

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Setting the scene

The Olympic Games are the world's biggest peacetime event (Toohey and Veal, 2000). They encourage and attract many countries' passionate participation and close global media attention. Every four years some 10,000 athletes from over 200 countries, with a similar number of coaches and officials, as many as 15,000 media representatives and hundreds of thousands of spectators gather for two weeks to participate in, report on and watch a sporting event that is in turn viewed on television, listened to on radios, read about in the print media, and followed on the Internet by billions of people around the world.

For the media, the modern Olympic Games are already much more than sport. They are a scheduled and periodic global media event of profound social, cultural, political and economic significance. As an Olympic Games approaches, the host country's news media, joined by their international counterparts, spare no efforts to boost public support for all things Olympic. Not only casting a close and zealous look at what is happening in the two weeks sports games, the media also need to conduct a series of all-inclusive coverage to go in "hot pursuit" of the Olympic related events and issues during the long period before and after the Games.

Indeed, the entire process of staging the Olympics – from cities vying for the opportunity to host them to the construction of infrastructure and facilities, handling of promotions and sponsorships, issues of media rights and arrangements for coverage, consequences for the urban landscape and the lives of the locals, and, finally, the actual event and its effects – entails news media keeping consistent attention on it and also to help build up and disseminate the Olympic image worldwide. For example, the news media of the host country, the Australian media, as Lenskyj (2002) comments, have "played an indispensable role in shaping public opinion" concerning Olympic sport in general and the Sydney 2000 Olympic bid and preparations before the Games in particular. The media are not only disseminators, but also boosters,

participants and even, to some extent, planners of the Games.

Furthermore, as Polumbaum (2003, p. 57) explains, every instance of the Olympics, summer or winter, is “a crucible not only of emotional dedication, biomechanical excellence, and athletic attainment, but also of cultural assertion, political proclamation, economic manoeuvring, and mediated spectacle”. In specific terms, each Olympics, with the help of news media is uniquely revealing about host cultures, participant nations, media producers, immediate and dispersed audiences, transnational agents, and the character of human action and exchange particular to the locale and the times.

In a sense, the media’s participation and promotion work is just like adding fuel to the flames. It makes the Olympics represent a “potent cultural resource with real implications” (Hargreaves, 1992, p. 121) for international communications and the domestic interests of nation-states. As the modern Games and its reach have grown ever bigger and grander, and also steadily more inclusive in terms of world regions, new nations, gender, race and ethnicity, endeavours to make best use of Olympic resources also have grown more complex and contentious.

Media scholars have argued over time that news media are always centred on that complexity and contention. Lippmann (1965) suggested that the pictures in our heads are a leading source for forming public opinion about foreign countries and peoples. Chang (1993) is concerned about the impact of news media coverage of foreign cultures on public perception and further points out that how people in one country perceive people in other countries might lead to international understanding or misunderstanding. Holstein (2002) points out that while reporting events in other countries, journalists shape our day-to-day understanding of the world around us as they write the “first draft of history”. In this case, the role that the news media play during a momentous event like the Olympics seems extremely important for the promotion of multicultural exchanges and the forming of ‘public opinion’ on a culture or a nation.

However, because the stakes of the modern Olympics have always been ideological, the Games proffer overwhelming economic payoffs, and athletics and business alike

are enveloped in broader strategic purposes, news media coverage of the Games is not always positive or able to make everyone happy. News records show that more than a century of modern Olympic history supplies a string of examples of the staging of the world's premier sporting event to accomplish non-sporting ends. Hargreaves (1992, p. 121) suggests that the global news media have been paying much attention to those issues in which the Games may serve in part to “obliterate a past shame or wrong, mask a current problem, revive or repair a moribund enterprise, enhance or elaborate a mission or identity, celebrate or commemorate an icon or myth”. And they invariably provide opportunities for the pursuit of nationalistic interests, from specific foreign policy objectives to the general quest for prestige (Hargreaves, 1992).

In contemporary society, as both Tudor (1992) and O'Donnell (1994) have comprehensively shown, forming national identity through sport, including participation at both a physical and an ideological level, is common across continents. Many accounts of sport situate it as a central tenet of national culture in either a welcoming or critical way. In turn, the media are deeply implicated in representing sport and forming its social meanings. King and Rowse (1983) maintain that popular media representations are best understood – both materially and symbolically – as part of a tripartite structure consisting of readers/viewers who are interpreting the world represented or implied, and those who are doing the representing. In this tripartite structure, media's influential representation has been described as helping to unify a diverse imagined community by means of a populist “plebiscitary rhetoric” (King and Rowse, 1983, p. 57). Thwaites, Davis, and Mules (2002, p. 145) explain that an “imagined community” is one made up of individuals who do not interact face-to-face, but who nevertheless identify as a community. According to Thwaites *et al.*, nations are imagined communities (Anderson, 1991). There is no way in which individual members of a nation could ever know and interact with anything but a small minority of the rest of the members. Nevertheless, they share a strongly felt sense of that national community, and its coherent values and common interests. Media play a significant role in reproducing the imagined communities of nation, as well as those of the more local kind, such as region and city. Media mediate between individual audience members to create a sense of communal belonging in terms of national, city, regional, and local interests. The community is imagined as having certain values not because of any essential quality it might have, but because

of the circulation of these values in media stories and representations.

Because of their mediating capacity, the media have the power not only to represent but also actively to maintain the relationship between audiences and social institutions. This takes place in the routine reporting of events and occurrences that are worked up into news stories, weighted with particular values. Stories about the Olympic Games held in Sydney in September 2000 and published in the Australian press often included words and images designed to create a sense of national purpose and pride. For instance, Australian athlete Cathy Freeman's win in the 400 metres track final was portrayed in the Australian media in terms of how it contributed to national pride and honour, made all the more emphatic through emphasis on her indigenesness, providing at least one powerful image of a new kind of racially unified Australia. The coverage of the Olympic Games thus helped to reproduce an imagined community amongst its audiences, based on patriotism. Yet further coverage by the international media reproduced other imagined communities in which national interests intermingled with a more global sensibility, as part of the "Olympic spirit". Through the global media, the audience members could feel part of a vast international community of audiences, all sharing the same experience and values.

However, there are indications across the history of nation, sport, and media that powerful political and economic issues can be put on the international public agenda at the uneasy, sports-sponsored meeting ground. For example, the entry of the USSR into the Olympics in 1952 produced a medal-table rivalry along Cold War lines that was constantly nourished and analysed by the media. Although the Cold War ended a decade ago, the medal-table rivalry is still a focus for media coverage of the Olympic Games. The Games are about international cooperation and the promotion of peace, but as Thwaites *et al.* (2002, pp. 146-148) point out, media reportage seems to say the opposite that "the fruits of achievement should only go to the winners, and that national pride should be based on victory over rivals." Competitiveness between individuals and teams was also played up, often with the cooperation of the athletes themselves. Thwaites *et al.* (2002, p. 148) suggest that the athletes' characteristics came to typify different national attitudes, leading to the metonymic identification of individual competitors not only with their national team but also with "a more abstract set of values and meanings, already circulating in the public culture".

By allowing certain kinds of stories and images to be published or broadcast, while excluding or repressing others, the media often privilege one aspect of an event, making it look like the only aspect that can be taken, or the natural or normal way of seeing things. In order to investigate how the print media select and organise agendas of representation, and thereby promote or obstruct international communications and cultural exchanges, this study explores the role of the press in the Olympic movement by examining the work (November 1990 to November 2004) of the Australian and Chinese press in relation to their coverage of the bids and preparation for the Sydney 2000 and Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, and the interlude of the preparation and staging of the Athens Games. Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to look more closely at the background of what makes these two countries and their news media have some connections in the Olympic movement.

The prelude began more than a decade ago, with Beijing's unsuccessful campaign to host the 2000 Summer Olympic Games. The bidding to host the 2000 Olympic Games was a special event happening at a special time, not only for the Olympic movement, which was approaching its centenary year, but also for the two rivals, Sydney and Beijing. The extent of the rivalry between these cities was understood by Australia and China, and more widely. In 1990 a report of the then New South Wales Transport Minister, Mr. Baird, named Beijing as a serious competitor (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, hereafter *SMH*, 17/11/1990, p. 1). In June 1991 Vitaly Smirnov, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) member from Russia, made his pronouncement at Birmingham that the bid was to be the battle of the giants, Sydney versus Beijing (McGeogh, 1994).

Given the many differences between the two countries, especially in the political systems, the process of the two countries' bids seemed to have become a politicized competition from the beginning. In the coverage of the bid, many parts of the press never forgot those sensitive topics and issues. So, for instance, illustrating Australia's political freedom and financial capability is a convenient and efficient way to help an audience make a comparison between Sydney and Beijing, from an Australian viewpoint. The mixture of sport, politics and other concerns is suggested by Gordon (1994), looking back at the Sydney bid in *Australia and the Olympic*

*Games:*

From the time it was launched early in 1991, Sydney's bid to host the Olympic Games of the year 2000 always had a really wholesome look about it. It was well underpinned financially, and the essential priority of the whole exercise was on looking after the athletes ... The bid came from a city of natural beauty, whose sophistication still possessed an edge of innocence, and from a people with boundless, ingrained enthusiasm for sport ... (Gordon 1994, p. 429).

On criteria such as financial soundness, the rightness of the physical environment, and the spirit of an imagined "people", Gordon thus represents the successful bid for hosting the Olympic Games as a "good-guy" selection. But, according to this viewpoint, one problem, as Olympic history has demonstrated, is that being "wholesome" does not always count in deciding the host country. Even Gordon admits that sometimes the "bad guys" among the competing cities, those with records of terrorism, dictatorship and disregard for human rights, have turned out to be the winners (Gordon, 1994). Sometimes deals have been made which had more to do with commerce, politics and the brokering of favours than with any feeling of reverence for the needs of the athletes. In an effort to reflect the competitive differentiation between the 2000 bid teams, Gordon (1994, p. 430) likens Beijing's efforts for the bid to Berlin's winning of the Games in 1936. His viewpoint is that international political concerns are, as a historical reality, put on the agenda for both the global press and public audience to look at the bid.

A counter-position to that Gordon indicates is reflected in the arguments of David Miller, an Olympic correspondent for *The Times* of London and ex-IOC President Samaranch's official biographer, who summed up the race for the 2000 Games in *Olympic Revolution*:

How, you may ask, can the Games be denied to Beijing and the world's most populous country? Sydney, Manchester and others will try to provide the answer to that ... The onus was on Beijing's rivals to prove why it should not get the Games, or at least why their bids

outweighed Beijing's inherent lead, rather than on Beijing to show why it should get the Games, like everyone else ... (Miller, 1992, p. 125).

Miller's comments represent much of the conventional wisdom of the time, which seemed to be developing in support of Beijing. Andrew Jennings, co-author of the best-selling book *The Lords of the Rings* (1992), also claimed that Beijing was a certainty to win. His argument, albeit unsupported by factual evidence, was that Samaranch was steering the Games to China as part of a quest to win the Nobel Peace Prize (Jennings cited in Gordon, 1994, p. 432).

Here, already we can glimpse the major tendencies towards divergence in public opinion on the bid for 2000 Olympics. Politics was becoming a very sensitive and nearly unavoidable topic whenever media reported the bid, in which Beijing, as the capital of the most populous country under the control of a communist party, was keen to make the 2000 Games the vehicle for its arrival in, and acceptance by, the wider world. Sydney's bid to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000 was the third attempt in succession by Australian cities. The two unsuccessful bids, Brisbane's bid for 1992 and Melbourne's for 1996, placed Sydney under great pressure. John Coates, president of Australian Olympic Committee said, at that time, that the Sydney bid was a case of now-or-never (Gordon, 1994, p. 433).

Framed within these rival pressures, the press, especially those from Australia and China, could be expected to have paid close attention to portraying each other's chances of staging such an important international event. Several major contemporary issues, from the Tiananmen Square incident, to human rights debates and even bribery scandals, could be expected to colour the ensuing news coverage.

Although coming tantalizingly close to landing the 2000 Olympics, in September 23, 1993, Beijing lost to Sydney by just two votes in the fourth round of IOC balloting. Having skipped the competition for 2004 Games, which was awarded to Athens, Beijing became one of the five candidate cities, narrowed from an initial field of eight applicants, under consideration for 2008, and was selected to host the Games at an IOC meeting in Moscow on July 13, 2001.

From the failure of bidding for the 2000 Games to winning the right to host the 2008 Olympics, even having skipped the 2004 bid, Beijing had never stopped its efforts in pursuit of the right to stage the Olympic Games. While the Chinese capital city came to be regarded as one of the favourites to win the competition by global media, Chinese athletes made headway in a range of sports, paralleling their country's growing prominence on the world stage. After the athletes' great performance in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, guaranteeing China's third place on the medal tally, the Chinese and some other international press saw the 28 gold medals and 28 bronze medals that Chinese athletes earned in Sydney as symbolizing that the right had been earned to stage the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

From this background, core questions of this study begin to arise. Which issues have been dominant in the Chinese and Australian press reportage and general news stories about the Olympic Games, particularly concerning the newspapers' own and each other's country? How have the press framed the stories and interpreted issues? For instance, how have they represented the two countries' respective chances of success in bidding for, preparing and hosting the Games? In what ways do ideological values and concerns inform the representations of Olympic-related activities, including the issues in relation to ideals and practices in the Olympic movement? In exploring these questions, others arise, concerning the nature of direct and indirect influences on the press, and issues of press freedom and control. How do representations of events in the press reflect certain ideas of nation, peoples or imagined communities and offer audiences particular ways of understanding situations?

Broaching these questions demands consideration of theories concerning news, media, culture and society. A helpful starting point is found in the distinction made by Li Kun (1992) between two major and basic theories of news and the functions of the media. The pluralist or traditional point of view regards the press as a "marketplace of ideas" by representing diverse views on matters of importance in society, which can be more or less freely constructed, circulated, received or contested. By contrast, the critical perspective, taken as a whole, views the press as constrained by an apparatus or network of ideological practices that determine the production and circulation of ideas. From this perspective, the press may work to maintain

hegemony of ideas and values and a social status quo.

This study will explore the hypothesis that the press systems are ideological apparatuses established in accordance with a society's political, economic and cultural context. The hypothesis will be examined best by a comparative analysis between two very different countries with different media systems and journalistic philosophies. According to critical theory, journalists are socially-situated, that is, they are bound by the political and economic conditions and cultural assumptions of their own society at certain historical periods and therefore their reporting can never be absolutely "true" and "objective" even in coverage of the Olympic Games, which advocates "mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair-play" (*The Olympic Charter*). Rather, their reporting will reflect ideological values, not necessarily intentionally, but because they are already situated in a way of working to perceive events through value-laden eyes.

## **1.2 Significance of the present study**

The present study investigates, in a cross-cultural manner, theories of news and of media, culture and society. It provides a selective focus on major Chinese and Australian newspapers and their coverage of the Olympic Games in order to explore processes of media representation and ideological implications in these different countries. The study is significant for three reasons. First, it pursues a general comparative interest in newspaper practices of representation in changing national and international contexts. Many researchers have analysed how the media work ideologically to support a status quo and social power structure or else present different accounts or ways of seeing events and situations. In addition, some research on international news examines who controls the news and what factors influence news content. A further step in this research tradition is comparative study between media in different societies. Comparative studies have been conducted between several Western democratic countries as well as between developed and newly developing countries, and also between socialist/communist and Western democratic countries (mostly the United States of America). However, the comparative study of issues of journalistic representation and ideology is a work in

progress. The thesis therefore pursues the opportunity to explore these issues further. It considers how conceptions of the ideological dimension of media can be applied in studying forms of journalism in different sorts of political contexts, such as socialist or communist and liberal-democratic societies.

Second, the thesis focuses this general interest, in specific historical terms, by recognising the importance of comparing journalism in China and Australia under their different political systems in the context of the continuous development of political, economic and cultural connections between these two countries. The increasing interest of each in the other provides not merely the valuable opportunity but the necessity to examine the roles of the media in Australia and China. This examination is significant because the Olympic Games provide a type of common ground on which to see how the news media may reveal already existing or new perspectives on their own and each other's country and culture. The China-Australia comparison is significant because it is conducted between a communist country and a liberal democratic country where perspectives and values exist at a great variance. But, it is also the case that both countries are, to use the term of Curran and Park (2000, p. 13) in some "transitional" process, which makes it necessary to employ some new methods or angles of view that allow shifts in representations or perspectives to be considered. Comparative study would not otherwise be complete.

Third, therefore, the thesis develops a methodological interest for comparative study of media representations. In particular, it combines ideas and methods of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of media representations and discourse. In order to identify frequencies and patterns in the content of the different media, it uses techniques that have been established in the scholarship of *content analysis*. It also uses techniques of *discourse analysis* to examine constructions of meaning in texts, at some crucial moments in the media coverage of the Olympics, to exemplify constitutive elements of ideological frames for the coverage. Both these terms, content analysis and discourse analysis, are explained further below, but we note here that this attention to the construction of meaning does not imply that meanings are simply encoded in the news and that readers receive messages passively. Rather, the writing and reading of news depends on the interactive articulation of ideological and cultural meanings. This applies to the Australian context and also to the Chinese one,

where an idea of a preferred view of events being expressed in the name of a unified society represented by state and the official press is maintained.

Bridging these theoretical methods in studying journalism combines study of media texts with contexts, and analysis of content with an understanding of historical circumstances of the media, which is a focus of academic debate among media theorists. As Robinson (1991) argues, the meaning of a cultural product is determined by interactive relations among the encoders, the decoders and the layers of social context within which they live. In this process of interaction, the relationships between the encoders and their social environments are the concern of the current study. Media content is the product of the encoders' (journalists') interaction with their social context, and their products have a reciprocal influence on the social environment in which they live. In this relationship, journalists are both the products and the agents of their cultural formation. Like other elements of the society, they are bound by the environment they are in, sharing a common sense of their culture. It is not necessarily the intention of the journalists in each country to be subjective in reporting. Instead, their values and opinions are formed culturally and reflected in the news messages they impart, which in turn may be accepted to a greater or lesser degree by readers. In other words, media systems may work together with other institutions to keep societies together. Relating the analysis of the media representations to the social, historical context of their production is necessary in order to explain this interactive, dynamic relationship. The concept of *news values* developed in media studies and practice will help to compare and contrast the Australian and Chinese press representations. Also, the comparative study will allow reflection on the different ideas of news values across the diverse cultural contexts of journalism.

These three related concerns are elaborated in the following sections. It may be added that a possible further significance of the study is that the comparison of media representations may help to examine and analyse any possible "gain" or "loss" from the media's work in portraying each other's country. Such an outcome would depend on readers' consideration of the findings, but it is hoped that by its comparative study the thesis may provide suggestions for guiding and improving the media's future work and contribute to promoting mutual understanding and bilateral

communication and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

### **1.3 International comparative studies of journalism and media systems**

International comparison of journalism is a trans-cultural and cross-disciplinary field of study. As a new and still developing sphere, the study of international comparative journalism was initiated by research seeking to extend understanding of the role and operation of the press in individual countries, regions or systems. Since the rapid development of communication technologies enables researchers to scan journalism worldwide, the economically advanced countries, or simply, the West, have a greater advantage than developing Third World and Communist countries. The result is unbalanced, as many studies about the Eastern press have been published in the West, while studies on the Western press remain rare in the East.

In particular, journalism study in relation to Australia and China is a comparatively new field of exploration and is far from being extensive. On the Chinese side, the number of publications is very limited, and those that exist are extremely brief overviews of Australian journalism. On the Australian side, the studies about Chinese journalism are mostly limited to analyses of reports on individual events and persons. No comprehensive and systematically comparative studies have yet been published.

But to begin with the broader picture, since the 1950s, world studies on individual press systems have made considerable progress and have laid the foundation for the emergence of comparative journalism. A pioneer work in this field is *The Four Theories of the Press* written by a group of American scholars, Fred. S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm (1956). In this work the world press was divided into three socio-political systems, liberal, authoritarian and totalitarian. The authors display focus on the American and Soviet media, and the early English press, but not extensively on any other media system. They arguably overcome some lack of comparative expertise by advancing a convenient, idealist argument. They claim that media systems reflect the prevailing philosophy and political system of the society in which they operate. Thus, to understand the international media system, it

is necessary merely to identify “the philosophical and political rationales or theories which lie behind the different kinds of press we have in the world today” (Siebert *et al.* 1956, p. 17). By implication, the world’s communication systems could be laid bare by studying their thought. The work was viewed as a landmark study. The explanation for why the book was taken quite so seriously is probably that it drew upon a Cold War view of the world widely endorsed in the West, and seemed therefore authoritative. In their account, these rationales were written almost entirely by Western theorists.

In contemporary studies of comparative journalism, however, there exists a growing reaction against the self-absorption and parochialism of much Western media theory. For example, reflecting developments in communication studies and seeking to improve on the “Four Theories” tradition, which saw the universe through Western eyes, in *De-Westernizing Media Studies*, Curran and Park (2000, p. 13) introduce an alternative method in a more broadly informed way to divide the world into authoritarian and democratic political systems, subdividing each of these into neo-liberal and regulated economic systems. In addition, the new way of ordering or classifying countries has an extra category – transitional or mixed societies, which refers to countries that are being transformed or regions with mixed regimes. The difference between the alternative model and “Four Theories” is that Curran and Park retain the authoritarian/democratic divide but add in the new categories that provide the places for those transitional countries, which previously belonged to either the “Soviet-totalitarian” sphere or authoritarian societies. According to this alternative model, China belongs to the transitional and mixed societies, which are different from the communist-totalitarian in traditional sense, although the signs of authoritarianism are still relatively strong. For Australia, still being classified in the sphere of democratic neo-liberal societies, according to the book, the southern hemisphere country is also increasingly self-identifying as part of the Asian region, in spite of its original status as a British colonial outpost and the “European” orientation of much of its population. Curran and Park suggest that the extent to which Australian media performance and practices can and should be seen on a continuum with those of Eastern states and cultures can be treated as an example to de-Westernize media studies, which show the change and development of global communication systems. This kind of viewpoint can help conduct the comparative work between Australian

and Chinese media coverage of events more accurately.

Since the 1980s there has been a rapid growth in international media studies. Some of this growth has occurred in China and Australia or can be seen as directly relevant to comparative study of the press in these countries. We shall discuss relevant aspects of these developments in detail in the next chapter, but here note initially that this work has explored issues of intercultural understanding that are important in developing comparative studies and perspectives and has also identified problems for the development of work in this field. For example, some attempts at international comparison are seen to be limited to parallel demonstrations of different forms of news representations. More generally, a major difficulty is the lack of a “common ground” (Li, 1999, p. 3) on which to analyse similarities and differences between the press in different cultural and political contexts in a meaningful way. In order to address this problem, this thesis takes the Olympic Games as the common ground for international comparative study of media activity in the Chinese and Australian contexts. By focusing study on a major site of shared events and media practice experienced in different ways, it should be possible to explore both similarities and differences in journalistic approaches and representations.

There is a great deal of contemporary research on the Olympic movement in the fields of sports, politics, economics, culture, education, history, sustainable environmental development and gender studies. However, there is less emphasis on studying the effect of the Olympic movement on promoting international communication and cultural exchanges among countries. Research work is even less concentrated on the role that media and their coverage of the Olympic movement have played in promoting, or possibly preventing, mutual understanding and cultural exchange among people with different cultural background from different countries. Therefore, it is necessary for this study to explore the area.

#### **1.4 Genesis of the research for the comparative study**

The very beginning idea, which inspired me to start the research project leading to this thesis, stems from an article appearing in *Australian Journalism Review* in 1995.

With the title “Sydney’s Olympics and the Beijing *People’s Daily*” (Zhang, 1995), the article presents some revolutionary changes in the journalistic style of China’s leading newspaper, the *People’s Daily* by examining and analysing the newspaper coverage of Sydney’s bid for the 2000 Olympic Games. By reflecting on an original survey, conducted for the article, of content and ideological features in some 34 stories about Australia run by the newspaper in 1969, Zhang shows that during the Chinese Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, the *People’s Daily* reflected the polemic of the Chinese Communist Party of which it is the official organ. While carrying the news about Australia, the newspaper could not help falling into the form of agenda in opposition to “the capitalists”’ cruel exploitation and oppression. Unfavourable reports occupied most space in the newspaper. A few positive references had been bestowed upon the Australian Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) for their efforts in calling on party members to support the struggle of Australian workers and students in Australian revolutionary practice. Zhang suggests that if Sydney had been Beijing’s major opponent in a bid for the 1976 Olympics, it is likely that the paper would have carried diatribes against the reactionary capitalists behind Sydney’s bid and Australia itself as a “running dog of the American imperialists” (p. 7). However, in 1993, according to the article, manifesting very distinct change from its political feature of fighting verbal battles against all capitalist countries, the paper treated Sydney as an honourable opponent of Beijing in the contest for the 2000 Olympics. The paper made no derogatory references to Sydney’s shortcomings, nor did it quote such references from Chinese authorities.

The interesting and revolutionary change that Zhang has observed implies the cultural transformation, triggered by multiple factors such as political and social change, Westernization and changes in economic structure in Chinese society between the 1960s-1970s and the 1990s. This transformation, according to Zhang, was clearly reflected in the press coverage of the certain event. Interactively, Chu and Ju’s divide of Chinese cultural change periods also supports Zhang’s findings. Chu and Ju (1993) suggest that cultural change in China takes place in three main periods: (1) Mao’s era of ideological indoctrination (1949-1978), (2) post-Mao China of economic reform (1978-1990s), and (3) the influx of Western influence through media (1990s onwards). The divide depicts the evolving and shifting of cultural and political perspectives in China. It reminds the researchers, when pursuing international

comparative journalism studies between China and other countries, to take the changes and the context based on the different periods into account rather than always stereotype the Chinese media system as an unchanged or undifferentiated model.

For this study, the conception of cultural development will also be examined since we are now looking at the press coverage of the similar events between post-Mao period and the influx of Western influence period. Are the journalistic styles and the cultural values found in the Chinese press' perspectives on Olympic activities still shifting? This is one of the key points to be focused on in this study. In exploring the development of the press perspectives, this study looks at how they operate in the reporting approaches by the two Chinese and Australian newspapers. There are connections here with other comparative work. For instance, in *Reporting on the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games: A Cultural & Journalistic Comparison between the People's Daily and the New York Times*, Gao (2001) reveals many differences between the two leading dailies named in the title. For instance, while the Chinese newspaper emphasizes the spirit of the collectivism, the American media affirms individualism, a difference in news approaches attributed to the respective cultural contexts.

In her Olympic series book, Lenskyj (2002) examines Australian media treatment of Olympic-related issues in the first half of 1996 – the crucial period leading up to the Atlanta Games and the halfway mark in Sydney's Olympic preparations – in order to show the state of play at that particular historical point. Lenskyj also examines the changing role of the media in the late 1990s, following an IOC bribery scandal. Her work focuses on the print media, with particular attention to the coverage provided by the *SMH* throughout the 1990s. Lenskyj analyses the *SMH*'s Olympic coverage every day of publication over the following periods: January-June 1996, April-May 1997, and April-May 1998; from November 1998 to February 2001. Her analysis is based also on monitoring of the *SMH* website for the corresponding periods. Lenskyj has found that the Australian media played an indispensable role in shaping public opinion concerning Olympic sport in general and the Sydney 2000 Olympic bid and preparations in particular. The Olympic product was eminently marketable, and it was relatively easy for the Olympic industry to use the mass media to maintain its relentless promotion of the Sydney 2000 project not only as a “magic moment” in Australian history, but also as a “once-in-a-life” opportunity to boost the economy

through tourism, employment, and private sector investment.

Further, by reviewing some Australian media's performance, Lenskyj has tested Chomsky's (1989) propaganda model, which noted the importance of "necessary illusions": the ways in which the mass media occasionally engage in self-criticism in order to convey editorial independence. In another example of this kind of critical inquiry into ideological of press representations, as one of the two regular contributors for Australia's best-selling sports magazine, *Inside Sports*, Colin Tatz has presented radically dissenting views on controversial issues (Lenskyj, 1998). In fact, Tatz's article on White Australians' racist treatment of Aboriginal people, both inside and outside sport, was one of the few to name the hypocrisy of the Sydney 2000 bid supporters who focused on China's human rights abuses and ignored Australia's own shameful record (Tatz, 1995, p. 21).

## **1.5 On quantitative and qualitative analysis**

I begin this study with the idea that comparative research offers a promising future for understanding international journalism if it is theoretically motivated and guided. Without a comparative approach, many constraints on international comparative journalism would have been either overlooked (e.g. the societal-level influences) or overstated (e.g. individual-level characteristics). However, without a clearly articulated conceptual framework, a comparative study too easily can become descriptive, idiosyncratic, and ad hoc. This study attempts to be theoretically oriented and to benefit from the approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate press discourse in different dimensions.

### **1.5.1 *Sample periods, newspapers and methods***

In its major research project in the 1970s, the Glasgow University Media Group identified two strategies for examination of media content and ideology. A researcher can look at the whole output for a short period, or a particular area as defined by content over a longer period. "It was felt that an examination of one area over a longer period would probably reveal more of the routine practices and

assumptions governing the production of news and the producers' ideology" (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, p. 39). In this study, the Glasgow University Media Group's second strategy is applied because of the need to measure recurring elements to identify similarities, differences and changing iterations of key issues in the press coverage of events of common interest over a lengthy period. The study divides both countries' press coverage of the two countries' Olympic activities during the overall period between 1990 and 2004 into three stages. First, from the bid to host the 2000 Olympic Games in 1993 to Atlanta Olympics in 1996 is the "post-bid" period, which is sensitive and unique to both countries and their press, since Beijing was defeated by Sydney in 1993. Second, from 1996 to the 2000 Sydney Olympics is the "Sydney Olympics" period, during which global media paid much attention to Sydney's preparations for the Games. Third, from 2000 to the end of 2004 the third stage is the "post-Sydney Olympics" or "pre-Beijing Olympics" period, during which Beijing brought the 2008 Games home and Athens hosted a successful Olympic Games in 2004.

The study pays particular attention to the press coverage of a number of significant events during the different stages, by the two countries' leading national dailies, *The Australian (TA)* and the *People's Daily (PD)*; by a Sydney local daily, *The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*, and a well-known Chinese news agency, Xinhua News Agency (Xinhua), covering the period from November 1990 to November 2004. Xinhua has foreign-language news services but this study focuses on its Chinese-language news because of its powerful influence on domestic news distribution and consumption. In addition, *China Daily (CD)*, the largest circulated mainstream English-language daily newspaper in China, is examined to provide further reference for the study.

To initiate analysis of selected articles from these sources, content analysis methods are used to identify frequencies of sub-topics, perspectives and actors or participants in the events represented. This entails breaking down the components of newspaper articles into units. Building on the content analysis, the study extends the qualitative analysis of the news texts by applying methods and ideas of discourse analysis. It focuses on close textual study through lexical and propositional analysis, the news values articulated in press representations, and the cultural values, traditions and

myths that they draw on and help to produce.

### **1.5.2 *Data collection and processing***

The collection and processing of the news content in the research that was conducted for this study proceeded in two stages.

(1) *Data collection.* Major newspapers and magazines were selected as samples based on their national and international fame and large daily circulation. The data selected are from November 1990 to November 2004 for the bidding and preparations for the Olympic Games that happened in this period. Most of the data have been collected mainly from the State Library in Adelaide, the Dixson Library at the University of New England, and information resources from libraries in China, including the Provincial Library in Wuhan, and the library in Wuhan University of Technology. News abstracts and news texts before 1995 are rare online, so data collection for the major period of the Olympics bidding was conducted manually in the above mentioned libraries. The data corpus includes a large number of news full texts and news abstracts from the selected newspapers, key examples of which are reproduced in the Appendices. A total of 368 news items from the Australian press and 507 news items from the Chinese press were selected for analysis.

(2) *Data processing and analysis unit selecting.* Data processing involved sorting the collected data into chronological sequence and categorizing them according to emerging “news types”, which include news articles, feature articles, editorials, etc. The process of selecting units for analysis depends on the kind of information to be obtained for the purposes of the study and whether the focus at a given point is on words, statements, sentences, paragraphs, or entire articles.

## **1.6 Organisation of the thesis**

Following this introductory overview, Chapter 2 helps to establish the theoretical framework for the study by providing a literature review of different perspectives in international comparative studies of journalism, and the factors that influence

international news coverage. It scans the findings from important previous research relevant to this study, in particular to find a common ground for comparison between Chinese and Australian press coverage of the Olympic activities. The chapter also makes a comparative review of the development of the press systems in both countries to establish a historical context for the analysis in the later chapters.

Chapter 3 explicates the methodologies of quantitative and qualitative analysis to be applied and explains further the choice of print media in their cultural contexts. It stresses the importance of combining content analysis and discourse analysis in the international comparative journalism study, thus creating a distinctive angle from which to compare the press systems in China and Australia.

Chapter 4 undertakes the detailed content analysis to process the data collected for this study, using the methods described in Chapter 3. It identifies the frequencies of sub-topics, perspectives, actors and their mode of representation, across the three main periods described above, for the selected Chinese and Australian press. Identifying different approaches to the events and issues, it leads into questions about the particular ways in which these are manifested in the press representations.

These questions are explored further through methods of discourse analysis in the remaining chapters. Chapter 5 uses methods of lexical and propositional discourse analysis to examine how meanings are constructed by focusing in on a set of examples of the two countries' press coverage at key moments in the Olympic activities. Chapter 6 widens the focus again to explore further the cultural and ideological differences in the content patterns and reporting techniques in the press coverage, with attention to the interplay of news values and cultural values. By investigating press representations further, in terms of their broader discursive practices and cultural contexts, Chapter 7 pays special attention to the two countries' press coverage of the 1993 bids and Beijing's second Olympic bid and 2008 Games preparations, in the final period of the study, to trace two different kinds of perspective change. Chapter 8 summarises findings and concludes the study.

## 1.7 Appendices

The Appendices provide the full or extended text of a representative range of many of the key articles referred to in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. For ease of reference, these articles are signaled at the relevant points in the main text, there is a separate Appendix for each selected newspaper and the Xinhua News Agency, and within these Appendices the articles are arranged in chronological order.

## 1.8 Translation of the Chinese coverage

The news items chosen from the Chinese press were originally in Chinese. The author of this study did the translations, including the Chinese press articles in the appendices and the quotations within chapters. As is common to all translation efforts, interpretation and necessary adjustments are unavoidable because of inherent differences between two languages. In an academic work, and especially a comparison of news content and discourse between the press using different languages, however, a distorted interpretation could be disastrous to the result of the research. Therefore, some criteria must be set to justify the translation.

The translation in this study applies what Yan Fu, a nineteenth century Chinese theorist in translation termed “Xin, Da, Ya” as criteria. In the preface to *Tiyanlun*, Yan (1981, p. 7) explained that the three problems in achieving an ideal translation are: “Xin”, faithfulness to the original text; “Da”, communication of the ideas; and “Ya”, literary elegance and grace. To Yan, a translation must be loyal to the original meaning, even if it means sacrificing some of the wording. In other words, a written translation does not have to exchange word for word literally as the only way of capturing the original meaning. “Da” can be achieved, for instance, by removing all dangling modifiers; “Ya”, a neat and graceful translation should save the tone and style of the originals. As no translation can be considered perfect by everyone, the translation in this study has unavoidable shortcomings. Considering the nature of the study and the nature of the material to be analysed, the current translation sets “Xin”, or being loyal to the original meanings, as the criterion of first importance. To avoid the fateful translation error as much as possible, the researcher used a second

## Chapter 1 Introduction

translator as a checker.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review of the Comparative Study of International Journalism

This chapter reviews theoretical work on press systems and international comparison of journalism, and discusses the development of Australian and Chinese press systems, to help set up the conceptual and historical context for the comparative study. By identifying themes in the study of press systems relevant to the Australian and Chinese press systems' conditions, the chapter attempts to position and compare the two countries' press systems in a view of historical development and change. Main works in the field of international comparison of journalism are considered to provide a theoretical platform for the specific comparison of the Australian and Chinese press relating to the issues in play with the Olympic topics.

To begin, it is necessary to have a general understanding of works in the field of international comparison in journalism. International comparison of press product requires research into the role and operation of the press in individual countries, regions or systems. The rapid development of communication now enables researchers to scrutinise and compare journalism systems worldwide. We survey developments in the relevant literature in general outline first, and return to them in more detail below.

Since the 1950s, world studies on individual press systems have made considerable progress and have laid the foundation for the emergence of comparative journalism studies. As mentioned before, a pioneer work in this field is *The Four Theories of the Press* by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956). In this work the world press was divided into three socio-political systems and analysed in terms of the free world of liberal democracy (with competing libertarian and social responsibility models); the "Soviet-totalitarian" sphere; and authoritarian societies. Another important work, *The Newspaper: An International History* by Anthony Smith, published in 1979, is a narrative history of the global press systems. These two early books provide consultable and disputable examples for subsequent comparative studies in international journalism. On the one hand, parallel demonstrations of world press

development and categorisation of the world press systems, based on the divisions of geopolitics or East-West model, are the common features of these two works. Although they mainly examining press history, their pioneering explorations have inspired ongoing research in international comparative journalism. On the other hand, as the time goes by, their approach makes the results of comparison only valid in certain period, and subsequent developments need to be taken into account when comparative study is conducted, to see how press systems in the world operate differently regarding news coverage.

Media researchers have long been interested in comparing content of different newspapers or coverage of a same event by different papers. Some have compared newspapers from different countries to track differences in their coverage. But after decades of mass communication research, scholars are arguably still testing theories for comparison of media in different political systems and how the systems affect media content, an issue already raised by Curry (1982). So when researchers do comparative content analysis, instead of referring to an authoritative theory, they base their research on the theories they consider are most valid or blend different points of view from previous researchers for use (Chan, 1992).

## **2.1 Press system classification according to political system**

Siebert *et al.* (1956) suggest that authoritarian media exist in countries where the government believes that it knows what the best is for its people. The government dictates the framework of news in such a system, and the press serves as a propaganda machine of the government. In this system, the press exists to contribute to the success of the state. It is usually state-owned and exists as a mouthpiece of the state. Libertarian and social responsibility tendencies, for Siebert *et al.*, are two aspects of liberal systems. Liberal press exists in Western countries where ideas and information can be exchanged freely as in a marketplace. The mass media work together as a separate institution – a fourth estate – and make their own decisions on what is selected as news. The government cannot control the media; rather the media are self-correcting. On the other hand, the media act as a check on government. The society, in which liberal press resides, accepts the idea that people

have the ability to choose and make decisions (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). Social responsibility theory stresses that the media serve the good of the society and spread information for people to make decisions. It assumes that everyone has a right to have his or her say. Community opinion, consumer action, and professional ethics are supposed to act as checks on media in societies where social responsibility theory applies (Siebert *et al.*, 1956).

A major criticism of the model in *Four Theories of the Press* is its oversimplification. So, for instance, Berry, Birch, Dermody, and Grant (1996) argue that Siebert *et al.* present too stark a dichotomy in assuming that the mass media are either totally controlled by the government or operate in an absolute marketplace where information can be freely exchanged. Hence, the model places media in a political environment as if they are not affected by any other factors. Berry *et al.* (1996, pp. 218-19) argue that its proponents did not take into account economic factors, which can also influence the media. They contend (pp. 218-19) that Siebert *et al.* portrayed a pure press-state relationship, in which the state or government is the only source of obstruction to mass media.

In the 1980s, some researchers sought to refine classifications of media systems. Martin and Chaudhary (1983) divide the world's mass media into three categories: Western, Third World, and Communist. In the Western mass media system, the media take the final decision as to what makes news. But in the Third World and Communist media systems, the government controls and decides what is presented as news. The Western mass media are autonomous, and the Communist and Third World systems are "ancillary media" (Martin and Chaudhary, 1983, p. 117). In turn, however, Martin and Chaudhary's division is challenged by Noam Chomsky's sustained arguments in defence of development communication, the critique of overly adversarial and oppositional journalistic styles, and the excessive emphasis on individualism and freedom in Western press (Chomsky, 1988). If Chomsky and others are correct in their analysis of the ideological and propagandistic control exercised by Western media in its distorting coverage of global politics and economics (Chomsky and Herman, 1988), then the differences between Western and non-Western news production depend on the nature and methods of controls on them, and the potential for contesting that control, rather than on an absolute distinction

between freedom and control. In other words, researchers should not rigidly adhere to certain theories of classifications of the global press systems when they are undertaking comparative study. To be valid, comparative international studies need a more nuanced treatment of historical contexts and emerging and changing influences on the development of particular press systems.

## **2.2 Common factors influencing media and differences of degree**

The works by Siebert *et al.* and Martin and Chaudhary discussed above suggest that mass media in Western countries and those in Communist countries differ with regard to whether the media are free or under their governments' control. While this is important, some other researchers have approached press systems and newspaper content in alternative ways. They do not classify media around the world into different categories just at a highly generalised level but look at those specific factors that influence media operations.

One important factor considered by some researchers, overlooked by Siebert *et al.* and Martin and Chaudhary, is the influence that Western, as well as non-Western, governments can have on their mass media. Whilst mass media around the world belong to different social and political systems, governments of different types can have an influence over them. Wiio (1983) argues that international media comparisons often are over-simplified when based on strict dichotomies of "free" or "government controlled" media. He outlines dimensions for evaluating media from different countries and proposes classifying media into either the "monolithic model", which is sender centred, or the "pluralistic model", which is receiver centred (Wiio, 1983, p. 92). His proposal diversifies the models for classifying press systems from different countries. Similarly, Graber (1993) indicates that non-authoritarian kinds of control exist in mass media systems, as can be seen from the media's practice of supporting a political system and rarely questioning its fundamental tenets:

Although the media regularly expose the misbehaviour and inefficiencies of government officials and routinely disparage politicians, for the most part they display a favourable toward political

leaders and the political system. (Graber, 1993, p. 135)

Graber suggests that the media tend to criticise only what is contrary to their system's social and political values and, like other institutions, have staff that have been "socialised to believe in the merits of their political structures" (p. 136). He notes also that outside financial factors make the media conform to the system – advertisers and audiences are often supporters of the status quo. In addition, journalists' reliance on information from government sources makes the media supportive of official viewpoints (p. 137). A specific aspect of political influence on mass media is indicated by studies suggesting that in the United States the President has increasing influence on the mass media (Goodman, 1998). Graber's idea that reporters rely heavily on the "high and mighty as their sources of news" (1993, p. 123) may help to explain this phenomenon. These sources exert influence and get their voices heard through the news media. Some governments (or government officials) also exert control on the media by setting rules and regulations so that reporters are punished for crossing the line (p. 125). Graber (p. 127) argues that there are definite degrees of control over the press, and that the control of authoritarian countries is more extensive and rigid than that of other countries. Nevertheless, governmental and political influence on the mass media can thus be found in Western as well as more evidently "authoritarian" political contexts.

More generally, some scholars have modified the binary opposition of freedom versus control by arguing that various other forms of press control are common around the world, not only in Communist and authoritarian press systems (Altschull, 1995; Chomsky, 1989; Graber, 1993). They take into consideration factors such as economic and social influences over the press. Altschull insists that a free press does not exist anywhere and refers to the news media as "the world's most visible mechanism of social control" (1995, p. 45) and argues that they are used by the powerful to reach their goals of influencing people. Altschull sees the media's social responsibility role as limited because the press is manipulated by commercial forces and maintains, further, that government and big business always are closely linked, both economically and politically. Graber also sees political forces as controlling the media. She writes that "attempts by government to control and manipulate the media have been universal for centuries because governments worldwide believe

media have important political forces” (Graber, 1993, p. 19). She holds that governments reach their goal of keeping their political system by controlling information agencies and producing their version of news. In a similar vein, considering the roles of journalists in the press, Chomsky (1989) points out that journalists belong to the same privileged elite as the powerful and conform to the accepted norms and ideologies of the elite. Therefore, even when economic and political powers do not directly impose controls, the cultural environment of journalists has political effects. From these points of view, both external and internal factors influence the press significantly, no matter which kind of society it belongs within.

These concerns with influences on the press lead into another theoretical perspective, that of “ideological orientation” (Hallin, 1987, p. 4). Recognising that liberal societies do not employ coercive forces to control the mass media, Hallin says that, instead, the media are part of the hegemony that works in such societies. In contemporary Western societies, power relations between groups and institutions tend to emerge through processes of consent rather than coercion or force. The authority of a dominant group is gained by the consent of subordinate groups and formations. Hegemony is a subtle form of this process, because it is not imposed on individuals, but offered them. In a hegemonic relation, the power between the dominant group and the others is not based on force. It needs to be maintained by a continual courting. Hegemony treats particular values as though they were universal, and as if consensus were simply a matter of following one’s feelings or agreeing to the obvious (Gramsci, 1971, 1988). People, including journalists, share common views and are acculturated to accept the obvious as common sense and shared values. Western governments’ role is to propagate and maintain that world view, mostly by giving scope to non-political institutions of civil society, such as family and church (Hallin, 1987, p. 5).

To understand the roles of the mass media in these differentiated ways, it is useful to note the argument of Curry (1982) that differences between forms of press control in different political systems are “more quantitative than qualitative” (p. 256). Control of media in different political systems depends on “a complex matrix of variables”, such as media ownership and the type of information being managed:

It is ... impossible to speak of unidimensional correlations. Instead, one can only note tendencies of variables to cluster around certain poles in various types of political systems and the relationship between historical and political factors and the media systems that result. (Curran, p. 255)

The ideas summarised thus far help to develop an approach to press representations in Australia and China that takes into account multiple influences in comparing forms of journalism in these countries. At this point, we take a preliminary look at the different press systems of the two countries in the light of issues considered to date.

### 2.3 Chinese press

If we were to apply the classifications by Siebert *et al* in *The Four Theories of Press* and by Martin and Chaudhary, the Chinese press would fall in the category of the Communist press system. In a Communist system, as Karch (1983) has argued, mass media are often under the control of the Communist party and are designed to serve the education role to spread propaganda, such as Marxist-Leninist ideology:

The party-government view of the role of the mass media – ‘educational,’ propagandistic, supportive of official policies and programs – is clear. Everyone involved in media understands the ideological-political primacy. Those who do not accept their expected and unqualified supportive role, those who possess a natural proclivity for expressing individuality, or those who wish to challenge the system face insurmountable obstacles. (Karch, p. 117)

According to Xu (1991), Chinese media serve the political aims of their government and serve its people: “All of its mass media work in accordance with the policy of the party. Media serve the interests of the whole of the people” (Xu, 1991, p. 111). In the Chinese system, the news media have limited autonomy in producing news. Dai Qing, a former reporter from *Guangming Daily*, gives an example to illustrate the

complicated news selection process. He says that the editing process is stringent in that the paper requires copy to go to three places to be checked: the reporter's own department, the office of the editor-in-chief, and the editor-in-chief or the deputy editor-in-chief (Qing, 1999). Similarly, Chang (1989) says China's press is an organ of the party, "and its political orientation and fundamental policies largely or totally depend on those of the Party" (p. 57).

However, a group of scholars researching China in the 1990s contends that with reform and the opening of China to the outside world after the 1980s, the mass propaganda and persuasion concepts about the Communist press can no longer be applied so easily to the Chinese press. As Chang, Chen and Zhang (1993) have argued, broader theoretical grounds are needed. These writers have studied foreign news coverage by five regional newspapers in China. They have found that although all these papers used the news sources from the Xinhua News Agency, the official news agency of China, they produced different accounts of international events. For example, the number of foreign countries covered by these newspapers varied. Moreover, the foreign countries covered by these five regional newspapers were different. Among each paper's international news, less than a third of the material covered the same countries as the other four papers did. This example illustrates that, with the changing times and environment, the mass media in China are also changing, and the old generalisations do not necessarily fit. Rather, the Chinese media need to be studied in a new context (Chang *et al.*, 1993). This study focuses on Chinese press where official influence is still strong but news representations work in complex ways in a changing environment.

#### **2.4 Australian press**

The Australian press could be seen to fall comfortably into the social responsibility category (Siebert *et al.*, 1956) and the Western press category (Martin & Chaudhary, 1983). However, the Australian media demonstrate a hybrid quality, with mainstream elements fashioned out of the intersection of British and American traditions. Australia's news media have a robust tradition of free expression and vigorous analysis of public policy. Strong competition exists in the newspaper, radio

and television industries as well as in the online (Internet) news media. This is accompanied by a lively debate about the role and influence of the media in Australian society and their role in a liberal democratic society. It is notable that, for a country that prides itself on its adversarial nature, Australia provides very few examples of truly “resistant” or “oppositional” mainstream media. Despite its emphasis on debate and confrontation with politicians and other authority figures, Australia is one of the few countries in the Southeast Asian region never to have had a revolution or to have systematically rejected its colonial past. At least this is seen as significant for commentators who consider that, behind the rhetoric of confrontation, there seems to lie (for most of the population) an easy acceptance of the status quo (Berry *et al.* 1996, pp. 218-19).

While there is much argument about the extent of media diversity in Australia, especially in terms of media ownership, most Australians enjoy a substantial choice of media from the newspapers, magazines, radio, television and online services available. Australia's media entrepreneurs have a global perspective and the professional skills and technical infrastructure of local media are often seen as world-class. News Limited and the Fairfax Group are the largest newspaper publishers and ACP Magazines is the largest magazine publisher. Australia has 12 daily national or state/territory newspapers. There are 35 regional dailies and some 470 other regional and suburban papers. The only national daily newspaper is *The Australian*, but other notable newspapers are *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* (Melbourne) and the most prominent financial newspaper, *The Australian Financial Review*. On a per capita basis, Australia has one of the highest newspaper and magazine circulations in the world. For the six months to June 2003, the 12 daily national/state newspapers had a total circulation figure of approximately 2.3 million. The circulation of Sunday newspapers was estimated at 3.5 million over the same period (O'Halloran, 2004).

## **2.5 Comparative approaches and the issue of common ground**

Before discussing the changing contexts of Chinese and Australian press in more detail, we need to consider in greater detail recent work on international comparative

journalism, to identify a problem that the present study addresses by seeking a “common ground” on which to make comparisons. International and comparative media studies underwent rapid growth in the 1980s. During this period, *Crisis in International News: Politics and Prospects* by Prichard and Anderson (eds) (1981) compared the problems of the information flow from the particular perspectives of “First World” and “Third World” countries. In 1983, a further two comprehensive world journalism comparative works were completed. *Comparative Mass Media Systems* by Martin and Chaudhary has already been noted. Dividing the world media systems into three – Western, Third World and Communist – according to different social conditions, and making comparisons on some basic issues such as freedom of the press, news and news value, and the social function of the press, it was one of the first attempts to compare international press systems systematically. The other distinctive work is *Global Journalism: Survey of International Communication* edited by Merrill (1983), which originally appeared in the same year. It broadly covers key issues of international journalism: philosophies, systems, and freedom of the press, ethics, constraints and controversies. The importance of the book lies in the fact that its 1995 edition has provided the latest accounts of the development of journalism in countries such as Poland, Yugoslavia, Russia and China, where communism has collapsed, wholly or partially. Another work, *Communication Theory: Eastern and Western Perspectives* edited by Kincaid (1987) takes a more specific look at the different understandings between American-oriented Western journalism and Eastern-oriented journalism. The particular countries examined include China, Korea, Japan and India, with emphasis on such diversities as cultural affinity and philosophies.

The development of comparative journalism studies in both Australia and China, however, remains sparse. In Australia, Avieson and Coddington (1988) discuss the obstructions to the flow of international news among the West, the Third World and communist countries, using some key documents and case studies in the book *Comparative Journalism*, which has been widely accepted as one of the most important works in the Australian comparative journalism studies. As a text for journalism majors, the book invites students to compare the news media of countries with different political systems, different cultures and different views about the information needs of the mass audience.

A handful of journal articles analysing journalism in different countries has been published. Most of those comparative studies were conducted by scholars working in the UK or the USA. Stuart, Li and Dagan (1991) look at the impacts on the press by the three different social systems. Lewis and Sun (1993) examine the different reporting strategies on Japan by the Australian and Japanese leading dailies. Sun (1996) focuses on the comparison of the frameworks between modern Chinese media and western media. Li (1994) introduces the issue of how the Chinese press work under the control of communist politics. Hodge (1999) depicts foreign correspondents' views on the function of the Chinese press in propagandizing government policy. Baker (1992) compares different reactions and forms of coverage between the Chinese and Australian media in the Tiananmen Square incident. Bishop (2000) maps out some of the engagements between western media culture and the Tibetan struggle and tries to unravel their complex and contradictory meanings.

In China, in the 1990s, some important works on the international comparison of journalism appear. *Comparative Journalism* by Tao (1994) has made a relatively systematic comparison between western journalism theory and Marxist journalism theory. The book has discussed several aspects of international journalism – theory, the legal system, and ownership. Similar or different press systems in several countries have been compared. Tong's (1999) *Compendium of Comparative Journalism between China and Western Countries* briefly and comparatively introduces press histories in China and western countries. The book further compares different countries' press management, ethics, laws and ideologies. In methodology, the above-mentioned books make comparisons among different countries' press systems through compiling and reviewing historical documents. The books settle on the historical review as one of the major research methods for the comparative journalism in China. The present study also follows that method to review the historical development of the Australian and Chinese press and thus lay a historical and cultural foundation for further comparison. In summary, the existing works set examples and references for developing the thesis. Nonetheless, some problems still exist, and these may be noted as they also provide a focus for the analyses that follow.

The existing works of international comparison highlight both the differences and the similarities of their subjects. However, many are limited to parallel demonstrations and suffer from superficial and sometimes misleading descriptions, particularly in discussion of the media in democratic and communist systems. Li (1999) finds that the way a newspaper speaks for the nation and national interest has some impact on the coverage of U.S.-China relations in both newspapers. But Li points out that emphasis on national interest in the coverage is a weak indicator of news content in both newspapers, for in *The New York Times* emphasis on national interest was associated only with references to trade while in *People's Daily* it was associated only with references to non-trade, political issues. The different emphasis made the comparative work hard to conduct. According to Li, the problem of comparative study in journalism appears to arise chiefly from the difficulty of comparing the press in entirely different socio-political systems – democratic and authoritarian. A lack of common ground is the recurrent problem. However, this study argues that a common ground can be established for the purposes of comparative analysis when a significant event provides a basis on which the press attention converges from different countries and converges according to different aims, perspectives, values and frameworks of representation.

In this study, the Olympic Games provide a common ground for comparison. There is a great deal of contemporary research on the Olympic movement in the fields of sports, politics, economics, culture, education, history, sustainable environmental development, and gender studies. However, there is less emphasis on the role of the media in representing the Olympic movement and issues raised for comparative international study of journalism. By focusing comparative study through a single but major shared framework of events, it should be possible to explore both similarities and differences in media approaches and practices. Before discussing the case of the Olympics, we can note that some previous works of cross-cultural comparative analysis support the development of this interest in the ways in which newspapers from different countries often cover the same event differently.

In their analysis of Japanese and American coverage of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World War II, Fuse and Mueller (1996) find that *The Washington Post* emphasized dramatic and lengthy coverage of Pearl Harbour. In contrast, the *Asahi Shimbun* of Japan

focused on the sufferings and historical narratives of Japanese atomic bomb survivors. The study shows the “ethnocentrism” of both papers’ news coverage (p. 13). Considering a different situation, Huang and McAdams (1996) assert that foreign policy and government reaction affect newspaper content. They study the coverage of the 1991 Moscow coup by *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* from the United States, the *United Daily* and *China Times* from Taiwan, and *The People’s Daily* and *Enlightenment Daily* from China. They compare the numbers and placement of stories that each newspaper published on the incident; the news sources and suppliers; the main actors in the news stories; and the terminology of the stories. The authors argue (p. 1) that each country’s news coverage was “biased in politically motivated directions to maintain the dominant political-economic system”. They add:

that each country’s news coverage of the Moscow coup was framed from an ideologically acceptable perspective to maintain the status quo. No news coverage across these countries can be found objective ... The news coverage is stereotyped or biased in line with prevailing political views. It appears that in covering the Moscow coup, journalists encoded the news event with a ‘dominant or preferred meaning,’ constructing the social and political realities and helping to maintain the dominant political-economic system. (Huang and McAdams, 1996, p. 26)

In another study, Boyle (1995) sheds light on the different use of official sources. His analysis of the coverage of the IRA cease-fire by *The Times of London*, *The Irish Times*, and *The New York Times* reveals that all three newspapers “presented news reports about the cease-fire cognizant of their audience’s interests” (p. 32). All three papers heavily quoted institutional sources but in ways which, according to Boyle (p. 32), “allowed each government to define the coverage”.

These examples suggest ways in which diverse influences affect representations of a common event or situation, in the press of different countries. Some historical background on the Olympic Games as that common focus may now be useful to prepare for the comparisons between the Chinese and Australian press.

## **2.6 Themes emerging from the development of the Olympic Games**

In the brief historical overview here, the essential concern is not with the general study of the Games themselves but rather with some aspects that can take on significance in the different forms of media coverage of the recent Olympic activities. The themes identified are the expansion of an international sporting and media stage; the presence of wider political, economic or cultural issues; and the role of cities in the theatre of bidding for and hosting the Games. The history and global significance of the Games justify their serious consideration as an object of academic enquiry; indeed, the academic literature on both the ancient and the modern Games is extensive and growing (Burkhardt, Toohey and Veal, 1995; Veal, Burkhardt, Toohey and Haxton, 1998). The history of the Olympic Games begins at least 3,000 years ago in classical Greece. In their ancient form, while they celebrated physical excellence, the Games primarily served a religious and cultural purpose. In their modern form, while still ostensibly about physical excellence, the Games play a cultural and economic, and often political role.

The first modern Olympic Games took place in Athens, Greece in 1896. Since the inaugural Games, the Olympics have been held every four years with the exception of 1916, due to World War I, 1940 and 1944, due to World War II. The first Games in Athens were host to 311 athletes from 13 different countries, with an audience in excess of 80,000 (Chu and Seagrave, 1988, p. 171). The majority of people thought Athens had successfully hosted the Games and that it “had given the most brilliant start to the history of the modern international Olympic Games” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 172). By 1912, in Stockholm, the summer Games had begun to strengthen, and by 1927 there was a noticeable increase in participation and interest. By 1912, it was obvious that the “Olympic Games had ceased to be ‘games’ or an ideal place in which to play” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 95). In 1924, Paris held the summer Games and provided the first example of improvement and lessons learned from the previous Olympics. Between 1928 and 1945, the “Olympic Games emerged as a significant international phenomenon” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 173). In particular, the 1936 Games in Berlin were the first example of increasing “appeal of international sport and more profoundly, the political uses to which it could be put” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 173).

The Games that occurred between the years of 1945 and 1959 were considered to be the “prelude to gigantism” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 137). Neither the technology nor the commercialism had yet fully developed, but the Games were gaining heightened international recognition. As well, cities were beginning to realise how it was possible to make the Olympics work in their favour. No longer were the Games simply a place for international athletic competition; they were an opportunity to revitalise a city and promote its image internationally. Not only were the Games of this period a prelude to the intensity of what was to come in terms of pageantry, urban impacts, financial benefits and international recognition, they were also foreshadowing political conflicts and the “East-West enmity that was to colour them for years” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 174).

The 1960 Rome Games were the start of the “era of gigantism” in which host cities came to spend large amounts of money on the bids and preparations for the Games, and the Olympics take on new kinds of meaning. Tokyo followed the same format in 1964, where the summer Games were nicknamed the “Science Fiction Olympics”. Preparations and bidding were developing an unprecedented role prior to hosting the Games. This was apparent in Tokyo, where “a new city was being born just to accommodate the Olympic Games” (Chu and Seagrave, p. 174). In this same generation of “gigantic” Olympics, the successive host cities were examples of lavish preparations and excessive spending. By now the Olympics had become an industry in which those involved, such as the IOC members, were becoming increasingly concerned about the huge amounts spent in bidding and preparing for the Games. The Games are now so expensive to host that sponsorship and advertising have begun to play a far larger role. As a result, the Olympics have come to symbolise the globalisation and commercialism that is occurring throughout the world today. The danger often seen in this is that the original intention of the Games is jeopardised.

In the changing circumstances, the IOC and the selection process have been a focus of media attention, and this is relevant to the division of sub-periods for analysing media coverage of bids in this study. The IOC is an international non-governmental organization that “conducts, promotes and regulates the modern Olympic Games” (IOC, 2001). The Games came into existence as a result of Pierre de Coubertin and

his effort in forming the IOC. At the turn of the twentieth century, the IOC had only 15 members and Pierre de Coubertin was the acting President. It was crucial to Coubertin that this first group of fifteen men should value internationalism above nationalism. The members of the 1894 Committee, along with all subsequent members, were not considered representatives of their respective countries to the IOC; rather, they were members of the IOC to the nations of the world (Cashman and Hughes, 1999, p. 37). While it was desirable at the time that the IOC members have a certain amount of wealth, it was required by Coubertin that the members were to have no known political connections. This was intended to help maintain the committee's values and the sense of internationalism (Chu and Seagrave, 1988, p. 94). Coubertin believed in two ideals that were to inspire the members of the IOC and all future members: the belief in the Olympic Movement and the concept of modern Olympism. The Olympic Movement consists of the IOC, the International Sports Federation (ISF), National Olympic Committees (NOC), as well as other organizations and institutions that are recognized by the IOC, all of which are intended to promote Olympism.

Presently, the IOC consists of over 100 members who are responsible for selecting the cities who will host the Olympic Summer and Winter Games (Cashman and Hughes, 1999, p. 37). To assist it in its decisions, the IOC requires each city that applies to host the Games, to go through a series of steps and procedures. The IOC must consider a number of factors so that it can make the most informed and appropriate decision both for the athletes and the city hosting the Games. This is achieved through the development of a candidature file and a series of visits by representatives of the IOC. The candidature file presents the opportunity for an applying city to describe its past history, its political situation past and present, how the city intends to finance the event and any physical planning or new infrastructure that may be required for the Games.

The IOC was once an organization that every four years went in search of a city to pay the bills for the Olympic Games. When Lord Killanin became President of the IOC in 1972, he had several concerns regarding the lack of interest by cities to host the Games. In 1970, for example, only four cities had submitted applications to host the winter Games. They were Denver, USA; Sion, Switzerland; Tampere, Finland

and Vancouver, Canada. The Summer Games had fewer prospects when only three cities applied: Montreal, Canada; Moscow, former U.S.S.R.; and Los Angeles, USA (Landry, Landry and Yerles, 1991, p. 80). In 1974 at the 74<sup>th</sup> IOC Session in Vienna, the only candidate for the 1980 winter Games was Lake Placid. Moscow and Los Angeles were competing again for the 1980 summer Games. For the 1984 summer Games Los Angeles was the only candidate to apply. Similarly, only three cities – Sarajevo, the former Yugoslavia; Sapporo, Japan; and Goteborg, Sweden – had applied for the winter Games of the same year.

There were a number of reasons for the lack of interest of cities in hosting the Olympic Games during the 1970s. For example, the two oil crises drove the world economy into a recession leaving many nations incapable of hosting the Games. Also, political groups were beginning to take advantage of the international recognition that the Olympic Games received. In Munich at the 1972 Games, terrorists attacked Israeli athletes in the Olympic Village, with the inevitable and necessary result of a substantial increase in the cost of security. The following Games also fell victim to political issues. In 1976, South Africa still had a policy of apartheid, resulting in many African countries boycotting the Summer Olympic Games in Montreal. The foreign policy of the People's Republic of China and its effects on the participation of the Republic of China (Taiwan) was becoming a competitive sore point. Throughout all of these international problems, Lord Killanin maintained the idealism of the IOC and refrained from soliciting any particular country to host the Olympic Games. He confirmed this in 1976, stating that the "International Olympic Committee does not in fact look for candidates for the Games, but it is the candidates who applying for the honour of staging the Games" (Landry and Yerles, p. 82).

Questions of international economics and administrative structures were to become more complicated. In 1980, Juan Antonio Samaranch became President of the IOC. During his presidency, the shortage of candidate cities became acute. Samaranch made it his goal to raise interest so that cities would want to organize and plan for the Olympic Games. He announced that "it is in the best interest of the Olympic Movement to see as many candidate cities as possible for the Olympic Games in 1992 and we shall work towards this goal" (Landry and Yerles, p. 85). Because of better

economic and political situations in the world, there was indeed an increase of candidate cities. More and more cities had become increasingly aware of “their potential as political and economic actors, right at a time when the development of communication technologies facilitated transnational contacts” (Landry and Yerles, p. 85). The IOC faces a challenging task when it decides upon a city that will host the Games. For each and every Games that have occurred there have been a number of complicating factors that have ultimately affected the final selection. Most often the decisions reflect the political and economic status, as well as the planning capabilities of a particular nation or city.

The various factors and issues evident here provide the focus for many media stories and commentaries, from diverse perspectives. In the following chapters, we consider newspaper representations in detail, but to support the comparative study we now look at developments that help to understand key features in, and differences between, the Australian and Chinese press traditions. For the comparative study, it is necessary to understand key differences in the contexts producing the data. Therefore, to review the historical development of the press in different political and social systems between the two countries is important.

## **2.7 Themes relating to the development of the Australian press**

This review of the Australian newspaper publishing history covers its development from its inception in 1803 to present day circulation and readership of metropolitan and country newspapers. It focuses on two points: the struggle for freedom of the press, and the commercial development and ownership of the press from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Each of these concerns contributes necessary understandings of economic, political and cultural characteristics of the Australian press media and in turn differences between the Australian and Chinese press systems.

To note first the range of secondary studies informing this thematic summary, the most important works on the first newspaper in Australia include Bonwick’s *Early Struggles of the Australian Press* (1890), followed by Ferguson, Foster and Green, *The Howes and Their Press* (1936), Walker, *The Newspaper Press In NSW 1803-1820*

(1976), and Outshoorn, *A Newspaper History of Australia* (1982), and the more recent work by Blair, *Newspapers and their Readers in Early Eastern Australia – the Sydney Gazette and its Contemporaries 1803-1842* (1990). There are also some relevant journal articles from Jones (1953) and Lack (1970). Some studies on the struggle for freedom of the press in Australia have concentrated on the colonial period. In addition to the works by Walker and Lack, detailed studies on a particular colony include *Pressmen and Governors: Australian Editors and Writers in Early Tasmania* (Miller, 1973) and several articles, such as those by Pitt (1946) on South Australia, Meaney (1969) on New South Wales, Anderson and Gill (1981) on Western Australia, and Davies (1951) on Queensland.

There are relatively few studies that consider the economic development of the Australian press over the entire period considered here. One major work in the field is Walker's *Yesterday's News* (1980). Useful but brief accounts can be found in Mayer's *The Press in Australia* (1964), and in a number of articles, such as Henningham (1993). There are also detailed studies of particular press empires and owners, such as those by Souter (1981) on Fairfax, Hutton and Tanner (1979) on David Syme, and Muster (1985) on Murdoch.

### **2.7.1 *The struggle for freedom of the press***

The history of newspaper publishing in Australia has been described as “varied, spectacular and honourable” (*Australian Encyclopaedia*, 1955, vol. VI, p. 312). The first newspaper appeared in 1803, with the publication by the military government of the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (1803-1842). This was only fifteen years after Governor Phillip's First Fleet established a colony of convicts in the native bush of Sydney Cove. Australia's earliest newspapers did not appear as a result of private enterprise like other pioneer English language newspapers in England or America, but emerged from direct government control. In addition, Australia's first newspaper, its printing, editing and publishing, was the work of a convict, unique in the history of the world press (Mayer, 1968; Walker, 1976; Green, 1984; Cryle, 1989). Australia's oldest capital city newspaper is *The Sydney Morning Herald*, first published in 1842 and still owned by the Fairfax family, and its oldest country

newspaper is the *Maitland Mercury*, from NSW, first published in 1843.

It was the Governors of the colony who played the key roles in establishing the colony's first newspaper. Arthur Phillip, the first Governor, had thought about the matter and brought a printing press to the new colony. A convict, George Howe, produced the first Australian newspaper and has been generally recognized as "the father of Australian press and literature" (Ferguson, Foster and Green, 1936; Walker 1976). George Howe arrived with other convicts in Sydney in November 1800 and has been described as being to Australia what Caxton was to England, and Benjamin Franklin to America. In March 1803, he threw himself into the work of producing the *Sydney Gazette* and *New South Wales Advertiser*, thus beginning Australian newspaper history (Walker, 1976).

The *Sydney Gazette* carried the optimistic banner "Thus we hope to prosper", and remained the colony's only newspaper until 1810. It ceased publishing in 1842. Until 1826 it carried a masthead that indicated the official controls to which published materials were subject (Outshoorn, 1982, p. 9). Howe once recalled the hardship he suffered from censorship when he said that Governor King would sometimes "just take up the pen, and without rhyme or reason, made a dash, by which sometimes a column, half a column, and even a whole page had been expunged, and the unfortunate Printer constrained to begin again!" (*Sydney Gazette*, 7 March 1828; cited in Walker, 1976, p. 4). In an editorial in the first issue, Howe declared that the newspaper was to be "a source of solid information" and that it would "open no channel to Political Discussion, or Personal Animadversion": he stressed that "information is our only Purpose" (Walker, 1976, p. 4). Howe's statements reflected his thought: the newspaper would serve all colonists, including both government and common people. Consequently, the contents of the earliest weekly were divided into four categories: General Orders, Advertisements and Notices, Local News and Overseas Information. Howe's prospectus in the *Sydney Gazette*, 7 March 1828, stated that the *Gazette* would contain five subjects: general orders, shipping information, agricultural extracts and moral and religious admonitions, law reports, and general news (Walker, 1976, p. 3).

A rival to the *Sydney Gazette* did not appear until 1824, when the first Australian

independent newspaper, the *Australian*, emerged. It produced a crisis for the first newspaper, although the Government censorship of the *Gazette* was lifted in the same year (*Sydney Gazette*, 14 October 1824, referred to in Walker, 1976, p. 5). However, during the following two decades until its demise on 20 October 1842, there was no fundamental change to the *Gazette*'s official status, even though other rival newspapers were fiercely fighting with the Government for freedom of the press (Ferguson, Foster and Green, 1936; Walker, 1976, pp. 10-11). The *Sydney Gazette* pursued a more cautious and "trimming" policy. For retaining the post of Government Printer and applying to be appointed King's Printer, Howe muted his voice in deference to Government House. It does not seem that any official actually wrote for the *Gazette*, but on occasion at least the Colonial Secretary gave it a hint as to what it might publish (*Australian*, 23 October 1829, referred to in Walker, 1976, p.11). Indeed, because of its official nature, the *Gazette* was known as a "conservative newspaper". It developed from a small sheet to a pre-modern-time newspaper, and its influence directly inspired the establishment of the other early Australian newspapers.

From 1824 onwards, the *Sydney Gazette* was superseded in importance by an independent Sydney newspaper, the *Australian*. Its co-founders were a barrister, William Charles Wentworth (1790-1872) (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1966, p. 582-589) and Dr Robert Wardell (1793-1834) (*Australian Dictionary of Biography*, 1966, pp. 570-572), both barrister and journalist. Without seeking official permission from the Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane (1773-1860), the two men launched their weekly newspaper and, on 14 October 1824, in the first issue of the *Australian*, proclaimed their purpose. This was "to convert a prison into a colony fit for a freeman to inhabit himself and to bequeath as an inheritance to a free posterity" and their newspaper would be "independent, yet consistent – free, yet not licentious – equally unmoved by favors and fear" (Outshoorn, 1982, p. 12).

When Wardell and Wentworth announced their intention to publish the paper, Governor Brisbane did nothing to prevent them, and this was perhaps because he discovered that he was powerless to stop them and partly because he decided to "try the experiment of the full latitude of freedom of the press" (Brisbane to Bathurst, 12 January, 1825. H. R. A., Series 1, Vol. XII, P. 471; Walker, 1976 p. 20). It seemed

that the Governor wanted to see if the removal of censorship would be beneficial. Censorship of the *Sydney Gazette* was soon lifted. This official attitude helped the first independent newspaper to develop swiftly and just one year later, the circulation of the *Australian* had surpassed that of the *Gazette*. Two years later, along with another independent newspaper, the *Monitor* (1826-1841), the *Australian* organized a campaign against Governor Darling (1775-1858), thus beginning the struggle for freedom of the press in Australia (Schultz, 2002, p. 104).

Some major factors should be noted when considering the emergence of the first independent Australian newspaper. For Australia, the decade between 1820 and 1830 was a period of struggle and change, from a purely penal colonial society governed by army and naval officers to a society influenced by increasing numbers of free settlers. There were “insistent and growing claims” for a liberal form of government by the Emancipists, mostly ex-convicts and free immigrants (Outshoorn, 1982, p. 12). Political pressure was brought to bear on the first Australian newspaper publishers by the colonial authorities – in fact, as soon as independent newspapers began to appear. From the 1820s onwards, Governors or Lieutenant Generals of the day attempted to impose governmental control of the press, which was strongly resisted, which helped begin a tradition of the free press in Australia (Outshoorn, 1982, p. 17). The early battle focused mainly on the removal of censorship and the abandonment of both the licensing system and stamp duty, and these goals were achieved in each of the colonies of Australia by the 1850s (Outshoorn, 1982, p. 12). This was part of the political rivalry between the Emancipists and the Exclusives. The former wanted an assembly elected on a low property franchise, trial by jury, and the admission of ex-convicts to the vote and jury service, while the Exclusives kept their antagonism to the Emancipists (*Australian*, 13 January and 3 February 1825; Walker 1976 p. 7). Newspapers were used by the Emancipists as a weapon for achieving a political purpose. This period of intense politicization of newspapers in the Australian colonies was relatively short, lasting roughly from 1826 to 1850. As a liberal democratic system was established, a commercial approach immediately replaced the official one and the colonial Australian press soon moved into a new stage of free development (Outshoorn, 1982, pp. 12-26).

The Australian colonies adopted and adapted the constitutional, economic, ideological and social systems of England, which, in general, nurtured a capitalist orientation and pattern. Once liberal governments had been established and the goal of freedom of the press in the sense of absence of political control achieved, the press, as the independent “fourth estate”, developed smoothly and rapidly. At the same time, with Australia’s relative prosperity, new Western technology was immediately introduced, such as the establishment of a rail network, the telegraph and the telephone in 1870s. This further encouraged the expansion of newspapers (Western, 1983).

### ***2.7.2 The commercial development and the ownership of the press***

By the beginning of the twentieth century, Australia had a population of only three million, but it had close to one thousand newspapers (Maher and Stimson, 1994; Walker, 1976, p.177). The press was robust in its reporting and highly competitive. The competition led to price wars and a battle for control between major rivals. Competition became the “driving force” that changed the colonial-period press step by step (Walker, 1976 p. 47). There was a change in form: the small sheets gave way to a larger size. A few pages became more than twenty. Weeklies became tri- or bi-weeklies, then dailies. Afternoon, evening and Sunday newspapers appeared. The major change was in “content, layout and news display”: and these became more professional and more actively journalistic (Walker, 1976 p. 51).

Despite starting much later than most English-speaking countries, the Australian press developed contemporaneously with mainstream Western journalism. During the 1870s, the evening paper, the Sunday paper and the penny paper appeared in Australian colonies almost at the same time as they did in England and America (Western, 1982; Walker, 1976). By the turn of the twentieth century, the format, news arrangement and other phenomena shown in the Australian newspapers were similar to those of other major English-speaking countries. Smith (1979) sees the period between the 1880s and the 1890s as the “golden age of journalism” for newspapers in most countries. Australian media scholars, such as Cryle (1989), make a similar evaluation of Australian journalism in that period.

Although the press has served as a medium for political organizations in Australia (Walker, 1980), no paper of a political organization has ever been a dominant force, and the commercial newspaper has been the mainstream, which has concentrated on public interests and profits. Within this commercial context, the “watchdog” function is one of the most important aspects of the freedom of the press in Australia. The role of the press is not only to inform people but also to scrutinize and criticize the social order, in particular, government policies and the government itself (Martin and Chaudhary, 1983). For example, the administration and policies of governments have frequently been debated and criticized. In recent times, active criticism is familiar to Australian readers in relation to domestic and foreign affairs such as the Tampa affair and the 2003 Iraq war. The newspaper, therefore, has been a medium for relatively free discussion. Investigative journalism takes an active role and is valued. Although there has been no major significant exploration of a political scandal, such as Watergate in the American press, Australian journalists are quite intrepid and are able to cover most social and government issues. Two cases can serve as examples: first, the influence of the media in deposing Prime Minister John Gorton in 1972 (Western 1983); and, second, the newspaper criticism of the former New South Wales Premier Nick Greiner for his alleged corruption, leading to his resignation in 1992 (Cooray 1992). The democratic system strongly favours press immunity from state power regarding expression of opinion.

Even during the Second World War, when the Australian Government imposed censorship, the press was still able to fight for its freedom. Historical records show that a sharp conflict occurred between the Australian Government and the newspapers in April 1944. The Curtin Government’s Minister for Information, Arthur Calwell, claimed that many newspapers were publishing biased editorials, which caused mischief in the United States, and he insisted that all reports be submitted to the authorities for censorship. A newspaper resistance, initiated by the *Daily Telegraph*, was the result. The conflict quickly escalated as other newspapers gave support. On Monday 16 April 1944, all copies of the *Telegraph*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Sun*, the *Mirror*, the *Melbourne Herald* and the *Adelaide News* were seized by the Commonwealth Police. However, following appeals the next day, the High Court granted an injunction to prevent the Government from stopping publication of the

articles. The newspapers had won and the Government was compelled to amend its censorship regulations (Gordon, 1988).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Australia had twenty-one capital city dailies owned by seventeen separate proprietors. However, during the 1950s, there were fifteen dailies with ten separate proprietors (Corden, 1956). The proportion was fourteen to seven in 1960 and it was fourteen to six in 1963. By the middle of the 1960s, the major newspapers belonged to four groups: 1. The Herald and Weekly Times Group, 2. John Fairfax Group, 3. Consolidated press, and 4. Rupert Murdoch Group (Mayer, 1964). By the 1970s, this was reduced to three: 1. The Herald and Weekly Times Group, 2. John Fairfax Group, and 3. Rupert Murdoch Group (Henningham, 1993). By the beginning of the 1990s, the ownership of the Australian press gravitated under the control of two monopolies: 1. Murdoch's News Limited, and 2. John Fairfax. Two major features of the modern Australian press are that it is perhaps the most concentrated print media ownership in the Western world, and that almost 90 per cent of the metropolitan and national daily press is ultimately under the control of foreign entrepreneurs (Henningham, 1993). In 2001, Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch each declared an interest in acquiring a majority shareholding in the company that produced the prestigious and profitable *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *The Australian Financial Review* among others, if such a move were to be made possible by changes to media ownership laws and the rules about the percentage of a newspaper that could be owned by a non-Australian citizen, or buying a media company with interests in another medium.

The high concentration of newspaper ownership has alarmed some members of the community and since the middle of the 1970s this has become an increasingly sensitive topic, both in the public and in the Government domain (Schultz, 2002, p. 112; Ward, 1995, pp. 124-153). There was a clear perception that the press would suffer considerably because of a "loss of diversity in the expression of opinion" (Hawkins, 1982) and because the power of a very few media owners would be able to influence the outlook and opinions of large numbers of people. From this viewpoint, if a media baron manipulates public opinion by taking a certain political line, the situation is dangerous for a democracy. In fact the private ownership of Australia's mass media, and in particular the political power this reputedly confers on their

controllers, has long attracted the interest of media analysts and even some public controversy. There are many stories of how interventionist newspaper proprietors have pressed their particular views into the news. Most date to an earlier era, when Australia's "media moguls" clearly did use their newspapers for their own political ends (Ward, 1995, pp. 124-130). Nevertheless, varied ideological influences come into play in the modern Australian press, and such threats to diversity do not mean it operates in just the same way as the "one service" model of a government-regulated system, such as that found in China.

## **2.8 Themes relating to the development of Chinese newspapers since 1949**

The evolution of the Australian newspapers has moved broadly through three stages: official control, partisanship and independence – albeit with concern over levels of media ownership concentration. However, Chinese newspapers have remained basically in the "official control" stage, which has lasted from the emergence of the first newspaper in ancient times until the modern era. In their long history of development, Chinese newspapers have been tightly controlled by all types of authorities, such as emperors, warlords, the Nationalist (Guomindang) government and the Communist government. While official control has been abandoned by the Australian newspapers for many years, it has been retained formally in the Chinese newspapers since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. The following sections deal with the development and characteristics of the Chinese newspapers since 1949, through phases of centralisation, reform, retrogression and partial liberalisation. At each stage, the situation of the press has depended heavily on the policy and attitude of the government.

### ***2.8.1 Class struggle and Cultural Revolution, 1949-1978***

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the Communist Party of China (CPC) carried out a series of movements within the general field of the ongoing class struggle, including Land Reform, Suppression of Counter-revolutionaries, Ideological Remoulding, Anti-rightist campaigns, Socialist Education and, finally in this first period, the Cultural Revolution representing the peak of all the class struggle

movements (Spence, 1990, pp. 514-609). Soon after the founding of the PRC, the CPC started to take over the entire field of private newspapers and established a communist newspaper system (Fang and Chen, 1992, p. 6). This system generally consists of four major parts, namely, the top CPC central news organs, regional newspapers, government department and army newspapers, and mass organization newspapers.

The top CPC central organs include the already discussed national daily, the *People's Daily*, and the national news agency, Xinhua (New China) News Agency that directs all newspaper units. The *People's Daily* is the most authoritative and widely-read official newspaper. Its major role is as a medium to publish CPC and government decisions, policies, regulations and instructions as well as to interpret them. The editorials are often regarded by the people as a reflection of the latest thinking of the top leadership and are frequently quoted by other newspapers as a guide.

The Xinhua News Agency, with twenty-nine branches in China and about one hundred branches abroad, is the only official news agency and news gatekeeper of the PRC. It is tightly controlled and watched by senior Chinese government officials. It is known for its long, dull articles that avoid any criticism of Chinese government officials or actions, and "all foreign news made available to Chinese publications and broadcasters is first processed by Xinhua translators and editors" (Swan, 1996, p. 27). At least officially, Xinhua also provides all national news to the provincial and local newspapers. It speaks for the CPC and government. The other parts of the newspaper system, which includes the regional, government department, army, and mass organization newspapers, are all under the control of the Party, and there is no fundamental difference between them and *The People's Daily*, except for their local, professional or organizational characteristics.

During this period, all the Chinese newspapers were under the CPC's tight control and strongly emphasized Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong's thought, and always enthusiastically responded to the Party's call to reflect specific programs and projects. For example, in 1951 when a nationwide campaign of ideological remoulding for all types of intellectuals began, all the newspapers were involved. During the campaign against the Rightists in 1957-1958, the newspapers acted as a powerful weapon to

suppress those who dared to criticize the CPC (Spence, 1990, pp. 572-583). During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the newspapers were full of revolutionary slogans, Mao's instructions and the Party's documents on criticizing capitalism (Fang and Chen, 1992, p. 176).

In this press environment, political news always took an important position. Forms of human interest information, such as tourism, entertainment and sport, were frequently ignored by the newspapers. Reports about the Western world were limited and biased, and always negative, focusing on economic crises, workers on strike, race riots, crime and the aggressive nature of capitalism. This was an attempt to justify the Party's leadership and convince readers that the Western world was self-destructive and that a socialist country was better.

### ***2.8.2 Reform and opening to the world, 1978-1989***

Two years after the death of Mao and the ending of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping returned to his position as the supreme leader of the CPC. Deng adopted a liberal policy of reform and open-door relations with the world, aiming at modernization. The major task of the CPC changed from class struggle into economic development.

The reform also affected newspaper management, since for the first time most newspapers had to support themselves. Consequently, they began to think of ways to attract both readers and revenue. Instead of only political propaganda, they published more varied types of readable items, such as reports on sensitive events, the lives of film and sport stars, and extracts from articles in foreign newspapers. In the meantime, many non-official newspapers emerged, which aimed at meeting readers' demands with "soft news" and a more lively style. As a result of the policy change, more objective reports on Western countries began to appear. Journalists were encouraged to criticize past administrations – the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution. Reform leaders such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang permitted newspapers more freedom and even encouraged them to expose corrupt Communist Party officials, carrying out a supervision function in order to achieve the goal of

modernization. Those forbidden zones in newspaper coverage previously set by the Party were seriously challenged. Disasters, the dark side of bureaucracy and accidents could be reported in most cases. For example, in July 1980, the *People's Daily* and the *Workers' Daily* continued to report the disastrous sinking of a petroleum ship in the Bohai Sea, caused by wrong directions given by bureaucrats. The result was that two party officials with direct responsibility for the incident were sentenced to two years in jail. The Minister of Petroleum and a vice-prime minister were found guilty and were sacked by the Government. Another example is the publication of a critical report on a high-level party official by *China Youth Daily* on 22 October 1980. It exposed an incident regarding the minister of Commercial Trade eating in an exclusive restaurant at public expense. This caused great concern among the people and led to his resignation.

### **2.8.3 Retrogression after the Tiananmen Incident, 1989-1992**

The policy of reform and open-door relations and the relative freedom of press were, however, detrimental to the interests of the conservative hardliners in CPC and met with their fierce opposition, leading to the crackdown on the students' democratic movement in the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 (Hsu, 1995, p. 926). The hardliners launched a retrogressive campaign against the reformers in all aspects, aiming to restore the old policy of class struggle and a planned economy. All the newspapers were once again taken under the tight control of the CPC and became the "mouthpieces" of the Party and the Government. The hardliners re-imposed regulations on the newspapers and the principle of absolute control by the Party was stressed. In 1989 more than two hundred newspapers were closed for not adhering to the Party's line (*Ming Pao Monthly Magazine*, 1994). Some of the reporters and editors were arrested, some were sacked and most of them were "brain-washed". The editorial leadership of *The People's Daily* was completely replaced.

Controlled newspapers cannot be independent and *The People's Daily* to a large extent, acted as a propaganda machine in the coverage of the Tiananmen Incident. During the period of the Incident, the main theme of the newspapers stressed the Party's directive not to go to Tiananmen Square and to obey the martial law. They

said that the democratic movement was a counter-revolutionary riot and that no student was killed during the incident in the Square. Sometimes, the propaganda was poorly disguised. For example, foreigners and tourists withdrew from Beijing after the Incident. Worried about the economic loss, the government tried to allay tourists' fears. On 13 June, 1989 the official English-language newspaper *China Daily* had on its front page an item headed "Beijing is Recovering but Tourism Hard Hit", and a huge picture depicting two foreign tourists having a photograph taken with two People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers and an old Chinese farmer on the Great Wall at Badaling, one of the most famous tourist attractions near Beijing. The people in the photograph were laughing. This was incongruous and scarcely credible in the tense post-Tiananmen situation.

During this period, the newspapers took a big step back to the period of class struggle in the Cultural Revolution. Political "positive" propaganda was a feature of the newspapers, showing the dependent nature of the newspapers in serving the goals of the authorities. The achievements of a national political campaign under the Party and Government guidelines were the most frequent themes. Economic achievements were also important and can be seen in reports such as high grain harvests, high production quotas in industry, scientific innovation or successful national projects. Other important themes were the propaganda coverage of exemplary deeds of advanced workers, PLA soldier heroes, model members of the CPC and the Communist Youth League. "Negative" reports such as disasters, crimes, bureaucracy and corruption, and criticism of government officials were strictly controlled from appearing on the newspapers.

#### ***2.8.4 Resuming the policy of reform and open-door relations, 1992 to the present***

In 1992 Deng Xiaoping realized that the conservative hardliners were pursuing a policy to abandon market economy as "capitalism" and build "socialist China" with the door closed against "capitalist influence" from the Western countries. Their attempt was to resume Mao's planned economy and class struggle line. This was apparently against Deng's policy of reform and open-door relations, and would destroy the achievements of reform since 1978 and stop the modernization of China.

On his journey south to Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in January 1992, Deng Xiaoping made a series of important statements to criticize the conservative hardliners and call for a resumption of economic reform and openness. Deng blessed Shenzhen's works and predicted that dynamic Guangdong province would become the "Fifth Little Dragon of Asia" – joining the previous successful development stories in Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore (Hsu, 1995, p. 945). After Deng's visit to Shenzhen, attitudes in the whole country changed. People who had been demoralized by post-Tiananmen repression rushed to board the reform train. News about profits from exports and imports, foreign investments, stock markets, construction, fashion retailing and all manner of other enterprise electrified China in a way it had never known. Many millions of Chinese people decided to take the plunge into private business. By the end of 1992, China had altogether 8,700 "development zones", up from 117 a year earlier (Hsu, 1995, p. 947). Charles D. Brown, Nike manager in Guangzhou, China, said: "I don't think we are in a dream stage. This is definitely an economic boom. It could be one of the largest ever" (Dunn, 1993, p. 17).

With the significant changes in economic aspects, the environment for newspapers became more liberalized and open. Newspapers began to be commercialized and to provide more reader-friendly content. With continuing economic reform, newspapers were told by the government to become self-sufficient, that is, profit-oriented. Since government newspapers were still considered the "voice of the Party", they established branch newspapers, weekend editions with separate names and other offspring, as a way to adapt to the market economy. These were allowed more freedom to appeal to readers, sell advertisements, and carry sensational news. For example, *Hubei Chutian Metropolis Daily*, where I have worked (from 2001 to 2002) as a sub-editor, is a branch newspaper of the provincial government newspaper, *Hubei Daily*. While the latter, as a "mouthpiece of the Party" and a propaganda machine, has little appeal to the readers, the former with plenty of up-to-date news and feature articles, attracts a huge number of readers. The latter with a daily issue volume of approximately 500,000 is mainly subscribed to by the government and party offices all over Hubei province, whereas the former is very popular with ordinary people and has a daily issue volume of 1,500,000, three times

that of the *Hubei Daily*. In adapting to the new market economy, regional newspapers were more successful than central newspapers in terms of popular readership appeal. While the morning newspapers of most cities were still thoroughly Party line, the evening newspapers, weekend editions, and “business dailies” livened up and became more popular. In addition, quite a large number of specialized newspapers were launched, especially in such industries as computers, telecommunications, automobiles, and sports.

More generally, from 1992 to 1997, the number of newspapers in China increased by more than 30%, reaching over 2,000 (“How China's censors are losing control”, *Southern China Morning Post*, 22/4/1997, p. 17). Since 1992, newspapers have been advancing fast towards practising more freedom of the press at least in the regions of Southern China. Evidence of this includes the following features: (a) newspapers are becoming an important tool in exposing corruption and supervising the government; (b) newspapers have become an important arena in the development of consumer rights’ awareness; and (c) newspapers represent increasingly the multifaceted sides of a society and different interest groups. A typical example is the newspaper revelation of the Guangxi tin mine tragedy. In July 2001, the Nandan Tin Mine in Guangxi province flooded, trapping and killing scores of miners. Local media outlets, cowed into silence by local authorities intent on covering up casualties, e-mailed the events to regional journalists, who scrambled to Nandan to investigate. Subsequently, regional newspapers began to report on hundreds of the dead and missing, and then the national *People’s Daily* followed up on the story, already in circulation, when the government decided that it was time to deal with it. This indicates that the news values of the official press place importance on following government needs and interests, at the appropriate time, rather than breaking the news or exposing problems such as corruption in their own right. The central government sent an investigative team to the mine, resulting in the arrest of the mine owner and several local officials (“Nandan mine worst accident a corruption-caused disaster” *People’s Daily*, 8/11/2001, p. 2).

### 2.8.5 *Characteristics of Chinese newspapers*

Since the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the number of newspapers has increased approximately 11 times, which enables China to rank among the world's most advanced countries in this respect. Most of the newspapers in China, however, still rely on Xinhua News Agency to fill up their pages. As indicated above, the major task of Xinhua, the national official news agency with its head office located in Beijing, is to collect and distribute important news and information concerning politics, economy and culture in China and abroad. Xinhua has become one of the major international news agencies, with over 100 branch offices throughout the world. Most newspapers in China carry news dispatched to them by Xinhua News Agency, apart from whatever local news they have picked up themselves.

*The People's Daily*, which we have noted above as the most authoritative and widely-read official newspaper in China, is the daily organ of the Central Committee of the CPC. Its major role is as a medium to publish CPC and government decisions, policies, regulations and instructions as well as to interpret them. The official English-language newspaper, *China Daily*, is regarded as equivalent to *The People's Daily*. Its role is to transmit the news and information carried by *The People's Daily* to foreigners. Regional newspapers include provincial and local newspapers run by the local authorities. They all work for the authorities and there is no fundamental difference between them and *The People's Daily*, although the degree of control by the authorities may vary.

Almost every government department has its own newspaper, in order to display and emphasize its own special features. The Chinese Central Military Committee also runs its own newspaper, the *People's Liberation Army Daily*. There are also various sorts of newspapers belonging to different mass organizations, such as *Workers' Daily* founded by the All China Workers Federation, *China Youth Daily* run by the Chinese Communist Youth League, and *China Women's Daily* published by the National Women's Federation.

Aiming at various groups of readers, the formats of the newspapers are becoming more and more rich and colourful, including daily (morning, noon, evening) and

weekend newspapers. Farmers, workers, business enterprises and professional people are all catered for. Of these newspapers, some focus on transmitting economic, scientific and technological information, and some aim at satisfying cultural and entertainment needs. Special newspapers offering various types of information and advertisements have appeared in great numbers.

In China most newspapers are still under the control of the central or local departments of Publicity of CPC and are supposed to serve as the instruments of the Party and government and adhere to the Party line. The examples above suggest degrees of freedom, but this is mostly in the more commercial context of southern China and is limited when sensitive issues could damage government interests. Jiang Zemin (1990), the CPC Party General Secretary pointed out: “Our country’s newspapers, broadcasts and television are the mouthpiece of the party, government and the people” and this statement “can explain the media’s nature, place and function in the party and the country’s works” (Jiang, *Qiushi Magazine*, 1990). The newspapers in China have never been able to attain the status of independent institutions and the level of impunity enjoyed by the Australian newspapers. The “mouthpiece” requirement is the key to the Chinese newspapers. It is in this way that Chinese newspapers differ most substantially from Australian newspapers. Nevertheless, from the development of the Chinese newspapers since 1949, especially after 1992, it is clear that the freedom and openness of the newspapers have been improved significantly. What from a Western perspective would be considered real freedom and independence of the Chinese newspapers may eventually be achieved. In the meantime, two press systems operate in China and Australia are very different.

## **2.9 Summary**

This chapter has reviewed theoretical work on press systems and international comparison of journalism, and discussed the development of Australian and Chinese press systems, to help set up the conceptual and historical context for the comparative study. After examining the classifications of the world press systems by the different theorists in different eras, it has suggested that those classifications were valid in certain periods, but that in new contexts comparative international studies need a

nuanced treatment of historical contexts and emerging and changing influences on the development of particular press systems. By identifying themes in the study of press systems relevant to the Australian and Chinese press systems' conditions, the chapter has tracked the development of the Chinese and Australian press systems, and discussed the historically changing contexts of both systems in detail.

For the Australian press, through three stages of its evolution – official control, partisanship and independence – the chapter has focused on two themes: the struggle for freedom of the press, and the commercial development and ownership of the press from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. In contrast, the Chinese press has remained basically in the “official control” stage, which has lasted from the emergence of the first newspaper in ancient times until the modern era. However, the development and characteristics of the Chinese press since 1949 saw something new, through phases of centralisation, reform, retrogression and partial liberalisation. This change from an authoritarian system to liberalisation driven by commercialisation suggests some similarity in the developing directions of the Chinese and Australian press, but these two press systems still operate within, and reflect, different political systems, and cultural contexts and traditions.

By considering the main works in the field of international comparison of journalism, the chapter has provided a theoretical platform for the specific comparison of the Australian and Chinese press relating to the issues in play with the Olympic topics. Recognising the differences between the press systems, we have suggested the importance of a common ground on which to explore similarities and differences between forms of press representation and to prepare for the study of divergence in the convergence of the press on the Olympics. It is the Olympic-related activities and issues during the bidding and preparations for the Games that provide the content for this common ground. The press coverage of these activities and issues diverges in the two press systems, and the methods for analysing the differing representations of the same major international series of events in the variant systems are explained further and applied in the following chapters.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology: A Quantitative and Qualitative Framework

#### 3.1 Questions and methods

This chapter presents in detail the frameworks of analysis that are applied in the thesis to compare the Australian and Chinese press coverage of Olympics-related events and issues. The aim of the thesis is to analyse patterns of representation where they emerge in press coverage, from a comparative perspective. As indicated earlier, the methodology developed for this thesis integrates quantitative and qualitative forms of analysis, and this approach combines *content analysis* and *discourse analysis*. The former is often strongly associated with quantitative analysis. But as applied here, it includes the recognition of qualitative aspects of meaning and perspective in measuring the constituent elements of representations. In turn, discourse analysis can build on quantitative analysis to support examination of the cultural and ideological dimensions of media representations.

Before considering the methods of content analysis and discourse analysis further, it may be useful to highlight the core questions for the comparative work of the thesis, anticipated in Chapter 1, which the theoretical approach is designed to address by examining a selective range of materials:

1. What events and issues are dominant in Chinese and Australian reportage and general news stories about Olympic-related activities, especially relating directly or indirectly to the newspapers' own and each other's country?
2. How have the Chinese and Australian press represented stories and interpreted issues in changing contexts, through the use of particular forms of writing and techniques of representation? In particular, how have they represented the respective chances of success in bidding for, preparing and hosting the Games?
3. In what ways do particular ideological and cultural values, concerns and

assumptions inform the print media representations and interpretations of Olympic-related activities, including the issues in relation to ideals and practices in the Olympic movement?

No single, definitive method is available to readily answer all these research questions. It has been argued that, in some academic disciplines, methodologies can become fixed when, for example, students learn particular ways of generating and processing knowledge that are standardised, and taught in textbooks as a series of staged tasks. This means that, theoretically, every student, given the same basic data, can produce the same interpretations (Berg, 1998). But in media and cross-cultural studies it is not necessarily the case that researchers always adhere to agreed methods. Researchers in these areas realise that the ways in which we generate knowledge and understanding of the world are important in themselves. They have not reached a consensus about the best methodologies for understanding different knowledge and culture (Wodak, 2000, p. 23). As seen earlier, approaches to comparative study continue to be criticised in debates about methods. When researchers do comparative content analysis, instead of referring to a universally authoritative theory, they base their analyses on the theories they consider are most valid or bring together different points of view from previous researchers for further use or modification (Chan, 1992). Researchers are constantly pointing out that any given methodology includes particular prejudices, ways of thinking about knowledge and information, and variable techniques for approaching different topics (van Dijk, 1997, p. 102).

In such a context, it may seem that we remain caught between two extreme options. One option is to turn to the apparently scientific rigour of a certain type of content analysis, where we can create categories and count numbers with certainty, ignoring the fact that this can produce limited descriptions, which do not consider conventions or assumptions at work in representations. It is worth noting that by the 1950s, a peak period for quantitative mass media and social survey methods, a controversy was already developing about research strategies in content analysis. Berelson (1952) was the first to put together the methods and goals of quantitative content analysis, which had been developed up to that time, and these concentrated on assessment on the basis of frequency analyses. Kracauer (1952) reacted critically to this quantitative orientation because it neglected the particular quality of texts – their

meaning content. The other apparent option is to run the risk of producing intuitive responses to texts, where we simply describe our own interpretations without grounding them in a reliable account of the representations or saying why we make particular interpretations, or what others might be possible. In the current study, the attempt is to avoid these two extremes and develop a careful mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches so that they may support one another, thus establishing a degree of validity. Let us now consider content analysis and discourse analysis in more detail to present these approaches.

## **3.2 Content analysis**

### **3.2.1 *Content analysis variables: sample validity***

Quantitative work with media most often includes content analysis, in which the researchers break down the components of a newspaper into recurrent units and count the number of times that they appear in media texts, finding their “frequency”. In the current study, the analysis of the press content could compare the coverage given to international Olympic news in, for instance, the Chinese leading daily newspaper *The People’s Daily* with the Australian national daily *The Australian*, counting the number of stories dealing with international Olympic news and, for instance, particular topics or sub-topics found in them. It could also potentially measure technical features such as the story’s prominence within the paper (the page on which it appears, for instance). The variables may become progressively more complex and significant, but even the most limited reviews can produce a useful basis for comparison in terms of the frequency and prominence of content features in a comparative analysis. The content analysis in this study will focus on relatively complex variables such as frequencies of, and perspectives on, particular sub-topics in reporting on the overall topic of the international Olympic news in the two countries’ newspapers. Before explaining this in more detail, however, we note further issues that need to be acknowledged in the relevant literature about the validity of content analysis.

Content analysis has been used for several fields of media study such as the beliefs

and interests of editors and publishing organizations, and the preferences of readers (Berelson, 1971). It is often considered to be among the more objective techniques of media research, its quantitative approach being able to claim validity through the construction of replicable inferences from data to their content (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 97). As Weber (1990, p. 9) suggests, content analysis uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. These inferences are about the sender(s) of the message, the message itself, or the audience of the message. In general, content analysis requires an attempt to achieve objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. However, Weber expresses a concern about the reliability of this research method. He points out that the rules of the inferential process of the analysis vary with the theoretical and substantive interests of the researcher (Weber, 1990, p. 9).

Weber suggests that the central problems of content analysis originate mainly in the data-reducing process by which the many words of texts are classified into far fewer content categories (Weber, 1990, p. 15). He suggests further that the problems of the ambiguity in word meanings, and category or variable definitions, concern the consistency or reliability of test classification (Weber, 1990, p. 15). Research on press content must therefore pre-determine the emphasis for its data collection but in turn must be careful about how it sets up its categories, for the figures to be collected depend on what the researcher decides to count.

It is indeed difficult, often, to decide what goes into each category. In the proposed newspaper comparison for the present study, for instance, would a story entitled “Sydney set to match China’s Olympic bid” (*The Australian*, 31/7/1992) count as an Australian or a Chinese item? Immediately, the seeming objectivity upon which this methodology founds its claims to rigour, validity and objectivity, is placed in question. Rather than resting on claims of absolute objectivity, however, the results of quantitative analysis may be situated within a framework where the reader (along with the researcher) is in a position to consider them relative to the way in which the categories are defined, for particular purposes. This is the approach taken here. Content analysis will be undertaken through the collection of data based on key components such as sub-topics and perspectives (to be explained in detail in the following chapter) in the texts of the selected press publications in the chosen periods.

Through the analysis of these key features, content categories of communication will be observed and measured. By submitting the results to a process of analytical description involving discourse analysis and its interpretation of recurrent language selections, it is possible to produce useful, replicable and insightful interpretations of media content.

What preserves content analysis as a valid research tool – even into an era of qualitative critique of research objectivity – is the careful structuring of its data management system. Krippendorff (1980, pp. 15, 130-154) formulates the following criteria for content analysis, each level seeking to ensure that the categorisation of the texts into data-streams is rigorously handled. His criteria are listed schematically first, then elaborated below.

## 1 Validity

- (a) Material orientation: seeks to prove semantic validity and sample validity
- (b) Result orientation: checks for correlative validity, and prognostic validity
- (c) Process orientation: tests construct validity

## 2 Reliability

- (a) Stability
- (b) Replicability
- (c) Precision

The consideration of *validity* seeks to establish how far, and in what way, a research method can be shown to select and collect data honestly and categorize it in a manner that will be consensually accepted. In the *material orientation*, *semantic validity* relates to the meaning reconstruction of the material, and is expressed in the appropriateness of the category definitions and the key examples. As indicated by

Holsti (1969, p. 41), the purpose of defining a category is to permit a classification of the data on the basis of selected concepts. Weber (1990, p. 21) suggests that words classified together need to possess similar connotations for the classification to have semantic validity. The latter exists, according to Krippendorff (1980, p. 159), when persons familiar with the language and texts examine lists of words placed in the same category and agree that these words have similar meanings or connotations. This collective agreement is not always possible in practice (as in the present thesis), but the procedures and criteria for grouping terms can be communicated, so that quantitative descriptions can be reflected upon in relation to them.

*Sample validity* refers to the criteria used to select a sample. In order to examine the nature of news and the roles and functions of print media cross-culturally, it is necessary to have a comprehensive sample of news coverage of a particular issue in at least two print media entities over a period of time to allow study of developments and patterns. However, for the purpose of analysis, the number of the entities must be narrowed down (pre-reduced) to a technically manageable level without creating too limited a basis for measuring the features of content and potentially their ideological meaning, and so affecting the credibility of the study. Moreover, the entities chosen must be those that cover large quantities of an event that persists over several years. The sampling for this study can be explained here before going through Krippendorff's other criteria.

### ***3.2.2 Sample selection and periods in the present study***

The objective of this study is to examine the nature of news and the roles and functions of print media cross-nationally. In light of the points just noted, the two or more press entities selected have to carry comparatively large amounts of general international news in order for the Olympic activities and events to be adequately reported. They also have to provide sufficient background information and descriptions of events to allow comparative study of materials. Finally, they have to be in some way representative of characteristic forms of reporting in their national or other cultural contexts.

Two newspapers from both countries, and a related news agency in the case of China, were chosen as the main vehicles for analysis. A reason for this choice is that the selected press provide coverage of events such as the Olympic bids and the logistics for the Games over an extended time and in a large quantity, which allows examination of embedded cultural assumptions. Further the Chinese examples represent the major forms of official press in their country, and the Australian ones are recognized as participants in a liberal democratic society, thus providing a context for comparison and contrast. The Chinese examples are chosen because, as the mainstream press, they have the crucial role of setting the tone for dealing with Olympic matters related to China's national interest, which other less important media may follow. Specifically, *The People's Daily*, already noted as the official organ of the CPC, is as its name suggests for the "people" of the Republic, with the largest subscription – over six million – in China. It is worth noting that the mastheads of the official Chinese newspapers have been designed by political leaders. The masthead of *The People's Daily* was designed by Mao Zedong and is reproduced in the style of his handwriting. It illustrates that the purpose of the newspaper is to serve the "people", as in the title, yet doing this also follows the direction of the Party (a dual function discussed further below). This is different from the situation of the press in Australia that, as Ward (1995, pp. 124-125) points out, can be "legitimately bought and sold", as privately owned enterprises, which "distinguishes them from all other political institutions, which are public bodies". As a Chinese national newspaper, *PD* provides the most news in terms of activities in the Olympics and its news reports are frequently referred to by Chinese local newspapers. It has eight to sixteen pages with national and international news, comments and editorials. The *China Daily* is a state-owned English-language daily newspaper with the widest print circulation (200,000 per issue) of any English-language newspaper in China. Since 1992, *CD* no longer received government subsidies and the newspaper's publication group was expected to show a profit. To this end, the paper has adopted a more commercial approach and its editorial content is being pitched increasingly towards a wider range of readers so as to attract more advertising revenue. For that reason, the newspaper sees more freedom and opens onto international circulation. Xinhua News Agency is studied as the main institutional organization for the state-based management and dissemination of news in China. For Australia, *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* have been chosen as they are seen to play an active role

in media reporting and debate. *The Australian* is distributed nationally and carries the most international news and has large readerships both nationally and internationally. *The Sydney Morning Herald* is a daily broadsheet newspaper published in Sydney. Both newspapers are considered to be “media of record” and are often if not always credited with high standards of journalism.

In relation to semantic and sample validity, the procedures for developing content categories include the following.

### **3.2.3 *Time setting in the present study***

Media stories were selected both across an overall period from November 1990, the year the Olympic bid was formally put on the government’s agenda, to November 2004, right after the Athens Olympic Games. More recent reports are not included for practical reasons in the research time available for this research project. Further, this overall period is divided into shorter episodes: the two ballots for the bids in 1993 and 2001, the IOC inspection tours to the candidate cities, and before the opening ceremony and after the closing ceremony of the 2004 Olympic Games. The two countries’ involvement in the Olympic movement and their endeavours to host the Games are not a simple linear process. They are characteristic of other social processes in both countries’ history, full of forward and backward movement, speeding-up and slowing-down of activities, resulting from the interactions among social forces. Recognising this, the various Olympic activities in both countries are grouped into time periods for the purpose of analysis. A turning point in the activities attended to by the media is called a highlight moment. Because there are changes of emphasis in the coverage of the Olympics by the press after each highlight moment, it is important and significant to examine the news coverage over these moments. There are three highlight moments during the sample period. The first is the final ballot day of the bid for the 2000 Games (23/9/1993), when Beijing and Sydney were vying to win the bid and the Games was awarded to Sydney. The second is in 2001 when Beijing won its second bid to host the 2008 Games (13/7/2001). The third is in 2004 when Athens hosted the XXVIII Olympic Games (4/8/2004). Accordingly, the content analysis will examine the coverage in these

three sub-periods: November 1990 to October 1993, December 1999 to November 2001, and November 2003 to November 2004. The study of the examples across the periods enables the sample to reveal both slowly emerging and regularly resuming patterns of sub-topics, and any stressed or urgent sub-topics at the peak moments in the reportage.

### **3.2.4 *Sample material in the present study***

The sample in this study is collected from the news items about the Olympic activities in the two countries. The sample selections of news material were based on a timeline summary of key events before and after the significant Olympic-related activities. The timelines helped the coder to have a structured frame within which to sort samples. For the purpose of analysis, news about the Olympic activities means all forms of articles carried by the two newspapers, that is, “pure” news as well as analyses, editorials, columns, feature articles and so forth, regarding all the aspects of the Olympic bid and logistics or preparations of the Games. All forms of articles are included here because it is not the intention of this study to find out if “pure” news is more objective than opinion press. Articles in different forms conventionally present different extents and kinds of information, but this study is interested also in the ways in which all news representations, including “pure” news, convey values and ideological tendencies related to the social contexts in which journalists work and live.

The total number of press items about “Olympics” and “Sydney” and “Beijing” as the key words in the selected Australian newspapers (*The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*) from November 1990 to November 2004 is 368. In *The People’s Daily* and *Xinhua* News Agency, China and Beijing involved Olympic activities are reported with greater frequency. The total number of news items about “Olympics” and “Sydney” and “Beijing” in the selected Chinese newspaper and the news agency from November 1990 to November 2004 is 507.

### **3.2.5 Key words and sub-topics in the present study**

Initially, key words such as “2000 Olympics”, “2008 Olympics”, “bid”, “China”, “Beijing”, “human right”, “IOC”, “Athens”, and “Greece” were used to identify articles in the selected Australian newspapers, and key words such as “2000 Olympics”, “2008 Olympics”, “bid”, “Australia”, “IOC”, “Athens”, and “Greece”, were used to identify articles on the very general topic of Olympic-related activities in the selected Chinese newspapers. The news items collected include news articles, feature articles and editorials. A further selection from the news items has been made on the basis of headlines relative to the rival Chinese and Australian 1993 bids, the Sydney 2000 preparations, the 2001 Beijing bid and the 2008 Beijing preparations (up to 2005). Then, the full texts of the selected news items have been scrutinized to identify story key words and expressions that index distinct sub-topics and perspectives in the representations of the Games. This selection effectively limits and standardises the samples, to permit an equalised review of content. The content categories are elaborated in Chapter IV, where examples are analysed. We can now return to Krippendorff’s other criteria, and related criticisms, to help situate our content analysis.

### **3.2.6 Further content analysis variables**

Krippendorff’s idea of *result orientation* relates to how the samples relate to other research findings. *Correlative validity* refers to how the categories interact with external factors (for example, the results of other methods or other studies). Such correlation between different studies is not possible in this thesis but, as indicated above, the findings of content analysis may be considered against the concerns and results of qualitative analysis. *Prognostic validity*, according to Krippendorff (1980, p. 157), “is the degree to which predictions obtained by one method agree with directly observed facts”. In content analysis, prognostic validity requires that the obtained inferences show high agreement with the facts in the context of data to which these inferences refer (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 158). Prediction (supporting prognosis) is defined as a “process by which available knowledge is extended to an unknown domain” (p. 165). *Construct validity* relates to previous success with

similar constructs, established models and theories, and representative interpretations (p. 167). Previous works provide the present study with research models whose techniques of validation also need to be examined. Rather than any exact prediction, or alignment with specific models, the concern in this study is to base content analysis of recent press representations on an understanding of both countries' press development and of cultural and ideological values that influence, and may be influenced by, those representations.

Regarding *reliability*, Krippendorff is concerned with how content analysis can guarantee the application processes of a given study design. *Stability* refers to whether the same results are obtained in a renewed application of the analytical tool to the same text. *Replicability* is the extent to which the analysis achieves the same results under different circumstances. Finally, *precision* assumes stability and replicability and denotes "the extent to which the analysis meets a particular functional standard" (Mayring, 1988, p. 127). As Krippendorff (1980, pp. 146-150) suggests, some possible sources of error may lead to a lack of reliability. In the research for this study, a related problem in combining quantitative and qualitative approaches is that the data collection work in more qualitative phase involving discursive patterns in full texts, encountered much inconsistency between news headlines and story-body texts. Sometimes, the headline met the selection requirements, and sometimes the text did. Nonetheless, findings can be viewed in relation to the methods and ideas that are applied for investigating press representations, without assuming that other applications of the methods in different circumstances would necessarily produce identical results.

Here it is of interest to return to Kracauer's concerns with content analysis, noted briefly above. In arguing the need to consider the qualitative dimension of content meaning, Kracauer felt that particular attention had to be paid to the reconstruction of contexts. "Patterns" or "wholes" in texts could be demonstrated, not by counting and measuring their manifest contents, but by showing the different possibilities of interpretation of "multiple connotations" (Kracauer, 1952, p. 133). For Kracauer (1952, p. 134), categories are also of central importance: "what counts alone in quantitative analysis is the selection and rational organization of such categories as condense substantive meanings of the given text, with a view to testing pertinent

assumptions and hypotheses”. Kracauer preferred to construct these categories with reference to latent contents and the reconstruction of context, and so to take account of the meaning of particular instances. His suggestions represent rather a shift of emphasis than an independent method (Ritsert, 1972) for discussion of the controversy between qualitative and quantitative content analysis), yet they have contributed to a long history of debate within media studies. Today, such debate plays out across some newer methodologies, formed by the subsequent history of development in a number of fields, including linguistics, sociology, psychology and economics. Among the multi-disciplinary methods addressing some of Kracauer’s calls for a cultural or social contextualization of all-important “categories” in content analysis are those of discourse analysis. To help set up a flexible approach or a framework that can, in the present study, integrate quantitative and qualitative methods to help understand the form and meaning in the two countries’ press coverage of the Olympic Games, we now consider discourse analysis further.

### **3.3 Critical discourse analysis**

Different and even competing forms of discourse analysis have developed in recent decades. What they share is an idea of discourse as language in use in speech, writing or other medium, and a form of social practice (Brown and Yule, 1983; Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258) emphasize that:

Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structures, but it also shapes them.

Thus, discourse is social. The words (or other signs) in a statement, and their meaning, depend on where, and against what, the statement is made (Macdonell, 1986). More specifically, Thwaites, Davis and Mules (2002, p. 140) explain that a discourse is “the particular mode of textuality of an institution”. It entails a set of textual arrangements that work to organise and co-ordinate “the actions, positions and

identities of the people who inhabit them”. Thwaites *et al.* suggest (2002, pp. 140-142) that discourse has four principal characteristics: “concrete social sites at and within which it circulates (institutions); roles for those who participate in it (functions of address); power relations carried in those roles; and certain topics which tend to be spoken about there, in a particular way (theme)” (p. 140). According to these authors, institutions reproduce themselves through discourse. They do this through the repeated production of texts in various forms and media, which provide addresser and addressee roles through which people relate to, and interact with, one another.

At this point, we may distinguish a particular approach and set of writings in discourse analysis that is identified by the term “critical”, and note commonalities and differences between “discourse analysis” and “critical discourse analysis”. There are many versions of discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1997). The term “discourse” (like “text”) is used very differently by researchers within the same and separate academic cultures (Weiss and Wodak, 2003, p. 13). There is a lack of agreement on its definition and Widdowson (1995, p. 169) has even suggested that “discourse” has been used so widely that it no longer has any definable meaning. Generally, the term has come to be used in interdisciplinary contexts such as media and cultural studies, where it signals the idea of both language in use and a particular way of saying something (of speaking or writing) that is shaped by certain socially formed ideas, values or ideological frameworks, and that involves a particular cultural context and relations between the subjects involved in communication. Following the work on Michel Foucault (1972, 1984), for instance, discourses are understood as particular ways of knowing, and ways of speaking or writing about, objects and activities in particular social circumstances. In media, communications and cultural studies, discourses are seen as working through different means of expression in different media including, but not restricted to, print media.

Critical discourse analysis shares the general concerns of other kinds of discourse analysis with the social nature of language and meaning. As its name suggests, it aims to provide a socially in its theoretical and descriptive accounts of texts (Dellinger, 1995; Fairclough, 1995; Teo, 2000; van Dijk, 1991). The term “critical” involves making a linkage that is not obvious between language and other things (Fairclough, 1992). Critical discourse analysis has its roots in a critical linguistics that goes

beyond the description of discourse to an explanation of how and why particular discourses are produced (Teo, 2000). Critical discourse analysis is a practice that is concentrated on the ways social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and speech in the socio-political context (van Dijk, 1993). Discourse analysis, as Fairclough (2003, p. 2) defines it, is based upon the assumption that language is “an irreducible part of social life”, interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always have to take account of language.

It is the way in which critical discourse analysis pursues these concerns through the detailed linguistic analysis of texts that it differs from some other approaches to discourse analysis (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Van Dijk, 1997; Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 2001a, 2001b). Recognising that discourse analysis can apply to works in different media, the focus for the purpose of the thesis is on print media. One major division is between approaches that include detailed analysis of texts and approaches that do not. Fairclough has used the term “textually oriented discourse analysis” to distinguish the former from the latter (Fairclough 1992). Social scientists concerned with discourse analysis in ways influenced by the work of Foucault, for instance, generally pay little close attention to the linguistic features of texts (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough’s (1992) approach to discourse analysis is to try to transcend the division between work inspired by social theory that tends not to analyse texts in detail, and work that focuses upon the formal processes of language in texts but tends not to engage with social and contextual issues. On the one hand, any analysis of texts that aims to be significant in social scientific terms has to connect with theoretical questions about discourse. On the other hand, no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write.

Fairclough (2003, p. 2) argues that “the focus on language is not a matter of reducing social life to language, and that it makes sense to use discourse analysis in conjunction with other forms of analysis”, for instance content analysis in this study. According to Fairclough (2003, p.205), critical discourse analysis is the analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse and other elements of social practices. He suggests that discourse figures broadly in three ways (Fairclough, 2003, p. 206).

First, it figures as a part of a social activity within a practice. Second, it figures in representations. Social actors within any practice produce representations of other practices, as well as representations of their own practice. Representation enters and shapes social processes and practices. Third, discourse figures in ways of being, in the constitution of identities – for instance the identity of a political leader. The particular concern of critical discourse analysis is with the changes that are taking place in contemporary social life, and with how discourse figures within processes of change. Fairclough (in Bell and Garrett, 1998, p. 143) sees critical discourse analysis as having a commitment to understanding how people’s lives are influenced contingently by social formations and considering the possibilities for changing them. We cannot take the role of discourse in social practices for granted; it has to be established through analysis. Discourse may be more or less important and salient in one practice or set of practices than in another, and may change in importance over time.

In critical discourse analysis, discourse practice involves the production and interpretation of texts (Fairclough, 1989, 1995a). As noted by Weiss and Wodak (2003, p.13) among others, the term “text” is used in different ways. What diverse theoretical uses of this term have in common, however, is that “text” refers to particular instances of language use in a particular medium that have an identifiable beginning and end, situated in time and place. Text can be considered the outcome of discourse. In other words, we can make a process or product distinction (Brown and Yule, 1983, p.25; Widdowson, 1979, p.71) and consider discourse a process which produces texts. Texts are concrete realisations of discourses (Lemke 1995), which is to say that discourses find their expression in text (Kress 1985, p.27). The relation between texts and discourses is one in which the texts belonging to some social domain or institution are constitutive of discourses, but at the same time discourses “define what it is possible to say and not possible to say” (O’Halloran 2003, p. 12) in texts. In critical discourse analysis, the link between texts and their social or cultural contexts is seen as mediated by discourse practices. Texts are seen to be in a dialectical relation with social practices, whereby language “is socially shaped, but it is also socially shaping, or constitutive” (Fairclough 1995a, p. 131). It follows from Fairclough’s rationale that texts are constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough 1995a, p. 131).

Similarly, for van Dijk (1991), by establishing relationships between text and context discourse analysis specifically aims to show how social, cultural or political contexts impinge on the text contents. In applying linguistic methods of analysis, critical discourse analysis seeks to account for the structures, strategies and functions of texts (van Dijk 2001, p.96).

Particularly important for this thesis is the developing application of critical discourse analysis specifically to the press in the interdisciplinary field of media studies. This development can be traced to several scholars' works, such as van Dijk (1991), Fairclough (1995) and Wodak (1997). According to those works, discourse analysis is intended to address the complexity of factors affecting cultural expectations of representational style in texts and the messages communicated through them. In media studies, discourse analysis is used to describe the relationship between media "content" and socio-cultural reality, as well as to provide a better understanding of socio-cultural aspects of texts (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Critical discourse analysis contributes to, and intersects with, approaches developed in interdisciplinary fields such as media studies and cultural studies (van Dijk, 1993) and arguably has been inspired by the studies of the power of media in mass communication. Various scholars contend that mainstream research on media discourse has developed within the broad framework of critical concerns with issues such as the projection of power through discourse, instances of dominance and inequality in discourse, the ideological underpinning of discourse, and discourse's affiliation with social change, and these concerns are relevant to critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989a, 1989b, 1995; Fowler, 1991; Fowler, Hodge, Kress and Trew, 1979; Hodge and Kress, 1993; van Dijk, 1993). These concerns extend into discourse analysis of the press, relevant to the present study.

According to van Dijk (1991), the study of news reports in the press is one of the major tasks of discourse analysis in media research. It is based on the reality that news is important in our everyday lives. Our social and political knowledge and beliefs about the world are often derived from, or influenced by, news representations, and the ways of organising meaning in news discourse can be shown to have particular social, political or ideological dimensions. Regardless of whether it is more or less accepted, discourse analysis in mass media research is considered as an

alternative or addition to the classical media research approach of content analysis. One of the characteristics of discourse analysis is that it is able to describe texts in terms of multiple levels or dimensions of discourse (van Dijk, 1991) and explore the broad social or ideological implications of the ways in which texts work. So, for instance, as many scholars point out (Fairclough, 1989b, 1995; Fowler and Kress, 1979), language is regarded as a material form of ideology. Specific media uses of language, in a variety of news texts, reflect and maintain, and may challenge, particular social ideas, values and meanings. The analysis of language is thus an indispensable part of the attempt to study ideology in the print media. Fowler (1991) argues that news is a representation of the world in which language imposes a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented, such that news, like every manifestation of discourse, constructively patterns that of which it speaks. He considers that each particular form of linguistic expression in a text – wording, syntactic arrangement, etc. – has its reason. There are always different ways of saying something, and they are not random, accidental alternatives. Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions and thus differences in representation.

The “critical discourse” concern with the ways in which texts construct meanings that reflect certain cultural or ideological values, ideas and perspectives, informs the study of news representations in this thesis. The term “text” is used here in a broad sense to refer to various kinds of newspaper articles (news stories, reports including reports of speeches, interviews, editorials, etc) as well as various kinds of publicity documents and stories. In examining the ways in which uses of language construct meaning in news texts, to extend the analysis of media content, the ideological underpinning of media discourse will be explored by adapting methods of lexical and propositional analysis, drawing on approaches in critical discourse analysis.

Lexical analysis of the news reports focuses on the choice of words that reveal significant or typical ideological meanings in their media context. It is widely accepted in critical discourse analysis that the choice of words in news reports is by no means arbitrary. To some extent, wording is not a journalist’s own creation, but the representation or reflection of the social, political, cultural or religious ideas shared by the social group to which the journalist belongs. In two studies (Trew,

1979a, 1979b), Trew has probed the relations between ideology and wording. According to him, all perception, which is embodied in lexicalisation, involves ideology (Trew, 1979a). Teo (2000) has examined the lexical choices for newspaper headlines. He concludes that “to analyse the lexical choice ... [allows] the critical discourse analyst a peep into the underlying ideological meaning behind newspaper reporting” (Teo, 2000, p. 14).

To apply this more generally, lexical choices in the body of news articles as well as headlines also reveal ideological dimensions of meaning, even though the focus is less obviously on individual or key words than it often is in the shorter string of words in a headline. Even in the apparently “factual” reporting of events and situations as news, the particular words that are chosen to describe places and settings, to denote events and actions, or to identify people participating in them, can suggest connotations, reflecting or conveying particular ideological attitudes or values. They can create a certain tone, such as approval or irony. The press coverage will be studied at the lexical level first (before propositional analysis, in Chapter 5) because the choices of words and particular uses of vocabulary are crucial in presenting the intended information about the news events to readers, and are an indication, whether implicit or explicit, of the ideological stances in press representations. The word choices are detailed matters of style, not necessarily in themselves conveying full extent of an ideological message or proposition, but still allowing an insight, or to use Teo’s expression a “peep”, into underlying ideological meanings. To illustrate differences in the viewpoints of the Chinese and Australian press representations, newspaper coverage of special moments during the two bids to host the Olympics and the Athens Games will be studied.

Methods of propositional analysis will be employed to investigate the inclusion or exclusion of the key statements and ideas on the part of the newspapers in reporting the same news event around a certain date, with particular reference to issues in Games preparations. The significance of the presence or absence of the proposition will be probed. It is hypothesized that the inclusion or exclusion of some details (realised in propositions) is not random, but purposeful and hence ideological. As Fang (1994) indicates, in the process of news making, media institutions represent reality in accordance with their underlying ideological positions.

The notion of proposition, derived from formal logic, is applied flexibly in text analysis (Brown and Yule, 1983). A proposition is basically represented as a relationship between a predicate and its arguments. Van Dijk (1988) says that propositions are the smallest independent meaning constructs of language and thought, which are typically expressed by single sentences or clauses. On the basis of propositions, Van Dijk works out the thematic structure of a news story in the form of topics in a hierarchical structure and argues that the societal structure is, through ideology, related to discourse structure. In the present study, a proposition is treated as an “idea unit”, expressed in the form of a clause or sentence, or able to be summarised from the whole news story. A proposition is a unit of convenience for comparison. The news discourse on the preparations issue from four newspapers will be segmented into propositions. This is a rather subjective process (Kintsch, 1974) on the part of the researcher. However, it is a matter of attempting to identify ways of making statements that have some generality or typicality in, to Hartley’s (1982) terms, the media’s “treatment” of the news events, in which the media decide whose comments and opinions as well as what details will be adopted, and how they will be framed, in the news reporting. Ward (1995, pp. 110-111) considers that news-work has its short-cuts and other “tricks of the trade” that journalists will use to cope with demanding daily schedules and the constant pressure to generate stories. As he points out, newspaper journalists have every incentive to reduce the uncertainty of their work and develop practical ways of generating stories from unforeseen events. Tuchman (cited in Ward, 1995, p. 111) has described this aspect of news-work as “the routinisation of the unexpected”. This routinisation point is developed by Gitlin (1980, p. 6), who suggests that journalists will have “little tacit theories about what exists, what happens and what matters”, which they rely on to select and present news stories. These tacit theories, he argues, are incorporated in media or news “frames”. Gitlin (p. 7) describes these as usually unspoken and unacknowledged “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion” that organise or structure news discourse. And their selection will be also congruent with their ideological stances. As van Dijk (1998) has indicated, ideologies are rooted in general beliefs, such as knowledge and opinions; so the lexical and propositional choices in news texts more or less mirror the news professionals’ views, which are formulated on the basis of their ideological stances.

Even if some newspapers claim to be politically neutral or ideology-free, their discourse choices will fit in with their institutional policies that are ideological themselves, for they are not “timeless and neutral, but have a history and a politics” (Cameron, 1993, p. 316).

Taking further the idea that the discursive choices of journalists relate to professional and cultural beliefs or outlooks, the construction of meaning in the press representations is also related to the idea of *news values*. These values reflect informal agreements in journalistic practices on what is important enough to constitute news (Mencher, 1997, pp. 65-75) and help to shape news stories. The idea of news values is extended to help organise the comparative study, but in turn the international comparisons open up questions about the culturally situated nature of some received models of news values. So, for example, among the factors making events, people or situations newsworthy, Mencher identifies the immediacy of events and timeliness of reporting (what is often called “breaking news”), impact, prominence, proximity, conflict, and the sense of “the unusual” (pp. 55-65). This overlaps with the account by Branston and Stafford (2006, pp. 150-165) of news values as revised in the influential work of Galtung and Ruge (1981) on frequency, proximity, negativity, predictability, unexpectedness, and continuity. Branston and Stafford show the interest of processes of “personalisation” and “narrative” – in which, for instance, stories may build up over time with social actors becoming “characters” through which events and situations are known and judged. As Hurst and White (1994, p. 60) suggest, audiences or parts of audiences do not necessarily accept fully the “industry-determined news values” through which “media truth is filtered”. Further, whether the conventional news criteria just noted, associated with Australian and other Western media, apply in the same way in different cultural contexts is an issue explored through the comparative study.

In considering news values in the Chinese context, Tong (2002) suggests that journalists there need to combine the general news values (cf. above) from the West with Chinese socialist characteristics. In fact, this reflects the way that codes come not from journalists themselves (as often in the West) but from the CPC. So a “socialist journalistic core value system” is seen to lay the “moral and ideological foundations” for helping build a “socialist harmonious society” (Tong, 2002, pp.

70-73). To values of accuracy, completeness, fairness, independence and objectivity, familiar from the West, Tong adds others such as modesty and compassion. The Chinese journalistic value system should include patriotism; honouring the framework of government policies and leaders' speeches; advocating social responsibilities including the safeguarding of national interests, social stability and unity; and the (Confucian) ethic of not making gains at others' expense.

News values and perspectives relate to broader cultural values, and the idea of myth as developed in media and cultural studies of discourse helps to consider this. For Barthes (1977, p. 165 and cf. Barthes, 1972) myth is not an "untrue" impression but a form of meaning culturally constructed through representations and the workings of "discourse" (including in the press), which express beliefs and values as "natural". It is close to a "collective representation", revealing the "power of particular symbols and narratives" (p. 165). For Barthes, "myth consists in overturning culture into nature or, at least, the social, the cultural, the ideological, and the historical into the 'natural' " (p. 165). As Thwaites *et al.* (2002, p. 167) point out, myth embodies wider cultural meanings in its representation, standing "metonymically" for other relationships within an ideological framework, and there may also be differences between "available myths".

This idea can be illustrated with an example that shows different perspectives in the Australian and Chinese press representations of Olympic-related activities in our period of study. The following is from a news summary, in the *SMH* section "48 Hours" on 26 February 2001, titled "What's Your Game Beijing?"

The International Olympic Committee has just wound up a week in Beijing as part of its assessment of bids for the 2008 Games. The Chinese Government went to extraordinary lengths to ensure pollution was not up to its usual throat-tingling standard. Cars were kept away from much of the city, allowing the citizens to ride round on their bicycles, something they haven't been able to do safely for years. Dissidents were, it is alleged, shipped off to holding camps for the duration of the IOC visit. Saddest news of the week was that Tiananmen Square loomed large in the planning for the Games and the

Chinese proudly announced it would be the beach volleyball venue. Some with memories of what happened there just more than 12 years ago must be hoping Beijing misses out yet again.

Applying the idea of myth here means not denying historical events but considering what symbolic meanings are attached to them in ideological workings of discourse. Tiananmen Square has become a mythic site because, as Larson (2001, p. 333) suggests, it has been seen through the wider “myth of democracy, which (in America where he writes) says that “the wisdom of the people, when operating in a democratic fashion, leads to the best decisions and will prevail”. In the *SMH* article, the picture of China is coloured by reference to Tiananmen Square as a myth to signify China’s poor human rights record. In explaining the plans to use the square as a venue for beach volleyball, the story refers to the square as “the site of the violent crackdown on the student democracy movement in 1989”. Although it does not elaborate in detail what happened in the square in 1989, the phrase “violent crackdown” is enough to reinforce the critical association of Tiananmen Square with totalitarianism and human rights abuse.

In contrast, Tiananmen Square has different significance within China. It has been used by the Chinese Communist Party for large scale public gatherings and mass activities ever since the founding of the PRC in October, 1949. Since then, people have gathered every October to celebrate the national anniversary with various parades, shows, and performances. Mass political campaigns have also started in this famous environment. The square serves as symbolic site of the nation-state where foreign state guests and visitors are honoured with flag-raising ceremonies and cannons. Over the years, it has become a symbol of power for the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese state, as well as being symbolic of political manoeuvres. In fact Hodge and Louie (1998) point out that Tiananmen Square as a political symbol is meant for “domestic consumption”. The Square is a national symbol of China signifying the power and achievements of the Communist rule, even though the events of 1989 pose some problems particularly in the international sphere. It is not meant for international exploitation in a negative sense and had not actually been exploited negatively by international media until 1989.

From the time of the student movement in 1989, the Western news media have stressed a different symbolic meaning. The technique to make the new signification seem natural is to link the “crackdown” of the student movement narratively with the Square when it is mentioned in an article. The Square has become a myth for Western consumption, capable of signifying the display of “sinister power” of the Chinese Communist regime and abuses of human rights. The idea of myth can thus be used to help understand the news values that shape press representations and their relation to cultural values, traditions and beliefs.

### **3.4 Summary**

In this chapter, a framework that integrates methods of both quantitative and qualitative analysis has been set up for conducting discourse analysis in the Australian and Chinese press coverage of the Olympics. To answer the research questions listed at the start of the chapter, content analysis provides key terms for organising the study of press outputs (in Chapter 4) on a comparative basis. Lexical and propositional analyses of representative texts are used to explore their qualitative dimensions of representation and meaning more explicitly, in Chapter 5. Chapters 6 and 7 extend the analysis of discourse by applying the method that has been introduced to contrast press representations over time in the different national contexts of representing the Olympics.

## Chapter 4

### Content Analysis of Press Representations

This chapter explains further the categories of content analysis, organised around the study of frequencies, which are relevant to the examination of Chinese and Australian press representations of Olympic activities. It adapts these categories – which are often used to study media representations within one particular country – by developing a major distinction, between foreign and domestic news, to help apply them for cross-cultural comparison. As discussed above, the framework developed is intended to support quantitative and qualitative analysis of news representations, and consider their ideological implications. Thus the chapter pursues the core questions, concerning the nature of the events and issues presented in the press, the ways they are articulated, and the cultural values that they express.

#### 4.1 Content analysis categories and frequencies

As outlined in Chapter 3, the categories developed in this study for content analysis, drawing on a tradition of work represented by the Glasgow University Media Group, include six types of frequencies. We elaborate these further, in general terms, before applying them later in the chapter.

##### 4.1.1 *Frequencies of sub-topics*

The first frequencies to be measured are of the sub-topics treated by the chosen Australian and Chinese newspapers. As noted in the previous chapter, sub-topics are specific themes recurring in the coverage of the more general topic of Olympic activities. The unit for analysis is sub-topics, instead of news items, because one news item may cover more than one sub-topic. This measurement of the sub-topics by newspaper is intended to examine which areas receive how much attention from each newspaper, their frequencies of appearance in the press. The significance of the frequencies in the different press contexts is something to consider progressively in the quantitative and qualitative analysis.

An item qualifies for inclusion if it mentions a particular aspect of the Olympic activities. At the most general level, sub-topics have been defined in terms of their character as economic, political or cultural. Within these groupings, more specific sub-topics have been identified. So, for example, the broad topic area of politics includes a range of matters, such as press freedom, human rights and religious freedom, which may be interrelated. Hence there is some flexibility in the grouping of sub-topics, which is influenced by the contexts in which they appear. An example of this is the sub-topic “Green Olympics”, which is the theme for the 2000 Sydney Games and also one of the slogans for the 2008 Beijing Games. It is counted under the cultural category, because it recurred most frequently as one of the Olympic mottos and was in this way strongly associated with the image of the host nation or city being projected. Another example is “bribery scandal”, which brought Sydney’s bid in 1993 under suspicion while a rumor spread that Beijing could take over the hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games. It is counted in the political category, which thus includes political tactics in the Olympic bidding itself as well as the broader issues of national and international politics. The sub-topics indicate the common ground on which to look at the different press representations. Many of them, as listed in Table 1, concern the Chinese situation most directly. This is because, with the political sub-topics, it is often the Australian (and more general Western) press that raises issues, reflecting wider interests in the relations of sport and politics, against which the Chinese press plays a reactive role, but one that is complex in the cultural ideas and values it brings into play and the managing of sensitive issues.

The classifications (Table 1) are not intended to be rigid, but when a particular sub-topic is identified it is counted in a consistent way across the Chinese and Australian press articles so that meaningful comparisons of frequencies can be made. Altogether there are 24 listed sub-topics. As in the other content categories, the many counted individual elements cannot all be analysed. But the overall measurement makes it possible to explore the meaning and implications of the frequency, and sometimes infrequency, of their appearance.

**Table 1, List of sub-topics**

<b>Sub-topic area</b>	<b>Specific sub-topics</b>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cost and financial support</li> <li>● Profit or loss; a money-losing or money-making exercise</li> <li>● Facilities and infrastructure construction</li> <li>● Revenue</li> <li>● Logistics planning</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Human rights</li> <li>● Press freedom</li> <li>● Religious freedom</li> <li>● Tolerance of criticism</li> <li>● Dissidents</li> <li>● Official corruption and abuse of power</li> <li>● Bribery scandal</li> <li>● Administrative changes, and measures to improve the existing government administration</li> <li>● Changes that may affect the social or political structure or ideological basis of the country</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cultural diversity and freedom of expression</li> <li>● General life style</li> <li>● Westernization of Chinese people's life style</li> <li>● Chinese traditional virtues</li> <li>● Confucianism</li> <li>● Green Olympics</li> <li>● People's Olympics</li> <li>● Hi-tech Olympics</li> <li>● Logo for the bid campaign</li> <li>● Motto for the bid campaign and Games</li> </ul>

#### **4.1.2** *Frequencies of sub-topics by period*

The second measurement is the frequency of sub-topics by period. As stated above, there are three special moments, marked by change in the pace and course of Olympic activities, in the overall sample period. Therefore, the whole sample period can be

divided into four parts as November, 1990 – October, 1993; November, 1993 – September, 2001; October, 2001 – October, 2004; November, 2004 – December, 2005. Frequencies of the sub-topics covered in each of these parts are measured to see if and how there are any changes in the attention given to each sub-topic. The working assumption here is that the emphasis of the sub-topics may shift with each special moment, in negotiations of meaning around the events and situations covered.

### ***4.1.3 Frequencies of perspectives***

The third measurement is the frequencies of the perspectives (see Table 2) from which the reported Olympic activities are regarded in the press representations and accorded a certain importance. In the broadest terms, the perspectives on Olympic activities are identified around the following three concerns: the “what”, or the meaning of staging the Games; the “why”, or the need and reasons for staging the Games; and the “how”, or the road to staging the Games. Twenty-five more specific perspectives have been identified across these areas, and their frequencies of presentation measured. Since the number of perspectives mentioned may exceed or be less than that of the total numbers of articles, the unit of analysis is perspectives rather than articles. In the research, perspectives were identified primarily by considering the titles of articles, which can be seen as a reasonably reliable way of identifying perspectives because, as a general rule, the title or headline indicates the type of concern found in the article (Gerbner, 1983). For example, in “Games facilities to cost \$1.6bn”, the perspective on the nature of the bid for the Olympics is identified as relating to “facilities and infrastructure costs and issues”, under “how” the Games are staged. Again, perspectives could be defined in a variety of ways, but the examples chosen to illustrate the process of content analysis are intended to show that perspectives are measured consistently in the interest of comparing ways of representing events and situations. The quantitative measurement thus allows consideration of the prominence of particular ways in which Olympic activities are presented in the press of the two countries.

**Table 2, List of perspectives**

<b>Broad perspectives</b>	<b>Particular perspectives</b>
<p>What the meaning is of staging the Olympic Games</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activities in the Games mean Westernization.</li> <li>● The Games are associated with capitalism.</li> <li>● The Games are a negation of Communist policies.</li> <li>● The Games are compatible with socialism, uniting the world.</li> <li>● The Games are of Chinese characteristics.</li> <li>● The Chinese authority is playing games.</li> <li>● The Games should not be granted to China because of its political woes.</li> <li>● The Games are an open door to the outside world, especially to the West.</li> <li>● The Games are economically rather than politically oriented.</li> </ul>
<p>Why the Games are needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Olympics for Olympics' sake</li> <li>● To promote the economy of a country</li> <li>● For political or ideological reasons</li> <li>● To strengthen the power of a country</li> <li>● For democracy and progress</li> <li>● To speed up the development of a country</li> <li>● To improve people's way of life</li> <li>● To display the culture of a country</li> <li>● To promote a country's global image</li> <li>● A chance for a developing country</li> </ul>
<p>How the Games are to be achieved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By support from government</li> <li>● By the efforts of the population/whole country</li> <li>● By necessary organization</li> <li>● Through the social stability and unity that allow successful staging</li> <li>● Through financial capability</li> <li>● Facilities and infrastructure costs and issues</li> </ul>

#### **4.1.4 *Frequencies of the appearance of actors***

The fourth measurement of frequencies is the appearance of actors (see Table 3). Actors here are persons, groups of people or institutions that participate in the Olympic activities, or agents presenting information relating to them. An examination of the actors is significant because the ideological tendencies of the media can be seen through the standing that they give to actors with different social positions. In their study of social conflict and television news, Cohen, Adoni, Bantz and Robinson (1990) argue that the status and privilege of social hierarchy is replicated by appearance opportunities on the news. Those with high status and power have their position reinforced and their status reconfirmed by their appearance on media, while those of low status are denied such appearances. According to Cohen *et al.* (1990), such differential presentation of parties and actors is an indicator of establishment bias, as the news organization reflects more general ideological assumptions about various parties' social positions. The current study, though, holds that this idea needs to be applied flexibly. The structure of the social hierarchy might differ from country to country because of cultural traditions. The questions considered in this frequency test are, therefore, what kinds of actors have how much access to the interpretation of the sub-topic, and what kinds of differences or similarities occur in presenting actors in the two countries' newspapers.

**Table 3, List of actors**

<b>Classes of actors</b>	<b>Particular kinds of actors</b>
Government officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High-ranking government officials; officials at central state level</li> <li>● Other government officials</li> <li>● Olympic bidding and organizing committee officials</li> <li>● International Olympic Committee officials</li> <li>● Western government officials</li> </ul>
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chinese media</li> <li>● Australian media</li> <li>● Western media</li> </ul>
Well-known people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Intellectuals</li> <li>● Dissidents</li> </ul>
Ordinary people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chinese ordinary people</li> <li>● Chinese people overseas</li> <li>● Australian ordinary people</li> </ul>
Athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Australian athletes</li> <li>● Chinese athletes</li> </ul>

#### ***4.1.5 Frequencies of presentation or quotation of actors***

Actors are identified in this study also by the modes of reference used in reports, that is, whether they are directly quoted, indirectly quoted or just referred to. Potentially, a direct quotation may mean that more credit and attention is given than an indirect one, for example. The mode in which the actors are presented in the news press is related to their social positions. This will be considered in order to see what kind of actors are portrayed in media coverage of Olympic activities and, again, to see if there are differences between the two countries' newspapers.

#### ***4.1.6 Frequencies of actors' perspectives***

The final measurement is the frequency of actors by the perspectives that they

represent. The actors' perspectives are mediated by the way they are presented in the news, so the study of these perspectives relates closely to the "mode" of reference just outlined. But the perspectives of actors themselves can have significant bearing on a story. This test reveals the relationship between actors and their respective ideas and opinions towards the two countries' Olympic activities as they are covered by the selected press. The assumption is that those with higher social status tend to represent those perspectives supportive of their own country's cultural values, traditions and status quo.

#### **4.2 Foreign versus domestic news: a general factor in comparative analysis**

Later in this chapter, we consider these six frequency categories in more detail by analyzing examples that represent the recurring sub-topics, actors, modes and perspectives in the coverage of Olympic activities. It is necessary first to explore the distinction between foreign and domestic news in order to relate these categories more fully to the international comparative study of press representations.

The general issue of differences between foreign and domestic news has been investigated usefully by Cohen *et al.* (1990). These authors identify complexity, intensity and solvability of foreign and domestic social conflicts, as categories on which to base comparisons, and analyse statistics on these media variables among five Western countries (p. 17). They suggest that foreign conflicts tend to be treated by the media as more complex and intense, and less solvable, than domestic ones. The researchers conclude that this finding lends support to hegemonic theories of media and social control. Cohen *et al.* (1990, p. 17) find that journalists downplay (usually unconsciously) the severity of conflicts in their own nations in the attempt to reassure nervous audiences. They claim that these differences are not the result of an elite conspiracy in each country but of journalistic practices and norms. The data for their research were collected in 1980 and 1984, so we wonder how things have changed with the end of the Cold War. In this research, Cohen *et al.*'s ideas remain relevant because engaging in Olympic activities has dimensions of social conflict, the representation of which provides a platform to examine the development or change of the print media respectively for a "de-westernizing" Australia (Curran and Park, 2000,

p. 237) and a “transitional” China (p. 21). Vying to host the Games, or preparing for them, brings conflict between contenders and with circumstances. Australia and China have competed in bidding to host the Olympics. A city may spare no effort to stage the “best-ever” Games. Further, engaging in Olympic activities can mean struggle between the existing social orders and new ones. There are proponents and opponents of the associated developments, and attitudes toward the changes may bring about further conflicts. The method developed by Cohen *et al.* (1990) may thus be adapted to design an initial test of foreign news. The three dimensions of social conflict (complexity, intensity and solvability) can be measured as indicators to help explore, and compare, the ways in which Olympic activities are treated by the Australian and the Chinese newspapers, in relation to their cultural contexts.

The complexity of the sub-topic relates to the number of the opponents and non-opponents in a story on a sub-topic. According to the Cohen *et al.*'s definition, opponents are participants in the conflicts. Non-opponents are involved in the conflicts as mediators, arbitrators or go-betweens. The total of both opponents and non-opponents in a news item is called parties in this study. The assumption is that, potentially, the more parties involved, the more complex the treatment of the sub-topic.

The intensity of the sub-topic is tested through the measurement of the appearance of physical and verbal aggression and emotional display. As defined by Cohen *et al.* (1990, pp. 27-31), intensity is indicated by the nature, extent and magnitude of both verbal and physical clashes among the parties, including damage, harm and casualties. Verbal aggression includes yelling and name-calling; emotional aggression includes weeping, or simply a description of an expression of sorrow or anger. Intensity can be explored without assuming that these particular features will necessarily occur. Solvability is determined by factors such as the willingness or unwillingness of the parties to negotiate, yield to some demands of others, or compromise, as well as the social and financial costs of alternative solutions.

However, in this more recent context of press coverage of Olympic-related activities, it is appropriate to adjust the method offered by Cohen *et al.* because of the differences in press approaches being compared and the nature of the events crossing

many borders. What we find in the Chinese press is that the Olympic-related activities tend to be treated in a way that downplays complexity and intensity, and tends to suggest solvability if there are problems, in its outlook on those activities in *both* a national and international perspective. In coverage for domestic consumption, the emphasis is on the unity of purpose and progress, and while some defence against criticisms on issues such as human rights is made for Chinese as well as overseas audiences the international concern is with building positive images of China. The Australian press stories tend to treat Olympic-related activities, as potentially complex and intense, with solutions being awkward, without neatly separating domestic news matters from the international stage of those activities. In both cases, the domestic aspects of Olympics interrelate with aspects of international Olympic developments.

### **4.3 Foreign versus domestic news: differences in the Chinese and Australian press**

This general distinction between foreign and domestic news can be seen as relevant to the press coverage of the Olympics over our whole period, and is applied now to provide an overview of differences in the style of coverage between the two countries' newspapers. This section presents the results of a quantitative analysis of Olympics coverage in the Chinese press (including *The People's Daily* and Xinhua News Agency) and the Australian press (*The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*). The measurements of the frequencies with which the variables of complexity, intensity and solvability appear help to consider the significance of the differences found between the Chinese and Australian press in their Olympics coverage.

#### **4.3.1 Complexity**

For the complexity of the news, the frequencies of the parties, the opponents and non-opponents involved in the sub-topics were tested (with the initial assumption, consistent with Cohen *et al.*, that the more parties that are involved the more complex the presentation of a sub-topic will be). The comparison shows that there is a difference between the presentations of the number of parties by the two countries' press (see Table 4). For *The People's Daily* and Xinhua News Agency, most

sub-topics (58.1%) involve two parties. Sub-topics that have three parties occupy 15.6% of the total. For *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the highest percentage is for three parties per sub-topic (37.2%), followed by sub-topics with two parties (29.5%) and with four parties (23.1%). The maximum number of parties per sub-topic in the Australian newspapers is six (5.1%). From these figures, we can see that the Australian newspapers present more parties than the Chinese in most of the sub-topics, with about 60% of sub-topics involving three or more parties. In contrast, in *The People's Daily* and Xinhua News Agency, less than 35% percent of the sub-topics have three or more parties.

**Table 4, Complexity: parties per sub-topic**

	Parties per sub-topic						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>The Australian and The Sydney Morning Herald</i>	10 (2.3%)	109 (29.5%)	137 (37.2%)	85 (23.1%)	10 (2.3%)	19 (5.1%)	368
<i>People's Daily and Xinhua</i>	62 (12.2%)	294 (58.1%)	79 (15.6%)	49 (9.6%)	23 (4.5%)	0	507

Opponents in the sub-topics were also measured. The result shows substantial differences between the examples of the two countries' selected press, as with the number of parties. The maximum number of opponents is three in the Chinese newspaper but six in the Australian newspapers. Most sub-topics in the Chinese newspaper have no opponent, while the Australian newspapers usually have at least two opponents, an indication that the activities in the Olympics presented by the Chinese newspapers are not very complex in terms of the number of the opponents involved in the sub-topics. For the Australian newspapers, the coverage is more complex than that of the Chinese newspapers. The conflicts in the Chinese Olympic activities as presented by the Australian papers are mainly between the government and the other people in Chinese society.

The significant difference between the two countries' newspapers is also found in terms of the non-opponent. Sub-topics that have only one non-opponent constitute 93% (472 items) in the Chinese press, whereas in the Australian newspapers 23.1% (85 items) of the sub-topics have only one non-opponent. Generally speaking, the fewer non-opponents, the less complex is the social interaction represented in the sub-topic, because the non-opponents are the entities that might be affected by the issue at hand or might seek to influence it (Cohen *et al.*, 1990, p. 137).

Taken as a whole, there is a significant difference between the number of parties involved in the two countries' activities in the Olympics presented by the Australian newspapers and covered by the Chinese press. There is also a significant difference in the number of opponents and non-opponents presented by the two countries' press.

#### **4.3.2 Intensity**

The intensity of the two countries' activities in the Olympics is considered by measuring the frequencies of physical and verbal aggression and emotional display reported in the coverage. Results show differences between the two newspapers. Whereas 51 items (8.9%) of the total sub-topics in the Chinese newspapers refer to physical, verbal aggression or emotional display, 134 items (36.3%) in the Australian newspapers do so. This difference indicates that the Australian press presents the activities conflicts in activities in the Olympics as more intense, compared with its Chinese counterparts, with more reference to physical and verbal aggression or emotional display.

#### **4.3.3 Solvability**

Conceptions of the solvability of conflicts in the Olympic activities are evidenced in the frequencies of press in the two countries report on calls for resolution, the state of negotiations, signs of willingness to compromise and the outcomes of conflicts. We can take these in turn.

A notable point concerns calls for resolution made by opponents. The sum of the “all opponents call for resolution” and “at least one opponent calls for resolution” is about 318 items (62.7%) in the Chinese press and only about 109 (29.5%) in the Australian newspapers. It seems that the Chinese press presents the opponents in the sub-topics as more willing to find a way out of their disputes than the Australian newspapers do. In terms of the role of non-opponents, it is interesting that 35 items (9.5%) of the sub-topics contain a journalist’s “call for resolution” in the Australian newspapers, whereas in the Chinese press only 24 items (4.8%) involve journalists. This appears to go against an assumption sometimes held that Australian journalists tend to be detached from the issues they are reporting, giving no personal opinions about them.

In representing the states of negotiations, the two countries’ papers come closer. In about 233 items (46%) of the Chinese press’ sub-topics, and 162 items (44%) of the Australian newspapers’ sub-topics, no negotiation takes place, or else there is no mention of negotiations at all. Similarly, attempts to get negotiation started are mentioned with about the same frequencies in both papers (26.8% in the Chinese and 27.1% in the Australian newspapers). Negotiations take place in the Chinese press (26.8%) more than in the Australian newspapers (11.4%). In sum, there are not radical differences in presenting the state of negotiations, although the Australian newspapers tend to present conflicts as less negotiable overall.

Frequencies of the willingness to compromise (measured in addition to the sub-topics and frequencies in the tables above) suggest a more complex picture. In the Chinese press 23.7% of the sub-topics, and in the Australian newspapers 33.8% of the sub-topics, involve reports that at least one opponent is willing to give up some demands, but the Chinese stories included many fewer opponents in the first place. The biggest contrast falls in “no opponents willing to give up some demands”, with the Chinese press around 26% and the Australian about 73%. As a whole, the Australian newspapers presented the opponents as less willing to compromise, or made less extensive reference to willingness to compromise, than the Chinese press.

As for the outcome of conflicts concerning the activities in the Olympics, most sub-topics in the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers mention no solution at

all (59.5% and 51.3% respectively). The Australian newspapers report the imposition of the outcome of the conflict on one opponent by another more often than the Chinese press. On the other hand, in the Chinese press opponents tend to convert to one another's position more often than do those in the Australian newspapers (9.5% and 1.3% respectively). This seems to indicate that opponents as presented in the Chinese press are more willing to compromise than in the Australian newspapers, even though there are no statistically significant differences.

#### ***4.3.4 Summary of Chinese and Australian coverage of foreign and domestic news***

The test of the three dimensions of the coverage of the Chinese activities in the Olympics as a social conflict by the two papers suggests that the Australian newspapers present the activities in the Olympics as more complex, more intense, and harder to resolve. Differences occur in the number of parties involved, the intensity of the conflicts, the “call for resolution”, and “the willingness to compromise”. These differences relate to media functions and values that we discuss in a later chapter. For instance, the Chinese press avoid implying criticism and controversy over matters such as Games preparations in other countries at a time of sensitivity, after the Tiananmen Square incident, about attracting international attention to their own situation. So there is no universal contrast between the treatment of foreign and domestic news with foreign news necessarily being treated as more complex and intense or as the scene of problems hard to solve, compared to domestic matters. Rather, the Australian press can show the intensity or drama in activities and relations between actors in either the domestic or international Games activities, and the Chinese press uses restraint for the purposes of positive representations of the activities domestically or image-building internationally. We now continue to compare the press representations by examining frequencies in the six categories of content analysis explained earlier in the chapter.

#### **4.4 Frequencies of sub-topics**

The first frequency to be analyzed is that of sub-topics. The frequency test is

designed to establish the extent of coverage that sub-topics receive in each paper. A starting assumption is that in an ideologically-driven society the Chinese press might place more emphasis on the political and ideological aspects of the activities in the Olympics, and that for cultural reasons the Australian newspapers might be more interested in economic and material aspects of the activities.

#### **4.4.1 *Economic activities***

In respect to the three economic aspects of the activities in the Olympics, the coverage in the two countries' newspapers demonstrates great differences. The specific sub-topic that shows the greatest difference is "Cost and financial support", which appears in about 225 items (44.3%) in the Chinese and 42 items (11.3%) in the Australian press. The reason for this contrast may be easier to comprehend if one takes into consideration another frequency of an economic sub-topic. "Profit or loss; a money-making or money-losing exercise" has about 25% coverage in the Australian but only 12.9% in the Chinese press. At the first glance, these two sub-topics are concerned with something very similar in nature because "Cost and financial support" includes the introduction of government support and a country's or city's budget for hosting the Games. However, the emphases placed on these matters by the two countries' newspapers are different. That is, the Chinese press coverage indicates, at least, that the idea of "government support" appeals more to the Chinese press than "profit (or loss)" in the economy. In the Australian newspapers, it is the other way around: the Australian newspapers seem more interested in the topics relating to "profit or loss".

#### **4.4.2 *Political activities***

Altogether there are nine sub-topics about the political aspects of the activities in the Olympics. A combined 33.5% of the coverage in the Australian newspapers is about sub-topics such as "press freedom", "human rights" and "dissidents", that is, sub-topics relating to structural and ideological differences. In contrast, administrative changes such as streamlining and rejuvenating bureaucracy and tolerance of criticism are reported in about 4.7% of items in the Australian

newspapers.

The Chinese press, on the other hand, reported the political activities in the Olympics proportionately much less often than the Australian newspapers (9.8% as against 33.5%). It covered the administrative changes in China a little more frequently than the Australian newspapers did (6.4% as against 4.7%). In the Chinese press, the three categories in the political activities in the Olympics received a much more evenly distributed coverage (9.8%, 6.4%, and 7.3% for structural, administrative and others combined respectively) than in the Australian newspapers.

The greatest contrast between the coverage of the political issues in the two countries' newspapers relates to structural and ideological difference. Sub-topics in this area concern fundamental questions arising in the Olympic activities, ideas of socialism and capitalism, the leadership and credibility of the Communist Party in dealing with Olympic matters, and so forth, which are central to the more general activities around the Olympics.

On the other hand, there are matters of administrative activities in the Olympics, such as rejuvenating bureaucracy, and dealing with subsequent changes in the political or administrative structure of Chinese society, according to ideological principles. It may be assumed that the Chinese press would be more inclined to report on these matters than the Australian press because of the tradition in the Chinese culture of putting more weight on the role that ideology plays or should play in the function of the society. In fact, the Chinese press tends to report on these ideological sub-topics less often than might be expected; however, this does not necessarily mean that they are not interested in those sub-topics. The explanation may be that it is taken for granted by the Chinese press that such ideological questions have long been answered and confirmed, as in the case of the debate over the leadership of the Communist Party. (Of course, there are some controversies and challenges, but they are marginal and would not change the established principles). In any case, it would oversimplify matters to conclude that the Chinese press is not interested in these ideological topics at all without further scrutiny. Here we begin to see that frequency of appearance is not necessarily related proportionately to the importance of a sub-topic or concern, a point that is developed more fully later in relation to the

function of news values.

#### **4.4.3 *Cultural issues***

The sub-totals of the overall coverage by the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers of the other aspects of the activities in the Olympics, grouped broadly as cultural concerns, are 9.8% and 9.6% respectively. However, despite this general similarity, the coverage of the specific sub-topics differs between the two countries' press in the materials examined. The Chinese press devotes its attention to the Chinese people's support and the nation's traditional virtues, and not to sub-topics such as "Cultural diversity and freedom of expression". In contrast, the Australian newspapers seem more interested in the "General life style" of people. As in the coverage of the political and economic activities in the Olympics, structural changes such as the "Westernization of Chinese people's life style" appeal to the Australian newspapers studied, while the Chinese press is more concerned with bettering the existing system. The changes in Chinese people's lives towards a Western style, marginal as they appear to be, might be as significant as the privatization of economy in their implication and impact on the basic structure of the society, and are therefore largely ignored by the Chinese press.

#### **4.4.4 *Summary of sub-topic frequencies***

In sum, the findings of the frequency tests for the overall period of study indicate significant differences in the coverage of sub-topics by the selected Chinese and Australian press, in terms of the number of times that specific sub-topics appear and the overall pattern among the three aspects of Olympic activities. The Australian newspapers devoted 42.5% of their coverage to economic and 48.2% to political activities in the Olympics. It would seem a little surprising that they did not devote more coverage to the economic activities, if it were assumed that the Australian culture emphasizes the material life of people and the whole society is economically driven. Contrary to the hypothesis that the Australian paper would be more interested in economic Olympics than political aspects of the Olympics, the Australian newspapers covered the economic and political activities in the Olympics almost an

even number of times.

On the other hand, the Chinese press, which might have been expected to give more attention to the political aspects, paid much greater attention to the economic aspects of the activities in the Olympics than to the political (even including administrative) ones (67.1% as against 23.5%). Similarly, the economic sub-topics appear more frequently than cultural aspects of the activities in the Olympics, which are covered lightly (10%). The reverse emphasis on the economic as against political aspects of the activities in the Olympics, compared with the Australian newspapers, seems inconsistent with the assumption about Chinese culture that the Chinese pay less attention to material than to political and ideological issues. However, the less frequent presence of political and ideological aspects in the Chinese press is not necessarily inconsistent with the general tradition of Chinese society's emphasis on political and ideological issues. The patterns of representation found here do not necessarily go against each country's cultural traditions, and their cultural implications will be explored further by considering other frequencies and further analysis.

#### **4.5 Frequencies of sub-topics by period**

The division of the whole sample period of study into shorter periods helps us to see if the patterns of sub-topic frequencies described above are constant or if they change at particular times. A working hypothesis would be that, since the Australian newspapers pay greater attention to the political aspects of Olympic activities in the whole sample period, any politics-related changes during each sub-period would have an impact on their coverage pattern. In other words, the Australian newspapers' coverage of the political changes would increase significantly following each moment. On the other hand, the Chinese press coverage pattern would remain much the same across the periods because of its tendency to present the activities in the Olympics, and of the Chinese social structure as a whole, without dramatic emphasis on change or disruption.

#### **4.5.1 *Period 1***

It will be recalled that period 1 begins in 1990, when the overall activities in the Olympics became prominent on each country's agenda, until October, 1993, when the bidding campaign was wrapped up. During this first period, the different emphases on political and economic sub-topics are well reflected in the two countries' press coverage. Of the total coverage in the Australian newspapers in this period, 63.7% was about political activities in the Olympics, 36.4% about the economic activities in the Olympics, and there was nothing about others. In the Chinese press, for the same period, 65.2% deal with economic activities in the Olympics. Political activities in the Olympics occupy another 11.6% and the remaining 13% mention activities in the Olympics in other fields.

In the first period, coverage of economic sub-topics about the Olympics, in both countries' newspapers, shows a different pattern from that of the whole sample period. "Political woes of China" drew much more attention (36.4%) from the Australian newspapers than the "improvement of the existing economic structure in China" (9.1%). The Chinese press, by contrast, reported more on the improvement of the current economic structure (21.7%) than on the structural changes (8.7%). These figures indicate differing emphases on significant dimensions of the economic activities in the Olympics by the Australian and Chinese newspapers.

There is relatively little coverage of political activities in the Olympics by the Chinese press in the first period. There are no significant differences in the coverage of sub-topics by both countries' newspapers in this period. However, the first highlight moment occurred in late September, 1993, which would affect the amount and patterns of press coverage of the Chinese and Australian Olympic activities in the two countries' newspapers.

#### **4.5.2 *Period 2***

With the revelation of the bribery scandals of selecting the host cities, there was a big panic in the host cities like Sydney. The scandal was reflected in the Australian

newspapers' coverage of Olympic activities. Coverage of political activities in the Olympics rose to 52.6% of the Olympics items in the Australian newspapers, as against 36.4% in the first period. The Chinese press, on the other hand, did not emphasize the scandal. It covered "the bribery for the International Olympic Committee members" for 7.4%. The frequencies of reports on these sub-topics strongly support the hypothesis that the Australian newspaper would increase or intensify its reporting on any particular crises, while the Chinese paper tends to downplay the impact of them.

The Chinese press, in this second period, paid more attention to economic activities in the Olympics in than it did in the first. This can be attributed to the fact that, during this period, large-scale economic activities in the Olympics in urban areas were staged. The Chinese press devoted 72.3% of items to the reporting of these activities, and the Australian newspapers 34.3%. For the Chinese press, this is an increase of about 5% from the first period. For the Australian newspapers, however, the total percentage of coverage decreased from 63.7% in the first period to 34.3% in the second period. The significance of these differences can be appreciated from the emphases on specific economic sub-topics. The most-covered sub-topic in the Chinese press is again "improvement of the existing economic structure" in China. "Westernization" of the economy receives only 11.1% of the total in the Chinese press, even though the second period in the Olympics activities was the time when privatization of the economy developed most in China. In contrast, the Australian newspapers paid great attention to this latter trend, devoting 20% of its reports to private enterprise and private market, concepts important to the capitalistic production order. Consistent with the overall coverage pattern described earlier, the Chinese press was most interested in Olympic activities such as "market force", "competition" and "efficiency", the changes that would better the existing economic infrastructure rather than simply set it aside.

Reports about activities in the Olympics in the cultural area in the second period are also consistent with the pattern of the overall time-frame. The Australian newspapers covered both categories in these areas, whereas the Chinese press only mentioned the educational and academic changes. This supports the finding that, overall, there are significant differences in the coverage of sub-topics in the second

period by the Australian and the Chinese press.

### **4.5.3 *Period 3***

In December 2000, the second large-scale bidding campaign was launched throughout China. The campaign represents another highlight moment in the Olympic activities and marks the beginning of the third sub-period in the current study. Among the political sub-topics, the Sino-Australia relationship caught the attention of the Australian newspapers. On the other hand, the Chinese administrative activities in the Olympics received merely 1.6% of the coverage in the Australian newspapers. The Chinese press, in contrast, covered the “structural and ideological changes” only 14.3% of the times. This is a 7% increase from the second period, and it is noteworthy that most reports in this category are about “separating the Party from the government (administrative) work”. In other words, the increase in this coverage is not due to more reports on the bidding campaign. In fact, the Chinese press coverage of the ideological issues remained much the same as in the previous periods. This is an indication that the political issues arising during the activities in the Olympics did not draw much attention from the Chinese press and did not affect its coverage patterns over the three periods. In the third period, the Chinese press devoted a little more attention to the administrative activities in the Olympics (16%). This is different from the overall coverage tendencies of the Chinese press, and is associated with a greater emphasis on the improvement of the existing political and economic system rather than on basic structural changes.

Regarding economic activities in the Olympics, the reverse coverage pattern in the two countries’ press about the “privatization and Westernization” of the economy and the “improvement of the existing economic structure”, noted above, is consistent with that in the first two periods.

### **4.5.4 *Summary of sub-topic frequency by periods***

For the Chinese press, governmental or administrative and economic activities in the Olympics received the most coverage during all three periods, with “improvement of

the existing economic structure” in China being the most frequently covered category overall. Political activities in the Olympics in the Chinese press increased from 15% in the second period to 30.3% in the third period.

For the Australian newspapers over the three periods, the coverage pattern is more complicated than that of the Chinese press. Economic activities in the Olympics are most frequently covered in the first and third periods (63.7% and 52.4% respectively). During the second period, reports on economic activities in the Olympics decreased, while those on the political activities increased.

Taken as a whole, the Australian newspapers present the two countries’ activities in the Olympics process as rough and filled with problems, not as smooth and without major problems as the Chinese press does. For the Australian newspapers, each highlight moment is clearly reflected by the frequency changes in sub-topics reported. This is consistent with the finding discussed above that the Australian newspapers presented the Olympics activities as more complex, more intense and harder to solve as sites of social conflict.

In summary, the analysis of the frequencies of sub-topics by period by both countries’ press supports the hypothesis that, since the Australian newspapers pay greater attention to the political aspects of the Olympic activities over the whole sample period, any political changes in each sub-period would have an impact on its coverage pattern. The Australian newspapers’ coverage of the political changes increased greatly following each highlight moment. On the other hand, the Chinese press coverage pattern generally remained the same throughout the three periods, with a tendency to present the consistency and continuity of the activities in the Olympics and, implicitly, of the Chinese social structure as a whole.

#### **4.6 Frequencies of perspectives**

The representation of Olympic activities by both countries’ press can be explored further by considering the frequencies of perspectives on these activities. As noted earlier, the perspectives are grouped into three main aspects (comprising some 26

identified perspectives): the “why”, or the intention of staging the Games, the “what”, or the need for the Games, and the “how”, or the road to the Games. It may be assumed, for purposes of discussion, that the Australian newspapers would interpret Chinese activities from the vantage of a democratic and capitalist Western society, and that the Chinese press would confine its interpretation of Australian activities within the boundaries of Chinese cultural values, even if those activities reflect Western social interests and ideological interests.

#### **4.6.1 *The “what”, or the meaning of staging the Olympics***

Among the specific perspective categories about the “what” or the meaning of staging the Games, there is a distinct contrast between the coverage in the two countries’ newspapers. The perspective “Activities in the Olympics mean Westernization”, for example, received 25.2% coverage in the Australian newspapers in comparison to 0% in the Chinese press. Similarly, the Australian newspapers considered the activities in the Olympics as a “negation of Communist policies”, while no such a point of view is held by *The People’s Daily*. Of the two categories that did not show statistically significant differences, “Activities in the Olympics are socialist in nature” received 15.2% of the coverage in *The People’s Daily*, whereas only 6.8% in the Australian newspapers, still indicating fairly different points of view.

As a whole, perspectives on the Olympic activities in the two countries’ press imply different understandings of the nature of the Chinese activities in the Olympics by the Australian and Chinese newspapers. This reflects, in particular, different ways of perceiving Chinese involvement in the Olympics and fundamental ideas of Chinese society as a whole.

#### **4.6.2 *The “why”, or the need and reasons for the Olympics***

There are two main kinds of perspectives within this broad category of the need for activities in the Olympics, both of which go beyond, and are seen more frequently than, “the Olympics for the Olympics’ sake”. The Australian press often held that Chinese activities in the Olympics were for “political or ideological” reasons. The

Chinese press did not mention such reasons in the critical way the Australian newspapers did, although it did emphasize the openness of Chinese policy for purposes of international acceptance particularly in the first Beijing bid. Attention to practical purposes in the Olympic activities was at a low level (5.7%) in the Australian newspapers but comparatively high in the Chinese press (22.9%). This included ideas that activities in the Olympics are “to speed up the development of the country” and “to promote the country’s image”.

#### **4.6.3 *The “how”, or the road to the Olympics***

Frequencies for the general perspective on how to achieve the activities in the Olympics show a significant contrast between the two countries’ newspapers. The greatest difference lies in concerns such as the need for “social stability and unity” as well as “financial capability” to allow successful staging. This includes ideas such as activities in the Olympics have “support from government” and “the whole country”, and have to go step by step. The Chinese press covered these concerns for a combined 42.2% of the total, with none in the Australian newspapers. The emphases in the “how” perspective by the Chinese press suggests that its coverage relates positively to the cultural tradition in China that ordinary people have to follow the authorities (in the form now of the communist government) and that collective goals are always important.

#### **4.6.4 *Summary of frequency of perspectives***

Among the three general aspects of the activities in the Olympics, 76.4% of items in the Chinese press are devoted to the “why”, or the intention of staging the Games, and 9.1% and 13.6% to the “what” and “how” of the Games respectively. As for the Australian newspapers, 20.9% of the items are devoted to the “why”, 22.9% to the “what”, and 55% to the “how” aspects of the activities in the Olympics. This difference in the overall attention given to the perspectives on activities in the Olympics suggests that the Chinese press is more interested in the general nature and picture of the Games and the intention for Beijing to stage the Games, while the Australian newspapers tend to probe into some specific problems in the Olympic

activities. The difference in this emphasis might imply a difference in the general characteristics of the press in each country: the Australian newspapers can supposedly be detached from the event they are reporting and inquire into it as an independent observer, while the Chinese press is expected to be part of the Chinese Olympic enterprise.

The interpretation of data supports illustrates the way in which the Australian newspapers represent Chinese activities in the Olympics from the viewpoint of a Western capitalist society, and the Chinese press represents the Olympic activities within the boundaries of Chinese cultural values. Most of the identified perspectives on the Chinese activities in the Olympics in this study are characteristic of either the Australian or Chinese cultural values. The perspectives upheld by the Australian newspapers are embedded with concepts such as free enterprise, free competition, pluralism, and democracy, associated with the Australian traditional concerns and values. On the other hand, the Chinese press interprets the activities in the Olympics within the framework of collectivism, order, stability and uniformity, which are values of the Chinese culture.

#### **4.7 Frequencies of actors**

Table 5 presents the frequencies of actors used as interpreters of the Chinese and Australian activities in the Olympics. In two actor categories, references to government officials do not show significant differences between the two countries' newspapers. In both the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers, actors with governmental positions, including high government officials, are quoted or referred to the most often (along with government directives). In the Chinese press, these actors were used for a combined 42% of the total. Similarly, the Australian newspapers quoted or referred to these actors for a combined 35.2% of the total. There may not be a great difference in the use of the government officials between the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers statistically, but a dominant presentation of official government authorities and speakers is evident in the Chinese press choice of actors. International Olympic Committee officials are quoted by the Chinese press 4.2% of the times and by the Australian newspapers 5.8% of the times. There is not much

difference in the use of this actor by the two countries' papers, either.

**Table 5, Frequencies of use of actors**

<b>Actors</b>	<b>Frequency of appearance in the Chinese press (%)</b>	<b>Frequency of appearance in the Australian newspapers (%)</b>
Government Officials	42	35.2
IOC Officials	4.2	5.8
Foreign Media	Nil	14.6
Domestic Media	7.2	11.7
Intellectuals	9	20.1
Athletes & Olympic Champions	23.5	2.5
Citizens (Ordinary People)	11.6	3.5

However, three other actor categories show notable differences. Foreign media are used 14.6% times by the Australian newspapers, but none by the Chinese press. Domestic media are quoted 11.7% by the Australian newspapers and 7.2% by the Chinese press. Intellectuals appeared 20.1% in the Australian newspapers' coverage and 9.2% in the Chinese press. These are the actors that have acquired the power and authority to speak for the news in the Australian society. In Australia, media are supposed to be independent of the government position and capable of providing diversified opinions. Intellectuals, identified with knowledge and expertise, are considered capable of independent thinking and opinion. Therefore, they are used frequently by the Australian newspapers and expected to provide a diversified voice other than potentially expressing views of the government.

In contrast, some other actors drew more attention in the Chinese press. For instance, famous athletes and Olympic champions are quoted or referred to 23.5% of the total times by the Chinese press, but only 2.5% by the Australian newspapers. Ordinary people are used 11.6% of the total by the Chinese press, but 3.5% by the Australian newspapers. Famous athletes and Olympic champions are frequently used by the

Chinese press because of their semi-official positions. They are assigned by the government to their roles and are responsible for carrying out government policies. It is perhaps surprising that the Chinese press referred to ordinary people more often than the Australian newspapers do, because in the highly hierarchical Chinese society, ordinary people are considered the least valuable in judgment or opinion. However, it seems that ordinary people are quoted often by the Chinese press because, symbolically, they will garner the greatest public support for the country's activities in the Olympics goals of the government, and in practice are the least likely to represent challenging voices to the authorities.

The research indicates that both countries' newspapers considered government officials the best or most available sources for the interpretation of both countries' activities in the Olympics. Except for government officials, however, actors are in totally different orders between the Chinese and Australian newspapers. As discussed above, actors with semi-official position or those least likely to express dissident opinions ranked higher in the Chinese press. In the Australian newspapers, actors who are assumed to be capable of independent thought and opinion are given more opportunities to speak.

In sum, examination of the frequencies of actors quoted or referred to by the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers indicates different coverage patterns. Presumably, the Chinese press seeks to present the opinions voiced by actors as homogeneous, and consistent as far as possible with the views of officials. Accordingly, actors with government or semi-government identity and actors believed to least challenge the official opinions are given the most prominence. The Australian newspapers, on the contrary, have tried to present a more diversified picture of the Chinese activities in the Olympics. As a result, actors who are expected to voice different opinions are quoted or referred to much more often than they are by the Chinese press. These inclinations largely express the cultural traditions in each country in terms of their conceptions of social roles and relationships.

#### **4.8 Frequencies of actors by mode**

As noted earlier, it may be assumed that the mode in which an actor is presented, that is, whether he or she is directly quoted, indirectly quoted or just referred to, indicates the level of access he or she is given by the medium for interpretation of subjects. A direct quotation usually means a higher level of access, an indirect quotation means a lower level, and so on. This section presents actor frequencies by mode. It adopts the assumption that there is a positive relationship between the frequency with which an actor is used and the level of access he or she is given. The more frequently an actor is used, the higher level access he or she would be given. For example, government officials would be directly quoted more often while other less important actors might only be mentioned.

In the Chinese press, the first three most directly quoted actors are government officials (51.3%), Olympic champions (22%) and ordinary people, including the overseas Chinese (15.5%). These actors are also the most frequent to appear in the coverage. In particular, government officials not only appeared most frequently (42%) but were quoted directly even more frequently (51.3%). As for the Australian newspapers, the three most-often directly quoted actors are government officials (36.8%), intellectuals (29.3%) and media (16.6%), actors that are also the most frequently used in the Australian newspapers. Foreign sources including diplomats and foreign scholars are the third most used actors in the Australian newspapers, but not among the most directly quoted (9.4%). In comparison, government officials are directly quoted more often in the Chinese press than in the Australian newspapers, and so are ordinary people. On the contrary, media, intellectual, and foreign sources are directly quoted much more often in the Australian newspapers than in the Chinese press.

In sum, findings in the frequencies of actors' mode support the assumption that the more used an actor is used as spokesperson for a subject, the more he or she is directly quoted, indicating a high level of access to the interpretation of the subject. Furthermore, both the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers present government officials as the most credible spokespersons for both countries' activities in the Olympics, indicating the privileged position of governmental authorities. The

rest of the actors, however, are treated quite differently. The Chinese press presented whoever will provide the least challenging view to that of the government, thus giving a unified picture of Chinese society. On the contrary, the Australian newspapers emphasized more independent thinkers' information, opinions and credibility, revealing a pluralistic approach to understanding society and reporting news.

#### **4.9 Frequencies of perspectives by actors**

We can test the homogeneity or heterogeneity of actors' perspectives by counting which actor holds which perspective. Because of the assumed cultural differences, the Chinese press is expected to present actors with more or less unified perspectives. On the other hand, actors in the Australian newspapers theoretically would tend to express diversified opinions.

In the Chinese press, as noted above, actors who voice their perspectives most often are government officials, famous athletes and ordinary people. Interestingly, any perspective that is held by either athletes or ordinary people represented is also mentioned by government officials. In other words, perspectives on activities in the Olympics held by athletes and ordinary people never go beyond the perimeter of the governmental opinion. The other three actors – high government officials, Congress representatives and government directives – logically present the same idea. Intellectuals, who are conventionally considered independent in thinking, basically echo the government opinions.

In contrast, the two remaining types of actors, dissenters and overseas Chinese persons, are presented as holding different ideas. When they are presented in the Australian newspapers, the emphasis tends to be on their interest in the possible improvement in Chinese society or political life, rather than specifically in economic production. This kind of perspective was not held by any of the other seven actors at all. Because of these actors' assumption that what China needs is a more democratic political system per se, they constitute a challenge to the existing social structure.

In the Australian newspapers, we find that actors who voiced more perspectives are

intellectuals, foreign diplomats, and other government officials. High government officials, other government officials held about the same perspectives as expected. The selected Chinese media were in complete agreement with the government perspectives in regard to the activities in the Olympics.

The coverage in the Australian newspapers shows that the Western diplomats, mostly Australian, voiced the most perspectives. This is not surprising because of their official positions and information resources. Their opinions, for the most part, represented those of the Australian government. The perspectives they presented, however, are totally different from those of the Chinese government, at least as presented in the Australian newspapers. For example, the higher Chinese government officials insisted that the activities in the Olympics are socialist in nature, while Western diplomats held that they promote capitalism. Western diplomats are willing to express a view that China's activities in the Olympics have a political and ideological dimension. Actually, only one perspective was held by both the Chinese government officials and Western diplomats. The only exception to the contradictory pattern is the perspective that activities in the Olympics have to introduce what is useful from the outside world, which means opening up to it. However, the Chinese government's criterion for something "useful" might be different from, or opposite to, that of the Western diplomats.

The views of intellectuals are mixed in the Australian newspapers. They reflect concerns with political matters such as human rights in China, and the issue of a more open society, more than with economic aspects of Games activities. This idea, however, was never openly recognized by the Chinese government and official press as presented by the Australian newspapers. Intellectuals are, therefore, portrayed by the Australian newspapers as being more independent in thinking, compared to other Chinese actors.

As for the actors with fewer identified perspectives, athletes were concerned not only with the more technical aspects of the activities in the Olympics. To them, activities in the Olympics have to introduce all that is useful from the outside world, a rather pragmatic strategy. They also emphasized the importance of competition in activities in the Olympics. The ordinary people in the Australian newspapers shared

a range of sporting, cultural and personal interests, not only or primarily the political symbolism of the Games. In comparison, actors in the Chinese press largely support government opinions on the activities in the Olympics. It appears that all ideas different from those of the government are just omitted. The fact that fewer perspectives and actors are presented in the Chinese press is an indication that the Chinese press portray the subject as less controversial and problematic. On the other hand, more actors voicing more diversified perspectives suggests a view of the Olympic activities as fraught with power struggle and conceptual conflicts. This, again, is consistent with the finding, in the initial test of foreign versus domestic news, that the Australian newspapers have presented the Chinese activities in the Olympics as a more intense process.

The Australian newspapers seem to have provided a marketplace of ideas, in which actors with different ideas have a chance to be heard. However, it is necessary to point out, that government opinions still have a distinct voice on the Australian newspapers, which means that not every actor involved has an equal say on the subject at hand. Furthermore, it remains to be examined whether the diversified perspectives in the Australian newspapers constitute a real challenge to the perspectives of the government or to the dominant ideologies.

#### **4.10 Summary**

This chapter has presented the results of the quantitative analysis of the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers' coverage of the two countries' activities in the Olympics. First, three dimensions of the periods in activities in the Olympics have been tested to see if differences occurred due to the newspapers' different treatment of foreign versus domestic news. Findings suggest that the Australian newspapers presented the conflicts in Olympic activities as more complex, intense and difficult to resolve. In other words, differences occur in the reports of the conflicts in both countries' activities in the Olympics in the Australian newspapers and the Chinese press.

In terms of the treatment of sub-topics, coverage of the frequencies of sub-topics

concerning Olympic activities by the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers demonstrates some significant differences in the number of times each sub-topic was reported and the overall pattern of coverage for the three aspects of activities. The Australian newspapers covered the economic and political activities in the Olympics almost evenly. The Chinese press reported the economic activities in the Olympics much more often than political activities in the Olympics.

Sub-topic frequencies over the three sub-periods were also tested. Taken as a whole, each moment was clearly reflected by frequency changes in each sub-topic reported in the Australian newspapers. Findings support the hypothesis of this study that, because the Australian newspapers pay greater attention to the political aspects of activities in the Olympics in the whole sample period, any political changes during each sub-period have an impact on its coverage pattern. In other words, the Australian newspapers' coverage of the political changes increases following each key moment. On the other hand, the Chinese press coverage pattern remains basically the same across the periods, with a tendency to present the activities in the Olympics process as consistent and views about it as uniform.

Findings about the perspectives on the activities in the Olympics firmly support the assumption that the Australian newspapers have interpreted Chinese activities in the Olympics within a framework that includes ideas such as free competition, pluralism and democracy that are related to the Australian tradition. The Chinese press, on the other hand, confined its interpretation of the two countries' activities in the Olympics within the boundaries of the Chinese cultural values, even if the specific Olympic activities reported have Western ideological underpinnings. It interpreted the activities in the Olympics within the framework of collectivism, stability and uniformity, which are values of the Chinese culture.

Examination of the frequencies of actors quoted or referred to by the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers has also revealed differences. In the Chinese press, actors with government or semi-government positions, and actors believed to least challenge the official opinions, are given the most credibility. The Australian newspapers, on the contrary, present a more diverse picture, especially Chinese activities in the Olympics. As a result, actors who are expected to voice different

opinions are quoted or referred to much more often than they are by the Chinese press. These inclinations largely express the cultural traditions in each country.

Coverage patterns of actors in the three different modes of their presentation indicate clearly a positive relationship between the use of the actors and diverse ideas about society in each country. The Chinese press presents a more uniform picture of the activities in the Olympics by giving government officials the highest level of access to its coverage, followed by actors with the least challenging views. In the Australian newspapers, even though government officials are the most privileged people, challengers are given same access. The Chinese press presents a much more homogeneous social structure, whereas the Australian papers try to provide a pluralistic picture, in which actors with diverse opinion have opportunities to speak out.

In terms of the actors' perspectives, actors in the Chinese press largely support government opinions on the activities in the Olympics. The Australian newspapers appear to provide a marketplace of ideas, in which actors with different ideas have a chance to be heard. However, not every actor has an equal opportunity to this marketplace. Furthermore, few extremely different opinions are expressed as no fundamental debate on activities in the Olympics values is presented.

In conclusion, the quantitative analysis has modified the application of content analysis categories for the purpose of considering relative presentations of foreign and domestic news, for international comparison. It has demonstrated a series of differences in the coverage patterns of Olympic activities in the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers, through the frequencies of sub-topics, perspectives, actors and modes of presentation. However, in order to understand more fully how these differences are related to respective cultural traditions and values, it is necessary now to extend the qualitative analysis of specific news representations, by using methods that allow more detailed exploration of the construction of meaning in journalistic texts.

## Chapter 5

### **Convergence and Divergence: Lexical and Propositional Analysis of Press Coverage of Olympic-Related Activities**

#### **5.1 Building on quantitative analysis**

In the previous chapter, the quantitative analysis showed differences in the reportage patterns of the two countries' newspapers in their coverage of the Olympic-related activities. In order to see how these differences are related to respective ideological traditions and values, it is necessary to extend the discourse analysis to specific reports. By focusing on lexical items and propositions in the press reportage, this chapter looks at the features of texts to explore the convergence and divergence of the two countries' press coverage of the same Olympic-related events.

When the Olympic flame was extinguished at the Athens 2004 Games, international attention turned to Beijing and the Games of the XXIX Olympiad. This brought China, and its rich and diverse culture, before the world's public in an unprecedented way. For China, winning the right to stage the 2008 Olympic Games represented the icing on the cake of international recognition and acceptance. Beijing's successful bid highlighted the strengths presented by China's enormous population, its rapid economic growth and growing technological capacity, underpinned by policies of modernisation and openness, and the country's enhanced sporting credentials. Although the memory of the unexpected failure of its first bid in 1991-1993 was still fresh, Beijing mounted a skilful bid in 1999-2001 to win the right to host the Games. The candidature file for Beijing's 2008 Olympic bid, submitted to IOC in January 2001, ends with the simple statement: "It is our sincere belief that the time is right for Beijing to celebrate the Olympic Games" (BCF, 2008). Does this statement imply that the timing of Beijing's first bid was not right in September 1993, when the Chinese capital city was defeated by only two votes by Sydney for the 2000 Games?

The time seemed not right for Beijing to make the first bid because of several special and negative circumstances such as the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident, China's human rights issues and Beijing's immature infrastructure for construction of

sporting facilities. Those topics had been broadly discussed and frequently mentioned by Beijing's bidding rivals, especially Sydney and the Australian newspapers. To consider the representations of the Olympic bids in the context of such issues, we now look at how the Australian and Chinese newspapers reported Beijing's and Sydney's bids when both cities were vying to host the 2000 Games. An examination of reportage in both countries of the Beijing 2001 bid will provide a further reference point for the purpose of comparison. This will help to understand the similarities or differences in the two countries' press coverage of the two successive Beijing bids. By comparing the Australian and Chinese coverage of Beijing and Sydney bids, this chapter argues that the roles and attitudes of the news media in representing social activities relating to the Olympics are changing and developing. Furthermore, it examines the reporting strategies adopted by the two countries' newspapers to illustrate specific changes of attitudes through the coverage of the bids.

By considering how the roles and attitudes of the press in coverage of the certain social activities are changing, this chapter also analyses and compares the Australian and Chinese newspapers' coverage of sub-topics relating to the Athens Olympics. Thus, the analysis can not only examine the similarities and differences between the newspapers' representation of the Olympic topics before and after the Athens Games, but also explore the development of the press attitudes and reporting strategies on the Olympic topics after the Beijing's successful bid for the 2008 Games.

The findings drawn from the content analysis in Chapter 4 suggest that differences occur in the reports of both countries' activities in the Olympics in the Australian and the Chinese newspapers. To further explore the findings, this chapter, by employing lexical and propositional analysis, looks at those differences through the concepts and their expressions in lexical items and combined into propositions expressed by clauses and sentences. It uses the theoretical framework established to combine quantitative and qualitative methods, examining lexical features and propositions to extend the considerations of categories of content analysis, and showing how certain words and statements in the articles operate in the representations of sub-topics and actors' perspectives.

## 5.2 Lexical analysis of newspaper discourse

The detailed review of the selected newspapers coverage of the two cities' bids may help reach a point of view that the Australian press performed more critically in portraying Sydney's bidding rivals. Even though the reporting approaches and focal points in coverage of the Olympic bid varied between the two countries' press and hardly made a head-on clash, something that the Chinese newspapers seemingly had tried to avoid, two special moments can still be identified when both countries' press had to confront and comment on each other's bid. At these two moments, the bidding cities' presentations at Barcelona in July 1992 and the IOC delegation's inspection tour of Beijing and Sydney in March 1993, both countries' newspapers followed the bidding activities avidly and also unavoidably compared their own with the rivals' bids.

Comparison of the choices of words can help make the newspapers' perspectives on the bids clear. On the basis of the comprehensive and chronological review of the three years (from 1990 to 1993) of newspaper coverage (by *PD* and *SMH*) of the 2000 Olympic bid, some typical lexical usage appearing in the news texts has been selected for analysis, related to the events at special moments when both newspapers watched the bid of each other's country closely.

### 5.2.1 *Lexical analysis of the coverage of bidding promotions in Barcelona*

A week before the opening ceremony of 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, the eight bidding contenders, including Sydney and Beijing, had all taken turns at presenting their case in the Spanish host city. Being determined to win the right to stage the 2000 Olympic Games, each city's bidding committee could not afford to miss this golden opportunity to fully display its merits and capability for global attention. To consider Chinese and Australian press representations of the bidding promotions, we now consider lexical features of new articles in an initial sample of coverage by *PD* and *SMH*. Both *PD* and *SMH* pursued close coverage of the event to portray the bids from their own countries and also to collect and find out the information about the competing bids.

Table 6 shows that the two newspapers use a range of contrasting terms to establish particular viewpoints and reporting angles on the two cities' bidding promotions at Barcelona. The lexical choices convey specific meanings in, and reinforce, a particular context of concerns. *SMH* regarded Beijing as Sydney's main challenge, which resulted in the newspaper's eyes from a presupposition that some IOC members such as Samaranch would favour bringing China to the world to foster the idea that the IOC could play an international role for the Olympic movement far beyond sport. Holding this opinion, *SMH* established a tone of reportage from which it seemed that Beijing had not as much to offer in its own right as Sydney did. This view would be supported by reference to Beijing's limited technical capability to stage the Games. *SMH* did not or would not pay much attention to Beijing's technical competence since, apparently, it was confident that Sydney's presentation of its ability to stage the Olympics was convincing and strong enough to defeat what the other opponents presented. Further, *SMH* was to maintain that political issues including China's human rights record should be of concern in choosing the host for the turn-of-the-century Games. In addition, the Australian newspaper pointed the finger at Samaranch's past to imply that the supporter of Spain's former fascist regime was good at playing political tricks internationally.

**Table 6, Lexical choices in coverage of the bidding presentations at Barcelona**

Newspaper	Lexical elements	
	For Beijing's bidding campaign	For Sydney's bidding campaign
<i>PD</i> (See Appendix C)	<p>“Beijing has been campaigning with the <b>enthusiastic and sincere attitude</b> (真挚和热情的态度) ... displaying the <b>Oriental civilisation</b> (东方文明) ... None of its promoting activities failed to show the <b>politeness of a great and proud country</b> (伟大而自豪国度的礼节) ...” (20/7/1992, p. 4)</p>	<p>“Sydney is <b>the most likely</b> (最有希望的) of all the candidates ... <b>strong campaign</b> (有力的申办)... <b>fully-prepared project</b> (准备充分的企划) and <b>governmental support</b> (政府的支持) ... the Sydney delegation was asked by some journalists if it was <b>working behind the scenes</b> (幕后工作) to cater to the IOC members' likes ... A German journalist accused Sydney of its <b>problem of the ozone layer</b> (臭氧问题)...” (20/7/1992, p. 4)</p>
<i>SMH</i> (Appendix A)	<p>“The (Sydney) bid's chief executive's statement that Sydney had an elected government was seen as <b>a swipe</b> at Beijing” (20/7/1992, p. 1)</p> <p>“Sydney's <b>main challenge</b> would come from Beijing” (30/7/1992, p. 3)</p> <p>“Beijing has <b>no time zone advantage</b> above Sydney” (7/8/1992, p. 4)</p>	<p>“Sydney bid officials has been deliberately <b>low key</b>” (16/7/1992, p. 2)</p> <p>“<b>Distinct disadvantage</b>” (21/7/1992, p. 33)</p> <p>“<b>Multi-million-dollar gamble</b>” (30/7/1992, p3)</p> <p>“<b>Samaranch</b>, a diplomat during the rule of <b>General Franco</b>, would love to bring China to the world ... IOC's geo-politics attitude spells <b>the biggest danger</b> to Sydney's bid” (8/8/1992, p. 35)</p>

In thus downplaying the potential strength of the Beijing bid posing a significant

threat to that of Sydney, *SMH* also had to negotiate over Sydney's own position. The wording of its coverage of Sydney's promotion, while suggesting confidence in its merits, still expressed the newspaper's concern over some disadvantages of the city's bid. This concern is reflected in the use of words like "disadvantage", "gamble" or "danger" to illustrate Sydney's chance of winning the bid. Nevertheless, the newspaper's note of cautious confidence in its coverage of Sydney's bid is seen in the use of "low key" by the newspaper to refer to Sydney bidding committee's performance at Barcelona. The term "low key" is an understatement indicating the newspaper's mixed feelings of high hopes of Sydney's success and anxiety over another possible failure after Australia's defeats in the two previous bids.

As an official newspaper of the Chinese government and the ruling party, *PD* is prudent in wording its reportage on international affairs. The political and diplomatic stance of the Government must be treated as having the utmost importance. So, the newspaper makes its coverage of the campaign at Barcelona read more like a diplomatic statement. Here we see news values, noted earlier, at work. In accordance with the virtue of "modesty" advocated in the Chinese tradition, *PD* does not criticise Sydney bluntly, but cites some journalists from other bidding cities on their biting questions aimed at Sydney, related for instance to the "ozone" problem or the behind-the-scenes "catering to the needs of the IOC members". At the same time, for promoting the Beijing bid, the Chinese newspaper chose the term "Oriental civilisation" to suggest the integrity and honour of the ancient Chinese society in the making of the bid. In contrast, the phrase "Oriental civilisation" in English has broader signification than its Chinese meaning, which mainly indicates the long and traditional Chinese civilisation. With preference to employ significant words to show its political and official status, *PD* makes use of the term to imply that China, with its long history and civilisation, is more suitable than the other candidates to stage the Olympic Games, the icon of the ancient occidental civilisation from Greece. This is not a term that would readily appear in Australian news reporting but, on the other hand, the reference to Samaranch wanting to "bring China to the world" focuses on the bid as a problem in the context of contemporary politics.

As *PD* (20/7/1992, p. 4) and *SMH* (20/7/1992, p. 1) mention: the bidding cities made use of the local and global media to promote their presentations at Barcelona, whereas

the journalists, especially those from the bidding cities, helped raise tough questions to pick holes in the rivals' bidding plans. Although none of the bidders would openly censure their rivals, probably for fear of incurring any counterattack (presumed by *PD*, 20/7/1992, p. 4), the journalists or the press from each bidding city were relatively risk-free to support the bids of their own cities by exposing the rivals' disadvantages. Based on the lexical comparison, the two newspapers only relate what is heard or seen at the site of presentations rather than taking any chance to attack a city's bid directly. Compared to its generally moderate reportage, *PD* does provide some negative coverage here, although most of this is cited from other foreign journalists (like the German one referred in the *PD* article on 20/7/1992, p. 4). To some extent, *PD*'s reportage shows that, at Barcelona, the Chinese newspaper neither deliberately avoided carrying negative reports on Sydney's bid nor followed some other foreign news media in pressing to make things difficult for Beijing's main rival.

On the other hand, in reporting on Beijing's bid, *PD* kept supporting a consistent "high profile" promotion, which was trying to help Beijing show the city's new image and the whole country's eagerness to be embraced by the global Olympic family. In contrast with *PD*'s "high profile" or "high spirit" promotion of Beijing's bid, *SMH* followed the "low-key" strategy in referring to Sydney's bid, which was worked out from the lesson of Melbourne's unsuccessful bid for 1996 Games. According to *SMH*, Melbourne's bidding campaign was the one with "high spirit". The officials of the Sydney bidding committee described the Melbourne spirit as: "absolutely enormous, in fact, almost too much. It got to the stage where there was too much resurgence riding on the bid" (*SMH*, 16/07/1992, p. 2). It seemed in retrospect to officials, and potentially to media commentators, that the enormously "high spirit" was one of the reasons why Melbourne had lost the bid. Hence in representing the Sydney bidding committee's campaign at Barcelona as "low-key", *SMH* adopted the strategy of allowing the local limelight to shine on the Barcelona Olympic Games. However, *SMH* did not refer this "low-key" performance to the committee's slackness in its bidding process. Conversely, it suggested that after the Barcelona Games the publicity in Sydney would intensify to fulfil the "low-key" strategy, which according to *SMH* (16/7/1992, p. 2), set the theme of Sydney's bid as "Share the Spirit" rather than "boast the spirit".

By comparing the lexical choices in the coverage of the bidding promotions at Barcelona, the different reporting angles and techniques between the two newspapers appear. The two newspapers offered both positive and negative reports in portraying the competing campaigns. The findings suggest that, although there was no media fighting or biting between the two cities, each paper was following and representing its own city's promotion supportively in covering the bids at Barcelona, with only indirect or guarded criticisms of opposing bids.

### ***5.2.2 Lexical analysis of the coverage of IOC members' inspection of Beijing and Sydney in March 1993***

As noted in Chapter 2, the IOC was once an organization that went in search of cities to host the Olympic Games. Nowadays, the cities do the searching. The cities search for not only the best way to facilitate the Games, but also the most impressive way to persuade the IOC members to cast their votes favourably. Thus, in March 1993, Beijing and Sydney could not afford to miss the opportunity to show their most attractive images to the IOC delegates, who arrived to carry out a close inspection of the cities. In coverage of the IOC inspection, both newspapers faced the challenge of promoting their own cities' bids while keeping an eye on their rivals.

As the first two cities on the inspection list, Sydney and Beijing took the IOC's visit very seriously and spared no effort in making preparations. Interestingly, according to the two newspapers' coverage, the two cities adopted quite different ways of handling the same task. Some typical locutions appearing in the newspapers show the divergence between their emphases in reporting the two cities' reception. Table 7 shows some lexical usages from a cross-section of articles in the inspection period, for further consideration.

**Table 7, Lexical choices in coverage of the IOC delegation's inspection tours of Beijing and Sydney**

Newspaper	Lexical elements
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	For Beijing tour	For Sydney tour
<i>PD</i> (Appendix C)	<p>“We respect the IOC as ‘<b>god</b>’ (神) . Their comments on our bid are the order that we need to obey, and we need to try our best to meet the requirement to win the bid,” said Chen Xitong, Mayor of Beijing and President of Beijing bidding committee: “while man might do his best to win, in the end ‘<b>heaven</b> will decide’ (尽人事，听天命) .” (6/3/1993, p. 4)</p> <p>“For <b>welcoming the arrival</b> (欢迎来宾) of the IOC delegation, the avenues and streets in Beijing are decorated with <b>thousands of colourful banners and balloons</b> (彩旗招展，气球飘扬) ...<b>hundreds of journalists</b> (数以百计的记者) waiting at the airport ...” (7/3/1993, p. 1)</p>	<p>“The IOC inquiry commission’s <b>quiet visit</b> (悄悄到访) to Sydney stayed away from the awareness of the Australian public ... <b>local residents</b> (当地居民) did not even notice that the ‘<b>fate-decision</b>’ (决定命运) delegation passed by their front door ... <b>scarce Australian media coverage</b> (鲜有媒体问津) made the news of the visit vanish into thin air.” (3/4/1993, p. 7)</p>
<i>SMH</i> (Appendix A)	<p>“China’s <b>smiling face</b> is offensive and criticised” (3/3/1993, p. 12)</p> <p>“The delegates will be driven around town in <b>14 new Mercedes 280s</b>, the number plates changed to read ‘Beijing 2000’.” (4/3/1993, p. 1)</p> <p>“the IOC inquiry commission’s visit prompted <b>considerable press coverage</b>, much of which <b>would have</b> distressed China’s bid officials ... to the Chinese political hardliners, the Olympics are a chance to redeem their image <b>stained with blood after the 1989 massacre</b> ...” (29/3/1993, p.11)</p>	<p>“Sydney’s strategy has been to strive for <b>technical excellence to counter the more emotional arguments</b> being used by competitors such as Beijing and Berlin.” (27/2/1993, p. 6);</p> <p>“The Enquiry Commission had been transported around Sydney in a <b>government air-conditioned minibus</b> rather than a fleet of Mercedes.” (6/3/1993, p. 75);</p> <p>“the bid has proceeded <b>without any substantial problems</b> ...” (29/3/1993, p. 11)</p>

The perspectives reflect the different emphases in each country’s newspapers on how the Games are to be achieved. For the Chinese press, this is by the efforts of government, whereas for the Australian press it is more by technical excellence.

From the wording of *PD*'s coverage we gain a hint of this leading Chinese Party newspaper's reporting tactics, which to some extent also represented the bidding strategy of Beijing. The perspective concerns how the purpose is to be achieved in the Games and the importance of the official efforts. *PD* did not see any impropriety in Beijing's reception, since in the Chinese tradition a grand reception shows a host's rousing welcome to its guests. So, conversely, the newspaper thought that Sydney's quiet reception was more or less improper. Furthermore, *PD* entrusted Beijing's hope of winning to "god" and "heaven", rather than the suggest over-confidence in the city's capacity to stage the Olympics. This proverb-like quotation suggests the value of modesty in representing claims, but this is complex, including both cultural and political aspects of modesty. Respect is conveyed for the IOC while the implication is that, if the bid fails, the Beijing officials wish to say they have tried everything and the IOC is responsible for the decision, so the central Chinese authorities could not blame them, and the city could accept the fate as honourable. The gesture of expressing traditional values thus has a role in representing and negotiating political circumstances.

Details of the language highlighted in the table show that *SMH* maintained its attitude towards Beijing's bid that the Chinese capital city was trying to win the Olympics in order to gloss over the country's political woes. The Australian newspaper deployed phrases like "stained with blood" and "the 1989 massacre" in the news text to evoke an image problem and recent memory difficult to overcome. These kinds of words were extremely negative and, if their meanings were widely engraved in international views of Beijing, could undermine the Chinese city's efforts. In keeping with its previous coverage of Beijing's bid, *SMH* took less interest in commenting upon Beijing's technical competence than repeatedly bringing up China's political record, which was of course the least favourite way for Beijing to be seen by the world. The lexical comparison between *SMH* coverage of IOC's tours of the two cities shows the newspaper's different reporting tactics on two cities' reception that placing stress on Beijing's "offensive smiling face", connoting a superficial appeal, as against Sydney's "technical excellence", which is seen to "counter" emotional appeals and appearances.

The phrases that *SMH* selected give expression to an intention to degrade Beijing's efforts of emotional and ceremonial promotion and push Sydney's pragmatic bidding

strategies forward. In reporting each city's reception of the IOC inspection delegation, *SMH* focuses the key details of the events very differently. Evidently, the newspaper was trying to imply a criticism when it put two sets of phrases together – “14 new Mercedes 280s” (by Beijing) versus “a government air-conditioned minibus” (by Sydney). In accordance with its previous reportage, *SMH* kept stressing the point that Sydney's bidding was more technical while Beijing was trying to win the IOC members' approval by an emotional and lavish method.

From the lexical analysis of the two newspapers' coverage of Beijing's and Sydney's bids for the 2000 Olympic Games, some findings can be established. When reporting the bids, *PD* and *SMH* adopted different ways to portray each other city's image and promote their own cities bidding campaigns. However, given the lack of precedent experience (discussed further later in the thesis), *PD* arguably did not handle its promotion work in an efficient way and was at a disadvantage compared to *SMH*. In the comparison, we have also seen that different cultural values and communication behaviours from the two newspapers need to be kept in mind when applying methods of discourse analysis to conduct international comparisons.

### 5.2.3 Lexical analysis of the coverage of Beijing's second Bid in 2001

The analysis of the lexical elements in the newspapers' coverage of the first bid shows the differences between their reporting angles and cultural values. We now move to the analysis of the wordings by the two countries' press on Beijing's second bid. Table 8 shows some typical lexical choices of the two newspapers' coverage of the IOC delegation's inspection tour of Beijing in February 2001.

**Table 8, Lexical choices of the newspapers' coverage of the IOC delegation's inspection tour of Beijing in February 2001**

Newspaper	Lexical elements in reporting: tour of Beijing
<i>PD</i> (Appendix C)	“Beijing works out the <b>plan of environmental protection</b> (环保规划) for the year ...” (13/2/2001, p. 8) “The Olympic <b>bid</b> improves <b>development</b> (申办促发展), and

	<p>development helps bidding ... the IOC delegation should only inspect the city's <b>competence</b> (能力) of staging the Games rather than to be concerned too much about <b>political issues</b>. (政治因素)” (19/2/2001, p. 1)</p> <p>“a <b>green Olympics</b>” (绿色奥运) (20/2/2001, p. 8)</p> <p>“the <b>people's Olympics</b>” (人文奥运) (21/2/2001, p. 7)</p> <p>“a <b>high-tech Olympics</b>” (科技奥运) (22/2/2001, p. 8)</p> <p>“the IOC delegation gave Beijing's bid a <b>positive assessment</b> (肯定的评价) after the one week inspection” (25/2/2001, p. 1)</p>
<p><i>SMH</i> (Appendix A)</p>	<p>“Amid increasing international criticism of Beijing's recent record on human rights and <b>accusations</b> he is delivering the Chinese Government a <b>propaganda coup</b> by agreeing to visit Tibet, the Australian Federal Minister for Health arrived in China.” (15/2/2001, p. 10)</p> <p>“Beijing is like a <b>nervous debutante</b> as it tries to convince the Olympic VIPs ... as the IOC's delegation arrived they were <b>whisked</b> into the centre of the city along boulevards beside which the <b>brown</b> winter grass had been <b>spray-painted green</b>, past huge bowls of fluorescent <b>artificial flowers</b> and towering decorations proclaiming “New Beijing, Great Olympics ... China's <b>human rights record</b> has come under increasing scrutiny in recent weeks as the IOC team's visit neared.” (21/2/2001, p. 12)</p> <p>“For the <b>duration</b> of the IOC visit, the Chinese Government went to extraordinary lengths to ensure pollution was not up to its usual <b>throat-tingling</b> standard ... saddest news of the week was that Tiananmen Square <b>loomed</b> large in the planning for the Games and the Chinese proudly announced it would be the beach volleyball venue. Some with memories of <b>Tiananmen Square incident</b> must be hoping Beijing misses out yet again.” (26/2/2001, p. 22)</p>

In these examples from the coverage of the second bid, *SMH* does not make direct political criticisms but again refers indirectly to “memories” of, and “scrutiny” by, others to repeat references to China’s past record, which is why Beijing is personified as a “nervous debutante”, as if the visit decorations are a cover-up, with the connotation that the political problems are something to be nervous about. In contrast, the *PD* perspective is on broad cultural development including environmental awareness and the positive role of “the people”. It focuses on “competence”, “environment”, and “development”, and the positive associations of these words are prioritised over “political issues”. Nonetheless, while neither the Chinese and Australian press might say they are politicising the other countries’ bid, in different ways they both are. The Australian reporting criticizes Beijing’s bid in staging the Olympics by hinting at China’s deeper political intentions associated with falsity, which is implied by the “spray-painted green grass” and “artificial flowers”. The Chinese news emphasis on Beijing’s diplomatic commitment to the Olympic process is in line with the policy of using that process to promote China’s “open image”. Downplaying “political issues” is thus political. In *SMH*’s coverage of Beijing’s two bids, the phrases, such as “Tiananmen Square” and “human rights” are like haunting ghosts, which always appear when criticisms on Beijing or China are needed.

As we can see from Table 9, which shows lexical elements in the press coverage of Beijing’s bid before the final ballot in 2001, these past stains have really become Beijing and *PD*’s taboo, which they do not want to see mentioned again and again by foreign media. In its coverage of Beijing’s second bid, and in line with its general reporting strategy at this stage, lexical choices that the Australian papers can make are avoided in the Chinese press because they would draw attention to the political issues of human rights. In contrast, the *PD* uses wording that stresses the “advantages” and “technical ability” of Beijing, and reminds the world that Beijing is focusing more on “solid work” now. At the same time, the newspaper reacts to those who repeatedly play the “human rights” card to stop Beijing from success. *SMH* still reiterates bad political records for China, in contrast to *PD*’s focus on cultural and economic progress, while quoting the judgment of the Australian Olympic organisation’s president that Beijing “deserves” to win the bid. Furthermore, the newspaper is already aware of the business opportunities for the Australians if Beijing wins the

right to host the Games.

#### ***5.2.4 Propositional analysis of the press coverage of the 1993 bid and the 2001 bid***

The study of the lexical choices in the two newspapers coverage of the four cross-sectional moments in the two countries' bids for the Games enables us to discover four propositions that appear explicitly or implicitly in different ways in the two newspapers: (1) politicizing the bid; (2) depoliticizing the bid; (3) high-profile promotion; and (4) low-key strategy. The first of the propositions was included by *SMH* in coverage of Beijing's two bids. Politicizing Beijing's bid is one of the most frequent ways *SMH* employed in its Olympic-related reportage. The Australian newspaper kept providing references to remind readers China's negative political records and also trying make connection with the Olympic bid. On the Chinese side, it seems that *PD* always avoided the topics in relation to the political issues. However, the news values reflected in *PD*'s coverage indicate that the newspaper was always following the ruling party's guidance and policy. So, in a sense, *PD*'s coverage of Beijing's both bids was politicized to disseminate positive and diplomatic messages only. The second proposition could be found in *PD*'s reportage on Beijing's both bids. But, the ways of depoliticization in *PD*'s reportage are different between the two bids. The main difference is that the usage of depoliticization in the first bid is more implicit than in the second bid. The Chinese newspaper responded to the criticisms on political issues more directly for the second bid. The third proposition can be found in *PD*'s coverage of Beijing's first bid, when the newspaper and the Chinese government hoped to win the bid by showing world a more ebullient and passionate image of China. The fourth proposition can be found in *SMH*'s coverage of Sydney's bid and in *PD*'s coverage of Beijing's second bid. When this proposition appears, it is notable that both newspapers, although at the different moments, put more emphasis to present and discuss their own cities' technical capability and promote their own bids more rationally.

In sum, by looking at the lexical choices and propositional inclusion or exclusion of the newspapers' coverage of the two bids, we can identify some differences between their reporting perspectives and techniques, and also between their reportage on the

different bids. The differences, mainly shown through the reporting angles and strategies, such as politicization or depoliticization, and high-profile or low-key, however, are in accordance with each city's bidding strategy. That is where convergence exists.

**Table 9, Lexical choices of the newspapers coverage of Beijing's bid before final ballot**

Newspaper	Lexical elements in reporting: Beijing's bid before final ballot
<p><i>PD</i> (Appendix C)</p>	<p>“Beijing has several <b>advantages</b> (优势), including modernized city construction, environmental resources, and development of infrastructures.” (13/3/2001, p12)</p> <p>“The IOC assessment report approves Beijing's conditions and <b>technical ability</b> (技术性能力) to stage a great Olympic Games ... Beijing is doing <b>solid work</b> (实实在在的工作) to win the bid.” (16/5/2001, p8)</p> <p>“China <b>vehemently condemns</b> (强烈谴责) US House of representatives passing the resolution to oppose Beijing's bid ...” (31/3/2001, p7);</p> <p>“<b>dog droppings everywhere in Paris</b> (狗在巴黎随处拉屎) may cost the city's bid ...” (14/3/2001, p. 7)</p>
<p><i>SMH</i> (Appendix A)</p>	<p>“Beijing despite its human rights record <b>deserves</b> to stage the 2008 Olympic Games, the Australian Olympic Committee president, Mr. John Coates, said yesterday.” (19/5/2001, p. 9)</p> <p>“Despite calm in the capital yesterday, Beijing's <b>paranoia</b> over the 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre [at Tiananmen Square] found expression in warnings to foreign media not to engage in ‘illegal reporting’ ... China's <b>human rights record</b> is still seen as <b>big impediment</b> to winning the IOC vote in Moscow.” (5/6/2001, p. 12)</p> <p>“Most investors seemed more focused on the potential workload for Bovis Lend Lease should Beijing win the right to host the 2008 Games ... Bovis Lend Lease is the <b>preferred builder</b> for <b>Olympic-related construction</b> in Beijing.” (14/7/2001, p. 44)</p>

### 5.3 Lexical and propositional analysis of the press coverage of Athens Olympics activities

At the closing ceremony of the XXVIII Olympic Games, the IOC president, Dr

Jacques Rogge, thanked Athens for having organised an “unforgettable Games, dream Games”. Athens also won an enthusiastic and general approval from the global press for the city’s endeavour to stage a wonderful Olympic Games. “Safe”, “well-organised”, “enthraling”, “poignant”: the global press used many such favourable adjectives to praise the Games and their organization.

Amid the shower of international praise, the voices of the newspapers from Australia and China, host countries of the preceding (2000 Sydney) and succeeding (2008 Beijing) summer Olympic Games, respectively, sounded peculiar because of the favouritism to their own Games. The other two Games were frequently mentioned while the papers commended the Greeks for their organising work. The Australian and Chinese newspapers also commented approvingly on the two-weeks Games, which obviously did not disappoint those who had been deeply concerned about it before the opening ceremony (for instance, “Thanks Athens: you pulled it off”, *SMH*, 30/8/2004, p. 29; “Spectators satisfied with Athens Games: survey”, *PD*, 10/9/2004, p. 2).

In fact, the Athens Olympics were a surprising success and a triumph beyond expectations, beyond those of an Australian anticipating the customary “post host let-down” (*SMH*, 31/8/2004, p. 12) and beyond those of a Chinese worrying the bar would be set too high for the future organizers. Looking back at the global media coverage of the Athens’ preparations before the Games, however, few attitudes of satisfaction and gratitude could be seen. Most global media, especially the Australian and Chinese newspapers had not given Greek organisers good marks. The newspaper coverage concentrated on delays in the construction of the venues, budget over-spending and security concerns. Many reports made the Games look far from being ready.

In the coverage from 1 November 2003 to 1 November 2004 by the selected Australian and Chinese newspapers of Athens’ preparations for the Games, it is evident that both countries’ newspapers, along with most of their counterparts worldwide, did not expect the Athens Olympics to be a success. They both doubted the city’s capability to stage the Games. The reportage and commentary of the two countries’ newspapers on Athens’ preparations for the Olympics can appear similar,

but some significant divergences can be found behind the apparent consensus. The next examples illustrate the newspapers' attitudes towards and views on the issue of the Athens Olympic Games preparations and the relationship between those attitudes and their underlying ideological positions. As van Dijk (1998) indicates, ideologies are rooted in general beliefs, such as knowledge and opinions; and the lexical choices in news texts more or less mirror the news professionals' views, which are formulated on the basis of their ideological stances. Through lexical and propositional comparisons, the inquiry continues to focus on a field of common interest in order to show that this is a case where the media seem to speak with similar voices but actually represent different positions.

### ***5.3.1 Lexical analysis of the press coverage of the Athens preparations issues***

On the basis of a comprehensive review of one year (from 1 November 2003 to 1 November 2004) of coverage of issues about preparations for the Athens Games by the selected newspapers, some typical words appearing in the news texts related to the issue have been selected for analysis. In referring to the same issue, different newspapers used different nouns, as shown in Table 10.

**Table 10, Lexical analysis of the press coverage of the preparations issues**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Word</b>
<i>TA</i> (Appendix B)	May 5, 2004 (p. 13)	Hubris; Tragedy
<i>SMH</i> (Appendix A)	Feb. 21, 2004 (p. 69)	Woes
<i>CD</i> (Appendix E)	Aug. 14, 2004 (p. 4)	梦魇 (Nightmares)
<i>PD</i> (Appendix C)	Mar. 18, 2004 (p. 7)	危急 (Urgency or crisis)

Table 10 shows that the lexical choices by the four newspapers express the similar meaning, at a literal level, that Athens' preparations were in trouble. However, lexical analysis reveals some differences.

*TA* uses “hubris” and “tragedy” to describe the Olympic preparations in Athens. “Hubris” is a Greek concept that dates as far back as the original Olympic Games. In traditional Greek tragedy, the human hero often suffers from overweening pride or ambition, ignores the advice of the gods because he thinks he knows better and thus plants the seed of his downfall. The newspaper substitutes the Athens Olympic Organising Committee (hereafter ATHOC) for the hero, the IOC and international publicity for the gods, to evoke, in the newspaper's word, a modern “tragedy” in the making in Athens. According to *TA*, the hubris of the Greek organisers is best illustrated by organisers' stubborn adherence to some unimportant projects, such as the international torch relay, that were designed as showpieces of the Athens Games. In the IOC's view, the Greeks appeared to be more focused on unnecessary flourishes for much of the seven years they have had to prepare for the Games, rather than on the requirements to run the Games. However, the organisers, just like the Greek human hero, did not care too much about the warning from IOC gods. After the organisers had missed the deadlines on the completion of the venues construction again and again, there was little international confidence that they would meet the final

requirements to start the Games.

By the allusions to Greek mythology, the newspaper implied that the Games would be doomed if ATHOC ignored the IOC's advice and warning but did everything in their own way. The word "hubris" sounds pessimistic. It is mildly derogatory and possibly denotes what in some people's eyes is a Greek characteristic. In the event, however, the Cassandras of the newspaper have finally been proven wrong, but a news emphasis on drama, character and conflict has been achieved.

*SMH* referred to the issue as "woes". This word denotes helplessness, sorrow and regret while "hubris" suggests something heroic and capable but unlucky. In a sense, *TA* did not say anything explicitly negative but tried to find some cultural backgrounds, such as the ancient Greek myth, as arguments to explain the Greeks' seeming failure and pave the way for speculation on the host's supposedly doomed fate. The allusions made by *TA* give the impression that the newspaper understands the Greeks and their national ways of doing things that is "start late, but finish on time". But, metaphorically, the newspaper uses the word to criticise the organisers' stubborn obstinacy. Comparatively speaking, *SMH* is more straightforward in stating its view than *TA* is here. It just points out the sad state of the Olympic venues construction and does not pay much attention to discovering the causes of the problems.

On the Chinese side, *CD* regards the case as a "nightmare". The selection of this word shows that the newspaper has really given careful thought to the matter. While the noun has a strong negative connotation, "nightmare" is a kind of dream after all. No matter how horrible or frightening a dream is, it is not a reality anyway, and a great relief awaits waking. Although a terrifying dream can only be realised when a person wakes up, sometimes, "nightmare" has been used in Chinese with good will to express a kind of wish that bad results remain illusory and will never happen in reality. To some extent, the newspaper took this word to leave an option to vary the negative comments on the Games. Compared to the words chosen by the Australian press, the word "nightmare" sounds less critical but more sympathetic. In accordance with the Chinese press' tradition of being prudent in wording, *CD* deems that ATHOC will finally make good the Greeks' promise of the last minute completion and work it out,

but can not help expressing concern about the progress of the Games preparations and whether the troublesome problems will be solved.

As an official newspaper of the Chinese government and the ruling Party, *PD* is always judicious in wording its reportage on international issues. The political and diplomatic stance of the Government must be treated as having the utmost importance. Yet its coverage of the issue (minimised) and implied commentary are the most moderate of the four newspapers in these examples. On the Athens preparations, *PD* regards the case as a matter of great 紧急 (“urgency”). But it uses diplomatic terms like 忧虑 (“concern”), and even the stronger 危急 (“crisis”) suggest the problem is still solvable. *CD*’s reference to 梦魇 (“nightmares”) is a metaphoric use of language that sounds less diplomatic and official, even if the obstacle can be overcome. One explanation of *PD*’s delicate reportage could be that, in line with its policy under the CPC, it can only carry short but straightforward coverage of these sensitive affairs. A related possible reason for this restraint, in terms of the news value of safeguarding state interests, is that because of Beijing’s current preparations for the 2008 Games, the less criticism on Athens’ issues appears in *PD*, the less recrimination on possible flaws in the 2008 Games the Chinese organisers might suffer later from the Greeks or others.

*PD*’s reporting approach is different from that of *CD* (which occasionally takes a mildly critical tone), and certainly from *TA* and *SMH*. Although expressing its concern too, *PD* took a diplomatic rather than critical tone. The discrepancy is not sharp but it is noticeable. Although they agreed that the preparations were in trouble, the four newspapers were not in fact concordant in their coverage of the issue. The choice of words varies with their points of view on the issue. It is interesting that the ways in which *CD* and *PD* reported the issue appear slightly different despite the fact that both newspapers are under the control of the Chinese government.

The variations can be seen in further examples that reflect the newspapers’ deep concerns about the preparations for the Games. The coverage of the Games preparations showed uncertainty about whether the Games would be ready on time (for instance: “Near enough good enough, says the Greeks”, *TA*, 5/8/2004, p. 1;

“Here’s hoping in deadline city”, *TA*, 7/8/2004, p. 20; “Fine tuning, and dog catching, all that remains for best Olympics”, *SMH*, 4/8/2004, p. 5; “Smaller, costlier, better: the new Olympic motto”, *SMH*, 13/8/2004, p. 30; “Greece’s spending on Olympics rises to 7 billion euros”, *PD*, 5/8/2004, p. 7; “Olympic Games starts in Athens”, *CD*, 14/8/2004, p. 4). Less than four months before the Games began, the fact that 60 per cent of the venues were incomplete brought constant expressions of concerns about whether the city would be ready in time. Furthermore, as for staging the first Olympics since the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, the October 2002 bombing in Bali and the March 2004 attack on Madrid, Athens was under great pressure to ensure security for the homecoming Games. For the sake of the athletes’ safety, a small and ordinary local fire could excite global journalists’ sensitive nerves and frighten Olympics participants. Furthermore, it was estimated that last-minute construction and soaring security expenses would push total spending on Olympics projects to seven billion euros, around 18 per cent higher than budgeted.

In referring to reporting the concerns about the Athens Olympic Games, different newspapers used different noun and adjectives as listed in Table 11.

**Table 11, Lexical analysis of the press concerns with the Games**

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Phrase</b>
<i>TA</i> (Appendix B)	5/5/2004 (two articles)	“A symbol of <b>Greek failures</b> ”; “ <b>Doom-saying</b> ” (p. 22)
		“A <b>near run thing</b> ” (p. 14)
<i>SMH</i> (Appendix A)	24/4/2004	“High on passion and emotion, and spectacularly low on organization ... <b>national pride</b> ” (p. 25)
	17/4/2004	“the potential <b>national disgrace</b> ” (p. 9)
<i>CD</i> (Appendix E)	8/5/2004 (p. 4)	超支的奥运会 (“ <b>higher-than-planned spending Games</b> ”)
	18/5/2004 (p. 4)	
<i>PD</i> (Appendix C)	12/11/2003	与北京的合作关系 (“ <b>cooperative relation with Beijing</b> ”) (p. 7);
	4/8/2004	雅典已准备就绪来举办一届 <b>成功的奥运会</b> (“that Athens is ready to stage a <b>successful Olympic Games</b> ”) (p. 7)

In *TA*'s 5/5/2004 edition, two articles commenting on the Games appeared on different pages. In the articles, it is predicted that the Athens Olympic Games would be “a symbol of Greek failures” or “a near run thing”. *TA*'s predictions, or in its own word “doom-saying”, indicate the same point that the Games would not be held on time. After the foreshadowing of the preparations issues and exploration of some cultural or mythological arguments, the articles present a point of view on the Games more directly. It is noticeable here that the Greek “failure” does not refer only to a supposedly unsuccessful Games, but also to the newspaper-mentioned Greek national

way of doing things – “start late, finish on time”. Because *TA* has repeatedly mentioned that sort of Greek characteristic, the newspaper’s pessimistic prediction can be regarded as a metaphor for criticising Athens’ preparations problems.

To be consistent with its reportage of the host’s preparatory chaos, *SMH*’s reference is hard on the Games itself too. The articles put the blame on Greeks’ “national pride” for the supposed failure of the Games and imply that the Games could become a potential “national disgrace” if the host keeps its own way of carrying out the preparations. Straightforwardly, the articles characterise the Greeks as too dependent on passion and emotion and overconfident about their ability and time of organization. So, *SMH* sets the reporting keynote by putting the finger on Athens’ “national pride”, which is more or less the same as the attitude *TA* article conveys. Here, the difference between the two newspapers’ references is, as mentioned before, that *TA* is implicit rather than outspoken in the expression of its criticism.

On the Chinese side again, *CD* pays much attention to describing the details of the Games preparations. Compared with its large quantity of reports on the budget overspending, delays in venue construction and security warnings, *CD*’s reference to the Games as a sports event in its own right is minimal. It is not easy to find an opinion-giving phrase in its reference to the Games. However, *CD* repeatedly mentions that the Games would be a “higher-than-planned spending Games”, from which the newspaper’s deep concern about the Games, at least on the skyrocketing budget, can be perceived.

*PD*’s reference is sharply different. It does not put a negative slant on the Games at all, but mentions Athens’ “cooperative relation” with Beijing in staging the Olympic Games. Although having reported those urgent preparations issues, too, the newspaper does not question the organisers’ capability and their brave words of last-minute completion. In fact, while expressing the concern about the Games preparations, *PD* shows diplomatic support to the organization of the Athens Olympics. Again, this is arguably because *PD* is an official national newspaper, and its perspective is always bound up with the Chinese government’s will.

To sum up, the comparative analyses reveal the newspapers’ different attitudes while

showing their concern about the issue. The mentioned aspects are signposts of newspapers' reporting strategies, which have ideological implications. The lexical analysis will be reinforced by a propositional analysis in the following section, with the intention of seeking further support for the findings of the previous analysis, as the propositional analysis presents a more explicit view of the whole coverage.

### ***5.3.2 Propositional analysis of the press coverage of the Athens preparations and their implications***

Two cross-sectional moments are studied by using propositional analysis. One is the ending stage of the issue, which is around 11-14 August 2004 when the Games started on time. The other moment is after the Games, which is around 30 August 2004 while the newspapers wound up their reportage of the Games. At this stage, some conclusive statements of issues appear.

Four news texts are chosen from around the first date (11-14 August), one from each of *TA* (14/8/2004, p. 18), *SMH* (13/8/2004, p. 30), *PD* (11/8/2004, p. 7) and *CD* (14/8/2004, p. 4). One more was selected from *PD* (29/8/2004, p. 7) and from *SMH* (30/8/2004, p. 32) around the other date (30 August), since Beijing and Sydney were the two main news actors in this issue.

Approaching the date of the opening ceremony, Athens' preparations work went well so that they were completed in time for the Games to start. After long-term reportage of the preparations issue, many journalists in the world reached the consensus that there was no longer any need to use words such as "chaos" or "catastrophe" to describe the city's readiness to host the Games (*TA*, 14/8/2004, p. 23). The newspapers, which had been highly critical in their coverage of the preparations issue, were facing the fact that their "doom-sayings" to bill organisers as "the modern Greek ruins" would prove false. Although winning a can-do image successfully, Athens was labelled as Cinderella going to the ball. The sparkling but hurried princess could never become the best ever. Spontaneously, all the selected newspapers carried articles comparing the Athens Games with the previous host Sydney and anticipating Beijing's preparations for the 2008 Games.

The comparison of the six news texts enables us to discover three propositions that appear separately or together in different ways in the four newspapers: (1) the Athens Games achieved unexpected success, but (2) they could not match Sydney 2000 in the size and slickness of the organization, and (3) Athens 2004 lowered the bar for the preparations of the Beijing Olympics. The first of these was included by every newspaper although this consent was not reached until the Games finished. The second could be found in every newspaper except *PD*, although the latter mentioned that Athens spent more money than Sydney did. This finding echoes with *PD*'s lexical choice, which indicates that its evaluation of the issue is more cautious about making such judgments. The third only appeared in the two Australian newspapers. But its absence as well as presence signifies, in this comparative context. We focus on it to show how, the use or avoidance of a proposition as an “idea unit” (Chapter 3), about a common matter – the meaning of the Athens' Games success in this case – shows divergent perspectives and a complex of ideas.

The third proposition was presented in a headline by *SMH* on 30/8/2004 “Athens lowered the bar but Beijing may set it too high”, but that it was missing in *PD* and *CD* is worth consideration. It could be a signal that Beijing might want to play down the massive image of the 2008 Games and keep a low profile. It is noticeable that *PD* carried an article, representing an official view (“IOC chief refuses to compare Olympic Games”, 29/8/2004, p. 7), which denied the validity or usefulness of comparing different Olympic Games. The reason for this might be the Chinese host's changing attitude to staging the Beijing 2008 Games. An article in *TA* (28/8/2004, p. 31) pointed out that after the Athens 2004 Games, China's common boast, heard from President Hu Jintao down, that Beijing's Olympics would be the best ever, was banned (although such news of a sudden change would not be stressed in the Chinese press). The former slogan attached to every mention of the “groundbreaking, avant-garde, cutting-edge” Beijing Olympics has been modified into more modest terms: the Olympics should be frugal, workable and good. Working in harmony with the changing attitude of the Chinese authorities and the Games organisers, *PD* (23/8/2004, p. 7) pointed out that Beijing 2008 should have China's own characteristics and the preparations should be efficient and frugal. *PD*'s opinion was undoubtedly not in accordance with the Australian newspapers,

which held the view that Beijing should meet the high expectations by sparing no efforts, while giving this a politically critical edge by predicting that Beijing 2008 will be “state-controlled” excellence (*SMH*, 24/4/2004, p. 25).

The propositions missing in the Chinese newspapers could be highlighted by the Australian newspapers. The inclusion of the proposition in the Australian newspapers suggests a view that Beijing 2008 Games should meet high expectations and be better than the Athens Games. In the Chinese newspapers, the exclusion of the proposition, together with the inclusion of the first two parts in the proposition, seems to send a message that Beijing did not intend to compare its own Games with those of its predecessors. The news value of modesty comes into play again. Avoiding the proposition reflects the cultural value of not wanting to be compared with others, but also serves the authorities’ purpose of economic management for a successful Games. Engaging with the proposition that Athens lowered the bar could make China’s own shift of strategy appear to be lowering the bar even further.

In considering why a proposition about the Athens Games can thus feature differently in the Australian and Chinese newspapers, Simpson’s account of ideology as “a mosaic of cultural assumptions, political stance and institutional practices” (Simpson, 1993, p. 176) is helpful. The political stance, first, could be seen in terms of the journalists’ and newspapers’ own political orientations giving rise to opinions in their particular circumstances. Among the preparations issues of the Athens Games, security concerns were undoubtedly in the international political spotlight. Athens would stage the first Olympics since the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York, the October 2002 Bali bombing and the attack on Madrid in March 2004, and terrorism fears cast clouds over the Games organisers and participants. As a very close partner of US and Britain in the global counter-terrorism war, Australia had concerns about being a target for terrorism. To warn its citizens of the threatening terrorism, the Australian government issued a travel advisory that made particular reference to Australians planning to attend the Olympic Games. After the advisory, issued on April 2004, *TA* and *SMH* reacted sensitively to incidents, even small local blasts, possibly linked to terrorism or related to the security problems in the host’s preparations. Athens organisers complained about the Australian press negative reportage and criticism that formed an image of the host city as unsafe (“Greece

criticises Western journalists for testing Olympic security”, *PD*, 13/5/2004, p. 4). Comparatively, although concerned about the Games and participants’ safety, *PD* and *CD* did not cover the issue with the degree of worry of the Australian newspapers. This was probably because China does not share the same international political stance with the US-led alliance. It adopts an independent stance in international affairs and is not in the “high risk” countries list. Apart from that, to keep good and friendly relations but avoid diplomatic rows with Greece and its people might be another reason why China and its press did not criticise the organisers’ preparations too much.

Second, regarding “cultural assumptions” embodied in the different value systems, and elaborating on news values, Asian cultures, including Chinese culture, place great value, as observed by Tannen (1998), on avoiding open expression of disagreement and conflict in order to emphasize harmony. A common feature of Chinese newspapers is that they rarely criticise or blame others. The value seen here is influenced by the Confucian tradition reflected in the injunction: “Be strict with yourself but least reproachful of others and complaint is kept afar” (Cheung, 1996). As a result, *CD* just reported the details of the issues objectively and comprehensively while *PD* only expressed the government’s views or even avoided some sensitive news facts. Furthermore, what is emphasized in Chinese values is a sense of collectiveness, that is, the collective interest is much more important than that of the individual. When the Greeks boasted that their national pride and collective spirit would ensure and guarantee the completion of the venues construction, the Chinese sympathy was aroused and the Chinese press showed much understanding and support.

By contrast, Western values are quite the opposite. In arguing the relations between independence and involvement in Western relations, Scollon (1995) notes that the individuality of the participants is emphasized. People could express openly what they would like to express. For instance, when being asked by Athenians why the Australians kept picking on Athens, Australian ambassador to Greece, Stuart Hume, comforted the hosts by saying that the Australian press’ scrutiny and occasional criticism of the preparations in Athens was nothing compared with its treatment of the Sydney Games (*TA*, 14/8/2004, p. 28). Hume indicates that expressing opinions

straightforwardly is a characteristic of the Australian press, and is not aimed only at others, but at Australians too.

Third, on “institutional practices”, *PD* and *CD* represent the Chinese government, so faithfully reflecting the government’s point of view is their duty, part of instituted news values. The minor difference between them is that *CD* is more comprehensive and entertaining as it is mainly published for an audience outside China. The reporting features of these Chinese official daily newspapers are not quite the same. *CD*’s reportage is more detailed in contrast to *PD*’s short and succinct articles. This could result from the new institutional practices *CD* adopted, which emphasize the market considerations, while *PD* is still totally dependent on the subsidy from the state. However, in delivering the government’s message, *CD* performs a similar function to *PD*. Learning from the Athens lessons, the early Chinese ambitions of staging the best ever Games have given way to concerns about cost overruns. After the government changed its attitude, the two Chinese newspapers have been in accordance with the government. Both kept a low profile in coverage of the Athens Olympics and avoided comparing Beijing with its predecessors.

Compared with the Chinese newspapers’ modest representations, *TA* and *SMH* always mentioned the “best ever” accolade of the Sydney 2000 while viewing Athens’ preparations with scepticism and criticism. Although *TA* and *SMH* are private, profit-driven organizations, the national interests are still primary considerations. In this regard it is worth noting that there can be different perceptions of this in the international media coverage of Games-related practices. Before the 2004 Games, a Greek journalist pointed out (*TA*, 14/8/2004, p. 23) that the Athenians had wondered aloud that the Australian Government and press criticism of the preparations was about them wanting to win more contracts for Australian companies. So placing high expectations on the Beijing Games (through a competitive emphasis on propositions about comparative success of different Games) might be seen as another strategy by the Australian press to seek more business opportunities for Australian companies to be involved in the preparations of 2008 Games. Furthermore, the disparity in the nature of the newspapers will have some effects on the media output, leading to different opinions. In the coverage of the preparations of the Athens Games, what we see is that all the sentiments are negative but those expressed by the

Chinese media are much more restrained. That might be why the “concern” or “urgency” in *PD* became the “hubris”, “tragedy” and “woes” in *TA* and *SMH*.

#### 5.4 Summary

From the discourse analysis of the four newspapers’ coverage of the Athens Games preparations, some findings can be underlined. The lexical and propositional study opens up for consideration certain differences between the selected newspapers of the two countries, and between press treatments within the same country. The preparations problems before the Athens Games brought the attention of the four newspapers, which expressed common concerns about the Games. All the reportage of the issues had similarities. But, the similar coverage of the same issue disguised the varied points of view held by the individual newspapers, which, as discussed, are rooted in their different political stances, cultural assumptions and institutional practices – in short, their ideological positions.

Lexical analysis of the Games activities has shown that the selected Australian press expressed more dramatic criticisms of the Athens preparations and alluded to China’s political record, while the official Chinese press attempted to downplay political aspects and international judgments about Games activities and relative success. This is confirmed by propositional analysis, which also demonstrates that the Chinese press avoided a type of statement that could encourage critical or competitive comparisons that may not be in China’s own interests, and could lead to discordance with the Chinese government’s attitude on the issue if expanded upon. While expressing concern about the preparations issue of the Athens Games, *PD* showed diplomatic support to the organisers. As an official English newspaper of the state, *CD*’s coverage is comparatively comprehensive and detailed. Even though it shares the approach of being prudent in wordings on sensitive issues, its reportage manifests more freedom and flexibility than *PD*’s. *TA*’s coverage appears to be academic by frequently employing historic and literary allusions to reinforce its arguments on the issue, perhaps considered appropriate as part of in-depth news analysis for a national broadsheet (quality). *SMH*’s coverage was more straightforward in stating its view than *TA* was. Being positioned as a metropolitan daily, *SMH* concentrated on telling

its audience popular and readable stories about what was going on in Athens.

The coverage of the same general issues sometimes seemingly indicates a consensus or shared view of events. However, a close textual analysis, applying methods of discourse analysis to initiate national and international comparisons, has enabled us to see a picture of differences. Discursively speaking, different ideologies are instantiated in the choice of lexicons and the inclusion or exclusion of some specific propositions in the coverage of the Athens preparations issues. What is emphasized in this chapter is that the coverage of the same issue is influenced qualitatively by the media's own ideological perspectives. This is "divergence in convergence".

## Chapter 6

### Cultural Values and News Values

The content analysis in Chapter 4 showed that the coverage of the Olympic Games by the Chinese and Australian press differs substantially in the frequency and treatment of sub-topics, perspectives on the Games, and actor appearances, and indicated the contrasting ways of framing the news. The formal and ideological dimensions have been considered further through the lexical and propositional analysis of press discourse in Chapter 5. This chapter now brings together several themes to compare the cultural values, assumptions and concepts and the operation of news values and techniques of presentation. As discussed earlier, these differences are not attributed to conscious bias on the part of journalists in either country, although this may have been the case in some instances. They are analysed, rather, for observable examples of the ways in the selection and presentation of sub-topics, actors and perspectives indicate particular, shared ideas of what has significance for report or comment – ideas that are also embedded in dominant cultural values, assumptions or ways of seeing in the press philosophy and system in each country.

The chapter thus continues discussion of the question about how the press in each country represents events and considers a series of dominant assumptions that inform the Chinese and Australian press perspectives on Olympic activities. The perspectives include disparate ways of understanding relationships between individual citizens and others within a social structure, different negotiations of ideas and their authority, and conceptions of social and personal success. This can be illustrated by the way in which, in the Chinese press, items are selected and composed on the basis of several related assumptions:

- Collective goals are superior to individual rights
- Stability and uniformity are crucial to success
- Authorities are always the wisest
- Olympic activities should support the existing social order
- Ideological direction is necessary to reinforce existing social relationships

These premises are contrasted with several assumptions that influence the construction of news and comment in the Australian press:

- Individualism and independent enterprise are encouraged
- Social meaning includes materialist and ideological interests
- Authorities are negative forces to be watched

## **6.1 Cultural and news values: the Chinese press**

### **6.1.1 *Collective goals are superior to individual rights***

One of the major differences in the Chinese and Australian cultures lies in their attitude toward individuals and their position in society. Generally, the Chinese consider individuals a necessary part and parcel of the society but see individual rights as subordinate to collective goals. Collectivism in the Chinese tradition can be seen in the perspective that “to stage a grand and international sports event like the Olympic Games is an opportunity to strengthen the power of the country”. This perspective was presented for 15.3% of the time in the *PD*. For example, a *PD* editorial, entitled “China is facing a historic choice: the significance of hosting the Asian Games and bidding for the Olympics”, stated:

The purpose of hosting the 11<sup>th</sup> Asian Games and the bid for the 2000 Olympic Games is to build up a social Olympic spirit with Chinese characteristics in China, to promote Chinese image and culture globally, and to strengthen the power of our country ... (*PD*, April 19, 1990, p. 5).

Here, improvement of people’s living standard is not mentioned as a purpose of hosting the Games. However, it seems to be taken for granted that if the country becomes powerful and strong, then individuals will enjoy a better life. On the other hand, it can be seen in the *PD* coverage of several sub-topics on the Games that, even if some individuals rather than the whole state benefit from staging the Games, it is

meaningless and insecure if state interests are not fulfilled. This critical view of pursuing personal interests is evident in, for example, the way that the issue of official corruption and abuse of power, which came along with the loosening of the central control in the economic field, is interpreted in relation to the superiority of the state interests.

In a report about Beijing's success in staging the 11<sup>th</sup> Asian Games, which has been boosted by the Beijing authorities proving the city's competence to host the Olympic Games, a local Games logistics organization is reported to have selected only those local officials who do not have "the slightest idea about personal gains" for the Games service bodies. "All those," the report went on, "who give thought to personal interests should be dismissed from the positions" (*PD*, 20/1/1990, p. 5). Official corruption, which is a problem in the Games preparations that can be attributed to various causes such as the lack of a legal system, is associated only with pursuit of personal interests, in the coverage by the Chinese press.

The conception of the solidarity of state and individual interests in the Chinese press can be highlighted by contrasting it with the view taken in the Australian press. A *SMH* story (29/3/1993, p. 11) states that:

Many Beijing residents resented the financial burden of special levies they had to bear during the Asian Games in 1990, and some have started grumbling about the hardships that may come as the city rebuilds itself in preparation for the Olympics.

The story then says some Beijing residents remembered that during the lead-up to the Asian Games:

over-enthusiastic cadres pressured workers into donating up to two months' salary to build new stadiums and improve roads. Others recall draconian police actions to expel thousands of migrant workers and sweep the city of black marketers and prostitutes ...

In the Chinese press, however, economic and planning matters are put in the

framework of collectivism, like political ones are, as in the coverage of the human rights issues raised critically by the Western (especially American) press from a democratic viewpoint. The most frequently mentioned Tiananmen Square incident and the student demonstrations are interpreted by *PD* as simply a pursuit of personal freedom and individual interests. No mention is made of the students' desire to promote political as well as economic progress in China and their belief that their actions are consistent with state interests. Coverage of the student demonstrations mentioned only how daily life in the cities was interrupted and the government apparatus was disturbed. Consequently, an action which might be explained as patriotic on another view was interpreted as harmful to state interests, which are to be considered synonymous with the interests of the Chinese people.

The idea of the superiority of the state interests is included in an article on *PD*, after Beijing's bid to stage the 2000 Olympic Games was greeted by a chorus of criticism from groups in the West, demanding that China's human rights record should preclude it from securing the nomination:

What kind of freedom does China need actually? The most it needs is the freedom of the state and collective. Once the freedom of the whole state and society is secured, there would be no problem of the freedom for individuals. (*PD*, 16/6/1993, p. 14)

The message considers state interests as harmonious with personal human rights. The state is seen as protecting the interests and rights of individuals. This, again, echoes the idea in the Chinese culture that the interests of the state are more important than those of individuals.

### **6.1.2 *Stability and uniformity are crucial to success***

Despite, or perhaps because of, constant social disturbances in modern Chinese history, the Chinese culture cherishes the idea of stability and uniformity. Numerous dynastic changes in the long Chinese history are merely changes of ruling families, not of basic social structures. The new rulers, after promotion of their desired

changes, emphasize stability, order and uniformity themselves once they are in power. While rulers in many societies try to stay in power by promoting stability and unity, the idea is especially crucial to the Chinese tradition because almost all its past social conflicts involve struggles to unify the territories around one ruler. What is more, the Chinese culture stresses uniformity of mind as a guarantee to the stability of the country and unity in action. China's bid for the Olympic Games stresses the imperative of the social unity and stability when drastic changes need to take place. The ideas of unity and stability are clearly presented in the *PD* coverage.

Three perspectives on the Olympic Games, as identified in the content analysis, pertain to the idea of stability and uniformity. These perspectives are covered for a combined 42.2% of the total of items. The idea that development has to give priority to "the stability and unity" of the society implies that anything detrimental to the unity of the country is not proper, even if it is undertaken in the name of the Games or the development of the country. According to this perspective, Western accusations about political freedom are considered harmful to the Chinese social order and are discouraged.

Uniformity in action and mind with one's fellow countrymen is considered a norm in the Chinese culture. To the authorities, this uniformity is the best thing they can achieve in ruling the country. The press perspective "The Games are of Chinese characteristics" implies this sense of uniformity and order in action. Even though economic development requires the introduction of capitalistic production mechanisms such as free competition, this competition has to be guided and well organized, a difficult task for the authorities who have to balance two contradictory pressures, opening up to a market economy but attempting to keep controls over its developments in China. The point of concern is that the idea of order and uniformity is maintained at least in theory and reinforced by news coverage in the *People's Daily*. This can be seen from the way in which the newspaper sees a certain amount of debate as appropriate yet admits ideological guidance.

So, for instance, on the theme that staging the Games in China means "improving people's way of life" discussions in the form of readers' letters were started in *PD*, trying to reach a unified conclusion. Although various opinions were printed, the

fact that an extended discussion took place in *PD* as a way to reach an agreement in opinion still implies the importance of uniformity of opinion. Another example is that there is no lack of problems in preparing for the Asian Games and bidding for the Olympic Games, as is reported by *PD* (20/10/1990, p. 4). But when such problems occur, there is some kind of discussion or guidance from authorities to help solve them. News about an issue usually concludes with common agreement among the people involved. In other words, the problem is always solved on the basis of common recognition of the issue, instead of as a result of power struggle among the people concerned. The implication is that harmony of opinion about any dispute can always be reached among the people, a happy ending, which one can find in most of the Chinese literary works.

### **6.1.3 *Authorities are always the wisest***

The idea that authorities are always wiser is deeply rooted in Chinese culture, be the authority a government, a supervisor, a father or someone of seniority. The highest authority to the ordinary people, is the government, or in current China, the Communist Party. The government and the Party are personified as the officials at various levels. People habitually respect and follow these authorities.

This can be seen in the respectful presentation of officials as actors of high status in the *PD* coverage of the government's activities for the Games. As discussed in the previous section, whenever a problem is reported, it is usually the higher officials who either investigated the matter or can give the "correct" interpretation of government policies, with the implication that people would agree with them and follow their instructions. The opinions of officials tend to be taken for granted as the "truth", whereas they are sometimes merely the officials' personal views. This model of "problem solving" in the news repeatedly appears despite the fact that in real life officials at various levels are themselves subject to criticism during political campaigns.

This style of problem-solving is also seen in response to international criticism. Once Beijing handed in its application to stage the 2000 Olympic Games, many

stories in the Western press covering Beijing's bid mentioned Tiananmen Square in one form or another. The Australian press, especially, reminded the public that "Beijing's credibility has always depended upon the rest of the world forgetting – or being prepared to forgive – the 1989 massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square" and (to recall a quotation from above) that "to the political hardliners who control the lives of 1.2 billion Chinese, the Olympics are a chance to redeem their image stained with blood after the 1989 massacre" (*SMH*, 29/3/1993, p. 11). The questions about the sensitive issue made many Beijing's internal and external supporters, including Chinese citizens, worried about Beijing's chance to win. In response to the censure of the Western press, Wu Shaozu, China's Minister in charge of sports said: "The Tiananmen Square incident is something which belongs to the past and historical events should be judged by history itself" (that is, not by the contemporary people) (*PD*, 6/3/1993, p. 1). Furthermore, he argued that:

in choosing the site for the 2000 Olympics, the IOC will consider the Olympic spirit and ideal, that is, sports competition can help young people develop both physically and mentally and promote mutual understanding and friendship between different peoples of the world so as to build a more peaceful and beautiful world. The IOC encourages developing countries to bear such an obligation but, so far, only two Olympics have been held in developing countries. With one-fifth of the world's population, China has the responsibility and the need to stage such a grand event. If China is permitted to hold the Games, the Olympic ideal will be spread throughout the country, a country with the largest population in the world.

Here the extended emphasis on the official's statement combines proverb-like wisdom (letting "history" judge the past) with principled then fact-based arguments on recognizing the role of a "developing" country. This fulfils the dual persuasive roles of the Chinese press: building Beijing supporters' and Chinese citizens' confidence in the Beijing bid, and representing a strong political case to IOC members, especially those from developing countries.

The way in which respect for the wisdom of authority is communicated is evident in

another controversy and the way it was resolved in press coverage. Concerning the question of how to stage the 2008 Games, the original slogan was to have a “groundbreaking, avant-garde, cutting-edge” Beijing Olympics, which set off a wide range of discussion and debate inside China and from abroad about the over-spent budget and the rational use of the sports facilities after the Games. After the 2004 Athens Games, the Chinese President Hu Jintao stated that the Olympics should be “frugal, workable and good” (*PD*, 29/8/2004, p. 7). The social discussion resulted in Hu Jintao’s speech, which was made to settle controversy. *PD* presents Hu Jintao’s statement with due emphasis as resolving the controversy, while not treating it as an obvious change from the previous slogan. There is no mention of the feedback of public opinion, especially from those with opposing views. The authority’s opinion is taken for granted as the only correct opinion, which provides the guidance for ordinary people’s activities. This is also the typical way to solve the social controversies under the basic relationship between the authorities and ordinary citizens in China.

Social relationships in Chinese society are situation-centered; that is, the Chinese people emphasize the appropriate place of individuals among their fellow citizens. The above reports illustrate the importance that the news representations place on social positions. Opposing opinions are silenced not only by the rationale of the high government official’s speech, but by the very fact that the addresser of the speech is a high government official.

Respect for and obedience to authorities in Chinese society are also demonstrated by the use of certain actors as interpreters of the Olympic activities in *PD*. The most-used actors in the *PD* coverage are government officials, as noted earlier, and most of these officials, whenever they are used, are directly quoted. Coaches and athletes who are involved in the Games also are used frequently and quoted directly. These people are assigned to their roles and position by the government; therefore their opinions are the same as those of the government.

#### **6.1.4 *Olympic activities should support the existing social order***

The *PD* coverage has also assumed that the bidding and preparing progress should be pursued within the framework of the existing social order. In terms of the Olympic activities, any changes initiated should be constructive instead of destructive to the existing social order.

As demonstrated in the frequency analysis of sub-topics, political issues and aspects of the Olympic activities were less often reported in the *PD* than were economic progress and aspects, but this does not necessarily mean that political and ideological factors are seen as playing a less important role in the activities. On the contrary, the existing political and ideological format in Chinese society is taken for granted as “right”. On the other hand, the economic progress and aspects, which cause changes in the material life of the society and play important roles in supporting the Olympic activities, are also seen as important and as necessary to help sustain the existing political and social relationships.

The perspective held by *PD* such as bidding and preparing for the Games have “Chinese characteristics” implies that there are some things in Chinese society that have to be kept in the Olympic activities. This idea demonstrates a common characteristic in all Chinese reforms and changes in history, that is, to preserve a core of solid Chinese identity while introducing advanced technologies and ideas from abroad, or in the words of the slogan, “Chinese learning as fundamentals, and Western learning for practical applications”.

As shown in the frequency analysis of sub-topics by *PD*, sub-topics concerning changes in economic life that would bring drastic changes in the basic social order and structure are covered less frequently than those meant only to better existing systems (12.9% as against 44.3%). Specifically, the prospect of change such as “the Games are associated with capitalism”, for instance relating to issues of privatization of the economy, received much less coverage in the *PD* than “the Games are economically rather than politically oriented”, for example in encouraging acceptable market forces, competition and efficiency. This is because the former raises the possibility of fundamentally altering the existing economic and social structure, while

the latter refers to economic improvement and strength.

The role of the press in supporting the existing social order is seen in an editorial (*PD*, 29/10/1993, p. 11; Appendix C) about the relationship between the Olympic spirit and the reform of the economic planning system. The editorial states that it is necessary to introduce the mechanism of market economy and advocates free competition and strengthens market forces. It points out the shortcomings and problems with the rigid central planning system before the reform, and asserts that market forces are very important in the whole planning system. This advocacy, however, is put against the larger background of the indisputable position of central planning. The assertion, instead of being based on the discussion about the soundness of the central planning system, is based on the assumption that a socialist country such as China ought to adhere to the idea of central planning. In other words, the editorial holds that the basic social structure in China should be preserved and only marginal adjustments allowed within it. Privatization of the economy as such, whenever it is mentioned, is reported as something marginal. So, for instance, in another editorial it is stated:

While we adhere to the principle of socialistic economy, we permit the existence of other forms of economy, such as private enterprises, joint venture with foreign investment and foreign investment. However, all these other forms of economy only occupy a very small portion of our whole economic system and are merely a necessary supplement to our state economy. (*PD*, 10/6/1992, p. 1; Appendix C)

As is stated in both these editorials, the existing economic system and the related social structure have to be preserved. Changes to the economy have to be supportive of the basic social structure. There is no reason to worry that the Games is going to change the existing social structure. The latter provides the appropriate framework for managing the introduction of the new economic mechanisms. Consequently, the social relationships among the people will also be preserved as the Chinese characteristics along with the social and economic structure.

### **6.1.5 Ideological direction is necessary to maintain existing social relationships**

The self-ideology relationship is decided by the self-other relationships in the Chinese culture. People usually have to assess how their relationships with others are going to be affected before they follow or reject any ideas. In this sense, the ideology of a person is decided by his or her social relationships but, on the other hand, because the Chinese people respect authorities just for what they are, the authorities could always initiate ideological changes to strengthen or alter social relations.

Ideological conflicts and struggles exist among the leading members of the government throughout the Olympic activities. But as shown by the frequency of sub-topics in the three moments during the sample period, *PD* tends to downplay the role that struggles play and instead presents the change of attitude on the Olympics as a fairly consistent process. Crises, when reported, are interpreted as an unsuccessful challenge to the mainstream ideology.

The report by *PD* about the campaign against “human rights abuses” is an example. This ideological campaign was started by the Central Party Committee for fear that the Western criticisms on China’s human rights issues would threaten Beijing’s chances of winning the Olympics and hence the credibility of the Chinese authorities. The CPC has been taken for granted as the only legitimate leading force in China. When the threat was felt by some top leaders as too great, an ideological campaign was initiated to purify the minds of the people at large. The purpose was to maintain the legitimacy of the CPC and reinforce the existing social structure. In terms of news values, what is noticed is the need for ideological guidance on events and issues, at the time judged necessary, rather than the capturing the immediacy of particular events in the Olympic activities. In a news report about the influence of the human rights issues on Beijing’s second bid for the Olympics, Liu Qi, Mayor of Beijing, is quoted as stating:

The influence of the Western criticisms creates an obstacle to Beijing’s bid and the development of the country. Under this influence, some people [in China] erroneously put themselves above the party or even against the leadership of the Party. It is crucial to

emphasise the purpose of our Olympic activities. The purpose is to speed up the development of the country, to improve our socialist system and to serve the people. (*PD*, 19/2/2001, p. 1)

There are two assumptions in this quotation. First, the leadership of the CPC is indisputable. Second, the socialist system is the only proper system in China. The two assumptions are both matters of ideological clarification, even correction, about the purpose of the Olympic activities, which are a chance to improve the existing system, not challenge or change it. Social relationships in China are based upon these two assumptions, which are presented as taken for granted, in the report, without further discussion. No discussion occurs about the validity of these two concepts or about alternative points of view. This report is typical of others that have implied that the basic principles in the existing Chinese social structure are the only legitimate principles and also suit China's characteristics.

When ideological challenges to the existing social relationships are initiated, they are discouraged and condemned. This is exemplified by reports about Falun Gong practitioners' demand for democracy and religious freedom. All the news represented by the official Chinese press about Falun Gong practitioners' protests, without exception, has framed protests as disturbances of the social order and lives of the ordinary people. Falun Gong is termed as "cult" and the protesters as "trouble makers" (*PD*, 24/5/2001, p. 5; Appendix C). Further, there was no discussion of the issues for which the practitioners were protesting. By discarding the practitioners' action as illegal and disruptive, their challenging ideologies are not given a chance to be heard.

In sum, ideology is considered by the Chinese culture as playing an important role in preserving or altering the social relationships. The *PD*, therefore, has treated the ideological concerns relating to the Olympic activities accordingly, and it is also a medium for official clarification that attempts to frame the meaning of events and issues. The *PD*'s interpretation of the Chinese reform is largely consistent with the traditional cultural values in Chinese society. Personal gains are always subordinate to collective goals. Authorities, presented as the representatives of the collective goals, are respected for their position and personal virtue instead for their actions.

The Olympic activities have to be supportive of the existing social relationship instead of harmful to it. Ideological changes are reported in the framework of preserving and reinforcing the legitimacy of the existing social relationships.

## **6.2 Cultural and news values: the Australian press**

### **6.2.1 *Individualism and independent enterprise***

While an individual is expected to contribute to the collective good in China, Australian culture places more emphasis on the importance of the individualism in society. This value of individualism is often taken for granted in the Australian newspapers, although this does not exclude emphasis on ideas of “social responsibility”. For example, the idea that individual effort and self-reliance are vital for success is demonstrated in their coverage of Olympic activities in both countries. The role of private business and business people has had great interest for the Australian newspapers, and this is reflected in extensive reference to private enterprise and market matters, arguably because they represent the spirit of individual effort and self-reliance.

As the one of the cities most favoured to win the bid, Sydney was banking its hopes on the city’s superior technical bid together with a strong environmental case. Furthermore, in the selected Australian press coverage about Sydney’s chances and advantage for staging the Games, the most mentioned reasons are hard work, perseverance and self-reliance. This contrasts with the report by *The People’s Daily* where the bidding city’s individual effort and success are directly related to either the correct government policy or help from one’s social circles. In the Australian newspapers’ reportage, outside help is not as crucial to personal or individual success, and government approaches favouring individual efforts and free enterprise are taken for granted. In contrast to the situation reflected in *PD*, where the individuals usually feel obliged to seek permission and help from their superior, ideas of limits to the role of government are thus familiar in Australian media.

In a piece of news about the relationship between the Sydney Olympic Committee for

Organising the Games (SOCOG) and the Australian authorities, the new moves to ensure that a successful Sydney bid to stage the 2000 Olympics would not be disrupted or hijacked by party-political forces are introduced by the NSW state government. The article states:

The body, SOCOG, would have an independent chairman, chosen by the Premier and the president of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) ... This key appointment would almost certainly be filled by a prominent business figure whose tasks would include overseeing expenditure of about \$1.7 billion ... It is also intended that SOCOG would advertise for a chief executive and other senior staff ... Early speculation that the former Premier, Nick Greiner may be appointed to the top job has been dismissed by the Premier ... The Government wants to ensure that an agreed organisational structure exists if the Games are awarded to Sydney ... The moves are also intended to prevent sectional interests capitalising on the success or failure of the Olympic Games bid and to guarantee stability and continuity over the organisation phase. (*SMH*, 7/6/1993, p. 5; Appendix A)

The article indicates that three changes of Federal and two changes of State governments are possible during the period from then to 2000. The AOC, the organisation formally awarded the task of hosting the Games, wishes to ensure that political interference in SOCOG's activities is minimised. As stated by the report, there is unanimity among all parties that this organisation should be isolated from the day-to-day vagaries of politics. The political and sporting interests brought together to prosecute Sydney's bid have successfully maintained a united front in public. But in private, the delicate, bipartisan balance between city, State and Federal political interests, as well as international sporting interests, is being tested. The article reports the rationale that the Games, if awarded to Sydney, could be only free of interference if SOCOG was independent from the political authorities. Because of the certain Australian political characteristics, the Sydney bid and preparations for the Games have been regarded by the Australian press as the individual activities more than a governmental organized movement, which is how they saw the Beijing bid and preparations for the Games.

Related to this individualism is a strong sense of competition. The sense of competition was prominent at various levels between the candidate cities in the bid. There is no lack of instances of competition in the Olympic activities reported by the Australian newspapers. In these newspapers, the reportage of any competition has often related it to conflicts and problems in the social or political life of the competitors involved. In other words, an individual's ability is not the only crucial factor in competition. Competitors' political connections and social environment are also mentioned and discussed by the papers. The Chinese press, on the other hand, has seldom mentioned the social or political factors or emphasized the factors behind competition. This applies also to the broader bidding competition.

In a feature article with the headline "Torching Beijing" by *SMH* (14/11/1992, p. 44) about Beijing's performance in the competition with Sydney for the 2000 Games, the Chinese capital city's advantage in the competition is described in the following way:

with the weight of the Government and the Communist Party behind it, Beijing's bid can adopt a "no expense spared" attitude ... the party leaders, and the high rank officials have called for "the whole nation to dedicate themselves to the bidding campaign" ... Beijing's Mayor, Chen Xitong, president of the bid committee and the first official to speak publicly in support of the suppression of the 1989 student movement, promises "Six Satisfactions" if Beijing gets the games (satisfied IOC members, athletes, journalists, sponsors, tourists and citizens) ... money is no object to the Communist Party ... Winning the 2000 Olympics is part of a process of image-rehabilitation through sport, and as such cheap at almost any price.

Compared with the Australian newspaper's report on Beijing's bid, the political emphasis on the above factors is not present in the Chinese press coverage of Sydney's. The *SMH* article also mentions:

China's Olympic bid is the most political of all the year 2000 bids ... Success in sport is an advertisement for the credibility of the

communist regime in the eyes of China's rulers, just as it was to Soviet and East European communists and to the fascist dictatorship of Spain's General Franco, faithfully served for 40 years by the man who now heads the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch ... China's aging communist despots, are desperate for the recognition and legitimacy which a successful Olympics bid would bring ... Like Franco, Hitler and Stalin, they are ready to use the athletic achievements of their young people to bestow honour on their tarnished system, blotting out memories of deeds they would prefer forgotten ... If commerce and sport are inextricably linked in the West, here politics and sport are eternally bound ...

This description seems to define Beijing's motives for hosting the Games as only involving political or social factors. Although a lengthy explanation has been offered for Beijing's political and social environment and background on its bid, the paper reminds the audience of China's political woes. This definition of "competition" implies that fair Olympic competition is the only prerequisite for success, not hidden motives. If this is so, then the *SMH* approach could open itself to criticism, because factors such as sports facilities capability or social connections which are crucial especially in the Chinese press coverage are missing in the Australian newspaper coverage.

### **6.2.2 *Social meaning includes materialist and ideological interests***

An Australian emphasis on material life and success is reflected, and sometimes debated, in the Australian newspapers, including in their coverage of the Olympic activities. Generally speaking, people's social status can depend more upon their material success in Australia than in the Chinese culture. It is taken for granted that people deserve the material benefits their hard work brings. While the Chinese press has viewed the purpose of the Games as being primarily to strengthen the power of the country and promote the country's image, the Australian newspapers have paid more attention to the presentation and the change of ordinary people's material life that the Games may bring about. Two related assumptions appear in the Australian

newspapers' reports on possible changes in people's material life if the Games were awarded, that material life is the antithesis of the ideological or political life in society, and that it is a major preoccupation of ordinary people while politics and ideologies are often seen as interests only for government officials and intellectuals.

A report about the role Sydney has to play in the 2000 Olympics states that the Sydney Games would guarantee a legacy of sporting and accommodation facilities, and transport infrastructure, and promote a feeling of goodwill and community spirit within the citizens of the city. To top it off, all indications are that it would return a profit, in addition to providing thousands of jobs and revitalising the city in the lead-up years (*SMH*, 26/3/1992, p. 3). The problem, the report points out, would be the politics of the decision-making. Another report (*SMH*, 20/1/1993, p. 3) stresses that Sydney is the second-best city in the world for "livability". It indicates that the "livability ranking" calculations may help Sydney's bid because they put the city well ahead of its competitors. The calculation takes many factors into account, mainly according to the material living standards and good environment. On that basis, Sydney ranks second (with Manchester 20th, Milan 27th, Berlin 35th, Tashkent 43rd, Beijing 64th and Istanbul 75<sup>th</sup>), the highest of the seven main Olympics bidders. Most of the reports by the Australian newspapers put the material life and the profits people are enjoying as reasons for the city to win the Olympic bid.

Furthermore, the high-standard material life is depicted as an "ideal world" – fabulous sporting facilities, reasonable ticket prices, economic benefits, employment and tourism opportunities, merry athletes and beaming spectators (*SMH*, 1/2/1993, p. 14). In this regard, materialism, or more specifically consumerism, is taken for granted as a mainstream Australian value, and ideological and power struggles are presented as negative and a possible threat to people's material life. Material achievement can be presented as a primary goal of life, largely possessed by the ordinary people, or in the newspapers' words, the "taxpayers" of the country, a term that suggests distance from politics.

On the other hand, however, interests in material well-being are also seen as entangled with political and ideological matters. For example, a report about the NSW reigning party's political aim in the Olympic bid and AOC's preference in politics

points out that “there have been suggestions that the NSW Liberal Government might seek to take advantage of the euphoria following a possibly successful bid by calling a snap State election” (*SMH*, 7/6/1993, p. 5). The news interest in following competition and conflict suggests a wider popular interest in political and ideological matters. Conflicts and problems reflected in the Olympic activities are often interpreted by the Australian newspapers as relating to some power struggle. The adjustment in policies and the reorganization of the government institutions and personnel subrogation are interpreted as a switch in the balance of power from one faction to another. A report about the appointment of the Sydney bid committee’s chief executive suggests that there were more than 150 candidates, many from overseas, some non-Australians, and some from prominent Australians, applying for the position to mastermind Sydney’s bid (*SMH*, 2/5/1991, p. 1). According to the report, Rod McGeoch was chosen only after the most hotly-contested race ever for an executive job in Sydney. Compared with the *PD* coverage of the nomination and appointment of the Beijing bid committee’s chairman, the Australian paper stresses the point of “competition”, heightening news interest. Another power struggle story, in *TA* (3/3/1997, p. 5), is about a dispute between government figures when Sydney was preparing for the 2000 Olympics. It suggests that rivalry between Cabinet ministers threatens to undermine a NSW government plan to establish a transport authority to coordinate road, rail, bus and ferry services for Sydney's 2000 Olympics. The perspectives of “power struggle” and “competition” are often found in the Australian newspapers’ coverage of the Sydney bid. However, they are concerned with the administrative level, whereas the Australian newspapers’ perspectives in the coverage of the Chinese bid are on a different level. For example, when commenting on Beijing’s bid, Bruce Baird, the Minister in charge of the Sydney bid, said the 11<sup>th</sup> Asian Games were “somewhat of a debacle” and people’s life in Beijing was “disaster” (*TA*, 10/7/1991, p. 3; Appendix B). The political reference is not only to the Asian Games administration but also broader concerns about people’s material life in Beijing under the Chinese system.

Perspectives in the Australian newspaper coverage of the Beijing bid, such as “the Games are associated with capitalism”, meaning that China is going towards capitalism, and “the Games are a negation of Communist policies”, best illustrate the Australian newspapers’ stress on political aspects in the Beijing bid. The combined

perspectives were mentioned 18.3% of all times regarding the nature of the Olympic activities. These perspectives reflect media and cultural concerns with the struggle between ideologies and between social systems. They place some issues within the Chinese political context in the larger frame of an international power struggle or the struggle between ideologies. An example is the Australian newspaper focus, in their coverage of the Beijing bid, on the political disagreement in Chinese society between some minority groups of dissidents and the ruling Party. This focus is evident in a story (*SMH*, 29/6/1993, p. 13; Appendix A) about the Chinese government's release of some high-profile dissidents from prison, including the 1979 Democracy Wall activist Xu Wenli, and Wei Jingsheng who had received long-term attention from Western countries, on the eve of the vote for the 2000 Olympic Games. The article suggests that the release has been made to curry favour with Western countries and build up support for the Beijing bid. It implies further that the Chinese authorities' compromise could lead to the first summit between the leaders of China and Taiwan since the establishment of the PRC in 1949.

An article in *SMH* coverage of the Olympic bid (12/6/1993, p. 9; Appendix A) claims that the Chinese Government's "human rights practices have remained repressive, falling far short of internationally accepted norms", and that "torture and degrading treatment of detained and imprisoned persons persisted". It says the Chinese Government had engaged in "massive transfers of population" to Tibet in order to marginalise the native Tibetans and suppressed the local culture and religion. "Holding the Olympic Games in countries ... which engage in massive violations of human rights serves to shift the focus from the high ideals behind the Olympic tradition and is counterproductive for the Olympic movement", the article states. It also mentions:

In recent weeks, there have been worldwide protests to mark the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, tear gas was fired at protesting Tibetans in Lhasa and international groups have stepped up their call for independence for Tibet.

Rather than a description of what the demonstrators hoped to accomplish, the article focuses the readers' attention just on the disturbance. The article uses "massacre"

instead of “incident” to depict the picture of bloodshed and killing and to make a strong contrast between “massive violation of human rights” and “the high ideals behind the Olympic tradition”. Therefore, readers of this article may distance themselves from the incident without even knowing the ideas for which the demonstrators demonstrated. In such criticisms, liberal political ideals about democracy have a strong role in framing the news to make a general critical statement.

Unlike the Chinese press, in which coverage of the social disputes reflects the idea of a collective with common goals despite differences about specific issues, such Australian news texts present Chinese society from a viewpoint based on the principle of a pluralist idea of society as including groups with different interests instead of uniformity, and the value of diversity in media reporting. However, the coverage of the Chinese Olympic activities in such texts arguably provides a simplified and stereotyped picture of a more complicated topic, indicating what Ward (1995, p. 111) describes as the limits that familiar “news frames” can place upon the representation of events and issues. Furthermore, the vying groups as presented by the Australian newspapers seldom represented “real” opposition to the power structure in Chinese society. In other words, the struggle between these groups can not change anything while the status quo social structure remains unchanged.

### ***6.2.3 Authorities are negative forces to be watched***

Issues in the media such as distrust of politicians indicate that, contrary to the Chinese respect and obedience to authorities, Australians make public a view of authorities as negative forces to be guarded against. This attitude is often reflected in the Australian people’s relationship toward their government and the “watchdog” role of media. People are constantly alerted to functions of the government and behaviour of officials because they are believed to possess interests other than that of their constituencies. For example, a feature article (*SMH*, 5/6/1993, p. 42; Appendix A) about the government’s implementation of environmental guidelines produced for Sydney’s bid points out that “they are all great guidelines”, then asks:

What does it mean? If environmental groups were presented with this for any other industrial or urban development, we wouldn't just accept it at face value, we'd want auditing mechanisms in place, monitoring systems in place; we'd want some sort of legal rights to take people to court if they're not implementing the guidelines ... We have been promised environmental improvements because of the Olympic Games...and we don't think those promises are credible ... [The bid committee] can't guarantee those guidelines won't be white-anted by future governments under financial pressure ... fine in theory, lousy in practice.

The official political approach to promoting development and “environment improvements” under the name of the Olympics is portrayed as inadequate. The driving force for improvement, on the other hand, comes from the ordinary people and democratic interests in accountability, rights and safeguards against future government failure to follow the guidelines “in practice”.

Hypothetically, the portrait of the two sides in such a situation might have been reversed. If the Olympic activities could be regarded as a kind of reform to Chinese society, *PD* would have treated the leadership as the initiator of the reform acting in response to the people's demand. Indeed, as is revealed in the discussion of the reform movements in modern Chinese history, these movements came from above instead of below. The only way ordinary people can initiate social changes is through violent revolt because of the lack of legal channels, which of course, is not reform at all. With all their respect and obedience to authorities and their general indifference toward affairs beyond their intimate circles, the ordinary Chinese people rarely demand a change in social structure. Further, their demand is usually for a new or better ruler whom they can follow. In contrast, the Australian newspapers' depiction of the Chinese government and its relationship to the people is largely from the viewpoint of an Australian model, in which people are assumed to be capable of calling governments to account through democratic processes.

To take another example, both the Australian newspapers and the *PD* have reported on the abuse of political power and corruption within the government or the Party, but in different manners. While government and Party corruption are reported by *PD* in a

framework of Party rectification, a campaign initiated by the Party itself, the Australian newspapers emphasize the damage that corruption brings to the people. Furthermore, rectification of the Party, as reported by the *PD*, is meant for consolidating instead of weakening the Party's credibility. Finally, corruption bad behaviour of the Chinese government and the Party are always curable in the *PD*, while in the Australian newspapers they are perceived as an inherent structural problem. Again, this different treatment stems from different ideas in the two countries of the relationship between the people and their governments. Assessing reasons for the failure to stop the corruption, the Australian news referred to the feeling of many Chinese that corruption has seeped into the marrow of the society so deeply that government, from the local to the national level, can no longer function without it. The account implied that official corruption is a structural problem that cannot be cured from within. Government, therefore, needs to be watched by the people from without, an idea coming from a pluralistic model of society.

This vigilant attitude toward government has manifested itself in the Australian newspapers' coverage of the Olympic activities in China, although this country has a totally different form of government. While most Chinese people are presented by the *PD* as being grateful for the government's Olympic policies, these policies have been presented by the Australian newspapers as a given, something that a government should have developed from the very beginning, not just when the bid needs them. Here we can recall the article from the *SMH* (29/3/1993) discussed above, for the way it comments on the deficit in the Beijing bid. Claiming that some Beijing residents resented "the hardships that may come as the city rebuilds itself in preparation for the Olympics", it states: "China's press is tightly controlled and freedom of speech hardly exists". "Unlike other candidate cities, opponents to the 2000 Olympics bid here risk jail terms". The article adds, referring to the Asian Games:

Factories had supposedly been shut to disperse the yellow cloud of noxious smog that usually hangs over the capital ... when handicapped people, considered by authorities too ugly to show visitors, found themselves ordered from their homes to huddle in hospital wards out of the public eye until the two-week event was over.

Although the word “supposedly” suggests that the authenticity of some events mentioned in the story is uncertain, they are presented as plausible reasons for Chinese people’s resentment and complaint, from the Australian newspaper’s viewpoint of watching a foreign regime’s use of power.

### **6.3 Press philosophy and presentation**

#### **6.3.1 *Australian press philosophy and presentation***

The Australian press system and press philosophy, like other social institutions, is built upon overall political-economic structures and cultural values in Australia. Their structural nature and presumed social responsibilities constitute a dual-purpose for the Australian media, information providing and profit-making. As discussed earlier, a major purpose of the press is seen as providing a public forum, a marketplace of ideas, and supplying people with the information they deserve to know in a culture that values pluralism and diversity. This stated purpose demonstrates itself in the form of the pluralistic description of the news events and the supply of diversified opinions. This is seen in the Australian newspapers interests in a broader range of Olympic and political related topics than their Chinese colleagues. It also uses a variety of people with different social positions as speakers about the topics.

The marketplace of ideas depends on the press being independent of governmental and partisan influence. At the same time, as also discussed earlier, because the newspapers operate as independent private enterprises in a society that values free competition, with profit-making as a major purpose of business, the question arises of the influence that their purpose of profit-making has on their independence. It is arguably because of this purpose that the media news reporting appeals to the desire of reader-customers in entertainment as well as information, drama, conflict, and accords with certain popular or dominant social values and norms, including the individualist, materialist and ideological attitudes discussed above.

While the two purposes could pose conflicts and dilemma for the journalists, they

present themselves side by side in the news coverage because the reporters themselves largely share the basic cultural values on which these two purposes of the media are established. Accordingly, the Australian newspapers, in their reportage of the Chinese Olympic activities, also adhere to these two tasks of the Australian media. In practice, the impact of both purposes on the Australian media system is present in the news coverage to various degrees and in different manners.

However, the result of the frequency test of the perspectives about the Olympic activities contradicts, or at least suggests limits to, the principle of diversification in news reporting. The perspectives relate to ideas such as free competition, pluralism and democracy. Theoretically, the marketplace of ideas makes sure that dissident and marginal voices are heard. The Australian newspapers did present more diversified ideas than the Chinese press in terms of changing policies for the Olympics, especially about the issues concerning basic social structure and ideologies. For example, the *SMH* devoted a comparatively large quantity of its reporting to the discussion of the human rights problems and the freedom of speech. Opinions that would be hardly acceptable to the orthodox ideology in China were presented and discussed. However, these are dissident opinions and voices as far as the Chinese dominant ideology is concerned, and are in key with mainstream Western or Australian values. Reporting them can be consistent with maintaining readership and profit by appealing to the values of readers. In the Australian context, this might compare with what Amanda Bennett points out in her study of American reporters in China, that American journalists report about China in such a way that the reports “fit almost perfectly into some of Americans’ favourite themes and myths” (Bennett, 1990). Repeating general political criticisms in some Australian news stories suggests a limit to the diversity of reporting of the Chinese social and political activities in the Olympics as a marketplace of ideas.

### **6.3.2 Chinese press philosophy and presentation**

The mainstream Chinese press system and philosophy are largely compatible with the overall cultural traditions in China. Chinese society stresses the importance of unity and integrity. Mass media in China are supposed to be part of the state apparatus,

rather than independent institutions. The importance of national unity and integrity is also expressed in the concept that uniformity of ideas is better than diversity. Accordingly, the Chinese media are expected to represent the ideas that are compatible with the dominant perspectives, be these government opinions or shared cultural values. As part of the state, the media should involve themselves with the everyday life of the country, instead of acting as independent observers.

In theory, as noted by Polunin (1999), the Chinese press has a dual responsibility: to serve the authorities and the public at the same time. According to the Chinese cultural tradition of unity and integrity, there are no fundamental conflicts between these two parts of society. Acting as a tool of the government and being a voice of the people, according to Chinese culture, are compatible and usually harmonious roles, because it is held by traditional Chinese values that the governor and the governed can harmoniously exist together. From this perspective, the Chinese government and the Communist Party are the best and most capable representatives of the people and their interests. By extension, therefore, it is possible for *The People's Daily* to perform a dual role both as Party voice and public forum. These two aspects of the mission of the Chinese press are two sides of the same coin. The ultimate goal of news reporting, according to this Chinese media philosophy, is to help sustain the existing social order rather than attempt to overthrow it.

In practice as well as theory, China's press has usually served hegemonic interests. At the institutional level, the media are an arm or the mouthpiece of the ruling party. At the individual level, as is discussed in the Chinese cultural tradition, there exists a Chinese tradition of the scholar-bureaucrat in which the intellectuals, including journalists, identify themselves with the state. At a third level, as is found by this study, the journalists and the press help to sustain hegemonic interests by reinforcing the dominant cultural values by sharing them with their fellow countrymen through the reporting of the news. In relation to the Olympic activities, the dual aspects of the press purpose are discussed separately. This does not mean, however, the two tasks can be separated in practice. On the contrary, the analysis finds that no matter on whose behalf a specific report is carried out, the end result is to serve the dominant cultural values.

The theory that the Chinese press is a tool of government has been challenged from both inside and outside the media in the last several decades, especially since the overall reform and open-up policy started (Hodge and Louie, 1998, p. 187). However, the result of the present study of the *PD* coverage of the Chinese activities in the Olympics reveals that this major function of the press continues strongly even though it involves adaptation in changing circumstances. With the development in the press system, there have been substantial changes at various levels, from the structure to the content and to the techniques of coverage. At the very least, the press does not overtly claim itself as only a tool of the party. Nevertheless, the Party's interests, or more broadly, the hegemonic social order, are served through more subtle ways.

The quantitative analysis of this study has found that, among the different aspects of the development and reform, the political changes are far less frequently reported than the economic changes. It is true that coverage of economic news became more prominent because of the shift in the government's focus since the reform and open-up policy began. The comparatively lighter emphasis on the political and ideological changes can also be seen as an expression of the assumption that the basic social order (in the form of the current political and ideological system) is solid and does not need reforming.

This idea of sustaining the existing social order while bringing about economic reforms can also be explained in light of the report about the economic changes themselves. As is indicated by the frequency analysis of the economic aspects in the Olympic activities, those items covered most often are changes that are intended to improve the current economic system. Changes that would shake the basic economic structure are less interesting to *The People's Daily* and are covered with caution.

The *PD* function as a party tool can also be seen in the degree to which its reportage is involved in the subjects it covers. This involvement with the events it reports is a result of two factors: the press in China is part of the governing machinery, and journalists have a tradition of identifying with the state and the authorities. One of the most prominent expressions of this tendency toward involvement is that there is

much less detailed discussion of the specific problems in the *PD* than in the Australian newspapers. As is shown by the frequency analysis of the perspectives by the media, the *PD* talked much less about how to achieve the specific goals in the Olympic bid or preparations than merely the general nature of the Olympics. The Australian newspapers paid more attention to the coverage of specific problems.

In relation to the Olympics activities, presenting the voice of the people in the *PD* takes several forms. Diverse opinions from the public towards the Olympic activities promoted by the government are rarely discussed. For example, corruption and abuse of power by officials are exposed, as is seen to be in the interests of the people, in the form of announcement reports without extensive commentary. Public opinions are best represented in the form of letters to the editor in the *PD*. However, the common characteristic in the so-called expressions of the voice of the people is that they have to be compatible with the overall Party and government policies to be carried by the *PD*. The people's expression of opinion must also be acceptable in terms of the traditional cultural values of China. For example, criticism of an official for his indulgence in pursuing personal interests draws more attention from the *PD* than for his negligence of duty. In other words, public criticism of a government official is presented in the *PD* not based on the judgment of the official's task performance but on his personal merit. The press function of expressing the voice of the people is carried out only if it is consistent with the function of being a Party tool, even if, as the Party leader Mao Zedong defined it, the main task of the Chinese press (e.g. *People's Daily*) is to serve the people. Whenever contradictions occur, people's opinions are subdued in favour of those of the authorities. A typical example is the student demand for more democracy. When the people's understanding of, and demand for, democracy goes beyond what the government is prepared to hear, or is aimed at changing the basic social order, their demand is not represented in the press.

#### **6.4 Variations of Presentation**

Having examined some basic assumptions in the *PD* and the Australian newspapers' coverage of the Olympic activities and how they are embedded in different cultural

and ideological values, we now examine further some of the methods used to convey these values without stating them overtly.

#### **6.4.1 *Ill defined terms***

Many concepts are used as givens, without providing information about the context from which they originally appeared. While particular concepts may have appeared in historically different situations, they are used by the both countries' newspapers as universal concepts, as if their meaning is fixed. For example, the terms "human rights" and "democracy" have been used frequently in the Australian newspapers to assess or criticise the political situation in China, without defining these terms. While *PD* has interpreted political development or reform as the readjustment and consolidation of the existing social structure, the Australian newspapers saw it as increasing "democracy" to try to persuade the Western countries to support the bid. The Australian newspapers' reportage about the Chinese Olympic activities has often been framed in terms of "human rights", with each move forward and backward in the course of the activities seen as the comings and goings of "democracy". In fact, these concepts are not something new in the Chinese political system, although they have a different meaning there – for instance, "democracy" is embodied in the Party ruling for the collective. These concepts have been used to criticize the "lack of the real democracy and freedom" in China because the democracy they represent is very limited in comparison to Western standards. For instance, the *SMH* (19/2/2001, p. 9) reported the demonstration for more democracy, linking it critically to the Beijing Olympic bid, without explaining what democracy really means, or might mean, to the Chinese dissidents. Applying such terms without definition and context implies that the Australian newspapers have used them largely according to their own understanding. Discussing the context for the terms, and providing specific historical information about the use of the concept, could be a starting point for reflection on differences and relations between the Australian and other cultures. For example, when Rowan Callick (*TA*, 16/10/2007, p. 11), a *TA* correspondent in Beijing, describes CPC's Party secretary-general Hu Jintao's speech at the 17th congress of the Party, he tells the story combined with relevant Chinese cultural and social terms:

Hu's speech contained few rhetorical flourishes and no jokes. Rebecca MacKinnon, an assistant professor at Hong Kong University explained: "Rousing, inspirational speeches just don't fit with the Chinese style of political leadership. In Chinese culture, if you're already powerful you don't want to act as if there's a need to win anybody over. If you act as if you care what people think of your speeches, you're admitting weakness."

... The modest priority accorded the Olympic Games, within the overall context of China's medium-term prospects, was indicated by their being restricted to a single mention in the 58-page speech: "We will launch extensive public fitness programs and ensure the success of the 2008 Olympic Games and the Paralympics in Beijing."

As we can see, Callick tells the story as well as providing certain definitions in the Chinese context, which helps readers understand the story better.

In the Chinese press, a comparable technique is seen of taking the meaning of certain terms as given. Probably one of the most used concepts in the Chinese paper reportage on the Olympics is "socialism with Chinese characteristics". However, this concept is not defined. It has at least two levels of meaning. It implies that China is a socialist country and that the socialism applied in China is different from that in other countries. However, *PD* takes the term for granted, whereas there could be many explanations and understandings, depending on who uses them. By providing no interpretation of the terms, they are proffered by the *PD* as "truth" instead of one-sided statements. They can also be used as a starting point of reference for further argument by the *PD*. For example, a *PD* editorial talked about the central planning of the Olympic Games in China, asserting that it was still very important to adhere to the central planning economic system in China. The reason for this, according to the editorial, was because China is a socialist country. This is building a conclusion on an unexamined concept, because nowhere is the term "socialism" defined. However, there is a particular reason for the lack of definition

in the Chinese press, which is that following debate about the concept of socialism within China, its meaning is deemed by the Party.

Another example is the generalized use of the term “freedom”, as in the *PD* article (23/1/1996, p. 4) about student demonstrations mentioned above. The article distinguishes between “freedom of the Western style” and freedom needed in China “because of its huge population and shortage of material resources”, that is, “freedom of the whole country and nation”. But nowhere is this key phrase further explained or defined. Does it include freedom of the individual or would it negatively limit freedom of the individual in favour of the country? Freedom is assumed as the freedom or power of the government to manage the nation for collective benefit. Again, alternative explanations are withheld and the concept, however abstract it may be, is used as the only legitimate interpretation for the argument.

In the examples discussed in this section, abstract concepts and terms are presented as given and agreed upon. However, these concepts bear specific cultural and historical values and contexts. By not providing any specific or alternative explanations, the Australian newspapers and *PD* have embedded their own understanding of the concepts into the news and missed the opportunity for the two cultures to learn about each other.

#### **6.4.2 *Figurative use of language***

Another technique found in both countries’ newspapers to convey their cultural values is to use concepts with different meanings as if they were synonyms. This is closely related to the first technique in which concepts are presented without giving concrete definitions. However, for this technique, satirical definition renders it possible to use concepts with different meanings figuratively and interchangeably, especially through connotative expressions.

For example, *PD* (25/1/1992) reports in a front-page story that in an effort to help win the bid for the 2000 Olympics, the Chinese government has undertaken a massive campaign to rid Beijing of flies. Residents of the capital are to help clean the pests

out of all government offices, hotel and hospital dining rooms, airports, railway stations, tourist spots and schools. Flies would be permitted in people's homes and dormitories "as long as they are found in less than one room out of 100" (*SMH*, 6/3/1992, p. 12) also reports this: "No flies on Beijing's Games bid". The similar reports appeared in 1993 in both countries' newspapers as well, "No flies on Beijing promoters" (*SMH*, 21/09/1993, p. 17) and "Creating good conditions for Beijing's bid" (*CD*, 20/09/1993, p. 4). It seems that both countries' newspapers have paid special attention to the issue, but while the Chinese press try to promote Beijing's new image by describing a 29 percent drop in the 'density of flies', their Australian counterparts wondered satirically how the flies are counted? In the article "No flies on Beijing promoters", *SMH* described Beijing's attempts to "whitewash the environment". The techniques and the social roles of the two national press cultures are clear here: direct positive promotional works directed to their own citizens in China; bemused coverage of such moves from Australia, which focuses instead on its usual mix of positive and negative coverage of both bids.

During the IOC's inspection of Beijing, *SMH* again carried an article about Beijing's flies as "Swat squads keep the flies off Beijing's bid" (4/3/1993, p. 11). The Australian newspaper was very interested in Beijing's "fly-free" issue. But the connotation is that, given the fact reported in the *SMH*'s article that all the efforts by China's capital to remove any blemish from its face are made to meet the visiting IOC's evaluation a few days later, Beijing's "sufficiently qualified" natural environment, as acclaimed by *PD*, does not look that "natural" any more.

### **6.4.3 Collocation and its rhetorical force**

Collocations are more or less typical or habitual patterns of co-occurrence between words. It is the property of language whereby two or more words appear frequently next to each other. Collocational studies have been considerably advanced by the development of corpus linguistics, allowing co-occurrence patterns to be identified in very large corpora of texts (Firth, 1957; Sinclair, 1991; Stubbs, 1996).

Collocations are commonly used, and may be pervasive, in news reporting,

confirming a particular way of representing a situation. In the context of this chapter, examining methods that convey ideological values or meanings without stating them directly, a particular use of collocation can be noted, where the combination of words suggests a simplified meaning that depends on leaving the specific content of the combined words undefined. So, for example, some words are juxtaposed with each other, in collocations that are left undefined and that are used as given, according to their simplified and stereotyped meanings, extracted from any historical specificity that they may have. Thus, the Australian newspapers repeatedly referred to people with differing opinions toward reform as “reformist” or “hard-liner”, without spelling out what these terms mean. By giving no definitions, *SMH* implied that those proposing radical changes in China were “reformists” and whoever opposes them were “hard-liners”. Likewise “Conservative” was juxtaposed with “liberal”, with the latter referring to people with Western ideas. Hard-liners were associated with tighter party control and their opponents were those in the forefront of economic change.

The juxtaposition of simplified concepts contributes to inconsistencies in the Australian newspapers’ coverage of the change in the politics. For instance, Deng Xiaoping, who was categorized by the Australian newspapers as a reformist, personally ordered the attack on the influence of the “bourgeois liberalization”, which, in the interpretation of the Australian newspapers, was a major setback for the reform. Similarly, proponents of the economic reform could be defenders of the orthodox Marxist doctrines at the same time. The Australian newspapers’ over-simplification of reform issues provides readers with a confused and inconsistent picture of both in both political and economic changes in the different structure and relationships of Chinese society.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the underlying assumptions in the Australian and the Chinese press coverage of Olympic activities and their relationship with media systems and philosophies and cultural traditions. It has shown that *PD*’s interpretation of the two countries’ Olympic activities is largely consistent with the

cultural values and traditions of Chinese society, subordinating personal to collective goals and emphasizing social stability. In doing so, it fulfils its role as a voice of the people, while providing a medium for guidance by authority and reinforcing official ideology, as part of the timing and significance of news. The Australian coverage is supportive of Australian cultural values, including individualism and enterprise, and often-critical views of authority and expectations of democracy, but with an eye to the news values, and entertainment value, of drama, conflict and controversy. These assumptions and views, however, are not necessarily stated overtly, as seen in variations of presentation such as the avoidance of definition, the use of figurative language and the rhetorical force of collocations.

## Chapter 7

### **Representations of the 1993 Bids and Beijing's Second Olympic Bid and 2008 Games Preparations**

Chapter 5 examined and compared the Chinese and Australian newspapers' representations of certain Olympic sub-topics, related to Beijing's two bids and preparations for the Games, at the lexical and propositional levels. It emphasized that the newspapers' opinions and attitudes in the coverage of a same issue are more or less influenced qualitatively by the media's own ideologies. Then, Chapter 6 looked further at the underlying assumptions in the newspapers' coverage of the two countries' Olympic activities and their relationship with cultural traditions of Australia and China by comparing the variations in the presentations of news values there. This chapter now extends the discourse analysis to cover press representations of Beijing and Sydney's bid in 1993 and Beijing's second bid, and Olympic preparations for the 2008 Games, in greater detail, and discuss shifts of perspective. It traces shifts towards softer political criticisms and pragmatic economic and business concerns in examples of the Australian press. It looks then at the way in which the Chinese press is still reacting to criticisms, but responding in new ways. Beijing's second bid has been regarded as an important "milestone" (Wen Han, BOBICO and BOCOG), marking a significant change, compared to the city's first bid, in the Chinese government's changing promotional strategy and the development of Chinese press reporting strategy. To help understand the relation between Chinese government and press strategies, the chapter examines relevant official discourse as well as news representation.

#### **7.1 Chinese and Australian press representations of the 1993 bids**

Beijing was hoping to win the right to host the Olympic Games of 2000, but faced rival bids from more experienced cities. Four candidate cities, Sydney, Manchester, Milan and Berlin, were respectively from countries that had held the Olympic Games before: Australia (Melbourne, 1956), UK (London, 1908, 1948), Italy (Rome, 1960) and Germany (Berlin, 1936, Munich, 1972). Leading press in China set as their keynote the one fact that China had never held the Olympic Games before, though

neither had Brazil or Turkey.

In the issue of 27/5/1991 (p. 1), *PD* carried an article titled “Beijing applies to host the Olympics”. The article analysed how “since World War II, there have been 13 Olympic sports meets, six held in Europe, four in America, two in Asia and one in Australia. It’s time for a country outside of these two continents to host the Olympics”. It further pointed out that:

in choosing the site for the 2000 Olympics, the IOC will consider the Olympic spirit and ideal, that is, sports competition can help young people develop both physically and mentally and promote mutual understanding and friendship between different peoples of the world so as to build a more peaceful and beautiful world. The IOC encourages developing countries to bear such an obligation, but so far, only two Olympics have been held in developing countries. With one-fifth of the world's population, China has the responsibility and the need to stage such a grand event. If China is permitted to hold the Olympics, the Olympic ideal will be spread throughout the country, a country with the largest population in the world.

This argument fulfilled the dual publicity roles of the Chinese press: building citizen’s confidence in the Beijing bid, and representing a strong political case to IOC members, especially those from developing countries. In addition to this point, the Chinese press were also focusing on reporting the whole country’s support for Beijing’s bid. In September 1993, just before the final ballot day, the Chinese press delivered the message that Beijing’s bid had captured all-out support from the entire country.

In response to the Chinese press’ focal point that China had never held the Olympics before, the Australian press stressed that Sydney’s application would be strengthened by failures of Melbourne’s 1996 Olympics bid and Brisbane’s 1992 bid. China’s press coverage represented China’s bidding as that of a nation arguing that it had never before been considered. Australian press presented Australia’s bidding as that of a nation that had regularly offered its services in the Olympic movement. But the media arguments differed on more substantial grounds as well.

Sydney's press covered stories sensitive to Sydney's bid, at least before 1993. Financial, environmental and social issues dominated the coverage of Sydney's bid by press media from 1991 to 1992. The press media covered both strengths and weaknesses in Sydney's bid during that period. The major weaknesses were addressed explicitly by the press, such as distances involved in travel to an isolated country, and international concerns, which had long existed, about the problems of holding equestrian events in Australia; and citizens' concerns about financial and environmental problems (e.g. "Dirty tricks' row hits Games bid", *SMH*, 19/7/1992, p. 24; "Pegasus now more at home in the air", *SMH* 15/5/1992, p. 27). The strengths were reported as: the compactness of Sydney's Olympic geography, with minimal travel between venues for athletes; the state government's commitment to sport, evidenced by the construction of \$300 million worth of sports facilities during the candidacy; the fact that 80 per cent of the sports facilities would be built by the time the IOC made its decision; security and political stability; community and government support at every level; good climate; Australia's Olympic record; and the fact the nation was making its third consecutive bid.

However, during the period leading more directly up to the announcement of Sydney's success there were few local critics of Sydney's bid, leading to some questioning of the independence of the media, especially given that leading media executives had become members of the bid committee (Bacon, 1993). The most high profile and consistent critic, Max Walsh of *The Sydney Morning Herald*, who produced a series of articles revealing the financial basis of the bid, became quiet when the date of the final ballot approached. It is also claimed that critical articles by freelance journalist Mikael Kjaerbye, published in September 1993 in *Reportage*, the newsletter of the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism (Hendy and Kjaerbye 1993; Kjaerbye 1993; Salleh and Kjaerbye 1993a, 1993b), had been rejected by a number of newspapers.

Lenskyj (1997, p. 87) has suggested that whether this lack of criticism was a result of an organized media or government conspiracy or a spontaneous and uncoordinated desire on all sides "not to jeopardize the bid by providing competing cities with critical ammunition, criticism of the idea of holding the Games in Sydney was muted".

Certainly, after these incidents, the press media mainly focused on the positive aspects to the bid. As did their counterparts in Beijing, the newspapers in Sydney marshaled positive reports as the decision date approached. At this stage, what differs is the range of coverage. Beijing focuses on broad political issues of national recognition and international cooperation, while Sydney focuses on the more pragmatic concerns of infrastructure and venues.

With their much longer history in coverage of the Olympics, the Australian press had gained more experience in reporting the Olympic bid than the Chinese press. It had witnessed the failures of the former two bids by two other Australian cities, knew how to cover the events in a new round of the bid more efficiently and in more telling detail. Its stories summed up, and paid close attention to, the shortcomings or the reasons leading to the failures of the former bids. They also introduced Sydney's advantages to the outside world. In the earlier stage, they emphasized concrete issues, such as financial strength and support (e.g. "\$300M nod: let the Games bid begin", *SMH*, 27/2/1991, p. 11) and environmental problems (e.g. "German sees a hole in our Olympic bid" [ozone layer], *SMH*, 19/7/1992, p. 10; "Greens enhance bid for Games", *SMH*, 4/3/1993, p. 37), construction of facilities (e.g. "Leading architects awarded main Olympic 2000 contract" *SMH*, 5/6/1993, p. 42), Australian quarantine barriers (e.g. "2000: Sydney too far away?", *SMH*, 9/8/1991, p. 17). The focal points in the Australian press coverage of the bid related to technical matters in relation to what Sydney could provide for the 2000 Olympics and athletes. After banging the drum for Sydney's infrastructure conditions and material environment, at a later stage, press attention turned into covering support from the Australian Government and people's enthusiasm for hosting the Olympics (e.g. "Olympic 2000 boost", *SMH*, 23/3/1992, p. 37; "Five reasons why Sydney should get Olympics", *SMH*, 20/10/1992, p. 21; "Govt. moves to protect Olympics", *SMH*, 6/6/1993, p. 12). Finally, whether having reached a compromise with the bid committee, or having hammered out any necessary reforms or improvements needed in planning, the press did not carry any further discordant stories on Sydney's bid and so secured Sydney's image before the final decision day.

Limited by a short history of taking part in the Olympics, the Chinese press showed a lack of the experience in locating an effective way to cover and promote Beijing's bid.

The Chinese Government regarded the bid for the right to host the 2000 Olympics as a shortcut to improve its international image and reputation, which was under widespread attack after 1989. The motto “A more open China awaits the 2000 Olympics” signaled China’s foreign policy of making friends with other countries rather than Beijing’s preparedness to handle a major international sports event. So, under the guidance of the government, the Chinese press focused the main theme of their coverage on all-out support and the desire of the government and 1.2 billion people across the whole country to host the Olympics. However, “humanity” publicity occupied too much space in the coverage. The press overlooked the need to assign enough space to covering technical matters, such as construction of facility, athletes’ accommodation problems, or environmental protection measures, in Beijing’s bid. The capacity for the press to firstly help develop the best possible bid, and then show the IOC that all possible problems and shortcomings had been addressed, was not available in a government-directed media.

### ***7.1.1 Portraying each other’s bidding rivalry in the 1993 bid***

But what of the other publicity role in this situation: the potential for each bidding team to foreground its rival’s shortcomings through its own press coverage?

In 1993, *PD* treated Sydney as an honourable opponent to Beijing in the contest for the 2000 Olympics. Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong, chairman of Beijing’s bidding committee, was quoted in March 1993 as saying the committee would maintain “the traditional Chinese virtues of never attacking others to elevate ourselves” (*PD*, 25/3/1993, p. 4). The paper made no derogatory references to Sydney’s shortcomings, nor did it quote such references from Chinese authorities. This was in contrast to a speech by then Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, who remarked to the IOC’s Evaluation Commission, “Well, Beijing is no fun city, but of course their crowd control is better than ours”, a remark – fortunately for Sydney’s bid – taken in good spirit by the delegates (*SMH*, 17/9/1994, p. 11). Here, the difference in social context and national systems is reflected – but in the press coverage as much as in the political practice. Sydney reported the comments, but Beijing did not.

Overtly, mid 1993, the Chinese traditional friendly spirit of competition between Beijing and Sydney was reflected in the *PD*'s front-page report, "Leaders talk the Olympic bid cheerfully" (5/6/1993, p. 1) of a light-hearted exchange between Keating and then Chinese Premier Li Peng in Beijing. Li said the applicant cities were competing opponents, but more simply were also friends. He said that "if Beijing succeeds in its application, I am ready to empty my pockets in support," a remark that brought laughter from the assembled officials. Keating replied:

Premier Li has put it very well. I agree with your view. It is true that Sydney and Beijing are competing opponents, but friendly opponents. In a word, the Olympic Games, no matter if held in Sydney or Beijing, will be held in the Asia-Pacific region. That is something to be pleased about.

Keating added: "Premier Li has said he is ready to empty his pockets in support of Beijing's hosting the Olympics. That must be a considerable sum". The paper reported that there was another wave of laughter. The news showed the Chinese press indicating that there was no obvious enmity between the two countries' governments in the contest. In the Chinese coverage, reporting the jokes suits the rhetorical purpose of making the political leaders seem more like one of the ordinary Chinese people (such gestures are one of the few occasions for gestures of being in touch with people since there are not electoral campaigns as in Australia), as well as suggesting a friendly atmosphere in the meeting of leaders of the two countries – Li Peng having been linked closely with the hard-line response to Tiananmen Square.

In Australia, *SMH* also covered Keating's visit to China: "Li Peng: I'll spend every cent to get the Games" (*SMH*, 25/6/1993, p. 6) and "Keating breaks the grovelling tradition" (*SMH*, 28/6/1993, p. 7). Both articles mentioned how "after two decades Australia has got its relationship with China about right ... the good news from Paul Keating's visit to Beijing and Shanghai turned on his emphatic rejection of the idea that Australia has, or can achieve, a special relationship with China" (*SMH*, 28/6/1993). Noticeably, Australia's coverage of Keating's visit stresses not harmony but critique – in line with its own critical practice. *SMH* (25/6/1993) states that "Li Peng said that he was prepared to take every cent out of his pocket to ensure Beijing's

successful bid for the year 2000 Olympic Games”. Accidentally or deliberately, this distorts Li Peng’s comment. According to Li’s original words and Keating’s response, described in *PD*, what Li would empty his pocket in support of was “hosting” rather than “getting” the 2000 Games. Combined with the article’s argument that the Chinese administration was struggling desperately to shake off the bad image it had acquired in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident, Beijing’s bid was represented as an effort to attain the Games actuated only by political motives, rather than the willingness to serve the Olympics. Furthermore, such misrepresentation produced an impression that the Chinese government would spare no cost to help Beijing get the Games. This is perhaps an instance where journalistic values of performing (liberal-minded) criticism, polarising sides in an event, can look at odds with other attitudes in the same cultural context that might recognise a more diplomatic exchange occurring.

In *PD*, the most unfavourable report on Sydney was a *Reuters* report, quoted by *PD*, that the strike by airline workers in Sydney in February 1993 had resulted in the cancellation of several international flights and left Olympic officials stranded at the airport for four hours. The report (*PD*, 4/2/1993, p. 4) said members of Sydney’s Olympic application committee were worried that the strike might destroy Sydney’s efforts. It pointed out, “the airport strike may leave Sydney’s Olympic bid carrying some extra baggage”. It seemed that the Chinese newspaper coverage of the strike in Sydney did influence Sydney’s image in China. A Beijing taxi driver, interviewed by *SMH*, had no doubt that his home town should be preferred over its main rival, Sydney, to stage the Olympics. He said: “You hear that the workers there are always going on strike in Sydney” (“An Olympic brawl fit for gentlemen” *SMH*, 25/2/1993, p. 12). *SMH* suggested that the strike could be “gleeful news” for Beijing, although no such “glee” could be seen in *PD*’s reportage of the issue. No matter what the Australian press thought of the Chinese press’ reaction to the issue, to this extent at least Sydney did continue to carry such negative stories in its Olympic bid coverage – even if reported in terms of concern rather than critique.

Australia’s press had been taking note of the obsessive passion with which Chinese authorities were pursuing the goal to win the bid. But, sometimes, exaggerated reports appeared. *SMH* reported on that “in an outrageous bid to beat Sydney to host

the 2000 Olympics, Beijing is giving one of China's greatest historical treasures – one of the terracotta warriors unearthed – worth \$100 million – to a new Olympic museum in Lausanne, Switzerland” (“\$100M bribe to Olympics”, 14/3/93, p. 17). However, the newspaper ignored the story when IOC publicity director Andrew Napier said later that all six bidding countries were lending art works for a temporary exhibit – and all would be returned. Indeed, when in May 1993, Samaranch made his official visit to Sydney, he was shown 10 works that the bid committee had arranged for the Art Gallery of NSW to lend his new Olympic art gallery in Lausanne (“Juan drops an Olympian hint”, *SMH*, 14/5/1993, p. 12). It seems that the Sydney newspaper was keen to report any stories discrediting rival bids.

In comparison, *PD* reported a positive reference to the Sydney bid shortly afterwards. It quoted a member of the IOC inspection delegation, at the end of the delegation's inspection of Sydney, as praising Sydney's first-class technical capability and rich experience in organizing world tournaments (“IOC delegation inspected Sydney”, *PD*, 3/4/1993, p. 4). *SMH*, too, published an article to report the inspection after the delegation had left for its second stop, Beijing (“The power of 12”, *SMH*, 6/3/1993, p. 75). It focused on two points, the head of the IOC Enquiry Commission, Gunnar Ericsson, favouring Sydney, and Sydney's low-key frugality for the reception of the delegation. According to the article, Ericsson denied the rumour that Beijing had been awarded the Games because the IOC was anxious to bring China to the world to assure Samaranch the Nobel Peace Prize. He believed that each candidate city's technical capability should be evaluated prior to everything, because the Olympic Games were first and last for the athletes. The newspaper hinted in summary that if there were 45 (a majority of final votes) IOC members thinking like Ericsson, Sydney would win the bid. As to Sydney's reception of the delegation, Ericsson made it clear that the IOC paid the travel costs of delegates and candidate cities met domestic expenses. AOC president John Coates (the source of news information referred to in Chapter 5) said the delegation had been transported around Sydney in a government air-conditioned minibus rather than a fleet of Mercedes. In contrast, before the IOC inspection delegation's visit to Beijing, *SMH* carried a front-page article to describe Beijing's all-out preparations to await the arrival of the delegation (“Swat squads keep the flies off Beijing's bid”, *SMH*, 4/3/1993, p. 1). The article stressed that the delegates would be driven around town in 14 new Mercedes, the number plates

changed to read “Beijing 2000”. It is noticeable that *SMH* was using such details to indicate that Sydney was more calm and confident than Beijing in facing the IOC delegation’s inspection.

*PD* quoted the chairman of the IOC inspection delegation as making some very positive remarks at the end of its visit to Beijing. He said Beijing was now opening up to the world and increasingly becoming an international city, and China’s economy was developing very rapidly. He was quoted as saying that Beijing’s application had the support of people at all levels: from the Premier to ordinary citizens, everybody had been very enthusiastic (*PD*, 10/3/1993, p. 1). On March 22, *SMH* (p. 21) described Beijing’s bid as “putting on a colorful show in the bid to win the 2000 Olympics”. The article, “Beijing’s big pitch”, stated:

Slogans proclaiming ‘a more open China awaits the 2000 Olympics’ covered giant billboards. Colored flags and balloons flanked major thoroughfares. Taxis carried ‘Beijing 2000’ stickers. Thirty thousand runners competed in the marathon, while whole neighborhoods were forbidden to burn coal in order to reduce offensive pollution. By the time the 11-member IOC’s site-selection team left town last Tuesday, they could have no doubt that China badly wanted to be the host to the 27<sup>th</sup> Olympiad seven years hence.

An article by the *PD*’s Canberra correspondent reflecting favourably on Australia was published on March 24, 1993. The paper reported that Sydney had announced new environmental protection measures for the Olympic village, including the use of only public transport, the generation of electricity by solar energy, re-circulated water supply, refrigeration that would not damage the ozone layer, and the exclusion of air conditioning from the entire village. No construction materials would be used that were harmful to the environment, and to reduce rubbish an electronic mail system would be used and food packaging materials would be reduced (*PD*, 24/3/1993, p. 2). Chinese newspapers did not mind reporting news favourable to Sydney’s bid.

Comparatively speaking, the different reporting approaches and focal points of covering the Olympic bid between the two countries’ press hardly produced any direct

clash, which the Chinese press seemed to try to avoid. However, the Australian press carried more negative reports than the Chinese press did, in coverage of both countries' bids. It performed more critically even in portraying Sydney's bidding rivalry. In sum, press coverage of two cities' bidding close to the final vote shows the Chinese press, in line with their consistent performance, playing the propaganda role, serving and promoting the Beijing bid, but rarely picking on Beijing's rivals. By contrast, the Australian press reduced critique on sensitive issues related to the Sydney bid, such as the bribery scandal, once the investigative focus by the *SMH*. Playing up its own bid, the Australian press also worked to criticise Sydney's rivals, especially Beijing.

### ***7.1.2 The Australian newspapers' pause in reporting the bribery scandal in Sydney's bid***

In January 1999, AOC president John Coates released documents revealing that he, and other officials, had been involved in extensive vote buying in 1993 to secure Sydney's Games' bid. The documents released by Coates also revealed many other bribery facts, including the scandal that NSW state government Olympic Minister, Bruce Baird, one of 15 members of the board that directed the 1993 bid, assisted Nick Voinov, the son-in-law of Alexandru Siperco, Romania's IOC delegate, to gain employment as an engineer with NSW State Rail ten months before Sydney secured the 2000 Games (Phillips, 1999). *SMH* had covered the story when the "SRA job" issue was exposed at the very beginning. From August 11, 1993 to August 30, 1993, it carried investigative reporting to track the story, detailing "How an IOC member's son-in-law got his SRA job" (11/8/1993, p. 11), "Baird backflip in Olympics job row" (12/8/1993, p. 12), "Un-Australian Olympic Games" (12/8/1993, p. 12), "Unionists say Olympic man's job broke rules" (15/8/1993, p. 11), "Man at centre of bid row speaks" (17/8/1993, p. 13), "Baird shielded from political attack" (24/8/1993, p. 12) and "ICAC to be called in on rail job" (30/8/1993, p. 11). However, after August 30, the paper stopped reporting the issue and focusing on revelations of the bid committee's cost, suggesting that, even in the Australian context, news values such as immediacy can be affected by concerns with timing. It did not mention the scandal again until Sydney's bid victory. On 24/9/1993 (the next day after winning), *SMH*

published two articles, “ICAC may investigate ‘special’ SRA job” (p. 10) and “SRA job ordered for ‘our Romanian friend’” (p. 10) to inform the public that the ICAC (the Independent Commission Against Corruption) was examining documents revealing how the “special appointment” of the son-in-law of a Romanian Olympic Committee member to the SRA occurred, and was considering investigating the matter.

On February 18, 1999, the *Associated Press* (AP) released an article, “Baird: Newspaper protected Sydney bid”, which quoted Bruce Baird as saying:

Sydney newspapers made a secret deal not to report on the fawning and spending during the city’s successful bid for the 2000 Olympics ... at the time we did the bid, we had an agreement from Ken Cowley of News Ltd., from Kerry Packer, and from John Alexander of *The Sydney Morning Herald* that they knew we would be going into a high level of duchessing and they were satisfied that that would be OK and they would not run the normal stories about it. (*AP*, 18/2/1999)

Nearly one month’s break for the reportage on the issue did not mean that *SMH* gave up covering those more sensitive issues, but made people feel like that the paper’s real watchdog function was out of order for a while; in other words, under the control of some interest group. The sole aim was very clear: to guarantee the image of Sydney before the final ballot. However, *SMH* appeared to have become aware of its reputation, or responsible freedom of speech, so that, right after Sydney’s victory, the paper was impatient to state its position by resuming its coverage of the scandals immediately. By doing this, the newspaper still met the news values of timeliness and objectivity, keeping readers abreast of the issue, but timed the reportage to achieve a certain purpose.

### ***7.1.3 The Chinese press kept the silence on Sydney’s bribery scandal***

Interestingly, before the final vote, Chinese press media did not mention any vote buying scandal in Sydney’s bid at all. Among the total 81 news items from the Chinese press in its coverage of both Beijing and Sydney’s bid, there is not any story

mentioning the vote buying scandal. It is certain that the Chinese press read the *SMH*'s early coverage about those issues, because the Chinese official Xinhua news agency reads and translates news from the entire world everyday. So, what produced their reticence? There are three aspects to consider. First, the Beijing bid committee persistently claimed its decision to maintain "the traditional Chinese virtues of never attacking others to elevate ourselves" (*PD*, 25/3/1993, p. 4). Similarly, the Chinese press media did not cover any improper conduct by other bidding rivals. Second, while Beijing's bid was under attack from US congress, China did not want to make too many enemies. This is consistent with the Chinese government policy of not reporting news detrimental to China's relationship with friendly countries. Australia was certainly considered a friendly country, clearly shown in the previously mentioned friendly meeting between Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating and Chinese Premier Li Peng in Beijing on June 24, 1993 (*PD*, 25/6/1993).

Third, above all, this refusal to report negative stories shows the different features of Australian and Chinese newspapers. Like many Western newspapers, Australian newspapers are generally unconstrained, straightforward and sometimes fiercely critical. Chinese newspapers, apart from being controlled by the government, are constrained by traditional Chinese culture, dominated by the doctrine of Confucius. Chinese newspapers stress self-restraint, reserved opinion, modest claims and magnanimous conduct. This can be seen reflected in an article recalling the production of the *PD* editorial on September 24, 1993 by the editor Li Demin (*PD*, 16/7/2001; Appendix C). Right before the final vote day, Li was asked to draft two commentaries in line with two possible Monte Carlo voting results either win or failure. He summarized his instructions as: Gain – do not become conceited because of victory; lose – do not be disheartened in case of defeat. If a win occurred, the paper would publish a commentary entitled "Beijing thanks the world"; if it failed, it would publish a different commentary titled "Unswervingly advancing to the world". The commentary published was the latter one, which said:

We respect the choice of IOC, and congratulate Sydney on its Olympic bid success. At the same time we are, as always, filled with gratitude to

the IOC for its support of China's work in applying to host the Olympic Games and are, as always, filled with the sentiment of friendship for the whole world. In the future, China will all the more open its mind to welcome guests from all the four seas, and extensively make friends from the five continents, and will unswervingly advance toward the world. The open China is expecting the Olympic Games; an open China is fully capable of hosting an Olympic Games successfully. Hosting the Olympic Games is the strong wish of the Chinese people whether today or in the future.

According to the commentary, Sydney's win would not incur any negative reports from the newspaper. The commentary of the *PD* soberly accepted the final decision by the IOC and expressed congratulations from the Chinese official daily newspaper on Sydney's success. However, it is clear that, although respecting the result, the article did not express any doubt about Beijing's capability to host the Games. In the conclusion, the article comforted the Chinese people suffering defeat by Sydney and encouraged them not to give up. So, the commentary also vividly and incisively showed the Chinese press conventions of self-restraint and magnanimity.

## **7.2 Australian representations of Beijing's second bid and Games preparations**

The defeat of the 2000 bid was painful for China. The Chinese authorities and the press showed restraint and discipline in not complaining about the decision. Instead, they further strengthened their Olympic credentials by performing well at the Atlanta Games (winning 50 medals, 16 of them gold), and even better at Sydney (with a total of 59 medals, 28 of them gold). By 1998, the Chinese Government had decided to submit a second candidature, this time for the 2008 Games. Beijing faced stronger competition in 2001 than it had eight years earlier. For this campaign, it is interesting to have a close look at the Australian newspapers' coverage of Beijing's bid, since Sydney's role had changed from a competitor to a spectator. As Beijing's main rivals in the bid, Toronto and Paris, on behalf of countries with strong Olympic history, offered imaginative and competitive bids. For comparing with the press representation of the 2000 bid, the selected Australian press coverage of Beijing's

second bid to host the Olympics is considered first, then its coverage of Beijing's preparation for the 2008 Games.

### ***7.2.1 Australian coverage of Beijing's second Olympic bid***

Unavoidably, the human rights issue was again one of the vulnerable aspects of Beijing's bid. Olympic protocol forbids the competitor cities to indulge in polemics against each other. But Beijing's opponents took adequate opportunity to draw implicit comparisons on human rights, while both Paris and Toronto stressed the multicultural character of their cities and political democracy far more than they would have done against a competitor other than Beijing (PCF 2008, p. 23; TCF 2008; pp. 15-21).

When it comes to press perspectives, not tied to Olympic protocol, *The Australian's* coverage of human rights issues in relation to Beijing's Olympic second bid campaign is somewhere between alternately positive and negative news reports and uncompromising criticism. It does not simply criticize China's human rights record and bombard the Chinese government with anti-communism slant. Nor does it adopt a sarcastic tone when making a critical report. Nonetheless, it continues to pay attention to the political and media aspects of Beijing's bid in relation to human rights issues.

When the ballot day was approaching, two representational news reports appeared on July 9, 2001, five days before Beijing won its bid. Headlined "Beijing Olympics chiefs confident of clearing human rights hurdle" (*TA*, 9/7/2001, p. 7) and "Beijing bid team deflects criticism" (*TA*, 9/7/2001, p. 28; Appendix B), the stories aim to discredit Beijing's claim that politics should play no part in the bid process of a sports event. Especially the second story, it gave lengthy paragraphs to make the point that the Beijing bid is a political trick played by politicians despite Beijing's public claim of its politics-free stand for the bid. The report was published at the key moment when China's claim was gaining more and more sympathy and wider support from the international community. The headline sounds like a harsh statement criticising Beijing as playing political tricks. It is a straightforward message that the Beijing

bid team mainly consists of government officials or politicians who are good at bringing politics to the bid process for a sports event. Theme of the report is constituted by the message, which is negative to Beijing's bid. The negativeness of the story is further indicated by the word "oppression", which is used in the introduction to describe Beijing as a "city synonymous with oppression". Actually, the phrase "Tiananmen Square" is not mentioned in the story. However, the combination of Beijing with the word "oppression" explicitly aims to remind readers of the past political woes of China and its capital city, where the oppressive tragedy happened twelve years ago. The myth of Tiananmen is implied here to drop a hint and highlight the theme of dirty politics.

According to the hint in the story, the person who playing the dirty tricks is Liu Jingmin, Vice-Mayor and deputy executive president of BOBICO, a typical politician. The story tells that he "smoothly deflects international criticism and concerns". The word, "smooth" often carries a negative meaning when used to depict politicians as it implies being courteous but insincere. Combined with the word "deflect", with the similar implication, "smooth" is applied here to maintain the negative tone set as the theme of the story.

Furthermore, to compare with the aggressiveness and impatience of "most other Chinese politicians", Liu's smoothness is described as having "all the answers" to sensitive topics including "human rights, religious suppression, freedom of speech, Falun Gong, Tibet, public protest, and pressure for political change". The political skills of Liu and his team are so refined because, the report says, they are "well coached" by two international public relations firms. The use of the term "well coached" suggests that the smoothness of the Chinese is a trained political performance, well practised and thus untrue and insincere. While giving credit to the public relation firms, the report does not forget to mention that one of the firms "acted for former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet". For the second time in this study, we can see a dictator appeared in the Australian newspapers coverage of the Olympic-related topics. In the lexical analysis of Chapter 5, *SMH* suggests that Samaranch, a diplomat and a supporter of General Franco, would love to bring China to the world. It seems that the Australian newspapers are consistently interested in associating the notorious dictators with China and to implicate CPC's political control

over China as a dictatorship as well. Apart from the “coached” smoothness of the Chinese politicians, the story provides some “facts” that could discredit the Chinese claim of its politics-free stand.

First, the story questions the Chinese government’s double standards in treating domestic and overseas Falun Gong practitioners. Drawing on the Chinese government’s promise to welcome overseas Falun Gong members to attend the Games, the story challenges the same government’s claim that Falun Gong is an illegal cult. The story also makes the case of Taiwan as an example to contradict Beijing’s public claim that no politics should be involved in the bid process, making Beijing’s suggestion that Taiwan could co-host some events another indication that Beijing is playing politics. To support the argument, the story quotes an unidentified Chinese official as admitting that “to the outside world, we say that politics should not be part of the process, but in reality, everything in China is political”. It further suggests that the Chinese government has invested “enormous political capital” in the bid. That includes the “State-controlled media” which are “projecting the impression that widespread international support makes Beijing a shoo-in for July 13”. These media are also described as being good at “whipping up nationalistic sentiment”.

This effort to discredit Beijing’s claim of politics-free stand aimed at revealing the real purpose of the Chinese government for winning the bid. The legitimacy of the Communist regime is questioned for “the brutal way the government stays in power” as suggested by the story. “The brutal way” is actually a different wording for abuse of human rights in implication of “Tiananmen Square” incident. The story cites critics as saying that this brutal way “compromises the Olympic ideal” of respect for universal fundamental ethical principles and the preservation of human dignity. This could be paraphrased as saying that the Chinese government stays in power through abuses of human rights and therefore the existence of the government is a violation of “the preservation of human dignity”. Human rights are something implicit, yet are present as an issue, from the introduction where the abuse of human rights is hinted at by “a city synonymous with oppression” to the mention of Tibetans protesting against the Beijing bid.

The story exemplifies the juxtaposition of multiple actors to represent critically the Chinese attempts to project a unified image in the campaign. First there is the image of Beijing, the city of “oppression”. Then there are the images of the Chinese bid official who “smoothly deflects” criticism and who “has all the answers”; the BOBICO officials who have been “well coached” by international public relations firms; “most other Chinese politicians”, who are characterized by “an aggressive wave of the hand or a piquish grunt”; and finally the Chinese government, which is “brutal”, behaves “strangely”, and has become “adept at whipping up nationalistic sentiment”. And also a cautious revelation by a pavid Chinese official who is quoted in the story and yet who “declined to be identified” depicts an image of the people working under the dictatorship.

The combination of these separate images shows some interesting points. First, they are all negative and sarcastic. We can hardly see a positive image of Chinese bid in this story. Second, the images of Chinese politicians show a kind of evolution between two generations of Chinese politicians. The image of the older generation, which is described by “an aggressive wave of the hand or a piquish grunt”, is still in the same mould of the Western stereotyping of Chinese leaders in Mao’s era. The image of the younger generation, which is represented by Liu Jingmin, is more or less different from the older generation. The professionalism and the competence of China’s new generation of professional politicians are meaningfully described as smooth and having “all the answers”. Young politicians are imaged as “well coached” actors for the purpose of “performing for the international media”. In other words, the competence of the younger generation is projected as the temporary result of public relation firms’ efforts, rather than professional qualifications. Third, integrating all the images together could depict a larger image of China which, as portrayed by the story, is still under the oppression of the “brutal” communist regime, although the Chinese politicians are trying hard to put on a different show. The clue that strings all the images in line, framing the news, is the implicit theme, coordinating all components reported in the story, from the coaching of BOBICO officials to the impression projected by the State-controlled media.

At the time when the final ballot is approaching and criticism of China is at its utmost peak, this report stands out as different. In accordance with Western criticism, the

story is uncompromising in its stand against the Communist regime. But its hostility is disguised by the indirect way it has used the myth implicated from the truth.

Here, we can see an example of the way *The Australian* treats the myth from the story headlined “Tiananmen Fails IOC Venue Test” (26/2/2001, p. 10). This story appeared when the IOC’s assessment team was at the end of their inspection tour of Beijing. While most other negative Western criticism of the team’s activity in China was focused on Falun Gong demonstrations, dissidents and Beijing’s clumsy effort to paint up the city for the inspection, this report was about Tiananmen Square being rejected as a sports venue. Any other spot being rejected as a venue might be a simple, routine report. But with Tiananmen, which has become a symbol, a mythic site, it is not just a simple event any more.

The beginning of the report shows no connotation or comment other than narrating the story unambiguously that Tiananmen has been rejected as a suitable sports venue. Technically, Tiananmen Square is simply introduced as “a vast grey concrete plaza at Beijing’s epicentre”. Then, from the third and fourth paragraphs, the mythic connotations of Tiananmen Square emerge. The head of the inspection team was quoted as saying that the reasons for the rejection were beyond technical considerations, the report is able to define a political Tiananmen Square:

Tiananmen Square is China’s most politically sensitive site, the centre of mass student-led demonstrations that were fatally quashed by an army assault in June 1989, and most recently the venue for almost daily demonstrations by Falun Gong followers protesting the demonisation of their group.

This passage presents Tiananmen Square as a “most politically sensitive site”, instead of a symbol of human rights abuse – indicating the way in which mythic associations can change in varying contexts of press discourse. What happened in June 1989 is described as demonstrations “fatally quashed” by an “army assault”, rather than a “pro-democracy” student movement that ended up in a “massacre” by the Chinese government. And the Falun Gong followers’ demonstrations on the Square are described as protesting the “demonisation” of their group, rather than the

“crackdown” of their group, but some continuity of government controls is implied by linking past and present events in relation to this place. Nothing is described in details about what really happened at the Square. Already, these associations have produced horrible images of students being crushed by military tanks and being shot by bullets. They have also produced images of Falun Gong protesters being dragged away by plain-clothed policeman and put into prison. The variation of the myth in this story is more reserved and politically sensitive than the other Western press versions which, by contrast, are filled with more negative and aggressive details.

It seems that the closer the voting day approaches, the softer *The Australian* has become in criticising China’s human rights record. The 9/7/2001 story uses “a city synonymous with oppression” and “the brutal way the government stays in power” to imply human rights abuses without actually mentioning human rights. The phrase human rights do not appear in the February of 2001 story either, but the myth of Tiananmen Square is used. Still earlier, one story (28/9/2000, p. 42) not only straightforwardly criticises China for its latest human rights abuses but also is much harsher in tone. Headlined “State of amnesia”, it cites reports of religious repression as well as political oppression from various sources to show what an “appalling” and “notoriously woeful” human rights record China has. By comparison, “Australia is undeniably a mature multi-party democracy where race relations are being discussed at every level of society”.

While this comparison of the democratic “us” versus the oppressive “them” was consistent in the newspaper’s coverage of Beijing’s Olympic campaign, the hostile stance in the year 2000 obviously changed to a soft approach by the eve of IOC’s final decision. It seems that the international political environment and domestic policy might have much to do with the change. However, one point about the stories is noteworthy: the conspicuous absence of the argument that awarding the Games to China will expose China to international scrutiny. The exclusion of this proposition reveals that, harsh tone or soft approach, the argument is for making China improve its human rights behaviour, rather than giving China the Games means supporting the Communist regime.

### **7.2.2 *Australian representations of Beijing's preparations for the 2008 Games***

China achieved its wishes when the Games were awarded to Beijing on July 13, 2001. Then, the press' attention turns to Beijing's preparations of the Games. Technically speaking, *TA's* stories about Beijing's preparations for the 2008 Games cover the issues of drugs, facilities, and business, but broader perspectives on cultural and political issues still emerge. The stories were published between July 13, 2001 and May 15, 2002 after Beijing won the Games, the period when organisers with some justification were trying to direct media attention away from the concerns of human rights to more tangible issues such as facilities and services. However, the topic of environment protection is conspicuously absent from the Australian coverage, though, it is the area in which Beijing's bid benefited from Australia's experience, including the concept of a "Green Olympics".

First of all, we can have a look at the drug-related topics. There are three stories on the drug issue. The first was published only four days after Beijing's win. Headlined "Banned but still training – changing the Olympic Guard" (17/7/2001, p. 28), it tells of Chinese athletes and coaches who were banned from the international scene but are still training in China. The story questions China's sincerity in solving the "doping" problem and uses unambiguously negative words that suggest suspicion and distrust. For example, it says:

Athletes and coaches banned from international competition to help China win the right to stage the 2008 Olympics Games are still training, casting doubt on claims that China's state-sponsored sports system has cracked down on drug abuse.

The wording is blunt and the term "casting doubt" stops just short of making a direct accusation. The message is clear: China's widely-acclaimed ban was only a time-out to "help" Beijing get the 2008 Games. Now with the Games in hand, those banned are allowed to be back in the arena again. China's so-called crackdown on drug abuse therefore remains at the stage of making only mere forms or routines, rather than practical moves. Such criticism and "doubt" are further expressed in the next paragraph:

Amid promises by Communist Party officials that bringing the Games to China will help improve human rights, little has been said about how genuine reforms to the world's last remaining socialist sporting behemoth will be in the run-up to 2008.

The word “genuine” reflects the distrust of the Chinese government’s promises and claims. Then, the story cites the cases of Ma Junren, a famous trainer of women’s long-distance running, and Zhou Ming, a former national swimming coach, to justify this distrust. The story indicates that Ma is called “the notorious trainer” and is identified as one of the 27 athletes and coaches pulled from the Chinese Olympic team for the Sydney Games “amid suspicions of widespread doping”. Zhou Ming, according to the story, on the other hand, is found still training while “supposedly suspended on doping charges for eight years”. Although the story mentions the fact that “none” of the athletes taken off from the Olympic team had tested positive, the story nevertheless has tried to make it sound like just the opposite should have happened. The technique of assumed guilt is conveyed by the narrative detail that the removal of the athletes came “immediately after it was announced Sydney would randomly test for the previously untested substance EPO”, with the chronological link implying a causal one (Barthes, 1977). In this way, the story implies that if the Chinese were innocent, they should not be scared to take the test. Other techniques have also helped the story to convey the sense of doubt and distrust. For one thing, by giving credible sources, the story has managed to make a seemingly strong argument out of the two cases. Seemingly, the case of Ma Junren is not valid in the first place. Ma was indeed removed from the national Olympic team for the Sydney Games, although none of his athletes returned positive samples later. But he was not banned from training, and no charges of doping were brought against him. So he was not “bragging” when he told the Chinese media, based on the story that he is not out of the game. He was in fact well into the game and playing out his training skills at his “world-class” training camp in China as described by the story. Thus, the story delivers the argument on the facts it collects without further verification, which is also important to keep an objective reporting. Perhaps Ma Junren, as one of the most controversial figures in world sport, is a good actor to be used in a story to bring up the controversy. Here, the story reveals the news values of narrative and

controversy, which help frame the reportage of issues in the Australian newspaper. As Branston and Stafford (2006, pp. 150-165) suggest, the approach of developing long-running stories allows certain “characters” to be constructed with particular motives and qualities in the unfolding drama of events – and this can include ways of casting actors as “heroes and villains”, or “a ‘them or us’ element” from an ideological viewpoint (Ward, 1995, p. 113). Using Ma as a character in the narrative gives far greater weight to the criticism of China, because of the fame he has.

In this story China plays a role of untrustworthy actor who has kept making promises and yet has kept breaking them as well. What China is apt to do is to claim having done something when it has actually done little, except perhaps for some immediate gains rather than long-term commitment. What does this construction of an untrustworthy government reveal? Arguably, anti-communist sentiment is present in this display of doubt: in the second paragraph, instead of saying the Chinese government, the story uses “Communist Party officials”. However, this perhaps is a typical framing that associates the Chinese Olympic-related activities with Party bureaucracy in the bid. Now that the villain has the prize, the good should do everything in power to make them uncomfortable if they do not behave like “us”. At least the attitude is sceptical: could they behave like “us” even if they claim they would? This distrust is disseminated through the story as grave concerns for the problem of drug abuse. But as a whole, the story is an expression of doubt about the solvability of a problem, the Communist regime’s ability to deliver on its promise of making the Beijing Games “the best ever”.

The second story on drugs is in the same mould. In fact, it could be read as a follow-up report to the first one. It uses the same tone of suspicion and distrust to convey the same message. With the headline “Ma’s latest storm blows into Canada” (2/8/2001, p. 8), the story reports on an overweening Ma Junren in Edmonton, Canada, as deputy head of the Chinese team for the world championships while two of his athletes were banned by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) for two years. Despite the fact that Ma is given a fair amount of space to argue his case, the emphasis on the IAAF ban of Ma’s two athletes, as well as on the suspicion around the Chinese pre-Sydney ban, plays up the theme of distrust and keeps the accusing finger firmly pointed at China. In its introduction, the story goes like this: “Having

only just won the rights to host the 2008 Olympic Games, a cloud hovers over China's athletics squad in Edmonton, Canada, for the world championships, starting tomorrow". The stress on immediateness ("Having only just") here allows the drama and uncertainty of events to be heightened.

The cloud of doubt, as the story goes on, comes from the IAAF bans of Ma's charges for using the banned body-building drug "testosterone". The bans are regarded by the story as confirmation of "long-held suspicions" about the record breaking performances by Ma's long and middle-distance female runners. But they also "throw renewed doubts" on Chinese government claims to have cleaned drugs out of sport. The story ends by citing an unnamed Chinese source as saying that the pre-Olympics ban was an emergency measure aimed only at ensuring that China was not embarrassed by positive tests during the Olympic Games. The Chinese source is further quoted: "in reality, nothing has been done about cleaning drugs out of sport in China because the most important thing is to win – and not be caught taking drugs to do it," the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Although voiced by the Chinese source, the logic has a striking similarity to the previous story, which sees the Chinese ban as a move to "help China" win the right to stage the 2008 Games and notes that "little has been said" about how genuine reforms will be. The same logic has naturally produced the same conclusion: what is ultimately in doubt is China's credibility. China in this story is again portrayed as like a "villain", but one difference from the previous story is the depiction of Ma Junren. The second story uses "controversial mentor" to describe Ma and refers to his reputation "as a super coach". In the previous story, however, Ma is described as "the notorious trainer" and cited as an example of the "banned but still training" cases to exemplify China's insincerity in cleaning drugs out of sport. This change of terms is probably due to the fact that Ma was officially cleared of any direct involvement in the doping by his two athletes and had IAAF permission to continue coaching at an international level. As reported, Ma himself had not been banned from coaching and the IAAF only criticised Ma for "loose administration". This is a different version from the previous story, which is based on the assumption that Ma had been banned from coaching at international level. That assumption has turned out to be wrong. But the change of terms does not necessarily mean that the story put Ma under favourable light this time. The technique is to implicate Ma in the doping scandal even though

Ma has claimed to be innocent:

Controversial mentor Ma Junren is with the Chinese team in Edmonton as deputy head coach, as officials in his homeland attempt to quash fallout from Ma's threats to sue his country's track-and-field authorities over bans handed down to athletes under his charge for using performance-enhancing drugs.

Here, Ma's first international appearance after China was awarded the 2008 Games is interpreted as a compromise by China's sports officials to "quash fallout". In addition, "Ma's threat" is phrased in such a way that it suggests that Ma went to Canada virtually by threatening the sports authorities in China. Hence, his international appearance, intended by the Chinese sports authorities as a positive and symbolic gesture to show that China's track-and-field movement is still intact and unaffected by a few individual cases of doping, has been transformed into an event in which both Ma and the Chinese sports authorities are put under suspicion. Questions arise about indecent dealings, and even possible scandals, by the Chinese sports authorities regarding its fear of Ma's threats, while Ma's own innocence is put under suspicion by stressing the fact that the athletes banned are "under his charge".

This kind of transformation occurs throughout the story. For instance, while the Chinese greeted the IAAF's criticism of Ma as "a mild rebuke", the story calls it "denunciation" and quotes a Chinese sports official as saying that Ma's case was being handled "internally". "Internally" suggests handling something behind closed doors and applying a different set of rules. In the case of Ma, "closed doors" means he is an exception from China's common practice of banning coaches of athletes caught using drugs. The explanation is, using the words of Shen Chunde, a senior official with the Chinese Athletics Association, that Ma was not the "direct charge coach" of the two runners. But the story adds, still in the words of Shen, that Ma is "supervisor of the Liaoning team". This addition implies that by being the supervisor, Ma's role in the doping should be investigated, rather than giving him the exception.

These transformations have made Ma's argument sound weak. As told by the story,

he called the ban “an unjust verdict” and believed “someone is out to frame me”. This feeling of being victimized is made to sound like a convicted man protesting his innocence. Ma’s argument is put there only to make the story look balanced: the article is presenting the other side of the controversy. But the way it is framed does not make the story objective. Enveloped in the “cloud” of doubts hovering over Edmonton, Ma is made to look no better than his home country, even though he himself has been officially cleared of any involvement in the doping charges.

In sharp contrast, the third story on drugs, which was published ten months later, is a positive portrayal of China. Headlined “Chinese take advice from Australia on drug-testing” (*TA*, 12/9/2000, p. 8), it is about how Australia will “assist in developing China’s national drug-testing program over the next three years and in planning for the testing program during the Olympics”. The tone throughout the story is positive and optimistic about China’s anti-drug battle. The primary reason may be the involvement of Australia in the Chinese battle: if China is depicted as a villain, then Australia would look bad in helping the villain. So the story spares no effort to build a favourable image of China this time, putting emphasis on the seriousness of China in dealing with drug issues. This emphasis is first reflected by the headline which suggests that China is eager to learn and to improve. Based on this positive note, the story begins to build up the theme of the Chinese readiness to take strategic actions against drug abuse. Such actions include “an approach” to Australia for help and the desire to establish “the most stringent testing program in history for 2008”. Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) chief executive John Mendoza is quoted to show ASDA’s confidence in China: “I think people can be confident of a strong deterrent program in China”. These favourable depictions of China have helped justify Australia’s involvement in China’s plan to set up both a national drug-testing program and a specific drug-testing program for the 2008 Beijing Games. After repeated criticism and attacks that China has done virtually nothing to clean drugs out of sport, such a justification is necessary.

Forgetting the critical coverage of China’s drug issues *The Australian* made before could raise questions about the newspaper’s consistency in dealing with the drug issue in China. However, picking up the old critical tone would contradict the favourable theme of the story. Confronted with this dilemma, the story’s solution is to

acknowledge problems in China without making any direct criticism or comment. The acknowledgement is accomplished through Mendoza as saying: “One of the problems the Chinese have is that their testing program can’t cope with the vast numbers of athletes coming through their development programs,” he said. The tone sounds more like an excuse for the Chinese incapability rather than criticism. The one problem Mendoza identified is more technical than bureaucratic neglect. This is a very different picture from the previous two stories, which have portrayed China as unwilling to deliver on its promises. To show consistency with the newspaper’s critical coverage of the drug issue in China, the story makes some criticism, but in a disguised form:

The Australian Olympic Committee yesterday launched its three-year drug education program leading into the 2004 Olympic Games, and it places particular emphasis on the dangers of athletes using nutritional supplements.

The emphasis on “nutritional supplements” is not put there simply to highlight the Australian campaign. It could be read as implying the extensive use of nutritional supplements by Chinese athletes to improve performance, suggested here by the device of implication. Because many of the nutritional supplements reportedly contain banned substances, the use of them has been a sore spot for China and is probed even by international news media. The mention of the issue, although in relation to the Australian drug education program, is thus intended to initiate a string of associations with China’s practice. In this indirect way, the story criticises China and yet does not risk triggering negative responses from China.

The image of China in this story is an incapable guy struggling with doping problems and wanting to gain help from us and then become one of us. This is a different image compared with the one portrayed by the previous two stories as a villain disguised as a good guy. Such a distinction is not a change of the newspaper’s perception of China. Rather, it can be interpreted as a technical manoeuvre, or tactic, casting Australia in a favourable light.

When the routine reporting on China returns, the newspaper’s coverage has tended to

be critical, as already shown by the first two stories on doping. Another example is a story headlined “Big guns called up for Games dry-run” (23/8/2001, p. 17). It is a critical report about logistic issues concerning the 21st World University Games (Universiade) held in Beijing, a dry run by China for the 2008 Olympic Games. Covering a range of issues including environment, facilities, traffic, and security, the story presents a negative picture of Beijing’s preparations for the university games to contradict Beijing’s promise to make the Universiade “the best in history”. The first three paragraphs are an ironic description of how Beijing organisers have managed to “have tamed mother nature” with their manipulative skills. The second part of the story, consisting of seven paragraphs, is a depiction of the logistics problems the university games is already experiencing, such as insufficient facilities, traffic disorders, and potential security threats. The last part of the story, also consisting of seven paragraphs, is about how differently the University Games are perceived by the Chinese and other countries.

The first part of the story begins with references to the Chinese shooting cannonballs containing silver iodine into the clouds to clear the sky, restricting traffic movement, and closing factories to ensure clean air for the Universiade. These measures are depicted as examples to prove that the Chinese are “master manipulators”. The transitional paragraph to the second part of the story is a concentrated display of almost all the negative elements of the story. Although organisers appear to have tamed mother nature, things on the ground are not quite as controlled. As the city’s communist rulers brag about staging the best ever Universiade, members of the home delegation have been forced to move out of the athletes’ village and roads around major venues have been choked for weeks with largely immobile traffic. Here, Beijing organisers are portrayed as “communist overlords” who have proven to be just boasting about the games. This image is almost a copy of the one projected by the first two drug stories. The communist villain seems to be the standard typecast for imaging China in *The Australian’s* coverage of Beijing’s Olympic campaign. Such typecasting is in the same tone as *The Sydney Morning Herald* in its portraying of China, although these *TA* stories are more elaborate. This can be seen in the techniques used in the third story referred to here. First is the use of irony, suggesting incongruity between activities reported and reality. Take the introduction, for example: “The Chinese pride themselves on being master manipulators, so when

they needed clear sky for the opening ceremony of the 21st World University Games yesterday, they wheeled out the big guns”. The irony is established through the description of the Chinese wheeling out “the big guns” to tame Mother Nature. The combination of “the big guns” with the active verb “wheel out” projects a picture of serious-looking Chinese doing something self-deceptively childish. Behind the comic effect is the criticism that China is taking some cosmetic measures to treat fundamental problems. The irony in the introduction has helped convey the message that the Chinese think they are clever in working out the temporary solution to air pollution, and again imply the Chinese organisers’ tricks of seeking some immediate gains rather than long-term commitment, but the quick solution has made them a target of international criticism.

Irony of this kind is also used in the description of the “tight” security surrounding the University games: “Security is tight: plainclothes police officers are stationed every few metres along streets around the stadium, and paramilitary police wearing bullet-proof vests jog around the neighbourhood in formation”. What is made comic about this scene is that deploying so many policemen and paramilitary police is supposed to give a sense of security, but in effect nobody could feel safe in this tense atmosphere as the newspaper described since the scary scenes always appear in the Australian newspaper’s past coverage of the Chinese military’s oppression of the demonstrators and plainclothes dealing with dissenters. The other point is while the Chinese are celebrating the games in festive mood inside the stadium, the presence of the police is making a nuisance to the general public outside.

The other technique used by the story is critical contrast. This is used extensively in the third part of the story, which is a depiction of China’s, as against others’, perception of the Universiade. As a contrast to problems covered by the second part of the story, for instance, the story sarcastically reports that IOC luminaries have been “praising the games’ facilities”. A sharp contrast made between China’s effort to make the Universiade a “high-profile” event and the indifference shown by the rest of the world to the games. The story points out that while there was no competition when Beijing decided to bid for the Universiade, which “generally loses money for host cities”, the Chinese vowed to make it “the best in history” and had spent more than US\$120 million on it. To achieve a more striking effect of contrast, two

quotations are included, one paragraph apart: “We made a solemn promise when we won the bid in 1998 that the 21st Universiade would turn out to be the best in history,” said Liu Jingmin, Beijing’s Deputy Mayor, Vice Chairman of the Universiade organising committee and Vice Chairman of BOBICO. “No one cares, no press comes, it’s a non-event,” said a European sports journalist in Beijing to observe the city for the Olympic purpose. Such contrasts invite readers to view China as ineptly making a big fuss out of a “non-event”. The story constructs a negative image of the Chinese government as a manipulative power. In fact, it is a typical story of *TA* coverage of Beijing’s Olympic campaign: descriptive, refined, but negative and critical.

As Ward (1995) points out, the media in Australia may carry news and even shape the course of political events, but first and foremost, the media are commercial organizations engaged in the business of returning a profit to their owners and shareholders, and enlarging circulation by providing useful business information, as one of the main services, for readers. Thus, while political criticisms, including about human rights, continue in the Australian press coverage of the Beijing preparations for 2008 in this final period studied, a concern with economic and business opportunities in the Olympic activities comes to the fore. This can be illustrated in three stories in *The Australian*. One story, headlined “Beijing comes clean on tenders” (2/11/2001, p. 11), depicts Beijing’s effort to assure foreign companies that tenders for work linked to the 2008 Games will be free of corruption. It quotes Beijing campaign bid executive and Deputy Mayor, Liu Jingmin, as saying that “very high priority” will be accorded to ensure a “clean and clear” process. It also cites Liu as saying that Beijing is prepared to introduce “stringent auditing procedures” on tendering for work related to the 2008 Games. The story ends by advising Australian companies to move fast and start looking for Chinese partners. China in this story is sincere and has faith in business, a different image compared from the insincere China portrayed by the politically critical stories about drug abuse discussed above.

The other two stories place more emphasis on how Australian companies are “well placed” to win contracts from Beijing. They suggest that Australian companies have a “head start” before the competition begins because of the support that Sydney

organisers provided for Beijing's bid. In the story headlined "Business in box seat to reap billions – Olympics decision time" (13/7/2001), published on the day of the IOC vote, Australian trade officials are quoted as saying that Australian companies have a two-year lead on competitors and could expect to win "a few percentage points" of the \$100 billion Beijing would spend on the Games if Beijing wins the 2008 Games. Big Australian companies, including Telstra, Bovis Lend Lease, and Endeavour Consulting Group, are depicted as "well placed" to reap billions from contracts in Beijing because of their support and consultant service for the Beijing bid. All these big players are happy with their "good local presence" in Beijing, as well as the "numerous relationships" they have built there, and expect good returns. Even the NSW government expects to gain contracts in the areas of policing, hospitality and environmental services because it is "well positioned", as reportedly pointed out by NSW Premier Bob Carr. This line of Australia's edge over other competitors is seen also in the other story, "Capitalising on Games know how – World Congress on IT" (27/2/2002, p. 21), seven months after Beijing's victory. This story reiterates the point about Australia being "well positioned", again claiming that "Australia had a head start with the support Sydney Olympics organisers gave China's Games bid". It notes at the same time the statement by a Chinese advisor to the 2008 Beijing Olympics organising committee and "member of the bidding committee responsible for deciding who gets a slice of the \$7 billion in IT contracts at the Digital Olympics", that the bidding process will be "very fair, very transparent" and open.

One possible or preferred reading of the stories on this subject could be that the press coverage aligns itself with Australian business interests, reminding China of Australian favours or discouraging other competitors for Beijing contracts, and so contradicting the high moral stand it has taken elsewhere in covering the Beijing bids and preparation, applying double standards. Business is business, and politics is politics, conveniently. What is interesting for discursive analysis, however, is that the particular economic concerns and perspectives on potentially profitable exercises through the Olympics would not have been so prominent at the time of the first bid in the early 1990s. The second bid and Beijing preparations for the Games coincide with the increasing interest in the Chinese economic reforms including free-market processes of investment and trade. In terms of two perspectives on what the Olympic activities mean, identified earlier, the Beijing Games help open the door to

international business, and this provides an opportunity for another country (Australia) to promote its economy. The new business opportunities provide a strong point that the Australian press can make, working on the criterion of the “proximity” of events and issues for its audience, to connect the Beijing Olympics to its domestic readers and to Australian life. In the context of broader developments, the opportunity is greater, compared to the start of the 1990s, to connect Olympic-related activities in China with domestic interests in the Australian context. Hence, while there is reference to some problems to be worked out (for example, the problem of corruption is dealt with references to official Chinese assurances to keep it out of the tendering processes), the Olympics as business news is approached in a generally positive way.

### **7.3 Chinese official publicity and the role of the press**

The reasons for Beijing’s unexpected failure could be seen in many ways. The human right issue was the main one. The Tiananmen massacre, as a significant diplomatic problem for China in some parts of the world, was still comparatively fresh in the popular memory in 1993. This was no doubt a factor in Sydney’s victory. Probably equally important at the time, was the greater experience and familiarity of Australia’s senior Olympic representatives with the Olympic Movement, in comparison with China’s. This had been strengthened by knowledge gained during the unsuccessful bids made by Brisbane and Melbourne for the 1992 and 1996 games respectively. In 1993, Sydney ran a clever, well targeted, sports-oriented campaign, taking full advantage of drawing favourable comparison for themselves versus China on human rights and multiculturalism. For the 2008 bid, China’s Olympic administrators had learnt lessons from the unsuccessful 2000 bid. They realised that human rights had been unavoidably an issue that Beijing and the Chinese media needed to address differently for Beijing’s second bid. China’s publicity strategy for the issue of human rights during its second Olympic campaign exemplifies the power of the Party and the government in regulating what is being circulated by the mass media. They made decision to indirectly deal with the human rights issue, officially called the “low-key” strategy (Wen Han, BOBICO and BOCOG). The low-key strategy did not mean being inactive. In fact, in anticipating criticism of China’s human rights record during its preparation for the bid for the 2008 Olympics, the

Chinese government had been actively and consciously involved in the building of an official discourse that not only addressed the human rights issue but also, in doing so, reflected the low-key and indirect approach. Apart from drawing on a discourse of development, the government also made good use of the proposition that communist rule succeeded with economic and social rights while lagging behind in political and civil rights (Sullivan in Ness, 1999). This developmental rights approach features in the majority of publicity produced for Beijing's second Olympic campaign.

### ***7.3.1 Chinese official publicity and the “low-key” strategy***

We shall look at four examples of the official publicity that reflect the low-key strategy and suggest its relevance for press representations. We take these in turn: the new motto, the announced themes, the emblem for the bid, and the “Beijing 2008” publication.

#### *7.3.1.1 The new motto*

The four-word motto for Beijing's bid succinctly illustrates the new publicity strategy. “New Beijing, Great Olympics” evokes a very different theme line designed to differentiate itself from the logo of Beijing's first bid. While the “more open China awaits the Olympics” theme of the first bid signalled the Chinese government's economic and foreign policies toward reform and opening up to the outside world, this logo positions Beijing in a new imaginary dimension of space and time, in its own terms and through association with the Olympic possibilities. In this way it foregrounds Beijing to cater to IOC norms and plays up the theme of the great Olympic movement in an attempt to win IOC votes.

Then, what is the link between “new” Beijing and the Olympics? The Olympic bid is construed, in general, as a competition of cities rather than countries. The motto therefore depicts Beijing, not China, as both the real space and virtual site where the meaning of Beijing's bid is constructed. This is a strategic manoeuvre that reflects the improved skills of government publicity. The official interpretation of the motto is that Beijing, a city with a history of over three thousand years, is striding into the

new millennium with a new outlook – the result of policies of reforms and opening up to the outside world. Thus a Xinhua report quoted Liu Qi, with the standing of an actor having a high-level role as both Mayor of Beijing and president of Beijing’s bid committee: “By ‘new Beijing’, we mean our resolve to let Beijing become the first Chinese city to achieve modernization. ‘Great Olympics’ refers to our pledge to make the 2008 Olympics the best in the history of modern Olympiad”. This interpretation of transformation not only reflects the technical positioning of Beijing as a bid city so as to cater to IOC norms and the norms of an Olympic bid, but also demonstrates the strategic positioning of the city in the country’s national development program. The choice of Beijing to represent China to bid for the 2008 Olympics provides a historic opportunity for Beijing to develop into a modern global city. As the mayor of Beijing puts it, the first part of the slogan, New Beijing, expresses the city’s anticipation of becoming “the first” city in China to achieve “modernization”, the benchmark of modernity associated with internationalism. The slogan also expresses determination to realize this prospect by refreshing Beijing out of the old.

Embedded within this explicit message is a more implicit one meant to serve the purpose of countering anticipated human rights attacks. Projected as a bidding city, Beijing was in a better position to deal with human rights questions. As pointed out in chapter 5, Beijing could always divert these questions to the Foreign Ministry and insist that human rights criticisms were beyond the scope of the bid. In fact, the positioning of Beijing as a bidding city was a strategic move reflecting the indirect approach of the low-key publicity strategy concerning human rights. It could effectively shield Beijing from human rights criticisms with the logic that the bid should have nothing to do with human rights issues.

The construction of these messages is based on a Chinese linguistic tradition of using very deliberate language to deliver an underlying message within the framework of a certain ideology. It is important therefore to understand the message, and more importantly the ideology embedded in the message, rather than taking the message at its face value. The adjective “new” in the construction of “New Beijing” is strategic: the interplay of new and Beijing is construed as being to the advantage of Beijing. In other words, “New Beijing” is imagined in two time frames: the present and the future. The present image of New Beijing is projected as a much-improved city with

so many changes that it is for the purpose of this promotion a different city compared with the past. The adjective “new” also suggests other “improvements” and implies improved political conditions of human rights. Improvement in the future sense implies that Beijing has put its past imperfections, such as political “stain” behind and is seeking new links to be built with the imagined outside global system. In this imagery, critical issues such as human rights will find solutions in the process of global integration as that process will expose China to international scrutiny. Through this global integration, Beijing will make great improvement and eventually become China’s first city to become a modern international metropolis. By then, China – represented by Beijing – will be an honoured member of the international community.

The word “new” in the new motto thus has a complex signifying function. By stressing differences between the present Beijing and the past Beijing, and anticipating the future Beijing, the adjective “new” blocks out the similarities, such as the continuation of an authoritarian regime, with the same political ideology, and the same human rights problems. This is a construction of the image of Beijing as a myth, in other words an implicit way of thinking about Beijing. The new motto diverts public attention from any unpleasant past images of China to wondering about the new things that might have transformed Beijing. It invites readers to share in a particular way of thinking: this New Beijing has become something that is more recognisable as a modern global city. The concept of development, which is connoted by the word “new”, plays a vital role in the attempt to change mythic image of Beijing. Improvement has two implications here: the acknowledgement of imperfections and the promotion of progress. The logic of the focus on Beijing’s bid is also that China is a developing country and therefore should be allowed time to make progress or improvement in human rights in the due process of development. To support this logic, *PD* (7/2/2001, p. 4; Appendix C) quotes a senior bidding committee official as saying: “Beijing’s bidding for the 2008 Games will not only boost urban development but also help further advance the human rights conditions of China”.

This logic of development rests in the language of improvement and progress which has also provided an overarching frame for the official discourse on China’s human

rights situations, for Beijing's Olympic campaign. Ideas of development and progress are actually Western concepts. From a historical perspective, the idea of progress was invented more than two centuries ago in Western Europe and progress is measured in terms of wealth generation (Zhao, 1997). The primary concern is to expand and enhance economic growth, as measured by gross national product, and development is thought of as a "package" with economic growth as the major motivating force. The Chinese government has adopted this Western idea of development and progress to serve its pursuit of modernization. It has also used it as tool to gloss over political and social contradictions and problems. Used in the official discourse of Beijing's bid, for instance, the idea of development had been an ideal weapon to justify, or even to evade, its human rights issues.

A different but complementary meaning is applied for "Great Olympics". This part of the motto expresses China's determination to uphold Olympic principles and carry on Olympic traditions. But hidden in this explicit message lies the implicit one: the universality of Olympics and the humanistic tradition include everyone in the Olympic movement regardless of race, religion, and political beliefs. Here, the modern ideal of Olympic internationalism (Polumbaum, 2003) is drawn upon and the Olympic spirit is invoked as a myth to create the impression that politics has never been part of the Olympic movement. The logic is that if Olympic internationalism dictates that no country should be discriminated against participating in the Olympic movement, then China should not be denied the equal opportunity on the human rights abuse charges. This is a subtle message, strategically positioned for later usage of publicity. And this positioning proved to be farsighted, useful and effective in relation to events during the bid, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In the same Chinese cultural tradition of "doing things with words" in complex statements (Schoenhals 1992), "Great Olympics" carries an excess of meaning and exemplifies multilayered strategic thinking. At the primary level, the positioning of this phrase in the motto aims to exemplify China's motives for hosting an Olympic Games. Again, unlike the motto of Beijing's first bid, "A More Open China Awaits Olympics", which was criticised as over-emphasising the benefits China could obtain from staging an Olympic Games, this motto celebrates the Olympics in their own right. In addition to helping with the country's development, the Olympics are

deemed “great” first and foremost because of their humanistic tradition and universal principles. As a strategic manoeuvre to win over IOC votes, this motto ties Beijing’s bid with Olympic movements in a tight knot by giving the prominent position to Olympics rather than to the promotion of self-interest.

At another level, the combination of the two phrases as the bid’s motto suggests an interactive relationship. It implies that hosting the Olympic Games would bring great changes to Beijing while China’s participation in the Olympic movement, with the world’s largest population, would provide strong support to the universality of the Olympics. This point can be illustrated by the Chinese version of the motto, which uses the same adjective “new” to describe Beijing and Olympics in Chinese: “新北京，新奥运” (“New Beijing, New Olympics”). The Chinese version, however, puts more emphasis on suggesting how a new Beijing is capable of hosting a unique Olympic Games, whereas the English version (“New Beijing, Great Olympics”) stresses the changes an Olympic Games could bring about to Beijing. The contrasting emphasis is an indication of the Chinese government’s consciousness of the difference between domestic publicity and promotion for international consumption.

The choice of the motto indicates that the Chinese government was better prepared in its bidding strategy for the second bid: the motto is more focused, well targeted, while also having the benefit of being politically correct. It establishes a “moral base” from which arguments could be drawn to counter possible human rights attacks. And because of the ideological weight it carries, the motto serves the ongoing preparations for the Games.

### *7.3.1.2 The themes for the bid*

When Liu Jingmin, another high-status actor, explained that the motto carries more meaning when considered in conjunction with the three themes of the bid, he was making a point about the promotion strategy for Beijing’s Olympic campaign (*PD*, 30/8/2000, p. 4). While “New Beijing, Great Olympics” was the promise of Beijing’s bid, this promise was supported by the three major themes: Green Olympics,

Hi-tech Olympics and People's Olympics. The three themes deal directly with the issues deemed by Beijing as crucial to hosting the Olympic Games. Beijing Mayor Liu Qi identified these issues as the ability to provide superior, reliable transportation systems, incorporate state-of-the-art technology into all aspects of the Games, and place a strong emphasis on protecting and improving the environment (*PD*, 30/8/2000, p. 4).

Conspicuously excluded from these crucial issues is the issue of human rights. Rather than engaging in a direct human rights debate, the Chinese government adopted an indirect approach: it concentrated its publicity effort on promoting the positive side of Chinese society, such as rapid economic development, great social progress and continued improvement of people's lives (Li, 2001). This approach is reflected from the three themes. Green Olympics focuses on the environment; People's Olympics pays attention to athletes and ordinary people; and Hi-tech Olympics aims to apply high technology to make the Games a unique and efficient event. These emphases indicate that the three themes are created under the overarching ideological frame of development. The connotation of improvement or progress is fully employed in this creation to serve as the logic behind the official tone of improvement of people's life, reflecting the improvement of human rights in China as well.

The focal point of the official tone is the essentialisation of the Chinese people. "We have the people's support" is a tag phrase for bid officials who claimed national support. The all-inclusive term of "人民" (the people) hides the conflicts of interests between government and some social interests groups on issues ranging from relocation of Beijing residents into high-density housing to protection of cultural sites including traditional residential districts and buildings "四合院". It seeks to shape the reader's understanding in the preferred way of thinking: think for "the people" in terms of an unspecified large group rather than in terms of individuals. This is where "the people" functions as a myth. Here we see that myth works as more than an allusion to vaguely defined general notions and values: it creates powerful connotations around a particular place, event, person or collective, so as to make ideas appear natural as truth or, in Bignell's (1997, p. 21) interpretation of Barthes, to

“promote one way of thinking while forgetting alternative messages, so that myth appears to be simply true”. By drawing on the myth of the people, for instance, the theme of People’s Olympics conceals conflicts and creates an image of an all-inclusive community of the Chinese people who will benefit from the 2008 Games in terms of improvement of living standard, which also counters the Western concept of political and individual rights as human rights.

The inclusive connotation of the people was intensively and extensively used in the official discourse on human rights for Beijing’s bid. After Beijing won the bid, “People’s Olympics” has been continuously promoted as the point of departure for the preparatory work for the 2008 Games and projected as its end result.

### *7.3.1.3 The emblem for the bid*

The emblem (shown in Appendix F) likewise, is a masterpiece of publicity for the Chinese interpretation of human rights. Using the traditional physical exercise of “太极拳 Tai Ji Quan” (Shadow Boxing) as a symbolic image, the official emblem signifies both the specificity and the universality of Chinese sports culture in relation to human development, implied in this new context as a key aspect of human rights.

The basic structure of the design is a knot in the shape of a person practising Tai Ji Quan. The shape of the knot is modelled after the “Chinese knot”, a traditional Chinese handicraft which symbolizes unity, co-operation, and exchange. Tai Ji Quan, a symbol of China’s traditional sports culture, embodies the essences of this culture, namely smoothness, harmony, vitality, and mobility. According to a BOBICO statement, the use of the same five colours as the Olympic rings in the design symbolises a perfect integration of Chinese sports culture and the Olympic spirits of unity of the people from the five continents (*PD*, 1/2/2000, p. 1).

Tai Ji Quan, which is developed to achieve harmony, unity and co-operation of human movement, is a popular sport in China, especially among aged people. In opposition to competitive sport, it favours slow, smooth and coordinated body movements. It is a traditional physical exercise that draws upon theories of traditional Chinese

medicine and stresses the coordination between breathing and physical movement that aims to achieve a state of balance and inward calmness. It also draws upon the philosophy of Tai Ji, which could be traced back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD). The theory of Tai Ji argues that Tai Ji (the Supreme Ultimate) is the source of the nature and universe. Thus, it is understood, by practising Tai Ji Quan, a human being could achieve a state of harmony with the nature.

Tai Ji Quan has achieved recognition internationally as a symbol of traditional Chinese sports culture, and this has been used in the official emblem to signify the long history of China's emphasis on human development. The message is that China's emphasis on human rights is fundamental, starting right from the development of the human body itself and showing a unique interest in the coordination of the body and mind of human being. In its appropriation for official publicity, Tai Ji Quan has acquired a new layer of meaning for Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympics. By using Tai Ji Quan as a symbol of traditional Chinese sports culture, the Government has tried to express that Beijing's bid strives to make as natural the association of Tai Ji Quan with a so-called Chinese sports culture. In this context, Tai Ji Quan has been used as a connotation in the creation of the official emblem for Beijing's bid.

A sense of combination of modernity and tradition is emphasised in this creation, characterized by putting the Chinese knot in the shape of the five Olympic rings and highlighting the sense of body movement. It underlines the intended message that China has a long history of sports culture and is very active in carrying on the tradition. It also reinforces the idea that Beijing is a place where ancient cultures co-exist with modern cultures and where Chinese cultures meet foreign cultures. This is different from the emblem of the first bid which foregrounded the Temple of Heaven, a symbol of China's ancient history and culture. Ancientness is what the previous emblem tried to sell to the world, with the conspicuous exclusion of signifiers of modernity. This emblem for Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympics is a much more refined publicity product for the Chinese government, as a result of the sagacious use, as a connotation, of the Western perception of Tai Ji Quan as a symbol of traditional Chinese sports culture. It also uses the powerful idea that Tai Ji Quan is now widely practised outside China, and its origins are known to be Chinese, to

enhance this implied use of the Chinese sport.

#### 7.3.1.4 *The “Beijing 2008” publication*

BOBICO issued over one million copies of special publications including information bulletins, photo albums, books, folding brochures, and postcards. They were sent abroad through various channels, such as exhibitions, conferences, Chinese embassies and personal contacts. The “Beijing 2008” information bulletin was one of these information outlets. Published in four languages from January 2001 to June 2001, “Beijing 2008” was a weekly newsletter that was sent to IOC members by mail. It carried official information about Beijing’s bid. An examination of its content reveals more about how government publicity has dealt with human rights issues.

On the cover page of issue 1, published in January of 2001, a news story (that also appeared in *PD*, 18/1/2001, p. 7; Appendix C) about Tibet occupies a large space. The headline, “Tibetan people support Beijing in bid for 2008 Olympic Games”, is more like a political statement than a news item. It is made more so by enlarging, bolding and italicising “Tibetan people”, the first two characters of the headline. The introduction of the story tells what Tibetan people do to support Beijing’s bid:

The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bid Committee will, in early February, receive a 100-metre-long hada bearing the autographs of more than 10,000 people in Tibet Autonomous Region as a token of support for its work. Hada is a pure silk streamer that Tibetans, in following their tradition, offer individuals or organizations they respect most.

Hada, the traditional symbol of Tibetan respect and hospitality, is used here to signify the relationship between the ethnic nationality and the central government. The connoted logic is the evident to indicate such a good relationship. When Tibetan people show their respect and support for the Beijing bid, they are also showing respect and support for the bid operator, Chinese government.

In fact, this is not the first time that hada has been used as a symbol to signify the political statement by the Chinese government. Hada is the most frequently used signifier in China's battle with Tibet separatists and human rights groups. The supporting paragraph to the introduction describes the scope of the event to suggest the theme of the story that Beijing's bid attracts popular support in Tibet. To illustrate this theme, three ethnic Tibetans are quoted. They represent different social groups in Tibet, and their importance as actors is seen in the mode of their presentation.

The first person, a politician, expressing a positive conviction: "I fully support Beijing in her bid for the 2008 Olympic Games," he said. "I believe all people in Tibet, whether ethnic Tibetans or Hans, ardently hope that Beijing will win." The quotation is typical of official rhetoric among ethnic Tibetan politicians. The phrase "whether ethnic Tibetans or Hans" is especially targeted at attacks on the intrusion of the Han culture into the traditional Tibetan culture. But the inclusion of the fact that he is a "witness" to what progress has been made in the "past 50 years" softens the hard edges of his political rhetoric and makes it more acceptable.

The second quotation is from a renowned veteran mountaineer in Tibet:

I have been following developments in Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games," he said, "Beijing is fully qualified for the games. Her success in hosting the Asian Games and many other international sports events testify to that.

This is a voice chosen to express popular support from Tibetans. The technique is to appropriately concentrate on sports, through statement, and use the success of the Asian Games to prove that Beijing is capable of staging an Olympic Games as well. The clout of a successful veteran mountaineer gives this statement extra weight.

The most important and meaningful quotation comes from a lama (title for Tibetan religious teacher or monk): "Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games shows that our country is getting increasingly prosperous. I am proud of China. That's why I support Beijing's bid". The quotation is meaningful and important for two reasons.

First, it is a statement from a lama, and lamas are greatly respected in Tibet and their political and religious orientation often influences public opinion. By quoting a lama, the story hopes to convey the logic that lamas support Beijing's bid, and so do their followers. Second, such phrases as "our country" and "proud of China" are used to underline the fact that Tibet is part of China, and Tibetans are Chinese. What should be further noted in this quotation is the fact that the official line of improvement, or the myth of progress, is deployed again. "Getting increasingly prosperous" is obviously the official discourse of development on questions concerning human rights. But expressed from a Tibetan lama, the official tone sounds more persuasive than in the previous two quotations that more or less have the official background. In fact, it has been common practice for government publicity, and for Chinese journalism as well, to personalize official tone through quoting people in the wider society. Such quotations can be based on real statements that can be obtained, for example, through interviews. Other times, they could be conveniently manufactured in order to achieve the desired effect. It does not really matter in this case whether the quotation is real or manufactured since no one will bother to check on it. What really matters is the message the quote conveys: even lamas, the religious leading roles of the Tibetan society, are by our side.

The story is a typical product of government promotion, in the sense of one-sided presentation of an issue. Throughout the story there is only one voice preaching the noble cause of Beijing's bid. No opposing voices are heard. And no mention is made of the Tibetan separatists overseas who were actively involved in lobbying, partitioning, and demonstrating to block Beijing's Olympic campaign on the ground of China's poor human rights record in Tibet. The "Tibetan people" is used as a myth (in the greater unity of "the people") to marginalize all other voices that might be heard in relation to the problem of Tibet. To enhance this myth, the story uses the traditional symbol of hada as well as the quotations to signify popular support for Beijing's bid. This popular support from the three Tibetans is employed to hint at China's human rights arguments as well. In line with the official "low-key" policy, other stories in Beijing 2008 make no direct reference to the human rights issue, except for launching press conferences to respond to certain criticisms.

Another example, in a form different from the feature-like story just discussed, is the

presentation of direct official statements in a whole page presentation of issue 3, devoted to response to media questions by Liu Jingmin (also in *PD*, 31/8/2000; Appendix C), Vice Executive President of BOBICO and Vice Mayor of Beijing. Liu's argument represents the official standing in relation to human rights. In response to the question of how he interprets the news headline "IOC emphasizes ability more than politics", Liu first elaborates on the Olympic ideal, which "transcends human limits" and allows every person the right to participate in the Olympics "regardless of political affiliation, religious belief, or ethnicity". He then argues that throughout Olympic history people have been trying to keep sports separated from politics in pursuit of the Olympic spirit. "In our case", he is quoted saying, "the emphasis should be on a bid city's ability to host the Games, not on the political affiliations of that city and its representatives". He points out that international controversy over the Falun Gong should not hinder Beijing's chances because the cult's philosophy runs counter to the Olympic ideal. Liu ends his response on the note that Beijing's Olympic bid is aimed at promoting not only the Olympic spirit but also a healthier, positive standard of living. His message is seemingly strategic. The official position in dealing with human rights issues is based on the Chinese government's interpretation of the Olympic spirit and its aspiration to improve the standard of living of the people. As mentioned above in chapter 6, Beijing's ability to deflect or separate Olympics from politics is a longer-established tactic already used by Beijing's first bid, but the argument of promoting a "healthier, positive standard of living" is a new strategy, marking a discursive shift, developed for the second bid. This official rhetoric explains the concept of "People's Olympics" and interprets human rights in terms of the rights to live a healthier and positive life. Key to this is the use of the myths of the people, of progress and of development. These myths, together with that of the Olympic spirit, have become the framework for China's discourse on human rights for Beijing's Olympic campaign.

The only other reference to human rights, although indirect, is found in issue 4 of "Beijing 2008". Yuan Weimin, Minister of the State Sports General Administration and Chairman of the Chinese Olympic Committee, is quoted as saying at a BOBICO press conference: "We call for the observation of the Olympic spirit in the bidding process and we oppose any non-sport elements to interfere with the bid". This is a

reiteration of the official rhetoric on human rights, even though human rights are not actually mentioned. The familiar reference to the Olympic spirit shows how this is exploited as a myth, apparently transcending politics, to advance Beijing's argument for its rights to host an Olympic Games.

It is worth noting that the government statements in relation to human rights were focused on Beijing, rather than on China. As mentioned previously, this city emphasis was meant to make it easier for spokespersons for Beijing's bid to deal with human rights questions and criticisms. This is where the myths of the people, of development, of progress and of the Olympic spirit were duly employed to deflect criticism and serve this purpose. The tough job of confronting human rights attacks in a direct way (as against the indirect linking of rights to a healthy way of living just mentioned) was assigned to the Foreign Ministry which represented the Chinese government in its deliberation of China's perception of human rights. So there are actually two images created for Beijing's bid, which support each other: the image of Beijing and the image of China. While the government publicity foregrounded the city, as we have seen from this section, the Chinese news media were similarly engaged in the creation of dual images.

### ***7.3.2 Chinese press representation of official publicity and campaign activities***

The Chinese press has never been allowed to be autonomous of the control of the Party and the Government. Moreover, those media engaged in international communication are subject to even tighter control than other media and have always served as the mouthpiece for the Party and the Chinese government. Their coverage is also in line with China's foreign policy. Therefore, media coverage of Beijing's bid is part of the government's publicity strategy. Having discussed the shift to the low-key strategy in official discourse, we now look at how it is mediated in the selected Chinese press. This will show the close relationship between the government and the media through the making of the image of Beijing and the image of China. We look first at Xinhua News Agency then at *The People's Daily*.

7.3.2.1 *Xinhua News Agency*

Xinhua coverage of the human rights issue has focused on reporting the views of the Chinese Foreign Ministry as well as the pronouncements of BOBICO officials. Few stories went further than that and there was no evidence of Western-style investigative reporting of alleged human rights violations. This could be interpreted as an indication that the press had been implementing the government's low-key publicity strategy for Beijing's bid. It is also a good example of showing China's official press' value of serving loyally as the mouthpiece of the Party and the Chinese government.

In this study, the first selected Xinhua report for the 2008 Beijing Olympic bid related to the human rights issue is a short news report on April 8, 1999. Headlined "Chinese Government firmly supports Beijing's bid for Olympic Games", the report goes:

The Chinese Government will do its best to support its Olympic Committee's bid effort to host the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Sun Yuxi said at a regular press conference here this afternoon. China hopes that political issues would not be tied up with the bid process, Sun said. He emphasized that China would remove the obstacles to ensure the success of Beijing's bid for the 2008 Olympic Games.

Both the headline and the introduction make it clear that the report is about the Chinese government's reaffirmation of its firm support for the Beijing bid. Conventionally, the body of the report should support this theme by providing information of how the Chinese government plans to realize the promised "firm" support. But, unexpectedly, without providing any background information, the next paragraph introduces some unidentified "political issues" that China hopes would not be tied up with the bid process. This statement may seem to have come from nowhere. For readers who are familiar with the Xinhua-style coverage, however, this figure of speech is a sign that China is having trouble with some kind of "political issues" that might impede its bid. But why does the report fail to identify those

issues? This is again a strategic positioning that is in line with the government publicity policy of “no involvement in direct debates”.

If human rights were identified as one of the political issues, China would need to put forth some kind of argument and, by doing so, could encourage more debates or even more counterattacks. Attacks over human rights are just what the Chinese government wanted to avoid. The government hoped to deploy its limited international publicity resources for attracting world friendly attention to accept positive aspects of China, rather than on engaging in unproductive confrontation with human rights attacks. The Xinhua report serves this purpose well. By not identifying the “political issues” but still encouraging readers to make their own interpretations, the report is able to imply that human rights are a political matter, and thus invite the inference that this issue should not be associated with the Olympic bid. This definition thus implicates political activists as attempting to block China’s bid effort. For the same purpose, the closing paragraph is vague about “the obstacles” that China promises to remove to ensure the success of Beijing’s bid. It is made clear that the story is about China, not only about Beijing. Because of this, the story is able to allow the national government to make a strong political statement, while giving Beijing the opportunity to act as a bidding city that would be free from politics. This positioning is a characteristic of Xinhua’s coverage of Beijing’s bid concerning human rights. According to this, the image of China is that of a developing and modernizing country with its own interpretation of human rights and of the Olympic spirit. Although the myths of development and the Olympic spirit are not used directly in this news item, the Foreign Ministry spokesman’s wording is an echo of the bid’s official rhetoric on human rights. In expressing the Chinese government’s hope that political issues would not be “tied up” with Beijing’s bid process, Sun is drawing upon the established governmental myths discussed earlier.

After eighteen months from the last human rights topics implied report, a second Xinhua report appeared in relation to the human rights issues. This silence is an indication that the Chinese government played its low-key theme to the extreme – until it could desist no longer. This time, the report, on October 2, 2000, is again coverage of the regular Chinese Foreign Ministry press conference and is again about China, not Beijing. But targets are named, background information is provided, and

more details about China's stand are given. Here, noticeably, the significance of a matter can be suggested by timing, in the Chinese context, contrasting with the more common Western press concern with timeliness of reporting in relation to the occurrence of the events themselves to keep readers continually informed (Mencher, 1997, p. 56). The Chinese press timed the reportage to make a point at the necessary moment and reinforced the impact through the change in mode of presentation, from no direct involvement in debates to direct rejoinder and naming of those criticized.

Headlined "Opposition to China's Olympics bid accused" (also on *PD*, 3/10/2000, p. 4, Appendix C), the story is about the Chinese Foreign Ministry's response to a motion tabled by some US Congressmen asking the IOC to block China's bid. In a rare show of anger during Beijing's bid, the Foreign Ministry "accused" the motion of being "a blatant contempt" for the Olympic spirit. "Such an action by a handful of anti-China congressmen, out of prejudice against China, will inevitably meet with opposition from the justice-upholding people all over the world," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi is quoted as saying. Arguing that Beijing's bid has popular support from the Chinese people, Sun tries to drive home the point that by supporting the bid, the Chinese people are making "their own contributions" to the realization of peace, friendship, and progress of mankind. He cites as "the best embodiment" of the Olympic spirit "the excellent performances" by the Chinese athletes at the Sydney Olympic Games. In contrast, he contends that any discrimination against a certain country or a certain person for ethnic, religious, political, gender or other reasons is "incompatible with the Olympic Spirit". Although the specific issue of human rights is not identified in this Xinhua report, the Foreign Ministry spokesman in this instance does not resort to vague language to sidestep the human rights issue. Instead, an explicit message is constructed with unequivocally strong words in the introduction, such as "accuse", "blatant contempt", and "discrimination". This message is an extension of the first statement in the previous story, making clear the Chinese government's stance. While the first one was more toned down using the word "hope" in the statement that "China hopes that political issues would not be tied up with the bid process", this message is strong and unambiguous from the outset.

This statement is later supplemented by two arguments from the Foreign Ministry. One is that the Chinese people are contributing to peace, friendship and progress of

humankind by supporting Beijing's bid. Drawing on the Olympic spirit of peace, friendship and progress, this argument implies that China's interpretation of human rights is related to those noble ideals of humankind. But without giving a political or cultural context to these noble words, Xinhua is able to empty them of any immediate historical meaning, relying on their mythic connotations to conceal conflicts and make natural China's interpretation of human rights. This usage of the Olympic spirit as myth is a good example of China's soft promotional approach to difficult issues. The other argument is the excellent performance of Chinese athletes at the Sydney Games as the "embodiment" of the Olympic spirit. Built on reference to indisputable medal records, this argument points an accusing finger at any attempt to block China's bid as discrimination and prejudice against China. This argument also implies that the Olympics are about sport, reinforcing the position that politics should be separated from the bid.

As a conclusion, the last paragraph uses the word "opposition" to highlight the wording in the title. But there is a significant difference. While the word "opposition" used in the title refers to China's attitude, the "opposition" used in the ending is expanded to "the justice-upholding people all over the world". With this reasoning, those who do not oppose the discriminatory move by "a handful of" anti-China U.S. congressmen are certainly not upholding justice.

This Xinhua story works as a relay of China's official discourse in human rights, in the form of a press report presenting a powerful actor and perspective. It serves as a source of reference for both the bid team and the Chinese media in dealing with the issue of human rights. Later news reports from *PD* (eg. 3/10/2000, p. 4) are elaborations of the arguments within the scope of this official discourse.

There are two connotations that can be identified from this official discourse of the Chinese government. First is the myth of the people. There are two types of people in this story: the Chinese people and the "justice-upholding people all over the world". In the perspective of "how the Games are to be achieved", the Chinese people are used in the context of popular support for Beijing's bid, and the mythic meaning of popular support is exploited for the argument of Chinese people making contributions to the Olympic spirit by furthering Beijing's bid. The people of the world are drawn

upon as a myth to simulate a sense of unity and friendship. The moral undertone of the “justice upholding world people” serves to counter the moral judgment delivered by the US congress action. This links to the second myth, that of the Olympic spirit, the universality and excellence of performance in the Olympic movement. Universality is drawn upon to contrast the “prejudice” against China as a “blatant contempt” for the Olympic spirit. On the other hand, excellence of performance is used also to foreground the outstanding achievements made by Chinese athletes at the Sydney Games, which was described by the Foreign Ministry as “the best embodiment” of the Olympic spirit (the perspective of “the Games for the Games sake” having an ideological purpose). Such intensive use of the myth of the Olympic spirit plays a key role in the press dissemination of the Chinese government’s discourse on human rights. So does the usage of the myth of the people. In the press representation, China appears as a victim, demonized by the West despite Chinese people’s support for Beijing’s bid and excellent performance of the Chinese athletes at the Sydney Games.

The first selected Xinhua news report that identified human rights issues appeared eight weeks later, on 30 November 2000. Headlined “Attempt to foil Beijing’s bid for Olympics futile: FM spokeswoman” (cf. *PD*, 1/12/2000; Appendix C), the news is again about the Chinese Foreign Ministry, which responded to a British report, and it is again about China, not Beijing. It identifies the human rights issue in the second paragraph as background information: Zhang made the remarks in response to a report recently made by Britain’s Lower House, which advised the British government not to support China in hosting the Olympics on the grounds that China has human rights problems. Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue’s remarks had nothing new to offer as argument, but she does point out a fact to support her argument: The Chinese government has also been dedicated to carrying out international cooperation with other countries in human rights, she noted. Since 1997, she said, China and Britain have conducted several rounds of dialogue on human rights, which have enhanced mutual understanding and yielded positive results. This remark suggests an attempt to go on the offensive by suggesting that since a dialogue on human rights has been established between the two governments, this move is contrary to the spirit of the existing dialogue.

This point is clearly made, but as always is the case with the coverage of Beijing's Olympic campaign, this Xinhua report does not provide any information on the details of the dialogue or the "international cooperation" mentioned by the spokeswoman. It is restricted to the reporting of what the Foreign Ministry has got to say, in this way faithfully playing the full role of the mouthpiece of the Chinese government. This way of giving full scope to the official actor's perspective is typical in Xinhua reporting. Two other Xinhua examples of Chinese Foreign Ministry reaction replicate this strategy. The only commentary worth noting is the description of U.S. Senator Jesse Helms and some others as being overwhelmed by a "cold-war mentality" (Xinhua 2/5/2001). This reference to the outdated cold-war mentality reflects an attempt to put the opponent in an unfavourable light.

Xinhua also gave coverage to the "other image" of Beijing, strategically constructed in accordance with the Chinese government's strategy of image construction for Beijing's Olympic campaign. Its coverage of how BOBICO has dealt with the human rights issue focused on how bid officials reacted rather than following up any problems targeted by human rights groups. Stories appeared in a concentrated period around the arrival of the IOC evaluation group in Beijing. Worried that growing criticism of China's human rights records would affect the result of the group's evaluation report, BOBICO officials began to talk about human rights to media. As it did with the Foreign Ministry press conference, Xinhua picked up all the arguments presented by the bid officials.

From early February to mid-March in 2001, a total of six Xinhua news reports related to the human rights issue, a clear contrast to the scarcity in the previous two years. Headlined "Beijing: Olympic bid helps develop human rights" (Appendix D), it reports on how BOBICO Vice President Liu Jingmin delivered his arguments about human rights, although it fails to identify where and to whom Liu made the remarks, as the focus is on the authoritative statement itself. Liu's arguments are built around the theme that Beijing's bid for the Games will not only boost urban development but also help further advance the human rights conditions of China. This theme is foregrounded in the introduction. The supporting paragraphs provide a detailed account of Liu's argument, which tries to convince the reader that to help realize the Chinese people's Olympic dream "means respect for human rights" because it is the

Chinese people's right to want to stage the Games. In addition, reports stress improvement of people's livelihood, a key argument throughout Beijing 2008's coverage. "We have done many things that bring tangible benefits to the broad masses," Liu is quoted as saying. He cites Meng Jingshan, a Beijing taxi driver, as an example to explain why Beijingers "threw their weight behind" their city's bid, and the report reinforces his interpretation of the ordinary actor's view:

Why does Meng support Beijing's bid? Because he is fully aware that under the bidding, he could move out of his shabby house and into spacious building rooms, he understands that the bidding can make him live better.

By the end of the story, Liu expands the scope of human rights situations from the city to the country to support his arguments. But he does not elaborate on it even for a little further. It is noticeable that he should keep his arguments focused on the city and should not get directly involved in something the Foreign Ministry is in a better position to manage. But it is the first time that BOBICO officials talked about human rights in China, not just the city:

Liu said that as the economy develops, China's human rights conditions have gained much headway in the past years, evidenced by such things as the set-up of grass-roots democratic election system and media supervision.

This news report presents BOBICO's arguments for human rights by quoting the bid official throughout the news report. As a result it reads more like a government publicity release than a news report, again exemplifying the point that media have served as the mouthpiece of the Chinese government. It should also be noted that this was the first time that the term "human rights" has ever appeared in the headline of a Xinhua news report, but it does so with the sense of a popular right to an improving way of life. This change from a low-key strategy to open discussion had much to do with the scheduled visit by the IOC evaluation group, whose report would be crucial to the success of Beijing's bid. It may be regarded as a shrewd, well designed strategic publicity policy. The heavy quoting by the Xinhua news report

reflects this change of publicity strategy in dealing with human rights issues. But this change of strategy does not allow the appearance of any opposing arguments, such as criticisms of China's human rights abuse. The report just covers the one-sided argument of BOBICO, making the story read like one man arguing his case with no opponent in sight. This neglect of journalistic principles (from a Western viewpoint) could only be explained by the Chinese government's media policy for Beijing's Olympic campaign.

Beijing's arguments presented by Xinhua can be summarized into three points. First, it is Chinese people's human rights to host the Olympic Games in China and therefore to help realize this "inspiration" is showing respect for their human rights. This is certainly the city's interpretation of human rights in relation to its bid for the 2008 Games. Second, Beijing's bid is also about "improvement of local livelihood". This argument is another example of exploiting both the myth of progress and the myth of the people in the construction of the official rhetoric on human rights. Third, much improvement has been made in human rights conditions in China along with economic development. Here, the myth of development and the myth of progress are used to justify China's human rights record and to promote the logic that economic development will help advance human rights causes. These arguments are supported by the citing of statements by officials for which ordinary citizens such as a *local Beijinger*, the Beijing taxi driver, become supporting evidence.

Unlike the first bid in 1993, these arguments reveal a well organized publicity effort. Beijing's case on human rights is thus more targeted, better supported, and carefully planned. The strategic effort is further developed by a Xinhua news report the following day. Headlined "Olympic bid official denounces Falun Gong cult" (Appendix D), the Xinhua story cites a Liu Jingmin press conference in which Liu gives two examples of how the problem of a cult need not affect hosting an Olympic Games. One example is the Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) in Japan and the other the Branch Davidian in the United States. Liu said both cases had not prevented either of the two countries from hosting the Games. The two cases are drawn to support Beijing's argument that the Falun Gong should not be used to impede Beijing's bid. By paralleling Falun Gong with the two foreign cults, Beijing aims at delivering the message that the two foreign governments should treat Falun Gong as

how they forbade the cults in their own countries. There is an implicit message, too, in the depiction of the two cases: if the problem of cult is an issue of human rights violation, then these two countries, Japan and the United States, should also be included in the countries which have such human rights problems. This implicit message hints at discrimination against China, since discrimination is a violation of human rights in itself. This argument is another example of well planned publicity technique.

In fact, the same press conference and the same topic had already been covered by “Beijing 2008” information bulletin. But the story in this publication makes no mention of the two foreign cults cases. The reason is probably that the readers of the information bulletin are IOC members who have the right to vote. Some of them might be resentful of the citing of the two cases as too imposing. But the Xinhua news targets a wider audience, including those evaluation members who are not directly involved in the voting process. This reader-oriented approach by Beijing 2008 is a sharp contrast to the previous bid when the same official rhetoric was used across all media. Xinhua is focused on topics other than human rights in its construction of the image of Beijing. These topics are consistent with the promotional package announced by BOBICO in February, 2001. The five themes to be promoted in the package include “the vibrant economic growth, extensive public support for the Olympic bid, sufficient accommodation, communication and transportation capacity as well as the well-planned Olympic venues” (Xinhua 20/2/2001). This list shows that logistics issues and service issues are ranked higher than the issue of human rights. This is understandable as these two areas are easier to manage than the area of human rights. The list also indicates what myths are being exploited by Beijing in the construction of its arguments for human rights. At least the myth of development and the myth of the people play a prominent part in this promotional package.

#### 7.3.2.2 *The People's Daily*

*The People's Daily's* coverage of human rights necessarily pays more attention to the domestic reader, as the daily newspaper is still largely distributed within China.

Because of this orientation, a subtle difference has always existed between *PD* news reports and Xinhua's coverage. This difference in orientation has reminded us of the different treatment of the same source materials by Xinhua and "Beijing 2008", such as the cases of foreign cults. Variations like these can be attributed to the Chinese art of using a formalized language in a political context. Schoenhals (1992) traces China's tradition with language formulation back to Confucius: In the *Analects* Confucius argued that when names are not correct – and what is said is therefore not reasonable – the affairs of state will not culminate in success, and the common people will not know how to do what is right. In his depiction of China's practice of language formulation, Schoenhals (1992, p. 2) sees direct control and manipulation of words as the techniques used by the Party and the government to ensure censorship. He points out that constant strategic deliberation at the highest levels of the Party have affected the use and abuse of formulations.

This point of deliberation provides a footnote for the division of work between the Chinese Foreign Ministry and BOBICO concerning how to respond to questions and criticisms from the foreign press. Schoenhals' thesis reinforces another point made in this chapter: When the CPC leadership approves of a certain formulation, it does so because the formulation is judged to be politically useful and clever. A highly scientific formulation is one the state can use as a powerful tool of political manipulation. In rare cases, it will be a formulation that lends itself to only one clear and concise interpretation. In a majority of cases, it will be a formulation the meaning of which can be bent in a number of directions (Schoenhals, 1992, p. 11). This description fits the case of the motto perfectly: the simple linguistic property of the four words is impoverished in a way that the meaning of these words can be "bent" in a number of directions. In other words, it allows different interpretations for different purposes.

The variations in the style of reporting between "Beijing 2008" information bulletin and Xinhua coverage are an example of language formulation in the sense of prescribing and implementing what is considered appropriate and what is inappropriate by the Chinese authorities. Although all the media use the same general official discourse, different orientations of these media may have made the language slightly different in presenting the news. The difference between Xinhua

and *People's Daily* can be illustrated by two stories – the already mentioned Xinhua story “Attempt to foil Beijing’s bid for Olympics futile: FM Spokeswoman”, filed on November 30, 2000, and a *PD* story “Foreign Ministry rebuts human rights criticism”, published on December 1, 2000. The two stories cover the same Chinese Foreign Ministry press conference and report on the same topic. But there is a difference in the wording of the headlines and the organization of the body of the story that is about more than just style.

While the Xinhua headline suggests that the Chinese Foreign Ministry is going to argue its case before an imagined world audience, the *PD* headline commands a blunt, accusing tone mainly for the consumption of the home reader. The former is more restrained using the word “attempt” to imply human rights criticism, probably for fear that drawing too much attention to human rights might not serve its purpose well. Aiming at gaining sympathy and understanding, China’s argument presented to the outside world is restrained rather than agitated. In sharp contrast, the phrase “human rights” sits conspicuously in the *PD* headline to catch as much attention as is possible. The reason is understandable, taking into consideration that domestic readers are part of a different “imagined community” (Thwaites *et al.* 2002, p. 145). Domestic readers are likely to be sensitive to, and resentful of human rights criticism emanating from the West. A long history of national humiliation and manipulation by foreign interests has cultivated in the Chinese people a strong desire to maintain national sovereignty and national identity. The official tone – and interpretation of human rights as rights of survival and rights of development – has almost unequivocal consensus within China and has actually functioned as a national discourse. This sentiment has been fully employed by the Chinese government in dealing with human rights attacks within the international political arena. But in this instance, nationalism is exploited at home to recruit popular support for the bid. The *PD* headline is an indication of this strategy.

Difference in the two news reports can also be observed in the treatment of the text. Xinhua quotes in detail what the spokeswoman said to constitute the arguments, but *PD* quotes only those elements that could be used to make clear the Chinese government’s stand to reassure its people that everything is under control and that the government will not allow the nation to be bullied. For instance, *PD* addresses the

issue using direct quotation: “China has made lasting and unremitting efforts to improve its human rights record and great achievements have been made”. Xinhua’s version is an indirect quote: “She [the spokeswoman] said the Chinese government has made unremitting efforts to protect and improve human rights and has made great achievements acknowledged by countries worldwide”. Xinhua’s use of the phrase “acknowledged by countries worldwide” attempts to remind the foreign reader that China’s improvement in human rights has been acknowledged by many countries. *PD*, however, does not use this phrase. This omission shows a consistency with the government’s stance and the common consensus among the Chinese people that human rights are an issue of internal affairs and that any move by a foreign government concerning China’s human rights is considered as interference in Chinese internal affairs. Therefore, deleting the phrase in the quotation saves the trouble of explaining why China desperately needs international acknowledgement of its human rights progress, while insisting that human rights is China’s internal affair. Putting the phrase in the quotation might have confused the home reader with this conflicting message. *PD* sometimes uses Xinhua’s story as a whole piece and sometimes rewrites a story. The rewriting, which in practice often means a cut here or an addition there, further reflects the different tactics used to deal with human rights for the foreign reader and the home reader. An example is the rewriting of Xinhua’s news report headlined “Beijing: Olympic bid helps develop human rights”, which was discussed in the previous section.

*PD* edited the Xinhua story by (a) omitting the fourth paragraph, the last sentence of the sixth paragraph, and the last paragraph, and (b) adding two paragraphs of its own while giving due credit to Xinhua by this credit line below the story: “Xinhua contributed to the story”. After this “rewriting”, the *PD* story is still more or less a version of the Xinhua one, but the parts that have been deleted and the part that has been added show that *PD* has more targeted imagined readers and is therefore sending a little extra politics in the message and exploiting a knowledge of what psychological “buttons” to push for maximum impact. The fourth paragraph that has been deleted in the *People’s Daily* is the BOBICO interpretation of Beijing’s bid within the framework of China’s interpretation of human rights. For the domestic reader, the linking of human rights to economic and cultural benefits – such as the right to hold the Games – is well-rehearsed. This connection therefore does not need to be further

elaborated in the report. The deletion of the final paragraph, which is a list of rival bid cities and the timeline of the final decision, is simply technical as by now the Chinese people were very bid-conscious as a result of government publicity campaigns and intensive media coverage of Beijing's bid.

There is also no need to remind domestic readers that “we have done many things that bring tangible benefits to the broad masses”, the last sentence of the sixth paragraph in Xinhua's story. These omissions are mainly technical, to cater to the home reader. But the adding of two paragraphs to the Xinhua story is more than technical. The two paragraphs conclude the *PD* version:

Liu said that the issue of the Falun Gong would not affect the city's pursuit of the sporting extravaganza when the IOC visits Beijing later this month. He said that the cult can not damage Beijing's image and would not have an adverse effect on the IOC officials who will tour the ancient capital later this month.

The new paragraphs are about the Falun Gong cult and did not appear in the Xinhua version. By adding the paragraphs, *PD* is reporting that the Chinese government would take necessary measures to ensure that Falun Gong “would not” affect the IOC inspection – because it is a matter concerning “Beijing's image”. For the Falun Gong cult, this is also intended as a warning. For the home reader, this provides a show of the Chinese government's determination to clear any obstacles to its bid for the 2008 Olympics. For the limited foreign readership of the newspaper, it symbolizes a flexing of political muscles in dealing with outlawed cults and a reminder that this is, for the Chinese – like most *PD* human rights disputes – an internal affair.

This kind of message could not appear in the Xinhua story because of the tough and threatening tone signified by the use of the word “would”. The following day, Xinhua dispatched the story on the same topic of Falun Gong, headlined “Olympic bid official denounces Falun Gong cult”, which has been discussed above. The story quoted the same person, but it substituted the word “should” to tone down the message and to introduce a supporting argument: “The Falun Gong cult should not get

in the way of Beijing's bid efforts to host the 2008 Olympic Games, Vice Mayor of Beijing Liu Jingmin said on Thursday". The strategy of selective reporting, as shown by these examples, is integrated into the journalistic practice in China and has become a characteristic of Chinese publicity. It reveals the connections between the Chinese government and the Chinese press.

Three particular stories can exemplify this relationship through the way the representation of the opinions of the Beijing taxi driver is managed. The story began with an account was written by an American freelance journalist, which was subsequently published in an American local newspaper. The story quoted Meng as saying that if Beijing wins its bid, it will mean that "Beijing would be greatly improved, and I and my family might be able to move to a high-storey building". Xinhua saw a golden opportunity of propaganda. It picked up this story and used it as supportive material for its human rights arguments in a story headlined "China Opens Up to Join World", filed on December 5, 2000. The same day, this Xinhua story was used by *PD* without any changes in text. The official authorities seemingly liked the story. Liu Jingmin, as we discussed above, picked up the Meng Jingshan story two days later to support his argument that Beijing's bid is closely linked with the improvement of local livelihood, significantly presenting it at a BOBICO press conference, to be taken up by Xinhua.

This connection between Xinhua, *People's Daily*, and "Beijing 2008" information bulletin not only indicates the relationship between media and government but also shows the extent to which Chinese publicity policy is intent on producing soft-sell messages for the international audience. The selection of the Meng Jingshan story from a local American newspaper by Xinhua is also an indication of the interaction between the Chinese media and foreign media.

#### **7.4 Summary**

This chapter has looked at how perspectives in the representation of political, economic and cultural issues have changed over time in the Australian and Chinese press, from the 1993 bid when Beijing and Sydney competing with each other to

Beijing's second bid as the common ground of attention becomes Beijing and preparations for the 2008 Games afterwards. Critical perspectives on China continue in the Australian press even when pragmatic interests in the Beijing opportunities are expressed. Chinese official publicity has taken the initiative of a low-key strategy, promoting Beijing's bid and preparations in a discursive framework that implies human rights are relative to Olympic ideals and openness. Because of the underlying news value of following the lead of authority, the official press has followed this strategy in representing the reasons for the Games and their meaning. Through deconstruction of China's official discourse on human rights, we have found that, while the Chinese government has refined its publicity skills, Chinese journalism is still undertaking the old practice of presenting "scripted events and preferred interpretations" (Chang 2003), but in doing so appeals to cultural values and myths in complex ways.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusions

This study set out to explore selected Australian and Chinese press coverage of Olympic-related activities, including two bids and preparations for the Games, between 1990 and 2005. The purpose was to make a comparative study of representations in the press systems of Australia and China. The criteria for selecting the press entities included the need for a range of coverage over an extended period, which could be seen as representative of main forms of reporting in the particular journalistic and cultural contexts, to support comparisons. On this basis, *The Australian* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* were chosen as well established newspapers in the tradition of commercially owned press in the Australian liberal-democratic context. *The People's Daily*, *China Daily* and the Xinhua Press Agency were chosen as the major official Chinese newspapers and organizations. To open the comparative inquiry, three general questions were introduced.

The first concerned the types of events, situations and issues that are dominant in Chinese and Australian reportage about the broad topic of Olympic-related activities, recognising that the newspaper representations could relate directly or indirectly to the newspapers' own and each other's country. Considering this question opened up the issue of how the press representations in the different contexts do more than just reflect events occurring in the world through a narrow focus on the sporting event as if this could be seen in isolation. The second question thus concerned the ways in which, in representing the Olympic-related activities, the Chinese and Australian press have constructed stories and interpreted issues in particular ways in changing contexts, through the use of specific forms of writing and techniques of representation. This was to include, in particular, consideration of how the press represented the respective chances of success in bidding for, preparing and hosting the Games. And the third question was about how the media representations in the Chinese and Australian press contexts bring into operation, and help produce, particular cultural and ideological values, concerns and assumptions, in the intersection with the Olympic activities.

We noted that no definitive method was available to readily answer all these research

questions. In approaching them, we indicated several points of interest in relating to broader scholarship on media studies of the press, which have now been developed. The study has pursued a general comparative interest in analysing press representations and their ideological dimensions in changing national and international contexts. It has focused this interest by establishing a common ground on which the selected Chinese and Australian press converge in representing the Olympic-related activities. It has combined methods of quantitative and qualitative to analyse the press representations. Content analysis has identified the press treatments of particular sub-topics, perspectives and actors in the activities. To investigate further the construction of meaning in the news texts, the study has combined the content analysis with discourse analysis, adapting them both for the purposes of comparative study.

Drawing on key types of frequencies established in the field of content analysis, we investigated the coverage of sub-topics in broad economic, political and cultural categories. Differences were found in the number of times that sub-topics were reported and the overall pattern of coverage for the three aspects of the Olympic activities. Generally, the Australian press covered the economic and political aspects in the Olympics almost evenly, and criticism of China over human rights was part of this, whereas the Chinese press reported the economic aspects much more often than political ones and sought to play down the importance of the latter. Examination of the press perspectives on the nature and meaning of the Games, the reasons for staging them as seen in the bids, and how the goals are to be achieved, demonstrated this difference further. In particular, the Australian press focused on political dimensions of China's Olympic activities, such as tensions between communist policies and the Games and the problem of political "woes" for Beijing's bid, while stressing the ideological nature of China's involvement. The Chinese press, on the other hand, confined its interpretation of both countries activities for the Games within the boundaries of the Chinese cultural values. It emphasized purposes such as helping to develop the country and promote its image while keeping social stability, maintaining that the Games activities are compatible with Chinese socialism and the way to a success is by support of the whole country following the authorities.

Sub-topic frequencies over the three sub-periods were also tested. Each period was

clearly reflected by frequency changes in main sub-topics reported in the Australian newspapers. It was found that, just as the Australian newspapers pay greater attention than their Chinese counterparts to the political aspects of the bidding and preparations for the Games over the whole sample period, their coverage of the political changes increases following each sub-period. On the other hand, the Chinese press coverage pattern remains basically the same throughout the sample periods, with a tendency to present the bidding and the preparations process as consistent and views about it as uniform. Particular shifts were discovered, however, especially in the later sub-period of Beijing's second bid and 2008 Games preparations.

Examination of the frequencies of actors quoted or referred to by the Chinese press and the Australian newspapers also demonstrated differences. The Australian and the Chinese press presented people as spokespersons for bidding and preparing for the Games in different ways, an indication of the kind and degree of credibility given to different people by the two countries' press. Coverage patterns of actors in the three different modes indicated a positive relationship between the use of actors and the presentation of ideas about society in each country. The Chinese press presented a more uniform picture of Beijing's bids and preparations for the Games by giving government officials the highest level of access to its coverage, followed by actors with the least challenging views. In the Chinese press, actors with government or semi-government positions and actors believed to least challenge the official opinions are given the most credibility. The voices from ordinary people can only be heard when they are supportive of the government's policies. The Australian newspapers, on the contrary, present a more diverse picture of both countries' activities in the Olympics, especially the Chinese side. As a result, actors who are expected to voice different opinions are quoted or referred to much more often than they are by the Chinese newspapers. In the Australian newspapers, even though government and Olympic bidding and organizing committee officials are the most privileged people, challengers are given same access. The Chinese press, it seems, presents a much more homogeneous social structure, whereas the Australian papers try to provide a pluralistic picture, in which actors with diverse opinion have opportunities to speak out.

In terms of the perspectives held by each actor, in the Chinese press actors largely support the government opinions and decisions on the bids and preparations for the Games. The Australian papers appear to have provided a marketplace of ideas, in which actors with different ideas have a chance to be heard. However, the government and the elite opinions still have a dominant voice on the Australian papers, which mean that not every actor has an equal opportunity to this market. Furthermore, few extremely different opinions are expressed as no fundamental debate on Olympic values is presented.

On the basis of the content analysis, it has also been found that the Australian papers presented conflicts in the Olympic related topics as complex, more intense, and harder to resolve, compared to the Chinese press. This applies to the coverage of the Olympics activities both in domestic and international news. For example, the Australian press stories tended to feature more actors, including opponents and commentators, which increased the potential for complexity, conflict, drama, controversy and individual or long-running stories of difficult problems. The Chinese official press, on the other hand, has avoided open conflict and controversy so as to have positive representations of Olympic-related activities domestically and develop its image internationally.

Extending the qualitative study of press content patterns, the lexical and propositional analysis of the two countries' newspapers coverage of the two bids and Athens Games preparations showed differences in the press perspectives in greater detail. The analysis of the coverage of the preparations problems before the Athens Games by the four newspapers showed that the four newspapers expressed common concerns about the Athens Games, but in ways that reflect different news perspectives and approaches. Lexical analysis of the Games activities showed that the Australian press made more dramatic criticisms of the Athens preparations and China's political record, whereas the official Chinese press downplayed political aspects and international judgments about Games activities and relative success. Propositional analysis confirmed that the Australian press used types of statement that could encourage critical or competitive comparisons, whereas the Chinese press avoided them as not being in China's interests or in line with the Chinese government's position. Hence there was divergence in the coverage of the common issues. For instance, the analysis of the

press interpretations of the Olympic bids showed that *The Sydney Morning Herald* tends to politicize Beijing's bid by revealing China's political intention behind the bid and recalling the country's past political woes, at the same time, while *PD* did something comparable by attempting to depoliticize its own country's bid, for the political purpose of showing the whole country's support and eagerness to win the bid. The convergence here is that both newspapers do something similar to represent the two cities' bids, but in ways in which the different strategies of news representation and different ideological and cultural values are evident.

The extended qualitative analysis of news discourse showed, further, the role of particular news values in framing the press representations, within their broader cultural and ideological context. These values are closely related to the overall cultural traditions and social contexts in each country, but in different ways. For instance, the Chinese emphasis on subordinating personal aims to collective goals and social order contrasts with Australian ideas of pluralism and individualism, while an Australian distrust of authority differs from the Chinese press role in extensively presenting and quoting government officials and views to provide ideological direction to reinforce the legitimacy of existing social relationships.

Whilst "objectivity" and "accuracy" are favoured Western media values, according to an idea that the news is a mirror of reality and journalists are independent purveyors of information, analysis of a range of news stories showed how they mediate information and interpret situations in very different ways, indicating the relative nature of such news values that we have considered at various points. For example, the analysis has shown that whereas in a conventional Western model of news values, immediacy and timeliness are emphasized and it tends to be assumed that greater frequency of appearance of an item means that it is considered more important, in the Chinese context the power of the press management of news is often in the timing of statements, restraint, and even avoidance of particular kinds of themes and propositions that might make for an awkward news agenda. (This was seen in the avoidance of the concern over whether the Athens Olympics had "lowered the bar" in relation to the Beijing preparations for the 2008 Games.) Interestingly, reflecting on this in the comparative context, we have also seen that timing rather than timeliness is applied during the coverage of some sensitive issues in the Australian press as well.

The Australian coverage generally reflected news values including not only journalistic independence but also the interest of drama, conflict and controversy. It provided a seemingly diversified picture of China's involvement in the Olympics by covering a wide range of sub-topics and diverse opinions concerning the Chinese Olympic activities, with some appeal to Australian readers' sympathy for the under-privileged through controversy, but sometimes the principled tendency towards critique limited the diversity of description in the framing of events.

The Chinese coverage reflected news values of following official policy, advocating social responsibilities and social stability in national interest. While culturally and politically the official Chinese press have been regarded as both tools of the Party and voices of the people, the study has shown the complexity of this dual role and the specific ways in which it has been maintained in changing circumstances. The discursive analysis of the treatment of themes, perspectives, actors and modes of presentation has shown the multiple functions of the official media representations. In terms of concerns and perspectives, the priority in press coverage, following the work of the Party in the Games bidding and preparations, is on disseminating positive information about the stability and unity of the society, and the development of the country particularly through economic changes, while political dispute and contention are least frequently reported because they could shake the current basic social structure. The relationship between ordinary people and the government as a whole is presented in the press as harmonious and without conflicts in interest, and debates are guided ideologically. The Chinese people's opinions are represented either through correct Party policies or by the people themselves, but only if they are consistent with the dominant ideology. The powerful position of the government and Party can be stated at a time of certain liberalizations as in the opening of the economy to free market forces. Domestically, the press can be a means of officially clarifying social discussion and modeling the process of debate to help reach agreement on issues. Government authority can be restated regarding political disagreement or dissidence. Through the different press organs, including the English-language *China Daily*, information can be managed with different emphases, for nationalist purposes of unity at home or strategic statements and image-building in international contexts.

The study has found that the general differences in the representations of the Olympic activities by each country's press continue through the sub-periods of the successive bids and preparations for the Games. It has shown how each newspaper's or press organisation's presentation is consistent with, and helps to reinforce, dominant cultural values and assumptions within the respective countries. The study does not seek to preclude or disprove the possibility conscious bias or manipulation by journalists in either country's press system. But rather than attribute the differences to individual bias or interest, it has shown historically specific relationships between the forms of coverage and particular news and cultural values manifested in the press. If for the Australian newspapers, conscious bias is under scrutiny and criticism because of the Australian media's self-proclaimed principle of independent "objectivity", in the Chinese journalistic practice the idea of objective and true reporting about a news event is upheld in a different sense that relates to a process in which official clarifications, and criticisms and corrections about "false" reports, are frequently carried out in the press. This is another aspect of the ways in which cultural values and ideologies dominate routine news reporting in the press of each country.

Finally, this study finds that coverage in both newspapers is also related to the characteristics of the press system and philosophies of the two countries in a mobile way. It concluded by showing how the emphases on sub-topics and the perspectives on political, economic and cultural issues changes over time in the Australian and Chinese press, especially in the activities surrounding Beijing's second bid and its preparations for the 2008 Games. In the changing context in which Sydney and Beijing were no longer direct rivals and there has been growing interest in economic relations with China, the Australian press subdued political criticisms somewhat and found relevant news angles and "proximity" in trade and business matters relating to Beijing. In China, following the failure of its more China-centered first bid, official publicity has taken the initiative of a low-key strategy, promoting Beijing's bid and preparations in a discursive and ideological framework that implies human rights are relative to Olympic ideals and openness. Because of the underlying news value of following the lead of authority, the official press has followed this strategy in representing the reasons for the Games and their meaning. In both the publicity and

the press coverage, this strategy involved complex appeals to cultural values and myths of the people, progress and the Olympic spirit.

By integrating and applying methods of quantitative and qualitative analysis, this study has shown their value for studying systems of news representations in the changing contexts of the official communist press system in China as a transitional authoritarian society, and the liberal-democratic culture of the Australian press. The treatment of the Olympic Games activities as a common ground, which press attention has converged on while diverging in the content and forms of news representation, has helped to extend the application of methods of content analysis and discourse analysis for the purposes of international comparative journalism study. This approach has identified the different discursive and ideological frames for the coverage of Olympic-related activities, and helped to understand the reasons for the differences, in the context of the press systems in China and Australia. As political, economic and cultural relations continue to change between the two countries, it is hoped that comparing and understanding the historically and ideologically situated nature of representational news practices can contribute to future possibilities of dialogue in and through the press.

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