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

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BEIJING, HONG KONG:
SHARING THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT?
CHAPTER 7 BEIJING, HONG KONG: SHARING THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT? LEARNING TO BE PATRIOTIC CHINESE CITIZENS

Hong Kong people are Chinese, this is an objective fact, a fact that we all need to acknowledge without question, this means that it is not about identifying or not. Such a redundant demand of adding the idea of “identification” gives a wrong impression or fantasy to some that they can choose, this then leads to some ridiculous hypothetical terms like “Chinese,” “Hong Kong people,” “Hong Kong Chinese,” “Chinese Hong Kong,” which many go all the way to discuss.

(Lau 2008; original in Chinese)

Any discussion of cultural studies and China would be inadequate without some attempt to address — not the well-worn theme of China’s relation to the West, but — the scarcely touched issue of China’s relation to those whom it deems politically and culturally subordinate. I am referring, specifically, to Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong, cultures which, despite their own histories, are simply denied identity and validity in the eyes of the People's Republic.

(R. Chow [1997: 151], emphasis in the original)

Just like on the moments when China won gold medals in the Olympics, Hong Kong people were happy — albeit briefly — when China won the bid to host the Olympics on July 13, 2001. The popular discourse in Hong Kong claimed that this should be read as yet another materialized example of “a rising China.” Unlike the discourse of China’s great rejuvenation in mainland China mentioned in chapter 1, this discourse functioned both as an opportunity and a threat in Hong Kong: Opportunity because Hong Kong is culturally and nationally affiliated to China and this would allow Hong Kong to tap into China’s growth; threat because Hong Kong — the newly reunited “son” after 150 years of colonial rule — is not quite culturally and psychologically close to China and China’s growing influence will shape much of the Hong Kong-China relationship. This complexity was revealed at the moments when China fared well in international competitions or when China was hit by natural disasters. The saying “blood is thicker than water” is often used to describe this bonding. Nonetheless, many in Hong Kong would also distance themselves from China upon controversial issues such as human rights infringement, corruption, the tainted milk scandals, and the like.

In *Writing Diaspora*, Rey Chow succinctly captures this peculiarity of a Hong Kong subjectivity:

> The history of Hong Kong predisposes one to a kind of “border” or “para-site” practice — an identification with “Chinese culture” but a distantiation from the Chinese Communist regime; a resistance against colonialism but an unwillingness to see the community’s prosperity disrupted. (1993b: 22)

This historical context has rendered Hong Kong in an in-between space perpetually caught between “a non-defined Western-ness and Chineseness” (de Kloeet 2007: 148). R. Chow argues in *Ethics after Idealism* that Hong Kong is marked and defined by “a double impossibility” (1998c: 151) — its in-betweenness and its awareness of impure origins could not be rectified simply by searching the roots (the quest for the national/native Chinese culture) or by opting for the path of hybrids (the overly celebrated postmodern hybridite discourse that downplays past injustices) (1998c: 163).
In the Introduction, I have discussed that today’s Chinese government gains its legitimacy through operating along a set of evolving, yet centuries-old, logics of governance, resembling Max Weber’s argument on how different systems of domination require different logics of legitimacy:

Every . . . system [of domination] attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy. But according to the kind of legitimacy which is claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, and the mode of exercising authority, will all differ fundamentally. (Quoted in Shue 2010: 44)

Hong Kong is an odd case here: It is situated at a transitory moment that is caught between two rulers — the former colonial government and today’s Chinese government — with different logics of governance and legitimation; yet, it cannot choose to follow either one of these dominant powers. What is characteristic of Hong Kong — a place without “territorial propriety or cultural centrality” (R. Chow 1993b: 25) — is then its tactical ways of dealing with and functioning in between these two dominant powers, trying to negotiate and “carv[e] out a space where it is neither simply the puppet of British colonialism nor of Chinese authoritarianism” (R. Chow 1998: 157). These struggles and negotiations between two dominant powers have given birth to this discursive Hong Kong subjectivity.

Hong Kong people’s conditional identification with China poses challenges to optimal governance in Hong Kong. Since Hong Kong’s retrocession in 1997, the HKSAR government, the academia, and the media in Hong Kong have been obsessed with questions about Hong Kong’s national and cultural identification, as well as attitudes toward mainland China. Much of this is empirical-based, often quantitative-driven.181

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Questions like what kinds of Chineseness we are talking about, in what ways they are being mobilized, and most important of all, how they are mediated in the media remain understudied. Previous research indicates that Hong Kong citizens find the media an important channel to acquire political information (Lau and Kuan 1995); radio talk shows are seen as valuable channels to express public opinion (Lee 2002) and many believe that the media are better representatives of their interests than the other political institutions (Lau 1998). While discussions and reports about Hong Kong media’s self-censorship have been growing more intense, no research has been conducted to examine “the politics of media” in this resinification process and none studies its relation to the Olympics.

This chapter examines the role of media in this resinification process, with a special focus on Hong Kong’s only public service broadcaster RTHK. Taking governmentality as the core concept of analysis, I want to study, first, how RTHK programs helped garner the public’s support for the Olympics and China; second, what kinds of negotiation strategies and tactics these RTHK programs used; and last, how they problematized or contributed to the governing practices.

Inspired by Stauff’s arguments about the governmentality of media, I look at media as both the “end and instrument of government” (Foucault quoted in Stauff 2010: 265). This is to say, the media not only provide ways to identify and regulate the production of knowledge of a related subject area (for instance, Hong Kong population’s cultural and national identification) but also the media themselves constitute a specific subject area to which specific regularities and rationalities are ascribed. Stauff posits that the ways in which media could function as techniques that guide behavior have placed them in interwoven relationships with other social practices and institutions, and these in turn have made media a problematized subject area that needs to be discussed and regulated. It is through these problematizations that media acquire their self-technologies — the kinds of knowledge and rationalities that define the media as subject (ibid.: 266). Stauff’s “Governmentality of

http://img.asianpacificpost.com/portal2/c1ee8c441b089f71011b08f2e5310065_Hong_Kong_citizens_say_they_are_Chinese.do.html (accessed on Oct 16, 2009); a quantitative study conducted by Fairbrother (2008) to see whether there was change in Hong Kong students’ attitudes toward mainland China after Hong Kong’s retrocession.

Media” (ibid.) draws our attention to the dynamics and interplay between governmental technologies and media. This approach also helps illustrate my argument in this chapter: The state does not possess a “metapower” that simply imposes its will on the population and render the media into merely the mouthpiece serving its interests. The interwoven relationship of media with social practices and discourses has not only helped shape the ways media operate and function but also, in the context of Hong Kong, this Hong Kong subjectivity. How these two intersect with each other and shape the effectiveness of media as the “instrument of government” is something my analysis aims to unfold.

In what follows I will incorporate the discussion of governmental power in presenting background information about Hong Kong and the media institution RTHK. My analysis is divided into two sections: I first look at how RTHK’s Olympic programs mediated the governing tactics and discourses. I divide my analysis into two parts. The first centers on cultivating Chineseness, in which various governmental practices are traced. These are (1) linguistic bonding that normalized the Hong Kong-China relationship, (2) features that helped shape the perception of Beijing among the Hong Kong people, and (3) the rehearsing of a set of generic governmental discourses, like a rich historical and cultural China, national humiliation, Chinese character traits, and a promising China. The second part of the first section illustrates tactics of negotiation that served to enlist the public’s interests in the Olympics. The tactics employed here, however, produced ambivalent results: They could be read as resistance tactics to the governing practices but also “effective” tactics to disseminate the governmental discourses. The second section examines how RTHK current affairs programs mediated reports related to the Olympics. I trace various mediation tactics to show how one of the RTHK programs Hong Kong Connection tried to live up to its media responsibilities and yet, in doing so, strengthened a Hong Kong subjectivity against the encroachment of the state. My case study demonstrates that the state does not possess this superseding power that simply controls everything. The self-technologies that have guided and directed the ways that RTHK programs operated and mediated were produced and sustained by this discursive Hong Kong subjectivity. In practicing these mediation tactics, the media have also extended the effects of this HongKongness. Finally, some recent political developments in Hong Kong and a set of questions for future studies will be discussed.
GOVERNMENTAL POWER AND HONG KONG

Hong Kong, a special administrative region of the PRC, has limited and partial democracy. It has witnessed the deployment of administrative measures as well as the use of juridical practices and coercion in the form of police intervention in shaping Hong Kong’s Chineseness and in resolving various controversial political disagreements between the territory and China. This could easily lead one to look at the Chinese authorities as the powerful dominator making endless attempts to assert its control over the city and rendering Hong Kong as a passive victim of the state. Various scholars, when discussing the national education reforms in post-colonial Hong Kong have used the Gramscian notion of hegemony to explain this state-people dynamic (see, for example, Fairbrother 2008; Tse 2007). I find Foucault’s governmentality more useful in offering better explanatory power in unfolding the complexity involved. The state’s use of the negative forms of power would indeed misguide our perception into seeing the almighty, dominating role played by the state.¹⁸³ The state is crucial but one should not overestimate its power as Foucault himself says:

I don’t want to say that the state isn’t important; what I want to say is that relations of power and hence the analysis that must be made of them, necessarily extend beyond the limits of the state. In two senses: first of all because the state, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations, and further because the state can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations . . . [the state] can only take hold and secure its footing where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that supply the necessary basis for the great negative forms of power. (1984c: 64)

The state plays an influential role in the resinification project; yet, one should avoid (con)fusing domination with a one-way power-relation that is simply enforced from above.

¹⁸³ I use “the state” in general to refer to the governing entity of PRC in order to highlight its sovereign authority over Hong Kong and the HKSAR government; I use “the Chinese government” or “the Chinese authorities” to highlight China’s governing body as a separate governing entity from Hong Kong, for example, when it gives political instructions to Hong Kong or to the HKSAR government.
Power should never be reduced to a simple understanding of something possessed solely by the state. Relations of power are played out in a multiplicity of micro-centers. As reflected in the first quote cited in the beginning of this chapter, they are not articulated by the state but through a diverse set of individuals who act as autonomous subjects to voice their concerns. Besides, the statistics concerning Hong Kong people’s political and cultural identification mentioned earlier would be examples of the state’s interests “at the level of the consciousness of each individual who goes to make up the population” (Foucault 1991: 100) so as to regulate and change the conditions of the population. The recourse to the negative forms of power should be understood as instruments, tactics, and strategies of governance, not the sole basis of power-relations (Lemke 2000; Nealon 2008; Sigley 2004). Other theorists of governmentality suggest that sovereign power such as authoritarian measures does not contradict the generative power of governmentality; rather, the two go as a pair (Sigley 2007; Dean 2002; Hindess 2001). According to Foucault, diverse strategies and tactics are deployed in order to govern and manage the population; even laws could be deployed as tactics to achieve the desired ends (Foucault 1991: 95).

Foucault reminds us that “having the ability to retain one’s principality is not at all the same thing as possessing the art of governing” (ibid.: 90) and “what government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of complex composed of men and things” (ibid.: 93). Although the Joint Declaration in 1984 has promised the PRC the return of Hong Kong to its sovereignty, the Chinese state realized that this did not necessarily guarantee optimal governance. Besides, considering the population’s fear of the communist regime then, the government under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping formulated the governing strategies of “One Country, Two Systems” (港人治港) and “50 years without change” (五十守不變), granting Hong Kong the status of a Special Administrative Region (SAR) with its independent governing body and ensuring that the Hong Kong way of living would remain the same for at least fifty years. Instead of ruling Hong Kong directly, the Chinese state promises that Hong Kong people can rule Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy (港人治港). The HKSAR government becomes a subsidiary body — an instrument — that helps Chinese government manage a household called Hong Kong. This shows that the state does take Hong Kong’s special context into consideration. What concerns it is not merely the question of sovereignty, but more importantly, how to govern the territory in the best possible ways so as to achieve the best ends.
The Chinese government also believes that Hong Kong’s conditional identification with China and fear of China could be dealt with by cultivating the population’s Chineseness as it relates Hong Kong’s peculiarity to a lack of Chinese themes in the territory’s colonial citizenship education (Lee and Bray 1995). Since 1984, the Chinese government has made ceaseless efforts to insert national themes in the education system. And after the handover, numerous education reforms have been put forward by the HKSAR government (Fairbrother 2008; Law 2004; Lee and Bray 1995; Luk 1991; Morris 1997; Fairbrother 2005).

Despite these governmental measures, the state has not quite succeeded in dissolving the differences between Hong Kong and China. Tensions persist in moments of political and economic crises. Examples include the proposal to establish an anti-subversion law article 23, the right to elect the city’s own chief executive, and the outbreak of SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome). The state has, to a certain extent, managed to deal with these political quarrels by bringing in the economic and mobilizing tactics that suit the subject’s interests and needs. For instance, while the central government and the HKSAR government keep deferring — not denying — the population’s political requests such as in electing the HKSAR chief executive, they put forward series of economic reforms to divert the people’s attention to economic interests and economic growth. The laissez-faire capitalist approach practiced in the territory may guarantee a low tax rate, but it gives little social protection and therefore requires the population to be responsible for themselves financially. Stability promised by economic prosperity is of great importance.

These economic packages not only offer economic stability; most importantly, they compel Hong Kong citizens to recognize the importance of China in their everyday lives and subsequently make them become the responsible and autonomous subjects who govern their own conduct, for instance, by developing interests in learning more about China and speaking good Mandarin. Only some ten years back, speaking Mandarin in Hong Kong was socially stigmatized; but, today it is a sign of affluence. Shopkeepers are more interested in serving Mandarin-speakers than Cantonese-speakers. The luxury retailer

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184 Luk (1991) and Vickers et al. (2003) illustrate that curricular content related to China in the mid-1980s was limited to Chinese language and Chinese dynastic and pre-revolutionary history.
185 In the first policy address of the HKSAR, Tung Chee-Hwa, the first chief executive, emphasized the importance of teaching Chinese history and culture to strengthen Hong Kong people’s feeling of national belonging. In a report published by the Curriculum Development Council (2002), national identity is listed as one of the five priority values for the school curriculum (Fairbrother 2008).
Dolce & Gabbana in Hong Kong was recently accused of discriminating Hong Kong residents and favoring mainland customers. This change is astonishing and powerful. Nonetheless, the more economic policies the government initiates or the more the government intervenes (even in a “positive” way), the more the Hong Kong people feel intimidated and threatened. The subjects’ self-consciousness in acquiring knowledge of Chineseness does not mean that they surrender their Hong Kong subjectivity to become Chinese subjects. The cynical Cantonese term “阿爺” (literally grandpa) is used to refer to the Chinese government as a powerful patriarchal figure. Foucault is right to pinpoint this interwoven relationship between power and resistance.

**RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG**

RTHK is a public service broadcasting organization, the only one funded by the HKSAR government and is supervised by the Broadcasting Authority. The public service broadcaster provides a wide range of media services in Hong Kong, including radio, television, internet broadcasting, and web pages. It has seven radio channels providing services in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English. Besides, it produces around 570 hours of television programs, including educational television programs (ETV) for primary and secondary students, public affairs television programs, and TV dramas which are shown by Hong Kong’s commercial television channels (TVB, ATV), Cable TV, webcast on RTHK (www.rthk.org.hk), and other media channels. It serves as an important education channel from the government to the public. It has been producing educational television programs related to Chinese (Mandarin) language learning, Chinese culture and history, as

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187 In government publications like the consultation papers, RTHK is addressed as a public service broadcaster to emphasize its role as a government-funded organization that provides public service. RTHK addresses itself as a public broadcaster; see “Radio Television Hong Kong: Performance Pledge 2010”. 2010. RTHK: http://rthk.hk/about/pledge/performance_pledge_10_e.pdf (accessed on Jul 22. 2010).


189 In its performance pledge, RTHK makes it one of its missions to produce programs “on national education and Mainland related features.” (“Radio Television Hong Kong: Performance Pledge 2010”. 2010 http://rthk.hk/about/pledge/performance_pledge_10_e.pdf).
well as contemporary Chinese subjects for Hong Kong schools.190 According to a survey, “Public Evaluation on Media Credibility,” conducted by the Center for Communication Research of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, RTHK is perceived by the Hong Kong public as the most credible electronic media institution since 1997,191 and ranks within the top three when print media are also included.192

As a public service broadcaster, RTHK’s editorial choice and independence has often been the topic of “political concerns.” On several occasions, Chinese officials and pro-China actors have criticized RTHK for not being “pro-China” enough as its programs often criticize the governments. The saying “biting the hand that feeds you” — not being obedient and loyal to the funding institution — reproaches RTHK’s failure to live up to its expected role.193 Rumors about government intervention in RTHK’s editorial choice appear every now and then.194 The proposal to privatize RTHK was a way to safeguard its editorial independence.195 Program producers and journalists of RTHK told me that the majority of them wanted RTHK to operate like the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) — income secured partially by license fee (guaranteed by law) and partially from its commercial operations. During the public consultation in 2006 and 2007, the misconduct of RTHK’s

195 The idea of corporatizing RTHK was mentioned for the first time in 1985.
personnel\textsuperscript{196} and its mismanagement (fraud charges and corruption)\textsuperscript{197} were widely reported. These scandals damaged the image of the media organization to the extent that public attention was shifted from editorial independence to issues of mismanagement and bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{198}

Figure 7.1: In the July-1 demonstration in 2008, RTHK employees initiated a campaign called “Save RTHK.” It asked the public to support RTHK to become a public broadcasting company independent of government influence.

The government consultation paper in 2009 decided to keep RTHK a government department, thereby subjecting it to monitoring and governance.\textsuperscript{199} It avoided the question of editorial independence and instead, it emphasized the role of RTHK as a “public

\textsuperscript{196} For example, its broadcasting director Chu Pui-hing (朱培慶) was caught soliciting a prostitute in 2007; its assistant broadcasting director Cheung Man-Sun (張文新) was arrested for drunk driving in 2008; and disc jockey Roland Leung Yik-lun (梁奕倫, also known as Leung Ka-fai [梁家輝]) was accused of fraud charges.

\textsuperscript{197} In 2006, four RTHK employees were charged with committing fraud from 1995 to 2001. In 2007, DJ Leung Ka-fai and his sister were charged with fraud in which they pocketed HKD 10,600.

\textsuperscript{198} My informants in RTHK told me that these scandals were political tactics to discredit the institution so as to keep RTHK under government control.

\textsuperscript{199} Both RTHK and its staff union were disappointed by this decision and responded by emphasizing editorial independence and its role of monitoring the government, and they should not be subjected to government “supervision.”
service” broadcaster that would be held accountable to the community. The use of public consultation (as a performance of openness and democratic practices), the dissemination of rumors and scandals, and the placing of emphasis on RTHK’s role as a “public service” broadcaster exemplify how the state uses various instruments and tactics to achieve its goals. Some of these tactics, such as performing the act of public consultation, demonstrate that the state operates in and along a whole network of existing discourses and power-relations. All these by no means reduce media workers in RTHK to victims of governing tactics, nor force the media institution to become the puppet of the government. RTHK’s media workers have also struck back by means such as using their programs to speak out their positions and their struggles with the government, and have seized the annual July-1 demonstration to seek the public support (see figure 7.1).

RTHK’s credibility and positive public image, its struggle to maintain impartiality, the debates about its “public” responsibility as a government-sponsored media institution, and the proposal of privatization illustrate Stauff’s (2010) argument that these processes of problematization have turned RTHK/media into a subject area with its specific rationalities and regularities. The struggles RTHK encounters exemplify the larger struggle between the encroachment of China and the maintenance of a Hong Kong subjectivity. The choice of my corpus in this research is motivated along this line of struggle. The four Olympic programs of RTHK that I have chosen for analysis represent the resinification efforts; whereas the 34-year old program Hong Kong Connection is chosen because it represents RTHK’s efforts of declaring its impartiality to serve the public’s interests. To include two different genres in the corpus is to demonstrate the complexities involved in analyzing media. It also helps make obvious how various discourses intersect with the governmental tactics and can in turn significantly challenge the governing practices.

201 July-1 demonstration is an annual protest in Hong Kong that started since the territory’s handover to China. On July 1, 2003, over 500,000 Hong Kong residents took to the streets to protest against the proposal to establish the anti-subversion law. Since then, the July-1 demonstration has become a yearly event for residents to demand for full democracy and to voice out their political and social concerns.
202 Details of these programs have been elaborated in chapter 2.
BOOSTING THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT?

In July 2005, Hong Kong was picked as one of the co-host cities of the Beijing Olympic Games. This decision was reported as a “win-win solution” for China and Hong Kong. It would save Beijing an estimated RMB 1.1 billion; meanwhile, it allowed Hong Kong to share some Olympic glory and add pride to the nation. The latter was frequently mentioned by the HKSAR government officials and pro-China actors in media interviews. These repetitive emphases on China bestowing Hong Kong with Olympic glory could be read as performances of pro-mainlandness that aimed to be seen and reported. Unlike the sovereign power that is possessed by the powerful ruling bloc and only functions to prohibit, what one sees here are the generative forms of power that is mobile, local, and relational. Motivated by their self-interests in having better political and economic career prospects and better business prospects, these individuals took on the responsibility to promote the interests of the state to the public. The state apparently had succeeded in soliciting individuals to govern themselves as well as the others by repetitive and ritualized performance of this Hong Kong-China relationship (Gordon 1991: 2).

Individuals who worked for the HKSAR government, such as program producers of RTHK’s Olympic and educational programs, were civic/public servants of this household. It was their responsibility to get their jobs done: producing national education programs that disseminated knowledge of Chineseness and helped the population understand China. Numerous Olympic promotion campaigns were put in place in Hong Kong. As part of these campaigns, RTHK collaborated with different HKSAR

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204 This included a broad spectrum of people and organizations such as politicians from The Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (民建聯), the Liberal Party (自由黨), and the Federation of Trade Unions (香港工會聯合會); media companies such as Wenweipo (文匯報); religious organizations such as The Society for Truth and Light (明光社); and businessmen who had economic ties with China.

205 For example, in an interview with the South China Morning Post, the HKSAR Chief Executive Donald Tsang emphasized that Hong Kong would host successful equestrian events to bring “pride” and “credit” to the nation. In “Hong Kong Chosen to Host Equestrian Events of the 2008 Beijing Olympics,” 2005. Hong Kong Trade Development Council, July 1. http://www.hktdc.com/info/mi/a/fs/en/1X00D9WD/2/Feature-Stories/Hong-Kong-Chosen-To-Host-Equestrian-Events-Of-The-2008-Beijing-Olympics.htm (accessed on Jan 29, 2010).

206 These included decorating the city with Olympics-related posters and slogans; dressing up the city with Olympic themes, such as having Christmas decorations with Olympic themes; celebrating the 300-day, 200-day countdown, and the Torch Relay (the 100-day countdown celebration); holding exhibitions related to Olympic themes; and the like. Much of the Olympic promotion was integrated into the larger civic education
government departments and produced four programs: *Olympic Highlights* (a 2-episode program on Olympic memory) and three series of *Glamour of Sports*. In what follows, the governing discourses and tactics as well as the negotiation tactics of these Olympic programs are traced.

1. **Cultivating Chineseness**

   For a long time, Hong Kong people would distance themselves from mainland China as China would often be perceived as backward, uncivilized, and politically corrupted. These negative images have resulted in socio-cultural prejudice toward China and mainland Chinese (see, for example, E. Chan 1999; Flowerdew, Li, and Tran 2002; So 2003; Lou and Chan 2003). A corollary of this is that it engenders an “us” and “them” divide that could hinder governance.

   *Zuguo* (祖国) and *guojia* (国家)

   One of the tactics to bridge this divide in these Olympic programs is to create a primordial bonding between Hong Kong and China. Utterances like *Zuguo* and *guojia* — referring to “our ancestor’s home country” and “our motherland” respectively — were repeatedly performed at the beginning of the programs and emphasized time and again throughout the programs. Here are some examples:

   Quote 1: The Olympics will be held in our capital Beijing (Jason, host of episode 1, *Glamour of Sports — Events Capital*).

   Quote 2: To compete here [in Qingdao (青岛)], it feels very warm, because [I am] competing in my own *guojia* [motherland] China, it’s very well-organized here . . . (Chan Wai-kei [陳慧琪], member of Hong Kong sailing team, episode 3, *Glamour of Sports — Events Capital*).

   programs, with the younger generation being the specific target. All primary and secondary schools received HKD 5,000 from the government to promote the Olympics. Two teachers I interviewed told me about this policy. One of them mentioned that it was HKD 2,000 but was not entirely sure; another interviewee (without recording) mentioned HKD 5,000. Taking into consideration the cost and scale of school promotion, I believe HKD 5,000 to be the more accurate amount. Extra funding was available upon schools' requests.
Quote 3: [the Olympic and the Paralympic Equestrian Games] were mega-events coorganized by Hong Kong and *zuguo* since Hong Kong’s retrocession, the most successful examples (Donald Tsang [曾蔭權], chief executive of the HKSAR in “Olympic Highlights — Sharing the Honor.”).

These utterances were hardly used to refer to Hong Kong-China relationship before the retrocession. Their insertions in these programs and frequent articulations were attempts to normalize the Hong Kong-China relationship in everyday life. These ritual-like performances remind one of Butler’s notion of performativity (1993) mentioned in chapter 3 that norms are created through repetitive utterances and discourses.

Beijing

The linguistic bonding mentioned above was accompanied by another tactic of normalization: Beijing as the place-to-be. This, I believe, was done in the hope of shaping Beijing’s place in the population’s perception. Images of Beijing appeared frequently. Their recurrent appearance accentuated Beijing’s centrality in the proper historical, cultural, and political Chineseness. The Great Wall, the Forbidden City, and the Temple of Heaven were often put side by side with images of a new, ultramodern Beijing represented by the new CCTV building, GuoMao (国贸),\(^207\) the high-rises, etc. Tiananmen Square (the political symbol of today’s China) appeared whenever positive socio-political changes were mentioned; for example, how China successfully held the Olympics and reports about China’s successful economic reform. To turn Beijing into something familiar, these programs brought in the *locals* — Hong Kong people who lived in Beijing — to share their Beijing stories:

Sometimes, I feel it is even better than in Hong Kong. Beijingers are polite, for example, while taking public transport, or in their cultural lives, I believe [Beijing] is

\(^{207}\) Guomao is the abbreviation of the Chinese name of the China World Trade Center (中国国际贸易中心); it is used to refer to Beijing’s central business district.
better than many other places (Jin Meisha [金美沙], hostess of “Olympic Highlights — The Glamour of the People.”).

I came here in 1992 to invest in the cultural industry, we all know that the cultural center is Beijing . . . if China is going to have its boom like in the Tang dynasty, it will definitely take place in Beijing, the only place that shows confidence, that can accept the existence of artists and cultural workers (image of the art district 798), these artists and cultural workers have a strong ‘stomach,’ they can swallow and digest many things, I believe that what comes out from their works would be something great and unpredictable that includes a wide array of cultures (Chan Koon-chung [陳冠中], the founder of City Magazine and a renowned cultural critic).  

These features helped draw an interesting comparison to Hong Kong’s out-migration to the West before 1997: Instead of fleeing to the West, many Hongkongers opted for the opportunities and experiences offered by Beijing. Besides, these Beijing stories were always told in the familiar dialect/language — Cantonese — and were always unfolded by bringing in the familiar “home,” Hong Kong, to compare with Beijing. This seemed to be a useful mediation tactic to draw Hongkongers’ attention and curiosity about Beijing and China. However, the majority of these experiences unfolded by recalling a shared Hongkongness, for instance, using Hong Kong as the reference point to compare their Beijing experiences, as well as the linguistic and cultural expression of experiences. Accounts of disappointment were rare but not absent, even though these were placed after the positive experiences with relatively less air-time:

Beijing is really a great place, I am very happy that I can perform here. Beijing really gave me this impression of the capital of a powerful country. I really looked forward to performing here, I thought Beijing was central in representing culture, Chinese culture. But, after being here, I realized I was wrong, not the contemporary Chinese culture, Beijing’s centrality lies only in the traditional Chinese culture, but

208 He was also interviewed in Ming Pao, a Hong Kong newspaper, where he said, “The success of Beijing is built upon its tolerance of outsiders.” “Like Hong Kong Everywhere is Opportunity [像香港到處都是機會].” 2008. Olympic approaching: New Beijing New Beijinger [奧運來了新北京新北京人]. Ming Pao / 明報, July 2 (Wednesday): A21.
the connection between the traditional culture and contemporary culture, I am indeed a bit disappointed. I think that was a choice made at that time, the problem about picking a wrong path, we make a wrong choice, can’t help, we looked retrospectively, of course, to find a good path, [it] will take a hundred years.

Disappointed? It’s a matter of choice, a matter of choice (Kenneth Tsang [曾江], a renowned Hong Kong actor; “Olympic Highlights — The Glamour of the People”).

Another example showed Jin Meisha screaming and arguing with a security guard who shouted at a senior. A while later, she said:

I think this time [Olympics] did Beijing well, China was indeed far more open. After this door is open, [China] it needs to connect with the world, if one does not have any basic etiquette, no matter how rich China is, it will only give people the impression of the *nouveau riche*, I think that’s not what China wants, Chinese people are proud of China, because China has become much more open and developed than before; when economy improves, then it’s also time to improve one’s behavior and be kind to the others (“Olympic Highlights — The Glamour of the People”).

Although these narrations were “buried” in the middle of the second of the two-episode *Olympic Highlights*, the choice of including them indicates the nuances involved in negotiating with the governing discourses. They might remind one of the distance/differences between Hong Kong and China, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, they might help accentuate the overall credibility of the positive Beijing stories.

In addition, a set of *generic* governing tactics and discourses was mobilized to encourage the population to identify positively with China. The reason I call them *generic* is that these themes of “Chineseness,” discourses, and tactics share striking similarities with those I mentioned earlier in the Introduction and other case studies. This indicates that the Chinese state operates in and along a similar set of governing ideals and logic of legitimation. This set of *generic* governing practices is comparable to a standard set menu:
borrowed, cut and paste, and broadcast in Hong Kong. The mobilization of these discourses and tactics suggests that the state believes that through cultivating Hong Kong people’s Chineseness, the Hong Kong subjectivity can be dissolved and the population will gradually take on a Chinese subjectivity.

A rich historical and cultural China

The widely circulated discourse of “China’s five thousand years of civilization” was repeatedly mentioned with pride: “I think we [Chinese] are all very proud of our 5000-year of civilization, through hosting the Olympics, [we] show it [5000-year of civilization] to the world, just to think of this idea is already making one very happy,” says Jin Meisha. Chinese culture was not only discursively described to be different but for a long time more advanced than the West. This was made obvious by bringing in examples like football (*cu-ju* [蹴鞠]), a Chinese invention of more than two thousand years ago), flying kites, archery, wrestling, polo (*ma-qiú* [马球]), and golf (*chui-wan* [捶丸]).

Chinese character traits

Endurance, resilience, and being ambitious were discursively highlighted as something distinctive of Chinese. The discourse of national humiliation was brought to the fore to show how China lifted itself from weakness to strength, from humiliation to pride. As shown in other case studies, national humiliation was a powerful discourse mobilized by the state to inculcate a mixture of shame and humiliation in the people, and to drive them toward a common goal — help build a strong China that would no longer be bullied by the Western powers. This sentiment was made clear in one of the athletes’ words: “I can tell the whole world, native-born Chinese can also do it, and we can do it as well as you [the West]” (mentioned twice in episode 4, *Glamour of Sports — Chinese Heritage*).

A promising China

Another tactic was to highlight China’s spectacular development in the past thirty years. In doing so, it rehearsed once again the larger discourse of China’s great rejuvenation
that would bring a promising future to all Chinese. This promising future was made explicit by juxtaposing the past with the present; for instance, the past title “the sick man of Asia” was brought up to contrast with the current title “the sports-giant of the East” (Episode 2, *Glamour of Sports — Chinese Heritage*); and statistical figures like the life expectancy of Chinese were presented (risen from 39 years in 1949 to 72 years in Beijing in 2002; mentioned in episode 2, *Glamour of Sports — Chinese Heritage*). The discourse of pride and glory was rehearsed by accentuating the fact that China could host the Olympics: “I believe that if a country dares to bid for hosting the Olympics, it is already a sign of confidence, I believe [country] that applies and succeeds in hosting the Games, this country [China] deserves to be praised as a ‘wealthy and strong country’ (國富民強)” (Jin Meisha, “Olympic Highlights — The Glamour of the People.”) This progress would further need to be represented in a tangible and humanized way by bringing in the ordinary people — family and the children — for easier identification. The stories of middle-class families (xiaokang 小康) and children in Beijing were brought in in the narration. All these feature stories took place in settings such as spacious luxurious apartments, dance studios, grand stage for ballet performances, and ski resorts; and these young children practiced middle-class extra-curricular activities like skiing, ballet-dancing, and horse-riding (Episode 1, *Glamour of Sports — Events Capital*; episode 4, *Glamour of Sports — Chinese Heritage*). Presenting how well mainlanders were doing was one tactic to rectify Hong Kong people’s long-held stereotypes (arrogance and self-indulgent superiority): Chinese from the mainland were not only wealthy but also cultured, not as uncivilized and backward as Hong Kong people believed.

2. Enlisting Public’s Support

Juridical and propagandistic ways of injecting national sentiments like the daily broadcast of the national anthem on Chinese-language television and inserting national themes in the education system have met with severe skepticism, cynicism, and criticism (Fairbrother, 2005; Tse, 2007). Gregory P. Fairbrother (2005) argues that Hong Kong’s “characteristic fear of indoctrination” has made the government become aware of and stay cautious of the pace and the ways it promotes national themes to the public. This, along

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209 The concept of middle-class is not officially recognized in China; another term to refer to these families is *xiaokang* families.
with other examples mentioned earlier, shows that the state does pay attention to what the people think and want when formulating governing tactics and strategies. These RTHK programs, bearing their duties to promote the Olympics as well as to live up to their image of public broadcaster to the population, would need, on the one hand, to deal with these tasks tactically to dissolve the public’s suspicion of indoctrination; and on the other hand, to draw the public’s interests to the Games. To stimulate the public’s interests, two major mediation tactics could be traced. The first was related to thematic programming; and, the second stressed on the positive benefits associated with sports.

Thematic programming

One tactic to draw the public’s interests was to use the familiar (for example, stories about Hong Kong, or stories and experiences told by the locals I mentioned above) to bring in the “Chinese” themes so that the themes and messages would be more convincing and have more impact. Themes of “Chineseness” were gradually introduced and accentuated as the Games drew closer. The first series of *Glamour of Sports*, shown between 2006 and 2007, centered chiefly on the positive benefits brought by sports. Themes promoting knowledge about China and “Chineseness” were rarely mentioned. The second series, broadcast in early 2008, had major storylines relating to China in the first three episodes; yet the remaining seven episodes focused entirely on Hong Kong and the benefits brought by hosting mega sport events. The last series, broadcast right before the Beijing Games, was devoted entirely to “Chinese” themes as the title “Chinese heritage” reveals. In order to make these Chinese themes more eye-catching, cheerful, and recognizable for the younger generation, the hosts and hostesses of this series were mostly celebrities from the Hong Kong entertainment industry, such as Elanne Kong (江若琳), Stephanie Cheng (鄭融), and Jill Vidal (衛詩).

This late introduction of “Chinese” themes echoed with the response of Carrie Yau (尤曾家麗), the former permanent secretary for the Home Affairs Bureau [民政事務局], the HKSAR government department responsible for the Olympic promotion in Hong

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210 Details about these series can be found in chapter 2 Methodology.
Kong) on reports about whether the government had done enough to promote the Olympics.211 Her response was added to episode 3 of the _Glamour of Sports — Events Capital_:

Citizens of different cities have different expectations and habits, [we] make plans according to the people’s level of acceptance . . . Hong Kong is truly an international city, so many things take place here, if [we] promote it too soon, [the atmosphere] will cool down very soon. We don’t want that, we have a well-thought out plan, [we] plan to boost the atmosphere gradually. In January, [we] have the 200-day countdown celebration. In the 100-day count-down, the Olympic torch will arrive in Hong Kong, I believe by then there will be a strong Olympic atmosphere.

Yau spoke as a civil servant of the HKSAR government who tried to do her job; what she said could very well reflect the position of the RTHK media workers. Through mediating her words here, these programs drew viewers’ attention to the “specificities”/“difficulties” involved in taking up this promotion task. Moreover, even though Yau tactfully avoided the touchy subject of Hong Kong people not showing interest in this national project, her response about Hong Kong being a different city with different cultural practices (habits) did — unintentionally — remind one that Hong Kong was different from the mainland and one should not expect the population to act with the same level of enthusiasm as those in the mainland.

The tactic of using the familiar to introduce the Chinese elements can also be traced in _Olympic Highlights_. The program started with Jackie Chan (成龍, a renowned Hong Kong celebrity) singing “Open the Sky” (打開天空), immediately followed by various quotes praising how well Hong Kong had achieved in organizing these impeccable Equestrian Games (in chronological order):

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Quote 1: Almost all the audience would support the local equestrian athletes; for athletes, this was a big support (Cheng Man Kit, Kenneth [鄭文傑], Hong Kong Equestrian athlete).

Quote 2: Hong Kong can host such a mega-event, not only international conferences, but also is capable of mega sport event (Henry Tang [唐英年], President of Equestrian Committee).

Quote 3: In the past thirty years, I have never seen how one could manage so many tasks with such a limited amount of resources (Lam Woon Kwong [林煥光], Chief Executive Officer of Equestrian Events [HK] of the Games of the XXIX Olympiad Company Limited).

Quote 4: These doubts have been totally dispelled, the choice of Hong Kong is a right choice (Jacques Rogge, President of the IOC) (“Olympic Highlights — Sharing the Honor”).

This affirmation to Hongkongness was often put side by side with the discourse that Hong Kong was tapping into China’s spectacular growth to emphasize that it was a shared effort made possible by having the help of China — guojia.

Example 1: We fly high together, unity brings not only power, but also more dreams, to be shared, in movement we search life’s touching sides, spread the red wings, the more challenges we face, the stronger we become (我們在一起飛翔 結不只是力量還有更多夢想 可以分享 動感中尋找 生命的感動 揮着紅色翅膀 面對越多挑戰 越堅強) (Jackie Chan’s “Open the Sky”).

Example 2: If it was not with the help of our guojia, Hong Kong by itself would not be able to be an Olympic city (John Chan [陳祖澤], chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club; “Olympic Highlights — Sharing the Honor”).
The emphasis that Hong Kong derived this joy and glory through China rehearsed the popular discourse about Hong Kong thriving upon a rising China. The same could be traced in the larger promotion campaign pertaining to the Equestrian Games. The slogan for the “Good Luck Beijing — HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup” rehearsal game said: “Hong Kong is leaping with Joy!” Another slogan “Hong Kong Riding High, Beijing 2008 Olympic Games” shared the message in a similar way. All these used similar visual images: an athlete riding on a horse leaping forward, against the Hong Kong’s signature harbor view with the spectacular skyscrapers at the back (see figure 7.2 as an example). These images suggested that after the transfer of sovereignty, Hong Kong had been doing better and better, figuratively leaping joyfully forward.

Figure 7.2: “Good Luck Beijing – HKSAR 10th Anniversary Cup,” photo taken in January 2008 at the Hong Kong Airport.

Stressing positive benefits

To solicit the population’s support of the Games, one tactic was to speak in the language of those governed as well as to appeal to interests of immediate relevance: The Olympics would bring positive benefits also to Hong Kong. The “Olympic” element in

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212 Good Luck Beijing was a series of pre-Games competition events to test the facilities and all the related operational issues that could occur during the Games. In Hong Kong, this Good Luck Beijing event was linked to the celebration of HKSAR’s tenth anniversary of return to the PRC.
these programs was presented as a mega (national) sport festival-like event that was positive, happy, and healthy. This positive-ness was mediated by bringing in multiple benefits associated with sports and potential economic gains.

As mentioned, the whole first series of _Glamour of Sports_ discussed the multiple benefits brought by sports. For instance, how young children and students — by dancing, participating in sports, and being a volunteer in a sport event — learned to build self-confidence, improve their interpersonal and communication skills, take things seriously, learn to be obedient and endure hardship, and the like. For the community, sports were crucial for community building that strengthened social cohesion. For the commercial sector, sports sponsorship helped build a better image and branding. For the sports organizations, these sports events gave them valuable experiences in events management and organization. For the athletes, the events allowed them to have more international exposure and to gain more competition experiences. Political and sensitive issues were absent. It did succeed in circumventing indoctrination but these detailed discussion about sport-related benefits rendered the whole program mundane and dull, just like the RTHK’s ETV programs for school children. Personally, I doubt if they succeeded in drawing the public’s interest in the Olympics.

Potential economic benefits brought by the Games were presented as lucrative and of immediate concern to everyone in Hong Kong, not China only. Figures, expertise experiences, Olympic sponsors’ and suppliers’ own narration (Yanjing Beer and Royal Furniture), and previous Olympic experiences were presented: “According to the official estimation, it could bring approximately RMB 2,000 billion to 5,000 billion to China” (Ji Ning, Beijing Olympic Economy Research Association Executive Committee Director in episode 2, _Glamour of Sports — Events Capital_). The tactic of bringing in the familiar was rehearsed once again: The CEO of the Hong Kong-owned Royal Furniture presented a personal account of the company’s experience and the benefits generated from an Olympic supplier in Cantonese.

Tourism and city-branding are telling examples of potential economic benefits and they were presented as something beneficial to everybody in the territory. The Olympics were presented as an important step for Hong Kong to achieve the status of “Asia’s world
Previous experiences — for instance, Hong Kong Sevens (Rugby), FIVB World
Grand Pix (women’s volleyball competition), the Standard Chartered Hong Kong
Marathon — were called in to illustrate how they helped promote Hong Kong overseas
and generate rewarding sources of income:

As a matter of fact, Hong Kong has hosted many mega sports events, which is well-
known all around the world, the Hong Kong Sevens, it has approximately 40,000
spectators, more than half of them come from outside Hong Kong, this group of
visitors belongs to the high-consumption group: the average visitors spend around
HKD 5,000 per visit, these high consumption visitors usually spend more than
HKD 10,000 per visit (Anthony Lau [劉鎮漢], executive director of the Hong
Kong Tourism Board [HKTB] in episode 5, *Glamour of Sports — Events Capital*).

To convince the viewers of the importance and relevance of the Olympics, these
experts would instill a sense of crisis specifically related to Hong Kong. Anthony Lau
continued, “Tourism competition among Asian cities has become very intense, we [Hong
Kong people] have to grab every opportunity to host these international sports-events to
promote Hong Kong tourism” (ibid.). City-branding needed media promotion, the
program quoted a Hong Kong architect who gave a tour to the visiting media workers:

The function of journalists is to tell the world about Hong Kong’s interesting
aspects and those things people haven’t heard of, this is why I take this
opportunity, not only to mention Hong Kong’s financial and commercial strength,
but also Hong Kong’s own culture and history, I believe they [the media workers]
will find these aspects of Hong Kong interesting and worthwhile to know
(“Olympic Highlights — Sharing the Honor”).

Feature reports and stories about Hong Kong produced by visiting media
organizations were important promotion for Hong Kong. Thus, the Olympic programs

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also brought in James Tien (田北俊), chairman of the HKTB, to present the figures relating to foreign media: During the Torch Relay, there were 7 television stations, with 500 crews, 130 film cameras; and during the Games, there were 60 TV stations in town to report the equestrian Games. These experts’ opinions presented the Olympics as something personal and urgent-sounding. The Olympics were not only something related to the national and political levels but also something that mattered to Hong Kong people’s everyday economic life.

MEDIATING DIFFERENCES?

What the RTHK Olympic programs demonstrate are the mediatized governing tactics and how programs were maneuvered around a set of governmental practices. To supplement this analysis, this section brings in a 34-year-old (as of 2012) weekly documentary and current affairs program Hong Kong Connection (HKC) to show how governing tactics intersect with a set of existing practices and discourses that define a Hong Kong subjectivity.

In its struggles with the government and in defining its position to the public, RTHK stresses repeatedly the discourses of impartiality, editorial independence, respect for freedom of expression, and responsibility to the (Hong Kong) public. These, I argue, are what Stauff (2010) calls the self-technologies that define and guide its ways of operation, and which would affect the effectiveness of media as technologies of government. HKC is representative in this regard. It defines itself, as mentioned in its Chinese webpage, as “a program [that] belongs to the viewers” and that it seeks to speak “the truth.”214 In an episode on March 30, 2008, “Hong Kong Connection 30 years: China Stories,” HKC stated its stance explicitly via documentary filmmakers. It began with a quote from Ai Xiao-ming (艾晓明), a documentary filmmaker, renowned activist, and professor at Sun Yat-Sen University, “Documentary records history, and those precious things in humanity,” it continued later on at greater length, “documentary is in fact to pass on a message of value, of human integrity, human rights, and to show when these human rights are being violated,

how people strive hard to get back their integrity, and their rights.” Adding to this were the words of one of HKC’s documentary filmmakers, Cheung Kwok Leung (張國良):

“If a documentary has no standpoints, it’s only a record, a documentary is to use images to express a standpoint, and its views of an object and event, [for example, to film how] the basic rights of ordinary citizen are being violated, this is a clear standpoint.

HKC sees itself bearing this moral responsibility to speak the “truth” and to be critical of any kind of inequality, violence, and human rights infringement. This media responsibility is a discursive idea shared by most media institutions around the world. The historical context of Hong Kong, coupled with RTHK’s struggles and China’s growing influence, has shaped this discursive media responsibility to one that often claims to defend the weak, the marginal, and the interests of Hong Kong against the dominating state. This media responsibility, referred earlier as the self-technologies, is a regime of truth produced and sustained by a set of existing power-relations in the context of Hong Kong. In short, RHTK’s claim of taking on this media responsibility is not value-free, nor is it free from power-relations. The critiques posed by HKC can act both as instrument for political intervention (a form of resistance) as well as instrument of domination.

In what follows I look at how this set of self-technologies intersected with the local practices and discourses, and how these as such unfolded the ways HKC mediated reports related to the Olympics; and, what kinds of discourses were generated in this process.

**Discourse of Living Up to its Media Responsibility**

Discussions about self-censorship of the mainstream media have intensified since Hong Kong’s retrocession. Mainstream media like TVB and ATV have been mocked as “CCTVB” and “CCATV” as their reporting styles are said to be more akin to the CCTV: report good news about China and Hong Kong, and downplay sensitive and negative issues. These media institutions autonomously screen the ways they operate without the state’s direct pressure. This practice of self-censorship exemplifies the workings of the
governmental power. Meanwhile, these discussions have also generated the public’s growing concerns about losing freedom of expression, one of the discursive elements defining this Hong Kong subjectivity. Many read censorship and self-censorship as a sign of the encroachment of China. The discourse of harmony — a political and cultural discourse of smoothing differences — is challenged and mocked. The discourse of “anti-evil river crab” (反河蟹) — a homophone to harmony in Mandarin — is used to contest the harmony discourse that silences oppositional viewpoints.

The 2008 Olympics complicated this discussion about freedom of expression. Whether the Olympics could be successfully held reflected the strength of China. The Olympics ceased to be just any state project but one that mattered to the survival and development of the nation. The worldwide media contestations had helped strengthen this equation to a normalized belief that related a Chinese subject’s love and loyalty to China to hosting the impeccable Beijing Games. This normalized belief succeeded in garnering people’s patriotic sentiments, and in guiding their self-government and how they governed the others:

‘One World One Dream’ is a peaceful idea. We all saw what happened when the torch went to London, Paris, how free-Tibet protesters seized the torch violently. I think the act of sabotaging the torch relay is a disrespect of Olympism, an insult to China’s dignity, an insult to all Chinese around the world, seeing this I am very angry. Being a Chinese, I have this responsibility, passion, to express my love tozuguo, my respect to Olympism (Yang Ke 杨可, a male mainland student in Hong Kong, in “One World”).

Not only protests and demonstrations during the Olympics were read as attempts to jeopardize the Chinese nation; many Chinese were extremely sensitive about media representations of China that might be considered damaging. For instance, when filming Chinese queuing up outside the Bird’s Nest, the HKC film crew and journalists were asked by the onlookers not to film them:
A woman muttered discontentedly: “No need to film us, right?! . . . This shows our passion toward our zuguo (motherland) hosting the Olympics, filming us in this packed condition is not good . . . .”

Another man joined in: “yes, it’s true, in our own country . . . ain’t we not as strong as the other country, this kind of queuing up scene, they [the other countries] don’t even have a chance to see.”

(extracted from the opening sequence of “Olympic Beijing”)

It was not the police or the government but ordinary citizens who took up the responsibility to defend the image of China, and subsequently made attempts to stop the filming. Despite Hong Kong’s ambiguities toward the China “proper,” how China was severely contested in the global media re-ignited and instigated the national and cultural bonding between Hong Kong and China. Lam Oi-Wan (林藹雲), an activist and the editor of inmeiahk.net explained why her group decided to stay “low” during the Olympic torch relay in Hong Kong:

In the past when we planned for a protest action, usually we will [would] call the press. But this time the pressure actually came from two ways. One is from the government. Another pressure is from the public. When you voice different opinions during the Olympics, then you will be criticized as a kind of running dog or anti-China (“The Pulse: Freedom of Speech and the Olympic Torch Relay,” original English text).215

Lam’s words show how this belief linking the Olympics to the Chinese nation had seized many people; even she, an outspoken activist, had censored her own actions. This is one instance showing how Foucaultian power had successfully disseminated in society, how “the public” had taken on the normalized patriotic values to defend China. This

215 “The Pulse: Freedom of Speech and the Olympic Torch Relay. Interview – Mia Farrow on Sudan and the Olympic [奧運火炬傳送與言論自由].” 2008. The Pulse [脈搏]. RTHK. The Pulse is a weekly English news program about current affairs in Hong Kong. It was shown every Friday evening on ATV World at around 19.00 and on TVB Pearl at 1.00 a.m. This episode won the 13th Annual Human Rights Press Awards (Merit) in 2008.
development has generated intense discussions about censorship and freedom of expression in Hong Kong.

Including diverse opinions

In the episode “One World” about the arrival of the Torch Relay in Hong Kong, it discussed the contestations around the nationalistic sentiment and the freedom of expression. The shrinking freedom of expression in front of this national project was criticized. The episode included various clips in which journalists, activists, and cultural critics repeatedly emphasized the importance of freedom of expression and expressed critiques on governmental intervention. Yet, instead of denouncing the pro-torch and pro-China crowds and giving a definite black and white conclusion, HKC tried to live up to this discursive idea of moral media responsibility by including diverse opinions; for example, “One World” included opinions from mainland students, protesters and activists, officials, local enthusiasts, mainland visitors, Hong Kong students, teachers, journalists, and cultural critics.

“Olympic Beijing,” another episode, was broadcast on August 10, 2008 during the Olympics. The central thread was to see how young people of the post-80 generation216 who lived in Beijing thought about the Olympics. It included seven interviewees: two Olympic volunteers, a Beijing rock’n roll musician, a white-collar from Jiangsu working in Beijing, and three female students studying at the Beijing Film Academy. Their diverse opinions, often mixed with critical and cynical remarks, informed the viewers that not all mainland Chinese were fanatic nationalists and above all, not everyone supported the Games unquestionably. To give two examples:

So many migrant workers participated in the construction projects for the Olympics, but they cannot see the Games, many of these Olympic venues may not be used after the Games, this is quite a waste of resources, many issues revolving

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216 The term post-80 generation (referring to those born in the 1980s) was initially used to refer to the generation born immediately after the Open Door policy and the one-child policy in mainland China. The term has been borrowed to refer to the young people who have been actively engaged in social issues in Hong Kong.
around the Olympics, I think many of them are valid concerns. (Chen Liping [陈丽萍], a student studying at the Beijing Film Academy)

We are now opening our door, welcoming people to come in and have a look, this is a mixed feeling. If we are criticized, we need to acknowledge the fact that we are indeed not doing well enough, our country’s economic development has only begun for a few decades, what can we do? If we are praised, we are of course very happy, we open our door to welcome friends, of course, we would love to have compliments, but we cannot avoid criticism . . . . (Wang Jue [王珏], a Guangzhou student studying at the Beijing Film Academy)

Their critical and reflexive comments introduced a counter-narrative to the often stereotypical media image about mainlanders: “They” were also made up of individuals who had different views and opinions. The broadcast time of “Olympic Beijing” and its focus on Beijing coincided with the emphasis on Chinese themes in the other RTHK Olympic programs. This “coincidence” may very well be explained by China’s growing influence, making China and China-related issues interesting themes for the territory. This episode adds on to the corpus that serves to shape Hong Kong people’s perception of Beijing and China mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, the same episode also included two small episodes that called one’s attention to the subject of (self)-censorship. One was mentioned earlier regarding queuing up and the other showed how the filming process was intervened by policemen.

Personal angle

Another mediation technique is to use the personal angle. Both “One World” and “Olympic Beijing” chose to follow the protagonists closely around their daily routine, such as taking the subway, going to work, relaxing at home, or at the dorms, etc. Through showing their private and mundane everyday life, this narration technique brought the protagonists closer to the audience and showed that these people — no matter where they were, what language they spoke — were just like you and me. This tactic and the one mentioned above are reminiscent of the governing tactic that serves to erase the us/them
divide. Yet, the ways they unfolded and the purposes they served diverge. The latter took Beijing/China as the point of interest, the center that attracted and pulled Hong Kong people. Here, the attempt to erase the us/them divide was not the end result but a tool to introduce the larger themes of freedom of expression and negotiating differences. The point of interest centered around the Hong Kong public, “we” as the subjects.

“One World” followed closely the mainland students who organized pro-torch activities to the train station, where they just got their pro-torch materials from mainland China, to the Torch Relay route, and to the university campus where they organized their pro-torch activities. This narration technique introduced these students as organized, passionate, and genuine about their pro-torch activities. This helped pave way for more understanding when presenting opinions that might not be to the liking of the Hong Kong viewers. For example, a mainland student’s response to what motivated him for this pro-torch action was:

To show Hong Kong people what patriotism is, because they don’t know, but we, from high school onward, we learn that guojia is very important. Hong Kong people know relatively less about the meaning of patriotism than we (Yang Lei [杨磊], a male student).

His words, however, recalled once again the tension/divide between Hong Kong and China: Hong Kong people’s lack of “proper” Chineseness. This tactic of following closely and bringing in the “personal” might help soothe tension. However, in narrating private and personal so closely, it also magnified the differences between us and them, for instance, the larger group of passionate, organized, and patriotic mainland students versus the mostly cool and not-so-interested Hong Kong students or the small group of activist-students.

While following these mainland students, the filming crew caught an unpremeditated confrontation between these students and some other students from Hong
Kong (Christina Hau Man Chan 陈巧文 and her university friends), who were preparing for their demonstration the next day, on the University campus. They quarreled over their protests and the meaning of patriotism:

Mainland student 1 (shout in Mandarin): Idiot!

Journalist: Are you going to talk to her?

Mainland students: No!

Mainland student 2: We are here, because we don’t want to discuss politics, No politics!

Mainland student 3: United!

Mainland student 4 (holding a small Chinese flag): One China! One China! One China!

Mainland student 4 (talks with his mates): Speaking loud does not mean that I am irrational!

Laughter . . .

Mainland student 5: Calm down, calm down, calm down . . .

Chan and other protesters were holding a Tibetan flag; another mainland student tried to cover it with a Chinese national flag.

Mainland student 1: If you are Chinese, you should stand up and do something [implying all Chinese around them, not just Christina Chan]

Chan (speaking in shaky Mandarin): I’m also Chinese, but . . . (mainland students silenced her . . .)

Mainland student 1: June 4 is patriotic, Free Tibet is disintegrating 亡国

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Christina Chan has since then been actively engaged in political activities in Hong Kong. She and many others who have participated actively in social protests in Hong Kong are called the “post-80 generation” (八零後). This term “post-80 generation” is borrowed from its popular usage in mainland China; yet, the term itself refers to those young people who were born in an affluent Hong Kong and at a time when Hong Kong’s political transition to China became imminent.
Chan (speaking in shaky Mandarin): We also love our country, that’s why we are against the Olympics.

Mainland student 1 (talking loudly in Mandarin): Against the Olympics is patriotic, is it?

Chan (speaking in shaky Mandarin): Why can’t it be? Don’t you care about how Chinese in China are doing?

Mainland student 2 (English): He doesn’t know much about Tibet . . .

RTHK journalist (English): He doesn’t or she doesn’t?

Mainland student 2 (English): She, sorry, doesn’t, so we don’t want to discuss with her today . . .

Chan (speaking in fluent English): I mean, you just said I don’t know much about Tibet, but you haven’t even talked to me, how do you know I don’t know about Tibet?

Another Hong Kong student: Why can’t we wave a Tibetan flag?

Mainland Student 6: You think that the Tibetan flag is about Tibetan human rights, but if you wave the flag, many people will have different interpretations

Chan (in Cantonese): What we are fighting for is not what Tibet should be . . . Even though all Tibetans are happy, only one of them is feeling discontented, and he wants Tibet to be independent, I think he has the rights to go into street and shout “I want Tibet to be independent,” he has this right to do so, what we don’t have now is this right.

(Except those mentioned were in English, the rest is translated by author; “One World”)

In showing how the pro-torch mainland students acted by shouting, silencing, and refusing to have a dialogue with the few Hong Kong student-activists on the university campus, this encounter forced one to sympathize with Chan and the protesters as if they represented the weak/marginalized who were being bullied by a mob. In representing this clear group-divide, it recalled the uneven relationship between China and Hong Kong and
it brought back the prevailing bias about mainlanders being unreasonable, violent, and uncivilized. Yet, what is more important is that this small episode also challenged the overly celebrated idea of the Olympics and made one rethink the Olympics-craze that categorized all dissents as unpatriotic. In brief, it was posed as a counter-narrative to the governing project that aimed to boost the Olympic spirit in the territory.

Juxtaposition

“One World” tried to maintain an even-handed representation by giving diverse opinions approximately equal air-time, at least for the first half of the episode. The first half unfolded in the following sequence: It started by showing a group of pro-torch young mainland students preparing for the Torch Relay’s arrival in the early morning. A Hong Kong policeman prepared them politely and softly by telling them what the police would do if there were any kinds of conflicts between them and the potential protestors. The camera then zoomed in on a poster fallen on the ground saying “To vindicate June Fourth” (平反六四). A police patrol car drove past the venue where the celebration ceremony would take place. A group of protesters wearing orange color shirts prepared for their demonstration.218 A pro-torch supporter held a big Chinese national flag on her shoulders looking excited and proud. The scene continued with a set of juxtaposing images — the pro-torch supporters vis-à-vis the protesters or the advocates for freedom of expression.

The program mediated various parties’ opinions by juxtaposing them with each other as if they were communicating to and corresponding with each other. For instance, a famous political activist Szeto Wah (司徒華) spoke about his group’s reasons to demonstrate and protest on that day, and this was followed by mainland students speaking about what motivated them to prepare the pro-torch activities. Here they spoke about their love for China and their wish to show the world how well China had been doing. This was subsequently followed by scenes of protests and actions held by the Hong Kong Journalists Association’s (HKJA).219 Mak Yin Ting (麥燕庭), Chairperson of the HKJA, and other

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219 A letter was written to IOC to complain about the violation of freedom of expression. “Letter to International Olympic Committee: No Movement Restriction Ahead of Olympic Games.” 2008. Hong Kong
journalists were shown to cover their mouth with white cloth — a symbolic protest against
the state’s intervention in hushing contesting voices like banning activists\textsuperscript{220} entering Hong
Kong.

This tactic of juxtaposition was also used to unfold the discursive struggle over the
meaning of patriotism. It first showed what Cheng Xiang (程翔), a dissident, said at the
World Press Freedom Conference:

Being patriotic is not just waving the flag and shouting [how much you love the
country], it’s not only about the country’s rights, but the most important of all is
that the country needs to have justice that is also patriotism . . .

The camera then showed a celebrity torchbearer Eason Chan (陈奕迅) waving to
the spectators. A group of cheerful Cantonese-speaking pro-torch supporters was shown
saying, “We want to show the world that Chinese are not easily intimidated, not that you
demonstrate then you can disapprove it [China hosting the Games], this triggers our
national sentiments.” Cheng Xiang continued: “We need to use the people’s voices, the
people’s action, to reinterpret the meaning of patriotism.” The pro-torch crowds were
shown again, with Eason Chan doing funny faces to his fans and his fans screaming back.
This was followed by an overwhelming crowd shouting “Support the Olympics, Love our
Chinese nation” in Mandarin. It went back to Cheng: “Pay attention to the mistakes made
by guojia, with frank assessment, frank assessment [spoken in English and then in
Cantonese once again], it needs to evaluate honestly all the mistakes and crimes it has
committed, and show repentance.” This was immediately followed by a pro-torch
Mandarin-speaking interviewee saying:

(accessed on Mar 31, 2010).}
\textsuperscript{220} These included Jens Galschiot, the Danish human rights activist and creator of the sculpture “Pillar of
Shame,” Zhang Yu (张裕), Chinese intellectual and general secretary of the Independent China Pen Centre
— a writer’s association, and two Canadian activists campaigning for free Tibet.
Being patriotic is to have an indescribable passion for the *guojia* where you were born and brought up, that is, you see everything about it as good, very good, I think I was born in this *guojia*, brought up in this *guojia*, I just love it (ibid.).

Her interpretation of patriotism as an unquestionable intrinsic love for China was posed as stark contrast to Cheng’s solemn interpretation of patriotism. This also echoed with various mainland students’ interpretation of patriotism quoted earlier in the episode. *HKC* might have made a considerable effort to include diverse viewpoints; yet, when it came to patriotism, those who held an absolute view were mainland Chinese, while those who proposed a more inclusive interpretation were Hong Kong Chinese. This narration, despite its efforts to maintain impartiality, reverted the viewers to the idea of us and them: their irrational love for China versus “our” rational and sober attitude to China.

This tactic of juxtaposition created a rather clear-cut opposition between the large amount of mostly Mandarin-speaking pro-torch supporters versus the relatively few and scattered Cantonese-speaking activists and protestors. Although “One World” has included Cantonese-speaking people in its pro-torch narration, they were comparably few in front of the Mandarin-speaking mass. A set of oppositional images was placed side by side: the red Chinese national flags versus the dotted pro-democracy orange; the noisy mass versus the rather solitary and calm protestors; during the confrontation, the angry and dominant crowd versus the weak and marginal protestors. This almost antagonistic juxtaposition of images compels one to associate this contesting force between the dominating China and the marginal Hong Kong. It reinforces once again the differences between Hong Kong and China.

In doing so it did revert Hong Kong and the protesters to the position of powerlessness, reminding us of Rey Chow’s ideas of how the representation of the self as powerless is a form of dominance (1993b: 11). In this case, the position of Hong Kong protestors as the marginal — albeit being the sober, rational, and intellectual few — could be a tactic to subvert the dominant presence of China and to defend a Hong Kong subjectivity. Yet this tactic also positioned the mainlanders as the *negative* other by subjecting them to the position of a collective mass.
Gradual introduction of its standpoints

It is unknown whether the tactics of including diverse views and fairly even-handed representation mentioned earlier were tactics to deal with the popular nationalistic sentiments during the Olympics or tactics to introduce the program’s viewpoints: Even if our opinions differ, everyone deserves the right of free expression, as it is articulated through a high-school teacher:

Even if the people do not accept their method, they use this method to express their opinion or views, this may bring counter-effects; but the right to choose should be given to the people who want to express their opinions, not the ruling authority, to take away their right to express their opinion (“One World”).

By engaging with the diverse opinions and the differences existing between Hong Kong and China about the Olympics, HKC made an effort to live up to the media responsibility it defined itself and in doing so, it produced, sustained, and extended the discursive Hong Kong subjectivity that valued openness and the rights of expression.

HKC’s critical standpoints on the subject of freedom of expression were accentuated toward the second half of “One World.” It gave more room to critical discussions on the practice of freedom of expression and the meaning of patriotism by bringing in high-school classroom discussion, Hong Kong cultural critics such as Cheng Xiang and Liang Wen-dao (梁文道), and clips about journalists’ protests of media censorship and demand for freedom of expression.

It also expressed concerns about this Olympic wind. Many people had chosen to act and perform the ideals of “proper” Chineseness; for example, schools would require students to take a “clear” stand: either pro-torch (wear red) or neutral (wear uniform) but not the critical one (orange). A high-school student shared this story in the program:

I wanted to wear an orange shirt [symbol of supporting human rights], but when the school said that we could either wear a uniform or a red shirt, then I chose the uniform. Rational people should be able to tell the symbolic meaning of the clothes
one wears; wearing orange does not mean that I don’t love my country. When one wants the Chinese government to improve its human rights, maybe that is a more patriotic act (ibid.).

This concern or this sense of crisis was also expressed through the various shots — despite scattered and relatively few — about Cantonese-speaking onlookers denouncing the protestors and the overwhelmingly cheerful crowd watching the celebrity torchbearers.

**DISCUSSION**

Through examining two sets of RTHK programs related to the Beijing Olympics, this chapter traces, first, what kinds of “Chineseness” and governing tactics were being mobilized in the Olympic promotion; second, the tactics of negotiation RTHK used in mediating these governing practices; and third, how RTHK problematized or contributed to these governing practices. Stauff’s argument in “The Governmentality of Media” (2010) helps illustrate an important argument here: Whether media function as effective governmental technologies largely depends on how they correspond with a set of self-rationalities and regularities that guide the operation of the media. RTHK’s intertwined relationship with social practices means that the discursive Hong Kong subjectivity shapes its media production, and vice versa. The decision to choose two different genres is motivated along the governmental process of resinicizing the Hong Kong population and an ongoing struggle of maintaining a Hong Kong subjectivity. My analysis adds to an overlooked aspect in Stauff’s approach, namely how different television genres broadcast by the same institution may mobilize different negotiation and mediation tactics that may produce different power-relations.

RTHK’s Olympic programs were special feature programs with educational purposes aiming to cultivate the population’s “Chineseness” and to garner their support for the Olympics. These programs bore the public service duties of bringing knowledge and information of China and the Olympics to the population. These duties also defined the contents and styles of narration of the programs to be informative and objective. In addition, being part of the Olympic promotion campaign required them to maintain a light, positive, and cheerful tone. Controversial or negative stories that would make one question the Olympics or China were either avoided or downplayed. In order to spark the public’s
interests in the Olympics and China, and to avoid the public’s fear of indoctrination, the programs mobilized tactics like (1) bringing in the locals, (2) using thematic programming that brought in the familiar to introduce Chinese topics, and (3) presenting the pragmatic aspects of Olympics-associated positive benefits. I argue that these tactics helped these programs negotiate its position as a public servant who had to get its job done (disseminate the governing tactics) and as a public service broadcaster with a discursive moral media responsibility to the Hong Kong public. Nevertheless, these negotiation tactics did produce ambivalent results: They could be tactics of resistance to the resinicizing projects (by re-emphasizing Hongkongness) as well as tactics that helped disseminate the governmental practices effectively (as they drew the subjects’ interests by bringing in what interested them).

These Olympics-related programs were one-off programs; whereas, HKC is a three-decade long documentary program that reports and discusses current affairs. As a documentary-current affairs program, HKC is dedicated to political and controversial issues. It also positions itself as a program bearing a set of discursive moral media responsibilities to the people: speaking the “truth,” being impartial, and defending the freedom of expression. This self-positioning, with its years of broadcasting history and good track records in Hong Kong, has empowered it to be recognized as a credible and respectable program. This also means that the self-technologies that direct its operation have also helped sustain and secure its place in the territory. The power effects it generates are more substantial and long-lasting than those of the Olympic programs.

The HKC programs I have analyzed mobilized various narrative tactics as efforts to show how they lived up to their discursive media responsibility. The tactic of including diverse opinions helped present a less clear-cut way of approaching the subject matters and therefore leaving room for viewers to critically engage with the discussions. The tactic of bringing in a personal angle tried to bring understanding by showing that “we” might hold different opinions but “they” were like “us” who led an ordinary life. Yet, this close-up narrative style also magnified the differences between “us” and “them.” The tactic of juxtaposition tried to create an even-handed reporting; yet, the stark and almost antagonistic contrast also reinforced the divide between the irrational Mandarin-speaking crowd and the under-represented and marginal Cantonese-speaking critical few. The tactic of gradual introduction of standpoints tried to give room to think and engage with the
subjects but it could also work to accentuate the program’s viewpoints. For instance, after seeing many images of the pro-torch crowd and the patriotic views articulated by the Mandarin-speaking pro-China supporters, the more reasonable ways of interpreting patriotism were those articulated by the Hong Kong students and Hong Kong cultural critics. The overall image of the relatively few sober critical views, mostly Cantonese-speaking, and the overwhelming large pro-torch crowd, mostly Mandarin-speaking, though with a few Cantonese-speaking individuals, did enhance the former as the powerless and the marginal. In mediating reports related to the Olympics, these programs had discursively maintained differences between Hong Kong and China, and therefore the discursive idea of a Hong Kong subjectivity.

These narrative tactics along with the media responsibility that HKC claims to defend are not free of power-relations. These tactics can be tactics of intervention (to the dominant position occupied by China “proper,” the sweeping notion of patriotism, and above all, the state-orchestrated Olympics) as well as tactics of domination by claiming the moral high ground and the position of powerless vis-à-vis the mainland counterparts. Like the negotiation tactics used in the Olympic programs, these tactics also entail ambivalences, which, I argue, can very well exemplify Foucault’s argument about the inseparable relationship between power and resistance. Moments of resistance always produce power-relations; these make power-relations less absolute and clear-cut as the top-down approach that sees resistance as something that only helps get rid of power.

The concerns about China’s growing influence in Hong Kong and the frequently discussed subjects of (self)-censorship may have given the impression that Hong Kong has been subordinated and has become controlled by the dominating state. What my analysis shows is that Hong Kong maybe subjected to a set of governing practices promoted by the state but this by no means reduces Hong Kong to a powerless position nor should we simply brush aside Chinese governing tactics as negative power. These RTHK programs have helped illustrate that the media are not simply the mouthpiece of the government. Even in programs that are intended to serve governmental purposes, one could trace negotiation tactics that pose challenges to the state-sanctioned plans. Moreover, the interwoven relationship between media practices and Hong Kong subjectivity also help challenge the assumption that sees the state as a “metapower” possessing superseding power (Foucault 1984c: 64).
This case study leaves more questions open than it can answer. Given China’s growing political and economic influence in Hong Kong, it will be of great importance to examine and compare how other media institutions negotiate their media positions. Several recent incidents and developments, like Kong Qingdong (孔庆东, a professor teaching at Peking University) calling Hong Kong people “dogs of British imperialists”\(^{221}\) and the controversies around mainland women going to Hong Kong to give birth leading to an escalating increase in demands and cost of hospital expenses,\(^ {222}\) have shown that after fifteen years of reunification with China, the Hong Kong-China divide remains enormous. In addition, the booming alternative media (for example Hong Kong People Reporter, Citizen’s Radio, inmediahk.net, and the like) and the gaining popularity of social network sites in recent years have commanded a decent scale of influence in Hong Kong. They have succeeded in mobilizing a mass of people, many of them belonging to the “post-80 generation,” to engage in social actions and to join protests against government policies. The growing influence of these new media has also motivated the HKSAR to use these media to promote its recent political reform campaign, such as “Act Now,”\(^ {223}\) which was part of the promotion for the “Package of Proposals for the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012.” All these developments make it urgent to look at how various media practices contribute to or problematize the Hong Kong-China relations. It is also necessary to examine how alternative media evolve, and whether and in what ways they constitute oppositional forces or governmental tactics in Hong Kong.

