

MASTER'S THESIS

News discourse of the Olympic Games and the national identity of the people of Hong Kong

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**NEWS DISCOURSE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES
AND THE NATIONAL IDENTITY
OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG**

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**A Dissertation
Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Communication**

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Abstract

The issue of national identity for the local people has been, and still is intriguing even after Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997. People may still be puzzled and hesitate to call themselves “I am a Hong Konger” or “I am a Chinese”. Or, some still make other claims.

In the last five years, several celebrated events in China took the attention of the world. In 2001, Beijing won the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games; in 2003, China successfully sent the first astronaut Yang Liwei into the space; and one year later, China won more than 60 medals in the 2004 Olympic Games, ranked second after the United States.

This Dissertation attempts to analyze one of the international events – the news discourse of the 2004 Olympic Games and its reflection and projection on the national identity of the people of Hong Kong. *Apple Daily* and *Ming Pao*, two main local Chinese newspapers, were selected for the study. News reports of China and Hong Kong winning gold medals were taken out for the analysis. Data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The number of 2004 Olympic Games articles were counted and their sizes were measured. In addition, discourse analysis was conducted to identify the loaded languages in the reports.

Despite the fact that the two newspapers adopt very different approaches in their daily reporting, the results show that both newspapers share many commonalities when it comes to news reporting of the Olympic Games. Both of them used loaded languages and big photos that could arouse emotions and feelings relating to one’s national identity of being a Chinese, or proud of being a Chinese. Both media treated the performance of Chinese athletes at the Olympic Games as top priority and placed the news as headline stories. The results may imply that an increasing number of Hong Kong people are identifying themselves as Chinese, as a result of the media’s influence on the public’s perception with their powerful news discourse.

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