Research on the Development Path of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns under the Background of New Urbanization

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Abstract. The proposal of construction of small towns with sports and leisure characteristics is an important measure to promote the integration of urban and rural development and implementation of the "mass national fitness" strategy. Sports and leisure characteristic towns are results of the interaction between new urbanization and sports industry. They play an irreplaceable role in promoting the structural reform of the supply of sports industry, the integration of urban and rural areas, inheritance and innovation of traditional sports culture, and meeting the sports needs of urban and rural residents. Based on the background of new urbanization construction, this paper points out the existing problems of the first 96 small towns with sports and leisure characteristics announced by the State General Administration of Sports, and analyzes their reasons. Finally, it comes to the development concept and optimization path suitable for small towns with sports and leisure characteristics in China.

Keywords: New Urbanization; sports and leisure; characteristic towns.

1. Introduction

Sports and leisure characteristic towns are neonatal babies under the background of new urbanization of China. With the announcement of ‘The Notice on Promoting the Construction of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns’ published by the State Administration of Sports, the construction of sports and leisure characteristic towns appeared in public and became an important measure through the development process of Chinese sporting field. THE NOTICE defines the importance, basic principles and main tasks of building sports and leisure characteristic towns and sets a goal that some sports and leisure characteristic towns which are helpful for environment and human health should be built with distinguish sports characteristics, full of local culture, industrial agglomeration by 2020. To the local government, every province should plan their unique towns based on their present advantages of resources, environmental and industrial characteristic. After relevant supporting policies are launched, a wave of building sports and leisure characteristic towns will soon spread over the whole country.

2. Connotation and Significance of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns

2.1 Interpretation of the Connotation of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns

‘The Notice on Promoting the Construction of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns’ published by the State Administration of Sports laid out a clear explanation. It put forward that sports and leisure characteristic towns can be defined as areas, mass fitness development platforms or sports industry base with sports, health, tourism, training or sports events. They are designed with the theme of sports and leisure and full of sports cultural and industrial base [1]. It also pointed out that these towns should be equipped with distinctive sports and leisure formats and atmosphere and high effective to use endowment resources in order to integrate with other relevant industries and poverty alleviation.

Relevant scholars’ opinions varies in the definitions of sports and leisure characteristic towns. Zhang Lei insists on that these towns should be divided into characteristic industry dominated by sports and leisure industry. It is a kind of space area which integrates with tourism, health preservation, traditional culture, education and training, sports events, Internet data and other related industries in...
order to promote the development of mass national fitness project and the extension of sports industry chain [2]. Li Lehu, Gao Kuiting and Huang Xiaoli believe that the essence of these towns lies in "unique sports culture". Without cultural factors, sports and leisure characteristic towns will lose their "soul"[3].

Yang Yiran and Shen Keyin put more emphasis on the sports fitness and leisure functions of small towns. They think that small towns are the new carriers for the development of sports fitness and leisure industry [4]. At the same time, they accelerate the upgrading and transformation of sports, fitness and leisure industries. From different perspectives, each scholar interprets the connotation of sports and leisure Characteristic Towns differently. From these opinions, author gets the conclusion that sports and leisure characteristic towns are a new type of space area and sports industrial development platform which integrates sports fitness, entertainment and leisure, health preservation and rehabilitation, cultural inheritance, training, sports events and other functions based on its own theme.

2.2 Significance of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns

2.2.1 Promoting Supply-side Structural Reform of Sports Industry

The supply-side structural reform of sports industry aims to improve the quality of supply, improve the adaptability and flexibility of supply structure to the change of demand and optimize the allocation of sports resources [5]. Firstly, small towns should pay attention to their characteristics and enrich the content and value of sports industry from the supply side. Secondly, small towns can effectively integrate more local sports events and share information with related industries which will contribute to promote regional economic development. Thirdly, the construction of small towns can promote the development of sports service industry and increase its proportion in the sports industry through sports tourism, health preservation, sports products, leisure and entertainment in order to increase the proportion of sports services in the sports industry.

2.2.2 Providing Effective Ways for the Construction of Urban-Rural Integration

New urbanization emphasizes the comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development of urban politics, economy, society, culture and ecology. At present, there are still some problems in our country, such as lack of rural sports infrastructure, inadequate supply of sports public services and low participation in sports. It is urgent to improve the unequal situation of urban and rural sports depending on the advantages of regional location, characteristic culture and ecological environment. Sports and leisure characteristic towns have built a bridge between cities and villages because of their geographical advantages, which has realized the integration of lives, production and ecology of urban and rural people. These towns embody the basic connotation of the new four-in-one community, which leads to the construction of regional economy, society, environment and industry. Sports and leisure characteristic towns are helpful for industry integration, which plays an important role in improving social and economic structure and alleviating social contradictions.

2.2.3 Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Sports Culture

Sports and leisure characteristic towns should take local sports culture characteristics into consideration to highlight the traditional sports culture [6].

For example, Golf Town in Ireland was founded with golf culture as its construction theme, relying on golf culture to vigorously carry out other sports and characteristic sports training; Davos Ice Town in Switzerland is a famous palace to carry out thematic events and activities around ice and snow sports; Songhuang Sports Town in China, located in DengFeng which is famous as "Kung Fu Capital" and "hometown of Wushu", vigorously excavates the culture of Wushu and inherits the spirit of Wushu. The inheritance and development of traditional sports culture is one of the indispensable functions of small towns. We should dig deeply into the connotation of traditional sports culture and internalize it into the core competitiveness of the sustainable development.
2.2.4 To Meet the Demands of Urban and Rural Residents for Sports

In October 2016, the State Council issued the Outline of the "Healthy China 2030" Planning, which clearly put forward the positive actions to promote the development of fitness and leisure sports industry [7]. At first, due to its geographical location, it can effectively solve the problem of imperfect sports facilities in rural areas to promote the equalization of urban and rural sports resources. Secondly, the comprehensive quality of small towns provides a broader platform for mass national fitness and the multi-functional orientation satisfies sports needs of different people. Finally, sports and leisure Characteristic Towns take characteristic sports culture as their core conforming to the people's pursuit and yearning for a better life.

3. Development of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns

3.1 Policy Environment for the Development of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns

The concept of sports and leisure characteristic towns was firstly proposed by the governor of Zhejiang Province in October 2014[8]. In July 2016, ‘Notice on the Work of Characteristic Towns’ made is clear that about 1000 characteristic towns will be cultivated by 2020, which indicated that the construction of sports and leisure characteristic towns in China will be formally launched. Subsequently, Greater financial support was given to the construction of small towns to promote the close link between financial poverty alleviation and industrial poverty alleviation. In May 2017, ‘Notice on Promoting the Construction of Characteristic Towns with Sports and Leisure’ integrates sports elements and enriches the connotation of Characteristic Towns on the basis of the development of Characteristic Towns. In August 2018, ‘Notice on the Establishment of High-Quality Development Mechanisms for Characteristic Towns and Characteristic Cities’ called for the construction of towns with high quality and sustainable development based on the stage of industrialization and urbanization which took different industries, different geographical locations and different modes of operation into consideration during the construction.

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<th>Numble</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jul.2016</td>
<td>Notice on Developing Characteristic Towns</td>
<td>Aim to cultivate 1000 characteristic towns by 2020, which are distinguished and full of energy. These towns are special for its leisure tourism, modern cultivation, education, science and technology, traditional culture, beauty and livability in order to the improvement of the construction level and development quality of small towns throughout the country.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>May.2017</td>
<td>Notice on Promoting the Construction of Characteristic Towns with Sports and Leisure</td>
<td>By 2020, we will build a number of small towns with distinctive sports characteristics, strong cultural flavor, industrial agglomeration, good ecological environment and sports and leisure characteristics that benefit people's health.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Aug.2017</td>
<td>The first list of Chinese sports characteristic towns was published.</td>
<td>The first 96 pilot projects of sports and leisure characteristic towns.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dec.2017</td>
<td>Some Opinions on Standardizing the Construction of Characteristic Small Towns and Characteristic Small Cities</td>
<td>Each region should take into account the characteristics of small towns and small cities, absorb the scale of employment and permanent residents, pay attention to introducing central enterprises, state-owned enterprises and large and medium-sized private enterprises as the main investment operators, try to avoid the construction of government debt and increase the debt burden.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mar.2018</td>
<td>Guidance on Promoting Development of Global Tourism</td>
<td>Promote the integration and development of tourism with science and technology, education, culture, health and sports, vigorously develop sports tourism such as snow, mountain, water, automobiles and motorcycles, Qigong and health preservation.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Aug.2018</td>
<td>Notice on the Establishment of High Quality Development Mechanisms for Characteristic Towns and Characteristic Cities</td>
<td>On the basis of industrialization and urbanization, we should create unique industrial form, convenient and perfect facilities and services, beautiful and harmonious environment, profound traditional culture and streamlined and efficient institutional mechanism. According to different industry categories, explore advanced modern service cases.</td>
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### 3.2 Development Scales of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns in China

#### 3.2.1 Types of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns in China

Sports and leisure characteristic towns are the combination of ecological environment advantages and human characteristics. According to the development model of "sports plus", this paper divides sports and leisure towns into four types: industrial type, leisure type, recreational type and sports type.

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
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<td>Leisure</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>On the premise of proper characteristic ecological environment and special geographical location, with sports events with high participation, low difficulty, strong adaptability and wide participation scope as the core, this town aims to be functional project gathering area with the purpose of pleasing body and mind, experiencing sports items, feeling beautiful ecological environment and leisure and entertainment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>With the core of creating a specialized event or a large-scale comprehensive event, the town extends some related industry of event service and a series of interesting and high-quality events for all ages. By means of commercial operation and cooperation with event broadcasting and sports brands, it aims to attract the public and enhancing brand influence, and finally build a sports and leisure characteristics town mainly about sports events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Based on beautiful ecological environment, the theme of the town is healthy lifestyle, in other word, the town targets on health preservation and sub-health population, with health preservation, physical fitness and mental cultivation as its core. Sports projects play an important role of carrier, and the town becomes professional place for sports rehabilitation, health preservation and other purposes under the guidance of professional technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Based on the production and manufacture of sports products, continuous radiation of surrounding related industries will bring economic benefits. Horizontal radiation includes sports brand, Internet plus, finance, insurance and other industries. While longitudinal radiation includes sports culture, sports training, tourism, entertainment and other industries. With the characteristic industries in the sports field adapted to local conditions as the core, we will continue to expand and drive related industries to form a complete industrial chain and development model of supporting facilities.</td>
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#### 3.2.2 Current Situation of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns in China

The first 96 pilot projects published by the State General Administration of Sports covers 27 provinces and 4 municipalities directly under the Central Government. Considering their regional distribution, coastal areas are more than inland areas. At the same time, southern areas are more than northern areas. After doing a lot of research, it is easy to find that most of the sports and leisure characteristic towns were transferred from the towns once relying on traditional industries, such as tourism, culture, education and agriculture. And now they become multi-functional sports and leisure characteristic towns dependent on geographical location and ecological environment advantages.

The development mode and function orientation of sports and leisure characteristics towns have their own features. For example, Huangshan International Outdoor Sports Base and KeQiao Cool Play Town in Shaoxing developed around the mode of "Sports + Tourism", which combined the three elements of sports industry, culture and tourism organically and devoted themselves to creating a new concept of sports tourism; Beijing International Football Ice Town, Chengdu Jintang Internet + Football Town, Beijing Fengtai Football Town focus on "Sports + Internet, Sports + Advantage Events". By developing special APP, they all realized online booking venues and matches, which formed large-scale market resources; Tonglu Rhine International Football Town and Hengda European Football Town take "Sports + Education" as their theme mode, as well as the cultivation of characteristic sports items as the main function. Through relying on various sports schools and training bases, they carry out project training to improve the internationalization degree of them; Songhuang Sports Town, Qingyuan Bicycle Theme sports and leisure characteristic towns aims at "sports + culture". With the connotation of mass culture, it realizes the organic integration of tourism, sports and cultural industries; Chenzhou Nanling Eco-city, Qingdao West Coast Mountain sports and leisure characteristic town set their theme as "sports + ecological environment". And they succeed...
creating a highly reputable and attractive sports and leisure characteristic town depending on ecological resources; Haining Marathon Town takes "Fashion Sports Items and Famous Scenic Spots" as its highlight and combines the features of Qiantang Tidal View Scenic Spot to develop marathon sport leisure tourism; Moganshan "Nude Heart" Sports Town in Huzhou and Tianjing Lake Electronic Sports Town in Taicang take "Sports + Industry" as the breakthrough point to create the sports and leisure characteristics town with integration of industry, culture, tourism and community; Pinghu Jiulongshan Aeronautical Sports Town takes sports health as its theme, and creates the development mode of "sports + health care".

4. Difficulties through the Development of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns in China under the Background of New Urbanization

4.1 Ecological Dilemma—Destruction and Threat

Construction of sports and leisure characteristic towns will have a certain impact on the regional ecological environment. The site of small towns is generally located around towns. The construction of small towns is bound to transform and process the ecological environment. Secondly, leisure sports will cause damage to the ecological environment in the process of experience. For example, water sports projects such as motorboats will increase the amount of gasoline emissions and make pollution; mountain sports such as automobile race and motorcycle race will consume a lot of fuel, increase exhaust emissions and pollute the air; artificial snow will destroy vegetation and damage the natural environment [9]. Finally, when the town is put into use, the gathering of tourists will inevitably bring garbage and pollution to the town, which brings difficulties to the resource and environmental protection.

4.2 Industrial Dilemma—Fuzzy Location and Homogeneity

Firstly, during the research on the first 96 pilot projects of sports and leisure characteristics towns, it is easy to find that there were 59 towns with sports and leisure characteristics, accounting for 61.5% of the total. The phenomenon of homogeneity was significant and lacked prominent leading functions. Secondly, most of sports and leisure characteristics towns set "tourism industry" as the leading industry instead of "sports industry". Finally, the integration between sports industry and its related industries is low. There is an unbalanced phenomenon in the industrial investment structure.

4.3 Cultural Dilemma—Inheritance and Innovation

Firstly, the culture of sports and leisure characteristics towns has been imitated. Diffidence in local sports culture is the cause of inferiority in regional culture, which leads to blind cultural imitation. The construction of small towns loses their local cultural connotation and falls into the crude imitation circle.

Secondly, the culture of sport and leisure characteristics towns looks same and lack of cultural connotation. The lack of creativity of cultural industry leads to the loss of the essence of towns and the function of cultural reengineering. Sports and leisure characteristics towns should become a renewable system for development of national culture.

Finally, the culture of sports and leisure characteristics towns seems to be hollow. The disconnection between traditional sports culture and society hinders the inheritance of traditional sports and its items[10].

4.4 Spatial Distribution Dilemma—Chaos and Modeling

Although there are differences in facilities, function orientation, industrial structure and other aspects between different sports and leisure characteristics towns, there are some common problems in their spatial distribution.
Firstly, space planning is unreasonable, which mainly embodies in uneven structure of land use and the unequal facilities of stadium and supporting sports. There should be some relatively different constructions between functional and auxiliary stadiums, which reflects in supporting entertainment facilities, catering, accommodation and other facilities.

Secondly, the dispersing stadiums, chaotic roads and sports facilities are the main problems in its spatial distribution [11]. As a giant sports complex, the rationality of spatial planning at the beginning of construction is an important basis for the sustainable development of these towns emerging industries.

5. Path Choice of Development of Sports and Leisure Characteristic Towns in China under the Background of New Urbanization

5.1 Attaching Importance to the Construction of Ecological Civilization and Reasonably Developing Town Resources

Destruction of ecological resources and demographic dividends used to be a common way to pursue for the rapid development of the national economy. But today we should follow the five development concepts of "innovation, coordination, green, open and sharing". The construction of sport and leisure characteristics towns must adhere to the concept of ecological and environmental protection, and absolutely not pursue the economic development at the expense of ecological environment[12].

Firstly, from the perspective of developers, the ecological environment assessment and regional facility planning in the early stage of town construction, as well as the following sustainable development, should take the protection of ecological environment as the premise, according to the natural environment and resource elements of the town. Strict management and supervision mechanism should be formulated to ensure the protection, safety and sustainable development of the ecological environment of sports and leisure characteristic towns.

Secondly, from the perspective of national policy, we should speed up the improvement and formulation of relevant laws, regulations and management systems, as well as specific compensation measures for the ecological environment of small towns.

Finally, from the perspective of audience groups, we should cultivate people's awareness of ecological environmental protection. Firstly, we can publicize the ecological environment of these towns, so a conscious awareness of protection can be formed after understanding the beautiful ecological environment. Secondly, some slogans and slogans can be set up in the park to influence the public's awareness of environmental protection imperceptibly. Thirdly, strengthen the management and supervision mechanism, and conduct punishment for serious damage to the ecological environment.

5.2 Constructing "Sports +" Model to Realize Industrial Integration and Linkage

A sports and leisure characteristic town is an experiential town with sports, leisure, fitness, health, entertainment and other functions.

Firstly, the competitiveness of small towns can be enhanced by highlighting the theme of small towns, establishing the leading function of small towns, carrying out special construction and linking the development of surrounding related industries.

Secondly, construction of a variety of modes such as "sports + tourism + health culture + entertainment + sports events + internet" helps implant sports IP resources and seize high-quality intellectual property resources, which will lead to the coordinated development of sports industry leading and radiating surrounding industries.

Finally, through multi-factor integration, multi-format aggregation and multi-function integration[13], the brand effect of sports and leisure towns will be created so that the overall development of small towns can be driven by characteristic industrial clusters. Form a virtuous cycle model from brand building to the introduction of related industries and finally to brand development.
5.3 Focusing on Traditional Culture and Highlighting the Theme Characteristics of Small Towns

Culture is the spiritual pillar of sustainable development of sports and leisure characteristics towns. Without the support of sports-featured culture, small towns will lack vitality and creativity.

Firstly, these towns should be built based on national traditional sports culture. Find out and dig the unique source of local national culture, and integrate them into the construction of sports events, sports events, stadiums and facilities.

Secondly, enhance the innovative ability of sports culture. Sports and leisure characteristic towns should attract foreign culture by local traditional culture. Absorbing the advantages of foreign and local culture helps form reconstruction of regional characteristic sports culture system.

Thirdly, promote the integration of tradition and modern culture. Based on the traditional sports culture and modern living style, we should construct the content and form of sports events which are suitable for the participation of modern people.

Finally, strengthen the supervision mechanism of sports culture. Firstly, establish a perfect mechanism for declaration and examination to examine the theme and connotation of sports culture. Secondly, set up the evaluation mechanism of sports characteristics culture to avoid the derivation of sports culture products with low value. Thirdly, build the inspection mechanism of sports characteristic culture to avoid the phenomenon of "hanging sheep's head and selling dog's meat" and ensure that sports characteristic culture is fully embodied.

5.4 Relying on the Foundation of Leading Industries to Promote the Construction of Urban-Rural Integration

Firstly, as the leading industry, sports industry will promote the employment of rural people. Sports and leisure characteristic towns includes a wide range of industries, which cultivates rural people’s employment skills and provides them with proper jobs.

Secondly, alleviate the inequality of public sports services in urban and rural areas effectively, including sports facilities, sports needs, sports ability training and other aspects.

Thirdly, form the interactive integration of rural and urban areas through sports industry. As a bridge, sports industry builds a link between urban and rural areas to form interactive and integrated development, which provides more possibilities for sports and relevant industries. One of the important goals of sports and leisure characteristics towns is to build the organic integration of sports industry and urbanization, which is an effective way of construction of urban-rural integration.

References


