China rejuvenated? Governmentality, subjectivity, and normativity: the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games
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INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

POSITIONING THIS RESEARCH

On July 13, 2001, I was watching the late night news reports at home in Hong Kong. The news about China winning the right to host the 2008 Olympics electrified the people in China. I could vividly recall the images of many Chinese in Beijing running on the streets and screaming “We got it! We got it!” (成功了！成功了!). The atmosphere was intoxicating. According to a poll conducted by the International Olympic Committee (hereafter IOC), Beijing, among all the bidding cities, had the highest support rate from its citizens in bidding for the event: 95 percent of the city’s population. The images of Chinese people celebrating this successful bid at Tiananmen Square were broadcast all over the world repeatedly over the years. I had seen these images so often that they have become my Olympic memory too.

About a year before the Games kicked off, this research started. My interests in the Beijing Olympics intensified and this paralleled with the growing media attention on the Games: Various global media agencies and the media in the Netherlands, where I have been living since 2005, had made various special features and reports about China and the Olympics. The discourse of “a rising China,” coupled with the spectacle effect generated by the modern Olympics, had made China an eye-catching media subject. I recall a special news report on Nederland 1 in the early summer of 2007 about Beijingers learning English

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3 Nederland 1 is the Netherlands’ first national television station. According to SKO (Stichting KijkOnderzoek) Annual Report in 2008, Nederland 1 was the most viewed channel in the country.
to welcome the foreign visitors in the Olympic year. The report ended with the Dutch reporter asking an old lady in Tiananmen Square to say something in English. She hesitated and appeared to be a bit shy, but she said “Welcome to Beijing!” anyway. Then, she burst into a spontaneous and bright laughter. Learning a foreign language at her age was not an easy task and yet, she appeared to do it with great pleasure and joyfulness. I was impressed by the lightness and cheerfulness of this report, and it did — for a moment — set me thinking that the Beijing Olympics would be a carnival-like cosmopolitan event. The reason I remember this episode so well has to a large extent to do with the rarity of this kind of happy report outside China; whereas in China, ironically, reports related to the population’s views toward the Games were exclusively happy and positive.

When I went to Beijing in autumn 2007, the Beijing in front of me was a place loaded with expectations and excitement, ready for China’s first Olympics. All the preparations were proceeding apace. The attention-drawing National Stadium (aka Bird’s Nest) was under construction but it was not a securitized area — no fence was built to prevent the public from accessing the site. I could easily approach some migrant workers who were working on site at that time. They told me where they came from, what they did before coming to Beijing, and how much they got paid: if I recall correctly, RMB 10 for paving a square feet of stone on the ground.

Yet, during my fieldwork in 2008, Beijing was entirely different from the joyous aura that radiated in the 2001 or the 2007 in my memory. Sequences of globally mediated events in early 2008 had replaced the previous casualness with an increasingly securitized and tense atmosphere in Beijing and in China. What draws my research curiosity was the sharp contrast between the seemingly overwhelming support of the Games in China[^4] and the global contestations of China. Not that there was no contestation within mainland China but there was a relative lack of domestic protests (Teets, Rosen, and Gries 2010) — at least, not as visible or audible as the contestations outside China — and the majority of the population, drawing on my observations during the fieldwork, seemed to be keen supporters of the Games. Many of them believed that the Games — despite the amount of resources they cost — would advance China’s status in the global arena, and that the

[^4]: The Tibetan uprisings and the Xinjiang terrorist attacks that happened in 2008 were not against the Olympics per se, those were attempts to seize the Olympics to make their voices heard.
Chinese Communist Party (hereafter CCP)\(^5\) and its current leaders were doing their jobs to make China a strong and respectable nation-state in the world. Academic works related to the Beijing Games have also pointed out this overwhelming support of the Games from the Chinese population (see, for example, Brady 2009a; Teets, Rosen, and Gries 2010; J. Dong 2010; Dong and Mangan 2008a; Nyiri, Zhang, and Varrall 2010). Then, how could we explain the Chinese population’s support to the Beijing Olympics and the government? What motivates an individual to become the active subject of the state?

This public support of the Games seems to challenge the prevailing view of seeing the Chinese government as an oppressive government and the people as the oppressed victims of the state, living in scornful conditions.\(^6\) It also contradicts what some scholars like Anne-Marie Brady (2009a) seem to believe as the successful application of a top-down approach: The CCP’s propaganda has successfully indoctrinated the masses with pro-PRC (the People’s Republic of China) nationalism. Following this line of thinking, power is possessed by the government to repress the powerless people. Propaganda is a negative instrument that brainwashes the masses. I find this view far too totalizing and simplistic. If all the CCP does is to repress and force its will on its people, then how could one explain this consistency of pro-PRC nationalism? And if all the governing body does is to make the people feel deprived, wouldn’t the people feel discontented and rise up to overthrow the regime? As Foucault writes:

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\text{The notion of repression is quite inadequate for capturing what is precisely the productive aspect of power. In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition. Now I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one}
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\(^5\) I use the Chinese state, the party-state, the Chinese government, the CCP, the governing body, and the ruling authority interchangeably to refer to the governing body of PRC. I do not, however, suggest that it is a monolithic entity. As Bruce J. Dickson points out, “The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is monolithic neither in its relationship with society nor in its attitude toward adaptation. Instead, it has forged multi-dimensional relationships, depending on the sector of the society, how it fits into the party’s modernization strategy, and the nature of its claims” (2010: 36). In chapter 7, I use “the state” to refer to the sovereign authority of the PRC; whereas to refer to the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, I use either the Hong Kong government or the HKSAR government.

\(^6\) One example of such a representation is: “The awarding of the Olympic Games to Beijing is no light thing. People could die from it — or be tortured or banished to a dungeon or camp” (Editors, NR. 2001). For more examples, see Mobley 2008; Kindred 2001.
which has been curiously widespread. If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourses. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (1980a: 119)

Based on what I experienced and observed during the fieldwork, I find the strategies and tactics deployed by the ruling authorities more productive than an imposing negative form of power would be. This study of the Beijing Olympics moves beyond the narrowly construed idea of coercive or oppressive power to look at the broader ruling strategies that shape the behavior of individuals. The multifaceted strategies, tactics, and discourses deployed by the ruling authorities sustain an order of things and values in such a way that drive individuals to commit themselves actively to the goals of the party-state. This dissertation sets out to examine how this process of subjectification is achieved. In other words, I examine the processes under which individuals become self-directed subjects of their own and whereby they internalize state-defined norms/ideals in their belief to embrace the nation’s dream. In such processes of subjectification, the media plays a key role, as a number of studies have highlighted the instrumentality of the media for the party-state (Landsberger 2009; Brady 2009a, 2006; Latham 2010) as well as the centrality of new and old media to the Chinese population (Latham 2009). In addition, through engaging with Foucaultian concepts and analyses, I also seek to reflect upon the questions of what China means for Foucault, what Foucault means for China, and what this interrogation adds to knowledge-production in China studies.

This chapter unfolds in four parts. The first section discusses Foucaultian “analytics of power” (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982: 184, 188), disciplinarity, biopower, and governmentality. The second section illustrates the strategies and tactics used by the government to garner the people’s support to the Beijing Games and ultimately to the support of the CCP. I begin this section with a discussion on the discourse of China’s great rejuvenation, a discourse that intertwines with the discourse of national humiliation and the
A MOBILIZATION STATE: TURNING THE OBJECTS OF GOVERNANCE INTO ACTIVE SUBJECTS

The legitimacy of the Chinese party-state relies on much more than the negative power of censorship and control; rather than see the PRC as a police state, it is better to understand China as a mobilization state that both encourages and feeds off of the positive productive power of popular feelings and mass action. (Callahan 2010: 25)

China as a single-party state, coupled with the negative news around its use of negative power like media censorship and the prosecution of dissent and dissidents, could easily lead one to assume that CCP’s source of domination is derived from its deployment of force and ideology. On reading Foucault’s works on the disciplinary power, and later on biopower and governmentality, Jeffery T. Nealon (2008) suggests that Foucault never excludes the existence of negative forms of power — the sovereign power — that control and repress. Various theorists have also argued that negative power coexists with what Foucault terms the productive forms of power (read, for example, Lemke 2000; Sigley 2004; Dean 2002; Hindess 2001). The former, as Foucault argues, is too easy to spot and

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7 This claim of Chinese nation is a Han-centric notion that demands the other fifty-five ethnic minorities to be subsumed in the larger notion of Chinese nation.
therefore is a less effective and more costly way of domination. Also, in adherence to Foucault’s notions of power and governmentality, which I elaborate in details below and throughout this dissertation, the negative power like censorship and control could be deployed as tactics of governance. In Foucault’s words, “even though consensus and violence are the instruments or the results, they do not constitute the principle or the basic nature of power” (1982: 220). What energizes the CCP’s rule in China is its tactical and strategic ways of deploying various means of governance.

The Chinese government initiated various promotion activities and programs like the volunteering services, civilized behavior campaigns, patriotic education, etc. It did not force these campaigns upon the citizens by law or by force. What one could witness — demonstrated through my case studies — were the ways in which a large number of individuals willingly submitted themselves to these practices. As Peter H. Gries writes, “nations do not act; individuals act” (2005: 257). Power should not be understood as something that is possessed solely by the sovereign state to impose on its people. In Foucault’s words:

Power must by [be] analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (1980a: 98)

Think, for instance, of the 1.7 million volunteers who served in the Olympics (the largest number in Olympic history), the majority of whom did not receive any financial remuneration. Furthermore, according to my interviews and observations, most of them had enjoyed their volunteering experiences, as discussed in greater details in chapter 4. Financial expenses in hosting such a mega-event were huge and the state managed to
mobilize its human resources at the minimal cost. This example, along with the other examples shown in this dissertation, demonstrates that: “the exercise of power is not a violence that sometimes hides, or an implicitly renewed consent. It operates on the field of possibilities in which the behavior of active subjects is able to inscribe itself” (Foucault 2002b: 341). The power exercised by the government to attain support and maintain its leadership within the PRC should be understood as the productive forms of power that function to achieve, not to oppress or to destroy. In a word, this power is much more intense and effective in dissemination, and gets things done at the most economical way. It is “much more efficient and much less wasteful (less costly economically, less risky in their results, less open to loopholes and resistances)” (Foucault 1980a: 119).

Foucault’s analysis of power-relations should not be read as a theory that makes universal claim about power-relations. To Foucault, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) elaborate, power is “not meant as a context-free, ahistorical, objective description. Nor does it apply as a generalization to all of history” (1982: 184). What Foucault formulates is “an analytics of power” (ibid.), in Gutting’s words, “the general mode of thinking (episteme)” that makes analysis of power-relations possible across a wide array of beliefs and practices, and in various places and time (2005: 57). One central thread running through this dissertation is the ways in which Foucault’s analytics of power help examine the processes whereby individuals became active and autonomous subjects helping the state to achieve its desired results in the context of the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Disciplinary Power, Biopower, and Governmentality

The disciplinary power works on what the body does and will do, that is, the capability of shaping possible actions: “not only what they do, but also on what they are, will be, may be” (Foucault 1995: 18). Foucault elaborates at great length in Discipline and Punish on the transformation of sovereign power — symbolized by the spectacle of punishment and targeting on individual criminal body — to the new technique of disciplinary power that operates on the larger social body “to everyday life in the factory, the home, the school, the army, the hospital” (ibid.: 82). Disciplinarity works through ubiquity. It is a mode of power that “produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (ibid.: 138). In disciplinarity,
one sees an increasing intensity and efficiency of power in contrast to the sovereign power that is costly and limited in effectiveness. In Foucault’s words, the disciplinary power is “not to punish less but to punish better” (ibid.: 82). The ways in which the Chinese subjects were guided to behave in a “civilized” manner in the period around the Olympics (often conforming to the Western definition of proper behavior) display the working of this form of power.

Biopower carries the disciplinary power to a greater intensity and in an ever more abstract and ubiquitous sense. Disciplinary power requires specific sites and specific bodies to generate the potential acts — for example, Chinese athletes embodied the nation’s dream to train hard in the training camps and to perform well in the competitions, the Olympic volunteers behaved properly and served people selflessly at the volunteer stations, and Beijing taxi drivers took on the driving civility requirements. Biopower works inside and outside of these specific sites and specific bodies. Biopower is, according to Foucault:

A new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology of power does not exclude the former, does not exclude disciplinary technology, but it does dovetail into it, integrate it, modify it to some extent, and above all, use it by sort of infiltrating it, embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques. This new technique does not simply do away with the disciplinary technique, because it exists on another level, on a different scale, and because it has a different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments. Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being. (2003a: 242–43).

Biopower targets the living man, that is, the population as a whole. It is a mode of power that manages, administers, and regulates life. Its goal is to make a better future for the entire population. It works through regularizing and setting social norms: “It effects distributions around the norm” (Foucault 1984b: 266). The CCP’s promotion of model citizens since its establishment in 1949 is one such practice. Lei Feng (雷锋), the model citizen promoted by Mao Zedong in the 1960s, is a representative example. Mao praised Lei, a solider of the People’s Liberation Army, for his selfless character and he urged the
population to follow in Lei’s footsteps to “dedicate one’s limited life to the unlimited service for the people” (把有限的生命投入到无限的为人民服务之中去). Lei and his model behavior — “serve the people” (为人民服务) — set the norms for the population. This example displays how biopower invests in managing “the living in the domain of value and utility” (ibid.: 266), not by coercion. Even after almost five decades, his name and his model character are still frequently brought up in the campaigns that promote ideal citizenry behavior, such as the Olympic Volunteer program elucidated in chapter 4. This is the same form of power that inscribes the feminine and masculine ideals onto the bodies of Chinese athletes, as discussed in chapter 3. Biopower invests in arranging life around norms. As Foucault puts it, an individual’s subjectivity “must be specified in terms not so much of the law as of the norm” (1995: 253). All these underline the importance of looking at how biopower, through the processes and the discourses of making a better life and a better future for the nation, has made Chinese subjects act out the responsibilities to display the best images of China so as to make China look good, unified, and strong.

The concept of governmentality sees how disciplinary power works along with biopower. Foucault coins the term governmentality to examine the art and rationalities of government with a focus to study the link between the practices of governing and the practices of the self. It is a critical analytical tool to examine the continuity between the government of a state and the governed (Foucault 1991: 91).

The word “government,” Foucault elucidates, not only refers to the administration of a state, it also means managing, guiding, and regulating the self, family, children, and the like (Foucault 1991: 87).

The practices of government are, on the one hand, multifarious and concern many kinds of people: the head of a family, the superior of a convent, the teacher or tutor of a child or pupil; so that there are several forms of government among which the prince’s relation to his state is only one particular mode; while on the other hand, all these other kinds of government are internal to the state or society. It is within the state that the father will rule the family the superior the convent, etc. Thus we find at once a plurality of forms of government and their immanence to the state; the
multiplicity and immanence of these activities distinguishes them radically from the
transcendent singularity of Machiavelli’s prince. (Foucault 1991: 91)

Government should be understood as “the conduct of conduct.” The editor of The
Foucault Effect Colin Gordon elaborates it as “a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or
affect the conduct of some person or persons” (Gordon 1991: 2). The art of government is
the art of guiding people to govern the self and the others that shapes the possible actions
(Foucault 1991: 91). That is to say, it aims “at once to ‘totalize’ and to ‘individualize’” its
effects (Gordon 1991: 3). Power of the state should therefore be examined by how it has
constructed an array of relations that make the system work. “[W]ith government it is a
question not of imposing law on men, but of disposing things: that is to say, of employing
tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics — to arrange things in
such a way that, through a certain number of means, such and such ends may be achieved”
(Foucault 1991: 95). With the emergence of governmentality, one witnesses the most
sophisticated and effective ways of power mechanism. In Nealon’s words, “power
increasingly comes to target the economic relations among bodies, rather than the bodies
‘themselves’” (2008: 53). Governmental power is the most virtual yet the most intensified,
economical, and efficient in achieving the governing targets and objectives. It exemplifies
the interplay of the technologies of domination and the technologies of the self — how the
individuals come to act toward the desired ends of the state. In the following section, I
discuss the array of strategies and tactics, and discourses that were mobilized by the
government to guide the processes of subjectification of its people during China’s Olympic
project.
NARRATING CHINA’S GREAT REJUVENATION: FROM THE AGE OF HUMILIATION TO THE AGE OF PRIDE AND GLORY

In the period leading up to the Beijing Games and the sixtieth anniversary of the PRC in 2009, numerous productions had been produced under the title “The Road to Rejuvenation” (复兴之路) — exhibitions, media productions,8 a large-scale “song and dance epic,”9 and books. The media also ceaselessly mentioned that China was on its way to a great rejuvenation. In the exhibition “The Road to Rejuvenation” at the Museum of the Chinese People’s Revolutionary Army,10 a quote from the Chinese leader Hu Jintao was highlighted:

Today, the development of the Chinese nation faces a rare historical opportunity, and the bright future of our nation’s great rejuvenation is laid out before our eyes. All the sons and daughters of China, including the people of the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, as well as overseas Chinese, should feel incomparably proud of being Chinese, take their share of the responsibility of bringing about this great rejuvenation and continue to write new chapters in the glorious annals of the history of the nation’s development with their hard work. Let us unite even more closely and continue to strive to build a moderately prosperous society in all aspects and achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.11

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8 Two TV series used the same title: The first one, The Road of Rejuvenation (复兴之路), is a 6-episode political commentary series (政论片), broadcast on CCTV1, the state television broadcaster in China, from Oct 10 to Oct 15, 2007 and it is accessible on CCTV.com http://finance.cctv.com/special/C19478/01/ (accessed on Jan 31, 2011); the second one, entitled The Road of Rejuvenation: A Record of 30 Years’ Reform (复兴之路 — 改革开放30年大事纪) is a 30-episode news documentary. On the cover, it says that the documentary was shown on CCTV but no exact time could be found. One could also buy a collection version, see http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5d88de2430100cu90.html (accessed on Jan 31, 2011); or, http://www.lpsave.com/list/368.html (accessed on Jan 31, 2011).

9 The song and dance epic performance of the same title was one of the shows that celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the PRC in 2009. According to Baidu Baike (百度百科), a Chinese language collaborative Web-based encyclopedia, the performance was believed to be one of the most important productions of our times, comparable to “The East is Red” and “The Song of Chinese Revolution.”

10 I visited this exhibition in May 2008. According to the museum information, this exhibition started in October 8, 2007. As for the duration of this exhibition, it is grouped as one of the theme exhibition in its website and the latest press release of it was on Dec 26, 2009. For more details, visit “News Material for the Exhibition of ‘The Road to Rejuvenation’ (复兴之路‘大型主题展览新闻素材’)” The Museum of the Chinese People’s Revolutionary Army [中国人民革命军事博物馆]. http://www.jb.mil.cn/zl/dxzl/fxzl/1163.shtml (accessed on Mar 3, 2012).

11 This is the official English translation in the exhibition.
The narration of China’s great rejuvenation is a discourse that echoes the globally circulated discourse of “a rising China.”[^12] The latter is often presented with a combination of dangers/threats and opportunities (Callahan 2005) or surprise and concern (Luo and Richeri 2010). Sometimes, threats prevail as the “Yellow Peril” Chinaphobes reveal (Caffrey 2008); whereas the discourse of China’s great rejuvenation — generated and circulated largely within the PRC — is a discourse that diverts the population to the present and a foreseeable future that is sowed with hope and promises. It serves to boost the population’s confidence toward China and its current leaders. As sinologist Vivienne Shue points out, “the present government, as we have all had occasion to note, associated itself most vigorously with the vision of a newly ‘rising China,’ a China that will no longer tolerate the bullying or the disdain of other nations, a China that will one day definitely outstrip the accomplishments of all other competitors” (2010: 51).

In Chinese, 复 means to return, to restore, and to repeat; whereas 兴 means to rise, to flourish, to be popular, and to be prosperous and strong. The combination of both characters means revival, a revival that is based upon China’s glorious past, the Sinic civilization. 复兴 is translated into rejuvenation (to make something lively and young again) in English. Yet, the Chinese characters are often used to refer to the Renaissance in Europe (文艺复兴). It is unknown whether it was a deliberate choice in using “rejuvenation” to avoid the overly confident connotation of a “Chinese Renaissance,” which may compromise China’s constant emphasis on “peaceful rise” (中国和平崛起) to the world.

The discourse of China’s great rejuvenation, as made evident by the contents of the exhibition and the media productions of the same title, obtains its power from the historical Chineseness and hints that this rejuvenation would parallel that of the past. China will flourish internally and then it will exert its influence across the globe. For example, the 6-episode political commentary series The Road of Rejuvenation (hereafter Rejuvenation) begins with the following narration:

In the Eastern part of the world, there exists a nation where its history and culture survive all the changes — China. Over the past few thousand years, the industrious

[^12]: Almost all academic articles on the Beijing Olympics — in varying degrees of significance — mentioned China’s spectacular economic growth, echoing the “rising China” discourse.
and courageous Zhonghua minzu [people of China] have created a splendid culture that has contributed a lasting role in the development of human civilization. In the year 1661, when Kangxi — the third emperor of the Qing Dynasty — succeeded to the throne, it marked the last Golden Age of the dynastic empire of China... Chinese who lived in the golden eras of Kangxi and Qianlong had no clue that they were facing a serious crisis. The Western colonialism that was hunting for resources and domination were spreading to the East. The drastic changes that China has never encountered for the past 3000 years were to arrive, Zhonghua minzu's [Chinese people’s] century-long difficult yet splendid journey of rejuvenation was about to start. (Episode 1)

The glorious past of the Chinese nation marks the beginning of this discourse. In bringing up the past glory of the Chinese civilization, the narration validates the existence of a great civilization — a historical Chineseness that is backed up by three thousand years of history (supported by the images of the Great Wall, Terracotta Army, and the Forbidden City in *Rejuvenation*), constituting a solid base for today’s great rejuvenation.
Figure 1.1 illustrates this discourse of China’s great rejuvenation. The beginning point here is 1661, as _Rejuvenation_ suggested. This golden age could also be stretched to the Ming dynasty (Zheng He’s seven voyages are said to have spread the Sinic civilization around the globe), the Tang, or the Han dynasties. From this point (1661) onward, China began a period of depletion. The Opium War (1840–1842) and the Treaty of Nanking (1842) are two significant markers as they are “usually seen as the beginning of the century of national humiliation” (Callahan 2006: 180). The Revolution of 1911 (when the Qing dynasty was overthrown) was mentioned only to highlight that the governing bodies between 1911 and 1949 were incapable of saving China from the turmoil. The establishment of the new China in 1949 is often marked as the end of the century of national humiliation (Callahan 2006, 2007; C. Hughes 2006a), and where the national salvation began. It was also at this point that China started to regain its strength and began its journey of rejuvenation. The CCP was therefore presented as the only rightful leader that could bring China a better future as China’s scale of influence started to reach out further to the Sinic world and the globe. The “reform and opening” (改革开放) policy initiated by Deng Xiaoping between 1978–1979 connected China back to the world, a point where China began to interact with, and be exposed to, other global factors such as the changes in global political economy (e.g. inter-city competition, financial crises), differences in political systems (e.g. differences between a democratic system and an one-party political system), and contestations of Chineseness (e.g. politics of identity and politics of representation).

Here, we witness how China’s political, economic, and cultural impacts have expanded prominently. The returns of Hong Kong (1997) and Macau (1999) allowed the CCP to discursively claim its place in cleansing the humiliating and shameful past, which serves as yet another proof of China being a step closer to great rejuvenation. Illustrated here in figure 1.1, the 2008 Beijing Olympics was discursively produced as the largest hallmark signifying China’s ascendency and it was expected to amplify China’s influence within China, the Sinic world (which includes all the Chinese overseas communities), and across the globe. Episode 6 of _Rejuvenation_ said:

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13 The Ming dynasty ruled between 1368 and 1644.
14 The Tang Dynasty ruled between 618 and 907. It was taken as one of China’s golden eras. The Silk Road and the maritime trade both brought prosperity to China and spread its cultural influence across the region. Today’s Chinatowns are literally translated as “The street of Tang people.” The Han Dynasty ruled between 206 B.C. and 220 C.E.; it was China’s second imperial dynasty. The word “Han” remains in use to describe the majority of Chinese people — the Han ethnic. All these dynasties are generally referred to as China’s golden ages.
The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games are approaching. For this long-awaited moment, China has already done a lot of preparations; in order to welcome this grand Olympics, China has already opened its arms to embrace the world. A completely open China is a step closer to the nation’s dream of great rejuvenation.

The Beijing Games was the first event that allowed the Chinese government to shine and promote itself on the global stage. The spectacular effects generated by the Beijing Olympics were seen as a base upon which a promising future would be built. This discursive vision about a bright, stable, and prosperous China was irresistible; it lured, influenced, and guided Chinese subjects to embrace the Olympic project and the related policies. Just as Foucault reminds us, “power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realize, it produces effects at the level of desire” (1980a: 59). The discourse of China’s great rejuvenation intertwines with two other discourses: the discourse of national humiliation and the discourse of pride and glory. These discourses are put in motion through acts of memory. Together, these discourses garner support for the discourse of the CCP as the rightful and legitimate leader for the nation. In figure 1.2, I visually elaborate how these three discourses, coupled with the strategic and tactical uses of media and technology as well as Chineseness and soft power, helped the state gain the population’s support for the 2008 Olympics, specified by the core “2008 BOG.” The arrow-shape endorsed in each of these elements indicates their interconnectedness, and how they worked to strengthen each other.
1. The Discourse of National Humiliation

Collective memory binds a people to an imagined community (B. Anderson 1983; Kong 1999; Bardenstein 1999). It is a set of “facts” and “truth” produced to strengthen a community’s own uniqueness vis-à-vis its alterity. Memory is more powerful than history. “History is not only a science but also a form of memory. What science has fixed, memory can modify; memory can work in such a way that the uncompleted is brought to a conclusion” (Buci-Glucksmann, quoted in Bal and Vanderburgh 1999: 5). Memory of the past is about the formation of a particular truth regime of the past, the present, and the future. It exemplifies the mechanism of power/knowledge: “Knowledge and power are integrated with one another, and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power…. It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power” (Foucault 1980a: 52). In
producing the history and the memory of China’s humiliating past, the ruling authority guides the emotions and affects of its subjects; and in so doing, the government manages its relationship with those governed.

The symbolic value of the Olympics to China has been amplified by the discourse of national humiliation (Z. Luo 1993; Callahan 2004, 2006; Gries 2004; Cohen 2002), a discourse that often goes concomitantly with the insulting title “the sick man of Asia” (东亚病夫). In the state-sanctioned narration of China’s contemporary history, it always begins with China’s traumatic past. Episode 1 of Rejuvenation devoted a sizable narration to this national trauma:

Quote 1: The two years that followed the Opium War, the Qing government lost again and again. In the end, it was forced to sign a peace treaty. Historians called this war the Opium War. The ancient China began its contemporary history this way.

Quote 2: The Opium War was a turning point in Chinese history. The Qing government ceded Hong Kong Island, paid twenty-one million silver dollars, etc., those were some of the harsh terms included in the Treaty of Nanking, a treaty that showed how the Chinese nation had fallen under the military threat posed by the Western colonialists; and how it was shamed and humiliated, felt lost and confused by all these sudden changes. From then on, the Chinese society had gradually deteriorated to become a semi-colony and semi-feudal society.

The discourse of national humiliation defines the worst historical moment in Chinese civilization, when China became a “semi-colony” and “on the verge of being subjugated” (Episode 2, Rejuvenation). A sequence of other events such as the Second Opium War (1856–60), the sacking of the Old Summer Palace (1860), the Sino-French War (1884–85), and the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) were mentioned to give a dark description of this traumatic past. This past — as the word humiliation suggests — imposes a collective affect on all Chinese. The narration of the attack of the Eight-nation Alliance (八国联军) in 1900 demonstrates such effects:
Each country’s military force seized a district to station; they required all Chinese families residing in their district to hang the occupying nations’ national flags. At that point, eight foreign countries’ flags were flying in the heart of the Chinese nation. No country in the contemporary history of mankind has experienced this kind of humiliation; the whole of China was like being torn apart. (Episode 1, Rejuvenation)

The discourse of national humiliation is not new. This painful encounter with the foreign powers has allowed the nationalists, the ruling authorities of the Republic of China (ROC) then, and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) today to mobilize national sentiments via the binary construction of the West and “us.” The West serves as the hegemonic signifier in which “peoples in the so-called non-West have to refer to and rely on … so as to construct their own cultural and historical identity” (Naoki Sakai quoted in R. Chow 1998b: 4). The West stands for China’s alterity: It is the progressive, modern, and desirable, but also threatening Other that China loves and hates at the same time. This discursively generated struggle with the West exemplifies the government’s management of identity practices that helps direct and divert sentiments, and channel actions. As such, the discourse of national humiliation is bound with patriotism and nationalism (Callahan 2006; Zhao 2004; Z. Luo 1993; Lemke 2000; Cohen 2002, 2003). To quote Dai Jinhua, “the so-called surge of nationalistic sentiments was linked to China’s ongoing complex with the ‘world/West/America’” (2001: 169).

The discourse’s reappearance was first spotted in the 1990s as a governing strategy to channel internal discontents to the external enemies (Brady 2009a; Callahan 2006).

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15 The West or the Western does not refer to a monolithic entity. The ways I am using these terms in this dissertation adhere to this discursive symbolic struggle.

16 Gregory P. Fairbrother, in writing about political education in mainland China and Hong Kong, has provided a lucid explanation on both terms: Patriotism refers to “those attitudes toward the nation without reference to other nations (an emotional attachment to the nation, a sense of duty toward the nation, a positive impression of the Chinese people, and a belief that the nation’s interests should come before individual or regional interests)); nationalism refers to “those attitudes relating China to other nations (a belief in Chinese superiority, a desire for China to be more powerful, and a belief in the importance of patriotism over internationalism)” (2008: 390). If one looks in both terms’ Chinese translations, patriotism is translated into 爱国主义, literally means a love for the motherland; nationalism is translated into 国家主义 and 民族主义, the former is translated as the idea for one’s home-country and the latter refers to the idea for a nation. The idea of relating one’s country to the others is implied rather than explicitly articulated.

As Callahan suggests, it was brought “to positively distract students from criticizing China’s domestic corruption, and thus refocus their critical energies on foreigners as enemies” (2006: 201). The discourse sought to shape the conduct of Chinese subjects; it molded the ways in which individuals bear and exercise their subjectivity as Chinese. The Olympics was upheld as a moment of redemption for China to acquire prestige and recognition. This national humiliation discourse served as a painful reminder that justified China’s quest for pride and glory, and was considered a necessary step for China’s great rejuvenation. This discourse was strategically positioned to motivate, validate, and complete the narration of China’s great rejuvenation.

2. Pride and Glory — The Olympics as a Highly Prestigious International Event

In the lead-up to the Beijing Games, a few Olympics-related “facts” had been frequently brought up to stress the remarkable value of the Olympics to China. Of the twenty-nine Olympics in history, only a small number were not hosted in the U.S. or in Europe; and only two (the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1988 Seoul Olympics) took place in Asia. China is the third Asian country in the Olympic history. This rarity was translated into uniqueness and prestige, mirrored by the fact that the Olympics were for a long time — politically, economically, technologically, and culturally — dominated by the powerful West. As Close, Askew, and Xu write, the modern Olympics is a “Western-based club which runs the Games and will conform to a set of basic Western values, conventions and standards which underpin both the Games and Western social life in general” (2007: 121). The Tokyo Olympics and the Seoul Olympics were offered as concrete examples of both countries’ political ascendency to the world stage because of hosting the event. The government not only borrowed but also enhanced a prevailing “Asian discourse on the Olympics that emphasized the economic agendas, aims and advantages of the Games” (ibid.: 127).

Besides, the large number of interested cities and the vast amount of investment required for hosting the Games helped stress once again that the Olympics were of high symbolic value — only countries with substantial economic and political power would be

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assigned the right to host the Games. The frequent references to the potential political and economic gains by bringing up, for example, the economic gains of the 1984 Los Angeles Games and the 1992 Barcelona Games, the amount of money commercial sectors would pay for being Olympic sponsors, and gains from tourism made hosting the Olympics sound like a sure-win situation for China and the co-host city Hong Kong.

The scientific technology and organizational skills needed for hosting the Games, as emphasized in the slogan “High-tech Olympics” (科技奥运) and “Green Olympics” (绿色奥运), and manifested in various high-tech and environment-friendly construction projects such as the building of the National Stadium and the expansion of the Beijing Subway, translated the Olympic project into progress whereby China would be regarded as a modernized country. This strategic use of scientific knowledge, which Vivienne Shue (2010) calls scientific rationalism and pragmatic empiricism, was one of the three crucial elements (which I will elaborate later in the coming section) that the government mobilized to acquire legitimacy. Shue writes: “Scientific knowledge and technological know-how are presented by the state not only as exhibiting and belonging to a universal set of established, non-falsifiable truths; they are figured also as morally sound and good because, through science and technology, modernization will be achieved” (50). Visions, plans, and maps, as I unveil in chapter 6, enabled the population to imagine a promising China. It was a governmental tactic that guided the people’s gaze toward newness, progress, and development of a Chinese nation. This strategic employment of truth — both scientific and technologically sounding norms — was used not only to demonstrate the CCP’s competence in making a wise decision for the nation; but also to enhance the belief that China would be leaping toward a future filled with hope and joy — a future worth investing into. What we see were the ways in which the CCP managed to facilitate conditions and measures that made a pluralization of forms of government possible.

3. The CCP as the Legitimate Leader for the Chinese Nation

China hosting the Olympics was presented as a remarkable political and economic achievement, exhibiting the CCP’s capability of bringing glory and pride to the nation. An explicit and recurrent theme in *Rejuvenation* reads: China leaps forward to its great rejuvenation; it is only made possible by the good leadership of the CCP. The opening sequence of *Rejuvenation* deployed two sets of images: The first set were images denoting darkness, pessimism, and hopelessness (e.g. fire, people screaming and fighting, heavy thunderstorms, snowstorms, and dark skies surrounding the Forbidden City); and the second set were images denoting brightness, optimism, and hope (e.g. clear skies, pigeons flying over the Monument to the People’s Heroes [人民英雄纪念碑] in Tiananmen Square, the portrait of Mao Zedong, the newly refurbished Forbidden City, and the bright national flag of the PRC). The juxtaposition of these two sets of images, together with the voice-over narration, suggested that it was the present government that put an end to the century-long suffering of the people and that it was this legitimate leader that made China flourish again and spread China’s influence to different corners of the world.

Previous mis-governance that had brought shame and humiliation to the nation — as manifested in the discourse of national humiliation — was critically assessed. In *Rejuvenation*, we hear harsh comments like “decadence brings stupidity, stupidity breeds decadence” and “as [China] was excluded from the world system, it was left alone and deserted. As such, it allowed itself to self-fantasize, to fool itself [that it was a great empire], this kind of empire would in the end be destroyed in a battle” (Episode 1). This critical evaluation of the past suggests that the current government not only is concerned gravely with the well-being of the nation, the population, and their future; but also has the knowledge and capability of leading the country as it can tell the right from the wrong, not letting history repeat itself.

These image-making practices of the CCP in presenting itself as the rightful and legitimate leader, coupled with the discourses connected with the larger discourse of China’s great rejuvenation, demonstrate one key point that I argue throughout my dissertation: The government rules with multifaceted strategies and tactics, not simply by coercion, as many foreign commentators on the subjects (such as journalists, human rights activists, academics) argue. Similarly, the CCP’s claims to legitimacy, contrary to popular
belief, do not lie solely and merely on spectacular economic achievements or instigating nationalist sentiments alone. As Shue posits, “The maintenance of the conditions in which the economy does develop and the people do enjoy more prosperity — this, I believe, comes much closer to capturing the actual core of the contemporary Chinese state’s claims to rule legitimately” (2010: 46; emphasis in the original). The core of the CCP’s legitimacy claim is on the maintenance of social stability and order, in which China can thrive economically and rise in the arena of international relations. Consider also, most protest and contestations that have taken place in the PRC in the recent years, as Teets, Rosen, and Gries (2010: 13) point out, have been largely motivated by the desire for effecting policy change, not regime change.

Shue (2004, 2010) argues that the CCP’s claim to legitimacy in mainland China is adherent to the logic of legitimation that could be traced back to the imperial times, which I suggest is tightly connected to the governing ideas preached by Confucianism. This logic of legitimation is equivalent to good government and it is achieved through practicing three governing ideals — Glory, Truth, and Benevolence, as Shue elaborates:

Good government — legitimate rule that was based on true knowledge of the universe and characterized by humane benevolence was, furthermore, itself taken to be the embodiment and the exemplification of the very superiority and glory of the Sinic culture. The best rulers and officials, those who governed in accord with universal truths and manifested the proper benevolence toward their subjects, might hope and expect to preside over a stable and harmonious order, and the very florescence of economy, the arts, and of philosophy that would emanate from such an enviable order would, in turn, engender awe on the part of all those who beheld it, and would thereby further glorify the Sinic civilization and all the lands and peoples under the sway of the empire. Thus, three of the key components in the logic of legitimation and the pursuit of harmony and stability were Truth, Benevolence, and Glory. (2010: 47)

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20 See, for example, Pei 2006.
21 Anne-Marie Brady suggests that the CCP “base(s) its legitimacy on both economic growth and a renewed emphasis on propaganda and political thought work” (2009a: 3); Peter Hays Gries (2004) argues that “with the slow death of communist ideology, the Communist Party foments nationalism to legitimate its rule” (136).
Despite a change of time, Shue argues that this historical and cultural concept of good governance still plays a key role in today’s political systems, yet with modifications to meet today’s needs. Glory refers to “wealth and power” (ibid.: 49) and is largely associated with the discourse of China’s great rejuvenation. Benevolence requires the government and the CCP officials to provide social support to those in need (ibid.: 51); just as in every natural disaster, senior CCP officials would visit the affected area to promise the people support from the central government. As for truth, I have discussed it earlier under pride and glory. This logic of legitimation strikes a chord with Foucault’s governmentality:

A person who wishes to govern the state must first learn how to govern himself, his goods and his patrimony, after which he will be successful in governing the state. … On the other hand, we also have a downward continuity in which sense that, when a state is well run, the head of the family will know how to look after his family, his goods and his patrimony, which means that individuals will, in turn, behave as they should. (Foucault 1991: 91–92)

As exemplified in Shue’s quote and the Confucian idea that those who rule must be morally upright (Bell 2008), those who rule and govern (the prince in Foucault’s writing, and the CCP officials and leaders here) are obliged to display their self-government by demonstrating good conducts and showing that they are equipped with the right knowledge of governance. A good government parallels what Foucault calls the “art of government”; it is to manage a continuity in relationship, that is, “in both an upwards and a downwards direction” (Foucault 1991: 91).

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22 The recent downfall of the Communist Party chief of the Chongqing municipality (重庆市), Bo Xilai (薄熙来), is an indicative example of this idea of governance. Bo’s wife, Gu Kailai (谷开来), was under investigation in the murder case of a British businessman, Neil Heywood. This murder case has sparked sequences of accusations about CCP officials’ abuse of power and corruptions, etc. These accusations have led to Bo’s suspension of his public position and rumors have said that he would not have any political future in the CCP or China.
4. Media and Technology

Although Foucault did not write specifically about the role of media and technology in his works, the role of media and technology in the governing strategies and tactics cannot be undermined; nor should we ignore how media and technology accelerate the process of subjectification in ever-more efficient and cost-effective manners.

For a long time, the ways in which political organizations try to produce and disseminate information to influence people’s thoughts and actions have been classified disapprovingly as the word propaganda and the notion of ideology suggest. *Chinese propaganda* is used to describe how the authoritarian government indoctrinates its people what to think and what to do. The easy description “state-controlled” propaganda is too one-sided and negative. In addition, it fails to illuminate and explain a vast and complex society. This reminds us once again of Foucault’s critique on the repressive hypothesis of power: “Power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of a great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way” (1980a: 59). Kevin Latham, a media specialist on China, has also pinpointed the unproductive and over-simplified way of understanding the government’s internal communication strategies:

The transformation of the Chinese authorities’ ability to dictate and shape news agendas, the complex array of old, new, more, less and not at all sophisticated strategies and practices they adopt to deal with this shift in the mobilisability of power and the complex configurations of innovation, challenge and complicity that characterize contemporary journalistic practices. Consequently the narrow focus on political control and ideology in understandings of Chinese media starts to appear inadequate and anachronistic. Chinese lives are heavily mediated in diverse and complex ways. (2010: 808)

The negative connotation associated with *Chinese propaganda* could easily lead one to overlook the multifaceted strategies and tactics used by the government to shape the conduct of people. Drawing on Markus Stauff’s argument in “The Governmentality of Media” (2010), I propose to look at media and technology as what Foucault calls
“governmental technologies” (1997), that is, techniques and procedures that offer strategic and tactical ways of shaping the population’s conduct so as to bring about the most desirable ends. Yet, these governmental technologies also place them in interwoven relationships with other social practices and institutions. This in turn subjects them to guidance and regulation on the one hand, and to become specific subject area with specific regularities and rationalities on the other. Stauff proposes to look at them as “governmentality of media” (2010: 266) and he posits that “the constitution of media as technologies of government therefore cannot be separated from a concept of media as self-technologies” (ibid.: 267). In a word, media and technology are technologies of government as long as they identify with and justify the “nature” of these governing tactics (ibid.: 263).

This would also mean that different localities (with different discourses and practices of governing) will bring about differences in the ways media and technology operate. In what follows, a few governmental strategies and tactics related to the promotion of the Olympics are presented to demonstrate how media and technology function as governmental instruments.

This begins with the ways in which the Chinese government seized a global media spectacle (Tomlinson 1996) and one of the most known “media events” (Dayan and Katz 1992) — the Olympics — to disseminate its power/knowledge to the internal population and to the world. The Opening ceremony is said to have cost USD 300 million, more than twice the cost of the 2004 Athens Games. The spectacular opening itself made use of a wide range of multimedia methods and technology, and thanks to media technology, this extravaganza reached the largest number of worldwide audiences in Olympic history.

Secondly, it was about the government’s swift, ad hoc, and tactical ways of using media and technology to turn crises into opportunities. In the period immediately prior to the Olympics, China encountered waves of global media contestations after the Tibet uprisings and the global Torch Relay. When China was severely criticized by the Western media like CNN and BBC, the state media agencies — followed by the regional media and

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internet portals — put forward numerous productions to counter the West’s inaccurate and misleading reports. During the 5.12 Sichuan Earthquakes, the state seized the catastrophe to show its good governance to the people and the world. The state media CCTV gave 24/7 reports on the rescue efforts in the affected area and detailed reports on senior officials’ visits. The government also welcomed global media and outside rescue efforts to China. Its openness in dealing with this catastrophe posed a sharp contrast to the ways the Burmese government dealt with the catastrophic Cyclone Nargis disaster.26

These events indicate once again the ways in which the multiple and interlocking discourses and strategies were at work with each other and that individuals were agents of power-relations, as shown in figure 1.2. The pitched media battle with the Western media aroused the population’s patriotic sentiments, sentiments that were inseparable from the discourse of national humiliation and the desire to attain glory and pride. These events in turn magnified and amplified the processes of subjectification whereby individuals advocated the state’s project as if those were their own. These events vividly show the art of Chinese government: how it managed to capture “a field of events” (Dayan 2008: 396) to manage its relation with those it governed, and with the countries it interacted.

The third involves the relatively long-term media strategies of the CCP. The Olympics should be looked at together with the constantly evolving promotion strategies and tactics of the Chinese state. Looking at the promotion strategies of the Beijing Olympics (and many before and thereafter), one could easily figure out that the CCP has been highly absorptive and adaptive in its communication with the public and externally to the world. Various specialists in China studies have shown how the CCP has adopted “new practices and systems from the outside world, especially Western democratic countries” (Brady 2009a: 2), combining techniques from commercial advertising (Landsberger 2009). Often, these new changes have striking similarities to “PR [public relations] promotion for a new product” (Brady 2009a: 5). To be specific, some of these changes in the CCP’s communication strategies are (1) increasing its sensitivity to language-usage, such as adopting new terminology to replace stigmatized words: *yundong* (运动) was replaced with

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and avoiding word propaganda in foreign-language publications (ibid.: 3); (2) adopting more effective media like television-based “public service advertising” (Landsberger 2009); (3) heightening sensitivity toward its national image shown by the example of avoiding the symbol of the dragon in Olympic materials as it was often seen as a “sign of aggression” (Caffrey 2008: 809); (4) starting what Latham calls “new practices of (strategic) engagement” with foreign media, instead of excluding them (Caffrey 2010: 801); (5) incorporating commercial sectors in its media campaigns (Landsberger 2009; Latham 2010); (6) making use of new media technology in its promoting strategies (Latham 2010); (7) adopting the popular aesthetics of Japan’s cute culture; for example, police figures in Olympic security posters had big eyes and cute faces that helped soften and popularize the message the government promoted (Chong, de Kloet and Zeng 2012, forthcoming); and many others.

Altogether they point to the increasingly diffuse ways of understanding the government’s communication strategies, which, as I argue persistently in this dissertation, cannot be simply brushed away and bracketed “Chinese propaganda that brainwashes its people.” However, to bring back Stauff’s argument, media and technology could only function effectively as governmental technologies if they work along with the rationalities that guide the operation of media and technology. When the latter does not recognize or account for the governing tactics, media and technology may become a “problem” instead of “the instrument of government” (2010: 265, 266). The Hong Kong case in chapter 7 illustrates how localized media practices mediatized tactics of governance, and how these might contribute to as well as problematize governing tactics.

27 According to Brady (2009a), the term yundong has been widely associated with political power struggles for the period between the late 1920s and the late 1970s. It has become a negative term in official usage (3).
28 Abundant examples can be found: China Mobile, China Telecom, Adidas, Nike, Yili, etc.
29 Some examples of these new media are: CCTV offering online coverage of the Olympics, and hosts’ interactive responses to incoming text messages (SMS) and emails, digital mobile television, mobile phones, and bulletin boards (BBS).
5. Soft Power, Culture, and Chineseness

China’s recent and frequent articulation of soft power (软实力) demonstrates China’s deliberate and conscious use of culture to appeal and attract in order to attain support within China and across the globe. China’s eclectic way of reading soft power and equating it to Chinese culture — despite its vagueness — has turned it into a discourse and one of the governing tactics that makes the population internalize the values of Chinese culture and believe that such tactics can bring China a great rejuvenation. In Hu’s words, “The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation will definitely be accompanied by the thriving of Chinese culture.” Soft power, which emphasizes making people “want what you want” (Nye 2004: 31) without coercion or payment, dovetails with that of governmentality.

The idea of a historical and cultural China occupies an important place in the concept of Chineseness. China as an old civilization that has millennia of history becomes a normalized belief that is assigned with the status of truth. Truth and power, as Foucault reminds us, always go concurrently: “Truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power . . . Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true . . .” (Foucault 1984c: 72–73). This regime of truth is also to a large extent produced and sustained by the Western imagination and expectation of what China and Chineseness should be. As Ien Ang (1993) says:

This historically rooted Chinese ethnocentrism is complemented and reinforced by the prominent place of ‘China’ in the global imagination. The West’s fascination with China as a great, Other civilization began with Marco Polo and remains to this day. . . . There is, in other words, an excess of meaningfulness accorded to ‘China’;

31 Ibid.
China has often been useful for western thinkers as a symbol, negative or positive, for that which the West was not.

This is reminiscent of Edward Said’s argument in Orientalism (1978): In dominating the representation of the Orient, the West is in control of defining what it is and what its Other should be like. The West’s imagination of who China is and what China should be has lent power and authority for mainland China to make claim about a proper Chineseness. Often, in defining China and Chineseness, self-orientalized and reductionistic strategies and tactics are employed. China describes itself and its culture as fundamentally different from the West through essentializing features like Chinese value family, respect the elderly, treasure harmony and peace, value the collective “us,” and so on.

The mobilization of this historical and cultural Chineseness displays the state’s management of identity practices. This proper Chineseness asserts the discursive cultural values and norms attached to the Chinese subjects. On the one hand, Chineseness functions as a cultural asset and heritage of the self; on the other hand, it works to discipline and control the ways in which a person should act and behave, that is, the disciplinary of the self by the self. Shown in the contestations over the meanings of patriotism between mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese, as discussed in chapter 7, one could see how this discursive Chineseness is regulated and inscribed on a person. In articulating “who is China” and “what is China,” a person claims a subject position to define and speak for the subject of contestation. In every articulation, power is performed by the speaking subjects that enforce a set of relations revolving around the idea of proper Chineseness. Against the presumption on the power being possessed by the powerful government, the government need not coerce its citizens to perform this China “proper”; individuals perform it of their own free will. Besides, these Chinese subjects would scrutinize and discipline those who do not bear this proper Chineseness. Through managing a subject’s relation to his Chineseness, it manages the relation between self and self, between self and others, between self and other social institutions and, between self and the polity. This is an exceptionally efficient and economical way of managing and arranging relations to achieve the best possible results.
The West’s imaginations of China, along with mainland China’s geopolitical position, have enabled China to make claim of its proper Chineseness in relation to the West, and to the other Chinesenesses outside China. It allows the state to use Chineseness as a symbolic capital; if managed well, it can bring in streams of political and economic values as China’s articulation of soft power suggests. Meanwhile, this sino-centric Chineseness displays a technique of domination over the other forms of Chineseness. Various literary and cultural critics have questioned and challenged the politics of identity and the politics of cultural representations of this truth-like Chineseness (Ang 1993, 1994, 1998, 2001; R. Chow 1998b; Chun 1996; Lim 2007), just like the media battle generated during the Torch Relay, which was interested primarily in mainland China and ignored by far (and so far) the other China’s and their Chineseness.

What seems to be a strategic and tactical use of Western imagination of Chinese is a double-edged sword as it also strengthens the power-relations of the Orientalist discourse. For example, as discussed in chapter 3, the muscular and manly Caucasian male body was brought to contrast with the frail effeminate Chinese male body in order to shape Chinese masculinity. Power is productive; it may impel Chinese men to work toward the image of Western masculinity. However, in doing so, it also strengthens the masculine ideals dominated by the West. Another example is related to the preservation project of Qianmen (前门). In remaking a shopping street with Chinese characteristics, generic symbols of Chineseness (e.g., the pailou/paifang 牌坊,33 dragons, lanterns) that are produced and circulated in popular media productions like those of Hollywood films are placed on site. The result is that it enhances a stereotypical way of representing Chineseness to the extent that the site becomes a simulacrum, a surreal China — Chinatown in China! It becomes a theme park that attracts mostly indigenous Chinese tourists.

The Beijing Olympics and the events revolving around them demonstrate that the government had succeeded in deploying a multifarious set of strategies and tactics that regulated, managed, and guided the minds and souls of its citizens to internalize the values and to act toward the government’s objectives. One should be reminded that this productive power is not equivalent to a celebratory reading of power, as Foucault writes: “We evolve in a world of perpetual strategic relations. All power relations are not bad in

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33 Pailou or Paifang refers to a Chinese arch-like gating architecture.
and of themselves, but it is a fact that they always entail certain risks... this [power] relationship being in itself neither good nor bad but dangerous” (Foucault 2002a: 372–73).

Persistent to his approach to the concept of truth and his critique on universal humanistic values such as freedom and justice, Foucault has avoided any normative judgments in his works. The problem is, as many critics have pointed out, that his analytics of power becomes “descriptive” and a neutral concept that power merely leads and directs behavior, without any normative evaluation such as bad, damaging, or oppressive (read, for example, S. Hall 1996; Teurlings 2004; Patton 1998; Habermas 1987). In following this line of thinking, then, as Foucault himself points out, power is indeed dangerous as one cannot stand outside of power-relations and simply judge it as something good or bad. Also, despite being critical, his analysis of the governmental power (the rationality of government) studies the world from the victor’s point of view (Hartsock 1990; Teurlings 2004). It therefore makes it hard to imagine an alternative world, and brings us to the question of resistance: How is resistance possible? I will discuss these relevant questions in greater details in the epilogue.

PREVIEW OF THE THESIS CONTENT

This research takes the Beijing Olympics as a case study, and I am well aware of the danger of essentializing the 2008 Games. Politics had saturated the Beijing Olympics but China is by no means the only or the first nation-state using the Games to promote its political agenda. Various studies have shown how host countries used the Olympics to promote a political agenda, to raise international profile through national image-making, to instigate national belongings, and to reconcile racial differences (Close, Askew, and Xu 2007; Essex and Chalkley 1998; Haugen 2003; Hogan 2003; Byrne 1987; Gottwald and Duggan 2008; Tagsold 2009; Black and Bezanson 2004; Nauright 2004; Elder, Pratt, and Ellis 2006). One should in fact question in what ways the rules and organization structure set up by the IOC have made these possible. To this, I hope to discuss more in the epilogue.

The politico-economic impacts of hosting the Olympics are other recurrent themes of investigation for Olympic studies, especially in urban geography, tourism, and management studies. On the macro-level, the Games is one of the key sites to examine the
relationship between changes in global political economy, and is an area of ever-growing interest in place-marketing and inter-urban competition (C. Hall 1987, 2006; Hiller 2000; Owen 2002; Roche 1994; Waitt 1999; Harvey 1989a, 1989b; Kearns and Philo 1993; A. Smith 2005). On the micro-level, the economic impacts of hosting the Olympics are linked to the urban (economic) development like urban planning, urban regeneration, and tourism markets (Essex and Chalkley 1998; Ren 2009; R. Ong 2004; H. Hughes 1993; Pyo, Cook, and Howell 1988; Bhada, Backman, and Ciahan 1993; Garcia 2004), and also to non-infrastructural aspects like impacts on local communities (community’s images, social cohesion, social problems, inflation, tax increases) and environment (Minnaert 2011; Waitt 1999; A. M. Smith 2009; Gursoy et al. 2011; Garcia 2001). Research areas pertaining to the modern Olympic Games are very broad, it is beyond my research scope to compare and contrast the present Games to the previous ones or the forthcoming ones in this regard.

A wealth of literature specifically related to the 2008 Olympics already exists. Popular approaches of the subject place the research focus on the political dimension (Mangan 2008; Cha 2009, 2010; Dong and Mangan 2008a; J. Dong 2010; Black and Bezanson 2004; de Kloet, Chong, and Liu 2008; Caffrey 2009a; Haugen 2003, 2005), political economy (Close, Askew, and Xu 2007; Gottwald and Duggan 2008; R. Ong 2004; X. Xu 2006), socio-economic dimension (Broudehoux 2007; Caffrey 2008; Lovell 2008), historical analysis (Caffrey 2009a, 2009b; G. Xu 2008a; Brownell 2008), and the ideological meanings of the Olympics (J. Luo 2010; Chen 2010; Liang 2010; Brady 2009a; Barmé 2009).

While recognizing the larger macro-effects generated by the Olympic spectacle and the importance of the event (such as the analysis of the opening and closing ceremonies in J. Luo 2010; Barmé 2009), I notice a significant lack of research — valid not only for the Beijing Games but also for other Olympics — in investigating the ways in which the micro-powers have been put to work at the scale of everyday lives. Except for a few articles

34 David Harvey suggests that, since the early 1970s, there has been a predominantly similar shift from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism in the North America and Western Europe (1989a, 1989b). This transformation in urban governance has been largely caused by deindustrialization, widespread structural unemployment, and fiscal austerity at both national and local levels (1989a: 5). The entrepreneurial approach emphasizes market rationality and privatization, and one of its characteristics is increasing the importance of the political economy of place.

focusing on the “domestic sphere” (Davies 2009; Ha and Caffrey 2009) and a quantitative analysis on Beijing residents’ perception of the Games (Gursoy et al. 2011), scant attention has been given to the everyday social lives of the very people who lived in the Olympic cities and none illustrating how such a mega sports event could be used as a crucial and interesting occasion to examine how disciplinary power, biopower, and governmental power were put into practice.

This research hopes to provide a useful addition to the overlooked aspects of Olympics studies and media studies on Olympics-linked topics. Within the field of China studies, this dissertation hopes to add on to the studies regarding the CCP’s governing strategies and promotion campaigns as the Olympics belongs to part of the continuous and ceaseless efforts in which the Chinese government tries to claim its superlative achievement, just like the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s or, more recently, the manned space program, the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the reform and opening policy, the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the PRC, and the 2010 Shanghai Expo, which it claimed to have the highest number of visitors.

This dissertation tries to develop the Foucaultian concept of productive power through examining the ways in which the Chinese government tried to mobilize the population to embrace its Olympic project through deploying various sets of strategies and tactics. My aim here is to examine the exercise of “microphysics of power.” The ultimate target of these mobilization strategies and tactics is the whole Chinese population, as the circle China in figure 1.2 specifies; yet, specific strategies had also been deployed on particular groups. In order to examine these strategies and tactics, I zoom in on specific groups of the population in Beijing: athletes, volunteers, taxi drivers, the Beijing citizens and the larger Chinese population that place-making projects targeted at, and lastly, the Hong Kong population. The inner circle in figure 1.2 indicates these population segments under my study; the circle Hong Kong, being half-way to the larger circle China, indicates its in-between position being officially part of China and yet not entirely integrated. As a great deal of my corpus is related to media materials, I will also examine the role of media in the formation of subjects — to unfold the state-initiated promotion strategies and to study the processes and mechanisms whereby individuals had been guided to become the subjects of governance.
In chapter 2, I elaborate in details the research methods, the method of analysis, and the corpus used for each case study. This chapter is concluded with a reflexive enquiry, in which I discuss my position in conducting this research. My first case study in chapter 3 studies the construction of gender roles pertaining to the Chinese athletes in the period leading up to the 2008 Olympics. History and politics intersect with gender norms. I look at the ways in which gender ideals were inscribed onto the athletes’ bodies that helped exemplify China’s nation-building project and its pursuit of modernity. I analyze the representations of three sets of male and female athletes of three different periods: the revolutionary China, the post-opening up China, and the global China. In analyzing both male and female athletes, I address the lack in “Chinese men studies.” Closely related to Foucault’s discussion on the discursive production of sex and sexuality and his inquiry on subjectivity and biopower, Judith Butler’s notion of performativity (1993) demonstrates that what appears to be normal or ideal masculinity and femininity is made “natural” through repetitions and ritualized practices. Performativity, though originally aimed to problematize heterosexual-normativity, helps tease out the ways in which gender ideals as a set of norms are consolidated onto the body and corporeal expressions. This concept is also useful in analyzing how these ideals are subjected to change as the surrounding discourses about these norms change. I argue that manliness and femaleness are cultural as well as political products produced according to the needs of the nation and the state at different historical moments; and, both men and women carry their share of national burden.

Chapter 4 examines the Beijing Olympic volunteer program and its close relationship with the production of model citizens. The visible images of the Beijing Olympics that the government sought to present to the world were predominantly positive — happiness, joyfulness, harmony-seeking, hospitality, and the like. The Beijing Olympic volunteers, with their enthusiasm and tireless bright smile, played a central role in constituting this positive image. Drawing on Foucault’s governmentality, I show how promotional strategies and training materials pertaining to the volunteer program acted as governing strategies and tactics that invoked and produced specific power relationships through which the state governed its citizens. I argue that these positive images drew its power from the less visible strategies and tactics. Three discourses are traced: First, the discourse of dream and glory that drew its power from a history of national humiliation; second, the discourse of hosting a great Olympics that was motivated by a desire for face;
and, third, the discourse of not to lose face that induced a sense of shame to teach citizens how to embody a civilized image of China. These discourses shaped citizens’ everyday lives; they guided volunteers to internalize and embody the ideal of a model citizen and as such they became part of the organized practices through which subjects were governed.

A large part of this dissertation examines the governing strategies, tactics, and discourses through looking at the production and representation of official materials. Chapter 5 adopts a different angle of analysis to focus on the subjects’ own experiences and narration so as to study the ways in which individuals lived and interacted with the governmental power and the discourses surrounding their everyday lives. Drawing on Walter Benjamin’s concept of the flâneur (1969) — an urban ethnographer who experiences and narrates the city while in motion, I focus my lens on the Beijing taxi drivers to see how they made sense of their everyday urban lives in a fast-changing Olympic city. My interviews with taxi drivers unveil that discourses circulating in the period around the Olympics were not one-dimensional and static but were processes that were constantly produced, dynamic, and ever-changing. For instance, with regard to urban changes, the taxi drivers saw new architecture and high-rise buildings as signs of progress and positive development for the city and for China. Yet, they also realized that this progress came at a cost — unaffordable housing prices and the gradual disappearing of the Beijing they felt once familiar with. In relations to China hosting the Olympics, they found the government-initiated driving civility campaigns strict and demanding; yet, the pitched media battle between China and the West in 2008 had changed their attitudes toward these trainings and the larger campaigns on improving people’s behavior and manners in order to gain international recognition.

Chapter 6 examines how the state seized the Olympic moment to imagine and represent a Beijing that shaped our views about the city, China, and Chineseness. “New Beijing, New Olympics” was not simply an official catchphrase, but a key moment of memory and identity formation. Memory formation in place-representation — comparable to an act of storytelling — is crucial in shaping identity, be it place-identity or national identity. This displays a governmental power, a conscious attempt that influences the ways people understand their identities, and influences the ways they interact with the world. What is to be remembered is presented as visible — to be “on the map”; what is to be forgotten is forsaken and therefore rendered invisible — to be “off the map.” The making
of a “New Beijing” did not imply that everything in Beijing was built from scratch. Rather, this project was one that utilized the past in conjunction with the new and (ultra)modern. Theoretical insights from Abbas’ analysis of (post)colonial Hong Kong and Shanghai in the 1990s offer a way of re-thinking the notions of disappearance and reappearance in the politics of memory production in place-making (1997). Particularly useful here is Abbas’ notion of disappearance, which we should see as a form of misrecognition — not seeing what is there — and not simply as a matter of nonpresence or absence. It is important to note that this notion of disappearance, just like Foucault’s notion of power as productive forces, is not simply a threat that takes away things but also something productive that generates actions. My analysis is structured according to three temporalities: the past, the present, and the future. Through the preservation project of Qianmen, I examine how the past appeared, and reappeared in the making of a “New Beijing.” Then I zoom in on the Olympic Green to show how the Olympic city, in keeping with Abbas, was built on disappearance. Last, by looking at representation materials, I study how the future of Beijing and China was being imagined.

The last case study in chapter 7 looks at Hong Kong’s only government-funded public service broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to examine how the Olympic programs that RTHK co-produced with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereafter, HKSAR) government mediated the resinification process and how RTHK’s own current-affair program mediated reports related to the Olympics in Hong Kong. The historical context of Hong Kong has given the territory a set of beliefs and practices that subsequently forms and sustains a subjectivity marking its difference from the China “proper.” I argue that this Hong Kong subjectivity is produced and sustained by the local media practices, and this in turn guides and shapes the self-technologies (a concept linked to Stauff’s discussion in “The Governmentality of Media” [2010] I mentioned above) of how media operate in the territory. These self-technologies are exemplified in RTHK’s insistence on the ideals of impartiality and maintaining editorial independence in its recent struggle with the HKSAR government and in its various program statements. My analysis draws on two sets of corpus. The first focuses on RTHK’s Olympic programs, I examine what kinds of “Chineseness” were mobilized and how they were mediated in these programs. The second part studies how its highly-acclaimed program Hong Kong Connection (鏗鏘集) mediated reports related to the Olympics
and in what ways these mediations might problematize or contribute to the governing practices. I argue that the mediation tactics deployed produced ambivalent results: They could be read as tactics of resistance (to the dominant appearance of the China “proper”) as well as tactics that helped disseminate the governmental practices. This case study helps challenge the perception that the Chinese state rules Hong Kong with coercion and ideology and that it possesses this dominating power over Hong Kong. I argue that the state’s limits are also made discernible in RTHK’s mediation of Olympics-related reports. The programs I analyze have discursively maintained differences between Hong Kong and China and therefore the discursive idea of a Hong Kong subjectivity.

In the epilogue, I want to address several key questions and debates related to this dissertation. The first set of questions is related to the use of Foucault in this research. The cultural politics involved in bringing Foucault in the context of China studies is discussed; I will also make an attempt to respond to what China means to Foucault and what Foucault means for China. The second section discusses the lingering question related to (the power of) the state. This then brings my discussion to the critiques of Foucaultian approaches and will be followed by an attempt to address these critiques in concert with the lingering question on resistance. The ever-growing significance of international or transnational organizations such as the IOC forces one to think beyond the framework of nation-state. In the last section, I discuss the role of IOC (its rules and regulations) and the discourses invoked around Olympism, Olympic ideals, and the Olympic spectacle; and how these have fueled nationalism and allowed the nation-state to seize the Olympics to achieve its objectives.