports can be quickly forgotten at the end of the competition. However,

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<sup>64</sup> ‘Medalism’ is a compound word of medal + ism. It is used to emphasise the result, rather than the process, in Korean society.

through the habitus code created by the Olympic sports media, people do experience a ‘fantasy shield of special charisma’ in which individuals and countries are unified.

### **6.5.5 The Media and Olympic Table Tennis Games’ Medals, Nationalism and Naturalised Player**

The final issue to be discussed based on the interview evidence analysed in this chapter concerns the question of whether the table tennis players themselves feel a sense of nationalism during the Olympic Games. *Hankyoreh* sports journalist, Wondae Kim, stated that: ‘Nationalism is often cited in Olympic newspaper reports’, while *Dong-A* sports journalist, Doohyun Park, stated that:

Nationalism does not usually appear in newspapers in ordinary times, but it goes well in international sporting events. Especially, they [athletes] are represented as Korean heroes, especially those who have won gold medals. The players will like it the best.

As discussed above, the Olympics, table tennis, the media, medals and nationalism unite to create a collective fantasy and common national identity at the moment of the Games. The Korean table tennis players revealed their feelings about this emphasis on nationalism. Korean Table Tennis Federation manager, Kim, stated: ‘It’s really hard to play a game with a foreign team, especially for a medal, and I remember nothing but the idea of winning the game during the game’. Former Korea Table Tennis Federation vice-president and Korean male veteran player, Young, stated: ‘After playing a game of table tennis, I lost strength in my legs and I wanted to go to the accommodation and rest quickly’. In 1988, the Seoul Olympic women’s doubles gold medallist, Lee, stated:

*Taegeukgi* [Korean flag] is also important, but the game is a fight against me. The result of the fight is a medal for me. I have no idea because it is too hard to play and after the game. The feeling of ethnicity is felt through broadcasting after the game.

There is no other reason that I sometimes cried after the game. It's just because the game is so hard. Also, during the game I can see the ball, nothing else.

Finally, naturalised player, Jeong said:

I know it is nationalism. However, when I play games, I have no idea. Table tennis is the first for me. In the media, athletes seem to be the core of nationalism and are made into heroes, [yet] many players seem to have little to do with their game and nationalism.

What is interesting here is that the media combines the Olympics, table tennis, medals and nationalism to create its own 'imagined community' and 'invented tradition', linking the people and the country by interpreting the habitus codes between the individual and the nation in order to create a 'patriot game' and a 'special charisma'. However, the athletes who participate in the Olympic Games tend to be detached from nationalism, thereby confirming that the combination of sports, the media, the Olympic Games, medals and nationalism seems to be created in terms of an 'imagined community' and 'invented traditions'.

Overall, while observing the national identity of the naturalised players in Korea, the Korean media do not seem particularly interested in table tennis or naturalised players. Although not a term for a naturalised player, the newspaper articles discriminate against foreign players by using the word '*Yung-Byung*'.<sup>65</sup> Naturalised athletes are not widely reported by the newspapers; however, when the media does demonstrate interest—generally when Korean and naturalised table tennis players attend the Olympics and subsequently win medals—the media does attach a frame of nationalism to portray naturalised table tennis athletes as Korean sports heroes. In contrast, the players themselves do not seem to relate to this nationalist frame of the media. Thus, in this analogy, table tennis, naturalisation, the

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<sup>65</sup>The meaning of *Yung-Byung* means to give money and buy a soldier from abroad. The meaning here is to give money and to buy sports players from abroad.

Olympics and nationalism can be understood as an ‘invented tradition’ and an ‘imagined society’ created primarily by the media.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

Central to this chapter is identifying the national identity of Korea through naturalised athletes. The naturalised athlete is a foreigner who has been naturalised to Korea because of the influence of globalisation and regionalisation between China and South Korea. This final findings chapter has examined the flow of national identity through interviews with relevant individuals to understand the changes in national identities. The first evidence from the interviews indicated the change in the identity of a naturalised athlete in Korea. When this athlete arrived in Korea for the first time, she was working as a partner for a Korean table tennis player. However, the identity of a naturalised athlete becomes a Korean table tennis player and becomes a national player with his high table tennis ability.

According to the interview data, the national identity of Korea has been divided into two different identities based around naturalised athletes, as the identity of the naturalised athletes has continuously changed in Korea. The two national identities are as follows. The first identity supports globalisation and welcomes naturalised athletes, while the second identity opposes globalisation and opposes naturalised table tennis players for various domestic issues. Finally, Korean sports media journalists display a national identity that does not advocate or oppose globalisation through naturalised athletes. They think of journalists’ interests, rather than national identities. Any athlete who earns a gold medal tends to think that journalists can give a nationalist news frame over players. Therefore, this chapter has indicated that, in contrast to the nationalist maintenance in the Korean newspaper reports

presented in Chapter 5, the nationalist identity seen through the naturalised athlete in Chapter 6 tends to be divided in various ways. This chapter has investigated two different views of the Korean national identity in relation to Chinese naturalised table tennis players and the globalisation process. The main aim of this stage of the research was to examine the dominant national identity in Korea through studying naturalised foreign players. To achieve this aim, interviews were carried out with individuals who were directly or indirectly related to naturalised table tennis players. The results of this interview analysis revealed three distinct national identities in Korean society in relation to the naturalised players. First, I examined the changes in the individual identities of naturalised athletes. The analysis of a naturalised table tennis player who moved from China to Korea revealed that her identity has changed five times during her 15 years in Korea, from being a Chinese citizen to being a Korean training partner, a Korean citizen, a Korean Air semi-professional player, a Korean international table tennis player, and finally a Korean Air coach. In the process, her national identity also changed from Chinese to Korean. By examining the changes in the identities of naturalised athletes, this chapter deduced that national identity in Korea has been changed by the effects of globalisation.

The second and third national identities comprised two conflicting identities in the globalised nation-state of Korea, where foreigners are able to freely naturalise due to globalisation. The first group embraced a globalised national identity that welcomes naturalised players into Korean society. This group is influenced by globalisation and has moved away from focusing on an ethnically-based society, which was once the main national identity of Korea. The second group has a national identity that rejects naturalised athletes, even though globalisation can benefit Korean society. This group comprises people who

believe in the ideas of the one-blood nation and pure blood. Importantly, the latter group represents a national identity that continues to exist in Korean society.

As Maguire (2011) stated, ‘national cultures and identities [are] weakened, strengthened, or pluralized by globalization processes’ (p. 986). For Seol (2014), Korean society should be transformed from an ethnic society to a civic society through the impact of globalisation. In contrast, Kang (2012) insists that Korean society should oppose globalisation and ban foreigners. Thus, it seems that Korea’s national identity is not unified by globalisation, but is constantly changing, diversifying and weakening in accordance with the environment of the times.

Moreover, in the era of globalisation, the Korean sports media is investing a lot of effort in maintaining the national identity of Korea, in opposition to globalisation. First, there is not much interest in foreigners. Second, the media uses table tennis—in which people are not usually interested—to maintain national identity through the Olympics. Thus, the Korean sports media has adopted the frame of nationalism to discuss Korean sports and Chinese naturalised players in order to maintain the ‘invented tradition’ and ‘imagined society’ of Korean nationalism. Therefore, the Korean sports media can be seen to play a role in maintaining the traditional national identity of Korea, in opposition to the forces of globalisation.

This chapter has indicated that, in the global age, Korean table tennis has become an unpopular sport. However, this decline in the popularity of table tennis should not be ignored because this research has indicated the important forms of Korean national identity that exist in relation to the naturalised table tennis players.



## **Conclusion**

### **Chinese Naturalised Players and Korean Nationalism and National Identity**

## **Construction**

### **1. Introduction**

The aim of this research was to discover the current state of nationalism and national identity in Korea through an exploration of the sport of table tennis and naturalised Chinese athletes in Korea. Towards this aim, this study analysed the history of table tennis, content produced by the sports media and conducted interviews with a range individuals involved with the sport of table tennis in Korea. Results show that the sport of table tennis has changed in terms of time, place, politics, and cultural and societal diversity over the last century. Korean nationalism continues to be maintained by the influence of sports media in general, and through table tennis in particular the media continues to reinforce Korean nationalism. However, it has been shown that the national identity of Korea, which has been analysed here in relation to naturalised Chinese players who have arrived in Korea because of the sport of table tennis, is not unified but is in practice much more diverse. As a result of this research, it is evident that Korean table tennis, and more broadly Korean nationalism and identity, resonate with Maguire's (1994, 1999, 2011, and 2012) concepts of sportisation, and diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties. In other words, identity is neither natural nor fixed; it is a social product and appears differently across time and space. To be precise, national identity can be weakened, strengthened or pluralised.

This concluding chapter is divided into four sections. Section 1 offers a brief summary of the main findings outlined in the previous chapters. Section 2 discusses Eliasian

theoretical substitution in relation to the findings presented in Chapters. Section 3 evaluates the overall process of this research. In particular, this section examines in detail the research methods that were most suitable for investigating the process of nationalism and national identity in Korea through the case of Chinese naturalised table tennis players. This section also discusses the limitations of the research. Finally, Section 4 offers some suggestions for future research on this topic.

## **2. Summary of the Findings**

The most important purpose of this research project was to examine the flow of Korean nationalism and national identity through the experience of Chinese naturalised players in relation to the process of globalisation. Chapter 4 considered the development of table tennis and focused upon the Chinese naturalised athletes who first appeared in Korean society during the era of globalisation. Chapter 5 examined the patterns of Korean nationalism reproduced in the media, while Chapter 6 employed interview samples to study how the identity of Korean society has started to diversify. Based on this evidence, the following three sections briefly describe the findings of these chapters.

### **2.1 The Lightest Ball has caused the Heaviest Changes: The Development of Table Tennis (19th century to present)**

The purpose of this chapter was to study how Chinese naturalised table tennis players have emerged in Korea as part of table tennis's long history of more than a century. As Maguire (2011) stated, 'sport worlds of the past have developed in our contemporary sport worlds, just as our actions of today shape what may come tomorrow' (p. 862). To understand

and trace the long-term historical development of table tennis, the theory of sportisation was useful to illuminate the historical development of the sports world (Elias & Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1999). Through examining the long history of table tennis, this study sought to consider the current issue of Chinese naturalisation that has arisen due to the development and spread of table tennis. The chapter described how table tennis began in England with its origins as a form of play, and gradually become a sport. With the development of table tennis in surrounding European countries, the sport started to be contested internationally. Table tennis then expanded from Europe to China and Japan, and finally to Korea.

Jarvie (2006) argued that certain sports such as Chinese table tennis reflect political national identities. Although table tennis is not as strong and persistent in Korea as in China, it has also played a political role in Korea. Korean table tennis has been used politically during modern times in Korea, including during the Japanese invasion, the Cold War era, and the military dictatorship from the late 19th century to the early 1990s. During the course of this process, over the past 100 years, table tennis has strongly reinforced Korean nationalism and upheld the national identity of Korea, playing different roles in each phase of Korean society. In the era of globalisation, there has been another change to Korean table tennis, as indicated by the archival evidence presented in this chapter. Apart from the traditional political perspective, Korean table tennis has also introduced a new paradigm—for the first time in the history of Korean sports, the Korean Table Tennis Federation selected a foreign player as an Olympic national representative for table tennis at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

Simply stated, this chapter was a study of Korean nationalism and national identity through examining table tennis and the emergence of naturalised table tennis players in the

global age. However, through researching this topic, the study also found that the political role of Korean table tennis has changed throughout the history of Korea. By promoting anti-colonialism, anti-Cold War sentiment and anti-Chinese sentiment, Korean table tennis has represented a sport that has constantly upheld forms of Korean nationalism. In this manner, table tennis has undergone various changes in Korean history, and it presented a new challenge to Korean society through the issue of sports naturalisation.

For more than 100 years, the power of Korean table tennis has evolved according to time and context. In particular, it was a sport that was initially used for the purpose of nation building because of its strong nationalistic character in Korea. Changes include the sensitive issue of naturalisation, which did not previously exist. The problem of naturalisation is related to nationalism and national identity in the host nation and to sensitive reactions. Based on an overview of the history of Korean and Chinese table tennis, the following two chapters examined Korean nationalism and national identity, possibility in the context of the Olympics Games.

## **2.2 Table Tennis, Nationalism and the Newspaper in South Korea: The Representation of Olympics Table Tennis Games from Seoul 1988 to London 2012**

The main purpose of this chapter was to analyse Korean newspaper texts in order to observe development of nationalism in Korea across the table tennis tournaments of seven Olympic Games (1988 to 2012). The most important theme that emerged here was that the Korean newspapers had continuously maintained the link between Korean nationalism and table tennis. However, the nationalism demonstrated by the newspapers was closely related to the performance and medal success of the Korean players. Thus, while the media played a

role in generating nationalism, the most important matter was to win medals in order to express the power of Korean nationalism. In other words, without medal success, the media's nationalism decreased in relation to table tennis.

The second theme in the chapter was that the Korean women's table tennis team experienced a significant change during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Previously, the Korean international team had been formed exclusively from Korean players; however, naturalised players were included in the Korean Olympic team in both 2008 and 2012. Based on these circumstances, the chapter investigated the discursive expressions of Korean newspaper reports when discussing Korean and naturalised athletes. The evidence indicated that the Korean newspapers used different pronouns and expressions when describing naturalised and Korean athletes. For example, when referring to Korean players, the Korean newspapers mainly employed terms such as 'our', 'our sister', 'Korean sister' and 'Korean duo'. For example, when one of the women's teams defeated a Japanese team and won the bronze medal, the newspaper reports stated, 'our eldest daughter led the team well' (*Kyunghyang*, 2008, p. 21). Conversely, when discussing the naturalised athletes, the newspapers often demonstrated patterns that emphasised the players' names or the word 'naturalised', rather than employing the everyday discursive expressions used to refer to the Korean players. For example, *Joongang* (2008) reported that the table tennis team 'acquired a bronze medal for the Korean women's group including this naturalised Dang' (p. 9), while *Kyunghyang* (2008) reported that, 'Chinese naturalised Dang has won bronze for the first time in her second country' (p. 9).

Another noteworthy issue was that when a naturalised player acquired a medal at the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, the attitude of the Korean newspapers was different, and

they began using nationalistic expressions to discuss the naturalised player. However, when no medals were won, the media did not implement this nationalistic frame. For example, when a naturalised player won the bronze medal for the first time during the Beijing Olympics, this was the most watched game in Korea. In response, the newspapers used nationalistic frames for the one that won the medal. For example, *Kyunghyang* (2008) reported that, ‘Chinese naturalised Dang has won bronze for the first time in her second country’ (p. 9). In contrast, when the Korean women’s table tennis team failed to win a medal at the 2012 London Olympics, the Korean newspaper reports began to criticise the naturalised players. The media reported that Korea did not need these naturalised players on the national table tennis team. Thus, overall, the Korean newspaper reports generally differed when developing nationalistic frames based on the presence or absence of medals. This indicates the different attitudes of the media, towards Korean players and naturalised players.

In summary, the following was evident based on the evidence presented in this chapter. The Korean newspaper reports essentially sought to maintain Korean nationalism via Olympic table tennis even during the era of globalisation. However, the frame of nationalism of the media disappeared when the athletes did not win medals. Thus, if medals were not won, the nationalistic frame would not be used by the media. In addition, Korean newspaper reports differently described the Korean players and naturalised athletes; however, when athletes acquired medals, the media referred to them with greater similarity. In short, the Korean newspaper reports covered the Korean players and naturalised athletes in different ways, and did not promote nationalism unless the athletes won medals. Until then of course, Korean table tennis had played a key role in promoting a nationalist frame because the sport had often brought medals for Korea.

## **2.3 The National Identity Construction of Chinese Naturalised Player and Korean Society**

The main purpose of the next chapter was to observe the process of national identity in Korea by further studying naturalised players in the global era. Specifically, this chapter focused on the formation of national identities that see the naturalised player from the Korean perspective. In order to understand this process, interviews with 17 people who were directly associated with naturalised athletes were undertaken. The results indicated that three kinds of Korean national identity have emerged in relation to naturalised players in the era of globalisation. The first group comprised individuals who approved of globalisation and welcomed naturalised players to Korea. The second group comprised individuals who opposed globalisation and also opposed naturalised players entering the Korean national team. The final group consisted of the Korean media. This group was neither in favour nor opposed to naturalised players. They look at naturalised players. To be precise, as stated by Maguire (1999, 2002) and Maguire et al. (2011, p. 986), national cultures and identities are weakened, strengthened or pluralised by the flow of globalisation.

To investigate this topic in further detail, this chapter first examined the identity of a naturalised athlete in Korean society in order to understand the national identities that exist within. By examining this athlete's identity during the previous 15 years, the thesis identified dynamic changes in the development of her national identity. For example, the athlete's identities changed from being a Chinese citizen, to a table tennis training partner in Korea, to a Korean citizen, to a Korean Air team member, to a Korean international team member, and

finally to a Korean Air coach. As a result, from 2008 until the time of this research, the player had been living in Korea with an evolving national identity.

To develop the argument, the research identified two groups related to Korean national identity. The first group was the government, and included the Korean government, the Korean Olympic Sports Association, and the Korea Table Tennis Association. This group argued that Korea should no longer be an ethnic-based nation, and considered it desirable for the national team to include naturalised foreigners to become Koreans. They also argued that Korean national identity should no longer be a fantasy of a single nation according to the one-blood nation theory.

In contrast, the second group claimed that there should be no naturalised players in Korean table tennis or Korean sports. This group comprised members of the Korea *Sil-Up* table tennis team, local high school table tennis players, high school players' parents, regional table tennis coaches, and local table tennis club members. This group believed that naturalised athletes are foreigners, and did not believe the *Taegeuk* mark<sup>66</sup> should be worn by these players. This group claimed that Korea must maintain an ethnic-based national identity. Another fundamental identity of this group was the idea of a one-blood state and pure blood nation. As evidenced in the interview data, this group claimed that a single Korean national identity is necessary to maintain an ethnically-based society, and, in practice, naturalised players tend to take this group's jobs and cause them to believe that there is no future for local players and coaches.

The interviews with Korean journalists identified that there is not currently much public interest in table tennis and naturalised players. Simply put, the national identity of the

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<sup>66</sup> The Korean flag.



media in relation to a naturalised player depends on the results of that player at the Olympic Games. When such a player wins a medal, the media seems to welcome them as ‘established’; however, if the athlete fails to win a medal, the media labels them as an ‘outsider’. In other words, the national identity of naturalised athletes in the Korean media is not fixed, and varies from one situation to another.

Thus far, I have briefly reviewed the findings of the previous three chapters of this research. First, Chapter 4 employed archive analysis to examine Korean naturalised players against the historical background of table tennis, using a macroscopic view. This chapter found that Korean table tennis was formerly a symbol of strong nationalism in terms of anti-colonialism and anti-communism, but has since changed its role throughout various stages of Korean history, and has now become Korea’s most global sport, and actively recruits naturalised players to join the national team.

Second, Chapter 5 employed media analysis, starting with the status of the Chinese naturalised player at the meso level. This chapter examined the representations of Korean newspapers to understand Olympic table tennis games to see more of the naturalised players who appeared in Korean society. The results of this chapter indicate that, despite globalisation, Korean newspapers continue to promote Korean nationalism through the Olympic Games table tennis competitions. In addition, the Korean media uses different expressions and nominal pronouns for Korean players and naturalised players. Taken together, these chapters reveal that Korean society is changing due to globalisation; however, the media insists on continuing to promote Korea’s nationalism. Chapter 4 analysed the naturalised players themselves while Chapter 5 studied how they were represented in the media.

### **3 Theoretical Discussions**

This research began by studying the phenomena of nationalism and national identity construction through a scientific and social examination of naturalised Chinese table tennis athletes who have emerged in South Korea since the early 2000s. South Korea has accepted the foreign-originating sport of table tennis, and it has been popular throughout recent South Korean history. Further, in the history of South Korean Olympic participation, only native-born athletes were chosen to represent the country, until table tennis accepted naturalised players for participation in its Olympic team. With this background in mind, this study observes the present state of South Korean nationalism and South Korean national identity in relation to table tennis, naturalised Chinese players, the Olympic Games and Korea as a whole.

Among the many sports sociology theories, this research used the theory of figurational sociology to study long-term history, the relationship between established and outsider groups, sport migration and athletes' naturalisation. The study also examined Korean nationalism by studying Olympic table tennis games' presentation in Korean sports media through the habitus concept of figurational sociology. In addition, this research examined the current state of Korean national identity through naturalised Chinese table tennis players and the South Korean naturalisation process. The results of this research show that the application of figurational sociology has been fruitful, and this theoretical background and contribution to the present sociology of sport found in this research is, in particular, the flow of current nationalism and national identity in South Korea.

The two chief concepts of figurational sociology are interdependence and process (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998). Another important notion is the concept of power in

figurational sociology. According to Elias, ‘power is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another’ (1978, p. 74). Based on this theoretical background, the main results of this research are presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. First, we address the research on the emergence of naturalised Chinese players in South Korea; then, we observe the long-term history of table tennis through the concept of ‘sportisation’. The sportisation process is used to observe the emergence of modern sports through their long history, determining how sports are made and changed in connection with certain political, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. One of the important concepts of the sportisation process is that modern sports have changed in both intended and unintended ways.

This study examined the first and second sportisation phases outlined by Elias and Dunning (1986); Maguire’s (1999) third, fourth and fifth sportisation processes (1999); Maguire’s (1999) last three stages of sportisation; and Robertson’s (1992) five stages of globalisation. In terms of table tennis, we know that the sport became popular in England after emerging in the 19th century (Bale, 1981), as shown in Chapter 4. Gradually, it moved into Europe, North America, Africa and Asia in the 1950s (Chae, 2011). What is important here is that, in the fourth phase of sportisation, sports are increasingly inclusive of national identity as international competition grows (Maguire, 1999). Table tennis is a keen example of a sport's effect on national identity. Table tennis became popular in Far East Asia, especially China, where it eventually became China's national sport. Similarly, from the 1970s through the 1990s, table tennis was one of the most popular sports in South Korea. In particular, the development of table tennis in China since the 1950s has led to naturalised Chinese players and coaches migrating to many countries around the world. China has won the most world table tennis championships and most of the Olympic medals in the sport.

According to early sportisation processes, sports typically develop from West to East, but in the process of globalisation, sports redevelop from East to West.

As Maguire (1994) argued, because of the cultural exchange between non-Western and Western countries, 'non-West codes and customs began to permeate back into Western societies' (p. 403). The spread of naturalised Chinese athletes is also an amalgam of West and East. In most Eastern countries, Western sports have been learned from Westerners. By contrast, in table tennis, there are many Chinese table tennis coaches and players spread all over the world. However, the naturalised Chinese athletes in this research mainly comprised settlers who live in their new nation through naturalisation. In the era of globalisation, an Eastern athlete can become a table tennis player in a Western country, becoming an established player as an Olympic athlete. For Maguire (1994, p. 409), the movement of people via the globalisation process creates new momentum, and new power balances and identities emerge.

Another interesting finding is the Pax-Sinica, which is addressed in Chapters 4 and 5, on table tennis relations. This represents a global sports power that is changing from an Anglo/European focus to an Anglo/American one, as indicated in sportisation phases three, four and five (Maguire, 1999). At present, it is unclear which global sports power will emerge after Britain, Europe and the United States; however, according to the evidence on table tennis and the Olympic record, China is the closest country to achieving global sports power. This established power balance includes more direction, such as from East to West. Maguire (1999) notes that it seems not only that Anglo/Euro and American power are decreasing, but that Eastern and local sports power are increasing in the fifth phase of global sport.

Thus far, we have discussed the role of table tennis in globalisation, which was the first finding of this research. This perspective of globalisation can be seen in terms of figurational sociology, increasing varieties and diminishing contrasts, the notions of established and outsider players and power relationships between the East and West in the development of table tennis within a long-term process. This section considers the emergence of naturalised Chinese athletes in Korea, which was the main purpose of the first chapter. The theoretical and interesting aspects of the sportisation process are linked interdependently with politics, the economy, society and culture through a long history, from the origin of sports to the development of modern sports. This process also results in the formation of an unexpected connection of intended and unintended results. The sportisation process shows the flow of power through sports.

As previously mentioned, table tennis has been established in China since the 1950s, while in Korea it emerged between the 1960s and early 1990s, but is now becoming an outsider sport. Table tennis was also a Western sport, but has become a world pastime most heavily entrenched in China. Finally, table tennis was the first sport in Korea to include foreign-born athletes on its Olympic team. The power observable through the long history of table tennis confirms the emergence of naturalised Chinese players in Korea. By observing them through the complex and dynamic history of table tennis and the interdependency and figuration of China and Korea, the next section examines the theoretical relationship between nationalism and national identity through naturalised Korean players in Korea.

Chapters 5 and 6 show the results of research on the changes in nationalism and national identity in Korea while observing naturalised Chinese athletes. Chapter 5 focuses on newspaper reports about the Olympics, demonstrating that Korean nationalism does not

include major changes. It also reveals the state of present-day Korean nationalism. By contrast, Chapter 6 demonstrates that Korean national identity is not a fixed one, but instead changes in various ways. These findings fit well with the theoretical framework of figurational sociology. In particular, figurational sociologists tend to study sports and nationalism through the media (Lee & Maguire, 2011; Tuck, 2003; Maguire, Poulton, and Possamai 1999).

Through the Eliasian habitus codes explored in this thesis, this research demonstrates naturalised Korean table tennis athletes' processes of nationalism and national identity construction. In particular, the expressions and various personal pronouns explored in Chapters 5 and 6 aid in our understanding of Korean nationalism and national identity by employing the concept of habitus. Nominal pronouns are commonly used in ordinary life and the media and play an important role in creating national differences (Elias & Scotson, 1994; Maguire, 2005). In addition, in *The Germans*, Elias (1996) stated that individuals and nations are not dichotomous, but are connected. This relationship between the individual and the nation can be understood by the habitus code of the 'I' and 'we' images, whereby national and individual images are common to each other (Lee & Maguire, 2011). It is also through 'sleeping memories' that individuals and nations produce common beliefs. These phenomena are seen in international sports, which demonstrate 'special charisma' through 'patriot games' between and among countries (Lee & Maguire, 2011; Tuck, 2003).

Against this theoretical backdrop, Chapter 4 demonstrated that the sport of Korean table tennis was played at the international level to promote anti-colonialism, anti-Cold War sentiment and anti-Chinese sentiment. This is based on the internalised relationship of 'I' and 'we' and demonstrates the 'special charisma' of Korea, portraying its image as a safe country.

In the media analysis in Chapter 5, this relationship was proven intensively for Korean and Chinese athletes. During the Olympic table tennis games with China, the Korean media consistently portrayed the matches as ‘patriot games’ and emphasised Korea’s ‘special charisma’ and superiority. Chapter 6 identified the flow of national identity through interview analysis by examining the personal pronouns used by the interviewees from the group opposed to naturalised Chinese players. This group continued to demonstrate the national identity of the anti-communist era and opposed the naturalised athletes.

Chapters 5 and 6 examined nationalism and national identity in Korea while observing naturalised Chinese table tennis players. The first is a study of Korean nationalism displayed by the Koreans media during seven Olympic matches between China and Korea between 1988 and 2012. The first observations focus on nationalism and table tennis between 1988 and 2004, when only Korean Olympians were present. The second phase, from the 2008 to 2012 Games, included naturalised players. This allowed for a study of the flow of Korean nationalism by looking at the differences in newspaper coverage. According to the results of this research, Korean newspapers promoted Korean nationalism throughout the Korea vs. China games.

When a naturalised player won the bronze medal at the Beijing Games in 2008, Korean newspapers wrote friendly articles about the player for a while, but the moment was very short. During the 2012 London Games, the newspapers blamed the poor performance of the Korean team on its naturalised Chinese members. The Korean media has a strong tendency towards nationalistic expression, especially during the Olympics and when reporting on competitions between China and Korea. This pattern was continually evident

from the 1988 Seoul Games through the 2012 London events, especially when the Korean team competing against the Chinese team won medals.

The Korean newspapers' reporting on matches between China and Korea expressed nationalism by assigning unfavourable historical events to the two countries. In addition, when discussing Korea and Korean table tennis players, the media used 'I/we' images and expressions to internalise Korea and its people. In contrast, the media discussions of China and Chinese athletes used the opposite pronouns to imply that they were not the same as 'us'. A similar study by Blain, Boyle and O'Donnell (1993) compared soccer to war and described a German team as 'ruthless'. In addition, Maguire, Poulton and Possamai (1999) found that the media often referred to World War II when discussing matches between England and Germany during the European Soccer Championships of 1996. In other words, memories of war between competing countries are invoked in relation to modern sports matches as a means of expressing nationalism.

Similarly, the Korean newspaper reports frequently substituted memories of historical conflict between China and Korea in their coverage of Olympic table tennis matches. In the history of Korea and China, and especially for Korea, which has never actually invaded China, the Great Wall of China has seemed to be an obstacle against invading China. For this reason, Korean newspapers' reports tend to compare matches to the Great Wall. Another image that Korea holds about China involves communism. Korea has been an enemy of China because of its anti-communist national atmosphere, which began during the Cold War and persists today. For this reason, Korean newspapers express a historical sentiment when reporting on Korea's matches against China to demonstrate Korea's national habitus and



collective negative attitude towards China. In short, Korean media maintains a sense of nationalism via its coverage of Olympic table tennis competitions.

In addition, the Korean newspaper reports indicated that their naming expressions for Korean and naturalised Chinese athletes are different. Koreans' cultural and ethnic expressions for Korean athletes are not employed for naturalised ones. This is similar to the findings by Poulton and Maguire (2012), who note that naturalised British athletes are characterised as 'plastic Brits' and discussed less in the media than native-born British athletes who were referred to more as 'fantastic Brits'. Despite the Chinese athletes being naturalised in Korea, the Korean media habitus still does not view them as true Korean athletes. The next section provides further evidence on the formation of Korea's national identity through the experiences of naturalised athletes.

Our newspaper analysis revealed that coverage of Korean sports remains strongly nationalistic, despite the onset of globalisation. In contrast, the findings in Chapter 6 suggest that national identity, identified through direct interviews with Koreans regarding naturalised athletes, has become non-uniform and diverse. This chapter presents the findings of interviews conducted to analyse the identity of three groups in regard to naturalised athletes in Korea. Maguire (1994, p. 410) argued that, 'Identities are not natural, nor are they fixed'. Instead, identities are socially constructed and subject to change over time and across places. As a result of the findings presented in Chapter 6, we can see that the identities of the naturalised Chinese players have changed in the last 10 years to become training partners, Korean local league players, Korean international players, and coaches. The South Korean national identity, which is seen through the naturalisation of Chinese players, has also diversified.

In other words, it is clear that naturalised Chinese athletes and Korean national identities have changed to include into many identities according to environment and time. People have multiple identities that are formed and transformed in social interaction. Moreover, as Maguire and Poulton (1999) note, national identities can be strengthened, weakened or pluralised within the broader process of globalisation. The interview participants did not present a unified view of naturalised athletes, but instead had different ideas according to their social backgrounds. In Korea, as a whole, many identities have been formed in response to the issue of naturalisation.

Looking more closely at these groups, among the people who were directly or indirectly related to naturalised athletes, some opposed naturalisation, while others approved of it. We can identify three categories of thought: a group with a civic identity in favour of globalisation, a group with an ethnic identity opposed to globalisation and a media group of four sports journalists whose thoughts on identity were uncertain. The group in favour of globalisation was the decision-making group. Their pragmatic position held that naturalised athletes are helpful for national sports. The opposing group echoed the findings of Falcous and Maguire (2005), who found that American basketball players were perceived to be taking the jobs of local players in the UK. According to the interview evidence, this group's objections to naturalisation and globalisation were primarily related to fears about job security, as they believed that naturalised athletes were taking their jobs. The media group had an identity that neither approved of nor opposed naturalised athletes. Their only interest in naturalisation involved teams and athletes winning medals at the Olympics. These interviewees explained that the main purpose of writing an article was to maximise the newspaper's subscription rate, thus ensuring that it would attract advertisers. In other words,

for the media group, the economic benefit of the media company was more important than the debate about globalisation and naturalisation. This research has confirmed the three chief views of Koreans regarding naturalised athletes. Finally, the examination in Chapter 6 of changes in the identities of naturalised athletes confirmed the identity of naturalised athletes in order to see her identity diversified. As a result, the identity of the examined naturalised athletes in Korea has changed from training partner to semi-professional Korean athlete, to Korean national representative, to Korean Air coach.

Two of the most important concepts in figurational sociology are interdependence and processes (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998, p. 36). In figurational sociology, power is not fixed, but instead flows (Elias, 1978). In other words, especially since table tennis was an outsider sport that flowed into China and Korea from the West, it became an established sport by creating various interdependencies in China and South Korea. Through the interdependence and figuration of table tennis, Korean nationalism, as manifested in responses to the Chinese table tennis players who appeared in Korea in the early 2000s, tended to be maintained, while Korea's national identity became more diversified. The three important findings of this research are as follows: first, table tennis has played a role in South Korea's globalisation and sportisation. Second, the South Korean media maintains a sense of nationalism through its coverage of Olympic table tennis competitions. Third, the South Korean national identity, in regard to naturalised athletes, remains diversified and is not unified, according to the interview evidence analysed here.

#### **4. Evaluation of the Research**

This section evaluates the overall research process based on the following three topics: evaluation of the research processes, research accomplishments, and limitations of the research.

##### **4.1 Evaluation of the Research Processes**

This study observed the flow of Korean nationalism and national identity through naturalised table tennis players. To do this, the study employed mainly empirical evidence with an inductive perspective. The study also used qualitative research methods to complement the use of quantitative data such as statistical data. A characteristic of this research is that it adopts the research perspective of figurational sociology. Elias (1996, p. 1) claimed that figurational sociology is ‘like a camera, which can be focused to different distances—close up, middle distance and long distance’. Just as people adjust the camera position to achieve a clear photograph, when undertaking research, researchers must adhere to the criteria of theory and evidence, involvement and detachment, and the adequacy of evidence to secure their positions as expert researchers (Maguire, 1988, p. 189-190) and to achieve an ideal balance between the researcher and research data. Consequently, the details of this study’s research methodology are as follows.

This study employed a multi-method approach by using the three methods of archive analysis, media (newspaper) content analysis and interview analysis. Using a multi-method approach allows each method to complement or counteract the pros and cons of the other methods. This research employed this approach to study Korean nationalism and national identity through examining naturalised table tennis athletes. Through archival analysis, this research determined the history of table tennis and identified the reasons for the emergence of

naturalised players in Korean society. Through the media analysis, this research also examined the flow of nationalism in Korea. Finally, the interviews provided deeper insight into how the Korean nation was understood in relation to the naturalised players.

A question addressed in the research process is the question posed to the researcher by the examiner in the research's first annual report in 2013: Since the researcher is Korean, is it possible to balance the researcher's views on the naturalisation issue in Korea? This was the most important consideration in the process of conducting this research. For example, when the researcher was collecting nationalist newspaper materials and interviewing participants, it was important to balance involvement and detachment whenever possible in relation to data and interviewees to observe the precise flow of Korean nationalism and national identity through the naturalised player.

#### **4.2 Research Accomplishments**

This research represents the first study of table tennis using the concept of sportisation of figurational sociology. Moreover, few studies have investigated athletic naturalisation from the perspective of figurational sociology. Poulton and Maguire (2012), for instance, conducted a study on the relationship between British naturalised players and the media at the 2012 London Olympics; however, academics have rarely studied the issue of sports naturalisation in Korea from the viewpoint of figurational sociology. It is also hard to find Korean academic contributions about the process of Korean nationalism and national identity in relation to naturalised athletes in Korea.

There are three main outcomes from this research. First, as a result of sociological observations of table tennis, table tennis can be understood as part of a symbolic movement

for Korea to overcome the colonial period and the cold war with various interdependencies, and in the process of globalisation it is a sport that has shaped various Korean identities. Second, the Korean media continues to strengthen and maintain Korean nationalism in its coverage of table tennis at the Olympic Games. Finally, within the Korean media's production of nationalism through table tennis, the naturalised table tennis player influences the formation of diverse identities in Korean society.

In addition, on discovering the above three outcomes, the researcher approached the Chinese naturalised player from three different perspectives: the historical point of view, the media point of view and the researcher's own point of view through a direct approach to the naturalised player. Consequently, different results were produced in the media analysis and in the interview analysis. According to the former, nationalism has been strengthened through sports media. In contrast, according to the latter, there has been an opportunity to diversify the viewpoint of Korean society through the naturalised table tennis player. Through these results it can be seen that Korean nationalism endures but, at the same time, the Korean national identity is diversified by the influence of globalisation. This is the concluding impression given by the case of the Chinese naturalised player, who is an outsider in the process of nationalism and national identity that is established as an idea of Korean society. This study suggests that Korean society has witnessed the growth of national identity through the process of globalisation, with one section of society retaining its identity and the other accepting diversity.

Maguire (1994, p. 410) stated that identity is socially constructed and changes according to time and place. According to this definition, various nationalities and national identities around the world change at different times and places. In particular, from the

perspective of the sociology of sport, athletes who migrate internationally tend to experience problems related to nationalism and identity. Hence, the aim of this study is to lend sociological insight into this phenomenon based on the specific context of Korea. Moreover, this research aimed to observe social problems in Korea by applying the perspective of figurational sociology to Korean society. Although there are already several scholars of figurational sociology in Korea, my intention here was to use this perspective in a practical research setting.

#### **4.3 Limitations of The Research**

While this study produced interesting results, there were limitations to the research. Two limitations in particular should be mentioned. The first was a limitation of the sports media complex. As mentioned by Maguire et al. (2002), it is important to study the audience who consume sports media. This research, as presented in Chapters 4 and 5, interviewed people involved in three groups of sports media complexes: sports organisations and personnel, media organisations and personnel, and marketing organisations and personnel. However, this study did not include research on those who consume Olympic table tennis games such as by watching on television. If the opportunity arises in the future, the researcher would be interested to undertake a research project concerning the way Olympic table tennis is interpreted by the consumer in Korea.

Second, this research focused only on naturalised players in Korea. Therefore, the results of the study on nationalism and the flow of national identity have been extruded through the Korean. If this study had been able to research nationalism and national identity of the country in the context of a comparative study of Korean players who had naturalised

into other countries, then a better comparative study would have resulted. For example, at the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014, a competitor in short track skating had naturalised from Korea to Russia. If this case had been compared with cases examined in the current study, more diverse results could have been produced through an analysis of nationalism and national identity focusing on Korean and Russian naturalised players. Therefore, it is hoped that the host country's social and academic research into the naturalised players of other countries will increase through the case of Korea in this current research.

## **5. Suggestions for Further Research**

This thesis has presented a study of nationalism and the national identity of Korea through examining naturalised athletes. This work was carried out with reference to the contributions of Maguire (1994; 1999; 2011). The results of this study offer three main suggestions for future research: the use of sportisation, the use of various research methods and the need to conduct research in new fields for future studies of naturalised athletes.

First, it is important to understand the historical background of each sport explored in this research. If researchers understand the historical background of sports, the present problems can be solved. For example, for a researcher unaware the historical context of Korean table tennis as a nationalist sport in the 1970s and 1980s, it would be more difficult to observe contemporary issues related to Korean nationalism and identity. Sportisation provides researchers with a perspective that allows them to see the development of sport within the wider spectrum of history. It also reveals how researchers can discover current social problems from exploring the historical backgrounds of different issues.



The second suggestion is that researchers should use a variety of research methods when studying sports migrants and naturalised persons. For example, researchers who study sports migrants through the reproduction of the media and interviews can arrive at different results. This is similar to the case of this research. According to the media analysis, Korean society maintains and sustains nationalism. Conversely, according to the interview analysis, one of Korea's various identities has a different view of nationalism and national identity. For this reason, it is important for researchers to try various research methods.

Finally, there are naturalised players in many other sports besides table tennis. The field of sport naturalisation remains an interesting research area because it is still relatively unexplored. In the collection of data for this research, the researcher regularly came into contact with information about the movements of naturalised athletes in sports such as women's hockey, volleyball and basketball. Therefore, the current research suggests further studies into various cases of sport naturalisation, similar to the way the current study explores Korean nationalism and national identity through the sport of table tennis.

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## Appendix I

	Interviewee's name	Interviewee's job	Date of interview
1	Jeong	Chinese naturalised table tennis player	16.04.2014
2	Shin	Korean Air table tennis player	18.04.2014
3	Kim	Manager of the Korean Table Tennis Association	07.04.2014
4	Young	Former vice-president of the Korean Table Tennis Association	11.04.2014
5	Dr Kim	Former member of the International Olympic Committee for South Korea	09.04.2014
6	Yang	Seoul Olympic women's doubles gold medallist and Korean table tennis youth team coach	13.04.2017
7	Professor Kim	Former Minister of Justice of Korea	08.04.2014
8	Jungduk Kim	Local table tennis coach	29.04.2014
9	Minkyung Yoon	Member of the table tennis club in Ilsan City	27.04.2014
10	Sunghye Park	Table tennis lifestyle sports club member	27.04.2014
11	Dooghun Choi	High school student player	12.04.2014
12	Jungsek Choi	Dooghun Choi's father	12.04.2014
13	Sujin Oh	High school table tennis player	12.04.2014
14	Donghyun Park	Journalist for <i>Dong-A</i>	26.04.2014
15	Taesok Lim	Journalist for <i>Hankyoreh</i>	27.04.2014
16	Wondae Kim	Taesok Lim	27.04.2014
17	Johun Ann	Journalist for <i>Seoul</i>	15.04.2014
18			
19			

## **‘Over the Net’**

### **Global Sports, Athletics Naturalization and Nationalism in South Korea**

This interview guide is divided into five different categories. First, general questions about the process of globalization, migration / naturalization and nationalism will be asked to build the framework of this research. The participants are mainly comprised of those who were engaged in decision making positions in the Korean government, and those who are known as nationalists and anti-nationalists in Korean society. Second, questions will be asked of Korean media professionals about how to produce nationalist images and narratives using Chinese naturalized players. Third, questions will be asked to some committees of Korean sports associations and Korean table tennis associations about their understandings of globalization, athletics naturalization, sport nationalism and how the process of sport naturalization occurs in Korean society. Fourth, local table tennis coaches and players will be asked some questions about Chinese athletics naturalization issues. Lastly, Chinese naturalized players will be asked about their process of naturalization into Korean society. Thus, this research will involve the synthesis of macro and micro level experiences and perceptions of globalization, migration / naturalization and the nationalism process to get data to examine contested issues about athletics naturalization and nationalism within the global process.

#### **I. Interview Guide (The Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Culture and Sport; Korean Nationalists; Anti-Nationalists)**

*Respondents are asked to talk about their experiences and perceptions regarding the processes of globalization, migration /naturalization and nationalism in Korean society.*

- Process of globalization in Korean society
  - What do you think about the process of globalization in Korean society?
  - Do you think globalization is important to Korea?
  - What parts of Korean society have been more affected by globalization?
  - How do you adapt the process of globalization to your decision making?
  - Do you have any concerns about the process of globalization on Korean sports?
- Migration and Naturalization in Korean Society
  - Why do you think Korean society accepts global migration / naturalization?
  - How do you select and provide foreign migration and naturalization into Korea?

- Do you have particular requirements to accept global migration and naturalization?
- Was it a difficult decision to accept foreign migration and naturalization?
- In terms of the naturalization process, what is the most important part of the decision making process?
- Do you have any concerns about the process of migration / naturalization on Korean sports?
  - Issues of Nationalism in Korean Society
- What is the meaning of nationalism to Korean society?
- What do you think of the current nationalism process in Korean society?
- What parts of Korean society had the most significant nationalist movements, and how does it differ from the current process of nationalism in the global era?
- When you made the decision to accept foreign naturalized athletes, did you have concerns about the issue of nationalism in terms of how their nationalism might differ from local people's nationalism?
- Do you have any concerns about the process of naturalization on Korean sports?

## **II. Interview Guide (Media and Sport; the Committee Members of the Korean Broadcasting System; (Sports) Journalists at Korean newspapers)**

*Respondents talk about their experiences and perceptions regarding the concept of nationalism within the Korean media's representation of sports (for table tennis in particular).*

- Nationalism in the Korean media
- Nationalism in the Korean media's representation of national sporting events (images and narratives)
- Nationalism in the presentation of global sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, in Korean media
- How do you manage the images and narratives of nationalism in the Korean media?
- How do think about Korean sport nationalism through media representations?
- Do you have any particular policies (images and narratives) to present athletics migration / naturalized players in the Korean media?
- Do you have any special media policies about nationalism images and narratives when presenting global sporting events, such as the Olympic Games?

### **III. Interview Guide (Members of Korean Sports Associations; Members of the Table Tennis Association)**

*Respondents are asked to talk about their experiences and perceptions regarding Korean processes of migration / naturalization and nationalism in sports. In particular, they are asked about the increase in sport migration / naturalization in Korean sports.*

- Increasing numbers of foreign athletes in Korean society

-What is your understanding of the increase of global migration / naturalization in Korean sports?

-Do you think this process is positive or negative for either Korean society or Korean sports?

-What are the main reasons and circumstances for accepting many foreign athletes in the last two decades?

-In the case of table tennis, why do you want Chinese table tennis players on the Korean national team?

-How do you select Chinese table tennis players? Do you have any particular policies or regulations?

-Do you have a plan to accept more Chinese players?

- Issues of nationalism

-Do you think that naturalized players have a similar idea of nationalism as Korean athletes?

-When you are accepting naturalized players, are you concerned about the issue of nationalism?

### **IV. Interview Guide (Korean Table Tennis Coaches and Players)**

*Respondents are asked about their experiences and perceptions about some issues of globalization, athletics migration / naturalization and nationalism in Korean table tennis.*

- How do you understand the developments of globalization, athletics naturalization and nationalism in Korean table tennis?

- Do you agree or not to accept naturalized players into Korean table tennis?

- What is the effect of naturalized players on local sports, such as table tennis?

- Do you think that naturalized players have a different idea of nationalism when representing Korea?

## **V. Interview Guide (Chinese Naturalized Table Tennis Players in Korean Table Tennis)**

*Respondents are asked about their experiences and perceptions concerning their process of naturalization into Korean society and sports.*

- The process of naturalization from China to Korea (experiences, motivation, foreign sojourn, adjustment, dislocation, retention, labour rights and work permits)
- Why did you choose Korea (general background information about your choice)?
- Why did you leave China as a table tennis player? Are there any particular reasons?
- Did you know anyone in Korea before your decision to come to Korea?
- Compared to China, what is different for you as a table tennis player in Korea?
- What do you think about sports nationalism issues?
- Do you feel like a Korean national when you play at international competitions?
- When you play with Chinese players at international games, how do you feel representing Korea, or do you still feel a connection to the Chinese players?
- What is the meaning of the Korean flag and Chinese flag during an international competition?
- Are you satisfied with your decision to be naturalized into Korea?