Taiwan’s Public Diplomacy and Mega-event:
An Analysis of Foreign News Reports of

Hsien-Yu Chung
Abstract

This thesis, as a case study, focuses on the perspective of foreign news reports on Taiwan’s first time hosting an international multi-sport event, the World Games 2009 in its biggest port city Kaohsiung. The World Games 2009 Kaohsiung, the significant Olympic type mega-event as to Taiwan, is applied as the approach to public diplomacy and soft power for the purpose of expanding Taiwan’s international space. It is expected to raise publicity and mass media exposure to boost Taiwan’s international profile and spur its tourism industry. From Taiwan’s image-marketing strategy, practices to foreign news reports, it outweighs to study foreign media’s reflection on Taiwan and the World Games 2009 as the important evaluation on the mega-event as a whole.

This thesis attempts to answer two research questions: How was the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung reported by the foreign media? Did hosting the World Games improve Taiwan’s image? It presents the results and perspectives of foreign news reports by qualitative methods: case study and discourse analysis of online-English news reports and some quantitative methods applied on data. It combines news reports study with theory, model of public diplomacy, mega-event and expected-model.

Within 101 pieces of online-English news found related to the World Games 2009, it unveils fruitful results such as the failure of interpreting the core story (Taiwan’s images and values) by foreign media during the sporting extravaganza, and it echoes Rivenburgh (2004)’s three viewpoints toward the Olympic type event (intercultural challenges, less news about host country’s culture and dramatic news). By the amount of news and the absence of foreign media on the press conference indicates that foreign media did not pay much attention to the World Games and Taiwan. In spite of reporting the sports and games, other major topics of reports were Taiwan’s hosting the event, the greenest solar-powered stadium designed by Japanese, Toyo Ito, Chu Chen’s promotion itinerary to Beijing and China’s absence on the opening and closing ceremony which triggered foreign media’s great concern.

Keywords: Kaohsiung; Mega-event; Mega Sport Event; Olympic Type Event; Public Diplomacy; Soft Power; Taiwan Image; The World Games

Length: 10,959 words
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1. Introduction

“(The World Games 2009 Kaohsiung’s) their importance is truly remarkable. Their impact is enormous: politically and economically. It is the first time that Chinese Taipei organizes a multi-sport event. For a long time, Chinese Taipei has been isolated from international sports. Now it has the opportunity to welcome the youth of the world for the first time. This gives people in my country the feeling to be part of the world sports.”

-- Wu, Ching-Kuo

Wu, Ching-Kuo who is a member of the Chinese Taipei’s National Olympic Committee and also of the International Olympic Committee, once replied when he was asked about “what is the importance for your country to hold the World Games?” by a journalist.¹

1.1 Background

Taiwan’s strategy to expand its international space by means of soft power

Faced with China’s accretion and overmatched hard power resources, Taiwan has been searching for means to enhance its soft power in order to augment its international space. In the international society, China never ever gives upon claiming sovereignty over Taiwan, by military force if it is necessary. Taiwan’s international participation has been significantly stunted by China’s omnipresent suppression for quite a long time. Such examples are that People’s Republic of China (China) opposes Republic of China (Taiwan) to joining almost all intergovernmental organizations. Taiwan is even not a member of United Nations. And there are only 23 countries which recognize Taiwan as an independent state and have official relations with Taiwanese government. What is worse, almost every time when Taiwanese people apply their names like Taiwan or Republic of China to participate international activities, China would put pressure on the host to correct the name or simply to add China after it for the purpose of showing Taiwan is part of China. However, with hundreds of missiles displayed, pointing at Taiwan and immense annual national security budget, it seems irrational for Taiwanese government to compete with China by military, but it would be promising for Taiwan to apply its soft power.

Joseph Nye defines the concept of “soft power” as a kind of self-attraction which can help oneself to get what one wants without coercions or bribery. Compared with hard powers—military and economy, soft power of one country relies on its culture, political value and foreign policy. As for Taiwan, the term soft power has become popular within recent years. One latest BBC report, “‘Soft Power’ raises Taiwan’s profile,” narrates Taiwan’s promotional strategy from arts, food, tourism to high technologies in pursuit of staking out Taiwan’s international image. It has become such an importance that Taiwanese incumbent president Ma Ying-Jeou brought up with “SMART” strategy for national security in 2008, in which the letter “S” stands for “soft power”.

1.2 Purpose and Problem

From Soft Power, Public Diplomacy to Mega-event

As Joseph Nye pointes out soft power can be implemented by public diplomacy. Within the practice of public diplomacy, I am interested in holding mega-events to improve one country’s image, and make one more visible in the world. It is just like marketing yourself. You have to advertise (public diplomacy) what you have (soft power) to attract your customers (target) to buy your goods (achievement).

As for Taiwan itself, by Fu, Hsiao-Lin’s account, the soft power could be categorized into three parts (shown by the graphic below), innovations of knowledge economy, values of democracy and human rights and the exchanges among communities. I intend to do the study on the right box, mega-event, partly because it is Taiwan’s first time to hold such an international multi-sport event, the World Games 2009 in its southern city, Kaohsiung. In addition, similar to Olympics, the World Games by its scale would offer Taiwan a golden opportunity to render its image, cultures and values not only to athletes, international media but the whole world as well. It is of great significance to study the World Games’ contribution to Taiwan’s international image.

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5 This graphic is cited and adapted from The Implication and Implementation of Soft Power: a case study on Taiwan foreign affairs by Fu, Hsiao-Lin. (2005), page 31
6 I would elaborate the World Games and whether it is a mega-event or not in 3.4, p14.
Research questions:

It’s remarkable to see within such two years had Taiwan hosted three mega-events. The World Games 2009 Kaohsiung was Taiwan’s first attempt to host an Olympic type event, and followed by the Deaflympics, the second mega event in September held in Taiwan’s capital, Taipei. Then in 2010 November, the Flora Exposition commenced in Taipei as the third one. The Taiwanese government and media would speak loud and proud of those events and view those as quite a success of helping Taiwan stand out. However, to examine whether holding such a mega-event would actually help Taiwan enhance its visibility, the main focus of this thesis is to investigate and to find answers to the research questions below:

- How was the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung reported by the foreign media?
- Did hosting the World Games improve Taiwan’s image?

I would strive to answer the first question and try to infer possible answers to the second research question because the measurement of image is not discussed in this thesis

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7 Known as the world games for the deaf; Chinese Taipei was elected the host city of the 21st Summer Deaflympics which took place from 5 September to 15 September 2009. The official website: http://english.2009deaflympics.org/bin/home.php
8 The 2010 Taipei International Flora Exposition is held from November 6th, 2010 to April 25th, 2011. Taiwan is the seventh city in Asia to host a gardening expo. The official website: http://www.2010taipeiexpo.tw/MP_4.html
9 One news is that president Ma spoke that the Floral Expo is the best time to show Taiwan’s soft power such as biotechnology, flora and biodiversity, and cultures. Chinatimes.com, November 17, 2010 http://money.chinatimes.com/news/news-content.aspx?id=20101117001551&cid=1210
1.3 Structure of the paper

Swedish thesis writing style

Inasmuch as I was pursuing my studies at Halmstad University in Sweden, and followed this thesis through under professor Jonna’s supervision, I would like to bring in a short account about Swedish thesis writing style at first, with regard to the structure of the paper.

Concerning the Swedish thesis writing system, the core lies on the research question which is also the goal of the thesis has to achieve. With specific the research question, the research has to be implemented on reliable materials which give the thesis validity. Then adding suitable methodology or theory in, one plans out the structure of the thesis and carries it out.

Structure of this thesis

As for this thesis, I would begin with the idea of soft power and public diplomacy in the intro and then elaborate the theories and models of holding a mega-event and the Olympic type (multi-sport) one. In chapter 4, in addition to the account of the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung, the main point would stress on carrying out the comparison between the theory, real practice and news reports by foreign media. How the foreign media reported about this mega-event held by Taiwan is the focus of discussions. It is concerned about whether one can acknowledge the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung as a success of public diplomacy or at least find beneficial results to Taiwan’s image. Essential findings and results within this thesis would be concluded in the end.
2. Methodology and Material

To carry out the answers to my research questions, I intend to conduct qualitative research: the Word Games 2009 Kaohsiung as a case-study of Taiwan’s public diplomacy and the discourse analysis on the foreign news reports; I also conducted basic quantitative methods to quantify qualitative data. I would first apply the theory (chapter 3) about holding a mega-event and Olympic type event. Then, to see if holding its first multi-sport event, the World Game 2009, would actually help Taiwan improve its images and gain positive international response, I would analyze the results of foreign news reports by combining the theory (chapter 3); I would point out specific questions to conduct clear discussions.

As to materials, the target is foreign media news report, so I exclude domestic ones and seek foreign on-line news which are accessible and with free search engine. Owing to my limited language ability, only those written in English are included and analyzed. The detail of news research methods would be illustrated by 2.2.

2.1 Previous Study

Academic articles about Taiwan’s soft power as well as public diplomacy mainly focus on historical accounts, theories and analyses, telling how Taiwanese government should apply and what had been implemented, but rarely focus on case study or examining the results and effects. In Fu, Hsiao-Lin’s master thesis, “The Implication and Implementation of Soft Power: a case study on Taiwan foreign affairs,” it clearly points out concept of soft power and classifies what soft power Taiwan has. Then in James Buu, “the discussion and implementation of public diplomacy—inspiration from foreign experiences”, it combines the theory and model with Taiwan government’s implementation of public diplomacy well. I was inspired by the latter, which first mentioned about mega-event. And coincidentally, Taiwan’s first multi-sport event was held last year. I think it would be worthwhile to conduct a case study of the World Games 2009, especially analyses on perspectives of foreign media and it could contribute to the study of Taiwan’s soft power and public diplomacy.

As to the previous study of the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung, since it is the first kind of mega-event Taiwan ever hosted, it bears so much attention that there are plenty of research on it. Yet, most of them concentrate on the effects on community, economy and tourism. Only the research report conducted by Wu, Ji-Hua (2009) takes in the perspective foreign media, but only the top 30 news sites in the world were searched and 17 pieces of news were found.
Therefore, to acquire more accurate foreign perspective, I would intend to enlarge the news scope to all the foreign news in English.

2.2 Qualitative Research – Foreign online-English-news research

In pursuit of understanding how the foreign media observe the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung in Taiwan, I intend to do the qualitative research—discourse analysis on foreign online-English-news reports, other than TV broadcast, radio or else. It is because news reports are written down in text, which is expedient to examine news contents. English-only news reports indeed confine my research scope. Those written in other foreign languages are thus excluded as a necessary loss. To obtain foreign media perspective, first of all, I rely on the website, “World Newspapers, Magazines, and News Sites in English” 10 to search English news. And the target countries are limited to those had athletes participating in the World Games rather than those only sent delegations but no athletes. The keywords applied are “Kaohsiung,” “World Games Kaohsiung,” “World Games Taiwan.” The research span would start from year 2003 when Kaohsiung city bid the 8th World Games to year 2009, 2-Aug., one week after it lowered the curtain.

I apply some basic quantitative methods to enhance the interpretation from the news. Both on timeline and the amount of news, I illustrate some figures which could illuminate the understanding of news such as appendix I, figure 7, table 2, figure 8.

2.3 Delimitation

There are numerous measures to examine the results and effect of hosting the World Games, such as questionnaire and TV broadcast. Owing to limitations of time and space, I would merely apply online-English news reports as one channel to investigate perspectives around the world. Although there might be some news reports which were written in other languages, I would engage myself in obtaining the foreign perspectives from the ones written in English. On the other side, my native language, Chinese, helps me to read the official articles and other news in order construct up the chapter 4.1. Other measures on foreign perspectives like how the athletes thought about Taiwan after the World Games were not counted in this study scope.

10 This website offers complete links of world news written in English. http://www.world-newspapers.com/
3. Theoretical Framework:

This chapter focuses on the essence of theory and discussions about soft power, public diplomacy and most of all the mega-event. Theory is of such an importance that it offers a clearer and more logical way to understand things. It would later be combined with practice, the news research, in pursuit of more valuable results.

3.1 Soft Power & Public Diplomacy

As said in the first chapter, the term “soft power” was coined by Joseph Nye. As he elucidated, “What is soft power? It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced.”

To wield soft power relies much on public diplomacy. In such an information age, shaping public opinion becomes very important to countries, especially to democratic ones. According to Edward R. Murrow’s definition, he views public diplomacy as interactions aimed not only at foreign governments but primarily with nongovernmental individuals and organizations, and often presented as a variety of private views in addition to government views. There are three dimensions of public diplomacy. The first and most immediate one is daily communications. And foreign press corps has to be the most important target. Second dimension is the strategic communications, a set of political campaign and themes. The last one is the development of lasting relationships with key individuals. Although it may resemble propaganda or marketing one’s image, “public diplomacy also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies.”

Implementing public diplomacy helps one country to brand its national image. Figure 4 shows that Manheim classifies countries into four types by its visibility (high or low) and valence (positive or negative). Country of A type with high visibility and negative valence should keep itself quiet and low in the international community to glide to B type. Country of B type needs to produce more positive news or reports to advance to C type. Only with diligent practice of public diplomacy can country of C type rise up to D type.

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12 Ibid. p.105-107
13 Murrow quoted in Mark Leonard. (2002). p.1
Taiwan’s Mega-event

Taiwan is in a bind; thus it is hard to define its location, but probably it’s on the way from C to D. Faced with China’s suppression and blocking the usage of the name “Taiwan,” and “Republic of China” whenever Taiwan participates in international activities, Taiwan has its own special tough challenges to implement public diplomacy.

3.2 Mega-event

Hosting a mega-event is one popular approach of public diplomacy. By way of its size and scale, mega-events can appeal tourism and affect economy, and reverberate in the global media.

“Mega-events are large scale cultural (including commercial and sporting) events which have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance”

“Mega-events have been and remain important elements in the orientation of national societies to international or global society and in the theory and practice of public culture and civil society at this level”

-- Maurice Roche (2000)

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15 Maurice Roche. (2000). p.1
16 Ibid.p.7
As Dayan & Katz stated, there are three types of mega-events: conquest; contest’
coronation. Olympic type event or so called mega sport event (Olympics, World Cup…) and
expos (World Expo…) are the most visible and spectacular mega-events; while those merely
national, regional, community or hallmark events are exclusive of mega-events.\(^\text{17}\)

Hosting a mega-event can bring about benefits but has shortcomings as well. In
addition to boosting economy, improving tourism and external relationships, the most crucial
merit is image-branding. It can lead to a chain of possible reactions. First, it heightens host
country’s awareness, and then produces target audiences’ involvements and actuates the
association that will influence their behavior. Nevertheless, it is costly. And it requires great
efforts and preparation to overcome such a complex event; or it would fail. Even worse, how
the international media would reflect on it is unpredictable and uncontrollable.\(^\text{18}\)

Figure 5 shows James Buu’s model of Taiwan’s public diplomacy Strategy,
illustrating how Taiwan should apply mega-event to fulfill public diplomacy. A mega-event
should have its core values as a story which is based on its national resources to convey to the
target audience both diffusely and abidingly. It plays a role to influence the media discourse,
elite discourse and public opinion.

Figure 5. Model of Taiwan’s Public Diplomacy Strategy

Source: Buu, James. (2005, August 30).

\(^\text{18}\) Buu, James (2005, August 30). p.125-126
3.3 Olympic event type

Practicing public diplomacy by means of mega-events varies from one another and so does the World Games. Younger and smaller as it is, the World Games is similar to Olympic Games, which is characterized as Olympic event type. As Rivenburgh (2004), an American expert in Olympics and communication, states, there are several traits of the interaction between the host and the international media:

- Although host cultures and images are pretty much showcased by the well-designed opening and closing ceremonies, owing to intercultural challenges, global media would misunderstand or often use simple words to interpret the show which falls quite short of host’s expectation.
- Number of foreign news about sports competition exceeds much that of host culture because of reporters’ lack of interest.
- International media are more willing to report dramatic or entertaining types of Olympic news – that will then be forever associated with the host’s image.
- Any considerable news occurring during the event may interfere with host’s image goals and make it out of focus.\(^\text{19}\)

To overcome the problems and defects that Olympic type event has is not an easy thing. Rivenburgh’s study and point of view would weigh a lot when it comes to the analysis with the news. In the next chapter, it would prove a lot of her views.

3.4 The World Games 2009 Kaohsiung as a mega-event

By its uniqueness and increasing size, scale (figure 6) and economic profits, the World Games can be considered as a mega-event. The World Games held under the auspices of the International World Games Association (IWGA) comprises more than 30 kinds of sports which are excluded in the Olympics, not on Olympic program such as korffball, ballroom dance, sumo wrestling and parachuting. At quadrennial intervals, in the years following the Games of the Olympiad\(^\text{20}\), the World Games is the Olympiad for athletes of non-Olympic program sports and athletes from all over the world in these sports unite in their common search for excellence.\(^\text{21}\)

\(^{19}\) Rivenburgh, Nancy K. (2004). p.3-13
The World Games has been held for eight times since 1981 in Santa Clara in the United States of America (figure 6). It is apparent that the participation from the world to the World Games is increasing each time. And in 2009 in Kaohsiung, as the second time that the World Games is held in Asia, the total nations and total participants of the World Games 2009 hit a new high. It has been 60 years that Taiwan successfully bid an international multi-sport event for the first time. About 2,400,000,000 NT dollars were spent hosting this event. An extra budget, 4,795,000,000 NT dollars, was to build the main stadium (the solar-powered stadium). According to the research report, “The influence of the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung on the development of the whole Kaohsiung city”, the estimated amount of consumption by visitors and participants in the World Games 2009 is approximately 345,000,000 NT dollars.\textsuperscript{22}

As an approach to public diplomacy, the World Games is not an influential mega-event as Olympics to the world. However, by the participation of 103 nations, 5994 participants, other foreign visitors and global audience, it is indeed a distinct opportunity for Taiwan to enhance its visibility and publicity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Sports</th>
<th>Official Sports</th>
<th>Invitational Sports</th>
<th>Total Nations</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st}</td>
<td>1981 Santa Clara (USA)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd}</td>
<td>1985 London (GBR)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd}</td>
<td>1989 Karlsruhe (GER)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>1993 The Hague (NED)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>1997 Lahti (FIN)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>2001 Akita (JPN)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>2005 Duisburg (GER)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8\textsuperscript{th}</td>
<td>2009 Kaohsiung (TPE)</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung Official Website

\textsuperscript{20} Last year 2008 was Beijing Olympiad, so some news said the World Games 2009 was Taiwan’s counterattack.

\textsuperscript{21} The World Games 2009 Kaohsiung Official Website

According to the value of events and quantity of promotions, I expect that the amount of news report would resemble figure 7. First there would be small amount of news about host’s bidding victory. And it would be silent during the host country dedicating itself to preparing. Until a certain period of time before the start of the Games, host country would begin to promote the event’s coming. The number of news reports would increase largely with the promotion and the event’s approaching. It would reach its zenith after the opening ceremony, and last during the contest. Over the closing ceremony, there would be news doing the conclusion. Besides, the country with more awards is likely to produce more news reports.

Figure 7. Expected Model of News Reports of Olympic event

*Illustrated by author
4. Analysis: foreign news reports about the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung

At this chapter, I would begin with what the Kaohsiung City Government (KCG) had planned to achieve, and then proceed to examine the important foreign news results, inferring their perspectives, and compare them with theory and model mentioned previously.

4.1 Kaohsiung City Government’s attempt and promotion

❖ Story and Values: KCG’s Well-designed Opening and Closing Ceremonies

In order to present the best opening and closing ceremonies, the directors had been dedicating to integrating the traditional elements of Taiwanese images, culture with new technology through fabulous show.

Opening Ceremony integrated four elements of Kaohsiung: technology, ocean, iron and light. There were more than 4000 thousands actors in the show. World-wide famous singer like Hayley Westenra was invited to sing songs. Within 45 minutes of opening show, the first part was “ocean,” with Taiwanese aboriginal show (Tau’s flying fish festival). Second part was based on Taiwanese temples, having third princes dancing and pili puppet acting on the floor in folk styles. And it ended with projection of earth combined with bicycles and jogging. As to fireworks, there were 3000 fireworks and lasted for 3 minute long, surrounding the whole stadium.

![Picture: The Opening and Closing Ceremony](image)

Sky lanterns\(^{23}\)  Third Prince\(^{24}\)  Fireworks at the closing ceremony\(^{25}\)

Taiwan’s Mega-event

Closing ceremony also had fireworks, but it was in day and with five different colors. When it came to 7:30 pm, 40,000 audiences held their LED lights in hand to form an enormous Milky Way. Famous Taiwanese singers were invited to sing as well. The World Games 2009 ended with 200 sky lanterns with words written by 12 calligraphers.

-The Main Stadium-

In order to host the World games 2009, KCG invited a Japanese designer, Toyo Ito to build a stadium that meets international standards with capacity of 40000 seats. It stands not only for vital breakthrough of construction techniques: open “C” shape design and use of adjusting hot temperature in summer but also stands for the greenest sports stadium. The entire structure of the stadium was made of recycled and 100% reusable materials. The braces of the roof were made of 9720 pieces of solar panels, which can achieve 70% of light-blocking rate, and is estimated to generate 1.1 million kWh of electricity each year. For its astonishing breakthrough techniques, energy saving and carbon reduction, the main stadium would be certainly bear much of attention in the world.

Picture: The Main Stadium

*Source: Official Publications on the World Games Kaohsiung Official Website

Series of promotion by date28

Table 1. Time Span of World Games 2009 Kaohsiung

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>2003 May 14th</th>
<th>2004 June 14th</th>
<th>2008 July 5th-13th</th>
<th>2009 promotion</th>
<th>2009 July 16</th>
<th>2009 July 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Taiwanese government submitted the application for bidding.</td>
<td>IWGA signed up with the KCG government for hosting the 8th World Games</td>
<td>President of Taiwan and mayor of KC celebrated “The Flying Dragon and One Year Countdown” with series of festivals and activities.29</td>
<td>Mayor Chu Chen went to Tokyo, Shanghai, and Beijing to promote the WG. Mayor Adams from Portland was also invited as guest.30</td>
<td>The opening ceremony</td>
<td>A series of side events of promotion were also held every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A big joke: No foreign journalists at the press conference

KCG opened up an international press conference, stating “World Games 2009, Kaohsiung city is ready!” two days before the outset. However, to their surprise, there were no other foreign media reporters but only those from Taiwan, China, Macau and Hong Kong. The whole conference was conducted in English which became a waste because there was no other foreign journalist.31 How this could happen remains unknown. No matter what, the absence of other foreign media firmly proved two things that the World Games did not bear much international attention as expected in the beginning; the advertisement and promotion seemed to be in vain. Even so, much foreign news was reported after the rising of the curtain.

4.2 Examinations on online-English news reported by foreign media

To clearly answer the research questions, I would bring forth the results of my research by offering questions below and give facts and analysis as well.

How many pieces of news about the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung?

As I conducted my news research, the number is larger than I thought originally. There are 87 countries qualified in my research method, which means that they had athletes

28 For detail information about KCG’s domestic and international promotion, please refer to Wu, Ji-Hua (2009). p.60
30 Kaohsiung mayor visits Tokyo to promote the World Games 2009 (2009, March 5).
Taiwan’s Mega-event

participating in the Games.\textsuperscript{32} Within these 87 countries, I searched all the online-English news websites which listed on the “World Newspapers, Magazines, and News Sites in English.” Out of 87 countries, merely 21 countries had news related to the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung. To tally up, 101 pieces of news reports are found.\textsuperscript{33}

Appendix I shows all the news by date and the number of pieces of news. It is apparent that there were only two pieces of news after and between May 2003 when KCG started to bid the World Games and 2008. No foreign news mentioned about the Taiwan’s successful bidding. News*98 listed out all the up-coming sports competition in the world. It gave a concise introduction and correct information.

Theory, the self-governing island off the China coast, is promoting the 2009 World Games in the southern city of Kaohsiung. This 11-day competition could be worth about $20 million for the local economy, said Chen I-heng, the head of the local organizing committee.

--San Diego Union-Tribune (2007, April 24)

News*77 “Taiwan Prepares to Host World Games in 2009 (2008, October 9)”, the only news from South Korea, was originally from KCG, giving a very detail report of the event.

Until in March and April 2009, with the start of extensive promotions, a little more news occurred. News*57 was another KCG news posted on Indonesian news website, narrating Mayor Chu Chen went to Tokyo to promote the World Games. News*64 from Pakistan reported that their handball team was qualified. News*101 was the first full and detailed coverage written by foreign media. News*38 was also first full and detailed coverage of the solar-powered stadium for the World Games. News*58 talked about the bad sale of tickets.

During May 2009, when the mayor Chu Chen went to Beijing, China to promote the World Games, it caused such a sensation in China that 15 pieces of news were found on

\textsuperscript{32} Inconsistency of the number of the participating countries occurred as I investigated. For accuracy, I calculate one country by another on the official athlete system. Athletes from Hong Kong and Macau are counted in China as one. Official Athlete System: http://results.worldgames2009.tw/WG_Info/en/Participant.mvc/List

\textsuperscript{33} They are listed out by number in the bibliography.
Chinese news websites. At the same time, there were three more pieces of news about the solar-powered stadium. (news*41, 42, 85)

Entering the last month before the outset, the number of news reports was increasing. On one hand, the news about KCG’s pre event preparation and the advent of the mayor of Portland (U.S.), its sister city was reported (news*12,90,91); as well as news from Pakistan, South Africa and United Arab Emirates about their athletes’ participations and preparations was reported. (news*65,66,76,84,85,86) Another two pieces of new did the full coverage. (news*34,52) Two more pieces of news about the solar-powered stadium were discovered. (news*71,95)

Finally the World Games kicked off on July-16th, the number of news reports reached its zenith, eleven pieces of news a day. Out of 52 pieces of news in this last period of timeframe, much of attention was focused on China’s absence at the opening and closing ceremony (14 pieces of news). Then it was the event itself and competition and awards were reported. News*97 was the last piece of news by my research timeframe, posting 19 photos.

- **Compared the news with expected model and promotion.**

To compare it with the expected news model (figure 7), it does relatively resemble the model by the latter part. And it was small amount of news compared with that of Olympics. First, it is pretty obvious that there was not any piece of news about Taiwan’s successful bidding after 2003. The fact that Taiwan hosted the 8th World Games was reported until two pieces of news were found before year 2009. And ironically, one of it was from KCG itself.

Although KCG had begun to promote the World Games in 2008 by celebrating a series of events of “one year countdown,” it seemed no attraction to foreign media at all. And during 2009 May, the mayor’s trip to Beijing, China to promote the World Games was reported more like a political issue which made the World Games out of focus. Looking like the model, the number of news reports indeed rose up more the closer it approached. And the event was highlighted during the Games. After the closing ceremony, news concluded the event itself was quite a success with lots of pictures.

One more point at odds with the expectations was that country with more awards did not have positive relevance with the number of news reports. From table 2, countries with a

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34 It was because Chen Chu is the highest ever political figure of Domestic Progress Party (DDP) in Taiwan. DPP has always been anti-China and independency-oriented, which is abominated by Beijing government.
Taiwan’s Mega-event

heap of medals such Italy and Germany did not have any relative news reports. Russia Federation, the top winner, only had one piece of news. Furthermore, beyond my expectation, there was no World Games news on Japanese news websites, and only one piece of news was found on a Korean news websites. Regional countries are supposed to pay more attention to the event. Without doubt, the mayor, Chu Chen’s visit to Tokyo was to no purpose. In contrast, Southeast-Asian countries such as Indonesia and Philippines reported much more than Northeast-Asian ones.

Table 2. Little Relevance between Awards and Number of News Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of News Reports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Chinese Taipei</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What were the contents? What is the proportion of things concerned about? Did they reflect Taiwan’s image or story? How did they portrait?

The pie chart below is the proportion of news topics. It proved Rivenburgh’s view toward Olympic type event that the amount of news concerned about the competition excelled much that of Taiwan’s hosting the World Games.

---China Daily (2009, July 14)

---Taiwan’s hosting the World Games: news*3.10.12.15.16.17.34.35.36.39.50.52.55.58.77.97.99.101
Solar-powered stadium: news*11.38.41.42.48.55.71.88.95.96
China’s absence on ceremonies: news*18.19.28.29.40.47.49.53.56.59.61.63.73.87.89.93
Competition and awards: news*1.2.4.13.24.30.33.43.44.45.46.51.54.60.62.64.65.66.67.68.69.70.72.74.75.76.78.79.80.81.82.83.84.85.86.100.
Chen Chu’s visit to Beijing: news*5.6.7.8.9.14.20.21.22.23.25.26.27.32
Others: news*31, 90, 91, 92, 94, 98
World Games’ Uniqueness: Offbeat and quirky

One main attraction to the foreign media is the games itself. Sports which are not competed in the Olympics such as skydiving and parachuting, canoe polo, rhythmic gymnastics, orienteering, and korfball are assembled to contend here in the World Games. And due to Taiwan as a host country, “dragon boat races” would be mentioned to be added in as an invitational tournament. They would used titles like “At these Games, the hop, skip and sidestep is the oddest event of all,” and used “obscure sports” to describe. One could say that perhaps it is another way to have an attractive title.

China’s absence: Wrestling of politics between China’s suppression and Taiwan’s attempt

As Taiwan try to raise its visibility at this event, the cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan seemed to be important background information mentioned most of time. Foreign reporters would use titles like “Taiwan races against China shadow” or “Taiwan to host rival World Games in 2009.” Although Taiwan’s attempt seemed to be clear in foreign reporter’s mind, it also interested foreign journalists to report in this way.

“For Taiwan, which has been politically isolated because of its decades-old tug-of-war with China over independence, the 11-day event has special significance. ‘This is a rare chance for Taiwan to make itself better understood by the world, especially at a time it is being overshadowed by the rapid rise of its giant neighbour, China,’ Kaohsiung Mayor Chu Chen told AFP.”


“Political grandstanding is upstaging a global festival, writes Jacquelin Magnay in Taiwan.”

“So, to appease China and the international sporting community, the local team calls itself Chinese Taipei at the World Games. At the last moment, the International World Games Association allowed the president of Taiwan, Ma Ying-jeou, ‘the authority to preside over the opening ceremony, in line with the consensus of the people of Taiwan’.”

“Elsewhere the political tensions are evident at all of the official World Games venues. The host country’s flag, the Republic of China flag, is missing - instead replaced by the sporting flag insisted on by the International Olympic Committee.”

The big surprise in the World Games was China’s absence, which instantly became a hot issue. When Taiwanese president Ma presented at the ceremony to open the World Games, Chinese athletes’ absence both on the opening ceremony and on the closing ceremony drew significantly attention from foreign media. There were 19 pieces of news that their titles were concerned about China’s absence. Once again it corresponded with Rivenburgh’s point of view that China’s absence intrigued foreign media very much. On one hand, much attention was centered on the World Games in Taiwan was a good thing. Yet, the core story of mega-event was neglected.

**China has boycotted the opening ceremony of the World Games in Taiwan, an official with the games has said.** A spokesman for the games, Hermann Kewitz, said China had not given an explanation but said that Chinese athletes would compete in the events. Beijing’s decision came after organisers allowed Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeou to open the games. Beijing considers Taiwan a breakaway province and does not recognise Mr Ma as its president.

--- Sui, Cindy (2009, July 16). BBC.


To compare foreign news with Taiwanese news and Chinese news, the latter had little news mentioning the absence, and usually only mentioned the absence but with no further description. I personally believe that it was compromise that both sides stepped aside for the event to be smoothly carried out, without splashing any conflict.

- The symbol of the WG Kaohsiung: the solar-powered stadium

Indeed, the main stadium had become the most notable object in the World Games. The followings are some crucial excerpts from the news.
Taiwan’s Mega-event

(The main stadium) is shaped by a sensitivity to those conflicting sensations. It is not only magnetic architecture; it is also a remarkably humane environment, something you rarely find in a structure of this size.


This futuristic looking stadium is the first in the world to provide all its own electricity using the power of the sun. The horse shoe-shaped structure in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, has been built for the World Games which will take place in the city in July. It is the first stadium to use only solar power technology for all its electricity.


Taiwan recently finished construction on an incredible solar-powered stadium that will generate 100% of its electricity from photovoltaic technology! Designed by Toyo Ito, the dragon-shaped 50,000 seat arena is clad in 8,844 solar panels that illuminate the track and field with 3,300 lux. The project will officially open later this year to welcome the 2009 World Games.

--Guardian.co.uk. (2009, May 21).

With the Stadium’s park-like setting, including native flora and fauna, walking trails, and ecological pond, residents, most of whom live in high rise condos or apartments, will use the green space as their backyard.


From these excerpts and ten pieces of news, it is obvious that the main stadium was highly praised. Words like “humanely,” “eco,” “futuristic,” and “dragon-shape” all stand for positive images and great appreciations. This first greenest stadium in Kaohsiung impressed the world. It is undeniable that it successfully conveyed Taiwan’s image of being the precursor in the environmental protection. By the combination of the World Games, the WG was thus much often given the news title such as “Taiwan boasts of eco-friendly World Games,” “Taiwan kicks off eco-friendly World Games,” “Stadium Where Worlds Collide, Humanely,” and “Taiwan aims to impress with eco-friendly World Games.”

➢ The well-designed opening and closing ceremony

Compared with domestic reports which were elaborated at chapter 4-1, it seemed to occur the defects that Olympic event would happen pointed out by Rivenburgh (2004), the intercultural challenges and the failure of interpretation by foreign journalists. The words used to illustrate the ceremonies and shows were simple and short.
“The World Games officially began in southern Taiwan on Thursday with a colourful music-and-dance spectacular…”


**News Discourse Comparison**

Students perform at the Main Stadium during the World Games' opening ceremony in Kaohsiung on Thursday.

The Opening Ceremonies of the 8th World Games was a fantastic sight. Underneath a sky filled with 3000 fireworks, performers entertained the crowds with a wide range of talents to show Taiwan’s unique diversity. It featured dramas depicting life of two of Taiwan’s largest aboriginal cultures, as well as special effects to highlight Taiwan’s technological savvy. The estimated U.S. $4 million that Kaohsiung city spent on the show is the kickoff of the largest sporting event that the country has ever hosted.

--Yuan, Elizabeth (2009, July 17). CNN.


Unfortunately, the right one news (above) was the only one illustrated the opening show with specific description and was longest one at the same time. It offered right facts about the show in decorated terms. But it was no better than the description of domestic news. One could see that there was no keyword like “Taiwanese temple”, “Third Prince,” “Tau,” “Sky-lantern,” or “Pili Puppet” but merely with a “colourful music-and-dance spectacular.” It implied that probably only Taiwanese audience would understand what was expressing on the show, and felt moved; yet, the foreigners with intercultural challenges would probably felt
they watched a fabulous show. Therefore, foreign news reports failed to interpret host’s well-designed ceremonies meant that it once again corresponded with Rivenburgh’s point of view. And according to the Buu’s model of Taiwan’s public diplomacy strategy (figure 5), if host failed to express the core story of the mega-event to the target audience, it meant that Taiwan’s image was not constructed in foreigners’ mind so strictly to speak, the public diplomacy failed as well.

➢ World Games medals express Taiwan’s images

*China Daily* gave a detailed coverage about the meaning of the World Games medals.

“On one side is embossed the official multicolored emblem of the 2009 World Games, and the Chinese character "kao", which means "superior". It's also the first character of the host city's name, the KOC said. The red, blue, green and orange ribbon-styled emblem is designed to create a sense of festivity and celebration, with the colors symbolizing the sun, the ocean, and energy, the organizers said. The other side of each medal will show a globe, the emblem of the International World Games Association, adorned with waves and a butterfly, symbolizing the ocean and Taiwan, the KOC noted. *Taiwan is known as the "Kingdom of Butterflies" because of the more than 400 butterfly species that can be seen on the island. The ribbon is decorated with a hand-made glass bead, reflecting local indigenous culture.*”

--*China Daily* (2009, July 14)

➢ Name: Taiwan or Chinese Taipei? Concerned with cross-strait relation with China

Although Taiwanese government abided by the compromise using the name, “Chinese Taipei” instead of Taiwan or Republic of China, references of Taiwan as a part of China can be found between lines in the media’s coverage.

*Pakistan Beach Handball team has qualified for the world game-2009 to be held in Kaohsiung (TiePa-China) from July 16-26 this year.*


*Ukraine has ranked fifth in team classification and fourth on the medals table at the World Games 2009 in Kaohsiung (China’s Taiwan).*

5. Concluding Remarks

After analyzing all the online-English news reports and comparing them with KCG’s advertisement, I would like to conclude this paper by answering the two research questions.

❖ How was the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung reported by the foreign media?

Combined with theory, model and my expectation, fruitful findings were discovered. To begin with, out of 87 countries that took their part in the Games, there were 101 pieces of news found related to the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung within 21 countries. Displayed by date, it indicated an inconsistency with the expected model of news reports of Olympic type event (figure 7) that there was no news report about Taiwan’s bidding success. In addition, table 2 showed that there was no positive relevance between awards and news reports. And promotions like mayor Chu Chen’s trip to Tokyo was to no purpose for none of Japanese news website reported it in English.

As to the content of the news, it supported Rivenburgh (2004)’s first three viewpoints: the well-designed shows in the opening and closing ceremony turned out to be interpreted with simple words; two dramatic things (the main stadium and China’s absence on both opening and closing ceremony) attracted plentiful of news reports; sports news outnumbered culture news (figure 8). Other important findings were foreign news such as those from Ukraine and Pakistan would note China’s sovereignty over Taiwan.

❖ Did hosting the World Games improve Taiwan’s image?

If examined with Buu’s model of Taiwan’s Public Diplomacy Strategy (figure 5.), hosting the World Games 2009 fell to achieve its goal as a mega-event to implement public diplomacy. The most vital dissemination of Taiwan’s images lies on “the story of mega-event.” This story was successfully presented both on the opening and closing ceremony. While domestic news gave full coverage about the shows, foreign news reporters failed to receive these images precisely, interpreting them to simply ordinary splendor without any keywords of Taiwan’s image and specific descriptions.

On the other hand, Taiwan successfully boosted its profile by hosting the World Games, and its image was improved by the solar-powered stadium. As Rivenburgh (2004) stated, the greenest sports stadium ever was indeed the object that would stick to this mega-
event abidingly. Therefore, KCG achieved to combine environmental technology and architecture together with the World Games as a strategy to promote itself.

Although the World Games 2009 Kaohsiung was a tremendous success by its size and scale and quality, Taiwan’s image on the foreign perspectives still remains in a bind with China. The cross-strait relation always hampers Taiwan’s diplomacy. The global news reports about the World Games 2009 cannot be cut off with the introduction of China’s suppression on Taiwan. Taiwan should go all out to break through this outdated image.

Implementing public diplomacy is just like running toward an endless end in a dessert. It requires long-term and continued efforts. Without knowing how long you have succeeded and how much ahead, you have to keep stepping and pushing yourself forward. I would not say the more the better, but the better the better. Rather hosting many events, it would be more visible to boost Taiwan’s profile if one is done with extraordinary success.

To possess strong soft power, Taiwan still has a long way to go. The World Games 2009 Kaohsiung as Taiwan’s first step toward hosting this Olympic type mega-event is essential for the following ones to learn from. What could be concerned most in the future study is whether holding these mega-events would actually improve Taiwan’s image or in an opposite way demolish it. Additionally, it would be both interesting and of much contribution to conduct the comparison between the Taiwan’s domestic news reports with the foreign ones.

On the whole, with limited time and space, the reason why Taiwan’s images couldn’t be well interpreted on the news reports remains a question. It is no doubt that the Kaohsiung City Government had made a tremendous success on hosting the games. While the World Games is Taiwan’s virgin Olympic type mega-event, there is still much for Taiwanese government to learn and to accumulate experience. In the future blueprint of public diplomacy, if Taiwan attempts to host a mega-event as a way to raise its visibility, host country should make sure that the target audience comprehends the core story of the mega-event well and thoroughly.
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Book


Article


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Official Publication


Research report


News


Website


http://www.world-newspapers.com/

Foreign news of World Games 2009 Kaohsiung (listed by country)

Australia


China
Taiwan’s Mega-event


**Taiwan’s Mega-event**


**Colombia**


**Croatia**


**Fiji**


**France**


Germany


India


Indonesia


**Iran**


**Oman**


**Pakistan**


**Philippines**


**Russia**


**Singapore**


**South Africa**


**South Korea**


**Ukraine**


**United Arab Emirates**


**United States of America**


Taiwan’s Mega-event

national/kaohsiung-taiwan-stadium-designed-by-toyo-ito-opens-this-week-for-world-games-we-re-talkintravel


Taiwan's Mega-event

Appendix I

Foreign online English news of the World Games 2009 Kaohsuing

 Taiwanese Mega-event