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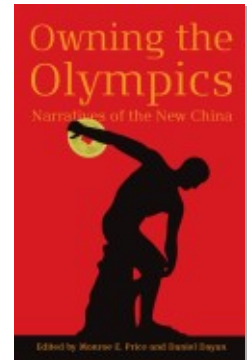
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New Technologies, New Narratives

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Media events and communication technology are inexorably tied. The success of a media event relies on communication technology as a means of connecting the audience to a live event. For, as Dayan and Katz write: “the power of these events lies, first of all, in the rare realization of the full potential of electronic media technology” (1992, 15). The broadcasting of the same message to geographically dispersed audience members not only connects the audience to the event but also connects audience member to audience member. Audience member awareness of technology-enabled copresence at a mass scale has the potential to galvanize the audience (Dayan and Katz 1992), and endow the event with a grandeur and importance that local events and smaller media broadcasts cannot achieve. Such shared experiences contribute to the power of media events to unite nation-states and, as examples such as Live 8 and Live Earth¹ have demonstrated, to unite, albeit ephemerally, populations across the globe. The Olympic Games unify the audience both within nation-states, as athletes compete for national glory and recognition, and globally, as audiences share in the experience of watching sports competitions and ceremonies, as well as learning about the culture, politics, and heritage of Olympic host cities.

Media events, much like expos in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, should be understood not only as being facilitated by technology, but as crucial opportunities for institutions and nations to

utilize new communication technologies and technological formats (Roche 2000) to alter their place in the world or their own and others' perceptions of it. Historically, media events have also provided an impetus for technological development as event organizers, sponsors, and broadcasters established deadlines or provided other incentives for accomplishment. This trend can clearly be seen in the Beijing Olympics. In negotiations with the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) committed to produce 3G mobile technology for the 2008 Olympics. Established communication technology yields a slightly different pattern as the media event provides the opportunity for greater implementation or diffusion. Beijing appears to conform to this trend as well. Lu Xuewu (2007), associate president of the Communication University of China, has explained that broadcasting key events in the 2008 Beijing Olympics in high definition is expected to spark greater demand for HDTV both within China and internationally.

Like other Olympics before it, the 2008 Beijing Games has created a narrative surrounding the event that emphasizes progressive technology. BOCOG has put a special emphasis on technology via the development of the "High-Tech Olympics" theme. "High-Tech Olympics," "Green Olympics," and "People's Olympics" form the three core themes of the Games. Technology has been a central component of the Beijing Games since the bid was first constructed: in early Beijing 2008 Olympic Games Bidding Committee (BOBICO) promotional material, such as the Beijing Olympic bid films, technology and other elements associated with hypermodernity are presented alongside a mythic or traditional Chinese culture (Haugen 2005). Hogan (2003) found a similar pattern in her analysis of the Japanese Winter Olympics in Nagano. She suggests that the introduction of a traditional/technology binary was an important component of the discursive formation of a narrative constructed for global consumption. This binary seems particularly important for Asian Olympic hosts, as Atsushi Tajima (2004) and Haugen and Collins (in this volume) suggest. These countries use the universal narrative of technology to conform to the globalizing and homogenizing Olympic discourse of progress and peace, while simultaneously including a flare of multicultural color via self-orientalizing representations of the past.

In this chapter, we focus on the "universalizing narrative of technology" component of this binary by exploring aspects of the High-Tech Beijing Games. This is not just about specific advances in communica-

tions hardware and software; the High-Tech performance should also be understood as a platform for constructing a new discourse about Chinese technology, and via this new technology discourse, a new discourse about China itself. The Beijing Olympics has the potential to send crucial messages to domestic and international audiences about China's ability to be both a technological pioneer and a producer of reliable technology, and to transform the perception of China from a low-cost industrial support system for the global information economy to a major player. And, though it may not have been planned that way, this sector offers an important means of redefining what it means for something to be Made in China.

Via two case studies, we examine the complexities and challenges of constructing and maintaining a consistent High-Tech narrative with the ability to reform the image of China's technological prowess in the global imagination. In the first case study, we explore the ascension of Lenovo to Olympic TOP sponsor status. Lenovo is one of the top personal computer manufacturers in the world, and the largest in the Asia-Pacific region. The company was founded in 1984 by a group of eleven engineers in Beijing. The former English name of the company was the Legend Group Ltd. and New Technology Developer Incorporated. In 2005, Lenovo's purchase of IBM's PC division transformed the company into a major international personal computer manufacturer. "Lenovo" is a portmanteau of "Le-" (from Legend) and "novo," pseudo-Latin for "new." Since 2005 the company has been working hard to establish its global image and to reinforce its leadership within China.

As the first Chinese company in the IOC's The Olympic Partner (TOP) sponsorship program, Lenovo, though it continues to struggle with poor brand name recognition outside of China (Norton 2007; Li and Yu 2007), is poised to become a global household name in personal and business computing. As Olympic TOP sponsor, Lenovo has pledged to provide equipment and technical support for "virtually every aspect of the management of the Games" (Lenovo 2007). The director of Olympic Sponsorship in Lenovo's Brand Communications Department, Xie Long, has directly linked (2006) success of the 2008 Games to successful performance of Lenovo equipment in their implementation. The fate of Lenovo, whose motto is "New World, New Thinking," is intricately linked to the fate of China as a global technology leader. If the Lenovo campaign and, more importantly, the Games management, succeeds—and this is the Dream—it could usher in a new way of

thinking about China's ability to lead on the global stage. Failure will only add to the existing Made in China narrative that positions China as "the global economy's low cost manufacturer" (Loo and Davies 2006, 198).

Similarly, the second case study, which analyzes the impetus behind China's 3G commitment to the IOC, finds that the ability to deliver this technology on time has become a way to measure Chinese innovation and success. This is a narrative about the ability to launch and implement a new system. When Beijing won the bid, China Mobile Communications Corp. (China Mobile), the country's largest mobile operator, suggested that it would be possible to watch live video coverage of the Games on its properly equipped mobile phones, and would radically change the way consumers could access information about restaurants, shopping, and sightseeing. Athletes and staff would also use 3G technology to access information related to the Games. Here—as with the question of whether Beijing will meet air-quality standards—the story is one of nail-biting anticipation: will China meet its aspirations or not?

As both case studies show, Beijing's High-Tech Games may author new narratives about China's role as a global innovator and economic power. However, these nascent Created in China (Su 2007) narratives, part of an overall Brand China emphasizing intellectual and technological leadership over cheap mass production, are delicate and could easily be destroyed if evidence is found that discredits or challenges them via the construction of technology-enabled counternarratives. The Beijing Olympics represents a major gamble for China's technological and political reputation. The goals that have been set are tough and, as the Lenovo and 3G stories unfold, the path to success continues to be tenuous.

Historical Perspective on the Olympics and New Technology

The twentieth century Olympics have been characterized by a modern discourse of technological innovation. They have provided the host country with an opportunity to prove itself to the world as a modern force in a global event. This occurs not only through the host country's athletes, but also through the facilities and technology the local orga-

nizing committee uses to host the event. Communication technology's role in the Games is increasingly central because of the importance of audience for financial as well as reputational reasons. Innovative communication technology is used frequently by the host country both to increase the sense of the host's prowess as an innovator and to spread news about Olympic events to the audience at the Games and to a larger broadcast audience.

There are established examples of Olympic host cities associating their country with modernity and progress by using new communication technology to extend the Olympic audience. Through IOC archival data, we learn that the Amsterdam Games of 1928 used state-of-the-art telephone and telegraph systems for immediate transmission of Olympic news (Netherlands Olympic Committee 1928). The Los Angeles Olympics of 1932 used radio broadcasting extensively to distribute news about the Games: "The capacity of radio to enable a mass nationwide listening audience to imagine that they are present at a dramatic and important 'live' event received an early demonstration in the USA through the broadcasts of the 1932 Los Angeles Games" (Roche 2000, 162). And in 1936, Germany experimented with local television transmission of the competition "to transmit pictures of the competition to a paying audience around the city" (Senn 1999, 60). In each of these examples, communication technology was used to create a greater sense of immediacy; extend the Olympic message to an ever-larger audience; and demonstrate the technological capacity, excellence, and modernity of the host city and country.

At the same time, broadcasting dramatically shifted the role of the Olympic audience: "Television provided the crucial complement to the Olympics, adding to the scale and intensity of their dramatic appeal" (Roche 2000, 159). The 1948 Olympics in London, the first Summer Games to be held after Berlin, heavily relied on broadcasting to create a global presence. A 1948 IOC report about communications technology suggests a tone that reverberates through to Beijing:

The XIV Olympiad was the greatest sporting festival that had ever been staged and the progress and results of the 136 Olympic events were of interest to millions of people throughout the world. As only a small number out of those millions was able to be at the Games in person, radio had to provide the rest with the nearest equivalent to front row seats whenever and wherever anything exciting was happening. Thus,

the listeners of five continents found themselves at Wembley as the competitors of 59 nations marched into the Stadium in brilliant sunshine on the opening day and, thereafter, as record after record was broken, they were able to share in the suspense of each event while it was actually taking place. In fact, they were often better off than the spectator, because he could be in only one place at once, whereas the radio listener could visit half-a-dozen venues in as many minutes and could travel from Empress Hall to Torbay at the turn of a single knob. (The Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad 1948, 114)

The radio listeners of the 1930s and 1940s, who could “visit” many more events in a day than a spectator who attended the Olympic Games, were the first signs of an Olympic mass media audience that could eventually be sold to sponsors for millions and millions of dollars. In the 1960s, television coverage of the Games became integral to the Olympics as a mega media event (Roche 2000), and the mass media audience became essential to the financial and cultural success of the Olympic Games.

Beijing 2008: The Techno-Narrative

We have already suggested the important association between technological innovation and the Beijing Olympics. BOCOG anticipates that the Olympics will burnish the idea of what it means to be Made in China in the high-tech sphere. With an estimated audience of 4 billion (Lenovo 2007), the Beijing Olympics is expected to provide an opportunity for China to show off its best and brightest technological advancements to the rest of the world. The Olympics is about China as technological innovator, with the 2008 Games furnishing an impetus to develop and innovate information technology to showcase at the event: “The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games will symbolize and spur on the city’s commitment to technological advancement and environmental protection for the future benefit of the Chinese people” (BOCOG n.d., 5). Consistent with its claim of inclusion and service to the world, BOCOG explained that technological development in preparation for the Games would benefit not only the Chinese, and not only those who come to visit the Games. Like previous organizing committees, it perceived the Olympics as an opportunity to project the host country’s technological advancements onto a world stage.

Case Study I: The Lenovo Sponsorship

Lenovo's sponsorship and the Beijing Games High-Tech theme are interrelated because they give China a way to demonstrate and reinforce its technological advancements at the same time: the Lenovo sponsorship highlights China's information technology, while the High-Tech theme redirects attention to the Lenovo technology created for and used during the Beijing Games. In 2004, Lenovo secured international sponsorship rights to the Beijing Olympics "for an estimated \$65 million to \$80 million" (Spencer and Fowler, 2007). The securing of the 2008 sponsorship rights allowed Lenovo to enter the IOC's exclusive TOP sponsor program. The program, which was initiated by the IOC in 1985, grants TOP partners exclusive worldwide marketing rights to both the Summer and Winter Games. Partners in this exclusive club include global brands such as Coca-Cola, Kodak, McDonald's, Panasonic, General Electric, Samsung, Visa, and Johnson & Johnson (IOC 2007).

Lenovo's participation in this program marks the first time that a Chinese company has been a TOP sponsor (Liu 2007b). This ascension is an important step for Lenovo, as a company, and Lenovo, as a representative of China (Legend Group Holdings, "controlled by the Chinese government, owns a majority stake in Lenovo" [Lower 2007]). Lenovo, then, must be understood as both an emerging global brand and as an important representative of the Chinese government. Thus, Lenovo's messaging can be understood as messaging from China as well.

While TOP partner status confers significant privileges, it is also an extraordinary responsibility. The pressure to construct successful and mature campaigns that will resonate with both a global and a domestic Chinese audience is immense. If Lenovo's Olympic sports marketing fails to adequately capture the world's imagination, the ramifications of such a failure will only be emphasized via comparison with other IOC TOP sponsors, with significantly more expertise in marketing on a global scale.

Lenovo's difficulties working with the established IBM brand identity since 2005 indicate that the computer manufacturer is still struggling to master global marketing. In 2005, Lenovo acquired IBM's personal computing sector for approximately \$1.75 billion (Lower 2007). The terms of the acquisition allow Lenovo to use IBM's logo on established product lines, such as Thinkpad and Thinkcentre, for a period of five years (Lower 2007). In effect, the deal created a five-year period

during which Lenovo could focus on branding and product integration before the IBM logo rights become off-limits. Despite this branding agreement, Lenovo has primarily featured the Lenovo brand rather than the IBM brand in recent years. Today, Lenovo is seeking to build brand recognition outside of China and to maintain sales within China. Although it is among the top PC manufacturers in the world, Lenovo has thus far failed to connect with the important North American market and is, in fact, facing a declining market share in this region (Spencer and Fowler 2007). Lenovo is the dominant player in China, with more than 30 percent market share, but Dell and Hewlett Packard are strong competitors, and together “already boast an 18% share in China” (Kleinman 2007, 6). In March 2007, Dell introduced an inexpensive PC in China that was intended to directly challenge Lenovo, whose success in China was largely due to the sales of inexpensive computers (Lower 2007). Dell’s recent move has only added to a growing perception among financial analysts that Lenovo is facing serious challenges in its own domestic market (Norton 2007).

To fend off declining domestic brand loyalty and establish global brand awareness, Lenovo has committed significant resources to sponsorship of sporting events, including the Olympics, the National Basketball Association (NBA), and Formula One. Philippe Davy, the head of Lenovo’s Worldwide Sponsorship and Alliance Division, has described Lenovo’s sports sponsorship efforts as the company’s “broadband solution” (Norton 2007, D1). The broadband solution refers to the ability of sports sponsorship to: (a) allow long-term exposure because the brand name is a constant across a season or throughout a global event, as opposed to a short television or radio spot; (b) allow for more cooperative advertising opportunities with other sponsors as sporting events have multiple sponsors; and (c) reach a wide demographic, from “C-level [corporate level] officers to consumers,” as Lenovo (2007) suggests.

Olympic sponsorship, unlike that of the NBA and Formula One, allows Lenovo to reach a diverse global audience. While the NBA sponsorship was primarily designed to promote much-needed brand awareness in North America, the Beijing Olympic campaign was designed with a multiplicity of audiences in mind, a significant portion of which are already aware of the Lenovo brand. Thus, the \$150 million Olympic campaign is being structured to showcase the technology’s ability in real time via the donation of Lenovo equipment for use by event organizers during the Games (Liu 2007a). This is a risky yet important ven-

ture that attempts to solidify brand trust as opposed to creating brand awareness. If Lenovo equipment is used successfully in the facilitation of the Games, it will demonstrate Lenovo's technological prowess and dependability, adding credence to both Lenovo and the Created in China narrative.

Lenovo used the same brand trust-building strategy at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino in what could be seen as a trial run for the 2008 Games. Lenovo considers its Torino marketing strategy a success because the Lenovo equipment operated error-free, thus promoting Lenovo as a powerful Created in China alternative to other computer manufacturers (Xie 2006). Although Torino was a triumph, Lenovo acknowledges that the Beijing Games represent a far more strenuous test of their products. The Torino Games hosted 2,508 athletes in 84 events at 15 competition sites; the Beijing Games are expected to host 10,000 athletes in 302 events at 39 competition sites (Lenovo 2007). Lenovo states that the "equipment and services provided during the two weeks of the Games are equivalent to that needed for any Fortune 500 company" (Lenovo 2007). The technological infrastructure demands of the Olympic Games, daunting in and of themselves, will be tested in front of a much larger global audience than in the 2006 Winter Games. Whereas only 80 nations participated in Torino, 201 nations are expected to participate in Beijing, and the number of accredited journalists is expected to double, from 10,000 in Torino to 20,000 in Beijing (Lenovo 2007).

Like other multinational corporations, Lenovo must pursue dual strategies. To develop its identity as an "international" corporation, its connection with China must be delicately defined. Within China, and its huge market, the strategy is quite different. The company must touch a personal nerve, making its success relate to the ambition of individuals who see themselves as part of a collective and advancing social whole. It is important to note that Lenovo's Beijing 2008 promotional activities extend beyond the two-week event itself. Domestic promotional activities seek to extend brand awareness from technologically advanced cosmopolitan cities such as Beijing and Shanghai to the rest of China. If the international narrative uses the idea of Created in China, the domestic message may be something like "Lenovo: part of China's global advancement and continued aspiration."

Through associations with state media and state officials, Lenovo has created what it calls the "500 Days of Lenovo Advertising" (Lenovo 2007). On March 27, 2007, Lenovo began airing daily twenty-five-sec-

ond spots on CCTV channels in advance of CCTV 1's primetime news program and during daytime viewing hours on CCTV 5, China's most popular sports channel (Lenovo 2007). Lenovo has produced "eight sets of commercials [that] feature different phases of the Olympic Games, including preparation of venues, Opening Ceremonies, test events, etc." (Lenovo 2007). These commercials also act as short public information campaigns, thus linking the Lenovo brand to state-controlled news about Beijing's preparations for the Olympics.

Perhaps more interestingly, the domestic campaign also includes a 1,000 town "road show" with the goal of rural outreach. These rural outreach events include full-day events with athletes, government officials, and Lenovo spokespersons, and the donation of personal computers to schools with the goal of giving the "first PC experience to thousands of Chinese" (Lenovo 2007). Lenovo suggests that through this initiative it has "brought [the] Olympic Games to cities outside Beijing" (Lenovo 2007). The linking of the Lenovo brand to the *national* Olympic experience makes Lenovo a key player in promulgating the notion that the Beijing Games are China's moment as opposed to Beijing's moment. Thus, at the domestic level, the Created in China narrative legitimizes Lenovo for millions of rural Chinese by exposing the company to them for the first time with the government and the government's Olympic goals as a key partner. Further, Lenovo's road show strengthens Chinese national pride and challenges regional disparities and discontent by uniting the Olympics with the nation and the nation with the intoxicating effects of modern technologies. In these road shows the nation-state legitimizes Lenovo just as Lenovo legitimizes the nation-state. Finally, as Lenovo's intensive domestic Olympics advertising campaign indicates, the success of Lenovo is as much about the faith of Chinese citizens in their own technology brands as it is about global impressions of Chinese technology products.

The complexity of Lenovo's task—and its relationship to the narrative for China and the Games—can be seen in much of the publicity it generates. *China Daily* reported, "For Lenovo, it will be important to build emotional ties. The firm wants to impress upon its customers and dealers that it is global, innovative and offers high performance products" (Li and Yu 2007, 3). In a company press release, Lenovo representative Philippe Davy stated, "Created in China, headquartered in the United States and with employees worldwide, Lenovo is both a symbol of 21st century business and the Olympic desire to build international understanding" (Lenovo 2005). Indeed, an international event would

seem the ideal place to promote Lenovo as a company that has an “international executive team” and “headquarters in Beijing, Singapore and Raleigh, NC” (Lenovo 2007). At the same time, Olympic sponsorship material has focused on Lenovo’s identity as a Chinese company attempting to enter the global market and has not framed Lenovo as a multinational corporation that, despite its Chinese roots and ties, has a head office in the United States. In the lead-up to the Beijing Olympics, Lenovo is attempting to present itself as both a Chinese company and as a global company. The two categories are not mutually exclusive. But Lenovo’s choice of messaging has implications for the Created in China narrative and Brand China. If Lenovo, the global company with Chinese roots and an American head office, is the most prominent international public face, then the Created in China narrative loses much of its impact. In fact, one could argue that this version of Lenovo would conform more to the Made in China narrative where China is the support mechanism for the innovations that take place in the American head office. If, on the other hand, Lenovo, the Chinese company with global aspirations and global offices, is the most prominent international public face, then the Created in China narrative is strengthened as Chinese ingenuity and quality is shown to have created a global demand that must be met by the construction of multinational bases of operation.

One clue to the thematic direction of the company’s promotional intentions can be discerned via a brief analysis of how Lenovo’s design for the Beijing Olympic Torch was presented to the global public. The unveiling of this torch—an aluminum torch resembling a scroll of paper—garnered international media attention, and suggests that Lenovo intends to package itself for international audiences at least partly as a Chinese company. A BOCOG press release stated: “The design of the Torch takes advantage of Chinese artistic heritage and technological expertise” (2007). As *China Daily* reported in their story about the torch, “paper is one of the four great inventions in ancient China that was spread to the rest of the world along the ancient Silk Road” (Lei 2007, 15). Thus, the torch represents China’s history of technological advancements and innovations. The construction of the torch emphasizes Lenovo’s ties to science in China. While the outside of the torch was designed by Lenovo, the internal flame system was designed by the China Aerospace Science and Industry Group. Maintaining a constant flame is particularly important because the Olympic torch route is intended to include the scaling of the highest mountain in the world,

Mount Qomolangma (or Mt. Everest) in Tibet. To scale the mountain successfully, the torch will have to withstand low air temperatures, high wind, and low air pressure (Lei 2007). The torch nicely represents a triad of the techno-narrative simultaneously symbolizing the *historical* inventiveness of China through the scroll design, the *current* inventiveness of China through the Lenovo-created design, and the *future* inventiveness of China through the unprecedented burning mechanism.

Lenovo's association with the torch must also be understood as a national project, again highlighting Lenovo as a Chinese company. Through its explicit cooperation with national scientific organizations and its implicit support of China's planned torch route through Tibet by helping construct a device precisely for this purpose, Lenovo is signaling to the world its clear association with the Chinese government and its prerogatives. The torch route through Tibet has been subject to substantial international criticism, and Lenovo's close association with the torch opens the possibility for the company to be subjected to criticisms related to China's tenuous relationship with the Tibetan people. This linkage between Lenovo and the Chinese government opens the possibility for the promotion of a new Created in China narrative; at the same time, it makes the company vulnerable to international criticism directed at China's political agenda. The Lenovo-spearheaded Created in China narrative is ultimately a fragile narrative that is dependent not only on the technology that Lenovo manufactures, but also on the policies that the Chinese government pursues.

Loo and Davies argue that "the nation brand is an overarching concept with a single positioning that straddles the entire range of outputs a nation has" (2006, 202). In the spring and summer of 2007, concerns about Chinese quality control in products ranging from pet food to toothpaste and toys dominated international media coverage of China. Following Loo and Davies's logic, toothpaste may actually prove to be mightier than technology. This is to say that despite Lenovo's broadband advertising strategy and the importance of becoming China's first TOP sponsor, the company, if understood by international audiences as Chinese, must today also contend with a reinvigorated Made in China narrative that highlights poor workmanship; poor quality; and, now, potential danger. If, as we have argued, the fate of Lenovo's Olympic campaign plays an important role in determining China's image as a player in the global information and technology economy, then it can also be said that China's reputation plays an equally important role in determining Lenovo's fate.

Case Study II: Mobile Initiatives

Mobile technology initiatives are an important component of Beijing's progressive techno-narrative of *Created in China*. China is one of the fastest growing mobile phone markets in the world. Currently, there are more than 400 million mobile phone users in China, and this number is increasing by 5 million users a month (Bremner 2006; Chandler 2007). The largest mobile phone provider is China Mobile, which is controlled by the Ministry of Information Industry. Originally spun off from China Telecom in 2000, China Mobile has since signed up more than 300 million mobile phone subscribers (Roberts 2006); the company's closest competitor, China Unicom, has more than 100 million mobile subscribers. In 2006, China Mobile's ad spending increased 57 percent to 4 billion yuan in preparation for the Beijing Olympics (Yeung 2007). Third generation mobile (3G) services, including high-speed data and broadband Internet services for mobile devices, are an important technological development within China as well as globally, and are an important component of the country's successful modernization and international integration. Such mobile services have been projected to increase mobile revenues in China from \$10 billion in 2006 to \$28.8 billion in 2010 (Roberts 2007).

The report that Beijing submitted to the IOC as part of its bid for the 2008 Olympics described Beijing as characterized by "the rapid development and application of leading edge technologies, such as IT" (BOCOG n.d., 3). It boasted that mobile 3G services would be available well before the Games (BOCOG n.d., 85). Xin Xu argues that "the award to host the Olympiad has certainly set the new impetus for China's modernization drive and international integration" (2006, 91). But in mid-2007, with testing of platforms and standards still under way—and no clear end in sight—the narrative implications have changed: Will China be able to fulfill these technological aspirations and permit and achieve the infrastructure for a meaningful advance in the way people receive and experience the Olympic Games?

There have been several technological and bureaucratic hurdles to China's successful development of 3G services. The Chinese Ministry of Information Industry is a key decision maker, but there have been inputs from the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), which oversees China's state-owned companies. Also involved in restructuring of the sector are the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Science and Technol-

ogy, and the State Administration of Radio Film and Television. One question, one narrative outcome, is how China deals administratively with these aspects of technological change.

There is no worldwide standard platform for 3G. The European and Japanese 3G standard is W-CDMA (wideband-code division multiple access), whereas the U.S. 3G standard is CDMA2000. In late October 2006, the Chinese State Administration for Radio Film and Television announced that the national 3G standard would be TD-SCDMA (these initials stand for “time division synchronous code division multiple access,” though that hardly makes the standard more understandable). “The TD-SCDMA standard has received the full blessing of the Chinese government and it will surely play a critical role in mobile communication development in China as well as in the world” (Chen et al. 2002, 48).

The initial choice of TD-SCDMA over W-CDMA and CDMA2000 as the national standard in China seemed an important decision because TD-SCDMA was developed by researchers and telecommunications industry leaders *in China*. China is not only competing at the Olympics for gold medals but is also competing with other technological standards for global market dominance. The decision to choose a Chinese-developed standard “reflect[s] government efforts to control core technologies by using domestic rather than international standards” (Yeung 2006, 15). By choosing TD-SCDMA first, the homegrown technology was given an additional six months of testing in China. In addition, much of the core intellectual property of TD-SCDMA is owned by Chinese companies, which means that the licensing fees for China to use this standard will be significantly lower than they would be for competing standards developed outside of China (Bremner 2006). If TD-SCDMA were to be successful, China and its industries would not only benefit financially, but the country’s reputation as a world leader in information technology would also improve. “The implications of [China’s] TD-SCDMA technologies to other countries will be far beyond technical significance. The success of TD-SCDMA from proposal to operational system will bring China into the world club, which used to be limited to the Western powers only” (Chen et al. 2002, 59). The Olympic Games are, in this sense, a world stage on which to showcase TD-SCDMA and China’s technological prowess.

As of a year before the Games, the commitment to 3G and mobile service remained an unsettled question. Industry leaders insist that TD-SCDMA will be ready in time for the 2008 Games. The deputy director

of TD-SCDMA at the largest equipment vendor for TD-SCDMA said, "TD-SCDMA will play a critical role during the Olympics and the networks will absolutely be up and running before the Olympics" (*BusinessWeek.com* 2007). Meanwhile, others, including the Chinese government and BOCOG, appear to have realized that the homegrown 3G mobile platform might not be serviceable in time for the Games. The question then became whether it was more important singly to advance the underlying China-developed technology or to demonstrate commitment to having mobile services ready. Jiang Xiaoyu, the executive vice president of BOCOG, indicated that China may "have to go back to the IOC to discuss its pledge to have a third generation mobile phone network available in time for the games" (*Economist* 2007). In a step to encourage further opportunity for 3G development in time for the Games, the Ministry of Information Industry announced in mid-May 2007 that it would place the two other international 3G standards alongside TD-SCDMA as choices for 3G in China. According to the ministry, mobile phone operators in China would be allowed to choose from all three technologies.

This decision to diversify China's acceptable 3G platforms is important for two reasons. First, it increases the chances that 3G services may actually be available during the 2008 Olympic Games. While the mobile services may not be as robust as originally intended, opening its 3G standards will most likely allow China to offer at least limited 3G services during the Games as promised. Second, the decision to include W-CDMA and CDMA2000 as 3G choices allows China to proclaim itself "technologically neutral" in regard to 3G. It is not a coincidence that this announcement was made less than a week before "high-level Chinese delegates visited the US for talks on long-term bilateral issues" (Poon 2007, 30). Internationally, China wants to project an image of fairness in regulating the potentially highly lucrative mobile 3G market in China. Allowing the three 3G platforms not only helps to ensure technological robustness during the Olympics, but can be seen as a positive gesture from China in the information technology global marketplace. Of course, it is important to keep in mind that state-run China Mobile will most likely be the primary service provider of any 3G services during the Olympics. Thus while China may open its standards for 3G services to include W-CDMA and CDMA2000, the Ministry of Information Industry is ensuring its control over the rollout and development of any mobile services.

In addition to the technological challenges of 3G, administrative,

political, and economic issues in China have also provided hurdles to mobile initiatives. Once a mobile 3G platform is developed and tested, the Chinese government must decide which mobile phone carriers can provide 3G services in China. China has been reluctant to issue 3G mobile licenses to providers because of a potential major restructuring of the telecommunications industry, which would integrate landline and mobile phone services and determine which operators would receive 3G licenses in China. However, any industry restructuring is immensely complicated, as three competing regulatory agencies must approve any changes (*Economist* 2007). Thus, despite allowing the other international 3G standards to operate in China, by not issuing 3G licenses China continues to inhibit efforts that would allow them to offer 3G services during the 2008 Games. When visitors from around the world come to Beijing for the Olympics, they will likely rely on Chinese mobile services. If China can prove its technological superiority during the Olympics then its technological standards may be adopted elsewhere throughout the world.

In addition, mobile technologies, including 3G and mobile TV initiatives, are important to the success of the 2008 Games because mobile technology provides an additional channel through which spectators can follow the events of the Games. While modern media events were originally viewed on the television at home (Dayan and Katz 1992), digital technology increasingly displaces the home as the site of spectatorship for the Olympics and other media events. Advanced mobile technology like 3G and mobile TV encourages the watching of events from wherever the viewer may be. Increased accessibility to Olympic coverage may encourage continuity in viewing and contribute to viewer attachment and investment in the success of the 2008 Games. NBC's multimodal approach for the 2006 Torino Games—with Olympic content made readily available on the Internet or through podcasts—allowed it to reach a broader audience. “‘We found that the more content we make available, the more buzz we create,’ said Gary Zenkel, president of NBC Olympics. ‘There’s an audience for the consumption of media that’s super-strong in front of the TV and also strong when people are not. We have to make sure our content is made available to people wherever they are’” (Levingston 2006, Do5). If people are no longer sitting in front of their televisions to watch the Olympics, broadcasters and Olympic media planners of the Beijing Games must develop new ways to reach an ever more mobile audience.

Mobile Sousveillance and Potential Counternarratives

While coverage of the 2008 Olympics through mobile technology may encourage viewership and reinforce the techno-narrative of the Games, the interactive nature of mobile technology also threatens the control of the official narratives surrounding the Beijing Games. Advancements in camera and video on mobile phones make users not only consumers of mobile content, but producers as well. Such technological advancements open up the possibility of counternarratives by noncorporate or nonstate institutions. The new producers may have very different incentives and priorities than Chinese authorities. And because mobile phones are highly accessible and portable, they may be able to record events and situations that were previously obscured from public scrutiny. Information technology also opens up possibilities for different kinds of surveillance. Typically surveillance is the monitoring *of* those with less power *by* those with more power—the use of information technology by bureaucratic and state institutions to monitor the behavior of individuals. However, Mann, Nolan, and Wellman (2003) suggest that ubiquitous information technology can allow for individuals to observe those in authority. Mann et al. refer to this inverse surveillance as “sousveillance,” from the French meaning to watch from below.

The power of sousveillance lies not just in the ability to record the behavior of those in authority, but also in the ability to present this behavior back to those in authority so as to confront them with their recorded actions, a process Mann (1998) refers to as “reflectionism.” This is partly done through the dissemination of the recorded act to mass media outlets. Probably the most famous example of sousveillance in the United States is the video of the police assault on Rodney King. The power of the video was not that it captured the events unfolding but that it was presented back to the public and to authorities and called on them to account for their abusive tactics.

More recently there have been examples of mobile devices contributing to the sousveillance of corporate and state institutions. Because mobile devices are almost always available to large numbers of people, there are recorded events and situations in which authority figures exert highly disputed examples of power or force over those less powerful. For example, in November 2006 a UCLA student refused to show his student identification to campus police at the library and was

subsequently stunned with a Taser gun. Several nearby students caught this exchange with their camera phones and posted it to the Internet. This resulted in a lawsuit and an investigation of campus police practices (*LA Times Staff* 2007).

The power of mobile devices to expose the behavior of authority is recognized within China as a matter of state concern. Chinese authorities have at times inhibited uses of mobile technology so as to impede the dissemination of information by average citizens. For example, on March 28, 2007, six workers died while building an underground railway connecting Beijing to the Olympic Village. The tunnel they were working on collapsed on top of them, and it took several days to recover the bodies of the victims. The *Daily Telegraph* reported:

The state-run construction company responsible for the work was so concerned to keep details secret it locked workers inside the construction site and confiscated their mobile phones while attempting its own rescue work. Eventually, one man who had managed to keep hold of his phone crept away and called a relative who works for the police. (Spencer 2007, 17)

Beginning in 2005 global news media started to use camera phone recordings by citizens who had captured newsworthy events that the official media could or did not record. Notable examples include the London bombings in July 2005, the coup in Thailand in September 2006, the hanging of Saddam Hussein in December 2006, and the Virginia Tech shootings in April 2007. The potential ubiquity of mobile phones at the Beijing Games increases opportunities for both athletes and spectators to record events and occurrences to which official press may not have access.

Already, mobile technology in conjunction with the Internet and blogs have proved a mobilizing communication tool for activists and citizens in China. For example, a text message campaign was used to raise awareness and fight the construction of a chemical factory in the seaside city of Xiamen (Cody 2007). Demonstrations were held, and demonstrators sent text messages and photos about the event to bloggers throughout China who then posted them on their Web blogs. Thus real-time accounts from the demonstrators and citizen journalists circumvented censorship by the government and could be read throughout the country. Chinese authorities postponed construction of the factory to conduct a review of the environmental impact (Cody

2007). The sousveillance enabled by mobile technology is changing the flow of information among citizens in China and indicating the fragility of the Chinese authorities' official narratives and their control over them. Although the mobile phone-enabled examples of sousveillance in China have only garnered minor international attention so far, mobile services are expected to be heavily promoted leading up to and during the 2008 Olympics, encouraging many athletes and tourists to have mobile phones on hand throughout the Games. When the world's eye is on Beijing during the 2008 Games, such sousveillance incidences may quickly become global news, tarnishing the positive techno-narrative that BOCOG and China have worked so hard to preserve.

Conclusion

The techno-narrative surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics is a means through which to foster an association between China and modern technological innovations, while at the same time suggesting that such a relationship has always been there. The High-Tech theme of the Beijing Olympics, the Lenovo sponsorship, and the mobile initiatives each represent a different but complementary facet of this techno-narrative. Central to this High-Tech theme is a Created in China narrative, which can be seen in both the Lenovo and 3G examples. In both cases, the Chinese government is involved in attempting to control the information technology preparation and branding for the Olympics as a means of protecting the potential fragility of this narrative.

While the High-Tech theme of the Olympics may connote Chinese technological progressivism and innovation, the increased adoption and prevalence of advanced information technology, including mobile technology, may provide opportunities for such a narrative to be hijacked and for counternarratives to emerge. Camera and video mobile phones provide a means of sousveillance through which everyday citizens can monitor, record, and disseminate official acts and behaviors of abuse or negligence. No doubt Western media, if their early framing is an indication, will be hungry for Olympic scandals involving the athletes, the events, or the host city and country during the 2008 Games. The ubiquity of mobile phones suggests that practically all of the Olympics including the main stage, side stage, and backstage activities will be captured and recorded one way or another; however, which

backstage activities get disseminated remains to be seen. Similarly, as a TOP sponsor and provider of information technology for the Games, Lenovo will be closely scrutinized as being both of China, for China, and for the world. The Chinese authorities will certainly try to control the discourse throughout the Olympic Games, in part by focusing on the High-Tech theme, but recent news coverage suggests that counternarratives can leak into the mainstream press with the help of the information technology itself.

Future research should explore the successes and failures of China to use the 2008 Olympic Games as a stage on which to demonstrate its shift from an economy producing inexpensive goods to a sophisticated information economy and one where Created in China and Made in China gain respect. By harnessing the Olympic discourse of progress, the Beijing Olympics will try to construct itself as a High-Tech Olympics. The computing services by Lenovo and the mobile services promoted for the Games contribute to this techno-narrative. The final year leading up to the 2008 Olympics emerges as a critical time for China to negotiate the tensions between internal regulatory struggles and the desire to project an international image of a technologically progressive country.

NOTE

1. Live 8 was a series of free concerts held on July 2, 2005, in the G8 countries and South Africa to raise awareness of poverty. Live Earth was a series of concerts held on July 7, 2007, around the world (at least one concert was held on each of the seven continents) to raise awareness of climate change.

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