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## Exploring the Nature of Genius Loci in SPORT Stadiums Based on Collective Memory in CHINA

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### Abstract

*The genius loci of sport stadium is the main element for the public to feel the sport atmosphere and experience its function as the city architecture, and it is also the foothold and significance of sport stadium. However, with the change of architectural concept, advanced technology and new building materials gradually become the architectural theme of sport stadium, and the nature of sports carried by it is gradually covered by these phenomena, leading to the weakening of the public's cognition of sport stadium. If this phenomenon exists for a long time, it will not only affect the function of sport stadium and its role in urban development, but also eliminate the nature of it. Therefore, to reconstruct and maintain the genius loci, this paper analyzes the genius loci of sport stadium in China with the main elements of the collective memory, explores the nature of genius loci, and provides suggestions for its spread and continuation in the future. This paper explores the construction of genius loci of Chinese sport stadium based on collective memory through literature review. It fosters to spread and consolidate genius loci of Chinese sport stadium through reconstruction of memory.*

*According to the results from this study, there are three factors of collective memory. 1) Sport fans as the subjects of memory in the construction of collective memory. 2) Sport events and activities as the carrier in the construction of collective. 3) Stadium carrying Genius Loci as the object in the construction of collective memory. However, there are still some existing problems of genius loci of sport stadiums for the construction of collective memory. Lacking chance to enter into sport stadium hinders interaction between people and stadium. The formation of Genius Loci of stadium needs people deeply interact with stadium. The feeling of subject is the first step to identify Genius Loci of stadium. At present stage, the openness of the stadium is low, and the opportunity for people to feel sports and have emotional resonance is reduced, so it is difficult to interact with Genius Loci of stadium. In addition, low continuity of sport events and activities which causes sport stadium idling impedes the spread of Genius Loci of sport stadium. The number of stadiums has been increasing with the rapid development of sport industry in China but the number of sport event generated is relatively limited. Moreover, location trend from city to suburb blocks the spread of Genius Loci of sport stadium. Most stadiums in China are located in the suburbs of the cities. Although they can be satisfied with the harmony of the surrounding natural environment, the interaction between stadiums and people is severely restricted by the inconvenient traffic and other conditions.*

*Based on the results from this study, there are several suggestions to keep collective memory of Genius Loci perceive from the stadiums by sport fans. 1) As the subject of the memory, the public's intuitive feeling and experience of sport stadium is the key to the spread genius loci. 2) Sport events are the main ways for the public to interact with Genius Loci. 3) The construction of sport stadium should focus on the integration of the surroundings and become an integral part of urban construction.*

**[Keywords]** Collective Memory, Sport Stadium, Architectural Theme, Genius Loci, Public's Cognition

## 1. Introduction

Place is the specific space in which a sort of events and activities occur and emotions and behavior can be connected by them here[1]. Stadium is the place where sport events and activities are held. Genius Loci is generated from place and becomes the existence foothold of an architecture. It not only makes the building functional on tangible level, but also gives culture to a building on intangible level[2]. Once a space has Genius Loci, it lives more than a tool. What happened in stadium has gradually formed history of itself and a city. Thus, stadium is a record of history and a city. History is the past which impresses people deeply and can be the reference for the development of contemporary era. While collective memory is an accumulation of the past. It is shared by a group people to acquire identification in society. The number of stadiums has increased for the development of sports. As a valuable resource, collective memory can be sustained in the process of urban development through explicit matter and potential culture. It is one of the most important bases for carrying forward and recording urban history and constructing urban spirit[3]. Stadium is constructed as a part of urban history. However, the stadiums that people are familiar with or even can just remember is only few. Some of them even are not kept in people' memory. Genius Loci of stadium determines whether a stadium exists in city or memory. Losing Genius Loci makes building be a tool just for a certain use. The core of Genius Loci is integration with environment, city and history and kept by the memory[4]. This paper aims to foster the development of stadium; it employs collective memory to analyze Genius Loci of stadium to explore the existence meaning of contemporary stadium.

## 2. The Three Factors of Collective Memory

### 2.1. Sport fans as the subject of memory in the construction of collective memory

The subject of collective memory is a group of people sharing common experience. It is the constructor and conservator of collective memory. The subject of collective memory in Genius Loci of stadium is a group of sport fans who watch or experience sport events and activities directly or indirectly in stadium. It is a place to hold sport events and experience the atmosphere of sports for the public. Genius Loci is the foundation of stadium, and also the embodiment of the unique characteristics, which provides orientation for people to identify themselves in such an environment[5]. Therefore, as the subject of collective memory and the direct perceiver of Genius Loci, the construction of collective memory indirectly fosters Genius Loci of stadium, so as to maintain the stable performance of the function of stadium. The construction of collective memory depends on the group's representation of the spatial structure and events of stadium in the past, thus forming the characteristics of it, which is the spirit of the place[6].

The subject of memory is divided into direct participation type and indirect participation type[7]. Direct participants refer to those who have directly experienced the atmosphere brought by sport events in stadium, and these people have much clearer feelings about Genius Loci of stadium. In general, these subjects are sport fans who are willing to invest time and experience in watching sport events in stadium. While the indirect participants refer to the group who never watch sport events in stadium but get impression of stadium for the events and history. These people have relatively less feelings about stadium. Feeling Genius Loci of the stadium need to take advantage of sport events and activities to establish relationship with stadium[4][5]. The increase of events provides more opportunities for direct participants to enter into the stadium and have a visual experience, providing space for them to experience Genius Loci here. Meanwhile the non-match opening of stadium provides the indirect participants with the opportunity to experience Genius Loci of the stadium, combining with the cognition of the stadium through historic records and news reports. Stadium is a typical kind of sport architecture and also a part of urban public buildings. Genius Loci is the soul and meaning of existing

stadium, which provides the orientation and identification for people in stadium. Orientation guarantees people not lose themselves in a new place and identification makes people feel comfortable instead of resisting a place[8]. It fosters the construction of collective memory. Collective memory is an accumulating construction of the past and people can compare the current Genius Loci with the one in different periods by collective memory. Therefore, as the direct perceiver of Genius Loci, the public's participation affects the spread of Genius Loci of stadium.

## **2.2. Sport events and activities as the carrier in the construction of collective memory**

The construction of collective memory depends on the carrier. It is a presentation form of collective memory. Maurice(1992) defined collective memory as the process and result of past shared by people from a specific social group[9]. Paul(1989) used social memory instead of collective memory in how societies remember. He thought that memory should be passed and maintained by ceremony. Commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices are the important method of inheritance[10]. Pierre(1996) believed that space is beneficial to arouse collective memory[11]. In the space of memory, both historical and modern are reflected. In such a space, the memory of people exists in both the space and the self-constructed emotional space, which reflects the complex social relations and local construction between people and space[12]. Genius Loci is the emotional space which is the result of the connection between people and space. Stadium is the place to arouse the memory of people to feel Genius Loci, while sport events and activities are the form of commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices to stimulate people's memory deeply.

The commemorative ceremonies can arouse the resonance of a group of people about a certain period of history in the past, which forms the collective memory and are shared by these people. The memory of stadium of these people is constructed by famous sport events or activities that took place in stadium. Meanwhile stadium, as a memory place, provides spatial support for the construction of collective memory. It is an accumulation to the past, also the presentation of people' cognition of stadium in a certain period which impressed people most. It depends on the orientation and identification originated in Genius Loci of stadium. As a carrier, the sport events and activities in stadium provide space for people to fully experience Genius Loci.

Genius Loci is the sense of space, which is produced from the process from identifying the place to establish deep connection with the place. The formation of Genius Loci is to use the character of architecture to establish intimate relationship between people and architecture[13]. The overall structure of stadium provides material instructions, sport events and activities provide a strong sport atmosphere for Genius Loci. The continuity of sport events and activities connects different times and forms memory fragments of different periods. The fragments at different periods recorded the development of Genius Loci in stadium and indirectly reflected the essential functions of stadium and the functions of it as public architecture in the process of social development. The essential function is presented through sport activities and sport events, which determines the existential foothold of people and stadium. Sport events and activities foster memory fragments constructed and shared by people. The memory fragments make people feel the continuous development of Chinese sports and generate a strong sense of identification. Constructing collective memory through sport events and activities can deepen impression of stadium and keep it in people' mind. Sport events and activities held in different period improve the feelings of Genius Loci of stadium.

## **2.3. Stadium carrying Genius Loci as the object in the construction of collective memory**

The object of collective memory is what the subject of memory remembers when the memory is constructed. Genius Loci of stadium is a kind of ideology, which is a subjective feeling given

by stadium. It is the result that people find their identification in a new space. People construct collective memory of Genius Loci based on the whole structure of stadium. Therefore, the object of memory in the construction of collective memory is Genius Loci in stadiums. It shows through the overall structure of stadium. It provides a specific space and a specific sport atmosphere through internal and external environment and collective memory is formed through individual's different feelings towards stadium. Genius Loci is an important way to measure whether people have a deep impression on stadium and determines whether stadium has architectural vitality[5][13].

In the process of constructing collective memory, Genius Loci of stadium is the embodiment of existence of the stadium in different periods, and the change of it also reflects the change of the historical mission and function in different periods. Therefore, although the collective memory is the construction of the past, people' memory of Genius Loci of stadium is the embodiment of the demands for stadium. Genius Loci of stadium creates a sport atmosphere for people through the facilities in the stadium. People obtain orientation and identification and then generate sense of belonging. Genius Loci makes people and stadium harmony. The harmonious coexistence guarantees the stable development of Genius Loci and also makes collective memory profound. Conversely, the construction of collective memory of Genius Loci of stadium reflects the real meaning of stadium in people' mind, which is not only the full realization of the stadium functions, but also the inheritance and display of culture. Nowadays stadium has gradually been the product of the games. Ignoring the actual remand of stadium makes it become lifeless consumption objects, which are discarded after use and Genius Loci of stadium begins to weaken[14]. The collective memory is constructed in a certain period with clear Genius Loci stadium. Genius Loci is originated from the space. It leads people to establish the relationship between themselves and stadium through the characters of stadium. If Genius Loci is the soul, stadium is the body to carry it and sport events and activities are the decoration to show the soul. Therefore, stadium is the most important condition to produce Genius Loci. While economic benefit is the most important aspect to be paid more attention than how to keep a stadium alive in the construction of stadium. Collective memory shows the memory of the past, but it serves the reality. Collective memory is only constructed when Genius Loci of stadium is clear. Weakening Genius Loci of stadium directly reflected the memory of stadium is vague and it hardly forms a memory fragment shared by a group of people. The loss of Genius Loci in stadium causes the decline of cognition to stadium for people at the present stage. It makes stadium lose its foothold in the process of social development. Moreover, it cannot provide reference for the formation or improvement of Genius Loci of sport stadium.

### **3. The Existing Problems of Genius Loci of Sport Stadiums**

#### **3.1. Lacking chance to enter into sport stadium hinders interaction between people and stadium**

The formation of Genius Loci of stadium needs people deeply interact with stadium. The feeling of subject is the first step to identify Genius Loci of stadium. At present stage, the openness of the stadium is low, and the opportunity for people to feel sports and have emotional resonance is reduced, so it is difficult to interact with Genius Loci of stadium. Opening hour determines whether people have opportunity to enter into stadium. Few sport events held in stadium limit the times that people can get into stadium to feel Genius Loci. The openness except sport events is the main chance for indirect participants to get in touch with stadium. No matter sport events and activities or just a space for mass sports, the maintenance and operation costs of some mega stadiums are relatively high. Therefore, some stadiums would be idle than open to the public. These stadiums once held mega sport events, condensing a certain sport atmosphere, is not only an important segment of the public memory, but also an important carrier of the

construction of collective memory. The indirect participants lack the field experience in stadium and lose the way they construct the initial memory of the stadium through the events or reports. The memory without space supporting hinders people' perception of stadium to some extent. Genius Loci rooted in sport context of the specific group has gradually weakened due to the lack of continuous interaction through sport events[15].

### **3.2. The low continuity of sport events and activities which causes sport stadium idling impedes the spread of Genius Loci of sport stadium**

The construction of collective memory of Genius Loci of stadium needs the help of a certain carrier. The material carrier is the stadium where Genius Loci is formed, while the non-material carrier is the sport events that take a place in the stadium. Sport events at each period guarantee the continuity of memory fragments, which is also an important guarantee for the spread of Genius Loci of sport stadium. However, due to the rapid development of sports in China, the number of stadiums began to increase rapidly, but the number of sport events is relatively limited. Some stadiums have the lack of reasonable planning at the beginning of construction, and the starting point of construction is to build for a certain sport events. After the game, the imperfect construction appeared gradually[15]. The number of sport events that some stadiums can undertake is very limited, and idling has become the daily condition. This situation leads to a decrease in the number of direct participants involved in Genius Loci of sport stadium. A stadium without events is like an empty city, unable to create a sense of belonging and identification for people, so Genius Loci of stadium cannot be formed, and it becomes an urban building without a soul. The continuity of sport events is an important way to construct the collective memory, and also creates a special sport atmosphere for stadium. Genius Loci of stadium relies on the continuous sport atmosphere to make people have enough cognition and then develop steadily[6].

### **3.3. The location trend from city to suburb blocks the spread of Genius Loci of sport stadium**

Most stadiums in China are located in the suburbs of the cities. Although they can be satisfied with the harmony of the surrounding natural environment, the interaction between stadiums and people is severely restricted by the inconvenient traffic and other conditions. In collective memory of Genius Loci of stadium, the construction of the stadium itself, as the place for the construction of the collective memory and the basis for the presentation of Genius Loci of sport stadium, is of great significance. In order to relieve the pressure of urban development and meet the scale of sport events and activities, some newly built stadiums are located in the suburbs, so as to reduce costs and promote the development of new urban areas. However, there are relatively few traffic and auxiliary facilities in the suburbs, and the phenomenon of post-game idling is serious[16]. The overall layout shows the trend of extending from the city to the suburbs, such as Guangdong Olympic Stadium, Shenyang Olympic Sport Center into and so on. The problems caused by living areas far away from urban residents and the inconvenient transportation make people pay less attention to stadium. Genius Loci of stadium is the result of deep communication between people and place. Stadium located in the suburb fails to bring a sense of belonging and identification to people. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for people to experience the stadium. Without interaction with people, there is no recipient of Genius Loci of stadium. This phenomenon causes stadium in people' potential memory more and more fuzzy, even if there are the sport events as memory stimulation. In such cases, the transmission of Genius Loci of sport stadium will be hindered.

## **4. Suggestions**

#### **4.1. As the subject of the memory, people's intuitive feeling and experience of sport stadium is the key to the spread of Genius Loci**

Increasing the opening hours of stadium so that the public can fully experience the atmosphere of the inside stadium is critical for the spread of Genius Loci. At the same time, constructing museum of stadium or related publicity provide the public with the opportunity to participate in the specific history of stadium. Compared with indirect participants, direct participants have more opportunities to enter into stadium, and can deeply feel Genius Loci through sport events and the environment inside stadium. However, there are relatively few opportunities for indirect participants to enter into stadium, and their cognition of stadium comes from the different platforms. Therefore, it is difficult for them to interact with stadium. The impression of stadium becomes weaker and weaker, leading to problems in the continuation and dissemination of Genius Loci of stadium. The dissemination of it should be based on a process from the recognition of stadium to the stadium and the opening of stadium are important factors to promote the continuation of Genius Loci of stadium. People's cognition of stadium can be strengthened by sport events and the continuous sport events can stimulate deepening of the memory. In addition, history and culture are effective aspects that can arouse the resonance of people's memory[17]. By exploring the historic and cultural attributes of stadium, people can acquire identification and belonging in their own culture system to a certain extent. In this case, it is particularly important to establish the historic museum of stadium itself, so that people can understand the history of it and its role in social development. These glorious histories constitute many memory fragments shared by people in collective memory, and draw this memory to the cognition of the stadium. The continuation of Genius Loci of stadium also creates life for stadium and enriches the history of it. According to the memory place of Pierre Nora's, it points out that place can help awaken the collective memory. Therefore, increasing opening time of stadium, creating chance to experience stadium can foster the history and culture of stadium and the internal external environment combined to promote the construction of collective memory. Genius Loci of stadium can be continued by the existence of stadium more clearly felt by people. The process of collective memory construction is the process from recognition to the establishment of a deep connection with the stadium, and also the process from Genius Loci pointing out the orientation to feel sense of belonging. The continuous construction of the collective memory of stadium is the way to constantly consolidate Genius Loci of stadium and leave a deep impression on the memory of people[17][18].

#### **4.2. Sport events is the main way for the public to interact with Genius Loci**

Sport events and activities are the carrier to connect people and Genius Loci. Therefore, making full use of existing stadium and continuity of sport events provide the public with the opportunity to experience the sport atmosphere and overall environment. It will promote the recognition and continuation of genius loci of stadium. Sport events is the carrier of memory to construct Genius Loci of stadium. Therefore, the development of sport events can greatly affect the cognition of people to Genius Loci. The construction of collective memory is also an important means to strengthen the people's cognition of Genius Loci. Stadiums provide places for people to construct memories, while sport events provide opportunities for them to interact with Genius Loci[15][17][18]. As a social activity, the continuity of sport events can gradually stimulate the subject's impression of memory deeply, thus deepening people's cognition of stadium. Deep impression of stadium brought by sport events is a public desire to know more about stadium, providing an opportunity to identify Genius Loci of stadium and establish a deep connection with it. In this context, existing stadiums should be fully utilized instead of constructing new stadiums to realize the function maximization. To some extent, existing stadiums are historic and cultural heritage, such as Beijing workers' stadium, Shenyang Wulihe Stadium, Shanghai Stadium, or other stadiums that have hosted some famous sport events, such as Beijing

National Stadium, Nanjing Olympic Sport Center, etc. Collective memory of Genius Loci of stadium is constructed based on these two aspects. Existing stadiums can avoid the disadvantages brought by building new stadiums, and is more conducive to the continuation and dissemination of the spirit of the place. Sport events or activities in different periods connect the people's memory of stadium and contributes to the construction of collective memory. The increase of sport events in the stadium provides the opportunity for people to enter into stadium to experience Genius Loci of stadium, and promote the continuation of it[19].

#### **4.3. The construction of sport stadium should involve in surroundings and be a part of city**

The basic function of stadium, as a sport architecture, is to hold sport events. However, stadium is also an urban building, participating in social development. As the object of memory, Genius Loci of stadium makes a deep impression on people and forms collective memory through the symbiosis between stadium and environment. The deep memory of Genius Loci depends on integration of stadium and environment, not only the integration of the inside of stadium and sport atmosphere, but also the integration of outside and overall urban environment. The internal environment of stadium can arouse the perception of the participants to Genius Loci of stadium. The collective memory of the past history or events in stadium is also aroused to promote the stable development. The external environment includes natural environment, urban environment, and the historic and cultural environment, which reflects the attribute of stadium as an urban building[5][7][15]. For the indirect participants, Genius Loci of stadium reflects not only the characteristics of sports, but also how a building perfectly integrates into the environment, bringing people orientation and identification recognition. Therefore, the construction of Genius Loci of stadium should pay more attention to the integration of environment. Internal environment of stadium should be oriented to arouse the collective memory of people, and present the memories of the past in the form of materialization, so as to get the resonance of people's memory in a specific period and establish their identification. At the same time, the potential urban architectural function of stadium should be explored reasonably to highlight the historic recording function of stadium. Sport events and activities at a specific time evoke a retrospective view of a city[19]. The historical review is a means for people to explore their own identity in the city, and the process building a sense of belonging as the owner of the city is also the process in which Genius Loci of stadium plays its role. The integration of stadium with the natural environment and the overall urban environment is reflected on a certain sense of existence in the environment. It can become a landmark building to give the public a sense of direction in the environment. The mega construction of event-oriented stadium makes the formation of Genius Loci of stadium limited by the realization of sport functions. Single architectural function limits the vitality of stadium to events, and stadium without the support of events and the integrated environment hinders the construction of collective memory. However, perfect function fosters the construction of people's perception in stadium. It arouses the memory of Genius Loci of stadium through the details of the external environment, and strengthens the memory by sport events. The real meaning of existence of stadium as a building can be realized, if the process of collective memory of Genius Loci in stadium is more solid[15][17].

## **5. Conclusion**

Stadium is the place of sport atmosphere, and also the carrier to record history. Genius Loci is the existence foothold of stadium in the city and people's memory. Inevitably, people always move in the place full of various memories, which are condensed and stored in various architecture[20]. Collective memory of Genius Loci of stadium is what people actually remembered about stadium. This memory is kept by people and deepened through sport events. As the material presentation, the development of stadium will influence the spread of Genius Loci. The

construction of collective memory is a way to foster Genius Loci of stadium. Stadium provides the space for people to create collective memory and Genius Loci. Sport events and activities helps record history of stadium, as a reminder. People constructs memory about stadium, so as to feel Genius Loci of sport stadium.

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## 7. Contribution

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	Initial name	Contribution
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Corresponding Author*	SHB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Corresponding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>-Play a decisive role in modification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>-Significant contributions to concepts, designs, practices, analysis and interpretation of data <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
Co-Author	BXF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Participants in Drafting and Revising Papers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li>-Someone who can explain all aspects of the paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>

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