

NATIONAL IDENTITY REPRESENTATION IN SPORT MEDIA
-THE CASE OF CHINA AND THE U.S.

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

NATIONAL IDENTITY REPRESENTATION IN SPORT MEDIA

-THE CASE OF CHINA AND THE U.S.

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ABSTRACT

Based on the interpretation of the newspaper's role in constructing national identity, this study explores the dynamic strategies employed in nationalism constructing in two major newspapers of China and USA during the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games. By situating meanings of news texts into specific social-cultural contexts, the distinctions and connections between various forms of discourse in news texts are revealed, displaying the complex process of nationalistic ideology construction in *China Daily* and *The New York Times*.

Three levels are included in the discursive construction of national identity between two newspapers. In the first level, two newspapers are engaged in the process of representing their athletes with specific nationalistic ideology. *China Daily*'s readings on respective athletes embody a process of pursuing new interpretation of Chinese, as well as committing traditional state-run ideology; whereas *The New York Times* projects its nation in favor of heroism with attempting to combine a balance between the value of individualism and teamwork. In the second level, different authors from the two newspapers present distinct process of identification, illuminating that reporters' personal identification has potential to influence their readers' identity and finally contribute to the construction of national identities. In the third level, both newspapers demonstrate their own genres to interact with readers facing those failure athletes, indicating the fact that various discourses can work together to the discursive construction of national identity.

The norms of national identity construction revealed in this study has the potential to be considered in the international sport marketing and business involvement in China

and the United States, two nations that have frequently been taken into comparison by the media in the past decade. As such, an analysis of representative newspapers' discourse focusing on national identity construction, makes this study both theoretical and practical meaning in media research and global discourse analysis.

Keywords: National Identity; Critical Discourse Analysis; Olympic; Newspaper

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Chapter 1

Introduction

During the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, China was locked in a tight battle with the U.S. in the ultimate Olympic competition - the race to be number one in the medal table. This intense competition lasted almost the entire London Olympiad. China had kept strong momentum from the beginning of the Games, and was in first place for several days, but America surpassed China in the second half of the Olympics. In all, the U.S. won 46 gold medals, marking the highest total the nation has ever won at an Olympics they did not host. China won 38 gold medals, also the most ever in Olympic Games not in China. During the seventeen days of the Games, China and the U.S. still had strong advantages in their traditional sports (e.g., badminton, table tennis and diving for China; tracks & fields and swimming for the U.S.). Also, China launched challenge on the U.S. by claiming five gold medals in swimming. The intense competition between China and the U.S. for Olympic superiority in London provides a starting point to observe the dynamic and complex representations of national values, ideology and culture between the two countries.

In the past two decades, many social scholars and researches (e.g., Anderson, 1991; Wodak, De Cilla, Reigl & Liebhart, 1999; Hall, 1996) have studied the concept of nation in terms of its meaning as an imagined community or mental construct. This meaning can be reflected through national discourse, a way which Hall (1996) argues influence our actions and helps to organize the conception of ourselves. As one of the most important sites in which nations are represented, sport, especially mega-events such as the Olympic Games, play vital roles in building national images. Lipsky (1978)

believes that sport can be analyzed as the symbolic expression of the values within political and social milieu. Its representation can exist in the process of articulation of ideology, cultural, social values, racial stereotypes, other factors (e.g., economic, language), as well as specific textual strategies realized in media (Trujillo and Ekdom, 1985; Jhally, 1989; Parisi, 1998). This means sport writing can produce consensus on values in a given social context, and has the power to continuously present and affirm this consensus. In some particular cases, the ideological power in sport writing can be transferred into a visible contest between “us” and “them,” either by manipulation of certain habitus or interplay between different levels of discursive consciousness (Poulton, 2004). In this sense, media discourse can also be regarded as a place where meanings and social values struggle and compete .

This research attempts to delineate the media discourses during the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games, and examines how national identities are constructed in newspaper discourse. Specifically, this study engages in a critical discourse analysis of print media representations, focusing on the discursive strategies employed in the construction of athletes and events between the *China Daily* and *The New York Times*. As such, this study employs a qualitative methodology, identifying and situating media discourse into the national values, ideology and cultural differences existing between China and the United States.

Definition of Terms

National identity: It is a predominance identities among other social identities. National identity owns symbolic power to unite people within nations, regardless ethnical and region differences.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): CDA is one approach of discourse analytic research, it views language as a kind of social practice, and can be discursively constructed.

Discourses: The ways of representation on different aspects and perspectives on the world, depending on different positions, social and personal identities, and so forth.

Styles: The process and ways of individuals identifying themselves and being identified by others. It reflects an embodiment of how people stand, look, and move.

Genres: The specifically discursive aspects of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events. Relevant features of genre include the rhetorical structure of texts; logical relation between sentences and over larger stretches; as well as speech mood and function at level of clauses.

Assumptions

The main assumption of this study is, through putting media texts into specific social and cultural meaning, there should be distinctions and connections between the coverage of the London Olympics in the *China Daily* and *The New York Times*, revealing the complex and dynamic processes of national identity constructions. It is also assumed that the discursive constructions of national identity demonstrated in the two newspapers are representative in their respective media systems, and can provide significant implications for sport marketing and sport management.

These assumptions are based on the two newspapers' status in their respective national media systems. As the largest metropolitan newspaper in the U.S., *The New York Times* has been one of the representatives of America media, producing nationalistic meaning in Americans' favor (Stone, 1994). The *China Daily* is selected for the

consideration of its important status and influence as the predominant English newspaper in the Chinese media. It is also regarded as the English version of the People's Daily — the “official mouthpiece” of the Chinese Communist Party. Furthermore, considering that the *China Daily* is an English-based newspaper, it is easy to assume the importance of its role in representing the Chinese national image and articulating national concerns and priorities to the international community (Li, 2009). Through an analysis of their representative discourse, and uncovering the dynamic representation of events and athletes, this study has potential to lay the foundation to extend interpretation and understanding of the function of media in national identity building between the two nations.

Delimitations

Applying the three focuses of analysis from Fairclough's (2003) framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, this study explores the dynamic constructions of national identities during the London Olympic Games. Reports of respective athletes and events from “*China Daily*” and “*The New York Times*” in the 2012 London Games were collected and analyzed then. News, feature stories and commentaries in two newspapers during the Games were the main research texts. These media resources were chosen through searching for keywords such as “London Olympic,” “China,” “U.S.,” “Chinese athlete,” “American athlete” and so forth. These searches were conducted through the online version of both newspapers, and limited between the July 20th (one week before the opening ceremony of the Games) to the August 20th (one week after the closing ceremony of the Games). The study sample was chosen in this period mainly because most of coverages on the Games were clustered in these thirty days. It is also a period

when people's attention is greatly paid upon the Games. As such, the meanings and norms of national identity indicated during this time are much more significant than other time for the implications of sport marketing and sport management.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

National Identity

In the last several decades, the notion of “national identity” has been well documented in social, cultural and political studies (e.g., Verba, 1965; Anderson, 1991; Mangan, 1996; Huntington, 2004). The basic idea underpinning the interpretation of “national identity” is highlighting the process of forming consciousness among people to identify with in their nations. This process, however, is arguably to be dynamic and complex. Hall (1991), for example, contends that national identity should be taken into consideration by drawing on the interpretation of dynamic social and cultural identities. He argues that national identity is one possible type of social identity, which is contingent, partially because of the complex process of constructing multiple social and cultural identity. Furthermore, in the new area of globalization, this complexity process even has potential to produce “hybrid” identities (Brookes, 1999).

But the predominance of the nation as a symbolic power can assimilate people into the cultural and political unit. The dominant representation of nation denies the complexity and contingency existing in the multiple social identities, which may allow difference and even contradiction within the nation based on ethnicity, region, locality, and so forth. As a united form of social and political organization, the nation and its identity can be represented by the mythical consciousness construction of its particular history, distinct national characteristics, specific traditions, and so on (Johnston, 1991; Mangan, 1996; Brookes, 1999). This representation is further reinforced by the notion of “imagined community” raised by Anderson (1991). In Anderson’s (1991) view, nation is

the product of human imagination, which can bring people together and convert political, social and cultural practices into meanings, using the authoritative sense of the word, that people can identify with. These meanings can hold members together in a nation, as well as provide the start points for people to think about themselves as being distinct from others. Besides admitting the dominant status of national identity among multiple social and identities, Anderson (1991) also argues that the formation of national identity is in process instead of being fixed and static. This process, which is defined by Anderson as “pilgrimages,” is inextricably related with the dynamic communication and interaction among people, as well as how they reach a final consensus in the creation of culture.

Based on the above discussion, the notion of “national identity” in this research regards its predominance among other social identities, as well as its symbolic power in uniting people within nations, regardless ethnic and regional differences. Also, its characteristic of continuity should not be neglected. National identity can be reduplicated and even reinvented in the ongoing processes of interaction among people and the formation of consensus .

National Identity and Sport

Among various cultural arenas, sport is believed to be entwined with national identity and greatly involved in the process of manifestation and creation of national identity (Morgan, 2000; Jarvie, 2003). During some international sport events, the emotion of national identity appears overwhelmingly. Nationalistic symbols in international sport events, such as nations’ representative sports (e.g., swimming in the USA; table tennis in China; soccer in Brazil), as well as their respective athletes, are frequently serve to generate the characters of a nation. People visibly relate success and

failure in sports with nationalistic sentiment and experience the emotion of superiority or frustration on various levels for the individuals and nations (Segrave, McDowell and King, 2006). Specifically, ever-increasing numbers of achievement and remarkable sport results store as collective memory among people, just as important as memories from other cultural areas, functioning as a key factor to the construction of national identity . Furthermore, owing to its extensive influence, sport can be interpreted as significant enough to be described as a cultural element and finally become a symbolic site reflecting a society's struggles and conflicts (Gruneau and Whitson, 1993). In this sense, possible failures in sport can even trigger people's collective reaction to extend to other areas of social disappointment.

Bairner (2001) argues that sport and national identity are closely interrelated, but not the same way among different nations. No two nations' sport nationalism is exactly alike, as Holder (2009) puts, paralleling Anderson's claim that no two nations interpret or image community in the same way. Sport allows specific nations to keep their distinction. Different manners with marked variation exist, and are employed in the process of promoting the nationalist cause in different contexts (Bairner, 2001). For example, Laine (2006) found Finnish believe sport is crucial to construct and represent Finland as a viable nation while sport in Japan, as being explored by Collins (2007), was found to be used as a projection to reveal Japan's economic growth and achievement in international diplomacy. The functions sport has on different nations embody the distinct social, historical, political and cultural consciousness of those people.

The Chinese interest in sport, which began by the start of 20th century, has been largely motivated by a collective desire to establish a new national identity. This desire

can be specially explained to save the nation, to rid the label “sick man of East Asia” and to make China secure and strong (Xu, 2008). When the modern sport was firstly introduced into China in the late 1890s, it was believed in general to be a strong medicine to save “sick” Chinese, both in physically and mentally. The fate of the nation then, was strongly associated with the physical training, as well as public health. Ever since Mao’s era, the idea of using sport to strength people has gradually transformed into a significant political implication for China’s nation building and international prestige. Sport was labeled as another frontier, similar to military and diplomatic missions, to fight for the glory of New China in the international arena and gain respect (Xu, 2006). In the post-Mao era, China is more obsessed with winning gold medals in major international sport events to demonstrate China’s new status as an economic and political power and its determination to join the new world system. In the last several decades, the development of sport in China has gradually fostered a remarkable “championship mentality, with victory becoming the sole motivation” (Xu, 2008, p. 268). The focus on winning gold medals with the support of mobilized national resources has helped China to emerge as a major power in sport, especially in the Olympic Games. A large amount of Chinese athletes are constructed as role models, inspiring common people. Their excellent performances, on the other hand, are interpreted as a significant symbol of China’s role in global affairs.

For more than a century, the Olympic Games have been interpreted by the U.S. as its representation of national identity and prowess. Sage (1998) contends that values and norms are inculcated in American sport to bolster nationalism and the legitimacy of its ideology. One dominant national value expressed in American sport is “The American

Dream,” the basic idea that any person can achieve greatness by unremitting effort and persistent striving (Willis, 2007). This value is deeply rooted in American sport culture, and has been continually reinforced by seeing increased Olympic contenders define their goals for audience, as well as expecting common people to be inspired and take hold of fate to achieve their own dreams. Closely attached to the norm of “The America Dream”, is the frequent expression of “Sport Heroism.” The sport hero can be regarded as a staple of American life and an embodiment of the American myth of success (Scheurer, 2005). Classic American heroes in sport, as Scheurer (2005) argues, are those who possess exceptional talent, devote themselves to hard work and demonstrate the requisite courage to conquer whatever hardship they are confronted with. Actually, either term, “The American Dream” or “Sport Heroism,” vividly represents what is deserved for American national character and what is good about American society (Kathryn, 2004).

National Identity and Media

National newspapers provide an important arena to disseminate and articulate national agendas. Thus, they play important roles in creating dominant national meanings, ideologies and cultures (Anderson, 1991). According to Anderson (1991), national newspapers can behave as a “nationalist novel,” promoting people to be engaged in national discourse. This can be produced through shared experience among readers, or the knowledge that readers are familiar and the rituals with which people can commit. Similar to the role newspapers taking in producing nationalistic thinking, Billig (1995) notes that newspapers yield nationalistic thinking based on their dynamic discourse with all kinds of related stereotypes. In this environment, readers are frequently reminded everyday to think in the way connected with the meaning of nation. The reality is

undeniable that media plays a vital role in building the relationship between sport and national identity. It is easy to see how particular sporting events become representation sites of nationalistic rhetoric and ideology through media (Rowe, 2003).

It has been well documented that media provide sport enough space for the construction and representation of national identity (Rivenburgh, 1995; Mangan, 1996; Bairner, 2001). International sport competitions are arguably seen as a form of ritualized war (Elias, 1996), serving as symbolic representations of competition between different nations. The sense of national identity can be easily promoted when citizens see their players represent them in a match against another nation (Duke and Crolley, 1996). Media in this process, then, can greatly highlight the cultural and ideological meaning of sport (Bairner, 2001). Finally, the media draws on the myths of collectivity and unity among people who believe those representative athletes are embodiments of themselves (Poulton, 2004). The interrelationship between national identity and sport media is also in accordance with what Rowe, McKay and Miller (1998) describe as the “sport–nationalism–media troika” (p. 13). Since audience has been continually experienced in the environment of mediated sport, one potential consequence is that they are saturated with militaristic value, which is greatly indicated through the binary of cultural opposites (i.e., “we” and “they”) and the process of erasing the heterogeneous “we” (Jhally, 1989). There is a continuous interest and expectation for society to encourage media construction of “nationalistic enemies.” In this process, if one enemy disappears in the media discourse, another emerges to take its place. Therefore, just as the Soviet Union was America’s “enemy” during the Cold War, China is described as a new rivalry for the U.S. in the new era. These enemies serve a special purpose for media consumers. They

provide a yardstick against which the nation measures itself in a metaphorical way (Riggs, Eastman, and Golobic, 1993).

The sport can be interrupted as the import image building elements for individuals and societies (Beck and Bosshart, 2003). Acting as the unifying forces of socialization, sport can greatly improve the social acceptance of athletes and finally support the construction of culture and national identities. International media

Bishop and Jaworski (2003) argue that the nation can be imagined in terms of both time and space through a variety of social events and symbolic practices. Considering this, a common sense of continuity through time constructed by shared history becomes another significant aspect in the process of imaging a sense of collective identity. In this way, the national community is discursively articulated through references to the past and speculation about the future (Bishop and Jaworski, 2003). Specifically, through the invocation of important historical references (e.g., Olympic history reference), the nation is imagined, intertwined with its past and a common sense of the present. Similarly, the references to the future impact related with expected result of events can also lay foundation for collective interpretation among people. The sense of historical continuity has been discovered in some popular major sport disciplines. In Duke and Crolley's research (1996), they found that the soccer, which is deeply embedded within some nations' history and is abundant with stories told about the legendary exploits of notable national players, serves constantly in the construction of a sense of national identity.

The Olympic medal and medal table are also believed to arouse national emotions, producing the experience of national pride (Van Hilvoorde, Elling, and Stokvis, 2010).

The understanding of Olympic medal has the potential to develop into a narrative, which is a specific form of representation, accentuating the sequential nature of meaning (Bruner, 1991). The narratives of the Olympic Games accompany the formation of national identity through influencing the audience's interpretation and understanding about medals and the performances of athletes. Narrative in this case is more than just one specific sport story, it can be categorized based on its particular structure and script and generalized from specific contexts (Van Hilvoorde et al., 2010). Through the employment of different explanatory and interpretative frames into the narrative of anticipating results, expecting success or attributing failure, the audience will be consciously or unconsciously guided in to the expected way of thinking (Jackson and Ponic, 2001). For example, based on the result of a competition, sport reporters often create a variety of narratives that offer accounts of causes and effects. This explanatory frames of winning and losing can be extended from the individual athlete to the potential social institutional problems, such as training facilities and funding raise, or even to the spiritual level, such as national characteristics like the "mentality" or "vitality" of a country (Van Oosten, 2010). Van Oosten (2010) also argues that narratives of "winning or losing" vary based on the expectation embedded in peoples' understanding of each competition. Whatever the result is, each narrative can more or less contribute to their experience of reading national meanings.

Social-political Background: China-U.S. Relationship in the Media

Founded on greatly distinct political systems and cultural traditions, the U.S. and China represent two distinct ideological systems in the post-Cold War era (Li, 2009). Over the last few decades, the two nations' views of themselves and each other are well

represented through their respective media. Herman and Chomsky (2002) contend that the “anti-communist” ideology has been dominating the U.S. media coverage on China since the two countries established their diplomatic relations. It ranges from economic development to democracy, human rights, diplomacy, and so forth (Zhang, 2011). In the 2000s, bolstered by great economic development, China has become an emerging power in the world (Lee, 2012). However, the American media’s coverage of China tends to be negative rather than being positive (Zhang, 2011). For example, Liss (2003) summarizes that human rights abuses, a repressive social system, and corruptive leadership are the common themes on images of China in today’s American print media. In a content analysis of major American news networks’ coverage on foreign countries, Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004) also found that the coverage of China in American media frequently centers on issues which are believed to threaten the interest of United States or values that the Americans want to protect.

Ramo (2007) states that China’s problem hinges on a disparity between how China views itself and other nations’ out of alignment image of China. China is inclined to see itself as a peaceful rising power. When faced with the “anti-communist ideology” coming from foreign media, strong nationalism is generally characterized by Chinese media (Zhang, 1998). Actually, starting from 1990s, promoted by some publications such as “Behind the Demonization of China” and “China Can Say No”, the ideological divide between press discourses is salient in the China-American conflicted nationalism storytelling lines. Particularly, with China’s extensive involvement of global affairs, the strong nationalistic concerns have become more and more evident among mass media’s characterizations of China (Huang and Lee, 2003).

The fact of long-standing political and ideological rivalry between two nations can be reinforced by the way in which media organizations construct their representation of sport events (Maguire and Poulton, 1999). Wang (2008) found that China's media would like to amplify the ordinary Olympic temptation of nationalism by focusing on head-to-head competition between China and the U.S., especially given two backstories. Dyreson (2009) argues that the Americans' readings of the Beijing Olympics created a discourse which fits neatly into America's favor. In 2008, China bested the U. S. in the gold medal count by 51 to 36. Ignoring claims from China and most other nations that the Chinese had "won" the mythical Olympic "championship," American interpreters provided readers with their preferred calculus of the medal data (i.e., comparison of total medals won by China and America). In this way, they not only made their claim to a convincing American triumph, but also downplayed Chinese achievements by marginalizing events they won (e.g., badminton, table tennis, weight lifting) (Dyreson, 2009).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Method

This research examines the coverage of the London Olympic Games in *China Daily* and *The New York Times* as a discursive construction of national identity. Social practices and cultural meanings are arguably embedded in this process. Considering this, this research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a framework to conduct analysis.

As one paradigm of discourse analytic research, CDA views discourse as a kind of social practice which can be discursively constructed (Fairclough, 1995). This perspective implies that research on media discourse should involve the understanding of social contexts, social institutions, and cultural practices which are embedded in the discourse production. CDA proposes that social and cultural meaning and norms can be constituted by discourse; discourse can be produced in the social interaction, with power relations being discursively constructed; and its analysis can adopt interpretative and explanatory frameworks (Wodak, 2001). Also, as an institution fully bearing discourse, media has been experiencing the process of different discourses and ideologies contending and struggling. Considering this, discourse analysis critically interprets social-political and ideological meaning through deconstructing textual units and structures (Fairclough, 2003). However, CDA is not a specific direction of research, which means it does not have a unitary theoretical framework (van Dijk, 2003). Therefore, no definite procedure or methodological approach is fixed. Any methods in discourse studies can be employed in the CDA, as long as its overall theoretically

framework is closely related with its insight into social effect of discourse (van Dijk, 2003).

Fairclough (2003) argues that textual analysis in CDA should go beyond the linguistic analysis and include what he called “interdiscursive analysis,” that is “seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, styles, and genres they draw on and articulate together” (p.3). Fairclough sees discourses as “ways of representing aspects of the world ... the ‘mental world’ of thoughts, feelings, belief and so forth” (p. 124). Different discourses, as being argued by Fairclough, illustrate different perspectives which are associated with the different relations people have to the world, depending on their positions, social identities, and personal identities. He also describes how we go about identifying different discourses within a text, from identifying the main parts of the world (including areas of social life) which are represented as the main “themes,” to identifying the particular perspective or point of view from which they are represented. Fairclough defines styles as “the discourse aspect of ways of being, linked to the process of identification - how people identify themselves and are identified by others” (p. 159). It reflects an embodiment of how people hold, look, and move. Similar to Fairclough, Coupland (2001) contends that style in news texts can be explained as a process of self-presentation, with completion of identity goals within related contexts. Genres, according to Fairclough (2003), function as “the specifically discourse aspects of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events” (p. 65). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) claim that genres can be employed as “framing” devices to build and organize structure between discourses. Relevant features of genre include the rhetorical structure of texts, logical relation between sentences and over larger stretches, and speech mood and

function at the level of clauses. An analysis of a text in terms of genre, thus, can reveal how those distinct text features contribute to frame particular social occasions (Li, 2009).

Implementation of the CDA

To explore the complex and dynamic constructions of national identities, this study will examine how China and U.S. daily newspapers report particular events and topics during the London Games. The coverage of athletes from both countries is selected for analysis. The three analysis focuses employed here attempt to identify different aspects of new texts and treat discourses with their dynamic meanings articulated in various textual features.

As being discussed, the analysis of discourses intends to examine ways in which different perspectives and aspects are represented, such as representations of social events, social processes, social actors, and so on. In the first level of analysis, this study will examine the representations of athletes, as well as their performance, based on different interpretations of the event. Through looking at specific ways of these representations, it will reveal how each newspaper's understanding is related with its nation's own ideology and social culture.

The second analysis level in this study will focus on the styles of discourse. Taking articles on specific athletes and topics in each newspaper as examples, this study will explore the process of authors' identity constructions, demonstrating how the two newspapers and their authors are engaged in a process of identifying themselves and being identified by others. In doing so, this study will focus on the evaluations emerged in text. Fairclough (2003) defines evaluation as a statement in which authors commit themselves to certain values by explicitly or implicitly expressing what is right or wrong,

good or bad. It is an important way for people to identify or construct certain identities for themselves (Li, 2009).

In the third analysis level, the study will examine the genres articulated in particular texts. Considering that Fairclough's framework sees genres as contribution to social interaction with various events, the analysis of genre then, considers how different genres facilitate better understanding of specific social events and construct the mood of discourse. Having noticed the nature of genre and how the news texts are organized, the analysis is ready to move onto the more minute levels: looking at issues such as connotations, metaphors, nominalization and topicalization.

Halliday (1994) contends that news discourse analysis should place discourses' meanings into the specific society in which they are produced. The framework applied in this research should arguably enrich our interpretation of news texts and their social and cultural dimensions.

Chapter 4

Analysis

Discourse Analysis — Representational Meaning

Fairclough's framework regards discourse as an attempt to understand ways of representing different aspects of social events, social processes, social actors, and so on. In the analysis in this section, I will focus specifically on the representations of representative athletes (i.e., social actors) in the two newspapers' discourses.

One prevalent media representation of social actor in Olympic Games coverage is the construction of individual heroes, which is embedded in a long tradition of elevating sports personalities to heroic or epic status (Alabarces et al., 2001). Hobsbawn (1990) argues that by representing their nation or state in mega-sport events, sport personalities can become primary expressions of their imagined communities. Wodak, De Cilla, Reigl, and Liebhart (1999) also note that many people do not see athletic achievements as individual, but as heroic representations for their country. In this way, the discursive construction of identities assigned to sports personalities can come to represent collective national identity.

***China Daily* Text Analysis**

After reviewing articles of *China Daily*'s coverage on Chinese athletes in London, several themes are categorized regarding their excellent performance: "China's new super icon," "hard working," "Adversity-overcome," "China's evaluation and introspection." These different perspectives and understandings permeate the texts with Chinese nationalism.

China's new super icon.

In this London Olympiad, the swimmers Sun Yang and Ye Shiwen are no doubt the biggest sports star among Chinese representative athletes. Sun won the 400m and 1500m freestyle at the 2012 Summer Olympics, setting the new world record in the 1500m event and becoming the first Chinese man ever to gain a swimming gold medal in Olympic competition. Through only 16 years old, Ye broke the world record in the women's 400 individual medley by more than a second, she also won the 200m individual medley and set the Olympic record. As China Daily's reporter Sun (2012a) opined, "Sun's gold medals in the 400m and 1,500m freestyle events were more inspirational than other sport programs." Ryan Lochte, the American star swimmer, expressed about Ye's performance as: "It's pretty impressive. She's fast and if she was out there with me, she might be able to beat me too" (Xinhua News Agency, 2009a).

The Chinese media started to dub "the new icon" of Chinese sport (the term varied slightly as "the new sport superstar" and "the new sport totem") almost as soon as Sun stunned the world by breaking Australian Grant Hackett's 10-year-old record to win gold in the 1500m at the 2011 Shang Hai World Championships. Before the London Olympic Games, Chinese media had hailed Sun as China's most anticipated next superstar, and poised him to join the ranks of former NBA All-Star player Yao Ming, track hero Liu Xiang and French Open champion Li Na. Two days before his debut in London, one article titled "China needs a star, and Sun is willing to oblige" (Chen, 2012a) argued that the competition between Sun and South Korean Park Tae-hwan is "one of the most anticipated rivals in the Olympic pool, after that between Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte." Sun's status was more highlighted by stressing that: "A nation whose Olympic

success mostly comes in less-popular sports like badminton and table tennis is in desperate search of a new sports star” (Chen, 2012a). After Sun and Ye won champions in their respective disciplines, their excellence was believed to be “no doubt a good start, not only for Chinese swimming team in London, but also for greater achievements of China's swimming career in days to come” (Xinhua News Agency, 2012b). Their fabulous performance was further interpreted as “highlights in the pool at the London Olympics” especially considering the fact of “historic victories in a sport which has long been dominated by western countries” (Xinhua News Agency, 2012b).

Accompanying with Sun’s “China new superstar” image was his distinct characteristics represented in media. The outspoken nature was one illustration. One vivid example came from that “he criticized the Chinese Swimming Association for making him attend a commercial event without letting him know beforehand” (Chen, 2012a). He was also quoted as saying: “I think I have a very good personality. I’m sunny and outgoing” (Chen, 2012a), or “I think my chances of winning the 400m are great if I can swim normally” (Chen, 2012a), again, consolidated his lively nature. This characteristic, along with his “trendy lifestyle” and “handsome appearance”, stabilized Sun’s distinct image, especially compared to other Chinese athletes, “who generally prefer to maintain a low profile” (Chen, 2012a). For Chinese athletes, being obedient and committed to the arrangement from leadership are taken for granted. Especially facing the state-run sport system, under which selection and cultivation of athletes are mostly controlled by the upper bodies, athletes’ autonomy is greatly depressed. In this environment, large amounts of athletes become overwhelmed by the training machine, with their sensitivity and intelligence being concealed or even eroded gradually, and they

are not expected to freely express their thoughts and put them into practice (Xu, 2008). Considering this, Sun's performance in front of media, definitely established a brand new image of Chinese athletes and served to overturn Chinese athletes' stereotype in popular consciousness.

In the same vein, Ye was represented as a "lucky girl" instead of "another product of China's state-run factory" (Sun, 2012b). In an article titled with "Robot? Nope-Just really good athlete" (Sun, 2012b), Ye made a difference with "a little more fortune" compared with "most of Chinese champions train at unfathomably high levels". This difference can be firstly reflected by quoting Ye's words: "I am not a robot, I don't need to practice over and over every day". It was further mirrored by the fact that "30 members of the Chinese weightlifting squad have to repeat their routines six days a week in a pungent gym filled with sweat and chalk as they prepare for the Games". Ye's achievement can largely change our understanding of China's traditional means of cultivating and training athletes, as well as the system's tough requirements on their daily practice. Ye is quoted as saying, "My training program is intense but scientifically arranged as well", and another young Chinese shooter Yi Siling, says of her reported six-hour daily drills, "I spent a lot of time with the team, but not as much as people might think". The new Chinese champions were presented as products of a reformed Chinese talent cultivation system, which replaces the traditional, highly demanding methods with countless practices being putted into.

Both Sun and Ye were imagined differently than those traditional Chinese Olympic champions, who either do not express their emotion to the public via media or train without passion like robots. However, where possible, it would make more sense to

construct an image different from the major members of group. The process of “othering,” or marking of difference, is sometimes indeed essential to nationalist discourses. Specifically, we know what it is to be Chinese athletes, actually, not only because of certain characteristics that “we” already have, but also because of characteristics “we” deserve, whereas “others” do. That is to say, the sense of “self” can also largely promoted by the expectation to be different.

Hard-working.

Another theme “hard-working” being suggested by several articles, was also one of the main reasons that Chinese athletes made it to the great athletic ability and became the final winner (e.g., Sun, 2012c; Xinhua News Agency, 2012b; and Chen, 2012b).

Trujillo (1991) claims that the fact that sport is constructed as a special case of work is more powerful than that of sport and work independently playing a role in producing hegemonic masculinity. One way that the mass media represent sport as work is to highlight work ethic. “Athletes,” argues by Sadler (1976), “often are aware that what they do is not play. Their practice sessions are workouts; and to win the game they have to work hard” (p. 245).

Media coverage of Sun Yang had reinforced this feature and, to great extent, he was reproduced as an excellent male worker. Sun’s work ethic had been admired and associated with his successful performance. One article, written before his success in London, quoted his latest post on Weibo as saying, “It’s not destiny that decides your life. It’s every choice and every effort you make that decide your life” (Chen, 2012a). Also, his coach was quoted: “He knows what works is, and he takes his responsibility” (Chen, 2012a). These quotations demonstrated both Sun and his coach’s respect for hard work.

Then, as he continued to achieve success in London, his work ethic was more highlighted than his athletic ability and talent, although he is regarded as China's most successful swimmer and marked as one of most prominent sport elites. His work attitude was also illustrated in detail such as stressing his rigid workout routine, in which he "awoke at 4:30 am every day and spent every moment in the pool that he was not sleeping and eating" (Sun, 2012c). By quoting Sun's other words, like "I made it entirely through same hard work that other athletes did" (Sun, 2012c), the media again consolidates his assiduous, hard-working images.

Besides sweat and working time, the two key aspects which can fully demonstrate athletes' work ethic, many other aspects were presented, displaying that hard working deserves the most credit for the success. Sailing-Laser Radial winner Xu Lijia, who had congenital amblyopia and a hearing impairment, was respected because of "her more effort and harder working than others" (Tang, 2012). Australia's diving athlete Anabelle Smith, believed that only if he "continues to work hard" (Chen, 2012b) and keep training like how Chinese athletes train, do "their best in diving and never give up" (Chen, 2012b), that they have a chance to beat China. In an article covering Chinese table tennis athlete Wang Hao, he was quoted as saying: "I hope my hard-work can be constantly recognized by the coaches. The lost won't influence my spirit" (*China Daily*, 2012a). Although he failed to snatch the title he deserves most. The theme represents him as still valued for the hard work ethic he owns and believes that this is more deserving of respect than just being a champion.

Adversity-overcoming

Associated with hard working theme, was the Chinese media's attention on how Chinese athletes overcome their difficulties and finally make a comeback.

Ding Ning, a Chinese female table tennis player, was taken as an example. The setbacks and expectations she encountered as the promising top seed player in China's female table tennis team are understood as an adversity. She said in one article that "I feel some pressure on my shoulder" (Wu and Tang, 2012). The context behind it is that, in 2010, Ding's surprise loss to Singapore rival Feng Tianwei shattered the rest of team and finally crushed the Chinese women's team's dream of clinching its ninth consecutive world championship. This laid the base discourse about her hardship which has to be overcome. Then, as this article goes, a more prominent theme emerged, regarding her determination and endeavors to clear the adversity she faces. In the article, a large depicts how she made it back to the top. She told the media that she "gradually realized that my real opponent was herself" (Wu and Tang, 2012) and stated that "Losing can't beat me - it only causes me to try harder" (Wu and Tang, 2012). These quotations implied that she was able to come back from adversity because of her strong will. She was also portrayed as an figure who "has a responsibility to carry on the glittering legacy of former world champions" (Wu and Tang, 2012), and is "not scared by the expectation" (Wu and Tang, 2012). In all, these narrations not only confirmed difficulties Ding faced were more than any other athletes, but so were her toughness and ability to conquer them.

Another example of "adversity-overcoming" came from China's world champion of Judoka — Tong Wen, who "left her doping ban behind and has her sights set on defending her Olympic gold medal in the +78kg event" (Chen, 2012c). Tong's preparation for the London Olympics was interpreted as a stuttering cycle, because she

was tested positive for the fat-burning drug clenbuterol at the 2009 but successful bid to overturn the ban in 2011. Tong returned to international competition then, and won several world championships later. However, all that winning could not “shut out the criticism from those who questioned whether the ban should have been overturned” (Chen, 2012c) and Tong was reported in believing that “the best response is to win another gold medal” (Chen, 2012c). She stated that “As a professional, what you should do is be focused on the preparations and competitions” (Chen, 2012c), indicating that the controversy around her can’t impede her step to win the final.

The best represented image who best illustrated the theme of “adversity overcoming and determination” was China’s star hurdler Liu Xiang, though he failed at last. The article titled “Liu clears hurdles to finally face the hurdle” (Chen, 2012d), which appeared after Liu arrived at London, yielded a eulogy discourse for Liu Xiang’s back from the injury out in the Beijing Olympics. The title also demonstrated Liu’s ability to overcome difficulty after the crash out in Beijing. This ability was further verified by quoting what he said: “I know how to adjust myself mentally and how to deal with distractions from outside. I’m now enjoying the Olympics” (Chen, 2012d). The phrase of “enjoying the Olympics” not only represented Liu’s confidence about the upcoming event, but also built Liu’s extraordinary temperament which is not available in most of Chinese athletes, who actually view the Olympics as the nation’s task that should be accomplished at any cost. Liu’s status was then believed to be “more mature and can handle everything,” and confidence in him was expressed: “his sheer determination will once again amaze us” (Chen, 2012d).

Further analyzing all of examples provided above, a structure or a way that reporters represent the theme of “adversity-overcoming” is drawn out. First, the representative athletes were chose from those who once had brilliant achievement. This prerequisite is essential, because it greatly triggers readers’ interest among Chinese, especially considering the fact that most Chinese only pay close attention to the Olympics during those 17 days (Zhang, 2011). That is to say, only those well-known athletes can bring people’s collective memory about their achievement, as such, they facilitate ground discourse for the readers’ further understanding. Second, the adversities those athletes face were much harder to conquer than that of other athletes. The great expectation people had of these athletes, worked tightly with the reporters’ intention to express, in turn translated into athletes having more responsibility in the story telling . Third, the determination coming from those athletes were expressed to the greatest extent in these reports. People need some medium embodying those characteristics they deserve, and heroic athletes are most suitable for this role (Whannel, 1992). These determinations on their faith to come back from setback enable the reporters cater to readers’ favor. Accordingly, it is the athletes’ spirits, instead of whether they can win or not, that takes the biggest attention.

China’s combined image as the strong and the weak

As influential opinion former, the written press plays a crucial role in the evaluation of the London Olympic Games. This evaluation followed the partisan-universal discourse, constructing China the strong image demonstrating its ambitious and dominance as a powerhouse, as well as the weak image with its introspection on its defect

in sporting (e.g., bad performance of team events) and organizational (e.g., unhealth of sport system) terms.

Acting as a mirror, the Olympic medals table reflects the relative competitive position of nations. The day before the closing ceremony, *China Daily* stared into this mirror to see what the Olympic Games revealed about state of China's sport. One article titled with "A more balanced show" (Sun, 2012d) expressed the satisfaction with the Chinese athletes performance, and took literal evaluations in comparing China's sport achievement with its own Olympic history and other world powerhouses in some mainstream events. In this article, Chinese honor and introspection was first clearly expressed by first highlighting the fact that the team had "delivered the best overseas Olympic performance in London," while later stating that "China remained humble about its competitive sports achievements because of gaps with world powerhouses in some mainstream events" (Sun, 2012d).

The media first introduced the achievements Chinese athletes accomplished in this Olympic Games. Among these narratives, the breakthrough of Chinese athletes in some mainstream events that are traditionally dominated by western athletes was stressed. A specific highlight of the breakthrough was constructed via listing China's first Olympic titles in less-developed events. Sun (2012d) reported that:

Among its 73 medal-winning events, China grabbed maiden titles in eight sports, including the men's 20km race walk (Chen Ding), the women's laser radial sailing (Xu Lijia) and the women's Epee team (Li Na, Luo Xiaojuan, Sun Yujie and Xu Anqi). The track cycling, synchronized swimming and modern pentathlon

contingents also respectively clinched their first Olympic silver medals, showing huge improvements compared with the last Games.

These accomplishments were clearly emphasized by the media and were perceived to have a higher value than others. This can be evoked especially considering the disvalued appraise of “others” for China’s performance in the Olympic events. As cited by Dyreson (2009), *The San Diego Scribe* once noted, after the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, that “many of the Chinese medal were earned in sports American don’t take seriously- badminton and table tennis, for example.” This can also be interpreted further as China has already become a formidable opponent of USA in London 2012 and beyond. Of course, the impression of Chinese dominance in its traditional strength programs should not be neglected as it works constantly. As Sun (2012d) reported: “Meanwhile, its traditional strengths in table tennis, badminton, diving, gymnastics, shooting and weightlifting contributed to the total. It swept all nine titles in two racket sports, while producing 17 in the others.” Bring together, China’s image of improvement and dominance in the London Olympic Games was established. As Liu Peng, the China delegation chief and sports minister, said, “Our relatively average medal distribution suggested our competitive sports development is more balanced than before” (Sun, 2012d).

Following the first highlight, which represented Chinese athletes achievement inclusively, an introspective theme characterizing failing performances in certain specific sports and contests emerged. This also was admitted by Liu Peng: “While we’ve improved, we still lag behind the world’s elite in reserve talent cultivation and grassroots promotion in some major events like cycling and track and field” (Sun, 2012d). The

discourse here constructed the basic tone underpinning the followed introspective discourse. China's lackluster performances in team ball events were later provided as an example demonstrating its gap with others. The fact is that "none of the five qualified ball teams medaled. Women's volleyball did the best, coming in fourth, and men's basket-ball did the worst, having been eliminated at the pool stage" (Sun, 2012d). In this way, a sense of disappointment was generalized.

The state-run sport system in China – a hierarchy of government organizations authorizing training schools and teams to select and coach a large amount young people for the main purpose of winning in the global events, provides many athletes the chance to bring honor for Chinese and themselves. However, the system has manifested its intrinsic disadvantages and has been criticized extensively. One issue lies in this system's orientation with national pride, which is largely built on the disvalue of individual athletes' interest. During the London Olympic period, *China Daily* discourses did not provide a very substantive portrayal of the athletes in this regard. Even so, relevant descriptions of Chinese athletes would also fit into the more complex picture in *China Daily*. These discourses about Chinese athletes' relationship with the Chinese sport system constituted a dual representation of athletes discussed earlier. Specifically, the two aspects of the dual representation – athletes as role models and as sacrifices under the current sport system – were tightly articulated with each other, resulting in the representation of powerless and apathetic athletes.

In this system, sport governing bodies make final decisions on the Olympic rosters although highly competitive Olympic qualifiers are held. An athlete's performance at the Olympic Games is not only related to individual career and fortune

but also to the cities and provinces the athletes represent. Because athletes' gold medals won at the Olympics are also counted toward their home provinces' gold medal table of the following Chinese National Games, which are frequently represented as an arena where all kinds of interests and power compare and struggle (Xu, 2008). In this context, some Chinese athletes were not active actors. In an article titled with "Too much weight on lifter's shoulder" (Chen, 2012e), the author presented the audience with an image of the consequences of political influence in selection of athletes in female weightlifting athlete Zhou Jun, who "was a surprising pick for Team China because she didn't have any major titles to her name" (Chen, 2012e). Zhou participated in the low-ranked group "B" – a first for Chinese weightlifters, who are considered top medal contenders on the Olympic stage. She failed in her three attempts, which was seen as "an embarrassment for the Chinese squad that has dominated the sport for many years" (Chen, 2012e). Zhou's failure was interpreted by Olympic officials as result of the decision "not to send the best athletes to the Olympic Games" (Chen, 2012e). In this group, Pre-Games favorite and national champion Ji Jing was omitted. This background information can help in understanding the intertwined interests and power struggles for recruiting representative athletes. The result was that athletes became the victims. The power struggle can be further interpreted by a quotation of Ma Wenguang (Chen, 2012e), director of the China weightlifting governing body:

Ji Jing was the champion in the 53kg qualifying, and we give the Olympic berth to Hubei province (which Ji represents in national competitions). So, we have to respect Hubei's decision (in picking Zhou). I'm not quite confident Zhou can take the gold.

In this quotation, the writer highlighted the power struggle among athletes, local governor and national governor in deciding who will represent China taking part in the competition on the Olympic stage. The word “have to” implied that the athlete and even the national governor, had no voice on final decision. It also implied that the national governor was actually against this decision, suggesting that they actually did not share the same goal. Meanwhile, athlete only becomes a tool in this article because of her much more limited power.

Brief Summary

The representation of Chinese athletes in *China Daily* revealed China’s struggle to project a new image distinct from its stereotype, as well as respects its dominant traditional ideology and deep-rooted mind state, admits its deficiency, and maintains humility and introspection. First and foremost, that China aspired to project its new superstars with distinct nature underlines both social and global values. As one of the most important figures in sport and society, the sport icon bears significant meanings and values for themselves, the society and even their nation in global affairs (Mandelbaum, 2005). Sun and Ye’s emergence then, greatly caters to current Chinese mentality, especially among the younger generation, who have a strong desire to break the bondage of certain outdated concepts and live in their own styles. Just as Chen (2012a) claims, Sun’s lively nature, along with his trendy lifestyle, will definitely make Sun an icon among China’s post-1990 generation, as well as a marketing darling. Not just a representation of brand-new Chinese, they also arguably signified a globally ambitious of China, the second-largest economy in the world. By claiming five gold medals in the pool in London, the Chinese squad challenged the Americans dramatically, the latter being

labeled as traditional powerhouse in this domain. Considering this, the fierce competition in the swimming pool between China and USA added new meaning to the constant rivalry between the two superpowers. Second, the ways of *China Daily*'s storytelling also illustrated Chinese respect to those disciplines which are deeply grounded in traditional ideology and not shading as time goes. For example, although being regarded as new productions of advanced sport training methods, it is the ethic of "hard-working" that was seen as a major factor for Sun's victory. Similarly, "determination" and "courage to conquer adversity" still were deemed to be indispensable qualities for excellent athletes. In many instances, it was these ethical principles that finally determined the orientation of ways of representation in the media. Last but not least, Chinese media's attempt to construct China as a combined image of the strong and the weak followed a adhere Chinese philosophy in its ways of development and improvement. Specially, through the discourses enumerating its dominance in traditional sports and improvement in some other sports which were underdevelopment while popular in the world, China showcased its ability and ambition to be a powerhouse which can greatly challenge the leadership of America in sport world; on the other hand, Chinese introspection on its disadvantage and acknowledgment of the gap between itself and others, made the image of weak emerged, which was also constant with Chinese attitude to be humility in current world system. Inspired by these, a clear structure and ways of *China Daily*'s representation of Chinese athletes and its rooted meanings can be more easily drawn out.

***New York Times* Discourse Analysis**

American dream chaser

In the U.S., faith in “the American dream” is a dominant ideology offering what Coakley (2009) argues is a belief in boundless opportunities with a hopeful vision for individuals to succeed economically. Under this ideology, everyone is believed to own the opportunity to success with the requirement of hard work and persistence. The ideology supports the contention that all individuals – regardless of color or gender – can achieve their dream in the context of current political, economic and cultural arrangements. In *The New York Times*, the idea of “the American dream” is also reporters’ belief, featuring neatly into the discourse of London Olympics coverage. Of the newspaper articles examined, several articles highlighted American athletes’ “dream-chasing” careers. One article covering the gymnast Danell Leyva, focused on his life journey from Cuba to the United States. While mainly depicting how his stepfather, also his coach, took him to the United States with “the seed of Olympic hope in heart” (Macur, 2012a), the article still presented his going to America and doing gymnastics as his dream career, which can be got by his father’s words: “That’s something me and Dani have similar. Even though he’s not my real biological kid, we dream the same” (Macur, 2012a). Still quoting Leyva’s father, who said, “I was a dreaming person, and people that dream, there’s no room for them in Cuba” (Macur, 2012a), the author indicated that they came to the U.S. because they believe it is a place where their dream is more possible to be realized. In another article reporting American female gymnast Gabby Douglas, the author highlighted the barrier she faced in the journal to the Olympics, and implied that a successful career to her meant more than that of others because of her poor family and her status as a black girl training in a state where she “doesn’t look like most of the others” (Macur, 2012b). These media discourses actually provided remarkable stories

which exemplify the classic paradigm, given the power and economic burdens on these athletes. They were close to the typical understanding of the “American dream” – to struggle with the unequal background and finally be a winner, inspiring so many people.

Still, consider the significant status of representations of African Americans in the U.S. Media, then, Lia Neal, the second African-American female swimmer to make it to the Olympics was placed on the front stage. The environment Neal faced was a “larger quandary in the land of opportunity, that so many sports have been resistant to inclusion for all races” (Rhoden, 2012), which could be explained by the fact that “so-called country club sports are often too expensive given the costs of training, private lessons and travel” (Rhoden, 2012). Other difficulty considerations like “a lack of familiarity, an absence of tradition and a short history of success among African-American athletes” also gave Lia Neal “no deep roots to grab onto” (Rhoden, 2012). In this environment, Lia’s success became “one of the roots and a likely source of inspiration for a younger generation” (Rhoden, 2012), as her father said, “This young lady is going to touch someone who’s going to be reaching for that higher goal also because of what Lia is doing right now in the water.” (Rhoden, 2012). Neal’s parents, Siu and Rome Neal, who were brought together by “poignant variations of the American dream” (Rhoden, 2012), also underlined the “complexities and contradictions of a nation conceived in liberty” (Rhoden, 2012). In this union, their daughter Lia Neal symbolized “the powerful, positive force” (Rhoden, 2012), and her ambition and determination to be an elite athlete embodied another specific quality of the American dream, which requires grasping any potential opportunities and demands unswerving commitment in the pursuit of great success.

Teamwork and Individualism

The belief in “teamwork,” which emphasizes the cooperation within a group of individuals, is labeled as a significant value in American sport. As Kruse (1981, p. 275) contends:

The ethic of team sport holds that the team is greater than any of its individual members. Players, coaches, managers - all those directly associated with the game - must function optimally as part of the unit ... and learn to suppress individual ego demands. Loyalty, unity, affiliation, and the ability to place the good of the group above one’s own interests, are basic constituents of the sports world’s ethic.

However, individualism is also respected in American society, especially notice that many team sport programs actually depend much upon the performances of individual players. Warshay (1982) argues that despite teamwork being necessary in most team games, there is still a priority on individual skills and identity, which can be demonstrated in statistics and awards for team players’ individual performance. The individualism “does not denigrate the role and necessity of teamwork” (p. 233), Warshay contends, but serves to build an interrelationship between the longtime popularity of team sport in U.S. and the individualistic ideology being valued in their culture.

The meaning of teamwork was mainly embodied in sport writing through quotations in which players described the contribution that their teammates offered in the games. For example, an article (Bishop, 2012a) following the U.S. men’s basketball team victory over Spain included star player Kobe Bryant’s remark that he made it because “the other guys have been picking me up.” Other affirmations on the value of teamwork included an article (Crouse, 2012a) reporting Lloy Ball’s (player of American men’s

volleyball team) successful efforts to give his teammates confidence and perfect cooperation was regarded as a key element for the women's soccer team's win (Borden, 2012a). Cooperation and teamwork were also represented in sport accounts of the team players' sacrifices for the benefit of their teams. Female gymnast Jordyn Wieber, for example, exhibited "initial goal was to be part of a team that won a gold medal" (Macur, 2012c), and Kerri Strug was highlighted by the depiction of "landing her vault for the United States on an injured ankle" (Macur, 2012c). The teamwork spirit was also praised in frequent representation of American national teams as a united family. This metaphor, as Trujillo and Ekdom (1985) put, connects this value within the larger cultural context in an even more dramatic way.

Also, *The New York Times* coverage celebrated the achievement of outstanding individual team players, showcased performance and achievement of these players extensively and explicitly labeled some outstanding individuals as "heroes." Basketball player Kobe Bryant played the role of "savvy veteran" (Bishop, 2012a), and female water polo player Steffens's story on the international scene "has such a storybook quality which script could have been written in Hollywood as a star vehicle" (Crouse, 2012b). As one reporter asserted, American sport fans "discovered new heroes every day" (Bruni, 2012) and another writer viewed the U.S. men's basketball team as "a hall of heroes" (Bishop, 2012a).

To summarize, "Teamwork" and "Individualism" represented in *The New York Times* reports were closely combined but were separated in distinct ways. Firstly, outstanding individuals were frequently referred by reporters and by players themselves to be "team players." Basketball player Chris Paul said "we all played our parts" (Bishop,

2012a), after his team won the championship. His teammate, Kevin Love was identified by reporter as an “unsung hero” (Bishop, 2012a). Still, female beach volleyball player May Treanor expressed: “I’m very happy. Kerri and I put a picture together at the beginning of the season, and we’re living that picture” (Pilon, 2012a). Secondly, as being mentioned above, leading players were described as heroes especially in those teams which won the gold medal. In these descriptions, sportswriters create a special rhetorical context to integrate the oppositional values of teamwork and individualism, implying that this integration was part of the reason for the success of the American national teams (Trujillo & Ekdom, 1985).

To Be Warriors

The New Yorks Times also presented athletes as warriors, with emphasis on the warrior role. Goodman, Duke and Sutherland (2002) argue that in American culture, heroism is most often associated with a traditionally male archetype, the warrior, whose images live in our collective impressions of the hunt and the battlefield. In more contemporary contests, the warrior removes his antiquated armor, ready to do battle in the arena of competitive sports. Goodman et al. (2002) also believe that news coverage of male sport events reinforces the imagery of the warrior through “masculine” texts that “invite identification with one main protagonist” and especially portray male-dominated sport as “dramatic spectacle of historic import” (p. 378). It is consistent with what Holt, Mangan and Lanfranchi (1996) argue: modern sports are metaphorically dramatic contests with epic heroes, whose qualities can epitomize their society’s esteem. More specifically, warriors can evolve on their way to actualization through being greatly motivated by duty to their countries, and then fully using their strength and competence

for something that makes a difference to themselves and to the world. The challenge for the warrior, however, is how to balance the desire with humility (Goodman et al., 2002).

One characteristic of warriors identifying American athletes was realized through narratives reinforcing their willingness and determination to win the titles they deserve and their status as symbols of American national identity. In describing an opening win of the America women's soccer team over France, the writer noted these women can "bounce back from that defeat (i.e., lose to Japan in the 2011 Women World Cup) to go on to win the gold medal" (Borden, 2012a). Player Abby Wambach also opined that "there's nothing that's going to stop us" (Borden, 2012a). After beating Japan in the final, she was again quoted as saying: "It's about heart," and "We can't let them back in the game." Defeating Japan was interpreted as "revenge" and fulfilled the "expectations for the United States, the top-ranked team in the world" (Borden, 2012b). Explicitly or implicitly, these athletes were portrayed as employing their warrior traits to respect and bring honor to their country at the Olympics. Similar to the description, some images being represented in other articles captured the speed, power, skill, and discipline associated with warriors. Take the depiction of Ashton Eaton (Bishop, 2012b) who won gold medal in Decathlon as an example:

They stayed for the greatest all-around athlete on the planet, not the world's strongest weight lifter, its fastest sprinter, or its most nimble gymnast. Eaton is an amalgam of all three, dynamic and explosive, powerful and agile, action verbs in human form.

Eaton's juxtaposition with the lifter, sprinter, and gymnast symbolized his connection to the qualities of strength, swiftness and agility. These qualities were augmented by the

stress of “an amalgam of all three” to emphasize Eaton’s supernatural power. Moreover, Eaton’s warrior characteristics (confidence and strength) were transferred to the nation. When Trey Hardee of the United States, who finished second to Eaton, praised his teammate, saying, “Ashton is the best athlete to ever walk the planet, hands down” (Longman, 2012a), the audience felt that Eaton and America are omnipotent, that all Americans are powerful, confident and strong. In focusing on Eaton’s untouchable achievement, the warrior and “mythic” (Longman, 2012a) were combined. His “mythic title” of world’s greatest athlete even got the approval of Usain Bolt, who just became the “first sprinter to win the 100 and 200 meters in consecutive Olympics,” by admitting that “I’m a great athlete, but to do 10 events, especially the 1,500” — the metric mile — “I’ve got to give it to him” (Longman, 2012a).

American athletes’ warrior persona was further emphasized by the following discourse on Michael Phelps (Crouse, 2012c):

Phelps has more pit bull in him. He can be friendly, but when he feels threatened, he is quick to bare his teeth. After Lochte opened the United States trials with a defeat of Phelps in the 400 individual medley, Phelps edged Lochte in their next head-to-head race, the 200-meter freestyle final. Phelps’s reaction, which he punctuated with a fist pump, was raw in its ferocity.

The representation above revealed these heroes’ strategy: become strong, competent, and powerful with unbeatable determination, which can be regarded as the actualization of warriors. The discourse about Phelps also clearly portrayed the hallmark of the warrior – assertiveness and confidence. The comments from the others further supported this depiction and the honor associated with athletes, as quoted by Le Clos, the champion of

the 200-meter butterfly in London: “The legacy he’s left behind in swimming is fantastic. Even in South Africa, everybody knows Michael Phelps” (Crouse, 2012c).

The warrior depictions are often accompanied with an expression of humility. Examples included: “I’m proud of where I came from, not me” (Borden, 2012b), “It is very important to bring your identity and know where you go the Olympics” (Pilon, 2012b) and “Maybe I am a hero, but just want to be a simple basketball player” (Bishop, 2012a). Moreover, “they see themselves as just fulfilling their missions for their countries” (Rhoden, 2012), which is a typical trait of heroes (Margaret and Carol, 2001). As a result of their accomplishment and humility, these heroes were worthy of admiration. In turn, the community celebrates the athlete: “Those who know him, look up to him. He’s someone to be proud of” and “not many have been able to achieve what Jordan Burroughs has achieved” (Associated Press, 2012).

Brief Summary

Similar to *China Daily*’s ways of representing their respective athletes, *The New York Times* readings on American athletes were stamped with the prevailing ideological trend. The difference is that, more legendary characters were given in the representation of American athletes compared with that of Chinese athletes. Varying from the images of “dream chasers,” “individual heroes,” and “warriors,” these representations all provided enough space for readers to experience dramatized stories. To further interpret, if the representations of Chinese athletes and Chinese sport in *China Daily* illustrated the idea of evolutionary embedded in traditional Chinese philosophy, then the value of heroism largely marked *The New York Times* reports on American athletes.

Style Analysis — Identificational Meaning

Previous discussion enriching the notion of style in this study sees it as way of building personal and social identities in discourse. Here, this research takes the *China Daily* and *The New York Times* articles covering the swimming competition between China and the U.S. as a starting point and focuses upon the authors' identity constructions. It will demonstrate how the two newspapers and their authors are engaged in a process of identifying themselves and being identified by others. Specifically, this section will analyze the evaluation and statements on the case of doping suspicion around Chinese star swimmer Ye Shiwen. It will also discuss other textual features in this case's coverage because they are related with the process of identification in the process of evaluation.

One article entitled "China Pool Prodigy Churns Wave of Speculation" (Longman, 2012b), appeared in *The New York Times*, after Chinese swimming athlete Ye Shiwen won the gold medal in the 400 individual medley. It demonstrated a complex process of various identities' construction. The article opened the article with an evaluation of remarkable achievement Ye made by equaling her with Usain Bolt, and the author provided more background information of "what," "when," "where," "who," and "how" in paragraph two, establishing the opening paragraphs as a narrative structure. In paragraph three, the author offered additional details behind the achievement of Ye and her reaction to the doping concerns. Followed in this way, the author seemed to project himself just as a detached narrator, whose principal role was to inform readers about what has occurred.

However, the author's identity as a reporter shifted as he inserted interpretive statements and evaluations into the facts in the following report. In paragraph four, he started the opening sentence with a statement of "Women's swimming does not permit

itself naive and untempered adulation” (Longman, 2012b). This statement was followed by providing some doping facts in swimming history in the following reports. By doing this, the author seemed to identify himself with one particular version of the story, guiding readers into his understanding of the truth, which was indicated in paragraph five, stating that “The response to unsurpassed achievement now falls somewhere uncomfortably between amazement and incredulity, that gray area between celebration and suspicion” (Longman, 2012b). Though implicitly, this statement demonstrated the author’s commitment to a version of the story – the possibility of doping for Ye, even though it was just the speculation. More indications of the author’s intent to guide reading, came from his quotations on reactions and evaluation of others (e.g., swimmers, coaches, and officials) in responses to Ye’s achievement in following paragraphs. The author firstly quoted David Sharpe, a Canadian swimmer, who said of Ye’s finishing kick as “pretty unbelievable” and “no one really understands how that happened”. Further, in paragraph twelve, he quoted the speech of John Leonard, an American who is executive director of the World Swimming Coaches Association: “Ye’s performance is disturbing.” Using these phrases to comment on Ye’s result, the author gradually created a framework in which can dominate readers’ further reading of Ye’s story.

The identification process of the author as a guide for readers was reinforced in paragraph twenty where he tracked back Chinese swimming doping history in the 1980s and 1990s. In the following paragraph, the author quoted a former chief doctor for the Chinese gymnastics team, who told *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “Doping in China was state-sponsored” (Longman, 2012b). The insertion of this history here again functioned to direct the readers’ understanding of China’s swimming performance. The author’s

evaluations became explicit in paragraph twenty-three and paragraph twenty-four when he gave specific examples and explanations of China's doping past: "a 16-year-old swimmer named Li Zhesi, a former relay champion, tested positive for the blood-boosting drug EPO in March," and "some athletes are even said to be avoiding meat, fearing it might be tainted with a banned substance, clenbuterol" (Longman, 2012b). These additional backgrounds helped readers to further take note of the context under which Ye's achievement being accomplished. With these essentially evaluative statements embedded in the discourse, the author assumed the power and authority to tell the audience how to understand Ye's performance and swimming in China.

Opposite to the reported speculation on Ye appeared in another article, titled "Debate Over Chinese Swimmer Turns Testy in Asia" (McDonald, 2012). In this article, Chinese sport officials speech which supported Ye's clean performance was separated into paragraphs, with some phrases such as "scientific training," "unfair," and "not proper" being placed in quotation marks:

Chinese sports officials have said much the same thing, and they credit Ms. Ye's excellence to a decade of hard work, their 'scientific training' methods and her outsized hands and feet, which give her extra propulsion.

Despite the Chinese swimmers' checkered medicinal past, team officials complained this week that it was "unfair" and "not proper" to link their latest results with past drug use (McDonald, 2012).

Rather than emphasizing and valuing the importance of Chinese sport officials' words, offering them with quotation marks is in accordance with what Volosinov (1973) argues is dissociating the author from the reported speech, displaying the author's "disapproval"

and critical attitude. In this way, the author embedded the authorial position into the report, drawing the readers' attention to these particular parts to encourage their critical interpretation and understanding. Finally, the author expressed his own commitment and promoted readers' commitment to a stand which is different from that being argued by the officials.

The identification process between the author and readers was also demonstrated in the process of the author delivering readers' possible questions. In the final two paragraphs, the author firstly quoted a commentary of Ross Tucker, a South African exercise physiologist and an expert in the training and pacing strategies used by elite athletes:

In the pool, history teaches us to be equally skeptical. Just this year, a 16-year old Chinese swimmer tested positive for EPO. In the 1990s, the same thing happened for swimming as happened for running — came, saw, conquered. But in that case, they got caught and then disappeared (McDonald, 2012).

Followed this, several questions were raised in the final paragraph, which are:

So what is your take on Ms. Ye and the suggestions about her gold-medal performances? Does this smack of racism, or is it a fair and legitimate discussion to have? Does the swim coach, John Leonard, owe Ms. Ye an apology? Is the subtext of the debate perhaps a Western fear and jealousy over a rising China? As a sports debate, is the topic fair game or out of bounds? (McDonald, 2012).

Not only is this the author's own inquiry, the questions addressed here also echoed the readers, creating a rhetorical situation in which both the author and readers are engaged in a dialogue of interesting in truth and more details. These questions also acted well as

the author triggers readers' possible memory of other discourses existed in the previous paragraphs. Through addressing the two questions, the author situated himself to Ross Tucker's statement of "no surprise that people will be suspicious". These textual features embedded in the related clauses then, offered the readers with a construct of reading story when it's engaged with various discourses (e.g., Chinese athletes doping history) related to this event.

Compared with *The New York Times* articles, the articles covering Ye's performance in *China Daily* also displayed an identification process as the authors' shifted from narrating the event to intentionally inserting evaluation on it. In an article titled "Ye Shiwen puts up strong defense against doping allegations" (Xinhua News Agency, 2012c), the author started with an "abstract" in the first two paragraphs to summarize the event for the readers, with Ye's activities and the reactions for her doping conspicuously being followed. The author finished with a "Verbal Reaction" of Ye's self-allegation that she had "absolutely not" engaged in doping. In these narrative statements, the author primarily assumed the identity of herself/himself.

As the article continued, the author increasingly inserted explicit evaluative statements on the hard-working ethic and criticized biased opinions imposed on Ye's performance from western countries, turning his position to be a total supporter of Ye. Starting from paragraph six, the author quoted more words directly from Ye, who emphasized that it is arduous training leading to her success, and argued that some people are biased and unfair for her because "nobody says anything against other countries people who win a lot of medals". In the whole article, only one other person's quotation was included, Caitlin Leverenz, the bronze medal winner of the event Ye took part in,

who believed Ye “swam a great last 100 and has worked hard to do that”. By largely excluding officials, coaches, as well as other social actors who were skeptical about Ye’s performance from discourses, *China Daily* provided an environment with unbalanced quotations involved, prompting readers to hear more voices and perspectives which back Ye’s clearance. Fairclough (2003) points out that author’s identification can be implied through quoting indirect speech of those authorities. This strategy was employed in another two articles. One was titled “IOC defends Ye Shiwen against doping accusations” (*China Daily*, 2012b), the other was “Yao supports Ye Shiwen and BWF’s decision” (Xinhua News Agency, 2012d). Both articles quoted the authorities’ (i.e., IOC officials and Yao Ming) opinions extensively, either supported Ye’s clean or condemned suspicions about Ye’s performance. By doing so, *the China Daily*’s authors committed themselves to the evaluations made by the authorities and projected themselves as supporters of Ye while reporting the event.

Brief Summary

The above analysis demonstrates the process of personal identity construction through manipulation of textual features such as evaluations and targeted choosing of quotations. During this process, the authors from both newspapers were engaged with various contending and struggling identities. Accordingly, these authors’ status shifted from detached reporter covering the events to a “truth” knower, from an authority guiding readers’ interpretation to a messenger providing readers’ common concern. In these shifts, they gradually turned into a supporter of a certain perspective and finally identified themselves as well as drawing their readers into the process of identification.

Genre Analysis — Actional Meaning

Based on the understanding of previous references to genres in Fairclough's (2003) framework, the final analysis of this study considers how different genres facilitate better understanding of specific social events and construct the mood of discourse. This is done by focusing specifically on both newspapers' reports on those athletes who were hopeful to be winners but fell short. Disappointment, as being noted by Knight, MacNeill and Donnelly (2005), implies a breach between actions and expectations and calls for explanation and understanding, especially in the level of Olympics where expectations and interests are intensified. Therefore, media discourse, as Luhmann (1995) claims, is a critical way in which disappointment can be socially managed and negotiated. Several articles in both newspapers covering their losing athletes can exemplify how media discourse define social events by manipulating genre features.

China Daily delivered an article entitled "Liu Xiang falls on London Olympic debut" (Chen, 2012f) to the report of China's hurdles star Liu Xiang's early out from the London Olympic Games. The disappointment and sympathy genre were dominant in the whole article, and marked the event of Liu's exit not so much as "news" but as a memory hard to cope with for Chinese people. Instead of the generic beginning conventions of a news report, the report started with a summary sentence depicting Liu Xiang's exit from the event he took part in like his performance in Beijing four year ago. Rather than just serving as the article's "Lead," it also carried a mood of disappointment and regret by referring to "an exceedingly disappointed nation." The personification of nation (i.e., China) demonstrated a combination between factual report and fictional construction, with a ceremonious genre being suggested in the context. The regretful feeling toward

Liu was further echoed by the references to his parents and members of the media. Liu's parents, for example, were described as having "cried in their hotel room in suburban London" and the members of media "struggled to get a handle on their emotions". Thus, through emphasizing the emotions expressed by the subject's family and other social actors included in this event, the report contributed to a ceremonious genre into the event's details as part of national discourse.

In the whole report, in which China is projected as a mother struggling with the fact, a discourse of sorrow for Liu's performance was prevalent. One key element suggesting a scene of sorrow was the frequent appearance of words such as "painful," "sorry," "hard," and "sad," constructing more genre of suffering with Liu's out. Moreover, the private emotion experienced by individuals was actually mixed with a nationalist discourse. The personification of China as despondent not only presents an image of China as a family coping with its member's struggle, but also gives both Liu and the sorrowful Chinese a group identity. The scene of sorrow is further reinforced through quotations such as "It's really a tragedy," emphasizing Liu's failure and its impact on the larger national community. Liu's nationalization was also created specifically by recognizing his withdrawal in the debut as a "loss" for the nation. This "loss" is confirmed by commentator Huang Jianxiang when he stated that "For so many years, Chinese athletics relied solely on Liu for its big moments on the international stage." Serving as a cohesive device, Huang's words identified Liu Xiang with the national community whose image in the world can be represented by him.

Further, a discourse of introspection about China athletic system brought these discourses of regret, sympathy, disappointment and nationalism together. When we track

back the analysis of discourses in a previous section, *China Daily*'s discourse of the London Olympic Games centered around an introspection of China's unhealthy athletic system acting on Chinese athletes. In Liu Xiang's report, he was also projected as a victim or sacrifice who was "crushed under the pressure of the nation" and "had to take on all of the nation's hopes in athletics." The projection, then, can be employed as an evocation which can transfer Chinese feeling on Liu's failure to the national's emotional response to the inhuman care on Liu's recruiting because of his constant injury to his foot, as well as the voice to reform the current Chinese sport system.

Similar with using the discourse of introspection as a principle to organize and combine other discourses together in Liu's report, a discourse of criticizing and condemning the unfair judgment of China gymnastics captain Chen Yibing worked in conjunction with the process of admiring and valorizing his performance and character. In the article " 'King of rings' ends career in disputed scoring" (*China Daily*, 2012c), the author highlighted and praised Chen's effort in the first paragraph by describing his silver from disputed scoring as "shining the gold light." The discourse of attributing honor to the failure was first evoked by claiming that the score from Arthur Nabarrete on Chen's last routine was "surprising and much disputed" and finally "deprived Chen of the gold and also a career closure in glory." The details of Chen's perfect performance (e.g., sound execution, stable landing) in the final were mentioned later and compared with that of his opponent, the final champion, who actually finished his routine with a stumbling landing. Also, many other voices were quoted, either criticizing the unprofessional behavior of the judge or supporting the conclusion that Chen was actually the real winner. These discourses worked together, indicating a strong emotion of admiration for Chen and

labeling him as the hero. What further reinforced Chen's heroic status was the discourse of Chen's attitude and mentality facing the unfair result. For example, he was quoted as saying, "You are not allowed to question point to other competitors" and "It's a result you can only accept instead of reasoning." This discourse created an image of an outstanding athlete whose excellence not only came from the physical action but also from the psychological quality illustrated through struggling with the unexpected result. The collective emotional response to Chen's failure was finally enhanced by stressing that this is Chen's final Olympiad in his career, as well as respecting his glorious past and the honor he has brought to China. In this sense, a genre of regret was explicitly expressed, with all of discourses included in the reports of Chen's failure being converged and transformed into an appraisal of Chen's greatness.

In the American case, a process in using explanation discourse as a predominating principle to bring various discourses together was operated in *The New York Times* reports on the failure and disappointment in athletics. Several issues were raised with respect to both coping with failure in athletes' performance and their determination to succeed.

One discourse that emerged in combined with the explanation is the lack of funding support. In the article "U.S. Boxing program is down but not out"(Bearak, 2012), for example, the reporter attributed the relative inexperience of United States fighters in international competition partly to the governing body of the Olympic effort being chronically short of cash. The USA Boxing's executive director, Anthony Bartkowski is quoted: "Would I love to have had a three- or four-month training camp? Yes, I would, but it costs money to put your kids in camp for 120 days, and it adds up very quickly."

The importance of funding was also reinforced indirectly by highlighting that “many nations had extended training camps for their boxers” and invoked in another article by comparing “the Olympians likes swimmer Michael Phelps and the gymnast Gabby Douglas who have lucrative sponsorship deals” with “many others who have been reduced to poring over their bank statements” (Minsberg, 2012). Not only just pointed out the issue of lacking funding support, the newspaper also emphasized the fact that many athletes actually raised money by themselves. It created empathetic images of those losing athletes most of whom have strong profession, being engaged in ongoing suffering from financial deficits and lack of social and governmental support. As a canoeist, Casey Eichfeld (Minsberg, 2012), puts it :

Build up these funds and then I spend them, then I’ve got nothing again, then build it back up. It’s probably the same exact way for other athletes. It’s what we love, so we make the sacrifices.

The empathetic image of these players in *The New York Times*’ discourse further made the discourse be nationalistic by referring to the athletes as “a legion of others less decorated but no less dedicated prepare for futures” (Minsberg, 2012). By attributing determination and dedication to those players, *The New York Times*’ discourse on their failure departed from simple “factual” news reports, expressed public emotions toward both the losing athletes and their “sacrifices,” and finally presented the eulogy genre in their coverage.

The discourse of nationalism in the discourse of *The New York Times* on those losing athletes was also enhanced through the respect expressed for their efforts. The respect genre was particularly permeated into the coverage of those who were Olympic

Champions and regarded as veterans. Matt Emmons, who misfired on his final shot in the 50-meter rifle three positions at both Games in Athens and Beijing, was taken for an example. In an article titled “This Time, American’s Aim on Last Shot Is Not Too Far Off” (Pilon, 2012b), Emmons’ performance was put aside. Instead, those twists and turns he experienced were highlighted in the whole discourse, setting a tone of respect for his determination and mentality. The terms which are related with “pressure,” for example, were mentioned several times in the report, such as “it was a really tough match. Probably the toughest match I’ve ever had to shoot,” and “Perhaps the greatest challenges to his dominance came off the shooting range. The last four years have been really tough.” These details, associated with discourse of Emmons’s recovering from Thyroid cancer, contributed to the construction of a national hero image whose spiritual inspiration goes beyond the simple result of winning or losing, and who can be interpreted as a brave soldier in real life.

Similarly, American gymnast John Orozco was represented as struggler who has firm faith to get back up. Also devoid a generic conventions starts as discussed previously in *China Daily*’s discourse, this article (Macur, 2012c) began with a sentence that carries an undertone of praise of the losing athlete’s bounce back. The second paragraph of this article was written in the following way:

His tears were gone. His sweet smile reappeared. He even laughed a few times about how uncharacteristically nervous he was Monday in the men’s team finals, a competition he will not soon forget.

Roeh and Nir (1990) state that rhetoric of “parallelism” is often used to express the intensity of emotion and generate emotionally powerful language. The repetitive effect in

the sentences then, strengthened the discourse of respect and praise. Knight et al. (2005) believe that failures to meet expectations can be framed in terms of “nostalgia for a golden past” (p. 47). This genre also worked neatly in discourse on John Orozco. His great past was pointed out in the article in statements such as “He came back to help the United States win a bronze medal at the 2011 world championships after tearing his Achilles’ tendon in 2010” and “In 2007, he won the junior national championship.” While they can serve as the “Background” for this player’s status and function in the American gymnastics team, the information was provided to diminish the disappointment feeling he may provide for the audience due to his faults in the final.

Most of the paragraphs of articles on John Orozco actually provided the whole story of his and his family’s struggles in life pursuing their dream. The discourse in this way, therefore, created the image as an American dream chaser engaged in struggles for ideals and dignity which is always deemed important. Then, based on the respect genre permeating in the discourse, and the interpretation of “winning and losing”, *The New York Times*’ discourse provided clues to the underlying ideological structures of the Olympic reports.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Implication

This study has analyzed the dynamic and complex process of national identity's construction during the 2012 London Olympic Games by examining news discourse in two national newspapers between China and the USA. The three analysis focuses employed in this study situate meanings of news texts into specific social-cultural contexts, demonstrating distinctions and connections between various forms of discourse in media. It is reasonable to contend that the norms revealed in this study display the processes of nationalist ideology constructions in *China Daily* and *The New York Times*.

It has been seen that in the London Olympic Games, *China Daily* constructed China to be an image of a raising superpower in the sport world by demonstrating its improvement in some western countries' dominant sport programs and its constant superiority in some traditional strongholds. It also, from another aspect, imagined China's humility and introspection regarding its lag behind the world's elites in the areas of reserving talent cultivation and grassroots promotion. In the American case, *The New York Times* intended to develop a discourse that represents its nation as a combined interest balance between teamwork and individualism. By eulogizing the spirit of cooperation and a valorization of its core players' status in their respective teams, *The New York Times* Olympics reporting integrated the oppositional values and implied that this combination was part of the reason for the success of the American national teams. In the representation of athletes, *China Daily* focused on the construction of China's new super icon, as well as highlighting the deserved quality and the personalities of specific athletes; whereas *The New York Times* represented its athletes in a more dramatic way.

Through building them as American dream chasers and warriors, the media provided a discourse environment with Americans' preferred understanding and ideology.

In the Ye Shiwen reports, *The New York Times* was inclined to guide readers into its understanding of the truth through enforcing authors' identity as authoritative guides. This is done by providing suspicious reactions and evaluations of others (e.g., swimmers, coaches, and officials) in responses to Ye's achievement, as well as tracking back Chinese swimming doping history. Finally, the authors shifted from detached reporters to guide readers' attention to taking a stand where both the author and readers are engaged in framework of understanding the whole story. Compared with *The New York Times* articles, the articles covering Ye's performance in *China Daily* also demonstrated authorial identities as the authors included many evaluative statements on respecting Ye's hard working ethic and criticizing biased opinions imposed on Ye's performance from western countries. These alternative constructions of different newspapers' discourses emerged in relation to specific understandings with larger nationalistic meanings and finally shaped the way people view themselves, others, and the whole world.

The analysis of genre has demonstrated that *China Daily* and *The New York Times* reports of losing athletes are dynamic events with different forms of social action being emerged. In Liu Xiang's case, while *China Daily* provided the reader with details related to the events, it also included a process of sharing sorrow the failure, nationalizing his out, and condemning the unhealthy state-run sport system by drawing on the eulogy and empathy genre to Liu Xiang. Similarly, in the American case, a process in using explanation discourse as a dominating principle to bring other discourse operated in its reports on the failures of athletes. Through embedding both public and personal emotions

towards the failure and their “sacrifices,” *The New York Times*’ reports presented the respect genre in the texts. These various forms of discourses combined together in *China Daily* and *The New York Times* reports allowed the newspapers to place the losing athletes’ images into the nations’ agenda, and build a particular national discourse to be articulated for their respective readers.

Previous studies have shown that journalistic, ideological, and personal values can influence news reporting (Brislin, 1997; Sylvie & Huang, 2008). The analysis in news discourse with its multidimensional meaning discussed has provide some insights into the complex process of producing discourses in sport news media, especially when it concerns issues related to national identity. Also, this analysis can be explained by the potential influence of social and cultural values of both newspapers’ journalists, confirming similar results from Trujillo and Ekdome’s (1985) analysis of sport writing and American cultural values in reporting about baseball. This study provides this confirmation in two cultures and across several sports in arguably the most significant worldwide athletic event.

The most critical limitation in this research is subjective nature of qualitative methods (e.g., subjective sampling and subjective analysis); thus, this research should be considered as a single attempt to uncover meaning embedded in newspaper articles. It should be noted that this process was more subjective and interpretive than quantitative method. Secondly, this study is only based on the newspaper coverage with a limited texts, this scope of research would allow us to go further in future research to consider media coverage from a more diverse sample, in terms of both geography and circulation size.

This paper potentially sets out the main principles of Critical Discourse Analysis in the area of sport media and illustrates how CDA can be employed to serve for a more profound understanding of human society. It also indicates the possibility of using CDA to fuel brand strategies in sport marketing. It will allow brand marketers, managers and researchers to move beyond a mere intuitive understanding and knowledge of “what words do” to a more systematic and powerful utilization of various and dynamic discourse.

As one of the hot topics in marketing research and brand management, social media research can provide its discipline support with discursive strategies in the process of applying brand promotion and customer service. Adopting a CDA approach to marketing strategies might provide some very different actions and outcomes. For example, rather than thinking about what we expect the customer to experience and feel, we can instead think about what people wish to be expressed in the media and measure it directly or indirectly whether these discourses are suitable or not. For example, when we choose a sport celebrity to be representative for specific brand, we should consider carefully whether phrases such as “legend” suitable for this celebrity’s image and experience, and whether it can be acceptable for customer in related contexts. Also, special attention needs be paid to the language use in printed commercials to examine to what extent some particular concepts and nationalistic discourse are being permeated and circulated in the public, especially in some special sport events which can arouse extensive resonance among people.

The norms and concepts included in the process of national identity construction should potentially be considered in the international marketing and business involvement in China and the United States, especially facing the fact that lots of sport brands (e.g., Nike, Li Ning, and Converse) are launching their markets overseas. According to Wang, Chen and Chun (2010), the localization of international brands requires the brand to make full use of local cultures. Only by organically integrating its products with local culture can the brand achieve customers' psychological acceptance with the "elimination" of foreign goods. Therefore, precisely interpreting the culture of targeted areas becomes an essential prerequisite to fully launch brands' localization strategies, and media discourse provides opportunity for a significant breakthrough. For example, in the process of American sport brands' localization in China, the marketers can try to capture the subtle changes of national identity's perception among Chinese as we discussed earlier, and then effectively inject some fresh meanings (e.g., individualism and heroism) which are expected to be accepted among current Chinese customers. Also, when Chinese brands attempts to open markets in America, the legendary nature underlying Americans' reading about sport can be taken as a significant factor applied in the specific scenes. Anyway, the advertisement and marketing strategies involved in brand promotion and localization needs take paradigms of national identity into deep consideration.

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