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Identifying Changes in Narratives in Chinese Propaganda Using Multimodal Discourse Analysis

MA thesis

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**Authorship Declaration:**

I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of other authors, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

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## **Abstract**

The fields of Chinese foreign policy soft-power is a fiercely debated areas of study. However, the narratives espoused by the Chinese government and more directly, the Chinese Communist Party are often ignored outside of formal publications. One of the most ignored subjects is how the Chinese government attempts to craft its own image in the international system. This thesis will use multimodal discourse analysis to analyze changes in narratives presented in music videos created by the Chinese government under the leadership of Hu Jintao for the Olympics. The analysis will cover various aspects of the videos such as lyrics, visuals and participants to explain the cultural contexts behind them and how they change over time. The analysis will begin with the pivotal Beijing Olympics in 2008 and end near 2012 just before the confirmation of Xi Jinping. The analysis demonstrates a China that begins unsure of how to present itself to the international community and changes over a course of four years to become far more confident in its place in the international community and its overall image. This increase in confidence is what set the stage for Xi Jinping's more assertive policies beginning after 2012.

## Contents

<b>Abbreviations.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Development of Chinese Foreign Policy and Chinese Nationalism.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA), Similar Studies and Application to Government Produced Propaganda.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Theoretical Background of MMDA.....	18
MMDA Studies: Achievements and Gaps to be Filled.....	21
How MMDA Will be Applied in This Study.....	25
<b>Narratives of Lyrics, Language, Translations and Music.....</b>	<b>29</b>
Comparative Discussion of the Lyrics and Focus on Particular Words and Phrases.....	30
Use of Subtitles and Selective Translation.....	33
Musical Expression.....	36
<b>Visuals and Political Narratives of Culture, Development and Minorities... </b>	<b>39</b>
Culture and History.....	39
Modernization through visuals.....	47
Visual Representations of Minorities.....	51
<b>Participants and Politics of Pop Culture in China.....</b>	<b>58</b>
Political Affiliations of Pop Culture Representatives in China.....	59
Taiwan, Hong Kong and Diaspora.....	63
The Cost of Taking a Stance and Other Political Troubles.....	69
Minority Representatives.....	72
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Works Cited.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>85</b>

**List of Abbreviations:**

Chinese Communist Party – CCP

People's Republic of China – PRC

People's Liberation Army – PLA

National People's Congress – NPC

Great Hall of the People - GHP

Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference – CPPCC

Beijing Welcomes You – BWY

Best Wishes From Beijing – BWFB

Century of National Humiliation - CNH

Discourse Analysis – DA

Forbidden City – FC

Multimodal Discourse Analysis – MMDA

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis - MCDS

Music Video – MV

Mass Participation Music Video -MPMV

## 1. Introduction

In the field of Chinese foreign policy much has been debated since Xi Jinping was confirmed as the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)<sup>1</sup> and the country's leader in 2012. Much research on Chinese foreign policy today focuses on Xi's personal involvement or economic and military factors relating to the shift towards a more assertive posture while neglecting the last years of Hu Jintao's reign and the major events of that period. Through discourse analysis of the videos I have selected to analyze in this thesis, evidence points to a progressively prominent nationalist narrative with consistent foreign policy goals instead of a radical shift. The change in narrative likely helped Xi Jinping in his first few years in building support for his more action focused foreign policy. Assessments of his leadership are often seen in tandem with the words "assertive" or "aggressive." While these assessments are right to point out changes in Chinese foreign policy post-2012 and the military and economic expansions that have been the subject of both triumphs of foreign policy and rifts between China and the world, they often lack significant context, socio-political explanations and or historical background that could demonstrate either continuity or discontinuity with previous leaders such as Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao. Much less, they also do not always discuss the dominant narratives that led to such a change being possible, as it is very difficult to radically change policies in most political systems and much more so for authoritarian states without the ground work of narrative changes over a certain period of time.

This presents a problem of distinguishing a change in nationalist narratives and foreign policy, as one must acknowledge that there is a difference between action and narratives. While both of these aspects are undoubtably important, there is obviously a relationship between them as the narrative usually aids in the furthering of policy. In the Chinese case there is an obvious divergence of action that begins several years after Xi's rise with military expansion in the South China Sea and the launching of the global Belt and Road Initiative. However, it would be untrue to say that these changes in actions simply appeared overnight and were not part of a larger,

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this work the Chinese Communist Party may be referred to as the 'CCP' or as the 'Party.'

more long term, foreign policy plan. Changes in policy are often prefaced with propaganda campaigns that often include changes in narratives or discourse. These changes can include changing the framing of how a state interacts with the outside world, changes in national identity and changes in the needs of the state.

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how propaganda pieces can be used to change discourse over time and how that can correlate to changes in policy, both foreign and domestic. This change also includes how both foreign and domestic audiences can interpret such changes. While propaganda and its modern pseudonym, public relations, are well established fields, changes in global politics and technology have translated into the war for the narrative being an ever-evolving conflict on a global stage. Propaganda can be compared to a story telling mechanism that explains why certain decisions are made and try to alter the viewers perception of reality or a particular event. This explanation is rather universal and not unique to China, but it is a starting point of how to interpret propaganda. For the Chinese situation almost all media is either state produced or state approved via censorship regulations.

To answer question posed above, I propose that a specific type of discourse analysis (DA) can be utilized to conduct research on changes in discourse over time. Modern propaganda is far more complex than just print media. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the increasingly global nature of the internet has allowed more states to project their narratives instantaneously across their domestic population and across the world. States have also evolved with technology to better present themselves through everything from tv advertisements, twitter posts to the subject of this thesis, music videos. In view of all these considerations, for this thesis I have chosen to analyze two music videos which were produced in cooperation with and under the direct supervision of the CCP. The first video was produced for the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the second was for the London Olympics in 2012. The second video was released just a few months before Xi became the general secretary of the CCP, meaning that the narratives expressed there are the direct positions that he inherited as a newly confirmed leader. The Olympics in 2008 represented one of the most important international events for China, and is recognized as having aided China's soft power and significantly raised its international prestige.

**The hypothesis of the work is that there was a change in narratives regarding Chinese nationalism and China's national image during the period of 2008-2012 ending with a much more confident and outward facing Chinese discourse in the final years of Hu**

**Jintao's reign leading up to the affirmation of Xi Jinping as the new general secretary of the CCP. By viewing these propaganda pieces, it can also be seen that China was still adhering to long established foreign policy goals. This thesis also seeks to further add to the tools of discourse analysis in demonstrating how Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA) can be used in a comparative format for political discourse analysis over time, particularly in relation to government created propaganda.** The beginning focus point for the analysis of this thesis will be the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The Olympics were a pivotal event for China as it provided an enhanced global image, national pride, increased chances for global cooperation and spurred development in many major cities. It may even be possible to suggest that the Olympics was one of the main events that led to a change in discourse and the break from passive foreign policy. Direct evidence of this assertion can be found in the changes in propaganda produced between 2008 and 2012, before Xi Jinping took power.

The 2008 Olympics were a major soft-power victory for the PRC. While this thesis is not about the level or effectiveness of Chinese soft-power but more of a discussion of the narratives presented by it, the background is still important. If one uses Joseph Nye's definition of soft power which is "to get other countries to do what it wants," and his further elaboration that the power of attraction, or to convince others to side with you based on agreement with your ideology or values was far more effective than coercive means (Nye, 1990), China had very little if any soft power prior to the 2008 Olympic Games. Due to its foreign policy goals and lack of coercive military power it had a strong motivation to acquire it, especially when the US was and still is a major player in the Asia-Pacific. In fact, it was a major point discussed by Hu Jintao in 2007 in which he stated China need to focus on utilizing its culture to increase soft power (Nye, 2008). The hosting of the Olympics allowed for China to hold the international spotlight and complete what was considered to be a "century long dream" of the Chinese to be internationally recognized (Pang, 2008). In addition, it served as a way to encourage foreign investment from many international companies which made large investment commitments for the Olympics and after (Pang, 2008) (Giulianotti, 2015). Nye himself also acknowledged that the Olympics was a major soft power victory in that there was a measurable increase in attractiveness in China from many factors such as investment, education and culture both traditional and pop culture all of which saw significant increases after the Olympics (Nye, 2008). The Olympics, for authoritarian governments such as China, offers the widest possible global audience for a presentation of the



country, its culture and political system as it is common for over a billion people to view just the open ceremony globally (Vincent & Johanson, 2021). The combination of this global event with the beginning of the global financial crisis in the second half of 2008 led Chinese confidence to soar to new heights, as the event provided affirmation of China's place in global politics as well as an affirmation of the PRC's political and economic systems as being superior to their Western counterparts (Ni, 2021). Therefore, when looking at the media produced during this 2008-2012 period it can be expected to see a gradual rise in the level of confidence in the Chinese system.

Much research has already been done relating to official party documents, and in particular, publications such as the People's Daily (Fewsmith, 2001). It is quite commonly known in the China studies field that these official publications are often a space where factions within the party hold debates or express ideas relating to all matter of political affairs (Fewsmith, 2001). In reality the People's Daily is just one example across academic, internal and journalistic publications in China. This field has been quite well explored and is frequently updated. However, the sector of officially produced propaganda media, including music videos which are the subject of this thesis, has been largely ignored by academic circles. This is despite the fact that these videos represent a projection of the ideas of the larger Party organization to what they believe China is and or how they want to be viewed. While methodologies such as MMDA have existed for an extended period most applications fall within the discussion of cultural and social interpretations. As with other media produced by the government, there are multiple target audiences for this media, and different groups will take different information from these videos, which is why it is important to conduct analysis using a form of MMDA.

The method of analysis of this thesis is MMDA and it will be used to discuss two music videos produced by and for the CCP for Olympic media use. One is from 2008, titled Beijing Welcomes You<sup>2</sup> (BWY), and the other is from 2012 and is titled Best Wishes from Beijing<sup>3</sup> (BWFB). It is known that BWY was produced by the Chinese Olympic Commission, a group under direct control of the Party, and that BWFB was produced by a state-owned media firm, its organizers and producers were majority CCP members and even several PLA members, and it was likely cleared by a government censorship bureau. Hence, it can be concluded that they were

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At the time this thesis was submitted both links were in working order. YouTube links are provided as the original Beijing Olympics Website has long since been archived and the plugin for the videos no longer functions.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xj8R7bEGK4w>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvoj6QehULY>

in line with the political message that the Chinese government wished to express at the time of their respective releases. BWFB was meant to be a direct sequel to BWY and its production team was largely comprised of CCP members as opposed to BWY which was mostly independent creatives including the main producer being from Honk Kong. This closer association to the Party gives BWFB further political meaning and acting as a picture of how China changed in the years following the Beijing Olympics. Beyond their association with the Chinese state, the other reason for picking these two pieces in particular is that they have been quite successful in drawing international attention. A simple search on YouTube will demonstrate that each of these two songs has been uploaded several times and each upload has up to a few million views for the first video and several hundred thousand for the second. Comments under the videos express viewers appreciation for the music, culture and imagery expressed in the pieces even from those who do not speak Mandarin or are only just beginning to learn. It is also well known that the first song in particular has been used by Mandarin language teachers and even Confucius Institutes as a way of teaching the language in addition to using it for class performances (Gambini, 2016) (Hubbert, 2019).

The reason for employing MMDA to analyze these videos is that it is an accepted method of analysis for works that encompass more than text or speech. The “multimodal” part of MMDA allows for the analysis of visual, textual and audio aspects of works, whereas more traditional DA would focus more specifically on the meaning of language used in a selected work. Music videos such as those which are the primary focus of this thesis contain a wealth of information, but traditional discourse analysis would limit the study to the lyrics and not the wider product being used to convey a message. This is opposed to MMDA which takes into account the visuals employed including locations, symbols and participants as well as audio such as musical tools, emphasis and cultural instruments. Additionally, it allows for multiple interpretations of the selected works based off of the potential target audiences such as the domestic population, diaspora and international audiences. Simply put, it creates a much more well-rounded analysis of the selected materials.

This thesis differs from most MMDA studies which tend to focus on a particular work from a particular point in time. Instead, this will be a comparative analysis as the two videos will be used to demonstrate changes in the tone of international foreign policy discourse over the period of 2008-2012. To accomplish this, the thesis will be divided into sections based off the

components of the analysis. The first chapter will be devoted to laying out the theoretical background of this study in the context of Chinese foreign policy and developments in nationalism. The chapter after will include a framework of MMDA, other relevant studies and how it will be utilized in this thesis. This is followed by three chapters devoted to analysis of the selected works. It will begin with a comparison of the lyrics including the employment of subtitles and a brief discussion of the music. Secondly, the visuals used in both videos will be compared. Thirdly, the participants and their backgrounds will be compared. After this section there will be a conclusion discussing the findings and implications of this thesis.

## **2. Development of Chinese Foreign Policy and Chinese Nationalism**

This chapter will discuss the trajectory of Chinese foreign policy over the last 70 years and will also discuss the post-Mao era developments of Chinese national identity, but more specifically the revival of traditional culture and its relation to neo-nationalist narratives. This will serve two purposes, one of which of being a literature review and the second being identifying themes or narratives that will be found within the MVs. As the hypothesis states that there were changes in the narratives over time yet the policy itself was rather consistent, this section will point out what constitutes a change. This will also serve as a way of demonstrating that MMDA can be used in a comparative format to help answer questions over the development of propaganda and foreign policy narratives.

Like many states in the developing world, China's experiences in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries involved great societal and political turbulence. Beginning with the Opium Wars in the early 1800s until the victory of the CCP in 1949, China had suffered under colonial division of its lands, the abrupt end of its imperial system in 1911, and a long period of civil war with a simultaneous invasion by Japan. The victory of the CCP changed China's course in many ways, isolating it from the non-communist world, attempting large domestic societal restructuring and the creation of a new Chinese identity, which included Mao's program to eradicate almost all relations to imperial China. As will be discussed in this chapter, Chinese foreign policy and identity have changed to varying extents over the last 40-50 years. Identifying the roots and trajectory of these aspects is important to correlating the themes that will be found in the analysis of this thesis.

From 1949 until his death, Chairman Mao was the central figure in Chinese political life and to an extent was largely representative of China's identity both domestically and internationally. Mao's foreign policy could largely be considered isolationist, as during his rule China had little connections to the outside world beyond those it made through various communist international organizations and meetings. The Sino-Soviet split created an opportunity for China to reorient itself during Mao's final years and led to the beginning of negotiations with the United States to open China to the outside world. It is from here that most of China's modern foreign policy can be traced. However, it is important to keep in mind that much of the foreign policy goals to be discussed below are related to China's experience in being colonized during the 1800s to mid-1900s and its isolation during the Maoist period. Towards the end of Mao's reign, the Party and Mao himself realized that in order to ensure China's strength internationally and to prevent a reoccurrence of what in China is termed "the century of national humiliation" (CNH), that China would have to take a different route in foreign policy and nationalism in order to ensure its survival (Callahan, 2004).

Researchers have been analyzing trends in Chinese foreign policy for decades, and many of them seem to find very consistent policy goals that remain constant over long periods of time. For example, in an article published before Mao's death one researcher, Wang Zheng, identified four main foreign policy objectives which were **reunification with Taiwan, decreased active U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, acceptance into the international system and sharing the idea of Chinese revolution** (Wang, 1972). When looking at the foreign policy goals of the PRC today, it can be seen that over time little has changed. Taiwan is still a major point of contention, which is directly related to the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific. China also has made great strides to integrate itself into most international organizations and has worked to offer itself as an alternative to the Western based systems in some regards which would suggest that sharing the idea of Chinese revolution remains in place, but has been modified to meet the modern international environment.

While Mao may have taken the first steps in opening relations with the United States, Deng Xiaoping was central in reorienting China's economy and foreign policy towards opening to the world and laying the foundation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to be able to join many international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to become a much more developed actor in others such as the United Nations (UN). However, Deng's strategy of

foreign policy is demonstrated in a quote, “hide one’s capacities and bide one’s time” (韬光养晦), which meant that China should avoid confrontation and focus on development. This strategy lays out a framework that China should be passive in international relations while building economic and other capabilities before trying to move into a place of global leadership, as becoming too assertive would damage China’s ability to ascend (Wolf, 2016). This policy is largely understood to have been adhered to by subsequent leaders such as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, as under their leadership China tended to avoid direct confrontation with the West and neighbors.

While China was still involved in major international organizations such as the U.N. and the WTO, it generally acted in a non-confrontational manner and was largely classified as a status-quo power. By non-confrontational it is meant in form of actions, China often criticized acts that it found against its international position, but even then, it often abstained from major UN decisions and rarely if ever took real actions against another state. While Deng’s strategy seemed quite logical and beneficial for a developing China, the problem with the strategy was it was rather undefined, at least publicly. This is because it does not include a tangible measure of when the PRC can or should stop hiding its capabilities nor does it specify if and when it should become a more dominant actor (Wolf, 2016). This is specifically in reference to the second part of the quote which is “bide one’s time.” This does not actually explain when or how long China should wait or how much development would bring China to the status of a global power. This ambiguity was likely intentional as it was and still remains very difficult to predict the future environment facing China. Meaning it was up to subsequent leaders to adhere to or divert from the policy depending on their circumstances.

Other researchers in the subsequent decades after Deng transferred power have identified similar policy goals. In the 1990s, after the Tiananmen Square crackdown, China had already reaffirmed many of these goals. It sought to promote an image that China was peaceful in its development, meaning not threatening to its neighbors, it sought closer relations with the West, began reconnecting itself to what it considered its fellow developing countries and remained wary of U.S. military objectives in Asia (Cheng, 1996). By the 2000s these goals were again identified by other authors as well. As one researcher stated China’s goals were “**fostering economic development, reassurance, countering constraints, diversifying access to resources, and reducing Taiwan’s interaction space**” (Medeiros, 2009). If Chinese foreign

policy goals have been consistent since the 1970s through the Hu Jintao era, then why has the perception of their goals in the West changed?

Only a few months after the second video was published the CCP confirmed a new leader, Xi Jinping. Xi had grown up during the Cultural Revolution as the son of an important CCP official who was denounced. He spent many years in the countryside as sent down youth laboring with China's peasants. After countless rejections of Party membership due to his father's political standing, he was eventually accepted into the CCP after his father was rehabilitated. He rose through the Party ranks and likely received a deep education in the goals of the Party. It also must be understood that his selection was based on negotiations within the Party, which places value on stability and order over chaos. Which is why it is very unlikely that Xi Jinping was selected by the Party in order to upset or radically change the last 50 years of foreign policy. The perceived aggression of China's military expansion into the South China Sea, border clashes with India, trade disputes with the United States could all point to a China that has abandoned Deng's policy. Xi himself even called for abandoning the policy in one of his speeches (Doshi, 2019). However, he was likely chosen for his adherence to what was previously established for him. The economic aims such as building better global ties, integrating into the international system, ethnic unity, the integration of Taiwan and Hong Kong are all aspects that existed previously and are all goals that he has sought to implement. Since his confirmation, China has become more involved in international organization, it has diversified trade through programs like the Belt and Road Initiative, it has created an idea of ethnic unity, and it has reduced Taiwan's influence internationally. Many would argue that Xi's policies are just a continuation of the path of Chinese foreign policy set before his ascension (Blackwill & Campbell, 2016) and potentially even still follows Deng's policy. The only thing that can be said to have changed after is that some of his actions, would have seemed out of place during the terms of Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao, but these out of place actions have remained consistent with the trajectory of the change in narrative that occurred during the final years of Hu Jintao.

This is quite a highly debated subject within the field of Chinese foreign policy. However, what much of the literature in this field would seem to point to is that while foreign policy has remained consistent, the narratives pushed by the CCP have not. The death of Mao left a cultural and power vacuum in China. To explore this the past once again must be examined, as much of the CCP's identity from 1949 onward had been directly linked to the cult of personality around

Mao. After his death the CCP had to fill this void, continue progress in international integration and legitimize the Party's rule without the established cult of personality. To abandon Mao and his legacy was not possible in the eyes of the CCP for several reasons as there were still many Mao supporters within the ranks in addition to fears that renouncing him would result in a downward progression of legitimacy which was observed in the Soviet Union. There were many things done during this period to confront the rather terrible history of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution and to begin the process of creating a new national identity which would have to include the Party as a founding principle.

During the years after Mao's death, a freshly rehabilitated Deng Xiaoping was able to rise and seize control of the Party, without ever being the General Secretary of the CCP. During Deng's rise the CCP had many internal conflicts, which were mostly between pro-reform and Marxist-Leninist hardliners (Walton, 2008). While Deng was considered to be a reformer, and indeed the Reform and Opening Up program was his creation, he was still largely an authoritarian in political mindset. Deng is largely responsible for the rehabilitation of traditional culture and specific figures such as Confucius which Mao had tried to destroy (Meissner, 2006) (Billioud & Thoraval, 2009), although there is evidence that this revival is only cemented in policy after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989 (Walton, 2008). However, the development of this revival took time and it is noted as not leaving academic circles and entering into the general population until the beginning of the 2000s (Meissner, 2006) (Billioud & Thoraval, 2009). This revival, along with other nationalist programs like patriotic education and the cementing of the CNH narrative were all intended at creating a unified Chinese people in the wake of the Cultural Revolution and Mao's death as well as justifying the existence and rule of the CCP (Wang, 2008). This is also an example of how narratives that begin in government backed propaganda circles eventually lead to policy change. In a Chinese authoritarian context in that the intelligentsia of China was given permission to discuss the topic, and after enough time it was finally allowed to enter the mainstream when support had been adequately built in the political and domestic parts of society.

The rehabilitation of traditional cultural aspects was quite important to solving the questions that faced the CCP, which were: what does it mean to be Chinese and what unites the Chinese people (Walton, 2008). China in the 1980s changed its stance from "the PRC was the sole legal government of China" to being "the sole legal government of the Chinese people" (Whiting,

1983). While seemingly a minor linguistic change, the implications of this are far reaching. The sole legal government of China statement was entirely directed at Taiwan and possibly Hong Kong and Macau, but the change to “Chinese people” signaled a broadening focus. However, within the Chinese diaspora communities abroad and even soon to be returned colonial possessions such as Hong Kong and Macau had preserved much of their traditional culture, meaning without the revival and ownership of this traditional culture it would be difficult to bridge the divide between a state that renounces tradition and a diaspora that clings to it as a form of identity. The reclamation of China as the cultural homeland of the Chinese people would aid greatly in outreach efforts. Examples can be seen with Confucius’s hometown, which has had many organizations sprout up around it since the 1990s and 2000s with the purpose of inviting those of Chinese descent to go to conferences and visit the historic city; at one point even Lee Kuan Yew (former prime minister of Singapore) came to visit the city (Billioud & Thoraval, 2009).

Yet, while the revival of traditionalism is an important factor in the shaping of the contemporary Chinese nationalism it is not the only factor. As mentioned above, patriotic education, which started in the 1990s set out to create a generation of Chinese who were educated in the victim narrative of the CNH and which represented the CCP as being the savior of China and its people (Wang, 2008). What is interesting about this narrative is that it essentially places the existence of an independent China and the CCP as being inseparable. Therefore, the CCP is also an integral part of Chinese identity, but while this might be more obvious in a domestic context where people are exposed to this symbolism on a daily basis it leads to the question of how is this image interpreted internationally. While culture and tradition might be a decent way of unifying Mainland Chinese with the diaspora in addition to attracting some non-Chinese (Billioud & Thoraval, 2009), it is unclear how well this would work for a more international audience or even in relation to the diaspora as it is inherently more political; much even less known is how often this is used in outward facing propaganda. However, it can be assumed that the CCP is deeply related to nationalism in China and it is directly responsible for foreign policy.

The reason it is important to discuss both the consistency of the foreign policy and the development of Chinese identity is that it plays a large role in literature that focuses on nationalist discourse. A well-known political scientist and China studies scholar named Allen S.



Whiting asserted in a widely cited article discussing Chinese nationalism that there are three types of nationalist discourses which are affirmative, assertive and aggressive (Whiting, 1995) (Gustafsson, 2014) (Zhao, 2021) (Bhattacharya, 2007). In his view affirmative discourse tends to focus on the “self” or “us” which tends to promote the cultural aspects of a particular group; assertive introduces a non-specific “them” which is negative as it represents a challenge to “us” in the formula; aggressive discourse changes the “them” into a specific named opponent and is obviously the most confrontational of the three types (Whiting, 1995). When conducting discourse analysis of propaganda in China it is useful to keep these categories in mind as many have used it to signal a shift in discourse under various Chinese leaders. For example, this is sometimes used to demonstrate the difference between Xi Jinping and Hu Jintao or Jiang Zemin (Zhao, 2021).

In the period selected for the studies many authors argued over whether Chinese nationalist discourse was affirmative (Chen, 2005) or assertive (Bhattacharya, 2007). However, some authors point out that each of these methods has a different intent with affirmative being linked to nation building (domestic) and assertive being linked to foreign policy goals (international) (Bhattacharya, 2007) (Zhao, 2021). What is not expressly stated by these authors is whether or not both narratives can exist simultaneously or whether the more prevalent method takes the lead. Evidence would suggest that both have been used over various periods even as far back as the 1980s when aggressive narratives were used to frame China’s relations with the Japanese (Whiting, 1983) and more recently Chinese diplomats have taken to social media like twitter with both aggressive discourses directed at the US and more assertive narratives directed at the collective “West.”

By analyzing videos such as those selected for this thesis it is possible to fill this gap in literature by demonstrating how these narratives are used and presented and how they can coexist, especially in a multimodal context. However, from the existing literature some assumptions can be made in that promotional videos such as those produced for the Olympics will obviously avoid assertive and aggressive narratives. Instead, they will almost always be affirmative, at least in the most obvious of circumstances as these events are about image building. Assertive and aggressive narratives would be more likely used in domestic media to direct anger towards outsiders. There will be veiled references to China’s foreign policy goals, as hosting the Olympics and by extension increasing China’s soft power standing were a major goal

that falls in line with China becoming more involved and accepted by the international system and preventing China from once again becoming isolated. A successful Olympics led to increased respect and economic opportunities for China after 2008. However, as the goals have remained consistent, the references should also remain consistent. Conversely, I have stated that the narratives changed during this period during the build up to Xi's confirmation. Therefore, there are vast changes in the narratives represented in the analyzed works of this thesis that specifically reference identity, minority issues, development, and culture. To identify and analyze these aspects I employ MMDA, while MMDA is largely used for socio-cultural analysis, in this case I will demonstrate how it can also be used as a method for identifying allusions to foreign policy goals and nationalist narratives.

### **3. Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA), Similar Studies and Application to Government Produced Propaganda**

This chapter will discuss the methodological and theoretical background of this thesis. This will include several sections. The first will be a detailed explanation of what MMDA is and how it is used to conduct discourse analysis. Next will be a brief overview of similar studies and how this study draws from previous work to create its methodology. Which, will then lead into a section on how the analysis of the selected works will be conducted.

#### **a. Theoretical Background of MMDA**

Discourse analysis as a method is quite commonly attributed to people such as Noam Chomsky, Michel Foucault and others. The frameworks created by their theories often focused on the linguistic factors in speech, such as sentence structure and focused linguistic meaning of speech (Kress, 2013). As Kress notes, historically discourse analysis has focused on discerning the political, social and cultural meanings of communication. While this method was quite useful in analysis of written documents and speeches it was quite one dimensional. While speech and texts are undoubtedly an important mode of expressing meaning and communicating they are not the only way that it is done in everyday life. Images, sounds, gestures and combinations of these with text can also be used to express discourse to people and can also garner emotional responses. For example, the inflections of a speaker's voice, body language and even the clothes they wear during a political speech can be used to emphasize or invoke certain emotions either

on a particular point or as a whole of the speech which is why MMDA remains an important branch of discourse studies.

As Kress states, “textual ‘threads’ are many and they are materially diverse: gesture, speech, image (still or moving), writing, music (on a website or in a film).” Kress refers to these different methods of expressions or “textual threads” as modes of discourse. In more simplistic terms, traditional discourse analysis could be compared to a two-dimensional drawing, where MMDA is more comparable to a three or four-dimensional image. Therefore, by breaking down a work into more categories than just speech or text, more information can be gained, especially in a political or cultural context. These works, whether science models, musical ensembles or political cartoons all involve the creation of meaning and its communication to audiences (Kress, 2013). To fully understand the sociological, political and cultural constructions of a work and what it is meant to represent one must analyze all aspects of the work in question. Limiting discourse analysis to only the linguistic meaning of literal texts and speeches leaves out many materials that could further studies in this field, which is the purpose of MMDA.

These modes as Kress describes can change depending on the work being analyzed. In his article he uses the example of a sign for parking and notes there are several factors or “modes” which can be analyzed such as “layout, colour, writing, image, font.” There are no specific or established guidelines for discerning the semiotic nature of these particular modes (Kress, 2013). Instead, the cultural, sociological and political meanings must be understood through further analysis especially based on what meaning the creator intended and how the meaning can be interpreted by the audience. It is also important to note that a creator of a work could intend for multiple audiences to have different takeaways from a particular work based off of their cultural or socio-economic background. Although it is very difficult if not impossible to control who the audience will be when a work is put in public and how the message will be interpreted by the received audience.

This brings in the issue of agency, which is addressed by many in the field of discourse analysis including Kress. However, agency comes with a duality in regards to performances. The creator of a work or performance retains the agency in how they craft their message, but the audience or recipient also retains agency in how they receive and interpret the message (Malacarne, 2021). According to Malacarne, this means that a creator can try to segment or appeal to multiple audiences at once, but there is always a risk that the idea could be

misinterpreted or commandeered if not done so with care. This is why propaganda uses many techniques to ensure that the message remains simple and direct to the particular audiences being targeted. Some examples of such mechanisms are band-wagoning, which means to use rhetoric to show that the idea being expressed is similar to the majority and that the audience should join to fit in; transfer, which means to take two unrelated concepts and try to associate them in a positive or negative manner; a last example would be vagueness, as it is difficult to disagree with a thought or idea if it is generalized and ill-defined (Snow & Palast, 2011). There are many more components, but these represent just a few examples of how propaganda discourse works. The concepts such as agency, methods of expression and interpretation will all be highly relevant to this thesis as it applies to government produced propaganda.

Discourse can take many forms including works of music and more importantly to this thesis, music videos (MVs). It is quite commonly known that music is often highly contextualized to culture and often has the ability to express political stances. For example, in the book Music as Multimodal Discourse: Semiotics, Power and Protest, the authors assert that “musical genres carry cultural or subcultural associations to attitudes, values and ideologies” (Way & McKerrell, 2017). Music is often seen as a powerful form of expression in both political and cultural means and as Way and McKerrell describe the reasoning for this power is the multimodal factors behind music. This is why they as well as other scholars including Kress state that music is a legitimate and important focus of discourse analysis and more specifically MMDA studies.

While researchers such as Kress and Way may have agreed that music is a legitimate focus of studies, it remains a relatively new frontier. Kress mentions the association between sounds and images in very minute references, and in the book by Way and Mckerrell they briefly mention the cover art of albums as being part of the multimodal effect of music as it is purchased and consumed. However, the idea of putting music and visual entertainment together is not a new concept, in fact it can be traced back to the late 1800s, with steady progress through the next century (Marcovitz, 2012). While it was not uncommon, as Marcovitz points out, the format that we identify as a MV in a contemporary sense was not popularized until roughly the 1980s by MTV in the United States. While MTV eventually became somewhat of an international phenomenon beginning its broadcasts of MVs over television, it likely isn't until the 1990s and 2000s that music videos that feature things beyond just videos of live or studio performances became the norm.

As an example, *Bohemian Rhapsody* by the Band Queen is considered one of the first true music videos and was aired in 1975 and represented the standard after it was released. The focus of that video was on the band and their performance as the point of publishing the video was to advertise the band itself and sell records which is where music groups made most of their money (Lynch, 1984). Michael Jackson's *Thriller* music video, released in 1983 on MTV was considered a new phenomenon in the category as it showed a theatrical performance. The reason for this change likely had to do with the commercial agreement between MTV and performance agencies. MTV was given largely free licensing for music videos produced by record labels, charged advertisers to run promotional advertisements and the performers received free nationwide and eventually international promotion (Cashmore, 2021). Simply stated, the theatrical version holds people's attentions span longer than recordings of live performances especially if the imagery used is relatable or extreme (Lynch, 1984). This shift to creating music videos that display events, locations and symbols signals a large change in the communicative effect that music can carry to audiences and can provide more avenues to achieving the artists commercial goals, in this case selling records or concert tickets. As Marcovitz mentions in his book, in some instances the money spent on the creation of the video dwarfs the total production cost of the music in contemporary settings (2012). This would seem to signal the increased significance of studying how messages are conveyed through this multimodal format.

#### **b. MMDA Studies: Achievements and Gaps to be Filled**

As the last section ended with a discussion of the contemporary relationship between music and MVs, this section will cover similar studies to the one being conducted in this thesis that have been done relating to both MMDA studies of MVs. As previously stated, this segment of studies is quite new and there are very few similar studies in both the exploration of MVs using MMDA and comparative studies. The format from these similar studies will be utilized in this thesis, albeit in a modified manner to account for the goal of this thesis. The general conclusion I reached while reading these studies was that the field is vastly underutilized, especially in the field of China studies.

In the field of Sinology, otherwise known as China studies, MMDA has remained vastly underutilized for the purposes of political analysis. Many of the studies that have been done focus on advertisements both static and live (Hu and Luo, 2016) (Huang et al., 2020), movie

paraphernalia such as posters (Chen & Gao, 2013) (Yin & Hassan, 2021) and a few city promotional videos (Wang & Feng, 2021) (Yao & Zhuo, 2018). Beyond these topics, very few could be considered analysis of government produced propaganda, except for those covering city promotional videos and another article by Wang Qing and Zhang Xiaorong which analyzed the title page of the Belt and Road Initiative website (2017). While these articles all shed light on different cultural aspects of Chinese society, they do not suit the project of this thesis, which is comparing changes in discourse over time and political narratives. For example, while analyzing tourist videos produced by municipal government bureaus could unveil trends such as how to reshape city identities it does not analyze foreign policy goals. Additionally, while the article discussing the Belt and Road Initiative does more to discuss foreign policy and symbolism in national projects (Wang & Zhang, 2017), it only focuses on a static subject which is not targeted at a global audience of average everyday people like the Olympic MV's. This website being analyzed would only ever be visited by those who have some sort of interest to the Belt and Road initiative which is a very small audience compared to the Olympics which has a far wider audience of varying demographics across the globe. This demonstrates that within the field of China studies there is knowledge gap that can be filled by an MMDA study on propaganda narratives in how they change over time and what message they attempt to convey.

Since there are few relatable MMDA studies in the China studies field itself I must then look outside to find more comparable studies. There are several studies that conduct MMDA analysis of various music videos and their discourse relating to society. A particularly relevant one could be an article written about the American artist Childish Gambino's song "This is America," which is a song about African-American minority issues in the US (Castillo Acosta, 2018). While the analysis is interesting and it does well to break down the visual and lyrical depictions of the African-American experience, stereotypes and the view of government programs, it comes from the opposite perspective of this thesis. Castillo Acosta is concerned with an artist's critique of a social situation in a democracy while this thesis is focused on the projection of state narratives. It would also seem that many studies in this field follow Castillo Acosta's selection process in that they do not analyze videos produced by the state and instead focus on specific artists (Martínez Guerrero, 2020) (Helland, 2018) (Margaretha & Panjaitan, 2020). Due to the lack of a similar study, it will be necessary to develop a different type of framework that is relevant to propaganda and government produced media.

The study that this thesis will base itself on is another book authored by Lyndon C.S. Way titled Popular Music and Multimodal Discourse Studies (2018). This book seeks to use a form of MMDA which Way terms as multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDS), to analyze music and MVs created in Turkey in relation to protests against the Turkish government. Way states that his book does not use any actual framework or established methodology, but instead draws upon various “tools” offered by critical DA and MCDS to identify discourses within his selected works to analyze. One of my contributions to this area of studies is to show how a methodology can actually be developed based on many of the tools Way identifies in order to show how propaganda discourses can be understood and their development over time.

For the analysis of his study Way identifies three modes, which he labels, “lyrics, visuals and musical sounds.” These modes encompass what it means to conduct MCDS and they are further defined in what they are meant to encompass in terms of analysis and interpretation. Way leaves his definitions intentionally general and open as he is trying to analyze not only music and MVs but the entire movement around a particular protest event. For the purposes of this thesis and creating a framework that others can use it will be important to take some of the tools and methods Way lays out, but to restrict them to a reasonable level so that future works can try to replicate the methodology.

The first mode he identifies is lyrics, which for a study focusing on music and discourse analysis is rather obvious. Way states that according to many previous works much importance can be placed on the positioning and identification of social actors. These can often be identified through use of pronouns, specifically ones like I (me) or you. The use of such labels, signals where the creator of the discourse places themselves in regards to the “other” in the situation. This creates a social relationship through discourse on their position. Interestingly Way notes that in some instances the use of pronouns may coincide with gestures or images, but the use of pronouns could also be omitted to be replaced by visuals. The use of pronouns will be an important part of this thesis, as foreign policy at its basis is generally a separation between on state and the other, and how they interact.

Continuing with lyrics, Way also identifies metaphors as being another powerful discursive tool (Way, 2018). Way explains that metaphors are often used to express ideas instead of directly saying them, as the comparison often appeals to people emotions and senses. While he does not expressly state it, metaphors are quite contextual and often carry a lot of cultural

meaning. Due to this contextual meaning, it is likely that the use of metaphors would denote the targeting of a specific audience who would be able to interpret the meaning, while outsiders of the particular group may not be able to completely understand the intent. Way does not seem to focus on this, but it is likely because he is analyzing content meant for a domestic audience with a shared language and cultural understanding. For use with outwards facing propaganda, this issue must be addressed in any methodological process.

Lastly, we come to the issue of translation. Way's study analyzed Turkish materials and thus to conduct the analysis of the lyrics they were translated into English through the use of several translators. When they came to an issue over possible translations they would work together to come to a consensus on the translation (Way, 2018). This is a common problem when analyzing texts that are not in one's native language and explaining it outside the context of said language. As this thesis discusses lyrics in Mandarin, I will consult with native speakers and translators to ensure that my interpretations of meanings, especially those of idioms and metaphors are accurate. Additionally, Way does not mention the use of subtitles, which when targeting multicultural and or multilingual audiences. Subtitles are translations of speech and as such are subject to the objectivity of the translator and potentially the bias of a supervising agency.

For visuals, the label includes promotional materials such as flyers and posters, images posted on social media including fan art, body movement, colors and the professional music videos with moving images (Way, 2018). He asserts that these factors help to explain the relationships and characterizations of social actors, people and places within the context being constructed by the creator. The way people, places and things are portrayed visually within the context of music does much to explain the intended meaning behind their use and similarly to music the visuals can be metaphorical representations. While Way is concerned with the social relations involved with the protest movement, this thesis is about how government projects itself to multiple audiences which could be domestic and international. The factors Way mentioned will be similar, but the analysis of use will be different due to the structure of the MVs. Way's broad use of visual aspects outside of the MV's themselves, while interesting, are problematic for replication and involve factors beyond the control of the creator. For example, Way also analyzes fan art, social media posts relating to the music videos, album art and other pieces as he is describing a social movement and not a singular work. While this can be explained as Way is



addressing a social movement, for the purposes of adapting Way's "tools" to a methodology, the selection of materials must be narrowed to what can be found within the MVs themselves.

The last mode identified by Way is music. Ironically, this is one of the shortest sections of his framework, as it essentially lays out that music can be used to emphasize parts of the previous modes. For example, music can be used to emphasize the relations between the people and police as authoritarian by employing militaristic drum music, or certain notes or pitches can be used to emphasize a particular section of lyrics or visuals (Way, 2018). What Way does not mention here is that like lyrics and metaphors, music can be deeply related to politics and culture. The use of certain instruments can play on nationalistic feelings or draw attention to certain aspects of society that are often represented by certain melodies or instruments. While this section will not be a large section of this thesis as I do not believe an extended musical analysis is needed for these pieces, but it is a part that cannot be fully omitted. I will include it in a subsection of lyrics chapter and not as its own standalone piece as the melodies in both songs are repetitive and generally play a supporting role to the other factors of the piece. The music will be discussed in ways that it emphasizes certain participants, lyrics, visuals or how it may suggest connections to socio-historical factors.

Now that's Way's tools and modes have been explored, in the next section I will focus specifically on how I will modify them to form a methodology to analyze propaganda. This will include expanding upon the modes above, creating new ones and even modifying some of the criteria. This will be done in hopes of creating a framework that is more uniform and easier to replicate in other cases.

### **c. How MMDA Will be Applied in This Study**

While Way's book identified three modes of expression and perception while conducting analysis of musical movements, in this thesis I have found that more could be necessary, and that creating more narrow criteria is necessary to conduct a structured MMDA. Instead of Way's lyrics, visuals and music I will use lyrics, visuals and participants. There will be some overlap with Way's categories, but all of them will be changed, narrowed or regrouped to some extent. Way is quite keen to point at the relationships between the modes (2018), and while these modes will be broken into the sections listed above, there will have to be discussion over how they

overlap, but generally the analysis of these components will try to be categorized based off of the more prominent mode. There are some specific reasons for this which will be discussed below, but before that can be done some explanation into the particular format and context of the selected videos must be done. Also, as this thesis is comparative, each section will present direct comparisons to explore similarities in narratives and the differences that emerged over time. As the later video was intended to be a direct sequel to the first some continuity and change gives credit to the exploration using this methodology.

Both of the videos selected for this thesis are what I will term as mass participation music videos (MPMV's). The reason I have come up with a specific term for these works is that they represent a phenomenon that occurs to an extent in democracies but occurs more often in authoritarian systems. The reason for the term "mass participation" is that videos such as the two selected have a range of participants from across society, but mostly celebrities, coming together to express support in a MV. The concept is not necessarily unique to the China, but the frequency of its employment seems to be very consistent in China and has roots in Chinese political culture stemming back to the New Year's Gala which has been a staple of government produced media in China since the 1950s. A similar case that could be found in western countries are charity events where celebrities come together to promote a charitable cause. However, it is quite rare that one would be able to gather so many celebrities to sing together in support of a cause. Even when celebrities offer their services to a charity in the West, they often do so by singing their own music, not music given to them by an organization. This is where China becomes more unique, as the government essentially controls access to the entire market through its censorship mechanisms. Refusing to participate in government sponsored events could be viewed as unpatriotic behavior that could lead to a star being blacklisted. Considering that the PRC has a captive audience of some 1.2 billion people, this is a considerable market to lose. This has two effects, which are the government is able to mobilize almost the entire entertainment class to its cause, and that celebrities lose the ability to act as opposition.

To begin with, the first mode I will use is lyrics. For this analysis I will follow some of Way's methods and some common critical discourse methods such as analyzing the use of pronouns in the lyrics and how they play into the construction of the social relationship of the political rhetoric being espoused. There is also some discussion to be had on role of Beijing as a subject of the songs. Additionally, I will have to explore the use of metaphors and Chinese

idioms that appear in them. Idioms in Chinese are quite different from those found in the West as they often have long stories associated with them. The use of such literary devices is often considered to be a sign of education and sophistication, but can be difficult to translate.

An additional layer that Way did not have to confront is that at least the second selected work in this case, BWFB was officially translated and subtitled while BWY was never officially translated but was still subtitled in Mandarin. This adds another layer of complexity that must be analyzed including differences between the Chinese and official English translation while also discussing why the first song was never translated. Beyond that, it is important that the lyrics that were written in these works were not made by the participants themselves but by a composer with connections to the Party. So, while Way would state that there is some relation between the speaker and the lyrics, in this case I can assume a level of separation, as the participant is simply saying the lines they are being given. Lastly, while Way puts music as a separate mode, I will include it within the lyrical section. Most discussion of the music will be kept to how it uses some musical elements to emphasize certain lyrics or cultural elements.

Next, visuals will be restricted to what is found in the videos themselves. This includes their clothing choices, the locations and props as they appear. To an extent the participants themselves will not exactly be the focus of this section as their biographies will be explored in the subsequent section. This is largely due to that the participants add social context to the MVs beyond just their physical appearance as each of them have different backgrounds and other reasons they were included which will need to be analyzed. The videos selected for this thesis are rich in visual displays ranging from locations to deep contextual references, which was likely meant to target a diverse audience and send several messages. The context in which these videos were produced was that it was one of the few chances China had to present itself and how it wished to be seen by outsiders, and as such the selection of locations used and displays of props are all extremely important to the narrative. The themes of these references and objects will be very important to exploring the discourse.

Lastly, while Way explored the use of people and participants within the visual section, due to the unique format of this type of MV, I thought it was important to explore information about the participants separately. This is also due to the number of participants being a significant factor in the production of the two selected works and similar MPMVs produced later on. Some of the factors that will be considered is their political stances, political affiliations, ethnicity and

citizenship. China like other countries has a vibrant and complex entertainment industry and occupies a space of being the largest market for the Chinese speaking world. While some people may not fully be aware, there are significant Chinese speaking and ethnic diaspora all around the world, but there are large populations in South East Asia in addition to the politically sensitive topics of Taiwan and Hong Kong. However, there is a political cost to those wishing to operate within the Chinese Mainland market in that they must remain apolitical or support the CCP to continue to operate. The employment of particular people in videos such as these is almost certainly not a coincidence and has wider implications for Chinese politics, society and foreign policy. I have also chosen to focus on this as the topic of political relations of celebrities is not often covered in political studies of China or their greater connections to China's international ambitions and the Chinese diaspora.

The combination of these modes will lead to an exploration of how Chinese rhetoric and political projections change over time. This study and its methodology are unique both in the employment of MMDA to explore MVs as well as its comparative format. It could also be said that MMDA studies are still quite underutilized when studying China, which is something that should definitely be reconsidered due to the wealth of sources that exist. Studies such as this which encompass the formulation of narratives of the Chinese government and governments and general and how they change over time is important, especially for governments that lack transparency in their processes such as the PRC. The modes as I have laid out provide a lot of context to the changing political discourse during this period and help to connect this period and the analyzed works to the greater trajectory of China's politics. The different modes also provide a starting point for many subsequent studies about various aspects of the Chinese political apparatus.

## 4. Narratives of Lyrics, Language, Translations and Music

This chapter will discuss the elements used in the formation of the lyrics, subtitles and musical elements of both selected songs, divided into three sections based on those labels. The sections will address the use of pronouns, literary devices such as idioms and other cultural-political references. The second section will discuss the use of subtitles in these works as well as the translations. Lastly, there will be a short section to describe how the music enhances certain elements of the songs and provides some cultural and political context.

### Beijing Welcomes You

Welcome another sunrise (beginning of the day),  
Bringing in a completely new atmosphere (bringing new/fresh air)  
yíng jiē líng yí gè chén xī, dài lái quán xīn kōng qì  
迎 接 另 一 个 晨 曦, 带 来 全 新 空 气  
A breath changes the sentiment of constant fragrant tea to an air of friendly feelings  
qì xī gǎi biàn qíng wéi bù biàn, chá xiāng piào mǎn qīng yì  
气 息 改 变 情 味 不 变, 茶 香 飘 满 清 幽  
The door to my home is usually (long been) open, open and waiting for your embrace  
wǒ jiā dà mén cháng dà kāi, kāi fàng huái bào dèng nǐ  
我 家 大 门 常 打 开, 开 放 怀 抱 等 你  
After an embrace (hug) there will be tacit understanding,  
you will fall in love with this place (here)  
yong bào guò jiù yǒu le mò qì, nǐ huì ài shàng zhè lǐ  
拥 抱 过 就 有 了 默 契, 你 会 爱 上 这 里  
Whether or not far or close everyone is a guest  
Please there is no need for formalities  
bù guǎn yuǎn jìn dōu shì kè rén qǐng bú yòng kè qì  
不 管 远 近 都 是 客 人 请 不 用 客 气  
xiāng yuē hào le zài yì qǐ, wǒ men huān yíng nǐ  
相 约 好 了 在 一 起, 我 们 欢 迎 你  
In my home is planted an evergreen, every section opening (blooming) a legend  
wǒ jiā zhòng zhe wàn nián qīng, kāi fàng měi duàn chuán qì  
我 家 种 着 万 年 青, 开 放 每 段 传 奇  
For the sake of tradition sowing seeds in soil,  
For you to stay and recall (to make memories for you)  
wéi chuán tǒng de tǔ rǎng bù zhōng, wéi nǐ liú xià huí yì  
为 传 统 的 土 壤 播 种, 为 你 留 下 回 忆  
Strange or familiar all are guests please there is no need for formalities  
mò shēng shí xī dōu shì kè rén qǐng bú yòng kè qì  
陌 生 熟 悉 都 是 客 人 请 不 用 拘 礼  
No matter how many times you've come,  
There will be much to talk about  
dì jī cì lái méi guān xi, yǒu tài duō huà tí  
第 几 次 来 没 关 系, 有 太 多 话 题  
Beijing welcomes you,  
For you (we have) done unprecedented things  
bèi jīng huān yíng nǐ, wéi nǐ kāi tān pì dì  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 为 你 开 天 辟 地  
The charm is flowing and full of vigor  
liú dòng zhōng dì měi lì chōng mǎn zhe zhāo qì  
流 动 中 的 魅 力 充 满 着 朝 气  
Beijing welcomes you  
Under the sun to have a breath  
bèi jīng huān yíng, nǐ zài tài yáng xià fēn xiǎng hū xī  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 在 太 阳 下 分 享 呼 吸  
On the yellow earth (we can) surpass achievements  
zài huáng tǔ dì shuā xīn chéng jì  
在 黄 土 地 刷 新 成 绩

The door to my home is usually (long been) open,  
Happily accommodating the world (heaven and earth)  
wǒ jiā dà mén cháng dà kāi, kāi huái róng nà tiān dì  
我 家 大 门 常 打 开 开 怀 容 纳 天 地  
Years burst forth with youthfulness and smiles,  
Welcoming this day  
suì yuè zhàn fàng qīng chūn xiào róng, yíng jiē zhè ge rì qī  
岁 月 绽 放 青 春 笑 容, 迎 接 这 个 日 期  
All the world are friends, please there is no need for formalities (politeness)  
Tiān dà dì dà dōu shì péng you, qīng bú yòng kè qì  
天 大 地 大 都 是 朋 友, 请 不 用 客 气  
Pictures and poetry with a smiling expression, only waiting for you  
huà yì shī qīng dài xiǎo yì, zhǐ wéi děng dài nǐ  
画 意 诗 情 带 笑 意, 只 为 等 待 你  
Beijing welcomes you,  
Moving you like (this) music  
bèi jīng huān yíng nǐ, xiāng yīn yuè gǎn dòng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 像 音 乐 感 动 你  
Making us all persevere and go beyond ourselves  
ràng wǒ men dòu jiā yǒu qù cháo yuè zì jǐ  
让 我 们 都 加 油 去 超 越 自 己  
Beijing welcomes you,  
Anyone with a dream is extraordinary  
bèi jīng huān yíng nǐ, yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
With courage there will be wonders (miracles)  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qì jī  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹  
Beijing welcomes you (with end participle) (Peking Opera)  
bèi jīng huān yíng nǐ ya  
北 京 欢 迎 你 呀

### Best Wishes From Beijing

Love is like a globe constantly rotating  
(Love is like a globe constantly spinning)  
ài xiàng dì qiú yí zhuǎn lái zhuǎn qù  
爱 像 地 球 仪 转 来 转 去  
Běijīng dào shì jǐ duō shǎo lì shēn shòu kě jī  
北 京 到 世 界 多 少 里 伸 手 可 及

How to reach Beijing? Just stretch your hand  
(How far is Beijing from the world? Just stretch out your hand and its within reach)  
北 京 到 世 界 多 少 里 伸 手 可 及  
Běijīng dào shì jǐ duō shǎo lì shēn shòu kě jī  
北 京 到 世 界 多 少 里 伸 手 可 及

Love leaves a trail from pole to pole  
(Love streaks across the path of the sky from pole to pole)  
ài huà guò guāi jī jīng wèi liǎng jí  
爱 划 过 轨 迹 经 纬 两 极

From East to West of the Great Wall, peace traces  
(Thousands of miles the great wall from east to west the flames of war have gone out)  
万 里 长 城 从 东 到 西 烽 火 散 去  
wàn lǐ cháng chéng cóng dōng dào xī fēng huǒ sǎn qù

Welcome from Beijing, with all our hearts  
(Beijing welcomes you, welcomes you, giving the world something unparalleled)  
北 京 欢 迎 你 欢 迎 你 给 世 界 无 与 伦 比  
Běijīng huān yíng nǐ huān yíng nǐ gěi shì jiè wú yǔ lún bǐ

Best wishes from Beijing, inspiring friendship every day to come  
(Beijing blesses you, blesses you, inspiring everyday legends (romance))  
北 京 祝 福 你 祝 福 你 激 励 每 一 天 传 奇  
Běijīng zhù fú nǐ zhù fú nǐ jī lì měi yī tiān chuán qì

Best wishes from Beijing, ringing out from every corner  
(Beijing blesses you, on the city wall discussing the same topic.)  
北 京 祝 福 你 城 墙 上 聊 同 一 个 话 题  
Běijīng zhù fú nǐ chéng qiáng shàng liáo tóng yī gē huà tí

Waving flags of good wishes, blooming between me and you  
(To pray (wish) to wave the flag and burst forth (bloom) (with) me and you)  
祈 愿 飘 扬 旗 帜 绽 放 我 和 你  
qí yuàn piāo yáng qí zhàn fāng wǒ hé nǐ

Best wishes from Beijing, under the stars, from all directions  
(Beijing blesses you, under the stary sky the whole world is spread)  
北 京 祝 福 你 星 空 下 挂 满 四 海 潮 衣  
Běijīng zhù fú nǐ xīng kōng xià guà mǎn sì hǎi xià yī

Brilliantly and boundlessly, together we celebrate  
(Brilliant and boundless drinking of heaven and earth)  
灿 烂 无 边 无 际 共 饮 天 和 地  
càn làn wú biān wú jì gòng yǐn tiān hé de

[alternates between Mandarin and English for final refrain]  
Blessing you  
祝 福 你

Figure 14:

<sup>4</sup> - Official lyrics translated into English can only be found for Best Wishes from Beijing. My personal retranslations of the lyrics can be found in parentheses.

- *Beijing Welcomes You* was never officially translated and as such, the English lyrics are my translation.
- Stanzas are only written once and repetitions are deleted for brevity; for the full lyrics please see the appendix.
- Yellow highlights are lines that are not repeated. (All lines in Best Wishes From Beijing are repeated)
- In Best Wishes from Beijing the entire song is repeated several times besides the final ending refrain.

### **a. Comparative Discussion of the Lyrics and Focus on Particular Words and Phrases**

Lyrically, both of these videos are quite related and follow similar themes, which is to be expected considering that BWFB was intended to be a sequel to BWY. Thus, the pronouns and nouns used in both songs are similar. Additionally, it should be noted that the lyrics of both songs are repetitive. This repetition falls in line with the theory that the format of these songs was meant to prioritize the number of participants and not on the quality of the lyrics. However, the first song, BWY has slightly more unique lyrics than the second, and it is also shorter by almost a full minute. Likely due to the increased participation of the second song, it did not allow for a less repetitive composition.

The first noun that should be discussed in the lyrical section is actually the use of “Beijing” (北京). Obviously, this is the capital of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and it was also the host city of the Beijing Olympics in 2008. However, the use of the city’s name in this context has the ability to imply several things, especially since the phrase “Beijing welcomes you” (北京欢迎你) is used in both songs frequently. Beijing as a word in this context can refer to simply the city (or city government), the government of the PRC or even the country itself depending on how it is interpreted by the listener. In Mandarin in most political contexts a reference to the national government or bureau would directly address them by name. As such, within a Chinese domestic context it would appear as if the city itself was welcoming the listener as opposed to the government, but in a more international context and in a more in-depth context it would seem to give a different interpretation.

In BWY, due to the context of this being the PRC’s first major international exhibition in its history, it is somewhat unlikely that they meant for Beijing to only imply the city itself. Additionally, most of the participants in these songs were not actually from Beijing, including those saying the phrase “Beijing welcomes you.” For further evidence, in 2008 not all of the Olympic events were actually held in Beijing. Thus, a viewer who did not understand Chinese may have interpreted this as meaning “China” instead of the city of Beijing was welcoming them. However, it is questionable if this was the intended purpose of the discourse, but highly likely that there were two intended targets with different meanings. Alternatively, since this song

was never officially translated, which will be discussed later on, there is a potential that they never intended for a foreign audience to have a concrete understanding of what was being said, or the creators assumed that someone would later translate it for them if necessary.

In the second song, there seems to be a more targeted use of “Beijing.” While it repeats the phrase of the first song, “Beijing welcomes you,” frequently it also includes a line which they officially translate as “How to reach Beijing? Just stretch your hand.” The stretching out of a hand would seem to imply some sort of international cooperation, and that one only has to reach out for help or friendship. In this context it is unlikely that the reference is only to Beijing, but would seem to represent the national government or nation. This would also seem to make sense considering the subsequent lines discuss “peace” in reference to a global scale “from pole to pole.” Therefore, this change in tone would seem to signal some sort of a shift in rhetoric from a less confident to a more confident China, that instead of relying on a more indirect use of “Beijing” the connection becomes much more concrete in the intended source of power or discourse.

The use of pronouns differs greatly in prominence from the first song to the second song. Pronouns are very important to the message being delivered to the listener. In the first song, the variety used is far greater than the second. The pronouns used include: you (你) (the audience), I (我) (the speaker), we (我们) (the speakers) and we (我们) (potentially the audience and speakers). The use of these pronouns seems to evoke the beginning of a relationship between the speakers and the audience as “we” is often used in conjunction with a positive connotation to “you,” such as “we welcome you” (我们欢迎你) and “the door to my home is open, open and waiting for you” (我家大门常打开，开放怀抱等你). The positive emotions evoked by these phrases are meant to foster a sense of closeness and welcoming feelings. The line “the door to my home is open, open and waiting for you” would seem to be a metaphor. The speaker is not actually offering for any person to stay in their home, but “home” in this case could be a reference to China or Beijing. This when combined with one of the opening images of the first song would seem to confirm this, as the clip shows one of the gates of the forbidden city opening. Thus, an interpretation from the audience (you) could be that China’s doors are open for business, tourism or living. Which, if interpreted in that manner would mean the use of “Beijing” would be for the country and not the city itself.

In BWFB, the use of pronouns decreases significantly, and most actions that are suggested, instead seem to focus around “Beijing” as an actor. For example, the lines “How to reach Beijing? Just stretch your hand”<sup>5</sup> (北京到世界多少里 伸手可及), “Beijing welcomes you, welcomes you, giving the world something unparalleled”<sup>6</sup> (北京欢迎你欢迎你给世界无与伦比), and “Best wishes from Beijing, inspiring friendship every day to come”<sup>7</sup> (北京祝福你 祝福你 激励每一天传奇) all paint Beijing as the actor and not the speaker. In this sense the speakers become more of an instrument of conveying “Beijing’s” message to the audience. This is an important shift as it conveys and increased sense of confidence in the message coming from Beijing and as the quotes above show there are some references to China’s foreign policy goals especially in the form of creating partnerships.

Beyond pronouns, BWY utilizes a lot of rather complex language, grammar structures and even one idiom. The use of this complex language especially the idiom is interesting due to the complexity of their interpretation and their cultural significance. The most common form of idioms in Mandarin are known as *chengyu* (成语). They almost always consist of four characters that normally do not go together, but because of some story behind them they carry significance. The use of these idioms is often considered to be a sign of wisdom. It is also why even though they are considered idioms as a Western comparison they are not the same in practice when compared with most English idioms which usually are statements that the meaning can be deduced without much context, and historical knowledge. Thus, it is unlikely that very many non-native speakers of Mandarin would fully understand what the intended meaning of these literary devices are unless they would take the time to look them up in a dictionary.

The idiom used in BWY is *kāi tiān pì dì* (开天辟地), which depending on the translation could mean “the creation of something unprecedented” or “something that has never occurred in history.” While some *Chengyu* have very similar allegories that could be compared to in other cultural contexts, this one is a bit different. It dates itself to the three kingdoms period China and is actually a reference to a Chinese creation story. The inclusion of such an idiom and its relative difficulty in interpretation would suggest that the use of such language was intended for a native

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<sup>5</sup> Official translation

<sup>6</sup> Author’s translation

<sup>7</sup> Official translation



speaker. Even then it is difficult to estimate what percentages of the domestic and or diaspora population would understand this reference. However, in the context of the song its use is quite apt. In my translation the entire phrase could be rendered as “Beijing welcomes you, (we’ve) created something unprecedented for you.” BWFB also uses a similar idiom, which is Wú yǔ lún bǐ (无与伦比). This idiom means “unparalleled” or “unique.” However, this idiom is far less complicated to translate than the one in the first song. As the individual characters directly translate roughly to “without a match/peer to compare.” This was likely an intentional choice to aid in translation into English.

The lack of more complicated literary devices and structure in the second song when compared to BWY would seem to suggest a change in both style and discourse. The first piece when taking into account Whiting’s understanding of nationalist discourse would appear very affirmative in its use of language. The language appears as if it is meant to draw the native listener’s attention to the complexities of the language and demonstrate its deep cultural ties. If it can be interpreted as the target audience having likely been Mandarin speaking then this would also lend credibility to China’s foreign policy goals of attracting support from the diaspora. The second video uses much less complex vocabulary, thus making it easier to understand for low level learners of Mandarin and it lends itself to be more easily translated. As this can be considered more “outward facing” and appears to suggest more of a relationship with the listener this could be considered to be a change towards a more internationally facing message and confident as it seems to infer the need to reach outside and create relations globally.

## **b. Use of Subtitles and Selective Translation**

The use of subtitles in these two works is an interesting and rather unique way of discussing discourse in the selected works. However, it also presents an interesting issue of how to interpret them beyond their actual meaning. While they are literal lyrics that are being sang by performers on screen, they represent both an expressive discourse as well as a potential visual one. However, I have opted to keep them in this section dedicated to lyrics as opposed to in the visual section, but this visual aspect cannot be ignored. In China, subtitles in Mandarin can be found in almost every form of entertainment media from TV shows to news casts and music. This is largely due to the diverse dialects spoken around the country. While most Chinese citizens are taught the

standardized Mandarin in school, in order to ensure clarity almost all media is subtitled. This ensures that the entire Chinese speaking audience that is likely literate can have an understanding of what is being said, even if the speaker uses a dialect or slang.

There is a rather obvious difference between the two songs in regards to subtitles. The first song was never officially translated into English, and because of this the subtitles of BWY appear only in Mandarin. This is a rather confusing choice for a song that was quite obviously meant to be viewed by a foreign audience and to create some sort of discourse about China's opening to the world. There could be a conclusion drawn that the committee that sanctioned the creation of BWY did not think it was necessary to add English subtitles as the video might be unpopular or they may have thought that others would do it online for them. However, by only having Mandarin subtitles it would suggest that potentially the target audience of the song was not necessarily international but instead it was Mandarin speakers.

China has one of the largest diaspora populations in the world, numbering more than 45 million depending on the parameters.<sup>8</sup> The diaspora has often been a target of Chinese influence and their relations with the PRC are responsible for much of the development that occurred in the post-1979 reforms (Smart and Hsu, 2004). There are Chinese diaspora populations all around the world with large populations being found in South-East Asia, North America and Europe. Due to the cultural connections that remain within Chinese communities even when they have lived outside of the Mainland for generations, it is likely that the creators of BWY thought that this song would be a way to open up increased connections with the diaspora. When viewing the use of these subtitles and lyrics through the eyes of a member of the diaspora it would seem to change some of the messages of who is being welcomed to Beijing and why. The suggestion is that since the lyrics are only in Mandarin that only people who understand Mandarin are being invited in and not non-native speakers and probably not non-diaspora.

The second video included subtitles in English, below the Mandarin ones. Taking into account the changed tone of the lyrics and the more internationalist message of cooperation, it could suggest that the focus of the discourse for BWFB had changed. It would suggest that China had shifted some of the focus of its influence operations to directly target the international

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<sup>8</sup> This statistic is according to the U.S. Census Bureau, but the methods of calculation are somewhat unclear as to whether it refers just to people of Chinese origin, Chinese by birth or by language spoken. Not all Chinese diaspora speak Mandarin which greatly complicates the ability to calculate or quantify.

[https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2019/demo/Chinese\\_Diaspora.pdf](https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2019/demo/Chinese_Diaspora.pdf)

audience that is watching. In context of what was occurring at the time BWFB was made, China was starting to become extremely prominent in the global economy. In 2010 they became the world's second largest economy, and with that their trade relations were rapidly expanding. Therefore, it is not surprising that Chinese discourse at this period would be promoting international cooperation to potential trade partners. Only two years after this video China would launch its Belt and Road project.

Even though official translations were provided for BWFB, what is interesting is it appears that the translators took some liberties. Meaning that some of the translations do not exactly line up to what is being said in the Mandarin subtitles. This is essentially another example of propaganda that is being used to send different messages to different audiences. While the differences between the two are subtle, the different use of language especially for those who do not understand Chinese is telling in that the discourse used for Mandarin speaking audiences is different from those who are considered to be international. This creates dual discourse within one work and separates people into categories based on what language they can understand.

One of the most interesting choices in translation is for zhufu (祝福), which according to most dictionaries and in its cultural use would mean “bless” or “blessing.” While potentially in English the terms “blessings” and “best wishes” could be similar, in practice they are quite different. Blessing would generally be considered a more spiritual term that infers a higher being is supporting you. While offering your best wishes to someone would imply that (you) hope they will be successful. In Mandarin, the sentiment would be similar to the new year's greeting Gōng xǐ fā cái (恭喜发财), which means “have a prosperous new year.” The term in Mandarin likely traces its roots to traditional Chinese folk religion in which historical figures or your ancestors could “bless you” or from Buddhism. In all of the English subtitles and even the title of the song, zhufu, is translated as best wishes, but at the end of the song the singers switch into English and actually say “blessing you” in-between saying the Mandarin version several times. This would imply that there was a disconnect or disagreement between the lyricists and the people who created the subtitles, which were likely related to the Party. Assuming that they did have competent knowledge of translations “blessing” may have been avoided due to some sort of religious context, which the officially atheist Party does not officially approve of.

Another translation choice that was made involved the line: From East to West of the Great Wall, peace traces (万里长城从东到西 烽火散去). In this stanza, the Chinese character for

“peace” is not present. Instead, what seems to be used is a metaphor “Fēng huǒ sàn qù” (烽火散去) more literally means, “the flames of war have gone out.” When combined with the first part of the stanza about the great wall this is a reference to the warning beacons that were placed along the wall to warn the country of invasion. Instead of translating the meaning and context of this line, the official translators seemed to have translated the intent which is that the world or possibly just China is at peace. The selective avoidance of words involving war and even past aggression are likely linked to China’s foreign policy regarding reassurance of China’s peaceful rise. When speaking internationally, state actors and media tend to avoid words that would imply that China is or ever was aggressive. For example, even though the Great Wall was a defensive nature, it was created through conquest, thus any suggestions towards that kind of history would be altered in an international context.

From looking at the differences in both the lack of subtitles and the selective translation of the BWFB’s lyrics several conclusions can be drawn. The lack of subtitles in BWY would suggest a lack of confidence in both the message being sent and how it would be received by the outside audience. Since the producers of the first song were from Hong Kong it is impossible to say that they did not have an English translator. Therefore, it appears that the Chinese government was content with the video only in Mandarin and that the visuals and music would be enough to convey the desired message or that someone would simply do it for them online giving them deniability for mistakes. This is opposed to the second video which while lyrically and musically less complicated, the dialogue is much more controlled, giving an impression of increased confidence in the message being constructed. The translations provided suggest that they wanted to control the interpretations of what was being said to non-native speakers and avoid amateur translations.

### **c. Musical Expression**

The musical composition of these works is not incredibly important due to the repetitive nature of the music. Both songs employ a repetitive melody with a steady base beat in the background which makes them easy to listen to and follow. The repetitive nature also would aid non-native speakers follow along with the melody. Beyond these similarities, the differences between the two pieces must be mentioned here. Both songs represent very different depictions

of China and they also contribute to the changes in China's confidence and discourse between 2008 and 2012.

The music in the first video often draws upon more traditional musical instruments and vocal accents. There are a few points in the video which draw upon vocal accents of traditional Chinese opera (also known as Peking opera). The use of these accents is a reference to Beijing's history and Chinese history in general. This style of performance was essentially banned in Maoist China, as Chairman Mao sought to erase most traces of imperial China from the people's collective memory. After his death many more traditional forms of entertainment and culture were revived in an effort to create a shared Chinese identity. The inclusion of references to Chinese opera would seem to have an effect of creating a discourse within the audience and its different forementioned sectors. To the diaspora that left during the Chinese Civil War or during the Maoist period this could be a potential signal that many of the more despised policies had been reversed and that China is moving to reclaim its cultural heritage. To a more international audience it would seem to be a way of distracting from the political aspects of China to draw the audience's attention to cultural heritage.

Beyond the inclusion of Chinese opera, there are also some segments of BWY that include some traditional Chinese instruments, including what seems to be a traditional Chinese Guzheng (古筝), which is essentially a Chinese zither. The use of such traditional instruments and vocal accents is contrasted with the use of more modern western instruments such as guitars and pianos. It would seem that the discourse trying to be constructed by the use of such instruments in this song is that China represents a mixture of both ancient culture and modern development. The appeal of such discourse to diaspora and international culture is quite clear as diaspora can come to connect with a cultural homeland and live in a modern state as an international can also come to learn about traditional culture and conduct business in a modern state.

BWY also employs some musical devices to draw the audience's attention to certain points, which the creator wanted emphasized. One of the first major instances is the introduction of Jackie Chan, which is preceded by a crescendo. The use of this musical device in relation to Chan is likely twofold. The first reason being that Jackie Chan is likely one of the most well-known Chinese people in the world and the second being he was very much involved in the production of the BWY. If a foreigner watching the video understood nothing of what was being

said or shown, at a minimum after watching the video they would know Jackie Chan supported the Beijing Olympics. The crescendo makes him a major piece of the video.

In addition to Jackie Chan's crescendo, there are two other musical devices employed to draw attention to other points of the video. In the second half of the video there is a section where the singing stops and a musical interlude is played against the backdrop of images of Beijing. The images are a combination of things that are both related to culture and modernization. The musical interlude would seem to shift the focus of the audience to the images being presented. Simply, focus on the visual discourse instead of the musical. The last device to be employed near the end of the song is known as an *accelerando*, or a gradual speeding up of the tempo. This is meant to draw the users' attention to approaching end of the song, and many of the previous participants and cultural references are flashed on the screen in tandem with the *accelerando* which would seem to push the audience to recall what they had already seen. These musical tools are not repeated in the second video. There are a few short musical interludes, but they simply focus on groups of people who do not sing or do a dance instead. Thus, while BWY shifts the focus to the landscapes and development, the musical pause in BWFB is simply used to showcase larger groupings of people against other backgrounds.

The second video changes quite drastically in music choice from the first. The most notable difference is that all of the traditional instruments have been dropped in favor of modern ones such as a grand piano, which Lang Lang can be seen playing at various points, a drum set and an acoustic guitar. There are likely several reasons for this, the first being the change in the staff who put together the music video. In the first video, many of the composers, producers and lyricists were from Hong Kong and to my knowledge none of them were Party members. They were also likely given more free range to compose given the higher status of the Hong Kong music scene. The production and organization staff of BWFB was largely based around CCP members and PLA members. Many of them were raised during the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. During those periods Chinese traditional music was severely limited in favor of more contemporary socialist and patriotic tunes which featured more Western instruments. It is possible that the producers had little experience with these instruments, their use in music production or even the unique pentatonic scale. That may have caused them to avoid their use. Alternatively, they may have wished to portray an image of a more modern China using more modern instruments, and indeed as will be discussed in the visual section, the

focus of the second video is largely to do with modernization. However, the song loses much of its Chinese appeal in this regard, and is noted by many comments that appear underneath the video on platforms like YouTube when viewers compare it to the first video.

From a comparison of these videos a large contrast can be seen in the music. The second video abandons most of the musical devices and complexity in favor of shifting focus onto the visual aspects of the video. This is likely intentional to more clearly express the narratives to the viewers. It is important to note here that the producers of BWFB were all from the Mainland and connected to the Party. As such, much of their education likely focused on more contemporary music. This is opposed to BWY who's main producer was from Hong Kong. However, this still would suggest that China's confidence had risen. Instead of utilizing outsiders with more international music experience they used a team from the Mainland which expressed its own musical abilities in organizing the piece. This is also representative of China having confidence in its own entertainment industry and beginning a gradual shift away from relying on outsiders to spread their narratives and instead speaking for themselves, even in music.

## **5. Visuals and Political Narratives of Culture, Development and Minorities**

This chapter will detail the visuals used in both videos and place them into deeper context. Both videos employ a very different visual style with different focuses. As such they have vastly different cultural and political implications for the discourse they represent and the progress of China's confidence over the final period of Hu Jintao's reign as Secretary of the CCP. Many of the images used in these two pieces represent one of two themes which are cultural heritage or modernization. However, the way that these themes are presented changes quite drastically over the course of 2008-2012. Additionally, there are some references to China's minorities which will be addressed.

### **a. Culture and History**

This section addresses images dealing with cultural and historical references and how they change in focus over the time period. This will note the divergence between the focus on culture factors in BWY and towards modernization in BWFB. In the build up to the Olympics in 2008 China faced an increasingly loud opposition to the hosting of the Olympics. This was compounded by recent memory of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests which were likely a

reason Beijing's 1993 bid was rejected. The violent crackdown on protests in Tibet in March of 2008 just a few months before the opening of the games also served to reignite protests around the world, but especially in the West.

In short, China had an image problem, and they had to take steps to address these issues. From new articles written near the time of the Olympics it is known that the Chinese government did many things such as hiring a foreign public relations firm (Clifford, 2008) and made promises of greater press freedom during the Olympics (Snyder, 2008) which were not kept. They also made major investments in both Olympic facilities and supporting infrastructure. However, as many reporters and scholars discussed, leading up to the 2008 games the image of China abroad was largely one of a repressive, authoritarian and communist state, which in the context of this period is extremely negative. However, as some authors point out, China had an advantage, which is that its cultural heritage was quite highly regarded internationally and this was even acknowledged by some indexes regarding country branding (Berkowitz et al, 2007). Hu Jintao himself pointed to this in the National Congress of the CCP in 2007 by saying the Party must "enhance culture as part of the soft power of our country to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests" and that "culture has become a more and more important source of national cohesion and creativity and a factor of growing significance in the competition in overall national strength" (Nye, 2008). While likely not a long-term solution, for the purposes of short-term success of the Olympics this is an obvious factor that can be exploited to paint a picture of a China that is reoriented, modernizing, cohesive, strong, and open for business.

One of the first images that the audience sees that demonstrates that point is an image of gates, which are likely in the Forbidden City (FC), opening as the camera enters. The symbolism is rather obvious in depicting that the audience is entering into a new and likely "exotic" place that others have not seen before, because the gates were metaphorically closed. This is combined with the singing only beginning after the gates have fully opened. Beyond just representing an opening China, the use of the FC in this video is frequent and interesting. As can be assumed from the previous paragraph, images that are associated with the government and more specifically the CCP are ones that the creators of the video seemed to purposely avoid. However, the clever employment of selective imagery here helps to paint a picture of the FC that is a bit different from reality as it is inherently linked to the government.





Figure 2: Timestamp 00:10

In the video it is portrayed in its cultural and historical aspects, but in an imperial context that avoids references to the ruling CCP. However, the main gate of the FC is Tiananmen Gate, which as its name suggests directly faces Tiananmen Square. If the former's recent history was not enough there is also a large portrait of Chairman Mao that has for more than half a century hung over the gate. Therefore, to capitalize on the use of the largest cultural iconic spot that is in the very center of Beijing, the imagery around it had to focus on the interior, while avoiding the main gates and Zhongnanhai which was the living residences of the CCP elite. This sanitized view of a place that is so inherently tied to the government is quite telling of the image the CCP wished to express to the viewing audience; this is especially true for the international audience as the domestic audience would likely not associate the same images with the FC. However, it can be noted that the creators were not entirely successful. In the clip with Chen Tianjia in the beginning one can still make out the Great Hall of the People (GHP), the national legislature, in the lower left corner of the screen and a second long clip during the musical interlude displays the front of Tiananmen Gate but the portrait of Mao is barely visible and due to the shortness of the clip it is not noticeable.



Figure 3:

This cultural-historical focus on the FC demonstrates a larger trend in this piece. When watching, I deduced there are about 60 different clips or scenes in BWY, and approximately two-thirds of those clips are dedicated to historical landmarks or cultural demonstrations. Some examples of other historical locations are the Temple of Heaven, the Drum Tower, Qianmen and the Langrun Garden in Peking University. These are all historical locations that have been preserved in Beijing in the face of increasing development and echoes authorities who said that the Olympics would only serve to enhance the cultural characteristics of the city (Beck, 2007). However, it is nearly impossible to continue to develop without replacing the old. In Beijing, space has always been a premium from ancient times, but as more and more people moved to the cities it seem to bring out the issues of some of the oldest neighborhoods in Beijing. It was estimated in 2007 that over 1.5 million people in Beijing would be displaced by the construction projects set by the CCP to prepare for the Olympics (Yardley, 2006), with some of the building slated for destruction being centuries old (Beck, 2007). This would make the cultural factors a

form of distraction away from many of the other more common sights from before the Olympics that were destroyed.

Cultural references are quite frequent in BWY and beyond the locations which have been discussed, much of cultural references are related to different traditional art forms. To be specific, the “cultural and historical” aspects to be discussed in this section are more specifically related to the Chinese (Han ethnicity) aspects and do not include the minorities as that is discussed in section C of this chapter. In the first few second of the song a duo can be observed practicing Taiichi in what is likely the FC as one example. Other art forms such as Chinese calligraphy, shadow puppets, Peking opera, and traditional outfits can be viewed. What is interesting about these art forms is that beyond calligraphy, all of them were for the most part banned under Mao’s rule. Taiichi and kung fu were largely lost in the Mainland, as many of the teachers of such practices were considered to be part of the feudal ruling class. As a sign of how deep this cleansing was, even the world-famous Shaolin Monastery was vandalized and the monks beaten and dragged away by red guards during the Cultural Revolution. Shadow puppets and their stories met a similar fate due to their depictions of feudal society which Chairman Mao sought to erase.

Peking opera and Chinese calligraphy were the only two arts that managed to survive in a more publicly accessible form albeit with modifications. Calligraphy became an important factor in both local propaganda displays after the communist victory in 1949 as well as for denunciations during the cultural revolutions. Red guards would often create what were called ‘big character posters’ to denounce people they saw as being capitalists, rightists or morally corrupt. Peking Opera survived in a bit of a different manner as the CCP realized the people still required some form of entertainment. Jiang Qing, Chairman Mao’s wife, led the way in creating a modified Peking opera that could be consumed by the proletariat masses but only in approved and modified forms that were not considered ‘reactionary’ (Yang, 1962). It was not until the death of Chairman Mao and the beginning of the reform era under Deng Xiaoping that these arts finally began to be revived and or returned to their historical roots.



Figure 4:

The centering of these arts is extremely important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it begins to answer the question raised in the wake of Mao's death over what it means to be Chinese. If the CCP had gone another way and continued to focus on Chinese communism being the sole focus of what it means to be Chinese then it would have driven a literal cultural wedge between itself, the diaspora population and to some extent other Asian countries which share in China's Confucian traditions. Beyond its obvious use as an affirmative nationalistic discourse to build pride in Chinese cultural tradition, it also seeks to challenge claims of cultural supremacy by Taiwan. Since the end of the Chinese Civil War, Taiwan has preserved many parts of traditional Chinese culture, including the art forms previously mentioned and even the traditional writing system. This has been a major point of contention between the two actors. By the PRC reclaiming these traditions it can be seen as accomplishing several foreign policy goals, such as reducing Taiwan's influence in the cultural and political space regarding its claim to Chinese culture as well as promoting China as a cultural homeland of Asia, which could be viewed as reassurance to China's peaceful intentions instead of solely focusing on its government style.

The second song changes the dynamics of the first in a major way, by eliminating most of these cultural references. While historical locations are still prominently featured, the art forms that have been discussed almost completely disappear with the exception of martial arts.

Although, the inclusion of Taiichi is probably only attributable to Jackie Chan's involvement in the creation of these videos. The use of historical locations and art forms in BWY is quite different still from the second video. In BWY arts are often combined with historical locations to create a combined experience for the viewer to see an action taking place with a location, but in the second they are completely reduced to being a backdrop. The only replacement that is offered is a large contingent of dancers which appear at many of the locations in the video. This serves as an important shift in the discourse being created.

The loss of arts in the second video seems to make way for an inclusion of CCP related imagery in the second video. In fact, within the first 15 seconds the audience sees a clip of Jackie Chan and a group of martial arts practitioners performing in front of Tiananmen Gate, under the large portrait of Chairman Mao, which is visible in all parts of this scene. This is also not the only time where CCP related images are used. The GHP mentioned above is one of the backdrops for the scene and interestingly, Andy Lau, an actor from Hong Kong is placed in front of it instead of a mainland actor. The combination of the use of stars such as Andy Lau and Jackie Chan in front of communist imagery tells a wider story of how the political process had progressed since 1989. During the Tiananmen protests many Hong Kong stars put on a concert to support the protests, and Jackie Chan performed in the event and Andy Lau publicly voiced support of the protests and the event (New York Times, 2019). They are also not the only ones, as another Canadian-Hong Kong star, Charlene Choi is also pictured in front of the China National Museum which still retains the communist symbols on the entrance. It seems unlikely to be a coincidence that only non-Mainland stars were placed in front of these locations and it was likely done intentionally to push a narrative. To be able to put stars like these in front of CCP related locations illustrates that not only have these stars personally "changed sides" but also that Hong Kong and China are officially united in common culture and politics, which in the coming years would be a serious point of contention in Hong Kong.





Figure 5:

While the inclusion of these three places could be considered modern in a way, but realistically not much has changed for them aesthetically since the 1950s. Additionally they are a representation of what life and imagery surrounding the city culture of Beijing has been since that time. The open inclusion of these locations also seems to point to a boost in confidence in the wake of the 2008 Olympics and other events. Most researchers consider the 2008 Olympics to have been a soft-power success for the CCP (Nye, 2008) in showing how they could mobilize the masses, complete large scale projects, and modernize an ancient city all while holding onto single-party rule without democratic reform. It can also be pointed out that the PRC was not heavily impacted by the global financial crisis and it went on to surpass Japan to become the world's second economy in 2010, all of which was attributable to the CCP's leadership in some way. Therefore, it can be surmised the change from sanitizing representations of China to showing the CCP to openly displaying its iconography represents a drastic shift in the confidence

of the CCP in the international sphere. It is a demonstration to the world that China claims its historical monuments, its people and its communist heritage.

### **b. Modernization through Visuals**

This section discusses modernization and how it is presented within the context of the visuals in the MVs. There will be some discussions on how the ideas of modernization are presented in both videos and how they have changed over the period, including focus on commercialization. While Beijing had some infrastructure developments before the Olympics such as a metro system, the expansion that occurred prior to and after the Olympics radically changed both the operational aspects of Beijing and inflected the architectural scene. There has been much discourse within the CCP about making Beijing a modern Asian capital, and the Olympics were a way to begin development. During the period leading from their initial bid in 2000, the Chinese are thought to have spent tens of billions of dollars on infrastructure development, transportation, athletic facilities, environmental regulations and even an expansion of the Beijing Capital Airport (Bradsher, 2021). According to Xinhua, three new subway lines were added specifically to deal with a surge of tourists at a cost of some three billion dollars (Xinhua, 2008). This is to say the Chinese were eager to show the world that China was modern and growing.

While modernization is not the main focus of BWY it does still play a prominent role, especially for the time. Beijing is commonly known by people who live there as a city that is both ancient and modern depending on where you are. At the time of filming in 2008, the expansion of the city was in full swing and the imagery used demonstrates this. Several buildings using contemporary styles were completed in the period leading up to the Olympics such as the Birds Nest, the National Center for the Performing arts, the Beijing National Aquatics Center, the Wukesong Arena and the Beijing Capital Airport. These locations obviously are a break from traditional focus of the video meant to show contrast and some of them are actually often repeated through the video such as the Bird's Nest and National Center for the Performing Arts. The lack of other impressive buildings being displayed is likely due to the fact that they did not yet exist or had not been finished. An example of this would be the CCTV headquarters which is known as the "Pants" building, because it looks like a pair of pants. It was completed only just before the beginning of the Olympics and not when BWY was filmed. After the Olympics left

Beijing, the development did not slow, instead it rapidly expanded with many large skyscrapers and other more contemporary buildings being rapidly constructed.

In the second video the focus shifts largely to these new style buildings. The previously mentioned buildings are often featured prominently to contrast some of the more traditional locations. After the piano introduction and Jackie Chan's cinematic martial arts display in front of Tiananmen Gate, the viewers are shown an aerial view of Beijing's Chaoyang District which is the most Modern part of Beijing, even today, and is the center of most foreign trade, foreign embassies and the most expensive residences in Beijing. Beginning with Chaoyang and some of the next images is meant to demonstrate a China that has changes since 2008. The backdrops for several of the scenes replace the focus on exterior modern architecture to the interiors of some commercial areas such as shopping malls, Beijing Capital Airport and art galleries. This is another interesting shift to be observed as instead of just focusing on the grand size of some of the structures that have been produced the visuals seem to try and imply that there is more sustenance on the inside as well. This is a clever way of combating some criticism that are often leveled at Chinese development, which suggest that their development is a facade or a shell and nothing more.

It is also a way of demonstrating that China's domestic market has advanced beyond even what had been shown in 2008. The discourse presented by these rather luxurious and modern locations is that China has developed and is becoming modern. When combined with the lyrics calling for cooperation and building a global relationship this would give an international viewer a suggestion that cooperation with Beijing would mean that China could also help them to achieve the same level of development. Which is related to a consistent foreign policy goal that began with Chairman Mao's wish to spread the Chinese revolution abroad. This then changed into a dialogue of the CCP offering an alternative development model for the third world. Their global footprint was also increasing in places like Africa which saw annual growth of 20% in Chinese investment in 2012 (Dahman-Saïdi, 2013). Therefore, demonstrating that a developing country had achieved this level of development and appeared to have wealth would be very beneficial to the narrative the government was espousing while trying to convince others to deepen cooperation and trade ties.

However, this could be contrasted by the obvious factor that it appears many of these clips were shot using a green screen. By this I mean that the people in these scenes are likely in a



video production studio and the backgrounds are being artificially projected behind them. As people who traveled to Beijing know, clear skies are not really a common occurrence, especially around this time due to pollution. If that is not enough, the depth perception of some of the scenes shows, the shadows and the unnatural fast movement of clouds can show that they are likely not in the locations they are using for a backdrop. While normally this would not be out of the ordinary for promotional videos to be “cleaned” for public use, in China it has a deeper political meaning. China’s development came at an environmental price in which pollution is one of the major problems and one that garnered both international and domestic criticism. Air quality is something specific that can be mentioned here, as almost all of the clips used have extremely clear skies, save for a few in which it can be seen that the sky is a bit grey. Some scientists have even demonstrated that 2012 was the peak of air pollution in the capital (Xie, 2021), which sometimes had pollution that was so serious visibility could be reduced to under a kilometer and it was not uncommon for flights to be canceled once every few years due to the lack of visibility due to pollution.



Figure 6:

It is understandable that the CCP would wish to only show a clear skies version of Beijing when presenting itself internationally, but this has interesting implications for dual discourse relating to the international and domestic audiences. While someone who has never been to Beijing might believe the image portrayed of the city, a local would certainly understand that these clips were edited just by looking outside of their window. The lack of clear skies could also be one of the reasons that some of the locations were shot inside of buildings instead of outside. This as opposed to a foreigner who has never been to China is only seeing images of Beijing with clear blue skies, which demonstrates that Beijing is modern, environmentally friendly and clean. Having high levels of pollution is not a symbol of a developed nation but one that is still developing or underdeveloped and damages the image of Beijing of being modern, which is why the creators of the video likely did their best to change, edit or superimpose clear skies on almost all scenes despite the somewhat obvious nature of them being fake. This also brings up another interesting point that there are certain points in the year when Beijing is known for having clear skies, which is during major international events and during the annual political meetings in Beijing. This is achieved by a government enforced shutdown of the factories that surround the city. This is also the method that was employed by the CCP in 2008 to reduce pollution, which was a major point of criticism by foreign media during the games. The association in the second video to Party related locations and clear skies is also a subtle reminder to the domestic population that the CCP can essentially control the “weather” in certain parts of the country.

Analysis of the factors mentioned would lead to a conclusion that the style of many of the images in the second video were meant for foreign consumption or even consumption by the diaspora which had not yet traveled to China. The main point of prioritizing the focus on modernization remains that it is a selling point for cooperation with China. Like any form of propaganda this video seeks to prioritize the positives of the post-Olympic developments in Beijing and use it as a representation for the rest of the country. The image portrayal of Beijing as a modern developing city with many cultural sites is probably not extremely far from the truth. However, its representation for the rest of the country is obviously problematic. Even today, as once one leaves the exterior ring roads of Beijing the level of development decreases significantly. However, the more videos such as BWFB were produced the better it would be for Chinese confidence, as it would combat the image spread by foreign, particularly Western, media

that China is nothing more than an authoritarian, underdeveloped and polluted country. It also allows the domestic audience and diaspora to have something which they can look to for boost of nationalistic pride to contrast the Western portrayal.

### **c. Visual Representations of Minorities**

Minorities were and still are a major issue for the CCP in both international and domestic aspects. There are officially 56 recognized ethnic groups in China, however one of them, the Han, make up over 90% of the population. The idea of ethnicity in China is complicated as in many other countries, however, it is also strategically important. The five recognized autonomous regions of China, which are so designated due to their ethnic status, make up approximately one-third of the PRC's land mass. Yet, their total populations remain less than 10% of China's total population. One of the issues faced by the Party which was previously mentioned is what is Chinese identity after the death of Mao. The place of minorities in China is a central piece to that question in that the CCP would have to ask if minorities and their culture are compatible with both CCP values and their vision for the future of China.

China's policies towards its minorities have always been a complicated subject and as a country led by an officially atheist CCP minority groups with different religious, cultural and linguistic roots have always posed a problem to unity. This is not necessarily a unique issue to the PRC but it is still important to note as it is an important factor in their relations to such groups. As in other countries it is not uncommon for ethnic problems to be an issue, but China's relations with these groups is rather unique in that the assertion by the CCP that these ethnic territories and peoples are an integral part of the state. Cracks in the system as it stood began appearing in the early 2000s, but peaked in the period between 2007-2009 drawing vast international attention. Protests relating to Tibet took place internationally in the year leading to the Olympics, which was combined with riots in Lhasa in March of 2008, just months before the beginning of the Olympics. This meant that topics of race and ethnicity were somewhat sensitive during this period as well as after the Olympics. In 2009, there were also riots in Xinjiang, which is a province that was inhabited by another minority, the Uyghurs, who like the Tibetans share little to no cultural or linguistic ties to the majority ethnic group the Han.

Thus, there is little surprise that cultural representation of the PRC's minority groups is effectively absent from BWY. This is despite approximately 14% of the participants having

recognized minority status. All cultural references in the first song essentially point to the majority Han culture in everything from the clothing, art and even food. This is with the exception of the qipao, which is considered a traditional “Chinese” dress but is actually culturally derived from the Manchus which led China’s last imperial dynasty. This dress is repeatedly used in the first video, but only one of the women who wears it is, Jin Sha, actually a minority and she is ethnically Korean not Manchu. The popularization of this dress came in Shanghai in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century among the ethnically Han population, which is why it is considered to be Chinese and not Manchu.



Figure 7:

The discourse presented by the first video is one that China is “Chinese” or as was mentioned above “Han.” While the domestic audience may have recognized some of the more major minority artists, it is unknown whether they would know that they were minorities or not and with the way they are presented in the video is that they are no different than other Han people. To a foreign person watching who has little perspective on the Mandarin speaking entertainment industry they would not be able to discern any of the minorities at all, especially since their names are not included on the subtitles in English or Mandarin. It would seem that due to the sensitivity around the ethnic issue that even though minorities participated they were likely portrayed in a way that did not emphasize their cultural heritage as one that did would have

likely drawn more criticism. Instead, they are portrayed domestically as signified or made to look Han.

This discourse changes drastically in the second video. Minorities are quite openly visible and appear both in cultural clothing and in certain instances singing in a distinct non-Chinese style which makes them more visible and discernable to a wider audience. In fact, the second video has particular sections where people relating to certain industries and in this case, minorities are shown grouped together. The selection of minority clothing and style displayed is also rather telling. The minority portion of the video begins with Alu Azhuo (阿鲁阿卓) who is from the Yi ethnic minority, a People's Liberation Army (PLA) officer, and a rather safe beginning point for propaganda, as the Yi have relatively few political problems despite being the seventh largest minority group.



Alu Azhou 04:12

Jamyang Dolma 04:13

Sechen Gerel 04:19

Figure 8:

Alu Azhou is followed by Jamyang Dolma (降央卓玛) who is Tibetan, and also in the PLA. This is where the more controversial aspect of this display comes in. Jamyang Dolma and what appears to be a Tibetan dance group called the Snow Lotus Band (no information is publicly available). The background also seems to be interesting as it does not appear to be in Beijing, but some Tibetan “village,” which seems to completely abandon the Beijing theme in exchange for furthering the narrative on the integration of minorities. While Tibet remained an issue for China somewhat domestically and internationally after the 2008 Olympics, the CCP tightened its grip



on the region and the risk of a repeat of the previous unrest decreased significantly. In this period China also increased its efforts to portray the Tibetans and their region as an integral part of China linked by culture and history. Therefore, showing a politically compliant and happy group of Tibetans would seem to demonstrate the narrative that the Tibetans are happy and integrated into China, despite the likely reality of their situation.

The Tibetans are not the only ones who were mustered for this event. The next part of the minority portion displays several minority celebrities from China's northwestern regions. The artists who participated appear in a group shot and are Kerman (克尔曼) and Alpha (阿尔法) who are part of the Uyghur minority from Xinjiang and Kai Ker Er Man Ni (开克尔曼尼) who represents the Hui ethnic minority which can largely be found in Qinghai province and Xinjiang. While today the plight of the Uyghur community might be commonly known in the West, in 2012 very few people beyond regional specialists even understood or realized these groups existed or that they were the source of anxiety for the Chinese state. However, for those that did portraying these celebrities as representatives of their ethnic group again play into a narrative that China has integrated these minorities, and beyond that they are also famous and successful as evidenced by their celebrity status. Similar to the Tibetan's previously mentioned, this group appears in front of a venue that seems to be located in Xinjiang, and is potentially a mosque. To my knowledge no such building as this exists in Beijing, meaning that this scene was shot in



Alpha, Kerman and Kai Ker Er Man Ni 04:17

Figure 9:

another location or is just another elaborate green screen background. It should also be noted that it appears that the rather unknown Snow Lotus Band also appears in the middle of these celebrities, which is rather confusing considering that beyond being minorities the predominantly Muslim Hui and Uyghur minorities have very little in common with the Buddhist Tibetans.

There are two other minority participants in ethnic costume which are worth discussing here, which are Sechen Gerel (斯琴格日乐) and Sa Dingding (萨顶顶) who are both part of the Mongolian ethnic minority. Sechen Gerel appears in front of a yurt, which is a traditional Mongolian tent that was used on the steppes as the Mongols are traditionally nomadic peoples. Sa Dingding appears later, separated from this minority portion but is also still in an outfit that while not entirely traditional seems to be inspired by a traditional look. This also seems to be an interesting choice to include in a piece that is supposed to only be about Beijing. While Inner Mongolia is close to Beijing, they are defiantly not one and the same. This including the last two paragraphs points to this song being much more about promoting China to the audience rather than Beijing.



Snow Lotus: 04:16

Sa Dingding 05:25

Figure 10:

Lastly, it can be mentioned that the domestic population viewing this probably would have taken notice of the inclusion of these minorities, especially after the instability from 2008-2009. Even if the domestic viewer did not know who they were or that they were minorities, the

inclusion of their names on the screen would be a hint. For example, Alu Azhou and Jamyang Dolma both have names that do not conform to common Chinese naming standards as they contain four characters. A typical Chinese or Han name would consist of two or three characters with the latter being more common. Their names thus appear to be phonetic translations into Mandarin instead of a typical name. Sa Dingding also fits into this part as while she has a more common looking three-character name, the surname “Sa” is not a typical Han name. While the inclusion of their names as a form of subtitle was likely just meant to promote the celebrities that participated and give them more prominence in China it does serve to highlight their minority relations. This furthers discourse domestically that minorities are an integral part of China, especially when they are in some way representing the capital.

However, the portrayal of minorities here seems to portray a domestic narrative that minorities are free to not only exist, but to be successful and well known as long as they have undergone Sinification. Even though they appear in costume and sometime sing with an “exotic style” they are still singing in Mandarin and not their native or ethnic language. Here it can also be noted that because of integration many minorities do not actually study or learn their ethnic languages and if they do they sometimes learn much later in life, meaning the language is not native. This seems to represent a common theme in China that to be Chinese or be a part of Chinese society you must speak and be part of the culture. Having your own ethnic culture and to be an official minority is accepted as long as you conform to the standard of being Chinese. Although, this essentially reduces their identity to the form of a spectacle instead of a far deeper social connection. The need for this reduction is led by the state as the CCP views a deeper connection as a threat to unity. This issue would become a more dominant narrative in China in later years, particularly in regards to the Uyghur’s in Xinjiang who maintained their connections to language, culture and religion and thus became the subject of state attention.

There is a lot of evidence and previous work that affirms the analysis above. While the official government led narrative states that all ethnicities are equal, this is not how they are presented in societal discourse. Several studies have noted that the Han majority tend to exoticize or even feminize minorities within official propaganda (Jinba, 2013) (Gladney, 1994). This is often accomplished by having them parade around in costumes for TV performances such as the videos being analyzed here and on an annual basis for the New Years Gala. In media they are often depicted as “pure savages,” which points to their backwardness compared to the majority



Han, and often has sexual suggestions that the women are more “loose” than those of the Han (Gladney, 1994). While historically this is not a new concept to those familiar with colonialism, it is quite different in a modern context as many of these stereotypes are enforced by state owned and produced media, and due to this minorities in China have no real way of voicing an opposition to their portrayal within the domestic sphere. Instead, in domestic media they are almost always portrayed living in their traditional clothing, happy and smiling which is a very romanticized and colonialist portrayal of an ethnic group.

There is also evidence of a disconnection with minority roots that can be found in the videos in that only about seven identified people in the second video appear in a cultural dress (not including the Snow Lotus Band). This is despite the participation of 26 minority participants I identified in the video (not including the Snow Lotus Band). While the breakdown of the participants and their minorities will be discussed in the next section, it is important to note that an overall majority of these participants do not appear in a form of cultural dress for the analysis of visual presentation. Nor would most of their names identify them as being so in the subtitles as opposed to the two previously mentioned. This would seem to demonstrate a disassociation with their cultural heritage. The only counter to such analysis would be that they were not allowed to appear that way, but from many of their public profiles that were explored for this research, almost none of them made it a very public part of their persona besides Alu Azhou and Jamyang Dolma, but for these two, ethnicity is part of their theatrical persona. For the viewer this means that they would have no way of associating the rest of the identified minorities with their respective ethnic groups unless they had prior knowledge of their background. Which, for an international audience is highly unlikely. For a domestic audience they might be slightly more knowledgeable in identifying the different minority representatives, but depending on the person or the ethnic group they are related to it could be difficult for even them to identify specifically. This would seem to confirm that the use of ethnic minority culture in propaganda videos is limited to performers who perpetuate colonial narratives at the direction of the state.

With the previous analysis it can be seen that the representation of these minorities vastly increased in the second video. In 2008 it was too risky and too much of a sensitive issue to have portrayed Tibetan and Xinjiang minorities in an international propaganda video. However, by 2012 the PRC had overcome its fear of international condemnation of issues relating to Tibet and Xinjiang. This is certainly related to the crackdowns in the two special autonomous regions that

ended in full CCP control of both and a suppressed minority population. The very open use of minorities and culture in a propaganda piece is evidence that they were no longer afraid of international condemnation. The strength of the Tibetan rights groups had essentially disappeared after the Olympics and there was no longer very open and directed political condemnation facing the CCP. The CCP had also gone to great lengths to establish the narrative that Tibet and Xinjiang were domestic problems for China. Lastly, in the international community many things had happened since 2008. The global financial crisis had placed China in a more confident position financially, the United States had failed to take any real action to condemn the CCP's handling of its minorities as it was distracted by the ongoing wars in the Middle East. This left China in a position to express its own more confident projection of China and its relations with minorities to the world through propaganda pieces such as BWFB.

## **6. Participants and Politics of Pop Culture in China**

This chapter will discuss the backgrounds and composition of the participants of these two videos. As the format of MPMV is quite centered around who is participating, their contribution to the discourse is far too important to overlook. While those who are not part of the Chinese community may not recognize many of the participants, their backgrounds range vastly and their affiliations, ethnic identities and citizenships leave much to be discussed in the terms of how they represent the image of China. This chapter will be broken into several subchapters which will focus on the political affiliations of participants, nationalities, political cost of celebrity status in China and lastly, the minority representation in the MVs.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A full table with notes will be included in the appendix section.

Table 1:

<b>Beijing Welcomes You (BWY) 北京欢迎你</b>		<b>Best Wishes From Beijing (BWFB) (北京祝福你)</b>	
Total Participants	80	Total Participants (estimate)	159
Total Mainland China	45	Total Mainland China	114
Total USA	4	Total United States	4
Total Canada	1	Total Hong Kong	18
Total Singapore	3	Total Taiwan	15
Total South Korea	1	Total South Korea	1
Total Taiwan	17	Total Canada	1
Total Hong Kong	9	Total Unknown	6
Percentage Mainland	56%	Percentage Mainland	72%
Percentage Minority	14%	Percentage Minority	16%
Percentage Politically Active	16%	Percentage Politically Active	25%
Percentage CCP Members	11%	Percentage CCP Member	18%
Percentage Dual Residents	16%	Percentage Repeated	16%
Total Minorities	11	Percentage Dual Residents	6%
Total Dual Residents	13	Total Politically Active	39
Total CCP Members	9	Total CCP Member	28
Total Politically Active	13	Total Minorities	26
Total Politically Inactive	67	Total Dual Residents	10
		Total Repeated	25

#### a. Political Affiliations of Pop Culture Representatives in China

While in many countries members of the cultural elite are often expected to take political stances and comment on current affairs using their “platform.” Which is another way of saying, because these people have access to a large section of the public which pays attention to what the celebrity says, the celebrity should then use this attention they receive to promote various social causes, charity and other potentially political issues. To an extent this also exists in China. A review of their backgrounds and Chinese Baidu Baike pages (Chinese Wikipedia) reveals that a majority of the stars in both videos participate in various charity events, some state sponsored and some not. What was even more interesting is that many of the pages even detailed how much money they donated to particular causes, especially national disasters like the earthquake in Sichuan in 2008. However, where many of these celebrities differ from their Western counterparts is that they do not as often take political affiliations. The obvious difference between the two is that the celebrities in these videos have to operate in the PRC, which is a single-party state which does not allow much space for dissent or criticism.

This lack of a space for criticism and the cost of dissent being catastrophic have led to the creation of a dichotomous system where a celebrity either maintains an apolitical stance or is openly supportive of the CCP and by extension “politically active” (term used in the spreadsheet). While there are some outliers that will be discussed below, where they come out as critical of the CCP, they are usually blacklisted immediately ending their pop culture careers. Due to that, I have coded into the spreadsheet a binary answer of “yes” or “no” when considering if a person could be considered politically active. To determine if a person met the standard of being politically active, I looked at the activities they participated in to determine if they were political in nature, the organizations that they belonged to and whether they had CCP membership. If they took part in state led activities promoting particular goals of the CCP they were counted as politically active due to this support. If they were members of various government committees or organizations (regardless of CCP status) they were considered politically active. Party membership would automatically mean that a person is politically active as they are a member of the ruling organization, regardless of holding an official position.

This method while quite subjective yielded some interesting results. In the first video only about 16% of the participants were identified as being politically active. What was noticeable about this is that since they were complaint to the needs of the government, it appeared many of them seemed to benefit from their association, even if they were not a CCP member. Those who were politically active were often featured on state owned media events, which tend to hold a high level of exposure to the domestic audience. For example, being featured in the Chinese New Year Gala would almost guarantee that a star would be seen by several hundred million viewers. This means that there like was and still is a high level of enticement for stars to be supportive either openly by declaring support for the state or covertly by simply participating in state led events as it is linked to increased opportunity. For celebrities that make their money in the Mandarin speaking community, Mainland China is by far the largest market and being excluded from such a market would likely doom their careers unless they could find work in other cultural spheres. Up until recently, Asian roles in Hollywood have not exactly been common, leading many ethnically Chinese stars to move to China to tap into the market. This is quite easily seen in the 2008 video as all except one of the stars (Jang Nara from South Korea) was ethnically Chinese or a minority from the mainland, but only 56% of the participants of the video were born in Mainland China.

While previously mentioned, the role of Party membership and PLA affiliations is another factor that needs to be discussed in detail. While Chinese communism, or socialism with Chinese characteristics, has been seen as a part of Chinese Mainland identity since 1949, its prevalence of members in society has always been surprisingly low. Two years after the filming of BWY Party membership stood at approximately 80 million, which is under 10% of the population at the time.<sup>10</sup> Even with yearly increases, today membership still remains under 10% of the total population. This is because joining the CCP has always been considered a privilege and an honor of someone who represents the values of China and its ruling Party. While this began with having proper political heritage of being a peasant and not someone from the more elite classes it has since grown into a representation of the top tier of the country in everything from entertainment to intellectuals.

While the CCP members might make up less than 10% of the population, and was probably closer to 6%-7% of the population in 2008, confirmed CCP members make up 11% of the participants in the first video. Before further analysis, it should be noted that “confirmed CCP member” just means that through analysis of their online profiles I was able to confirm they were members of the Party either through state media or personal confirmation. The actual number of members in the entertainment industry is likely higher than what I was able to confirm, as some people try to hide their membership. For example, Jack Ma the famous business mogul and founder of Alibaba was outed as a Party member in 2018 and there were multiple media outlets who published articles seemingly sensationalizing his membership. For business or personal reasons some people would obviously have reasons to keep such information private. The percentage of CCP members in the first video is almost double their representation when compared to the population. Additionally, 50% of the CCP members were actually members of the PLA.

From an outside perspective this would seem odd. Most countries do not associate the national military with the entertainment industry, but in China this is not the case. Many entertainers, and minorities in particular, have gotten their start through PLA song and dance troupes and its musical academies. Joining the PLA almost guarantees membership in the CCP. Meaning that any talented musician or actor who joins one of these groups can gain a lot of

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<sup>10</sup> Statistics from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/281378/number-of-chinese-communist-party-ccp-members-in-china/>

benefits for doing so, and they are more likely to get aid in promotion from the state apparatus itself. This essentially fast tracks politically compliant and vetted celebrities to the top. While they never appear in either video wearing a military uniform, the domestic audience would likely be able to identify some of them as being members of the PLA. This is particularly true for someone like Han Hong. She is a half-Tibetan singer, a colonel in the PLA, prominently featured in both videos and very well known in the PRC. While she very rarely appears in a military uniform, she often participates in events for the PLA which are broadcast on domestic television, and can be found on websites like YouTube. There are several other examples in the first video, but their actual level of fame varies as some that are relatively unknown and some that are quite famous. Since they are public facing and linked to the state their promotion and media coverage can be disproportionate.

Going with the hypothesis of this thesis that Chinese confidence was increasing in the period following the Olympics and the CCP wished to change the way they were viewed, it is reasonable to assume that they would increase the number of politically loyal participants as time went on in this style of propaganda. From the data collected, this hypothesis is confirmed. In the second video the percentage of politically active people increased to 25% and the number of confirmed Party members increased to 18%. It should also be noted when viewing these percentages that the total number of participants of the second video was double the first, with the first video having 80 participants and the second having approximately 159 (when counting the Snow Lotus Band as one participant). If the participants of the second song were compared to the general population, the number of confirmed CCP members participating would equal approximately three times the Party's representation in the general population. This disproportionate representation is clearly not accidental and represents a shift that China becoming less politically tolerant than it was even four years prior.

The second video even has portion in which 10 consecutive participants were from the PLA. However, for the international audience watching it is highly unlikely that they would know. For the domestic audience in China, they could potentially know some of them as they have generally had distinctive hair styles, most released patriotic albums, several participated in national televised events, and some went on to have minor acting careers. For Olympic promotional material, the use of military performers is normally limited to the flag raising ceremony at the opening of the games. However, China seems to have gone far past this trend

and employed them for official promotional use. Their selection would appear to confirm the desire for politically vetted celebrities to be used for international promotion, as it reduces the risk of a star making a controversial remark that could cause the country to lose face. While China is not considered to be a militarized society it is known that the PLA has been and still is involved in many industries, including the entertainment industry. However, their increasing presence in some of these promotional propaganda videos is another indicator that the discourse on China's outward presentation was changing at this time. Far from the expectations of the West which at the time believed that more engagement and involvement in the international system would create a more liberal and democratic China, the evidence of more PLA personnel in such videos would suggest that China was becoming more autocratic in nature. This is also evidence that China was also presenting increased confidence in itself, the Party and its authoritarian style of governance.

#### **b. Taiwan, Hong Kong and Diaspora**

As mentioned previously, Mainland China is the largest market for those in the Mandarin speaking entertainment industry. As such, since the reform period there have been diaspora who have been trying to break into the market. In the last years of Mao's life and through the beginning of the reform period music, fashion and other aspects of pop culture began to slowly trickle into the Mainland through growing contacts and smuggling with Taiwan and Hong Kong. The era shared many similarities to the reform movements in the Soviet Union which started an inflow of foreign products and culture. Prior to this gradual opening, the entertainment industry in China was very limited to officially approved music and entertainment which was mostly "patriotic" in nature. As younger Chinese were gradually exposed to pop music from Taiwan and Hong Kong, the demand for the new music grew exponentially, and this continued even after the Tiananmen crackdown (Gold, 1993). Superstars from Taiwan and Hong Kong began to tour in China, their movies were imported and they even started appearing in advertisements for Chinese products (Gold, 1993). Domestically many started to attempt to produce their own music and entertainment yet they lacked the ability to overtake Hong Kong and Taiwan in the entertainment sector largely due to lack of experience, access to foreign trends and the legal environment in China.

Until the late 1970s the Mainland had been largely isolated from the outside world, but this was not the case for Hong Kong and Taiwan. Hong Kong was a British colony and had deep influence from both the Chinese intellectual class that fled Guangdong during the Chinese Civil War as well as influence from the Western, mostly British, foreigners. Taiwan adapted much of its entertainment market due to soldiers from the United States that were constantly rotating in and out of the country during the Cold War, which led to an Americanization or Westernization of the Taiwanese entertainment industry; the Taiwanese government also spent money on preserving Chinese culture, which was almost destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in China (Gold, 1993 P. 909-910). This meant that when relations began to stabilize and entertainers from Hong Kong and Taiwan were able to cross into the Mainland they could provide two highly sought after products, which were Western style entertainment in Mandarin and more traditionally Chinese entertainment; thus, despite having miniscule populations when compared to the Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan seized large pieces of the Mainland entertainment industry and held wide influence and appeal amongst the general population (Gold, 1993) (Weiss, 2013).

In short, everything foreign became more popular than what was produced domestically. Until the 1990s this trend continued as China's domestic entertainment industry was only just starting to grow with the support of state-owned media firms. The domination of these outsiders likely peaked in the early 2000s, but many of the most famous and most successful entertainers in Mainland China were still from outside. This situation is evident in the participants from the first video of which 44% came from outside the Mainland. Many of these participants were also extremely famous stars from Hong Kong and Taiwan. For example, in the first video one can see two extremely famous Hong Kongers, Jackie Chan and Wakin Chau. Jackie Chan is incredibly famous for his martial arts related movies and for spreading Chinese culture around the world. His movies are also likely responsible for a revival of traditional martial arts in the Mainland. Wakin Chau is a musical superstar in the Chinese speaking world, who has worked in Hong Kong, Taiwan and later in the Mainland. They represent the older influential generation of Hong Kong entertainers in this context, and Jackie Chan has been particularly supportive of the CCP in the years after the Tiananmen protests. Waukin Chau on the other hand became politically silent more or less, but continued working and attending events in the Mainland, which are his majority market.



Beyond these two Hong Kong stars there are about seven more participants in the first video that hail from Hong Kong, but I have only chosen to highlight the two above as they are probably the most famous. However, the inclusion of these nine Hong Kongers, which are 11% of the total participants is important to the whole discourse being created by the MV. It must be kept in mind that the official stated purpose of the MV was to promote the “Beijing” Olympics, with a key focus on the city of Beijing. While these stars are certainly famous, they have no relation of connection to Beijing, and their native languages are not Mandarin, but Cantonese. As many of the previous analysis has shown, the video has a wider focus of contextualizing the Chinese experience. The context to why there is a large representation of Hong Kongers in the MV is that Hong Kong had only within the last 11 years been returned to Chinese rule by the United Kingdom. The use of these stars in a video about the capital of the Mainland advances a narrative that Hong Kong is China, Hong Kongers are Chinese and that the entertainment elite support the Chinese government. This is also apparent as all of the Hong Kong stars use Mandarin in the MV, despite all of them speaking Cantonese as a first language and usually English as a second as those were and are the official languages of Hong Kong. While it could be argued that for the purposes of the lyrics and the music it would make sense for them to speak only one language, in this context it would seem to be a more political choice to have them speak Mandarin instead.

Interestingly there are many Taiwanese stars in the first video, substantially more than the Hong Kongers numbering at 17 and representing 21% of the participants. Although, they mostly represent a much younger cohort of entertainers when compared to some of those from Hong Kong. Richie Jen and Jolin Tsai are both musical superstars in the Chinese speaking entertainment industry. At the time the first video was filmed, Jolin Tsai, born in 1980 was considered the “queen of C-pop” (Chinese Pop) and her musical style and dance routines brought many foreign trends into the Mainland scene. Richie Jen although a bit older than Tsai only started his entertainment career in the late 1980s and reached the peak of his entertainment career in the early 2000s. Again, I’ve only chosen to highlight the two most famous stars, but they represent something that is much more of a problem for the CCP than Hong Kong. While Taiwanese stars have been popular in China since the reform and opening up, as Taiwan was heavily influenced by the US and thus had a robust entertainment industry, this does not exactly

explain their prevalence in a video presenting the capital of the Mainland unless there is another motive.

Taiwan has been a problem for the Mainland since the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Until the early 1990s the Republic of China (ROC) (Taiwan) held the position that it was the sole legal government of China. While the PRC on the other hand declared they were the only sole legal government of China and including Taiwan. This led to the creation of what is known as the “one China principle” in that both sides agree that there is only one “China,” but they disagree as to which side is the legal government. However, after China took the ROC’s place in the United Nations in 1971 the ROC slowly walked away from its stance of being the sole legal government, instead pursuing a one-China two systems approach. This essentially would mean that Taiwan would remain de facto independent, but would not take an official stance on independence, thus maintaining the status quo. This shift was not entirely accepted by the Mainland side as they have been pushing for “peaceful reunification” since the early 1990s. While this is long contextual explanation, it is important to consider in why Taiwanese stars feature so prominently in Mainland propaganda.

While Taiwan has more than one official language, Mandarin is known as Guo yu (国语) which is literally translated as “national language,” which means that Taiwanese media and entertainment is very easily moved into the Chinese market with only a slight change in subtitles from traditional to the Mainland’s simplified character system. This is a very different situation to Hong Kong and much of the Chinese diaspora which is predominantly Cantonese speaking. This means that to an extent the Taiwanese have a much easier time in integrating within the Mainland market, and from a political context they are likely encouraged to do so. The reason that so many Taiwanese stars feature in the first MV is that similar to the utilization of Kong Kongers, it promotes an image to the domestic audience and Taiwanese audience that they are unified and share a common ancestry. It would also seem to promote the success of Taiwanese stars in the Mainland, as it is their primary market. However, this success in the Mainland comes at a cost. None of the Taiwanese stars that I analyzed appeared to be politically active, and noticeably none of them appeared to have ever made a public statement about the relations between Taiwan and the Mainland. The reasoning behind why this is the case is rather obvious, as it would mean being blacklisted from the Mainland market. To avoid being blacklisted it is likely that Taiwanese stars must do more than remain apolitical. They likely must preform at

events and participate in propaganda pieces such as those being analyzed in this paper almost as a form of tribute to the CCP for allowing them to continue their careers.

The last group of people who must be discussed here are the Diaspora. For the purposes of this analysis this will include ethnically Chinese people who immigrated to the West and gained foreign citizenship in addition to the Chinese populations that can be found in South East Asia in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia.

When looking at the second MV, it can be seen that the trend of foreign domination of the entertainment industry had decreased significantly. Many of the iconic stars mentioned before like Jackie Chan, Wakin Chau and Richie Jen still appear alongside another iconic Hong Kong star not featured in the first MV, Andy Lau, who was one of the famous four kings of Hong Kong, but their overall presence decreased significantly. In the second MV, 114 of the participants or 72% of the overall were from Mainland China. This is despite a 2004 law which classified Hong Kong films as being Mainland productions and not being counted towards the quota for foreign films and entertainment. In the post-2008 period the Mainland was quickly replacing the outsiders with its own domestic entertainers (Weiss, 2013). However, the reasoning behind a decrease in these outside stars is more complicated than just a decrease in their market appeal.

For Hong Kong specifically, since the turnover of Hong Kong from the UK's control back to China, there had been a growing dissent movement. Every year since 1997 protests took place in Hong Kong often to commemorate the Tiananmen crackdown or the handover of Hong Kong. Political issues over the election of local politicians on the Island, which the PRC had agreed in the handover to not change for 50 years, became an increasingly important issue as the PRC began to push for more political influence over Hong Kong's governance. Even though Hong Kong was both legally and physically under the PRC's control, the idea of Hong Kong identity remained far more complicated. Many Hong Kongers had to confront this issue of identity as they might have identified as ethnically Chinese, but culturally they did not feel as part of the Mainland. This also meant that celebrities from Hong Kong also had to navigate this complicated road. By being successful in the Mainland and either supporting the CCP or remaining apolitical they would risk severe criticism at home. To combat this, some stars have been noted to have adopted different personas depending on the market. For example, Weiss (2013) found that Hong Kong stars such as Andy Lau and Jackie Chan adopted a characteristic of "Chineseness," which,

according to the author, was meant to either emphasize their ethnic connections to the Mainland or to draw upon some sort of nationalist sentiment or narrative (Weiss, 2013).

It is also likely that the CCP became progressively weary of entertainers from Hong Kong and by extension Taiwan because they were less controllable politically. A mainland celebrity who made politically unsensitive comments or actions could be arrested and “disappeared,” while trying to do the same to a Hong Konger was slightly more complicated and to a Taiwanese star was impossible if they had already left the Mainland. This would mean that as far as promotional materials, Mainland Chinese were much more reliable to entertainment firms working in the PRC and were more easily vetted by the Party when being promoted on state-owned media. As much of the entertainment industry is based upon marketing and exposure, it is very easy to do in the PRC since the state controls nearly all media. It is likely not a coincidence that non-Mainland participants decreased significantly in the second MV. This would also speak to the PRC’s growing self confidence and assertiveness, as they realized they had already created a form of dependence by Taiwan’s and Hong Kong’s entertainment industries and they could likely begin to push into other industries as a result.

It is worth looking at one participant in particular, Jackie Chan. Chan’s centrality in both of these videos is quite important and many descriptions of the videos in the PRC media label him as being one of the main organizers of both songs. Chan has politically reversed since the Tiananmen square protests, which he supported, and the turn over of Hong Kong. Since that period of time, he has become closer to the CCP and has participated in propaganda works such as the songs in this research and became a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). The CPPCC is an advisory organ made up of successful and connected people across China from various backgrounds such as business, entertainment, minority groups and so on. It reports to a member of the stating committee of the CCP politburo and is a key piece of the United Front, which is largely responsible for contacts with the diaspora abroad and creating Chinese soft power in foreign states. While in the West most media coverage of Chan focuses on his performance as a comedian and entertainer, his persona in China is quite different. For example, Weiss noted that he often draws upon nationalist narratives: “‘You look at all the films I have made, I have never “lost face” for China.’ At this, the studio audience erupts in applause. He characterizes his fame in the US as a one-way relationship, with famous US stars bowing to him: ‘Some even, they even do this when they see me [he motions kowtowing].’ This

narrative – of Americans bowing to a Chinese national hero – in many ways evokes the desires of a rising Chinese global power.” (Weiss, 2013).

In the same interview Chan also downplayed the value of Hong Kong films and instead promoted the supremacy of the Mainland market in addition to criticizing foreign influence in the Chinese entertainment (Weiss, 2013). While Chan often seeks to promote these nationalistic values and has no doubt remained successful in the market it is difficult to discern whether he truly believes what he is promoting or if it is just to maintain his commercial success. Despite his constant support of the Mainland, due to being born in Hong Kong he cannot ever join the CCP. His family was even targeted as part of a crackdown several years after the filming of the second video, in which his son, who also appears in both videos, was arrested for drug possession and spent several months in jail despite Chan’s attempted interference. The context of these incidents would suggest that Chan promotes these narratives as a way of staying relevant, and not necessarily because he believes in them, which would seem to confirm the analysis that to be a successful star in China from the early 2000s onward it became increasingly important to be politically aligned with the Party. The PRC’s increasing global reach along with its authoritarian style of governance was causing the CCP to be increasingly intolerant of stars who do not at least tacitly support its governance.

This growing intolerance is another sign relating to the hypothesis of this thesis, in which China had become more confident between this period of four years. The Party became less willing to make compromises or allow for expression of entertainers.

### **c. The Cost of Taking a Stance and Other Political Troubles**

In the years following the filming of these two videos, many stars who participated ended up taking political stances that were not in line with CCP narratives, sometimes intentionally and sometimes it would seem they unintentionally did some action that sparked nationalist rage in the Mainland. As stated in the previous section, by 2012 it already appeared that the PRC was becoming less tolerant of politically independent or critical stars. Before the Beijing Olympics some foreign stars had already faced being banned from the country, like the Icelandic singer Bjork, who called for Tibetan independence in a concert and a Taiwanese singer Chen Shuibian for singing and the inauguration of pro-independence party president in Taiwan (Savadove,

2008).<sup>11</sup> While China had the power to ban people from entering or selling physical products in the Mainland if necessary, by 2012 they still did not have the complete power to blacklist a celebrity. The Great Firewall, as the PRC's internet censorship regime came to be known, was still in its infancy by 2012. Its second development period had only officially come to a close in 2008 with some major foreign media and social media applications being banned in 2009 in response to the riots in Xinjiang. After this point China would progressively continue to censor, control or restrict various aspects of media and the internet.

Very few of the celebrities in both music videos had political mishaps after the release, however some can be highlighted here. One of the most important people is someone who does not appear in the videos, but instead wrote the lyrics. The lyricist for BWY was a Hong Konger named Albert Leung. In 2019 he came out in full support of the Hong Kong protests and pro-democracy umbrella movements. The response from the Mainland was the 3,500 songs that he had written were removed from the Chinese stores overnight. Since this event he has only written song lyrics for singers from Hong Kong and Macau. While there does not appear to be an official explanation for this it is likely that he has been officially blacklisted from continuing to work in the Mainland.

The Queen of C-pop, Jolin Tsai, also did not escape some criticisms. Although throughout her career she struck a very apolitical or neutral stance on cross-strait relations, in 2021 she made a social media post congratulating several athletes on their success in an international competition. However, one of the athletes that she congratulated had made their own post where they expressed that they were Taiwanese and from Taiwan. That was interpreted as a way of saying that the athlete supports Taiwanese independence. Tsai's association with this athlete led many online commenters known in China as "netizens" to criticize her for also being pro-independence and calling for the government to ban her from the Mainland. While it was likely a misunderstanding given Tsai's well established apolitical stance (Koh, 2021), it still shows sensitivity of the Mainland audience and how nationalism has grown even from the Hu Jintao period.

Two participants of the first song eventually faced legal troubles in China due to substance abuse. Man Weijun, a signer and member of the Hui ethnic minority, and Jackie Chan's son

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<sup>11</sup> Neither of these two artists appear in the selected video, but are examples of the politics of access to the Chinese market.

Jaycee Chan were arrested in the time after filming the first video. Man was arrested very soon after the filming in 2009, and it appears the incident had a relatively large impact on his career as he struggled to find work after and has not participated in a major work since 2015. Jaycee Chan's experience was a bit more complicated. After the filming of the first MV in 2009 Jaycee renounced his U.S. citizenship in what appeared to be an attempt to prove his nationalism and boost his career. The action was not a major boost to his career in the end and he was arrested on a tip in 2014. This put his father in a rather awkward position as he was serving as China's narcotics control ambassador (BBC, 2015). While Jackie Chan apologized for his son's behavior and took responsibility, Jaycee remained in jail for six months. This incident was rather confusing for many as Chan and his family were thought to have had some sort of political protection due to Chan's previously mentioned closeness to the Party, but it seems that the CCP decided to make an example out of him in their bid to crackdown on drug use.

There is also evidence from the participants of these songs that CCP membership is not a guaranteed protection from the government. In the first video, a PLA singer and CCP member named Tang Can disappeared in 2011. She was accused of sexual bribery and corruption although details were never actually released. What is interesting about this case is the image it creates of the Party. Tang Can had been featured prominently in propaganda pieces before this and given the charges against her, if they were true, it was unlikely the first time. It is not a secret that the CCP is a rather sexist organization, the National People's Congress is and has always been majority male, despite the various bureaus dedicated to female empowerment, and notably the Standing Committee of the CCP has never had a female member. There are a number of stories of male CCP officials abusing their posts to solicit sex from subordinates and others in exchange for favors. What is interesting is that in this case only Tang Can was punished, at least publicly, meaning that her counterparts likely went unpunished, likely because they were high ranking and male. This is a very different picture than what is painted in the videos with CCP representatives being portrayed as regular celebrities and having clean moral backgrounds.

From this analysis it can be seen that China has retained its control over the entertainment industry and may have become stricter since both of these videos were filmed. This portion is rather complicated to interpret as cracking down on celebrities who do not live up to the proposed Chinese values or policy could be seen as both more confident or less confident. However, I feel that it shows more confidence in their system as they do not fear backlash from

pursuing these individuals regardless of their social status. A state with weaker control over its population could be seen as lacking the confidence to imprison or punish prominent figures in society, but in China this is not the case. The CCP has no issue with arresting or criticizing the most prominent figures in the entertainment industry and occasionally within the CCP itself as it knows that it can withstand or redirect any criticism it garners for doing so. Since 2008, they appear to have become increasingly ready to do so and the entertainment class has not found any power to prevent it.

#### **d. Minority Representatives**

While the use of minorities in a visual capacity has been covered previously, there were many more minority representatives in both videos that did not visually differentiate themselves. As noted previously, the minority representatives who did dress in a more ethnic style regularly appear in this kind of dress for their career with the exception of Alpha (阿尔法), the Xinjiang singer who appeared in the second MV. The rest of these stars marginally went about their careers without relying on their ethnicity or simply did not appear in an ethnic dress. Some appear to have been rewarded for political loyalty by being given places in the video to try and advance their careers, despite relatively little public popularity prior to being featured. Therefore, in this section some of the other minorities who were featured will be explored, along with aspects for why they were selected and how it relates to the discourse being presented.

In the first video, the selection of minorities appears to only encompass “safe” representatives. What is meant by the term safe is that the minorities selected come from either from minorities who have undergone significant Sinicization, which is the process of assimilation into a more Han cultural dynamic, or they are very politically connected to the CCP. To demonstrate this, a count of the minorities in the first MV would show that three were from the Mongolian minority, two were from the Manchu minority, two were from the Hui minority. There were several other representatives from some of the smallest minorities such as the Nanai which only number in the thousands in China, the Korean minority, which is equally small, and one Taiwanese star that is mixed race who could potentially represent the Taiwanese Aborigines. The only outlier who comes from a politically sensitive region is the half-Tibetan Han Hong, but she is a colonel in the PLA, and thus already a well vetted participant. What must be noted here is that despite this rather large cross section of Chinese ethnic groups, most of



them did not appear in an ethnic dress, but there is evidence that their selection for these videos is still largely dependent on their ethnicity and not just their talent.

The reason I have labeled the Mongolians and the Manchu's as a safe representation and having been assimilated is that in many aspects their more traditional culture has been subdued. A key example is that despite the presence of over a million Manchus in the PRC and that it was official language of the last imperial dynasty, the language is considered critically endangered with what is estimated to be less than 20 native speakers still living and only several thousand second-language speakers (Agence France-Presse, 2016). Inner Mongolia has a somewhat similar problem although not as pronounced. There are no statistics on how many ethnic Mongolians in China speak Mongolian, but due to education and state exams being only offered in Mandarin, it is unlikely there are many. Additionally, the only outside state which can claim affinity for the Mongolian minority is the country of Mongolia itself, which holds virtually no power in the region. Making the situation of the Mongolians markedly different from that of the Tibetans and Uyghurs who can have countries like India and Turkey to host their exiles and give voice to dissidents.

Beyond these two groups, the use of the Hui is also rather interesting. The Hui minority are essentially Han Chinese who converted to Islam and intermarried with foreign traders during the silk road period of China's imperial past (Beech, 2014). The Hui were conceived, until recently, as less of a threat to cultural supremacy led by the CCP, because they do not have their own language, are mostly physically indistinguishable from Han and are more geographically dispersed (Beech, 2014). This led to them being more or less a "model minority" for lack of a better term. While in the West this term often refers to the higher academic and economic achievement of Asian minorities, in a PRC context this would mean more that the minority is integrated, speaks the official state language and is aligned with state interests. At the time of filming, the Hui were the only religiously affiliated minority that fit this description. Therefore, they could be used in pieces like the ones being analyzed because they represent the idea that multicultural and religious minorities can exist in China and be integrated if they are Chinese enough.

These "safer minorities," besides the Hui, are also considerably smaller than say the Uyghurs who have a population of about 12 million in China, but that is not the only reason that they are considered less troubling to the CCP. The Tibetans and Uyghurs are historically the last regions

that were added to the Chinese imperial empire. While the other minorities have had greater exposure to the Chinese civilization over their history, the Tibetans and Uyghurs have had far less, which is why they are both more concentrated geographically, have less links to Han Chinese culture, predominantly speak their own language in their homes (Mandarin is a second language) and often hold other religious affiliations. This is why for the 2008 video they were probably not so prominently featured. Even with the politically compliant people available it was likely too much of a risk.

Politically compliant minorities are important to the ability of the CCP to portray itself as a multicultural and integrated society, which is where people like the previously mentioned Han Hong come in. Han Hong is a very famous half-Tibetan-half-Han singer, the focus on the Tibetan half of her identity is important to her place in Chinese society and what she represents. Many of her most famous songs are specifically about Tibet, but interestingly she only sings in Mandarin. Despite the focus on her ethnicity, she seems to only utilize her Tibetan roots to sing about exotic topics and use a more Tibetan style, but due to her music only being expressed lyrically in Mandarin it represents Sinicization of Tibet; also, she is almost always referred to in Chinese media as Tibetan, but she is from a mixed family which is an important note. Further evidence of this is that Han Hong is both a CCP member and a colonel in the PLA as part of a song and dance troupe. The reason that Han Hong is used in both the 2008 and 2012 is because she is fully politically vetted and is not a threat to the CCP. There are very few examples of a person of similar orientation to Han Hong in the West, as she is politically active, a member of the armed forces, a purported representative of a repressed minority, and a pop-superstar.

For the second video the rate of minority participation remains generally unchanged. While several Uyghurs and Tibetans were added to the performance it seems to effect little change in the overall message, besides the inclusion of ethnic clothing. In terms of political implications this would suggest that the overall public and political attitudes towards minorities remained unchanged, however, the policies towards international dialogue and narratives relating to minorities had started to change to format where instead of hiding them the CCP tried to seize the narrative. While this seems like a domestic issue, and indeed China often states that the political issues in Tibet, Xinjiang and other locations are “purely domestic issues” that the outside world should not comment on, China had realized that from the 2008 period that their international reputation could be threatened over such issues. It certainly seems to have played

out that way in retrospect from 2022, with the large focus on China's relations with Xinjiang having caused trade and diplomatic issues for the PRC. Which going back to China's foreign policy goals of reassurance of a peaceful rise and preventing China from being isolated are goals that could be threatened by organizations and states criticizing China's human rights relations with minorities. China had already experienced a major setback due to human rights criticisms in the aftermath of the Tiananmen protests and it would be an imperative for the CCP to cast doubts on future criticisms of its human rights records, especially in relation to minority groups. While China's policy from Deng Xiaoping onward was to avoid confrontation, it became quite obvious that completely avoiding the issue was not possible or beneficial. Therefore, China needed to begin to change the narrative, and demonstrate the integration of minorities.

With the onset of criticism towards China in its handling of minorities such as the Uyghurs in the late 2010s and early 2020s it can be observed that the narrative in the second video is very similar to what is being done now. On platforms such as YouTube, TikTok and others viewers can find many videos shot by state-affiliated/owned media outlets and influencers that were likely paid by the PRC to go to places like Tibet and Xinjiang and show how "happy and integrated" the local minorities are. Many of those videos share the same colonial depictions of minority groups as they are often shown in traditional outfits, dancing or singing, despite this not being a real reflection of reality and instead it portrays them as exotic savages. If the CCP was not worried about its international image in relation to these minorities it would not have gone to such lengths to promote them in propaganda like the video in 2012 or in the videos produced more recently. This change in how minorities were depicted did not necessarily mean a direct change in actual policy towards minorities. However, as history will demonstrate, changes in rhetoric and narratives often lead to changes in policy. China's policies towards minorities from 2008-2012 and maybe even until 2017 could have been considered somewhat repressive, but they were mostly reactionary in nature. It is only from 2016-2017 onward that policy towards minorities shifted to being more totalitarian. By this time, they had also done enough narrative work globally that a significant portion of the global population still doubts the Western narrative about what China is doing in Xinjiang or do not care due to their economic or diplomatic ties with the PRC. Evidence of this can be seen in debates which took place in the UN in 2020, in which some 35 countries led by the US attempted to pass a resolution condemning China, which was opposed by some 45 mostly developing countries opposing (Putz, 2020). Interestingly

though, many of the countries who did not take a side and remained absent were those with large Muslim populations (Putz, 2020). This offers evidence that China's foreign policy goals and even some domestic goals relating to minorities have remained consistent even after the accession of Xi Jinping. However, the discourse relating to these goals has changed as they have become much more vocal in justifying and expressing their own narrative in the face of international condemnation. What is more is that it can be seen that the continuation of discourse related policy has had some level of success in preventing China's international isolation, which is another foreign policy goal.

## **7. Conclusion**

In her book on China's developing pop culture after the Tiananmen crackdown, Zha Jianying offers some interesting insights to the changes taking place in the PRC going into the 1990s. She particularly notes that after some debates with her father, a ranking CCP official, he stated to her mother: "I think my difference with our daughter boils down to this: she believes culture will save China, I believe the economy will" (Zha, 1995). It would seem in reality both of them were partially correct in their observations. The post-2008 China is one that reached economic success that was never imagined by many. Kaiser Kuo, the founder of one of the largest China focused podcasts called Sinica, often states that the last 50 years in the PRC has been the best 50 years in the past 5000 years of Chinese civilization for the bottom half of Chinese society, and for the most part he is correct. China has at it often touts lifted millions of people out of poverty within the last 50 years. However, as Zha is keen to point out, much of that could not have been done without a change in culture, which even though the Tiananmen protests failed in the goal of seeking democratic change, the event did serve as a wakeup call for the CCP and there indeed were changes after Tiananmen. However, Zha stated in her book that ethnic nationalism would not be the way forward in China, often citing the chaos incited by the Balkan conflicts, but just from videos like the ones analyzed in this thesis we can see that she was incorrect.

From the analysis done in this thesis it can be viewed that many of the foreign policy narratives and goals have remained consistent since the final years of Mao's rule. From 2008 to 2012 China was still committed to reassuring their neighbors that they do not have military expansionist intentions, securing places in international organizations in addition to more diversified trade options, reducing Taiwan's influence and offering an alternative development

model. From the lyrical, visual and participant based analyses there is great evidence of this. The lyrics express China's intentions of being opened to the world and forming ties of diplomatic and economic natures and the images present China as an ancient civilization that is modernizing and open for business. The participants demonstrate a China that is trying to present itself as the sole legal representative of the Chinese ethnicity with a particular focus on its problematic relationship with Taiwan and Hong Kong. These narratives are importantly consistent across both videos

It has been asserted by many that the CCP went through a form of identity crises after the death of Mao and it needed a way of solidifying a national identity that would prevent the Party from losing control especially after the loss of centralization around Mao due to his death. In fact, the way the Party officially dealt with Mao's legacy was by an official statement from Deng in which it was said that Mao was "70% right and 30% wrong (Schmidt-Glintzer, 2017). This equation method of dealing with the disaster that was Mao's Cultural Revolution was a way of saving face in that the Party admitted he had some faults but did not completely abandon his legacy along with that of the CCP. In BWY, the analysis shows the beginning of a new Chinese nationalistic image, which is then expanded in the second video to once again include the Party as an equal to Chinese identity. What can be seen in more recent history is that changes in narrative, likely lead to changes in actions. The shifts that took place under Hu Jintao did not translate into assertive or aggressive actions under his leadership, regardless of the temporary rhetoric around certain issues. What it did accomplish was laying the ground work for the leader who would come after him; who would be left with a stronger more self-conscious national image both domestically and internationally and a clear guideline for China's foreign policy goals.

In future analysis in the field of international relations and China studies in particular, studies of this kind should become more prominent, as they are a way of exploring how the ideas and goals of the state over time from various aspects. While focusing on documents such as newspapers and articles written by the country elite can be a window into the debates in non-transparent authoritarian countries, looking at what the government itself is projecting to the public can often explain just as much if not more. While propaganda is often discredited as fake or misleading it is key to understanding how the government or ruling party wishes to be viewed by the domestic and potentially international audience. There are far too many debates on soft

power to fully dissect them in this thesis, but one of the key aspects of soft-power is how a state is viewed and portrayed. Videos such as those in this thesis are key examples of how governments can utilize new media formats to change perceptions. The narrative has since moved on from what was projected in 2008-2012, but these videos represent the beginning of an information space that is not dominated by the West, and leads us into the world and information ecosystem that we live in today.

From the videos analyzed it can be seen that each video represents a different China, or one that has undergone a rapid change in a very short period of only four years. Both videos are projections of the reality that the CCP wanted to express at the individual times they were published and had obvious goals of advancing discourse and promoting China's foreign policy goals by using a multimodal form of expression. The first video represents a non-confrontational China that is still attempting to keep a low profile and gather its strength while promoting affirmative nationalist narratives. This non-confrontational approach includes aspects such as avoiding sensitive topics like China's minorities, CCP heritage other aspects. The second represents a China that has become more confident and is expressing itself on a global stage in the wake of its soft power victory in the Olympics and economic success in the post-financial crisis world. The second video demonstrates that China is no longer going to hide its Communist Party heritage, nor will it allow for other countries to bully it based on human rights issues particularly on account of its minorities. This growth in confidence to express these views is an important piece of the trajectory of China's development. Without the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and the events of the final years of Hu Jintao's leadership, China likely would have maintained a much stricter understanding of Deng's "hide your capabilities and bide your time" even after Hu had passed on the leadership position. What is demonstrated in these videos is a gradual awakening of or formulation of Chinese nationalism, which was a necessary precursor to Xi Jinping's rule.

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## 9. Appendix

## Annex 1: Full song lyrics and translations

Beijing Welcomes You

Welcome another sunrise (beginning of the day),  
 Bringing in a completely new atmosphere (bringing new/fresh air)  
 yíng jiē lìng yí gè chén xī, dài lái quán xīn kōng qì  
 迎 接 另 一 个 晨 曦, 带 来 全 新 空 气  
 A breath changes the sentiment of constant fragrant tea to an air of friendly feelings  
 qì xī gǎi biàn qíng wèi bù biàn, chá xiāng piāo mǎn qíng yì  
 气 息 改 变 情 味 不 变, 茶 香 飘 满 情 谊

The door to my home is usually open, open and waiting for your embrace  
 wǒ jiā dà mén cháng dǎ kāi, kāi fàng huái bào děng nǐ  
 我 家 大 门 常 打 开, 开 放 怀 抱 等 你  
 After an embrace (hug) there will be tacit understanding,  
 you will fall in love with this place (here)  
 yōng bào guò jiù yǒu le mò qí, nǐ huì ài shàng zhè lǐ  
 拥 抱 过 就 有 了 默 契, 你 会 爱 上 这 里  
 Whether or not far or close everyone is a guest  
 Please there is no need for formalities  
 bù guǎn yuǎn jìn dōu shì kè rén qǐng bú yòng kè qì  
 不 管 远 近 都 是 客 人 请 不 用 客 气  
 xiāng yuē hǎo le zài yì qǐ, wǒ men huān yíng nǐ  
 相 约 好 了 在 一 起, 我 们 欢 迎 你

In my home is planted an evergreen, every season opening (blooming) a legend  
 wǒ jiā zhòng zhe wàn nián qīng, kāi fàng měi duàn chuán qì  
 我 家 种 着 万 年 青, 开 放 每 段 传 奇  
 For the sake of tradition sowing seeds in soil,  
 For you to stay and recall (to make memories for you)  
 wéi chuán tǒng de tǔ rǎng bō zhǒng, wéi nǐ liú xià huí yì  
 为 传 统 的 土 壤 播 种, 为 你 留 下 回 忆  
 Strange or familiar all are guests please there is no need for formalities  
 mò shēng shú xī dōu shì kè rén qǐng bú yòng jū lǐ  
 陌 生 熟 悉 都 是 客 人 请 不 用 拘 礼  
 No matter how many times you've come,  
 There will be much to talk about  
 dì jǐ cì lái méi guān xi, yǒu tài duō huà tí  
 第 几 次 来 没 关 系, 有 太 多 话 题

Beijing welcomes you,  
 For you (we have) done unprecedented things

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, wéi nǐ kāi tiān pì dì  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 为 你 开 天 辟 地  
The charm is flowing and full of vigor  
liú dòng zhōng dì mèi lì chōng mǎn zhe zhāo qì  
流 动 中 的 魅 力 充 满 着 朝 气  
Beijing welcomes you  
Under the sun to have a breath  
běi jīng huān yíng, nǐ zài tài yáng xià fēn xiǎng hū xī  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 在 太 阳 下 分 享 呼 吸  
On the yellow earth (we can) surpass achievements  
zài huáng tǔ dì shuā xīn chéng jì  
在 黄 土 地 刷 新 成 绩

wǒ jiā dà mén cháng dǎ kāi, kāi huái róng nà tiān dì  
我 家 大 门 常 打 开 开 怀 容 纳 天 地  
suì yuè zhàn fàng qīng chūn xiào róng, yíng jiē zhè ge rì qī  
地 岁 月 绽 放 青 春 笑 容, 迎 接 这 个 日 期  
tiān dà dì dà dōu shì péng you, qǐng bú yòng kè qì  
天 大 地 大 都 是 朋 友, 请 不 用 客 气  
huà yì shī qíng dài xiào yì, zhǐ wéi děng dài nǐ  
画 意 诗 情 带 笑 意, 只 为 等 待 你

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, xiàng yīn yuè gǎn dòng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 像 音 乐 感 动 你  
ràng wǒ men dōu jiā yóu qù chāo yuè zì jǐ  
让 我 们 都 加 油 去 超 越 自 己  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qí jì  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, wéi nǐ kāi tiān pì dì  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 为 你 开 天 辟 地  
liú dòng zhōng dì mèi lì chōng mǎn zhe zhāo qì  
流 动 中 的 魅 力 充 满 着 朝 气  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ zài tài yáng xià fēn xiǎng hū xī  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 在 太 阳 下 分 享 呼 吸  
zài huáng tǔ dì shuā xīn chéng jì  
在 黄 土 地 刷 新 成 绩

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, xiàng yīn yuè gǎn dòng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 像 音 乐 感 动 你  
ràng wǒ men dōu jiā yóu qù chāo yuè zì jǐ

让 我 们 都 加 油 去 超 越 自 己  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qí jì  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ ya  
北 京 欢 迎 你 呀

wǒ jiā dà mén cháng dǎ kāi, kāi fàng huái bào děng nǐ  
我 家 大 门 常 打 开, 开 放 怀 抱 等 你  
yōng bào guò jiù yǒu le mò qì, nǐ huì ài shàng zhè lǐ  
拥 抱 过 就 有 了 默 契, 你 会 爱 上 这 里  
bù guǎn yuǎn jìn dōu shì kè rén qǐng bú yòng kè qì  
不 管 远 近 都 是 客 人 请 不 用 客 气  
xiāng yuē hǎo le zài yì qǐ, wǒ men huān yíng nǐ  
相 约 好 了 在 一 起, 我 们 欢 迎 你

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, wéi nǐ kāi tiān pì dì  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 为 你 开 天 辟 地  
liú dòng zhōng dì mèi lì chōng mǎn zhe zhāo qì  
流 动 中 的 魅 力 充 满 着 朝 气  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ zài tài yáng xià fēn xiǎng hū xī  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 在 太 阳 下 分 享 呼 吸  
zài huáng tǔ dì shuā xīn chéng jì  
在 黄 土 地 刷 新 成 绩

(Musical Interlude)

wǒ jiā dà mén cháng dǎ kāi, kāi huái róng nà tiān dì  
我 家 大 门 常 打 开 开 怀 容 纳 天 地  
suì yuè zhàn fàng qīng chūn xiào róng, yíng jiē zhè ge rì qī  
地 岁 月 绽 放 青 春 笑 容, 迎 接 这 个 日 期  
tiān dà dì dà dōu shì péng you, qǐng bú yòng kè qì  
天 大 地 大 都 是 朋 友, 请 不 用 客 气  
huà yì shī qíng dài xiào yì, zhǐ wéi děng dài nǐ  
画 意 诗 情 带 笑 意, 只 为 等 待 你

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, xiàng yīn yuè gǎn dòng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 像 音 乐 感 动 你  
ràng wǒ men dōu jiā yóu qù chāo yuè zì jǐ  
让 我 们 都 加 油 去 超 越 自 己  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ



北 京 欢 迎 你, 有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qí jì  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, wéi nǐ kāi tiān pì dì  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 为 你 开 天 辟 地  
liú dòng zhōng dì mèi lì chōng mǎn zhe zhāo qì  
流 动 中 的 魅 力 充 满 着 朝 气  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ zài tài yáng xià fēn xiǎng hū xī  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 在 太 阳 下 分 享 呼 吸  
zài huáng tǔ dì shuā xīn chéng jì  
在 黄 土 地 刷 新 成 绩

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, xiàng yīn yuè gǎn dòng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 像 音 乐 感 动 你  
ràng wǒ men dōu jiā yóu qù chāo yuè zì jǐ  
让 我 们 都 加 油 去 超 越 自 己  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ, yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你, 有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qí jì  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹

(Build up to the end)

běi jīng huān yíng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你  
yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ  
有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qí jì  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹  
běi jīng huān yíng nǐ  
北 京 欢 迎 你  
yǒu mèng xiǎng shuí dōu liǎo bù qǐ  
有 梦 想 谁 都 了 不 起  
yǒu yǒng qì jiù huì yǒu qí jì  
有 勇 气 就 会 有 奇 迹



### **Best Wishes From Beijing**

Love is like a globe constantly rotating  
(Love is like a globe constantly spinning)

爱像地球仪转来转去

ài xiàng dì qiú yí zhuàn lái zhuàn qù

How to reach Beijing? Just stretch your hand

(How far is Beijing from the world? Just stretch out your hand and its within reach)

北京到世界多少里 伸手可及

Běijīng dào shì jiè duō shǎo lǐ shēn shǒu kě jí

Love leaves a trail from pole to pole

(Love streaks across the path of the sky from pole to pole)

爱划过轨迹 经纬两极

ài huà guò guǐ jī jīng wěi liǎng jí

From East to West of the Great Wall, peace traces

(Thousands of miles the great wall from east to west the flames of war have gone out)

万里长城从东到西 烽火散去

wàn lǐ cháng chéng cóng dōng dào xī fēng huǒ sàn qù

Welcome from Beijing, with all our hearts

(Beijing welcomes you, welcomes you, giving the world something unparalleled)

北京欢迎你 欢迎你 给世界无与伦比

Běijīng huān yíng nǐ huān yíng nǐ gěi shì jiè wú yǔ lún bǐ

Best wishes from Beijing, inspiring friendship every day to come

(Beijing blesses you, blesses you, inspiring everyday legends (romance))

北京祝福你 祝福你 激励每一天传奇

Běijīng zhù fú nǐ zhù fú nǐ jī lì měi yī tiān chuán qí

Best wishes from Beijing, ringing out from every corner

(Beijing blesses you, on the city wall discussing the same topic.)

北京祝福你 城墙上聊同一个话题

Běijīng zhù fú nǐ chéng qiáng shàng liáo tóng yī gè huà tí

Waving flags of good wishes, blooming between me and you

(To pray (wish) to wave the flag and burst forth (bloom) (with) me and you)

祝愿飘扬旌旗 绽放我和你

qí yuàn piāo yáng jīng qí zhàn fàng wǒ hé nǐ

Best wishes from Beijing, under the stars, from all directions

(Beijing blesses you, under the stary sky the whole world is spread)

北京祝福你 星空下挂满四海霞衣

Běijīng zhù fú nǐ xīng kōng xià guà mǎn sì hǎi xiá yī

Brilliantly and boundlessly, together we celebrate

(Brilliant and boundless drinking of heaven and earth)

灿烂无边无际 共饮天和地

càn làn wú biān wú jì gòng yǐn tiān hé de

[alternates between Mandarin and English for final refrain]

Blessing you

祝福你

## Annex 2: List of participants and notes

Name (Eng/Chinese)	Nationality/Place of Birth	Minority? (Yes, No or N/A)	Politically Active?	Dual Citizen/Residence?	CCP Member? (Only noted if confirm Place of Dual Nationality/Residence)	Notes
Chen Tianjia 陳天佳	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Liu Huan 刘欢	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Na Ying 那英	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
Stefanie Sun 孙燕姿	Singapore	N/A	No	No	No	N/A
Sun Yue 孙悦	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Wang Leehom 孙悦	USA	No	No	Yes	No	Taiwan
Han Hong 韩红	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A
Wakin Chau 周华健	Hong Kong	No	No	Yes	No	Taiwan
Gigi Leung 梁咏琪	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A
Chen Yufan (Yu Quan) 陈羽凡 (羽泉)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Hu Haiquan (Yu Quan) 胡海泉 (羽泉)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Jackie Chan	Hong Kong	No	Yes	No	No	N/A
Richie Jen 任贤齐	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Jolin Tsai 蔡依林	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Sun Nan 孙楠	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Bibi Zhou 周笔畅	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Wei wei 韦唯	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Huang Xiaoming 黄晓明	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	No	Hong Kong
Han Geng 韩庚	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
Wang Feng 汪峰	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Karen Mok 莫文蔚	Hong Kong	No	No	Yes	No	United Kingdom
Tan Jing 谭晶	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Eason Chan 陈奕迅	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A
Yan Weiwenn 阎维文	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Dai Yujang 戴玉强	Mainland China	No	No	No	Yes	N/A
Li Shuangsong 李双松	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Wang Xia王霄						
Liao Changyong	Mainland China	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Hong Kong
Lin Yilin 林依轮	Mainland China	Yes	No	Yes	No	N/A
Jang Na Ra 张娜拉	South Korea	N/A	No	No	No	N/A
JJ Lin 林俊杰	Singapore	No	Yes	No	No	Taiwan
A-do 阿杜	Singapore	No	No	No	No	N/A
Joey Yung 容祖儿	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A
Li Yuchun 李宇春	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Huang Dawei 黄大炜	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	USA
Chen Kun 陈坤	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Nicholas Tse 谢霆锋	Hong Kong	No	No	Yes	No	Canada
Han Lei 韩磊	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
Vivian Hsu 徐若瑄	Taiwan	Yes	No	Yes	No	Singapore
Fei Xiang 费翔	Taiwan	No	No	Yes	No	USA
Tang Can 汤灿	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Lin Chi-ling 林志玲	Taiwan	No	No	Yes	No	Japan
Zhang Zilin 张梓琳	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Jane Zhang 张靓颖	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Valen Hsu 许茹芸	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Sky Wu 伍思凯	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Yang Kun 杨坤	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Christine Fan 范玮琪	USA	No	No	Yes	No	Taiwan
You Hongming 游鸿明	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Zhou Xiaohu 周晓鸥	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Sha Baoliang 沙宝亮	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
Jin Haixin 金海心	Mainland China	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
Man Wenjun 满文军	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A
Peter Ho 何润东	USA	No	No	Yes	No	N/A
Faye (F.I.R.) 飞儿乐团 (黄淑青)	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Real (F.I.R.) 阿沁 (黄汉青)	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Ian Chen (F.I.R.) 陈建豪	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Pang Long 庞龙 (庞永清)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Qi Feng 齐峰	Mainland China	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
Li Yugang 李宇刚	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Kengji Wu 吴克群	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Tony Sun (Band 5566) 孙协志	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Wang Renfu (Zax) (Band 5566) 王仁甫	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Sam Wang (Band 5566) 王少伟	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Xu Mengzhe (Jason) (Band 5566) 许孟哲	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Anson Hu / Tiger Hu 胡彦斌	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Yumiko Cheng 郑希怡	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A
Dao Lang 刀郎	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Ji Minjia 纪丹迪	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Tu Honggang 屠洪刚	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	No	N/A
Demis Ng 吴彤	Canada	No	No	No	No	N/A
Guo Rong 郭蓉	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	No	N/A
Liu Genghong 刘刚宏	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A
Tengger 腾格尔	Mainland China	Yes	Yes	No	No	N/A
Jin Sha 金沙	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Su Xing 苏醒	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Wei Jia 韦嘉	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Fu Lishan 付丽珊	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Huang Zheng 黄征	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A
Jaycee Chan 房祖名	USA	No	No	Yes	No	Hong Kong and potentially Taiwan
Beijing Welcomes You (BWY) 北京欢迎你						
Total Participants	80	Total Minorities	11			
Total Mainland China	45	Total Dual Residents	13			
Total USA	4	Total CCP Members	9			
Total Canada	3	Total Politically Active	13			
Total Singapore	3	Total Politically Inactive	67			
Total South Korea	1					
Total Taiwan	17					
Total Hong Kong	9					
Percentage Mainland	56%					
Percentage Minority	14%					
Percentage Politically Active	16%					
Percentage CCP Members	11%					
Percentage Dual Residents	16%					
Total Minorities	11					
Total Dual Residents	13					
Total CCP Members	9					
Total Politically Active	13					
Total Politically Inactive	67					

Name (Eng/Chinese)	Nationality/Place of Birth	Minority? (Y/N)	Dual Citizen/Residence?	Politically Active	CCP Member? (Only noted if confirmed)	Place of Dual Residence	Repeated from Beijing Welcomes You? (Y/N)	Notes
Lang Lang 朗朗	Mainland China	Yes	No	No		N/A	No	Manchu. US educated. History of playing for state leaders and functions from a young age.
Jackie Chan 成龙	Hong Kong	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	Yes	CPCCC member
Song Zuying 宋祖英	Mainland China	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Hmong. Joined CCP in 1999. Career start in PLA troupe. NPC and CPCCC member.
Andy Lau 刘德华	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Rumored affair with Jiang Zemin
Huang Xiao Ming 黄晓明	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Devout Buddhist. Involved in charity work.
Tan Jing 谭晶	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	Worked with UNICEF
Li Bingbing 李冰冰	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	Joined the PLA. Joined the Party in 2009.
Fan Bingbing 范冰冰	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	NPCC member. Member of CMC dance troupe.
Han Geng 韩庚	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Member of the Chinese Zhi Gong Party
Sun Nan 孙楠	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Nanai minority, smallest in China. Torch bearer in 2008
Eason Chan 陈奕迅	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Torch bearer in 2008
Han Hong 韩红	Mainland China	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	PLA member. Half Tibetan
Wang Feng 王峰	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	From Beijing
Wakin Chau 周华健	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	Taiwan	Yes	
Coco Lee 李玟	Hong Kong	No	Maybe	No	No	US/Canada	No	Moved to the US when young and Married a Canadian in 2011.
Chang Shilei 常石磊	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	Mongolian
Richie Ren 任贤齐	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	
Eva Huang 黄圣依	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Bibi Zhou 周笔畅	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	
Gigi Leung 梁咏琪	Hong Kong	No	Maybe	No	No	N/A	No	Involved in a political incident on a microblog over the milk powder issue in 2010. Married a Spanish man in 2011.
Sun Yue 孙悦	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes	PLA member.
Yu Chengqing 郁程庆	Taiwan	No	Maybe	No	No	N/A	No	Married in the US. Potentially dual resident.
Peter Ho Ho 何润东	United States	No	Maybe	No	No	Canada/Hong Kong	Yes	
Zhang Zilin 张梓琳	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Family is almost all military. Miss world.
Li Yundi 李云迪	Mainland China	No	Yes	Yes	No	Hong Kong	No	Was a member of the Chongqing CPCCC but date he became a member is not clear. Was arrested in 2021 for solicitation of a prostitute.
Crystal Liu Yifei 刘亦菲	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	United States	No	Immigrated with her mother to the US and gained US citizenship in 1990s. Supported Hong Kong Police in 2020 through blog post. But no evidence of political activity from 2008-2012.
Sally Yeh 叶倩文	Taiwan	No	Yes	No	No	Canada	No	Immigrated to Canada at the age of four but born in Taiwan. Has difficulty reading characters due to her upbringing speaking English. Married to George Lam.
George Lam 林建祥	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Foreign educated in UK. Lived in US.
Huang Yi 黄奕	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Anson Hu 胡彦斌	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	
Chen Chaocheng 陈朝成	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Valen Hsu 许茹芸	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	
Zhang Jie 张杰	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Torch bearer in 2008
Mei Nie 聂政	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Gained fame from BWF. Not very well known, but is a member of the railway troupe.
Li Yugang 李玉刚	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Peiking Opera actor.
Zhang Meng 张檬	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Vicky Zhao Wei 赵薇	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	Torch bearer in 2008. Severed in standing committee of the All China Youth League in 2010.
Andy Hui 许冠文	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Mother potentially Vietnamese
Sha Bao Liang 沙宝亮	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Hui minority.
Alec Su 苏有朋	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Ocean Wang 王海洋 (前七小福)								There is not a lot of information on this group in general. They also seem to have switched members over the years so it is unclear which members participated in the video. I've selected the 7 that seem to have been present. Important that they are all students of Jackie Chan
Jack Tu 涂圣成 (前七小福)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Educated in the US.
Jerry Liao 廖瑞 (前七小福)	United States	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Completed projects with the Communist Youth League
J. Young 杨成 (前七小福)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Adan 阿端 (前七小福)	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	Hui minority.
Daniel 胡皓乾 (前七小福)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Completed projects with the Communist Youth League. Foreign educated in UK
Yan Yanlong 闫彦龙 (前七小福)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Completed projects with the Communist Youth League
Cindy Zhang 张惜媛 (PRY组合)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Little to no information. Group was formed by Jackie Chan
Veronique 郑雅文 (PRY组合)	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	No	Hong Kong	No	Group formed by Jackie Chan
Hu Rongrong 胡蓉蓉 (PRY组合)	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Group formed by Jackie Chan
Vivian Hsu 侯若瑄	Taiwan	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Mixed ethnicity Hakka and Tayal. Accused in 2010 of holding Taiwan independence sentiments but never proven. In 2018 appears to be banned from the Mainland.
Audrey An Yuwan 安以轩	Taiwan	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Shawn Huang 黄征	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	
Charlene Choi 蔡卓妍	Canada	No	Yes	No	No	Hong Kong	No	
Leo Ku 古巨基	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	
Joey Yung 容祖儿	Hong Kong	No	No	No	No	N/A	Yes	Was not politically active at the time of filming. But later came out as pro-establishment in HK and pro-Xinjiang cotton in the late 20-teens
Zhou Tao 周涛	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	CCTV host. Is in a lot of CCP committees including the All China Women's Federation
Dong Qing 董卿	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Later went to the US for studies or to have a child. However, unconfirmed and mostly rumors.
Zhu Jun 朱军	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	CPCCC member. CCTV host.
Sa Beining 撒贝宁	Mainland China	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Hui minority. Some articles suggest he is a CCP member but difficult to verify. CCTV Host.
Li Jiaming 李佳明	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	CCTV Host.
Chen Chunni 陈春妮	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	TV Host. Joined CCP in high school due to achievements. All China youth federation member.
Li Kun 李坤	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	No	N/A	No	TV Host. Was a member of the Beijing Municipal People's Congress. Likely in the CCP but no confirmation.
Wang Yeh 王屹	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Beijing TV host. Member of the Propaganda department. That is basically confirmation of Party membership without directly saying it.
Tu Jingwei 涂经纬	Mainland China	Yes	No	No	No	N/A	No	TV host. Yi minority.
Guo Wei 郭伟	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	CCTV host.
Ren Luyu 任鲁豫	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	CCTV host. Was nominated for a media award for Party members which is proof enough of membership
Zhu Dan 朱丹	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Actor and TV host.
Chen Mo 陈昱均杰	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	TV host.
Meng Kunyu 孟买玉	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Traffic officer from the PSB. Gained a lot of media attention for being a "model traffic police officer" for his good looks, smile and dedication to service.
Li Gen 李根	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Famous Badminton player
Li Yongbo 李永波	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Famous Badminton player and coach.
Ye Yiqian 叶一茜	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Chinese Olympic coach. Father of Li Gen.
Tian Liang 田亮	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Former Olympic Diver turned actor.
Lang Ping 郎平	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	No	United States	No	Former Olympic volleyball player. Part of the first team to win an Olympic medal after the Cultural revolution. Considered a sports and cultural icon. Coached the American team to victory in 2008 and became the Chinese head coach after.
Yang Yang 杨扬	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	CPCCC member. High position in the All China Youth Federation Council. Vice Chair of world anti-doping agency. Found one article asserting CCP membership.
Li Xiaohuang 李小小	Mainland China	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	No	Former Olympic gymnast. CCP and CPCCC member.
Li Xiaopeng 李小鹏	Mainland China	No	Yes	No	No	United States	No	Former Olympic gymnast. Married a Chinese American woman and has spent time living with her and their children in the US.
Bao Chunlai 鲍春来	Mainland China	No	No	No	No	N/A	No	Former Olympic badminton player.

[illegible]

Best Wishes From Beijing (BWFB) (北京祝福你)					
Total Participants (estimate)	159			Total Politically Active	39
Total Mainland China	114			Total CCP Member	28
Total United States	4			Total Minorities	26
Total Hong Kong	18			Total Dual Residents	10
Total Taiwan	15			Total Repeated	25
Total South Korea	1				
Total Canada	1				
Total Unknown	6				
Percentage Mainland	72%				
Percentage Minority	16%				
Percentage Politically Active	25%				
Percentage CCP Member	18%				
Percentage Repeated	16%				
Percentage Dual Residents	6%				
Total Politically Active	39				
Total CCP Member	28				
Total Minorities	26				
Total Dual Residents	10				
Total Repeated	25				