SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SPORTS: HISTORICAL INFLUENCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHINESE SPORTS VALUES

Liu Xing[1], Gong Zhengwei[2]
[1]*School of Economics and Management, Shanghai University of Sport, Shanghai, China*
[2]*School of Marxism, Shanghai University of Sport, Shanghai, China*

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra19017
DOI No: 10.36713/epra19017

ABSTRACT
Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism theorizes the Protestant ethic, providing a foundation for exploring the formation of Protestant ethics through the Reformation and how it shaped modern sportsmanship. This study discusses the potential impact of Protestant ethics on China's sports modernization and suggests how Chinese sports development can draw upon Protestant values to enhance sportsmanship and cultural growth. Finally, it proposes a distinctive sports ethics with Chinese characteristics adapted to China's current context.

KEYWORDS: *Protestant Ethic, Modern Sports Development, Sports Ethics, Cultural Values*

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern sports, as a significant product of social evolution, trace their origins and development to Europe, particularly during the critical period from the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution not only marked the maturity of modern sports but also served as a pivotal turning point in its progression (Li & Yang, 2015). The growth of modern sports owes much to the material base created by the dissolution of Western society's agrarian economy and the rise of a market economy, alongside the social foundation built by industrialization. The intellectual foundation of sports, however, is equally significant. The Western Renaissance liberated individuals from ecclesiastical constraints on thought, prompting a shift in recognizing self-worth and physical health, transforming spiritual affirmation of sports value into a tangible demand for sports. Overman (1997), from the perspective of the relationship between Protestant ethics and the spirit of modern sports, argues that religion and modern sports functions progressively aligned, promoting development through self-discipline, humanistic growth, social responsibility, standards of competition, success, and morality. This perspective may explain why modern sports emerged in the West rather than Eastern societies (Weber, 2010). This article, based on Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, aims to explore the origins, development, and alienation of modern sports from a religious ethical-cultural perspective, providing a reference for the modernization of Chinese sports.

2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF BODILY VIEWS UNDER THE PROTESTANT ETHIC

The Protestant Reformation catalyzed a shift in Western cultural values, particularly emphasizing discipline and purpose in daily life. This cultural transformation redefined physical activity, aligning it with self-discipline and moral integrity, thus creating fertile ground for the structured development of modern sports. By promoting controlled, meaningful bodily engagement, Protestant ethics contributed to a growing recognition of sports as a valuable social and moral pursuit.

2.1 Historical Background and Theoretical Foundation of the Protestant Reformation and the Formation of Protestant Ethics

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, especially marked by Martin Luther's publication of *Ninety-Five Theses*, signified the initial formation of Protestant ethics. This theory, further developed by John Calvin, had a profound influence on the spirit of modern sports. Known as the Dark Ages, medieval Europe was characterized by economic stagnation and frequent wars under feudalism, with the Catholic Pope controlling national powers and imposing strict mental restraints on people, which hindered Europe's development. However, as humanism and the Renaissance emerged, a shift occurred in people's pursuit of values. Many Catholic believers began to question traditional faith, exemplified by Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517, which marked the beginning of the Reformation. Calvin subsequently became the second-generation leader of the Reformation, which lasted until 1648.

SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

The concept of "Protestant ethics", as proposed by Max Weber in his seminal work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, argues that spiritual and cultural factors significantly drive socioeconomic development. Weber explored the relationship between Protestant ethics and the underlying psychological drive behind capitalist growth, or what he termed the "capitalist spirit". He concluded that the core doctrine of the Protestant ethic lies in the concept of "calling", derived from Luther's translation of the term "calling" in the Bible to the German "Beruf" (profession), implying that secular occupations represent a life mission assigned by God. The asceticism rooted in the "calling" concept became one of the defining elements of modern capitalist spirit and, by extension, of modern civilization. Furthermore, Weber believed that Calvinist predestination was an essential foundation of Protestant ethics, where salvation was predetermined and unaffected by worldly deeds. Calvinists believed that earthly actions could demonstrate salvation, thereby attributing profound meaning to secular life and rationalizing all worldly activities as acts glorifying God (Overman, 2011).

The Protestant ethic shaped by the Reformation led the majority of the Western population to actively participate in worldly affairs and diligently engage in professional labor while exhibiting frugality, rejecting all forms of hedonistic consumption. Wealth accumulation through hard work and frugality was seen as morally unassailable, symbolizing divine grace, while indulgence was viewed as sinful. Consequently, the ethics of conviction and responsibility intertwined within Protestant ethics. This rationalization does not imply a mere calm temperament or the suppression of emotions as commonly interpreted. Instead, the rationalization formed by the Reformation established an orderly cause-and-effect relationship between means and ends, where both means and goals were predictably aligned. According to Weber, Protestant ethics, by ascribing moral significance to secular activities, paved the "path of institutional and cultural confidence" for capitalism. Hence, "profit is the primary social responsibility", with no need for shame or guilt; even the act of making money became a noble pursuit (Overman, 2011). This undoubtedly fostered the emergence and development of the capitalist spirit, whose economic rationalism ultimately constituted the cultural foundation of capitalism. The values of Protestant asceticism, rationalization, goal orientation, self-realization, individualism, professional ethics, and time discipline collectively laid the groundwork for capitalist logic. Under this cultural influence of values and rational spirit, societal views on the body underwent significant transformation, thereby providing cultural support for the formation and development of modern sports (Overman, 2011).

2.2 Changes in Bodily Views under the Protestant Ethic

Early Greek culture celebrated the human body, yet around the 6th century BCE, Greek philosophy introduced a dualistic tendency, elevating the soul and denigrating the body. Plato, as the architect of the body-soul dichotomy in Greek thought, viewed bodily desires and needs as the sources of worldly suffering and sin. This perspective became mainstream in medieval Christian orthodoxy, leading to the elimination of physical education from church schools and stifling the budding interest in public sports (Liu & Wang, 2018). The Reformation challenged the Catholic doctrine of soul-body dualism, introducing a new concept of "unity of soul and body". This perspective not only contested medieval asceticism but also theoretically supported the emergence of modern sports. Under the Protestant ethic, the body was viewed as a divine gift, and thus, maintaining physical health was seen as a duty to God. This shift led to bodily activities being accepted as legitimate within the church, encouraging exploration of physical potential and abilities.

Consequently, with the Reformation's revival of this holistic view of life inherited from ancient Greece, a humanistic sports ethic gradually developed in Europe, emphasizing the ontological significance of physical movement. This transformation fostered a view of sports as an essential part of secular life and provided room for a sports philosophy centered on human nature. Both the Renaissance and the Reformation affirmed the positive role of sports in cultivating the natural individuality of human beings, leading to an evolving sports ideal. Compared with the Renaissance, the Reformation placed even greater emphasis on the status and value of the body, a view that held considerable influence within Christianity itself. Martin Luther stated, "Only a healthy body can serve religion; maintaining physical health is the duty of every Christian", thus affirming the positive role of both the body and sports in his educational philosophy. He argued that the soul and body were not contradictory; rather, he noted that a strong body contributed to achieving religious ideals and that physical fitness was a responsibility of every Christian (Ci & Zhang, 2015). God requires His followers to possess not only a pure mind but also a healthy body. The Reformation's expression of this humanistic view on body and soul broke through ascetic barriers, leading Christianity to recognize the equal status of body and soul and paving the way for the rise of modern sports in Western culture.

3. THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN SPORTS: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THE FORMATION OF MODERN TRANSFORMATIONS

Protestant ethics not only facilitated organized sports but also instilled a new cultural understanding of competition as a moral endeavor. The shift from unstructured play to rule-based sports echoed Protestant values of accountability and ethical purpose. This perspective allowed sports to become a space for character development, where fairness and community-minded success were celebrated as reflections of a disciplined, purpose-driven life.

SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

3.1 The Formation of Modern Sports and New Forms under the Influence of Protestant Ethics

Against the backdrop of the Reformation, changes in bodily views influenced by Protestant ethics helped shape modern sports, particularly in cultivating the spirit of competitive sports. The merging of Protestant values with sports ethics laid a strong ideological foundation for the development of modern sports. For instance, Martin Luther opposed asceticism, emphasizing the role of competitive sports in social reform and advocating activities such as fencing, running, wrestling, and dancing as alternatives to drinking, prostitution, and gambling. Luther understood that the rules of competitive sports fostered knowledge of social law and public morality, thereby promoting sports development. Guided by Protestant ethical principles, the integration of personal career and religious faith became a societal norm, with people viewing their career successes and failures as manifestations of divine will, motivating them to strive actively, remain resilient, and persevere until success. This mindset provided a solid ideological and theoretical foundation for various sports activities and competitive sports, transforming them into a spirit of competition. Positive elements within Protestant ethics, such as honesty, integrity, justice, concern for public welfare, opposition to egocentrism, and resistance to the worship of wealth, aligned with the ethical demands of sports, creating a moral foundation for the growth of modern sports. These ethical beliefs not only advanced the development of modern sports, especially competitive sports, but also established a theoretical framework for the moral norms of athletic activities.

Globally, the origins of modern sports are generally recognized to have emerged in the late 19th century, with the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens, Greece, in 1896, marking the beginning of modern sports formation and development. In Britain, an essential characteristic of modern sports was the mid-19th-century transition of certain sports activities in public schools from unregulated pastimes into structured, codified games, with Christianity playing a key role. In 1824, under the decision of Thomas Arnold, students at Rugby School were allowed to participate in rugby activities during breaks, with each dormitory forming its own rugby team. Through Arnold's work at Rugby School, and under the influence of writers such as Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, a close relationship between sports and religion emerged in Victorian Britain, with long-standing religious values permeating both grassroots and elite-level sports initiatives. Broader social conditions and contexts, such as the middle and upper classes' concern for the habits and recreational activities of the industrial working class, fostered this connection. The church's sports regulations extended beyond forming football teams or organizing recreational activities to include more complex structures. For instance, the formal establishment of clubs for chess, billiards, tennis, and cycling, as well as clubs specifically for women such as those for gymnastics, table tennis, and hockey, were promoted (Parker, 2012). While the Olympics represented modern sports with a Greek religious heritage, most modern sports originated in medieval and early modern Western societies and had strong ties to Christianity (Fang, 2019). By 1850, Protestantism in Britain began to embrace sports as a legitimate and comprehensive lifestyle.

The Protestant ethic's rational approach to life, shaping capitalist work ethics that promote wealth accumulation through thrift, influenced modern sports to pursue record-setting, precision, and continual improvement (Guttmann, 2012). American cultural anthropologist Allen Guttmann provided a comprehensive analysis of modern sports characteristics, identifying seven elements: secularism, equal competition opportunities and conditions, role specialization, rationalization, bureaucratic organization, quantification, and record pursuit. Each characteristic is thus defined (Guttmann, 2012). Consequently, early American sports values emphasized the importance of victory, viewing sports as rational, goal-oriented activities infused with work principles and a noble moral purpose. American sports, based on the leisurely pursuits of the British upper class, could develop freely without authoritarian, economic, or cultural restrictions. However, during the Progressive Era, Puritan moral values returned, with institutional control applied to recreational activities to guide them by Victorian standards, including professional ethics and the self-interest of commercial elites.

As capitalism took hold, external, irrational, and faith-based elements lost relevance. In a market-driven economy, individuals pursued wealth not out of religious ethics but due to "full adaptation to this system". The "calling" concept shifted to economic motives, making capitalism a self-sustaining system. Over time, religion waned, secularization surged, and utilitarianism supplanted religious foundations, forming today's capitalism. Without spiritual guidance, Western sports faced the rise of materialism, with the idealistic pursuit of the Olympic movement continually challenged by commercialization and moral decline (Fang, 2019). Amateurism yielded to professional and commercial sports. Ultimately, science, technology, scientific management tools, and capitalist spirit were fully integrated into American sports, with consumerism, profit-seeking, and sports forming an inseparable network. Alcohol advertisers and their marketing methods exemplify this, as sports' scientific, commercial, and professional advancements since the 1960s have significantly contributed to the decline of moral values within sports, with the purposefulness and rationalization of American sports impacting sports culture ambiguously.

Modern sports are the "offspring" of the capitalist production mode and human nature. The capitalist production mode inherently involves a social division of labor, which Marx referred to as "alienated labor", making modern sports the inevitable product of this irreconcilable contradiction (Wen, 2006). In this way, modern sports represent the positive negation of capitalism's shortcomings, complementing each other and flourishing together. During the industrial era, American workers experienced a disconnect between

SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

work and fulfillment; unable to find spiritual value in factory labor, they redirected their desire for physical experience to sports. American companies capitalized on this trend by sponsoring semi-professional sports leagues closely aligned with their business interests. Sports gradually became a mimicry of labor, evolving into a marketing tool within the capitalist machine. To offer a romanticized solution for modern sports, some movements abroad advocated restoring games and playful sports, suggesting that sports should prioritize enjoyment as both means and end, moving away from competition for excellence and seeking an appreciation for human limits.

3.2 The Protestant Christian Approach to Sports: Preservation and Rejection within Protestant Bodily Views

The Reformation not only theoretically constrained sports but also practically shaped its development, while sports, in turn, influenced religious self-adjustment and adaptation. Particularly in Protestant Christianity, sports were regarded as a means of physical and spiritual cultivation. The Catholic view of the body exhibited theoretical and practical contradictions, enhancing its adaptability to the secular world and its self-regulation, with Protestantism being the most representative of this adaptation. As a major denomination in Europe, Protestantism split from Catholicism and carried forward the Lutheran affirmation of bodily value. During the medieval period, the British had generally poor physical conditions, high mortality rates, and lacked masculinity, suffering from low immunity and poor hygiene habits. Under the bodily view encouraged by the Reformation, sports saw some degree of growth and spread. However, with the rise of capitalism and the wave of the Industrial Revolution—especially after the French bourgeois revolution in the 18th century—Protestantism faced decline, necessitating further adjustments in Christian self-conception.

After the Enlightenment, emerging liberal theology bridged the gap between heaven and earth, further affirming the legitimacy of the body. Entering the 19th century, Christianity became increasingly secularized and ethical, integrating the new bodily view with Western Christian social movements, resulting in numerous Anglo-American Christian organizations promoting sports (Fang, 2019). Consequently, the relationship between Christianity and sports also evolved. Some denominations aimed to promote and spread sports worldwide, viewing it as a tool to impose European civilization and Christian ethics in regions like Asia and Africa, a form of cultural colonialism. The establishment and development of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), founded in 1884, exemplified this, using youth-targeted sports activities to instill Christian ethical education and propagate Christian civilization abroad.

Physical activity was considered an essential aspect of Christian life, with American Christian societies or professional associations related to sports possibly more prevalent than in other fields, particularly as religious and moral attitudes underwent significant changes during the Victorian era. Although Christianity and Catholicism were predominant, they gradually shifted focus from religious faith to moral responsibility and social welfare. For example, sports became a mechanism for cultivating masculinity, promoting virtues such as integrity, fair competition, respect, strength, and perseverance. Additionally, radical Christian groups believed that leaders could be "made" through this mechanism, shaping individuals as model Christian gentlemen and leaders. Numerous charitable organizations emerged and developed, and the British government established the first public health insurance system to improve social welfare and public health standards. Religions sought to inspire young people to join local Christian associations, often referred to as "fellowships", where members would meet regularly to study the Bible, pray, discuss, support one another religiously, and engage in sports activities. Some local organizations even funded specific projects to encourage social involvement, especially among young people [6].

Protestant ethics imposed norms on both spiritual faith and secular life, with athletes relying on shared beliefs to foster teamwork and viewing sports as an extension of spiritual life. The fusion of doctrine and sport effectively transformed professional sports into a "quasi-religion", where participation in sports and skill acquisition became symbols of identity, and a love for sports became a mode of identity and cultural affiliation.

Before sports were commercialized and marketized, Protestant groups in Britain and America viewed sports as tools for spiritual and social salvation. Modern sports benefited from this support, expanding rapidly and spreading globally. Protestantism's transformation of sports not only reversed the medieval Christian opposition to sports but also demonstrated Protestantism's adaptability to modern society [7]. The Industrial Revolution and the sweeping social changes brought by British capitalism spurred certain Christian factions to actively address social realities. In Britain, modern sports became increasingly visible within Christianity due to their role in developing talents suited to modern society, forming a "muscular Christian" ideology [6], which significantly impacted the development of Western sports, particularly in America, where it fueled the growth of competitive and professional sports. This concept of "muscular Christianity" originated from 19th-century British ethical and moral issues, including protecting the weak, addressing poverty, and promoting moral virtues. Muscular Christianity framed these and other issues within the contexts of physical effort and spiritual purity, establishing a set of core values that ultimately defined the relationship between sports and religion: fair competition, respect (for oneself and others), physical and emotional strength, perseverance, obedience, discipline, loyalty, cooperation, self-control, self-sacrifice, and endurance [6]. Courage, temperance, and team spirit were held in high regard, forming a "holy trinity" of moral standing. The life and achievements of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic movement, are said to have been influenced by these values.

SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

Despite Christianity's goal of using sports to educate youth and counter the "diseases of civilization" brought about by urbanization, Protestantism, rooted in Christian ethics, often viewed morality and recreation as opposing forces. This tendency sometimes led to harsh prohibitions, perceiving cultural and athletic activities as indulgences that promoted laziness and moral degradation. For example, denominations like Puritans and Calvinists in Europe and America often enforced their principles rigorously, significantly impacting folk sports and hindering sports dissemination in these regions. Calvin personally instituted the *Geneva Regulations*, which prohibited nearly two hundred forms of games and recreational activities. In America, Puritans imposed fines of forty shillings and sixteen strokes on the back for running, jumping, horseback riding, or dancing on Sundays. In Britain, Puritans criminalized group dancing, hunting, chess, and similar activities. These anti-physical and anti-sports measures within Protestantism reveal the limitations of the Reformation, leading to constraints in the selection of sports activities in modern sports development.

4. INSIGHTS FROM PROTESTANT ETHICS FOR RESHAPING CHINESE SPORTS VALUES

China's unique cultural foundation provides an opportunity to integrate traditional values into modern sports ethics. By drawing from Confucian principles of harmony and respect, alongside insights from Protestant ethics, Chinese sports culture can cultivate a balanced view of competition that emphasizes both personal growth and social responsibility. This synthesis aligns with China's broader vision of a values-driven society, supporting individual and collective well-being.

4.1 The Core Role of Spiritual Culture in Sports Values

According to the Marxist historical materialism perspective, the economic base has a decisive influence on the superstructure, a notion reflected in the development of modern sports in the West, where economically advanced nations also have well-developed sports sectors. However, Max Weber, through the lens of Protestant ethics, emphasizes the significant role of spiritual and cultural factors in socioeconomic development. Therefore, in discussing the future of Chinese sports, it is essential to go beyond a purely economic view and recognize the profound impact of cultural confidence on sports development. In the realm of sports, both Western countries and China face spiritual challenges, such as the dominance of materialism, consumerism, spiritual emptiness, and a lack of faith. These issues are especially evident in phenomena like sports corruption, gambling, and match-fixing. The ethical issues within modern sports reveal a fundamental truth: the pursuit of wealth without cultural or spiritual support can lead to the moral decline and spiritual degradation of sports participants. Protestant ethics further asserts that personal interest orientations are deeply influenced by worldview, highlighting the close connection between economic activities and individual perspectives.

The evolution of Western bodily views and the formation of bodily views under Protestant ethics reveal an important observation: the development of sports is closely linked to specific perspectives on the body. This view suggests that sports development is grounded in a particular bodily perspective, which in turn deeply influences people's core attitudes toward sports. Within mainstream thought, bodily perspectives have had a guiding role in the sports development of their respective eras. Although the Chinese public holds diverse views on sports, the field of sports science has a responsibility to guide the formation of a scientific, proactive, and pragmatic sports perspective through academic research, public education, and service provision.

Protestant ethics promotes personal initiative and the spirit of perseverance, qualities that are equally applicable to sports. Chinese sports should encourage young people to actively participate in sports, fostering their competitive spirit and resilience, while viewing sports as an integral part of personal and societal development. Emphasizing the social value of sports, the Lutheran view of sports highlights its potential to enhance individual morality and social engagement, seeing sports not merely as a means of competition and entertainment but as a powerful tool for character-building, social cohesion, and cultural dissemination. The integration of sports and education is especially important in light of the negative impacts of modern sports. The Lutheran perspective on the importance of sports for personal growth can inspire China to integrate sports with education, incorporating sports into school curricula to cultivate students' physical health and moral integrity. The fusion of sports and education not only promotes physical health but also plays a significant role in moral education and fostering teamwork.

4.2 Exploring a Socialist Sports Ethics with Chinese Characteristics for the New Era

Recognizing the limitations of Protestant ethics, we must acknowledge that as a product of the capitalist era rooted in unconditional faith in God, it does not fully align with human development as a whole. Therefore, in exploring the cultural foundation for the development of Chinese sports, we cannot rely solely on religiously based values and ethical frameworks. The formation and existing issues of modern sports offer valuable lessons for China's sports modernization. In promoting the modernization of sports in alignment with China's current realities and integrating with China's rich traditional culture, it is essential to adhere to a people-centered guiding principle in sports and embrace a collaborative and inclusive sports culture as a guiding concept [12].

SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

In the development of sports, adherence to ethical principles, particularly in sports economic ethics, is crucial. Reconstructing sports ethics to meet the challenges posed by a market economy has become increasingly important. At the core of sports ethics should be the ultimate concern for human welfare, fostering an ethical framework in sports that is rich in humanistic values. In the process of China's sports modernization, cultivating a robust sports culture is key to achieving the goal of a strong sporting nation. Integrating ethical values into sports education and events emphasizes principles such as morality, fair competition, and teamwork, making sports an essential component of societal education.

Chinese traditional culture, particularly Confucian values such as benevolence, propriety, honor, and integrity, provides a wealth of resources for developing sports morality and character. Sports are not only a platform for physical training but also a venue for cultivating moral character and team cooperation. By promoting fair competition, respect for opponents, and discipline in sports, China can preserve and promote its traditional moral values. Reflecting on the rich, five-thousand-year history of Chinese civilization, China possesses a deep cultural tradition in sports, including the traditional "Six Arts", with activities such as archery (*she*) and charioteering (*yu*). These traditional sports are not only forms of physical education but also valuable guides for the future development of Chinese sports. Leveraging national policies to promote outstanding traditional Chinese culture, China can preserve and expand sports that embody the Chinese spirit and wisdom, building a distinctive traditional sports culture with national identity and enhancing its appeal on the international stage.

5. CONCLUSION

As a profound ethical framework, the Protestant ethic provides a perspective for deeply examining the development of sports from an ethical standpoint. In the context of China's sports modernization, adopting positive elements from Protestant ethics can help foster the growth of sports spirit and culture. Firstly, it is essential to establish a positive ethical framework for sports. The Protestant ethic values honesty, diligence, resilience, and personal responsibility—qualities upheld by modern sports. The development of Chinese sports should be based on principles of integrity and morality, creating a transparent sports environment that prevents corruption and preserves fair competition.

Secondly, it is crucial to consider ethics and morality within the sports economy. The Protestant ethic's rational attitude toward life and its emphasis on record-keeping, precision, and continual improvement highlight the need for ethical guidance in China's commercial sports development. This approach helps China avoid the pitfalls of "championship mania", consumerism, and an overemphasis on achievement, ensuring that sports reflect both individual growth and societal value rather than merely commercial interests.

Thirdly, ethical considerations in competitive sports must be carefully balanced. The emphasis on victory and gold medals in the Olympic movement, influenced by championship and consumerism ideologies, can lead to an excessive focus on honor and financial rewards. Chinese sports should emphasize a balance between competition and sports ethics, nurturing athletes' character and morality. This approach values not only victory but also participation and teamwork.

Finally, fostering a public perspective on sports is essential. The "elitism" and "professionalism" in modern sports sometimes shift the public's focus toward elite athletes and professional competitions, overshadowing the importance of mass sports. Chinese sports should actively promote public participation in sports activities, encouraging fitness for all and cultivating a healthy view of sports within society.

Funding Project
National Social Science Fund General Project: Construction of the Discipline System of Sports Ethics with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era (Project Number: 21BTY018)

REFERENCES

1. *Li Yulan, & Yang Xi. (2015). An analysis of the characteristics of modern European sports. Tiyu Wenhua Daokan, (12), 29–32+57.*
2. *Weber, M. (2010). The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism (Yan Kewen, Trans.). Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House.*
3. *Overman, S. J. (2011). The Protestant ethic and the spirit of sport: How Calvinism and capitalism shaped America's games. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.*
4. *Liu Rensheng, & Wang Dongyue. (2018). The value gap and ideological continuation of European medieval sports. Tiyu Wenhua Daokan, (03), 139–143.*
5. *Ci Chunlei, & Zhang Xiaohua. (2015). The historical influence of medieval Christianity on sports development. Shenyang Tiyu Xueyuan Xuebao, 34(04), 58–62.*
6. *Parker, A. (2012). Sport, spirituality and Protestantism: A historical overview. Theology, 115(4).*

SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 11 | November 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

7. *Fang Fang. (2019). Comparative study of Christian and Taoist views on sports (from the Middle Ages to modern times) (Doctoral dissertation). Northeast Normal University. https://doi.org/10.27011/d.cnki.gdbsu.2019.000021*
8. *Guttmann, A. (2012). From ritual to record: The essence of modern sports (Hua Yongmin, Zhong Xiaoxin, & Cai Fangle, Trans., Yuan Dan, Ed.). Beijing: Beijing Sport University Press.*
9. *Wen Xingman. (2006). On the inevitability of modern sports (Doctoral dissertation). East China Normal University.*
10. *Hao Qin. (1988). On the historical relationship between sports and religion. Tiyu Wen Shi, (04), 12–18.*
11. *Wu Jintong. (2012). Olympic champion Eric Liddell and China. Shijie Wenhua, (12), 17–19.*
12. *Dai Guobin, Cao Keqiang, Zheng Guohua, Gao Xiaobo, Yang Haichen, & Hua Jiatao. (2023). The cultural logic of Chinese-style sports modernization. Tiyu Xue Yanjiu, 37(01), 15–21. https://doi.org/10.15877/j.cnki.nsic.20221129.001*