

The Culture of Sport: Education, Training, Performance, Psychology, and Media Coverage in the Global Age Yu-wan Wang (Germany 2005)

Biography

Dr. Yu-wan Wang, recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship for U.S. Administrators in International Education (2005-2006), is currently Director of International Student & Scholar Services at Dowling College, Long Island, New York. She has more than twenty years of work experience that literally spans the globe, including Taiwan, China and the United States. She has served as a consultant for the Mayor of Taipei, where she also worked at McKinsey & Co., and taught computer science at Fu-Jen Catholic University. She was born and grew up in Tianjin, China, and lived through the Cultural Revolution. During that time her formal education was suspended. Despite this interruption, she went to the library every day to continue learning on her own, and when the Cultural Revolution finally ended, she passed the fiercely competitive college entrance exams, attending university in China before coming to the U. S. in 1981. She holds a B.S from Carlow University, an M.L.S. from Clarion University of Pennsylvania, and an Ed.D from Dowling College. She is an active member of Rotary International and NAFSA, and a certified hospice volunteer. She has traveled to over 30 countries with her daughter Henna, a junior at Bucknell University.

Background

The recent controversy at the 2008 Beijing Olympics over the ages of some members of China's women's gymnastic team poses questions about how the early training, education, psychological preparation, and socialization of Chinese athletes differs from those in the west. These questions, in turn, raise larger issues concerning the role and meaning of athletics in today's global culture. This roundtable discussion session will explore the ways in which different cultures and political systems around the world – especially Asia, Europe and North America – understand the role of athletics in society, and also the differing methods of training, education, socialization, psychological preparation, and media coverage that athletes from these different cultures and nations receive.

Discussions Questions

1. What are the images of Asia and the West as portrayed through media coverage of the Olympics and other international (and national) sporting events?
2. How do cultural stereotypes influence these portrayals?
3. Has athletics become “corrupted”? And what is the meaning of “corruption” across differing cultures and political systems? What does the controversy over the “doping” of athletes reveal about the differences (and similarities) in the societies of competing nations?
4. How do politics and economics influence athletics (and vice versa)?
5. How does national identity shape athletics (and vice versa)?