

Public Abstract

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Title:Examining the impact of Beijing 2008 Olympic Games on foreign news coverage on China: a content analysis

The nature of the Olympic Games encompasses various human rights issues, among which press freedom would not be neglected. The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games provides a rich social context for the study of the rigorous media censorship practice in Mainland China. This research applies media gatekeeping theory and content analysis to examine the effects of a relaxed media censorship during the Beijing Olympics by studying the news stories on China from the *International Herald Tribune*. The news stories were collected from two time periods: the 656 days on which the policy applied, and the 656 days before the policy announcement. A total of 1,418 news stories were analyzed, and the results showed that a change in foreign media censorship from the Chinese government led to more news coverage of controversial issues on China. The findings suggest an improvement in the treatment of foreign media in the relaxed media policy period. The foreign journalists gained access to sources that used to be off limits, and the international readers were therefore able to obtain news content that challenged the Chinese authorities. Nonetheless, the short span of the relaxed media policy indicates a limited degree of foreign press freedom in China. Future research on the foreign media censorship in China after the Games is required to examine how the Chinese government copes with the idea of a freer media environment.