Elite Disability Sport in China: Policy and Practice

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Abstract

There has been growing interest in research on disability sport internationally, yet little research has concentrated on the development of disability sport in China. This thesis focuses on elite disability sport in China in the context of history, politics, policies and practice from 1979 to 2012. It examines the relationship between athletes with disabilities and the three major disability games: the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games. Three key questions are asked: What policies have ensured the success of elite disability sport? How do the elite sport system and management of elite disability sport work in China? In what way has elite disability sport empowered athletes with disabilities in China?

The thesis includes a comprehensive literature review on the historical development of disability sport in China and beyond. Functionalism and Empowerment are the major theoretical backgrounds for the research. The former analyses the function of elite sport policies, systems and other factors occurring during the process, whilst the latter examines the relationship of empowerment between elite disability sport and athletes in China. The three major disability competitions are used as case studies. A qualitative research methodology with specific methods of semi–structured interviews, data collection and documentary analysis is applied to the research. The thesis concludes that the development of elite disability sport in China has received strong support from the government. Elite disability sport is closely linked with China's politics and international image. The success of athletes with disabilities on the international stage has raised awareness of the issues facing people with disabilities. This has changed their image in Chinese society in general, and has empowered athletes with disability in particular. However, there is unbalanced development in elite disability sport. The thesis concludes by indicating some potential future directions for further research.

Declaration

DECLARATION FOR THESES CONTAINING PUBLISHED WORK AND/OR WORK PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION

This thesis contains published work and/or work prepared for publication, **some of which has been co–authored**. The bibliographical details of the work and where it appears in the thesis are outlined below.

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List of Abbreviations

ACSF	All–China Sports Federation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDPF	China Disabled Persons' Foundation
CISS	Comité International des Sports des Sourds
CNDSC	Central National Defence Sport Club
CPISRA	Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association
CYL	Communist Youth League
DPF	Disabled Persons' Foundation
IBSA	International Blind Sports Federation
ICF	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps
ICSD	International Committee of Sports for the Deaf
INAIL	Instituto Nazionale per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro
INAS–FID	International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ICSO	International Committee of Special Olympics
IPC	International Paralympic Committee
ISF	International Sports Federations
ISMGF	International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation
IWAS	International Wheelchair & Amputee Sports
LDS	Labour and Defense System
NSC	National Sport Committee of the Ministry of Education
NWAA	US National Wheelchair Athletic Association
PCACSF	Preparatory Committee for the All–China Sports Federation
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
SPCSC	State Physical Culture and Sports Commission
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter 1 Introduction

Prior to 1979 no organized disability sport existed at the national level in China. It was Deng Xiaoping's 'open–door' policy in the early 1980s that resulted in the Paralympics and Special Olympics being introduced to China. Since then, China has rapidly climbed the medal tables and has held the top position at the Paralympic Games for three successive Games: in 2004, 2008 and 2012 respectively. China also successfully hosted the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Summer Games, which Sir Philip Craven, President of the International Paralympic Committee, declared had helped create a new level of awareness for the Paralympic Games and the future of the Paralympic Movement. Furthermore, the China Special Olympics Committee reports that some five hundred thousand Special Olympic athletes have been recruited and trained in the past two decades (Chi, 2005).

How has Chinese elite disability sport achieved so much in such a short time? One of the major reasons is that it is embedded in the national elite sport system and receives full support from the Chinese government. Han (2004) states that achievements in disabled sports help the Chinese government to realise a positive international image, and that this has been the most important function for disabled sports in China. On the other hand, Wang (2006) points out that the use of political power to promote disabled sports is crucial for the development of disabled sports. Zhang (2002) concludes that policy support is the key to developing disabled sports at a level that serves the government's political expectations. Xiong (2004) takes a more critical view, believing that in disabled sports participation is more important than winning; nevertheless he

arrives at the same conclusion: that disabled sports are a political asset. He argues that to enable a more positive human rights image the government should prioritise the development of a sporting population of athletes with disabilities, rather than focusing on the winning of medals.

To date, however, there has been no in–depth research examining the policies, systems, finances or practices that the Chinese government has put in place to promote elite disability sport. Furthermore, there are no in–depth studies that analyse how disabled athletes use sport to empower themselves and raise awareness of disability–related issues in Chinese society. In addition, there have been no studies on the significance of the three major games in disability sport: the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games.

The aim of this study is to examine China's involvement in the Paralympics, the Special Olympics and the Deaflympics from 1979–2012, and to explore the relationship between politics and disability sport. It will focus on the following research questions:

1. What policies have ensured the success of elite disability sport in China?
2. How do the system and management of elite disability sport work in China?
3. In what way has elite disability sport empowered athletes with disabilities in China?

In order to achieve these research aims and to answer the key research questions outlined above, the study will focus on three research domains: first, social and sports policies concerning disability. In general, disability social policy has directly or indirectly affected the development of elite disability sport. This research will give an

overview and an analysis of the development of disability social and sport policies in order to reveal the function and influence of these policies in practice.

Second is an examination of the elite disability sport system. On the one hand, policy–making has resulted in reforms of the administration of the elite disability sport system. On the other hand, the empowerment of Chinese elite athletes with disabilities is a subject that is closely affected by the sport system. Therefore, the Chinese elite sports system is the macroscopic background of the research.

The third and final research domain is an exploration of the development of the three major disability sport games – the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games – and their relationship to athletes of disability. In order to study how Chinese elite disability sport has empowered athletes with disabilities, it is necessary to examine the empowerment relationship between the three major disability sport games and Chinese elite disability athletes.

There are different types and levels of disability sports and games in China, yet their research value is still to be discovered and developed. This thesis strives to reduce the gap in the existing literature. The development of the three major disability games/competitions reflects the modernisation and transformative experiences of Chinese disability sport. An examination of this development also provides an understanding of how sport, especially elite sport, has effectively changed the status and image of people with disabilities in society.

The thesis will develop a theoretical framework to analyse elite disability sport in China from a socio–historical perspective. It will apply a qualitative research method, which

includes semi–structured interviews with sports experts and administrators, athletes and coaches, along with documentary data collection. Some of the material in the study has never been exploited by other researchers before.

The thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction. It outlines the research background of this study, sets out the research aim and research questions, and addresses the significance and originality of the research.

Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature from a historical perspective. It summarises three types of knowledge which relate to the research questions. The content also carries a substantial critical discussion and commentary based on the cited work.

Chapter 3 focuses on a theoretical framework, which includes two major theories: functionalism and empowerment. It explains why these two theories have been chosen and how they will be employed in this study. Based on this, the theoretical framework is built for this research to answer the key question of how disability sport has developed so fast in such a short period of time in China. In this chapter, the following topics are reviewed separately to enable an understanding of previous research in this area: disability; the history of disability sport; and the research of elite disability sport in China.

Chapter 4 takes into consideration methodological implications for this research. It explains that the research adopted a qualitative research method, which led to the formulation of the data–collection approach as well as the data–analysis approach. Primary and secondary historical data, semi–standardised interviews, and participant

observation are applied as the appropriate methods to collect data. Thematic analysis was then conducted as an analytical method of coding these collected documentaries, which is a particularly useful method of answering the research question. The issues of reliability and validity in qualitative research, as well as the relevant ethical considerations, are taken into account in the practical process of designing and conducting this research project.

Chapter 5 focuses on disability social policy and sport policy issues, as well as their political implications in China. Initially it reviews the development of disability social policy. Then it analyses the political motivations behind the development of disability sport policy from 1979 to 2012, especially the relationship between able–bodied sport policy and disability sport policy in terms of national unity, social equality and a new image for China on the international stage.

Chapter 6 examines the management and training system for athletes with disabilities in China. It considers how China distributes its resources to develop elite disability sport through its administration system. It analyses how China processes world champions in such a short time in the disabled sports field. It demonstrates how China, through its well–structured selection and competition system, trains people with disabilities for international sporting glory.

Chapter 7 discusses how the three major disability games/competitions have empowered athletes with disability in China. These competitions are: the Paralympic Games; the Special Olympic Games; and the Deaflympic Games. This chapter argues that the three major games empowered athletes with disabilities. Eventually the games

helped to change the image and social status of people with disabilities, particularly for athletes with disabilities.

Chapter 8 contains the conclusions of this study. It outlines the contribution of the study to existing knowledge and indicates some potential areas of future research. The research focuses on the elite disabled sport in the summer sport area. It could explore the winter sport area in a future study. The mass disability sport in Chinese society is an important area to explore in future research as well. Although the Chinese government currently still regards winning gold medals at international sport competitions as the priority, people with disabilities have begun to gain access and opportunities to participate in a range of sports and this has had a significant impact on Chinese society. There should be a similar study on the development of disability sport at the grassroots level.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review procedure is an essential part of the research process which helps guide decision–making and explains how the research was carried out. The review explores the available literature on relevant topics and identifies any gaps. This is instrumental in guiding the researcher when making decisions as to how to proceed. Learning about the available literature on the particular topic of interest, and identifying gaps where further research is necessary, is the principal force driving this process. Traditionally, the literature review in qualitative research is presented in a 'narrative' form, where it is left to the researcher's discretion as to which literature to review in order to further guide his/her particular study. However, the evaluation, or critique of reviewed literature, is arguably the most important function of the review. The evaluation involves both the quality of the arguments and the evidence that underpins current understanding.

In this research, the literature review summarises three types of knowledge which relate to the research questions. Furthermore, the content also carries a substantial critical discussion and commentary based on the cited work. In this chapter, the following topics are reviewed separately to enable an understanding of previous research in this area: disability; the history of disability sport; and the research of elite disability sport in China.

2.2 Definition of Disability

2.2.1 Medical Definitions

Thomas and Smith (2008) examined perceived meanings of disability and defined disability into two broad categories: medical and social. For their purposes, the medical definition was also defined in the 'personal tragedy' category.

The medical definitions of disability dominated understanding about disability for most of the twentieth century, particularly in Western countries. These definitions suggest that disability is an impairment that is owned by an individual and which results in a loss or limitation of function or some other 'defect'. The definitions of impairment, handicap and disability were introduced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1980, and these definitions came to be widely used in the application of much social and welfare policy and professional practice.

An important example of the dominant view of disability was the work conducted by WHO in the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH). The WHO combined their definition of disease with one that considered disability, impairment and handicap. These terms were defined by the WHO in the following way:

> Impairment: Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. (WHO, 1980: 27)
>
> Disability: Any restriction or lack of ability (resulting from impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. (WHO, 1980: 28)

> Handicap: A disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role (depending on sex, social and cultural factors) for that individual. (WHO, 1980: 29)

The ICIDH definitions conceptualised impairment as a deviation from a bio–medical norm, and clearly considered disability as the consequence of impairment, which focuses on the parts of the body that do not function in the usual manner. This means that the ICIDH classification also focused for the most part on what people with disabilities can and cannot do as a result of impairment (Thomas & Smith, 2009).

Some researchers, such as Oliver (1986), differed in their views. According to Oliver: disability has been conceptualised in a largely individualised or medicalised way that formed the historical discrimination of disabled people during the rise of industrialism.

Barnes and Mercer (2003) argued that it is clear that the traditional individualised definitions of disability were typically formed by medical ideologies of disability, which were based on the assumption that this was for people with disabilities' own benefit, and to prevent people with disabilities from being a burden on others in the wider society. Therefore medical professionals and educational psychologists thought about disability in terms of 'solutions' to problems rather than considering the issue in a wider social context. These 'solutions' were often found in separate institutions, such as hospitals and 'special' schools.

Shakespeare and Watson (1997) also argued that the WHO's definitions of disability, impairment and handicap encouraged medical professionals to place their own priorities

on the lifestyles of people with disabilities, and to treat those people as ‘problems’ to be ‘cured’ only by medical rehabilitative therapy.

More specifically, Goffman’s (1961,1963) studies in mental hospitals clearly indicate how this institutionalised process affected those who were considered ‘impaired’ as somehow ‘different’ from ‘normal’ people in the broader society. The tendency to define disability through various medical theories implied that those disabilities possessed ‘undesired differentness’ to those considered non–disabled, and enabled the construction of labels that describe people with disabilities as ‘deviant’ and ‘abnormal’.

Elias and Scotson (1994) pointed out that putting people with disabilities into separate institutions enables more established groups (i.e. medical professionals and some non–disabled groups) to encourage less powerful groups of people with disabilities to accept an identity that views them as a ‘minority of the worst’. According to them, institutionalisation also encourages people with disabilities to absorb negative self– and group identities. At the same time, these separate institutions reinforce a more positive ‘minority of the best’ image in relation to more established groups, which identifies ‘desirable’ characteristics, for example able–bodiedness and perceptions of ‘normality’. Therefore, these definitions from medical institutions can be seen to have a negative impact on people with disabilities.

Thomas and Smith (2008) analysed the reasons why the ICIDH has been criticised on explanations of disability. First, and most importantly, the ICIDH focused purely on the personal limitations of people with disabilities, and ignored their other personal and social needs. Second, according to their definitions, the sole cause of disability is impairment. Last, they state that the ICIDH definitions have further enhanced the

already growing power of the medical profession to define what are and are not perceived to be medical problems.

Barnes and Mercer (1996, 2003) further argued that the ICIDH–based definitions of impairment and disability mainly focus on their medical nature. They ignore aspects by which disabilities and other sources of social division, for instance gender and social class, are socially constructed. The ICIDH definitions also ignore the complex ways in which different societies have perceived and experienced disability over time. Additionally, the ICIDH definitions have come to be defined by the medical profession and other non–disabled groups. The medical profession and other non–disabled groups have a greater ability to define what ought to constitute 'disability' and 'impairment'. Because of this, they have a more advantageous position relative to other less advantaged groups (Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeareet ,1999).

Oliver (1986) pointed out the growing dissatisfaction with the mainstream medicalised definitions of disability which were widely used during the twentieth century. From the late 1960s, several political campaigns began to challenge this understanding and practice across Europe and North America (Priestley, 1998). These campaigns, which were led by people with disabilities such as activists and organizations who were forced to stay in separate residential care facilities, helped challenge medically–informed explanations about disability and the perceived status of people with disabilities as 'second–class citizens'. Oliver (1996) argues that disability should not be seen as a medical or biological problem, but as a social construction. The people with disabilities who led these political campaigns primarily focused on improvement of welfare services through the working organisations, such as the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). These campaigns shifted focus towards placing

greater importance on the right of people with disabilities' to 'independent living'. They also started to campaign to change the attitudes of people in wider groups towards those considered as having a disability (Oliver & Barnes, 1998).

Barnes (1992) proposed that one outcome of attempts by the disabled people's movement to challenge the orthodox medicalised explanation of disability was the 'social model' or definition of disability that 'focuses on the environmental and social barriers which exclude people with perceived impairments from mainstream society'. This definition of disability has become increasingly accepted by organisations such as the UK's Disabled People's Council. This alternative definition, based upon a biomedical definition that says some individuals could be seen to have an impairment, acknowledges the complex causes of disability, like all kinds of social division, which have deep roots in the differential and unequal power positions between groups in the wider society (Barnes, 2002).

2.2.2 Social Definitions

As Thomas and Smith (2008) explained, definitions of disability have tended to fall into two main categories: medical or social. Shakespeare and Watson (1997) further discuss the concept that social definitions that support the social model of disability are the most widely accepted among the two main categories. There has been growing support for the social model of disability since the 1960s, because it 'underplayed the importance of impairment in disabled people's lives, in order to develop a strong argument about social structures and processes'. However, the social model has been criticised for failing to provide an understanding of disability that acknowledges the centrality of impairment, and the experience of disability in people's lives from the point of view of people who have such disabilities.

Shakespeare (1996) argued that the over–emphasis of social and environmental explanations of disability is perceived as a concept. It is understandable and fearless to rethink impairment as a medical 'problem' or 'personal tragedy'. It proves a view of disability: one that can only be 'healed' through medical ways. Despite the reliability of these thoughts, there have been calls for an update on the definition of disability by some people within the disability movement (Bates & Davis, 2004). They argue that the assumptions made in the previous definition of disability are not reliable with regard to the actual lives of people with disabilities. They argue for a definition that is informed by the experiences of people with disabilities, and one that recognises the social and environmental constraints that help structure those experiences (Barnes, 1997; Crow, 1992; Hughes and Paterson, 1997). It seems impossible to define in detail the complicated theoretical arguments which surround the veracity of the social model of disability (e.g. Barnes and Mercer, 2003; Barnes et al., 1999; Hughes and Paterson, 1997; Shakespeare and Watson, 1997). Although it is evident that those who advocated the definitions that structure the social model of disability failed to account for the individual experience of impairment and disability in their discussions, it could also be argued that the many complex interdependencies that exist between each individual's experience of impairment and disability would make this unfeasible (Barton, Barnes and Oliver, 2002).

2.2.3 Component of Health Definitions

WHO issued a developed ICIDH (ICIDH–2) in 2000 (WHO, 2001) which defined disability as a 'component of health'. This was in response to widespread criticism, particularly from people with disabilities and their organisations, as well as from

academics and medical professionals whose approach to defining disability ignored the social constraints that people with disabilities experience.

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) defines disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome and depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g. negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social supports).

Thomas and Smith (2008) considered that the ICIDH–2 took account of the criticisms of the previous definition of disability and tried to balance both the medical and social models of disability. It distinguished between those limitations to social life which are best dealt with by medical intervention, and those which are the cause and subject of social and environmental constraints on disability. In this regard, the ICIDH–2 adopts what has been seen as a new 'biopsychosocial' approach to defining disability. This approach is argued to think that each area of disablement can be explained through a complex affect on each of the other different dimensions, which it terms 'impairments', 'activity limitations' and 'participation restrictions' of an individual's experience of impairment and their social and physical contexts.

Despite the obvious recognition of the complexities involved in adequately explaining disabled people's experiences of disability and the relationship between disability and impairment, this has not resulted in a substantial shift – either in policy and practical terms – away from the dominant medical understanding of disability. Indeed, as Barnes and Mercer (2003) have observed:

> There is sample evidence internationally of the continued acceptance of the individual model of disability in policy circles ... the 'functional limitations' approach is widely incorporated within anti–discrimination legislation (as in the USA and Britain), and it continues to inform surveys of the prevalence of 'disability' within the European Union (Barnes and Mercer, 2003).

To sum up, it is clear that the definition of disability is still developing and needs to be updated as there is yet not a definition that satisfies everyone. However, when compared with the first two main definitions of disability, the last definition suits this study better as a sole concept. Therefore, this thesis will apply the ICIDH–2 definition of disability in order to analyse the research question, and also to guide this research in understanding disability sport.

In terms of terminology, it defines those central concepts to the analysis being presented for the purposes of the research. This research prefers to use the term 'people with disabilities' (the preferred usage in the United States) rather than 'disabled people'. However, it should be borne in mind that much of the core theory material on which this research is based emanates from the UK, where the phrase 'disabled people' has tended to dominate much of the disability studies literature over the last half century or so. However, the key term of this research should represent the approach of this study: In the phrase 'people with disabilities', the word *people* come before *disabilities*. This places people at the forefront, and recognises people as the defining concept, rather than the term disabled.

2.3 Historical Review of Disability Sport

The best representative events that showcase elite disability sport are the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games. These are the largest multi–sport competitions and international events that raise genuine and inspiring questions about the essence of sport, disability and society. For this research, it is very important to study the historical development of disability sport.

Unlike the abundance of resources available to the researcher for Olympic studies, it is difficult to source documents in single archival or library sources for disability sport. This is partly because early disability sporting events were organised on extremely small budgets by volunteers who had little or very limited time to keep an adequate record of the Games (Brittain, 2009). Therefore, in order to understand the historical development of the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games, it would be beneficial to this study to have a clear historical and global background.

2.3.1 Historical Review of the Paralympics

World War II and the Paralympics

Sainsbury (1998) cited several examples of sports clubs and leisure clubs for people with disabilities in the early period of the twentieth century. These included the British Disabled Drivers' Motor Club (1922), and the Society of One–armed Golfers (1932).

Legg, Emes, Stewart and Steadward (2002) review found that there were a great number of patients suffering from spinal cord injuries who died less than three years after they were injured during World War II. Craven (2006) discusses how Ludwig Guttmann

founded what the world now recognises as the Paralympic Games. When he was in Germany in the 1930s, Guttmann worked as a doctor, where he met a miner with an injured back. He was shocked to learn that experts believed that this was an incurable case and that the man was likely to die within weeks. This particular injury frequently resulted in sepsis of the kidney, blood failure, or both. However, according to Brandmeyer and McBee (1986) the invention after World War II of a drug named sulfa helped patients with spinal cord injuries to survive. Another major problem facing those with spinal cord injuries was depression. This was mainly caused by social attitudes towards them, which made them feel as if their lives were worthless.

According to Lomi,Geroulanos and Kekatos (2004), reviewed in 1939, Ludwig Guttman was a German Jew who fled Nazi Germany and finally settled in Oxford with his family. Guttman worked at Oxford University as neurologist, in which area he was an expert. In September 1943, the Government of the UK appointed him as the Head of the National Spinal Injuries Unit at the Ministry of Pensions Hospital, Stoke Mandeville near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, UK. This was mainly to take care of the huge amount of soldiers and civilians whose spines had been injured during World War II. Guttmann accepted this job on condition that he would be allowed to work independently and could follow his own method of treatment. Patients were concerned, and many of his peers were clearly shocked by his enthusiasm for what they viewed as an extremely challenging task. Goodman (1986) commented that people did not understand why Guttmann relocated from the ‘dreaming spires’ of Oxford University to be ‘engulfed in the hopeless and depressing task of looking after traumatic spinal paraplegics’.

Steadward (1992) states that there is little evidence of any organised efforts before World War II to develop or promote the life of an individual with a disability. This was especially true of those with spinal cord injuries, who were viewed as having no hope of surviving their injuries. After the war, however, medical authorities re–evaluated the rehabilitation process and found that the traditional method was not a satisfactory response to the medical and psychological needs of a large number of disabled soldiers. According to McCatin (1996), Guttmann recognised the physiological and psychological values of sport in the rehabilitation of paraplegic hospital inpatients, and so it was that sport was introduced as part of the total rehabilitation programme for patients in the spinal unit. Anderson (2003) further discussed that the aim was not simply to give hope and a sense of self–worth to the patients, but to change the attitudes of society towards the spinally injured by demonstrating to them that they could not only continue to be useful members of society, but could take part in activities and complete tasks with which most of the non–disabled society would struggle.

According to Guttmann (1952), they started modestly and cautiously with darts, snooker, punch–ball and skittles. Sometime later, apparently after Guttman and his remedial gymnast, Quartermaster 'Q' Hill, had 'waged furious battle' in an empty ward to test it, the sport of wheelchair polo was introduced. Scruton (1964) stated that after some consideration, it was decided that wheelchair polo was too dangerous and it was replaced by wheelchair netball. This later became what we now know as wheelchair basketball. The next sport to be introduced into the programme at Stoke Mandeville was to play a key role in all areas of Guttman's rehabilitation plans. That sport was archery. According to Guttmann (1952), archery was of immense value in strengthening, in a very natural way, just those muscles of the upper limbs, shoulders and trunk, on which the paraplegic's well–balanced, upright position depends. However, it was far more than

just that. It was one of the very few sports that, once proficient, paraplegics could compete on equal terms with their non–disabled counterparts. This led to visits of teams from Stoke Mandeville to a number of non–disabled archery clubs in later years, which was very helpful in breaking down the barriers between the public and the paraplegics. It also showed that once discharged from hospital, the paraplegic had an access to society through their local archery club. According to Guttmann (1976), these experiments were the beginning of a systematic development of competitive sport for the paralysed. They were also an essential part of patients' medical rehabilitation and social reintegration in the community of a country like Great Britain, where sport in one form or another plays such an essential part in the lives of so many people.

The Development of the Paralympic Games as an International Event

The event now internationally known as the Paralympic Games had a very difficult beginning. According to Guttmann (1952), its journey began as a demonstrational archery race between two competitors of wheelchair users from the Richmond Star and Garter Home for Injured War Veterans and the Stoke Mandeville Ministry of Pensions Hospital. For the event, the London traffic management department and the British Legion organised a specially modified bus to bring competitors to Stoke Mandeville.

The event kept growing and would eventually become the biggest ever sporting event for athletes with disabilities, and one of the biggest sporting events in the world after the Olympic Games. The purpose of the bus was to allow patients to travel across the country to a variety of activities and events, but also let them return to their community, to readjust to a more urban life. Buses were also provided for both disabled and non–disabled archery teams in competitions in the following few years.

Maybe more fortunate of great future impact was the date chosen for the archery demonstration, which was Thursday, 29 July 1948. This was the same opening day as the 14th Olympic Games at Wembley in London, less than 35 miles away. Although it is not known for certain whether this was purely coincidence or a deliberate choice, it was an interesting early link that Guttmann openly encouraged over the years. Guttmann (1952) later pointed out that the event was not only an experimental public performance, but that it also presented a model of society which highlighted the notion that sport was not purely the domain of non–disabled people.

According to *The Cord* (1949), Guttmann describes the 'Grand Festival of Paraplegic Sport', as the second incarnation of the Olympic Games, held on 27 July in 1949. The hard work of Guttmann and his colleagues and all kinds of influence resulted in the Stoke Mandeville archers moving to other spinal patient care units nationwide, bringing their new–found passion for sport with them. The number of spinal patient care units subsequently moved up to six units. A group of thirty–seven athletes participated in these Games, with special guests being archers of the Penley Polish Hospital in Wrexham. In these Games, every competitor was also Guttmann's patient. A type of wheelchair netball, which was actually a kind of mix between netball and basketball, was also put on the programme.

In the next three years, the number of competitors at the Games kept rising due to more and more spinal patient care units from all over the country starting to participate. Guttmann (1952), however, had far bigger visions: his ultimate ambition was to move the Games to a world–class stage. A local paper said the Games had walked one step closer to becoming a global event. Competitors represented several countries, including France, Australia, Poland and Southern Rhodesia. Apart from the Penley Polish hospital

patients, the other competitors were all residents at British spinal units. This was Guttmann's first step towards his dream of holding a real international Games. The following year, in 1952, a group of four paraplegics from the Netherlands Military Rehabilitation Centre competed in the first international Games. Four years later, in 1956, awareness of the Games had risen sharply on the international stage, and by then there were eighteen countries participating.

Spreading the Spirit

Scruton (1957) stated that it may be difficult to learn how a single event that only started with sixteen wheelchair archers in 1948 as a public demonstration went on to become an international competitive event that challenged the disadvantages of people with disabilities. Ten years after its inception, there were many international delegations in attendance. In fact, the Games developed to such a degree with several international branches together. It became important to hold a national Stoke Mandeville Games for athletes selected for the British team in 1958, and then to participate in the international Games one month or so later. According to Brittain (2009), Guttmann played an important role in spreading the word about the Stoke Mandeville Games to different countries worldwide, helping it become the successful international sporting event we know today.

In the early days, much of the development of the Games seems to have been down to Guttmann's former patients who were moved to other spinal care units. They brought their passion for sport to other patients in these new units. Most of Guttmann's patients came back to participate in the Games over the years. To a smaller extent, this is also true of the doctors and experts from all over the planet who arrived at Stoke Mandeville

to be trained by Guttmann and returned home to apply sport into their treatment programmes, for example the Israeli doctor, Dr Ralph Spira.

In 1947, the earliest edition of *The Cord* was issued. This was a journal containing a series of articles and suggestions for beneficial treatment for paraplegics. It often also had a section on hospital sporting events. Importantly, copies of *The Cord* were always posted to individuals and organisations in different countries with news of the Games. News of Guttmann's treatment programmes spread far and wide due to the short supply of practical knowledge on how to provide assistance to paraplegics. The journal kept publishing up to 1983.

In an expansion of the Games to the worldwide arena, Guttmann himself was the main advertisement. He was a seasoned traveller to other countries, where he attended conferences or gave lectures. Occasionally he even provided evidence in court cases. While abroad, he would take every chance to tell people about the Games and his method of using sport as a tool for rehabilitation. He also always challenged particular eminent individuals in other countries to send a team to the Games. For example, in 1956, Sir George Bedbrooke and his Royal Perth Hospital team paid a visit. That was first time that Australia had sent a delegation to Stoke Mandeville (Lockwood and Lockwood, 2007).

Guttmann also seems to have been very astute when it came to political matters, and he knew what it took to attract attention for an event. Beginning with the first Games in 1948, he always ensured the attendance at the Games of high–ranking political and social figures, along with future sports stars and celebrities. He was aware that the attendance of well–known people would attract media attention.

The final method used by Guttmann to emphasise the importance of the Games in the public mind was his frequent use of comparisons to the Olympic Games, despite the lukewarm response he received when he first suggested it. Guttmann's plan seems to have been two–fold. First, the idea was to give his patients something visible to work for and to give them a sense of self–worth. Second, the ambition was to attract media attention, along with that of people and institutions involved with paraplegics all over the world.

The Modern Paralympic Games

The Cord (1960) reported that Guttmann's long–time work in building a link between the Olympic Games and the Stoke Mandeville Games took a big step forward in 1959 at the World Veterans Federation's annual meeting in Rome. Following suggestions from various federation members including Dr Maglio of the Rome Spinal Care Unit, and the Instituto Nazionale per l'Assicurazione contro gli Infortuni sul Lavoro (INAIL), it was agreed to hold the 1960 Games in Rome a couple of weeks after the Olympic Games were scheduled to be held in the same place. Despite several issues in Rome, mostly about access to suitable accommodation, it was generally felt that these Games were a great success.

Tokyo had been selected by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to host the Olympic Games in 1964, and the organisers of the Stoke Mandeville Games decided to hold their Games at the same venue close to the same time. This resulted in the first–ever delegation of Japanese athletes and officials presenting themselves. Dr Leonardo Ruiz from the Institute Mexicano de Rehabilitacion was present at the Tokyo Games. He was there to observe the Games in the hopes of holding the Games in Mexico City in

1968. On 21 July 1965, the International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee received a letter from the president of the Mexican rehabilitation centre where the application of sports treatment was progressing positively. Because of concerns about the effect of the altitude on paraplegics, the Americans sent an advance investigation team to Mexico City. However, when the team manager, Ben Lipton, worked on arranging this, he received a letter from the president of the rehabilitation centre explaining that because of financial limitations and problems with accessibility to the facilities in Mexico City, they would not be happy for the Games to be held there. Following offers from New York and Tel Aviv, Israel was then chosen to hold the 1968 Games(Scruton, 1964).

According to Brittain (2009), after the Stoke Mandeville Games in Israel it was hoped that the 1972 Olympic hosting city, Munich, would be able to host the Games. Unfortunately, the Olympic Organising Committee refused the proposal based on the fact that the Olympic athletes' village was to be rebuilt as civil housing immediately after the Games, and it was clearly too late to alter this plan. However, the Germans did offer another option of the University of Heidelberg, which was agreed upon.

The 1976 Olympic Games were scheduled to be held in Montreal, Canada, but as had happened previously in Munich, the decision was made by the Montreal organisers to refuse the application to run the Games. This was mainly because that it had been agreed to run a combination of games: these were the International Stoke Mandeville Games Federation (ISMGF) – International Sports Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD) Games. The plan was to include blind and amputee athletes and paraplegics, which directly expanded the Games in terms of both complexity and size. The 1976 Games were eventually held in Toronto.

In July 1977, Arnhem in the Netherlands was selected as host for the 1980 Games due to a lack of interest from the Moscow Olympic organisers. The 1984 Olympic Games were set to be held in Los Angeles. However, no evidence can be found to show that either the ISMGF or the ISOD tried to use the Los Angeles venues for their own games. Following the 1980 bid of Ben Lipton, the Chairman of the US National Wheelchair Athletic Association (NWAA), America was picked as the host nation. However, these Games were to be divided into ISOD Games (to be run by the ISOD) and ISMGF Games (to be run by the NWAA) separately and at different venues, but at about the same time. According to the 1984 VIIth World Wheelchair Games final report, in October 1980 Ben Lipton had released a placement paper listing the reasons why the NWAA decided to run the games separately. Before this plan could move ahead, it was eventually decided that the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign would hold the wheelchair Games in July, and that Nassau County, New York would hold the ISOD 'International Games for the Disabled' in June. However, in early 1984, financial and political challenges concerning the wheelchair Games forced the University of Illinois to give up their support for the Games, and the wheelchair Games were removed to Stoke Mandeville at very short notice.

Since 1988, the Paralympic Summer Games have been organised in the same host city as the Olympic Games. The starting date is normally approximately two weeks after the Olympic closing ceremony. The only exception to this was in 1992. In that year, the Paralympic Games for Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities was organised in Madrid, as a forerunner to Athletes with Intellectual Disabilities being included in the 1996 Atlanta programme, along with the other four types of disabilities already scheduled.

The Winter Paralympic Games

According to Gold and Gold (2007), in 1974 the first suggestion for a Winter Paralympic Games was made at the annual meeting of the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled. Unsurprisingly, the suggestion came from Sweden, a country with a strong winter sports tradition. There was only about eighteen months to make the important arrangements, which meant that the Games were small in size, but they were still recognised as a great success. These first Games were only open to athletes with visual disabilities or amputations. The first six rounds of the Games were all held in Europe, where winter sports were very popular, and where winter sports for athletes with disabilities had first emerged in the 1950s. Athletes with spinal injuries raced in the second Games, which were held in Geilo, Norway. These were soon joined by Les Autres athletes in Innsbruck, Austria, and then four years later athletes with cerebral palsy participated. The Winter Games did not take place in the same venues as the Olympic host city until their fifth round, in the 1992 Tignes–Albertville Olympic Winter Games. Special events such as disability skiing had appeared as early as 1984, however, at the Sarajevo Winter Olympic Games.

2.3.2 Historical Review of the Special Olympics

According to Orelove and Wood (1982), Eunice Kennedy Shriver was the founder of the Special Olympics. She was a member of the politically and economically renowned family, the Kennedys, who were in the forefront of American politics throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Eunice Kennedy Shriver had visited many units built to care for numerous people with intellectual disabilities in the United States as part of her work with the Joseph P. Kennedy Junior Foundation. This foundation had been established in honour of the Ambassador and Mrs Joseph R. Kennedy Shriver's eldest son, who had died in World War II. Eunice Kennedy Shriver was shocked by the awful living

conditions and the complete absence of any opportunities for physical or educational activity provided for these people. She became very certain that something needed to happen for them. She was an active sportswoman herself, and was also influenced by the international Paralympics movement, so she believed that sport and physical activity could positively improve the daily lives of people with intellectual disabilities. Privett (1999) reviewed, in 1962, that Kennedy Shriver organised a day camp at her home in Rockville, Maryland, named Camp Shriver for a total of thirty–five boys and girls with intellectual disabilities. This was her way of testing her hypothesis in the application of a variety of sporting and physical activities. Camp Shriver became a yearly event, and the Kennedy Foundation provided funding support to different organisations to practice similar activity camps across the United States.

According to the History of Special Olympics official web page (www.specialolympics.org/) the Kennedy Foundation then started to facilitate workshops on the benefits of sports for all people, including people with intellectual disabilities(Special Olympics, 2010) . One of the participants at a workshop in Chicago was Anne Burke, who was working for the Chicago Parks Department on how the parks could provide more services for people with intellectual disabilities. The Chicago Parks Department collaborated with the Kennedy Foundation on the programme for the first Special Olympics International Games in July 1968. From these first Games, the Special Olympics has developed into a worldwide organisation with over two million athletes registered from over 170 countries. In 1977, the first Winter Games were held in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. In 1993, the first Games to take place outside the United States were the Winter Games in Salzburg and Schladming in Austria. Then, in 2003, the Summer Games were held in Dublin, Ireland. This was the first time the Summer Games took place outside the United States.

The Special Olympic Games

Competitions always play an important role in sports development. Like any other sporting events, the Special Olympic Games always draw considerable media attention. According to the Special Olympics sports rules, a series of sporting games were organised exclusively for people with intellectual disabilities. Those whose IQ falls below 70, are aged over eight years old, and who participate in physical activity for over eight weeks, are eligible to become Special Olympic athletes and to participate in the Special Olympic Games. The Special Olympic Games is a mega sports event which is divided into three levels: the intercontinental level, the country level and the local level (Special Olympics, 2007). The Special Olympic Games are held every two years, alternating between the Special Olympic Summer Games and the Special Olympic Winter Games. At present, the Special Olympic Games formally includes twenty–three summer events and seven winter sports.

2.3.3 Historical Review of the Deaflympic Games

Stewart (1991) cited that organised deaf sport emerged through deaf communities, church groups and book–reading clubs. The Glasgow Dumb and Deaf Football Club (Scotland), which was established in 1872, is the earliest recorded and organised adult deaf sport club. The first six adult deaf sport clubs were all in Britain, so it is clear that they developed in line with the development of sports clubs for the hearing. In 1915, other clubs emerged, mostly in Western Europe and Australia. In Europe, because of geographical accessibility, 'friendlies' were organised between local sporting clubs and across national borders. In 1891, the earliest known full deaf international match in any sport between two nations was held in Glasgow: this was between teams from Scotland and England. In 1910, about nineteen years after the first match between Scotland and

England among the hearing groups, German Deutscher Gehörlosen–Sportverband was recorded as the earliest national association of Deaf sport. DePauw and Gavron (1995) pointed out that the first international organisation which worked for one focused disability group and its involvement in sport was established in 1924 by a deaf Frenchman, E. Rubens– Alcais, with the help of six national sports organisations for the deaf. It was named Comité International des Sports des Sourds (CISS). In 1924, athletes from nine countries attended the first International Silent Games in Paris. Then it was renamed the Deaflympics. According to the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) , there are Summer and Winter versions of the Games. The Deaflympic Summer Games is normally held in the year after the Olympics and Paralympics, however it was suspended during World War II. In 1949, the first Deaflympic Winter Games took place in Austria, with thirty–three athletes from five countries.

The ICSD recorded that the Deaflympic Games is the second earliest international multisport event in the world, coming after the Olympic Games (1896). The United States and Japan were the first non–European nations to associate with the ICSD, and the United States was the earliest non–European nation announced to take part in the 1935 Deaflympics Games. Since 1977, among newly joined members sharing the positive outcome of this social inclusion and international network of sports are such geographically disparate countries as Cyprus, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Swaziland, Uruguay, Iceland and Estonia. It is under the backing of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In 2001, the IOC officially provided recognition for the Deaflympics. At the end of 2010, the ICSD had 104 member countries geographically allocated amongst four regional level organisations as follows: Asia Pacific (30), Africa (20 members), Pan America (8), Europe (46) (ICSD, 2011).

2.4 Researches in Elite Disability Sport in China

2.4.1 Studies on Elite Disability Sport Policy

According to Chi (2005), attitudes towards people with disabilities are one of the most important standards to measure the progress of social civilisation. He also states that China has run sports games for people with disabilities from as early as the 1950s. China joined the Paralympics in 1984, and topped the medal table by far at the 2004 Athens, 2008 Beijing, and 2012 London Paralympic Games.

Stone (2001) argued that, both under Maoist understanding, where 'fit bodies were a prerequisite for a strong and fit China' and under the policies of Deng Xioaping's free–market economy, people with disabilities became alienated in China. In the first case this was because of people with disabilities' physical challenges, and in the second case it was because of people with disabilities' low productivity. She further pointed out that media coverage of disability sport in China has been another way of moving the government's responsibility towards people with disabilities away from the state and on to society in general, and particularly on to people with disabilities themselves. The government often sets up examples of heroic people with disabilities, such as Paralympic champions, to encourage and even shame those who did not do their part. Brittain (2009) citied the Vice Chairman of China Disabled Persons' Foundation (CDPF) Wang Xinxian's comment, 'all of our disabled players are non–professional athletes and most do not have a stable job. They have to consider their family's economic situation when doing sports. Some excellent athletes have had to give up sports for financial reasons', which seems to be evidence to support Stone's argument. Further claims give examples of the lack of means of Paralympic champions from people with disabilities' point of view.

Brittain (2009) is critical about evidence that China invested heavily in disability sport and suggests that the success may not be a true reflection of the strategy or how people with disabilities are cared for and considered within China. China appears the only country to be taking a similar approach to that of the former East Germany and Soviet Union in disability sport. Among its possible motivations, is its desire to present itself to the world as an strong economic power which can look after all of its people with the same care, thereby giving examples of elite disability sport success to encourage other people with disabilities to make more of their lives.

2.4.2 Studies on Elite Disability Sport Administration

Lu, Li and Chen(2004) study is the only existing study on elite disability sport administration in China. The elite disability sport management system and the organisational structure experienced a development process over the past 20 years. The system has played an important role in promoting elite disability sport. The current management structure of Chinese elite disability sport is to uphold the traditional organisation style. However, the social environment of elite disability sport has become increasingly complex and the elite disability sport administration has shown a lack of flexibility in dealing with rapid change. The external factor in terms of social environment has resulted in management organisation structure changes. As a result, The China Disability Sport Training Centre was established in 2003, which was a landmark in the transformation of the organisational structure.

Lu et al. (2004) stated that the Centre was still applying a traditional linear structure which has been shown to be of great unsuitability in the current social environment. He said the future direction of management, organisational and structural reform should

take full account of changes in the social environment and match the goals of elite disability sport in China to establish an innovative, flexible, efficient, dynamic management and organisational structure. It should have the main features of modern organisations: namely organic, non–centralisation (decentralisation of decision–making), non–regularisation, flat, information exchange technology, and workflow–oriented. Furthermore, the organisational cultural construction should be strengthened to emphasise the integrity and unity of the organisation, and respect for individual interests would help to create a good working and living environment for all staff. This would enable the stabilisation of the coordinated development organisations.

2.4.3 Studies on Elite Disability Sport Training and Selection

Chi (2005) stated that the local Disabled Persons' Foundation (DPF) had set up records of adolescents and children in welfare institutions, local hospitals, special needs schools and elementary or middle schools. This was done to enable the identification of talent as early as possible, and it is the key to the success of disability sport in China.

Zhao (2012) studied elite disability sport training and selection in Jiangsu province. She found all athletes should be selected by the coach's instinct and experience. According to her research, 75% of coaches prefer to select athletes by their competition performance, whereas only 12.5% prefer the DPF to recommend athletes. The remaining 18.8% of athletes are selected by other forms of recommendation. In terms of the selection criteria, 93.75% of the selections are based on coaches' personal experience; 62.5% of the coaches focused on physical condition; 31.25% considered athletes' performance; and 12.5% are concerned about the athlete's classification. The lack of a scientific and rational selection mechanism caused the failure of many athletes to achieve long–term development.

2.4.4 Studies on Elite Disability Sport Competition

According to Zhao (2010), the development on the medal table shows China has improved its portion of the winning medals at every Paralympic Games (except for 1992 when it sent a very small team), even though the number of countries winning medals has nearly doubled in the same period.

Cai (2009) reviewed the development process of the Chinese Paralympics competition, and found that in different historical periods the number of Paralympics competitors, the scale and the events were very different. Because of Chinese Paralympic competitions implied centralised management mode, China made brilliant achievements in a relatively short time to meet the demands of the national political needs. In the recent past, the number of Chinese Paralympics competitors has risen sharply (Dai, Wang and Yang, 2010). However, the competition form is too simple. The competition programmes and events put too much emphasis on performance requirements, which resulted in the development of hosting international games were limited. The fact that China rarely hosted the international Paralympics competitions does not tally with its economic strength and international competition results. To better understand the development of the Paralympics, competitions should take into account education and the cultural building of disability sports for the public. To do so, it is important to develop the Paralympics, Deaflympics and Special Olympics in a balanced way rather than focusing only on the Paralympics.

To sum it up, from the aspects of policy, administration and training system; elite disability sport studies in China is very limited in general since 1979 to 2012 due to lack of public awareness and government funding.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the definition of disability and sport as well as the historical development of disability sport movements, including the Paralympics, the Special Olympics and the Deaflympics. It is helpful to understand how each of these three movements facilitated social change by influencing the public's perceptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Based on this, the research on disability sport in China was reviewed. The review concludes, first, that current research on disability sport in China is very general, as the Paralympics, the Special Olympics and the Deaflympics are not discussed separately. Second, research on disability sport in China is weak, because no study in China has considered the three disability sport movements as a whole; existing studies only look into disability sport in China either from the government's perspective or from the perspective of people with disabilities. Last, Chinese research is lacking in theory foundation. In order to draw the full picture of disability sport in China over its 30–year development and to try to understand it from a theoretical perspective, the following chapter will explain and clarify the appropriate theory which will be applied in this research.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The studies of functionalism theory and empowerment theory are multiple and varied across and within most academic fields, and disability sport studies is no exception. Therefore, it is necessary to outline the research terrain in order to conduct the research inquiry for this study. In doing so, this chapter has three objectives. First, it will review functionalism theory and empowerment theory, and the major schools of theorists. This is to confirm the theoretical position this study will take amongst the many that exist in the field of sport studies. Second, it will review the relevant studies on disability sport in terms of its political, policy–making and power dimensions. The aim in so doing is to outline the multidimensionality of disability sport in China as a historical and dialectical process. Third, this chapter will discuss how functionalism theory and empowerment theory have been adopted in this study. It aims not only to clarify the theoretical foundations underpinning each theory, but also to identify the rationale for selecting the theory which will be applied in this study.

3.2 Functionalism Theory Review

Functionalism is one of the oldest theories in both sociology and anthropology. Many sociologists regard the 'systems model' (Coakley, 1990) as the best way to study society. According to functionalism, society is an organised system of interrelated parts that are held together by shared values and established social arrangements that maintain the system in a state of balance or equilibrium (Loy, 1978; Loy & Booth, 2000). As Zeitlin (1973) argues, functionalism is also known by the following terms: functional orientation, functional theory, functional analysis and structural

functionalism. This section will primarily outline the contents and the development of functionalism, and then highlight Robert K. Merton's perspective on functionalism. Furthermore, the functionalist theory and research on sport and this study will be explored.

3.2.1 The Origin and Forms of Functionalism

The concept of functionalism was introduced in modern sociology by its founding father, Auguste Comte. Comte was the first person to use the term, and his use of it can be traced back to the middle 19th century. Taking a lead from Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim espoused organic models of society. They analysed the structure and functioning of societies in a manner analogous to the study of the structure and functioning of a biological organism.

Spencer addressed the following phenomena in comparing society and organisms: both society and organisms can be distinguished from inorganic matter by examining how both of them grow and develop. With society and organisms, an increase in size means an increase in complexity and differentiation. For both, parts of the whole are interdependent, where a change in one part affects other parts. Each part of the whole is also a micro–society or organism in and of itself. In both organisms and societies, the life of the whole can be destroyed, but the parts may continue to live on for a while (Turner, 1984).

Durkheim adopted several of Spencer's opinions in presenting his own perspectives on functionalism. The idea of structure primarily came from the theories of Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred Radcliffe–Brown. Emile Durkheim also derived the theme of functionalist theory. He stated:

> A social system must reveal some degree of internal integration among its constituent parts. The important theoretical task is to determine the functions, or consequences, of a constituent part for the integration of the systemic whole. The cause and functions of the part need to be analysed separately in relation to social integration. This social integration is a way for the different parts to become integrated with the whole (Turner & Maryanski, 1979).

Durkheim's point of view deeply influenced the sociological functionalism of Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. Parsons' functional approach to sociology became so dominant that by the late 1950s sociology and functionalism had become more or less identical. This meant that sociology studied the roles of institutions and social behaviour in society. It also studied the way these are related to other social features, and developed explanations of society in social terms (Wallace and Wolf, 2005). In contrast to Durkheim's idea, Talcott Parsons et al. attempted to integrate the individual with the social structure, in order to optimise the traditional status of social structure in functionalism. Parsons claimed that 'the social system consists of the actions of individuals' (Parsons & Shills, 1976), and that the interaction between two individuals faced with a variety of choices about how they might act are choices that are influenced by a number of social and physical factors (Parsons, 1961). Parsons also highlighted the idea that social structures are complementary; they perform positive functions for each other and tend to move towards equilibrium, meaning that society is characterised by consensus. According to Parsons' standpoint, all systems have four functional imperatives: adaptation; goal–attainment; integration; and latency.

Robert K. Merton is another well–known sociologist who provided some important structural, functional theoretical statements. Merton was not a pioneer of grand theories as was Parsons, preferring instead to focus on smaller social systems (Ritzer & Goodman, 2008). While Durkheim and Parsons may have been concerned with human society as a whole, Merton was more focused on mid–sized social systems. Furthermore, he always tried to vary what he chose to study.

There are many types of sociological resources which explain the forms of functionalism. In one of the most detailed topologies, twelve types of functionalism were identified (Spiro, 1953). Furthermore, according to Abrahamson's (1978) perspective, the individualistic, interpersonal and societal forms serve to illustrate both classic and contemporary forms of functionalism. Individualistic functionalism is most closely linked to the anthropological writings of Bronislaw Malinowski, who contended that every society has to cater for individuals' needs in terms of cultural values and social institutions that are functional responses to these needs (Loy & Booth, 2000).

The perspective of interpersonal functionalism, on the other hand, deals with interpersonal interactions. There are a large number of interpersonal practices which act as solutions for minimising inherent social functions and strains to connect individuals into an integrated whole. Last but not least, societal functionalism refers to practices that satisfy the needs of the social system. All the above three forms of functionalism are incorporated into what is normally called 'structural–functionalism' (Loy & Booth, 2000).

3.2.2 The Perspective of Functionalism

In society, the most important social institutions are family, education, media, politics, economy, religion, leisure and sport. According to the functionalist approach, if the different social institutions are working together in an orderly manner and around a core set of values without any great conflict, a society will usually operate in equilibrium, or moving towards equilibrium, with consensus rather than conflict governing the interrelationships of these various institutions. Sometimes a change will occur in one of these parts which happens in an orderly and evolutionary fashion, rather than via revolutionary or dramatic structural breaks. Conflicts or external factors stimulate adjustment of the parts to move towards a new equilibrium. As change occurs, the various parts of societies become more differentiated, with these parts adapting to new needs and problems. Societies become more complex, with new institutions and subsystems developing that perform the new functions required to make the society operate smoothly (Coakley & Pike, 2009).

In the functionalist theory model, individuals carry out each of these tasks in various institutions and within roles that are consistent with the structures and norms of the society. Functionalist analysis assumes that social systems operate efficiently when they are organised to do four things called system needs (Coakley, 1990). The satisfaction of these needs is essential for the efficient operation of any social system, whether it is a society, a business organisation, or a small group. These four needs are referred to as:

(1) socialise people so that they learn and accept important cultural values;

(2) promote social connections between people so that they can cooperate with one another;

(3) motivate people to achieve socially approved goals through socially accepted means; and

(4) protect the overall system from disruptive outside influences (Coakley & Pike, 2009).

If these needs are being met, then it is the social structures that meet these needs. The structures are thus functional in the sense that they help society to operate. Interconnections exist within and among these structures, and individuals and groups are constrained by these structures (Coakley & Pike, 2009).

According to the functionalist approach, society is composed of different parts, and the proper operation of these parts is necessary for the smooth operation of society as a whole. The interdependence of these parts is also an important feature of functional analysis. The roles taken on by individuals, as well as the institutions and organisations of society, are all interdependent. A change in any one part affects others, requiring other parts to take account of the changes, modify actions and adapt to any changes necessary. While most sociological approaches recognise the interdependence of the different elements of a society, the functionalist approach tends to regard these elements of society (individuals or institutions) as having particular functions to perform.

Functionalists argue that societies are generally in a normal state of affairs, with the different parts functioning smoothly and contributing to the operation of the society (Coakley, 1990). There may be disturbances from this normal state of affairs – from outside the society, because the different parts are not operating properly, or because of features such as population or technical change – but these disturbances trigger adjustments in the various parts of society that return the society to a state of

equilibrium. When there is a disturbance in the social world, the various roles and organisations have the means to return the society to a more normal state of affairs.

The functional approach tends to argue that there is consensus within the social system. Individual behaviour is governed by social norms or rules that are generally accepted and agreed upon. Functional analysis does not emphasise conflict, does not consider conflict to be an integral part of the social world, and generally does not consider change to be dramatic but rather to be evolutionary.

3.2.3 Robert K. Merton's Perspective

Compared with both Durkheim and Parsons' perspectives on human society as a whole, Merton was more focused on a mid–sized social system. In this research, functionalist theory will be employed to analyse the Chinese elite sports system, but not to analyse the Chinese society as a whole; therefore, the point of view that is mainly adopted is that of Merton's.

Robert K. Merton (1968) indicated that there may be functional alternatives to the institutions and structures currently fulfilling the functions of society. This means that the institutions that currently exist are not indispensable to society. Merton states that 'just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items'. This notion of functional alternatives is important because it reduces the tendency of functionalism to imply approval of the status quo.

Merton's theory of deviance is derived from Durkheim's idea. It is central in explaining how internal changes can occur in a system. For Merton (1957), anomie means a

discontinuity between cultural goals and the accepted methods available for reaching them.

Merton (1957) stated that there are five situations facing an actor:

(1) Conformity occurs when an individual has the means and desire to achieve the cultural goals that have been socialised into him or her.
(2) Innovation occurs when an individual strives to attain the accepted cultural goals but chooses to do so in novel or unaccepted ways.
(3) Ritualism occurs when an individual continues to do things as prescribed by society but forfeits the achievement of the goals.
(4) Retreatism is the rejection of both the means and the goals of society.
(5) Rebellion is a combination of the rejection of societal goals and means and a substitution of other goals and means.

Thus it can be seen that change can occur internally in society through either innovation or rebellion. It is true that society will attempt to control these individuals and negate the changes, but as the innovation or rebellion builds momentum, society will eventually adapt or face dissolution.

In order to produce a satisfactory statement of functional analysis, Merton proposed a distinction between manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions refer to the conscious intentions of actors, and latent functions are the objective consequences of their actions, which are often unintended (Merton, 1957). With respect to Merton's standpoint, mistakes are often made about existing functionalism, which is a result of a conflation of these two different categories.

Another of Merton's important contributions to functionalism was the concept of dysfunction. Merton criticised functional unity, saying that not all parts of a modern, complex society work for the functional unity of society. According to Merton's perspective, it may be that some non–literate societies show a high degree of integration, but it would not be correct to assume this would pertain to all societies. Furthermore, it is probable that what is functional for society, as a whole, does not necessarily prove functional for certain people or for some subgroups within society. The opposite is also true in so far as what is functional for an individual may not be functional for the greater society. It has been argued that alongside the concept of a function, it is necessary to put forward a concept of dysfunction, where the objective consequences of an action are negative for some individuals. The idea of bringing power and coercion into functionalism and identifying the sites of tension may lead to struggle or conflict. By identifying and looking at the dysfunctional aspects of society, one can explain the evolution and tenacity of alternatives. Hence, as Holmwood states, 'Merton explicitly made power and conflict central issues for research within a functionalist paradigm' (Holmwood, 2005).

3.3 Empowerment Theory Review

3.3.1 The Concept of Empowerment

There is very little agreement about the definition of empowerment. Servian (1996) presents at least nine different explanations of the word within the existing studies, ranging from the impact of spiritual enlightenment to the effect of technological change. Rappaport (1984) describes the lack of empowerment as a state of: '... powerlessness, real or imagined; learned helplessness; alienation; loss of a sense of control over one's

own life'. It is widely agreed that empowerment is the catalyst through which those without power, or the 'disempowered', gain better control over one or more fields of their lives, and achieve an improved feeling of political or personal gratification. Adams (1990) offers a fairly general definition of empowerment as: '...the process, by which individuals, groups and/or communities become able to take control of their circumstances and achieve their own goals, thereby being able to work towards maximizing the quality of their lives'. Similarly, Holdsworth (1991) points out the aim of empowerment as being '... to enable the formerly powerless to exert at least some measure of control over their lives'.

However, by further examining the concept, a considerable disagreement about the understanding of empowerment is revealed. Particularly, and most importantly, the understanding of empowerment depends on very different concepts of what 'power' is, and what the relationship is between those who hold it and those who do not. One view is that many approaches to empowerment could be thought of as an assumption that the gain of power on the part of particular groups or individuals necessarily contains its absence or reduction on the other parts. This concept of power as a 'zero–sum' or limited quantity results in a direct and inverse relationship between the capability of one individual or group to control the behaviour of another individual or group and the capability of the latter to resist the expectations of the former. For example, in the State level social work context, this approach claims that the disempowerment of purchasers or service–users results in the practice of power on the professionals' part, their empowerment needs being the reduction of power of the purchasers or service–users.

An alternative idea of empowerment may be based on an understanding of power as a 'variable sum' or expandable quantity, in which the power gained by some may not

necessarily result in the loss of power to other parts. This perspective argues that even between those with opposing interests, there may still be contexts in which the empowerment of the other 'side' strengthens the power of their own 'side'. However, this fact is rooted in political alliances and conspiracies. It is also possible to visualise a situation in which the 'empowerment' of the powerless could be ensured without any significant harm to the power of the powerful. Craig and Mayo (1995) discuss that the successful search for collective subjects such as economic regeneration can be found to benefit all groups within society.

Lupton and Nixon (1999) state the idea of zero–sum power seems to ignore the fact that power relationships are not stable but are socially constructed, determined in large part by the operation of forces external to them. In a similar way, the relationship between professional social workers and their 'clients' or service–users can be viewed as being affected, not just by the influence of professionally based power, but also by the operation of a range of economic, ideological and political factors which determine or constrain the actions of both sides of the relationship. In so far as some of these factors, such as the impact of 'new managerialist' approaches, for example, or of increased financial constraint, may be seen to disempower the professional as much as the client, it is possible to envisage scenarios in which both 'sides' of the relationship could benefit or suffer equally.

3.3.2 The Political History of Empowerment

To understand the concept of empowerment, contrasting political ascendancy–driven ideological tendencies need to be examined. To do so, it is necessary to begin with the perceived development of the British welfare state to fulfil the political vision of its founders. Marking the end of piecemeal and paternalistic forms of charitable assistance,

the formation of the welfare state was intended to represent a new contract between the State and its citizens, providing them with a comprehensive and universal system of public support 'from cradle to grave'. Original expectations that the welfare role of the State would diminish in the face of the improved health and economic security of the population soon proved to have been misplaced. Instead, increased demand for health and welfare services as a result of demographic and technological change, and the enhanced expectations of a more affluent public, meant that the range and volume of the State's activities were to expand dramatically over the post–war years. In the face of evidence about the wasteful, inefficient and costly nature of these activities, concern began to grow about the price the welfare state was exacting from the nation. This concern was given particular urgency by the international oil crisis and accompanying economic depression of the early 1970s (Lupton and Nixon, 1999).

In response, ways of ending the 'provider dominance' of the State began to be sought actively at a central political level. There was a growing interest in the possibilities of voluntary effort, with David Owen as Minister for Health in the 1974 Labour government writing of the need to establish a 'partnership' between statutory and non–statutory providers of services. In the face of what was seen to be an increasingly passive and demanding citizenry, there was also a concern to encourage greater public involvement in local service development. The late 1960s saw a series of reports (the Skeffington Report (1969) on local planning, the Plowden Report (1969) on schooling and the Seebohm Report (1968) on the personal social services) which, in their different ways, all made the case for greater community and public participation. As Brenton (1985) has argued, the growing political consensus over these years about the importance of 'voluntary action' or 'partnership' was driven not so much by the ideological commitment to welfare pluralism, as by the attempt to make a virtue out of

the political necessity of cutting social expenditure. Nevertheless, it can be seen to represent a significant shift in the attitude of central governments towards the involvement of the non–statutory sector, and this laid the foundation for subsequent moves towards a 'mixed economy' of welfare provision (Lupton and Nixon, 1999).

At the local level, the paternalistic and unresponsive nature of State welfare services fuelled the rise during the 1960s and 1970s of new groups and organisations committed to many different forms of self–help and collective action. Many of these groups were defined in terms of their consumption (or not) of particular State services: tenants' associations, squatters' groups, patient associations and so on. Others focused on specific mental or physical conditions, e.g. the Epilepsy Action Group or the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, or campaigned around a particular social problem or issue, such as the Preschool Playgroups Association or the Child Poverty Action Group. Although in the main committed (or consigned) to the use of State services, these groups were opposed to the manner of their provision and/or the extent of their availability and accessibility; a political position which some groups described at the time as being 'in and against the state' (London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1979).

Brenton (1985) states the alternative organisations, groups and movements that grew up in the 1960s and 70s were in many ways the by–product of the public welfare system; as much a reaction to the deficiencies, size and inaccessibility of the state welfare apparatus as the result of pressure to participate and protest engendered by the wider process of cultural and social change.

One of the central problems with State–provided services was seen to be the way in which they encouraged passivity and dependency on the part of those receiving services. Users of services were viewed in terms of their perceived needs or 'deficits', but were largely excluded from the professionally dominated process of defining these needs. Ignoring the wider personal and social contexts in which their 'clients' lived, professional interventions were focused on the individual, typically isolating and pathologising the 'problem' being treated. Little recognition was given to the social construction of these needs: the fact that they were often the product of 'socially imposed constraints' (Oliver, 1990) rather than simply the result of the physical or mental conditions of the individuals concerned. The biophysical disempowerment of many service–users was thus compounded by diminished access to social goods such as employment, affordable housing and a decent standard of education. In addition to the objective of participating in, or 'reclaiming', the process of defining need, therefore, the emergent service–user groups also pressed for a broader political shift from the role of client or patient as passive recipient of help, to the more active role of citizen, with rights to the means to participate fully in social and economic life (Lupton and Nixon, 1999).

Many groups also campaigned for the creation of alternative forms of service provision controlled by users and/or local people themselves. The late 1960s and early 1970s thus also saw the emergence of a range of 'autonomous' service providers – such as women's aid refuges, rape crisis lines, advice centres, housing cooperatives – which operated on very different philosophical and organisational assumptions to those of traditional State services (Campbell & Olive, 2013). Typically based on the principles of self–help and collective action, these new providers were committed not only to the provision of assistance but, just as importantly, to the particular means by which this

assistance was provided. Thus Kelly (1991) describes the aim of the UK Women's Aid movement as not only providing a place of safety but also offering women using the service '... a different way of understanding what happened to them and the possibility of not being the "victim" or "client". We talked about self–help, working with women, rather than for them'. By demonstrating the possibility of acting on the world to change it, participation in these new forms of provision was seen to provide a personally empowering experience for those involved (Lupton and Nixon, 1999).

Central to the work of many of these groups and movements was the shift in focus from the needs or behaviours of individuals to more collective forms of identity and action. The social and physical 'disempowerment' of individuals was seen to stem not from their personal circumstances/attributes, but from the operation of wider systems of race, sex, class and other forms of structural inequality: '... the powerlessness and loss which results from ... material and ideological oppression' (Mitchell, 1989). Many of the service–orientated and self–help groups were thus also linked to the broader agendas and activities of the 'new social movements' emerging at the same time in the UK. These larger–scale movements were defined in terms of the 'politics of identity' (Williams, 1992) – women's groups, gay and lesbian movements, Black groups and the disabled persons' movement – and/or by a commitment to community, environmental or peace activism. Inspiration was also drawn from the activities of the anti–poverty and urban renewal movements emerging across the USA in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Brenton, 1985). Thus the routes to personal and political empowerment were, for some, linked to a commitment to wider sociopolitical change:

> The new social movements are consciously engaged in critical evaluation of capitalist society and in the creation of alternative models of social

organisation at local, national and international levels, as well as trying to reconstruct the world ideologically and create alternative forms of social provision. (Oliver, 1990)

3.3.3 The Development of Empowerment theory

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), the analysis of empowerment theory considers three levels: it explores the control and participation of key elements of empowerment at (1) the individual level; (2) the organisational level; and (3) the community level. The construct combines perceptions of control, participation with other people to achieve goals, and a critical awareness of the factors that enhance individual efforts to gain control in their life. Thus, empowerment includes structures and processes that enhance member participation, and increase organisational effectiveness in terms of goal–achieving at the organisational level. At the community level, empowerment could be understood as a collective movement to increase the life quality of a community and the relationship between community organisations and agencies. However, empowerment of organisational and community structures does not constitute a general collection of empowered individuals. Zimmerman's (1993, 1995) outline empowerment theory suggests that three dimensions are necessary to build a consistent framework for research: (1) values; (2) processes; and (3) outcomes.

Empowerment Values

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), empowerment values offer a belief system that directs the way in which clients and professionals work with each other. These values include: attention towards health; adaptation; competence; and natural helping systems. As discussed above, Lupton and Nixon (1999) view empowerment in terms of wellness versus illness, and competence versus deficiency. In other words,

professionals would help people with disabilities to gain as much independence as possible, to develop skills to eliminate the conditions that cause difficulties in their lives, and to work with others to deal with challenges that restrict full integration into disability communities. The collaboration between the professionals and people with disabilities is an empowering process. Empowerment is not bestowed on the individual by the professional. The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research policy for constituency–oriented work (NIDRR, 1993) (DeJong, 1983) and independent–living movement are consistent with empowerment values.

Empowerment Processes

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), Empowering processes are the effects through which people, organisations and communities gain control over conditions that obstruct them, raise a critical awareness of environment, and become involved in making decisions that affect their lives. They provide individuals with opportunities to learn and exercise skills that are important in taking control of their sociopolitical environment (e.g. resource–mobilisation and decision–making skills), along with the opportunity to critically examine their sociopolitical environment. Critical awareness refers to one's knowledge of how to receive those resources and gain the skills to manage them once they have been acquired (Freire, 1973; Kieffer, 1984). Empowering processes are also formed of opportunities to influence the sociopolitical environment and collective learning. They are processes in which attempts to get a critical understanding of the relevant social environment are central, as are proper access to resources and the capacity to work with others to achieve common goals (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Mechanic, 1991; Rappaport, 1984). Maton and Salem (1995) state that empowering interventions improve group–based belief systems and offer opportunities to access skills and knowledge, build a supportive resource

warehouse, and consist of inclusive and shared leadership. Thus a goal of empowering interventions is to help people, organisations, and communities become more self–governing and self–reliant and less controlled by external forces.

Several rehabilitation examples could illustrate empowering processes. Webb and Glueckauf and Quittner (1992) reported that where adults were actively involved in goal–setting for treatment, the outcome showed gains for two months after the intervention, whereas less involved adults did not have the same success. Balcazar, Fawcett, and Seekins (1991) state training programs offer an initial move in an empowerment process for people with disabilities. As group members develop their advocacy–group discussion skills, their capacity to advance critical awareness and access are improved. Mathews, Francisco, Fawcett and Seekins (1994) find empowering processes for people are linked with independent living centres. They point out the professionals' role as collaborative versus a more expert–control approach.

Empowerment Outcomes

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), the empowerment outcome considers results of empowering processes as well as measurement issues. Therefore, if it is said that someone is empowered, one is referring to outcomes. Empowerment outcomes, in fact, relate to dependent variables (or intervening variables) in research. Empowerment outcomes are of primary interest because they offer a basis for learning the results of citizens' attempts to get better control in their lives and community, or the effects of interventions to empower participants. However, empowerment outcomes may differ across levels of analysis.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

3.4.1 Functionalism Theory and This Research

Functionalism theory guides people to ask research questions about how sport helps satisfy the four basic needs of the social system (Coakley, 1990). It focuses on the approach that sport contributes to the smooth operation of social systems, such as groups, communities and organisations. Because functionalist theory emphasises the 'functions' of sports, it can also tell people how sport contributes to the smooth operation of social systems. Furthermore, the theory also leads to the result that sports are a type of source of inspiration for individuals and societies (Coakley & Pike, 2009).

This research focuses on Chinese elite disability sport and the analysis will primarily be based on how to present the structure of the process; from being an ordinary participant in disability sport, to becoming an elite athlete, then graduating to the national team, and finally becoming a world champion. This process could be regarded as a system based on the functionalist theory.

First, there are various stages involved in reaching the international level. Second, there are several individual issues involved in the different stages. These could include issues relating to the elite athletes themselves, or issues relating to sports events. Third, the stages occur in tandem with three background criteria. These are: the Chinese elite sports system, the elite sports policy, and the social situation at the time. Hence this research, by applying functionalist theory, examines both individual issues and the background functions that relate to elite disability sport.

Moreover, because the policy of elite disability in China is administered by the China Disabled Person's Federation, the system is reviewed and analysed first in order to properly interpret the policy. The function of the Chinese elite disability sport system is specifically analysed from both functional and dysfunctional perspectives, which are mainly based on Merton's structural functional approach.

3.4.2 Empowerment Theory and This Research

Empowerment theory is also employed for this research. As reviewed in Chapter 2, the original intention of sport for people with disabilities was as part of the process of rehabilitation. However, is now thought that sport may also contribute to empowerment for people with disabilities (Hutzler, 1990; Hutzler & Bar–Eli, 1993; Hutzler & Sherrill, 1999; Sherrill, 1997; Sorensen, 1999). The concept of empowerment is rooted in the ideology of the social movements of the 1960s and the self–help political aspects of the 1970s (Freire, 1970; Kiefer, 1984; Rappaport, 1981). Rappaport (1987) proposes that 'empowerment suggests a belief in the power of people to be both the masters of their fate and involved in the life of their several communities'. In terms of disability sport, a definition offered by Gutierrez (1990) may be more appropriate: 'Empowerment is a process of increasing personal, interpersonal or political power so that individuals can take action to improve their lives.' Her study examines how people from a disadvantaged social group can, on an individual basis, develop abilities and skills to take action to improve and gain control over their lives.

Gliedman and Roth (1980) claim people with disabilities are the world's largest minority. Other researchers conclude that as a minority, people with disabilities are a disadvantaged social minority (e.g. Geron, Dunkelman & Reches, 1978; Sherrill & Williams, 1996). Disability in society is seen in terms of personal differences in

function structure, performance and appearance that are recognized as undesirable (Goffman, 1963; Sherrill, 1997). According to Sherrill (1990), disability may be the most feared and the least understood of the many identities held by human beings. Sherrill's research implies that people with disabilities are a disadvantaged social minority.

Many people with disabilities do not feel their difference is negative, even though others may view it as unfortunate and sad. Sorensen and Pensgaard (1999) led a qualitative study on athletes with different types of disabilities. They found that some of the athletes believed that having a physical challenge had actually enriched their lives. McDermott and Varenne (1996) further argued that these people are only disabled in certain contexts and not when engaging in sport: for example, sit–volleyball for amputees. Studies on comparing psychological variables of sport participants with and without disabilities highlights more similarities than differences (e.g., Horvat, Roswal, & Henschen, 1991; King, Shultz, Steel, & Gilpin, 1993; Mastro & French, 1986; Pensgaard, Ursin, & Roberts, 1999). Grue (1999) found that Norwegian youths both with and without disabilities shared similar profiles on a number of psychological parameters. However, another study on comparing the self–image of individuals with and without disabilities in physical education or sport has found many differences (Sherrill & Rainbolt, 1988; Sherrill, Hinson, Gench, Kennedy and Low, 1990; Tam, 1998). This, certainly, shows that even if the people with disabilities may in some aspects be disadvantaged socially as a group, it is a very diverse population with many individual differences, and as individuals the disadvantages may not apply to everyone.

Taking this into consideration, the circumstances for people with disabilities as a group makes empowerment a viable framework for disability sport research. In fact, according

to the International Paralympic Sport Science Committee, empowerment is a prioritised research topic (Sherrill and Wilhite 1995). Empowerment theory combines perceptions of control, critically understands the sociopolitical environment, and is a proactive approach to life (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989; Mechanic, 1991; Rappaport, 1987; Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, & Checkoway, 1992).

However, some critics disagree with the empowerment framework on some level. Bandura (1997) believes that empowerment as a serious theoretical approach concept is too indefinite and unspecific. He suggests that a more accurate and wider investigation into the viewpoint of the empowerment idea is needed in order to have a valid research result. Therefore, this research should apply a detailed model of empowerment to understand disability sport.

Riger (1993) points out that a number of theoretical and conceptual issues confuse method when a study chooses the empowerment perspective. First, the focus of studies is often on the perceived control rather than actual control. Riger is critical of the cognitive perspective, which is in favour of the empowerment theory, because it focuses on individual creation of reality and individualism. From Riger's point of view, this may result in people thinking that they have more power than they actually do. According to him, social or situational structures are downplayed. It is right that the empowerment theory is cognitively based and that accesses and control are essential components for well–being. However, Pensgaard and Sorensen (2002) believe that the context also seems to be downplayed in empowerment studies. This is especially evident when the fundamental assumptions in which the empowerment perspective is rooted are considered. These assumptions highlight the importance of including different levels of empowerment. In order to understand empowerment, it is not enough

to work only on the individual level, because many challenges and restraints are posed at other levels(Hardy & Leiba–O'Sullivan, 1998). Therefore, in this research, it is necessary that the empowerment perspective is analysed from all three levels, based on the sport, social and political context.

According to Wallerstein (1992), many of the statements that endorse the empowerment approach are neglected or disregarded in most research, and this may explain why many empowerment intervention studies fail to meet prior expectations (Hardy & Leiba–O'Sullivan, 1998). Initially, it may be too much to hope that researchers should include the entire hypothesis that the empowerment perspective builds upon, but they should all be considered. However, if this research were to take into account Zimmerman and Warschausky's (1998) framework, some critiques like Wallerstein's may not stand.

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), they provide a framework of empowering outcomes and processes at individual, organisational, and community levels. The provision of opportunities to participate, and actual participation, are the main themes across every level. Empowering processes at the individual level of analysis include opportunities to receive and provide assistance. Empowering processes at the organisational level are outlined as structures that motivate participation in sharing responsibilities, skill development and decision–making. Empowering processes at the community level initially investigate equal access to resources such as media outlets, protective services, or recreational facilities. They then look for opportunities to improve social diversity. Finally, they assess institutions on community involvement as well as their contribution to the building of society.

Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998) also propose empowerment outcomes that highlight awareness, participation and control. These could also be operated differently across the three levels of analysis. Empowered individuals are those who understand their social and political environment, feel in control of their lives, and are actively involved in this control. Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998) suggest that these empowered individuals could effectively influence policy through networking with other organisations (e.g. coalitions) or by mobilising resources in ways that would further advance their missions, and service provision could identify empowered organisations. An empowered community could be investigated by effectively mobilising collective action, including organisational coalitions, to maintain citizen involvement and community living standards, and to be responsive to threats to quality of life.

To sum up, this research applies this framework to study the relationship between people with disabilities and disability sport in China. One main feature of this framework is that it takes into account three levels of empowerment on both progress and outcomes, based on contextual (situational) factors. For example, when studying how participation in sport affects the development of empowerment on an individual level, that the individual has to receive and provide assistance in sport. In addition, contextual (situational) factors such as background could affect the degree of empowerment and possibly explain why sport and its participation affect empowerment in different ways for different people. This study will employ empowerment theory by testing it on Chinese sport's cultural, social and political contexts.

3.5 Conclusion

The first section of this chapter looked at functionalism, which is one of the oldest theories connected with sociology and anthropology. For the purposes of description, functional systems were often compared to organisms as the two systems could be described in terms of structure. Functionalism states that when society works around a core set of values in an orderly manner there is a state of equilibrium. Change brings about complexity as society adapts to these new functions. If there is a non–beneficial disturbance within a system, that system will attempt, through various means and organisational methods, to return to the norm. Part of the smooth running of social groups is brought about by sports, which are part of the functionalist theory in promoting the status quo within a society or system.

In this chapter, empowerment theory is also reviewed and employed for this research. The complexity of the empowerment concept is both its strength and its weakness. The major benefit of employing this perspective is taking both across levels analysis and contextual factors analysis into account in the study of disability sport, in order to understand how a situation is perceived. The philosophy of empowerment theory provides hope and opportunity to athletes with special needs. It affects all parties involved in the wellbeing of disabled athletes. Based on this, the theoretical framework is built for this research to answer the key question of how disability sport has developed so fast in such a short period of time in China. Does disability sport in China empower people with disability? The following chapter focuses on the methodology which will be employed in this research.

Chapter 4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Three main areas of the study are addressed in this chapter: (1) the research approach; (2) the research methods; and (3) the research design. A number of potential research strategies were identified initially and evaluated thorough interviews and documentary analysis of disability sport within the three selected provinces. Following an examination of the rationale behind using interviews as a research strategy, the nature and actual implementation of these interviews of people in their natural settings is also examined.

4.2 Research Approach

How has disability sport in China made such significant progress so quickly? Does disability sport empower people with disability? The justification of an appropriate approach for answering the research questions posed some ontological, epistemological and methodological challenges. In general terms, social research should be based upon a purposive and rigorous investigation, through which it aims to generate new knowledge. In this context, social scientists' research must first be purposive, and second must consist of rigorous investigation which allows researchers to enter contexts of personal and/or public interest that are unknown to them (Gomm, 2008). Fundamentally, social scientific research must be valid, rigorous and purposeful. The research must also have coherent methods and analytical features. The reason for this is that it permits social scientists to accurately search for answers to their questions. Social research is all about discovery and the expansion of new horizons of knowledge. By employing analytical and methodological features within the research, clear, rigorous, purposeful and valid

elements are added to the research. This, in turn, lends confidence to new ideas and (new) conclusions about all aspects of life (Sarantakos, 1993). In the simplest of terms, the purpose of social research is to:

> (1) explore social reality for its own sake or in order to make further research possible; explain social life by providing reliable, valid and well–documented information; evaluate the status of social issues and their effect on society; make predictions, develop and/ or test theories;
> (2) understand human behaviour and action; and
> (3) offer a basis for a critique of social reality; emancipate people; suggest possible solutions to social problems; and empower and liberate people (Sarantakos, 1993).

Hence qualitative researchers must confront three challenges: representation, legitimisation, and praxis. The challenges of representation ask whether qualitative researchers can use text to represent authentically the experience of 'others'. The issue of legitimisation refers to validity, reliability and generalisation. Finally, the problem of praxis leads qualitative researchers to explore 'how qualitative studies are to be evaluated in contemporary settings'.

Drawing upon these key features of social science research, this study investigates the functions that exist in policy and practice during the process of the development of disability sport in China. In the first place, this requires a comprehensive study to capture the present situation of disability sport in China. This is executed through a thematic discussion, which includes the interrelated functionalism aspects of policy and practice in Chinese society from the point of view of people with disabilities. In essence, the main

purpose of this thesis is to carry out a major study that captures the development of disability sport in China to enable an understanding of the relationship between disability and sport in Chinese society. By utilising a narrative approach and by employing empowerment theory, changes in concepts of disability, along with social changes, have affected the development of disability sport. This narrative approach helps to illustrate characteristic examples given by interviewees. More importantly, this study attempts to explore the extent to which disability sport empowers people with disabilities in China. The stories of athletes with disabilities resonate with the process of the development of disability sport in China. Thus, the narrative approach is an analytical tool for reflecting the reality from people with disabilities' point of view, and for delivering the voice of people with disabilities.

4.2.1 World View: Epistemological Assumption

Methodology focuses on how we obtain knowledge of the world. The basic paradigm employed to help achieve this is an epistemological one. This can be seen as the foundation of a paradigm which asks how people know the world (the reality) and how this research understands it. In its broadest terms, epistemology accounts for knowledge which has an individualist orientation. Within the discipline of philosophy, epistemology is the study of knowledge and justification, in particular, the definition components, the substantive condition and sources and the limits of knowledge and justification (Moser, 2002). Ontology, in contrast, defines the fundamental categories of reality concerned with the nature of social entities. Here reality is external to social actors and should be considered as a social construction that has been created from the perceptions and actions of social actors. An epistemological world view supplies a different methodological influence; one whereby knowledge and justification are acquired through different types of inquiry and methods of investigation. In general,

epistemology addresses the following questions. What is knowledge? How is knowledge acquired and how do we know what we know? By outlining the three main epistemological stances (positivism, interpretivism and critical social research), a rationale for the epistemological position for this research is required.

Positivism is a term created by August Comte (1975) to indicate a philosophy of strict empiricism. This is a traditional approach of social research. According to Comte, positivism is a theory of historical development in which improvements in knowledge are both the motor of historical progress and the source of social stability. It seeks to establish causal explanations, or to search for fundamental laws of human actions or historical change, or to insist on objective empirical information systematically organised to generate or test hypotheses (Halfpenny, 1982). In brief, the paradigm of positivism assumes the social world is inherently knowable and has an order to it, which social scientists can discover and people can agree upon with regard to the nature of the social reality. From this point of view, knowledge is created by deductive logic, which means finding ways to operationalise and then test social theories (Esterberg, 2002).

Interpretivism is another approach used in social science. It is also called interpretivist tradition or interpretive sociology and is used in qualitative research as a method to explore social life when the meaning of human action is assumed to be inherent to the action. The interpretive approach requires the research to focus on interaction between people, and to unearth the meaning of how they interact with each other. It also questions what objects are in their world and what meaning people attach to those objects. According to Blumer (1969), there are three premises for the interpretive approach: first, human actions are based on the meanings that things have for them; second, the meaning of things comes from social interactions; and third, meanings are

created or changed in the process of interpretation. However, it opposes formulating substantive hypotheses before actually beginning the research. The interpretive approach aims to understand and interpret, whereas positivist research aims to predict and control. In this instance, critical social research as reviewed in the previous sections can be understood in the context of working towards human emancipation. It is a stance of understanding and analysing that emerges from a negative position, where it attempts to connect underlying mechanisms which may account for social relations and tries to explore the hidden nature of these relationships within a society's sphere (Esterberg, 2002). As stated above, every approach has its own strengths, but none of them are perfect. This is mainly due to the fact that it is difficult to explain every aspect in the context of social life. After consideration of the questions that this research proposes to explore, a critical social research approach has been chosen as the best match.

4.2.2 Discussion on a Research Approach

Based on these epistemological assumptions, an argument is developed for employing qualitative, rather than quantitative, research methodology in this study. Quantitative research usually includes large–scale data collection, structured observation and designed experiments and surveys. The focus here is on numeration, coding and the use of statistical models to explain conclusions drawn from the collected data. Critically, quantitative research methodologies are seldom able to capture their subjects' deeper perspectives, since they rely more on remote, inferential empirical methods and materials (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:16). Abstracting a world view from quantitative research and analysis rarely involves probing, prompting and clarification. On the other hand, qualitative research (which has specific relevance for this study) allows for a realisation of the pluralisation of life worlds (Flick, 2006). Here, there is an emphasis on process and meanings, which are not measured in terms of the quantity, intensity or frequency of a phenomenon and its features; but on

what can be gleaned as an 'understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants' (Bryman, 2001:264). It is the pursuit of social experiences which are created and thus given meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). A brief summary of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research is outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Differences between Quantitative and Qualitative research

	Strategy	
	Quantitative	Qualitative
Data	Numbers	Texts
Analysis	Statistics	Interpretation
Prototype	Opinion polling	In–Depth interviewing

(Source: Martin W. Bauer & George Gaskell: Qualitative Researching: A practical Handbook, 2000:7)

Table 4.1 shows two potential research strategies. Since the aim of this research is to explore the relationship between the development of disability sport and Chinese society, the key concern is the general rule of human behaviours and how this is explained. Hence the main rationale for choosing a qualitative research methodology as opposed to a quantitative one is as follows: qualitative research delineates more clearly the course of different interactions among the different social properties (for example power and politics) during the processes of development of disability sport. Qualitative methods allow for more illustrative and understandable concepts of empowerment.

Conducting research within an empowerment framework requires the study of many diverse local settings, where people already handle their own life challenges. Instead of a helper–helpee relationship, the research approach should be collaborative. This favours a qualitative methodological approach when empowerment is the concern (e.g.

Blinde, Taub and Han, 1994; Blinde & McClung, 1997). An even more valid approach would be to involve the users themselves in the process of constructing an empowerment scale in order to measure empowerment.

In practical terms, disability sport is the independent variable and Chinese society is the dependent. These two variables overlap, crosscut, connect, interact and influence each other at many levels in a society. In order to capture a more complete picture of these interlinking properties or interactions between disability sport and Chinese society, more complex questioning is required. Hence the impact of the development of disability sport in Chinese society cannot simply be understood or analysed by exploring the rate or degree of development of disability sport, since both the development of disability sport and that of Chinese society are complicated processes. In this context, qualitative research can help us make sense of these interlinks and overlaps, given that qualitative research is concerned with the individual's point of view (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Qualitative research can also help us explore the deep meaning of the interactions between disability sport and Chinese society from the aspects of power, policy, politics and practice. Here the interviewees can express what they understand to be salient and relevant or what they term to be important, thus providing greater insight and more meaningful data for this research study. Further possibilities also arise in terms of the interviewee/people with disabilities' voices being heard regarding exclusion, alienation or contradictions. Finally, qualitative research is concerned about the deep meaning behind a phenomenon. As a consequence, by adopting this approach, reasons which are not immediately evident concerning the transformation of disability sport and its impact on Chinese society can be best found through interviews. Here rich detailed information regarding how interviewees are transformed, and why these transformations are significant, comes to light.

With this detailed discussion on the qualitative research approach, it is important to examine my own values, knowledge, position and purpose in order to uncover influences in the construction and production of the research knowledge (Stanko & Lee, 2003). Thus the next section focuses on self–reflexivity as an important aspect of this research.

4.2.3 Self–reflexivity

This study acknowledges the point that the process of knowledge construction in any research is largely determined by the researcher. Thus feminist research has advanced arguments that the 'politics of the researcher' are a central issue in the production of knowledge (Oliver, 1986, 1996). Considering this aspect, feminist qualitative researchers encourage 'an awareness of self and the forces which shape the self (Kincheloe, 2003). Reflexivity, according to Cohen and Manion (2007), recognises that 'researchers are an inescapable part of the social world that they are researching, which is already interpreted by the actors, undermining the notion of objective reality'. The researcher was aware that the reason this study was formulated was because of the socio–cultural and political practices the researcher was always and continue to be part of. Thus, it is important for the researcher to examine his or her own values. The current researcher's identity in this study is both as an 'outsider' and 'insider'. The current researcher consider himself to be an 'outsider' in that the researcher is studying disability sport in China as a research student, but the researcher is also an 'insider' because he has been a disability sport senior coach, volunteer, educator and referee for six years in the Paralympics, Deaflympics, and Special Olympics from the city level to the international level. It is interesting, but also challenging, to examine one's own 'society', where the familiar is made strange (Marcus, 1998), even though the

researcher has adopted a critical position on practices in disability sport in China. Considering this position situates the researcher beyond the 'binary of insider/outsider polarity and familiarity and strangeness' (Hamersley & Atkinson 1998), as researcher's identity in this study, therefore, involves a hybrid of insider–outsider positions.

Scott and Morrison (2007) talk of 'personal reflexivity, which foregrounds the personal characteristics and values of the researcher, both in the conduct of the research and in the way it is written up'. These characteristics include race, gender, physical and health condition, and social class as they are considered 'fundamental to the type of knowledge that is eventually produced' (Scott & Morrison, 2007). Throughout this research the researcher has been aware that the researcher is a research instrument and have continuously and closely monitored my interactions with participants, some of whom the researcher knows well from my time as a coach and educator. The researcher has been cautious of his reactions and aware that his role is that of researcher rather than a coach or educator. The researcher has also been wary of any bias, particularly with athletes with disabilities or with the institutions, given my experiences as a coach and educator. This awareness allowed the researcher to make ethically accountable choices in the way the researcher engaged with the participants in his study.

The dynamic processes involved in the sharing of knowledge place the researcher, as a researcher, in a position where, according to Kincheloe (2003), the researcher is 'always concerned with the expansion of self–awareness and consciousness ... engaging in a running (meta)dialogue, a constant conversation with self, a perpetual reconceptualization of his/her systems of meaning'. Cohen and Manion (2007) emphasise the point that highly reflexive researchers will be acutely aware of the ways in which their selectivity, perception, background and inductive processes and

paradigms shape the research. The researcher's experiences as a senior coach, volunteer, educator and referee, his involvement in management in disability sport associations, and his informal observations have shaped the design of this study, as the researcher realised that little focus continues to be given to disability sport. Basically, being involved in disability sport management, the researcher realised that disability sport was not taken as seriously as elite sport within and outside sport contexts. This treatment, particularly in disability sport organisations which manage the funding, did not consider the considerable effect disability sport could have on the quality of people with disabilities' lives. Given these experiences, it was important for the researcher to take note of them to ensure that they did not make the researcher biased towards research participants or the way the study was written up. The researcher argues, however, that these experiences made him more cautious and critical in the way he interacted with all disability sport stakeholders.

It is an understanding that the researcher has clarified his position and experiences in this study, and that it is appropriate to introduce the research design for this study.

4.3 Research Design

This inquiry method examined disability sport in its naturalistic settings and used semi–structured interviews. This was coupled with purposeful sampling with cases (i.e. from the three provinces), which were specifically chosen for the richness of their information in order to generate an in–depth understanding and to avoid generalisations. This research will be divided into five stages as follows:

Stage l: Identifying the Research Topics

During this phase, a preliminary literature review was conducted in relation to the research topic of disability sport in China, as well as for the research field of disability studies. This desk study enabled the researcher to familiarise himself with the research topic and to address the research aim of integrating the relationship between disability sport and Chinese society into one comprehensive framework in order to examine its politics, policy and practice.

Stage 2: Clarification of Concepts and Review of the Existing Theories

After broadly deciding what to study in the field of disability sport in China, this thesis conducted a more selective and rigorous literature review of disability. This not only enabled the thesis to clarify the various definitions of disability and sport, and identify the foundational theoretical schools, but also guided this study to analyse the multi–dimensional process of the development of disability sport in the Chinese context. The literature reviews were not only based on the existing studies in the West, but also examined some local studies. Reviewing the existing theories can elucidate how other people in this area work, what has been studied, what has been focused upon and what has been neglected. It also can help to answer what the methodological traditions, alternatives or controversies are and whether there are contradictory ways of using the methods that one could take as a starting point (Flick, 2006). In this thesis, the theoretical framework drew on functionalism theory and empowerment theory.

Stage 3: Development of research aims and questions

The first and central step to starting qualitative research is deciding how to formulate the research questions. The questions are relevant to the methods of collecting data, conceptualising interview schedules and interpretation (Flick, 2006). After examining

the existing theories and previous studies, this research aims to explore what changes have been produced in the process of the development of elite disability sport, and what is the relationship between elite disability sport and Chinese society.

Stage 4: Data collection

The research approaches in this study include interviews and the examination of relevant documentation. Interviews give the researcher access to first–hand accounts of sport participation. The documentation can help to provide the indirect material to facilitate an understanding on the context and phenomena of the research. The researcher has spent a total of six months visiting the three provinces for both archival material and to conduct interviews in nine branches of the Disabled Persons' Foundation. The Foundation is the governing body of disabled sports in China (including the Paralympics Committee, the Special Olympic Committee, and the Sport Performance Centre) at provincial, city, and district levels. The researcher also visited three special needs schools with sport training centres, as well as three sport institutes from the selected provinces.

Stage 5: Data analysis

According to Flick (2006), qualitative research is oriented towards analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts (Flick, 2006). However, it is evident that the collected data cannot express by itself and will need to be analysed in a certain way for the usage of the research. Therefore a definite method for analysing data should also be stated, and the reason why it is suitable needs to be explained. In this research, grounded theory analysis and narrative analysis methods will be employed to analyse the collected data. In order to make the narrative analysis much clearer, statistics are also used as a

complementary tool, which add a further dimension to the narrative.

Stage 6: Draw a conclusion

At the end of the research, a series of conclusions will be drawn from the analysis of disability and sport in China. Fundamentally, it will conclude the relationship between disability and sport and how disability is influenced by different sport developments at different stages in Chinese society. Furthermore, it will summarise whether or not disability sport has empowered people with disabilities in China. What is the main limitation or contradiction for developing disability sport in China? Ultimately, some emerging conclusions, based on the analysis of interviews and documents, will be evaluated as well.

4.4 The Selection of Research Sites and Locations

In order to overcome issues of representation and legitimisation, there is a need within this study to adequately capture relevant data. Here the snowball interviewing sampling scheme was utilised to select people for interviews. Three provinces at various stages of development of disability sport represent this research sample design. This represents a framework within which the snowball interviews (sampling scheme) occurred. Clearly this research sampling was non–probabilistic (i.e. non–random sampling). The goal of this research is not to generalise but to obtain insights into the phenomenon of sport in China for people with disability from the point of view of power, politics, policy and practice. Thus there was a need to purposefully select three provinces as research sites and locations which are closely associated with the target of the research. It was decided that the three provinces selected offered adequate and useful information that gave a picture of how disability sport impacts on Chinese society. This sampling scheme

means no general influence can be drawn. However, the selection of the three provinces represents multiple cases. The major goal here is to compare and contrast the selected cases. In such instances, a cross–case analytical narrative is a natural choice to analyse the data captured by the interviews. A cross–case analysis involves analysing data across cases. Moreover, it represents a thematic and a theoretical analysis across the cases (the three provinces).

Consideration must also be given to the vast territory of China and the great variations in terms of local customs and practices, along with varying stages of development of disability sport. There is no single place that can truly represent the whole country, as each province has its own typical nature. Although the objective of this study is not to generalise, it was deemed that the provinces selected should attempt to best represent this variety. The goal is to obtain insights into the phenomenon of sport with regard to individuals with disability. Clearly, therefore, this thesis as a qualitative research of purposively selected individuals and settings (known here as the three provinces) in order to increase our understanding of the disability phenomena with regard to sport, and to reach the points of thematic and theoretical data saturation.

After examining data from the provincial bureaus of statistics of Hebei, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, from the geographic and population perspectives Hebei province was chosen to represent the eastern region of China, which covers 188,500 square kilometres. The population of Hebei province was 67.5 million in 2014. The population of people with disabilities was 4.959 million in 2007. Hebei province is a representation of the typical medium–sized province from the perspective of population. Sichuan province was selected to represent north central–western China, which covers an area of 486,000 square kilometres. Its population was 81.07 million in 2014, and the population

of people with disabilities was 6.223 million in 2007. Sichuan province represents the typical large–sized province from the perspective of population. Yunnan province represents the western region of China, covering an area of 390,000 square kilometres. Its population was 45.7 million in 2009, and the population of people with disabilities was 2.883 million in 2007. Yunnan province is representative of the typical small size–province from the perspective of population.

After examining data from the provincial bureaus of statistics of Hebei, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, from the economic development perspective, in 2011, Hebei's gross domestic product (GDP) was 2.40 trillion RMB (US$379 billion), an increase of 11% over the previous year and ranked 6th in China. The GDP per capita reached 24,428 RMB. Sichuan's nominal GDP for 2011 was 2.15 trillion RMB (US$340 billion), equivalent to 17,380 RMB (US$2,545) per capita. Both Hebei and Sichuan represent the economically developed regions of China. Yunnan's nominal GDP in 2011 was 875.1 billion RMB (US$138.92 billion), ranked 24th among all 31 regions, with an annual growth rate of 13.7%. Its per capita GDP was 13,494 RMB (US$1,975). Yunnan represents an economically developing, as opposed to developed, region of China. These three provinces illustrate the different influence on disability in terms of their differing levels of economic development.

From the perspective of performance in disability sport in China, according to official results of national games, Yunnan province ranked 1st, 1st and 6th in the National Paralympic Games of China in 2003, 2007 and 2011 respectively. Hebei province ranked 5th and 6th in the National Paralympic Games of China in 2007 and 2011 respectively. Both Hebei and Yunnan are considered to be leading provinces in disability sport performance in China. Sichuan province ranked 23rd and 16th in the

National Paralympic Games of China in 2007 and 2011 respectively. Sichuan represents the middle and lower level of disability sport in China as regards performance.

4.5 Participants for the Study

The quality of a piece of research, according to Cohen et al (2007), stands or falls not only on the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation, but also on the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted. Before the selection of the sample, this study considered the research topic and the purpose of the study, which was to gain insight into disability sport development in China in three provinces in order to understand the full picture of disability sport. Given this aim, the purposive and snowball sampling strategies became relevant for this study. In purposive sampling, research participants, including research sites, are chosen because of '... some defining characteristics that make them the holders of the data and also, considering participants' experiences within the context of a study, beliefs that they have rich information on the research topic' (Maree, 2007). This study intentionally used purposive sampling to select relevant informative disability sport stakeholders for individual interviews.

In addition, some research participants were recommended without being initially approached by the researcher, because of their relevant experiences and perceived rich information on the topic (Gall, 2010; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2010). This process represents snowball sampling which, according to Best and Kahn (2006), refers to a 'process whereby participants are recommended by individuals who know other individuals likely to yield relevant rich information data'.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), qualitative researchers must first decide whom or what they want to study, and consider which populations are relevant to the research focus being developed. During the construction of this study, disability sport stakeholders (administrators/offers, athletes and coaches) were central for providing information in the three selected provinces. Because it was important for this study to gain in–depth information on the topic, scholars in disability sport were specifically selected for interview with the assumption that they had relevant experiences of the context and could reflect on critical perspectives. Thus, the initial sample consisted of a purposive sample of six administrators, twelve athletes, six coaches and three scholars. For clarity, appendixes presents this sample. The section commences with the research sites where the study was undertaken and is followed by a discussion of the selection process of research participants for the study.

Another primary methodological consideration for this research involves interviewee selection. For this research, disability sport is the key interest. For this reason, people who are involved on a behavioural level (more concisely, players on a primary behavioural level, or those with personal involvement in disability sport) are seen as important constituents for this research. According to Fan and Lu (2012), in the context of China, people who participate in competitive sport (elite sport) are elite athletes. They are trained to compete at national or international levels of sports competitions and view sport games as their occupation. In this study, athletes at city level or above are considered to be elite athletes. Athletes at city level from special needs school and community are selected in this study. Considering the research objectives of this study, both elite sport and mass sport are selected as the research site.

4.6 Research Methods

4.6.1 Data Collection

Establishing Interviews (Snowball Techniques)

Interview is one of the most widely employed methods in qualitative research (Bryman, 2001). The qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). An interview is literally an exchange of views between two persons in conversation about a theme of mutual interest (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). There are three different kinds of interviews: the structured interview, the semi–structured interview and the unstructured interview. The degree of 'structuring' is taken to refer to the degree to which the questions and other interventions made by the interviewer are in fact pre–prepared by the researcher (Wengraf, 2001). Structured interviews are usually used in quantitative research and reflect the research's concerns. These forms of interview refer to a situation in which an interviewer asks each respondent a series of pre–established questions with a limited set of response categories. There is very little flexibility in the way questions are asked or answered in the structured interview setting (Fontana and Frey, 1998). Unstructured interviews are used in an attempt to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without imposing any a priori categorisation that may limit the field of inquiry (Fontana and Frey, 1998). Semi–structured interviews are designed to have a number of interviewer questions prepared in advance, but such prepared questions are designed to be sufficiently open so that the interviewer's subsequent questions cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in a careful and theorised way (Wengraf, 2001). This is linked to the expectation that the interviewed subjects' viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed

interview situation rather than in a standardised interview or a questionnaire (Flick, 2006). Semi–structured interviews also produced an oral history of disability sport in China. This was obtained from interviews undertaken with individuals with direct or indirect experience with, or knowledge of, disability sport.

Fieldwork interviews occurred in three main phases. In the first phase, concentration was placed on interviewing in Hebei. In the second phase, interviews focused on the Sichuan provinces. During this phase, the researcher was invited to observe the 8th National Games of Disabled Persons of People's Republic of China with the Sichuan Delegation in Zhejiang. Last phase interviews were conducted in the Yunnan province. All collection of data is outlined in appendixes.

In order to ensure a range of people was interviewed, a snowball sampling procedure was employed. This ensured that on average 9 people were selected within each province. All interviewees declared that they were permanent residents within their respective province. Likewise they had witnessed the degrees of development of disability sport and the transformation of the understanding of the concept of disability. Furthermore, one disability sport scholar in each province was also interviewed to support the research. Appointments were made earlier to confirm interview time, and in most cases these interviews were conducted after the interviewees' period of disability sport–related working hours.

During the interview process, some general demographic questions were asked, e.g. the interviewee's age, gender, occupation and whether or not they had children. Consent forms were given to all interviewees before the interview process began. A number of interviewees chosen within the snowball sample were athletes and coaches. Interviews

were also held with sport administrators, and representatives of the management of disability sport in China. Specifically these interviews dealt with changes in sporting facilities and policy transformations.

Documentary Data

In this research, a number of varying categories of documents were needed. The first category relates to the general history of disability sport, the Chinese sport system and its transformation in order to supply a basic historical background for the research. Information was gathered from libraries and archive museums, such as the Library of Chengdu Sport University, the central and local archive museums of the Disabled Persons' Federation, and the local archive museums of special needs schools. There is no single place that can truly represent the whole country due to the vast territory of China and its varying stages of development in disability sports. Therefore, three provinces (Hebei, Sichuan, and Yunnan), each at different stages in the development of disability sport, were selected to represent this research sample design. From July to December 2011, the researcher spent a total of six months visiting these three provinces for both archival material and to conduct interviews in nine branches of the Disabled Persons' Foundations. The Foundation is the governing body of disabled sports in China (including the Paralympic Games Committee, the Special Olympic Committee, and the Sport Performance Centre) at provincial, city, and district levels. The researcher also visited three special needs schools with sport training centres and three sporting institutes from the selected provinces.

The second category focuses on national and local governmental reports and policies, such as the development plan, the 'sport for all' plan. These documents provide the political basis for the research. Clearly, policy documents obtained from the central and

local official website, such as www.gov.cn（中华人民共和国中央政府网）, www.xinhuanet.com（新华网）, www.people.com.cn（人民网）, www.stats.gov.cn（中华人民共和国国家统计局网）, www.cdpf.gov.cn（中国残疾人联合会）www.sport.gov.cn（中国国家体育总局）are key and fundamental sources of data.

The third category covers general publications. These include official data, statistical collections, and academic publications (conference papers, articles, etc.); for example, the participation in sport of urban people (how long they spend on sport participation, which games they take part in, etc.). These documents are standardised artefacts, in so far as they typically occur in particular formats: as notes, case reports, contracts, drafts, remarks, diaries, statistics, annual reports, certificates, judgments, letters or expert opinions (Wolff, 2004). In a sense the documents examined for this research represent the facts or the reality of disability and sport in China. Hence they provide an important source of information. In order to access the sources, newspapers and journals such as *People's Daily* and *Physical Education* were the main resources. There are also many journal articles downloaded from CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). The research also used University College Cork (UCC) library and the University of Western Australia's library catalogue to navigate the research literature that is relevant to this thesis.

4.6.2 Data Organisation and Analysis

The initial preparation for data analysis required organisation of the enormous amount of information because qualitative research often results in voluminous information gathered from the study (Creswell & Garrett, 2008; Best & Kahn, 2006). This was particularly the case for this study, as the researcher used semi–structured interviews, which meant that the interview transcripts provided a mass of information. Data needed

to be organised using files representing each province's interview respondents, identifying various characteristics (when, where, and with whom). To reiterate the above–mentioned point, De Vos (2002) states that data analysis is the process whereby 'the researcher brings structure and order to the vast amount of data collected, and looks for patterns in the data in order to make sense of it, leading to interpretation and meaning–making'. There were twenty–seven interviews for this study, which resulted in large amounts of information after the transcription of all the interviews.

Interviews Transcription and Coding

The researcher personally conducted all the interviews. All the interviews were recorded with the permission of participants using a digital audio recorder to ensure quality and clarity of responses. For the purpose of comprehending participants' responses, The researcher listened to all interviews the same night without transcribing them. This was to identify any gaps or misunderstandings and to refine questions for the next interviews where necessary. In the interests of time, the task of transcribing all the interviews was outsourced to a qualified transcriber, who was instructed to include all non–verbal cues in the transcripts and given clear transcription conventions to follow. The researcher has to mention that the transcription process took almost eleven months, because the transcriber also had work commitments on some days. When some transcriptions were completed, the researcher listened to them to make sure that everything that was discussed was written, at the same time making sense of the data to start identifying patterns. Transcription, according to Creswell and Garrett (2008) is the process of converting digital audio recordings into text data by hand or through computer, and in this study the researcher insisted that the transcriber use the latter to speed up the process. Considering this difficulty, the researcher decided that because the interviews were transcribed per province, it was important to make sure that discussions and

arguments were captured and transcribed. This meant listening and ensuring that participants were well represented in the transcription. Thus, the overall transcription of all interviews, including reading and confirmation of transcripts, took almost a year, as the process was intense and detailed.

This research employed the analytic approach of grounded theory to do inductive coding of the data. As mentioned above, transcription involves: (1) interviews from oral conversation into written text, and (2) reading through and familiarising oneself with the initial transcripts and documents in order to prepare and acquire more general notes.

Then, coding starts with re–reading the transcriptions and giving a code number to each interviewee. In this research, twenty–seven respondents have been coded from 1 to 27 in accordance with the interview order. Furthermore, this included making marginal notes of the significant remarks by key words (in so far as possible) so as to generate an index of terms. For instance, during the interview, some interviewees mentioned their finances. The researcher adopted key words such as: 'self – independent', 'low sport performance', 'unaffordable cost', 'rewards', 'pension' , 'welfare and right', and 'unfairness'.

The next step was to review the codes accompanying the transcriptions. This means comparing the remarks again and again, inquiring about the connections between the codes and then selecting the regular code, putting them into several categories and then putting these further categories in a new concept. The above codes of 'unaffordable cost', 'low performance', 'unfairness' and 'pension' have been gathered into one category named 'financial difficulties'; whereas 'rewards', 'welfare' and 'right', belong to the 'financial benefits' category. After coding, it was necessary to continue with the

comparison of concepts and try to outline the connections between them in order to create more advanced categories and then generate general theoretical ideas. For instance, when comparing other categories such as 'personal attitude of self – independent' or 'personal ability', both financial difficulties and financial benefits should be put into a 'financial issues' category. They are then drafted into the emerging hypotheses, which conclude that 'financial issues' affect the athlete with disabilities' participation in sport.

The final step was to continue to code and collect data theoretically until the categories are saturated, using the different levels of data to test the emerging hypotheses. Then the final theory is explored using the grounded theory processes: for example, to check whether the hypotheses can be supported by them using any of the initial and advanced codes. Consequently, this generates the formal theory that financial issues will have a different influence for the athlete with disabilities' participation in sport.

Data Analysis

The focus of this research is on an exploration of disability and Chinese society during a process of disability sport development. People involved in sport see participation in sport as an aspect of their life story. Consequently this research adopts a narrative analysis approach to capture interviewees' life experience of sport, specifically regarding their participation in sport. Analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity, and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts, are clear aspects of qualitative research (Flick, 2006). However, narrative analysis is just one among a number of other different ways for data to be analysed in this study. Other varieties include content analysis and comparative analysis.

A narrative analysis is mainly used on the data which has been gathered throughout this research. Narrative analysis in the social sciences refers to 'a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have in common a storied form' (Riessman, 2004). In some disciplines, such as social history, the term 'narrative' can refer to an entire life story, woven from the threads of interviews, observation and documents (Riessman, 2004). According to Riessman (2004), what makes such diverse texts 'narrative' is their sequence and consequence: events are selected, organised, connected and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. Storytellers interpret the world and their experience in it – and sometimes create moral tales – to show how the world should be. Thus, narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). Four models are included in Riessman's taxonomy of narrative analysis: (1) thematic analysis, which emphasises the content of a text, i.e. 'what' is said more than 'how' it is said, and what is 'told' rather than the 'telling'; (2) structural analysis, which shifts emphasis to the telling, the way a story is told; (3) interactional analysis, which emphasises the dialogic process between teller and listener; and (4) performative analysis, which 'extends the interactional approach [in which] interest goes beyond the spoken word and [where], as the stage metaphor implies, storytelling is seen as performance' (Riessman, 2004).In this study, thematic analysis was employed. Themes are empowering and enlightening and highlight political exclusion, inclusion, unfairness and welfare. According to these themes, ideal sources of data were identified and collected. Following this, the collected data were indexed and coded.

A cross–case narrative analysis is also employed here as an approach to the elicitation and analysis of data that is sensitive to the temporal sequence of the people interviewed. As tellers of stories about lives or events around them, the narrative analysis detects certain episodes surrounding our lives and injects an account of these episodes (Bryman,

2004). Narrative analysis focuses on the meaning and linguistic arrangements of texts and addresses the temporal and social structures and the plots of interview stories (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Once applied to the data that is gathered, the transcribed interviews of the interviewees' understandings, experiences and feelings are indicated in a systematic way. Similarly, the elements of those experiences and feelings expressed during the interviews and which are most significant to the interviewees are also highlighted (Elliott, 2005). Here all interviewees are treated as a set of their own 'voices'. They are compared to all other cases one at a time in order to understand better the impact of sport on the understanding of disability. Clearly, this is achieved when the collective voices resulting from the interviews generated data. Similarly, when theoretical saturation is reached, the cross–case narrative analysis of these sets of voices, as seen through the lens of functionalism theory and empowerment theory, leads to a clearer understanding of disability and Chinese society from a sporting perspective. There is also a minor role for descriptive quantitative analysis in this study. Here data captured in the interviews was reduced and manipulated to be orientated towards a description of the interviewees' degree of disability sport involvement. Additionally, raw data derived from the interviews was manipulated by collating the responses and presenting it in tables for ease of interpretation. Therefore, this lends to the cross–case narrative analysis of the interviews. The transcription of versions of the interviews enabled a more comprehensive analysis of the interview data. This is a more holistic approach to data analysis. The data obtained from the interviews was organised into a common set of categories (e.g. instance gender, occupation). This approach facilitates the simultaneous focusing of the data towards both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative data analysis organised the frequent of interviewees' answers. At the same time, it also remained grounded in relating a more accurate

narrative analysis of the impact of disability sport on Chinese society, which is the main task of this thesis.

Content analysis is another approach employed in this research to analyse documents and texts. It seeks to quantify content in terms of pre–determined categories in a systematic and replicable manner. Research includes analysis of policy–related documents, or what could be seen as links to the 'sedimentations of social and political practices' (1997). The analysis of policy–related documents applies to what Altheide (1996) has named 'qualitative content analysis', or more accurately to his term 'qualitative document analysis'. This method is employed in order to recognise how different conversations organise the activities of actors, and how they 'are produced, how they function, and how they are changed' (Howarth, 1995).

Moreover, this research applied comparative analysis which has as a key component 'the careful analysis of the conditions under which certain foreign practices deliver desirable results, followed by consideration of ways to adapt those practices to conditions found at home' (Noah, 1984). Additionally, Heidenheimer, Heclo and Adams(1990) claim that a comparative approach is necessary and can stretch to different levels of organisations, where recently policy burdens have tended to shift from central to local and semi–public groups. Therefore, this research brings interest in the interactions between actors from different types of organisations, as well as interest groups, researchers and coaches. Data analysis of this research cooperates by 'focused comparisons' (Babbie, 1998) or via a 'multiple–case' (Yin, 1994) approach. Babbie suggest that a study of an 'intensive comparison of a few instances', which results in a detailed description of a specific topic, could be viewed when exploring how variables interact and evolve in a particular setting. The important utility of the focused

comparisons approach is for analysing policy, organisation and practice processes over a decade, and comparing how a selection of regions vary in their response to common problems over time (Babbie, 1998).

4.7 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are a must in quantitative research. The trustworthiness, the strength and the transferability of knowledge are, in the social sciences, commonly discussed in relation to the concepts of reliability, validity and generalisation (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Reliability refers to the capacity of measurement to produce consistent results, and validity is the property of a research that measures its relevance, precision and accuracy (Sarantakos, 2005). However, in qualitative research, Mason argues that reliability and validity 'are two different kinds of measures of the quality, rigour and wider potential of research, which are achieved according to certain methodological and disciplinary conventions and principles' (Mason, 1996). Reliability involves the accuracy of research methods and techniques and is often considered in relation to the issue of whether a finding is reproducible at other times and by other researchers (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In other words, reliability is equivalent to consistency, which means that a method is reliable if it produces the same results whenever it is repeated, and is not sensitive to the researcher, the research conditions or the respondents (Sarantakos, 2005). As Matthews and Ross (2010) argue, 'reliability is a measure of research quality, meaning that another researcher would expect to obtain the same findings if they carried out the research in the same way, or the original researcher would expect to obtain the same findings if they tried again in the same way'. Yin (2003) suggests that documenting the procedures adopted during previous work or establishing several steps which are as simple as possible in order to make them

operational are ways of achieving higher reliability. In this research, a discrete procedure was established before setting about each research phase. Multiple works on research methodology were also consulted in order to ensure the adoption of the correct and most reliable approach (e.g. Yin, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Gratton & Jones, 2004; Maxwell, 2009; Matthews & Ross, 2010). More importantly, in this research, the method of acquiring data was based on thorough thinking and understanding of the research questions. The data collection process for this study was based on unambiguous research and interview questions, and on deliberate considerations, such as the selection of appropriate conversation sites and using ice–breaking words before the beginning of interviews. Voice–recording was carried out during the interviews. The information gathered from the different methodological processes within this research, i.e. interviews and documents, enabled the establishment of a more dynamic research.

Validity is an important term in research and refers to the conceptual and scientific soundness of a research study (Graziano & Raulin, 2004). Matthews and Ross (2010) state that 'validity is a measure of research quality, meaning that the data we are planning to gather and work with to address our research questions is a close representation of the aspect of social reality we are studying'. In other words, the primary goal in taking validity into account is to increase the accuracy and usefulness of findings by eliminating or controlling as many confounding variables as possible. This allows for greater confidence in the findings of a given study (Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005). Yin (2003) notes that a valid study is one that has properly collected and interpreted its data, so that the conclusions accurately reflect and represent the real world that was studied. Based on his own work as well as numerous other qualitative studies, Maxwell (2009) has offered the following seven–point checklist to be used in combating threats to validity:

(1) Intensive long–term (field) involvement: to produce a complete and in–depth understanding of field situations, including the opportunity to make repeated observations and interviews (Maxwell, 2009). The researcher of this study was a volunteer high–performance coach involved in both Paralympics and Special Olympics from club level to international level from 2003 to 2010. Since 2006, the researcher was also the Sichuan province volunteer Paralympics high performance director and worked as head coach for Sichuan Paralympics swimming, boccia and lifting as well as for Special Olympic swimming and power lifting. The researcher also completed and was involved in six disability sport–related research projects during from 2005 – 2009. Given this experience, the researcher considers himself a competent observer of the field. This long–term field involvement has also brought benefits in terms of Maxwell's (2009) second point (below).

(2) 'Rich' data: to cover fully the field observations and interviews with detailed and varied data. Furthermore, the vast number of images and visual data gathered during the field involvement has provided a solid foundation for consideration.

(3) Triangulation: to collect converging evidence from different sources. For the purposes of triangulation, multiple methods of data collection and analysis were adopted in this research.

The remaining four points suggested by Maxwell (2009) were also taken into consideration and met in this research (Maxwell, 2009):

(4) Respondent validation: to obtain feedback from the people studied to lessen the misinterpretation of their self–reported behaviours and views,

(5) Search for discrepant evidence and negative cases: to test rival or competing explanations.

(6) Quasi–statistics: to use actual numbers instead of adjectives

(7) Comparison: to compare explicitly the results across different settings, groups or events (Maxwell, 2009).

In order to ascertain the usefulness of material, a thematic awareness and a theoretical framework are employed as suitable epistemological positions for the narrative analysis of the data gathered. These considerations ensure and guarantee that the interviews can provide a theoretical insight into the experiences and meanings of the interviewees. Narrative analysis can also provide an appreciation of aspects of power, politics, policy and practice with regard to the current development process of disability sport in China. These considerations can give context where the understanding of the sample of interviewees can produce evidence that has an inter–subjective meaning which is shared by the whole community within these provinces in China.

4.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethics is an important issue associated with any academic research and refers to the question of whether the research is socially and morally acceptable (Gratton & Jones, 2004). This research follows the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Statement) and the policies and procedures of The University of Western Australia guidelines. It has also been approved by the Human Ethical Office of UWA, which issued the file reference number: RA/4/1/7269 for this research.

First, it should be noted that this research was gathered strictly on the basis of informed

consent. Before commencing the interviews, each participant was presented with a copy of my PhD student ID and an introductory letter on headed paper from the School of Social Sciences of University of Western Australia. Each participant in the research was informed about the nature of the study and how data supplied would be used. All interviewees knew that they were being interviewed and the information that they supplied was for the sole purpose of this research. This was undertaken before the data was collected from them and consent was obtained from each participant. All participants were also informed that the conversation could be stopped at any time if they wished to do so. Each interview was conducted in a face–to face manner. Second, all the participants were told that a voice–recording would be taken of the conversations and that they could ask to stop the recording at any time. Third, all participants were guaranteed anonymity and told that only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor would have access to the research data after the interviews and after use in the thesis. In addition, this researcher created a protected folder to store the digital data, while all paper–based data was locked away.

4.9 Conclusion

In sum, this thesis adopted the qualitative research method. Semi–structured interviews were conducted as the main method of data collection, along with documentary data as support. The narrative method is used as the core method to analyse collected data. Validity and reliability are two important criteria to ensure the research goes smoothly and that it is persuasive. Therefore, all ethical issues were also considered in relation to the research value of the research process. The analysis of data will be developed in the following chapters on the following aspects: (1) Elite Disability Sport: Policy and Politics in China; (2) Training the Bodies with Disabilities for China: the Elite

Disability Sport System; (3) Progress and Empowerment: China's Participation in the Paralympic Games, Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games.

Chapter 5 Elite Disability Sport: Policy and Politics in China

5.1 Introduction

The remarkable changes that took place within Chinese society following the Cultural Revolution, and more specifically following the Third Plenum of the Eleventh National People's Congress in 1978, opened the door for reform and open policy in China. It was a watershed moment not just for the Chinese political economy, but also for every aspect of Chinese society (Hao, 1999). At the same time, disability sports were introduced to China in the 1980s. This chapter will first illustrate the transformation in social policy on disability. This will then be followed by an analysis from a political perspective of this period in order to gain an understanding of the historical context of disability. Second the key role of Deng Pufang, the founder of the China Disabled Person' Federation, will be discussed with the aim of understanding disability and sport during this period, along with the development of social policy and sport policy after 1979. Last, this chapter will examine the role political power has played in disability sport policy development in order to understand the relationship between disability sport and politics in China.

5.2 Overview on Ideology and Policies for People with Disabilities

In Chinese traditional culture, people with disabilities were considered ugly and not worthy of attention. They were dismissed as nothing more than burdens on the rest of society (Xun, 2002).

In the early 20th century, the human body was redefined by biological science theory (Xun, 2002). Science theory highlighted the aspect of personhood. A theory of

autonomy of the person was brought in from the West, and health began to be determined by an individual's own efforts. The medical model of bodily 'weaknesses' and 'resistance' supported this claim. The causes of disability were thus accredited solely to physical facts.

In 1941, the Committee for the Study of Population Policies, founded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, was the first official movement towards a systematic approach to eugenics. In the name of 'cultural advancement and racial rejuvenation', it suggested the segregation of people with physical and mental disability from the rest of the population (Xun, 2002).

In addition to race improvement and population control, disability in republican China was also closely related to discussions of public hygiene, venereal disease and prostitution. A social movement encompassing moral purity and physical vigour insisted the nation attempt to eliminate what it saw as its deviants (Miles, 2000). People with disabilities were therefore marked as 'social problems' by new professional elites (Phillips, 1997). This was the first time that this group of people became visible in published photographs and public exhibitions. By displaying the 'disability' in public and in photographs, it categorised them, distanced them and, finally, obstructed them from society (Xun, 2002).

With the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the State, medicine, and science became tightly coupled with Communist ideology in order to consolidate the newly acquired power of the regime. The emphasis on State control over the human for the nation gained strength, and the very rough medical model continued. This model saw no clear boundary between physical disabilities and mental disabilities – all disabilities were

viewed as undesirable from a medical perspective. At that time, there were strong links between individual behaviour and the notion of nation–building. Mao insisted that the body should to be physically fit, classless, simply and frugally clad (Xun, 2002). However, during the period under Mao, class–biased eugenics was officially criticised. Physical anthropology and genetics were accused of being a 'bourgeois science'. 'Abnormality' and 'normality' were certainly measured by whether a person was born 'red' or 'white' (Xun, 2002).

In socialist China, the ideology of the strong body and the political supremacy of the revolutionary soldier and worker–farmer were indivisible. Individual personhood was based on a person's function (national military service, manual labour or childbearing). Work was the key measurement of personhood, and its manifestation was seen to cultivate a strong physique. National heroines and heroes were physical paradigms of the socialist reality, ready to toil and even sacrifice themselves as producers for the country's development (Stone, 2001). It is not surprising that people with disability were omitted from the vision and politics of socialist China and nation–building. The only disabled people who counted as heroes were those whose impairment was acquired through self–sacrifice for the nation through national military service, through labour, or through an act of self–sacrifice for others.

Therefore, the government's policies toward people with disabilities were in line with socialist body ideology. In 1950, 'Temporary Regulations to Honour the Injured Veterans of the Revolution' was issued to support those veterans of the revolution who served in the national military. The following year, the 'Labour Insurance Regulations of the People's Republic of China', a stipulated method to help injured workers, was issued. In 1956, 'Demonstrating Rules on Advanced Agriculture Cooperation' was

issued by the agricultural cooperatives with the aim of caring for people with a disability who could not work. Importantly, in 1956, The Constitution of the People's Republic of China resolved that Chinese people had the right to benefit from social security. However, people with disabilities were excluded and were only covered by social relief policies. Only very few employed persons with disability were covered by the same social insurance as other able–bodied employees. In 1960, the Association of the Blind and the Deaf–Mute was formed (Shuhan, Rui, Ailin, Liu, and Tang, 2011). However, people with disabilities were separate from the society as potential non–soldiers, non–workers and non–mothers (Dixon, 1981).

During the Cultural Revolution, however, a few cases of people with disabilities featured in Chinese state propaganda. There were reports of people with disabilities who had been 'healed' by the power of Maoist thought and the seemingly miraculous capabilities of Chinese acupuncture (Xun, 2002).

5.3 Deng Pufang and the Establishment of the China Disabled Persons' Federation

In 1976, the Cultural Revolution ended. Deng Xiaoping took China's paramount political power to lead over one billion people along a very different course towards national development. In general, Deng Xiaoping's vision was also for a powerful and strong China to become an international major player. Mao had gathered the strength of the Chinese masses' into collective toil for the collective nation, with claims that continued politicised class struggle and revolution was the key to national development. In contrast, Deng had cruder capitalist instincts for individual profit–making. He depoliticised factory and field, de–collectivised the collectives and encouraged the

Chinese masses to make money. Free market economics were surely but slowly employed.

Only a significant few (especially in China's coastal regions and cities) enjoyed the growing wealth that came with this new sense of economic freedom. Increasing communication and trade led to changes in social constructions of the human body. The changes were very limited as the dominant constructions of body function remained attached within the narrow confines of utility and fitness. The ultimate goals of national strength and fitness, and the association with physical strength and individual fitness, remained intact. The change was that collectivism had been replaced by competitiveness in the national vision of the nation and the human body. According to Stone (2001), competitiveness was highlighted as a praiseworthy characteristic by the Chinese government. 'In an era of market competition, the ability to compete and win is a prerequisite for success and survival.' Under this market economics ideology, the survival challenges for people with disabilities became even more pronounced. However, one key person greatly changed the cause, and significantly improved the life quality, of people with disabilities in China.

5.3.1 Deng Pufang

Deng Pufang is the eldest son of China's former paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping. He is well known for being crippled by the Red Guards and then becoming a paraplegic during the Cultural Revolution. After his father, Deng Xiaoping, came to power in the 1980s after the Cultural Revolution, Deng Pufang committed his life to improving the rights of people with disabilities in China.

During the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping and his family were attacked by the Red Guards. Deng Xiaoping was labelled as a capitalist roader and was tortured. The Red Guards then jailed Deng Pufang. In 1968, Deng Pufang was a student at Peking University. He was tortured and thrown out of the window of a three–storey building. He was rushed to a clinic, but was denied admission. When he got to another hospital, he was paralysed as his injuries were too severe to cure. He remains a paraplegic, using a wheelchair (Yan, 1992). Once Deng Pufang talked about his views on the Cultural Revolution, 'The generation of the Cultural Revolution is in no sense a lost generation, as is often said. Quite to the contrary; all those who passed through that test have been toughened. These people think a great deal, and have their own ideas. They are firm in their convictions, and show initiative. To my way of thinking this generation represents a trump card for China and for the reforms which they have set in motion (Yan, 1992).' Deng Pufang committed himself to the cause of people with disabilities in China.

5.3.2 The Establishment of the China Disabled Persons' Federation

After 1983, Cui Naifu, who was the Chief of the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, actively assisted Deng Pufang. They worked together to establish the China Welfare Fund for the Disabled in 1984, which was an organisation focused on poverty reduction in China. In 1986, China established the China Organising Committee for United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, which was led by the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs in Beijing. Cui Naifu chaired the Organising Committee meeting. The Vice Premier Qiao Shi gave a speech and Deng Pufang reported his working progress on the China Welfare Fund for the Disabled. This meeting formulated the responsibilities and operational system of the Organizing Committee and its secretariat (Lu, 1995).

In 1988, to better promote the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons project in China, the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) was established in Beijing. The CDPF is a national organisation for individuals with disability in China. Its aim is to safeguard and represent the interests and rights of people with disabilities. It was formed by the China Association for the Blind and Deaf, which was established in 1960, and the China Welfare Fund for the Disabled, which was established in 1984. The CDPF has three basic functions: (1) to represent the interests of people with disabilities in China and protect their legitimate rights; (2) to provide them with effective and comprehensive services; and (3) to supervise affairs commissioned by the Chinese government which relate to people with disabilities (Lu, 1995).

The CDPF reports to the National People's Congress, which is held every five years. The deputies are chosen by the Bureau of the CDPF. More than 50% of the deputies should be persons with disability or their relatives. The National People's Congress has the power to consider reports from the Bureau of the CDPF, in order to direct working tasks and principles, modify the election of the Bureau of the CDPF and the CDPF charter. The CDPF hold honorary positions, which are Honorary Chairman and Honorary Vice–Chairman, and both positions shall be appointed by the Bureau of the CDPF (Lu, 1995).

The National People's Congress elects the Bureau every five years. During the intersession of the National People's Congress, the Bureau is responsible for guiding the work of the CDPF and implementing the resolutions of the National People's Congress. The Bureau includes a chairman, several vice–chairmen and board members. The Bureau meeting, which is called by the Chairman of the Bureau, is held at least once a

year. The Bureau is mainly responsible for supervision work and personnel changes in the CDPF (Lu, 1995).

The next level is the Executive Board. This is the permanent executive body of the National People's Congress of the CDPF and the Bureau. The Bureau of the CDPF elects the chairman, who is then appointed by the government and cannot serve for more than two consecutive terms. The members and vice–chairmen of the Executive Board are nominated by the chairman and must be approved by the Bureau. Members of the Executive Board should be representatives from all types of disability or relatives of people with disabilities. The ultimate responsibility for the work of the Executive Board rests with the Chairman. The Executive Board leads several administrative office departments and undertakes the daily work of the CDPF (Lu, 1995).

Under the Executive Board's leadership, there are Specialised Associations which have a chairman and a vice–chairman elected by the Committees of the Specialized Associations. The Specialized Associations are composed from the Association for the Blind, the Association for the Deaf, the Association for Disabled Persons, the Association for Mentally Disabled Persons, and so on. The Committees of the Specialized Associations are elected by representatives from the National People's Congress. Their duties are: to represent, educate and unite disabled persons in the same category; to highlight any special requirements; to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests and to fight for social help; and to participate in international activities. Despite the existence of the Specialized Associations, membership of the CDPF is also open to all national community groups that speak for the career of people with disabilities and adopt the Constitution(Lu, 2003).

As discussed, the Chinese government supported the CDPF formation in the 1980s. Since then it has shaped the Federation to become emblematic of the PRC's attainments of modernity, and used the Federation's existence as institutional proof of China's commitment to fostering a national civility from the aspect of international standards of human rights (Hallett, 2006).

From the above it is clear that Deng Pufang channelled his father's political power for Federation development. Therefore, the Chinese government supported the CDPF formation in the 1980s with a substantial degree of resources and material (e.g. office buildings, financial outlays), human resources (e.g. social workers, administrators, clinicians), and intellectual capital (e.g. media coverage, research institutes, publishing houses). It is evident that his role was crucial in the development of disability movements; some people even argue that if it was not for Deng Pufang's paralysis, the CDPF would not exist today or would not have developed so quickly. A similar case can be seen in the US, where Eunice Kennedy Shriver was the founder of the Special Olympics. She was a member of the elite Kennedy family, a politically and economically powerful family who were the political leaders of America in the 1960s and 1970s. Both Deng and Eunice used their family's strong political influence to promote the disability movement.

In China, according to Kohrman (2003), since the 1980s most Chinese tend to downplay the work and growth of the CDPF and have emphasised a different social force as the fuel for the Federation's expansion: the physical presence of Deng Pufang himself. This is because the state–controlled media has promoted accounts of Deng Pufang's life – his imprisonment by the Red Guards, his crippling, and his partial

rehabilitation – as the foundational story in the formation of CDPF. In interviews, the opinion expressed below appears very frequently.

> 'Definitely, Deng Pufang is the most important person for the Chinese disability movement, which includes disability sport. If it wasn't for him, if it wasn't for all that happened to him during the Cultural Revolution, China's disability situation would be totally different. Because of what he's had to live through, and the political background he had, we have the Disabled Persons' Federation.'

It is not surprising that people attribute such sociopolitical significance to Deng Pufang's disability. Deng Pufang and his CDPF associates, in their efforts to develop the CDPF since 1980s, have carefully packaged and displayed his persona, particularly his physical presence. This has involved more than having Deng Pufang chairman as the Federation's key authority figure at almost all the CDPF's big events. It means an emphasis on a physical display at these big events. During these events, and in the many Federation–generated visual representations (video and photographic) of them, Deng Pufang never sits in a four–legged chair like others around him, but in a wheelchair. Moreover, in order to generate resources for Federation growth, and in order to curry goodwill for Federation objectives, they have found it is very necessary to keep Deng Pufang and his wheelchair in constant motion, moving across the elite landscapes of China and the world as a public figure meeting with Chinese and foreign dignitaries.

To sum up, Deng Pufang and the CDPF are as fundamental to the rapid development of all disability movements as the government's power and will behind them. The next

section will discuss disability social policies since 1978 in more detail in order to have a general picture of the development of disability policy in China.

5.4 Overview of Disability Social Policy and Development Since 1979

Since the end of Cultural Revolution in 1976, the development of disability social policies were guided by its goal: 'equality, participation and sharing'. The 1980s was the most important decade for people with disabilities in China. First, China took an active part in the 'United Nations Decade of the Disabled' (1983–1992), which was a landmark international disability movement. During this decade, modern disability ideology and the successful experiences of the disability rights movements all over the world were introduced to China (Cong & Tang, 2003). Although serious discrimination no longer existed, Chinese society and government still applied the political approach themed in 'Care and Protection', and these policies directly resulted in people with disabilities having no choice but to be nursed only by their families (Shang, 2016). People believed that disabled relatives were a liability, because families were expected to take full responsibility for them. At that stage of social and political transformation, the Chinese government had neither the economic capacity nor the political will to provide sufficient welfare benefits and social support to millions of disabled people (Stone, 1996). However, in order to ensure that disability policy development kept pace with economic and social development, China established the 'Future Plans of the Work for Persons with Disabilities in China' (in 1984 and 1987), which outlined the basic rights of people with disabilities', such as social inclusion, equal rights as citizens and new ideologies toward to disability.

In 1988, the First National Survey of Disability was published. The survey put a figure of 51 million on the number of people with disabilities in China (one in every 20 people). The statistics were important, not only because it soon became clear that with China's focus in the 1980s on self–help and profit, and with the transformation of the collective and community, people with disabilities experienced some particular disadvantages. These included the existence of informal constraints such as social, conservative and prejudiced attitudes towards disabled people which meant they were excluded from mainstream society and from dominant social groups. However, in the mid–1980s, China began to gradually change its national social welfare system. The statistics of the first National Survey of Disability guided the direction of disability policy development in 1990s (Stone, 1996).

In 1991, the Chinese government issued the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of People with Disabilities, and amended it in 2008 (CIIC, 2004). The Law on the Protection of People with Disabilities specified equal rights from political, economic, social and cultural perspectives. It also detailed how to be aware of and protect the above rights (Vaughn, 1993). Furthermore, the Chinese government formulated administrative regulations such as the Regulation of the Education of People with Disabilities, the Regulation of the Employment of People with Disabilities, and the Regulation on the Construction of Barrier–Free Environments. Many related statutes, such as the Compulsory Education Law, the Social Insurance Law, Employment Promotion Law and the Mental Health Law, have included protection for the rights of people with disabilities. While legislation for people with disabilities has been set up China is actively initiating enforcement inspection, pushing forward the implementation of laws and policies (Shuhan, et al, 2011; Guo, 2014).

The Chinese government granted, supervised and promoted programmes for people with disabilities in the National Economic and Social Development Five–year Plan. Since the 1980s, six programmes for persons with disability have been implemented and been effectively promoted. The most important one is the 12th National Economic and Social Development Five–year Plan, which clearly outlined its aim as to 'speed up the development of programmes for persons with disability' with regard to services within the social protection system. In recent years, central government planning for education, employment promotion, population development, primary public service and social protection, as well as the National Human Rights Action Plan, has suggested policy measures that protect the rights of persons with disability and improve their conditions. The latest Development Outline for the Disabled Persons' Programme in the 12th Five–year Plan of China (2011–2015) detailed the overall goal as 'generally bringing the life of disabled persons to well–off, substantially improving their living and development conditions' in the coming five years. Other development goals of the 12th Five–year Plan of China include: the provision of rehabilitation services to 13 million persons with disability; the provision of new employment to a million persons with disability in cities; assistance for 10 million poor persons with disability in the villages to improve their living conditions and ensure that persons with disability receive employment service and vocational training.

The development of disability legislation and social policy as a national strategy was also responsible for a positive impact on the development of policies in the areas of poverty reduction, employment, medical treatment, education, cultural and sports participation, accessible construction, and international exchange and cooperation.

5.4.1 Poverty Reduction Policy and Development

China has gradually constructed a basic social protection and service system for people with disabilities. With regard to social protection, people with disabilities living in poverty were generally entitled to the minimum subsistence allowance. In most provinces, the number of families with disabilities was on the rise (Liu, 2010) . The government gradually built a system of living subsidies for people with disabilities and care subsidies for people with severe disabilities. For these persons with severe disabilities living in poverty, the government has built a subsidy system that covers social insurance, basic elderly–care and basic medical insurance (Dong & Ye, 2003). The urban–rural participation rate of disabled persons in social insurance has steadily increased. For orphans with disabilities, the social protection system was also improved. The central government funded the implementation of the 'Sunshine Home' programme, in order to provide care service with boarding and community day care services to people with severe disabilities (Li & Piachaud, 2004).

China has worked with two 10–year development plans on poverty reduction for people with disabilities. These plans offered a variety of special medical treatments, agricultural subsidies, discount loans and social protection service to people in villages. The plans included free skills training and professional education to develop to enable people with disabilities in these villages to increase their income. The plans also helped poor families with disabilities in villages to reconstruct dangerous buildings to let them have a safe house (Guo, Bricout and Huang, 2005). According to the CDPF Annual Report, more than 4.8 million people with disabilities who live in villages were released from poverty from 2009 to 2013.

5.4.2 Employment Policy and Development

China enforced multiple approaches to enable and support people with disabilities to join the labour market and participate in productive activities. These include: proportion employment, concentrated employment, voluntary assistance of business start–up and non–profit job allocation. The Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons and the Regulation of the Employment of People with Disabilities outlined that the number of employees with a disability in an employment unit must make up no less than 1.5% of the total, workforce, and that these people must be placed in proper and genuine positions(National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005). The laws also cleared the way for the enforcement of a series of benefits to companies that hire people with disabilities and enable disability welfare enterprises. These benefits include priority in government procurement, production and sale franchise, and subsidies on social insurance. Government welfare branches were required to employ people with disabilities as a priority or retain a proportion of positions for them. The laws further stated that people with disabilities who wish to be employed can receive employment services and professional training (Pierini et.al, 2001). According to the CDPF Annual Report, more than 1.6 million people lately received employment services from 2009 to 2013 in both urban and rural areas. The disposable income per capita of the urban family of a person with a disability increased to 65.5% at the same time.

5.4.3 Medical Treatment Policy and Development

Initially China focused on rescue medical treatment for children with disabilities aged 0–6, the intention being to provide medical intervention to them during their formative years that would be of benefit their entire life (Shang, 2002). Later, all levels of government provided financial support to implement key medical treatment programmes, such as free cataract surgery for the poor (Dong, 2005). According to the

CDPF Annual Report, the latest data from 2009 to 2013 shows that 12 million people received different degrees of medical treatment. More than 5.2 million pieces of assistive devices and equipment were provided to people with disabilities. About 2,800 cities and districts in China provided community level medical treatment, which covered 55.2% of the total population of people with disabilities.

5.4.4 Education Policy and Development

A full education system for disabled people from pre–school to tertiary education has been established(Wang & Wang, 1992). The enrolment of children and teenagers with disabilities in compulsory education has significantly increased(Shang, Wu and Wu, 2005). Almost 60% of students with disabilities have received education from 'Learning in Regular Classrooms,' which is general public education for those children whose disability does not affect their performance in the classroom (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2005). Free education for high school students with disabilities is gradually being implemented(He, 2007). At present, over 30,000 students with disabilities study in normal high schools, and special institutions of higher education. Occupational education and training are also widely provided (Tan, 2009).

5.4.5 Cultural and Sports Participation Policy and Development

The CDPF actively promoted people with disabilities to participate in public cultural and sports activities. Public cultural and sports service were provided by cultural and sports organisations (Wang, 2008).. At the same time, the government led a series of cultural programmes and fitness programmes for people with disabilities, along with cultural and sports services, such as the use of audiobooks and Braille books. National, provincial and city radio and television stations provided special programmes and sign language programmes. Public libraries at city level or above provided reading rooms for

the blind. The government encouraged people with disabilities to participate in fitness programmes and cultural and artistic activities (Zhang & Qing 2007).

5.4.6 Accessible Construction Policy and Development

The Chinese government included accessible construction in the comprehensive planning of urban–rural construction, and actively increased accessible construction for public spaces, such as city transportation, airports and railways. Central and local governments gradually provided funds to renovate accessible construction for homes of people with disabilities in poverty (Ma, 2013). People with disabilities could now travel more easily, communicate more effectively, and enjoy a wider social life (Fu, 2002).

5.4.7 International Exchange and Cooperation Policy and Development

The Chinese government actively took part in international exchange and cooperation concerning disability affairs(Wilde, 2001). China is a positive supporter of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and one of the first countries to sign and to be approved accession to the Convention(Wang & Tan, 2006). In 2008, the National People's Congress Standing Committee issued the Convention, which came into force in September of the same year. The government made serious efforts, as the Convention stipulated. The Chinese government submitted the first national implementation report as scheduled and passed the examination by the United Nations Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, in recent years China successfully hosted a series of important international events, such as the 2007 Special Olympic Summer World Games in Shanghai, the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing, and the 2010 Asian Paralympic Games at Guangzhou, which increased the friendship and communication between people with disabilities from different countries. The Expo 2010 in Shanghai China established the first pavilion with the theme of

disability – the Life and Sunshine Pavilion – in the 159 years of world expo history. In 2012, China organised the Beijing Forum: Removing Barriers, Promoting Integration, and then announced the Beijing Declaration 2012, which called for the enhancement of cooperation to implement the Convention of the Rights of Persons.

To conclude, disability policy has been comprehensively developing in China since 1978. Living conditions have been considerably improved. The equal rights and opportunities of people with disabilities are better protected. More and more people with disabilities access public life and employment (Yang, 2003). The Chinese government has aimed to achieve the objectives of participation, fairness and sharing. The dominate power of the Chinese government, and the assistance of the CDPF, strengthened the construction of disability policy on a national level and provided basic public services to people with disabilities from all aspects. However, there is still a large gap between the living conditions of people with disabilities and that of the average conditions of society. Also, the development of urban–rural disability services is still imbalanced (Yin & Lan, 2008). People with disabilities still arguably face obstacles and challenges to access medical treatment, education, employment, culture and sports, social participation, etc (Young, 2001). Discrimination and violation continue to exist to different degrees. Just as the disability pioneer and leader Deng Pufang said, 'The work we have already done, when compared with the work we need to do, is far from enough.'

5.5 Sport Policy and Politics in China

To better understand the policy development of disability sport in China, it is crucial to review the background of sport policy before and during the introduction of disability

sport to China. The role political power played in sport development in China deserves special attention as it draws a full picture of the background of disability sport in China, which helps this study to thoroughly examine this question.

5.5.1 Sport Policy and Politics (1949–1977)

In the PRC, sport has always been associated with pragmatism and utilitarianism. The ambition of Communist China to use sport as a means of implementing political ideology began as early as its establishment in 1949. The All–China Sport and Physical Education Congress took place on 26 and 27 October, immediately after the establishment of the new republic in 1949 (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan, Fan and Lu, 2010). Zhu De, the commander–in–chief of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and vice–chairman of the central government, outlined the role that sport ought to play in the future:

> 'Sport is a significant component of education and health. The central government must give it its place in building socialism . . . and it should serve the people, and the purposes of national defence and health. Chinese people, including students, peasants, workers, citizens and soldiers, should all participate in physical exercise and sport activities of all kinds' (Zhu, 1950).

The Preparatory Committee for the All–China Sports Federation (PCACSF) was established at the conference and Feng Wenbin, secretary of the Communist Youth League (CYL), was elected as its first director. He announced three tasks for the PCACSF at his inauguration, one of which was to establish a national sports organisation (Feng, 1950). In 1952, the PCACSF formally changed its name to the All–China Sports Federation (ACSF), a semi–governmental organisation which functioned

under the leadership of the central government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). It followed the 'Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference', and helped the government to organise and promote physical education and sport. The objective was to improve people's health, and to serve the purposes of national defence and state–building. Zhu De was elected as the honorary president of the ACSF (ACSF, 1952; Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

Soon after its establishment, the general secretary of the ACSF, Feng Wenbin, wrote to the IOC and the International Sports Federations (ISF) to inform them that from now on the ACSF would represent China in international sport affairs (Tan, 2005: 416). In 1954, the IOC formally recognized the ACSF. In the same year, the Central National Defence Sport Club (CNDSC) was established under the ACSF. This semi–governmental system played a significant role in the development of Chinese mass sport and military sport in the early 1950s. Some 30,505 local sporting associations were established throughout the country and memberships had reached 915,150 by 1956 (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

However, China's political dispute with Taiwan and the Soviet Union's victory over Western Europe and the US at the Helsinki Olympic Games in 1952 demonstrated that the ACSF was unable to meet the central government's political needs in terms of utilising sport to restore the nation's prestige in international politics. After the Helsinki Olympics, Rong Gaotang, head of the Chinese Olympic delegation, visited the Soviet Union to learn about its centralised sport system, and he reported his findings to the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in April 1952 (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

In September of 1952, Ma Xulun, the Minister of Education, submitted a similar report to the Government Administration Council. The two reports came up with the same proposal. It was argued that the ACSF was merely a semi–governmental organisation which did not have enough power to lead sport development and physical education in China. In order to further promote sports in China and to win recognition on the international sports stage, an influential sports organisation with authority, such as the Ministry of Sport in the Soviet Union, was needed. Both reports suggested that the central government should establish a national governing body for sport under the Administration Council of the Central Government and that Marshal He Long should be appointed its leader (Fan, 1999a; Li & Zhou, 2002: 52; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The proposal was approved by the central government. In November 1952, the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission (SPCSC) was formally established, following the Soviet Union model. This was a governmental ministry with the same status as other ministries like Education, Finance, and Commerce, all directly under the leadership of the State Council. At the same time, local sport commissions were established successively at provincial, municipal and county levels throughout China. These sport commissions were governed by the SPCSC in terms of sport policy–making and implementation, but were under the direct leadership of local government in terms of human resources, budgeting, and general operation. Thus, a top–down governmental system took shape. The SPCSC soon took over from the ACSF as the dominant power in governing Chinese sport (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

Under the SPCSC system, mass sport developed rapidly in the late 1950s, particularly during the Great Leap Forward and following the implementation of the Ten–year

Guideline for Sports Development, which was issued by the SPCSC in 1956. This Guideline aimed to promote mass sport and competitive sport simultaneously and to reach international levels within a decade. The major target was to 'have four million people achieve the standard of the Labour and Defense System (LDS), and to cultivate eight million active athletes and five thousand elite athletes in ten years' time' (SPCSC, 1958). By mid–1958, inspired by the booming campaign in agriculture and heavy industry, the SPCSC believed that 'the goal of surpassing the capitalist West has stimulated the development of sport … [and that] the old Guideline no longer suits the current situation and will reduce people's enthusiasm' (Fu, 2007). Therefore, the SPCSC revised the Guideline in September 1958, and now required '150–200 million people to achieve the standard of the LDS, and aimed to cultivate 50–70 million active athletes and 10–15 thousand elite athletes' (Fu, 2007). The revised Ten–year Guideline for Sport Development was approved by the CCP Central Committee in September 1958 (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 6–125; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

In 1960, the CCP changed its slogan to 'Readjustment, Consolidation, Replenishment, and Raising Standards'. In 1961, the SPCSC revised its policy on producing elite sports players (SPCSC, 1982: 60, 72). The government determined that its limited resources should be used to provide special and intensive training for young athletes with the potential to compete on the international sporting stage. Under this policy, a centralised sports system which aimed to produce a few elite sports stars took shape.

In 1963, the SPCSC issued its Regulations for Outstanding Athletes and Teams in an effort to improve the system. Following instructions from the Ministry, a search for talented young athletes took place in every province (SPCSC, 1982: 102). Meanwhile, 10 out of a total of 43 sports were designated key sports: athletics, badminton,

gymnastics, swimming, football, basketball, table tennis, shooting, weightlifting, and skiing (SPCSC, 1982: 103). This marked a key turning point in the Chinese sport ideology and transferred the sport system's focus from 'two legs walking' (elite and mass sport) to 'one leg walking' (elite sport only), as the Chinese saying goes (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 126–296; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The advent of the Cultural Revolution, however, heralded a tumultuous period for Chinese sport. This was a political movement initiated by CCP leader Mao Zedong. Mao believed he was losing control of the party and that his revisionist enemies had changed the colour of the Party from red (communism) to black (capitalism and revisionism). His aim for the Cultural Revolution was to regain and consolidate his power and to prevent China from changing its colour (Fan, 1999b). In matters of sport, the focus ultimately turned to the relationship between elite sport and mass sport. The former was regarded as the representative of bourgeois and capitalist ideology and the latter as communist and proletarian. Mass sport thus survived and maintained a steady pace of development (Fan, 1999b; Fu, 2007; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

As a result, the SPCSC, which had regarded elitism in sports as a promising solution to establish China's international image within the shortest possible time in the planned economy system, disintegrated. The Revolutionary Communist Central Committee, the State Council, and the Central Military Commission (which took over the top governing chair from the SPCSC) jointly issued a Military Order on 12 May 1968 disbanding the SPCSC, including the CNDSC, and the provincial and local sports commissions. He Long, the Sports Minister, was accused of neglecting mass sport and of supporting a revisionist and capitalist sport policy. He was condemned, jailed, and died in prison in 1975. PLA officers and soldiers were sent to replace sport administrators. More than

1,000 sport administrators from the SPCSC were sent to a May Seventh Cadre School in Shanxi Province to be 're–educated' through physical labour. The administrators and coaches of provincial and local sports commissions were also sent to the countryside to be re–educated (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 297–386; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The entire elite sport training system in China was dismantled. Sports schools were closed down. Provincial and local sports teams were disbanded and national squads stopped participating in international competitions. Sports facilities were destroyed by the Red Guards and revolutionary rebels. Sports stadia became venues for denunciation meetings. Top athletes, renowned coaches, sports scientists and scholars were condemned as counter–revolutionaries, capitalist–roaders, and rightists, and they suffered mentally and physically. Some of the athletes even died in the violent revolutionary storm of the Cultural Revolution. For example, three famous world–class table tennis players, Rong Guotuan, Fu Qifang and Jiang Yongning, committed suicide in 1968 as they could no longer endure the torture they had been subjected to by the revolutionaries (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 297–386; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The situation began to change after the 'Ping–Pong Diplomacy' of the early 1970s, when for political and diplomatic reasons for China began to feel threatened by the Soviet Union and sought to cultivate the US as a new ally. Sport was used to open channels of communication with the Western powers. In February 1973, the SPCSC was restored to power to govern Chinese sport under the State Council. The provincial and municipal sport commissions were rebuilt accordingly to implement the political strategy and sports policy of the central government and the SPCSC (Fan, 1999a; Fu, 2007: 387–417; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

In summary, sport development in pre–reform China was organised, both at party and state administration level, in a vast hierarchy with power flowing down from the top. Between the late 1940s and the late 1970s, the national governing body, the ACSF/SPCSC, was responsible for the formulation and implementation of sport policy, the administration of national sports programmes and organisations, training elite athletes, and organising national and international competitions.

The model for the Chinese sport administrative system reflected the political and diplomatic strategies and wider social system in China. In this period, sport was seen as a useful tool for the government to improve the country's international image, as is reflected in the development of basketball (Fan, 1999a; Hao, 2006: 5–70; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

5.4.2 The Centralised Power 'Juguo Tizhi' (1978–2012)

Mao's death in 1976 brought an end to the Cultural Revolution. The Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee was held in September 1978, and this marked the beginning of a new era for China. The Maoist 'class struggle–oriented' political policy was replaced by economic reform and an 'open–door' policy (Hao, 2006). It was hoped that, through economic reform and communication with advanced countries in the West, China would catch up with the West and again become a strong, modernised country. Sport administration in Chinese sport also underwent institutional transformation in the new era, highlighting the importance of public involvement in governing China's mass sport. Meanwhile, government leadership was maintained in elite sport. According to the Decisions about the Reformation of the Sports System (Draft) issued by the SPCSC in 1986, the proposed structure of China's sport governance was that mass sport should be promoted by a variety of public organisations

in different sectors with support from the sports commissions, but that elite sport should continue to be managed by the state, albeit in co–operation with some public organisations. The purpose of this strategy was to transform the state–centralised sport governance model into a combination of state centralisation and public involvement, thereby creating a new model. (Fan, 1999a; SPCSC, 2006: 92; Fu, 2007: 387–417; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

Although progress in mass sport was mediocre, mainly due to the lack of public interest, the reform in elite sport began apace. It was called 'Juguo tizhi' in Chinese and translates as 'whole–country support for the elite sport system'. In pursuit of ideological superiority and national status, this system channelled all sports resources in the country into elite sport, effectively producing hundreds of thousands of young elite athletes in a short time. The system's main characteristics are centralised management and administration and guaranteed financial and human resources from the whole country to ensure it maximum support. This 'whole–country support for the elite sport system' was officially acknowledged in the 1980s when China adopted the 'open–door' policy and competition was advocated as the spirit of the new era. The SPCSC held a national sports conference in 1980 and officially established its strategy for the future development of sport.

In 1980, Wang Meng stated at the National Sports Conference that forging a relationship between sport and the socialist economy was crucial to the development of Chinese elite sport. On the one hand, China was still a poor country and was restricted in the amount of money it could invest in sport. On the other hand, elite sport was an effective way to boost China's new image on the international stage. Therefore, the solution was to bring elite sport into the existing planned economy and administrative

system, which could assist in the distribution of the limited resources of the whole nation to medal–winning (Fan, 1999a; Hao, 2006: 5–70; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

In 1982, the SPCSC started to reallocate its governance power within the committee. For the purpose of developing Olympic sports, the SPCSC restructured its organisation into six departments, named Competition Sport Departments One to Six. Each was responsible for certain sport events. The intent was to cover all the Olympic sports and to centralise all resources to ensure victory in international competitions (Hong, 1999a; Hao, 2006: 5–70; Hong, 2008; Fan et al., 2010; Fan & Huang, 2013). It was a successful strategy, which brought immediate success at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. After a 32–year absence from the Olympics, China won 15 gold medals and was placed fourth on the Olympic medals table. Although the success in Los Angeles was partly attributed to the absence of the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Germany, it nevertheless excited many in China, from government officials to ordinary citizens. (Fan, 1999a; Hao, 2008: 5–70; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The slogan and a dream for the Chinese people became ‘Develop elite sport and make China a superpower in the world’. The Chinese government had captured the national competitive spirit and wanted to capitalise on the inspiration of the Olympic victory for the Chinese people. The Society of Strategic Research for the Development of Physical Education and Sport produced the Olympic Strategy for the Sports Ministry in 1985. This strategy clearly stated that ‘elite sport is the priority’. It aimed to use the nation’s limited sports resources to develop elite sport in order to ensure that China would become a leading sports power by the end of the 20th century. The strategy was the blueprint for Chinese sport in the 1980s and 1990s, and the primary target was the Olympics (Fan, 1999a; Hao, 2006: 5–70; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

Wu Shaozu, the Minister of Sport from 1990 to 2000, claimed that 'the highest aim of Chinese sport is success in the Olympic Games. We must concentrate our resources on it. To raise the flag at the Olympics is our major responsibility' (Wu, 1999: 64). To achieve this goal, the government had to channel much of its limited resources into providing special and intensive training for potential gold medallists. Chinese athletes benefited both from the 'whole–country support for the elite sport system' and the Olympic Strategy and they achieved very satisfactory results (Fan, 1999a; Hao, 2008: 5–70; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The turning point from solely politicisation of sport to its commercialisation came in 1992 when a major reform policy was initiated by Deng Xiaoping. On his South Patrol in February 1992, Deng urged the central and local governments to speed up economic reform at all levels of Chinese society. In response, the SPCSC held a conference in Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, in November 1992 to discuss how to speed up the reformation of Chinese sport. At the conference, Wu Shaozu pointed out that the major objective of sport reformation was to further transform the sport system, which was still based on a planned economy, to a new system, which would be based on the market–oriented economy. Sport, he maintained, should stand on its own feet (Fan, 1999a; Cao, 2008: 46–152; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

Based on the principles espoused at the Zhongshan Conference, the SPCSC issued the Proposal of Moving Ahead of Sport Reformation on 24 May 1993, which officially announced a market–oriented reform policy. In this policy document, the SPCSC, for the first time, publicly advocated the commercialisation of sports and the promotion of a sports industry. Wu Shaozu claimed:

> ‘The Chinese sport system must reform without delay. The strategy for the reform is to commercialise sport and to integrate sport into people’s daily lives. This includes people paying for sports and exercise, privately sponsored sport, the club system, and promotion of a commercial sports market.’
>
> (Fan, 1999a; Fan et al., 2010)

Later the same year, the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee was held and the establishment of the socialist market economy was approved. Soon thereafter, in the sport field, the SPCSC set out the framework for the future development of Chinese sport. Three decrees were issued in June 1995: the Olympic Strategy, the National Fitness–for–All Programme, and the Development of Sports Industry and Commerce Outline. These decrees were designed to be integrated, and were expected to support each other to form a new model for sport policy and practice in China (Fan, 1999a; Cao, 2008: 46–152; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

The implementation of the three decrees simultaneously legitimised the involvement of the public, who would exert power in the form of non–governmental federations. It altered the government’s role in the Chinese sport system from one of command and direct control to one of leverage. The SPCSC changed its name to the General Administration of Sport GAS in 1998. A new administrative structure for Chinese sport was introduced along with the change of the name, as part of the wider reformation towards a market economy. At the same time, 14 sports management centres were set up to work with 41 national sports federations to manage 56 sports under the GAS (Fan, 1999a; Cao, 2008: 46–152; Fan, 2008; Fan et al., 2010).

However, non–governmental sports federations did not yet preside over sport administrations. There was a slow transference of power, and the practical power in governing Chinese sport was effectively superficial. Nevertheless, there has been a tendency and trend to move away from direct government control of sport.

5.6 Disability Sport Policy Development since 1979

The emergence of disability sport in China is still under discussion in academic circles. Generally, the differences in opinion are caused by different points of reference. Some scholars prefer the earliest archival records about disability physical activity from the medical and historical perspective. Others prefer to use the establishment of the People's Republic of China as a historical benchmark from a political perspective. Furthermore, social science scholars tend to use the 1980s as the landmark for disability studies in China. This study therefore, will follow the social science scholars, who consider disability sport to have begun in China in the 1980s. The earlier physical activity for people with disabilities in China was unorganised and has no relationship with modern sporting events such as the Paralympics and the Special Olympics (Hao, 2010). Also, before the 1980s, the records of disability sporting activities refer almost exclusively to those with listening and/or speaking disabilities. Additionally, Chinese society experienced the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, and the government did not function properly during that period of time. The new leaders brought the country back on track in late 1970s, when disability sport started to be managed by the SPCSC.

5.6.1 Development without Policy Support (1979–1992)

The SPCSC began operations in 1976. The mass sport department of the SPCSC managed the development of disability sport, but there was no one officer responsible

for disability sport in particular. However, disability sport started to be organised in China by national organisations. The first national disability sport competition was run in Tianjing and the Injured and Disabled Sport Association was established in 1984. Both of these events were to become historical benchmarks in the development of disability sport.

As discussed in 5.4.2 above, in 1982 the SPCSC started to reallocate its governing power by applying 'whole–country support for the elite sport system'. In contrast, disability sport was forced to share all resources with the Olympic sports management in the mass sport department, which meant that disability sport was neglected and dismissed or seen as unimportant. During this period of time, there was no clear policy to promote disability sport due to the government's single–minded focus on Olympic success.

The lack of resources and policy support from the central government limited the development of disability sport in China. The response of two interviewees No.1 and No.10 who are expert in this area illustrates this inadequacy:

> ' … the general public barely gave attention to people with disabilities as the 'open–door' policy started to sharply change people's daily lives. Productivity became the theme of the time. Unfortunately, people with disabilities even experienced discrimination due to lack of productivity. In the meantime, disability sport was covered by Olympic success. The media only reported the great achievements in the Olympics for political purposes.'

> ‘During that period of time, China was poor. The infrastructures for people with disabilities were under–developed. Therefore, people with disabilities were overlooked.’

In 1983, China joined the international Paralympics committee and promised to send a delegation to the 1984 New York Summer Paralympic Games. For this purpose, the government pushed disability sport to gradually advance in three ways. First, in order to join the International Paralympics committee, the SPCSC set up the Injured and Disabled Sport Association for Paralympics, although there was still no officer working exclusively for disability sport and it was still sharing resources with the mass sport office. Second, the Injured and Disabled Sport Association ran its first national disability sport competition in Tianjin in 1983 to select the delegation that would attend the 1984 New York Summer Paralympic Games. The competition was reported in the People’s Newspaper, which was the first time the media gave nationwide attention to disability sport. However, during this stage, central and top–down power was absent in guiding disability sport in China.

The turning point for disability sport policy development was that the Injured and Disabled Sport Association and the mass sport department of the SPCSC jointly issued the ‘Notice for Developing Injured and Disabled Sports’ to the provincial Sport Commission in 1984, 1987 and 1990. This was the first recorded policy from the central sport administration to promote disability sport, although its main aim was to select athletes to compete in national or international Paralympics Games. The policy was not made by people with disabilities, so it was limited in its ability to empower athletes with disabilities.

Educational institutions played a major role in the development of disability sport in this period. In part, this is due to education legislation such as the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China (1986), in which Article 9 provides that 'local governments at all levels should organise special education schools for the blind, deaf, dumb, intellectually disabled children and teenagers'. Another legislative push came from Regulations on the Work of College Sports, which came into law in 1990. This addressed the regulations for physical education and health programmes at colleges and universities. It provided that colleges should make available appropriate health, therapeutic exercise, medical treatment and sports activities for students who had physiological challenges or certain medical conditions (such as traumatic brain injury and dwarfism), so that they could improve their physical condition and health.

During this period, disability sport was not promoted on a national level through any specific policy, as all policy–making was aimed towards competition tasks due to the central government's focus on Olympic success. However, a rapid development in disability social policies started to bring disability groups into the public eye, and laid the foundations for the social environment that would invigorate disability sport.

5.6.2 Development with Policy Support (1993–2012)

In 1993, the central government moved the responsibility for the management of disability sport from both the CDPF and the SPCSC to the CDPF only. For the first time, the government hosted the Far Eastern and South Pacific Disabled Games in Beijing 1994 (commonly referred to as the FESPIC Games), a regional version of the Paralympics for countries of South and East Asia (Sun, 1994).

This was the first time disability sport was managed by its own organisation. It was led by a former political leader's son, Deng Pufang, who was a wheelchair user. After the CDPF took over the duty of management of disability sport, it immediately faced hosting an international competition and performance (Zhao, 1994).

Although Chinese sport was formed by Communist ideology, new policies were emerging in response to internal economic reform and external opportunities. In 1993, the Chinese Sports Ministry held a conference named 'The Urgent Promotion and Development of Sports Business' (Tan & Fan, 2002). Participants of this conference were directors from provincial and large city sport councils. The Minister of Sport, Wu Shaozhu, stated that the Chinese sports system must reform without any hesitation. He pointed out that the reform strategy was to commercialise sport, and bring sport into ordinary people's lives. Therefore, a sport development framework for adopting an increasingly marketised economy was set. It had three targets: the Olympic Strategy; the Development of Sports Industry and Commerce Strategy; and the National Fitness for All Programme. These targets were designed to be integrated and were expected to support each other and to form a new sports policy and practice in China.

Importantly, the National Fitness for All Programme was the first national sport programme that combined both mainstream sport and disability sport. However, China's ambition to re–establish its national image and status and to inspire national confidence to catch up with the Western powers through Olympic success meant that the Olympic Strategy was the priority. There were two consequences: first, this resulted in the CDPF, the management body of disability sport, also giving priority to performance in international competition. Second, as National Fitness for All

Programme was a commerce–based programme, it made it even more difficult for people with disability to access sport facilities.

As a new organisation which lacked the relevant experience, the CDPF simply applied the Chinese Olympic approach, which was the only available approach for quick results on competition performance at the time. The CDPF hoped the Chinese Olympic approach could help them to successfully host the FESPIC Games. In 1994, the FESPIC Games was a success, so the Chinese Olympic approach became a successful experience for disability sport.

In 1995, another law guiding disability sport, the People's Republic of China Sports Law, came into force. This was a special law which aimed to develop initiatives to improve health and sporting opportunities at all skill levels. The law pointed out that work in sport should be based on national fitness activities, and attempted to encourage all types of sporting activities to grow. The law also included the establishment of public sports facilities which included activities for students, the elderly and people with disabilities. Article 16 provides that 'the whole of society should show concern and support for the elderly, and the disabled, to participate in sports activities. The People's government at all levels should take measures for the elderly and disabled to participate in sports without barriers'. Article 46 stipulates:

> Public sports facilities should be open to the community to facilitate the public and the majority of society to carry out sports activities, and provide preferential treatment to students, the elderly and persons with a disability to increase their utilisation of sports facilities.

The law explicitly protected disabled people's rights in sport and stated that it was the duty of governments and related departments at all levels to ensure that disabled persons participated in sports activities as much as possible, and at their convenience. At least on paper, the law was the first to state how these changes could be facilitated by pointing out ways to develop disability sport and to encourage both mass participation and competitive disability sport.

The CDPF aimed to pursue the success from disability sport medal winning in the 1992 Paralympic Games, the National Paralympic Games and the 1994 FESPIC Games in order to establish champions as role models in order to encourage others. The ideology of disability sport was as follows:

> Although they experienced disability, yet they have ceaselessly sought to strengthen themselves. They have forced themselves to forge ahead; they have overcome frequent and unimaginable difficulties, they have contributed their own sweat and blood and wisdom, and they have made an outstanding contribution to the glory of the motherland and the flourishing of the race.
>
> (CDPF, 1991, first preface)

After a decade of development, all levels of government began to pay more attention to disability sport and, gradually, more policies oriented or related to disability sports were established.

Before 2001, there were no statistics concerning the number of people with disabilities participating in sport. Anecdotally it has been reported that few people with disabilities were able to leave their homes to take part in sport or exercise, with the exception of

some students with disabilities who had physical education lessons in their schools. Therefore, the Chinese government required improvements in sporting activities for the disabled. In 2001, the 10th Five–year Plan aspired to achieve a participation rate of 10% of the total population of people with disabilities. Its main goal was to increase the number of people with intellectual disabilities who would participate in the Special Olympics from 50,000 to 500,000 (Premier Zhu, 2006). According to the Statistics Report of Implementing the 10th Five–year Plan, these targets were achieved. Through these programmes, disability sport made progress.

In 2002, the CCP Central Committee and State Council established the 'Guidelines on Further Strengthening and Improving the Work of Sports in the New Era'. This was introduced to help frame the development of sport as part of hosting the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games (Department of Competitive Sport, 2002). Article 13 states, 'Pay more attention to and support the selection, training, team organisation, and competition of athletes with a disability.' The push came both internally and externally, because the International Olympic Committee (IOC) required everything to be done to ensure the success of the 2008 Paralympic Games. This requirement improved competitive sport for people with disabilities, and furthered the ability of China to hold large disability sport events. It also helped lead to the successes of high–performance disabled athletes and the successful hosting of the 2008 Paralympic Games.

Established on 6 May 2007, the 'Guidelines of the General Office of the State Council on Further Strengthening the Disabled Sport Work' systematically addressed disability sport. It pointed out that, although China had made great progress in disability sport since 1978, it was still under–developed. This was especially the case for mass

participation sport. It also indicated that the Shanghai 2007 Special Olympics (Olympics for people with intellectual disabilities) and the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games would provide great opportunities for people with disabilities. The State Council believed that disability sport should be improved from the grass roots level.

Another important policy was the Central Committee and State Council's Guidelines on Accelerating Disability Initiatives, which was established on 28 March 2008. This required that 'every place should pay close attention to sports activities for the disabled, develop athletes with a disability and support them by specific state policies'. This further reinforced the message of the Guidelines of the General Office of the State Council on Further Strengthening the Disabled Sport Work:

> Make disability culture and sport prosper. Organise the disabled to take part in mass culture, arts and entertainments, enrich their spiritual and cultural life, and encourage them to actively participate in the advanced cultural construction of socialism. Fulfil the National Fitness Project and initiate mass sport and fitness activities for the disabled. Do scientific research and physical education on disability sport. The public facilities for culture and sport have to be open to the disabled at preferential prices. Organise Paralympic competitions, the Special Olympics and the Deaflympics. Hold and participate in major competitive games at home and abroad. Try to have the best events and to successfully host the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games and the Guangzhou 2010 Asian Disabled Games.

Both sets of guidelines have had, and should continue to have, a great impact on the lives of people with disabilities, and on disability sport.

After China's success in the Olympics and it position at No.1 in the Paralympic Games three times in row from 2004 to 2012, the disability sport policy did not change very much. The National Sports Congress in early 2009 re–emphasised the continuation of the implementation of sports policies issued by the State Council in 1995: the 'Olympic Strategy', the 'National Fitness for All Programme' and the 'Outline of Development of Sports Industry and Commerce'. It also included the aim to hold on to the first position in the medal tally. The 12th Five–year Plan (2011–2015) therefore retained the emphasis on continuing to win and perform in international competitions. Another goal was the development of sport as medical treatment.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of disability ideology and politics in the context of social policy, sport policy and disability sport policy development in China. Following initiatives from the national government, China explored new ways to expand, support and change its welfare system for people with disabilities by learning from successful programmes in other countries. As the host country of the 2007 Shanghai Special Olympic Summer Games and the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, those with disabilities were pushed to the social and political forefront and, as a result, China expanded its social welfare for people with disabilities. The social welfare system was improved by combining programmes within the government, promoting social participation and integrating families, communities and welfare institutions. Generally, in the relatively short history of disability sport in China, elite disability sport policy dominated for a very long time.

In the PRC, elite disability sport policy–making has always been associated with pragmatism and utilitarianism, as the Chinese government recognises it as a power to serve its political purpose. The Chinese government's determination to achieve a global presence and reach first place in the international sports tables has resulted in the centralisation of sport governance power in order to get elite athletes into world competitions (Fan, 1999a; 2008). Although, since 1995, a reformation in disability sport has been undertaken to combine government interests and public interests, public interests still have to give way to government interests in order for China to be a part of 'Juguo Tizhi' and the Olympic Strategy. The decisive power in governing Chinese disability sport is still in the government's hands. Most importantly, Deng Pufang, the leader of the CDPF, has a special political background which has played a crucial role in developing disability social policy as well as in elite disability sport. He injected political power into the CDPF at its establishment, which directly resulted in the acceleration of disability policy development in all aspects over a short time.

Despite the paradoxical relationship between state and private interests in sport policy–making, recently disability sport in China has determined how to develop, both socially and economically. The successful hosting of the 2007 Shanghai Special Olympic Summer Games and the 2008 Beijing Paralympics raised the awareness of disability groups' sport needs. The promotional policy for Special Olympic participation has meted a remarkable outcome. Elite disability sport policy has helped to shift the understanding of disability from a purely medical perspective to a social one. It has been highly significant in relation to the development of disability social policy.

Chapter 6 Training the Bodies with Disabilities for China: the Elite Disability Sport System

6.1 Introduction

As reviewed in Chapter 5， the Chinese elite sport system is called ‘Juguo Tizhi’ in Chinese and represents the ‘whole country’s support for the elite sports system’. This system channelled all the sport resources in China into an elite sport group (Fan, 2001). In the 1990s, Chinese elite disability sport applied a similar approach to build its own system. It is mainly comprised of an administrative system, a competition system, a selection system and a talent cultivation system. This chapter examines the four parts of the Chinese elite disability sport system from 1979 up to the present to analyse the secret of its rapid development. However, the practice of elite disability sport was deeply influenced by the Chinese mainstream elite sport system in various areas. Therefore, each section will review the mainstream elite sport system to draw on the historical and cultural background in order to understand the elite disability sport system. The content of this chapter mainly focus on an overview of the Chinese elite disability sport system and the development process which includes administrative, competition, selection and training systems.

6.2 The Administrative System

6.2.1 Sport Administrative System in China

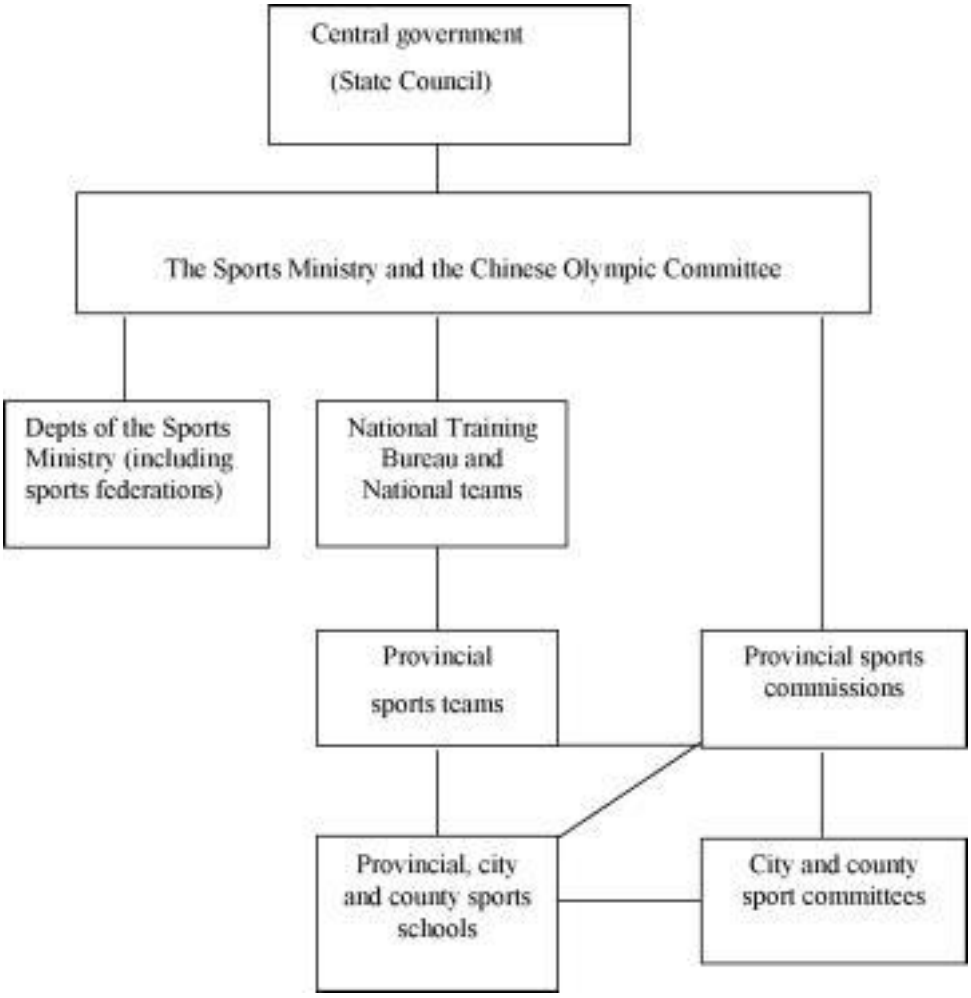
Elite disability sport was managed by the Chinese sport administrative system with Olympics sports at the beginning. Then its management duty was shared between the Chinese Sports Ministry and the China Disabled Person’s Federation until 1992.

Although elite disability sport management duty was transferred to the China Disabled Person's Federation, it was still run in the same way as Chinese Olympics sport due to it becoming a very important part of Chinese elite sport. Therefore, it is important to understand the relationship between the structure of the sport administration system in China and politics, leadership, and its influence on elite disability sport.

When the Communists established the PRC in 1949, the former Soviet Union was a model in virtually every field of policy because it was the first powerful communist state in the world. In order to raise the level of Chinese sports, after 1950 China sent its sports officials, coaches and students to the Soviet Union. They inspected the Soviet sports administration and training systems, as well as school sports. This helped the Chinese to develop their own sports system. In November 1952, the Chinese Sports Ministry was formally established. It was a governmental ministry with the same status as other ministries such as Education, Finance and Commerce, all of which are directly led by the State Council. Between 1953 and 1954 sports commissions were established at every province and local county level (Fan, 2001). By the end of the 1950s, China had initially formed an elite sports administrative system whose leadership was mainly combined with the Chinese Sports Ministry and the local sport commission.

Figure 6.1 shows the administrative structure of Chinese elite sport. The Chinese Sport Ministry operated directly under the leadership of the central government. This structure was created in 1952 and continued to be used until 1996.

Figure 6.1 The Administrative Structure of Chinese Elite Sport



(Source: Figure cited in Fan , 2001)

Since the 1980s, the Chinese economy has been through a process of change from a planned to a market economy. The Chinese elite sports system was also affected by this change. In accordance with the transition to a market economy, the Chinese leadership attempted to separate the government from industrial enterprises by gradually downsizing the mammoth bureaucracy. In 1993, sport administrative departments were gradually transformed from governmental sports agencies into quasi–autonomous organisations, such as management centres and associations (Ren & Luo, 2005)).

A whole new system of national sport management was gradually created (Fan, 2001). By 1997, the old departments responsible for elite sport under the Chinese Sports Ministry ceased to exist and had transferred their responsibility to 20 management centres (Tan, 2005). These centres were encouraged to develop their own programmes and financial resources, and to assume the role of decision makers and coordinators, thus enabling the government to reduce its direct involvement. The Sports Ministry attempted to encourage Chinese sports management centres to stand more on their own feet and rely less on government support (Fan, Wu and Xiong, 2005). However, the sports management centres remained largely dependent on money from the central government for survival, and during the preparation for the Beijing Olympic Games, the central government increased its financial support for China's elite sports management centres in order to achieve success at the Games (Aires, Salaam, Muscat, Nagano and China, 2012). The traditional centralised system remains and still plays an important role in the Chinese elite sport system.

6.2.2 Elite Disability Sport Administrative System

In the early 1980s, specialised agencies had not been established, nor full–time staff appointed for the organisation and management of elite disability sport. This was run by the mass sports department of the former National Sports Commission. In 1983, the government established The China Injured and Disabled Sport Association, which became responsible for the overall management of disability sport. Subsequently, the China Intelligence Disabled Sports Association, and the China Deaf Sport Association were set up in 1985 and 1986 respectively. Although, these associations remain located in the mass department of the former National Sports Commission, and still without

fulltime staff working for disability sport, at least their existence shows that disability sport had begun to have its own specialised management organisation (Feng, 2002).

In 1993, the CDPF founded the sports department as the highest administrative body for managing national disability sport. At the same time, the sport office comprehensively managed the China Disabled Sport Association, which was renamed in 1991 from the China Injured and Disabled Sport Association. Its membership includes the physically disabled, the intellectually disabled, the spinal cord injured and the blind. The China Intelligence Disabled Sports Association, and the China Deaf Sport Association together with only three full–time staff were responsible for all of China's disability sport management from policy, planning and institutional development right down to the specific events.

During the 1990s, the sport department played an important role in developing disability sport. First, from the perspective of the organisation's structure, the sport department has gradually increased its staff numbers. In 2003 its staff numbers grew to 17, up from three in 1993. Second, it developed its internal structure from having only one office to two sub–offices (Training Office, Competition Office) and two professional committees (Medical Committee and Research Committee). Last, it now represents China jointly and assisted internationally the following disability associations:

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC)

The International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD)

The International Committee of Special Olympics (IPC)

International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA)

Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA)

International Wheelchair & Amputee Sports (IWAS)

International Sports Federation for Persons with Intellectual Disability (INAS–FID)

There are three major disability sports associations whose names within China differ from their international names as can be seen in Table 6.1. Their names changed for two main reasons: first, lack of staff caused the same people to be working in different management roles, as the CDPF sport department had only two offices with very limited staff before 2003, and second, the politicising of disability sport resulted in their being renamed.

Table 6.1Major Disability Sport Associations in China

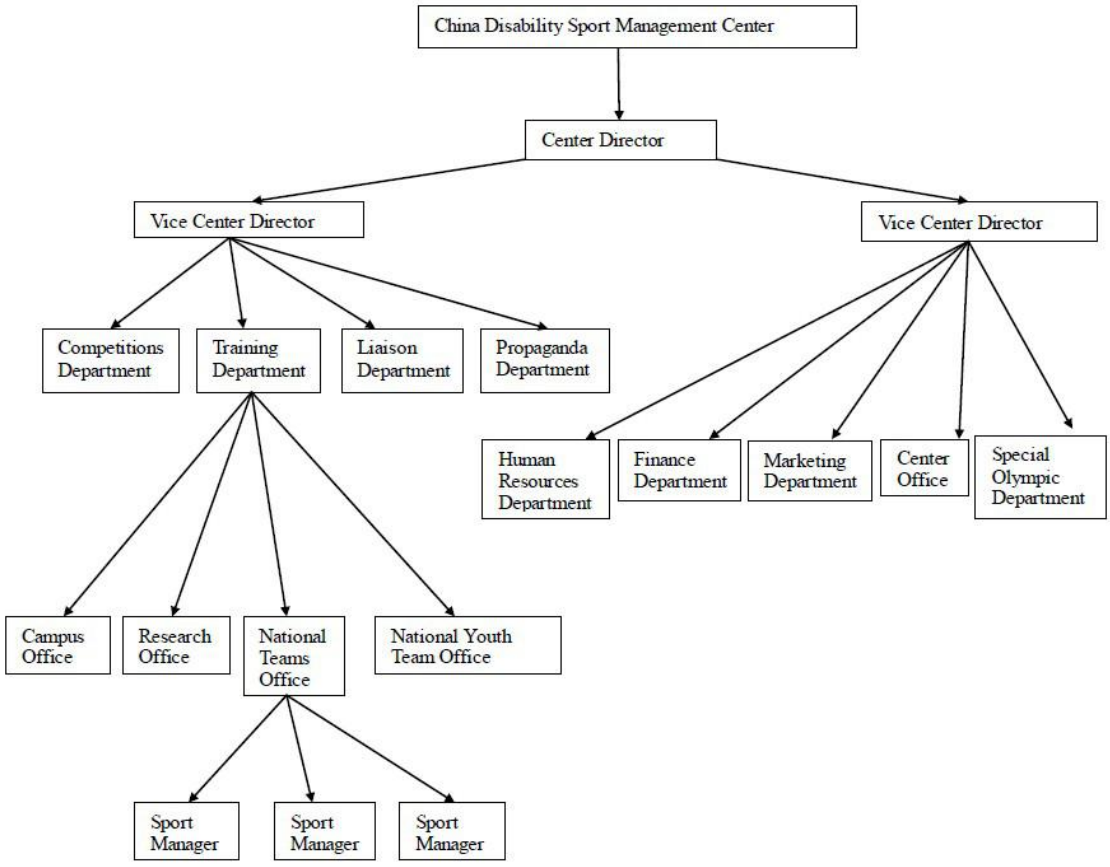
Name used in China now	Name formerly used in China	International Name
China Sports Association for the Disabled	China Injured and Disabled Sport Association	China Paralympic Committee
China Sports Association for the Intelligence Disabled	N/A	Special Olympics China
China Sports Association for the Deaf	China Paralympic Committee for the Deaf	China Deaflympic Committee

(Table developed by author)

The three associations are well presented across the country, having extended branches in all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, and also in some cities and districts within the CDPF structure. There are initiatives for local collaboration in disability sport.

In 2003, the confirmation that China was to host the 2008 Paralympic Games directly led to the establishment of the China Disability Sport Management Centre. The establishment of this centre was a milestone in the development of disability sport in China. With it, disability sport entered a new period of development. The Centre was the first instance of an organisation that had specialised departments with professional full–time staff for elite disability sport, and it maintains the world's biggest disability sport training campus. Its organisational structure and position setting is shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 China Disability Sport Management Centre Structure

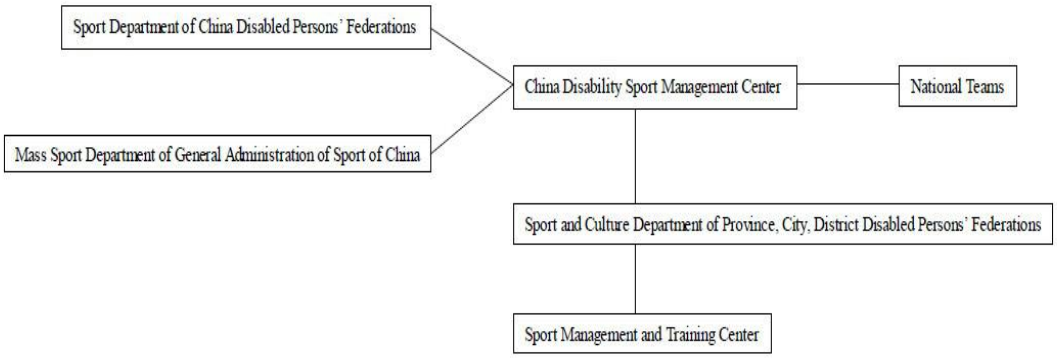


(Figure developed by author)

The China Disability Sport Management Centre is the nation's highest administrative body for national elite disability sport. Its responsibilities are as follows: overall management, policy–making, planning, and organising of social disability sport and physical rehabilitation; organising the Chinese sports delegation from selection and training to competing in both domestic and foreign competitions; organising national and international competitions; managing China's disability sport training campus; providing professional elite disability sport technical training and assessment; and guiding and coordinating with provincial disability sport organisations.

Its management structure also channels resources from the Chinese Sports Ministry and China Disabled Persons' Federation into elite disability sport. Its management structure is shown in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3 China Disability Sport Management Centre Management Structure



(Figure developed by author)

The China Disability Sport Management Centre adopted the structure of the Chinese elite sport system in 1997. The government attempted to encourage sports management

centres to stand more on their own feet and rely less on government support. (Fan et al, 2005). However, the China Disability Sport Management Centre remained largely dependent on money from the central government for survival. During the preparation for the Beijing Paralympic Games, the central government increased its financial support for the centre in order to achieve success at the Games. The traditional centralised system remains in place and still plays an important role in the Chinese elite disability sport system.

Since 2003, as the Chinese elite sport system has reached out to all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, elite disability sport training centres have steadily emerged all over China. This has allowed elite disability sport to grow so that to date, 17 training centres have been established as Figure 6.4 shows, including:

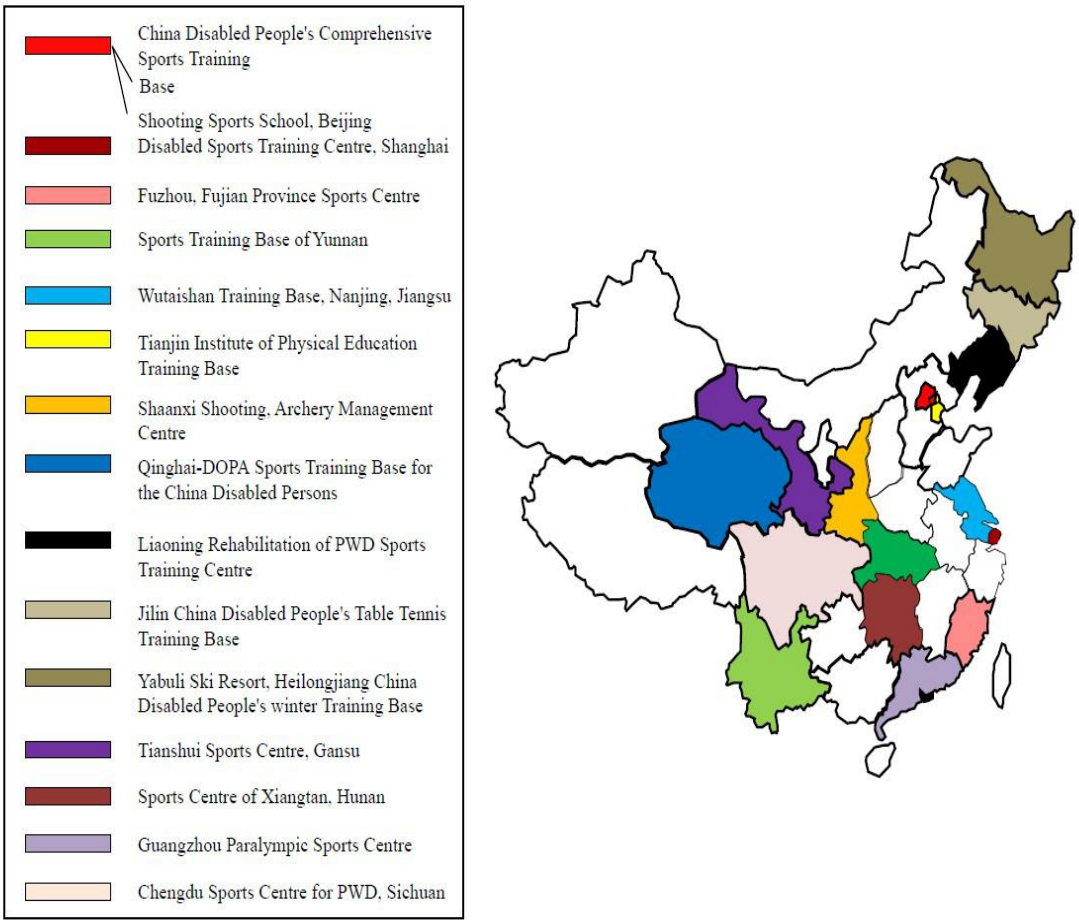
The Comprehensive Training Centre for Disabled Sport of China, Beijing;
Shanghai Sport Training Centre for the Disabled, Shanghai
Fuzhou Sport Centre, Fujian province;
Haigeng Sport Training Centre, Yunan Province;
Sport Training and Rehabilitation Centre, Liaoning Province;
Nanjing Wutai Mountain Training Centre, Jiangsu Province;
Tianjin Physical Education College Training Centre, Tianjin;
Huangshi Sport Centre, Hubei Province;
Shooting and Archery Management Centre, Shanxi Province;
Duoba Disabled Sport Training Centre of China, Qinghai Province;
Table Tennis Training Centre for the Disabled of China, Jilin Province;
China Disabled Persons' Winter Games Training Centre, Heilongjiang Province;
Beijing Shooting Sports Technique School; Tianshui Sport Centre, Gansu Province;

Xiangtan Sport Centre, Hunan Province;

Guangzhou Disabled Olympic Sport Management Centre, Guangdong Province;

Chengdu Disabled Sport Centre, Sichuan Province.

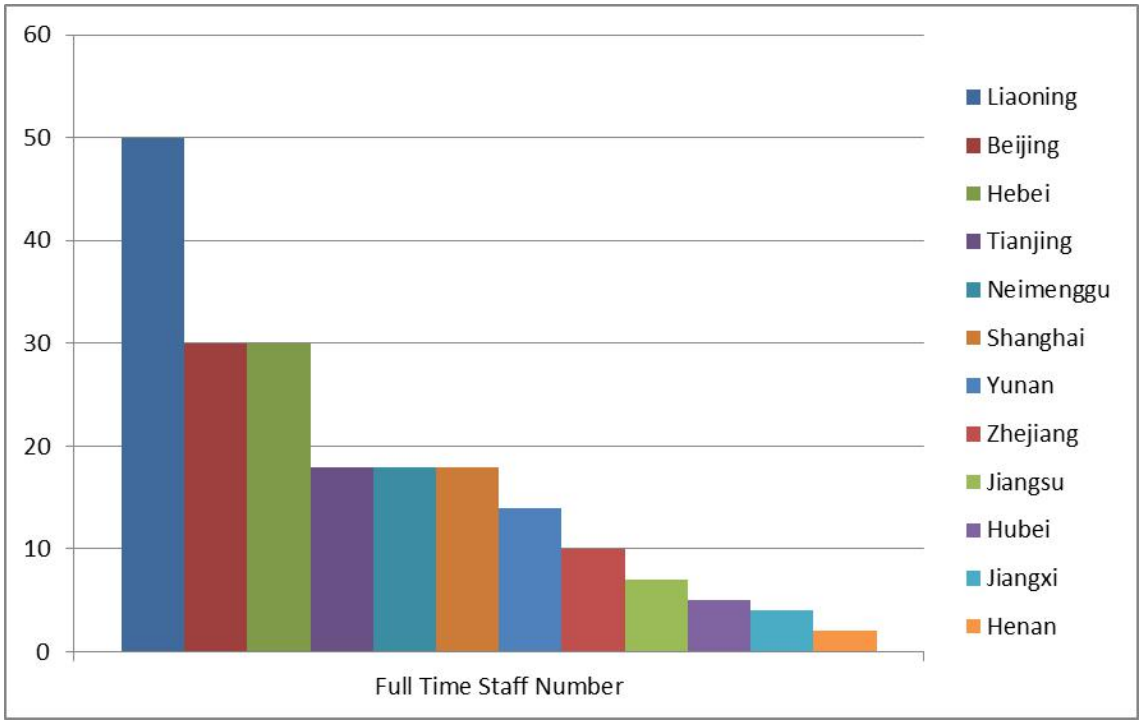
Figure 6.4 China Disability Sport Training Centres Map



(Cited from: Shuhan et al.,, 2011)

At the provincial level all of the training centres have full–time staff, but staff numbers vary depending upon the economic development of the respective province, and the related fact that elite disability sport performance is regarded very differently across the provinces. According to CDPF's Annual Report for 2010, the staff numbers of 12 provincial training centres are shown in Figure 6.5.

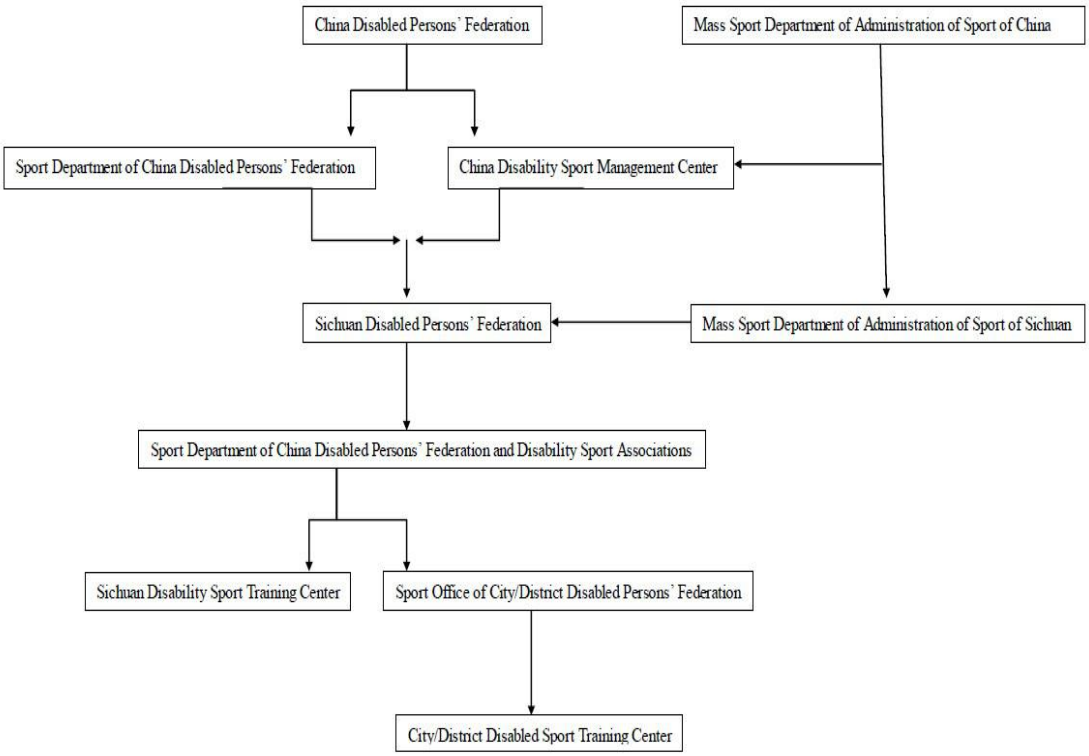
Figure 6.5 Full Time Staff Numbers of 12 Provincial Training Centres in 2010



(Figure developed by author)

Some provincial level DPFs also developed training centres at the level of the city, for example in Sichuan province – its organisational structure is shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6 City Level Sport Training Centre Organisational Structure in Sichuan Province



(Figure developed by author)

6.2.3 Financial Support

Funding Resources

Developing elite sport always requires funding from the government, and the same applies in Chinese elite disability sport. Generally, financial support for Chinese elite disability sport operates on a graded responsibility system. The central financial department is in charge of national sports teams, and local governments are responsible for their own sports teams. The country allocates funds to the local government according to their competition results.

Financial support of Chinese elite disability sport has mainly consisted of funds allocated by the government. There are three other methods by which money is raised for elite disability sport. The first is via the sport lottery fund and the welfare lottery fund. According to the rules of the Ministry of Central Finance, finance departments have to arrange special funds from the sports lottery and the welfare lottery to support disability sport. However, the proportions are not laid out clearly and the funds are inadequate. The second method is sponsorship. In the past, this has come from individuals, companies, government bodies and agencies, social associations and so on. However, in the current economic climate this has been greatly reduced. The problem has been compounded by the fact that there is no tradition of charitable donations in this area. As a result, money from charity and sponsorship is very limited. The last method is self–support, meaning that athletes spend their own money to support themselves for elite sport participation. This way is extremely rare in elite disability sport in China, and can only be found in non–Paralympic disciplines like badminton, and with athletes at the level between the provincial and national teams.

The State's financial investment in elite disability sport is the main source of funds. It increased sharply with elite disability sport development. Although required to provide appropriate funds for disability sport at all levels, most of the money has been spent on elite disability sport. Table 6.3 shows the increase of the financial support from budgets of government financial departments from 1983 to 2003. The National level disability Sport Budget remained 100,000,000 RMB per year since 2003.

Table 6.3 National Level Disability Sport Budget

Year	1983	1993	2002	2003
Budget	160,000RMB	4,000,000RMB	20,000,000RMB	100,000,000RMB

(CDPF, 2003)

At the provincial level, the provincial government financial department also has budgets for supporting elite disability annually. Most importantly, because every province is at a different economic development level, there is a huge difference between provinces. Table 6.4 shows this huge difference between several provinces in 2009.

Table 6.4 National Level Disability Sport Budget

Provence	Hunan	Sichuan	Yunnan	Hebei	Jiangsu	Guangdong
Budget	220,000 RMB	500,000 RMB	500,000 RMB	550,000 RMB	6,000,000 RMB	20, 000,000 RMB

(Table developed by author, data collected from fieldwork and cited form Cheng, 2004; Gu, 2008; Guan, 2008;Shi, 2004; Zhang & Feng, 2010)

Expenditure Situation

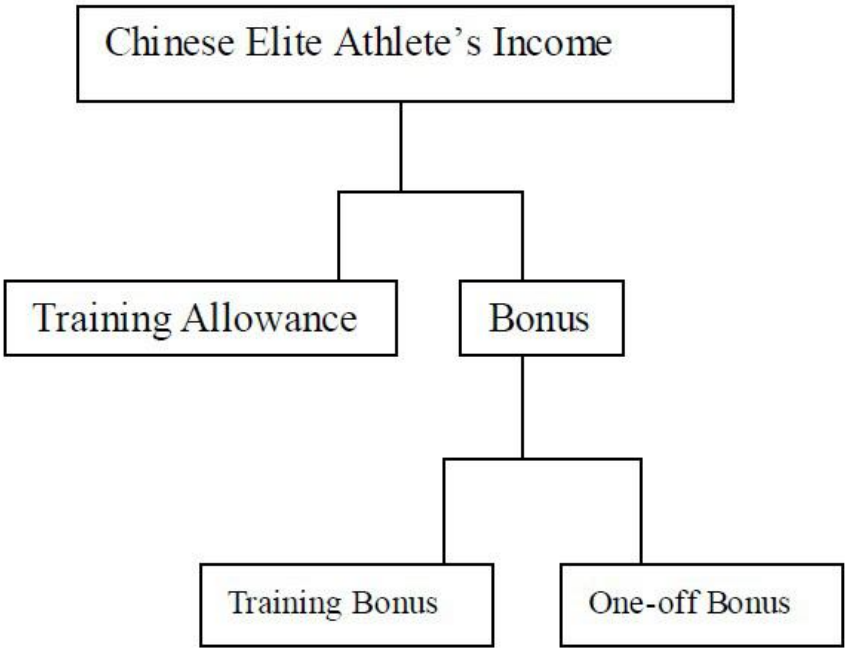
Expenditure on Chinese elite disability sports basically has the following three aspects: daily funds, special funds and infrastructure construction funds.

(1) Daily funds

Daily funds are mainly the necessary normal sports expenses such as training, equipment, allowances and the costs of entering competitions. It includes training allowances and bonuses.

The most recent policy relating to elite athletes' income was issued by the Sports Ministry, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Personnel in 2006 (Zheng, 2010). Figure 6.7 represents elite athletes' income, which includes allowances and bonuses. The bonus has been specifically broken down into various items.

Figure 6.7: Chinese Elite Athletes' Income Sources



(Source cited in: 'The opinion of elite athletes carrying out the income system reform of the institution working personnel', 2006)

In Chinese Olympic sports city and provincial teams, once the athletes obtain good results in competitions they can become formal provincial team members in order to prove their talent, which means they can hold a place in a provincial team before they finish their elite sport career. In contrast, however, there is no long–term place in elite disability sports teams for any individual. Everyone has to defend his/her place by maintaining a high level of performance. Elite athletes do not pay money, as the local

government covers all their fees, which include training, competition, coach's training allowance and a daily nutritional food allowance.

Elite athletes' training allowance and bonus are both key items of daily funds. Normally, athletes do not get a salary from the local DPF, but a training allowance. In the 2000s, the training allowance was between 10 and 50 RMB per day in most provinces. The training allowance is very little indeed, but elite athletes do get the best free training, coaching, food and medical treatment when selected for a provincial and/or national sports team. However, if the athletes were previously employed, sports training could even cause a loss as the training allowance is often much less than their former salary. It is definitely not enough to help athletes survive after training, as there are no other benefits if they do not perform at national level and above.

The bonus is divided into a training bonus and a one–off bonus. Elite athletes who achieve excellent results in important international or national games receive a one–off bonus, which relates to the competition level and result. The training bonus is granted to the elite athletes and is related to un–targeted low level competitions without the one–off bonus. It is a small amount intended to reward the athletes' training and racing effort, and is normally the same for everyone in a team. Generally, the amount and type of bonus is dependent upon the level of competition in which the athlete participates (there are four different levels).

The training bonus covers general national competitions and general international competitions. The lowest level is paid for participation in general national level competitions, such as National Championships, and in some cases there will be no bonus given at all. The athletes get a bonus from the local DPA when the whole team

achieves a good result, but this depends on the financial situation of the province. One of the interviewees (No.5) in this research is from the Sichuan provincial team. He claimed that he won a bronze medal in the National Championships in 2005, but did not receive a bonus from the local province. Another interviewee (No.4), who is from Hebei province, mentioned that she got 300 RMB after winning two national championships in 2003.

The second level of training bonus is for general international competition. In this situation the bonus for a remarkable result will come from two sources. One is the Chinese Sports Ministry and the CDPF, and the other is the local CDPF. Although only a few elite athletes have a chance to participate in international competitions, the bonus is still not that high and in some cases there will be no bonus given at all. Interviewee No.12 was the international champion of the Paralympic Shooting Team at The World Cup in 2008, but did not receive a bonus from either the Sports Ministry or the local government.

For some high performance elite athletes, the allowance and training bonus are only a small part of their financial income. The one–off bonus that they get from remarkable government–targeted mega competition results is the most important one. One–off bonuses cover the National Disabled Games and the Paralympic Games.

At the National Games, the bonus is paid by the local government. For some elite athletes, the National Disabled Games are their only chance to make money through bonuses, as they will never participate in the Paralympic Games. This is the case in disabled badminton events. It is not a Paralympic discipline but *is* an event of the National Disabled Games. In China many elite disabled badminton athletes devote

themselves to hard training, but they never have a chance to achieve success on the Paralympic Games stage.

In addition, the National Disabled Games in China are considered to be the equivalent to an 'Internal Paralympic Games' between the different provinces. Each province tries to give its best in an attempt to prove athletically and politically that it deserves glory. Nearly all the local governments encourage their elite athletes to win glory for their hometown and they regard bonuses as the most effective catalysts. This situation, which began in the middle of the 1990s and has strengthened in recent years, was especially true in the 8th National Games which were held in October 2011. According to the Guizhou Province DPF report, a National Disabled Games champion athlete and coach got 50,000 RMB each, a silver medallist received 20,000 RMB, and the bronze medal athlete got 10,000 RMB(Guizhou Disabled Persons' Federation, 2012). . According to the DPF report of the Xingjiang Autonomous Region, a national champion from that region received 60,000 RMB. However, those finishing in fourth to eighth place got only 5,000 RMB each, with the coaches receiving one quarter of the rewards of their athletes (Xingjiang Disabled Persons' Federation, 2012). Some audiences called the 8th National Games the 'Money Games'.

The top–level one–off bonus is for the Paralympic Summer Games. At this level bonuses come from various sources such as the national and local governments, business companies and supporters of sports generally. For example, the Gold medal–winning bonus in 1984 provided by the government was 600 RMB, which was only one tenth of the Olympic gold medal–winning bonus at that time. In the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games the winning bonus for every gold medal was 100,000 RMB. In the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games each gold medal athlete received 500,000 RMB for

each gold medal, which was the first time that the Paralympic Games gold medal–winning bonus was the same as the bonus for Olympic gold(Ce & Yi, 2012) . All medallists also received various bonuses from their own individual local governments. For instance, interviewee No.22 from Yunnan province received 150,000 RMB for each gold medal and 50,000 RMB for a world record, each of which was provided by the Yunnan provincial government. Interviewee No.21, a Paralympic Games S8 swimmer gold medallist of the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, received 600,000 RMB in total after the Games.

The above policy is appropriately adjusted by local governments according to their own financial situation. Hence the elite athletes' income also depends on the financial wealth of the relevant province, with the most powerful awarding the highest bonus and allowance increases. Normally, the income of an athlete from a rich province is higher than that of those from less affluent ones. This situation is fully reflected in the bonus and allowances.

(2) Special Funds

Special funds are made available to finance participants in prestigious games such as the Olympic Games and the National Games, and for hosting competitions. For key athletes who participate in international sports competitions, all costs are met by the government. Alternatively, athletes who want to compete abroad are financed by their own local government because it is an investment for them to achieve glory for their province in the future. In 2009, one of the interviewees (No.15), who comes from Sichuan province, received about 50,000 RMB in financial support from the local government; this allowed him to participate in a few competitions in Europe. In recent years, Chinese elite athletes have had increasing opportunities to participate in international sports

competitions. This is not only because of the principle of 'Through competition, promote training' but also because of government financial support. Although special funds are needed to support this, local governments see the hosting of competitions as an opportunity to improve performances.

(3) Infrastructure Construction Funds

Infrastructure construction funds are available for necessary infrastructure, equipment, purchase and repair of materials. At the provincial and national level, each training centre has been provided with a training campus. In general, the central government and local governments fund the construction of the entire disability sport infrastructure. Especially in the last decade, China has built up a series of training centres including an altitude training centre, a plain training centre, and an aquatic training centre. These centres do not all belong to the CDPF, as some of them have been built for local provincial teams. In addition to the training centres, China has built and restructured a large number of disability accessible stadiums, which are also appropriate areas for elite disability performers to train and compete, as well as being suitable for holding various international or national disability sports games.

6.3 The Competition System

6.3.1 The Sport Competition System in China

In the early 1950s, the competition system of China's elite sport was mainly run by centralised management. The Soviet government sent teams and experts to help China develop sport. In 1954, He Long led a Chinese delegation to the Soviet Union, as the delegation was engaged in preparing a procedure to set up a formal Chinese competitive system. In 1956 the Sports Ministry issued 'The Competitive Sports System of the

PRC'(Xiong, 1995). This policy claimed that 43 sports were officially recognised as competitive sports, and rules and regulations were therefore defined. Professional teams were set up at provincial and national levels, and they would compete with each other at regional and national championships. The National Games would take place every four years to promote elite sports and to unite the nation though these events. From here on in, the competitive sports system was formally set up in China (Wu, 1999).

The first National Games hosted in Beijing in 1959 was an internal competitive event as China was isolated from the international sports stage at that time. After the National Games, a series of provincial and city games was gradually introduced. In 1965, the National Sports Conference issued 'domestic training, foreign competition' as the ideology of the Chinese competitive sports system, and all of the competitions from 1961 to 1965 were organised under this ideology (Fan, 2002; 2012).

From the late 1960s to the 1970s, the competitive sports system did not develop too much because of the Cultural Revolution. During this period all sports competition ceased and Chinese teams stopped touring abroad. Fortunately the situation was under control when China began to reform and open up by the end of the 1970s.

Modern sports developed very rapidly in the 1980s throughout the world, and this also deeply affected Chinese elite sports. The competitive sports system in China made several reforms in order to enhance the elite sports level (Xiong & Zhong, 2010). In 1986, the competitive system reformed the methods for the elite athlete's attendance at the National Games. All the sports games at national level adjusted the timing of their competitions in order to help improve the Olympic Games results; all of the sports events in the National Games also related to the Olympics and so on (Xiong, 2002).

The ideology of the competitive system in the 1980s indicated that China attempted to connect internal sports competition with the international games, especially the Olympics. The authorities also prepared to apply to host both the Asian Games and the Olympics in China.

The highest level of elite sports competition in China was the National Games, and it had played an important role in Chinese elite sports development. In 1993, the Sports Ministry reformed some relevant issues in relation to the National Games. First, it adjusted the timetable of the National Games to occur one year after the Olympic Games rather than one year before the Olympic Games. This was in order to ensure that the elite athletes concentrated their mental and physical training on the upcoming Olympic Games in an attempt to gain the best results. Second, all the sports included in the National Games – bar martial arts – were the same as the Olympics, and despite the importance of the National Games the priority was on the Olympic Games. Third, the point recording system of the National Games was subsequently changed to reflect the success of those who had competed in the Olympic Games (Fan, 2002; 2012). From this time on, the Chinese elite sports development placed more emphasis on the Olympics than on any other competition.

Additionally, when the club system was introduced into China and the old Chinese sports departments transferred their responsibility to the aforementioned 20 management centres in the 1990s, sports competition increased in China and the system gradually moved towards development and diversification. Competition in China was then divided into different forms according to their level, such as: national and local competition; comprehensive and single competition; professional and business competition; adults and adolescents competition, etc.

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the Chinese Sports Ministry opened the market for sports competition. It encouraged all social entities to host the sports games through a tendering application process. Meanwhile, the tournament system and the methods of awarding prizes had also been changed in the National Games system. In this period, all of the national sports competitions complied with the Olympics strategy.

6.3.2 The Development of the Elite Disability Sport Competition System

In 1983, the Tianjin Sports Ministry, the Civil Affairs Bureau, the Labour Bureau, and the Red Cross Society co–sponsored and organised the first national level disabled sports tournament. Altogether, 200 blind and amputee athletes came from 13 provinces, cities and autonomous regions in order to compete in track and field, swimming, table tennis and other sports. In 1984, the 1st National Disabled Games of the People's Republic of China was held in Hefei – more than 1,500 disabled athletes, coaches, and referees from 29 provinces, cities, autonomous regions and from Hong Kong took part in the Games. This event marked the fact that an internal competitive system had been established. In 1985, the National Blind Youth Athletics Communication Competition and the National Disabled Table Tennis Championships were held in Hangzhou. In 1986, the Taishan Cup National Deaf Basketball Tournament was held in Jinan. China held nearly 60 national championships from 1987–1993, the number of sports increased from 4 to 14, and there were more than 10,000 participants in national disabled competitions.

In 1992, the CDPF and the Sports Ministry reformed some relevant issues in relation to the National Games. First, they adjusted the staging of the National Disabled Games to

occur in the same year of the Paralympic Games rather than one year beforehand. This was done to ensure that the elite athletes concentrated their mental and physical training on the forthcoming Paralympic Games in an attempt to gain the best results. However, this strategy did not produce the desired results. In 2003, the CDPF changed the National Disabled Games back to one year before the Paralympic Games in an attempt to produce better performances. Second, all the sports included in the National Disabled Games qualification system were the same as the Paralympics, and despite the importance of the National Disabled Games priority was laid on the Paralympic Games. Third, the recording system of the National Disabled Games was subsequently changed to reflect the success of those who had competed in the Paralympic Games, which was learned from the Chinese National Games (Liu, 2007). From this time on, the Chinese elite sports development emphasised the Paralympic Games more than any other competition.

The competition system in China made several reforms in order to enhance the elite sports level. In 1992 all the sports events at national level adjusted the time at which they took place in order to help improve results at Paralympic Games; all of the sport events of the National Disabled Games also related to the Paralympic Games. The ideology of the competition system for the disabled in the 1980s indicated that China attempted to connect internal sports competition with the international games, especially the Paralympic Games. The authorities also prepared the application for hosting both the FESPIC Games in China.

According to the CDPF report, from 1983 to 1993, China ran almost 300 disability sport teaching and coaching workshops for developing professions that were related to disability sports and relevant competitions. More than 10,000 people were trained

through these clinics, which meant that China had 10,000 people qualified to work in disability sport competitions at different levels and in different areas. After ten years development on the disability competition system, China already had the capacity to host international disability competitions.

After the National Games, a series of provincial and city games was gradually introduced. At district and township level, various games for people with disabilities were frequently organised by local CDPFs. At this level, total athlete participation numbers reached more than 20 million in various competitions from 1987–1993. Apart from the rapid social development of the disability movement in China during this period, the main motivation for running disability competitions at district and township level was to assist in selecting the athletes to compete at a higher level.

In the 1990s, disability sports competition increased in China and the system gradually moved towards development and diversification. Competition was then divided into different forms according to their level, such as: the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games; national and local competitions; comprehensive and single competitions; professional and selection competitions; adult and Youth competitions, etc.

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the tournament system and the methods of awarding bonus events had also been changed in the National Disabled Games system. During this period, all of the national disability sport competitions complied with Olympic and Paralympic strategies.

6.4 The Athlete Development System

6.4.1 The Elite Sport Training and Selection System

In the early 1950s, the Chinese Sports Ministry chose some talented athletes to train together in order to improve the level of Chinese elite sports. In 1952, the All–China Sports Federation (ACSF) decided to set up the 'Chinese elite sports training classes'. It established football, basketball, volleyball and other sports events. From 1953, Chinese local provinces had started to set up their own 'sports training classes', which were the predecessor of provincial professional sports teams. From 1951 to 1956, China had gradually established several national sports teams, such as a basketball team, a volleyball team, a badminton team, a swimming team and so on. And at the same time, local governments also set up their own elite sports teams. By the end of 1959, every province had its own professional sports team (Liang, 2005).

Apart from the national and provincial teams, sports schools also played a very important role in Chinese elite sports. In 1955, the Sports Ministry set up three spare–time sports schools in Beijing, Tianjin and Shanghai. In 1956 the Sports Ministry pushed every province to follow this example. Additionally, rules relevant to the youth sports schools were issued. These were based on rules that related to the sports school's organisation, education and training, funds, etc (Chen, 2009). The aim of the sports school was to attempt to train and foster talented athletes from a very young age. Although the sports school system was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, it developed very well after it re–opened in 1974. The sports schools had various structures; those set up by the government's sports department and those that were founded through alternative means, such as educational departments, social groups and

through individual sponsorship. These schools and programmes have produced nearly all of China's Olympics athletes.

China's sports schools, provincial sports teams and national teams combine to make the Chinese elite sports training system appear like a three–level pyramid. In this pyramid, thousands of sports schools are at the primary level, hundreds of provincial professional sports teams are at the intermediate level and the national sports team is at the highest level. This three–level sports training system was formed in the 1960s and remains in place today (Feng, 2012) .

6.4.2 The Elite Disability Training and Selection System for Paralympics and Deaflympics

In the 1980s, when disability sport was introduced to China, there was not any training system for developing athletes with disabilities. Therefore, in the beginning the selection of athletes was a huge challenge. For instance, in 1983 and 1984, when organising the national disabled sports tournament and the 1st National Disabled Games, the competition organising committee had to allocate places without the benefit of any qualification criteria to fulfil the events. There were even several provinces that still failed to organise enough athletes to attend the games. This situation did not change until 1992, when disability began to be managed by the CDPF with its specialised organisation and its full–time staff.

In order to identify and train talented athletes with disabilities from a young age to achieve success in international elite disability sport, the CDPF applied a similar three–level pyramid training and selection system as applied to able–bodied sport. Local Disabled Persons' Federations utilise various methods to select talented athletes with

disabilities at young age. For instance, most cities or districts have their individual sports teams, including various sports such as International Paralympic Committee (IPC) powerlifting, sitting volleyball, table tennis and so on. These sports teams absorb the best local young talented athletes in provincial level sports games. Every year these sport teams attend one or two training camps in order to prepare themselves for the provincial level sport games. Training camps are part–time amateur events, focussing on the acquisition of basic sport skills rather than on developing sport ability on an advanced level. During provincial games some young athletes will be discovered and selected for more professional training in the provincial training camp. Sometimes a professional coach will also go to the district DPF in order to select the potential athletes, who are encouraged to join sports training at local or provincial level.

In provincial training camps, young athletes will receive 'semi–professional' training. They start with morning training and then continue with academic studies for the rest of the morning, finishing the day with afternoon training. They are trained for 3–4 hours per day and for 5–6 days per week, depending on the sport–training program. Of those young athletes who are not selected for the provincial training team after the training camps, some return to school to carry on with their studies whilst some of them will try other sports to see if they have the talent to be successful there. After several months of training, some potential athletes will be selected for the provincial team. In a provincial team, the elite athletes train for a total of 6–8 hours per day and 6 days per week in preparation for the National Disabled Games. This training lasts for 1–6 months and in some provinces, the elite athletes even receive year–round training.

In the provincial sports team, a few elite athletes who have great talent and have achieved good results during elite disabled competitions will gain the chance to train in

the national team. They train for at least 8 hours per day and 6 times per week. For most elite athletes, the aim is to reach the third stage and become members of the national squads and Paralympic teams. In national Paralympic teams, all the elite athletes have to focus on full–time sports training. Of these, a third eventually makes it to the national team and about a fifth become Paralympians – in training. The athletes who were not selected into higher level will compete at the current level until their performance could be replaced by some newly developed athletes. After that, they could either compete at a lower level or retire from elite disability sport.

In brief, China's elite disability sport selection and training system takes the talented young athletes from a local unorganised part–time team to the provincial team, and finally to the national team, while providing ample opportunities for competition. The above situation indicates that China's elite disability sport selection and training system is one of the cores of the 'whole country support for the elite sport system'.

6.4.3 The Elite Disability Training and Selection System for the Special Olympics

In China, there are vast numbers of school age children with hearing disabilities, visual disabilities, severe intellectual disabilities, mental retardation, and multiple other disabilities who are receiving education from special needs schools and special classes. In general, there are two types of special needs schools and special classes which are based on their students' type of disability. One kind of special needs school and special class aims to provide education to children with hearing disabilities and visual disabilities, for example, two fieldwork schools, Shijiazhuang Special Needs School which has 380 students with hearing disabilities and visual disabilities, and Kunming Special Needs School which has 433 students with hearing disabilities and visual disabilities. Another kind of special needs school and special class provides education to

children with other kinds of disabilities. For example, the fieldwork school, Chengdu Tonghui Special Needs School, which has students with almost all other types of disabilities.

In the special needs schools for children with hearing disabilities and visual disabilities, sports are very much organised according to the curriculum. Differences between schools relate to the sports offered in the course. For example, in Shijiazhuang Special Needs School students are offered basketball, volleyball, football, track and field, badminton, table tennis, and roller skating. In Kunming Special Needs School, students are only offered basketball, football, track and field, and badminton due to economic conditions. In both special needs schools, their funding resources for sports are very limited, and almost come from the government's education financial allocation. Therefore, their funding can only barely provide very basic sports and sports programs to meet the curriculum.

However, sports in special needs schools for children with intellectual disabilities is diversified. The sports courses outlined in Curriculum of Compulsory Education of Schools for Intellectual Disabilities and Special Olympics programs played an important role in elite athletes with intellectual disabilities recruiting and development. CDPF and local DPF set training centres in these special needs schools for children with intellectual disabilities to promote Special Olympics programs. When different levels of competitions require athletes to represent their city, province and even China, these special needs schools will provide trained athletes for selection and make the delegation. It is unlike the Paralympics and Deaflympics selection of athletes, where the best ones are chosen in order to have a better chance to win medals. Then, CDPF and local DPF

provided the opportunities to different special needs schools to participate in Special Olympics.

6.5 Conclusion

In general, the leading body of the Chinese elite disability sport is the CDPF. Under the CDPF there is the China Disability Sport Management Centre of CDPF. The Centre includes a three level administrative system: the national, the provincial and the city. The CDPF and the Centre work with the General Administration Sport of China, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Civil Affairs to advance elite disability sport in China. The funding of elite disability sport mainly comes from the governments of the three levels.

The training and competition system is divided into three levels as well under the three level administrative system. The highest level competition in China is the National Disabled Games. Its aim is to prepare athletes for international competitions. There are then the provincial level and city level sports meetings to develop athletic talents. Nevertheless, athletes who perform at the national level receive better treatment including funding, facilities, coaching and other support resources, and they are on the whole year training programme. The Special Needs Schools in China provide the venues to train all the athletes who would participate in the Special Olympics.

This is a well–structured system for elite athletes with disability in China. It is copied from the well–developed Chinese elite able–bodied sport system. It has successfully enabled China to become the world sport super-power in the Paralympic Games and the Special Olympics (Summer versions). As Fan(1999a; 2008) states, just as elite sport has

played an important role in China's political and social life, disabled sport is no exception.

Chapter 7 Progress and Empowerment: China's Participation in the Paralympic Games, Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the disability elite system from the perspectives of administration, competition, and the selection and training of athletes. This chapter will look closely at the three major disability competitions and their relationships with China. These competitions are: the Paralympic Games; the Special Olympic Games; and the Deaflympic Games. This chapter argues that the three major games empowered athletes with disabilities: the games meant that athletes with disability became more visible in society. Eventually the games helped to change the image and social status of people with disabilities, particularly for athletes with disabilities.

7.2. The Paralympic Games in China (残疾人奥林匹克运动会)

The 3rd Far East and South Pacific Games in Hong Kong was the first time that fifteen Chinese athletes with disabilities competed in international disability sport competition. These games are a kind of Asian version of the Paralympics Games, and were later renamed the Asian Paralympic Games. The following year, the Tianjin Sports Ministry, the Civil Affairs Bureau, the Labour Bureau and the Red Cross Society co–sponsored and organised the first national level disabled sports competition with the aim of selecting athletes to participate the 7th Paralympic Games. Two hundred blind and amputee athletes came from 13 provinces, cities and autonomous regions. They competed in several events, including track and field, swimming and table tennis. The

1st National Disabled Games of the People's Republic of China were held in Hefei in 1984. More than 1,500 disabled athletes, coaches and referees from 29 provinces, cities, autonomous regions and Hong Kong took part in the Games. After the games, China selected the 24 best athletes of the People's Republic of China to form its first Paralympics delegation to participate in the 7th Paralympic Games in 1984. Two blind Chinese female athletes, Ping Yali and Zhao Jihong, won the women's B2 and B3 long jump gold medals respectively. It was the first time that China had engaged with the Paralympic Games(Huang, 2009).

The CDPF and Sports Ministry reformed some relevant issues in relation to the National Games in 1992. First, they adjusted the timetable of the National Disabled Games to occur in the same year as the Paralympic Games, rather than one year before the Paralympic Games. This was in order to ensure that elite athletes would concentrate their mental and physical training on the upcoming Paralympic Games in an attempt to gain the best results. However, it seemed there was not enough time to prepare the athletes for the international games. Therefore, the CDPF changed the dates of the National Disabled Games back to one year before the Paralympic Games to ensure a better performance in 2003. Furthermore, all the sports included in the National Disabled Games qualification system were the same as the Paralympics, in order to prepare athletes for the Paralympic Games. In addition, the point recording system of the National Disabled Games was subsequently changed to reflect the success of those who had competed in the Paralympic Games, which was the same as that for the Chinese National Games (Huang, 2009).

The main challenge in developing the Paralympic Games in China was the training of qualified managers and referees. Between 1983 and 1993, China ran almost 300

disability sport workshops and courses to develop Paralympic Games–related professionals, such as referees of sports competitions, referees of Paralympics classification, coaches and managers. After ten years development focussing on the Paralympic Games, from 1983 to 1993, China gained the capacity to host international disability competitions for both Paralympic Sports and Paralympic Games.

7.2.1 Paralympics Sports

Summer Sports

In the 1988 Seoul Paralympic Games, China competed in only four sport events: athletics; swimming; table tennis; and shooting. After more than 20 years of development, China took part in all twenty Paralympic summer sports in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. These events were: archery; athletics; boccia; cycling; equestrian; football 5–a–side; football 7–a–side; Judo; goalball; powerlifting; rowing; sailing; shooting; swimming; table tennis; volleyball; wheelchair basketball; wheelchair fencing; wheelchair rugby; and wheelchair tennis(CPC, 2008).

China took part in fifteen sports in the London Games in 2012. China now has a pool of elite Paralympics athletes that are capable of covering most sport events (Guan, 2015).

Winter Sports

Unlike the summer sports, the Paralympics winter sports have made little progress since 1983. In 2002, the first Chinese Paralympic Winter Games delegation sent four athletes to the Games to represent only two sports. In the 2006 Games, only seven Chinese athletes raced in Alpine skiing and cross–country skiing.

7.2.2 The Paralympic Games

China has participated in and hosted different levels of the Paralympic Games since 1984. At an international level, China participated in and hosted the Paralympic Games and the FESPIC Games. At a national level, China regularly hosted the National Disabled Games. The National Disabled Games includes all Paralympic Games events, and also includes some Deaflympics events. These games are regarded as the most important competition for athletes with disabilities, and they continue to expand in size. This section will look at the development of the Paralympic Games at the national and international level.

The National Paralympic Games

The highest level of elite sports competition that is hosted regularly in China is the National Disabled Games of the People's Republic of China. These games have played an important role in the development of the Paralympic Games in China. In 1992, the State Council officially approved the inclusion of the 3rd National Disabled Games of the People's Republic of China, held in Guangzhou, into a major national games series to be held every four years. After that, China held the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th National Disabled Games of the People's Republic of China in 1996, 2000, 2003, 2007 and 2011 respectively. Each National Disabled Games has advanced upon the previous one in terms of numbers of athletes and events, as shown in Table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1 National Disabled Games and Athlete Numbers

Name	Time	Host City	Athlete Number	Delegation Number	Sports
1st	1984.10	Anhui, Hefei Province	500	30	4
2nd	1987.08	Tangshan, Hebei Province	900	30	5
3rd	1992.03	Guangzhou, Guangdong Province	1,153	33	6
4th	1996.05	Dalian, Liaoning Province	1,200	34	8
5th	2000.05	Shanghai	1,800	34	11
6th	2003.09	Nanjing, Jiangsu Province	2,229	33	14
7th	2007.05	Kunming, Yunnan Province	4,614	35	20
8th	2011.10	Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province	5,000	36	17

(Table developed by author， data from CDPF, 1984-2011)

Following the National Disabled Games, a series of provincial and city Disabled Games gradually began to take place. Even at district and township level, various games for people with disabilities were frequently run by the local PDF. At this level, the total number of athletes participating reached more than 20 million in various competitions from 1987–1993 (Zhang, 2010). Apart from the rapid social development of the disability movement in China during this period, the main motivation for organising Disabled Games at district and township levels was the selection of athletes to compete at a higher level(Zhang, 2005).

In 2001, the CDPF issued the Disability Working Annual Report, which included a sport section. This showed that the government was working on developing disability sport, especially in relation to the Paralympic Games, because of the upcoming 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. The reports of 2001–2010 demonstrate how the sports section was mainly focused on elite sports performance, sport facilities and sport competitions. In the reports, the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games are not reported on separately in detail, but they were reported on together in the one report, rather than as separate events. However, during those years a

very broad development in the Paralympics Games at provincial level and city level can be discerned due to the government's main focus on success at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games (Zhang, 2009). Table 7.2 below shows the expansion of disability sports games and its participants at provincial and city levels.

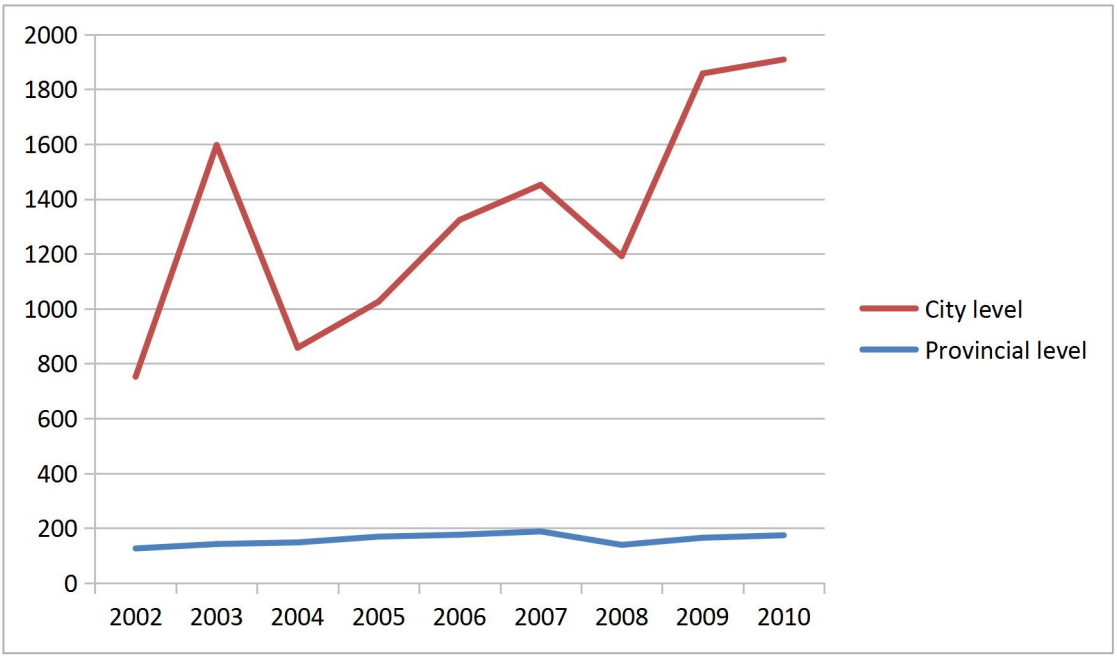
Table 7.2 the Development of Facilities, Sports Games and Participants

Year	Facilities (in total)		Sport Competitions (in total) and its Participants (in total)	
	Provincial level	City level	Provincial level	City level
2001	N/A	N/A	130 Sport Competitions 3,213 Participants	757 Sport Competitions 24,069 Participants
2002	126	626	116 Sport Competitions 8,644 Participants	579 Sport Competitions 30,523 Participants
2003	142	1455	101 Sport Competitions 9047 Participants	665 Sport Competitions 25,935 Participants
2004	148	710	77 Sport Competitions 8205 Participants	537 Sport Competitions 27,926 Participants
2005	169	857	171 Sport Competitions 13,110 Participants	828 Sport Competitions 49,507 Participants
2006	176	1148	148 Sport Competitions 17,585 Participants	771 Sport Competitions 53,588 Participants
2007	188	1264	95 Sport Competitions 10,157 Participants	838 Sport Competitions 51,975 Participants
2008	139	1053	57 Sport Competitions 11,964 Participants	784 Sport Competitions 62,107 Participants
2009	165	1693	110 Sport Competitions 15,000 Participants	2120 Sport Competitions 152,000 Participants
2010	174	1735	109 Sport Competitions 20,000 Participants	3370 Sport Competitions 243,000 Participants

(Note: Facilities represent the sport facilities with accessible infrastructures that are funded by the DPF. Source: the Disability Working Annual Report of the CDPF from 2001 to 2010)

Figure 7.1 below shows the advance in the total number of sport facilities with accessible infrastructures that are funded by the DPF at provincial and city levels.

Figure 7.1 The Development in the Total Number of Sport Facilities at Provincial and City Levels from 2002 to 2010

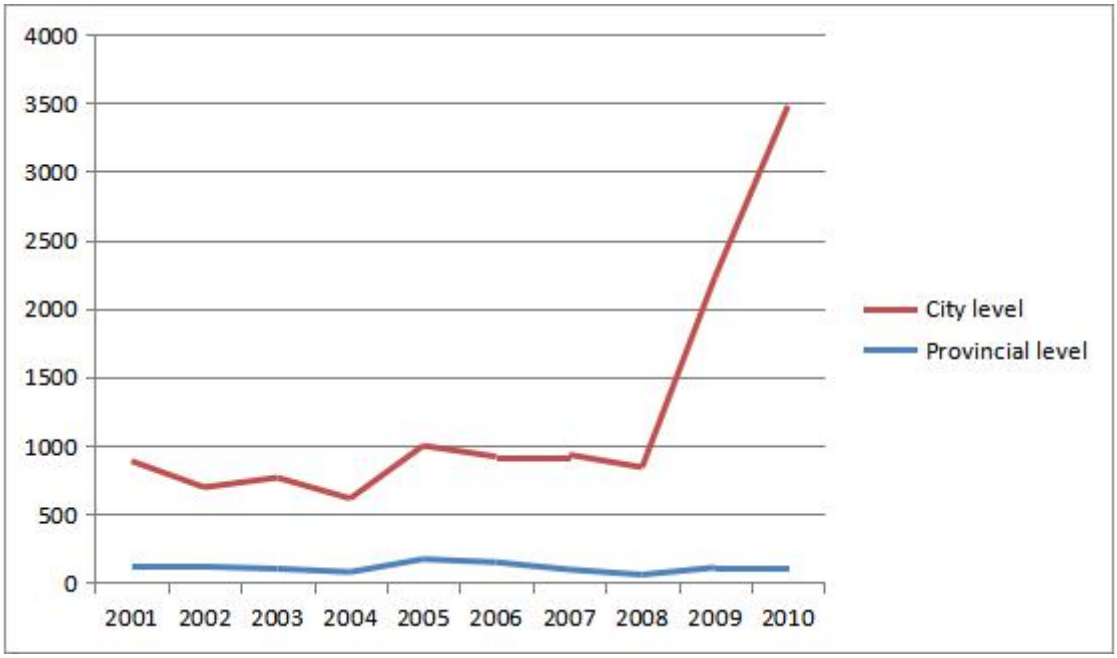


(Figure developed by author)

From figure 7.1 above, it can be seen that, in general, facilities for disability sport continued to grow at both levels. Slowly but surely, facilities for disability sport increased at the provincial level during 2002–2010, with a slight lapse in 2008. At city level, the development is less linear and increases as well as decreases throughout the years. In 2003 there is a boost in city level facilities due to the selection of athletes for the 2004 Athens Paralympic Games, but after 2004 the level quickly returns to that of

2002. This is a pattern that reoccurred in 2008. These drops in development could be evidence that the Chinese government's priority was to host and succeed in the international games (Wu & Han, 2007). As interviewee No.2 said, 'We had a very tight budget; if the international Paralympic Games came up, our budget had to focus on the success of these eye–catching events.' This idea is also reflected in the total number of sport competitions and in the number of participants at both levels. Figure 7.2 below demonstrates the development in the total number of sport competitions and participants at the provincial and city levels from 2001 to 2010.

Figure 7.2 The Development in the Total Number of Disability Sport Competitions and Its Participants at Provincial and City Levels from 2001 to 2010



(Figure developed by author)

Figure 7.2 shows a similar trend to figure 7.1, where the total number of disability sport competitions at both levels generally increased, but there was a clear drop in the year of the international Paralympic Games. These numbers were obviously affected by the

Paralympic Games. It seems to indicate that they are highly relative to the Paralympic Games. Therefore, the development of the Paralympic Games at both provincial and city levels can still be evidenced, although it is not clearly listed in the table 7.2.

The International Paralympic Games

(1) The FESPIC Games

Chinese athletes with disabilities competed for the first in an international disability sport competition in 1982. They sent a delegation of 15 athletes to the 3rd FESPIC Games in Hong Kong. After that, China competed in all of the following Games. China held the FESPIC Games in Beijing in 1994. After the 2006 9th FESPIC Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, the FESPIC Games was replaced by the Asian Paralympic Games (APG). The 1st Asian Paralympic Games were held in 2010 in Guangzhou, China (Ni & Cao, 2009). Table 7.3 shows an overview of FESPIC Games in which China has competed.

Table 7.3 FESPIC Games and 1st Asian Paralympic Games Results of China

Name	Year	Host	Participants	Medals		
				Gold	Silver	Bronze
3rd FESPIC	1982	Hong Kong	15	6	12	7
4th FESPIC	1986	Surakarta, Indonesia	23	64	21	3
5th FESPIC	1989	Kobe, Japan	57	99	32	8
6th FESPIC	1994	Beijing, China	422	298	28	138
7th FESPIC	1999	Bangkok, Thailand	195	205	90	45
8th FESPIC	2002	Busan, Korea	206	191	90	50
9th FESPIC	2006	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	190	199	76	32
1st APG	2010	Guangzhou, China	448	185	118	88

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF,1982-2010)

(2) The Paralympic Games

The first Chinese Paralympics delegation, comprised of 24 athletes with disabilities, participated in the 7th International Paralympic Games in 1984. Two blind Chinese female athletes, Ping Yali and Zhao Jihong, won the women's B2 and B3 long–jump gold medals respectively. Thirty–seven Chinese athletes participated in Atlanta at the 10th International Paralympic Games, winning a total of 16 gold medals, 13 silver medals and 10 bronze medals. Ten Chinese athletes broke 16 world records in these games, which were held in 1996. China was listed 9th in the gold medals ranking. China sent a delegation of 87 athletes to participate in the 11th Paralympic Games of 2000. In the six major events, consisting of 150 races, Chinese athletes won 34 gold medals, 22 silver medals, and 17 bronze medals. In total 25 Chinese athletes broke 15 world records, and China was ranked 6th in the gold medal tally for 2000. At the 12th Paralympic Games in Athens, Greece, in 2004, the Chinese delegation received 63 gold medals, achieving the top ranking for both gold medals, and for the total medal count. Table 7.4 shows an overview of the Paralympic Games in which China has competed.

(3) The Paralympic Winter Games

Success in the Paralympic Winter Games in China has been very limited. China has participated in the Paralympic Summer Games since 1984, but its first Paralympic Winter Games was in 2002. As table 7.4 below shows, China has been listed in the top 10 in the Paralympic Summer Games medal table since 2004, but its Paralympic Winter Games performance is surprisingly poor. Table 7.5 shows its historical performance in the Paralympic Winter Games.

Table 7.4 Paralympic Games Results of China

Name	Year	Host	Participants	Medals			Listed
				Gold	Silver	Bronze	
7th	1984	New York, United States	24	2	13	9	23th
8th	1988	Seoul, South Korea	43	17	17	10	14th
9th	1992	Barcelona, Spain	24	11	7	7	12th
10th	1996	Atlanta, United States	37	16	13	10	9th
11th	2000	Sydney, Australia	87	34	22	17	6th
12th	2004	Athens, Greece	200	63	46	32	1st
13th	2008	Beijing, China	332	89	70	52	1st
14th	2012	London, UK	282	95	71	65	1st

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF, 1984-2012)

Table 7.5 Paralympic Winter Games Results of China

Name	Year	Host	Participants	Medals			Best Result
				Gold	Silver	Bronze	
9th	2002	Salt Lake City, United States	4	0	0	0	6th
10th	2006	Turin, Italy	7	0	0	0	7th
11th	2010	Vancouver, Canada	7	0	0	0	No Finalist

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF, 2002-2010)

Table 7.5 illustrates that although China had become a dominant force in the Paralympic Summer Games, it barely made any progress in the Paralympic Winter Games.

7.3 The Special Olympics in China（特殊奥林匹克运动会）

The Special Olympics China (China Intelligence Disabled Sports Association), established in 1985, is a branch of the International Special Olympics. It is committed to promoting physical exercise and activities for people with intellectual disabilities. The Special Olympics China is a mass sport organisation which is structured by organisations at provincial and city levels. It is supported by non–profit Special Olympics, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the State Sports General Administration and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. It provides operational guidance, supervision and management as the highest level of Special Olympics organisation in China.

The Special Olympics made the greatest contribution to the disability sport population in China. A visit to China in 1986 by the then Special Olympics President, Sargent Shriver, garnered government support and enthusiasm and opened the doors for growth. While Chinese people were often sceptical of outside ideas and politics, and the world viewed China's human rights policies as less than adequate, Shriver saw an opportunity for growth and the potential for significant, lasting change. With the support of many Chinese government officials, Special Olympics China held its first National Games in Shenzhen in 1987. The programme was up and running, but it would need a lot of guidance and support to become intertwined with Chinese culture and society. There was a lack of progress during the 1980s–1990s, with only two National Special Olympic Games being held. The turning point came in 2000 with the success of the Millennium March. The leaders of the Special Olympics met with Chairman Jiang Zemin; Arnold Schwarzenegger led the first–ever Law Enforcement Torch Run along

the fabled Great Wall of China; and a gala benefit for the Special Olympics at the Great Hall of the People was broadcast live to 300 million viewers in 32 countries(Zhang, 2009). Shortly after the Millennium March in 2000, the Chinese Government enacted into law the Special Olympics 5–Year Growth Plan, mandating that all of the goals be met by 2005. This historic piece of legislation provided access for the Special Olympics China to substantial resources from the government, and provided significant leverage for the work to be done. Then China made a successful bid to host the 2007 Special Olympic World Games. The Special Olympics became a core part of the government's working plan. In 2001, the 10th Five–Year Plan was put forward, which implemented the 'Rules on the Sport Careers of the Disabled'. From 2001 to 2005, China aimed to increase the percentage of people with disabilities who regularly attended mainstream sporting activities to 10% of total population with disabilities. Included in this percentage, the Chinese government also aimed for the number of intellectually disabled athletes participating in the Special Olympics to increase from 50,000 to 500,000. As surprising or unrealistic as the numbers might seem in comparison to those in other countries, the projected growth figures for people with intellectual disabilities served by the Special Olympics was exceeded. The growth is shown in table 7.6 below.

Table 7.6 The Growth of Special Olympics Athletes in China

Year	Number of Athletes
1998	~28,000
2002	179,510
2004	407,026
2006	600,000+

(Cited from: Shuhanet al., 2011)

7.3.1 The Special Olympics Programmes

The Special Olympics China not only offers sports programmes, but also some programmes geared towards promoting the understanding of the Special Olympics in China and participation in the Games. It includes:

- Special Olympics Athletes Leadership Programme
- Special Olympics School and Youth Programme
- Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programme
- Special Olympics Family Programme
- Special Olympics Unified Sports

The Special Olympics China has attempted to involve every social actor in the Special Olympics.

7.3.2 The Special Olympics Sports

In 1987 the Special Olympics China only offered three sports to athletes: athletics, table tennis and football. In 2007, twenty–seven Olympic–style individual and team sports were offered to athletes among over 30 Special Olympics sports. Therefore athletes had more options and easier access to sports facilities. Summer and winter sports were offered, as can be seen in Table 7.7 below.

Table 7.7 Special Olympics Sports in China

Summer Sports	Winter Sports
Aquatics; Athletics; Badminton; Basketball; Bocce; Bowling; Cycling; Equestrian; Football (Soccer); Golf; Gymnastics; Judo; Powerlifting; Roller Skating; Sailing; Softball; Table Tennis; Tennis; Volleyball; Team Handball.	Alpine Skiing; Cross–country skiing; Figure Skating; Floor Hockey; Snowboarding; Snowshoeing; Speed skating.

(Table developed by author)

The Special Olympics China continually expanded its sports, with the result that more athletes were attracted to sports by the variety of options available.

7.3.3 The Special Olympic Games

China has participated in the international Special Olympic Games and has hosted national level, provincial level and city level Special Olympic Games such as the Paralympic Games. At an international level, China has participated in the Special Olympics Games since 1987, and hosted the 2007 Special Olympic World Summer Games. At a national level, China has regularly hosted the National Special Olympics Games. Its size keeps growing. This section will look at the development of the Special Olympic Games at the international level and the national level.

The National Special Olympics Games

China hosted its first National Special Olympics Games in 1987. Following the Games, the Special Olympics expanded dramatically in terms of both size and number of participates. Therefore, China's active participation in and hosting of the Special Olympics Games acted as a window through which the world could see that China had the ability to look after its people with intellectual disabilities.

In total, China has held five National Special Olympics Games since 1987. Different aspects of the Games continue to develop. However, there was a 10–year gap between the 2nd and 3rd National Special Olympic Games, which was caused by the change of the Special Olympics governing body, and a lack of interest from the central government, which viewed the Special Olympics as having much lower competitiveness than the Paralympics. Since 2000, the Chinese government has recognized the political value of the Special Olympics, as is evidenced by the series of Special Olympics events that have been held. Of particular note were the International Special Olympics delegation's fundraising tour of China, which brought about a meeting with Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. This meeting resulted in powerful government involvement in the promotion of the Special Olympics in China. One outcome was that the National Special Olympic Games officially is now run every 4 years. The rapid development of the National Special Olympic Games is shown in Table 7.8 below.

Table 7.8 The Development of the National Special Olympic Games

No.	Year	Host City	Sports	Athletes	Delegations	Other programmes
1st	1987	Shenzhen	3	304	13	None
2nd	1991	Fuzhou	4	301	19	None
3rd	2002	Xi'an	6	1,065	34	None
4th	2006	Harbin	10	1,418	37 (includes Taiwan, Korea)	3 (Youth Summits, Healthy Athletes Programme, Family Support Network)
5th	2010	Fuzhou	11	1,728	39 (includes Taiwan, Singapore, Korea, USA)	5 (Officers Summits, Youth Summits, Healthy Athletes Programme, Family Support Network, University Programme)

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF,1987-2010)

The Special Olympic Games is also held at provincial and city levels every 4 years, as well as the Special Olympic championships.

The International Special Olympics Games

China has actively participated in the Special Olympics World Games since 1987. Unlike when it did not organise the National Special Olympics Games in the 1990s, China did not miss any Special Olympics World Games for either the Summer World Games or the Winter World Games. The main reason is obvious: organising a delegation to participate in a World Games which has no qualification system requires much less effort with regard to management and financing than does organising a mega national games. The World Games in which China has participated are shown in Table7.9 below.

Table 7.9 Special Olympics World Games in which China Participated

No. and Summer/Winter World Games	Year	Host
Summer World Games VII	1987	Notre Dame and South Bend, United States
Winter World Games IV	1989	Lake Tahoe and Reno, United States
Summer World Games VIII	1991	Minneapolis and Saint Paul, United States
Winter World Games V	1993	Salzburg and Schladming, Austria
Summer World Games IX	1995	New Haven, United States
Winter World Games VI	1997	Collingwood and Toronto, Canada
Summer World Games X	1999	Chapel Hill, Durham and Raleigh, United States
Winter World Games VII	2001	Anchorage, United States
Summer World Games XI	2003	Dublin, Ireland
Winter World Games VIII	2005	Nagano, Japan
Summer World Games XII	2007	Shanghai, China
Winter World Games IX	2009	Boise, United States
Summer World Games XIII	2011	Athens, Greece

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF, 1987-2011)

However, after the early 1990s, economic and social progress drove China to take disability sport more seriously. For example, in 1996, China held the Asia–Pacific Special Olympics Games in Shanghai. More importantly, China successfully bid for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, the 2008 Paralympic Games and the 2008 Olympic Games. This resulted in an accelerated development of Special Olympics in China. China promised to develop the Special Olympics athletes and host the Special Olympics World Games. In preparation for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games, the host city Shanghai ran an International Special Olympics Invitation Games

in 2006. Table 7.10 shows how the capacity of the host international Special Olympics Games in China continued to improve after 1996.

Table 7.10 the improvement in capacity of the host international Special Olympics Games since 1996

Games	Year	Host	Sports	Athletes	Nations	Other programmes
1st Asia–Pacific Special Olympics Games	1996	Shanghai	5	521	15	None
International Special Olympics Invitation Games	2006	Shanghai	21	2,222	20	4 Performing Sports
2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games	2007	Shanghai	21	7,450	165 (1 for observing)	4 Performing Sports 8 None–sports Events

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF, 1996-2007)

The 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games successfully brought Chinese Special Olympics athletes' lives into the limelight, and also delivered modern disability theories to Chinese society. During the games, media coverage highlighted every aspect of the games. There were 1,438 journalists reporting on the games, which was the biggest number of journalists in the history of the games. Journalists especially reported on the lives of Chinese Special Olympics athletes' to the world, as this was the first time this group of people had been under the limelight in an international festival–like event in China. Further to this media coverage, trained volunteers brought modern disability knowledge to Chinese society. More than 40,000 volunteers from all over China attended disability–related workshops for the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games. After the games, they went back to their original lives all over China with the

knowledge they had gained, and this helped to create a positive atmosphere in Chinese society.

More importantly, the 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games attracted 3,500 politicians and international organisation leaders from all over the world to observe the events. Therefore, it even created a strong international influence.

7.3.4 The Special Olympics in Practice: Tonghui Special Needs School

Sports in special needs schools for children with intellectual disabilities played an important role. The courses outlined by the Curriculum of Compulsory Education in Schools for Intellectual Disabilities and Special Olympic programmes promoted participation in sport (Tan, 2005). The fieldwork school, Chengdu Tonghui Special Needs School, is a typical example of how sports play a part in special needs schools for children with intellectual disabilities. Chengdu Tonghui Special Needs School, which has a special education class for 5 students with intellectual disabilities, was originally named Ximapeng School in the 1980s. Ximapeng School established the special education centre due to the growth in student numbers, increasing to 21 students in 2002. After a decade of development, Ximapeng School became the leading school in special education for students with intellectual disabilities in the southwest of China. Not all of the students are local; in fact some are from other cities and even other provinces. This resulted in a huge increase in the number of students, which rocketed up to 103 students in 10 classes by 2012. Among these 103 students, there were 58 students with autism, and 45 with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. All students were eligible to qualify for the Special Olympics.

Sport Facilities

Chengdu Tonghui Special Needs School is located in the southwest of China in Sichuan province, Chengdu city. It is a typical public school for inclusion education, which has both a general education department and a special education department. Both of the departments operate as separate organisations as they each have their own independent financial, teaching, staff and management systems, but they share the same school name and campus. Together, both departments are called Tonghui School, which forms the inclusion aspect. Tonghui School was originally called Ximapeng School. It is located in a 660 square meters campus, which is not adequate to meet the 2006 trial version of 'Special Education School Construction Standards'. The Construction Standards outlined school sports venues: 'Sports venues should be used for PE class, class break gymnastic exercises and after school hours sports activities.' It also detailed the standards for the sports venues' activity area for three categories of special needs school. For an intellectual disabilities school, it specified the following provisions: the sports venue's activity area in a school for intellectual disabilities should not be less than 3,570 square meters for nine classes, and the scale should not be less than 5,394 square meters for 18 classes.

Because of the sharp increase in student numbers and good sports achievements, the local government decided to move the Ximapeng School to a new campus in order to provide better education and facilities. In 2012, Ximapeng relocated to its new campus of 22,000 square meters, which included 6,700 square meters of sports facilities and which was almost 33 times bigger than its original campus, and it was renamed Tonghui School. Figure 7.3 shows the sports facilities in Tonghui School.

Figure 7.3 The Sports Facilities in Tonghui School

(Photo taken by author)

Sports Achievements

The relocation of a special needs school to a newly built campus with access to much better resources would be almost impossible without the support of local government. However, Tonghui School managed to do this simply through their policy of developing sports in school. Table 7.11 shows Tonghui School's sports achievements in different levels of the Special Olympic Games since 2002.

Table 7.11 Tonghui School's Sports Achievements in Different Levels of the Special Olympic Games

Games	Medals		
	Gold	Silver	Bronze
2002 1st Sichuan Province Special Olympic Summer Games	5	2	4
2006 4th National Special Olympic Summer Games	6	4	1
2007 12th Special Olympic World Summer Games	4	4	2
2009 2nd Sichuan Province Special Olympic Summer Games	8	8	5
2010 5th National Special Olympic Summer Games	4	10	16
2010 1st National Special Olympic Winter Games	13	10	4

(Table developed by author)

As well as winning medals at the international level, national level and provincial level, Tonghui School students also won medals in city level games and National Special Olympic sport championships, such as the 2008 National Special Olympic Roller Skating Games (2 Gold, 2 Silver, 5 Bronze) and the 2009 Chengdu Special Olympic Summer Games (35 Gold, 24 Silver, 10 Bronze). According to interviewee No.17, Tonghui School participates in 4–5 games in different levels each year. Although the Special Olympics does not set official medal rankings, and the medals and trophies are not awarded on a competitive basis, but rather are a prize received by every participant, the winning of medals still makes a good story for media reports for government's propaganda. Tonghui School started to be widely recognised as a leading special needs school in the Southwest of China because of the many medals won by its students, and this resulted in much media coverage. This media interest also brought more resources and opportunities to Tonghui School, such as sponsorships, volunteers, support, and even employment for students. Additionally, the winning of medals also inspired the local government to include a special section on education in their annual report. In return, the local government provided more support to develop sports in Tonghui School. It is evident that the relocation of the campus was one of these supports.

Sports Training

In Tonghui School, the maximum hours are spent in Sports and Health courses. For year 1–6 students, this is 2.5 hours per week, and for year 7–9 students it is 2 hours per week plus adapted activities, class break gymnastics and extra Special Olympics programmes. It is this focus on sport and health that gives the Tonghui School's school sports the edge over other special needs school. The Special Olympics Sports training programme is a school programmed course which offers an extra 3 times (40 minutes each time) specific sport training for all students out of the school sport courses every week.

Students can choose their own favourite sport from track and field, basketball, football, softball, badminton, table tennis, swimming, roller skating, grounder, mini golf, gymnastics, aerobics, and dance. Each term, Tonghui School holds at least one School Special Games and one Inclusion Sports Games together with its regular education department. Additionally, different training camps are run throughout the summer and winter vacations. Apart from those Special Olympic Sports programmes, Tonghui School also actively runs different Special Olympic programmes to promote its sports programme. Their Special Olympic programmes include:

- Special Olympics Athletes Leadership Programme
- Special Olympics School and Youth Programme
- Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Programme
- Special Olympics Family Programme
- Special Olympics Unified Sports

From the above Special Olympics programmes of Tonghui School, it is clear that Tonghui School is involved in all of the Special Olympics programmes. As interviewee No.10 pointed out, there are two key things that make Tonghui school successful in sports performance, the most important being that education programs and Special Olympic programmes netted human resources and financial resources together to develop performance, another is the 'early–bird' advantage, which means that the school started to focus on the Special Olympics much earlier than others.

Significantly, after years of development, Tonghui School is now not only a school which has a great sports atmosphere, but it also creates a positive atmosphere for the local community as a community disability sport centre. Its Special Olympics Young

Athletes Program is open to the local community three times per week (40 minutes each time). Tonghui School also runs Special Olympic sports training for the local community three times per week (40 minute each time). These sports training programmes are always full. Interviewee No.11 said some parents even drive their children 1.5 hours across the city to the school to train. Therefore, the waiting list is still very long due to the current resources restriction.

Financial Support

Financial support for special needs school sport in China mainly come from three resources: the education budget of the Department of Education; the sport training budget of all levels of the DPF; and corporate sponsorships. However, the financial support for special needs school sport in China varies between schools based on their sport performance, the type of disabilities they cater for, economic development progress, and local DPF's sport development strategy.

In general, special needs schools which can perform at national level or above will receive abundant financial support for their sport development. However, special needs schools for those with visual disabilities and hearing disabilities can perform at the required level due to the lack of sport culture and necessary resources. Therefore, except for what is received through the education budget of the Department of Education, these special needs schools do not have any other financial support for their sport development. Special needs schools for those with intellectual disabilities, which are closely associated with the Special Olympics, benefit the most due to the focus on participation rather than on competition at the Special Olympics. This means that special needs schools for those with intellectual disabilities tend to have financial support from all three resources.

Interviewee No.17 introduced the fieldwork school Tonghui Schools sport funding resources: 'Our most steady funding is the education budget of the Department of Education; it is allocated differently based on student numbers for each academic year. The total amount is 3,200 RMB per student. This is the budget for all subjects. Different schools have a different proportion of sports budget. In Tonghui School, it is about one–fifth of the total amount the Department of Education spent as part of the education budget on sports. That means about 600 RMB per student per year. As far as I know, 600 RMB is a big proportion among all special needs schools in China.' Another two fieldwork schools, Shijiazhuang Special Needs School and Kunming Special Needs School, claimed that the education budget is the only resource for their sports. They also point out that sport is not prioritised in their schools as their focus is on employment.

Tonghui School also received strong financial support from all three levels of the DPF due to their Special Olympic training centres attached to the Tonghui School. The following schools are supported separately with different levels of funding: The CDPF Special Olympic Training Centre, Sichuan Province DPF Special Olympic Training Centre, Chengdu City DPF Special Olympic Training Centre are separately supported by different levels of the DPF. Interviewee No.17 stated that 'Generally, Tonghui School receives about 400,000 RMB per year for Special Olympic training from all levels of the DPF. If a year has an international or national competition, then we would have more support from all levels DPF. For example, in 2011, for preparing the Special Olympic World Summer Games, Tonghui School received almost 1,000,000 RMB from all levels of the DPF.'

In summary, the Special Olympics approach became popular in special needs schools in China. First, it offered an impressive result for the government's education system due to its unique and productive sports results. Then, success in competition performance meant it was possible to attract more funding support for the special needs school itself.

7.4. The Deaflympic Games in China (听障奥运会)

The earliest record of sports games for the deaf in PRC was when Beijing hosted the first deaf athletics, table tennis and swimming competitions in 1957. Later, in 1959, the first National Deaf Basketball Competition was held. The Athletics Invitation Games of Special Needs School for the Deaf were held in 1980. Delegations from four cities – Beijing, Tianjin, Tangshan, and Zhangjiakou – were sent to participate in these games. In 1986 the Taishan Cup National Deaf Basketball Tournament was held in Jinan as a celebration of the establishment of the China Sports Association for the Deaf. In 1988 this association joined the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf. Therefore, sports for the deaf were introduced and developed earlier than other two major games. However, its development was the slowest among the three major disability sport games.

7.4.1 Deaflympic Sports

Deaflympic sports are similar to the Olympic sports, including such sports as basketball, volleyball, soccer, table tennis, athletics, cycling, gymnastics and swimming. The only difference is that a flag rather than a starting gun signals the start for the players.

Summer Sports

China has participated in the Deaflympic Summer Games Since 1989. However, after more than 20 years development, its capacity to qualify for the sports in the games does

not seem to have changed very much. Table 7.12 below illustrates how until very recently, Chinese Deaflympics athletes could only qualify for a very limited selection of sports.

Table 7.12 Deaflympic Summer Games Sports China Has Participated In

Name	Year	Host	Total number of sport events of the Games	Sport events China has participated in
16th	1989	Christchurch, New Zealand	12	Table Tennis
17th	1993	Sofia, Bulgaria	14	0
18th	1997	Copenhagen, Denmark	14	Athletics, Swimming and Table Tennis
19th	2001	Rome, Italy	15	Athletics, Swimming, Table Tennis, Badminton and Tennis
20th	2005	Melbourne, Australia	15	Athletics, Swimming, Table Tennis, Badminton and Tennis
21th	2009	Taipei, Taiwan	20	Athletics, Swimming, Table Tennis, Badminton, Tennis and Basketball

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF, 1989-2009)

Winter Sports

The only Deaflympic Winter Games China participated in was the 16th Winter Deaflympics of 2007. In that Games, there were five sports: alpine skiing, cross–country skiing, curling, ice hockey and snowboarding. China only had athletes racing in the cross–country skiing and curling events.

7.4.2 The Deaflympic Games

Unlike the Paralympic Games and Special Olympic Games in China, the Deaflympic Games do not have their own National Games, but are represented as a sub–class with very few events in the National Disabled Games. Also China has yet to host the international Deaflympic Games. The development of the Deaflympic Games in China has been very limited.

The Deaflympic Summer Games

In 1989, the 16th World Deaflympic Games were held in New Zealand and China sent its first delegation of only 8 athletes to take part in the table tennis event. In 1993, China was absent from the 17th World Deaflympic Game because they were preparing to host the 1994 FESPIC Games in Beijing. China sent 13 athletes to the 18th World Deaflympic Games. At these Games, Xiaodong won the men's long jump gold medal, which was a breakthrough for the Deaflympic Games on the medal table. In 2001 the 19th World Deaflympic Games were held in Italy, and China sent 15 athletes to participate in track and field, swimming, table tennis, badminton and tennis. The athletes won two gold medals, three silver medals and three bronze medals. Table 7.13 below shows an overview of the Deaflympic Games in which China has competed.

Table 7.13 Deaflympic Games Results of China

Name	Year	Host	Participants	Medals		
				Gold	Silver	Bronze
16th	1989	Christchurch, New Zealand	8			
17th	1993	Sofia, Bulgaria	0	0	0	0
18th	1997	Copenhagen, Denmark	13	1	0	0
19th	2001	Rome, Italy	15	2	3	2
20th	2005	Melbourne, Australia	69	5	8	4
21th	2009	Taipei, Taiwan	78	12	9	17

(Table developed by author, data from CDPF, 1989-2009)

The Deaflympic Winter Games

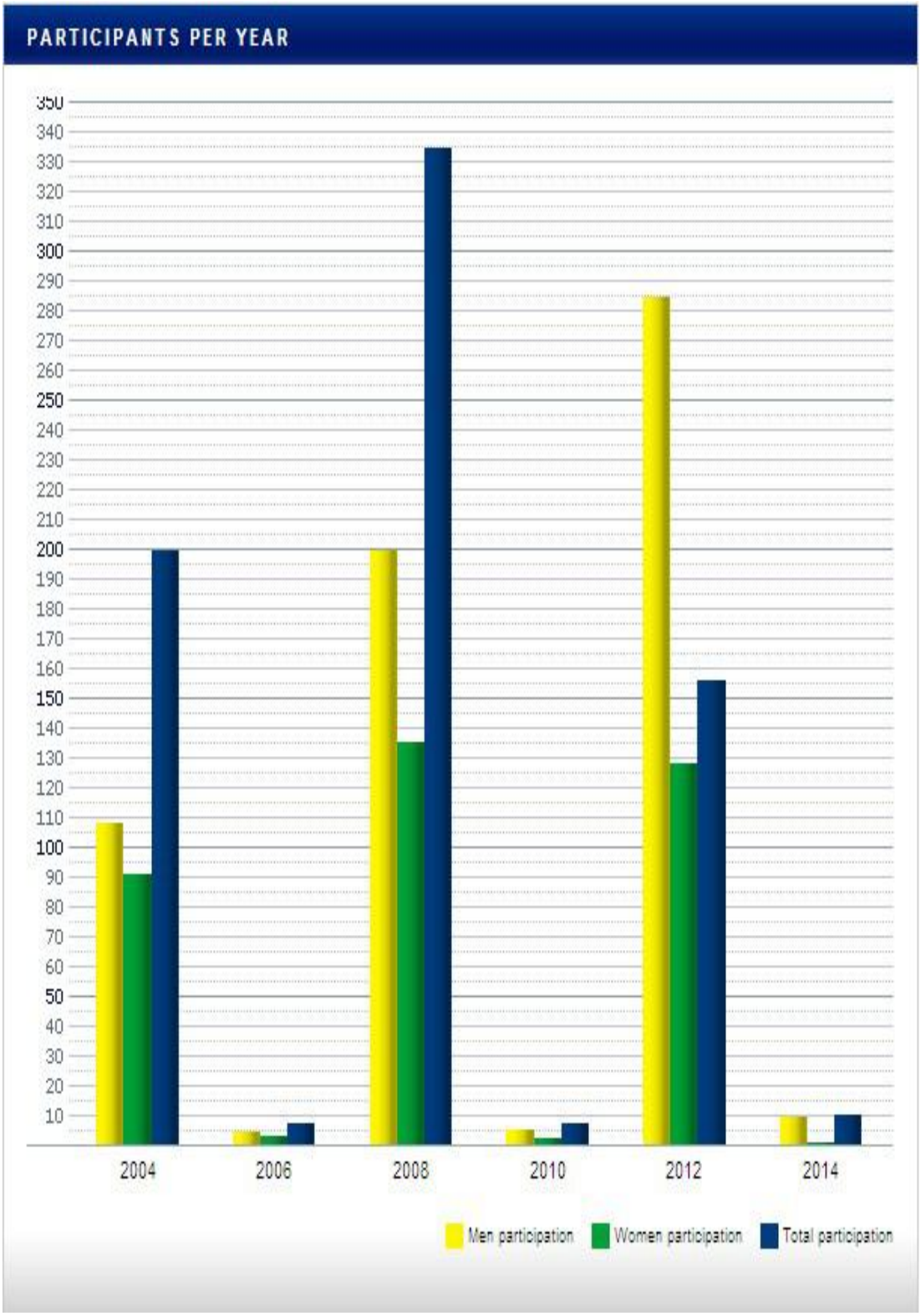
In 2007, the 16th World Deaflympic Winter Games were held in Salt Lake City, US. For the first time China sent 14 athletes to participate in the cross–country skiing and curling competitions. The Chinese delegation won a bronze medal in the men's curling competition. In 2011, The International Committee of Sports for the Deaf cancelled the 17th World Deaflympic Winter Games due to financial problems. Therefore, the 16th World Deaflympic Winter Games were only games in which China participated.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the development of three major disability sport games in China. The Paralympics made great progress. The performance of athletes at an international level in the Summer Games continued to improve until it became the dominant power in the world medal rankings. This remarkable achievement made the Paralympic Games the representative symbol of elite disability sport in China. This success provided inspiration to people with disabilities that showed they could be heroes of their nation. Before The Paralympics success started to attract attention from Chinese society, people with disabilities were seen as a burden on society. Second, the Paralympics set a competition system with three levels – national, provincial and city levels. The competition system continues to grow in terms of the total number of games, sport events and athlete numbers. However, there is evidence of an unbalanced development in the Paralympics (Zhou, 2005).

Figure 7.4 below demonstrates the huge gap between the Paralympic Winter Games and the Paralympic Summer Games as regards the number of participants in every game since 2004.

Figure 7.4 Participants in each Paralympic Games since 2004



(Cited from the Paralympic Games official website, www.paralympic.orgpeoples–republic–china)

The major cause for this circumstance is the lack of government effort. In other words, the Chinese government does not have a strong interest in the Winter Games. First, they believe that the Winter Games lack the strong political influence of the Summer Games, and would not be able to attract as much worldwide media attention. Therefore, the China government has not focused on the Winter Games. Second, as interviewee No. 27 claimed, 'The Chinese elite sport system is a money–eating monster due to its inefficiency. Our government has spent a fortune on elite sports, but the system is always short of money … If we compare its cost and its productivity, then it is very easy to see the ridiculous outcomes.' Even though China has heavily invested in disability sport, financial constraints still exist for the Winter Games (Gao, 2005).

Then, the Paralympics medal winning strategy became a double–edged sword. To maximise the amount of resources available, the CDPF has an unacknowledged strategy to manage the medal winning. In elite disability sport, there are some money–burning events such as wheelchair racing, or where high–tech materials such as prosthetics are involved in sports and equestrian event(sZhou & Tian, 2006). Until 2000, China only focused on three athletics events, i.e. swimming and table tennis. In other words, the CDPF did not put the necessary effort into other sports (Zhang, 2012). This strategy was learnt from the Olympic medals winning strategy. In 2004 China participated in 11 Paralympics sports and 284 events in Athens (Zhou & Li, 2006). These three key sports were targeted for medals and therefore received most of the support in the elite sports system. In order to keep its No.1 position in the medal table league and gain more medals in 2008, China prepared to participate in all 20 Paralympics sports, as table 7.14 shows. China has carefully analysed its strengths and weaknesses and has divided its Paralympic sports into four categories:

1. Traditional Paralympics sports, in which China is guaranteed to win gold medals, such as athletics, swimming and table tennis. China focused on these sports because each of them is a medal warehouse; for example, swimming gained 140 gold medals in 2008. China won gold medals in each of these three sports in 2000. China believes that it will maintain its dominant position in these areas.

2. Capable Paralympics sports, in which China has the present ability to gain some gold medals, such as powerlifting, shooting and judo. China will try its best to win more gold medals in these areas.

3. Potential Paralympics sports, in which China has the future potential to gain more medals, such as wheelchair fencing, volleyball and archery. There are gold medals in these areas. China only won one or two gold medals in wheelchair fencing and archery in 2004. These are the areas in which China will attempt to gain more medals in order to secure its leading position in 2008.

4. Weak Paralympics sports, in which China lags behind, such as cycling, equestrian, rowing and sailing. These are the areas in which China will work harder than ever to reach the qualifying standard and then try to win medals.

Table 7.14 the Paralympics Sports Development and the Proportion of the Traditional Four Sports in Total Gold Medal Winning

Game	Sports Competed	The Proportion of Traditional Three Sports in Total Gold Medal Wining
2000 Sydney, Australia	1.Athletics 2.Swimming 3.Table tennis 4.Shooting 5. Powerlifting 6.Judo	82%
2004 Athens, Greece	1.Athletics 2.Swimming 3.Table tennis 4.Shooting 5.Powerlifting 6.Judo 7.Cycling 8.Archery 9.Wheelchair fencing 10.Wheelchair tennis 11.Volleyball	81%
2008 Beijing, China	1.Archery 2.Athletics 3.Boccia 4.Cycling 5.Equestrian 6.Football 5–a–side 7.Football 7–a–side 8.Judo 9.Goalball 10.Powerlifting 11.Rowing 12.Sailing 13.Shooting 14.Swimming 15.Table tennis 16.Volleyball 17.Wheelchair basketball 18.Wheelchair fencing 19.Wheelchair rugby 20.Wheelchair tennis	72%
2012 London, UK	1.Archery 2.Athletics 3.Boccia 4.Cycling 5.Football 5–a–side 6.Judo 7.Goalball 8.Powerlifting 9.Rowing 10.Shooting 11.Swimming 12.Table tennis 13.Volleyball 14.Wheelchair basketball 15.Wheelchair fencing	75%

(Table developed by author)

Table 7.14 shows that even in 2008, where China competed in all 20 Paralympics sports, the traditional three sports still dominated the medal winning table. Other sports are still underdeveloped.

Then, this paper looked at the development of the Special Olympic Games in China. There are three forces which played an important role, which were: the sport system of the DPF, the education system, and its organisation which is Special Olympic China. All three forces put necessary resources into the Special Olympic Games and the Special Olympic Games' participation–focused culture meant that the development of the Special Olympic Games happened in a fairly balanced way.

The last major games are the Deaflympic Games. These were the earliest games to emerge in China among the three major disability sport games. However, its development has been the slowest among them. Unlike the Paralympic Games and Special Olympic Games, the Deaflympic Games do not have their own National Games, but are represented as a sub–class with only a very few events in the National Disabled Games. China has yet to host an international Deaflympic Games. For each international Deaflympic Games, China has only qualified very few athletes, which shows that the development of the Deaflympic Games in China is very limited. In general, the restrictions of the development of the Deaflympics are caused by two main effects. These are: the historical relationship with the Paralympics and a lack of starting advantage.

The Limitations of Deaflympic Games' Development in China

A crucial move in the history of deaf sport has been the relationship with the Paralympics. In 1985 the Comité International des Sports Siliencieux (CISS), which translates as the International Committee of Deaf Sports, took a dramatic step in its history to seek membership with the International Coordinating Committee for the World Organisations of Sports for the Disabled (ICC). According to Steadward and

Foster's (2003) record, the CISS was approved and was accepted to the ICC in 1986. Subsequently, the CISS became a founding member of the International Paralympic Committee in 1989. However, this act immediately raised issues, especially in the area of self–determination. Past President of CISS, Jerald Jordan (2001) commented:

> '... many national Deaf sport organisations which formerly had direct and harmonious ties to their national Olympic committees were cut off from the linkage and forced into a national sports organisation, losing their autonomy and suffering reduced funding (Jordan, 2001).'

Therefore, a continuing question is whether deaf athletes should compete under the Paralympics umbrella? Supporters like Art Kruger, one of the founders of the American Athletic Association of the Deaf – now called the USA Deaf Sports Federation – (from a profile of Kruger in Stewart, 1991) believes that it is an advantage in term of economies of scale for hosting large–scale events and potentially increased media exposure. Opponents suggest that, first, there are now over 80 national Deaf sport organisations and although 'these numbers speak clearly to the popularity of the world of Deaf sport at the international level, there is increasing evidence that Deaf sport at the grassroots level is not faring as well' (Stewart & Ammons, 2001). Then, control over the number of athletes participating in the Paralympic Games and funding for interpreters is a cause for concern. As a result, in 1995, the CISS decided to withdraw the IPC membership (Steadward & Foster, 2003; Stewart & Ammons, 2001).

This crucial move in the history of Deaf sport was to deeply effect the development of the Deaflympics in China. First and most importantly, Deaf sport was understood as a sub–event of the Paralympics when disability sport was first introduced to China in the

1980s. Deaf sports were not treated equally with the Paralympics in all aspects. The Paralympics were understood to be the most influential disability sport, which included Deaf sport as a sub–event. As a result, even today, the Chinese National Disabled Games still has Deaf sports and there is no National Deaflympic Games. Secondly, in 2001 Deaf sports were recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as the Deaflympics (Eickman, 2001). From 1966 to 1999, Deaf sport games were named the 'World Games for the Deaf', and occasionally called the 'World Silent Games'. So, as interviewee No.10, who has been a senior administrator for disability sport in the provincial DPF over 20 years, said, 'The Deaflympic Games only started to build its global influence and reputation as an independent international game and to draw China's attention after 2001. In the context of Chinese deaf sport, deaf sport has a longer history than the other two major disability sport movements, but the Deaflympic Games are fairly young in terms of development when compared to the other two in China.'

The first Paralympic Games China participated in was in 1984, where the Chinese delegation won 2 gold medals, 13 silver medals and 9 bronze medals after only a few months' preparation. The Chinese government took this as a strong message that China had a great potential in the Paralympic Games. However, the Deaflympic Games was not as successful: China's first Deaflympic Games trip in 1989 did not receive any medals and did not even send athletes to the following Deaflympic Games. Besides, although China had already climbed to the top 10 in the Deaflympics medal table in recent games, there was a long way to go before their performance would become as 'first class' as the Chinese Paralympics. Interviewee No.18 makes the point that, 'The Deaflympics had a very high level of performance when China started to compete. This was unlike the Paralympics, where there were some events where success could be

achieved quite quickly. An athlete could become a Paralympic world champion within five years' time or even shorter, but this would be impossible in Deaflympics.' The Deaflympic Games' high competiveness meant that the Chinese government did not see a potential chance to achieve quick results that would satisfy the political needs. It was another important limitation of Deaflympic Games development in China.

Additionally, from 2002 onward China was planning to host the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, and the government invested almost all disability resources into this big show (Wu, 2007). Interviewee No.6 pointed out that, 'It seems the Deaflympics is rising in China. However, the Deaflympics never receive the equal attention like Paralympics from the government because we cannot help the government to get the medals to show off. So I think the government needs to rethink that how much effort they make for us. It is so unfair!' It seems the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games over–absorbed resources which could possibly have been used to develop the Deaflympics. Until recently, this further limited the development of the Deaflympic Games in China.

Barnes and Bowl (2001) view empowerment as a kind of partnership which shares decision–making and negotiation (Starkey, 2003). Handler (1996) also perceives that empowerment is not a client controlling the agency from which it receives services, but rather a client having a strong voice in participating in decision–making, with mutual benefits. Means and Smith (1994) identify three levels of participation in decision–making. They list these from the most empowering to the least empowering: 'At the most empowering level of participation, people have the authority to make decisions about important areas of their lives. This is followed by people having authority to make some decisions, people having an opportunity to influence decisions, people's views being sought to influence decisions, and decisions being publicised and explained

before implementation. Least empowering, and not empowering at all, is people being given information about decisions after others have made them.' Zimmerman (2000) described that having actual control may not directly lead to empowerment. In some cases, it may be empowering to gain experience in the decision–making process even when not making the actual decision.

The imbalanced development within and between the three games highlighted the fact that the athletes did not have any participation in the decision–making process. Either they did not have a voice at all, or their voice had been ignored. It is the government that decides which games or sport events to develop, not the athletes with disabilities. This is why the Deaflympics has remained a sub–class of the Paralympics Games in China.

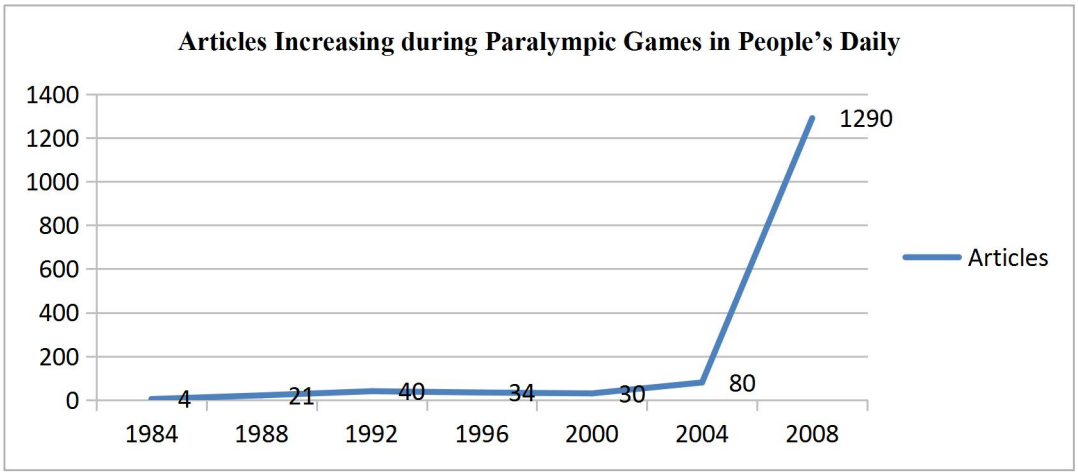
Dubois and Miley (1999) stated, 'Empowerment hinges on having access to resources.' Hasenfeld (1987) pointed out the importance of resources: 'Empowerment is a process through which clients obtain resources – personal, organisational, and community – that enable them to gain greater control over their environment and to attain their aspirations.' The Paralympic athletes had access to the most resources from the CDPF and national sport resources due to the development of the Paralympic athletes being at the centre of the elite disability sport system. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Special Olympic Games also accessed resources from the CDPF and the national sport system, but the amount received was far less than for the Paralympic Games. Accessing resources from the education system ensured the development of the Special Olympic Games in China. Therefore, the Special Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games empowered its athletes by helping them to access resources. However, the Deaflympic

athletes received what was left after resources had been allocated to Special Olympics and Paralympics from the CDPF, the sport system and the education system.

Zimmerman (1995) saw a clear difference between empowerment processes from outcomes: 'The former refers to how people, organisations, and communities become empowered, whereas the latter refers to the consequences of those processes'. Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998) offered a more detailed definition of empowerment processes: 'Empowerment processes are the mechanisms through which people, organisations, and communities gain mastery and control over issues that concern them, develop a critical awareness of their environment, and participate in decisions that affect their lives.' Any process that prepares people to participate more effectively in an activity that increases their power, control, or influence can be considered empowering (Zimmerman, 2000). As a case in point, participation in sport can be empowering because it provides individuals with resources to exercise a range of life choices. Opportunities in terms of available sports for athletes with disabilities in these three major disability sport games continued to increase. Although there were some blind spots in the development of the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games, the overall trend of opportunities available for athletes has continued to rise over the last more than 20 years and it does not seem to have slowed down. These games' performance helped to increase the opportunities for social diversity to flourish, which can be clearly seen from the perspective of infrastructure, for instance foot paths for the blind and wheelchair accessible paths are now mandatory in China. Media coverage sharply increased as a result of the medal winning and 2008 Games hosting. According Liang to (2014), figure 7.5 shows the increase in the number of articles that appeared in the *People's Daily*, the most official and influential national newspaper in China, about elite disability sport during each

Paralympic Games. Elite disability sport articles dramatically increased to 1,290 articles in 2008 from 80 articles in 2004(Jing, 2014).

Figure 7.5 Articles Increasing during Paralympic Games in *People's Daily*



(Figure cited from Liang, 2014)

Zimmerman (1995) defined empowerment outcomes as the consequences or results of empowerment processes. Fitzsimons & Fuller (2002) argued empowerment outcomes can also be divided into objective and subjective outcomes. Objective outcomes are those typically expressing behaviours. Some people use the terms 'products' or 'actual power' instead of 'objective outcomes' (e.g., Rappaport, 1987; Staples, 1990). Subjective outcomes are those that are self–perceived or attitudinal. Examples include changes in one's self–perceived sense of control, self–esteem, and how one is valued. Subjective empowerment outcomes of these three major disability games can be identified because their goals are all focused on one's self–perceived sense of control, self–esteem, and sense of being valued. If athletes are successful in their endeavours, this can increase their self–confidence.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis is threefold. The first aim is to review the historical development of elite disability sport in China. The second is to analyse relevant policies, systems and various other measures that have impacted on the development of disability sport in China. The third aim is to examine the progress and power of the three major games and to examine how athletes with disabilities empowered themselves through the games.

The thesis provides research findings and reflective discussion according to the research questions. It explains the contribution the research may make, to both subject–area knowledge and theory, and it also discusses the implications of the study and the limitations associated with it. It concludes by outlining possibilities for future research.

8.1 Discussion

One aim of this research is to explore the process of development of elite disability sport through an examination of its multiple manifestations in the dimensions of policy and performance. One of the major questions of this research is: what are the main features of the historical stages of elite disability sport in China from 1979–2012, and what policies have ensured that the State achieves success in elite disability sport?

Chinese elite disability sport emerged in China in 1983. In that year, China joined the International Paralympics Committee and promised to send a delegation to the 1984 New York Summer Paralympic Games. Since then it has been government organised and led. Following the aims of Chinese elite sport, elite disability sport has also placed

the achievement of gold medals during various competitions on the national and international stage as its top goal. The elite disability sport policy development could be drawn from two periods of time.

The first was the period before 1992. During this period elite disability sport developed without policy support due to Chinese society and government being focused on Olympic sport, and also because a disability sport specific management body was absent. The earliest national level disability sport related policy development was when the Injured and Disabled Sport Association together with mass sport department of SPCSC jointly issued the 'Notice for Developing Injured and Disabled Sports' to provincial Sport Commission in 1984, 1987 and 1990. It was the first recorded policy from the central sport administration to promote disability sport, although it mainly aimed to select athletes to compete in the national or international Paralympics Games. The policy was not focused on promoting disability sport, but on determining the Chinese delegation for the Paralympics Games. Therefore, the policy did not provide any guidance or support to develop elite disability sport in China.

Educational institutions played a major role in the development of disability sport in this period of time. In part, this was due to education legislation such as the Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China (1986), in which Article 9 provided that 'local governments at all levels should organise special education schools for the blind, deaf, dumb, intellectually disabled children and teenagers'. Another legislative push came from Regulations on the Work of College Sports which came into law in 1990. This addressed the regulations for physical education and health programmes at colleges and universities. It provided that colleges should make available appropriate sports health, therapeutic exercise and medical treatment and sports activities for

students who had physiological challenges or certain medical conditions (such as traumatic brain injury and dwarfism), so that they could improve their physical condition and health.

The second period was the transition period from 1993 to 2012. The open policy and the marketing economic resulted in rapidly social development. A new understanding of disability gradually became embedded in Chinese society through social policy development. The rapid development of disability social policies started to bring disability groups into the public's sight, and laid the foundation of a social environment for boosting disability sport. Most importantly, direct management was shifted to the CDPF, which was an institution controlled by people with disabilities but also having strong government policy support.

As a new organisation which lacked relevant experience, the CDPF simply applied the Chinese Olympic approach, which was the only available approach for quick results on competition performance at the time. The CDPF hoped the Chinese Olympic approach could help them to successfully host and perform in the FESPIC Games. In 1994, the FESPIC Games was indeed a success. Therefore, the Chinese Olympic approach became a successful model for disability sport. In 1995, another law which guided disability sport, the People's Republic of China Sports Law, came into force. It was a special law for sporting activities and aimed to develop initiatives to improve health and sporting opportunities at all skill levels.

In 2002, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council established the 'Guidelines on Further Strengthening and Improving the Work of Sports in the New Era'. This was introduced to help frame the development of sport as a part of hosting the Beijing 2008

Olympic Games and the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games. Article 13 states "pay more attention to and support the selection, training, team organisation, and competition of athletes with a disability". The push came both internally and externally, because the International Olympic Committee (IOC) required that everything must be done to ensure the success of the 2008 Paralympic Games. This requirement improved competitive sport for the disabled and furthered the ability of China to hold large disability sport events. It also helped lead to the successes of high–performance disabled athletes, and to the successful hosting of the 2008 Paralympic Games.

Another policy, the 'Guidelines of the General Office of the State Council on Further Strengthening the Disabled Sport Work' was established on May 6, 2007 and systematically addressed disability sport. It pointed out that, although China had made great progress in disability sport since 1978, it was still undeveloped. It also indicated that the Shanghai 2007 Special Olympics (Olympics for the intellectually disabled) and the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games would provide great opportunities for the disabled. The State Council believed that disability sport should be improved from the grass roots.

Another important policy is the PRC Central Committee and State Council's Guidelines on Accelerating Disability Initiatives which was established on March 28, 2008. This requires that "every place should pay close attention to sports activities for the disabled, develop athletes with a disability and support them by specific State policies".

Both sets of guidelines have had, and should continue to have a great impact on elite disability sport. Then, why has China invested so heavily in elite disability sport? How does the elite sport system and management of elite disability sport work in China?

According to Coakley (1990), society is composed of different parts and the proper operation of these parts is necessary for the smooth operation of society as a whole, and the interdependence of the parts is an important feature of functional analysis. The roles taken on by people, and the institutions and organisations of society are all interdependent. A change in any one part affects others, requiring other parts to take account of the changes, modify actions and adapt to any changes necessary. While most sociological approaches recognise the interdependence of the elements of a society, the functionalist approach tends to regard these elements of society (individuals or institutions) as having particular functions to perform.

In the functionalist theory model, individuals and institutions carry out each of these tasks in various institutions and roles that are consistent with the structures and norms of the society. Functionalist analysis assumes that social systems operate efficiently when they are organised to do four things; they are called system needs (Coakley, 1990). This study discussed the institutions and individuals needs on elite disability sport in China.

First, the institution needs are looked at from the national level. The real question is 'what are the motivations' for China being so eager to win in elite sport competitions throughout the world? In fact, sport competition is always very closely related to national glory, with an intense focus on nationalism and national image building in China. Elite disability sport is not an exception (Fan & Lu, 2012).

The nationalism embodied in elite sports was carried through by the Chinese population in the PRC. At the beginning of 1952, the Soviet ambassador in Beijing paid an official visit to the Sports Federation (Fan & Xiong, 2002) . He informed the PRC that the

Soviet Union was going to participate in the summer Olympics for the first time. He wanted to know if the PRC would also participate so that the Soviet Union would be able to construct a suitable policy towards the IOC. On 18th February, The Organisation Department of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League of China jointly established a notification entitled 'Select and Train Elite Athletes'. The notification stated:

> "International sports competitions are flourishing worldwide. International friends hope China can participate in these events. Recently, we announced that China will send a team to the Helsinki Olympics. Sport in China was poorly developed in the past. After competing at a few international sporting events in recent years, we are well aware that Chinese athletes' standard of play is very low, which does not suit China's international status. We must change this! Therefore, sport must be popularized and the standard of play must be improved in certain areas."
>
> (Select and Train Elite Athletes' notification)

Tan(2009) argued that the Helsinki Olympics saw a major transformation of the Chinese government's sport policy. Since then, sport has been bonded to China's national image building in the international arena. Elite sport was utilised as a vehicle to enhance China's international reputation, and to inspire the Chinese people's national self–confidence(Tan & Fan, 2002). In 1954, the former Prime Minister Zhou claimed at a state council meeting that "we must understand the link between sports and the nation's future."

In the 1980s, the nationalism embodied in elite sports reached a peak. Deng Xiaoping

made an ‘open door policy’ speech in February 1980, which implied not only an economic involvement with the capitalist world but also an opening to ideas and cultural forms originating in the West (Knight, 2003). As Lu & Fan argued, in an age of reform, the question of how to make China strong became the central theme of Chinese nationalism (Lu & Fan, 2013). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) noticed that elite sport, which includes elite disability sport, could enhance national self–esteem, self–confidence and national dignity (Fan, Mackay and Christensen, 2008) . Based on this strategy which fuelled both patriotism and nationalism, elite sport was set as a priority and developed rapidly (Fan & Lu, 2012).

The Chinese government believed that Chinese athletes’ excellent performances on the international sport stage could be one of the best proofs of China’s great achievements in modernisation and economic reform (Fan, 2013). China’s status and relative strength among nations became measured by the number of gold medals won at the Olympics and Paralympics. In addition, for Chinese people a win in an international game would arouse a great psychological tide of Chinese nationalism (Fan, 2005). When the Chinese women’s volleyball team won the championship in the 1984 Olympics, Chinese people treated them as national heroes and their performances were praised as expressions of Chinese national honour (Fan, 1998). Therefore, China’s sport success was regarded as a totem of national revival. The idea that winning is everything has entered the mind–set of many Chinese people (Lu & Fan, 2013).

In order to meet nationalism and national image building needs in elite disability sport, there were several important actions which laid the sole foundation to a successful performance from the management aspect in terms of origination structure, competition and athlete development, and also funding support (Fan & Lu, 2012) .

In 1993, the CDPF founded its sport department as the highest administrative body for managing national disability sport. At the same time, the sport department comprehensively managed the China Disabled Sport Association, which had been renamed in 1991 from the former China Injured and Disabled Sport Association. Its membership includes the physically disabled, the intellectually disabled, the spinal cord injured and the blind. The China Intelligence Disabled Sports Association, and the China Deaf Sport Association together with three full–time staff who are responsible for China's disability sport management from policy, planning and institutional development to organisation of specific events.

During the 1990s, the sport department played an important role in developing disability sport. From an organisation structure perspective, first, the sport department has gradually increased its staff numbers, from 3 in 1993 to 17 in 2003. Second, it developed its internal structure from only one office to 2 sub–offices (the Training Office, the Competition Office) and two professional committees (the Medical Committee and the Research Committee).

In 2003, the China Disability Sport Management Centre was established as a direct result of the future hosting and performance requirements of the 2008 Paralympic Games. The establishment of the Centre was a milestone for disability sport in China. It brought disability sport into a new period of development for several reasons. First, it has specialised departments with professional full–time staff for elite disability sport, as well as the world's biggest disability sport training campus. The China Disability Sport Management centre is the highest administrative body for managing national disability sport. Its responsibilities for elite disability sport in China are: overall management,

policy making, planning, organising social disability sport and physical rehabilitation, organising the Chinese sports delegation from selecting and training to competition for both domestic and foreign disability sport competitions, organising national and international disability sport competitions, managing the China disability sport training campus, providing professional elite disability sport technical training and assessment, guiding and coordinating with provincial disability sport organisations.

Its management structure also channels resources from Chinese Sports Ministry and China Disabled Persons' Federation into elite disability sport. Like the Chinese elite sport system, the elite disability sport training centre also extended to all provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities after 2003. Elite disability sport training centres steadily increased all over China. The provincial training centres all have full–time staff. But staff numbers are different due to the different rates of economic development in different areas in China.

One main function of the management structure is financial support. Financial support of Chinese elite disability sport has mainly consisted of funds allocated from the government. Since 1983, investment has increased sharply along with the development of elite disability sport; in 2003 a total of 100,000,000RMB per year was allocated for disability sport. Although required to provide appropriate funds for disability sport at all levels, most of the money has been spent on elite disability sport as that is the way the system tends to operates. Expenditure on Chinese elite disability sports basically has the following three aspects: daily funds, special funds and infrastructure construction funds.

During the 1990s, disability sports competition increased in China and the system gradually moved towards development and diversification. Competition in China was

then divided into different forms according to their level, such as: the Paralympic Games, the Special Olympic Games and the Deaflympic Games; national and local competitions; comprehensive and single competitions; professional and selecting competitions; adult and youth competitions, etc. At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the tournament system and the methods of awarding prizes had also been changed in the National Disabled Games system. In this period, all of the national disability sport competitions complied with the strategy of the Olympics and Paralympics.

In order to select and train talented athletes with disabilities from a young age to achieve success in international elite disability sport, as happened in the Chinese elite sport system, the CDPF also applied a similar three–level pyramid training and selecting system. Local Disabled Persons' Federations adopted various methods from which to select talented athletes with disabilities at young age. For instance, most of the cities or districts have their individual sports teams including various sports such as IPC powerlifting, sitting volleyball, table tennis and so on. These sports teams absorb the best local young talented athletes for sports performance in provincial level sports games. Every year these sports team will attend one or two training camps to prepare for the provincial level sports games. Training camps are part–time and amateur, and focus on basic sport skills acquisition rather on developing sport ability. During provincial games some young athletes will be discovered and selected for more professional training in provincial training camps. Moreover, sometimes a professional coach will also go to the district DPF to select potential athletes to join the sports training at a local or provincial level. In provincial training camps, young athletes will receive 'semi–professional' training. Some potential athletes will be selected for the provincial sports team in preparation for the National Disabled Games. In some provinces, elite athletes

even receive year round training. In the provincial sports teams, a few elite athletes who have great sports talent and who have achieved good results during elite disabled competitions will gain the chance to train in the national team. In national Paralympic teams, all the elite athletes have to focus on full–time sports training.

In brief, China's elite disability sport selection and training system takes talented young athlete from local unorganised part–time teams to the provincial team, and finally to the national team, while providing ample opportunities for competition. The above situation indicates that the China's elite disability sport selection and training system is one of the cores of the 'whole country support for the elite sport system' approach.

Therefore, it can be seen that leading on the Paralympics medal table since 2004, as well as incredible development on athlete recruitment of Special Olympics since 2002, were used to meet the institution needs of CDPF. The elite disability sport system's main functions for institution needs are nationalism and national image building, effective management, and funding support. Importantly, individuals' needs, which are the needs for sport from athletes with disabilities, were met by establishing the competition and athlete development system. The medal table success also demonstrated important cultural values to motivate individuals to achieve socially approved goals through socially accepted means, that is, an individual with a disability could become a hero, athlete and champion through elite disability sport. This shows the shifting of social understanding.

However, as Merton (1957) commented, it is probable that what is functional for society, as a whole, does not necessarily prove functional for certain people or for some

subgroups within society. The opposite is also true in so far as what is functional for an individual may not be functional for the greater society.

This study also examined the dysfunction of the elite disability sport system in China by looking into the three major games separately. The main dysfunction of the elite disability sport system in China is unbalanced development.

In the Paralympic Games, first, there is a big difference between the Paralympic Winter Games and the Paralympic Summer Games in regards to participant numbers, sports and achievements. The major cause for this circumstance is lack of government effort.

China has carefully analysed its strengths and weaknesses and divided its Paralympic sports into four categories, and only put necessary effort into those sports in which it is possible to win Paralympics medals. The institution's need for nationalism and national image building has resulted in the medal winning strategy becoming a double edged sword. It maximised resources to gain the best outcome with regard to medal winning. But the strategy also limited other sports' development.

Another major games is the Deaflympic Games. It was the earliest to emerge in China among the three major disability sport games. However, its development was the slowest. Unlike the Paralympic Games and the Special Olympic Games in China, the Deaflympic Games does not have its own National Games, but is a sub–class with very few events represented in the National Disabled Games. China also has not yet hosted the international Deaflympic Games. For each international Deaflympic Games, China has qualified only a very few athletes for the Games, which shows the development of the Deaflympic Games in China is very limited. In general, the limitations of the

Deaflympics development are caused by two main reasons. They are: the historical relationship with the Paralympics and the lack of a starting advantage.

From recent data, the CDPF, which is the disability sport management body, is trying to lead disability games into a balanced way for sustainable development. The elite disability sport system in China is evolving due to its own dysfunction. The Winter Games, the Deaflympic Games and those unfocused sports have already made progress, and even some breakthroughs, on the medal table due to the increasing of the Games' international influence and the Chinese government's new ambition and sport development strategy. The political needs focused system evolves very slowly. However, China will possibly be become a member of the leading group in these dysfunctional areas as it already has an established system and successful experiences in climbing up the medal table

The last domain focused on the relationship between athletes with disabilities and the three major disability games. In what ways have the three major elite disability sport games empowered athletes with disabilities in China?

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), empowerment theory analysis considers three levels, it explores the concept that control and participation are key elements of empowerment at the individual level, organisational level, and community level. The construct combines perceptions of control, participation with other people to achieve goals, and a critical awareness of the factors that enhance individual efforts to gain control in their life. Elite disability sport empowered athletes with disabilities in all three levels from empowering processes approach and empowering outcome approach.

According to Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), empowering processes are the means by which people, organisations, and communities gain control over conditions that obstruct them, raise a critical awareness of their environment, and involve them in decision making which affects their lives. Zimmerman and Warschausky (1998), the outcome dimension thinks results of empowering processes. They said that someone is empowered, one is meaning to outcomes. Empowerment outcomes are of primary interest because they offer a basis for learning the results of citizens' attempts to get better control in their lives and community, or of the effects of interventions outlined to empower participants. However, empowerment outcomes may differ across levels of analysis.

From both the empowering progress and empowering outcome aspects, at the individual level athletes with disabilities gained control over their conditions by participating in elite disability sport. First, elite sport provides them the meaningful values which to be heroes, athletes and champions, and by which they can make society proud. Elite sport helped athletes to build a positive understanding that they have total control of their body. It raised athletes' critical awareness of the environment that sport is their right. Second, sport offered more opportunities to people with disabilities. Disability sport policies development has increased available disability sport facilities, competitions, and sport events since the 1990s.

The Paralympics athletes and the Special Olympics athletes received strong assistance on resources. At the individual level, Paralympics athletes have the same sport system as the Olympics athletes. The Special Olympics athletes were supported by the DPF system and the education system. However, the lack of development of the Deaflympics

caused its athletes to share the same sport system as Paralympics athletes but with very little assistance, which kept them un–empowered.

At the organisational level, the CDPF which is the main elite disability managing body is both an organisation for people with disabilities and one led by them. From this point, sharing responsibilities and decision making could be met. Disability Sport policy development increased equal access to resources not only in disability sport. At the organisational level, the CDPF structured the elite system to develop athletes' sport skill.

At the community level, notably, elite disability sport is favoured by disability sport policies. At the community level, media outlets sharply increased along with the medal winning and 2008 Games hosting. According to Gu (2014), figure 6.6 shows the increasing of article numbers about elite disability sport during each Paralympic Games in the People's Daily, which is the most official and influential national newspaper in China. Elite disability sport articles dramatically increased to 1290 articles in 2008 from 80 articles in 2004.

Another point which may affects the empowering outcome is that the CDPF as the main elite disability managing body is both an organisation for people with disabilities and one led by them. It effectively networks with General Administration Sport of China, the Ministry of Education and Civil Affairs to mobilise resources in ways that further advance elite disability sport in China. Its service provision brought China to the top on the medal table. However, it also has institutional control over elite disability sport at community level. The organisations of the three games are like decorations which are owned by the CDPF, their functions as independent units are very limited, which almost certainly cannot influence policy, network with other organisations (e.g., coalitions),

and mobilise resources in ways that would further advance their missions. It is because of the Chinese disability sport system still implying the direct and centralised management. The Chinese disability sport system is a double–edged sword, on the one hand it could effectively develop its targeted games performance. On the other hand, it sacrificed or limited other uninterested games by its strong control. Under the CDPF's will which be driven by political needs, these three games as independent units are unlike disability sport as a whole. The strong government, weak associations became a resistance to allow the three games empowers its own community.

8.2 Contributions of This Research

This research has made an original and unique contribution to the study of the history of disability sport and the relationship between sport, politics and policy in the PRC. It has employed Merton's functionalism theory and Zimmerman and Warschausky's empowerment theory, to analyse the political motivations which guided elite disability sport practice in China. It built a theoretical foundation for the examination of the development of elite disability sport in China since 1976. The historical evolution of elite disability sport was shaped by state political ideologies in different social contexts and demonstrates the changing focus of disability sport in China.

This research contributes to Chinese sports studies by focusing on elite disability sport. It opens a new perspective on Chinese sports studies. In Chinese studies, disability sport is a less frequently studied topic than able–bodied sport. However, as a specific public event and one of China's largest domestic sports gatherings, the changing and developing history of disability sport is in fact a mirror of China's changing sports sector and, to a certain extent, a reflection of the changing nature of contemporary

Chinese society in term of its attitudes to people with disabilities in general and in athletes with disabilities in particular.

In this regard, the aforementioned research findings in relation to China have provided sufficient evidence to argue that taking Zimmerman and Warschausky's empowerment theory into account is necessary and useful. On the one hand, this study has illustrated the utility of empowerment theory. On the other hand, it has exemplified that empowerment theory can be applied not only to the West, but also in China to multiple dimensions in elite disability sport. However, the consistent aim has remained the return of China to national greatness. The spotlight on elite disability sport uncovers the reasons why sport in China has been so close to politics, and how disability sport has contributed to Chinese political and cultural integration and cohesion. This research is only a starting point to the critical examination of the relationship between disability sport and politics in China. The complexity of this issue requires further research and theoretical analysis

8.3 Research Limitation and Future Research

Despite the research having made a significant contribution to knowledge, it has to be recognised that there were limitations not only on the research carried out but also for any future work that might occur concerning the subject matter.

Initially, it was intended to undertake more interviews with officials of the government. However, due to various circumstances I was unable to interview more officials who would provide me with more information on disability sport policy making process in China.

The research focuses on the elite disabled sport in the summer sport area. It could explore the winter sport area in a future study. Furthermore, a balanced development approach of the three major disability games in China and how it could potentially further empower people with disabilities will be discussed in future.

The mass disability sport in Chinese society is an important area to explore in future research as well. Although the Chinese government and Chinese people currently still regard winning gold medals at international sport competitions as the priority, ordinary people with disability begin to gain access and opportunities to participate in a range of sports, which, in turn, has had a significant impact on their physical and social life in Chinese society. There should be a similar study on the development of disability sport at the grassroots level. This is my ambition in the near future.

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Appendixes

Interviewee List

No.	Category	Province	Sports	Level
1	Administrator	Hebei	Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics	Provincial
2	Administrator	Hebei	Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics	Provincial/National
3	Athlete	Hebei	Paralympics Table tennis	World Medallist
4	Athlete	Hebei	Paralympics Judo (for blind)	National Medallist
5	Athlete	Hebei	Paralympics Swimming (for blind)	City
6	Athlete	Hebei	Deaflympics Swimming	City
7	Coach	Hebei	Paralympics, Special Olympics	Provincial
8	Coach	Hebei	Special Olympics	City
9	Scholar	Hebei	Special Olympics	N/A
10	Administrator	Sichuan	Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics	Provincial/National
11	Administrator	Sichuan	Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics	City
12	Athlete	Sichuan	Paralympics Shooting	World Medallist
13	Athlete	Sichuan	Paralympics Swimming	National Medallist
14	Athlete	Sichuan	Paralympics Boccia	National Medallist
15	Athlete	Sichuan	Badminton	National Medallist
16	Coach	Sichuan	Paralympics, Deaflympics	National Team
17	Coach	Sichuan	Special Olympics	National Team
18	Scholar	Sichuan	Deaflympics, Special Olympics	N/A
19	Administrator	Yunnan	Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics	City
20	Administrator	Yunnan	Paralympics, Deaflympics, Special Olympics	District
21	Athlete	Yunnan	Paralympics Swimming	World Champion
22	Athlete	Yunnan	Paralympics Athletics	Provincial Medallist
23	Athlete	Yunnan	Deaflympics Athletics	District Champion
24	Athlete	Yunnan	Deaflympics Swimming	Provincial Medallist
25	Coach	Yunnan	Paralympics Swimming	National Team
26	Coach	Yunnan	Special Olympics	City
27	Scholar	Yunnan	Paralympics	N/A

Interview Schedule

Phases	Province	Time	Interviews	Documentary Data Visits
1	Hebei	04/07 – 28/08 2011	Administrators, athletes, coaches and scholar	Hebei Province Disabled Persons' Foundation, Shijiazhuang City Disabled Persons' Foundation Chang'an District Disabled Persons' Foundation Hebei Sports University Shijiazhuang Special Needs School
2	Sichuan	05/09 – 30/10 2011	Administrators, athletes, coaches and scholar	Sichuan Province Disabled Persons' Foundation Chengdu City Disabled Persons' Foundation Qinyang District Disabled Persons' Foundation Ximapeng Special Needs School Chengdu Sports University
3	Yunnan	07/11 – 30/12 2011	Administrators, athletes, coaches and scholar	Yunnan Province Disabled Persons' Foundation Kunming City Disabled Persons' Foundation Wuhua District Disabled Persons' Foundation Kunming Special Needs School Yunnan Normal University