

The New Urbanization Construction Empowered By Sports Industry: Based on the Perspective of Spatial Justice Analysis

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Abstract: The sports industry serves as an important vehicle to promote the modernization of new urbanization, providing new opportunities and strong impetus for high-quality development in cities and towns. This study, based on the perspective of spatial justice theory, clarifies the spatial justice demands of sports industry empowerment in new urbanization construction. It examines the reality of sports industry empowerment in new urbanization construction from the perspective of spatial justice and identifies issues such as lack of resource elements and uneven distribution at the level of spatial production justice, policy orientation bias and governance deficiencies at the level of spatial institutional justice, and unmet demands and rights inequality at the level of spatial value justice. Based on these findings, the study proposes spatial justice directions for sports industry empowerment in new urbanization construction: integrating resource elements and ensuring their rational allocation to shape the urban sports industry economic chain; focusing on the institutional supply of urban sports industry development and improving government governance mechanisms; and adhering to a people-centered development philosophy to promote the satisfaction of residents' demands and equal rights.

1. Introduction

The “National New-Type Urbanization Plan (2014-2020)” clearly states that new urbanization construction should adhere to the basic principle of people-oriented urbanization. It evaluates the level of urbanization based on the level of economic development, constructs a fair and just urbanization development pattern, meets the diverse needs of urban residents for culture, economy, ecology, and social public services, and achieves the shared fruits of modernization for all people. The development gap between cities is one of the main social contradictions faced by China during the period of transitioning from high-speed growth to high-quality development. The proposal of new urbanization construction aims to address the imbalances, inconsistencies, and inadequacies in the economic, environmental, and social benefits between urban and rural areas [1]. It is a proactive response and strategic layout based on the reality of the country. The sports industry, as a pillar industry of the national economy, has strong economic potential and plays an important role in promoting new urbanization construction by providing sports services to meet the material and

cultural needs of modern people.

However, the spatial manifestation of sports industry empowerment in new urbanization construction reveals practical issues such as lack of natural and social resource elements, uneven distribution, policy orientation biases, governance deficiencies, unmet demands, and rights inequality. These issues give rise to spatial injustice phenomena. In the context of China's new urbanization, promoting new urbanization construction is based on human-centered values and seeks coordinated development in multiple fields rather than a one-sided pursuit of economic development. It has a stronger social attribute. Pursuing the ideal state of spatial justice is the inherent rationale for advancing new urbanization construction. Therefore, by incorporating spatial justice theory into the exploration of sports industry empowerment in new urbanization construction, with spatial justice as the guiding principle, this study presents a forward-looking path for sports industry empowerment in new urbanization construction and provides theoretical references for the development of new urbanization construction.

2. The Call for Spatial Justice: The Logical Path of Empowering the Sports Industry in New Urbanization Construction

2.1. Promoting the Construction of a Modern Urban Economic System

Building a modern urban economic system establishes the economic foundation for new urbanization construction and is also a necessary step in improving the construction of the national modern economic system. As an important component of the modern economic system [2], the sports industry will inject new economic development momentum into the high-quality development of new urbanization construction. By integrating the sports industry with the local natural resources and cultural characteristics of urban areas, idle urban resources can be utilized, the consumption space in urban areas can be expanded, and the green transformation of the urban economy can be promoted, creating a development path for industrialization, systematization, and institutionalization of the urban economy. The development of the sports industry also helps to promote the diversification and sustainable development of the urban economy. By introducing the sports industry, the development scope of the urban economy can be broadened, providing more employment opportunities, promoting the rational allocation of human resources, driving the optimization of industrial structure and the enhancement of innovation capabilities, effectively enhancing the quality of economic development, and thus promoting the construction of a modern urban economic system.

2.2. Alleviating the Contradictions of the Rural-Urban Dual Structure

The core of new urbanization construction lies in overcoming the long-standing problems of the rural-urban dual structure system, ensuring equal development opportunities and rights for urban residents, reducing the development gap between urban and rural areas, and achieving integrated urban development [3]. Effectively reducing the development gap between urban and rural areas requires accelerating the smooth flow of resources such as funds, talents, and labor between urban and rural areas. Promoting the development of the sports industry is the entry point for resolving the rural-urban dual contradictions. On the one hand, relying on the sports industry to promote new urbanization construction will weaken the administrative constraints of the urban-rural division, promote the complementary use of urban and rural resources, and facilitate their complementary development. For example, the development of sports-themed towns and new formats of recreational sports will gather elements related to the sports industry, supporting the integrated development of industries in the new urbanization, shaping the sports industry chain, and providing urban residents with places and services for leisure and fitness consumption. On the other hand, creating more

employment opportunities [4] through the sports industry will stabilize the existing young labor force in urban areas, attract migrant workers to return to urbanization development, and encourage more outstanding talents to engage in new urbanization construction, thereby rebalancing the urban population structure and alleviating the phenomena of “hollowing out” and “rural marginalization.”

2.3. Effective Approaches to Improve the Livelihood of Urban Residents

The “Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development and Vision 2035 of the People’s Republic of China” emphasizes the goal of enabling more people to enjoy a higher quality of urban life [5]. Improving livelihoods is the fundamental requirement and ultimate goal of China’s new urbanization construction. The inherent demand of empowering new urbanization development through the sports industry is to meet the needs of the people for a better life. On one hand, the development of the urban sports industry meets the intrinsic spiritual and cultural needs of urban residents. The development of industry systems such as sports competitions, fitness and leisure, and emerging outdoor sports greatly satisfies the spiritual and cultural needs of urban residents, while also fostering their awareness of physical exercise. On the other hand, the development of the urban sports industry significantly enhances the construction of sports infrastructure, achieves the integration of the urban sports industry with public sports services, and fills the gaps in public sports services for urban residents. Empowering new urbanization construction through the sports industry is an important measure to effectively improve the livelihood of urban residents and enhance their well-being.

3. Examining Spatial Justice: The Realistic State of Empowering New Urbanization Construction through the Sports Industry

Spatial justice theory criticizes the unjust spaces in capitalism’s productive forces and production modes, aiming to regulate and adjust the possession and distribution of spatial resources and products among various entities, while respecting the acquisition and enjoyment of spatial rights and interests by these entities, in order to construct a value-oriented space centered around human beings [6]. Based on the principles of rationality and legitimacy in spatial justice, we examine the realistic state of empowering new urbanization construction through the sports industry and identify instances of non-justice in spatial production, spatial institutional justice, and spatial value justice.

3.1. Spatial Production Justice: Lack of Resources and Unequal Distribution of Elements

The spatial distribution of production factors is directly related to the achievement of spatial production justice. Spatial production justice refers to the process of transferring, combining, and aggregating production factors within a spatial scope. However, with the improvement of spatial productivity and the expansion of capital into space, spatial agglomeration and the destruction of spatial structure also follow. The goal of spatial production justice is to achieve fair distribution and efficient utilization of resources such as land, capital, labor, and technology in social development. Unequal distribution can lead to social unrest and regional development imbalances. Currently, there are distinctive features of differentiated resource allocation between urban and rural areas, where the lack of rural resource elements and unequal distribution constrain the development of urban and rural sports industries. On one hand, there is a fundamental lack of rural resource elements. Strong supporting industries are needed for the new urbanization construction. However, in promoting the development of the sports industry, the lack of resource elements in terms of infrastructure and funding hinders the progress of the sports industry. Existing tourism resources and ecological resources are difficult to transform into economic resources, and the structure of the sports industry

value chain is incomplete. As a result, the sports industry struggles to provide sustained development momentum for new urbanization construction. On the other hand, there is an unequal distribution of resource elements that tends to favor urban areas [7]. The uneven distribution of urban and rural resource elements significantly affects the development of urban sports industries. Currently, the scale and quantity of cities in our country continue to grow, and resource elements are influenced by the spatial agglomeration effect of capital, with local government resource allocation leaning more towards urban spaces. However, the total stock of resource elements is limited, and the increase in resource elements in urban areas means a corresponding reduction in the resources available to rural areas. Labor force further concentrates in economically developed regions, rural populations continue to decrease, rural development momentum further declines, and the loss of development resources accelerates. Under this unjust resource allocation, rural areas will be unable to possess the spatial pattern of resources and value chains necessary for the development of the sports industry, thereby forming a significant obstacle to achieving justice in new urbanization construction.

3.2. Spatial Institutional Justice: Policy Orientation Deviation and Governance Deficiency

Spatial institutional justice aims to deeply analyze the roots of social problems in spatial terms at the institutional level and, through scientific institutional constraints, stabilize and strengthen the process of producing justice in the face of disorderly capital expansion. Whether it is the fairness of the starting point of spatial production in the sports industry under the new urbanization construction or the issue of fair resource allocation, the deviation in policy orientation and governance deficiency may lead to alienation and segregation of rural areas and residents. A sound institutional system is conducive to effectively correcting spatial injustices in urban sports industry. Therefore, the effective construction of institutional and operational environments for the development of urban sports industry is of profound significance for advancing the social space of new urbanization. However, the current policy orientation in urban sports industry construction is biased, and the governance efforts to correct these deviations are insufficient. On one hand, there is a deviation in policy orientation. As a livelihood industry promoting new urbanization construction, the formulation, design, control, and guidance of policies for rural sports industry are crucial guarantees for promoting the development of urban sports industry and empowering new urbanization construction [8]. However, in the face of the reality where the flow channels of sports elements in rural sports industry are blocked and sports elements are scarce, the current relevant policies for rural sports industry are mostly macro-level policies limited to specific regions. They lack clear implementation subjects and scope, only expressing attitudes and directions. There is no specific operating mechanism, and there is a lack of targeted and practical policies. This policy orientation deviation often leads to imbalanced resource allocation, further exacerbating the difficulty of promoting new urbanization construction and the inequality of spatial development. On the other hand, in the planning and resource allocation process of urban sports industry construction, the government and relevant departments lack governance capacity in terms of planning, design, execution, and supervision. Governance deficiency often leads to the difficulty of achieving spatial institutional justice in the development of urban sports industry, placing the vulnerable rural sports industry in a disadvantaged position in resource allocation. It becomes difficult to attract high-quality sports resource elements to promote development and may even result in vicious competition for resources between urban areas, counties, and townships, exacerbating the mismatch and imbalance of resource allocation among different spatial areas. This hinders the great cause of the sports industry empowering new urbanization construction.

3.3. Spatial Value Justice: Unmet Demands and Inequitable Rights

Spatial value justice is based on the fundamental principle of pursuing “comprehensive and free development of individuals” [9]. Viewing spatial justice from a values perspective means focusing on the intrinsic value orientation of spatial justice when dealing with the contradiction between spatial development and human needs. The intrinsic value orientation of spatial justice requires the fulfillment of two requirements. Firstly, space should meet people’s basic needs for survival, which is the primary function of space. Secondly, space itself should provide a context for production and life, and spatial justice requires meeting people’s spiritual needs and pursuits. Therefore, to achieve spatial value justice, we should consider how to achieve fair and equal distribution in spatial utilization to meet people’s basic needs and ensure that everyone can enjoy public resources and services. To achieve this goal, we need to consider factors such as social justice, environmental sustainability, and economic benefits in the planning and development process, balance the conflicts between spatial utilization and human needs, and ensure that spatial development aligns with human needs and promotes the overall well-being of society. However, there are some issues in reality. On one hand, the demand for physical activities by urban residents is not adequately met. The premise of new urbanization construction is to narrow the development gap between towns and urban economies, aiming to further strengthen the livelihood-oriented development strategy that enhances the spatial rights and fair access to public services for urban residents. However, the implementation of new urbanization construction has failed to comprehensively cover the needs of urban residents for a better life. In practice, new urbanization construction has focused more on high-end shopping malls, residential areas, hospitals, and other facilities [10]. Insufficient attention has been given to the demand for physical activities by urban residents, resulting in limited space for sports activities, and the daily physical activities of urban residents cannot be effectively guaranteed. At the same time, the convenience and diversity of fitness activities for urban residents are overlooked, as well as the different requirements of various groups for sports and leisure activities. The development goals of urban sports construction, centered around building landmark sports event centers, are unable to effectively meet the demand for physical activities by urban residents. On the other hand, rural residents do not have equal access to public sports services. The sports industry is mostly concentrated in urban areas, and rural residents, due to factors such as geographical location and economic conditions, cannot access the same sports facilities and resources as urban residents. Rural residents are unable to obtain appropriate sports venues, fitness equipment, coaching guidance, etc., thus unable to enjoy equal rights to public sports services. Compared to rural residents, urban residents have more rights in the utilization and allocation of public sports services. This inequality leads to limited opportunities for rural residents in sports activities and health, affecting their physical and mental well-being and comprehensive development. This phenomenon contradicts the people-oriented goals and original intentions of new urbanization construction, while distorting spatial value justice.

4. Spatial Justice Direction: Prospects for Empowering New Urbanization with the Sports Industry

4.1. Integrating Resource Elements and Rational Allocation to Shape the Urban Sports Industry Value Chain

The high-quality development of new urbanization is an important measure to promote urban development and implement rural revitalization [11]. The development of new urbanization involves the scale, quantity, location, and combination of various resource elements, which are closely related to the daily life and production of urban residents. The essence of new urbanization is the process of integrating and redistributing urban resource elements, which requires addressing the spatial

production fairness issues related to the differences in resource distribution between urban and rural areas. Due to the uneven allocation of urban resource elements and the differences in resource endowment in rural areas, the development of rural sports industry is imbalanced, and its economic benefits have not been fully realized. Therefore, it is necessary to fully examine the reality of urban areas in terms of economy, resource endowment, population, land, and industrial development, and effectively integrate urban resource elements. Based on a comprehensive understanding of the reality of underdeveloped rural areas, it is important to rationally allocate and invest resource elements to accurately support the development of sports industry in areas with resource deficiencies. At the same time, urban agglomerations that have advantages in the development of the sports industry can be regarded as the main driving force, leveraging the driving and radiating effects of urban regional centers to support the development of rural sports industry. Although urban areas have different resource elements, they are highly complementary. By combining rural cultural advantages with urban market scale advantages, active promotion of cooperation in the urban sports industry can be facilitated [12], expanding the economic supply chain of the sports industry and enhancing its added value. Building an economic value chain for the urban sports industry to achieve coordinated urban economic development is of great significance. The urban sports industry will become a new highland for promoting new urbanization construction.

4.2. Focusing on the Institutional Supply of Urban Sports Industry Development and Improving Government Governance Mechanisms

China has explicitly stated that improving the overall efficiency of the national economy is a priority goal, encouraging regions with conditions to take the lead in development and providing support and compensation to underdeveloped areas [13]. In the development of new urbanization, it is also necessary to recognize its diversity and improve institutional arrangements for urban development, seeking harmonious and coordinated spatial relationships. This reflects respect for reasonable diversity and is an important guarantee for achieving spatial justice. To alleviate the problems of policy orientation deviation and governance shortcomings in the development of urban sports industry, it is necessary and important to focus on the institutional supply of urban sports industry development and improve government governance mechanisms. On one hand, to avoid policy orientation deviation, the government and decision-makers should listen to the demands of various stakeholders and ensure that the policies formulated to support the sports industry can be implemented in the development of urban sports industry. Strengthening the institutional supply of urban sports industry development involves clarifying the subjects and scope of policy implementation. At the same time, it is important to play an effective role in cultivating new consumer demands in rural areas, optimizing the business environment for sports industry integration, and promoting the balanced development of urban sports industry. On the other hand, to address governance shortcomings, relevant departments responsible for resource management and regulation should enhance the effectiveness of policy implementation and supervision through capacity building, institutional innovation, and technological support. This will ensure the implementation of spatial justice in the urban sports industry. Additionally, it is important to deepen the transformation of the integration mechanism of the urban sports industry, facilitate the flow of elements between related industries [14], enhance the flow and transformation of rural sports elements into economic value, fully activate idle resources in rural areas, and invest them in sports industry development. This will create conditions for the prosperity of the urban sports industry and lay a solid foundation for the construction of new urbanization.

4.3. Adhere to a People-Centered Development Philosophy and Promote the Satisfaction of Resident Needs and Equal Rights

Achieving a better life for the people requires simultaneous attention to the development of material and spiritual civilization. When faced with cultural and lifestyle differences among urban residents, respecting the diverse living needs of individuals should be considered as a fundamental aspect of achieving spatial justice. Integrating a people-centered value system into spatial development becomes the primary choice for achieving spatial value justice, thereby truly constructing a value space centered around people. Spatial justice is associated with equal opportunities and equal starting points in spatial production, which requires providing fair opportunities and conditions for urban residents to pursue interests, self-development, and improvement. The construction of new urbanization is an important means to safeguard the interests of individuals and promote social development. The integration of the sports industry into urbanization is aimed at realizing the satisfaction of the needs and equal rights of all residents for a better life [15]. On one hand, it is important to closely focus on the sports needs of urban residents and provide effective sports services. Firstly, conduct thorough research to understand the preferences for sports and leisure activities among urban residents, the availability of sports facilities, and accurately grasp the real needs of urban residents regarding sports activities. Based on these needs, government departments should engage in scientific planning and layout, develop diverse sports industry venues, and meet the needs of different urban residents. At the same time, actively mobilize the efforts of diverse social actors to participate in the overall development strategy of urban public sports spaces. On the other hand, improve the governance mechanism for public culture and sports in rural areas to facilitate the expression of daily sports needs by rural residents and implement the supply and distribution of public sports products and facilities accurately. Encourage and guide the tourism, culture, and ecological industries to participate in the rural sports industry, promote the production and sale of sports products, develop sports leisure businesses, provide sports skill training, develop sports products and projects, and cultivate new formats and models in the sports industry. These measures not only contribute to improving the level of public sports service supply in rural areas but also meet the increasingly diverse sports needs of rural residents. It ensures that rural residents in a position of power disadvantage can enjoy equal and fair opportunities and rights in the production and distribution of spatial resources.

5. Conclusion

As an important measure to improve the quality of urban development and implement the strategy of rural revitalization, the construction of new urbanization has gradually become an important engine for empowering the development of new urbanization, with the support of the economic stock and labor absorption capacity of the sports industry. Based on the perspective of spatial justice theory, this article explains the logical path of the integration and development of the sports industry in empowering the construction of new urbanization and analyzes the current state of the sports industry's empowerment of new urbanization from three dimensions: spatial production justice, spatial institutional justice, and spatial value justice. Based on this analysis, future development prospects are proposed to enhance the economic, social, and ecological benefits of the sports industry in empowering the construction of new urbanization, providing reference for promoting the high-quality development of new urbanization and China's sports industry.

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