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Abstract

This research investigates the discursive construction of Hong Kong identity in mediated political communication, in order to understand the relationship between media discourse and the political economy of the media in Hong Kong, as well as the political and economic context in Hong Kong, and thereby reveal the dynamic of the involvement of the media in the politics of Hong Kong identity. It is argued that the Hong Kong identity has changed substantially over the past few decades, and that these changes have been shaped by broader political changes, economic developments and cultural shifts, all of which have been filtered through the Hong Kong media system. To demonstrate this, the thesis employs a novel combination of textual and contextual analysis, drawing on analytical techniques and concepts from corpus linguistics, critical discourse analysis, the political economy of the media, and sociological theories of identity. To be able to assess the relative role of the media system factors and the broader contextual elements in shaping the mediated representations of Hong Kong, the research encompasses two case studies, one focusing on the media coverage of the 2004 interpretation of the Basic Law regarding universal suffrage, the other on the coverage of the Chief Executive Election in 2005. The analysis reveals that the mediated construction of Hong Kong identity is closely related to the political economy of individual newspapers – the newspaper type, its readership, ownership, political affiliation and commercial orientation. The comparison between the two case studies also shows that the media representations of identity are also inflected by the characteristics of the broader society of Hong Kong, its politics and economy at the chosen points of time. The results of the study contribute to a better understanding of Hong Kong, its identity, political culture, and its media system. These results also suggest that the analytical approach used, based on a parallel examination of the political economy of the media and the discursive constructions of identity in the media, has a lot to offer and could be fruitfully applied to other cases around the world.

Keywords: Press, Politics, elections, identity, Hong Kong, commercialisation

Contents

Abstract	i
Index of Tables	ix
Index of Charts	x
Abbreviations	xiii
Acknowledgements	xv
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 The context of the project	1
1.2 Research questions and aims	2
1.3 The thesis chapters in brief	4
Chapter 2. Politics in Contemporary Hong Kong	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 The key actors in Hong Kong politics	8
2.2.1 The business/incorporated elite	9
2.2.2 The grassroots elite	10
2.2.3. The major political parties in Hong Kong	11
2.3 The key development of Hong Kong politics	14
2.3.1. Transition, the first stage	14

2.3.2. Transition, the second stage 1989–1992 18

2.3.3 Transition, Governor Patten and the third stage 1992–1995 20

2.3.4. Transition, the Final stage 1995–1997 22

2.3.5. The first term of the Chief Executive 1997–2002 23

2.3.6. The second term of the Chief Executive 2002–2005 26

2.3.7. The second Chief Executive 2005–Now 30

2.3.8 Summary 32

Chapter 3. The Hong Kong Identity 34

3.1. Introduction 34

3.2. Defining identity 35

3.3. Crucial ingredients of the Hong Kong identity 40

3.4. The Hong Kong identity and its modern history 42

3.5 The existing literature regarding Hong Kong identity 47

3.5.1 Questioning the (origins) of Hong Kong identity 48

3.5.2. Between nationality and locality 50

3.5.3 Assimilation vs. integration 52

3.6 Conclusion 54

Chapter 4. The Hong Kong Media Landscape 56

4.1 Introduction 56

4.2 A brief history of Hong Kong newspapers 57

4.3 The contemporary journalistic culture in Hong Kong 59

4.3.1 Journalism education and employment 60

4.3.2 Journalists Association and Press Council 62

4.4. Media ownership, self-censorship and credibility 63

4.4.1. Media ownership and its impact 63

4.4.2. Self-censorship 65

4.4.3. Market orientation and credibility 67

4.5 Major categories in the newspaper industry 68

4.5.1 Popular tabloids: *Oriental Daily* and *Apple Daily* 69

4.5.2 Elite broadsheet: intellectual and commercial—*Ming Pao* and *HKEJ* 75

4.5.3. Partisan papers: political 'without' commercial: *Wen Wei Po* 78

4.6 Summary 80

Chapter 5. The Relationships between Politics, the Media and Identity in Hong Kong 82

5.1. Introduction 82

5.2 The specificities of Hong Kong politics and political economy 83

5.2.1. Weak parties, strong state 83

5.2.2. The media as a replacement for weak parties? 85

5.3. The specificities of the Hong Kong media system 87

5.3.1. The structure of the newspaper industry 89

5.3.2. Political parallelism and professionalization 91

5.3.3. Professionalization 95

5.3.4. The role of the state and the market 95

5.3.5. The Hong Kong media system: a liberal model, but not quite? 100

5.4 Hong Kong politics, identity and the media 101

5.4.1 The overlapping of political and territorial identities 101

5.4.2. The mediation of political identity in Hong Kong 105

Chapter 6. Methodology 108

6.1 Introduction 108

6.2 Research questions 108

6.3. Textual analysis I: critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis 111

6.3.1. Category labels 113

6.3.2. The choice of actor/subject and object 114

6.4 Textual analysis II: corpus linguistics 115

6.4.1. Frequency and proportions 118

6.4.2. Collocations 121

6.4.3. Interpreting the findings of CL with CDA 124

6.5. Contextual analysis and description of the corpus 125

6.6. Summary: research design at a glance 131

Chapter 7 Case Study: Interpretation of the Basic Law in 2004 133

7.1 Introduction 133

7.2 The interpretation of the Basic Law in 2004: the context 133

7.2.1 The Basic Law 133

7.2.2. The Interpretation 135

7.3. Data and sampling 138

7.4 Analysing the corpus 139

7.4.1 Amount of coverage 139

7.4.2 The construction of the Other 141

7.4.2.1 Label: ‘communist/socialist’ 141

7.4.2.2 Label: ‘inland/mainland’ 142

7.4.3. The sense of belong and not belonging to China 145

7.4.3.1 Label: ‘Beijing’ 145

7.4.3.2 Label: ‘China/Chinese’ 149

7.4.4 The construction of the self 155

7.4.4.1 Labels: ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ and verb collocations - general 155

7.4.4.2 Labels: ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ and verb collocations – differences and similarities between newspapers 157

7.5. Conclusion 168

Chapter 8 Case Study: The 2005 Chief Executive (CE) Election 170

8.1 Introduction 170

8.2 The 2005 CE election 170

8.2.1 The Basic Law 170

8.2.2. The first Chief Executive 171

8.2.3. The election 172

8.3. Data and sampling 173

8.4 Analysing the corpus 174

8.4.1 Amount of coverage 174

8.4.2 Construction of the Other 176

8.4.2.1 Label: ‘communist/socialist’ 177

8.4.2.2 Label: ‘inland/mainland’ 178

8.4.3 The sense of belonging and not belong to China 181

8.4.3.1 Label ‘Beijing’ 182

8.4.3.2 Label ‘China/Chinese’ 185

8.4.4. The construction of the Self 191

8.4.4.1 Label ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ and verb collocations - general 191

8.4.4.2 Labels: ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ and verb collocations – differences and similarities between newspapers 194

8.5 Conclusions 205

Chapter 9 Conclusion 207

9.1 Introduction 207

9.2 Key results: the two case studies compared 208

9.2.1 Similarities and differences between the two case studies 208

9.2.2 External factors that determine or affect the similarities and differences between the mediated constructions of identity 210

9.3 Contributions to existing knowledge 212

9.3.1 Contributions to the understanding of Hong Kong identity 212

9.3.2 Contributions to the understanding of Hong Kong politics 213

9.3.3. Contributions to the understanding in the Hong Kong media 215

9.4 Broader theoretical and methodological implications of the study 223

Bibliography 227

Appendix I: Related Article of the Basic Law 251

Appendix II: Excerpt English/Chinese 256

Index of Tables

Table 5.1	The Three Models: Media System Characteristics	88
Table 5.2	Hong Kong Population by age and sex (2006)	90
Table 5.3	Hong Kong Population by social class and sex (2005)	91
Table 6.1	Meanings of label ‘China’	120
Table 6.2	Meanings of Label ‘Beijing’	121
Table 6.3	Examples of Verbs	123
Table 6.4	Newspapers chosen for the analysis and their main characteristics	129
Table 6.5	Number of articles sampled in the two events	130
Table 6.6	Research Design at a Glance	132
Table 7.1	Timeline of the interpretation of the Basic Law in 2004	138
Table 7.2	Basic Corpus Data of the case 2004 Interpretation of the Basic Law	141
Table 8.1	Basic Corpus Data of the case 2005 CE Election	176
Table 9.1	The mediation of Hong Kong identity: Links between the political economy of Hong Kong newspapers and their discursive construction of the self and the other	223

Index of Charts

Chart 4.1	*Apple Daily, Ming Pao, Oriental Daily & HKEJ*: Important current affairs reading, 2005	72
Chart 4.2	*Oriental Daily* Readership: by age, 1998–2006	73
Chart 4.3	*Apple Daily* Readership: by age, 1998–2006	73
Chart 4.4	*Ming Pao, Oriental Daily & Apple Daily*: Average Personal Income (HK$) 2005	74
Chart 4.5	*Ming Pao, Apple Daily, Oriental Daily* Readership: by Education 2006	74
Chart 4.6	*Ming Pao* Readership: by Age, 1998–2006	76
Chart 4.7	*Ming Pao, Apple Daily, Oriental Daily & HKEJ* Readership: by Education, 2005	78
Chart 4.8	*HKEJ, Ming Pao, Oriental Daily & Apple Daily*: Important business reading, 2005	78
Chart 7.1	Frequency of label ‘communist/communism’ and ‘socialist/socialism’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	141
Chart 7.2	Frequency of label ‘mainland/inland’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	142
Chart 7.3	Frequency of label ‘Beijing’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	145
Chart 7.4	Meanings of label ‘Beijing’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	146
Chart 7.5	Frequency of label ‘China/Chinese’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	148

Chart 7.6	Meanings of label ‘China/Chinese’ in general (2004 Interpretation)	149
Chart 7.7	Meanings of label ‘China/Chinese’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	150
Chart 7.8	Verb collocation of label ‘central government’ in general (2004 Interpretation)	155
Chart 7.9	Verb collocation of label ‘central government’, ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ (2004 Interpretation)	156
Chart 7.10	Frequency of label ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	157
Chart 7.11	Label ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ appears in the same paragraph with main others by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	158
Chart 7.12	Verb collocation comparison of label ‘Hong Kong people and ‘citizen’ by newspaper (2004 Interpretation)	160
Chart 8.1	Frequency of label ‘communist/communism’ and ‘socialist/socialism’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	176
Chart 8.2	Frequency of label ‘mainland/inland’ by newspaper (2004 Election)	178
Chart 8.3	Frequency of label ‘Beijing’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	181
Chart 8.4	Meanings of label ‘Beijing’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	182
Chart 8.5	Frequency of label ‘China/Chinese’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	184

Chart 8.6	Meanings of label ‘China/Chinese’ in general (2005 Election)	185
Chart 8.7	Meanings of label ‘China/Chinese’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	186
Chart 8.8	Verb collocation of label ‘central government’ in general (2005 Election)	191
Chart 8.9	Verb collocation of label ‘central government’, ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ (2005 Election)	193
Chart 8.10	Frequency of label ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	194
Chart 8.11	Label ‘Hong Kong people’ and ‘citizen’ appears in the same paragraph with main others by newspaper (2005 Election)	195
Chart 8.12	Verb collocation comparison of label ‘Hong Kong people and ‘citizen’ by newspaper (2005 Election)	196

Abbreviations

ADPL	Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood
BNC	British National Corpus
CCP	Communist Party of China
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CE	Chief Executive (of HKSAR)
CEEO	The Chief Executive Election Ordinance
CEPA	The Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement
CL	Corpus Linguistics
DBA	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong
DP	Democratic Party (of Hong Kong)
EC	Election Committee (of Chief Executive of HKSAR)
FC	Functional Constituencies
FTU	Federation of Trade Union (of Hong Kong)
GC	Geographical constituencies
HKAS	Hong Kong Affairs Society
HKBU	Hong Kong Baptist University
HKCU	The Chinese University of Hong Kong
HKEJ	Hong Kong Economic Journal
HKHRM	Hong Kong Human Right Monitor
HKIFJ	Hong Kong Federation of Journalists
HKNEA	Hong Kong News Executives' Association
HKPA	Hong Kong Progressive Alliance
HKPC	Hong Kong Preparatory Committee
HKPPA	Hong Kong Press Photographers Association
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administration Region
HKU	The University of Hong Kong
LDF	Liberal Democratic Federation (of Hong Kong)
LegCo	Legislation Committee (of Hong Kong)
LP	Liberal Party (of Hong Kong)
MP	Meeting Point
NPC	National People's Congress
NPCSC	Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

PRC	People's Republic of China
PWC	Preliminary Working Committee
RTHK	Radio Television Hong Kong
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SC	Selection Committee (of CE and LegCo)
SCMP	South China Morning Post
TKP	Ta Kong Po
UDHK	United Democrats of Hong Kong
WWP	Wen Wei Po

Acknowledgements

The completing of this project would not have been possible without the generous help and continuous support of many people.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors: Dr. Sabina Mihelj and Mr. Graham Murdock, whose patient advice and encouragement have kept me going, especially Dr. Mihelj's tireless comments on my drafts since the very beginning of this five-year project.

I would also like to thank Dr Dominic Wring and Dr John Richardson for their advice on improving the research design of this project.

My gratitude also goes to the lecturers, staff and my colleagues who have contributed to a pleasant experience during the period of my study at the Department of Social Sciences of Loughborough University.

Extra thanks to Ms. Heather Owen who tirelessly proofread the whole dissertation in a very short period of time.

I would also like to thank Irene Lai for all her inspiring suggestions ever since starting this research, as well as warm friendship and a guest room over the course of several research trips to Hong Kong; and Nian Ji for being a great friend and supporting me through both good and bad times.

Last but not least I thank my parents Runzhi Liu and Lin Zhang. I am the single child in the family. I am lucky to have their understanding and support, which has allowed me to pursue my academic aspirations at the cost of their life savings and great sacrifice.