

# Research on the Framework of Media Coverage of Naturalized Athletes

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**Abstract:** *The primary objective of this study was to assess the framework for media coverage of athletes preparing for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. The purpose of this task is to conduct a multi-perspective media analysis of the diversity of today's news media, focusing on existing coverage of naturalized athletes in the United States and China, with the goal of comprehensively investigating the impact of public opinion on naturalized athletes in various countries, as well as determining the reasons for media coverage of public opinion and a summary of the findings.*

**Keywords:** *Naturalized athletes, Agenda setting, public communication, media framing, Chinese and American perspectives*

## 1. Introduction

At the 2022 Winter Olympics, the performance of naturalized athletes once again attracted the attention of countries around the world. At present, public has sparked heated debates on nationality, athletic performance, and the naturalization of athletes by naturalized athletes. A naturalized athlete refers to an athlete who renounces his original nationality and voluntarily acquires the nationality of another country. In fact, naturalization has long been common in the international sports world, and the reason for the heated debate is that some people have a certain degree of prejudice against naturalized athletes. In the eyes of these people, naturalized athletes win honors for the naturalized country in the shortest time, and their gold content will be criticized by others. Once the number of naturalized athletes is too large, they may also be accused by public opinion of deviating from the spirit of the Olympics. However, for athletes, being naturalized can provide more opportunities and choices in their careers. In the context of globalization, it is an inevitable trend for more and more naturalized athletes. Deconstructing the communication dilemma of naturalized athletes, rebuilding the public discussion and public communication environment of naturalized athletes, and studying naturalized athletes from the perspective of media reporting framework are important theoretical and social practice considerations.

## 2. Concerns provided

Naturalization of athletes is an unavoidable trend in this era of increasing globalization of sports and advancement of China's opening up process. In comparison to the maturity of naturalized athletes in the United States, China's efforts to attract high-level foreign athletes are still in their infancy. As a competitive sports force, the United States has long been a vital part of the world's competitive sports strength. The United States is not only a significant naturalized athlete, but also one of the countries with the greatest number of naturalized athletes. Naturalized athletes are well accepted by the American public and media, and there is no discrimination. Although there is far too much controversy, naturalized athletes are subject to the American public and media. The dispute about naturalized athletes is more heated than the discussion over naturalized citizens, which is complicated by the United States' role as a major immigration destination [5]. On the other hand, China's social and cultural views have argued for a "multi-integrated structure" with a stable cultural core dating all the way back to ancient times. When it comes to sporting events involving the "national team," the public has a stronger national complex. It will use national sporting events to showcase the country's complex of personalities. It is widely used to differentiate between Chinese and naturalized athletes. It has more severe rules for naturalized athletes and requires additional documentation on their identity. Exclusivity. Many scholars have been drawn to this context by the discussion theme of naturalized athletes, the differences in the degrees of identity of different naturalized athletes, whether performance is used as a criterion for naturalized athletes, and the

angle and narrative of media reports that assist the public in forming cognition about naturalized athletes. The study contrasts media stories on naturalized athletes Gu Ailing and Zhu Yi in China and the United States in order to analyze the establishment and growth of media reporting frameworks for naturalized athletes.

### **3. Narrative structure**

The enormous number of naturalized athletes that China has brought in for this Winter Olympics is progressively becoming noteworthy as the Winter Olympics progresses. Nowadays, athletic activities are no longer responsible for a country's victory, and sporting accomplishments are merely excellent or poor. The naturalized athletes, on the other hand, and the uproar they have sparked have a very different connotation.

China's economy has reached a certain degree of growth and has entered a phase of industrial upgrading, requiring it to recruit talent from a variety of nations to assist in its development, particularly abroad Chinese and those of Chinese heritage. As the conflict between China and the United States escalates, and the Western world, led by Europe and the United States, becomes more openly racist toward Chinese people, now is a fantastic moment to entice overseas Chinese to return to work in China.

There is no such natural responsibility between China and naturalized talent imports.

The connection is transactional and based on market principles, with a two-way choice: first, they must be talented and deliver advantages to China, either through economic development or improved science and technology. This is a different kind of work or commercial connection from the one China has with its native-born Chinese. In China, native-born Chinese have no prerequisites, no maximum restriction on development, and an extraordinarily high floor of support. Naturalized imported talents are subject to a variety of qualifying constraints and development limits, and the question of a bottom-up lower limit will only arise in exceptional instances. We cannot use the standard requirement for Chinese people, we can use patriotism to demand Chinese people, but we cannot use patriotism to restrict naturalized imported talents, therefore there are diverse viewpoints in the news reports in China and the United States.

The public's expectations for the entrance of talent to the country are mostly reflected in pre-existing multi-platform social support, leading to a news narrative agency based primarily on these various levels. The main social tone of the news coverage is centered on the relevance of the introduced athletes' social value from the first level [1]. People have gradually let go of the "gold medal first" complex as the country has grown stronger. We don't need "mercenaries" to win championships and satisfy our inner national pride to a considerable extent. We're looking for high-level talent who identifies with China and is prepared to contribute to the development of China's cultural and sporting textbooks.

On a second level, it is easy to see in news reports that the public expects athletes to perform at a higher level of skill. The arrival of naturalized athletes will, to some extent, squeeze the performance space of native players, as seen this time in the sport of skating. Furthermore, the skewed resources for naturalized athletes would put a pressure on other resources. Wouldn't it be better if the money spent on naturalization went toward grassroots education, particularly the development of young athletes? As a result, naturalized athletes must compete at a high level.

The third deeper level to emerge, both for the sake of society as a whole and for the development of national sports, is to establish the idea of investing more effort into projects with tremendous promise but weak foundations. That is, through the pioneering role of naturalized talents, to solve the talent shortage in traditional weak sports with more commercial value, as well as to stimulate new sectors and markets.

### **4. Theoretical Approach**

In this paper, we examine the reports of Chinese and American news media samples from the following two perspectives: 1. to identify the contrasting narrative structure in the sample articles 2. to summarize the emotional tone of the relevant reports; that is, the attitudinal tendencies and emotional judgments highlighted in the reports themselves; in general, positive attitudes toward the host country's naturalized athletes belong to positive reports, negative attitudes to negative reports, and reports with no obvious emotional tones to Neutral reports.

## **5. A narrative framework for naturalized athlete journalism**

### ***5.1 Expectations versus reality***

The Beijing Winter Olympics are China's first Winter Olympics, and the country is looking forward to and expecting to display the world the image of a great nation while also holding the common expectation of uniting all countries into the future. The performance of numerous naturalized competitors at this year's Winter Olympics is also a source of contention. The naturalized athletes' coverage in the Chinese public media has been polarized [3]. This article focuses on Ailing Gu, a freestyle skier, and Zhu Yi, a women's singles skater. Both are of Chinese origin, grew up in the United States, and opted to represent China, yet their performances are vastly different, causing stark contrasts in the news media [2]. Due to tense Sino-American ties, two athletes, Gu Ailing and Zhu Yi, who left the United States for China, have come to the fore. Queries concerning Chinese and American nationality at the press conference put pressure on Gu Ailing, who won the gold medal; for Zhu Yi, who did poorly, the overwhelming questions from Chinese netizens highlighted the harshness of national identity. Prior to the Winter Olympics, China's domestic overwhelming propaganda for Gu Ailing and Zhu Yi in advance to create a perfect persona, the same labeled as a talented young girl returned only to play for the motherland, leading to the problem of poor performance in the official competition, the athletes themselves will receive public opinion, which stems from the expectations and reality of the strength of the gap still exists, and the other side of the US allies Public opinion pressure, for example, has resulted in poor overall performance and unsustainable future development.

### ***5.2 Emotional tone under different political perspectives***

The news coverage page for the athletes is in a distinct emotional tone, based on the contrasting political viewpoints and perspectives of the two sides: the United States does not tolerate Gu Ailing's betrayal, and China does not tolerate Zhu Yi's failure. People are more concerned about who can take the gold medal than whether it is Chinese, so Zhu Yi gave up his US citizenship and returned to China to compete. However, not winning the gold medal is the biggest mistake; people are more concerned about who can take the gold medal, not whether it is Chinese. Gu Ailing is not to fault for not singing the Chinese national song at the Winter Olympics medal ceremony. Cultural identification, in addition to the national identity represented by nationality, became a test criterion for the general public outside of officialdom, particularly language skills, which became a crucial indicator to measure the cultural identity of naturalized athletes. While Gu Ailing's fluent Chinese with a Beijing accent made her extremely popular among mainland netizens, Zhu Yi's less-than-fluent Chinese became a key source of online rumors against her: shortly after her defeat in the competition, news spread on Sina Weibo that she had refused to be interviewed by CCTV and would only be interviewed by Western media in English. Despite the fact that the story was swiftly dispelled by CCTV, the tape of the interview was made public, and her personal image was severely tarnished. Deep topics and surface reality are more set to reversal of public opinion, in which both the public and the media are involved and can express their own opinions, and this type of news, which is classified as reversal news, can raise citizen awareness and disperse anxiety in society, and the deep topics and surface reality are more set to reversal of public opinion, in which both the public and the media are involved and can express their own opinions. The surface reality is mostly concerned with people's livelihoods, whilst the deeper issues are concerned with their own perspectives. As public opinion continues to shift in numerous directions, all of these issues are tied to the country's morality. The forces that motivate humans to test their physical boundaries are silently shifting while the nation-borders state's are collapsing. Naturalized athletes, both mononational and multi-national, are more visible on the international stage, expressing the futility of adhering to national identity. Top athletes' strength is becoming increasingly linked to expensive scientific training programs, huge and sophisticated teams, and even understanding of event rules, rather than the notion of pure national glory. The news is dependent on the general public's social mood, and what actually drives it is the building of a perfect persona.

## **6. Framework under multiple perspectives**

The performance of naturalized athletes is one of the focuses of this Winter Olympics. There are many naturalized faces in the Chinese delegation to the Beijing Winter Olympics. Among them, Gu Ailing (Eileen) joined the Chinese sports world as an excellent athlete, rapidly improving the performance and influence of Chinese skiing. At the 2022 Winter Olympics, Gu Ailing won a gold medal

and a silver medal for China in two events of the 2022 Winter Olympics. After winning the award, Gu Ailing further cemented her status as a sports star in China, and she seems to be more popular than any Olympic champion. She received overwhelmingly positive coverage in the domestic media. She has been discussed eagerly by the public, from her sleeping hours to each of her previous interviews. The athlete has been popular on social platforms since she won her first gold medal on February 8. Many Chinese people appreciate the naturalized athlete [4].

In fact, Gu Ailing appeared in the public eye before the competition. Because of her high-profile announcement of her citizenship and her decision to represent China in the competition, most of the coverage of her in the Chinese media was positive. Today, with the further development of globalization and the changes caused by covid 19 to the original pattern of the world, the gap between China and the United States is gradually narrowing. For a long time, it was the outstanding Chinese people who gave up their Chinese nationality to join the American nationality. The flow of talent between China and the U.S. and Gu Ailing's renunciation of the U.S. to become a Chinese citizen has undoubtedly become a topic of interest. Almost no one has made this decision before, and such an approach is clearly the end of China's decades of foreign worship.

When the public accepts a large number of media reports on Gu Ailing's renunciation of American citizenship, they can't help but feel good about her. Topics such as "genius girl renounces American nationality to join Chinese nationality" can also be seen on social media. Although the mass media cannot determine people's opinion of someone, they can effectively guide the public's attention to certain aspects through related issues. From the perspective of agenda setting, with the positive image of the media before, people obviously do not reject Gu Ailing's naturalization. Therefore, after she won the Olympic championship, she gained an excellent reputation.

However, from the perspective of the United States, naturalization of elite athletes to other countries is not acceptable. Take Gu Ailing as an example. From the time she announced her participation in the Winter Olympics to the present, the American media began to blast her online. Mainstream American media such as CNN, Fox, and the New York Post expressed disappointment at Gu Ailing's naturalization, claiming that she betrayed her country. Fox News host Will Cain has said publicly that her decision to compete for China rather than the United States is ungrateful and shameful. Due to the influence of the media, many Americans do not have a favorable impression of Gu Ailing. Many unsupportive remarks can be found on various social media in the United States. The American media's emphasis on Gu Ailing's naturalization status has led the American public to pay more attention to this matter. The audience will change their perception of the importance of things because of the issues provided by the media, and act first on events that the media considers important. For example, many U.S. users tweeted photos of Gu Ailing skiing on piles of dollars, with captions like "Love China's money." Before the American media reported negatively on Gu Ailing, there were not so many people in the United States who opposed her. After the mainstream media spoke out, most Americans were more willing to condemn her for competing on behalf of other countries than to focus on her performance in the Winter Olympics. This phenomenon is also a manifestation of Agenda setting.

## **7. Conclusion**

With the development of globalization, the globalization of sports transcends national borders and regions and breaks down regional barriers. The flow of sports talents from different countries is becoming more and more common, and athletes from different countries have also begun to integrate into multiple countries. Gu Ailing and other groups of naturalized athletes have caused controversy in both China and their country of origin, and the traditional concept of citizenship and nationality has been impacted. The phenomenon of naturalized athletes sparking heated debate heralds an inevitable trend towards the globalization of sports. At present, the naturalization of athletes, as an important form of sports globalization, has been accepted by more and more countries. According to the agenda setting, which aspect the media pays attention to, the more the audience cares about it. Chinese and American media have different views on Gu Ailing's participation in the 2022 Winter Olympics on behalf of China, which has also affected public perception. The media and audience attitudes towards naturalized athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympics confirm the media view that the media is an institution engaged in environmental reconfiguration.

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